F I R E F R O M H E A V E N

A Description and Analysis of the

Revivals of the "Burned - Over District" of New York

1800 to 1840

and Spiritual Deceptions

by

Robert Evans

Research in Evangelical Revivals

2005

ISBN 0975673300

REVIEWS OF THIS BOOK

"Fire from Heaven is the most important book about American revivals to appear in recent years. By quoting extensively from little known contemporary sources the author has provided us with a rich resource and a vivid portrayal of the revival movement and its evolution into revivalism. For the first time we have a properly balanced assessment of the controversies that have swirled around the name of Charles Finney. I cannot speak too highly of this book."

Richard A. G. Dupuis.
Co-editor of the only complete text edition, with annotated critical notes, of the "Memoirs" of Charles G. Finney. Published by Academie Books, 1989.

"Robert Evan's manuscript on the great revivals in upstate New York during the 1820s and 1830s is well researched, clearly argued, and judiciously presented. It is particularly strong in its assessments of Charles G. Finney, of Finney's actual deeds, and of his critics. The book is as fair and helpful as a historical project could possibly be on what was right, what was wrong, and what can be debated about these momentous spiritual events."

Professor Mark Noll,
History Department, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois U.S.A.

"In this perceptive work Robert Evans presents an excellent detailed account of Finney's early revivals. He has researched widely, unearthed original materials which gives a strong historical authenticity to his succinct style of writing. Theological issues are given a balanced treatment in the context of the times. The dimension of Methodist revivals has sometimes been overlooked in the era considered, but *Fire from Heaven* has a breadth of coverage with a more accurate picture of the total revival scene. Opposition to Finney is set in a well-documented perspective. The section on "Deception" deserves careful reading, with contemporary lessons for the 21st century. I am glad to warmly commend this refreshing new contribution by my friend and colleague, to an area of revival research which has obviously been waiting for this kind of book."

Roy N. McKenzie. Gore, N.Z.
Presbyterian minister, and co-author with Robert Evans of "Evangelical Revivals in New Zealand." (1999).

CONTENTS

Introduction i

PART ONE - The Great Awakening

1. The First Great Awakening in New England 1
2. James Davenport and the Great Awakening 17
3. Edwards Defines and Defends the Awakening 35

PART TWO - Upstate New York Revivals 1799 - 1825

4. The Second Great Awakening. 1799 - 1805 45
5. Upstate New York Revivals. 1815 - 1820 72
6. Revivals in Upstate New York. 1821 - 1825 99

PART THREE - Theological Aspects

7. Relevant Aspects of New England Theology 116
8. Finney's Early Theology and Personal Impact 153

PART FOUR - The 1826 Oneida Revival and its Aftermath

9. The 1826 Revival in Oneida County, N.Y. 174
10. How Can Revivals Be Made to Serve the Devil? 219
11. The Prayer of Faith, and Knowing the Will of God 229
12. Protracted Meetings and the Anxious Bench 251
13. True and False Conversions 277

PART FIVE - 1831 and After

14. The Great Revival of 1831 295
15. Evangelism and Revivals, 1832 - 1840 320

PART SIX - A Closer Look at Spiritual Deceptions

16. Various Reactions 345
17. The Longer Term Results 377
18. Spiritual Deceptions (a General Statement) 398
19. Early Mormonism and Spiritual Deceptions 409

Appendix 435
Notes and Bibliography 446

INTRODUCTION

Charles G. Finney was the best known American evangelist through the middle period of the Nineteenth Century.

He first rose to prominence during the years from 1824 to 1831 when he was involved in a series of revival movements, mainly in upstate New York. In later years he became professor of theology at the newly founded Oberlin College in Ohio.

His story, not only during the early revivals, but later on, is fascinating for a number of reasons. It provides an important landmark in the annals of evangelical religion in the United States. It is also worthy of attention because these revivals in upstate New York form an important stage in the evolution of evangelism, which had many repercussions later on.

Also important in many ways were the theological struggles of the period, and the role that Finney played in them. The main one involved a three-cornered contest between the New England Congregational Calvinists, the Old-School Presbyterian Calvinists, and various developing forms of Arminian theology.

Calvinist theology emphasised the sovereignty and election of God, and His determining influence over everything that happened, although human free will was also seen as playing a role. Arminian theology worked in the other direction. It emphasised human free will, and tended to limit the sovereignty of God.

Each of these types of theology was going through an evolutionary process of change during these years. In upstate New York through the 1820's and 1830's, a new and slightly different form of Calvinism was developing, which became known as New School Presbyterianism. The most blatant protagonists of Arminian theology in upstate New York were the Methodists, and, as the years went by, the flavour of their theology seemed more allied to the spirit of the age, and thus slowly gained a strangle-hold on the evangelical scene in the U.S.A.

In these early years of his ministry, Finney was a New School Presbyterian. Finney was not an Arminian, although his theological enemies accused him of being one, and even of promoting views which seemed to be a much worse form of heresy, in their view.

So, many of the Presbyterians and Congregationalists in upstate New York during the 1820's and 1830's were Calvinists, although some of them were influenced to a degree by the Arminian tendencies which played such a role in the revivals which prevailed in that part of the country.

Also, because the Presbyterians and Congregationalists usually worked together in upstate New York, generally speaking, the church structure,

organisation and discipline which developed in that part of the country was not "Presbyterian" enough for the Old School Presbyterians, and they fought against it.

The frontier nature of many parts of upstate New York in that period, and the cosmopolitan and transitory nature of the population, helped to produce a different psychology or atmosphere in that part of the country, more conducive to thoughts of enterprise, choice, human freedom and initiative.

In the years just prior to Finney's rise to prominence, the best known evangelist in the north-east parts of the United States had been the Rev. Asahel Nettleton, a New England Congregationalist minister, and a Calvinist more allied to the Old School Presbyterians and the stricter Congregationalists.

The revivals in which he had been involved up to 1822 were very different in character from the revivals which appeared later. His personal character and Christian experience strongly influenced the nature of his work, in the content of his preaching, the instructions that he gave to prospective converts, and in the way he managed the movements.

The older-style Calvinists approved very highly of Nettleton's work, and many of them thought that any departure from it would seriously affect the quality of the work of God in their hands, both in the short term, and in its long term results.

The purpose of the present book is to explore some of these issues, with hopefully a better degree of wisdom than has been achieved in many places so far. After all, it is the aim of historians to try to improve our understanding of the past by building upon what others have done before us. Future historians will no doubt continue this effort.

* * * * * *

There were several considerations which weighed upon my mind, when starting out on the project of writing this book..

Firstly, I wanted to tell the stories of these revivals to a new generation of Christians. Most of the documents which contain these stories are not widely available to the Christian public, and have not been in print for a long time. There are a few exceptions, of course. Some of Charles G. Finney's books stay in print, and a number of books like William B. Sprague's "Lectures on Revivals", and Ebenezer Porter's "Letters", have been reprinted in recent decades.

Secondly, I wanted to try to improve upon the historical objectivity which much of this Christian literature happens to possess. Christian literature in this area is generally either inspirational in purpose, or more theological in interest.

Its objectivity and balance is often greatly in need of improvement.

Much of the literature available to the average Christian today which deals with the "western" revivals in upstate New York, in the years between 1800 and 1840, is affected by the same kind of bias, and is ideologically driven, in the same way as much of the Christian literature which was published about the revivals back in those days, nearly two hundred years ago.

In the realm of "Christian" literature, most of the books which refer to these revivals reflect a particular theological agenda and interest, which helps to cloud a more accurate portrayal of the story.

(a) For example, much of the inspirational literature has been produced by Arminians, who have largely swallowed whole and believed what Charles Finney said about these revivals. Even some of the academic literature tends to be like this.

Those who have had a more Arminian approach to theology and to evangelism, loved the stories of these revivals, especially as they were told by Finney in the older, standard version of his "Memoirs." They believed almost everything Finney said in his famous "Lectures on Revivals." In some cases, this book was made into a Bible College text book for prospective Christian workers.

They believed the good things that Finney said about himself, and about these revivals, in a fairly uncritical way. And they found it hard to understand why somebody like Nettleton or Weeks should oppose Finney in the way they did. Surely Nettleton and Weeks must have been misguided people, blind leaders of the blind, to oppose the work of God in this way.

(b) On the other side, much of the older literature which has been re-published, has been produced by people who wanted to further the older Calvinist theology. The literature has generally been well chosen, in the sense that it is good material, but a hidden agenda usually lay behind the choice of what books to reproduce, and the result has been that a picture is created for the present generation which is not as well balanced as it might have been. Some of the blinkers which the Old School Calvinists wore in the 1840s have been placed upon the eyes of people in our own generation.

The Old School Calvinists, for example, detested Charles G. Finney's theology, and his methods of work. They cast a wary and baleful eye upon those revival movements with which he was so much associated. They tended to believe all of the bad things they heard about Finney and the revivals, whether these alleged bad things happened to be true or not. And they tended to refuse to believe any good things that they might have heard about the revivals, or about Finney. They thought that these alleged good things could hardly be true, because, whatever good might have been done, seriously bad things should flow from such a corrupted source as Finney's theology, and his revival methods.

This also applied to Asahel Nettleton and William Weeks, who were not strictly Old School Presbyterians, but were close followers of the stricter Calvinists in the New England Congregational school of theology. They shared this jaundiced view of Finney and his work.

A most interesting recent study in the general area of these "western" revivals has been Iain Murray's book "Revival and Revivalism: the Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism - 1750 to 1858", which was published by the Banner of Truth Trust in 1993. This book is both an attempt to portray history as objectively as possible, and is also an attempt to beat the Calvinist drum. Both of these agendas should be borne in mind when reading this book.

Thirdly, I have been keen to explore these revivals in an attempt to glean wisdom from the past about the management of Christian spiritual work today.

A study of the revivals in upstate New York from 1800 to 1840, and of the people who were involved in them, provides a great place from which wisdom can be learned for the future about the understanding and management of revivals, and about many aspects of Christian living.

Both Calvinists and Arminians have misunderstood Finney, for different reasons, and have failed to appreciate the revivals in which he played a part.

The long-term effect of the campaign that Nettleton and Weeks mounted against Finney helped to create this situation where there has been a widespread failure of understanding. Their work not only created much wrong understanding, but also bad feeling between Christians, and contributed substantially to the acrimonious rupture in the Presbyterian Church in 1837.

One of the main concerns both in the study of evangelism and revivals, and for those who are blessed by God to be involved in such activities, is the concern to be **wise** in all the contributions we may make to the work of the church, and the Kingdom of God. There is continual need for concern about purity in the spiritual quality of these movements, both recognising and fostering all the desirable qualities of such movements, and avoiding false conversions, recognising and avoiding the works of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and other undesirable features.

For those who become involved directly in revivals, there is always the related concern of striking a balance between attempts to control and eliminate factors which create the undesirable features, and the need not to grieve the Holy Spirit by the use of human controls.

This concern to understand the factors which tend toward the spiritual quality of revivals has been a major interest of mine for many years, and is one of the reasons for this book.

Probably the main matter of historical interest in William Weeks's substantial book "The Pilgrim's Progress in the Nineteenth Century" was his concern about these very matters. The largest part of the book contains his comparison

between, and evaluation of, the revival work and theological views of Asahel Nettleton and Charles G. Finney.

It is because of his concern for the spiritual and theological purity of revivals, and his desire to help in avoiding false conversions, that his thoughts are of such value.

In this book, I have not been trying to defend or justify either Weeks or Finney. I have tried to set out as objectively as I could their theological views and reasons in relation to the revivals.

Whatever one might think about the activities of Nettleton, Weeks or Finney, or indeed any of the other people who figure in these events, their opinions and comments about wisdom and purity in the spiritual qualities of these revival movements have a lasting value for the world today. We must learn from the wisdom of the past, or we may be condemned to commit the same mistakes which occurred in the past.

William R. Weeks has also been greatly neglected in recent historical studies about the revivals in this period of American history, and he deserves to be treated better by the academics. Christians generally might also profit spiritually from what Weeks said, so far as our own spiritual lives are concerned. Especially, those who wish to be involved in leadership in evangelism or revivals today ought to learn deeply from his wisdom, and from similar sources.

It is for a combination of these reasons that I became interested in studying what Weeks said about these matters, and more generally in what would promote the purity of revivals.

The theme of seeking to know something about wisdom and spiritual purity in revivals, therefore, lies behind the choice of materials dealt with in this book, and in the choice of events which are described.

Fourthly, following upon the mutual misunderstandings of the Calvinists and the Arminians, and the two classes of literature this has produced, there has developed a third type of historical writing about this part of American history.

This third component of historiography has come through the work of a wide range of academic historians, since about 1950, who have looked at both Finney, and the revivals, in order to gain a wide range of insights, and learn many historical things about the period, affecting many aspects of life. The subject, after all, is an important part of the national heritage of the United States of America, including, of course, its church life, theological history, and evangelistic life, to say nothing of the role all this played in the entire history of New York state.

These academic historians are mainly analytical, made a number of different philosophical and religious assumptions as a basis to their research, and had various agendas of their own, which is what one would expect. They usually

are not interested in actually telling the stories of the revivals, nor do they really want to introduce the old documents about the revivals to the present generation. Professional historians normally do not want their writings to perform an inspirational role, or to help in growing the desire for more and better revivals in the future.

Fifthly, I have tried to distinguish clearly, especially in the last two chapters, when a particular theological stance is being taken, and showing that normal historical procedures are not being used in certain parts of those chapters.

The Basic Historical Attitude in this Book

My basic aim, as an historical writer about this period, has been to pay the most attention to those writers who seemed to be the most accurate in recording the history of the period, regardless of their theological orientation. This has been decided:-

(a) by the talents they showed as accurate historians,

(b) and by how close they were to the events they were describing.

(c) Yet I have always tried to see value in what others wrote, as well.

Two writers especially lived in central and western New York right through the period, from 1800 to 1840. Both were ministers, who played a significant role in the story.

One of these was the Rev. James H. Hotchkin, who must therefore be treated as the foremost authority, especially about Presbyterianism, and about the revivals which were so common. He shows many characteristics of a careful and accurate historian. Theologically, he was closer to the Old School Calvinists. He had less liking for the theology of Finney, and liked even less the theology and actions of the more extreme evangelists who arose in our period. Hotchkin's book is a basic source.

The other, who wrote much less, but who has deliberately tried to set the story straight, is the Rev. Dr. William Wisner.

The other historian, who took a similar stance to Hotchkin, but who appeared on the scene a little later, was the Rev. Dr. Philemon Fowler, the official historian of the Synod of Central New York for the Presbyterian Church. His book has been relied upon substantially.

Historians and writers of various kinds who have written from a stance other than the stances represented by Hotchkin, Fowler and Wisner, have been extensively used. I have tried to include their insights as often as I could. An example of this is seen in the way some of William Weeks' various concerns have been raised and aired, and his general position described. Some of his

concerns are centrally important to the main purpose of this book. Indeed, attention has been paid to a range of people who were not necessarily in harmony with the New School outlook.

Both Hotchkin and Fowler pay a great deal of attention to the New York revivals. This is an indication of the role and value that these movements played in the history of the period.

Outline of the Book

The Great Awakening in New England is an obvious starting point, emphasising the general features of the movement, as well as those features which relate to the special interest of purity.

For these reasons there is a special chapter on James Davenport, and another on the efforts by Jonathan Edwards to defend the movement.

Upstate New York was steadily opening up for new settlers as the Second Great Awakening began to have an effect in that area. These revivals are outlined, as far as is possible with available information, as well as the main revivals up to 1820.

Special attention is given to the revival of 1820 around the Albany area, in which Asahel Nettleton was involved. This revival clearly affected the issues which were later raised by Weeks, and is the only revival for which we have a description written by Nettleton himself. It also gives us a good introduction to the style of revival work which Nettleton conducted.

Theological issues have to be dealt with. So, the relevant aspects of New England theology have to be set out. We also have to make some attempt to detail aspects of Charles Finney's early theology, which is not always easy, because most of what we know about his theology relates to his more mature thought and writings, which appeared much later in his life. Even his autobiography was written much later, and is not always a good guide to what he believed in his early ministry.

The main conflict between Weeks and Finney arose out of the events of the 1826 Oneida revival, in which Finney was heavily involved. The New Lebanon Convention was a notable event which flowed from this movement.

The chapter entitled “How Can Revivals Be Made to Serve the Devil?” is a summary of several chapters in the “Pilgrim's Progress”, and I believe contains very valuable insights into Weeks's thought, as well as seed for thought about ourselves.

The three chapters which follow that, deal with special matters of concern arising from the issues which Weeks raised, and which many at that time thought were vehicles of great damage to the work of God, and which have been matters of concern for various Christians since then.

Part Five deals with the Great Revival of 1831, perhaps the most important revival in which Finney was involved. At several points in the overall story, an effort is made to see to what degree Finney was actually guilty of doing the things of which he was accused, or whether others did these things. It is also necessary to ask to what degree the accusations against him were misguided and incorrect.

Part Five also deals with the evolution of evangelism in upstate New York up to 1845. It asks to what extent this evangelism was really revival, and in what ways the features in these revivals changed or evolved with the passing of time.

The final section asks whether the term "Burned-Over District", (that is, burned over by false fire), which has come to be applied to upstate New York regarding this period, is a title which is accurate, or is properly deserved to some degree.

It also looks at the reaction to these revivals which came from Charles Finney, and from William B. Sprague.

One of the outstanding results of the whole Old School versus New School controversy was the Schism in the Presbyterian Church in 1837. The controversy involving Finney certainly played a part in this event. The Schism also displays certain psychological aspects, the clash of personalities, and the ability of orthodox Christians to use (church) political power to defend their own cause, whilst behaving towards other Christians in a way which showed a total disregard for the Golden Rule, or for Christ's command of love.

Chapter sixteen concludes with a brief statement as to whether the bad results of "new measures" revivals, which had been predicted by Nettleton and Weeks, actually occurred to a degree ***in the short term,*** before 1845.

Chapter seventeen then asks whether these bad results occurred ***on the longer term***, during the remaining years of the Nineteenth Century, and in the early years of the Twentieth Century. The conclusion drawn is that these bad results did in fact occur to a very marked extent. But it is also concluded that these bad results should not be blamed completely on the "new measures", or on Finney. Many other major factors were involved, as well.

Chapter eighteen tries to present a summary of the whole question of spiritual deceptions. In an important sense, the entire area under discussion in this book is part of the overall question of spiritual deceptions.

In the final chapter, we look at an extreme example of spiritual deception. The early history of Mormonism is looked at, in so far as it arose from the so-called magic world-view, which was widespread at that time, and from the interest in magic, astrology and the occult, which was shared by the Mormon prophet, Joseph Smith Jr, and other members of his family. Mormonism arose in upstate New York during the period of our study.

This deception is now having an impact on a major scale, as demonstrated by the present size, growth rate, and doctrinal status of the Mormon church, and by

the fact that modern Mormons are almost totally ignorant of the real sources of their faith.

On an even wider scenario, as we commence the Twenty-First Century, there is an enormous revival of interest in magic, astrology and the occult, in the wider community. The whole question of the "new age" movement faces the wider mission of the church to the world.

A Comment on Library Resources

I have been deeply interested in the great awakenings and evangelical revivals which have occurred in many places since New Testament times. For more than forty years I have collected books, photocopies, microfilms, microfiches, cassettes, magazines, clippings and articles relating to all aspects of these subjects, regarding revivals which took place anywhere in the world.

During that time, I worked as a Circuit or Parish minister, often in country locations in New South Wales, where research library facilities were even more difficult to access than in cities. For some of these years, the nearest library which was in any way suitable to support this sort of research was at least a hundred miles away from where I lived. So I had to own any book I was interested in, or a photocopy of it, almost regardless of the subject.

Most of the books needed for the research underlying this present volume are old books (some are very old), which would not be available in local, university, state, theological or national libraries in Australia. As a result, it has been necessary for me to purchase everything needed for this task. Almost without exception, copies, in one form or another, of **all** the books used in writing this book are in my private library.

Regarding the collection of materials about revivals in the United States of America, I have been particularly helped by contacts with Dr. J. Edwin Orr, and with Richard Owen Roberts, both of whom I first met in California in 1974, and again at later dates. For over twenty years, I tried, where I could, to gain material through the American second-hand book market, although what I could achieve in this way was limited by my range of contacts. I visited the United States again (for other reasons) in 1983, 1988 and 1992, taking advantage of the opportunity to gather books and photocopies about revivals. These included materials from the Fuller Theological Seminary Library, and from the Billy Graham Center Library, and several other libraries. Microfilms and fiches have been purchased from the Library of Congress, the British Library, and from the American Theological Library Association. Since 1998, access to the internet has enabled me to purchase many other most interesting, relevant and useful books in the second-hand market. In that respect, it has been an expensive time for me in the last few years.

Naturally, I could not access local newspapers, and other similar materials, as I could have done if I lived in central New York. But I am thankful that this difficulty has been overcome to a good degree, by the methods described above.

I am particularly indebted to Mr. Richard A. G. Dupuis, of southern England, for his encouragement, and for correcting many of my mistakes. I am indebted also to Professor Mark Noll of Wheaton College, and Mr. Richard Owen Roberts of Wheaton, who read the manuscript, and made comments and helpful suggestions. A photocopy of one of the key books for this research was provided by the Rev. Dr. Don Goembel, of Orion, Illinois. He has also read the manuscript, and offered helpful comments. Another photocopy of great importance was secured for me by an astronomy friend, Dr. John Dickel, also of Illinois. I am very grateful to all of these friends. The Rev. Roy McKenzie, of Gore, New Zealand, and co-author with me of a previous publication, also showed his customary encouragement and support.

I am indebted also to Mr. Rob. McDonell, proprietor of Arkangles Business and Personal Computer Systems, for his help in the laying-out and printing of the pages of this book, and to Mr. Raymond Ricketts for helping me to prepare the maps.

The Origin of the "Burned - Over District" Name-tag

Various comments made in the books I have perused indicate that the expression originated as a result of some extraordinary and exciting events in a Methodist revival in northern New York state, which produced a severe adverse reaction in many people in the surrounding area. Finney in particular refers to the existence of this adverse reaction. (1.) The Methodist records for the period around 1800, and after, do not refer to anything strange enough to account for such a reaction, although that is not proof that such events did not occur.

Fowler says:- "A special reason for the frequent mention of the orderliness of the revivals here, during the first ten year of the century, and of the Calvinistic type of preaching, was not so much the 1740 extravagancies in New England, or the Kentucky extravagancies and errors in 1800, as the extravagancies of Methodism, then common here, reports of which were likely to give repute abroad to the operations of grace in our own churches. Methodism had not then passed out of its early crudities and excesses, examples of which are noted in the Rev. John Taylor's journal of his missionary tour through this region in 1802. They acted as checks and cautions to Presbyterianism and Congregationalism, and so saved them from the looseness of doctrines and the uncouthness of measures to which a new community is liable, and made our early churches and ministers the best of progenitors." (2.)

In the "Journal of the Rev. John Taylor's Missionary Tour through the Mohawk and Black River Countries in 1802," Taylor reports that many instances had occurred in Methodist meetings which were like the extremes of Kentucky camp meetings in 1801. He gives a few, fairly mild, examples. (3.)

But the meetings to which Finney referred, and which caused the serious reaction of which he speaks, may well have happened after that date.

Lyman Beecher used the expression in letters he wrote around 1827, about the growing revival movement in New York, and Finney used it in his "Memoirs." According to Rosell and Dupuis, it is these uses of the term by Beecher and Finney which have made it fashionable for historians to talk about the "Burned - Over District" in referring to upstate New York in this period. (4.)

In the minds of some people, the term meant that the area had been "burned over with false fire." William Wisner believed that the term was used in that way by some. Whether or not Wisner was correct, it is the conclusion reached in this book that such a use of the term implying that there was a great deal of "false fire" in reference to upstate New York in the 1820's and 1830's is **not justified** by the historical evidence that we now have.

Editorial Issues

(a) Problems occur in the following accounts because, in some cases, names of places are given in our sources without specifying exactly where these places were situated. Around 1800, for example, the Methodist district which included upstate New York also included Canada, and places are mentioned without saying whether these centres are in New York, Pennsylvania or Canada. At this late date it may not always be easy to cast light upon such details. But, generally speaking, it has been my policy to indicate where I could discover that places were OUTSIDE of upstate New York. So, in so far as I could gather, the places mentioned in this book are in New York State, unless the text somehow indicates otherwise.

In other cases, names of places may have been changed by local authorities since the time of the events described here, or since the texts were written. In some instances these changes are mentioned in the text.

(b) Unless stated otherwise, emphases and italics are in the originals. Despite this general principle, in some instances, names of places have been emphasised by me. In a few instances, subheadings have also been added, to make long quotations easier to understand. In many of the quotations in this book, extra paragraphing has been added in order to make the material easier to read and understand. Some of the old documents had very long sections using only one paragraph. Square brackets indicate that I have inserted something into the text

being quoted, whereas round brackets within a quotation show that an inclusion appears in the originals.

Conclusion

It is the author's prayer that this book will stir many Christians to pray, not for the return of the past, but for God to do something new, and even better, in our own day. When God answers that prayer, may we all be wiser, through learning from “what God hath wrought” in days gone by.

CHAPTER ONE

THE FIRST GREAT AWAKENING in NEW ENGLAND

Our study in this book is centred upon the evangelical revival movements in upstate New York, between 1815 and 1840. These revivals are usually seen as an extension of the Second Great Awakening, which progressed in the United States from 1792 to about 1840. The first part of this Second Awakening occurred in many parts of the world from 1792 to about 1805 or 1810. The upstate New York revivals gained their main strength after 1815.

A piece of necessary background information will involve us in a sketch outline of the main features of the First Great Awakening in New England, which occurred around 1740. Chapters One to Three will look into the Awakening of 1740, preparing the background for our studies of the later period. Chapter One will seek to set down an outline of events in that First Awakening.

Overall, the First Great Awakening was a movement of the Holy Spirit, which had effects in many parts of the world. Its roots went back to 1727, to the Great Revival amongst the Moravians, in Germany, and also to the revivals in the 1720s in Pennsylvania (although this had little influence in New England). The time-span of its most active period commenced with the revival in Northampton, Massachusetts, in 1735. It grew with the conversion of George Whitefield, and with the spiritual experiences which transformed the lives of Charles and John Wesley, and the subsequent revivals at Kingswood, at Cambuslang, and many other places.

It reached one of its high points in New England with the Great Revivals in 1741 - 1742, instigated largely by the preaching of George Whitefield, Gilbert Tennent and others. In New England, a sad reaction soon set in, for various reasons, which caused the revival to come to an end as abruptly as it had started. It re-appeared at a later date in many parts of the British Isles, and in Virginia. Overall, it had an enormous impact in many places, especially in the British Isles, and also in the colonies of America, as they prepared to become, in due course, a separate country.

Literature

The reader can pursue the story of the Great Awakening in more detail in several outstanding publications which are readily available. In particular, the histories of the Great Awakening by Joseph Tracy, and by John Gillies, and several relevant works by Jonathan Edwards, have all been reprinted in recent years.

The primary documents which describe the events are Jonathan Edwards' "Narrative" of the Northampton Revival in 1735, and in Thomas Prince Jr's "Christian History," which was published as a periodical in 1743 and 1744, a year or two after the main events in New England had occurred, and as the decline in the revival was taking place. Prince's "History" is not available separately now, but Gillies and Tracy used some of Prince's material. There are many other primary documents which are not so easy to find today, such as narratives, journals, sermons, old biographies and letters. A great many pamphlets appeared, as part of the factional fights of the time.

Several modern historians have published volumes of documents from that period. Richard Owen Roberts has produced a mammoth "Bibliography" about George Whitefield. And there is now an enormous secondary literature of studies about aspects of the revival, and about that general period in American history. The best of these more recent studies, although fairly brief, is Edwin S. Gaustad's "The Great Awakening in New England." Much of the information presented here is from Gaustad's book.

Some of the New England Revivals before 1740

As the generations slowly passed, following the arrival of the Pilgrim Fathers, the numbers and quality of the church members in New England who could tell a proper story about their conversion to Christ declined, and the average age of those who took part in the services of Holy Communion rose steadily. In matters of state, only full church members could vote, or hold public office.

The issue of church membership was a thorny problem for the New England ministers. According to Frank Foster, the historian of New England Theology, the ministers all believed that nobody had the ability to do anything of an active kind to secure their conversion, or to turn to God, unless it was done in them by a sovereign act of God. This doctrine of inability did not provide theoretical problems so much as practical difficulties, in seeking the conversion of their people. The sinner had to wait for God to act upon him.

One attempt to solve the problem was called the "Half-Way Covenant", which allowed people to accept the Holy Communion, and function as church members, if they simply acknowledged the Christian faith, and the doctrines of the Confession, without being able to give a specific account of their conversion experience. The ministers hoped that God might use coming to Communion as the means of conversion, for some of the people, at least. But it also helped to produce people who had no concerns about eternity, apart from a very nominal and superficial acquaintance with God.

Foster said, "Suffice it to say that to the time of Increase Mather there was scarcely a single preacher who seemed to possess the evangelistic instinct and who could wield the evangelistic methods. In Mather's case hard common-

sense and practical tact outweighed theory." (1.)

In this deeply discouraging scene there were sometimes flashes of light and hope. In 1721, the Rev. Eliphalet Adams, of Windham, "had seen a 'remarkable concern... among the people' which resulted in eighty persons being admitted to full church membership within a period of six months. 'The town was full of love, joy, thanksgiving and praise. ...But while this place was so remarkably wet with the dew of heaven, the ground was dry all round it.'" (2.)

One minister who managed to achieve some conversions in his parish was Solomon Stoddard, who was pastor at Northampton, Massachusetts for sixty years, till he died in 1729. He saw five "harvests," or periods of special spiritual concern, between 1680 and 1719, when a large number of persons professed to be converted. That is, they "felt themselves to be now of the 'elect,' recipients of a divine and saving grace."

In East Windsor, where Jonathan Edwards' father was minister, there had been "four or five seasons of the pouring out of the Spirit" since 1694. Nearby Windsor was also affected at times. (3.)

Edwards took over as pastor at Northampton in 1729, following the death of Stoddard, who was also his grandfather. Edwards thought the local people in 1729 were "very insensible of the things of religion." (4.)

> ".....licentiousness for some years greatly prevailed among the youth of the town; they were many of them very much addicted to night walking, and frequenting the tavern, and lewd practices, wherein some of their example exceedingly corrupted others. It was their manner very frequently to get together in conventions of both sexes, for mirth and jollity, which they called frolicks; and they would often spend the greater part of the night in them, without any regard to order in the families they belonged to: and indeed family government did too much fail in the town. It was become very customary with many of our young people to be indecent in their carriage at meeting....." (5.)

Over several years, a slow change began to appear in the young people of Northampton. By 1734, the whole town became concerned that God might withdraw His blessing, because of their irreligion.

> "Following the conversion of a young woman of questionable morality, the tempo of religious activity and interest thereabouts rapidly increased. '...religion was with all sorts the great concern, and the world was a thing only by the by.'" (6.)
>
> "This work of God, as it was carried on, and the number of true saints multiplied, soon made a glorious alteration in the town; so that in the spring and summer following, anno 1735, the town seemed to be full of the presence of God: it never was so full of love, nor so full of joy; and yet so full of distress as it was then. There were remarkable tokens of God's presence in almost every house. It was a time of joy in families on the

account of salvation's being brought unto them; parents rejoicing over their children as new born, and husbands over their wives, and wives over their husbands. ...Our public assemblies were then beautiful; the congregation was alive in God's service, every one earnestly intent on the public worship, every hearer eager to drink in the words of the minister as they came from his mouth; the assembly in general were, from time to time, in tears while the word was preached; some weeping with sorrow and distress, others with joy and love, others with pity and concern for the souls of their neighbours." (7.)

This movement spread, by word of mouth, to neighbouring towns through the countryside. South Hadley, Suffield, Green River, West Springfield, Long Meadow, Enfield.

Edwards called this a "surprising" work, because at that time, revivals were viewed as pure visitations from heaven. Nobody knew how or why they came, or why they disappeared soon after. Nobody knew of any preparations which might be made, but by prayer.

In 1738, Edwards published his "Narrative" of this revival, and also a book of sermons emphasising the doctrine of justification by faith, as this subject had played a key role in the sermons preached during the revival. This book was called "Discourses on Various Important Subjects, Nearly concerning the great Affair of the Soul's Eternal Salvation."

The Rev. William Williams, minister at Hatfield, had been one of the six Hampshire ministers who had signed an attestation in Edwards' "Narrative", confirming the accuracy of his reports about the revival. In 1738, also, Williams published a book of sermons about the way of salvation, entitled "The Duty and Interest of a People among whom Religion has been planted, To Continue Stedfast and Sincere in the Profession and Practice of it. From generation to generation."

Partly due to the influence of these newly published books, in 1739, a very quiet revival moved out from Northampton and Hatfield, up and down the Connecticut River, and for about thirty miles east of the River, but nowhere else. The books caused a ripple through about twenty-four towns. (8.) This very quiet revival, hardly noticeable, was really an extension of the 1735 movement. It has since been viewed as one of the forerunners, or precursors, of the spiritual tornado that was soon to follow.

George Whitefield

George Whitefield was born in Gloucester, England, in 1714. His parents owned a local pub. He went to Oxford University by a method which allowed him to earn his way by serving others. He became intimate with John and Charles Wesley, and belonged to the "Holy Club" for a while. The strict and regimented form of life promoted by the Club produced a crisis in Whitefield's life, because it enforced a style of life, and a certain pursuit of holiness, that did

not suit his personality. After avoiding a nervous collapse, he experienced an evangelical conversion, which occurred before that of either of the Wesleys.

His popularity as a preacher grew very rapidly. In 1738 he was in Georgia involved in the establishment and running of an orphanage for homeless and poor children. He was ordained as a priest of the Church of England in 1739, but began to find opposition to his style of "Methodism" So he commenced preaching in the open air, and a marvellous revival broke out amongst the miners of Kingswood. He arrived back in Georgia later that year, and preached in the open air, as he travelled to New York, raising funds for the orphanage.

Whitefield arrived in Newport, Rhode Island, on Saturday, 14th September, 1740, and wrung from the reluctant local Anglican minister an invitation for him to preach in his church the next morning. He preached and prayed again in the church on Monday and Tuesday, both morning and afternoon.

New England had been prepared for Whitefield's arrival by the revivals of the previous few years, and by the news that the people had received from further south, through ministers who wanted to support his efforts, advertisements of his books, and newspaper reports.

He arrived in Boston on the Thursday evening. He preached in Benjamin Colman's church on Friday afternoon, in the South Church on Saturday morning, and in the afternoon to about 5,000 people on the Common. On the Sunday afternoon, he preached in the Brick church, although the crowd was far too great for the building, so, after that service, he went outside, and preached to over 8,000 in the field.

> "On Monday Whitefield, having addressed about six thousand persons at Webb's meetinghouse that morning, proceeded to Checkley's church in Summer Street in the afternoon. So great and unruly was the crowd awaiting him that by the time Whitefield arrived, what should have been a prayerful congregation was in fact a turbulent mob. When the zealous orator was informed that five persons had killed themselves in ill-advised leaps from the gallery he decided that the Commons might be safer, if less sacred, ground and there led his hearers." (9.)

On Tuesday he preached for Joshua Gee in the Second Church, on Wednesday at Harvard College, and on Thursday for Thomas Foxcroft in the First Church.

Whitefield wrote, "So many persons come to me under convictions, and for advice, that I have scarce time to eat bread. Wonderful things are doing here. The word runs like lightening. Dagon daily falls before the ark...."

After his week in Boston, he preached in Roxbury, Marblehead, Ipswich, Newbury, Hampton and Portsmouth. Wednesday, 1st October, he reached his northernmost point in York, Maine. From there he went to Salem, and then made return visits to each place on the way back to Boston.

Back in Boston, he preached in the Old South Church for Thomas Prince and

Joseph Sewall.

> “Boston and Whitefield continued to revel in each other. Early the following Sunday evening, October 12, Whitefield's farewell sermon reached some thirty thousand eager auditors.
>
> With evident excitement and joy, Thomas Prince wrote that upon Whitefield's departure 'great numbers in this town were so happily concerned about their souls, as we had never seen any thing like it before, except at the time of the general earthquake: and their desires excited to hear their ministers more than ever: so that our assemblies both on Lectures and Sabbaths were surprisingly increased, and now the people wanted to hear us oftener. In consideration of which, a public Lecture was proposed to be set up at Dr. Colman's church, near the midst of town, on every Tuesday evening... the first stated evening Lecture in these parts of the world....'“ (10.)

After he left Boston, he travelled out towards Northampton, preaching at Concord on Monday, Sudbury and Marlborough on Tuesday, Worcester and Leicester on Wednesday, Brookfield and Cold-Spring on Thursday, and Northampton on Friday. From there he went to Springfield, and then to Suffield, Windsor, and Hartford. He preached five times in three days in New Haven, then quickly through Milford, Stratford, Fairfield and Newark. On Wednesday, 29th October, he preached in Stamford, and then passed over the boundary to Rye, in New York state.

Many years later, Henry Stanton left a pen-picture of Whitefield's preaching. Although he was an octogenarian when he wrote his “Random Recollections”, published in 1887, he drew a strong picture from many years before.

> “The echo of Whitefield's fame lingered among my native hills. My grandmother told me of the mellow accents of his voice, now soft as a flute, anon swelling like a bugle; of his dramatic gestures and thrilling appeals, which swayed great audiences as if swept by the wings of the tempest, and how he rode at full gallop from town to town to meet engagements, the skirt of his silk gown streaming behind on the wind.” (11.)

Gaustad reproduces a more famous picture, from Benjamin Franklin.

> “He had a loud and clear voice, and articulated his words so perfectly that he might be heard and understood at a great distance, especially as his auditories observed the most perfect silence..... By hearing him often, I came to distinguish easily between sermons newly composed and those which he had often preached in the course of his travels. His delivery of the latter was so improved by frequent repetition, that every accent, every emphasis, every modulation of the voice, was so perfectly well turned and well placed, that, without being interested in the subject, one could not help being pleased with the discourse.

His writing and printing from time to time, gave great advantage to his enemies. Unguarded expressions, and even erroneous opinions, delivered in preaching, might have been afterwards explained or qualified; but *litera scripta manet*. Critics attacked his writings violently, and with so much appearance of reason, as to diminish the number of his votaries, and prevent their increase. So that, I am satisfied that if he had never written anything, he would have left behind him a much more numerous and important sect; and his reputation, in that case, would have been growing even after his death; because, there being nothing of his writing on which to found a censure and give him a lower character, his proselytes would be left at liberty to attribute to him as great a variety of excellences as their enthusiastic admiration might wish him to have possessed." (12.)

Gilbert Tennent

After Whitefield left New England, criticisms of him, and of the whole spiritual movement that he represented, slowly developed, fuelled (at first) by a small number of the ministers.

On his way south, he met Gilbert Tennent, and urged him to tour through New England, in order to build upon the foundation that Whitefield himself had laid, as he thought the real work had only just begun, and very much still needed to be done. After feeling some reservations, Tennent finally agreed.

Gilbert Tennent was born in County Armagh, Ireland, in 1703, and migrated to America with his father when he was about fourteen years old. His conversion, and development as a Christian, also occurred within a few years of this time. His father was a minister trained at the University of Edinburgh, who founded the famous Log College to train ministers in this new country. This College, which met literally in a log building, was the initial forerunner of Princeton University.

So, Gilbert was the first ministerial candidate to receive a private education in the Middle Colonies.. He "had a good knowledge of the classics, some knowledge of Hebrew, and a creditable understanding of the theological issues of the day. Hardly the rustic and unlettered peasant he is often portrayed to be, Gilbert Tennent was a worthy example of the prevailing Presbyterian concern for an educated ministry." (13.) Sprague says that the honorary degree of Master of Arts was conferred upon Tennent at Yale College in 1725. (14.)

About Gilbert Tennent's preaching ability, Sprague says, "From the commencement of his ministry, his preaching excited great attention; and his popular and commanding powers were acknowledged, even by those who disrelished the doctrines he preached, or thought him chargeable with undue severity." (15.)

Despite the Puritan origins of the Massachusetts settlement, for years it had been very widely believed in the American colonies, that the ministry and

sacraments were not materially disadvantaged if the person who performed the ministrations could not relate a personal evangelical conversion experience. In other words, it did not really matter if the minister was not converted. This was partly due to a similar belief, amongst some Protestants, in many parts of the British Isles, and it had been a part of Roman Catholic belief for centuries, probably for more than a thousand years.

Like all the graduates of the Log College, Gilbert Tennent was strongly committed as a "revival" man, and believed firmly that all ministers ought to have such a testimony to an evangelical experience, or else they were not qualified to minister in the name of Christ.

The Presbyterian minister in Nottingham, New Jersey, had died in September, 1739. Five ministers were being considered for the position. Two were staunch "revivalists". The other three were "subscriptionists", which meant they considered a minister need only subscribe to the Confession, without needing to have a testimony to his conversion experience, to be qualified to act as pastor and preacher. The contest went on for some months to see which kind of minister would fill the vacancy. On March 8th, 1740, Gilbert Tennent had been asked to preach to the congregation at Nottingham, to show why a converted minister ought to be called to the settlement. His sermon was entitled "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry." It became known as "the Nottingham Sermon."

> Coalter said:- "Tennent treated the Nottingham congregation to his most scathing attack on unconverted ministers. As in previous sermons, Tennent declared the ministry of natural men 'uncomfortable' to the Christian soul because their sermons were generally too short, always out of season, necessarily lacking in authority, and inappropriately divided. But for the first time in his career, Tennent made the further charge that such a ministry was 'unprofitable' and 'dangerous' to the laity's souls."
>
> Tennent said:- "The Ministry of natural Men is dangerous, both in respect of the Doctrines and Practice of Piety. The Doctrines of *Original Sin, Justification by Faith alone* and the other Points of *Calvinism* are very cross to the Grain of unrenew'd Nature. And tho' Men, by the Influence of a good Education, and Hopes of Preferment, may have the Edge of their natural *Enmity* against them blunted; yet it's far from being broken or removed: It's only the saving Grace of GOD, that can give us a true Relish for those Nature-humbling Doctrines.
>
> And alas! What poor Guides are natural Ministers to those, who are under spiritual Trouble? They either slight such Distress altogether, and call it *Melancholy* or *Madness*, or daub those that are under it with untemper'd mortar." (16.)

Tennent was more interested in saving souls than in ecclesiastical order, so he was not backward in saying that people ought to leave the ministrations of an

unconverted minister, and seek out someone of more godly character. The impact of this sermon was a main factor in the division in the Presbyterian Church in the Middle Colonies, which took place in 1741. Tennent not only played a leading role in that split, but also in the reunion, which occurred some years later.

In Boston, the winter of 1740 was the worst the region had experienced for thirty years. "Ice covered the entire Boston harbor, and roads into the city became so clogged with snow that mail carriers were forced to abandon their horses and move about on snowshoes." (17.)

Tennent arrived in Boston on 13th December, 1740, and inherited all of Whitefield's enemies, as well as his friends. Tennent preached in most of the places where Whitefield had been, and in some extra places, as well. Sprague said that Tennent spent nearly three months in the Boston area "preaching almost every day with great power, and producing of course a divided public opinion corresponding to that which already existed in respect to the labours of Whitefield. The effect of his preaching in Boston is thus described by the Rev. Mr. Prince, minister of the Old South Church, and the well known author of the Christian History:-

> 'It was both terrible and searching. It was for matter justly terrible, as he, according to the inspired oracles, exhibited the dreadful holiness, justice, law-threatenings, truth, power, and majesty of God, and his anger with rebellious, impenitent and Christless sinners; the awful danger they were in every moment of being struck down to hell, and damned for ever, with the amazing miseries of that place of torment. By his arousing and spiritual preaching, deep and pungent convictions were wrought in the minds of many hundreds of persons in that town; and the same effect was produced in several scores, in the neighbouring congregations. And now was such a time as we never knew. The Rev. Mr. Cooper was wont to say that more came to him in one week in deep concern, than in the whole twenty-four years of his preceding ministry. I can say also the same as to the numbers who repaired to me." (18.)

Gaustad has another quotation from Thomas Prince.

> "Both people and ministers seemed under a divine influence to quicken each other. The people seemed to have a renewed taste for those old pious and experimental writers, Mr. Hooker, Shepard, Gurnal, William Guthrie, Joseph Alein, Isaac Ambrose, Dr. Owen, and others; as well as later - such as Mr. Mead, Flavel, Shaw, Willard, Stoddard, Dr. Increase and Cotton Mather, Mr. Mather of Windsor, Mr. Boston, &c. The evangelical writings of these deceased authors, as well as of others alive, both in England, Scotland and New England, were now read with singular pleasure; some of them reprinted and in great numbers quickly bought and studied. And the more experimental our preaching was, like theirs, the more it was relished." (19.)

> "It appears from a letter which Mr. Tennent addressed to Whitefield.... that a similar effect attended his preaching during his whole tour; and that, not only in the region of Boston, but at New Haven and Milford in Connecticut as well as Long Island, there were multitudes addressing themselves with the utmost anxiety and earnestness to the work of their salvation." (20.)

Opponents had other opinions about it. Coalter reported the negative view of Timothy Cutler, an Anglican missionary in Boston, who said that Tennent was a "'monster' who told all that came to hear him that 'they were damn'd! damn'd! damn'd! This charmed them! and in the most dreadful winter that I ever saw, people wallowed in the snow night and day for the benefit of his beastly brayings." Charles Chauncy thought Tennent's ability in preaching was moderately average, the content of his sermons would turn people off, and the Spirit in which it was uttered was "more bitter and uncharitable than you can easily imagine." (21.)

> "Tennent's own evaluation of his work contained a mixture of pride and humility. In a letter to Whitefield... He... admitted that he had met with success 'much exceeding' his expectations. But Tennent did not assume that his eloquence was the primary cause for his warm reception. When asked by one of his female admirers 'what was there in the matter or manner of his addresses... that produced such a wonderful and irresistible effect,' Tennent replied, 'Madam, I had very little to do with it. I did not preach better than common and perhaps not so well: for I was often much fatigued with travelling, and had little time to collect or arrange my thoughts. But I went into the pulpit and spoke as well as I could, and God taught the people.'"
>
> "Judging from his only published sermon during this period, Tennent was perhaps too modest about the 'matter' of his addresses. In this homily, entitled, *The Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees considered,* the middle colony clergyman exhibited shrewd insight into the religious pretensions of his New England audience, for in it he attacked the two pillars of their spiritual pride, those being their scrupulous observance of the biblical law and their family ties to the great Puritan 'saints' of the seventeenth century." (22.)

Itinerants Galore

Gilbert Tennent had certainly made his tour of New England at the worst time, so far as the weather was concerned. But it also certainly built strongly upon the impact of George Whitefield, and seemed to heighten and deepen the spiritual concern which so many people had felt about their personal relationship with God.

As the spring and summer of 1741 came on, several noticeable developments

occurred. One of them helped to raise the spiritual impact of the Great Awakening to its highest level. The others helped, each in its own way, to undermine the movement, and bring about its demise.

Thus it was after Gilbert Tennent had left for home that the full floodtide of the revival took place.

(a) A number of the regular New England pastors now began to travel around, drawing large crowds of people who were thirsting for God's message, and in some cases saw things just as astonishing as Whitefield or Tennent ever saw. Some of these preachers were hardly known at all, but had great success for a brief period, and now have been forgotten. Others were famous and widely-respected ministers. Nor should it be thought that they were uneducated ranters. Intellectually, Benjamin Colman and Jonathan Edwards had no equals, and both strongly supported the Awakening.

As an example of a minister who was very little known, Gaustad mentions Samuel Buell, who was one year only out of College, was licensed to preach, but was not yet ordained. Not yet having the responsibilities of a pastorate, he began to itinerate around. For example, "In October (1741) he travelled from Fairfield, Connecticut, to Northampton, Massachusetts, preaching in nearly every parish along the way. So successful was his preaching in Northampton, where he spent a 'fortnight or three weeks,' that Edwards was moved to tears because his own ministry seemed by comparison so unprofitable. Edwards advised Prince in December that 'there were very extraordinary effects of Mr. Buell's labours; the people were exceedingly moved, crying out in great numbers in the meeting house, and great part of the congregation commonly staying in the house of God for hours after the public service.'

An anonymous pamphleteer thought Buell unworthy of such honor: 'He is not able to speak two sentences without transgressing the common Rules of Grammar. His Sermons were the most stupid Stuff that ever came from a Man's Mouth.' But Buell nonetheless kept busy dispensing the 'Spiritual morsle,' the several contemporary references to him, favorable or otherwise, indicating the intensity and extent of his activities in the revival." (23.)

The local pastor who seems to have put the most effort into the Awakening was the Rev. Eleazar Wheelock.

> "He travelled extensively, argued boldly, and corresponded frequently in its behalf. Because he was the regularly ordained minister of the North Society of Lebanon and not a 'foreigner or stranger' he was less often denounced than Whitefield, Tennent, and Davenport as an itinerant or 'pretended apostle.' The moderate criticism he received is, however, misleading with reference to the prodigious evangelistic labors he wrought. A popular and persuasive preacher, he itinerated widely during the Awakening, keeping a Journal that reads much like Whitefield's."

"Even in the first months of 1741 Wheelock had been energetically preaching in many places outside his own parish. In the fall of that year he began a tour which carried him eastward into Rhode Island and then into Massachusetts. He found the expectant interest still high, though it was now a year since Whitefield's visit. Although he was occasionally aware that 'Satan is using many artful wiles to put a stop to the work of God,' more often the great power of God was 'much seen and many hopefully converted.'" (24.)

The most adequate description of Wheelock's work as an evangelistic pastor, and as an itinerant preacher, is given in his "Memoirs," edited by M'Clure and Parish.

"Soon after his settlement it pleased God to favor New England generally, and many places in the middle and southern colonies, with wonderful effusions of the holy spirit. This great work seemed first to commence in Northampton under the pastoral care of the Rev. Jonathan Edwards. Mr. Wheelock's congregation partook largely of that divine visitation, to the great joy of their pastor. From experience of grace in his own heart, and his knowledge of its effects on others, he became an excellent casuist and skilful guide of souls. The duties of the pulpit were, to him, delightful. That remarkable revival of religion through the land about the year 1740, and succeeding years, animated him to the performance of great and astonishing labors in the gospel. He preached almost daily, either at home or in his travels, to numerous, attentive, solemn audiences. In those assemblies, while some opposed the surprising work, others were crying out in terror, under alarming views of divine wrath; while some earnestly supplicated mercy; others expressed by the serenity of their countenances the ardor of their love, their inward peace, and joy in the God of their salvation. He was wise and skilful in his addresses to each class of hearers, and gave to every one a word in due season. Distant towns called for his assistance, and in compliance with their requests he often left his people and itinerated through the country, preaching wherever invited. The word dispensed by him was mighty to awaken and convince the ignorant and secure, to conduct enquiring souls to Christ, to detect the erroneous, and to establish believers in their holy faith. Many pious and zealous ministers united with him in carrying on that great work, and God abundantly blessed their labors. He was warmly attached to the celebrated Rev. Mr. Whitefield; and was fired with a kindred zeal for God and the salvation of men.

Mr. Wheelock's house, while he was there, was the daily resort of persons under solemn religious impressions, to whom he dispensed the word of life. In his public and private instructions they hung on his lips with ardent attention. Mr. Wheelock was a favored instrument in the hands of God of gathering many souls to Christ, who are now his joy and crown.

> Towards the close of this uncommon work, some enthusiastic and unlearned teachers and exhorters arose, who, led many astray and set up societies, denominated *Separatists*. Mr. Wheelock, with other able leaders in the work of God, opposed this wild torrent of delusion, which threatened the peace and edification of the churches. They were successful in reclaiming many, who had deserted their duty. The good effects of his wisdom appeared conspicuous among his own people, who universally discountenanced the pretensions and errors of the *Separatists*, and continued united in great peace and love." (25.)

No doubt there were many other preachers who did a wise and sterling job in those wonderful months of revival. Gaustad mentions a list of other itinerants who saw spectacular things happen, but who did unwise things which caused offence, of various sorts. These were Benjamin Pomeroy of Hebron, John Owen, minister of Groton, Timothy Allen of New London, Nathanael Rogers of Ipswich, and William Shurtleff of Portsmouth.

Despite his claim that other preachers did so much better than he, Jonathan Edwards did some travelling and preaching. His sermon at Enfield, on 8th July, 1741, entitled "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," became perhaps the most famous sermon ever preached in New England, because of the impact that it had upon the congregation, as part of the revival. Tradition has it that Edwards was short-sighted, and had to hold his manuscript up close to his face as he read it. The people held onto the furniture and structures of the church for fear that they were, that moment, sliding into hell. Iain Murray says that this tradition came from Timothy Dwight. Murray marshals evidence that Edwards was not tied so rigidly to his manuscript as that. In later life he often did not use a manuscript. (26.)

The subject matter of this sermon also creates a false impression as to what Edwards normally preached about. He preached on the love of God more often, and his subjects ranged widely.

Whether or not Edwards read his manuscript, Whitefield, Tennent, and some of the others, were talented extemporaneous preachers. Over a period of time, preaching without any manuscript became more common, and has now become a natural and normal part of preaching in the modern evangelical world. In due time, men like Charles G. Finney preached logical, powerful sermons, without the help of any notes at all.

(b) One of the factors which helped to undermine the effects of the revival came from George Whitefield himself. He wrote and published his Journal, section by section, as one of his means of raising money for the orphanage. We have already noted the comment by Benjamin Franklin that things Whitefield wrote gave much ammunition to his enemies. This certainly occurred in 1741,

when the part of his Journal which covered this tour of New England was published.

During the actual time of his tour, he seemed to get on very well with Boston. He seemed happy enough with most of the ministers he met. Nearly all of them supported his efforts. Although naturally, some were more wholehearted about it than others.

However, on the day he left New England, he set down his reflections on his time there. He thought that most of the ministers "do not experimentally know Christ." Their habit of preaching from a manuscript was a sad sign of the decay of religion, and that the ministers had "in a great Measure, lost the old Spirit of Preaching."

> "As for the Universities, I believe it may be said, their Light is become Darkness, Darkness that may be felt, and is complained of by the most godly Ministers... The Church of England is at a low Ebb, and, as far as I can find, had people kept their Primitive Purity, it would scarce have got Footing in New-England.... In short, I like New-England exceeding well; and when a Spirit of Reformation revives, it certainly will prevail more than in any other place, because they are simple in their Worship, less corrupt in their Principles, and consequently easier to be brought over to the Form of sound Words, into which so many of their pious Ancestors were delivered." (27.)

This instalment of the "Journal" was published the next year, 1741, and anti-Whitefield feeling exploded in many quarters. For example, the New England ministers did not like being told that hardly any of them had an experimental knowledge of Christ. And the Colleges did not like being told that their light had become darkness. Even the clerical friends of Whitefield had, in a tactful way, tried to rebuke him for what he had written. Steadily, the number of New England ministers who would no longer welcome Whitefield continued to rise.

Regarding the long-term response to Gilbert Tennent, Gaustad says:-

> "For some months following his departure, there had circulated in New England rumors about and perhaps a few copies of Tennent's infamous sermon 'On the Dangers of an Unconverted Ministry.' When in 1742 that sermon was reprinted in Boston, its title and Tennent's name became synonymous. On the whole, the harangue is not as poisonous and scathing as the number and heat of the references to it would indicate; yet its disruptive tendencies and unsoftened language furnished much ammunition for Tennent's enemies." (28.)

When Whitefield returned to New England on subsequent occasions, the reception he received was very different indeed from the one he got the first time he came.

(c) James Davenport came into the district as an itinerant preacher during the height of the revival, emphasising this same particular point about unconverted

ministers, accusing ministers right, left and centre, of all kinds of short-comings, and urging their congregations to leave them.

Because of the importance of Davenport's work for the matter we are studying in this book, an entire chapter is reserved for looking at his work. To that we must now turn.

Concluding Summary

In this brief outline, we have seen some of the details of the spiritual preparations which went on before the revival began.

Two itinerants raised the temperature of spiritual concern, the English Anglican clergyman, George Whitefield, and the Irish Presbyterian minister Gilbert Tennent. Local ministers carried the flame through the peak period of the revival. During this peak time, several ministers acted unwisely in various ways, the chief of whom was James Davenport, as we shall see.

The Great Awakening was really the spiritual source from which arose all the efforts by the next generations of New England ministers, wherein they tried to manage local revivals more wisely than their predecessors had done in the 1740 revival. They tried to avoid all the unsatisfactory side-effects, and disastrous consequences of over-wrought enthusiasm, and unwise methods and messages, which had occurred in the earlier movement.

Also, the First Awakening was the new source of spiritual dynamic in the churches, and thus provided the foundation upon which home missionary interest was based. When the revivals of the Second Awakening spread near and far, missionary concern burst forth with renewed energy to carry the Gospel into the new frontier areas of the United States, such as Upstate New York, and the areas further west. For that reason, it is one of the key factors in understanding the struggle to manage revivals wisely, and to learn from the ups and downs, the successes and failures of that quest.

In the end, the New England phase of the Great Awakening finished just as abruptly as it had started, and with bitterness and anguish in many places.

CHAPTER TWO

JAMES DAVENPORT and the GREAT AWAKENING

James Davenport was born in 1710, in Stamford, Connecticut. He came from a great clerical family tree, his grandfather being the first settled minister in New Haven. His father was also a prominent clergyman in Connecticut. He graduated from Yale College in 1732, and continued living in New Haven for several years while seeking to recover from a serious illness. "His letters at this period show that he was the subject of great spiritual conflicts, and was intent upon making high attainments in religion. Some of them show also, that he was far from having any sympathy with that extravagant spirit, - of which he afterwards gave so humiliating an example." (1.)

At that stage of his life he seems to have displayed an attitude which made many people think he was a very saintly person. In fact, he was widely believed to be the most saintly man those concerned had ever met. After he was licensed to preach, in the spring of 1738 he received a call to be pastor of the congregation at Southold, Long Island. He was ordained on 26th October of that year. His settlement in this parish commenced just about the time when the first signs of the "Great Awakening" were beginning to appear in various parts of the country.

Some Features of His Work

(a) Judgmentalism

"It was the custom of those who deplored the prevailing religious indifference, to draw the line with great distinction between the converted and unconverted, and to express to individuals personally the judgment they had formed of their spiritual condition. Davenport, who seems to have been of an excitable temperament, and to have hailed the earliest signs of the new state of things with intense interest, practised the severest scrutiny in regard to the religious character of the members of his church. He went so far as to pronounce upon them almost with the confidence of Omniscience, - calling those, of whom he formed a favourable judgment, *brethren*, and the rest, *neighbours*, - at the same time, by a strange inconsistency, having as little intercourse with the latter class as possible." (2.) Soon after, he excluded the "neighbours" from the Holy Communion, which created much excitement, distress and exasperation.

(b) (Subconsciously) Hoping to be Someone Great

Davenport had a special friend in the Rev. Jonathan Barber, ministering at Oyster Ponds, who seemed to have an even less stable attitude toward some of his religious practises than Davenport had. "It seems, that when the reports concerning Whitefield's labors and success first reached Long Island, both Davenport and Barber, of Oyster Ponds, 'received him as an angel of God,' and were confident that a glorious revival of religion was about to pervade the land.

They betook themselves to special prayer, that God would hasten the work, teach them what he was about to do, and make them eminent instruments in promoting it. From their subsequent career, it appears neither unreasonable nor uncharitable to suppose that their prayers were inspired, in part by a sincere zeal for God and for the salvation of souls, and in part by pleasing visions of their own future greatness, as 'eminent instruments of its promotion;' though of this last element of their feelings, they probably were not aware." (3.)

(c) Mistaken Use of the Scriptures as a Result of Impulses and Mental Impressions

> "After some time, the words in Habakkuk 2:3, - 'For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and shall not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry,' were strongly impressed on Barber's mind; which he took as a divine intimation that their expectations should be fulfilled. He informed Davenport of the impression, on whom it had a similar effect.
>
> Soon after - it must have been about the beginning of March, 1740, - Barber sat up all, or nearly all, of Saturday night, meditating on these things; and at family worship the next morning, as he was reading Psalm 102, the 13th verse was impressed upon his mind. The words are, 'Thou shalt arise and have mercy upon Zion; for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.' This he took as an intimation from heaven that the great revival which he had been expecting, should immediately commence, and as an order to begin his labours without delay. He fainted; but recovered so as to attend public worship at the usual hour." (4.)

He spent a week visiting and exhorting his people, and telling them about the vision, and how he had fainted at it. He then left Oyster Ponds. He took no money, or change of clothes, and declared he did not prepare anything to preach upon, as he believed he would be guided directly by the Spirit in what to say, wherever he should go.

Davenport assembled his people to hear Barber preach, in his unprepared style. Barber then went on to Oldmans, and declared his message there. Strangely, the impulsive guidances left him at that point, and, although his parishioners pleaded with him to return home, he stayed in idleness at Oldmans

for several months, growing fat and ragged, until Whitefield came through the district, and took him back to Georgia, to superintend some of the orphanage work. (5.)

(d) Unwise Conduct of Meetings, and More Impressions

It was at this point that Davenport began his extraordinary preaching ministry. One of the early meetings amongst the Southold people lasted for twenty-four hours, and the beginnings of later disorders appeared in the meeting. (6.) It is not so much the length of the meeting which became the issue, as the manner in which it was conducted (or, not conducted), what was allowed to happen without sufficient careful control, and who was allowed to take part. The bitter and critical spirit of some of the happenings would also have been a problem.

Someone proposed that he should go outside the boundaries of his own parish to spread his message. He prayed about it. After some time, his mind was strongly impressed by reading the story of Jonathan and his armour-bearer, and the way the Lord gave them the victory over the Philistines. But he could not go anywhere (at that stage) until he was asked, as that would correspond to Jonathan and his armour-bearer being called up by the Philistines before the victory. At length. some of the Easthampton people asked him to come and preach. "He went, with his friend [the Rev. Benjamin Pomeroy] up to their knees in snow, as Jonathan and his armour-bearer climbed up the hill to the Philistines, on their hands and knees." (7.) The result was - twenty professed conversions, as they had expected.

(e) Unethical Behaviour Towards Other Ministers

Davenport and Pomeroy visited a number of places over the next months, seeing a modest number of conversions in some places, but hardly any converts in other places. In many of the places "he condemned the ministers as unconverted, and exhorted their people to leave them. Among those whom he condemned, was the venerable Eliphalet Adams, of Windham, Connecticut, whose faithful labours had been a principal means of preserving the flame of piety in that region from extinction," during a very dull and difficult period, from a spiritual standpoint, "and under whom there had been a happy revival in 1721, the period of deepest darkness in New England." (8.)

At Windham, Davenport's "influence in producing alienations and divisions is said to have been peculiarly unhappy, though no particulars are given; and the report of the injustice done to a man so extensively known and revered, and of the injury done to his people, produced a deep sensation throughout the country." (9.)

> "On the 25th of August [1741], he called upon Mr. Hart, of Saybrook, and asked if he was willing that he should preach in his pulpit. Mr. Hart,

before answering, asked him if it was his practice, as reported, publicly to condemn ministers as unconverted. He replied that it was. Mr. Hart asked, on what evidence he condemned them. Instead of answering that question, he stated the object for which he did it, - which was, for the purification of the churches, and the discovery of the unconverted, that they might be avoided."

He declared that he encouraged all truly converted people to meet separately from the church, and listen to itinerant preachers, instead of the local minister. (10.) After vain attempts at conciliation, Hart refused Davenport the use of the pulpit.

The next day, four ministers tried to discuss the whole matter with Davenport. But they found conversation impossible. "He commenced a vehement discourse to them, and would not be interrupted; lecturing them as unconverted men, blind guides, wolves in sheep's clothing, and the like; then offering a prayer, partly for their conversion and partly against them; and then left them, to attend a meeting which he had appointed, refusing to decide whether he would grant them an interview at any future time."

He continued his journey to New Haven, "calling on ministers by the way, demanding of each an account of his religious experience, and condemning all who refused to give it, or whose accounts were unsatisfactory, or who in any way opposed his movements, as unconverted." (11.)

(f) How Did Davenport's Enthusiasm Seriously Damage the Revival?

Apart from the basic Scriptural question of whether or not he was committing sin by what he did, or the question of whether such behaviour was grieving to the Holy Spirit of God, there are other major reasons why Davenport's activities seriously damaged the revival.

Answer: He Created a Diversion

This is, that by raising questions about whether or not the minister is converted, he succeeded in drawing away the attention of people from the question as to whether they, themselves, were converted.

Davenport's challenge to the local ministers provided a major diversion. The real excitement in a revival arises from people turning to God, and posing the question to others that they, also, need to be right with God. By accusing the minister of being unconverted, Davenport provided a big issue for gossip, criticism, grief, hurt, complaint, innuendo, and all sorts of speculation and argument, which took the minds of the people away from asking whether they were, themselves, right with God. This effectively stopped the revival in many places.

Answer: He Forced People to Take Sides Over a Misguided Issue

Another major problem for the revival which was caused by Davenport's behaviour has been described as follows:-

> "Conscientious agitators, like Davenport, have strange ways of making all men take sides. Sometimes they assert, that a certain pastor is on their side; and he must contradict the assertion, or his whole flock will be carried over by this unauthorised use of his influence. Sometimes all who will not actively cooperate, are denounced as enemies, and are obliged either to come over publicly and avow themselves friends, or be regarded and treated as enemies. When such tactics are used, the force of the agitating party is commonly brought to bear on one man at a time; and it may be good policy for those who do not wish to be conquered, to take their stand early and unitedly in defence of the truth and of their right against the aggressors." (12.)

It was for this reason that, the following year, the Congregational ministers of Boston issued a Declaration, in which they all closed their pulpits to Davenport, and gave the reason. In this way they avoided being conquered by Davenport, one at a time.

If a preacher had to stand against Davenport alone, he would have been criticised and abused in such a way as to be seriously damaged by it all, and his church disrupted. Fear of such a result would make him submit to what Davenport wanted. Davenport could then use his name as a weapon to browbeat others into the same submission.

(g) David Brainerd

One of the sad little events which occurred in New Haven, as a result of Davenport's visit, concerned one of the students at Yale College named David Brainerd. It illustrates how an enthusiastic young person can so easily be affected by influences like this, and also the difficulty some older people have in reacting wisely to it.

> "In the winter of 1742, a woman told President Clap, that a Freshman told her, that he heard Brainerd say of somebody, 'He has no more grace than this chair;' and he guessed that Brainerd was speaking of some of the Faculty. The words had been uttered in the Hall, where Brainerd and two or three others of his religious circle were conversing, and the listener was in an adjoining room. Clap sent for the Freshman, ascertained who were conversing with Brainerd, called them, and extorted from them the fact, that the words were used in reply to a question, 'What do you think of tutor Whittelsey?' Mr. Whittelsey was a man whose piety there was no good reason to question. Brainerd deserved to be privately reprimanded, and made to confess his fault before those who heard him commit it. But he was required to make a public confession. Disgusted with the harshness of the

sentence, and with the meanness of thus ferreting out a private conversation, he refused, was expelled from College, and, though powerful influence was used in his favour, never permitted to rejoin his class." (13.)

Brainerd later became, for a few years, a missionary to the nearby Indians, seeing an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in that work, and dying at a very young age. At the time of his death he was engaged to be married to Jerusha Edwards, a daughter of Sarah and Jonathan Edwards. Edwards later published an edited version of Brainerd's Journal, which has become one of the spiritual classics of all time. Despite the wonderful way in which God honoured young Brainerd, in answering his many prayers for the conversion of the beloved Indians, Edwards thought that Brainerd had been less careful of his own life and health than duty demanded, and that his enthusiasm had hastened him to an early grave.

(i)In Trouble with the Law, and Twice Declared to be Insane

Congregationalism in New England at that time was an established religion, and the combined wishes of the clergy could be enforced by the magistrates. In this way, Davenport was eventually deported back in the direction of Long Island. One of the reasons given for doing this was because he had left his pastorate without the permission of the people he was supposed to serve, had left them without pastoral care for a long period of time without apparent concern for them, and had invaded the pastorates of other ministers against their express wishes.

Also, on two occasions, Davenport was legally declared to be insane. This was not necessarily because he was actually mad, but was perhaps a more charitable way for the Court to deal with an ordained minister who was acting in a most peculiar way, and who would take no notice of any advice.

(j) Prophesies Which Did Not Come True

One of the other issues which might be seen as reflecting badly upon anyone who pretends to have guidance which is coming directly from heaven is that alleged prophetic statements, or statements which are uttered in such a way as to look like a prediction about the future, should always come true, if the inspiration is in fact coming from heaven. If these kinds of statements do not come true, this should stand against the reliability and truthfulness of whatever else these people might say.

There is no doubt that Davenport made many statements of this kind, as he toured through New England, telling everybody what they should do and believe, and telling them all what was going to happen, and what great things he was going to achieve.

One example of this kind, in relation to Davenport, occurred before he left Southold.

"A woman in an adjoining parish had been long insane, and for some

time dumb. Davenport fasted and prayed for her recovery, and gave out that she would recover on a certain day that he named. On that day, she died. He claimed the event as an answer to his prayer, as she was relieved from her infirmity by being taken to heaven." (14.)

This rationalisation has also been used in the healing ministry of the church in the Twentieth Century, to explain why a certain prayer has not been answered as we expected. But, in Davenport's case, it is a clear instance of a prophesy which was proved to be wrong by subsequent events, and which must therefore be accepted as evidence that other things said by him may similarly not be reliable

Another simple example occurred at Saybrook in 1741. Davenport "had given out, before his arrival, that he had a great work to do in Saybrook; but the event seems to have fallen short of his expectation." (15.)

The Boston Association

Through the latter part of 1741, he visited other areas, such as Philadelphia, and came back to Southold for the winter. The next summer, he went to Boston, where he appeared before the Boston Association.

> He "gave them an account of his experience, which, on the whole, led them to believe that he was 'truly pious,' while yet they felt constrained to issue a public testimony disapproving his course. But he availed himself of the first opportunity publicly to denounce them, representing some of them as unconverted, and the rest as Jehoshaphats in Ahab's army, and exhorted the people to separate from them without delay. In consequence of his erratic proceedings, he was seized by the Sheriff, and, on refusing to give bail, was committed for trial. The Sheriff offered him his liberty till the day of the trial came, on condition that he would promise good behaviour; but he refused, and was accordingly kept in close quarters. When the trial came on, the ministers made intercession in his behalf, and the verdict was, that while he actually uttered nearly all the defamatory expressions that were charged upon him, he was at the time *non compos mentis*, and therefore *not guilty*." (16.)

He visited a number of places around Boston in the few months after this.

The Council at Southold

In October, 1742, a Council of ministers met at Southold, to look into the irregularities in James Davenport's behaviour. Their conclusion was published, and made quite a lengthy document.

(a) Firstly, they admitted that a blessed revival had been in progress, to the glory of God, and that Davenport had played a role in it.

(b) But they complained that he had barred various members of the congregation from the Holy Communion, and suspended one of his deacons,

without any other reason against them than his own private apprehension of their spiritual condition, and this was too arbitrary and uncharitable.

(c) His congregation had just cause for complaint, because he had left them several times for long periods, without caring for the pastoral obligations he had towards them.

(d) He made no preparations for his public preaching and praying. Furthermore, he allowed various people in the congregation to pray, sing and exhort, all at the same time, which was clearly contrary to the instructions of Saint Paul, where he said that everything should be done decently and in order.

(e) "We likewise think that his method of censuring and condemning those ministers of the Gospel, whose conduct and conversation is unexceptionable, is that censorious judging, so frequently and in such plain and strong terms condemned in the word of God."

(f) His encouraging people to meet separately, as a consequence of this censuring, "is such a rending of the mystical body of Christ, and such a promoting of schism and uncharitableness, contention and confusion, as is utterly unwarranted."

(g) They did not approve of his practice of singing loudly, as he walked down the street, thinking that it was displaying too much ostentation. In other words, Davenport was 'showing off.' What he did was too much like the Pharisees doing their praying in public. There was also no example in the Scriptures which indicated that this practice ought to be followed.

(h) They also highly disapproved of Davenport's habit of making impressions upon his mind into the rule of his conduct, in many cases. He would publicly declare that in this way he was directly inspired by the Spirit of God. The Council did not believe that he had any credentials to justify this claim to such a high degree of inspiration. Further, it would lead people away from depending upon the Scriptures as the only safe and sure rule of our faith and practice.

(i) Davenport had forbidden other regular ministers to preach in Southold, in his absence, contrary to what the congregation had chosen. This was against all the charity and brotherly love that he ought to show. Instead, he had allowed unqualified and immature people to preach and exhort.

(j) The Council was very pleased that the congregation at Southold still wanted Davenport to be their minister. They hoped the people would continue to exercise forbearance, and they hoped that Davenport would stop all of these peculiar actions and practices. (17.)

The Burning of the Books

It is not clear how Davenport reacted immediately to this action by the Council, but, as time passed, it became obvious that it had not produced the effect that the ministers wanted.

After spending the winter beginning 1743 in Southold –

"In the beginning of March, 1743, he went to New London, by request of a company of his partisans, to organise them as a church. Immediately upon his arrival, in obedience to messages which he said had been communicated to him from God, in various ways, he began to purify the company from evils which prevailed among them. To cure them of their idolatrous love of worldly things, he ordered wigs, cloaks and breeches, hoods, gowns, rings, jewels and necklaces, to be brought together into his room, and laid in a heap, that they might, by his solemn decree, be committed to the flames. To this heap he added the pair of plush breeches which he wore into the place, and which he seems to have put off, on being confined to his bed by the increased violence of a complicated disease.

He next gave out a catalogue of religious books, which must be brought together and burned, as unsafe in the hands of the people. On the afternoon of the 6th of March, - the requisite preparations having all been made, his followers carried a quantity of books to the wharf and burned them, singing around the pile, 'Hallelujah' and 'Glory to God,' and declaring that, as the smoke of these books ascended up in their presence, so the smoke of the torment of such of their authors as died in the same belief, was now ascending in Hell. Among the authors were Berridge, Flavel, Doctors Increase Mather, Colman and Sewall, and even Jonathan Parsons of Lyme. The next day, more books were burned, but one of the party persuaded the others to save the clothes." (18.)

This was the last recorded outbreak of Davenport's fanaticism.

Two Letters

For some time after this, Davenport was out of action, because of his illness. But it was in this time of illness that he finally came to his senses.

Apparently, during this time of illness, Davenport questioned his situation sufficiently to ask for advice from two ministers whose opinions he respected, and who treated him lovingly as a brother in the Christian Ministry. These two ministers were Solomon Williams and Eleazar Wheelock, who were pastors of the two churches in Lebanon. Davenport wrote to these two men, and they replied to his queries. It must be understood, however, that the replies presupposed the laws of New England, and the standing orders of the Congregational churches at that time, and the system of ministerial ordination, etc., which was involved in that system. They believed these to have Scriptural justification, and to be based upon certain Biblical passages.

The letter to Solomon Williams asked his opinion about two matters. These were:-

(a) Davenport's public censuring of ministers as unconverted, and

(b) Promoting Separations from their Ministry under that fear or apprehension of them, being based upon certain principles.

These principles were (Davenport believed) **(1)** **"**That it is unlawful for an unconverted Man to undertake the Work of the Ministry: Whence it must follow that if a Man be found in an unconverted State in the Work of the Ministry, it must be unlawful for him to go on, and unlawful for his People to attend his Ministry; and therefore they ought to be warned of their Danger in it, and he ought to be born Witness against."

(2) **"**That at that Time you had a very great and extraordinary Concern upon your Heart about the Danger of an unconverted Ministry, and for the welfare of precious and immortal Souls - and from thence was willing to conclude that God had prepared and fitted you for this Work, and while you was doing this, you was confirmed in it by some extraordinary Appearances of Success."

Williams's reply was dated 29th June, 1744. Williams agreed with Davenport's first point, that it was unlawful for an unconverted person to undertake the work of the ministry. But he said that Davenport's conclusions from this principle did not follow at all.

All ordinary ministers of the Gospel become so "according to the known and standing Laws of Christ's visible kingdom found in his Word, and can be made no other way." The basis of a minister's Commission, therefore, is found in the ordinances of Christ, and not in human decisions or feelings.

A visible church chooses a person to be their minister whom "in the best judgment they can make they esteemed qualified according to the Gospel Rule" to be their minister.

So, a local church, and the district Presbytery, using the best judgment they have, conclude that a prospective minister is converted, and is otherwise suitably qualified for the work. The Presbytery has the right to ordain such a person, and the Church can call him to his work of ministry.

When that happens, that person is a lawful minister of Christ, and has authority from Christ to perform all parts of the ministerial work. It then becomes a sin for any individual Christian. or other minister, to attack that minister's authority, or to belittle or obstruct his work.

If, after due care and process, the Presbytery or Church made a mistake, and the minister was not really converted when everyone thought he was, he is still a lawful minister, although he will probably not be a good or faithful minister. (Biblical examples were produced.)

If such a person is considered to have no authority when he is (later) thought to be unconverted, then he did not have it when he was (earlier) thought to be converted. Those whom he baptised in his earlier years were not in fact baptised, although everyone thought they were at the time.

If this system prevailed, nobody in the world could ever be sure that they had been legitimately baptised, or had partaken of Christ at a Sacrament, because the minister who administered the baptism or Communion might later prove to have been unconverted when everyone thought he was converted.

A minister's Commission does not depend upon how he feels, or upon what other individuals think of him, or whether other individual ministers (like Davenport) thought he was converted, or not.

The minister's Commission depends upon him believing he has a call from Christ, and also upon the Church or Presbytery "in the best judgment they can make they esteemed qualified according to the Gospel Rule" calling him to be their minister. Scriptural support for this view was produced.

He can only cease to be a minister if these two steps become reversed.- if he comes to believe that he is not called by Christ, and the Church or Presbytery also comes to that decision, after due care and process, and based upon publicly available evidence (not on private opinions, fears or doubts, about his converted state).

These are the Scriptural procedures, Williams explained, and nobody, not even Davenport, has the right to do otherwise. If someone's personal opinion in the matter was allowed to rule, then the Scriptures would be rendered unnecessary, and anarchy would reign.

The only possible exception is if a person has direct, Divine inspiration in the matter, and that would have to be proved by the appearance of miracles, such as appeared in Christ's own ministry. John's Gospel, chapter 15, verse 24, was used to support this view.

The Real Value of Davenport's Basic Motive Examined

Williams reasoned that Davenport might have had "a great and extraordinary Concern upon your Heart about the Dangers of an unconverted Ministry, from whence you concluded that God had prepared and fitted you for that Work, and your being confirmed further in doing this by some extraordinary Appearance of Success:

I think it need only to be observed, that the greatest Concern for and most ardent Love of the greatest and best End that ever was aim'd at, or ever can be pursued - viz - *the Glory of God,* never can warrant any Man to do any Action beside or contrary to the Word of God, and the Directions thereof." Romans, chapter 3, verses 5 to 8, are quoted by Williams in support of this view.

> "Now it is plain, that the Apostle not only rejects with Abhorrence any Principle which warrants a Man to transgress the Law and Word of Christ, or pretends to justify his acting for the best End, the Glory of God, in any way beside or contrary to the Word of God, but he also peremptorily pronounces them worthy of Damnation who say that they, as the Apostles of Christ, taught or allowed any such Doctrine.

Now I think it is plain from what has been said before, that you had no Direction or Warrant for such a Conduct in the Word of God, and I am sure that the greatest Concern about the Danger, or the greatest Love of the Salvation of precious Souls, which are less, and subordinate Ends, could not warrant that which the best and highest End could not warrant. Such a Concern and Love was to quicken and excite your greatest Zeal to do what God's Word directs you to, to attain those Ends, but it can never prove that you have Right, in Pursuance of those Ends, to do what you don't find your plain Warrant for in the Word of God."

Is Success a Sufficient Justification for a Bad Course of Action?

Williams then raises the point which would be brought against Charles Finney, and the New School Presbyterians, many times in later years.

"Neither can Success prove any such Thing. We are tied to the Word and Institutions of God. [God may] bless and over-rule a Man's Labours to Good, and use him as an Instrument of great Good to many, and Glory to his Name, when yet in many Things the Man acts wrong in endeavouring to do that Good, as well as over-rule the wicked Actions of wicked Men, to do much Good to his Church, and to glorify his Name." Biblical examples are discussed.

God even used wicked people to achieve His ends, at times. But this does not make the wicked people good, or their actions right.

If Davenport really thought that his success implied that the means he used were correct and true, does this mean that God is limited to using only those means to glorify His Name which are wholly right and correct?

Williams argued that, even if there were a small number of cases where Davenport's denunciations of a minister had brought about either the conversion of the minister, or the blessing of his people, (which was not certain), "yet there are many more certain and known Instances to the contrary. It is beyond Contradiction that this Practice has done much to hinder the Work of God. It has a Tendency to prejudice Men's Minds against it, and it has done so in great Numbers. It tends to harden Men's Hearts, and set them into fierce and angry Debates, to stifle Peoples Convictions, and take off their Concern from the great and necessary Things of Religion, to lead off their Thoughts from Christ, and the Gospel, to a Dependence on Men, and idolizing of them, to dispose them to place much Zeal and much of the Exercise of their Religion in Things doubtful and uncertain, instead of placing it in, and exercising it about those Things which are plain, certain and absolutely necessary; and this appears to be the Fruit of it, and a Fact absolutely manifest in this Land."

Williams's Conclusion

An unconverted ministry is "without Controversy one of the greatest

Calamities that can befall a Church." But it is wrong for private persons to use their private fears and concerns to attack lawfully ordained ministers in the hope of creating a remedy. We should instead pray, fervently and unceasingly, that the Lord of the harvest would convert all his ministers, and thrust forth faithful labourers into his harvest.

After all, Christ loves His Church far more than we do, and shed His own blood for it.

> "Thus my dear Brother, instead of many Things which might have been said, I have given you in haste, a few of my Thoughts on the Subject you desired. I have done it in hearty Love to you, and I think also to our *good and divine Master, the blessed Jesus*, and to his *poor but dear Church*. If I am mistaken in my Thoughts, pray God would make me see Truth. If I am right, and you receive the least advantage by it, bless God alone, but still pray for your poor brother, Solomon Williams."

Eleazar Wheelock's Letter

Davenport asked Wheelock for advice about the issue of encouraging private persons, perhaps newly converted, inexperienced or unqualified, to exhort and preach to congregations of people.

Wheelock's reply was dated 10th June, 1744.

This reply also was based upon the laws in operation in Connecticut at that time, and which were embodied in the standing orders of the Congregational Churches, which these men believed were solidly supported by the teachings of the Scriptures.

Wheelock said that nobody was entitled to preach or exhort to a congregation unless he actually had a calling by Christ to preach. "Without this Commission they have no right to be received, entertained, heard or obey'd, as the Ambassadors of Jesus Christ, and the rejecting of them is no Sin."

This Commission consisted of two parts. The first was the inward sense of call. The second part was the public recognition of the inner calling by a Church and a Presbytery.

The only exception was in the case of a person who was directly inspired by Christ to preach, but this had to be attested by miracles, as had happened in Christ's own ministry.

Wheelock, however, was very careful to avoid any sign of hindering real Christian fellowship, where people could share together their thoughts and their Christian experiences. He affirmed a clear distinction between this kind of fellowship, which was very helpful, and preaching and exhorting, where a person was holding forth in the name of Christ, and was not expecting to be interrupted. (19.)

Davenport's "Retractions"

Between June and August, 1744, Davenport wrote his “Retractions”, and had them published. He also sent the two letters, from Williams and Wheelock, to Thomas Prince, to be published, with an accompanying note to say that it was these letters which were largely responsible for his repentance, and his retracting from his previous beliefs and actions.

In these “Retractions,” he offered a wide-sweeping apology for his misbehaviour, and some details of the mistakes he had been making. As his health slowly improved, he began to make what amends he could, trying to undo some of the damage that he had caused. But, very largely, it was much too late.

After making reference to the recent great revival of the Lord's work, his confession included two lists. The first list included some general aspects of his confession. The second provided special emphasis on certain matters of concern. Here is a summary of the first list.

(a) Davenport confessed that he had been very industrious in promoting many things which were not a real part of God's work, but which had been inspired by the false spirit, and by his own misguided zeal.

(b) What he had done had caused great blemishes on the work of God.

(c) He had grievously hurt many of God's children, and ensnared and corrupted others.

(d) He had caused many people to question whether the revival was really a work of God, and led some to decide that it was not a work of God. In this way, many people would have been turned away from accepting the Gospel, and thus become hardened in their sins.

(e) He had given the enemies of the Gospel grounds to criticise the right ways of God.

(f) His actions were “withal very offensive to that God, before whom I would lie in the dust, prostrate in deep humility and repentance on this account, imploring pardon for the Mediator's sake, and thankfully accepting the tokens thereof.”

In the second list, **special emphasis** was placed upon the following points:-

(a) In condemning ministers as unconverted, he had made his own private judgment into the ground of public action and conduct, offending against the ninth commandment (which concerns bearing false witness against a neighbour), and the laws of justice and charity. It helped to destroy their ability to influence people for good.

(b) The laws of justice and charity had also been broken because he advised and urged people to separate from those ministers, who had already been

wrongly treated, as above. This was "rash, unwarrantable, and of sad and awful tendency and consequence." He asked forgiveness of all the ministers he had treated like this.

(c) "I have been much led astray by following impulses or impressions, as a rule of conduct, with or without a text of scripture... I am persuaded this was a great means of corrupting my experiences, and carrying me off from the word of God, and a great handle which the false spirit has made use of with respect to a number, and me especially."

(d) He also caused much damage to religion by urging private and unqualified persons to perform as ministers, and to exhort with an assumed authority. In other words, he had encouraged people with little or no Christian maturity to act like spiritual dictators, and to tell others what to do and believe. In many instances, this had produced spiritual pride, people "much puffed up, and falling into the snare of the devil." This had, in turn, led others to have a direct prejudice against the real work of God.

(e) He had not been careful to remove any prejudice which might have arisen through the practice of singing in the streets, or in assemblies.

(f) His sins were greater because he had held onto all these errors for a long time, "with great stiffness", being unwilling to examine or question any of them, even though many people, by friendly counsels and cautions, urged him to do so.

(g) During "the awful affair of books and clothes" at New London, he was "under the powerful influence of the false spirit almost one whole day together, and parts of several days." He had paid too much attention to outward things, and not to the heart.

The "Retractions" closed, with expressions of deep humility, praying that he would be saved from any further such mistakes, and that God would undo the damage he had caused, and deliver people from any prejudices that they might have acquired as a result of what he did. (20.)

The Overall Impact of Davenport's Zeal Without Wisdom

From a human point of view, the misguided zeal, and lack of wisdom, shown by James Davenport were clearly important factors in bringing the New England phase of the Great Awakening to an end, and in a good degree of acrimony. He caused much hurt, anguish, disillusionment, and spiritual damage of many kinds in the lives of a great many individuals. He mentioned himself, that it also greatly dishonoured God. Not only that, but much of the damage

could have been avoided, if Davenport and his friends had exercised a better degree of wisdom. This was not an unreasonable expectation for a young minister with his training and pedigree.

It would, clearly, be an over-estimation to say that Davenport provided the main cause of the premature end of this spiritual movement, but it was certainly a major factor. Several other factors were involved, although some of these might be considered not so important.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, George Whitefield himself had done some things in this same unwise direction, but probably not enough to cause too much trouble. Whitefield was so famous, and created such an impact on this visit to New England, and the other northern colonies, that he quite naturally had many zealous and immature young Christians to imitate him.

Gilbert Tennent had also created a glaring example of criticising other members of the clergy for being unconverted, if they did not share his enthusiasm.

The rise of Unitarianism amongst the Congregational churches of New England was due to a wide range of causes. Disorders during the Great Awakening was only one of them.

The division in the churches between Old Side and New Side, or Old Light and New Light, had many deeper theological roots, although the Great Awakening certainly emphasised some of them. It prompted a revival in stricter Calvinism.

People under deep conviction of sin sometimes collapsed, or shouted and screamed, and displayed many psychological factors that were unusual, and attracted many criticisms. Davenport's disorderly management of meetings, and his excitability, added his share to the problem. Despite the bad flavour of these criticisms, and fear of the unusual, the writings of Jonathan Edwards about the revival happenings provided a strong, rational explanation, and corrective, about many of the features of this kind in the Great Awakening.

Again, we are speaking merely from a human point of view, and without enough knowledge of the inscrutable ways of God. After allowing for the various possible causes, Davenport and his friends must be seen as bearing a substantial part of the responsibility for the decline of interest in spiritual matters, and in the degree of acrimony that was a feature of the latter period of the Awakening. With better wisdom, even better results might have been achieved, and the problems might have been partly avoided.

Final Days

He resigned from the pastorate at Southold, and for several years preached in Plainfield, Conn., and in different parts of Virginia, New York, and New Jersey, possibly as an informal supply, or as steps toward being inducted into another pastorate. Eventually, on 22nd October, 1754, he was installed as pastor of the

New Side Church at Hopewell and Maidenhead. The Rev. William Tennent preached the sermon on that occasion.

He was Moderator of the Synod of New York in 1754. His letters to a friend, at that time, bemoaned the depth of spiritual apathy which was then apparent on every hand, so opposite to the days of the Great Revival.

William Weeks reports a death-bed confession by Davenport, and a self-evaluation of his life's work. Davenport is alleged to have said, “My evidences of going to heaven are clear as the sun; but I believe the church of Christ would have been better off, if I had never been born.” (21.)

He died on the 10th November, 1757, aged forty-seven years. His wife, Mrs Parnell Davenport, died on 21st August, 1789, aged sixty years. They were survived by their two children. They were both interred in a small burying ground about a mile west of Pennington, New Jersey. (22.)

CHAPTER THREE

EDWARDS DEFINES AND DEFENDS THE AWAKENING

At the time of this first Awakening in New England, there were many friends who tried hard to define what parts of the movement were actually a work of God, what parts were not necessarily a work of God, and to defend the real work of God from attack.

Defence was needed at two points. There were increasing numbers of critics, of one kind or another, who stood outside the movement, and who criticised it in various ways from their own points of view. There were also numbers of people like Davenport, who were definitely inside the movement, but who brought disgrace upon it, or who spoiled it in one way or another.

These friends who did the defending at the time the events were in process no doubt did the best they could, and made a good contribution. But, the many things they did can now only be traced in part, because their efforts did not all end up in print, in a form that is available to us at the present time.

The clearest and most definitive statements, which had a long-standing impact upon our understanding of the nature of revival, for over a century, are found in the writings of Jonathan Edwards. These writings are still of fundamental importance.

In this chapter, we will consider at what stage of the proceedings these various writings appeared, and the main message that they carried. We are also interested in the notice that was taken of these writings many years later, during the different stages of the Second Great Awakening.

Part One: The "Distinguishing Marks" of a Work of the Spirit of God

We have noted already that Edwards published an account of the 1735 revival in Northampton, and in the surrounding towns, which we now call "A Narrative of Surprising Conversions." It appeared late in 1737, being somewhat later in publication than might have been expected because two English divines attached a Preface to it (Isaac Watts and John Guyse), and this would have taken some months to organise.

This was followed, in 1738, by his little book of sermons on the way of salvation.

The "Distinguishing Marks" was the first publication which was more directly involved in the defining and defending of the Awakening. This was originally a sermon, or discourse, although it spreads out eventually into 110 book pages.

He began with the text from 1 John 4:1, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." On this basis, using his wide knowledge of the Scriptures, he sought to set out the basic marks of the work of the true spirit.

In many instances, Edwards used a complicated grammatical structure, indulging often in double negatives, and even in triple negatives, at times. Some of his sentences are not easy to de-code. So we will attempt to make his points simpler, in this summary.

Negative indicators

Beginning with the **negative** signs, he lists the following:-

(1) If the work is very unusual, even extraordinary, even showing great variety, and even if all the activities fit within the limits set by the teaching of the Scriptures, none of these qualities provide any proof that the work is really from God.

(2) If the work produces tears, trembling, groans, loud outcries, agonies of body, failing strength, **none of these are true signs** that what is happening is the work of the Spirit of God. Subsequent history might lead us to add many other such things to this list. These might include falling on the floor, much laughter, periods of abundant joy, speaking in tongues, jerking, barking, etc. Any, or all, of these things might happen in a God-given work, but none of them are proof that the work comes from God. The work might be purely human, even demonic, and show these signs.

(3) The work might make such an impact on people that there is a great deal of noise about religion, and a great deal of attention paid to religion. But that is not proof that the work comes from the Spirit of God.

(4) The work might make such an impression on the minds of people that their imaginations become greatly stirred. This can result in flights of fancy, heavenly feelings, ecstatic experiences, visions, dreams, people imagining that they have messages from God as a result of impressions on their minds. These experiences may be rare or widespread, weak or strong, but they do not constitute any proof that the work is from the Spirit of God. Some of these experiences may indeed come from God, but the above qualities do not prove that they came from God. They might have come from other sources.

(5) If people use the power of setting an example, or the power of suggestion, these do not prove anything, that the work came from God, or that it did not.

(6) The next points are turned around by Edwards. Many people said that a great many imperfections occurred in the Awakening, and therefore it was not a work of God. But Edwards argued against this. He said that people involved in a spiritual movement may be very unwise in what they do or say, or they may be very irregular in their behaviour. People may break orderly habits and patterns. In other words, the people involved in a spiritual movement may be very imperfect. But this does not prove anything as to whether or not the work has come from God.

(7) The people involved in a spiritual movement may suffer from delusions and hallucinations, and may commit many errors of good judgment. But these sad things prove nothing as to whether or not the spiritual movement has come from God. It simply proves that people can be strange and very imperfect, and that they can make a lot of mistakes.

(8) Some people who have become subjects of the spiritual movement may, in due time, fall into gross errors, may come to believe heresies, or they may, in due time, indulge in scandalous behaviour. They may fall away from God altogether. But, no matter what the sad long-term results may be in the lives of people who were once part of a spiritual movement, these sad results do not prove anything about whether or not the spiritual movement originally came from God. All these sad things may happen in the end, although the movement did, originally, come from God.

(9) Many people objected to preachers talking about guilt, hell-fire and damnation, complaining that they were frightening people into becoming Christians. Edwards argued that, even if this was true, it did not prove anything, one way or another, as to whether the spiritual movement came from God.

The movement may still have come from God, or it might not have.

Positive Signs

Edwards then listed several **positive things**, which, he believed **provided evidence** that a spiritual movement had come from God.

(1) Edwards said that a true work of the Spirit of God will cause people to have **a greater esteem for Jesus Christ**. The Gospels teach that it is the work of the Holy Spirit to teach us about Christ, to lead us to rely upon Christ's atoning death on the cross as the means whereby we are made right with God, and to form the personal qualities of a Christ-like character in us (the fruit of the Spirit). If this is what was happening, as the result of spiritual experiences, then that provided some evidence that it was a work of the Spirit of God.

(2) The interests of Satan's Kingdom lie in encouraging and establishing sin, in individual lives, and in the world. If a spiritual movement operates against the interests of Satan's Kingdom, then that provides some evidence that the movement comes from God. In other words, these first two points show that growth in personal holiness of life, according to the standard of the New Testament, is an evidence that God is at work.

(3) If the spiritual movement promotes greater regard for the truth of the Holy Scriptures, and for the divine inspiration of the Scriptures, then that is evidence that the movement has come from God. We need to remember that Edwards was not promoting any one particular theory about how this inspiration might have occurred. But he was supporting thirst for God, and His Word, and respect for the divine inspiration of the Scriptures.

(4) Another evidence that a spiritual movement is coming from God is that people are being led to the light of truth, remembering the words of Christ, who said, "I am the Truth."

(5) A spiritual movement that is truly coming from God will excite love to God and man, making the attributes of God, as they were manifested in Christ, "delightful objects of contemplation."

We must remember that this publication appeared before Davenport, and others like him, had really appeared on the New England scene. The lists show that Edwards was not so concerned about behaviour which might disrupt the order of church worship, or life, but he was very concerned about dishonest and sinful behaviour. He was willing to be more patient with immature or unwise things, than with whatever was clearly against the clear teaching of the Gospels.

Part Two: "The Religious Affections"

Over the next few years, some of these themes were developed in two publications. These were, firstly, the account that he published of the Northampton revival in 1741 and 1742 (which appeared in print in 1742), and, secondly, the edited version of the Journal of David Brainerd (which appeared in 1749, although Brainerd had died two years before). These contained some reflections on the more serious immature and unwise doings of Davenport, and the serious reaction that had set in throughout New England after 1743.

So, all of this time his mind was steadily working over these issues. In due course, these workings of his mind produced a much more substantial book,

dealing with the whole subject, and which has been a landmark in our understanding of revivals ever since. "A Treatise concerning Religious Affections" was published in 1746.

Definition

Edwards defines "affections of the mind" in this way.

"The affections are no other than the more vigorous and sensible exercises of the inclination and will of the soul."

He says that the soul has two parts, the understanding, and the affections. The **understanding** is that faculty of the mind which enables us to perceive, to speculate about, to discern, and to make judgments about things. The **affections** is the faculty which makes us inclined to, or to choose, or to love, one view of a subject rather than another. Edwards says that the Bible calls this "the heart"

One of his great defining comments is that "True religion consists largely in holy affections."

Thus, Edwards is opposed to the view that true religion is a cold, rational thing alone. It will have its rational element, but it consists more truly in being inclined to, choosing, and loving God.

In the search for signs which give good evidence of real Christian experience, Edwards follows the same basic pattern here that he had used in the "Distinguishing Marks." He gives a NEGATIVE list, of signs which do **not** fulfil the role. These factors may appear in a person's Christian experience, but they do NOT provide conclusive evidence that the person's religious affections have come from God.

Negative Signs

(1) It may well happen that a person's religious affections may be raised very high. But this is not conclusive evidence that it is real Christian experience.

(2) It may be that a person's religious affections may have great effects upon their body. But this does not provide conclusive evidence that it is real Christian experience.

(3) These new, or apparently Christian, religious affections may have the effect of making these people very fluent in talking about their experiences, or about God, and make them very fervent in doing this, and make them talk a great deal about religion. But this does not provide conclusive evidence that their religious affections are truly Christian, and come from the Spirit of God.

(4) It may be that people did not invent the religious affections, dream it up, or manufacture the experiences themselves, but that they came upon them from

outside of themselves, and from factors beyond their control. But this does not prove that the affections came from God. There are other possible sources.

(5) These religious affections or feelings may come into a person's mind with remarkable power, and even be backed up by apparently appropriate verses from the Bible. But this does not provide conclusive evidence that the affections have come from God.

(6) These religious affections may even create an appearance of LOVE in the person. While this may be very desirable, it does not provide conclusive evidence that the person's religious affections are truly Christian.

(7) A person's religious affections may blossom in a variety of forms, and may exhibit themselves in many ways. But this still does not provide conclusive evidence that the religious affections are truly Christian, and are from God.

(8) People may even be deeply convicted of their sins, or become greatly alarmed at their bad spiritual standing before God. They may, for some reason, then feel great relief and joy, and may appear and feel certain that God has forgiven them. But this does not provide conclusive evidence that they have actually had an experience of salvation through Jesus Christ.

(9) Their religious affections may make them spend a great deal of time in practising their religion. They may become very zealous in spreading it, and in the external duties of worship. While all these things may be very good, and eminently desirable, yet none of these things provide conclusive evidence that their religious affections have come from God, or are truly Christian in character.

(10) Their religious affections may even make them inclined to offer much praise to God, and to glorify God. While this is also greatly to be desired, it does not provide conclusive evidence that their affections have come from the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

(11) Their religious affections may make these people very confident indeed that they have become truly objects of the grace of God. While this is good, if it truly comes from God, yet the appearance of this quality, this great degree of confidence that they are objects of God's grace, does not provide conclusive evidence that what they believe is actually true.

(12) Finally, even if all of these religious affections were to create a

great impact upon other people, this does not provide conclusive evidence that it has all come from God.

Undoubtedly, many of the factors listed above are desirable, and would well appear in a person's religious experience, if the Spirit of God was leading and teaching that person. But such things might also appear in other people who are simply swept along in a movement, but who do not have a real experience of Christ. As a general thing, it is important to be able to differentiate, in theory. And in any particular case, the person concerned needs to have a way to analyse his or her own experience, in order to know whether he or she is Christ's, or not. It is not necessarily a way to judge someone else, into whose heart and mind we cannot see, but it is very important that we should have a way of judging for and about ourselves

Positive Signs

A List of POSITIVE statements then provide what Edwards sees as proper evidence that a person **actually does belong to Christ**.

(1) The first point sets out the basic aim. Affections that are truly gracious and spiritual (from the Christian's point of view) arise from influences on us which come from the Holy Spirit. Obviously, nothing else is going to qualify.

(2) It is affection for God, and for divine things, which have a particular motive, which is important here. We have an affection for God because of the beauty and excellence of Himself, and because of the excellence of divine things. We do not have such an affection for self-interest, or for any self-oriented motive. This creates a radically different feature about the entire framework of our spiritual experiences.

(3) It is also affection for God, and for divine things, because of their MORAL excellence. Love for God, and for heavenly things, should be pursued because it is absolutely the right thing to do, and not because of any feeling or impulse which might have prompted us.

(4) These affections arise because we have been enlightened to understand the value of these divine things. In other words, it will be based upon something that we have learned; something that has entered our understanding. It is an intelligent and rational thing, and not simply an emotional thing.

(5) These thoughts about God have not simply been a matter of theory which can be taken or left because they have not made any impact upon us. The value of these things has been impressed upon us in such a way as to **carry**

conviction, and to prompt a SUITABLE ACTION. It will not be a belief which makes no difference to our habits of life, and behaviour.

(6) That which is truly from God is attended in us with **evangelical humiliation**. That is, we will appreciate painfully our own total inability to satisfy God by our own efforts. We will appreciate painfully the odiousness before God of our sinfulness. And the entire attitude of personality will reflect these realities, as a result. Humility is the recognition that God is so much the basis of our existence, and that without Him we are nothing.

(7) A thoroughgoing change of our personalities, and of our whole attitude to life, will take place. Edwards called it a "change of nature."

(8) This will beget within us "the Temper of Jesus."

(9) This will soften the heart, and will be followed by a Christian tenderness of spirit. We will begin to have a conscience that is tender toward God, and which responds to the love that we now have to obey God in all matters.

(10) The features of Christian character have a beauty, and a balanced symmetry, and due proportion, about them.

(11) The more a person loves God, the more he or she will want to increase in this love. When anyone rests content with the degree of love for God already existing, this is a sign that the affection is false.

(12) A holy life, in all its dimensions, is the chief sign of true Christian experience, coming from the Spirit of God. This is true whether we are seeking to judge ourselves to see whether we are true children of God or not, or whether we are making our witness to the world.

Theological Comments

In a later chapter of this book, more attention will be paid to some of the theological ideas which coloured these various opinions.

(a) At this stage, we should note that Edwards, and all of his followers, believed that a person became a Christian when the Holy Spirit performed a sovereign act of creation in that person's mind and soul. Before that creative act, the person might have been deeply convicted about his need of God, but he could not do anything to save himself, or to establish spiritual life within himself, or to be reconciled to God.

It was by an instantaneous creative and sovereign act that the Holy Spirit

made a person into a Christian, creating in that person a whole new attitude and relationship with God.. While many preparatory things might have occurred, these bore no essential link with this creative work of the Spirit of God.

A person might wonder whether the Holy Spirit had done this inner work, or look around for evidences of it, in order to arrive at some assurance that he or she was a member of the elect children of God. So, a person could discover that he was a child of God, as a result of recognising some results which flowed from the Spirit's creative and sovereign act, but he could not do anything to bring about this creative act.

So, this looking for signs, or for evidences, of the work of the Holy Spirit within one's own life,
was a very important part of learning to understand the nature of Christian experience.

(b) The other side of this coin is also true. If a person has been the subject of the "New Creation," then it is inevitable that a complete range of changes will follow, as surely as full daylight follows dawn and sunrise.

This is the point which Edwards relies upon as the one real evidence that a person is really the subject of the workings of the Holy Spirit. The signs of new life will be full-orbed, balanced and beautiful, and covering every area of life. The fruit of the Spirit will appear like a lovely garden in that person's experience. The person himself will be able to recognise this, and people will see the results. The cultivation of this garden of the fruits of the Spirit, and of growth in Christian holiness, is henceforth to be the governing motive in the Christian's character development. A new Christ-likeness of character is another way of describing what this change will be like. Such results are inevitable, if the person has been truly a subject of God's sovereign saving grace.

Any other part of experience, which Edwards listed among the negative signs, may, or may not, be present, and therefore does not constitute definitive evidence. These negative signs can also be present in the experience of a person who has no true experience of Jesus Christ.

(c) Similarly, it was always vitally important that these changes in a person, which were signs of the Spirit's work, should always be linked with the work of the Spirit, as their source. So, it was important that the changes were not produced mainly, or only, by excitement, psychological factors, human pressure, crowd psychology, sympathy or suggestion, or any other more superficial cause, despite the fact that some of these factors might have been strongly present.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING in UPSTATE NEW YORK 1799-1805

In order to set the context properly for what is to be said later in this chapter about the Second Great Awakening in upstate New York, brief comments need to be made first about those revivals as they appeared in New England. The early stages of this Great Awakening occurred in Connecticut.

Part One: The Scene in Connecticut

The two decades after the American War of Independence were largely spiritually barren in New England, with a very small number of local sporadic revivals to give a glimmer of a better hope. Whereas in Virginia, this same period was the time of the first Great Awakening in that part. In New England, a few revivals had occurred, but the general spiritual landscape was cold and desolate. Some churches went for many years without taking any young people into membership, upon profession of faith.

As an example of this, the Rev. Jeremiah Hallock described the days in the last two decades of the Eighteenth Century at the start of his account of a revival which took place in 1798 to 1799 in his parish.

> "Through the course of twelve tedious years before this memorable period [1798], the religion of Jesus gradually declined among us. The doctrines of Christ grew more and more unpopular; family prayers, and all the duties of the gospel were less regarded; ungodliness prevailed, and particularly modern infidelity had made and was making alarming progress among us. Indeed, it seemed to an eye of sense, that the Sabbath would be lost, and every appearance of religion vanish, yea, that our Zion must die, without an helper, and that infidels would laugh at her dying groans." (1.)

Charles Keller provides a summary of the "forerunner" revivals to the main part of the Awakening.

> "In spite of popular disapproval and the Old Divinity attitude, revivals did not disappear completely from Connecticut after the Great Awakening. The Reverend Ammi Robbins wrote of a revival in his Norfolk church in 1767, the Reverend Israel Day of another in Killingly in 1776, the Rev. Thomas Brockway of a third in Lebanon in 1781. In 1783 several towns in Litchfield County were 'awakened,' while the next year New Britain experienced a 'fruitful' revival. 'Precious harvests' were gathered in East Haddam and Lyme in 1792, in New Hartford and Farmington three years

later, and in Milford in 1796. The Rev. Edward Dorr Griffin later wrote that the modern revival period dated from 1792, but these scattered 'appearances of the Holy Spirit' were only the forerunners of the awakening which began in 1797 and became widespread in 1798." (2.)

There were a few other revivals before 1797 which Keller does not mention. Cyrus Yale describes what happened when the newly ordained Rev. Moses Hallock commenced his pastorate at Plainfield, Connecticut. "At the very commencement of his labours in 1790 - the church having been formed of fourteen members, August 31st, 1786 - God poured out his Spirit, and the record is, 'In consequence of this glorious work, seventeen joined the church in one day.'" (3.) Dr. J. Edwin Orr mentions this revival, quoting from Halliday, but includes the mistake that Moses had been a soldier in the Revolutionary War. (4.) Yale points out that it was the older brother, Jeremiah, who fought in the war, even though he was under-aged. (5.)

The Concert of Prayer

The period up to 1792 had been difficult in England, as well. The response there had been that the church leaders called for a "concert of prayer" for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Men like Andrew Fuller spent much time and energy trying to promote this prayer effort amongst a wide range of Christians. This was taken up broadly by the various British denominations, and it was not long before the Lord answered their many prayers with some years of great and widespread blessings, and considerable numbers of conversions. Generally speaking, the blessings continued as long as the concert of prayer was maintained.

Dr. Orr has given us a panoramic summary of the answers to these prayers during the early 1790's, firstly in England, then in Scotland, Wales and Ireland, followed by awakenings in Scandinavian countries. (6.)

In the Eastern American states, "The growing concern for prayer soon reached its climax. In 1794, following the British example, Isaac Backus and Stephen Gano, outstanding Baptists, and a score of other New England ministers, issued a circular letter inviting pastors and churches to engage in a Concert of Prayer for spiritual awakening. Addressed to ministers and churches of every Christian denomination in all the United States, it suggested devoting the first Tuesday in January 1795 and once a quarter thereafter to public prayer until the Almighty deigned to answer their pleas for a general awakening.

Response was immediate, general, cordial, and earnest. The Presbyterian Synods of New York and New Jersey soon recommended the call to all of their churches. Throughout the country, the Methodist Episcopal Church dedicated its time to prayer and fasting. Likewise, Congregational and Baptist associations joined in the intercession, and the Moravian and Reformed communities cooperated.

It was not until the Concert of Prayer in 1795 that the general awakening became noteworthy. It waxed strongest in communities most removed in influence or distance from Harvard and its Unitarianism." (7.)

Perhaps significantly, Nathanael Emmons was pastor in Franklin, Mass., and his congregation was not touched by this Second Awakening.

The Nature of These Revivals

When one reads some of the many accounts which exist of the revivals in Connecticut and surrounds, which occurred at this time, it can easily be seen that these revivals were in many ways unlike the organised evangelistic campaigns which became so popular later in the Nineteenth Century, with their "anxious seat" appeals, and organised enquiry rooms. Also, particular counselling techniques came to be used by some evangelists, such as D. L. Moody. Some evangelists, like Billy Sunday, were noted for not having much of a counselling technique at all, which did not help the prevention of mistaken claims to conversion. Eventually, these counselling techniques became more fully developed by the Billy Graham Organisation.

In the 1800 revivals in New England, the contents of both preaching and counselling were very theologically aware. Ministers were very careful to avoid undesirable results.

In these revivals, instances of conversion often showed characteristics which demonstrated the sovereignty of the Spirit of God in the way people were convicted of sin, and led to conversion in due course. In some instances, this seemed to happen without any dependence upon the particular kinds of methods and means which the ministers were using.

Arminian descriptions of revival happenings naturally tend to stress the events which are more directly related to the human efforts put forth in seeking to secure revival blessings. No doubt some of the happenings in the Connecticut revivals would have fitted into that picture, too. But it is a salutary lesson for Christian workers, as well as one of the great hopes for the future of the church, for us to note conversion events in which God acts in His own time and way. This emphasises for us that His work is not necessarily dependent upon the methods we use. God's work is not to be confused with what we do. God may use our efforts, as a means to His ends, but the human and the divine must never be confused, or become identified with one another too closely in our minds.

The number of people who joined particular churches as a result of the Connecticut revivals was often less than one hundred. In many other cases, the numbers joining these churches were greater. Some converts also joined other denominations. The great impact of the Awakening arose in two ways. In the first place it occurred suddenly. New life characterised churches, instead of a kind of creeping deadness which had been common beforehand. The other

aspect of this impact arose because there were a great number of revivals which occurred all over the place. They returned, also, from time to time, for several decades.

Williston Walker, historian of American Congregationalism, said: "But the revivals were far more than the result of any special pattern of doctrine or method of Christian work; they were a general and profound influence, quickening and uplifting the religious life of the nation as a whole, and their effect on Congregationalism was almost that of a new birth." (8.)

In 1799, Edward D. Griffin provided what has become a memorable quotation, that he could stand on his doorstep in Litchfield County, look across the countryside, and in his mind's eye could number fifty or sixty congregations "laid down in one field of divine wonders", where people were then experiencing the outpourings of the Holy Spirit.

Revivals in Many of the Colleges

Edwin Orr has provided a summary of revivals in many of the collegiate institutions of that time.

Earlier, there had been a revival, in 1787, in the Hampden Sydney College, where John Blair Smith was in charge. There, "Blair Smith had determined to use all means to prevent physical manifestations of feeling from expressing themselves among the students. There was a marked lack of dubious emotion in every subsequent movement on campus. Freedom from abnormal excitement became a marked characteristic of the college awakenings."

At the turn of the century, the colleges were affected, to a degree, when revivals occurred in the local communities, and new Christian societies were formed at Harvard, Bowdoin, Brown, Dartmouth, Middlebury, Williams and Andover, mainly for prayer and fellowship. Generally speaking, however, the student bodies in the American colleges were hotbeds of rationalistic, deistic and infidel attitudes, which often broke out into persecution against any student who was bold enough to declare himself a Christian. Anti-Christian blasphemies and satires became more common, and filthy language clubs grew.

The first step toward the reformation came in 1797, when Timothy Dwight, President of Yale College, preached two sermons to the undergraduate students which he entitled "The Nature and Danger of Infidel Philosophy." Dwight believed that infidel philosophy which had come to the fore in the French Revolution, and had become so popular in the United States, had a long history, and always showed certain characteristics. For example, it always had a cynical and negative attitude, and it was always based upon a foundation which had never provided satisfactory moral standards or theories of value. Therefore it was never able to restrain vice or promote virtue. As a result, in every form in which infidel philosophy had appeared, down through the centuries, it tended to destroy the foundations of society, and was not able to make a positive

contribution which could heal human ills. Students should, therefore "embrace Christianity."

Dwight continued to develop this stance, and it proved to be a turning point. The first college revival occurred at Yale in 1802, when 75 students were converted. Revivals occurred in many other colleges, and recurred periodically. After all, the student body changed every few years, with converts graduating and leaving, and many unconverted students enrolling. "Amherst, Dartmouth, Princeton, Williams and Yale, to name a few, reported the conversion to God of a third to a half of their total student bodies, which in those days usually numbered between a hundred and two hundred and fifty." Many of these converts became preachers. (9.)

A Letter from Connecticut

William Woodward published the following letter, written by an unknown minister in Connecticut, dated August 8, 1799, and passed on to Woodward by the Rev. Dr. Ashbel Green, of Philadelphia.

> "The revival of religion through this country is extensive. I could name to you a great number of towns in the counties of Hartford and Litchfield, some in the counties of New-Haven, New-London and Windham in Connecticut; and some in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Vermont, that have been distinguished by the gracious presence and smiles of our Redeemer. But at present, although I have the names of them before me, I think it unnecessary to write them, as you are not acquainted with their situation. This heavenly work has extended from Hartford 180 miles in a north direction, and produced the most happy effects in every town contained in those limits.
>
> In some places it has prevailed chiefly among children from about 16 years old and under; in others among the mature and the aged. In a number of towns the most sensible, opulent and influential characters, have been turned to the love of God, and delightfully constrained to exert their talents of every kind in promoting his religion. In some instances avowed, virulent and industrious infidels have been made the trophies of victorious grace, have publicly confessed the atrocity of their past opposition to Jesus, their present love for him, and their resolution to glory in his cross and to advance his cause. In some places this work is at present stationary, in others declining; and in others progressing.
>
> I shall only add (what is a pleasing, perhaps a peculiar fact in the history of great revivals) that in no town, nor in any instance that I have heard of, has the glory of this work been sullied by enthusiasm, either in private conversation or in public devotion. This I cannot but consider as particularly designed by God to shut the mouths of infidels, who, in the present day, are

so lamentably numerous, and so eagerly catch at every thing that can render ridiculous our Lord or his disciples. May the God of grace exert his saving power on every minister of the gospel, and on every soul in our empire." (10.)

Documentary descriptions of some of these revivals in New England were widely published.

Part Two: The Revivals in Upstate New York

Presbyterian and Congregational Revivals in Central New York, 1799

Central New York was at that time very much described as "new settlements", and "frontier." Nevertheless the 1800 revival reached into those areas in a remarkable way. There were very few settled ministers in the area. A number of missionaries were sent into this area, as well as into Vermont, because of the impact of the revival upon the "home" churches, which resulted in a very much raised interest in both "home missions" and "overseas missions."

The missionaries sent by the New England Congregational Associations were often young men, who were more able to stand up to the rough conditions of such itinerant preaching. But, some of the older men went, as well.

For example, Jeremiah Hallock made trips into Vermont during 1801 in this way, seeing revival movements in several places. His biography contains information about these trips.

Another example is provided by Dr. Jonathan Edwards Jr., who organised churches at Paris Hill, and at New Hartford. He was also President of Union College, Schenectady, for a few years, very early in the history of this College.

James H. Hotchkin's Account

Hotchkin was the son of the Rev. Beriah Hotchkin, and began his ministerial career in Western New York in 1801, as a very young man, briefly at Milton (now Genoa), and then at West Bloomfield, where he settled as minister. His "History of Western New York" is an outstanding source of what we know about the first parts of the Second Great Awakening in Upstate New York.

(a) **"**At the commencement of the year 1799, the ministers resident in the Genesee country were, Rev. Zadoc Hunn, at North Bristol; Rev. John Rolph, at South Bristol; and Rev. Reuben Parmele, just arrived at Victor. It is believed that Rev. Jedidiah Bushnell, then a licensed preacher of the gospel from Connecticut, was preaching in the village of Canandaigua. From the month of July to November of that year, he was employed as an itinerating

missionary, in the service of the Missionary Society of Connecticut. Rev. Seth Williston was employed by the same society for four months in the early part of that year, as a missionary in the county of Ontario, and again towards the close of the year, and most of the succeeding year, though his field of labor on this last mission embraced the whole region of Western New York. Rev. David Barclay and Rev. Robert Logan spent three months as missionaries under commissions from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, mostly in the counties of Ontario and Steuben.

In connexion with the labors of these ministers, God was pleased to pour out his spirit on the people in a remarkable manner, and a glorious work of grace was accomplished, extending into many places in Western New York. For many years afterwards, the year 1799 was mentioned as the year of the '*Great Revival*.' The preaching and labors of Messrs Williston and Bushnell were in a particular manner instrumental of good in the work of Divine grace." (11.)

(b) Hotchkin then quotes at length a letter, dated April 29th, 1799, that Seth Williston sent to the "New York Missionary Magazine."

"There has been a very pleasing attention to *the one thing needful*, in several societies in this county (Ontario), during the winter, and it still continues. The seriousness began, I believe, at Palmyra, a town which is situated about fifteen miles north from Canandaigua, where several have hopefully been brought to Christ. At Bristol and Bloomfield there has been, and still is, a most solemn attention to the concerns of eternity. Bloomfield is a large town; it contains three congregational societies; the awakening has prevailed in them all. One of these societies (Victor), where they have lately settled a minister, the awakening is now very much upon the increase. The youth and children seem to be roused up to inquire, *What must I do to be saved?* In Bristol the work seems to have a new spring. In that place, I believe there are as many as twenty persons who have lately obtained a hope of their saving acquaintance with Christ. In the several places in this neighborhood where the work of God is going on, there are, probably, about sixty whose hearts, we hope, are renewed, and many, who have no hope in Christ, are pretty fully convinced that they are in a deplorable state without religion. There are some other towns in the vicinity, where there is more than a usual attention paid to religious matters. A few drops from the cloud of glory have fallen upon Pittstown (Richmond). At Charlestown (Lima) the people are quite desirous of having the word preached; and, what is very encouraging to the friends of religion in this quarter, there is a very pleasing and uncommon attention to public worship in Canandaigua, the capital of this county, and one of the most flourishing towns in all the western part of the State. The people generally attend public worship, and when present, they

apparently give a solemn attention to that which is spoken by the preacher. They have had a worthy young candidate (supposed to be Mr. Bushnell) with them for six months past, who has been an instrument of much good in the county. In Canandaigua there are a few individuals whose minds are anxious about futurity. The spirit evidently began to be poured out upon Bristol and Bloomfield about the beginning of the year. The preaching of the gospel, and the attendance upon conference meetings, appears to have been the principal means which the spirit has made use of to begin and carry on the good work. There has been a remarkable attention paid to public instruction, not only on the Sabbath, but also upon week-days. It has been difficult during the winter to get places large enough to accommodate, or even contain the people who have come together to hear something about Jesus and his salvation. It seemed as if there was scarcely anybody at home who could possibly get to meeting. Once I saw about four hundred people assembled at one place. When at the place of worship there is a very solemn attention paid to the preaching. The countenances of many show how anxious their minds are to know how they may flee from the wrath to come. There are some pretty remarkable instances of the sovereignty of grace. The awakening among us is very free from noise and wildness Convictions in general are pretty clear, and the supposed conversions are not of the visionary kind. The doctrines which God made use of to awaken and convince sinners among us, are those which are commonly distinguished as Calvinistic doctrines." (12.)

Hotchkin comments that, 400 people at one meeting, at that time in the history of New York, would mean that the greater part of the population within four miles, old enough to understand the sermon, would have been present, in an area more heavily populated than many others.

(c) Hotchkin then quotes at length a part of Jedidiah Bushnell's report to the Trustees of the Missionary Society of Connecticut, which, Hotchkin says, was written in the spring of 1800.

"I have spent most of my time since I entered upon my mission in the county of Ontario. In that county God has been pleased to pour down his spirit in a remarkable manner. The religious attention began more than a year ago in the town of Bristol. It soon spread in a number of societies in the town of Bloomfield. The work increased gradually through the winter. But in the spring and summer following (1799), God made a more wonderful display of divine power and grace in the conversion of sinners. It was truly a glorious time; many people, it is believed, will remember it for ever. Through the whole awakening, the most evident marks have appeared that the work was God's work. The convictions of sinners have been regular, solemn and pungent; their conversions calm, rational, and heavenly. Two societies in the town of Bristol, and three in the town of Bloomfield, have been the most

highly favored with the blessed effusions of the Holy Spirit, though the neighboring societies have shared considerably in the fruits of the glorious harvest; and in my last tour over the country, individuals appeared awakened in most places. Five churches have been formed in the county of Ontario; the past year, also, great additions have been made to a number of churches previously organized. In some of the other western counties, appearances are promising. Audiences are frequently numerous, and the attention solemn; but, notwithstanding, some parts of the wilderness have of late appeared to bud and blossom like the rose. There are many places where the inhabitants are truly in a deplorable situation. They are perishing in darkness. It is not uncommon for missionaries to preach where the people have not heard a sermon for twelve months. The situation is truly affecting." (13.)

The Doctrines Preached

Hotchkin highlights the comment by Seth Williston that the doctrines which were used by God to awaken and convert sinners in these revivals were those commonly called Calvinistic. He explains what that meant.

"Those who are in any degree acquainted with the published writings of Dr. Williston - and they have been widely disseminated - will be at no loss to apprehend what he means by the doctrines commonly distinguished as Calvinistic. They will understand, that he means to include the doctrines of man's entire depravity of heart by nature, and alienation from God - his inability while remaining in this state to do anything acceptable to God - an inability consisting wholly in indisposition of heart; - man's perfect obligation to do the whole law of God; - the duty of immediate repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, whose atonement constitutes the sole ground of the sinner's justification with God; the person, character and work of the Mediator; the fulness and freeness of the overtures of mercy in the gospel; the necessity and nature of the work of the Holy Spirit in the regeneration of the heart, and the sovereignty of God in the bestowment of the Spirit's influences; together with the realities of the world to come. Nor in this enumeration of doctrines preached, is the doctrine of the particular election of a select number of the human family to final salvation, to be omitted. These doctrines were clearly, fully, affectionately, and constantly presented in the preaching of the Word, to the view of the hearers, and were manifested to be the sword of the Spirit to pierce the consciences and hearts of sinners."

The Means Used in This Revival

Earnest prayer, normal preaching, personal conversations, and special conference meetings, were the main means used. In view of later events, Hotchkin added the following comment:-

"At this early period of the ecclesiastical history of Western New York, all that machinery for getting up and carrying on revivals of religion, which has to such an extent been employed in modern times, was utterly unknown. The plain, faithful exhibition of divine truth, together with earnest persevering prayer to God for the special influence of the Holy Spirit to make it effectual, was understood to be the legitimate means of promoting revivals of religion.

Conference meetings, so called, were very frequent in the Eastern States, during the latter part of the last, and the beginning of the present century. They were meetings of individuals of a neighborhood, and sometimes of a parish, ordinarily held on a week-day, for religious exercises. They were opened and closed with prayer, ordinarily accompanied by singing. The interval between the opening and closing exercises, which included in it the greater part of the meeting, was occupied with conversation on religious subjects, or at times with address in a way of exhortation. The conversation sometimes was confined to a particular subject, or portion of scripture; sometimes it was of a more desultory character. During the meeting, often questions were asked respecting the meaning of passages of scripture, or for information respecting some doctrine or duty contained in the word of God, and answers were given. In times of revival, the meeting often assumed the character of an inquiry meeting, and much of the time was occupied in personal conversation with individuals, especially young converts, and the awakened, respecting the state of their souls. Such meetings were generally very frequent in times of revival, and afforded most precious opportunities to ministers to impart instructions to the awakened, and young converts, appropriate to their individual circumstances.

The ministers who were connected with this revival, had much to say on the danger of resting on a spurious hope, and were very earnest in imparting instruction on the distinguishing characteristics of a well-founded hope in Christ. As the result of this course of instruction and treatment, those who united with the churches were generally well indoctrinated, and were able to give a clear and rational account of a work of grace on their hearts They generally remained steadfast after their profession.

Had a similar course of instruction and training been pursued in revivals of later times, if the number of professors had been less, the church would not have had to mourn over the dissensions and divisions, the alienation of affection, the animosities and heart-burnings, the secessions and apostasies, which have marred her beauty, rendered her a laughing-stock to her enemies, and afflicted her in all her members." (14.)

Bushnell's Letter

Later glimpses of the work of the Rev. Jedidiah Bushnell appeared in the

"Connecticut Evangelical Magazine." The first glimpse was through a letter, quoted in part in the Magazine, dated 23rd July, 1800, and written from Springfield, Otsego county, New York.

> "The last six weeks, I have spent in the counties of Otsego and Delaware. In both these counties there are considerable awakenings, which appear to be increasing and spreading. They are regular and orderly, free from that noise and enthusiasm which sometimes attend such revivals. Meetings in general are still and solemn, and a profound attention is given to the speaker. Lectures on week days are often attended by 200 people, and on the sabbath by 500 or 600. The towns in Otsego County where there is a revival are Otsego, Springfield and Worcester; those in Delaware County are Delhi, Stamford, Franklin and Walton. In these towns there appears to be a glorious work of the divine spirit, and the religious attention in these parts is as great for the time, if not greater, than it was in the Genesee the last season." (15.)

Bushnell's Longer Report

A much longer report of this trip, written at the start of the next year, was, in due course, printed in the "Connecticut Evangelical Magazine."

> "In the course of my last mission to the western counties of New York, it pleased God to pour out his Spirit upon some of those counties, particularly the counties of Otsego and Delaware, in which there was a remarkable revival of religion. The following account of the revival, extracted from my Missionary journal, you will please to publish, if you think it will subserve the cause of truth and piety.
>
> The former of these counties lies upon the head waters of the Susquehannah river, the latter upon the head waters of Delaware river. The counties united comprehend a track of country, almost as large as the state of Connecticut.
>
> The moral state of the people in these counties, previous to the late awakenings, was much as it is in other parts of the new settlements, which have not been visited with the effusions of the Holy Spirit. The people had little preaching, the sabbath was greatly profaned, and the few pious people scattered through the country were much discouraged; consequently a train of vices and errors succeeded, which rendered the situation of the country melancholy indeed. Some places were more enlightened and civilized than others, but a general stupidity reigned through the whole; and some settlements, where the power of divine grace has since been gloriously displayed, were truly sitting in the region and shadow of death."

First Signs in Delaware County

> "The first tokens of the late religious attention in these counties,

were visible in the town of **Delhi,** the capital of Delaware county. This place had been remarkable for stupidity, religion was treated with contempt; and the little church, consisting of three or four male members, concluded that they must soon become extinct. The revival began in the month of March, 1800. Its first glimmerings were small, rendering it doubtful whether a day of grace was to succeed. The small number of Christians were between hope and fear; sometimes, they thought the work increased and there were prospects of a joyful harvest; at others, their prospects were covered with clouds, and they were afraid that the Holy One of Israel was departing.

Thus the friends of Zion watched and prayed until near the last of April, when it became evident that the cause had gained ground, and a deep solemnity sat upon the countenances of many people. The latent spark, which had gradually made its way to the conscience began to burn with a gentle flame.

The work increased; in the month of May we had solemn days. Near the close of the month, in one part of the town, called **Little Delaware**, the power of divine grace appeared to bear down all opposition before it. Whole families were under deep conviction of their lost state; they crowded to know what they must do to be saved. It was glorious to see the displays of divine grace; some persons appeared as tho' they had lost all their friends, and that their ruin was inevitable, while others were comforted with the hope of divine mercy.

About the time the awakening became visible at Little Delaware, the attention of the people was arrested, in the southern part of the town. Here the cause struggled with much opposition, but was succeeded, so that a joyful number of people hopefully became the subjects of the glorious work. The revival continued in the town without much alteration, for many months, until many sinners were brought to experience in their souls the merits of the Redeemer's purchase. About fifty persons in this town, have become visible members of Christ's church, since the commencement of the late revival; some few others expect soon to make the same public profession.

While the work was increasing at Delhi, God was pleased to send his Holy Spirit into the town of **Franklin**, which lies seventeen miles west of Delhi. The Rev. *David Harrower* preaches one half of the time in this place, the other half in the town of Wolton. The attention in this place, like that in Delhi, was gradual at its commencement; until God, in the dispensation of his providence, visited that town with some solemn instances of mortality. These, under God, gave vent to the feelings of the people, which had been suppressed through timidity. The fear of the world vanished and sinners confessed their guilt. It was a solemn time, for months; many people will remember it for ever. How many people have made a public profession of religion in this place, since the reformation began, I cannot tell, not having

visited them for months; the number, however, is great.

Soon after the awakening commenced at Delhi, it began at **Stamford**, on Delaware river, ten miles north of Delhi. The attention has not been great among this people; they have received a pleasant shower. The little church, formed in this place, some years since, has been much refreshed, and considerably strengthened by additions. Other places in the county have had some small sprinkling of divine grace, and particular instances of conversion have been in most parts of the county."

Otsego County

"We will now give some account of the glorious work of God, in the county of Otsego. From information since the commencement of the awakening, it appears, that in this county, the religious attention began in the hearts of the people months before it was noticed by the public eye. The Angel of God's presence evidently went before the preaching of the gospel. The Missionaries observed among the people, in some parts of the county, an unusual readiness to receive the word. The good people appear to have been given much to secret prayer, and in some instances united together for social prayer, and to read the best printed sermons. Some sinners were convicted of their danger, and some few hopefully converted, before the work became public.

At length, in **Union Society**, at the head of Otsego creek, in the month of April, 1800, the awakening put on a public appearance. The friends of the church began to lift up their heads and sing, hoping that the day of its redemption drew nigh. The attention was not great on its commencement; one was awakened here, and one there, in almost every direction of the society, and some without its bounds. It soon become (sic) evident, that the cloud of divine blessing was gathering, and there was a sound of abundance of rain. God evidently appeared to set up his kingdom in the hearts of men, and stout-hearted sinners seemed to bow to the power of divine grace.

Both the righteous and the wicked acknowledged, that God was present. Our public assemblies and conferences were crouded (sic), full and solemn. Many people, on the sabbath, come a great distance to divine worship; some eight, some ten, and some fifteen miles. Missionaries often preached to four, five, six, and seven hundred people. Only the reading of a text of scripture, or some sentence from a speaker, would have more effect upon the audience than whole, laboured, approved discourses in time of religious declension. God held the work in his own hand; creatures prayed, and some of them used the foolishness of preaching, but God wrought the salvation; to his name be the glory. The church in this place was formed since the awakening began; it now consists of fifty-one persons; some of them, however, live without the bounds of the Society. There are other

persons also, who probably will soon profess their faith before men.

Soon after the commencement of the awakening at Union Society, divine light began to shine in a small settlement, called **Metcalf settlement**. This settlement is eight miles northeast of Union Society. About the same time the work made its appearance, in the **Hartwick settlement**, seven miles southeast from Union Society; tho' in this settlement there had been some tokens of an awakening, for some time before. In each of the settlements Christ has a number of witnesses to his cause; they have not yet united with any church, except those of them who reside in the western part of the Hartwick settlement, they have united with the church in Union Society.

About the middle of June the same glorious work began in the town of **Springfield**, in the northern part of the County. The means which God used at the beginning of the attention were a little singular. The small church in that place invited a clergyman to come and preach with them on the sabbath and administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. On Friday, preceding the sabbath, he preached the preparatory lecture. After the public exercises were closed, he requested the church to tarry, and examined them respecting their experimental and practical religion. They were so deficient in family prayer, in the education of their children, and in other Christian duties, that they were informed without reformation, he did not feel clear to administer to them the Lord's Supper. The church was solemnly moved, most of them were in tears, and before they left the house, confessed their sin, and promised reformation. From that day the church arose from the dust and put on her beautiful garments; and the awakening immediately followed.

It has, by no means, been general in this town; some people have been convicted and hopefully converted, some others solemnized, but many have remained unmoved. Our places of divine worship have been full, and usually attended with much decency, and sometimes with deep solemnity. Seventeen persons have publicly united with the church, in this place, since the commencement of the awakening; and a considerable number of others expect soon to make the same declaration of their faith in Christ.

The attention to religion began in **Worcester,** in the month of July, though in one part of the town there were favourable appearances some time before. This town is on the southeast part of the County; and is very extensive, comprehending three small societies; the land is mountainous, consequently the people not so numerous as in some other parts of the country. The attention became public in the various parts of the town, nearly at the same time. Many people were under deep concern for their souls; and there was a general flocking to hear the gospel. In some instances, in this town, conviction rose uncommonly high, and some conversions were remarkably clear.

It may be proper to mention one instance of conviction: he was a young man of handsome talents, about twenty-five years of age. He had been tinctured with universalism, but now says, that he never, in his conscience, believed those sentiments. Soon after his awakening commenced, his doubts were removed respecting universalism, and he was convinced there was a hell; and a most dreadful scene of legal convictions followed. In conversation with his friends he often used these expressions; two hells are my portion, one in the infernal regions, the other in my own breast. After a series of the most dreadful temptations in which his life was endangered, and his friends much alarmed, God was pleased to reveal his Son to him, and shew him the riches of his grace. His conversion, in his own opinion, was not the most clear at first; his language was, it cannot be, that God should show mercy to such a creature, as I am. But the more he examined his hope, the more he was comforted; and finally became a visible member of Christ's church.

Probably, the awakening has been as genuine in this town, as in any part of the wilderness. Fifty-one persons have made a public profession of their faith in Christ, since the commencement of the awakening. Fifteen of them have united with the first church in town, seven with the second, and twenty-nine with the third. The latter of these churches was organised, since the commencement of the awakening, the other two were previously formed.

At **Cooperstown**, the capital of the county, a large, wealthy, and respectable society has been organized the last summer, and a church formed by the Rev. *Isaac Lewis*, who has since been installed, their minister. This church has increased to thirty-three persons. The things of religion have appeared encouraging among this people for some time; but the present prospects are much more favorable. In the northern part of the society, by the name of **Piertown**, God has displayed his power, and many people are solemnly awakened, and numbers hopefully converted. The prospects, in this society, are now as encouraging as in any part of the county."

Cayuga, Onondaga and Oneida Counties

"In the course of my mission, I took a tour down the Susquehannah river to Tioga Point, which is about one hundred and fifty miles from its source, then turned my course west up the Chenango river, called som[e]times Tioga river, sixty miles, then turned my course northeast through Cayuga, Onondaga, and Oneida counties. On the Susquehannah and Chenango rivers, there are some Christians, but the people are generally stupid [i.e. not sensitive to spiritual realities].

In Cayuga and Onondaga counties there have been awakenings. The towns of **Milton, Scipio** and **Homer** have all received showers within a year past. A number of settlements in Oneida county have experienced

similar effusions of the Holy Spirit; especially the society of **Clinton**, under the preaching of the Rev. Mr. *Norton*, and the town of Paris, under the ministry of the Rev. Mr. *Steele* have been uncommonly awakened, and a multitude of sinners flocked to Christ. The academy in Clinton, under the instruction of the Rev. Mr. *Niles* has been considerably favored. Also from accounts from Ontario county, Genesee, we learn that the churches formed there, in the great revival of religion a year ago last summer, are built up and edified, and numbers of them have ministers ordained."

Evaluation of the Revivals

"These awakenings, in the new-settlements, have been regular and free from enthusiasm. Persons have, at the beginning of their convictions, been solemn, and have manifested a great eagerness to hear the word. Their countenances have been full of meaning, denoting that something of importance lay with great weight upon their minds. As their convictions increased they have complained much of the stubbornness of their hearts and of their helpless state by nature. Previous to conversion, they have been disposed to find much fault with divine sovereignty; but, when they have been born again, they have joyfully embraced that glorious truth, as one of the great sources of their consolation. Jesus Christ and the bible have been their great themes. They have not only improved exceedingly fast in the plain points of divinity, but they have made astonishing progress in the great doctrines of the gospel. They have not been disposed to vaunt, but modestly to hear, rather than dictate. As far as we can judge, since the commencement of the awakening, the fruits have been the effect of that wisdom from above, which 'is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.'

The preaching, in these settlements, has been plain. Ministers have dwelt much on experimental religion, on the great doctrines of sovereign grace; such as repentance, faith, the necessity of the new birth, and other plain or leading doctrines of the gospel. They have also equally enforced Christian morals as the only visible evidence of a gracious state.

Notwithstanding the great revivals of religion in the new-settlements, for two years past, a great part of the wilderness remain stupid in their sins. The tract of country, through which missionaries, from the United States, travel, is several hundred miles square. This tract has but partially experienced the influences of the Holy Spirit. When we consider the worth of souls, and their unalterable state beyond the grave, it is hoped that every person will contribute to send salvation to those who are destitute of the means of grace; not only to our brethren in the new-settlements, but to the heathen upon our frontiers. They are souls as valuable as ours, and are capable of enjoying the same spiritual and everlasting blessings.

I have been kindly treated in the wilderness. The people present their thanks to the Missionary Society of Connecticut, for their liberal contributions and exertions, to the support of missions in the new-settlements. They wish the people of Connecticut grace, mercy and peace, an hundred fold more in this life, and in the world to come, life everlasting.

Jedidiah Bushnell.

Hartford. January 26th, 1801." (16.)

The Military Tract, and Other Parts

The Genesee country that we have been considering in this chapter, so far, was mostly part of the Phelps and Gorham Purchase. The territory to the east of this, was called the Military Tract, or New York Military lands, including Onondaga county, amongst others.

Hotchkin provides a number of details about early religious developments in this area, especially about the divisions of Presbyteries, and the formation of new ones.

He concluded that it was not possible, at the time when he wrote, to reconstruct a history of the Awakening of 1798 and 1799 in the Military Tract. However, he emphasised that revivals had occurred in this area, similar to the revivals which had occurred further west. This happened, despite the fact that no ministers of either Presbyterian or Congregational connections had settled in the area before 1800. The area was served by missionaries sent out by the General Assembly.

Seth Williston also spent some time in the area in 1800. Although it was during a previous visit by him to the village of Homer, in 1798, that a local revival had occurred there.

Many of the immigrants which had come into the area between Cayuga and Seneca Lakes, in those early days, had come from Pennsylvania, and were of Dutch, Scottish or Irish descent. The Dutch Reformed and Presbyterian churches were better represented amongst them.

"Documents are wanting, or, if they exist, they have not fallen under the notice of the compiler of this work. The towns of Milton (now Genoa) received a goodly share of the effusion of the Divine Spirit. Scipio, Locke, Aurelius, Camillus, and Marcellus experienced a refreshing. It is believed that the same can be said of Pompey, and probably of some other places.... The result of these revivals was, that a goodly number of souls were born into the kingdom of God. The feeble churches previously existing, were increased in numbers, and strengthened. The way was preparing for the regular settlement of ministers. How many churches on the Military Tract had been organised previous to the revival, is not known by the writer." (17.)

Hotchkin thought that the same limitation applied to other counties south and east of the Military Tract. Lack of documentation is often a problem faced by

historians of revivals.

> "To what extent the revival of 1799 and 1800 affected the Chenango country, and the county of Tioga, the writer has not the means of determining. The revival was felt in this region, but it is supposed that it was by no means as great as in the region further west, or in that which lay to the east. The counties of Delaware and Otsego were powerfully affected by it. So also was the county of Oneida, which lay to the north. It was a general shaking of the valley of dry bones. God manifested himself in his glory in building up Zion. The tide of infidelity which was setting in with so strong a current, was rolled back, and Western New York was delivered from the moral desolation which threatened it. The general prosperity, the religious order, the benevolent and literary institutions, which constitute the glory and happiness of this section of country, it cannot be doubted, are, in no inconsiderable degree, attributable to the change produced in the current of public sentiment, as the consequence of this extended revival of religion. The year 1798 is an era which should long be remembered in Western New York, as giving a character to this part of the State, which laid a foundation for its large prosperity, and improvement in all things useful." (18.)

Much further west in New York State, in 1800, not even the first settlements existed in the area which has now become the city of Rochester.

Fowler's "History"

(a) 1799. In this record of revival events in upstate New York, Fowler says that in 1799 the revival was felt in the west and south of the central part of the state, as we have seen described in Hotchkin's account. It appeared in the eastern parts during the following year.

> "During 1799, the special work of grace was principally manifest in the southern and western portions of the territory of the Synod [of Central New York], and extending beyond in the latter direction, as far as the wave of population had flown. The origin of it has been traced to Broome county, under the preaching of Seth Williston, but its power was most felt in Ontario county, while the whole intervening region and its vicinity was the theatre of it." (19.)

Fowler then refers to the words of Dr. Williston that we have quoted above. Apparently these are the main documentary sources of information about that phase of the movement.

> "The organisation of a considerable number of churches was the immediate result of the 'great revival,' and churches, too, composed of intelligent and tested Christians, and that proved stable and permanent, and from that period dates their rapid multiplication in this region of the country. The tide of infidelity and of irreligion generally, was likewise stayed and the spiritual destiny and character of the community determined. Prior to this,

the prospect was dismal enough. The extensive incursion of reckless worldliness and of fundamental error into the new settlements had foreboded a dark future." (20.)

(b) 1800. "In 1800, the revival manifested itself eastward. Chenango, Oneida, and especially Otsego and Delaware counties, felt its power. None of the details of it appear in documents relating to Chenango and Oneida counties, but the reports of Jedidiah Bushnell and other missionaries record them quite fully in relation to Otsego and Delaware counties." (21.) Fowler then quotes extensively from Bushnell's account, which we have seen above.

(c) 1802 - 1809. "The General Assembly of 1802 spoke of 'the most pleasing intelligence' as having been brought 'from the East, from the West, from the North and the South,' and in 1803 it stated that 'there was scarcely a Presbytery under its care from which most pleasing intelligence had not been announced,' and that from some of them communications had been made 'which illustriously displayed the triumphs of evangelical truth and the power of sovereign grace,' and that in most of the eastern and northern Presbyteries revivals had prevailed, but free from 'bodily agitations or extraordinary affections.' It is reasonable to presume that this region shared in the widespread blessings of those years, but no record of them has been found." (22.)

Fowler uses Presbytery and Assembly reports as sources, to mention the revivals in Sherburne and De Ruyter in 1805, and in Homer in 1806 - 1807.

The Rev. Dirck C. Lansing came into the Onondaga area in 1806, and built up a church from nothing. Fowler said that no revivals were reported in the area for 1808.

Contrast with the Methodists

Fowler concluded his review of the Presbyterian and Congregational revivals of this period with the following comment:- "A special reason for the frequent mention of the orderliness of the revivals here, during the first ten years of the century, and of the Calvinistic type of the preaching, was not so much the 1740 extravagancies in New England, or the Kentucky extravagancies and errors in 1800, as the extravagancies of Methodism, then common here, reports of which were likely to give repute abroad to the operations of grace in our own churches. Methodism had not then passed out of its early crudities and excesses, examples of which are noted in the Rev. John Taylor's journal of his missionary tour through this region. They acted as checks and cautions to Presbyterianism and Congregationalism, and so saved them from the looseness of doctrines and the uncouthness of measures to which a new community is liable, and made our early churches and ministers the best of progenitors."

The Beginnings of Methodism in Central New York

Methodism made its formal entry into upstate New York after 1788, when Freeborn Garrettson was appointed presiding elder, responsible for a large area which included all of that part of the country, and much more. Within a few years, several circuits had been formed within New York state boundaries, one including Saratoga, and the township of Albany, and the other stretching out toward Utica. Circuit boundaries changed rapidly, as new settlements developed and were included in the circuit structure, and new circuits appeared. For some years, the meetings were all held in barns or houses, or sometimes even in churches belonging to other denominations. But before 1800 there were no specifically Methodist church buildings in Central New York.

At this time, the northern parts of New York state were in the Upper Canada Methodist district. Powerful revivals had occurred in this district, partly through the ministry of Freeborn Garrettson, but even more through the indefatigable labours of another itinerant minister, Hezekiah Calvin Wooster.

George Peck's record of events was partly based upon Minutes of various official meetings. “In 1798 Chenango [circuit] appears, and here is Jonathan Newman again, in charge of a new circuit. This circuit took in the extremes of Otsego, Herkimer and Tioga [counties], embracing the Chenango and Unadilla valleys, and many small and remote settlements among the hills.”

> “In 1799 we find in the Minutes, Mohawk, and Cayuga and Oneida added to the list of circuits. Mohawk is taken from Herkimer [circuit] and has one hundred and eighteen members. Oneida has only twenty-eight members.”
>
> “The year 1800 was signalled by many gracious revivals of religion, and a great enlargement of the work. Within the portion of the state of New York west of Albany and Saratoga circuits, we now find one thousand five hundred and seventy-three members. This year Barzillai Willy and William Vredenburg are upon Chenango circuit. [Vredenburg] was what was called a Low Dutchman - a man six feet high and well proportioned, with a pleasant face and a stentorian voice. There was no religious excitement at the time, but he poured out such a tide of earnest appeals and exhortations that a young lady broke down and wept. She subsequently experienced religion. His whole frame seemed to be agitated, and waving and clapping his great hands he roared out, 'I am after souls, and souls I must have,' and he was not disappointed.”

At that stage of the story, Peck introduced an anecdote about Vredenburg, showing how he exhorted and prayed, in broken English, and with a strong accent, but with such wonderful spiritual power that he saw marvellous results wherever he went.

"A great revival took place this year [1800] in Brookfield, and the Giles family were converted and brought over to Methodism." Brookfield was one of the little settlements in the hills near the Unadilla river. (24.) Peck then relates a long story (covering seven pages) about this Giles family, and how several of the members of the family were converted during this revival. One of the Giles men later became a noted minister.

"The Spirit was poured out from on high, and men and women, old and young, dreamed dreams, saw visions, and were filled with the spirit of prophecy.

This year the first Methodist meeting-house within the bounds of the old Genesee Conference was undertaken in the settlement on the Sanquoit, called 'the Paris meeting-house.'"

A subscription of $800 was raised, payable chiefly in labor, and the work commenced. Before it was finished, the first sermon in the new building was preached by Bishop Richard Whatcoat, one of the great founders of Methodism in the United States.

Peck comments: "The house thus erected has probably been the spiritual birthplace of more than a thousand souls; and how many have been blessed, and comforted, and sanctified within its sacred walls, eternity alone can determine. With the exception of perhaps one log chapel, it was the first Methodist meeting-house erected in the state of New York west of Albany." (25.)

In 1802, the famous and erratic Lorenzo Dow came into the area, and worked well with the circuit evangelists. The Presiding Elder, William Colbert, described him. "'He is tall,' says Colbert, 'of a very slender form; his countenance is serene, solemn, but not dejected, and his words, or rather God's words delivered by him, cut like a sword.'" (26.)

The itinerant evangelists included Anning Owen, Valentine Cook and Thomas Ware, who had done valiant work for a number of years in this area, and had seen some revivals. Also included were Jacob Gruber, Anthony Turck and Benjamin Bidlack, as well as Vredenberg and Willy.

As an example showing the kind of men some of these itinerants were, Stevens tells us about Bidlack's earlier life.

"He had been in the Revolutionary army, being at Boston when Washington took command, and at Yorktown when Cornwallis surrendered; had been noted 'for fun and frolic,' for his love of strong drink and 'good fellowship,' and yet had a singular reverence for religion.

He would attend gravely the preaching of the early evangelists, however drunk he might be at the time. 'He sometimes sung with great gusto, and even raised the tune, when he could hardly stand without holding on to something.' He once appeared in the congregation with his usual gravity, but with a bottle of rum in his pocket, its long neck visible to all around.

Anthony Turck, a Dutch itinerant, fiery with zeal, and 'bold as a lion,' saw him, and poured forth a terrible denunciation against drunkenness. The congregation were alarmed, for they knew Bidlack's courage; but he trembled under the word, and 'instead of resenting the attack, went home stung with remorse.' He publicly confessed his vices, repented, became a Methodist, and, before long, was travelling with the itinerants, one of their most flaming fellow laborers. He was a superior singer, an important advantage in the early ministry, and a preacher of acknowledged talents.... He was a gigantic man, over six feet high, with broad shoulders and strong limbs." (27.)

Baptist Work in Upstate New York

Information about Baptist work in upstate New York before about 1810 is very sketchy. Despite this, the first Protestant meetings of any kind in this part of the state were Baptist. These occurred in 1773, when Ebenezer Knap and Increase Thurstin, and their families settled at Butternut creek, in what is now Otsego county. "...notwithstanding their isolated situation, [they] were not unmindful of their duty to God, but, immediately after their arrival in this inhospitable wild, commenced the worship of God in their families, and on the Lord's day, by singing, exhortation, and prayer - a noble example for all Christians who form new settlements." (28.)

In 1776, David Fowler and several Indians, established their homes, and religious worship of the Baptist kind, in Brothertown, which lies within the present Oneida county. These settlements were seriously disrupted during the war of Independence, but were re-established afterwards.

In the later years of the Eighteenth Century, several local revivals were reported by the Baptists in this part of the country. Elder William Furman was blessed by the Lord in this way in the Springfield Church, Otsego county, in 1790, and in other places later.

A couple of places in Delaware county saw glimpses of revival in 1793. Litchfield was blessed in 1796, Exeter in 1797, and Oteo in 1798. Butternutts saw a taste of revival through 1798, and the North Norwich church in 1799. The Baptist work grew steadily. Its written records do not give any indication of impact from the widespread Congregational and Presbyterian revivals in 1798 - 1800. (29.)

In 1794, the Otsego Association was formed, based in Springfield, and inspired in part by Elder Furman, who was the minister there. It included most of the Baptist churches in upstate New York. At least modest records were kept. In 1807, a comparison was made with the state of the Baptist work in this Association ten years earlier. Whereas, in 1795, there had been thirteen

churches, five ministers, and four hundred and twenty-four members, as part of the Association. In the rest of central and western New York there were two more churches, containing one hundred and twenty members, served by two ministers. Total - 15 churches, 7 ministers, and 540 members.

By 1807 the Association had 55 churches, 28 ministers, and 3,265 members. All this, despite the fact that other Associations now existed, to which the Otsego Association had contributed churches and ministers. Of course, this did not all represent conversion growth, as there had been a great deal of immigration. But conversions certainly did account for some of the growth. (30.)

A part of this scene of expansion included a revival movement which started in the Baptist church in the village of Hamilton. This congregation became the warm-hearted centre from which Baptist missionary work spread out in the following years. It was blessed by a series of revivals.

Brooks described this 1798 revival in Hamilton as follows:-

> "In 1798, a young man who had been a leader in the merry circles of youth, was suddenly brought into the deepest concern for the salvation of his soul. The poignant and heart-searching preaching of those times, and the penitent expressions of this young man, made so deep an impression upon several of the youth that they left their schools and went to see him. They found him in deep distress.
>
> The night following there was a meeting for prayer and conference at the house of Deacon Samuel Payne. It was a memorable season. The tongues of the saints were loosed and their prayers and exhortations were fervent and searching. Sinners cried, 'What shall I do to be saved?' This revival soon became widespread and proved to be lasting in its results. During the progress of this work of grace a noted deist, who delighted much in reading Paine's 'Age of Reason,' and in opposing the Bible, was converted and became an earnest defender of the faith and a pillar in the church. His name was Daniel Hatch, one of the pioneer Baptists of Eaton, whose hospitality and liberality gave him a wide and honorable reputation among the saints. This was the first of a remarkable series of revivals that blessed this historic church..." (31.)

The "Plan of Union" of 1801

The Presbyterian historian, Philemon Fowler, tells us how this plan came into being. "Soon after the inauguration of John Blair Smith as first President of Union College, Eliphalet Nott, who succeeded him in that office, passed through Schenectady on his way from Connecticut to the 'new settlements.' The president was a distinguished Presbyterian, and the young missionary a somewhat ardent Congregationalist. Both intensely sought the evangelisation

of the parts beyond, and conferring about it, they both appreciated the need of harmony in it between their respective denominations, and finally concluded how that might be effected.

'The Plan of Union,' so familiar to us, was substantially devised by them, and perfected by observation and reflection and counselling, it was adopted in 1801 by the General Association of Connecticut and our General Assembly, Rev. Dr. Ashbel Green preparing the draft of it, and the younger Edwards submitting the motion for it in the Assembly.

As we well know, while urging 'mutual forbearance and accommodation,' it allowed a Congregational Church to settle a Presbyterian minister, according him the right of appeal to his Presbytery or to a Mutual Council consisting equally of Congregational and Presbyterian members..." Similarly, a Presbyterian Church could settle a Congregational minister, allowing him to appeal to his Association, or to a Mutual Council, if a matter of major conflict arose.

Churches which had a mixture of Presbyterian and Congregationalist members were also allowed to organise, and to administer discipline to members. If the member being disciplined was a Presbyterian, he or she could appeal to the local Presbytery. If, however, the member being disciplined was a Congregationalist, he or she could appeal to the local Association.

This plan was "projected and brought into operation by some of the wisest and best men the Presbyterian Church has ever known." This was even admitted by the Assembly of 1837, which abrogated the Plan. Fowler said this "Plan of Union" was a masterpiece "of Christian liberality and benevolence." Each denomination was willing to set aside its own particular ecclesiastical interests in order harmoniously to pursue the evangelisation of the "new settlements" in central and western New York, and further west in the Western Reserve of Ohio.

Although a Presbyterian, Fowler acknowledged that the Plan of Union was particularly a generous act on the part of the Congregational Association, because they contributed the most, and stood to lose more, as Presbyterian church order developed, and exercised the influence of its strong points in the growing areas of New York state. Somehow, Presbyterian church order seemed to suit the new areas better, and had a better chance of achieving the kind of work that was needed to be done there. (32.)

A further development along the ecumenical line was seen in the growth of interdenominational organisations for Home and Overseas missionary work, which became very strongly supported in the New York areas. The main ones were the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the American Home Mission Society, and the American Education Society. But, below this level, there developed a vast range of voluntary organisations in support of every good ideal in the land, all of which received a great boost from

the various revival movements, as the early decades of the Nineteenth Century progressed..

The Plan of Union went through various evolutionary changes, as time went by, and as it was adapted to a variety of new situations.

A Few Scattered Revivals, Through to 1815

Hotchkin informs us that no extended revivals occurred in New York State for some years, after the close of the 1799 revival period.

George Peck tells us that in 1801 Ephraim Chambers and Anning Owen were stationed on the Wyoming Circuit. Owen has since become known as the "Apostle" of the Wyoming area because of the years he had spent there as a circuit rider in the previous decade. Chambers "began to reap the fruit of the labor of the preceding year in the awakening and conversion of souls. A revival broke out on the Plains. Roger Searle was baptised in the winter by immersion, a hole being cut through the ice in order to accomplish it. This was a great novelty in the country." (33.)

There was a local revival in West Bloomfield in 1802. Hotchkin himself had become the settled minister in that place. Thomas Robbins also refers to it in his "Diary", as he spent much of 1802 travelling slowly through that part of the country.

A revival was also reported in Ulysses in 1803, and in East Groton in 1805 - 1806.

Several places were blessed by movements of the Spirit in 1806 - 1807. These included the congregation in Homer, where the minister was the Rev. Nathan Darrow. In Sherburne, also, a revival was experienced. Both of these movements worked slowly over a period of several years. The town of Pompey also was blessed. Homer again saw a movement of the Spirit in 1813. Several other places are also mentioned as experiencing revivals, in other parts of the State. (34.) The Methodists also reported upon the Sherburne revival.

It was the year 1815, however, which marked the beginning of a new era.

CHAPTER FIVE

UPSTATE NEW YORK REVIVALS 1815-1820

Methodists Organise the Genesee Conference, 1810

As Bishop Francis Asbury travelled through the area, he learned that some of the preachers in western New York, and in Canada, had to travel between two hundred and five hundred miles to attend their Conference, and the call was presented to him to form a new Conference, based in the Genesee area. The General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, held in 1809, decided to form a new Conference. The bishops had discretionary powers to call the necessary meetings. And the first meeting of the new Genesee Conference was held in the granary belonging to Captain Daniel Dorsey in the town of Lyons, in July, 1810. It was chaired by Bishop Asbury, who was accompanied by Bishop William McKendree, and by Asbury's travelling companion, the Rev Jacob Boehm. The staff of the Conference comprised fifty-six preachers. A camp meeting was held in conjunction with the Conference,

The Conference consisted of three Districts, the Susquehanna District with a membership of 3,966 (including forty coloured), the Cayuga District with 4,124 members (including fifteen coloured), and the Upper Canada District with 2,603 members. This made a total of 10,693 members, out of a total membership of 174,560 for the whole country. It was decided to leave the Lower Canada District in the New York Conference.

The Susquehanna District, with Gideon Draper as Presiding Elder, consisted of the following circuits: Lyons, Ontario, Holland Purchase, Canisteo, Lycoming, Northumberland, Wyoming, Canaan, Tioga and Seneca. It was transferred from the Philadelphia Conference.

The Cayuga District, with William Case as Presiding Elder, consisted of the Chenango, Otsego, Herkimer, Black River, Mexico, Western, Westmoreland, Pompey, Scipio and Cayuga circuits.

The Upper Canada District, with Henry Ryan as Presiding Elder, consisted of the Cornwall, Saint Lawrence, Augusta, Bay Quinte, Smith's Creek, Young-street, Ancaster, Niagara, Long Point and Detroit circuits. These two districts were transferred from the New York Conference.

Districts and circuits were added and/or divided in bewildering succession, almost year by year. The boundaries of the Conference were substantially changed in 1824, when the Canada Conference was formed, and again in 1828, when the Oneida Conference was formed. (1.)

The war of 1812 greatly disrupted the work for several years in parts of the area.

Methodist Revivals

For some years, much of the available information that we have about any revivals in this new Conference has depended largely upon Abner Chase's "Recollections," which were published some years later in the "Christian Advocate," and then collected into a little book. Both George Peck and Conable have quoted from this source. Chase transferred from the New York Conference, and took an appointment at Utica in 1814. After that he spent the Conference years of 1815 and 1816 at Paris (Sanquoit), where he records revival scenes.

For 1815 and 1816, Chase mentioned an increased seriousness, and a deepened spirit of prayer, followed by the notable conversion of a young man. "This revival was more like a gentle and continued rain than like an overwhelming flood. Convictions were multiplied and deepened, and one after another of the respectable part of the community came forward and proclaimed the mercy of God to their souls, or in tears requested an interest in the prayers of the Church." (2.)

"At this [1816] Conference I was reappointed to Paris, and the work of God in the awakening and conversion of souls went gloriously on during the whole of the following conference year. Many particular instances of the power of divine grace might be given." And Chase provided one or two instances. (3.)

The Conference of 1817 was held at Elizabethtown, in Upper Canada, where, Chase says, a revival occurred during the Conference. (4.)

With respect to 1817, George Peck says the following:-

> "A gracious revival of religion took place in various places on the circuit, under the labors of the Rev. Abner Chase, in 1817. Mr. Chase has left upon record some thrilling incidents connected with this revival which we will here copy: 'At this conference I received my appointment to Otsego circuit, where I was again permitted to witness the displays of divine power and grace in the salvation of many souls.'
>
> 'At a place called Fly Creek, a few miles west of Cooperstown, there was a little church or meeting-house which was built or formerly occupied by Episcopalians, but was at the time of which I am writing mostly occupied by Methodists. In the month of December of that year we held a quarterly meeting in this little church. There had been something of a move among the people of the neighborhood for a few weeks preceding, and several young persons had professed to find religion or a change of heart. When the quarterly meeting commenced, therefore, the people seemed prepared to avail themselves of its privileges.
>
> Through the entire meeting, from its commencement, there was a heavenly influence resting upon the congregation. But Sabbath evening was the great and memorable time. The presiding elder, C. Giles, remained with us, and was much in the spirit of the work. At about the usual hour for

closing the meeting, while some were relating what God had done for them, an old man by the name of Shepard... inquired of a lad who had spoken of the mercy of God to him, if he thought there could be any mercy for such an old sinner as he was. It seemed that he made the inquiry of the boy because he was near him, and because he had not confidence to speak to any one else. The lad was rather taken by surprise, and did not answer immediately; but another person did, assuring the old man that there was mercy for him, and that he might find it then and there. Upon which the old man fell upon his knees, and many of us bowed with him, and while we were interceding for him God spoke peace to his soul, and he arose and testified it to the congregation.

This produced a powerful effect upon many. At the same time there arose a severe storm of lightning, thunder, and rain, attended or succeeded by a storm of snow. The thunder-storm at this season of the year added to the solemnity of the meeting, so that all idea of closing it was given up for the present, and cries and tears, and prayers and praise, were mingled together without intermission for several hours; some having no disposition to leave the house on account of the storm, while many more were induced to stay because of the interest they took in the meeting.

Before the next morning dawned many souls in that house were delivered from the guilt of sin, and made to rejoice in God their Saviour.'" (5.)

The revival spread through the nearby locality of Millford.

At the conclusion of the 1816 - 1817 Conference year, the Minutes of Conference noted the results which showed it had been a blessed time. Throughout the Conference area, membership had risen by 2,700 during the year.

Conable says, "It is worthy of remark that there were extensive pastorates in those days, *numerically* as well as geographically considered. There were many circuits with from five to nine hundred members, generally under the care of two preachers. Of course the most that the preachers could do was to perform the requisite travel and fill their regular appointments. The meetings were not frequently *'protracted,'* but the regular services did tell mightily in the awakening and reformation of the people.

The demonstrations of opposition, sometimes from sources whence it was least apprehended, were often violent; but quenchless was the zeal and undying the ardor and courage of the itinerant champions of a free and full salvation, and glorious were their victories.

The quarterly meetings were generally very numerously attended, and occasions of wonderful spiritual power. There were few regular houses of worship in those times, but often in inconvenient and uncomfortable places and positions the word was preached in a manner worthy of the grandest

pulpit, and heard with earnest and joyful attention and interest. In private log dwellings, in barns, and in the groves, 'God's first temples,' sermons, textual and theological expositions, and frequent thrilling and overwhelming appeals, were, with the accompanying operations of the Holy Spirit, made effectual in the enlightenment, conversion, and sanctification of souls."

"The numerous quarterly meetings, camp meetings, and other meetings, ordinary and extraordinary, with all the pulpit and pastoral labors of the self-denying, untiring, and heroic ministers and preachers, travelling and local, and the earnest, indispensible co-operation of the official and private membership, were signally owned and blessed of God, and the cause of Methodism, of 'Christianity in earnest', was greatly strengthened." (6.)

A more general report is also included for 1817, which applies to the whole Oneida district, under the control of presiding elder, Charles Giles.

"In September last we held a camp-meeting on Litchfield circuit; the season being cold and rainy, rendered our situation in the tented wilderness very unpleasant; but these gloomy circumstances did not impede the work of grace: both preachers and people were zealously affected in the good cause from day to day. At the close of the meeting about one hundred souls were found who professed to know that their sins were forgiven. Indeed, all our camp-meetings have been attended with glorious consequences: hundreds are now rejoicing that they ever saw those consecrated groves, where they were awakened to see their vileness, and where they first felt the renovating power of grace.

In the revivals on Black River circuit the preachers have added three hundred members to the church this year; and it is worthy of notice, that one of the subjects who has a place among them is a young man both deaf and dumb, who had a very remarkable view of the glory of heaven and the misery of hell, which he communicated to me and to others by certain expressive signs. He appeared very happy and devoted to God. Another subject of this work was a man who had been a long time in despair: for several years he had wholly neglected his temporal concerns, but in the revival his bands were broken, and his soul released from the power of sin and Satan. On a memorable evening succeeding a quarterly meeting on Westmoreland circuit, twenty-three souls were brought into the kingdom of grace. To God be all the glory!"

"One thousand members have been added to the Church this year on our district, but in consequence of numerous removals to the western country, the Minutes will show an increase of only seven hundred and forty." (7.)

In 1820, Manly Tooker was received on probation by the Genesee Conference. He wrote:-

"In the fall of 1819 I commenced a school in Ulysses, on the west

side of Cayuga Lake, among entire strangers. At a prayer-meeting held in my school-room the second week, an extraordinary manifestation of the presence and power of God was suddenly witnessed at a time of great langour. I was called upon to close the meeting, which was but thinly attended. I was strongly impressed to speak, and yet I had no language for the occasion but, having opened my lips, an overwhelming effusion of the Spirit's influence came upon me and pervaded the place.

Weeping and responses indicated the presence of an unusual and unearthly power, and the Holy Ghost taught speaker and hearer. At the close of an exhortation of less than ten minutes' length, the question was proposed, 'Who will consecrate himself to the Lord?' when every person present arose, and two of the number, who came to the place in the darkness of unbelief, went home rejoicing in God's 'marvellous light.'

From this time through the entire winter meetings were held every night in that house, there being no house of worship in that part of the town. Scarcely a meeting closed without conversions, and the revival extended to adjoining towns, and several hundred were added to the various churches as the fruit of it." (8.)

As announced at the 1820 Conference, the number of Methodist church members in the Genesee Conference was 25,467 (including 112 coloured), being an increase of 1,520 for the year. (9.)

Presbyterian and Other Revivals

The year **1815** saw the small beginnings of a widespread and prolonged movement in which many revivals occurred in upstate New York. Generally, this period of heightened revival power lasted for nearly twenty years. During these years a great number of revivals occurred in many other parts of the United States. This period is commonly seen by historians as an extension of the Second Great Awakening, which, as we have seen, occurred mainly from 1799 to about 1805 or soon after. A few others have called it a Third Great Awakening. Even other titles for it have sometimes appeared.

Fowler mentions modest revivals influencing Utica and Rome, and Bradley describes the impact of a revival upon Troy, and the Albany area. Also, the little towns of Franklin, Middlebury and Greenwich were mentioned. The "Plan of Union" churches, as well as the Baptist and Methodist churches, shared in the blessings of these movements. (10.)

Bradley's descriptions of these movements show that, although in some cases the first signs of revival appeared in 1815, they blossomed forth in power as the new year, **1816**, arrived. For example, in Greenwich:-

"Towards the close of 1815, a good work began in this town. Saints began to arise from a long and very stupid state of spiritual slumber, and to come into the light, and liberty of the sons of God. A few came forward and

joined the church. This seemed to freshen the souls of many, and especially the conversion and exhortations of a young woman, who was greatly engaged in religion. With an humility truly amiable, and with an holy solemnity she conversed with many concerning their soul's eternal happiness. She seemed to seek every convenient opportunity, to recommend her Lord, and to plead with her young friends to seek Him.

In the commencement of 1816 conference meetings were multiplied, and the church arose, leaving the things that were behind, having taken up the stumbling blocks, that she had lain in the way of sinners, and moved onwards *towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Four or five converts appeared on the Lord's side, told their experiences, and followed Jesus in His appointed way, and joined the church, about the 20th January. At the close of this month the work spread into different parts of the town.

No particular providential events occurred as the visible means by which the work was either begun, or aided in its progress. The Spirit came in a very gentle manner, yet it powerfully convinced of sin, righteousness and judgment. The preaching of the word; the solemn and fervent exhortations of young converts, and the administration of ordinances were all owned of the Lord and crowned with success.

In 1816, two hundred and fifty four joined the Baptist church, of which the Rev. E. Barber is pastor. Twelve have been added since.

Notwithstanding, the work was powerful and rapid, and all ages from twelve to sixty years old, were gathered from the broad way that leads to hell and brought to Christ and his church, yet but little noise and confusion has been heard, through the whole transaction. Truly, the Lord wrought *according to the counsel of his will; that they should be to the praise of his glory.* A part of Easton and Jackson shared in these heavenly influences." (11.)

Hotchkin gives a long list of places where revivals occurred in **1816** and **1817**. Many of these were included in the Cayuga Presbytery. In some cases, Hotchkin indicates where the names of towns had been altered between the time of the revival, and the time when he wrote about them some years later.

Revivals occurred in Cazenovia, Smithfield, Genoa, Manlius, Onondaga, Pompey Hill, Sherburne, Homer, Norwich, Fabius, Otsico, Owasco, Elbridge, Auburn, Scipio, Cayuga village, Genoa first church, Locke, East Groton, Sempronius, Ludlowville, Ithaca, Danby, Lisle, Western (now Berkshire), Newfield, Binghamton, Coventry, Romulus, Lyons, Wolcott (now Huron), Palmyra, Geneva, Middlesex, Gorham (now Rushville), East Bloomfield, Victor, Richmond, Livonia, Parma (now Ogden), Riga, Murray (now Bergen), Mount Morris, Buffalo, Hamburgh, Gainesville, Willink, Eden and Pomfret.

"The writer believes that revivals of greater or less power were

experienced in a number of other congregations, but he has not the data to determine the point with certainty; and with respect to the congregations named, in several instances, the sum of his information is, that a revival was enjoyed. But, in other instances, his information is of a more definite character." (12.)

More extended details are provided about what happened in several of these places. For example:-

"In Cazenovia, the pastor of the [Plan of Union] church, Rev. John Brown, in a letter dated June, 1816, says, 'About the middle of December last, God was pleased to pour out his spirit in no inconsiderable degree. The first appearance of an awakening was a few minutes after the close of a prayer meeting and conference. A certain female mentioned to some of her companions the alarming condition in which she viewed herself; a divine influence appeared to seize nearly all who were present. The next evening, I preached in that neighborhood; and it was as solemn a season as ever I witnessed. Numbers were soon awakened in different parts of the society. About fifty have been added to the church since the attention commenced; some now stand propounded to the church, and some more are to be propounded next Sabbath. Children have been sharers in the work; seven or eight have been added to our church under the age of fourteen. There are a number of others, and one about seven years of age, entertaining hopes of a saving change, and apparently on good ground. Some are now under awakening influence.'" (13.)

Bradley's report on the revival in Cazenovia comes from Baptist sources. The Rev John Peck was ministering there in 1815. Bradley's report says that the revival first appeared in the summer of 1815, and includes the following:-

"This work has been like a gentle rain, or *the waters of Shiloh that* move *softly*, yet so mighty as to bear down opposition and stop the mouths of gainsayers. The Deists and Universalists have renounced their pernicious sentiments, and embraced the humbling doctrine of the Lord Jesus. Backsliders have returned with broken hearts, being fully convinced that those, who *Observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.* Saints have blessed God for the rich exhibitions of his boundless grace. More than two hundred have been added to the Baptist, and a number to the Presbyterian church." (14.)

"In Norwich, previous to 1814, it is stated that no church existed. The ordinances of the gospel were neglected. Vice and immorality, especially profaneness, greatly abounded; and, if the Sabbath should be distinguished from other days, it was by being more devoted to the pursuits of vanity, and the practice of iniquity. In June, 1814, a Congregational church was organised with twenty-one members. About the middle of December, 1816, it was manifest that the Spirit of God was moving on the

hearts of the members of the church. By the close of the year, the work had become general; and was deep, rapid and irresistible. There was scarcely a thoughtless mind in the whole village. In a short time more than a hundred professed a hope in Christ. All classes were subjects of the work; the old, and the young; the rich and the poor; the learned and the ignorant; the lawyer, the farmer, and mechanic all alike were made to bow to the sceptre of Immanuel. In the month of June, it is stated, that more than sixty had united with the Congregational church." (15.)

"In Auburn, the revival commenced in April or May, 1817. At this time the church contained but 14 male members. The Rev. D. C. Lansing had just commenced his labors as pastor with the church. At a communion season on the 4th of May, fourteen individuals united with the church. God was manifestly present. The members of the church were aroused from slumber, and with penitent hearts engaged in duty. Sinners were alarmed and led with solicitude to inquire, 'what must we do?' From this period the work progressed with great efficacy, and in a rapid manner. At the communion season - the first Sabbath in August, one hundred and forty persons stood up, in presence of an immense congregation, and entered into solemn covenant with God, and with his people. Others were added at subsequent periods. The late Mr. John Oliphant, who was at that time a ruling elder in the church, and a most active assistant in using the means for carrying on this good work, says, 'I believe there were more than two hundred souls added to the church, as fruits of that revival.'" (16.)

On the western extremity of New York state, social development was much more recent. Churches were poor and small at that time. Few had regular preaching. But, Hotchkin says, God revived some of them, in the Holland Purchase area. Missionaries to the Indians travelled through the area, as well. Included amongst these was the Rev. Calvin Colton.

Hotchkin's information about the year **1818** refers only to the Presbytery of Cayuga, which reported revivals in eighteen out of the twenty-seven congregations under their control, with nearly six hundred new members joining the churches as a result. (17.)

Bradley described a revival in the town of Westmoreland.

"....in 1818 a revival commenced in this town. A very singular circumstance occurred demonstrating that all are in God's hands, and that he can use them, for the prostration of every high, imaginary system of men; and for the rapid advancement of his kingdom in the world. A man who was a strong advocate for the doctrine of the final restoration of all men, urged professors to set up conferences, which had been neglected. This surprised them, that he should urge them to this important undertaking. They went forward - The Lord made them feel his life giving presence in these meetings: Sinners were awakened; saints were moved by an internal force, to

take hold on strength - to be diligent - watchful, and active in the performance of every duty. About forty were brought out of darkness, and enabled to profess the Lord before the world." (18.)

For **1819**, the Niagara Presbytery reported revivals in Lewiston, Clarence, Cayuga Creek, Pembroke, Gainsville, Le Roy, Fredonia, and amongst the Indians near Buffalo.

The Presbytery of Ontario said they had been favoured by seasons of special attention in the towns of Penfield, Bloomfield and Riga.

The Geneva Presbytery reported revival in the town of Ulysses.

The Cayuga Presbytery reported revival in the town of Aurora.

The Presbytery of Onondaga reported revivals in Pompey First Church, Orville, Sullivan, Lenox, Lysander, and in the town of Onondaga.

The Presbytery of Bath reported revival in the town of Prattsburgh.

> "It continued for some time with great power, and, as the final result of it, about seventy members were added to the Presbyterian church. Time has tested the genuineness of this work, and evinced in the clearest manner that it was a gracious work of the Holy Spirit, who alone quickeneth dead sinners and imparts spiritual life." (19.)

Fowler adds the towns of Utica and Whitesboro, to that of Westmoreland (already mentioned) from the report of the Presbytery of Oneida. (20.)

This report by the Synod of Albany (which included the Presbytery of Oneida) appeared in 1819, and refers to events mainly the previous year. Fowler adds also the towns of Bridgewater, Mount Vernon, Cooperstown, Vernon and Verona. The total of additions from these revivals was about three hundred and forty.

The church at Adams, in Jefferson county, reported an increase of sixty-five new members upon examination during that year.

Hotchkin reported that the years **1819** and **1820** saw revivals in a number of places. Revivals were reported at Sherburne, Smyrna, Smithfield, Homer, Truxton, Coventry, Newark Valley, Ithaca, Ludlowville, Genoa, Auburn, Onondaga, Marcellus, Geneva, Phelps, Jamestown and Ellicott. "Some of these were very extensive, and in view of them it may truly be said, that a great company were obedient to the faith." (21.)

The Presbytery of Otsego was newly formed in 1819, and included several churches which had experienced revivals the year before. In October, 1819, they reported:-

> "Most of the churches within our bounds have had the peculiar manifestations of the grace of God. At Cooperstown there has been, during the last autumn and this winter, an unusual religious excitement. Persons of all classes and ages have been the subjects of it. In many instances, convictions have been pungent. A deep sense of the total depravity of the heart and the need of the grace of Christ to renew the heart have been felt in a

greater or less degree. There have been added to the church, during the past year, one hundred and seven persons, most of whom were the subjects of the late work, while others entertain the hope of having passed from death unto life, who have not yet united with the church. Cherry Valley has also been visited with the outpouring of the Spirit, and fifty have been received to the church."

"In Sherburne a very general awakening and reformation have occurred. Convictions were short in many instances, but sharp and distressing. A deep sense of sin as against holiness and God, the baseness and ingratitude of neglecting Christ, the folly of loving the world and of forgetting the soul, have been the exercises of the anxious. There has been an engagedness on the part of God's people, who have visited much from house to house for conversation and prayer, and a peculiar spirit of prayer and a deep feeling for sinners; ninety-two have united with the church, and many more entertain hope." (22.)

Fowler tells us that the General Assembly speaks of 1820 as a year of "general revivals." These revivals, the Assembly said, were

"characterised by deep and solemn stillness, insatiable thirst for social religious excuses [?], pungent and humbling convictions of sin, a spirit of importunate and persevering prayer, ardent concern for others and a general zeal for the cause of truth and the interests of religion. The blessing has fallen on persons of all ages and conditions. Advocates of error, as well as slaves of vice, have felt its power and demonstrated its effects." "These glorious displays of grace and power had, for the most part, the general impress of Jehovah's work. Their beginnings were small and insignificant. An obscure prayer meeting, thinly attended by some of the humblest and poorest of God's people, or a small country school house, were often chosen as the scene of their first appearance, while in other cases, meetings of parents and baptized children were the occasions for pouring out blessings on both. In some churches, days of fasting and prayer for revival have been offered, with many instances of evident answers from on high."

The Assembly listed a revival amongst the students at Hamilton College, with revivals in the Presbyteries of Onondaga, Oneida and Otsego, and the towns of Homer, Truxton, Smithfield, Virgil, Preble, DeRuyter, Lenox, Cazenovia, Skaneateles, Elbridge, Mount Vernon, Union (Sanquoit), Westmoreland, Verona, Utica, Holland Patent, Trenton, Litchfield, New Hartford, Cherry Valley, Cooperstown and Springfield.

To this list, Fowler added the St. Lawrence Presbytery, and the churches in Lorain, Watertown, Brownsville, Ogdensburg, Sackets Harbor, by the last of which seventy new converts were received, and Rome, to which twenty-three were added, among them the young Albert Barnes. (23.)

Asahel Nettleton's First Ministry in New York State

The years which represent the first part of the evangelistic ministry of the Rev. Asahel Nettleton, commencing in 1812, were spent in various parts of Connecticut. In this prolonged and strenuous evangelistic work he had the honour of seeing many local revivals. In the summer of 1819 he went to Saratoga Springs, in the eastern part of New York state, for the sake of his health, intending not to preach or to be involved in any formal work.

After only a small number of days, a friend, the Rev. Mr. Tucker, who was minister at Stillwater, visited him. In the course of conversation, Tucker spoke about a village called Malta, which then appeared to them both as a spiritual wasteland, where no "Plan of Union" churches existed. Nettleton became concerned for the area, and wanted to visit it. Together, they visited a home where a prayer meeting was being held, with a few neighbours who had been invited. Nettleton agreed to preach for them, and on 1st August a congregation of fifty people gathered to hear him. By the following night, he had returned to Saratoga to attend a prayer meeting.

For some weeks after that, Nettleton divided his time between working in the Saratoga area, and in Malta. Then he gave fuller attention to the village of Malta, through until April, 1820.

In a letter to a friend, Nettleton said:-

> "The commencement of this work was at Saratoga Springs last summer. At that place, about forty have made a profession of religion. These include some of the most respectable characters in the village. Directly south is the town of Malta. For a number of years there has been no Presbyterian church in that place. But the year past,... there has been a very interesting revival among that people. Our meetings have been crowded, and solemn as the house of death. A church has been recently organized, which now consists of one hundred and five members. You can hardly imagine the interest which this revival excited in the surrounding region. Although the inhabitants are scattered over a large extent, yet, I verily believe, I have seen more than fourteen hundred people assembled at once to hear the Gospel. On the east of Malta is the town of *Stillwater*. Here, also, there has been a very powerful revival. Although there has been some excitement as to serious things in this place in years past, yet this revival exceeds any they have ever before witnessed. On the 27th February last [1820], one hundred and three publicly presented themselves a living sacrifice unto the Lord; and about a hundred more are rejoicing in hope, and expect soon to follow their example. The work is still advancing; numbers are under conviction. In *Ballston*, adjoining Malta on the west, the work has been very powerful. At their two last communions, they admitted one hundred and eighteen as the fruit of this revival, and the work is yet increasing. Directly north is the town of *Milton*. I visited that people Sabbath before last, and preached three times to a

crowded and solemn assembly. In this place a revival has just commenced. Twelve are rejoicing in hope, and a number more are anxious for their souls. Eight miles to the north-west, adjoining Milton, is the town of *Galway*. Here the work is overwhelming. In less than two months past, more than a hundred and fifty have been brought to rejoice in hope. Dr. Nott, from this College, visited them last Sabbath, and admitted ninety-five to the church; and the work is still progressing. On the south of this is *Amsterdam*. Here fifty have recently been led to rejoice in hope. Adjoining this is a place called *Tripe's Hill*. Here thirty are rejoicing; and the work in both these places is increasing." (24.)

Saratoga Springs

The Presbyterian Church in Saratoga Springs had commenced with nine members in 1817, and by the summer of 1819 had twenty-two members, most of whom had been received by transfer from other places. The church was under the care of the Rev. D. Griswold, although he was not a settled minister there. So the church was not experiencing any marked conversion growth or spiritual vitality.

A correspondent provided Reuben Smith with a first-hand account of Nettleton's time there.

"In the midst of this coldness and gaiety, Mr. Nettleton came amongst us like any other stranger, though in a very unobtrusive manner. He commenced preaching in a school house, in the latter part of August, and did not officiate in the church until some weeks afterwards. I well recollect the impression which this produced on me at the time. I had not then heard or seen him. But understanding that a stranger had selected a *school-house* instead of the church, for evening lectures, I inferred that he considered himself too inferior in talents to be placed in contact with several popular preachers who were then in the village. Still I had been urged by a pious old lady to hear him, in company with her son, who was my personal friend. This we resisted for a time, but at length, to gratify her, more than for anything else, we attended an evening lecture.

I was surprised to find the house so much crowded, but there was nothing in the appearance or manner of the preacher, which was calculated at first to arrest my attention. His text was at Heb. xi, 16 - 'or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat, sold his birth-right.'

His method of introducing it, was somewhat startling. But I sunk down into a state of indifference, for the time being. I thought the preacher had too many repetitions - that his language was not of that high order which I had oftentimes heard and admired, and that he was far from being an eloquent man. Soon, however, I lost sight of all this, and found *that he was*

depicting my own case! and that, like Esau, *I* had sold my birth-right! I felt the full force of his reasoning, and for the first time in some years, was greatly alarmed.

At the close of his sermon, and before dismissing his audience, he cited a case which had come under his own observation, where one who had evidently despised her birth-right, by slighting the warnings of the gospel, had suddenly sickened, and died, without hope. The solemn manner in which this was related, produced an overwhelming effect. There was not a dry eye in the house; and I doubt whether there was one present, not already a believer, who did not resolve from that time to seek an interest in Christ. Certain it is that many dated their first serious impressions from that evening.

My friend and myself walked silently from the place for some distance, before speaking, each being afraid to address the other, as it was afterwards ascertained, lest a serious remark should excite ridicule. At length an encouraging word from one, broke the silence of both. We walked, arm in arm, for two hours, and before separating, had solemnly pledged ourselves to each other, that we would, from that moment, earnestly seek an interest in Christ.

The next morning I called on Mr. Nettleton, expecting from him words of comfort, and that direction which I so much needed. But he scarcely replied to me, except to say that I must repent. This, at the time, seemed unkind; but I afterwards learned that it was the course he frequently adopted with the awakened sinner. He took away, if possible, every earthly prop, and merely pointed 'to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.'" (25.)

Smith tells us that the most effective part of the revival at Saratoga Springs did NOT begin immediately after Nettleton started preaching, but commenced a short time later, after the meeting described by this hearer.

About eighty conversions followed from the meetings in Saratoga Springs in which Nettleton was involved, before he moved his work to Malta, on a fuller basis. These converts generally stood very well the test of time and troubles, and were a blessing to other churches where they went.

Malta and Stillwater

We have seen, above, that Nettleton and Tucker visited a home in Malta, where a prayer meeting was being held, about the end of July, 1819. He then preached to a congregation of fifty people in a school house on Sunday, 1st August.

The concern that Nettleton felt about this place, and certain happenings during this first visit, prompted him to return. But, because of activities in Saratoga Springs, he could not work full time in Malta until 26th October, after

which he preached there regularly for about eight months.

Between 1st August, and the end of October, a licensed preacher from the Presbytery of New York, and two students from Princeton Theological Seminary, came to serve briefly the people in Malta. And as a result of their work, a church consisting of twenty-four members came to exist. Most of these were converts from the previous two months of work. Nettleton began his regular work there on 26th October. As a result of this concentrated effort, it was really from Malta that the revival influences seemed to emanate, and spread to other places.

> "Within the year, about one hundred were added to the Presbyterian church in this place; how many to the other churches, we have not yet the means of knowing." (26.)

At Stillwater, where the work was mainly carried on by the Rev. Mr. Tucker, with his elders, "...in the short space of six months, one hundred and ninety-four were added to the church, of whom *one hundred and three* were added in one day." (27.) Others were added later, making a total of 217. They believed that over 300 were converted in the town, altogether.

Ballston

Reuben Smith was the pastor of the Ballston church at the time of the revival. At a later time he moved away, but, after an absence of twenty-two years, he returned to pastor this church again. So he knew the people and the situation well. It is about the revival in Ballston that he provides us with the best details.

Some of the Ballston people attended a Communion season at Malta, and were stirred by it to seek a revival amongst themselves.

> "...on the 12th day of December, four or five church members being together after one of our evening meetings, felt in an unusual degree the necessity of a Revival of Religion, both in their own hearts, and through the congregation; in consequence of this, they solemnly covenanted with each other to observe a special concert of secret prayer for this object, at a particular hour of the day.
>
> This was the first visible movement among Christians; but it ought to be told, for the encouragement of others, that there had existed for several years in this church, a small female praying society, who had made it one article in their constitution, that they would never cease, while the organisation lasted, to pray for a Revival of Religion!
>
> *The session of the church* were awakened next. On the day appointed for our state thanksgiving, after attending the public services, they held a special conference among themselves. They inquired into each other's official faithfulness - examining their own hearts, and comparing views with regard to the state of religion in the church. Much tenderness of feeling was

manifested on this occasion, and it was agreed before they separated, to call a meeting of all the members of the church for a similar object.

The meeting was held on the first Monday in January, and was indeed a solemn and melting season. After prayer, several exhortations were given, and we then began a free conversation with individual members, on the state of their religious experience, as well as their views and feelings in regard to our spiritual condition as a church. Almost all were found either prayerful and strong in the belief that God was about to pour out his spirit upon us, or they were mourning their coldness, backslidings, and neglect of duty. Some of our most exemplary professors, were almost wholly in darkness, but they were panting for the light of God's countenance, 'as the heart panteth after the waterbrooks.'

The awakening amongst God's people was now general. Our hopes in his designs of mercy for others rose in proportion." (28.)

The following Saturday night, at a prayer meeting, several impenitent young people became deeply concerned. The first anxious meeting was held a few days later. About sixty were present, with many people bowed under deep conviction. Conversions started to become numerous, and daily they heard of people being converted, in all parts of the town.

The session members, went two by two, and visited every family in the congregation. A week-night lecture was commenced. Prayer meetings, anxious meetings and conference meetings were held, with several being held on any evening, and in different places.

"The people seemed never weary of attending, and the difficulty was rather to satisfy them without appointing more meetings than we thought to be best. They would flock together during all the inclemencies of the season, and listen, when met, with so deep and profound an attention, that in a room crowded to overflowing, it would almost seem you might hear a pin drop or the beating of a watch. The stillness, at times, seemed to have something like mystery about it; it was sublime, it was awful; you almost seemed to be in eternity." (29.)

"These things notwithstanding, it would be a mistake to suppose that there was anything like enthusiasm manifested in this movement. No dreams, no visions, or supernatural impressions (except in a single instance) were pretended or relied on. No efforts were made to excite the passions or imagination. Noise was repressed, and convictions were, in general, rational and deliberative. Plain doctrinal and conscience-exciting truths were principally presented in preaching, and these sermons were those most frequently blessed. Much was urged as to the obstinacy of the sinner's will, his entire responsibility, great guilt and entire dependence on God, to save him from destruction."

"More than once indeed have human wisdom and foresight been

entirely set aside, and the church had thus been taught to believe that the best way to carry on a work of God in Revivals, *is just to lie in the dust of humility, doing duty as it arises, and suffering God to carry on the work himself.* The principal duties are those of prayer, patience, Christian intercourse, and continual waiting on the ordinary means of grace." (30.)

The first Communion, during the revival at Ballston, was held on 21st February. It was preceded by a day of fasting and prayer. Fifty-nine new communicants were received, which formed the first-fruits of the revival. The older Scottish pattern was followed, and thus about 500 took part in the Communion, including many visitors, and about two thousand were present altogether.

Six weeks later, fifty seven more were added to the church, during a very solemn gathering, with others joining the church at later times. The character of the church was transformed and greatly enlarged.

Asahel Nettleton preached in Ballston on only two occasions during this revival, but the content of the preaching, and the methods used, were in total agreement with what he normally did.

Galway

Reuben Smith tells us that there were two churches, East and West Galway. The following account concerns the East Galway congregation.

"This place seems to have been next visited, and in a way to show another variety in the sovereign dispensations of grace. They were at the time without a pastor, although a faithful licentiate preacher had been with them the previous autumn, who after the Revival became their minister. In the Presbyterial Narrative, the church is described as 'greatly diminished in numbers, cold, stupid and discouraged.' Symptoms of a Revival first began to appear among them about the end of February. Its principal care and labors devolved, for a considerable time, upon the eldership.

There appeared first, an unusual seriousness in one of the district schools. On the first sabbath in March, the President of Union College visited them, for the administration of the Lord's supper. Seven were added to the church on that occasion; the ordinances were very impressive, and several, it was believed, were then awakened.

The week following, the solemnity was evidently increased, and on Tuesday evening, at a conference, some twenty to thirty persons were so deeply impressed, as to be either unable, or entirely unwilling to leave their seats after the services were closed. Some stout-hearted young men were found wringing their hands in great agony, and asking, 'What must we do to be saved?' School rooms became too small for these conferences; the church was resorted to, and soon filled to overflowing. The faithful eldership

redoubled their exertions. They visited all the families by districts, conversed with individuals, and attended numerous religious meetings. They also succeeded in securing the stated services, for a season, of the preacher before mentioned [Dr. Nott]; and it is remembered, and will long be remembered by this people, with what disinterested and affectionate zeal he devoted himself to this work. For not less than seven or eight sabbaths in succession, was he with them, proclaiming the gospel of reconciliation, faithfully, plainly, and with great apparent effect.

Many whole families were hopefully converted to God, and in the course of a few weeks, more than two hundred and fifty, of every age, were rejoicing in hope. *One hundred and sixty* were added to the Presbyterian church; the Baptist and Methodist churches were also enlarged. The special means were continued by the eldership for some time longer. They were then relieved, in some measure, by the settlement of a pastor. Bible classes, sabbath schools, and catechetical instructions, were for a long time well sustained: and this congregation was distinguished for its liberality in the support of benevolent institutions." (31.)

Another angle on the story of the revival in Galway is given in the biography of Dr. Nott. The authors of this biography comment upon the very different preaching styles and personalities of Dr. M'Auley and Dr. Nott of Union College, and the evangelist Mr. Nettleton. M'Auley was a fervent, outgoing, dramatic preacher, who appealed to people to turn to God, and used his talents widely, along with Nettleton. Nettleton was more someone who stressed the dangers of impenitence, and the doom facing those who did not repent. Eliphalet Nott was a much quieter, more "ordinary" preacher, who did not possess the features which were so evident in the outpourings of the other two. Yet it was Dr. Nott who was honoured by the Lord in the revival in Galway.

"Nor was the preaching of Dr. Nott without revival effects of a more direct and outwardly impressive kind. During the winter of 1820, the Presbyterian church in Galway, Saratoga County, was without a pastor. Dr. Nott had been assigned by the presbytery, as a temporary supply. This led him to preach often in that place; and although his sermons differed in few, if any, respects from the style they ever manifested - impressive, indeed, but seldom terrific or alarming - they were followed by a revival of religion no less solemn and effectual than that which sprung from the labors of Mr. Nettleton in Schenectady and a number of towns in Saratoga. It showed that the divine influence was not confined to any particular mode of preaching, so be it that the preacher.... was only solemn and earnest in the delivery of his message. It was a season of 'the right hand of the Most High,' and every truthful mode of appeal made an impression unknown to other times." (32.)

Union College and Schenectady

The story of how the revival affected Union College in Schenectady is also referred to in a letter which Nettleton wrote, while residing at the College.

> "South from Malta, about twelve miles, is the city of *Schenectady*, and Union College, where I now reside with Dr. M'Auley. He takes a lively interest in this good work. I first became acquainted with him last summer at the Springs, and more particularly at Malta, where he frequently visited us, and preached, and conversed, and attended the meetings appointed for those anxious for their souls.
>
> On a Sabbath, when a number were to be admitted to the church in Malta, he brought with him a number of students from the college. Some of them became anxious. About this time, one of the students was called into the eternal world. He was laid out in Dr. M'Auley's study. The Doctor was anxious to improve this solemn providence to the best advantage. He assembled the students around the lifeless remains of their departed friend, and conversed and prayed with them in the most solemn manner. A number of them engaged to attend to the subject of religion in earnest. From that time, many of the students became deeply impressed with a sense of their lost condition. For them were appointed meetings of inquiry; and in this very room, where they lately beheld the breathless corpse of their young companion, and where I am now writing, was witnessed a scene of deep and awful distress. About thirty of the students are brought to rejoice in hope.
>
> The revival is now very powerful in the city. Such a scene they never before witnessed. More than a hundred have been brought to rejoice in hope. Besides these, we have more than two hundred in our meeting for inquiry, anxious for their souls. We met in a large upper room, called the Masonic Hall. The room was so crowded, that we were obliged to request all who had recently found relief to retire below, and spend their time in prayer for those above.... Did you ever witness two hundred sinners, with one accord, in one place, weeping for their sins? Until you have seen this, you can have no adequate conceptions of the solemn scene.
>
> Some of the most stout, hard-hearted, Heaven-daring rebels, have been in the most awful distress. Within a circle whose diameter would be twenty-four miles, not less than eight hundred souls have been hopefully born into the kingdom of Christ since last September. The same glorious work is fast spreading into other towns and congregations. *'This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel."*" (33.)

A further insight into the personality and preaching of Eliphalet Nott, President of Union College, and into the revival at the College, comes from the biography of Dr. Nott, referred to above. The students were naturally more impressed by the fervid and dramatic preaching of Dr. M'Auley, and by the direct and pungent portrayals of human nature by Mr. Nettleton. Dr. Nott was

quite different, and was therefore easily underestimated, or was even spoken about as of little consequence as a preacher.

> "There is well remembered a series of sermons which he gave, that memorable winter, in the college chapel. After a manner peculiar to himself, a number of discourses were preached from the same Scriptural passage. A most suggestive and elevated thought was chosen as the textual theme, while the whole series was but an expansion of it in all its applications to the religious life: 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and on earth is there nought that I desire beside Thee (or without Thee); flesh and heart (body and soul), they fail, but Thou art the rock of my heart (strength of my heart) and portion for ever.' Sabbath after Sabbath, during that season of religious interest, was that sublime text announced in our hearing, and its soul-filling and soul-elevating truth, with all the kindred ideas so richly suggested by it, presented in every way that could make the deepest impression." (34.)

The Revival in Nassau

Following the movement starting from Saratoga Spring, and spreading from Malta, through the district, and reaching a climax at Schenectady, in April, 1820, Nettleton began preaching in the village of Nassau, and its vicinity, a few miles east of Albany.

One remarkable thing about this revival was that it provides the only case in which Asahel Nettleton made notes about his activities at the time, and developed these notes into a modest journal. This journal is reproduced by Bennet Tyler in Nettleton's "Memoirs." It covers about fifteen pages, depending upon which edition of the "Memoirs" is being consulted, but too many pages to include here in its totality. (In both the American and the English editions, and the subsequent reprintings, the text of this journal is complete, but the format of the editions vary.)

As Tyler said, if Nettleton had been able to keep a similar journal during all of his other revival activities, such a journal would have included an enormous wealth of very interesting material.

Some people from Nassau visited Malta during the revival there, about the month of February, 1820, and at least one person was converted before returning home. This prompted the older church members to reconsider their situations as a church, and some heart-searching took place. Soon, several other conversions occurred in that area. The result was that Nettleton was implored to visit them.

He arrived in Nassau on April 19th. On April 26th, he returned to Schenectady for two days only. By May 4th, there were forty apparent conversions in Nassau. Many entries occur in the journal, describing details of what he did.

By May 30th, “From this time we spent a number of half-days and evenings in hearing a relation of their Christian experience, preparatory to a public profession. These were interesting and animating seasons, affording the best opportunity of learning the human heart in all its foldings of depravity and opposition; and the astonishing change wrought by the power of God's grace.”

“June 25, Sabbath. - This day sixty-eight made a public profession of religion, thirty-two of whom were baptised. At this time, more than a hundred had, to appearance, become the subjects of divine grace. A number more have since publicly professed Christ; and of these five young men are preparing for the Gospel ministry.” (35.)

Tyler adds:- “This sketch was drawn up by Mr. Nettleton, a few months after he left Nassau, from brief memoranda which he kept at the time. It is, on the whole, a good specimen of the revivals which occurred under his preaching.”

Results of the Revival

(a) Its immediate effects. Smith says that “the facts now exhibited leave us no room for disquisition. In the number of souls converted; in the enlargement of the churches; strengthening of believers and building up the various institutions of benevolence and religion, and in further favoring the cause of order and truth in every department, it was universally acknowledged, that the Revival had been a blessing, distinct and manifest.

The deportment and spirit of the subjects also, was such as to bear the best tests of examination on the subject. Reviewing the ground after more than one year had elapsed, the testimony of the Albany Presbytery, is as follows: The converts 'have been uncommonly united in Christian love, and out of a number not less than two thousand, who have been hopefully converted, and of whom fourteen hundred have united themselves to the Presbyterian church, not more than four or five are known to have shown signs of apostacy.'“ (36.)

(b) Its longer term results. Writing in 1848, Smith says, “Truth compels us to state, that ministerial changes have been frequent in one or two of these congregations, and divisions and unhappy differences on points of church order; but in no instance, we believe, could these evils be traced to the Revival, nor have they amounted to essential heresies, or been of long duration.

The result of a trial of more than twenty years, therefore, is thus far this; that while there have been delinquencies and declensions in some of the churches which are now reviewed, there has *not* been a falling off, as a whole; but, on the contrary, an increase in numbers, strength and efficiency, as compared with their preceding state.” (37.)

Causes of Difficulties in the Churches

Causes of these problems, Smith believed, could be traced to THREE main roots.

(a) The first arose from bringing new converts into church membership too quickly. This was very difficult, because both the new converts, and the older Christians, wanted to welcome the converts into the communion of the church as soon as was reasonably possible.

(b) The second cause was that inadequate instruction was given to the converts after the Revival was over. A number of practical difficulties rotate around this issue, making it hard to carry out properly.

(c) The third cause, and the one which Smith believed to be the most serious, was that, after 1824, a different type or class of revivals began to be experienced by the churches, which were in many respects different from those which occurred in 1820, and before.

> "It is well known that about the year 1824 or '25, what have usually been styled **new measures**, began to be adopted for promoting Revivals, such as *protracted meetings*, the *anxious seat*, the more *vehement excitement of natural sympathies*, and corresponding instructions, as to *human ability* and the *ease of obtaining religion*.
>
> It is known that Mr. Nettleton never approved of these measures, or the doctrinal views with which they are connected. He prophesied that 'they would *run out* true revivals,' and finding he could not resist them successfully, retired from that time into comparative obscurity.
>
> Now it is a fact [Smith believed], that these revivals have not, in general, borne substantial fruits. They have been of short duration, and followed in many instances, (we might say in most instances,) with more or less of evil to the churches, even where stated exertions have afterwards been made to give them a right direction.
>
> They have often been connected with divisions, strifes, unsettling of ministers, heresies, and a multitude of developments of spurious experiences in professors, such as give infinite trouble to churches, and for which no remedy seems to exist.
>
> We do not mean to affirm or believe, that these have been the only fruits of these more modern Revivals; but that they exist, and to a far greater extent, than was common in older movements of this sort, is what all observe, and few we think will be disposed to deny." (38.)

Smith thought that some people might conclude that alleged special influences of the Holy Spirit, such as were normally seen in revivals, might belong only to the fanatics and the deluded. Smith knew that such special workings of the Spirit as seen in revivals were both scriptural, and well attested by examples in subsequent church history. (39.)

He thought that, in order to avoid undesirable revivals, others might decide that we should have a situation where the church could grow and expand without the event of revivals. Perhaps people might want to get on without revivals? But, so far, the church had not got very far without revivals. True revivals come from God, and are an essential part of God's way of doing things. They have served the church very well. (40.)

> "Nor does the tendency to degeneration of Revivals at all prove the falsity of the doctrine of Revivals; every good thing tends to degeneracy in human hands." He comments that the Great Awakening was followed by the evil aspects introduced by Davenport. The New England ministers around 1800 wanted to overcome these bad influences that Davenport introduced, so they had to manage revivals in a much purer way. This is what men like Nettleton and Griffin had done. Only by having revivals that were as pure as possible could such bad elements be eliminated, and their baleful long-term influence be overcome. "True revivals are of God; then they have been of signal service to the church, and if in any instances they have been followed by those less pure, and evils have ensued, the fault has been in their management, not in the thing themselves." (41.)

So, a greater degree of purity in revivals must be sought by means of managing revivals in wiser and purer ways.

Differences Between the Old Revivals and the New Measures Revivals

Reuben Smith provides us with a list of nine differences which he believed existed between the "older" revivals of Nettleton and Griffin, and the "new measures" revivals which arose after 1824. But he does mention that the new measures really arose because of the doctrinal differences which existed between the older Connecticut men and the new generation of preachers in New York.

These differences will be summarised here, and then commented upon.

1. The principal actor in the revivals after 1800 (Nettleton) had peculiar qualities which made him admirably suitable to being involved in the purest and highest quality of revival work, and these admirable qualities did not exist amongst the principal new measures men.

2. In the older Connecticut revivals, doctrinal truth was much more heavily emphasised. People were strongly taught about the great depths of their sinful depravity, human dependence and God's sovereignty, the atonement and regeneration, and the whole range of the Holy Spirit's work.

3. In the older revivals, sinners were NOT taught that they could repent by their own efforts, or in a way which flowed simply from their own decisions, although they WERE taught strongly that they had no excuses for their impenitence.

4. In the older revivals, efforts to promote revivals always followed the appearance of the workings of the Holy Spirit. It was never the case that people attempted to start revival efforts, in the hope that the Spirit's work would appear afterwards. The newer revivals often put human effort first before any evident signs of the Spirit's work.

5. In the older revivals, there was less noise, less dependence on what could be seen ("the Kingdom of God cometh not by observation."), and less attempt to build upon curiosity and other human sympathies.

6. More effort was made to secure correct advice and instruction for sinners under conviction.

7. Only discreet and judicious persons were allowed to exhort in meetings.

8. There was no speedy admission of converts to church membership.

9. More pains were taken to instruct converts after the revival was over. (42.)

Comments

Several comments are appropriate, following upon Smith's comments here about the new measures.

(a) Regarding point 1, it is true that Nettleton was admirably qualified to conduct the revivals that he did, in view of the particular type of theological system that was prevalent at that time in Connecticut, and in much of New York. Men like Edward D. Griffin, Eliphalet Nott and Timothy Dwight had very different types of personalities from Nettleton, and had very different styles as preachers. But they also had success in revival movements which were of a character similar to those enjoyed by Nettleton.

It could probably be argued that the style and type of revival was governed largely by the type of theological system that was being preached, as much as by any particular personality or personal qualities which a preacher like Nettleton might possess.

Finney was a totally different type of person, and a totally different type of preacher, from Nettleton. In his early ministry he was also immature in certain ways, as one would expect, and we would expect that he would do things differently, and have a different impact, for those reasons. Certainly, his different theology would also produce different results, as well. One could argue that Finney was admirably qualified to take part in his style of revivals. As noted elsewhere, however, Finney's theology was not so totally different from Nettleton's as many people have tried to make out.

We have to beware of assuming that God wants all revivals ideally to be the same as the older Connecticut revivals, that all good theology ought to be New England Calvinism, and that every deviation from these ideals is due to human mismanagement, bad theology or unfortunate personality peculiarities.

The history of revivals show clearly, I believe, that God does NOT always do

things exactly the same everywhere and on every occasion, and that differences between one revival and another are not always simply due to human factors.

(b) Many of the differences between older and newer revivals which are listed by Smith were not so true of revivals before 1830 as they were after that date.

Similarly, many of the differences that he lists were not true of Finney, or were not true to any great degree, but were more true of some of the other evangelists who followed him, as we shall see in a later chapter.

For example, a number of instances which Finney describes in his "Memoirs" provide examples of starting to promote a revival AFTER the Spirit had led, or after a position of prevailing prayer had been gained, or after the Spirit had already commenced to work. Very few, if any, cases before 1835 show Finney going ahead of the Spirit in his revival work.

Even with the lesser evangelists in upstate New York, and with the outreach work of ordinary lay people, protracted meetings and all, it can be argued that they usually tried to be led by God, and that they usually followed the spirit of intercessory prayer. In this way, it is usually not really fair to say that they went ahead of the Spirit.

The "stereotype" of organised mass evangelism is, of course, that we decide what and when to organise, and ask the Spirit to come in and bless us, as an afterthought. Many times there was, and is, much truth in this view, but it is almost never wholly true.

(c) Overly vehement preaching, and appealing to human sympathies and feelings, did certainly happen many times in the new measures revivals, but, while Nettleton's preaching may not have been overly vehement, it would be quite mistaken to say that he was never guilty of similar things.

For example, we have seen above in the description of events at Saratoga Springs, how Nettleton used the story of the girl who apparently neglected her spiritual birth-right, did not close with the gospel message, sickened suddenly, and died apparently without hope. This is an instance of making a very emotional appeal. The telling of the story was also an important factor in the spread of the revival. There is little doubt that Nettleton did this sort of thing often enough. He would also have preached on hellfire as the result of impenitence on suitable occasions. This kind of thing was seen as a simple instance of telling people the truth, and declaring what Jesus had taught in the Gospels. It was meant to appeal to their consciences. It has been staple diet for evangelists for centuries.

So, it is misleading to say that there was no noise or emotion in Nettleton's meetings. They could be very emotional meetings. The emotions were often raised by subject material which Nettleton introduced quite deliberately,

although raising the emotions was an unintentional by-product of his message. He was aiming at the conscience, at repentance, and at bringing people to Christ.

He deliberately suppressed outbursts of groans, crying, and audible signs of agony of mind. He went to great lengths to suppress that kind of thing. In that sense, his meetings had no noise. He wanted to limit sympathetic reactions which might overtake people as a result of such noises, and in this way result in spurious conversions.

The Differences in Doctrine - the Key Factor?

Smith mentions the differences in doctrine in passing, implying that it was the foundational factor which caused all the other differences between the older revivals and the new measures revivals. Asahel Nettleton and William Weeks certainly agreed with this understanding, as did a great many other men who sympathised with them. Charles Finney would also have agreed with this, in many instances.

One very clear statement of this view was expressed in 1833 by Edward D. Griffin, when he published "A Letter to a Friend on the Connexion between the New Doctrines and the New Measures."

There are three particular matters over which he takes issue. (43.)

(a) The new theology taught that the Holy Spirit brings a person to God, and to regeneration, by using motives to make the person change his or her mind about the relationship with God. Thus, the preacher's task is to heap motives upon a person, trusting that the Spirit will use these things to bring about a conversion. There is a temptation in this, Griffin says, to overleap propriety, good taste and manners, in order to achieve this end. The end justifies the means for the preacher.

(b) Sinners are taught, in the new theology, that they can turn to God themselves. So, it hardly matters what motives for turning to God that a preacher may place before his audience, so long as he succeeds in making them turn to God. He can address their conscience (as Nettleton did), or selfishness, or imagination, or the social affections, or the animal passions. No matter what motives are used, when the person turns to God, his actions become holy, and he has become a Christian. Again, the end justifies the means, for the preacher.

(c) Griffin believed that the new measures theologians made a mistake in understanding the nature of the mind, and lost sight of the depraved nature of the unregenerate mind. Preachers thought they could appeal to unsaved people directly, and get them to turn to God.

In the Calvinism that Griffin was accustomed to, there was no mileage in

appealing directly to the depraved, unregenerate mind. It could not grasp the ways of God, as Saint Paul had taught in the early chapters of First Corinthians. The unregenerate mind could only be changed by a creative act of the Spirit of God, to create life, enlighten the mind, and change the heart. Then a person could respond to the Gospel. Then the person would have the ability to repent and believe in God.

So, for Griffin, the new measures were based upon important flaws in theology, which helped produce serious defects in practice. These, in turn, would produce bad long-term results, and bring the good name of revivals into disrepute. Not only that, but it would dishonour God, and prejudice the work of people trying to preach the Gospel, for many years to come.

Some of Smith's "Differences" were directly theological factors. Some others were more practical issues, but which depended upon theological principles for their validity.

It is not my purpose to discuss here to what extent theological considerations might have been fundamental in the ways that many of the Calvinists believed. Our treatment of the whole area will develop through this book, as we proceed. And we can return to it later.

At this stage, we can simply note the basic importance of the theological issues, and note that, while there may be a great deal of truth in this view, it can also be argued that other factors played significant roles.

CHAPTER SIX

REVIVALS in UPSTATE NEW YORK 1821-1825

The general character of the situation in 1821 in upstate New York regarding religious revivals was that there were a number of interesting movements in process, although they did not constitute something as powerful, or as widespread in their influence, as happened in 1820.

Fowler provided information from the Presbyterian Synod of Albany, which said that the effects of a revival from the previous year were still being felt in 1821 in the area covered by the Oneida Presbytery. The congregations of Whitesboro, Holland Patent and Norwich were especially mentioned.

The congregation of Winfield was in the area generally served by this Presbytery, but belonged to another Presbytery. "One hundred and thirty were said to have been hopefully converted" in Winfield, although it was a rural town.

In Oneida presbytery, "General meetings of neighboring ministers and congregations for special prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit, have been established in different parts of the Presbytery and attended with good effect."

Effects of previous revivals were still also being felt in both Union College and Hamilton College.

With respect to 1821, in the Otsego Presbytery, the congregation of Cherry Valley reported a revival in which 150 were added to the church, and the Springfield congregation reported also 150 conversions, with a good number of others asking what they must do to be saved.

The Presbytery of St. Lawrence reported that the Watertown congregation "has enjoyed a special season of refreshing," with 93 added to the church. The Rev. George S. Boardman was the newly inducted minister of this parish. The Presbytery also mentions revivals at Sackets Harbor, Adams, first and second, Lorraine and Rodman.

Fowler tells us that the "Utica Christian Repository" added the towns of New Haven and Henderson to those listed above. It also reported that 52 were received into the church at Rodman, and as many again appeared to be hopefully converted. In one of the churches in Adams, 44 had joined the church, and fifty others appeared to be converted as well. In the other Adams church, there had been 60 or 70 conversions. At Henderson there had been between 70 and 80 converts. It said that most of the towns in that part of the State enjoyed an "unusual attention to religion." There were between 800 and 1,000 conversions in Jefferson county.

The Presbytery of Onondaga reported revivals in the town of Otisco, where

34 were added to the church, and twenty others were hopefully converted. The township of Onondaga itself saw 76 added to the church, with other hopeful signs, as well. (1.)

George W. Gale's Ministry

The revival in Adams is the one about which we have the most information, and to a small degree the revivals in Sackets Harbor and Henderson. The sources of this information are from the autobiography of George W. Gale, who was the Presbyterian minister in Adams through that time, and also from the autobiography of Charles G. Finney, who was converted during the revival. Both of these documents were written many years later.

Finney's autobiography is a gripping, inspiring and thrilling account of his spiritual journey, and of many wonderful things done by God through his ministry, although his account is also known to be inaccurate in a number of ways. It was written around 1870, when Finney was quite an old man. Probably without realising what he was doing, Finney wrote his story in such a way as to defend and justify a number of agendas that he promoted throughout his life. So, to some degree, his account is a revision of what actually happened. As a result, at certain stages of the story, it can be hard to know how much weight to place upon some of the things he said.

George Gale's autobiography was written earlier, but definitely after 1851. He died in 1861. It only covers the period of his life up to 1834.

A family member made a second hand-written copy from Gale's original copy. Part of the original was later destroyed, as the only part remaining in Gale's handwriting is from 1827 to 1834. This second copy was again copied some years later, by a family member, using a typewriter. Finally, this typewritten version was published (privately) in New York, in 1964. Rosell and Dupuis apparently consulted all of the remaining materials, and said that all versions contained slight differences. (2.)

Because this autobiography has only been available to the public since 1964; because a very limited number of copies exist, and because Gale was not so famous as Finney, Gale's autobiography is hardly known, and has not been subjected to the same scrutiny as Finney's material. Its contents, indeed, are hardly known to anyone except certain specialists in the field.

George Washington Gale was born in the town of Stanford, in Dutchess county, New York, on the 3rd December, 1789, so he was only three years older than Finney. The events of his early life do not concern us here, except perhaps to comment about his theological training. He was in Princeton Seminary for several years about 1815, with a break for health reasons at one stage. The health problem arose because he had to earn his living by teaching, while studying, and found it too taxing on his strength. His teachers included

Ashbel Green, Samuel Miller and Archibald Alexander. Simply from considering these names we can see the kind of theology Gale believed, and later preached.

During the time he was at Princeton, a powerful revival occurred. "During the winter [of 1815] there was an extensive and powerful revival under the direction of Dr. Green. The President, the professors, preached alternatively in the college, and the theological students met in the chapel with the students. It was under the ordinary exercise and preaching of the Sabbath that the work commenced in connection with the labors of the President, who had a regular Bible Class of all the students every Sabbath. It seemed, as it was indeed, eminently a work of God. It pervaded almost the entire college. It seemed at one time as if it would sweep the whole college. A great number professed a hope, and thirty or forty remained steadfast." Gale lists several of the students from those days, who were great friends of his. Some of them were converts in the revival. Several of these friends entered the Episcopal ministry.

"This revival was one of the most interesting I ever knew, and one which was followed by most happy results." (3.)

A fuller account of this revival was written by Ashbel Green, as a report to the college trustees. It appeared in print first as a pamphlet, and it was later included as an appendix in his biography. He also published the detailed, careful instructions which he gave to those students who professed conversion during the revival. This last document is especially interesting. (4.)

Adams, 1821

Gale describes his various activities after he left college. He worked as a missionary to remote parts of the State for some of the time, and pursued further studies. For some of the time he preached at Sackets Harbor, which was not far from the town of Adams. He was ordained and installed as pastor at Adams on 27th October, 1819. At first, he lived with various families in the district, but soon became impressed with the need to be married, and to have a home of his own. Gale gives quite a long account of his efforts to secure for himself a good wife, and admits to the amount of time he was out of his parish in pursuit of this goal, during the first year after his ordination.

He occasionally exchanged pulpits with the pastors at Brownsville and Watertown. George Boardman, pastor at Watertown, was a special friend of Gale's.

In March of 1821, Mrs Gale gave birth to a baby three months prematurely, and the baby died. For a month, Gale nursed his wife day and night until she slowly began recovering some of her strength.

It is at this point that we find his account of the steps which marked the beginning of the 1821 revival in Adams, which had such an enormous impact

on the whole district in the next few years.

> "As soon as I could be out among the people of the parish, I saw things had gone on quietly and we had had a few additions to our church since my settlement, but that did not satisfy me. I wanted to see sinners converted. I told the church that since they had got a pastor they seemed to think that all was well. Little or nothing more was to be done, I found. We agreed to call a church meeting. I made it a sort of inquiry meeting. All confessed their coldness, and a day of fasting and prayer was agreed upon, and committees appointed to visit the church. On the fast day the church met and had an interesting season. The committees reported that they had visited the members, and that they had attempted to settle some cases of difficulty that they had found, but had not quite succeeded. Spoke favorably in regard to them, and thought a little more labor would accomplish the object. Another day of fasting and prayer was appointed. The church came together, and all difficulties between members was found settled. I had drawn up a confession of our lukewarmness and worldliness, and requested all who felt that they could unite in such a confession to arise. Nearly or quite all arose, and one or two hopeful conversions since our last meeting were reported, and there was evidently an increasing solemnity among the people."

At this point, he got news that his sister was dying of consumption, and she wanted to see him. So the family travelled some distance to make this visit. Gale arranged for a young helper named Jedediah Burchard, who had been converted shortly beforehand, to take charge of the Adams pulpit in his absence. He was not to preach, as he was not qualified, but he could read a sermon, and then he could exhort the people.

> "On my return home I found the state of religion had not retrograded, but rather advanced. Before I left I got a young man, accustomed to take the lead of meetings, to read sermons from a book. I gave him, telling him I did not wish him to preach as he was not licensed, but he might exhort the people after he had read, and in the other parts of the service he might call upon some leader in the church, or perform the duty himself. This young man was Jedediah Burchard, the noted revivalist as he afterward proved to be... Whether I erred, as some think, or did good to the cause of God, as many others would think, I was at a loss to decide, but, on the whole, I believe the good vastly preponderated, although from his eccentricity some evil did undoubtedly follow. Many souls through his instrumentality will rejoice forever in heaven, I doubt not."

Gale provides a good deal of information about Burchard, which we will note later.

> "On my return he [Burchard] remained with me several weeks, visited with me, and attended prayer meetings, and my meetings on the

outskirts of the congregation, where I invited him to give a word of exhortation, which he did with great propriety and effect. After some weeks, finding that I did not need his services, I advised him to labor in other places, to help the Baptist church in our Township, and to assist in holding meetings in the adjoining towns, which he did with good results." (5.)

"The work which was on the advance, although not rapid, for some time, continued to increase in interest. In an adjoining town, where Mr. Burchard was attending a meeting, there was the most visible impression, and there I went every week. A young physician, who had just set up practice in that neighborhood, was among the first who manifested a special interest for his soul. When an opportunity was given, near the close of meeting, for any one desiring the prayers of christians to let it be known by rising, he was one of the first to rise.... He was a stranger to me, but I soon made his acquaintance, and not long after he gave his heart to God. He soon after came to the village, where he united with the church, and where he still lives, a godly man and much respected as a physician....

The impression seemed deepening at Adams, and numbers were converted, but it seemed to linger specially among the youth. I remarked one day to Burchard, as we were going home from visiting in town, that in a certain town where Mr. Nettleton was laboring, he had remarked that there was one man who stood in the way of the conversion of many in that place. If that man should be converted the spell would be broken, or words like those, and the event proved the truth of his remark. I added, 'I believe that we have a similar case. If C. G. Finney... should be converted the young people in the village, and many others, would give up, for numbers of them are deeply convicted.'" A certain local schoolteacher also exercised a similar influence.

"[Finney] led the choir of singers on the Sabbath, and professed, and doubtless cherished, a respect for religion, and was a warm friend of mine, but said he would not go to the prayer meetings in the school house because there were fleas there, and my meetings for inquiry he called whispering meetings... I was in the habit of conversing in a low tone with each one at my meetings of inquiry..." Finney had made fun of the prayer meetings and inquiry meetings in a number of ways. He also had thought that being a lawyer would require him to do things which were not consistent with the profession of being a Christian.

"To my surprise, Mr. Finney came one evening late in the fall into my meetings of inquiry. ...I was conversing with Captain, afterward Judge, Goodell, ...who was at my meeting, bathed in tears. He came in late, had been in the prayer meeting in the other room. I left the Captain, and going to him took him by the hand, and said, looking him in the eye, 'You have come here, I presume, as a spy. You want to get something to make

sport of.' He looked at me, with an air of solemnity I shall never forget. 'No, Mr. Gale', said he, 'I have not. I am willing now to be a christian.'... 'Do you think,' said he, 'there is any hope in my case?'"

Because of Finney's habit of treating serious subjects with levity, Gale said to Finney that he could be converted, but, if that happened it would be "something very similar to God's exercising miraculous power." Gale led the gathering in the closing prayer, while Finney knelt by his side, trembling.

The young schoolteacher, mentioned earlier, was named Charles Sears, and Gale urged him to keep away from Finney, as his influence might make it harder for Sears to become a Christian.

The inquiry meeting had been on a Monday evening. "I was so much occupied that I thought but little of his case until Thursday evening, when young Sears, the school teacher, came to my house." "He asked me if I had seen Mr. Finney. I told him not since my meeting of inquiry. He replied, 'I think you would like to see him now,' and, after some few words on different subjects, he left.

The next day Mr. Finney came to my house. He came, with tears streaming down his face. I took him by the hand, we were both too full of emotion to say much, for some time. He broke out soon, 'Brother Gale, do not hereafter doubt of any one's salvation. I hope God has had mercy on me.'..."

"On the succeeding Sabbath evening, in a full house, I asked him to state what his grounds of hope were, and how he had been led by the Spirit of God."

Gale then gives a full description of Finney's conversion experience, and the events which followed in the next day or two, as presented by Finney at that church service. It follows fairly well the account which Finney later provided himself in his autobiography.

> "The change of Mr. Finney, and the decided course that he took, produced an astonishing effect. Mr. Wright, one of the lawyers with whom he was studying, soon after came out decidedly on the cause of Christ, is still living, and has been for many years an esteemed elder of the church. Young Sears, also, of whom I have spoken, and another by the name of Morton, on the first Sabbath of January, I think it was, among many others there, kneeled before me to receive the ordinance of baptism. Charles G. Finney, Charles C Sears, and Charles Morton, young men of more than ordinary promise, and very decided and active christians." (6.)

One final comment needs to be added here. Many people said later that Finney had been converted mainly through the instrumentality of Burchard. Gale expressly denies this claim, and says that Burchard had been away from Adams, working in surrounding towns, for six weeks and more before Finney's conversion occurred.

The Place of Prayer in the Revival

Gale says, “During all the revival prayer meetings at noon, on the Sabbath, in which old and young, male and female, held separate meetings. The large unoccupied rooms in the house where I lived were seated and made very convenient for the ladies prayer meetings, for the sisters of the church in the afternoon, and mixed meetings in the evening, in and out of the village. This is the most interesting the bright period (sic) of my ministerial life. O, that such days could come back again I often felt in succeeding years. So I feel still. These bright days were to be succeeded by those of darkness, and they were many.” (7.)

Rodman

“The work which had begun in Adams spread thro the country around. I was called to attend a council in a Congregational Church of Lorraine, about six or seven miles south of Adams, which resulted in the excommunication of a member. As it stormed, and we could not return that night, we held a prayer meeting at the house of the pastor, Rev. Mr. Bliss. In the course of the meeting I took occasion to relate what the Lord had done, and was doing, in Adams.

Deacon Grierman, of the Congregational Church in Rodman, a town east of Adams, was then a member of the council. He listened with interest, and remarked, 'I shall go home with new purposes.' He did so, and as the pastor, my excellent friend and neighbor, the Rev. Mr. Spear, was sick, the Deacon labored day and night, visiting with others thro the congregation, the Lord blessing the efforts, in which the pastor was able, soon after, to unite, and a glorious work followed. The friends and enemies of religion were the subjects. I mean those who were specially so. In the village, which then numbered about fifty families or more, but four or five remained in which the altar was not erected, as I was informed by the pastor, and on New Year's evening, when the young people were accustomed to assemble for a ball, they met for the worship of God, and contributed to the pastor the amount of money they had been accustomed to spend on pleasure.” (8.)

Lorraine and Henderson

“In Lorraine also a good work commenced from the date of that meeting and in the pastor's family several of his children, some interesting daughters, were the subjects of the work.

Mr. Finney and I went over to Henderson, where his parents lived, to hold meetings. I preached, and Mr. Finney made some remarks and prayed. I urged them then to pledge themselves, by rising up, to labor for the revival of God's work. There was a considerable number of the Baptists present, as well as Congregationalists. There was some opposition from a Baptist member, not because he was opposed to the thing itself, but there

were difficulties in the Baptist church which he thought ought to be settled first. I told them I thought they would be more apt to settle their difficulties if they would get into the spirit of a revival for the conversion of sinners. Nearly all arose, as I put the question, signifying by their willingness and purpose to seek the blessing of God, by prayer and labor in his cause.

A good work commenced there from that time. In the course of the year, I think in the summer, early, I went down to administer the communion and receive members into the church, as they had no pastor. Among others received were Mr. Finney's parents and brother. The old man and his son were baptised. I shall never forget as the old man, over three score years, with his naked head, for he was bald, kneeled to receive the ordinance from my youthful hand. The son afterward entered the ministry. When I last heard of him he was preaching in Massachusetts. I saw him in 1844." (9.)

Decline of the Revival in Adams

Gale's physical constitution had never been as robust as he would have liked. He worked hard, and was out from home every evening of the week except Saturdays for many weeks. After about a year of this workload, his health began to suffer. Also, by that time, the numbers of conversions were declining. Finney was also becoming more involved in his study programme, in preparation for his later ministerial work.

Baptist and Methodist Revivals in 1821

The Hamilton Baptist Missionary Society reported upon the success of their missionaries during the year. They gave as a specimen an extract from the report by Elder Nathaniel J. Gilbert, who "labored seven weeks and five days, chiefly on the Holland Purchase. He informs us, 'That at Mud Creek the Lord has poured out his Spirit on a school and neighborhood, and numbers have been called to realize their election of God;' that 'at Concord the Lord has of late poured out his Spirit, and a church has arisen;' that 'at Bethany the Lord has displayed his pardoning love, and a church has been organized; and the prospects are pleasing;' that 'in Warsaw God has shone upon his people with the rays of Divine mercy; and the little church, which was in a low condition, has broken forth on the right hand and the left;' and that 'Gainsville, too, hath been refreshed by the outpouring of the Divine Spirit, and a considerable number have become the subjects of saving grace.' In the course of his mission he preached fifty-seven sermons." (10.)

George Peck mentions very briefly that towards the close of 1821, a revival took place within the Broome Circuit, under the ministry of John Grining and James Hodge, who were stationed there at the time. (11.)

1822

The various Presbyteries made their reports to the Synod of Albany for 1822.

The St. Lawrence Presbytery said that encouraging revivals had occurred in Adams, Ellisburg and Redfield.

The Female Missionary Society of the Western District received a report about the Redfield revival during 1821 and 1822. The Rev. John Alexander wrote to the Society,

> "You have been informed of the remarkable revival in Redfield, - remarkable because few visible means of grace have been employed. Perhaps for two years previously the people had not enjoyed two Sabbaths' preaching by Presbyterian ministers. Prayer meetings had been neglected. Zion was a desolation. A few, however, were pressed in spirit for perishing souls, and with many prayers and tears they wrestled with the Angel of the Covenant and prevailed. About sixty are rejoicing with trembling. All are constrained to acknowledge the sovereignty of grace. I have spared no pains to enlighten them in the doctrines and duties of christianity, to distinguish true from false religion, and to feed the tender lambs with the sincere milk of the word."

Adams often represented a district more than a village. Parts of this district around Adams had apparently not been affected by the revival described by George Gale in 1821. The Rev. Adams W. Platt wrote to the Female Society:-

> "While engaged on the mission, I preached frequently in a society in the north part of the town of Adams. This society had been without the preached Word for a considerable time, and religion had very much declined. One or two of the members of the church became very much alarmed at the coldness and stupidity about them, and concluded to establish conference and prayer meetings, and it pleased the Lord to bless them. The word was very powerful in the neighbourhood where it commenced, and extended more or less through the society generally. Persons of almost all ages were the subjects of it, but more especially the youth. Though no particular exertions were made among the children, it was soon discovered that many of them were deeply affected, and twenty or thirty between ten and sixteen years old, give good evidence of a saving change. One of the little girls, eleven years of age, soon after sickened and died. But death had no terrors for her. Her dignified composure of mind and her expressions of joy to the last were truly remarkable. Her conversation with those who visited her, was far beyond her age. This instance of the trial of their faith, stopped the mouths of many who supposed that children were moved by sympathy alone. Some of the children were taken into the church, but most of them were put under its watch and care to be instructed in the principles of christianity, and will be received after a time."

Sixty-two joined this church at Adams, and twenty each at both Rutland and

Brownville.

The Presbytery of Oneida said, "In the congregations of Utica, Paris and Skenandoah there has been the effusions of the Spirit, the display of divine grace, and the ingathering of souls into the kingdom of Christ." 400 joined the churches of that Presbytery.

Ogdensburg Presbytery reported that in the congregation at Madrid, eighty have "in the judgment of charity, been made the subjects of renewing grace."

The Presbytery of Onondaga spoke of "unusual religious interest" in Granby, Oswego, Lysander, Harrison and Virgil.

The Presbytery of Otsego "mentions interesting displays of mercy and might" in Butternuts and Bowman's Creek, and "favorable appearances" in Cherry Valley, Madison, Norwich, Exeter and Eaton. (12.)

Baptists Report a Revival in Plattsburgh

In a letter dated 31st March, 1823, Nehemiah Lamb wrote:-

> "A little church was fellowshiped in this place about the 20th of May last, and it was my lot to be present, and preach on the occasion. I thought I discovered some omens of a reformation. The next day I preached again, and baptized a man, who was advanced in years and respected in society. I appointed to visit them again in June, but disappointed them by means of bodily infirmity. A great concourse of people assembled; the brethren felt weak, but endeavoured to wait on God. Nothing special took place, however, until after the intermission, when the cloud of divine blessings seemed suddenly to break upon them. While the brethren were fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, a number of backsliders were specially wrought upon, and the power of the Lord was present to heal them. A number of careless sinners were pricked in the heart, and the language of each was, 'What must I do to be saved?' and being pointed to the Lamb of God, they soon found peace in believing. That day is said by the oldest Christians there, to be the most remarkable of any they ever saw. When the brethren told me the news, I told them I was glad for their sakes that I was not there, that they might see more clearly that it is God's arm alone which bringeth salvation.
>
> Elder Amos Chase of Italy has often been with them and baptized... The present number of the church is about seventy-five, and the prospect is, that there will be some gleanings of the vintage yet gathered in, although the work seems to be much abated. We are in a new country, and people generally poor, but they have erected a comfortable log meeting-house, well lighted, and a fire-place for their accommodation in the winter.
>
> I have removed to this place at the special and unanimous request of the church. How long it will be my lot to tarry with them, is known best to the great Shepherd. I am sensible that to be useful amongst them, I need the

divine aid. Pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified. The good work has recently begun in Poultney, a town adjoining. I understand between thirty and forty have been baptized, and the work is still progressing. May it still spread until the whole earth shall be filled with his glory." (13.)

1823

According to the Synod of Albany,

"Early in 1823 the **Oneida Presbytery** reports: 'In the small congregation of Herkimer there is a revival of religion, and a goodly number are the hopeful subjects of divine grace, and at Little Falls there is an increased attention to the things of religion;' and afterwards, referring to the whole year, the Presbytery further reports revivals of religion in Augusta, Skenandoa and Oneida. 'In the former place more than one hundred, and in the two latter twenty and thirty have given hopeful evidence of having passed from death unto life. In some other congregations there have been precious tokens of the divine presence, and small numbers have been gathered into the kingdom of Christ.'

Twenty-one joined the church in Rome, and twenty conversions were reported at Hamilton College."

The Presbytery of Onondaga reported that "it has pleased the Head of the Church to visit two of the towns in our territory - Lenox and Sullivan."

The Presbytery of St. Lawrence mentioned a revival at Ellisburgh, describing the moral aspect of the community has been materially changed. Sackets Harbor also had 25 join the church, mainly from the army, and the families of officers. (14.)

In an Extract from a "Narrative of the State of Religion" issued by **the General Assembly**, and printed in July, 1823, a long list of revivals are mentioned, from all around the country. The ones relevant to our interest here were:- "In the Presbytery of Niagara, Fredonia. In the Presbytery of Gennessee (sic), Sheldon, Orangeville and Warsaw. In the Presbytery of Rochester, Riga and Bergen. In the Presbytery of Geneva, Romulus. In the Presbytery of Bath, Naples and Putney. In the Presbytery of Cayuga, Sempronius and Groton. In the Presbytery of Onondaga, Granby. In the Presbytery of Oneida, Utica, Paris, Shenandoah, Herkimer and Little Falls. In the Presbytery of Otsego, Butternutt's and Bowman's Creek. In the Presbytery of St. Lawrence, the continuation of former revivals, in Brownville, Adams and Watertown."

All that, despite a shortage of ministers, such that, "In the Presbytery of Niagara, there are thirty-one churches, and only seven ministers and licentiates. The Presbytery of Albany is among those which are best supplied with the ministry of the gospel; but, in four counties within its bounds, more than 50,000

souls are represented as destitute of adequate means of grace." (15.)

Another brief reference in the "Spectator" mentions, "In Romulus, N.Y., is a revival, and the instances of hopeful conversion are frequent. Fifty or sixty have already been numbered.

A revival is going forward in two parishes in Granville, N.Y., Forty or fifty hopeful converts.

In Knox, N.Y., sixty converts have been numbered as the fruit of a revival. In Kingsbury, seventy; and at Edinburgh a great work is now going forward." (16.)

1824. Revivals through the St. Lawrence Presbytery

This year marked the beginnings of the revival which was to reach a peak in 1826. It was often thought to have started in 1825, but first indications occurred a year earlier.

Normally, in the past, the only information we have had about the beginnings of the revival have come from Finney's "Memoirs." As a result, we have normally believed that Finney's work was the key to the beginnings of the revival. But a better perspective comes from the narrative of religion by the Presbytery of St. Lawrence, and is quoted by Fowler. This shows clearly that revivals had broken out in a number of other places around the Presbytery, either before, or around the same time as Finney began his missionary work. Finney's work was only a part of it all, although an important part.

> "It is with heartfelt joy and gratitude to the great Head of the Church that they present to the public the following statement of the goodness and mercy of God to the churches under their care during the past year: Verily 'the day-spring from on high hath visited us,' and the sun of righteousness has poured upon us the light and glory of his beams. While in the retrospect of other years we find occasion for thanksgiving and praise in view of the visitations of the Holy Spirit, we may say of the past year, that it has been a sealing time, a harvest season, a day of pre-eminent favors. In places where the prince of darkness has long reigned and over which impervious clouds have cast their gloomy shades, light has sprung up. Where recently were heard the songs of revelry and the profanation of the name of the Lord, we hear the songs of Zion and the voice of adoration and worship.
>
> Gratefully acknowledging the droppings of mercy in other places, we mention the following as particularly refreshed: Thirty-seven have been hopefully converted in **Orleans**, and between twenty and thirty in the neighborhood. Prayer for individuals has been one of the most obvious means of good here. More than thirty indulge hope in **Carthage** and **Wilna**. **Leyden** has been remarkably blessed. For many years it was in a deplorable state. The Word preached was apparently only a 'savor of death unto death,' and iniquity abounded in its most destructive forms. But about the middle of

April a shower of mercy began to fall. But Satan was not easily driven from his stronghold. Many rose up in rebellion and showed the malignity of their hearts. It was the Lord's work, however, and vain was the opposition of man. About two hundred submitted to the Cross, and four times as many attend public worship and preaching as ever before.

The condition of **Denmark** was formerly sad, and several circumstances threatened the ruin of the church; but God came to its help and relief, and thirty were added to it and breaches healed and repaired and dangers averted.

Brownville, too, has shared in the outpouring of the Spirit, and about forty testify to his renewing power. Hostility to the work was strong and untiring; but the Lord triumphed and stout hearts bowed - many of them cases of peculiar interest.

Martinsburg is now in the midst of a revival numbering already more than fifty subjects.

Cape Vincent has shared with sister churches in the divine influences, and under them more than twenty have been brought into happy union with it. Opposition was raised here, too, but served to swell the number of hearers and to fix their attention.

A minister was sent in May to **Le Ray** by the Female Missionary Society of the Western District. He was stoutly withstood at first, but the Lord wrought with him and through him, and soon began to prevail. Party spirit was then aroused for another encounter; but, wherever it appeared, prayer laid it. Christians gathered privately here and there to plead against it as it showed itself in such or such individuals, and so kept it down. Numerous noticeable instances of conversion occurred. Infidelity shrank back abashed, and heresy yielded to the truth. At least eighty forsook all and followed Christ.

The minister whose labors were so much prospered in Le Ray extended them at the same time to **Antwerp** and under them thirty were brought to the Saviour.

In the midst of summer, and during the violence of party strife, the Spirit of God descended on **Lowville**, and more than two hundred experienced his saving power, one hundred of whom united with the Presbyterian Church there, fifty-three of the number being, or having been, members of the Sunday School." (17.)

The minister referred to above who was sent to Le Ray by the Female Missionary Society was, of course, Finney.

After Finney had supplied the pulpit in Adams for a few months, as a result of Gale's breakdown in health, Gale then secured for him an appointment as a missionary to less settled parts. Finney left to fulfil this appointment before

Gale moved away from Adams, in November, 1824.

In his "Memoirs," Finney lists the places where he worked as Evans Mills, Antwerp, Brownville, Le Raysville, and Gouverneur.

Fowler tells us that the church at Evans Mills was not under the care of the Presbytery, and therefore would not be mentioned in its narrative. But Gouverneur was, and it is not mentioned. Finney says that Gouverneur was "a large farming town, settled by well-to-do inhabitants. The great majority of them, I am confident, were in that revival converted to Christ."

> Fowler says:- "The work of grace in all the other churches of the Presbytery would seem to have been conducted under their several pastors, and no measures are known to have been employed to which the most fastidious would except. The statistical reports of the churches, always imperfect, record as added on examination, 95 to Lowville First; 16 to Lowville Second; 23 to Martinsburg; 42 to Leyden First; 20 to Ellisburg; 30 to Denmark; 30 to Cape Vincent; 35 to Antwerp; 30 to Le Ray; and 15 to Orleans." (18.)

It seems that a special interest in the great matters of eternity pervaded much of the district in upstate New York before the 1826 revival got under way.

Revival Amongst the Methodists, 1824 - 1826

At the Genesee Conference in **1824**, the Conference was divided so that some of the northern circuits were transferred to the new Canada Conference.

In this new incarnation, the Genesee Conference now had seven Districts and 26,940 members, which was an increase of 2,779 on the previous year. The Ontario District had 4,587 members, including 1,000 in the Lyons Circuit. The Oneida District had 4,576 members. The Chenango District had 4,047 members. The Black River District had 3,873 members. The Susquehanna District had 3,974 members. The Genesee District had 3,239 members, and the Erie District had 2,644 members.

The Geneva and Canandaigua Circuit, for example, included churches at Canandaigua, Geneva, Hopewell, Castleton, Bethel, and Rushville, plus several smaller preaching places. The following comment about this circuit was written many years later.

> "During the winter of this year [1824] we were blessed with a revival of religion in Rushville and its vicinity. A number of these converts became members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. A small proportion of these still continue with us as bright and shining lights, while a still greater number have departed in peace, knowing in themselves that they had in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Since that time Rushville has enjoyed several powerful revivals of religion at different times, which have contributed, in their season, to the present state of prosperity and peace of which we now boast in the Lord." (19.)

Marvin Blakeslee describes a revival amongst the Methodists in and around the township of Phelps, and of Clifton Springs, during these years. These places were then known as Vienna, with the adjoining village of Sulphur Springs. Abner Chase was the Presiding Elder in that area, and reported on the revival in the "Methodist Magazine" for November, 1824. His letter was dated July 1st, and quoted words by "Brother Sabin, the preacher in charge." At that time, Vienna was included in the Lyons Circuit.

> "We have on this circuit five chapels and one parsonage, thirty classes and eight hundred and fifty members..... About two hundred and eighty have joined the different societies during the present year. The work has been gradually progressing for eight or ten months; perhaps the seed sown years ago by the servants of the Lord is now springing up and ripening. Indeed, we have been all the year harvesting, and are yet in the midst of the harvest, and who can tell what the Lord will yet do while his people pray and believe. (The five chapels were at Lyons, Lodi, Vienna or Phelps, Newark and Canandaigua.)"
>
> Blakeslee continues:- "From the Conference of 1824 Mr. Sabin was again returned as preacher in charge, with Joseph Gardner as junior preacher. The revival continued and the membership rose from five hundred and seventy-seven at the beginning of his ministry to one thousand at the close.
>
> The prosperity was not confined to the Methodists. The Presbyterian Church, under the labors of Samuel W. Brace, received many accessions, the result of which was the erection of what afterwards was known as the 'White church in Vienna.' Previous to this the Methodist church had been the only one in the village, the Presbyterians worshipping at Oak Corners."

In **1825**, there is reference to a revival in Sulphur Springs. J. B. Alverson (a retired but active minister) wrote, "At Sulphur Springs the work goes on as powerful as ever, seven were converted last Sunday evening. [The next evening] mourners from the Springs crowded the altar of mercy and three found peace that evening and on the next morning." (20.)

A number of revivals occurred in the Methodist work through **1826**. Several circuits were mentioned by the historian, including Ithaca, Herkimer.

> "This year [1826] Benjamin Sabin was stationed at Ithaca, and a good revival occurred soon after Conference, under his ministry, of which he gives an interesting account in the 'Christian Advocate' of October 14. The prospects were encouraging. Long and serious difficulties had been settled. The congregation had much increased. The doctrine of sanctification had been revived among them. Several were witnesses of the cleansing efficacy of Jesus' blood.
>
> Rev. B. Sabin referred to two camp-meetings, one in the town of

Lansing, and the other in Oswego, at which there were numerous conversions, and where numbers sought and found the blessing of perfect love. He also mentions his being informed of a good work in Penn Yan, of a very successful camp-meeting in Phelps, where between fifty and sixty professed pardon, and of a good revival in Williamson, Ontario Circuit, under the labors of Dr. Samuel Moore, a local preacher."

John H. Wallace was this year appointed to the Herkimer Circuit, Oneida District. The 'Christian Advocate' for October 7th contains an account from him of an extensive and powerful work of revival on his charge, particularly in Russia and Fairfield. He writes of some extraordinary manifestations at Fairfield, while sinners were crying for mercy, and believers being sanctified. He reports the admission on trial of about one hundred "since Conference." In a subsequent letter he reports a visible progression of the work, and the admission of some fifty-five more on trial. (21.)

After describing many interesting developments in the spiritual work, for 1826, he says: "Numerous other revival notices are found in the 'Christian Advocate' of this period. Isaac Grant writes of good reformations in the Chenango Circuit - in Brookfield, in Sidney, Guilford, Butternuts, and South Berlin; John Cosart of the triumphs of grace in the Nunda Circuit, at different points; W. W. Rundell of the abundant display of the divine goodness in the Ogdensburgh charge; C. V. Perry of the good times in the Perry Circuit."

"John Dempster was stationed in Rochester at that time. His health was very feeble, and Brother Rowe was invited to assist him in a glorious work there. He did so, and attended 'sixty meetings in eleven days.' It was said that seven hundred souls were converted in the different Churches during that revival.

All over the territory of the Genesee Conference, more or less, this was one of the years to be remembered as one of more than ordinary revival power and prosperity. The increase of the membership, as shown in the General Minutes, indicates the same. The increase was 3,279, the total number [for the whole Conference] being 30,446." (22.)

Early in 1827, Abner Chase reported on a Camp Meeting which had been held in Phelps, near the Sulphur Springs, at which "the Lord was pleased to manifest himself in mercy to many; sixty found peace", and forty-eight were added to the church. The Camp Meeting had probably been held sometime in 1826.

The Rev. Benjamin Sabin wrote to the "Christian Advocate" mentioning another very successful Camp Meeting in Phelps, "where between fifty and sixty professed pardon." Other revivals followed in the next few years. (23.)

While the other denominations did not have such success in 1827, the Methodists reported having had a good time, although they may have still been sending in details about the afterglow from the revivals in 1826.

"In various places in all the different districts of the Genesee Conference this year there were good revivals, the Genesee and Buffalo Districts being highly favored."

The total membership reported at the 1828 Conference had now reached 31,949. (24.)

CHAPTER SEVEN

RELEVANT ASPECTS of NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY

There are a number of ways of approaching, presenting or describing, the main theological questions that New England Congregational ministers were trying to grapple with.

Some of these main questions, however, do not relate to the issues of **wisdom and purity in revivals,** and of **basic practical matters in evangelism**, which concern us here in this book. These questions which have little or no relevance, in this way, will not be considered in any detail here.

But some of these main questions are directly relevant to our issues of concern. In this chapter, we will try to describe these matters, in what hopefully will be an interesting and helpful way.

Part One: Introductory Matters

A good starting point is to consider an insight set out by Williston Walker, emphasising that the New England School of Theology was not mainly concerned with abstruse, highly remote, theoretical and academic theological issues and questions, but New England theology revolved around issues which were of vital importance to the evangelistic work of the Church. To a large degree it sprang out of the Great Awakening, and sought to extend and purify questions and matters which were central at that time.

> "The Edwardean movement was a theological development of great force and originality; but its impulse was not primarily speculative. The New England mind has always been essentially practical. ...the Liberal [Unitarian] and the Edwardean movements alike had to do with what may not improperly be called the more practical doctrines of theology. Questions of the proper use of 'means,' of the nature of conversion, of the extent of human freedom and responsibility, of the essence of that holiness which is characteristic of the Christian life, of the relation of the atonement to the forgiveness of the individual transgressor's sins, constituted the chief themes of these debates." (1.)

It was because the Edwardean theology was so linked to the subsequent evangelism and revivals that it had such an impact on following decades of church history, and national history.

Another obvious foundational observation, but which many Christians fail to appreciate, or practice, is that all theological ideas are human efforts. They are human attempts to understand something about God. This is true, no matter

how closely we may think our ideas follow the teaching of the Bible. Because they are human, theological doctrines are, therefore, never complete. They are always subject to revision, can always be improved upon, and so can never approach finality or perfection. Every form of a doctrine has strong points in its favour. Each human doctrine also has problem areas, weak points, and unsolved issues, associated with it. In this way, theology is the same as any other system of human enquiry. Our best efforts to understand what God is saying to us through the Scriptures also suffer the same kinds of imperfections.

Before, however, looking at the basic questions in New England Theology, and the various ways in which these basic questions evolved over time, several other points need to be set down.

1. New England Theology was Reformation Theology

All areas of New England Theology which concern us here were forms of **Protestant** theology.

At the time of the Protestant Reformation, the Reformers were all protesting in favour of certain basic Biblical concerns. These matters, the Reformers said, needed to be set back into the fundamental fabric of Christianity, instead of being lost sight of, or being relegated into side issues.

(a) Protestant theology is **Biblical** theology, in the sense that the Bible is to be taken as the sole guide and authority in matters of faith in God, and in the practice of the Christian life. In playing this role, passages in the Bible had to be interpreted according to their original historical meanings, and also in a context provided by the Bible as a whole. The traditional teachings of the Church, or the voices of leading clerics, were not to be considered on the same level of authority as the Bible. Furthermore, allegorical and speculative interpretations, as used by the mediaeval schoolmen, were not to be taken seriously. The principle of "Scripture only" is basic to the Protestant Reformation.

This principle has various implications for today. One is that personal impressions upon the mind of any kind, including impulses, visions, dreams, angelic revelations, alleged words from God, any idea entering our minds from outside, or anything we have thought of ourselves, are not reliable guides, even if they are backed up by verses from the Bible coming into our minds in support. While God may lead us by this means, at times, such things are not a reliable guide, as a general principle. All such cases need to be tested fully before being relied upon.

Another implication is that the Bible is not a reliable guide if we have misunderstood the meaning and application of a passage upon which we are relying for guidance.

Especially, any visions, or impressions on the mind, which appear to have

come from God, but which introduce new doctrines and teachings which do not appear in the Bible, or have no foundation in the Bible, or which place an unorthodox and different emphasis from what the Bible teaches, should be immediately and totally suspected of being merely human, or demonic, in origin.

This "Scripture only" principle is often stated by people in an extreme form, which implies that nothing at all can be learned from the past unless it is found in the Bible. In this way, the traditions of the Church, the words of people who are wiser than ourselves, the accumulated wisdom of God's saints down through the ages, and legitimate lessons from history, are all treated as being of no value at all. There is no doubt that this "history-less" kind of Christianity leads to disaster. The judgments of God are such that people who will not learn from the past will be condemned to make the same mistakes again themselves. Furthermore, we are commanded to study, marvel at, and learn from, the great works of God, and a great many of these have happened since the Bible was written.

(b) Not only did Reformation theology emphasise "Scripture only," it also emphasised "**Christ only".** This was not meant to imply that the Heavenly Father, and the Holy Spirit, were not important. Reformation theology was always fully Trinitarian. But "Christ only" meant that any one of us could only experience salvation through Jesus Christ, who is the one and only Mediator. Our salvation could not be achieved by the intercessions of the Blessed Virgin, or by the super-abundant merits of any or all of the saints. Neither could they contribute to our salvation in any way, in order to add one detail to what Christ had already done. Salvation is by Jesus Christ alone, through the merits of His crucifixion and resurrection, and, indeed, through His whole saving work for us.

Certainly, God might use the life and witness of the saints, or of the Virgin, as a tool to bring us back to Himself. But these good things could not add in any material way to the atonement achieved by Jesus Christ upon the cross, as the sole thing which actually makes us right with God. All these additional possibilities imply that Christ's sacrificial atonement is not sufficient by itself to save us, and make us right with God for all eternity. Somehow, something else needs to be added to it, in order to make it work properly. No. Salvation is through Christ alone.

This second principle is linked to the third, which follows.

(c) In Reformation theology, salvation is also **by faith alone**.

This principle is like the second, in that it seeks to make sure that no extra qualities, or works, or merit, is needed to be added by anyone to what Jesus Christ has already done for us, in order to make our salvation complete. It

emphasises that we do not have to do anything ourselves to add something to the work of Christ, so that it will work for us.

Faith means relying upon someone, or something. In this case, we are relying for our eternal salvation upon what Jesus Christ has done for us, in His death and resurrection, as the only means whereby we are made right with God, and that Christ's work by itself makes us totally acceptable.

An implication of this principle is that repentance must not be seen as a work that we have to do, which somehow makes Christ's work on the cross more effective. Even faith itself must not be seen as something we must do, in order to be saved, which somehow adds to what Jesus Christ did for us.

When unconverted people are challenged about the need to be saved from their sins, it is a normal reaction for anyone in that situation to try to defend themselves, and to enlarge upon the worth of who they are, and of what they have done. All such thoughts are contrary to the principle that we are saved by faith alone in what Jesus Christ has done for us.

2. Comments On Calvinistic Theology

New England Theology, in so far as it was sympathetically involved in the revivals, was always Calvinistic theology, until about 1825, when the influence of Nathaniel W. Taylor and Charles G. Finney became more evident. To say that something is an example of Calvinistic theology can mean many things, so the following comments may help us understand what was meant by this expression.

In one sense, Calvinistic theology starts with the Biblical revelation, just as most other forms of Protestant theology claim to do.

In a different way, Calvinist theology emphasises the doctrine of God, as opposed to Arminian theology, which tends to emphasise the doctrine of man, and his "freedom."

Two main forms of Calvinism (called Supralapsarianism and Sublapsarianism) are distinguished and defined in terms of God's decrees, and the order in which these decrees are thought to have occurred.

(a) For example, **Supralapsarianism** has been described in the following way. God's decrees ultimately portray the basic reason and purpose behind the creation, and the reason for human existence.

God's ***first*** decree was to glorify Himself through the election of some people to salvation through Christ, and the reprobation of the others. Some people were chosen to be saved, and others were chosen to be lost. Here we see the famous "double predestination" of the saved and lost.

God's ***second*** decree was that, as a means to this end of glorifying Himself through this election, He decreed to create those who would be elected, and those who would be reprobated.

God's ***third*** decree was that He permitted the Fall to take place, which brought the entry of sin into the history of mankind, and into every individual. In some forms of Supralapsarianism, God actually decrees the Fall, instead of simply allowing it to happen, and using it for His own ends.

God's ***fourth*** decree was to provide salvation for the elect, through Jesus Christ, including the sending of the Holy Spirit into the world to bring the elect back to God.

In this way, God's election of individuals to salvation occurred before the Fall was permitted to take place. Thus the word "Supra" means "before" the Fall. The order in which the decrees are seen to have occurred provides the key to the meaning of the word.

On the other hand, **Sublapsarianism**, or Infralapsarianism, as it is sometimes called, has been described as follows.

God's ***first*** decree was the decision to glorify Himself through the creation of the human race. As a result of this decree, the creation took place, including the creation of humanity.

God's ***second*** decree was to permit the Fall to take place. As a result, all people have become sinners.

God's ***third*** decree was His decision to elect or choose some members of the human race to be saved from the penalty due to them because of their sins. Those who were not chosen would be passed by, and simply be left to be condemned because of their sins.

God's ***fourth*** decree was to provide salvation for the elect through Jesus Christ, including the sending of the Holy Spirit actually to save the elect, and bring them to faith in Christ..

In this view, therefore, the elect were chosen by God after the Fall had been permitted. So, we can see that the word "Sub," or "Infra," means "after" the Fall. (2.)

Also, this second view does not involve the "double predestination" that is found in the first view. The first view includes the idea that God chose the elect to be saved, and chose other people to be damned. The second view includes only a single predestination of certain people to be saved, while the others are by-passed, and are allowed to remain in their sins, and to be damned as they deserve.

It is easy to see, from the above, that **God's decrees** are really the driving force behind the way everything is understood in Calvinistic theology.

The election by which God has chosen people to be saved is unconditional, that is, this election does not depend upon our worth or works, or even upon anything we might do, such as exercising faith, and repenting of our sins. God's election does not depend upon conditions outside of Himself.

(b) The distinction between these two views of God's decrees provides a good basis for outlining other very important points of Calvinism.

The doctrine of **Original Sin** is very important. It points to the essential way in which everybody in the world has been classified as a sinner, and made to be without excuse. Everyone is a sinner because of the sin of Adam. We are involved in his sin, and are subject to judgment and condemnation because of that. We have also sinned on our own account, and through our own choice.

Human beings are not born innocent. Even before we were born, we have incurred association with the sin of Adam, and the sin of humanity as a whole, which has rendered us worthy of condemnation before God's judgment bar.

Never, at any stage of our personal existence, have any of us been in a position to make ourselves right with God, or to make amends for our sins. In our natural state, we do not love God, and tend to practice an ingrained selfishness and self-oriented attitude in every detail. Even if we love others, and give our lives and bodies as a sacrifice for others, we are only doing what comes naturally to us as fallen humanity, and it does not arise from supreme love for God.

Of course, human and civic virtues are very good, and praiseworthy, in their own way, and the world would be a much more dreadful place without them. But this is unconverted behaviour. It is only good by human standards, and not in the light of the great commandments. In his natural state, man cannot please God.

(c) The doctrine of a **Limited Atonement** has normally been linked to the above views, as an essential part of Calvinist theology. This view is that Christ died on the cross for the elect only, in the sense that they alone, of all the people in the world, will benefit from Christ's death in being eternally saved.

Another theological term which means roughly the same thing is **Particular Redemption**. That is, Christ's redemption is designed and intended only for particular people, that is, the elect, and not for everybody.

It was often argued that, if Christ died for everybody, in the sense that His death was intended to achieve the salvation of all mankind, then everyone would infallibly be saved. And as this is clearly not the case, then Christ's death was only intended to save the elect.

There are a number of Biblical verses which state that Christ died for this limited purpose. Verses in the Bible which say that Christ died for everyone have to be understood in some other way than the meaning described above.

After saying all this about the Calvinist doctrine of Limited Redemption, most of the members of the New England school of theologians believed in some form of a General Atonement. (3.)

(d) Linked to the above doctrines is the doctrine of **irresistible grace**. We

must remember that sinners are incapable of saving themselves, or of doing any righteous act. So they cannot prepare themselves in any way to receive salvation. If it was necessary for us to prepare ourselves in some way, then that would become a "work" of our own which would be part of the basis of our salvation. No longer would it be true that we are saved by Christ alone, and by faith alone.

So, the only way that a person can be saved, is for God to do it, as an outright act of Divine grace. By an act of God's creation, the sinner is born again, instantly, and by God's act only. By this act, God implants in the newly forgiven sinner, a new heart of love for God, and a new disposition and inclination to see everything in a new light, and to live a new life, based upon love for God, and desire to obey Him.

If a person resists God's grace, and remains unconverted by his own choice, it simply means that it was not God's time or choice to convert that person on that occasion. God is almighty, and so would have no trouble in converting any person in the time, place and way of His choice. If a person resists the call of God, then they are not yet converted. This is proved by the fact that they are not yet inclined to obey God.

If a person resisted God's grace by his own choice, and this is seen as frustrating God's purpose in any way, then an Arminian position is being expressed, where man is supposed to have the power and ability to resist God, and frustrate God's purpose, by man's own will. In Calvinism, man cannot frustrate the purposes of God in this way, unless that act of resisting is, itself, a part of God's chosen purpose. That would make man greater than God, which is clearly impossible.

(e) Another important Calvinist emphasis, closely linked to these other doctrines we have mentioned, is belief in the **final perseverance of the elect**, once they have been converted to Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit. The elect will be kept by the power of God, until they are presented finally in God's presence, saved and perfected through the power of Christ's atoning death.

This is taught in many parts of the Bible, as are the other doctrines we have mentioned. There are other Bible passages which seem to place conditions upon this teaching, or imply that someone can fall away from salvation. Naturally, Calvinists have explanations for these verses. There is also the practical problem, that most experienced Christians know personally a good number of people who once, indisputably, professed a real faith in Christ, but who no longer do so. Many such may die in their unbelief. The Lord alone is judge, and knows how to handle these problems and issues.

(f) Linked with these views, also, is the problem area of the "**freedom" of the human will**. Because the Calvinist view of reality is very God-centred, and

bound up with God's decrees, His sovereignty, His election, and His chosen ways of doing things, there is a long-standing problem of describing how humans can exercise any real freedom of their wills, as seems implied in the idea that people are to be held responsible for their actions, and punished for their wrong-doings.

Edwards advanced the theory that the human will was a part of our personalities which operated somewhat like a machine, and which always chose what was most dearly desired, or whatever inclination happened to operate on us most strongly at the time. Other New England theologians tried to refine this view in various ways.

In recent times, the main way around this problem is to say that God is sovereign, working everything according to His own will, and also working out His purposes partly through the free choices of moral agents. In this way, people are thought to have really free choices, yet God is still sovereign in such a way as to include these choices in His purposes, that is - purposes which cannot be frustrated or set aside by mere human will or choice. The most which can seriously be said for this view is that it is an attempt to combine two views, which apparently are not reconcilable within human thought systems. This is done by saying that God knows how to surmount this difficulty, as He seems to be able to do, although we do not know how He does it. It is declared to be one of the mysteries of God. Nobody is able to describe how God works His sovereign will in such a way as to include truly free choices by human moral agents in His sovereign purposes. But He appears to do it.

At the end of the Twentieth Century, this view has become conservative evangelical orthodoxy, as expressed by Norman Geisler. After explaining what he considers were Edwards's mistakes, he says:- "God sovereignly gave man his freedom by creating him a free creature, and God sovereignly continues to allow man to exercise his freedom by sustaining him moment by moment (Col.1:17). Thus the sovereignty of God is not thwarted by human freedom but glorified through human freedom. For God gave man free will, he sustains man so he can act freely, and he brings about all his purposes without violating man's free will. As the Westminster Confession puts it, 'Although in relation to the foreknowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably and infallibly, yet by the same providence he ordereth them to fall out, according to the nature of second causes, either necessarily, freely or contingently.' (V, ii)." (4.)

In so far as man's ability to explain how God does this, however, human doctrines and systems of thought have only, so far, been able to provide adequate explanations on one side at a time, and have never been able to combine the two. Our theories can explain how humans have real freedom of choice in making their moral decisions, and thus have followed the Arminian line of reasoning. Or else our theories have followed the Calvinist emphasis,

saying that God is sovereign in everything, and His purposes cannot be denied, including those areas which involve “free” human choices. Calvinists have never explained how God can determine all things, yet within that determinism, people can make free choices.

This was a major problem area in New England Theology.

(g) Preparation theories

Another major problem area for Puritan theology, and for Calvinism generally, had arisen in trying to account for the way the Holy Spirit works in the minds of people, bringing them to the point where they are converted.

It was a matter of experience that this process could take a very long time, for some people, and be very quick for others. So, the range of differences between one person's experience and another person's experience could be very great. The problem really was that, before the decisive act of the Holy Spirit, when a person was made into a child of God, that person could not do anything to prepare, or do anything which was holy or acceptable to God. If a person could contribute, somehow, in preparing for his or her regeneration, this would be thought to compromise the Reformation principles which we have explained above. Within the terms of Puritan theology, it was hard to explain how any preparation could take place.

For example, if all of one's actions and thoughts before conversion were evil, how could the Holy Spirit use any of these things to prepare for His coming into that person's life? If regeneration (or the new birth) was such a sudden and new experience, so radically different from anything which had happened before to that person, how could anything prepare for God's new life?

If the preparatory things which the Holy Spirit did were righteous, then it would no longer be true that absolutely nothing in the person's life before regeneration was acceptable to God. Despite the fact that this view created a conflict with other doctrines in the Calvinist system, many Puritans did adopt this view (that the Spirit could do righteous things in a person before conversion), in order to overcome the problem of explaining how preparation for conversion took place.

If, on the other hand, the preparatory things were evil, this would cast a shadow on the workings of the Holy Spirit, because He would be seen as regularly using bad things to prepare for God's new life in the soul. This would tend to make the Holy Spirit into the author of sinful things, to some degree. It would amount to an acceptance by God that the end justifies the means, and this was a principle that none of the Calvinists wanted to accept.

Another way of expressing the same problem is, that, if the Holy Spirit did any preparatory things in a person's life, the Spirit must already be present in that person's life in order to do these things. So, the person must somehow already be converted, before that conversion historically took place. In the

revivals, people could be strongly convicted of their sins, without ultimately being converted. So, the Spirit did things in that person's life, but conversion never occurred, in the end. The preparation made it appear that the person was converted already, but no real fruit developed from it. So, the doctrine created turmoil, and a theological maze, to which there seemed to be no answer. (5.)

By the time of Jonathan Edwards, and the rise of New England Theology, the problem had not been solved. The struggle to produce a satisfactory Calvinist theory of preparation had not been overcome. But, with the passing of time, and with the impact of continuing events, other questions had arisen to take up the attention of thinking people. The times were different. Other questions were being asked instead of this one.

(h) The Impact of the Great Awakening

We have seen in previous chapters that there was a serious spiritual decline in the New England churches in the decades before the Great Awakening. We noted Frank Foster's view that, before Increase Mather, none of the New England ministers seemed to have the evangelistic instinct. None of them wielded the evangelist's sword.

When the revivals began to appear, leading up to the Great Awakening, they were called “surprising” events. Nobody knew how they happened, or why. There was no “science” of the subject.

Yet, they all could understand that God had chosen, by the foolishness of preaching the Gospel, to save those who were to believe. So, with the entry of Edwards, and of George Whitefield, a new era blossomed in New England, when forthright evangelistic preaching became a possibility. This preaching was still set within the overall system of Calvinistic theology. God had to convert people, and make them inclined to respond positively to God. But, the tool of evangelistic preaching, in an atmosphere of revival, became clearer. Soon, prayer for revival became clearly the way ahead, to convert the world, and to prepare for the coming of Christ's Kingdom. Soon, the call to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit became the ringing response, whenever the churches began to decline, or began to find the going difficult.

3. Brief Comment on Arminian Theology

James Arminius himself did not have much impact in the American colonies. He was a Dutchman, whose influence was fairly local. His impact, however, became very considerable in America for two reasons. The first was that John Wesley adopted an Arminian theology, and his emphasis on the Arminian aspects of his theology became more intense as his life progressed. As a result, all of the Wesleyan Methodist preachers were Arminians. The second reason was simply that the times were changing, and the emphasis on individual human initiative and responsibility became part of the spirit of the age, as the

United States developed, as the Industrial Revolution progressed, and as the modern world became "modern."

Arminian theology emphasised that God elected to salvation, and predestined, those whom He foresaw would freely choose Christ, and be saved. Arminius certainly believed in original sin, and that this sin had corrupted everything that was good in human nature. Nobody would ever repent unless they were drawn to God by the Holy Spirit, neither could anyone do anything acceptable to God without the inner workings of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ had died for everybody, not just for those who would believe in Christ, and be saved. But the atonement had to be personally appropriated. Anybody could be saved, ***if*** they would turn to Christ. But God's grace was not irresistible. It could be resisted. And those who were once saved might be lost. By their disobedience, they could lose their salvation. Suddenly, nobody could be assured that they were saved any more than for the present moment. They did not know what the future might hold. In the future, they might fall from grace. (6.)

Calvinists hated anything which looked like Arminian teaching, because these Arminian doctrines implied things about God which the Calvinists found to be highly offensive. Arminian doctrines were clearly dishonouring to God. For example, God's election was no longer determined by His own choice, but by somebody else's choice. So, it wasn't really God's election any more. God's purposes could be frustrated by mere mortals. God appeared to be placed at the mercy and whim of man, instead of everything being the other way around. Arminianism put the cart before the horse, and turned everything upside down. It made man powerful, and God weak. In fact, it was quite possible that God might not be able to fulfil His purposes, as He had promised to do, because human disobedience might ultimately get in the way, and stop Him. God was not really God any more. Man had become God. God was no longer in charge. In New England, Arminianism was steadfastly hated and resisted by the Calvinists, throughout the period we have under review.

Part Two: Jonathan Edwards

First and foremost, Edwards was the theologian of the Great Awakening, and of the Christian Life. He tried to re-state Calvinism in a way suited to his own age and situation. Yet he also thought out a complete philosophical context for his theological speculations. His intellectual powers were considerably above those of his successors in the New England school. His theology was very complex and sophisticated, so it is not altogether a surprise that his successors could not always build well on the foundations that Edwards provided. Also, Edwards's successors were independent thinkers in their own right, and so none

of them fitted easily into a mould which they inherited from a founding genius.

A number of his best writings were published during his lifetime, including some of his sermons. Several other volumes of vital importance appeared posthumously. But right through his life he maintained voluminous intellectual diaries where many of his thoughts lay buried. Many of the contents of these journals are only being published now, two hundred and fifty years later.

(a) Theology

Edwards's first concern was with the greatness and majesty of God. This arose through his own Christian experience, and through the impact of Biblical teaching. For example, on one occasion he was especially impressed with God's majesty while thinking about 1 Timothy 1:17. This appreciation of the beauty of God would characterise his whole life. The Calvinist theology, with which he had grown up, provided a natural vehicle for this insight. The majesty of God was a constant theme of his sermons.

The Great Awakening impacted upon him, as had the earlier Northampton revivals, and he wrote several books to describe and defend the real values and experiences of these revivals. These books contained major statements about the nature of true Christian experience, listing as well many other experiences which may be associated with true Christian experience, but which are not essential, and which can be misleading if they are relied upon as guides to the real thing.

"Edwards's careful analysis of genuine faith emphasized, in sum, that it was not the quantity of emotions which indicated the presence of true spirituality, but the origin of such emotions with God, and their manifestation in works in accord with the law of God." (7.)

A summary of some of his other beliefs is:- "The root of human sinfulness was antagonism toward God; God was justified in condemning sinners who scorned the work of Christ on their behalf; conversion meant a radical change of the heart; true Christianity involved not just an understanding of God and the facts of Scripture but a new 'sense' of divine beauty, holiness and truth." (8.)

His book on "Freedom of the Will", published later in life, "argued that the 'will' was not an independent faculty but an expression of more basic human motivation. To 'will' something was to act in accordance with the strongest motives prevailing within a person." In other words, people always did what they were most strongly motivated or inclined to do. A critic who is trying to be rude might have said that people are not seen by Edwards as independent agents capable of actually deciding anything, but are seen as a kind of machine displaying a range of buttons for someone else to press, and idly waiting for someone outside of us to press one of our buttons, so that we would make a certain response. While this comment is not fair to Edwards, it does emphasise that Calvinistic theories of "free will" are deterministic, no matter how hard one

might try to avoid it..

His book “Original Sin,” which was published posthumously, described the theory of human nature which undergirded his earlier writings. God allowed a course of events, knowing that sin would inevitably follow, but God did not decree the Fall. So, Edwards was largely Supralapsarian, but not entirely. Also, some of his other teachings headed in a different direction. From a Biblical viewpoint, he said “that all humanity was present in Adam at the fall and that all people, as a consequence, shared the bent toward sinning which Adam had brought upon himself. Edwards felt that he could show in this way how individuals were responsible for their own sinfulness and yet were also bound to the dictates of a fallen nature until converted by God's sovereign grace.” (9.)

Here, Edwards introduced a modified definition of sin, which was to have far-reaching effects in later years. The Calvinism of his day taught that Adam was a “federal head” of our race, and his sin was imputed upon the whole race. This produced a sinful corruption within us all, and this, in turn, produced actual voluntary sins in us. So there are two types of sins, voluntary sins and involuntary sins.

Edwards accepted the view that Adam was federal head of the human race, and that human physical death was the penalty of sin. Since all people die, they must all sin. The guilt of sin lies on everyone. He could not accept, however, the common Calvinist view that men are charged with something which they have not done. So, he took the view that sin is imputed to us, not in order to make all people sinners, but because we were all somehow actively involved in Adam's sin. Everyone sinned when Adam sinned. This allowed the conclusion that all sins are voluntary, and involuntary acts could not be classed as sinful. (10.)

Edwards also made a significant change to the doctrine of “ability.” Further changes to this doctrine were made by some of his successors. The old doctrine had taught that the impact of sin, and of the Fall, was such that people naturally had neither the ability nor the inclination to turn to God, unless given new life, taught and drawn by the Holy Spirit - which involved regeneration as the basic step. Regeneration gave the person both the ability and the inclination to repent and believe the gospel.

Edwards taught that people naturally still had the ability to turn to God, but they did not have the inclination to turn to God unless this was created in them by the Holy Spirit. It was this change in a person's disposition or inclination, worked by the Spirit, that really constituted the beginning of the Christian Life, according to Edwards. As we shall see, it was Bellamy who built the next step on this foundation.

In his exposition of 1 Corinthians 13, Edwards also introduced the concept of “love for being in general,” as a term to indicate, and perhaps describe, the

breadth involved in loving God supremely, other people equally with ourselves, and, indeed, loving God and the whole of His creation.

So this gives us another way of defining sin. Sin is "any other elective preference than that of the good of being in general." (11.)

Edwards also made a contribution to teaching on the doctrine of the Church, and to eschatology. Regarding the church, he taught that it was the bride of Christ, which is made up only of truly converted people. The institutional church should try to reflect this, even though only God could read the heart. It was this belief which led him eventually to reject the "Half-Way Covenant", which had been espoused by his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard. This stand cost him his pulpit, because he was ousted from his church at Northampton over this issue.

The early Northampton revivals, and the Great Awakening, encouraged him to think that the millenial dawn was about to break in New England. After several years, he issued a wide appeal for Christians everywhere to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, so that, by means of the revival of God's work, and the spread of the Gospel, the events of the end times might come to pass.

(b) Philosophy

Although Edwards knew the writings of Newton and Locke, and of many other Seventeenth Century philosophers, such as the Cambridge Platonist Henry More, and embraced many of their insights, yet he developed an idealist philosophy, more like that of Plato, or of Bishop George Berkeley.

Everything existed, and remained in existence, because God chose it to be so.

'That which truly is the substance of all bodies is the infinitely exact and precise and perfectly stable idea in God's mind, together with his stable will that the same shall gradually be communicated to us, and to other minds, according to certain fixed and exact established methods and laws." (12.)

To study the various areas of science was simply a way of learning what God had been doing, in certain areas of His creation.

Although Berkeley's writings existed before Edwards did his thinking about idealism, it seems that he did not know what Berkeley wrote, yet he arrived at similar conclusions on his own account. His students and successors, Joseph Bellamy and Samuel Hopkins, were familiar with Berkeley's work, and adopted the same idealist position, which fitted in so well with their high form of Calvinism.

(c) Ethics

As a general principle, Edwards, and all his followers, held to a "Natural Law" theory of the basis of ethics. That is, the universe, and human nature, were made by God in such a way that certain things were right or wrong, as a natural result of the way they were made.

Many of the ethical writers of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century were Humanists, or held views along the Humanist line. That is, they believed that human beings had a natural, inbuilt faculty or sense, which could be cultivated, and which allowed people to recognise and to do truly virtuous behaviour. This implied that people were not basically bad, or, at least, if they were bad, they had a capacity to improve themselves.

Edwards took the view that people could only be truly virtuous by the grace of God, and that anything less than this was not good enough. Only by being born again, or regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit, could the real fruits of the Holy Spirit begin to appear.

Edwards's reasoning followed three steps. ***Firstly*** he said that people naturally had God-given common sense, and some conscience, to help them regulate their lives, and make them more mature and morally beautiful.

Secondly, he insisted that although natural virtues were commendable, as far as they went, true virtue was not possible apart from the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. Strictly speaking, "No truly good thing exists which is not always and everywhere dependent on God."

Thirdly, Edwards tried to show "that the picture of virtue presented by the new moral philosophers was really a confusing description of prudence, self-seeking and self-love. In these efforts Edwards was striving to preserve the particularity of grace. By so doing, he hoped to reassert the unique goodness of God as the sole legitimate source of true virtue." (13.)

Many modern evangelicals would agree substantially with these ethical views. These views also strike a chord in a world where Christians have to show that Christian love, and the fruits of the Holy Spirit, are somehow different in quality from the humanitarian virtues which are widespread today, and also from the secular virtues of modern democracies.

Part Three: The Schools of the Prophets

(a) Joseph Bellamy

In those days, ministers were trained only partly by going to College. They would also attend a live-in apprenticeship and school with a well-regarded minister, possibly for several years. Jonathan Edwards had a number of students in this way, the most notable being Joseph Bellamy and Samuel Hopkins, who, in their turn, both ran schools of their own which had an enormous impact upon the subsequent generation of Congregational ministers in New England. Indeed, it can be argued with good reason that the impact of these two men, and their schools, provided much of the evangelistic emphasis, and the theological harmony, which existed throughout those New England churches which experienced the revivals in the Second Great Awakening

between 1798 and 1805.

Bellamy and Hopkins were great friends, worked together in their studies, and were theologically similar in many ways. Bellamy (1719 - 1790) became pastor for many years in Bethlehem, Connecticut. He was a famous and popular preacher. Walker said that Bellamy "was the most gifted preacher of any of the Edwardeans, - a man of unusual pulpit abilities and he threw himself heartily in the revivalistic current of the Great Awakening, becoming, for two years, an indefatigable itinerant evangelist." (14.)

Bellamy faced the old problem, arising from the old Calvinist doctrine of "inability". People knew that they could not repent until God converted them. The result was, that they did not repent because they thought they could not. Bellamy turned the argument around. "You have no inclination to repent. But this lack of inclination is the result of your own evil voluntary choices. So, the less inclined you are to repent, the worse sinner you must be, in order to arrive in that situation." "Your duty is not to listen to the Gospel with an inclination against repentance, but to listen to it with an inclination to love, believe and practice it." "There is nothing in the Bible which says you cannot do it.!" As a result, Bellamy called upon people **NOW** to love God, and to believe and accept the Gospel.

This was a new thing in New England. This was the beginning of the call to **immediate repentance**, which became the backbone of later evangelistic preaching. Bellamy believed people could voluntarily choose to do this. Strictly speaking, his doctrine did not support the idea, but Bellamy thought that it did, and that was enough. As a result, he called people to immediate repentance, and this transformed his message, and the message of subsequent New England preachers. So, the next generation of New England ministers became powerful evangelistic preachers. True, some of them still read their essay-like sermons, but some did not, and became powerful evangelists. (15.)

The other major contribution made by Bellamy was to introduce a completely different theory of the Atonement into the New England scenery. This was an adaptation of the "governmental" theory, which had been proposed first by Hugo Grotius in Europe quite some years earlier, and linked it with a general view of atonement (as opposed to the "limited atonement" usually held by Calvinists).

Edwards had followed a "Satisfaction" theory, whereby Christ's obedience and death represented His bearing of a degree of punishment on behalf of the elect, which would meet the demands of God's law, broken by them. (16.)

Bellamy adopted the concept of God as "Moral Governor of the Universe," who always acted in love. In the face of man's sinful rebellion against God, God would be compelled to do something to uphold basic justice in his universe. Being a loving God, He would also want to save sinners. So, the death of Christ is seen as satisfying the governmental needs of God and the

universe, by upholding the value and importance of real justice, yet also providing a way whereby sinners could be treated mercifully. Being a general feature of God's dealings with mankind, the benefits of the atonement would be open to everyone. The elect alone would in fact benefit from it. The concept of Government became pervasive throughout different areas of Bellamy's theology. (17.)

One of Bellamy's students, Jonathan Edwards the Younger, was the one who made this theory of the Atonement popular throughout New England, and the theory was still having a major influence when Charles G. Finney was a young evangelist. (To distinguish this Jonathan Edwards from his father, the older Edwards was called President Edwards, because for a brief period before his death he had been President of the College of New Jersey. Also he did not have a doctorate. The son was commonly called Dr. Jonathan Edwards Jr., or Jonathan Edwards the Younger.)

It was Bellamy, also, who introduced the idea to New England that sin had been permitted by God as a thing necessary in order to attain the greatest good in the end. This was rather like Leibnitz's view that the present world had to be the best possible world.

Apart from Jonathan Edwards the Younger, other leading New England ministers who were Bellamy's students, or who followed his line, more or less, included John Smalley, Timothy Dwight, Lyman Beecher, Asahel Nettleton and Bennet Tyler. In all, in his home, he trained about sixty men for the ministry, which was a higher number than almost any other New England minister, apart from Emmons. All of Bellamy's students carried the marks of their master's teachings. The main disciples of Hopkins were Nathanael Emmons, Leonard Woods and Edwards A. Park, although many other lesser lights followed these men as well, as we shall see.

(b) Samuel Hopkins

Foster said, “It was fortunate for the new theology of New England that so rich a nature, with so warm a heart and so intensely practical interests as Bellamy had, stood at its fountain-head to direct its course. The other colaborer with Edwards, Hopkins, was naturally of a more prosaic and exclusively intellectual turn; but he too was a pastor, and was thus made constantly solicitous for the practical usefulness of every theological theory.” (18.)

Hopkins (1721 - 1803) settled at first as pastor (1743) on the Massachusetts frontier at Great Barrington, and then moved to Newport, Rhode Island, in 1769. From this latter settlement he wrote and published constantly. Walker said Hopkins was “a man of great natural modesty, of self-denying Christian life.” But he was not such an interesting preacher as Bellamy. (19.)

Hopkins based all of his theology squarely upon the Divine decrees, and carried this out in such a way as to be even more of a High Calvinist than many

others. This was largely because of his fear of Arminianism.

> "This is the point upon which Hopkins - and I may also say the whole line of New England divines - laid the chief emphasis. Few men would be so bold as to deny that God has a plan in the government of the world, and few so foolish as to deny that this plan is governed by infinite love. The tendency of Hopkins' whole scheme is thus to maintain the loving government of God. If there be any other element in this problem, it must be interpreted so as to preserve, not only the *fact* of his loving government, but the *emphasis* which belongs to this fact.
>
> The fact of the divine decrees is proved from the Scriptures and from the divine foreknowledge.
>
> But Hopkins has an eye also for the difficulties of the theme, and he states them with great force. The crucial objection is that decrees seem to destroy freedom, to make vice necessary, and thus to impugn the character of God. The reply is from the Scriptures. Cases are cited to show that God did decree certain acts, which were nevertheless free acts of men. Decrees, he says, include the freedom of man, because God makes use of that freedom to carry out his decrees. Particularly does freedom consist in volitions; and when God decrees that men shall be saved, it is that they shall be saved through their volitions - that is, that their freedom shall be preserved. This is not a philosophical defense of the doctrine..... Hopkins had no theory of the action of the will which he was willing to introduce for such a purpose. He many times intimates that in a limited sphere we readily see how God through motives can govern man without infringing upon his freedom, and this proves that there is nothing *in the nature of volition* to prevent control of a free agent. But into any hopeless attempt to uncover the point in our subconscious nature where the divine and human action join, Hopkins does not go." (20.)

Hopkins wanted to develop a theology where real freedom of the will was possible, but he followed Edwards too closely to be able to succeed in that project.

Regarding the doctrine of original sin, he followed Edwards in saying that all sin is voluntary, and that this is the only kind of sin that there is. We get Adam's sin by heredity, but become guilty and are condemned by choosing sin ourselves.

After the Fall, man is on probation under God's government. Despite the Calvinist nature of the theology, Hopkins believed that people did have the ability to choose to turn to God, just as Edwards and Bellamy had believed.

Regarding the Atonement, Hopkins took the view that Christ had made atonement by suffering the curse of the law. So he believed in a vicarious sacrifice. In this way, the concept of justice is dealt with under God's government. Christ's sufferings were equivalent to those required by justice

before the law, in order to redeem sinners, according to God's purposes.

Hopkins developed Edwards's ethical teaching into a complete system, using the term "disinterested benevolence" to describe the ideal Christian attitude toward everything. That is, when a person was regenerated by the power of God's Spirit, a completely new attitude had to be put into practice, which was not self-oriented (= disinterested = had no hidden agenda or interest of its own), and which showed love to God, man, and all other things, in their proper proportion (benevolence). On the basis of using this term, Hopkins was able to offer guidelines for practical ethical behaviour, which included a strong opposition to slavery. "Disinterested benevolence" was a term that Charles Finney later adopted widely.

In Hopkins's case, his approach to Christian behaviour, however, did tend to appear as a legal duty, more than as a response from a loving heart, as it would have been for Edwards.

Hopkins also introduced a modification to the definition of sin. He saw himself as adding a valuable insight to the definition of sin provided by Edwards.

As stated above, Edwards' definition of sin was that sin "is any other elective preference than that of the good of being in general." Hopkins taught that "all sin consists in self-love and what is implied in this." Foster provides an analysis of Hopkins's teaching at this point, and finds it very inadequate. (21.)

As with Bellamy, Hopkins made a number of other detailed changes in his theology which are hard to set out here in a meaningful way. As mentioned, these men were all independent thinkers, who were capable of cutting their own path through the theological maze. They were different in some details, but were also amazingly similar.

Hopkins had more ability as a systematic thinker than some of the others. As a result, his system of theology is the best one amongst the various New England divines. He thought he was being very Calvinistic. And in some ways he produced a very "high" form of this theology. He thought he was being more consistently a Calvinist than many others.

Comment

The New England theologians were varied, as we have seen. The thing which seemed to bind them together was their special concern over a small number of theological issues. These were:-

(a) the freedom of the human will. We have seen that Calvinistic theologies had great difficulties in giving an account of human decision-making in which people make outright decisions which are not part of a larger determinism. The doctrines of God's decrees, of election, of predestination, and of the kind of influence exerted upon us by the Holy Spirit when He leads us to become Christians, are involved in this question.

(b) the morality of divine justice. This is the problem of people being punished for sins that they did not commit, or which they committed only in some remote way, such as being a part of Adam, at the time of his sin. The question of whether sins can be involuntary is also involved.

(c) the problem of what caused sin to appear in the world. This is the problem as to whether God Himself was the cause of sin, by deciding that it would occur, and thus being responsible for making us all into sinners. Was God the cause of evil? Again, the divine decrees are involved. (22.)

(c) Nathanael Emmons

Nathanael Emmons was born in East Haddam, Conn., in 1745, and graduated from Yale College in 1767. His ministerial studies occurred partly under the control of John Smalley, but Emmons became a special friend of Samuel Hopkins, and it was from Hopkins that the pattern of his theology was developed. His only pastorate was at Franklin, Mass., from 1773 to 1827. He died there in 1840 at a very great age.

> "A man of enormous industry, of much wit, and of exceeding keenness of mind, Emmons's best work was as a trainer of candidates for the ministry, of whom it is thought not less than one hundred passed under his molding touch." He also influenced the development of his denomination's policy. "No man of his age was more widely a force in the religious life of New England." (23.)

Philosophy

We have noted that the earlier members of the New England school of theologians were idealists in their philosophy. Edwards reached a view in some ways similar to Berkeley about the nature of reality. Others seem to have followed Berkeley more openly.

Although Emmons had such good abilities as a systematic thinker, when it came to his theology, it does not seem that this ability stretched to the philosophical foundations of his theology.

Foster says, "On some points he seems to have had no philosophy, for he evidently had a profound horror of ontology, in this respect quite anticipating the attitude characteristic of the last half of the [Nineteenth] century." Foster concluded that Emmons seemed to have held a "philosophy of the unsophisticated man" upon many points, "and the more because we know him to have been familiar with the early leaders of the Scotch school - Reid, Stewart and Brown. The time had not come, however, for the distinct transfer of our theology to the new philosophical basis." - That is, from idealism to the Scottish Common Sense School of Philosophy.

Indeed, his abilities as a systematic theological thinker seemed also to dominate over his method of interpreting the Bible. He seemed to treat verses

from the Bible as things to be understood in the light of his systematic thought, rather than trying to discover the meaning of the Bible passage as a thing of value in itself, as the Puritans would have done.

So, Emmons's style of presenting truth had the effect of tending to make his hearers "boldly and exclusively rationalistic." (24.)

Theology

Like the others, Emmons maintained "the historic faith of the church in the divine Trinity; in the two natures of Christ, human and divine; in the inspiration of the Scriptures; in human depravity; in atonement, justification, sanctification; and in the future punishment of the wicked." (25.)

He followed Hopkins in all of the main trends of systematic theology. Yet there are several details in which he differed from Hopkins, although he claimed these points were natural developments in thought, or were evolved from Hopkins. However, as with all of the others we are considering, he was always an independent thinker, and he wrote as such.

Hopkins had described himself as a "Consistent Calvinist." His followers came to be nick-named "Hopkintonians," or "Hopkinsians." Emmons was one of these, although even a little more extreme. His approach to the divine decrees was Supralapsarian.

Holiness and Sin

"Emmons belonged to the tendency in our theology which emphasised the sole agency of God till it had excluded any proper agency in man. True, Emmons affirmed a real agency in man, and said that it was as real and perfect as if the agency of God had nothing to do with it; but he really removed it when he spoke of God's 'creating' our volitions."

He "made holiness and sin consist in 'exercises.' Hence he consistently rejected the doctrine of a sinful nature, for 'there is no morally corrupt nature distinct from free, voluntary, sinful exercises." He also rejected the doctrine of our union with Adam in his sin, and every imputation of his guilt to us. (26.)

The process whereby regeneration takes place in a person formed an important part of the New England theological system. Here, we will briefly compare the views of Hopkins and Emmons. Hopkins had a rather vague theory of the human will. "The Holy Spirit puts forth a causative activity, the effect of which is the 'exercises of the regenerate in which they are active and agents.' The Spirit works immediately upon the heart, without means, and produces an instantaneous change in it. The word 'heart' is used here in the sense of will."

When the Spirit produces this change, then the mind of that person is able to perceive and understand the light and truth of God, which the Spirit pours into the understanding. Upon regeneration, conversion follows, which is the radical

change of attitude, action and thought, in every aspect of life, which takes place, and which people choose, and in which they voluntarily take part. So, for Hopkins, regeneration was a work of God, and the conversion that followed, and which was made possible as a result of the sovereign creative act of the Holy Spirit, was a work in which man's efforts were included. In some places he allowed room for the Spirit to do some preparatory things in the person's mind, as well.

Emmons was able always to state things in much sharper relief. Here he took Hopkins's views, and 'evolved' them. For Emmons there was no difference between regeneration, conversion and sanctification. They are all the production of holy exercises in the hearts of sinners in the same way. This God does by an immediate act of power. Sometimes he strives with sinners, and produces conviction, etc., uses means. But all this does not effect regeneration. In this God produces holy love. He makes the heart willing. This is the first act of the regenerated will. It is repentance, not some mysterious thing on which repentance follows. So, the new taste for God, and the new disposition to obey God, are part of what God does in the heart (and will), and which constitutes the Christian life. So, holiness consists in exercises of the character, produced by God. Seeing that there was no "soul," or no spiritual substance, or substratum, to be prepared for conversion, the preparation problem also disappeared. Or, at least, most of his followers believed that he thought so. Professor Park, however, disagreed. (27.). Everything was just exercises in the heart produced by God, whether it took place after regeneration, or before.

Another aspect of his doctrine of sin was that all sin was seen as selfishness. Holiness was therefore the opposite of selfishness, which was being submitted to God in such a way as to have no other personal agendas but to seek God's glory.

Submission to God

This was the key thought for Emmons, in describing what constituted the Christian Life. A person had to learn a new way of looking at life, so that complete submission to God was involved. Any person who professed to be a Christian, or who was thinking of becoming a Christian, and was in the process of counting the cost, was counselled to choose a total surrender to God as the only proper response to God by us. Sinners were told that they must be willing to seek the glory of God, first before anything else, even if it meant our own damnation. If God would be the most glorified by sending me to hell for all eternity, then I must choose it, for God's sake. So, God's glory must be sought regardless of our personal comfort, safety, security or salvation.

Human Free Will

It will already be evident what answer Emmons gave to this problem area.

God acts freely, and is the basic and first cause of all that happens. Man's action and decision is really only a second cause, and is not the real and efficient cause. But, within this context, man's actions and decisions are free and full. So, gospel preachers must call upon all people everywhere to repent immediately, and to do all of the things that God commands them to do. The preacher must declare the whole counsel of God, and emphasise all those responsibilities that God has placed upon mankind. The preacher must declare Christ's invitation to sinners to come to Him, and must urge people to obey this gracious call. God will, in His own way, produce the results of preaching, and the responses to His own gracious message of salvation. He will use the foolishness of preaching to call out the elect, and save them. He will also use our prayers for the success of the work of God in order to fulfil His purposes.

So, although every step in the path to salvation was the work of God in us, yet each step also involved human decisions, free choices and co-operation.

Here we see an insight into the substance of the gospel that was preached in the New England revivals around the year 1800.

Revivals

In his biography of Emmons, Edwards A. Park quotes from an autobiographical piece that Emmons wrote about 1806.

> "After recording the untoward events connected with the Revolutionary War, he writes: 'But I should be very ungrateful to God, if, after mentioning so many disagreeable things, I should pass over in silence some very happy circumstances in the course of my ministry. From the time of my ordination in the year 1773 [Park's printed text mistakenly says 1785], I seemed to labor in vain, and to spend my strength for nought. Though now and then an individual joined the church, yet there was no general and deep attention to divine things among my people. This was a matter of grief and discouragement. I began to despair of ever seeing any considerable success in my ministerial labors, and was brought to feel my entire dependence upon God for a revival of religion. While my mind was in this state, a serious attention to divine things began to appear in the second parish in Medway, which was contiguous to mine, about the middle of November, 1784. In the space of five or six weeks after this, the same serious attention began to spread in my congregation, which continued and increased till April or May, and did not wholely subside for above a year. It was indeed a glorious and solemn season.
>
> On the Sabbath, at lectures, and in conferences, the people in general were deeply affected. And though many had high exercises of mind, and were extremely impressed with lively views of eternal realities, yet no disturbance or irregularities occurred. Those who entertained hopes of a saving change, never expressed any enthusiastic fervor or zeal, but

manifested a sensible, rational, scriptural joy in God, and delight in religious duties.

It could not be ascertained how many were really awakened and convinced. There was, however, an uncommon solemnity upon the minds of the people in general, so that there was no opposition made to the work, by scarcely a single person. There were about seventy who professed to entertain a hope of a saving change, though the whole of that number did not join our church.

This revival of religion put a new face upon my congregation, and gave me new courage and zeal in my ministerial labors. Some who had been unfriendly became friendly, and many who had been friendly, became more and more attached to me.

I believe I stood in a favorable light among all my people; though probably some were more displeased with my preaching, the more they understood and felt it.

Not long after this revival, religion gradually declined among us, though the late converts retained as much life and vigor and zeal as could be expected, and generally gave convincing evidence that they had been savingly taught of God.

But in February, 1794, God was pleased again to pour out his Spirit in a more than common measure, but not to so great a degree as in the former revival. It first appeared in one family, in which two or three were hopefully converted. But upon preaching a sermon in that family, the attention immediately and considerably spread; so that in the course of a few months, about thirty professed to find comfort, and finally made a public profession of religion.

In consequence of these two spiritual harvests, my church was greatly enlarged, and continues to be the most numerous in this vicinity. At this time, January, 1806, there is awful coldness, and indifference, and stupidity prevailing, both in the church and congregation. On the whole, I have abundant reason to bless God, that he has given me to see so many displays of divine grace, and afforded me so much ground to hope, that I have been made the instrument of some saving benefit to the precious souls committed to my charge." (28.)

A third harvest occurred in 1808 - 1809, when about forty were added to the church.

He retired from his pastoral responsibilities in 1827. No sooner had he done this, than another harvest took place, in which thirty-six persons made a public profession of their faith. He saw this as fruit flowing from many years of sowing. In 1836 - 1837 he rejoiced to see a fifth harvest..

During the fifty-four years he was pastor in Franklin, 308 people were added to his church, 272 by profession of faith, and 36 by letter from other

churches.

> "If it be considered that the greater part of his ministry was during the great declension of religion in Massachusetts, when the enemy came in like a flood, when revivals of religion were little known, and when a majority of the churches in his vicinity were either overrun or torn asunder by the prevalence of Unitarianism and its kindred errors, these facts indicate much more than ordinary success in the conversion of sinners.
>
> It is well known to the people in the immediate vicinity of his labors, that conversions among his people were much more frequent and striking, than in the neighboring societies generally. His success as a preacher was once a common subject of remark. The number that was added to his church during the long period of his ministry, is not indeed great for these days of revivals and increased population. But for the times in which the vigor of his life was spent, and for the population of the place where he lived, it was uncommon." (29.)

(d) Timothy Dwight

Timothy Dwight was born in Northampton in 1752, and was, through his mother, a grandson of the elder Jonathan Edwards. He graduated from Yale in 1769. He served as a chaplain in the Revolutionary War, and soon afterwards became pastor in Greenfield parish, in the town of Fairfield, Connecticut, until he was appointed President of Yale College in 1795, where he was also Professor of Divinity.

Some writers (e.g. Berk) have perhaps overemphasised the role that Dwight played in the Second Great Awakening, portraying him as the leader, inspiration, master-mind and strategist of the whole movement. In fact there were no special leaders in the Awakening. However, Dwight played a particular role in helping to destroy the power and attraction of French Deism amongst the American students and intellectuals, and spreading a more popular form of New England theology through his sermons to the students each Sunday. "His own powerful personality, warm piety, and great ability gave these discourses wide popularity and much influence, not only over the students of the college, but with the Christian public." (30.) The sermons were eventually published widely.

He disagreed with Hopkins and Emmons on certain points, especially on the way God's decrees seemed to make God the ultimate source of man's sinful choices. So, two streams developed in the general New England theological arena. The evangelist Asahel Nettleton was, perhaps, closer in his theological outlook to the views espoused by Dwight.

For example, one point of divergence concerned Emmons' doctrine of "exercises" as the form of new life in the believer. Dwight preferred to say that the believer had been given a new "taste" for God, and for spiritual things,

enabling a person to trust in Christ's atonement, and to repent. This "taste" doctrine, as it became called, was adopted by a number of the New England ministers.

Dwight died at the college in 1817.

(e) Nathaniel W. Taylor

It is with the advent of Nathaniel Taylor to the chair of Divinity at Yale College that we start to see major changes taking place in New England Theology. Taylor "was born at New Milford, Conn., in 1786, and after graduating from Yale in the class of 1807, he studied theology with President Dwight, whom he served as an amanuensis and by whom he was much beloved. In 1811, after Moses Stuart had accepted a professorship at Andover, he became Stuart's successor in the pastorate of the First Church in New Haven, and from that office he was called to the post in the Divinity School which he retained till his death in 1858." (31.)

Taylor had lived for two years in the Dwight family, after graduation, as he studied theology. He imbibed Dwight's deep concern for revivals, and the evangelistic drive within Dwight's theology and preaching. When he became pastor in New Haven, he became the defender of revivals. So, for ten years, he occupied the most prestigious pulpit in the state. Upon becoming professor, in 1822, he wanted to help set out a theology which would make the preaching of the gospel more direct and simple.

It was not so much the case that Taylor made wide-sweeping changes in basic doctrines. In one sense, the changes he made were not great. But the changes he made, nevertheless, altered the character of much of New England theology away from being Calvinistic. So, in another sense, Taylor helped to create a sea-change, which had far-reaching consequences. These changes became better known to the public, and better formulated, in the period between 1826 and 1828.

The Unitarians had increasingly been attacking Calvinism, charging "that Calvinistic determinism actually promoted immorality by denying human freedom."

Philosophy

Taylor's response included accepting the Scottish Common-Sense philosophy of realism, although it was humanistic. This included accepting "that reason provides not only proof of God's existence [such as the argument from design] but also the first principles of morality that make man a free, moral agent." (32.) Here we can see the basis for the change away from Calvinism. This philosophical change, and the common sense view about human freedom, meant that theology would no longer depend so heavily upon the sovereignty and decrees of God, with little or no room for human freedom. Now, the

emphasis began to be in the other direction, with emphasis upon human freedom, and with a doctrine of God which looked like it was a denial of God's sovereignty.

In fact, his Presbyterian critics accused him of being Arminian, and even Pelagian. (Pelagianism is the doctrine that man can do something to help save himself, by his own efforts.) Both of these accusations were not fair to Taylor, and showed that the critics did not understand Taylor's thinking properly. But, we can see why the accusations were made, just the same.

Theology

Taylor "insisted that men are lost but denied that Adam's sin was imputed to all men and that everyone inherits a sinful nature which causes everyone to sin. [We have seen this with some of the others, already.] Even though a person sins, he has power to do otherwise, thus remaining morally responsible.

Taylor also reinterpreted Calvin's teaching on God's sovereignty by calling God a moral governor who rules, not by determining the destiny of all men through election, but rather by establishing a moral universe and judging its inhabitants. God promotes moral action by a system of means and ends in which man can respond to ethical appeals for repentance.

He opposed the legal view of the Atonement that stressed Christ's substitutionary death on the cross in the place of sinners to satisfy God's justice. Instead, God as benevolent moral governor sent Christ to die so that his death could be preached as a means to urge sinners to turn freely from their sin .....and be converted. [Even if self-love was a motive for turning to God.]

Taylor blurred the distinction between the Holy Spirit's sovereign work of regeneration and human repentance." Edwards had maintained this distinction in his attempts to defend the Great Awakening in the 1740s. (33.)

So, his approach to the Atonement was more in the line of a "Moral Influence" Theory.

Some of these views were published by Taylor in 1826, but became much more widely known through his lecture "Advice to the Clergy" ("Concio ad Clerum.") in September, 1828. Such a lecture for the clergy who came to visit at Yale, for the Commencement, was held every year.

The "New Haven" Theology

The term, "New Haven Theology," was coined for Taylor's particular interpretation of the New England Theology.

(a.) The New Haven Theology became an object to be misunderstood, attacked and abused, by the "Old School" Presbyterians, as part of the train of events which led to the split in the American Presbyterian Church in 1837. It was seen as a clear departure from Calvinism.

(b.) Charles G. Finney adopted a rather similar theological position, although

it is possible that he may have arrived at it independently. Finney had already begun to develop his views before 1826. Nevertheless, the “Western” revivals amongst the New School Presbyterians, and the Congregationalists, helped greatly to popularise aspects of Taylor's theology.

Part Four: William R. Weeks

William Raymond Weeks was one of the lesser known ministers who played a significant role in the Western New York revivals in the 1820's and early 1830's. He was not a leader in any of the revival meetings, or in organising any of the revival activities. He was not a famous preacher. He had a minor role as a theological educator of the public, mainly through his publications. He also had a minor role as a parish minister during most of the period. His main role lay in his efforts to draw attention to certain features of the New York revivals which he thought would produce undesirable results in the short and longer terms. There are significant lessons for us to learn today from this aspect of his work.

Biography

The only extensive source of information about Weeks' biographical details is in Sprague's “Annals of the American Pulpit.” His parents were Ebenezer and Eunice (Griswold) Weeks. He was born on 6th August, 1783, in Brooklyn, Connecticut. His father was a farmer, and moved to Steuben, Ontario County, New York, in 1791, where William passed his early years in clearing and tilling the ground. At an early age he was apprenticed to a printer. He worked at this trade for several years at Whitesborough and at Lansingburg, New York.

A revival occurred under the ministry of the Rev. Jonas Coe, in which William Weeks professed conversion, and experienced, “as he hoped, a radical change of character.” Some of his friends urged him to train for the ministry. This took several steps. Firstly, he did some preparatory study under his cousin, the Rev. Holland Weeks, who was then Congregational minister in Pittsford, Vermont. Eventually, he entered the College of New Jersey, graduating in 1809. He remained there for a further six months as tutor in Hebrew, fully intending to become a foreign missionary.

He then pursued further study under his cousin, and partly at Andover Theological Seminary, starting there in 1811. His health became seriously impaired. This interrupted his studies, and he had to give up his cherished ambition to preach the Gospel to the heathen. He was licensed to preach by the Association of Vermont.

He preached briefly in Hebron, N.Y., and in December that year was ordained. He was installed as pastor in Plattsburgh, New York, by the

Columbia Presbytery, in February 1812. On the 15th of January he had married Hannah Randel, of Albany. He resigned from the Plattsburgh position in 1814. We could speculate that his stay in Plattsburgh was, in the end, not a happy one, because 1814 saw him preach and publish a sermon at Plattsburgh entitled "Withholding a Suitable Support From the Ministers of Religion is Robbing God."

Whilst at Plattsburg, he published the first editions of his first and second small books. The first, "Nine Sermons on the Decrees and Agency of God" reflected the very high Calvinism of his personal theology, basically an expression of the theology of New England Congregationalism at that time. The second, "A Catechism of Scripture Doctrine," was a pocket-sized book which went through many editions during his lifetime, and seems to have exercised a significant ministry. Indeed, both books were meant to provide within small volumes things which normally could only be had in large and expensive volumes.

After leaving Plattsburgh, he was based with his in-laws in Albany for a year, although spending most of the time travelling, looking for a new settlement. In 1815 he moved to Litchfield, Conn., where the people wanted him to become pastor. But the Association would not install him, because of some theological difference of opinion between Weeks and the Association. So, he set up a school there, and stayed till 1818, when he moved to Clinton, Oneida County, New York.

He continued running a school in Clinton until 1820, when he received a call from the church at Paris Hill, which he accepted. But the church was in a "somewhat divided and restless state", so he declined to be installed as pastor, thinking that he would be more comfortable himself, and also serve these people better, if he simply preached for them as "stated supply." He remained at Paris Hill until 1831, although he operated a school as well for the final two years of that time. Several small publications appeared in this time. Also, the first twenty-one chapters of "Pilgrim's Progress in the Nineteenth Century" were published as articles in the "Utica Christian Magazine" during 1824 - 1825. These articles express his opinions on a variety of subjects in the form of a Bunyan-like allegory.

It was during this time that he took a stand about some of the features of the "Western Revivals", which were prevailing in his neighbourhood. It is aspects of this work that we will be looking at later in another chapter. Another six articles appeared in 1828 - 1829, which in due course became chapters in his "Pilgrim's Progress". These expressed in a most interesting manner his views about some of the issues that he was protesting about, in relation to the revivals. A summary of five of these chapters has been included a little later in this book, under the heading "How Can Revivals be Made to Serve the Devil?"

He received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from Williams College in 1828.

By 1831, “His situation was now rendered very unpleasant by the introduction of what were technically called the 'new measures' in connection with revivals of religion; and he therefore removed to Utica, where he remained about a year, teaching a school, and ministering to the Third Presbyterian Church, then a missionary station under the care of the American Home Missionary Society.” In 1832, he addressed a pamphlet to the Paris Hill church called “A Letter on Protracted Meetings”, which set out his reservations about that aspect of the “new measures.”

In 1832, he was called to the Fourth Presbyterian Church in Newark, New Jersey. Here he preached regularly, and also taught in a school, until the autumn of 1846, by which time his health had declined to such an extent that he retired from both preaching and teaching. During this period, he wrote a number of pamphlets on a wide range of issues, and published them, as well as working on the main parts of the “Pilgrim's Progress in the Nineteenth Century.” It had reached the stage of being ready for the printer early in 1848.

He died on 27th June, 1848, whilst on a visit to Oneida, New York.

“Pilgrim's Progress in the Nineteenth Century” finished up being a substantial volume, and included his opinions of a wide range of controversial subjects. In its allegorical form, it also set out a history of the “new measures” controversy in which he had been involved for so long, as well as stating many of the arguments used on both sides. It was registered by Hannah Weeks, and published in New York in 1848. Several post-humous editions of it appeared over the next year or two, including commendatory reviews by several leading ministers and laymen.

Personality

The Rev. Baxter Dickinson, who contributed the second biographical sketch of Weeks in Sprague's “Annals”, says that Weeks was kind and generous, and was very conscientious. He was very careful in standing for theological principles. This not only played a role in his ability or inability to be part of certain organisations and activities, but was a major factor in his stand about the “new measures,” that we will consider shortly.

Weeks was, at times, stubborn and tactless in preaching about controversial issues, even when his friends pleaded with him not to do it. One example later in his life was that, on one occasion he decided he ought to preach against slavery, and announced publicly what he was going to do. His friends pleaded with him not to do this, but to go about it in another way. But he insisted. As he rose to preach, a mob entered and wrecked the church. The following Sunday, without any signs of repentance, or of having learned a better wisdom, he preached on the inscrutable and wise ways of God's sovereignty in what had happened the previous week.

As a preacher, he was not “popular” in the ordinary meaning of that term.

"His style was clear, correct, didactic, but never sparkling. He dealt very much in principles, and not enough directly with the sensibilities of his hearers. He was intellectual, argumentative and convincing, - not sufficiently imaginative and impressive." But he had dignity, seriousness, earnestness and strict propriety.

"Had he expended less strength and time relatively in expounding and establishing the naked truth under discussion, and indulged more freely in direct, pungent, rousing exhortation, he might probably have been a more acceptable, and at the same time a more useful, preacher." He worked hard, and was a faithful and able minister of Christ.

His theology was "emphatically that of the Hopkinsian School." He not only emphasised the strong points of this system of theology, but found them to be medicine for his own soul, in the various episodes of life that came his way. (34.)

Theology

(a) As mentioned, his "Nine Sermons on the Decrees and Agency of God." portray a very high Calvinistic position wherein absolutely everything that ever happens can only occur because it is the choice and will of God. God has decided whatever will happen, in His absolute sovereign decrees. The sermons are all based upon part of Ephesians 1:11, which says that God "worketh all things after his own will." This statement is taken completely literally, and is applied to everything that has ever happened. This was a theme that Weeks preached upon many times, and exulted in as a most joyful thing.

One problem which seemed to flow from this view was that God became the author of sin, all the work of the devil, and of all the evil in anyone's life. Naturally, Weeks, and those who also adopted this view, had their replies to that charge, and these are spelled out in his little book of sermons.

Another problem was - on such a basis, many people thought it was very difficult to provide any real place for human free will, because God has already decided whatever happens, including so-called free choices made by humans. In his sermons, Weeks discusses this problem, and provides as good an answer to it as one could find in the realm of New England Theology. Many other problems with these Calvinist views are also aired by Weeks, argued about, and decided firmly in favour of this God-centred view. Weeks was not afraid to state as fairly as he could any and all of the arguments of his opponents, and then to argue his own case against them. (35.)

Charles G. Finney and his friends thought that Weeks' form of the doctrine of God's sovereignty was deplorable. Finney also thought that many of the objections that Weeks later expressed about the Western Revivals flowed from these, and other, peculiarities of Weeks' own theological position. (36.)

(b) The Calvinists of this period fought strenuously against any sign of Arminianism in their theology. The Arminians of this period also believed in Divine Sovereignty, but in a different way.

We have just seen that the Calvinists started their theology with God's sovereignty, and then tried to fit some form of freedom of the human will in as well. On the other hand, the Arminians started with the freedom of the human will, and then tried to fit some form of Divine sovereignty into their theology. With Calvinism, the problem was to fit the human aspect into the picture. With Arminianism, there was no problem with the human will. The problem was to fit a really big God into the picture.

Amongst the New England Calvinist theologians, the first person to try seriously to overcome this problem between Divine sovereignty and the freedom of the human will was the great Jonathan Edwards. What many consider to be his greatest philosophical work was his attempt upon this problem. His book was called, "An Inquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notions of that Freedom of the Will which is supposed to be essential to Moral Agency, Virtue and Vice, Reward and Punishment, Praise and Blame."

Despite his best efforts, Edwards' doctrine somehow did not work. The ultimate feeling left in the mind was that man still tended to be seen as a pawn, or a piece of a machine, within a picture determined totally by the decision of God. Edwards' main followers or students were Samuel Hopkins and Joseph Bellamy. Both Hopkins and Bellamy refined Edwards' picture of the human will in certain ways, as well as several other theological points, in attempting to improve on the theological position. It was Hopkins' approach to these questions that William Weeks had embraced.

(c) New England Theology at that time was also very decidedly evangelical. The Congregational revivals during the Second Great Awakening in eastern U.S.A. all functioned within this Calvinist framework. People were called to repent, and to turn to God, and have faith in Christ, although it was also believed that they could not do these things unless God had already acted within them to produce these results. After all, God had chosen to save people by the "foolishness" of preaching the Gospel. So, evangelistic preaching should be the path to success.

So, linked to this view about the complete sovereignty of God, was the doctrine that people could only be "born again" by a direct creative act of the Holy Spirit, which was instantaneous, and which produced repentance, faith, a changed life, a thirst for God, and the fruit of the Spirit. The person's willpower, decision and actions occurred as a part of this process after the creative act of God. Everything which happened in a person's life prior to this Divine creative act of regeneration was sinful and selfish.

They could not do anything to prepare for regeneration, or do anything truly

acceptable to God, because that could be viewed as a “work”. Everyone had to be saved by faith alone, in what Christ had done, and not by any works. Even the needed faith in Christ could not be seen as a “human work” of any kind. Christ's sacrifice was seen as the only factor which actually saved anybody.

It was the task of the church to instruct people wisely in all aspects of these matters, and to receive people into church membership after they had been tested for a period, and after it was clear that they had really been born again by the power of God, and that they understood fairly well what had happened to them.

What the people felt, or even what they said, was not so important as there being evidence in their lives that they were truly regenerate, and that their lives were changed. Great care was taken to save the converts from having a false hope that they were saved when in fact they were not, or that they had misunderstood their situation before God. The converts of the Congregational revivals of this period in New England tended, therefore, to last very well indeed, and very few fell by the wayside.

One of the main sources of problems in this area was emotionalism in the meetings, or people acting according to their feelings, instead of being more thoughtful about what they did.

Another source of problem that the New England evangelical ministers were very conscious about, and were always striving to avoid, was using foolish techniques in a meeting, and thus creating an unhelpful or destructive impact or reaction in the people. Glaring examples of this had occurred as a result of the ministry of James Davenport in the First Great Awakening back around 1740. Even the great George Whitefield had not been unblemished in this respect. The New England ministers took deliberate and extraordinary steps to avoid these problems during the revivals of the Second Great Awakening, and for quite some years they seemed to be successful. With the rise of Charles G. Finney, however, this trouble-free period seemed to be coming to an end. Many ministers like William Weeks began to think that another Davenport had arisen.

The Motives Behind Weeks' Efforts to Purify the Revivals

His efforts to purify the New York Revivals, or to create a greater degree of wisdom in the ways they were managed, had a number of results. (a.) His efforts were greatly appreciated by those who shared his concerns, and his theological viewpoint. (b.) He caused many headaches for people working in revivals who wanted to be left alone to do what they thought God wanted them to do, but who did not want to ask legitimate questions about the quality of what they did. (c.) By being unwise himself, he could so easily give many people reasons for thinking the Gospel was something from which to keep well away. In this way he would help to promote rebellion against God and

impenitence.

His motives for doing this were fully worthy, so far as we can tell. There is no evidence upon which to base any accusation that Weeks had ulterior or selfish motives in any of this.

(a) The Glory of God

This motive is basic to all real Christianity, and is reflected strongly in the very high Calvinism which was the basis of Weeks' system of theological beliefs. It also followed from the definitions of true Christianity which came through the New England School of theology, directly from the founder of the school, in the theology of Jonathan Edwards. As Weeks wrote in his "Pilgrim's Progress", "In true religion God is loved for the excellence of his own character." (37.)

(b) The Desire to Save People from a False Conversion Experience

As mentioned in the previous section, Weeks' understanding of true conversion depended upon a creative act within a person by the Holy Spirit, who is the Lord. This creative act cannot be arranged or controlled, anticipated or guaranteed as a result of our prayers. We have no control over it. But, like the beginnings of physical life, it leads to a new life of new loves and new inclinations, new choices, new hopes and fears, new motives and goals, and a completely new orientation in one's outlook, with God at the centre. In philosophical terms, we would say that the person had adopted a new world view, and this new view created a deep and pervasive change, in every detail of life.

Although false conversions ought to be greatly and equally feared by Arminians, as well, these Calvinists shared a special concern about them. The Congregational ministers in New England were very careful over this matter. False conversions can be produced easily if a preacher (or a pastor, or someone being used by God to manage a revival) uses unwise methods, or teaches inappropriate doctrine, or false doctrine. A person might easily come to think he was converted, when he was not.

False conversions dishonoured God, and brought eternal pain and damnation to people who were relying upon the clergy to advise them well, instead of falsely.

We have also seen in an earlier chapter that the Congregational ministers involved in the New England revivals, in the early period of the Second Great Awakening, had developed a counselling method, based upon their special theological beliefs, in which they tried to provide safeguards against false conversion experiences. The history of these revivals seemed to give evidence that a good degree of success was achieved, as the number of apparent backsliders in these revivals was very low. Asahel Nettleton, especially, made

this issue a major aspect of his work.

In his turn, Charles Finney had extensive teaching about true and false conversion, explaining how the true could be promoted and the false avoided. But this was based upon a somewhat different system of theological beliefs.

At this point, we need to emphasise that William Weeks saw the goal of avoiding false conversion, and giving the teaching that would achieve this, as absolutely a major motive and goal in his work.

(c) The Defence of Revivals

Jonathan Edwards had taught that revivals were the divinely chosen means whereby the Gospel was to be spread most effectively throughout the world. In the future, they would lead to the fulfilment of Biblical prophesies about the last times. He had published a clarion call for people around the world to pray for outpourings of the Holy Spirit which would lead to these fulfilments.

All New England Congregational ministers, who were in the tradition of Edwards, valued revivals in this way. In the earlier stages of the Second Great Awakening, these ministers practised what Edwards said. They believed that they had conducted the revivals, in the New England phase of the Awakening, in an enormously successful and worthy manner, yielding the best and clearest possible results.

William Weeks shared this view on the value of revivals. It is stated clearly in the "Pastoral Letter" issued by the Oneida Presbytery, and is assumed to be true in the "Pilgrims' Progress." (38.)

He also believed that the New England revivals since 1799 had been managed very well. There had been hardly any false conversions, or people falling away afterwards.

Revivals were the life-blood of the Church. Without them, churches became cold, barren and spiritually unproductive. Churches which do not experience revivals for a period may seem to flourish for a while, but they are only living off the fatness of their heritage. Before long, they will decline, and if this continues for too long, those churches will die out completely. They have sacrificed the true purpose of their existence.

Revivals were a key part of preparing for the Millenium, and for Christ's return as King. Obviously, the purer these revivals could be - the better they might help to achieve these goals. (39.)

Anyone who did things which endangered the purity of revivals, or which actually made a revival less pure and wise, was especially bad and blameworthy, because by these unwise actions they endangered positive qualities in the life of the church. Or else, they actually sacrificed positive contributions to the fulfilment of these Biblical prophecies. They did things which made these fulfilments more difficult, and more distant.

The search for a better wisdom and a greater purity in revivals was a major

motive for William Weeks, at every stage of his work. In our future discussions of the work of William Weeks, these very valuable motives must be borne in mind.

CHAPTER EIGHT

FINNEY'S EARLY THEOLOGY and PERSONAL IMPACT

Following upon our discussion of various persons in the stream of New England Theology, we now come to discuss the life and work of Charles G. Finney. After a brief biographical description, we will look at Finney's early theology, as this is the part of his theological development which is most directly the concern of this present book. After that, we will look at several other aspects of the impact that he made upon upstate New York.

Biography

Charles Finney was born in the village of Warren, in Litchfield County, Connecticut, on 29th August, 1792. The family was poor, and was not "pious". As populations spread west, the family moved across the Hudson River to Brothertown, and then to Hanover, in Oneida County, New York, where Charles spent his boyhood. The area was then largely wilderness.

> "There were farm chores to be performed, logs to be felled, soil to be tilled. When Charles was old enough he took down the long-barreled flintlock rifle which hung from deer antlers over the door and hied himself to the woods where such game as deer, turkey and wild pigeons were plentiful. He became an expert shot and hunting was a diversion he enjoyed throughout the more active years of his life." He excelled at every available form of sport. (1.)

Schooling taught him how to read, spell, write legibly, and how to keep the family accounts. This was followed by two years at Hamilton College in Clinton, where he was inspired to seek a classical education, and he learned to love music, especially learning to play the violin, and the cello. He also had a great singing voice.

When he was sixteen, the family moved to Henderson, on Lake Ontario. These frontier locations provided few religious opportunities, especially for those not previously so inclined.

> "The call of the War of 1812 sounded and Charles went to Sacket Harbour on the lake with the intention of enlisting in the navy, but here in one day he heard more profanity than he had heard in the twenty years of his life and it was more than he could stand. He was also accosted by a street woman, young and pretty." Meeting the prostitute so shocked Finney that it reduced him to tears. (2.)

He attended another academy for two years, intending after that to further his classical education at Yale. Following these two years he taught for two years in New Jersey, using his time to get a modest working knowledge of Latin,

pursuing also other subjects.

Following this, he embarked upon a legal career, and, at age 26 years, he entered the law office of Judge Benjamin Wright in Adams, New York. He studied there for two years, was admitted to the bar, and became a partner in the law firm. He became interested in the civic activities of the community, joined the Masons, and in due course was asked by the Presbyterian minister, the Rev. George W. Gale, to lead the choir, but his knowledge of spiritual religion was woefully inadequate, and almost non-existent.

For the first time, Finney began to hear sermons regularly, and to attend other meetings. Gale's sermons expressed a high form of Calvinism that he had learned at Princeton. Sinners had neither the inclination nor the ability to make a right choice. Man's soul was entirely passive in regeneration, which consisted of a Divine act of creation - indeed, a physical change. People were urged to repent, but, at the same time, were told that they could not do it. People were urged to exercise saving faith, but were then told that this was impossible until after the change of regeneration performed by the Holy Spirit.

His only knowledge of the Bible came slowly because he had never read it before he bought a copy to read as a resource book relating to the history of law.

According to George Gale's account, a degree of revival already existed in Adams, and in the surrounding district, over a short period before Finney was converted. Gale tells that, in June, 1821, he had called the Adams church people together to meet in special times of fasting and prayer for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and he led them in formal confession of lukewarmness and lack of love. Although there had been a few conversions earlier, he began to hold meetings for enquirers after salvation, and soon a number of conversions occurred amongst the older people. There were not many amongst the young people, however, because Finney's negative influence over the other young people seemed to be a major barrier. Also, Jedidiah Burchard, then a young and inexperienced preacher, had been working in the district, mainly under Gale's supervision. Gale and Burchard together saw a number of conversions. (3.)

In the prayer meetings, the elders regularly prayed for revival, but Finney saw no sign of their prayers being answered. They asked Finney if he would like them to pray for him, but he said he saw no evidence that their prayers were being answered, and that their prayers would be no use. However, some of the young people also took up the task of praying for Finney's conversion.

Gale said that Finney “had been in the habit of making very light of the revival. He led the choir of singers on the Sabbath, and professed, and doubtless cherished, a respect for religion, and was a warm friend of mine, but said he would not go to the prayer meetings in the school house because there were fleas there, and my meetings for inquiry he called whispering meetings,

and Bucktail conferences, and would rally some times those who were serious." These comments by Finney were a way of being rude about Gale's special meetings, because he spoke very quietly to the enquirers present. The expression "Bucktail conferences" was a slang reference to Democratic political meetings in New York at that time which were addressed by a party official who did not have much ability at public speaking. (4.)

But the prayers were having an effect upon Finney, as Miller describes. "For sometime previous to [his conversion] he had been a questing disciple though not openly. He was numbered among those who would seek at night or in the closets of his own mind when from the gaze of all others his innermost thoughts and longings were locked securely." (5.) It was also in this context that he began reading the Bible with a more serious personal quest in view.

To outward appearances, his conversion was sudden and dramatic. It occurred on 10th October, 1821, when Finney was 29 years old. Immediately, he knew that he must preach the Gospel. Within a day, he also experienced a baptism of the Holy Spirit, without him really knowing what was happening to him, and his conversion marked the beginning of a series of conversions in that neighbourhood.

Immediately he began to prepare for the ministry under the guidance of his minister. A year or two later, when George Gale moved away from Adams, Finney came under the supervision of the Presbytery, which appointed Gale, and George Boardman, as Finney's tutors.

In 1824, he was commissioned as a missionary to the back-woods areas of New York state, financed by the Female Missionary Society, Western District of New York, which was based in Oneida County, initially for three months. He began in Jefferson County, dividing his Sundays between the villages of Evans Mills and Antwerp, which were about thirteen miles apart.

HIS EARLY THEOLOGICAL VIEWS

The reason why we are mainly interested here in the early stages only of his theology is because our study is really only about his role in the "Burned-Over District" during his earlier years of evangelism, and we are not particularly interested here in his fully developed systematic thinking, as he developed it after he moved west to be Professor of Theology at Oberlin College.

This project of looking primarily at his early theological thinking, however, is much more difficult to achieve than might be thought. If we were to content ourselves with studying his mature thought, then there are several substantial publications which tell us what pattern his thought followed.

We have firstly the "Skeleton of a Course of Theological Lectures", which was published in Oberlin in 1840. This was really a book of sketch notes, or

headings and sub-headings, which covered certain subjects which feature in the early part of his system. We also have His "Lectures on Systematic Theology", which were published some years later. The subjects dealt with in this second book basically carry on from where the first one ended.

But it would be quite a mistake to think that Finney believed all these things, in their mature form, back in 1826, or in 1830, or even less when he began preaching where he had been converted, in the village of Adams, Jefferson County, New York.

Also, it could easily be misleading to rely too heavily upon what Finney said about those early days of his ministry, when he wrote his "Memoirs", over forty years later. It is not hard to show that his memory of those early days was, at times, distorted by later events, and so comments he makes about his theological views at that early time could be affected in the same way. This does not imply that what he wrote in the "Memoirs" is of no use. It means simply that some care is needed.

Despite this last comment, we will need to begin with Finney's own words about these matters. Throughout this book, these are drawn from the Rosell and Dupuis edition of Finney's "Memoirs", which is the only complete text edition, and which contains many extra valuable notes, turning this book into a veritable mine of information about many aspects of Finney's life and work.

Finney's Own Witness

(a) The first example to be introduced is a quotation from the "Oberlin Evangelist" which Rosell and Dupuis provide for us, about an aspect of Finney's conversion experience.

> "I can well recollect a crisis in my own religious history. I felt that there was not another step to take in the direction I was going. I had pursued my worldly interests a long time, all in vain; I had sought God selfishly, but all in vain; and I now betook myself to mighty prayer as I supposed, as if I would pull down blessings at any rate upon my needy soul. Often since, I have looked back with wonder to that moment. I came then to see that I actually said to myself - I may just as well stop this course of seeking now as ever. I hastened away to the woods to pray, pressed with the consideration - I am a selfish man - altogether selfish. I must come to a dead stand in this course; my selfish efforts are of no use, and even my selfish prayers are nothing better than an abomination before God. I had gone out with the determination never to leave the place without giving myself to God. I could see that all had been perfectly selfish, and that now the thing God demanded of me was to desist from any selfishness and give up myself supremely and wholly to Him." (6.)

This note by Finney provides light upon an aspect of his conversion, which emphasises one of the main points around which his conversion experience

revolved. That is, selfishness is here given as a description of his own sinful state, versus total surrender to God, involving the removal of self as the guiding principle of life, and the placing of God in that position, instead. Again, remember, that it can be difficult to tell how much Finney is reading back into his early history the theological theories which later became fundamental to his view of things. Nevertheless, the concepts of selfishness and surrender do seem to describe well the events of that day, to which they refer.

Regarding his period of studies under George Gale, Finney says:-

"I had the use of his library, and ransacked it thoroughly on all the questions of theology which came up for examination; and the more I examined the books, the more was I dissatisfied. I had been used to the close and logical reasonings of the judges, as I found them reported in our law books. But when I went to Brother Gale's Old School library, I found almost nothing proved to my satisfaction. I am sure it was not because I was opposed to the truth; but I was dissatisfied because their positions were unsound and not satisfactorily sustained. They often seemed to me to state one thing and prove another, and frequently fell short of logically proving anything. I finally said to Mr. Gale, 'If there is nothing better than I find in your library to sustain the great doctrines taught by our church, I must be an infidel.' And I have always believed that had not the Lord led me to see the fallacy of those arguments, and the manner in which the truth was to be established from the Bible, and had He not so revealed Himself to me personally that I could not doubt the truth of the Christian religion, I should have been forced to be an infidel.

At first, being no theologian, my attitude in respect to his peculiar views was rather that of negation or denial, than that of opposing any positive view of his. I said, 'Your positions are not proved.' I often said, 'They are insusceptible of proof.' So I thought then, and so I think now. But after all, he would insist upon it that I ought to defer to the opinions of the great and good man who, after much consultation and deliberation, had come to those conclusions. That it was unbecoming of me, a young man, bred to the profession of law and having no theological education, to oppose my views to those of the great men and profound theologians whose opinions I found in his library. He insisted that if I persisted in having my intelligence satisfied on those points with argument, I should be an infidel; and that I ought to accept those opinions, because they were the opinions of men who knew so much more than I did. He believed that the decisions of the church ought to be respected by a young man like me; and that I should surrender my own judgment to that of others with superior wisdom. Now I could not deny that there was a good deal of force in this; but still I found myself utterly unable to accept doctrines in the shape of dogma. If I tried to accept

those doctrines as dogmas, I could not do it. I could not be honest in doing it; I could not respect myself in doing it. Often when I left Mr. Gale, I would go to my room and spend a long time on my knees over my Bible. Indeed I read my Bible on my knees a great deal during those days of controversy with Mr. Gale, beseeching the Lord to teach me his own mind on those points. I had nowhere to go but directly to the Bible, and to the philosophy or workings of my own mind as they were revealed in consciousness. My views took on a *positive* type but slowly. I at first found myself unable to receive his peculiar views; and secondly, gradually formed views of my own in opposition to them, which appeared to me to be unequivocally taught in the Bible." (7.)

Comments

Several comments are appropriate here.

(a) He says plainly that he developed his own positive views gradually.

(b) These positive views were developed in opposition to the views espoused by George Gale at that time.

(c) Finney was just as much a normal human being as anyone else. His theological opinions, and indeed his ideas on any subject, would form quite naturally within the framework of the world-view that he had already accepted before he was converted, and would be strongly influenced by his legal studies, by everything in his previous experience, as well as by his dramatic and life-changing conversion experience. He admits freely that he looked for convincing argument and supporting evidence such as he found coming from the law books and the judges.

(d) While we may admit that God led Finney in many ways, in answer to his prayers, as his thoughts developed, we must NOT accept the view that Finney's positive views were somehow much closer to absolute truth than those of any other person who also studied the Scriptures prayerfully and assiduously.

(e) Linked to this last point is the fact that Finney was not claiming any special inspiration that would make him into the leader of a cult, or of some specially enlightened theological school. Naturally, he thought that his personal theological position was Biblical teaching, and that it was closer to the truth than the opinions of others radically different from himself. But this is the same as what most other Christians believe about their own opinions. So, Finney is not claiming anything unusual here.

George W. Gale's Witness

George Gale was the minister in Adams at the time of Finney's conversion. Some few months after that, Gale started guiding Finney's general studies, with the understanding that he might enter the ministry. Gale enquired at Andover, Princeton and Auburn seminaries, to see if some scholarships might be

available to help Finney to get through ministerial training, but this proved to be unfruitful. So, Gale advised him to apply to the Presbytery, and to let that body put him under the supervision of one or two ministers, who would guide his reading, set topics for essays, etc. This was the path that Finney followed. He applied to the Presbytery in the summer of 1823, which met in Adams.

The Presbytery appointed Gale and George Boardman to direct his studies. This continued until mid-1824. Early in 1824, Finney was licensed to supply the Adams pulpit for some months, because of Gale's declining health. Then he was appointed, as a result of Gale's instigation, to be a missionary in newer areas of the state.

From this we can see that Gale had a good insight into Finney's theological views at that time.

His key comment about it was this.

> "His peculiar views, adopted since he has been at Oberlin, were no part of his theology at that time, and for a number of years afterward." (8.)

George Wright's Witness

An excellent summary outline of Finney's thought appears in George F. Wright's biography of Finney, and he begins his description with some very interesting comments about those early days.

Before 1825

> "According to the ordinary course of things, it would seem in the highest degree preposterous for a man with Finney's experience previous to 1835 to set about the task of restating the theology of the church, and of reconstructing its underlying philosophy. For...the first Bible he owned was purchased as a law-book when he was nearly thirty years old; while his conversion was of such an extraordinary character as almost of necessity to thrust him into the work of preaching without preliminary study.
>
> But it should be remembered that his knowledge of practical affairs and his legal training, combined with the deep experience of the gospel in connection with his conversion, made him a most apt student of the Scriptures; and it is everywhere evident in his writings that he had studied the Bible faithfully, and had obtained a thorough knowledge of its teachings.
>
> The illumination of the Spirit which he sought upon his knees was connected with the illumination reflected to his eyes from the book always open before him.
>
> Moreover, his study of the Scriptures was for the practical purposes of the hour, that he might meet the wants of the hungry souls to whom from the first he was called upon to minister.
>
> In his pastor and first instructor, Mr. Gale, also, he was associated with a man of no inferior quality, whose influence was probably greater upon

his mind than he ever realised." (9.)

Comments

The special points to note from the above quotation is that, when Finney was converted, he was apprenticed to a lawyer, and had been pursuing this for several years. He loved legal work, and seemed to have good talents in that area.

According to his "Memoirs", the main subjects about which he tangled with George Gale, as Finney began his theological studies, arose from his legal concerns and interests.

(a) They had very long discussions about the **Atonement**, and how it worked, from a legal point of view. Gale had trained at Princeton, and accepted the theological position which had been taught there, that the atonement was LIMITED to the elect only. Finney became impressed by those verses in the Bible which said that Christ had died for everyone.

> "He held that Jesus suffered for the elect the litteral (sic) penalty of the Divine law. That he suffered just what was due to each of the elect on the score of retributive justice. I objected that this was absurd, as in that case he suffered the equivalent of endless misery multiplied by the whole number of the elect. He insisted that this was true. He affirmed that Jesus litterally paid the debt of the elect, and fully satisfied *retributive* justice. On the contrary it seemed to me that Jesus only satisfied *public* justice, and that that was all that the government of God could require." (10.)

Rosell and Dupuis have a footnote, quoting from Wright, to the effect that the term "public justice" was used by Jonathan Edwards the Younger in his development of the governmental atonement theory, in combating the Universalists, and Finney may have learned of this term "public justice" later, from sources other than Gale. Whether this is so, or not, the point at issue for Finney in these early days was still very relevant. Within a few years of his conversion, Finney was debating with Universalists, and was using a form of the governmental atonement theory to help defeat them, instead of using the substitutionary theory that Gale believed in, and which the Universalists could attack more easily.

(b) However, the main sticking point for Finney was over the question of **imputation.** That is, over the question as to whether Adam's sin, and the guilt of it, had been imputed to everyone else in the human race, and also the question as to how the righteousness of Christ is credited to our account, in order to make us acceptable to God.

Finney came to the view that people could only be held accountable for sins

that they knew about, and that they had actually committed, and that punishment for sins operated in the same way.

He preached that people should come to Christ, without depending upon any efforts of their own, and submit themselves wholly to Christ, who was the only righteous one, and whose death was adequate to secure the blotting-out of the sins of all mankind.

So, we can see that his legal interests helped to determine which areas of theology he tried to grasp first, and helped to mould what areas of theology interested him most in his discussions with Gale.

(c) Another point of great importance is that his legal studies would raise for him questions of the freedom of the human will, and the full responsibility that people had for their sins, and that they fully deserved whatever punishment came to them because of their sins. This emphasis would immediately tend to make his outlook somewhat Arminian in character, or at least into a view which emphasised the human side of theology, instead of the sovereignty of God, as the Calvinists did.

(d) The practical nature of his evangelism, in those early days, would also indicate that when he called upon people to repent of their sins, to have faith in Jesus Christ, and to surrender their lives to God, he was calling upon people to do things that were within their power to do, and for which they were blameworthy if they did not do it.

Gale, it should be remembered, had received Presbyterian training, at Princeton. He was a Presbyterian minister. So, his approach to the Westminster Confession had not been modified in the ways that we found amongst the New England Congregational ministers. Presbyterian Calvinistic theology had been through a somewhat different series of evolutionary changes.

(e) Finney emphasised in many places that much of his theological education in these early days was gained through reading the Bible upon his knees, in constant prayer that God would guide his thinking and reading, and his search for wisdom.

1825 to 1827

(a) Wright continues:- "On coming to labor in the vicinity of Rome and Utica, in the second year of his ministry, Finney was brought into contact with ministers of New England training, in whose minds the theology of Edwards and his successors was the dominant influence. It was in the house of Rev. Dr. Aiken, of Utica, that he first read Edwards 'On Revivals,' as well as other volumes by the same writer. Of these he 'often spoke with rapture,' according to Dr. Aiken, who adds that Edwards 'On Revivals' and Edwards

'On the Affections' were more read by his own family than any other book except the Bible. Dr. Aiken thinks these books had a perceptible influence on Finney in toning down the original harshness of his expressions in preaching. It was about this time that Finney preached in Utica his celebrated sermon....., upon the text, 'Can two walk together except they be agreed?' And this sermon certainly shows many indubitable marks of Edwards's influence." (11.)

For these opinions expressed by the Rev. Samuel Aiken of Utica, Wright was dependent upon material which was published in Lyman Beecher's "Autobiography." The actual quotation from Aiken's letter to Beecher is as follows:- "When I first became acquainted with him [Finney], I think he used too frequently the word 'devil,' and harsh expressions; but he is greatly reformed, and I apprehend that reading those very quotations which you make from Edwards on Revivals was the means of his reformation. Until he came to my house (at Utica) he had never read the book, and here it was frequently in his hands during the revival; also other volumes of that great writer; and he often spoke of them with rapture. Indeed, next to the Bible, no book was read so much in my family as Edwards on Revivals and on the Affections."

The editor of the "Autobiography" (Charles Beecher) goes on to say:- "It was said, also, that certain measures were introduced not hitherto of good repute among Presbyterians and Congregationalists, such as women praying in public, the intrusion of evangelists upon the parishes of settled ministers, and other fanatical practices.

How much truth there may have been at the bottom of these charges we shall not undertake to determine. That there was some foundation for them seems probable. That they were greatly exaggerated seems no less probable.

As the revival spread, and many laborers entered into the field, it is natural to suppose that Mr. Finney would have imitators, who, as usual in such cases, would find it easier to exaggerate his defects than equal his excellencies. And as no one mind could know all that was transpiring in different places, so many exceptionable things may have occurred of which the principal leaders could have no knowledge, and which, when reported in an exaggerated form, they might with perfect sincerity deny to have happened." (12.)

(b) **"**Upon going from Utica to Troy, in the winter of 1827, Finney became acquainted with Rev. N. S. S. Beman, whose influence..... was making itself powerfully felt in the liberalizing movement which ended in the disruption of the Presbyterian Church ten years later. It is instructive to notice that Beman's published opinions on the atonement coincided closely with those which Finney himself subsequently wrought out." (13.)

The impact of this last comment by Wright perhaps emphasises the point that Finney learned his theology from a much wider range of sources than Finney ever admitted.

1828, up to 1835

> "When a little later, Finney went to New York, and came in contact with the Tappans, he was brought into the circle of influences then radiating from Dr. Taylor, of New Haven, who was then the great advocate of the self-determining power of the human will. Yale Divinity School was established in 1822. While gathering funds for this, Beecher and Taylor made the house of Arthur Tappan their headquarters when in New York. Just how much association Finney had with Taylor cannot now be directly ascertained; but it is related by the late Rev. George Clark that, previous to 1836, he was present at New Haven at an interview between Finney and Taylor, and listened with rapt attention to these two as they discussed great theological questions.
>
> Finney's first labors in Boston also brought him into close contact with the theological speculations of the New England divines. His sermon in that city in 1831, upon the duty of sinners to change their own hearts, provoked most lively discussion. Rev. Asa Rand took notes, and severely criticised it in 'The Volunteer,' a paper started in Boston, and edited by him, for the express purpose of counteracting the new measures coming into use for the promotion of revivals." (14.)

Wright then goes on to describe the pamphlet warfare that developed, as a result of Finney's preaching of this sermon, and other related influences, between two theological factions, called the "Tasters" and the "Exercise Men."

The "Tasters" followed a line of reasoning similar to the Old School Calvinists. Regeneration was seen by these people as a sovereign creative act of the Holy Spirit wherein God creates a new taste in the soul so that the sinner could choose holiness. In this way, regeneration was a creative and sovereign act of God, and did not involve human choices, whereas the choosing of holiness (conversion) involved human choices, and followed regeneration. Two things are being spoken of.

The "Exercise Men" said that regeneration and conversion were two names for the same thing, or two aspects of the same process, which happened together, and therefore both regeneration and conversion involved human choices and action. The workings of the Holy Spirit were also involved, of course. Finney obviously fitted better into this second option.

Princeton theologians, however, misrepresented this second line of thought when they called it Pelagian, or as being a view which gave human action an essential role in salvation. The "Exercise Men" clearly still wanted to be truly Protestant, with salvation being by Christ alone, and by faith alone, and

essentially dependent upon the workings of the Holy Spirit.

Wright concludes, "Thus, before coming to Oberlin, Finney was thoroughly identified with the New School Calvinism of the times." (15.) The rest of Wright's exposition relates to Finney's more mature thought.

FINNEY'S PERSONAL IMPACT

There are several ways of approaching this subject. In the first instance, we will look at factors like his personal appearance, the force of his personality, the dramatic power of his preaching, and what we might call his personal charisma. Then we will look at the factor which Finney himself considered to be the most important in accounting for his impact upon those around him.

George Gale's Comments

(a) These first comments apply to the period around Finney's conversion. "He was a good student, it was said, and had obtained a knowledge of the law which many practitioners had not obtained in that section of country, and when meeting them as opponents in justice's courts was more than a match for them. He was a young man of clear mind, of quick perception and logical, without much training in the art. He had had but little more than a common education. He had attended an Academy where he got some knowledge of Latin, in addition to his English. He had studied some of the higher branches of English education, but nothing very extensively, I should judge, from what he told me, that his education was about what might have been required to enter college, except that he had not studied Greek. His study of law, however, had given him considerable discipline of mind.

He was a young man of strong impulses, great vivacity of spirit, bold and fearless, which qualities are strongly imprinted on his physiognomy, independent and self reliant, but full of kind and tender feeling and strong attachment to his friends. He was a little above the medium size, light complexion and light hair, large and prominent light blue eyes, with his upper jaw a little projecting over the under.

His first appearance was not prepossessing, and his manners plain and bordering strongly upon the rough and blunt, but his warm heart, sincere and unchanging attachments, and affectionate manner, made him many friends. His was a guileless, honest, frank heart... He might sometimes when excited have used rough, or even profane, language, but he was not, that I know, addicted to any low vices." (16.)

In reference to the time when Finney went to preach at Utica, for the Rev. Samuel Aiken, Gale said:- "[Aiken] was afraid that his refined and literary

people would be disgusted with (Finney's) plain Saxon, and unpolished manners, if not offended and driven away by his direct and powerful application of offensive truth. But they were pleased as well as impressed by his business and offhand way of presenting truth, which had more the air of the forum, or the stump, than the pulpit, or rather which resembled the class of orators who address a jury rather than a popular audience. And yet this does not express it fully. He often made strong appeals to the feelings, but not usually until he had endeavored to satisfy the reason of the truth he would enforce. He would select a text that embodied some important truth or duty, and when by exposition and agreement he had got it fairly before the minds of the listeners he would urge it home, not by a tedious and prolonged application, but in thoughts and language that would leave a deep impression of the individuals personal interest in the subject. He usually knew as well as a skilled lawyer addressing a jury, when he had produced the conviction in their minds of the truth, or doctrine he advocated, and in many cases little else was required." (17.)

(a) One of Finney's great strengths was his ability to destroy the refuges of lies behind which sinners hid from God. "He possessed a masterly power in unmasking men and systems of false religion. A professor in college, who heard him in several instances expose the absurdity of the Universalist's system, said that his reasoning came the nearest to a mathematical demonstration of anything he ever heard. He was no less successful in answering the cavils of men against the truth. [Gale then gave an example.] The objection of the Universalist is that it would be cruel, as well as unjust, to punish men forever for sinning so short a time. 'How long does it take a man,' said he, 'to raise his rifle to shoot a man thro the heart? And suppose when he was convicted, and permitted by the judge to say why sentence should not be pronounced upon him, he should plead that he was but a moment in committing the crime, and to imprison for life, or to deprive him forever of life, would be very unreasonable.'

In his course of argument, or of illustration, he always selected his arguments and figures such as any man would appreciate or understand. He was sometimes very sarcastic. In preaching in one of the cities he took occasion to show the folly and unreasonableness of that class of men who refuse to believe what they cannot comprehend. Holding his hand up before the congregation he said, 'Suppose there was an insect moving about upon my thumb nail as if he was inquisitive to know what kind of being I am, and I should begin to tell him what my dimensions and power of body and mind are, and at the close of my sentence he should say in his insect terms (and here he let his hand fall as if imitating the supposed utterance of the insect) 'I do not believe it, I cannot understand it.' By a sudden blowing with his

mouth, and convulsive shake of the hand, he said, 'So, would you do with him. And so will God blast the man who refuse to believe truth.' He reaches under the proud and arrogant plea that they cannot understand it, when he shall rise to judgment." (18.)

To this statement by George Gale, one might add reference to the nature of many of his published sermons, which sought to expose hiding places of one kind or another. The sermon which perhaps epitomised that most of all was his sermon on "Moral Insanity", declared by V. Raymond Edman to be "one of the most heart-searching and solemn statements of truth I have ever read." (19.) Ideas from this sermon have, of course, been pirated many times by other preachers who neither acknowledged the source from which their ideas came, nor did they have the same ability as Finney in handling the subject. (20.)

(d) "His language, or manner,... cannot be described. If judged by strict rules of rhetoric it might sometimes be a subject of criticism, but after a few sentences all criticism would be forgotten by an intense interest in the subject.... Nobody who heard him could help feeling delighted, interested, or enraged, according to his character or prejudices.... Men would often go to hear him full of malice, or with a proud defiance, who would return deeply convicted, and sometimes converted. In the city of Rochester, a few years after, the churches could not hold the multitude who flocked to hear him,..... and when liberty was given those... who had made up their minds to be Christians to present themselves in the aisles, there would be a rush and the aisles could not contain them. These were not women and children but strong men, educated men,... Lawyers and judges, men of all professions and conditions of life. His revivals were remarkable for laying hold of this class of men. The great secret of his success was that he was a powerful reasoner. Tho he was a bold and fearless preacher of the Gospel he was a man of much prayer, and singleness of purpose. It was to win souls to Christ that he labored. His own reputation, or interest, came in for no share of his aims, any farther than the cause of Christ was to be effected. Like Barnabas, he was full of the Holy Spirit, as well as a good man, and much people were added to the Lord." (21.)

H. B. Stanton's Picture of Finney's Preaching

"In October, 1830, Charles G. Finney, the famous evangelist, came to Rochester to supply the pulpit of the Third Presbyterian Church. I had been absent a few days, and on my return was asked to hear him. It was in the afternoon. A tall, grave-looking man, dressed in an unclerical suit of gray, ascended the pulpit. Light hair covered his forehead; his eyes were of a sparkling blue, and his pose and movement dignified. I listened. It did not sound like preaching, but like a lawyer arguing a case before a court and jury. This was not singular, perhaps, for the speaker had been a lawyer before he

became a clergyman. The discourse was a chain of logic, brightened by felicity of illustration and enforced by urgent appeals from a voice of great compass and melody. Mr. Finney was then in the fulness of his powers. He had won distinction elsewhere, but was little known in Rochester. He preached there six months, usually speaking three times on the Sabbath, and three or four times during the week. His style was particularly attractive for lawyers. He illustrated his points frequently and happily by reference to legal principles. The first effect was produced among the higher classes. It began with the judges, the lawyers, the physicians, the bankers and the merchants, and worked its way down to the bottom of society, till nearly everybody had joined one or the other of the churches controlled by the different denominations.

I have heard many celebrated pulpit orators in various parts of the world. Taken all in all, I never knew the superior of Charles G. Finney. His sway over an audience was wonderful. Do not infer that there was a trace of rant or fustian in him. You might as well apply these terms to heavy artillery on a field of battle. His sermons were usually an hour long, but on some occasions I have known an audience which packed every part of the house and filled the aisles listen to him without the movement of a foot for two hours and a half. In his loftiest moods, and in the higher passages of a discourse on a theme of transcendent importance, he was the impersonation of majesty and power. While depicting the glories or the terrors of the world to come, he trod the pulpit like a giant. His action was dramatic. He painted in vivid colors. He gave his imagination full play. His voice, wide in scope and mellow in pathos, now rung in tones of warning and expostulation, and anon melted in sympathetic accents of entreaty and encouragement. He was a fine singer, and, when a lawyer, used to lead the choir and play the bass-viol in his town. In singing the Doxology he alone could fill the largest edifices. His gestures were appropriate, forcible and graceful. As he would stand with his face towards the side gallery, and then involuntarily wheel around, the audience in that part of the house towards which he threw his arm would dodge as if he were hurling something at them. In describing the sliding of a sinner to perdition, he would lift his long finger towards the ceiling and slowly bring it down till it pointed to the area in front of the pulpit, when half his hearers in the rear of the house would rise unconsciously to their feet to see him descend into the pit below. Bear in mind that this was without the slightest approach to rhodomontade or exuberant excitement on the part of the orator. Mr. Finney regarded his success at Rochester as among the greatest of his remarkable career. In theology he was a New-School Presbyterian." (22.)

Dr. Edward Beecher's Witness

Many years after the event (November 6, 1889), Edward Beecher provided this description of Finney's preaching, and its effect upon himself. This applied to Finney's first visit to Boston, soon after the 1831 revival in Rochester. It is quoted by George Wright.

> "I was pastor of Park Street Church when he (Finney) was first invited to preach in Boston, and I invited him to preach for me. He complied with my request, and preached to a crowded house the most impressive and powerful sermon I ever heard.... No one can form any conception of the power of his appeal. It rings in my ears even to this day. As I was preaching myself, I did not hear him again. But I met good results in all who heard him, and have ever honored and loved him, one as truly commissioned by God to declare his will as were Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Paul." (23.)

POWER FROM ON HIGH

Whatever Finney might have thought about any of the factors we have mentioned in the last section, without doubt there was an entirely different factor which he considered to be of paramount importance in the success of his work, and without which any and all of the other factors were worse than useless. This is what he called "the enduement of the Spirit," although several other terms were also used in referring to it. This was not simply an initial experience, early in his Christian life, but was something to which he returned on many occasions, and which he felt had to be renewed almost every day.

(a) Mention has already been made of what seemed to Finney like a vision of Christ at his conversion, and the baptism of the Spirit that he received within a day or two of his conversion. Finney describes it in his "Memoirs" in the following way:-

> "As I went in and shut the door after me, it seemed as if I met the Lord Jesus Christ *face to face.* It did not occur to me then, nor did it for sometime afterward, that it was wholly a *mental* state. On the contrary, it seemed to me that I met him face to face, and saw him as I would see any other man. He said nothing, but looked at me in such a manner as to break me right down at his feet. I have always since regarded this as a most remarkable state of mind; for it seemed to me a reality that he stood before me, and that I fell down at his feet and poured out my soul to him. I wept aloud like a child, and made such confessions as I could with my choked utterance. It seemed to me as if I bathed his feet with my tears; and yet I had no distinct impression that I touched him, that I recollect. I must have continued in this state for a good while; but my mind was too much absorbed with the

interview to recollect scarcely anything that I said.

But I know as soon as my mind became calm enough to break off from the interview, I returned to the front office and found that the fire that I had just made of large wood was nearly burned out. But as I returned and was about to take a seat by the fire, I received *a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost*. Without expecting it, without ever having the thought in my mind that there was any such thing for me, without any recollection that I had ever heard the thing mentioned by any person in the world, at a moment entirely unexpected by me, the Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed *to go through me*, body and soul. I could feel the impression, *like a wave of electricity*, going through and through me. Indeed it seemed to come in *waves*, and *waves of liquid love;* - for I could not express it in any other way. And yet it did not seem like water, but rather as *the breath of God.* I can recollect distinctly that it seemed to fan me, like immense wings; and it seemed to me, as these waves passed over me, that they literally moved my hair like a passing breeze.

No words can express the wonderful love that was shed abroad in my heart. It seemed to me that I should burst. I wept aloud with joy and love; and I do not know but I should say I literally *bellowed out* the unutterable gushings of my heart. These waves came over me, and over me, and over me one after the other, until I recollect I cried out, 'I shall *die* if these waves continue to pass over me.' I said to the Lord, "Lord, I cannot *bear* any more.' yet I had no fear of death." (24.)

Finney said it was from this moment that conversions commenced to take place, right, left and centre, as a result of his witness. He always looked upon this experience as the starting point from which developed many experiences of the power and leading of the Holy Spirit throughout his life.

(b) Whenever he preached, in days that followed, he found that he experienced the most success and impact when, in a context of much private prayer, he relied upon the power of the Holy Spirit to achieve things in the lives of people, at all stages of his ministry. The promise of Christ, in Luke 11:13, was most important for him, that the Heavenly Father was far more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who asked than we were to give good gifts to our children.

He also found that, as he prepared to preach, he needed to let the spiritual need of sinners, and the need that sinners ought to repent, and glorify God, weigh heavily upon his mind. This worked as a kind of burden in intercessory prayer. Then, as he entered the pulpit, this burden could be unleashed as he preached.

In Finney's experience, these two factors were the most important ones.

It should be emphasised, however, that Finney did not place such an

emphasis upon this initial experience of the baptism of the Spirit as we find amongst Pentecostals, more recently.

Often, when illustrating examples of the results of being filled with the Holy Spirit, Finney did not return to this initial experience, but told stories of other experiences which had occurred later in his life, as examples of the work of God which flowed from the enduement of power from on high, or else he used examples from the lives of other people. (25.)

(c) Finney also believed that all other preachers of the Gospel were disqualified for their work if they did not experience this baptism of the Holy Spirit, and if their ministry was not carried on in this power and effectiveness.

No amount of theological training, education or talent, could make up for this lack. Indeed, these other factors could very often get in the way, and lead a preacher to rely upon them, instead of relying upon the Spirit of prayer, and the effective power of the Holy Spirit, working through the preaching and declaration of truth. (26.)

By the time Finney wrote his "Memoirs," this factor was very important in his mind. Again, we must question whether he was similarly aware of this issue in the few years after his conversion, although that is the point in the "Memoirs" where the issue is first raised.

> "But there was another defect in Brother Gale's [ministerial] education, which I regarded as fundamental. If he had ever been converted to Christ, he had failed to receive that divine anointing of the Holy Ghost that would make him a power in the pulpit and in society for the conversion of souls. He had fallen short of receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost which is indispensable to ministerial success. When Christ commissioned his apostles to go and preach, he told them to abide at Jerusalem till they were endued with power from on high. This power, as every one knows, was the baptism of the Holy Ghost poured out upon them on the day of pentecost. This was an indispensable qualification for success in their ministry. I did not suppose then, nor do I now, that this baptism was simply the power to work miracles. The power to work miracles and the gift of tongues were given as signs to attest the reality of their divine commission. But the baptism itself was a divine purifying, a filling them with the Holy Ghost, bestowing on them a vast divine illumination, filling them with faith and love, with peace and power; so that their words were made sharp in the hearts of God's enemies, and were quick and powerful like a two-edged sword. This is an indispensable qualification of a successful minister. But this part of ministerial qualification Brother Gale did not possess. And I have often been surprized and pained that to this day so little stress is laid upon this qualification for preaching Christ to a sinful world." (27.)

Comments

(a) A first and obvious comment is, that teachings about the enduement of power, or the baptism of the Holy Spirit, or whatever other terms may be used to indicate these realities, have gone through a vast range of changes, evolutions, revolutions, regurgitations, distortions, twists and turns, since Finney's time. As a result, Finney's personal views on this subject must not be confused with, or identified with anyone else's, before, since, or at the time.

(b) Nor must we think that Finney was somehow a fore-runner of the modern left-wing Pentecostals, in believing that George Gale might not have been converted, at the time when Finney was a student of theology under his care.

(c) It is very common for anyone who has a powerful experience to place expectations upon everyone else to have an experience of a similar kind, or to have an experience which performs the same role in that other person's life which has been played by the powerful experience.

There is no doubt that George Gale was a very different person from Finney, and certainly had a very different theological education from him. However, it should be remembered that Gale had seen touches of revival, and a number of conversions as a result of his ministry, before Finney was converted. Indeed, Finney's own conversion, and the many which followed, can easily be seen as part of the result of Gale's ministry, as answers to the prayers of the people in the Adams congregation, and a result of the mighty workings of the Spirit through both minister and people. There is no sign that Finney ever recognised this kind of thing.

A similar kind of mistake is seen in the fact that highly intelligent people, who feel strongly the logical and practical force of their own ideas, can often believe that any other person who really thinks at all, ought to reach the same conclusions about subjects as they have reached, and that there is something wrong, foolish, stubborn, or obtuse, about them if they do not.

(d) Many leading Christians have had crisis experiences which fall into the category of "baptisms of the Spirit." During revival movements, such experiences can be fairly widespread. Among famous evangelists who have arisen since Finney's time, many of them have had experiences at least something like Finney's baptism. One of the difficulties which has arisen from this is the expectation mentioned above that, therefore, everyone ought to have experiences which fit into this one mould. Linked to this is the idea that, once people obey God, and have this experience, they will each and all become successful evangelists.

(e) Despite all of these qualifying comments, and many others which might

also have been made, we must listen carefully to Charles G. Finney, and take careful note of what he said. His place in the history of the Christian Church is such that he has earned the right to be heard.

None of us can rest satisfied, and say we could not have done any better than we have for God. We ought always to be willing to question and challenge ourselves that our experience of the power of the Holy Spirit might have been better than it was, if only we had been willing to learn from someone else.

Many of us are so entrenched in our own viewpoint that we fail to learn significantly from the testimony of someone with whom, perhaps, we might not have agreed. It may well be the case that, on the Judgment Day, Charles Finney will be a witness against us, emphasising the poverty and ineffectiveness of our work for Christ, and highlighting what might have been the case for the glory of God if we had a deeper experience of the Holy Spirit in our lives than we actually had.

Conclusion

The overall conclusion to draw from all this, so far as the purposes of this book are concerned, is to remember H. B. Stanton's final sentence. "In theology he was a New-School Presbyterian."

Finney's theology became closer to that of Nathaniel W. Taylor, as the years passed, although it would always be a mistake to say that their positions were the same. And when he went west to Oberlin, he slowly developed, in certain respects, more detailed peculiarities of his own.

CHAPTER NINE

THE GREAT REVIVAL in 1826, and its AFTERMATH

We come now to the year 1826, in which one of the most powerful and widespread of the revivals in upstate New York took place.

Sources of our information, such as Hotchkin and Fowler provide a long list of places around the state which reported revivals. Conable also reports revivals in various of the Methodist churches.

On this occasion, we will not look at quotations from these sources, in order to describe what the revivals were like. Instead, we will look at two main sources, one of which was published at the time, and the other some few years later.

Before looking at these quotations, we will ask the question:-

Why were these Revivals called the "Western" revivals?

Finney says that these Upstate New York revivals became known as the "Western" revivals because a revival in 1825 - 1826, in which he was heavily involved, occurred in the Oneida town of Western, and spread through a wide area. (1.)

The impression gained from many other books is that these revivals were called the "Western" revivals because New York State is west of Connecticut, and that numbers of the people who moved to Upstate New York came from New England. This explanation raises a problem. If New York state is "west", what are we going to call places that are even further west, such as Ohio and Kentucky?

The analysis of revivals, and some of the reactions to them, which is the subject of our study, came to the fore in 1826, and the years immediately following. The Western Revivals gained a wide notoriety around the eastern states of the USA, and the impact of them spread all through the neighbouring districts of New York State. Naturally there was a great deal of enthusiasm about these revivals amongst supporters of them, and there was also a great deal of criticism from various sources.

Part One: Two Accounts of Revivals in 1826

ITHACA, 1826 - 1827

Hotchkin draws from the report of the Cayuga Presbytery to provide an example of what happened in 1826 in Western New York. While he mentions

revivals in several places, he draws upon this Presbytery's account of a revival which occurred in Ithaca. He gives only a very brief summary of what happened.

For the previous two years, spiritual fires were said to be sadly declining in Ithaca. About June, 1826, a female prayer meeting was recommenced.

> "The spirit of prayer thus enkindled, continued to increase and spread till about the middle of October, when the whole church seemed to travail in birth for souls. This spirit of agonizing prayer was in most cases not general, but specific in its objects, taking hold of particular individuals."

That is, Christians who experienced such concern would be drawn out to pray with agonizing concern for the conversion of some specific person. The praying person did not know why they felt concern for that particular individual, as it was probably not a close family member, or anyone about whom the praying person might naturally be concerned.

> "These prayers in many cases received the most signal answers, and the promise was often literally fulfilled: 'While they are yet speaking, I will hear.' While a little group of Christians would be gathered together, with one accord, in one place, to pray for some distressed sinner without his knowledge, light would break into his soul, and leaving his retirement for the purpose of informing his Christian friends that he had found the Saviour, he has discovered them agonizing at a throne of grace on his behalf.
>
> For some time after the commencement of the work, it was chiefly confined to children, but afterwards it almost entirely left the children, and passed up to persons of mature age. Of the 250 hopeful converts, are to be found persons of every age, of every class of society, of every complexion of character, and of every grade of mental cultivation."
>
> "There has been nothing noisy or disorderly in their solemn assemblies, even when the excitement was at its height; but while sinners have been suffering the most awful and overwhelming agony, so that their trembling limbs have been actually unable to support them, the house of worship, save for the speaker's voice, has been silent as the grave. In most cases, the distress of mind has been most pungent, produced by a strong conviction of the entire alienation of the heart from God; and such convictions have been usually followed by very comforting views of Christ as a Saviour, Almighty, and in every respect, All-sufficient." (2.)

At a later time, a fuller description of this revival was published by the minister who had been mainly involved, the Rev. William Wisner.

> "As Christians love to contemplate the grace of God in bringing sinners to Christ, I have thought that it might be interesting to the reader to have me place among the incidents of my pastoral life a brief narrative of a work of grace which occurred in my congregation in the winter of 1826 and 1827.

The ordinances of the gospel had been regularly administered, and the word of God statedly preached for a little more than ten years, and the church had during that period been blessed with frequent seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. But for two years next preceding the time above mentioned, there had been fewer conversions to Christ, and less deep seriousness in our village than at any time since my coming to that place. Though my people were orderly, and regular in their attendance on the Sabbath, yet our weekly lectures and prayer-meetings were poorly attended, and the means of grace seemed to produce less effect than was usual among us.

In the latter part of June, arrangements were made for celebrating the fourth of July in the usual manner, but a few Christians, feeling that they could not enjoy such a celebration, resolved to meet by themselves and observe the day as a season of thanksgiving to Almighty God for our great national blessings.

This measure was severely censured by some of the people, and many predicted a thin attendance at the sanctuary. One prominent member of my congregation remarked that, the pulpit would accommodate all who would wish to attend. But notwithstanding all the opposition, and ill-natured remarks, when the day arrived, the sanctuary was crowded at an early hour, and though seats were brought into the aisles, the congregation could not all be accommodated, and the gentleman who had predicted that the pulpit would hold all that would attend, was not only deprived of a seat, but could not get further than the door of the vestibule, where he stood on his feet through the whole service, a deeply attentive hearer of the discourse.

I preached on the occasion from Exodus xii.14. 'This day shall be unto you for a memorial, you shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations.'

I endeavored to show that if the day was kept at all it should be kept as an annual thanksgiving, or a feast unto the Lord.

Contrary to all expectation the political celebration, which was held in a grove, was poorly attended, and many, as I afterwards learned, felt while there a conviction of the inconsistency and impiety of observing the day in such a manner.

In the course of the next day the general conversation in the street, and in the places of public resort, was the religious celebration of the fourth of July. Though some affected to despise it, the most were convicted in their hearts, that to be consistent we should either renounce our belief in our obligation to God for our national independence, or regard the day as a thanksgiving to him. Conversing with a lawyer, who was a prominent man in the political celebration, he said to me, 'I am convinced that Christians ought to observe the day as you have, but those who have no religion will long keep

it in the other way.'

From this day the conversation through our village was more on the subject of religion than it had been for a long time. The people seemed to feel that if Christians regarded religion of sufficient importance to have it govern them in their public festivities, it was time for them to inquire whether they could do without it. The people of God, too, seemed to have received a new baptism of the Spirit and became more deeply affected with the condition of dying souls around them.

A female prayer-meeting, which had been neglected for many months, was revived, and a youths' prayer-meeting was established and kept up once a week. Our stated prayer-meetings were well attended, and a spirit of earnest and agonizing prayer began to prevail among the members of the church.

In the latter part of September, a few sinners began to attend our prayer-meeting, and on the thirtieth, a young lady was, in the judgment of charity, renewed by the Holy Ghost.

Christians seemed to consider this as a token of God's readiness to hear his people when they cried unto him, and they felt that they could not let the Saviour go without a blessing.

Our prayer-meetings now became more frequent, and when two or three Christians would meet together accidentally, or on business, they would generally spend a few moments in prayer. In the course of a week there were two more hopefully brought to Christ; and by the fifth of November there were sixty-five indulging hopes, and some thirty-eight others were added to the church.

From this Sabbath the work seemed rapidly to decline, and continued to do so until the enemies of religion began to rejoice aloud that the excitement, as they called it, was over, and only a few young people and children had been affected by it. The triumphing of the wicked, and the sighs and tears of God's people, were for several days seen and heard in our streets, and I have no doubt they were known in Heaven.

On the next Sabbath I preached, with an aching heart, from the text, the triumphing of the wicked is short. In this discourse I endeavored to show that though they might grieve away the Spirit, and might be permitted, as some were then doing, to triumph over those who were weeping over them, and crying to God night and day for their salvation, yet their triumph would be a short one. God would soon wipe away the tears from the faces of his children, when those who now rejoiced over them would be filled with shame and everlasting contempt.

At the close of the exercises, Monday was appointed as a day of humiliation and prayer, and when it came it found the whole church with one accord in one place. Christians were deeply humbled under a sense of their

sins, and with many tears, poured out their agonizing prayer to God, that for his holy name's sake, He would hear the voice of our supplications and revive us again.

Tuesday and Wednesday the little church continued instant in prayer. On Wednesday afternoon, as we were all on our knees in the parlor of a private house, one of our elders, an old man full of the Holy Ghost, while pleading, with sobs and tears, for the return of the blessed Comforter, said, in a tone of humble confidence, 'O Lord, open our eyes that we may see as thy servants did of old, that there are horses and chariots of fire between us and our enemies, and that they that be for us are more than they who are against us.' This appeal went to all our hearts like an electric shock, and we felt that we could rejoice and trust in God, and go forward.

That evening, November 29th, at our weekly Wednesday evening lecture, two or three individuals requested the prayers of God's people, and that night one of the leading physicians in the place obtained comfort from the Lord.

The next morning, as we were a few of us met at his house for prayer, his wife requested us to pray for a sister of his, who was upstairs in deep distress of mind. While we were on our knees praying for her, that she might be brought to submit herself to God, and put her trust in the crucified Saviour, she came down so full of joy and peace, that she wished us to return thanks to the Lord for snatching her as a brand from the burning. She told us that she had resisted the strivings of the Spirit, and had rejoiced when she thought the revival was over; but now she could not be thankful enough that God had not given her up to walk in her own way.

A new impulse was now given to the work. Friday and Saturday were days of much fervency of prayer, and several were brought to submit themselves unto God.

The Sabbath was a solemn day, and I trust a day of salvation.

On Monday evening, at my meeting of inquiry, the room was crowded with anxious sinners, and two precious souls, we had reason to hope, were in that meeting delivered from their bondage to Satan.

The next morning, as I was going into a house where the man and his wife were the night before convicted of sin, a young man came running across the street, and in great distress, threw his arms around me, and besought me to pray for him. I told him I could not do so there, but I would meet him in thirty minutes at Mr. Herrick's, a merchant who had recently been converted to Christ, and pray for him. I went into the house where I had intended to visit, found the man and his wife both without hope, and told them they might meet me in half an hour at the place I had appointed for the young man. I went immediately to Mr. H's, and told him we would a few of us be at his house at nine o'clock, to spend an hour in prayer. I then notified

two or three Christians of the meeting which I had thus unexpectedly appointed, and at nine we commenced praying with three or four, or perhaps half a dozen, Christians, and four anxious persons. As soon as we began to pray, the Spirit of God seemed to come down with great power, and three of the four anxious persons soon began to rejoice in the Lord. 'When these things were noised abroad the multitude came together,' and in a short time two good-sized rooms, which opened into each other, were crowded to overflowing. The Spirit continued present with his regenerating influence, and many who came to see what was doing, went away rejoicing in Christ.

At noon I endeavored to send the people away, but they would not be persuaded to disperse, and the whole day was spent in prayer and religious conversation.

When the evening came I sent them home, but not until I had promised to meet them there the next morning at nine o'clock.

That evening we had a prayer-meeting in the court-room, which was much crowded and very solemn, and several there indulged a hope of pardon and eternal life. At nine o'clock the congregation was dismissed, and we returned home with more of a disposition to pray than sleep.

Wednesday morning at nine, I met the congregation again at brother H's, but the assembly, by the time I arrived, was so large that we were obliged to remove to the court-house, which was filled to its utmost capacity with Christians and anxious sinners. The whole congregation of the impenitent were by this time ready to acknowledge that this was the work of the Lord, and each one felt a deep interest about his soul. We remained here, with an hour's intermission, until nine at night, when the congregation were again reluctantly sent away.

The next morning we met at the sanctuary to observe our annual State thanksgiving. The house was so greatly crowded at an early hour, that though it was large, and the aisle supplied with benches, all could not be seated. An awful solemnity pervaded the whole assembly, and for a time the only noise that was heard was the half-suppressed sobs which now and then escaped from an overburthened soul. Never before had I beheld so solemn an assembly, and never, before or since, have I felt so deeply the awfulness of the divine presence. When the hour of service had arrived I preached from the words, 'Rejoice with trembling,' and never have I felt so much like a dying man preaching to dying men.

Through the remainder of the week, the court-room was crowded from nine in the morning until nine at night with praying and inquiring souls, and very many of our leading citizens were brought to put their trust in the Lamb of God.

The next Sabbath was our communion, and eighty-six persons were received into the church.

From this time the revival was less powerful, though a pleasing work of grace continued through the winter.

From the last week in September until the last week in January, there were about three hundred hopeful conversions in my own congregation, and two hundred and twenty of them became members of the Presbyterian church of which I had the charge. Of those who made a profession of their faith, as the fruit of this work, eighty were heads of families, twenty-one the husbands of pious wives; and of the whole, one hundred and twenty-seven were baptised in their infancy. The converts were of all ages from the old man of seventy to the child of eight years old; and of all classes, professions and callings.

Though the work was deep and solemn the most perfect order prevailed throughout. I knew of but one case through the whole revival in which there was anything like disorder, and that was a female who was so overcome by the anguish of her soul that she gave vent to her feelings in cries of distress. Our evening meetings were always dismissed by nine, though those who had the command of their time would often assemble afterwards at some private house and spend much of the night in prayer.

Convictions of sin were usually very deep, and in many instances so overpowering that the subjects of them would be confined to their beds until they obtained comfort. Sinners were taught experimentally that the heart was wholly opposed to God, and they must be saved by grace if saved at all.

The church was greatly refreshed by this work, and the members were large partakers of that love, and joy, and peace, which are the fruits of the Spirit.

Sinners who were not converted were benefited, too, by this work. They were many of them reformed in their outward conduct, and all seemed to have their consciences quickened, and to have imbibed a higher respect for religion than they had before.

There was no re-action at the close of the work, but its sweet savor remained, and was a blessing to all. I do not believe that there were three impenitent sinners in the place who would not at any time within a year, have rejoiced to have had just such another work of grace.

I have never seen or heard of a revival, since the days of the apostles, in which the presence and power of the Holy Spirit was so manifest. While Christians were greatly encouraged to work, they felt that all the power must come from God.

I had no assistance from abroad, except four or five sermons from neighboring pastors; but what I lacked of help from without was made up to me by the efficient labors of my elders, and the other members of the church. The brethren, like the disciples who were scattered abroad by the persecution

which arose about Stephen, 'went everywhere preaching the word.' Our females, too, though they acted upon the principle that 'women must keep silence in the church,' were untiring in their humble and inobtrusive labors of love. All felt that each one had a place, and that it was their privilege and duty to be found in that place.

I never before knew how much moral power there was in a church, nor understood the responsibility of the brethren and sisters to God. It is not the minister alone in whose skirts the blood of souls will be found if he is unfaithful, but every member of his church who does not, by a pure and holy life, by unceasing and earnest prayer, and by all the influences that he can exert, aid and assist his pastor in bringing souls to Christ, will have to divide the responsibility with him. In my extensive field, I could have done but little without this aid; with it the whole field was occupied, and an abundant harvest was brought into the garner of Christ." (3.)

Conable gives this brief acount of revival in Ithaca in 1826, as experienced by the **Methodists.**

"This year (1826) Benjamin Sabin was stationed at Ithaca, and a good revival occurred soon after Conference, under his ministry, of which he gives an interesting account in the 'Christian Advocate' of October 14. The prospects were encouraging. Long and serious difficulties had been settled. The congregation had much increased. The doctrine of sanctification had been revived among them. Several were witnesses of the cleansing efficacy of Jesus' blood.

Rev. R. Sabin referred to two camp-meetings, one in the town of Lansing, and the other in Oswego, at which there were numerous conversions, and where numbers sought and found the blessing of perfect love. He also mentions his being informed of a good work in Penn Yan, of a very successful camp-meeting in Phelps, where between fifty and sixty professed pardon, and of a good revival in Williamson, Ontario Circuit, under the labors of Dr. Samuel Moore, a local preacher." (4.)

THE PRESBYTERY OF ONEIDA'S "NARRATIVE" FOR 1826

The Presbytery of Oneida selected a Committee, to prepare, and then to publish, a "Narrative" of the 1826 revival in the Plan of Union churches. It was much longer than the usual narratives that had, at times, been published about other revivals, because the ministers of the Presbytery who had the job of preparing this "Narrative" wanted to provide the best information about the revival that they could, to answer unfounded criticisms, and provide accurate information. Here, we will consider some quotations from the main part of that

document.

The “Narrative” provides accounts of revivals which occurred in the Plan of Union churches in a long list of places throughout the county. In order of mention, these were Vernon (both Vernon Centre and Mount Vernon), Westmoreland, Skenandoah, Western, Rome, Verona, Camden, Boonville, Whitestown (Whitesborough and New Hartford), Utica, Frankfort, Remsen, Russia and West Brunswick, Holland Patent, Litchfield, Floyd and Sangerfield. Clinton and Hanover are also mentioned in passing. Indeed, some “drops of grace” were seen “in almost every place in the county.”

Western

Although a revival had appeared in Vernon in August, 1825, the first main centre of the revival in Oneida County, from which it spread widely, was the town of Western. The report of events in this place was prepared for the Presbytery by the Rev. George W. Gale, who had been Finney's theological tutor several years earlier, but who had retired onto a farm near Western, for the sake of his health. The Presbyterian church in Western did not have a settled minister, and Gale's health was such that he was not able to preach.

> “The moral condition of this town, which has always been dark, was unusually so previous to the late revival. People might be seen in almost every direction, pursuing their business or their pleasure on the Sabbath, while few repaired to the house of God..... The establishment of a flourishing Sabbath school, and of prayer-meetings, were regarded as favourable tokens, by those who observed the signs of the times, that God was about to 'turn the captivity of Zion.'
>
> On the last of September, 1825, the Rev. Charles G. Finney arrived in town, (after a short visit to recruit his health in this county), on his way to the county of St. Lawrence, where he had been labouring with success, and where the people were anxiously waiting his return. The urgent request of those who were mourning over these desolations, that he would tarry here for a season, induced him, after some deliberation, to stay.
>
> He commenced preaching three times on the Sabbath, and almost every evening in the week, in different parts of the town, besides visiting during the day from house to house. Professors of religion were urged to 'pray without ceasing; believing the words of our Lord, that he is more ready to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than earthly parents to give good gifts to their children.' Sinners were pressed with the duty of immediate repentance, by every truth and motive which the word of God presents, in language plain and pointed.
>
> These efforts were not permitted to be made in vain, even in this

unpromising field. Christians were humbled for their past unfaithfulness, and led to pray as they had not prayed before. Sinners began to inquire what they must do. Convictions and conversions multiplied and spread through the town. In some instances whole households were converted.

In this interesting state of things, the overwhelming influences of the Spirit of God in Rome, rendered it necessary for Mr. Finney to spend all his time in that place. He spent twelve weeks here; after which his labours were required in other places; and there has been only occasional preaching with us. But meetings on the Sabbath have been kept up, and prayer-meetings in the week in different parts of the town. Convictions and conversions through the winter and summer have been frequently occurring. The number of converts in this town, and that part of Lee where the people attended meetings here, is supposed to be about one hundred and forty. Thirty seven have united with the Presbyterian church on confession of faith; a number with other denominations; and many have not yet united with any church. [Many of these last mentioned may have joined a church in the following year.]

The great variety of denominations in this town has seemed to distract the minds of those who have indulged a hope of an interest in Christ, and prevented many from uniting with any church. This, together with the prevalence of universalism, unitarianism, deism, great ignorance of divine things, and the habits of utter neglect and even contempt, with many, of the institutions of religion, present powerful obstacles to the progress of vital godliness.

The moral aspect which this town has presented, and which it still presents, and must for generations to come, speaks more than volumes could, the importance of 'home missions', and of making the *earliest efforts* to establish the preaching of the gospel in every settlement in our country. It is now more than thirty years since this rich and populous town was first settled, and only nine years since the Presbyterian church was organised, and a house erected for public worship; and this was done through the labours of a missionary. The means which God has blessed here, have been similar to those employed in adjacent places. Prayer has been signally answered. While Christians have been praying, convicted sinners have frequently found peace in believing. Most of those who give evidence of reconciliation to God, are among that class who have reverenced the institutions of religion, and the greater part are among the young. Several are quite young, even down to ten years of age. Most of them were religiously educated. A *few* advanced in life give satisfactory evidence of a saving change, which, while it shows the danger of delay, teaches us not to limit the grace of God, nor wholly to despair even of the aged." (5.)

Rome

The report about the revival in this town was provided by the Rev. Moses Gillett, the Presbyterian minister in that place, and one of the men on the Presbytery committee.

> "Gospel ordinances have been statedly administered here almost twenty years. Several seasons of revival have been enjoyed, and the church increased from fourteen members to two hundred and twelve. The fruits of these revivals have been manifest in the christian deportment of the subjects. For a considerable time, however, previous to the late outpouring of the Holy Spirit, we had been in a cold, formal state. Meetings were well attended, and discipline administered. Still we ought to confess with shame, that there was much formality in our worship, and many faithless prayers were offered up to Him who requires us to believe with the heart.
>
> In October, 1825, a revival took place in the town of Western, under the preaching of Mr. Finney, the influence of which was felt here. The latter part of November, the influence of the Spirit was visible in the conviction of sinners in the eastern part of the town, called Wright's Settlement. Meetings soon became very solemn. In about four weeks, forty might be numbered as hopeful converts to Christ. On the last Thursday but one, in December, a church prayer-meeting was held in the meeting-house, which was very solemn and interesting. Great searchings of heart prevailed among professors. In the evening a few individuals agreed to meet at a private house, half a mile out of the village. The house was crowded. After prayer, and reading a passage of scripture, a few remarks were made. One young man was so distressed as to be unable to suppress his feelings. He was heard to utter broken sentences of prayer. We united in our supplications at the throne of grace, and the spirit of the Lord appeared to come down suddenly in the midst of us, and to fill the room in an astonishing manner. All present appeared confounded. Old professors stood and trembled. There was a death-like stillness, or solemn awe, such as I never before witnessed. Little was said, except in prayer. The young man was in great distress till toward morning, when he found peace in believing. Great seriousness from this time was manifested.
>
> Monday evening, the last week in December, a meeting of inquiry was held for convicted sinners. Mr. Finney came here that evening, and remained four weeks, and was a distinguished instrument in promoting the revival. The meeting of inquiry was at a private house, and a prayer-meeting at a school-house at the same time. The room was filled with inquiring sinners. After prayer, personal conversation, and a short address, we dismissed them. Instead of retiring, they partly fell upon each other, and gave vent to their feelings in sobs and groans. It was with difficulty we prevailed upon them to retire. From this time the excitement became general

in the village. Meetings were held for about five weeks in the church every evening, and most of the time the house was crowded. Sometimes there was preaching, and sometimes only prayers with short addresses. Meetings of inquiry were now held in the day time, and in some instances three hundred and upwards have attended. Great stillness and solemnity prevailed till the close, when sometimes there would be a burst of feeling in groans and loud weeping. We urged them to retire, telling them that they must look to Christ; that their impenitent tears would not save them. When not engaged in meeting, we visited from house to house. We often found sinners in great agony of mind, and Christians in almost equal agony, praying for them. Although constantly engaged, it seemed we had little to do, except to look on and see the salvation of the Lord.

The description here given falls far short of the reality, during the greatest excitement. Worldly business was to a great extent suspended. Religion was the principal subject of conversation in our streets, stores, and even taverns. Merchants' and mechanics' shops were many of them closed in the evening, that all might attend meeting. Instances of hopeful conversion were most frequent about the second week in January [1826]. At two different times, it appeared that more than twenty were hopefully converted in twenty-four hours. All classes of people were affected. Many who had regularly attended public worship for twenty years, and lived through revivals unmoved, were now made to tremble and bow to the cross. Four lawyers, four physicians, all the merchants who were not professors before, and men of the first respectability in the place, are hopeful converts.

Sabbath schools have been established here nearly ten years. We have now evidence that the seed of the word has not been sown in vain. More than one hundred and thirty, who have attended these schools, are hopeful subjects of renewing grace. Children from nine to twelve years of age give evidence of piety, and their promptness in applying passages of scripture is truly striking.

During the greatest excitement there was little open opposition. Scoffers were confounded: Universalists trembled. Some renounced their sentiments, and were brought to repentance. The moralist was stripped of his vain covering, and led to beg for mercy. Great is the change. 'It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.' In March, one hundred and sixty-seven were received into the church upon profession of faith. The whole number received is two hundred and eighty-four. Upwards of thirty have united with the Methodist church, and some with the Baptists and Episcopalians. The number of hopeful converts cannot be accurately stated. Probably not far from five hundred. Some of them were from adjacent towns. A number who have expressed hopes here, have not yet united with any church.

During the spring and summer past, meetings have been held every evening in the week. For eleven months there has been no time when sinners were not under conviction, and but few weeks without instances of hopeful conversion. Meetings of inquiry are continued, and a spirit of fervent prayer still prevails.

Some additional remarks respecting this work of God may be useful. After the revival in Western commenced, it became a subject of conversation in Rome, and many professors and others attended. Christians returned, feeling that something must be done Our prayer-meetings became lar ge and solemn. Directions were given to pray for a definite object - for the influence of the Spirit, to revive Christians and convert sinners. There was such wrestling and agony in prayer as we had never before witnessed. Christians viewed their impenitent connexions and neighbours, as standing on the brink of hell, and that nothing but the mercy of God could save them. They prayed as tho' they could not be denied. They seemed to take hold of the promises of God to prayer, with strong faith. In little praying circles intercessions were made for individuals by name. Striking answers appeared to be given. In the language of the prophet, it might be said. 'As soon as Zion travailed, she bro't forth her children.' Christians seemed to plead with God, as a child would plead with his parent; and they found him more ready to give the Holy Spirit, than earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. Indeed, the great instrument of this glorious work has been prayer. Christians seemed to believe both the promises and threatenings of God, and in view of them have wrestled at the throne of grace until they prevailed.

The word of God, in sermons, short addresses, at prayer-meetings, and in private conversation, has had a powerful effect in convicting sinners of their great guilt, and desert of eternal punishment. The truths brought into view are such as have generally been termed the doctrines of grace. The justice, purity and binding nature of the divine law, with its awful penalty, have been exhibited with great clearness. The sins of the heart have been exhibited, not merely for transgressing the law, but for rejecting mercy, for not repenting and turning to God. Christ has been exhibited as the only and all-sufficient Saviour. Repentance and faith have been urged continually upon sinners, as their immediate duty; that they were without excuse for not complying with these requirements. Convictions have been more sudden and more pungent than we have witnessed in former revivals. Sinners in some instance have trembled through their whole frame, in view of their guilt, and the impending wrath of God; though in no instance, to my knowledge, was bodily strength wholly suspended. And however strange it may appear, when sinners have thus been filled with mental agony, and bodily agitation, they have complained that they had no feeling, that their hearts were hardened. It was not necessary to teach them that there was an eternal hell. They felt ,

that without a change of heart, there could be no heaven for them. Convicted sinners were exhorted to submit themselves to God. They were told they must repent or perish; that they must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, or be damned; that their impenitent groans, and tears, and prayers, could not save them. Every false dependence was torn away as soon as possible.

Often would they say - 'We cannot change our own hearts.' The command was urged - 'Make you a new heart and a new spirit, for why will ye die?' No allowance was given to wait God's time. They were told - 'Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation;' that the longer they continued impenitent, the greater their guilt, the more danger of becoming hardened, of grieving the Spirit, and of dying without hope.

Meetings of inquiry have apparently been a powerful means of bringing sinners to repentance. When hundreds have attended, there would be a death-like stillness, and great solemnity in almost every countenance. They were conversed with individually, and such instruction given as their case seemed to require. Often at the close of such meetings, they manifested such strong desire to remain, that it was found necessary to exhort them to retire and give their hearts to God. In many instances, convicted sinners have, apparently, been born again, while praying. While praying for themselves, they would be heard pleading for others, without expressing any hope; though in a short time light would break in, and they would have peace in believing. Converts have been fervent in prayer, and many of them active instruments in the conversion of others.

I will doubtless be asked, with no ordinary interest - What are the fruits of this revival? Three or four instances of backsliding have occurred. One has been suspended for intemperance. These cases are to be lamented, and we hope will humble the church, while sinners may pervert them to their own hurt. In general, the subjects appear as well, if not better, than in former revivals, which I have witnessed. A marked reformation in morals is too apparent to be denied. The Sabbath is more strictly observed. Intemperance and profane swearing are checked. More good feeling in neighbourhoods and families prevails. The church is blessed with peace and harmony. It may be said in truth, these Christians love one another. May it be our prayer, that no root of bitterness may spring up to trouble us; but that we may 'keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.'" (6.)

Pomroy Jones tells us that Moses Gillett was pastor of this church for thirty years, from 1807 to 1837, and was like Barnabas - "'He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith, and much people was added unto the Lord.' There were added to the church during his ministry, 807 members, 103 by letter and 704 by profession; of these, 184 were added March 12, 1826, as the fruits of the 'great revival' which occurred in connection with the labors of the Rev. Charles G. Finney, and the influence of which spread over an extensive region,

but was probably more strongly marked in this vicinity than elsewhere. The influences of this revival have been likened to the waves formed by casting a pebble upon a sheet of water, pressing forward, wave forming wave, until they strike the farthest shore; so many of the inhabitants of the western prairies, and granite-bound New England, yet bless God that they lived in 'these days.'" (7.)

Camden

This town was situated within Oneida County, but the Presbyterian Church and pastor had been transferred to Oswego Presbytery, when this Presbytery was formed in 1823. The report for the Oneida Presbytery was prepared by Mr. Kellogg around the end of 1826, when he was supplying for the Pastor, the Rev. Henry Smith, who was away on a visit.

> "The revival in this place commenced about the 1st of January. The pastor of this church and several of the brethren visited Rome, to witness God's mighty work. They were refreshed, and returned impressed with the importance of a revival in this place. They endeavoured, by prayer and exhortation, to arouse their brethren. About this time, the Rev. Mr. Nash visited this place. His efforts were directed to the church, pressing them to repent and awake to duty. His efforts were blessed, and the church entered into a covenant to pray that God would revive his work. There was a season of deep heart-searching in the church. Convictions were soon visible among the impenitent, and increased until the excitement became general, and a number were hopefully converted.
>
> About the middle of February, when the influenza became very prevalent, the attention declined, and fears were entertained that the work would stop. A few of the brethren betook themselves to the throne of grace, and wrestled with God in prayer, *believing*. The work revived, and prevailed with overwhelming power. During two weeks in April, between sixty and seventy were hopefully converted. After this the work declined in power; but has continued through the summer, up to the present time. The converts, generally, appear to be stedfast, growing in knowledge and grace.
>
> The means which were most blessed of God, were the faithful preaching of the word - the naked truth - not only in the desk (pulpit), but from house to house. In visiting, the pastor was assisted by many of the brethren. The greatest *plainness of speech* was used in conversing with individuals. These means were used in humble dependence on the Spirit of God, manifested in fervent prayer for his blessing. Christians prayed as they had never done before. They were distressed and weighed down with agonizing pains, especially in the closet, pleading the promises of God - believing them. Answers to prayer were manifest. Numbers were converted, while prayer was offered up for them, individually.
>
> Young converts engaged with zeal in the work, and partook of the

same spirit of prayer. About one hundred and fifty have united with the Presbyterian church. A number have united with the Methodists. Many give evidence of a saving change, who have not yet united with any church; and many strangers and visitors from abroad were hopefully the subjects of renewing grace." (8.)

After mentioning several previous revivals in Camden, Pomroy Jones said: "But 1826 was the crowning year of all, and justly styled 'the great revival.' As a result of this revival, more than 150 were added to this church (Presbyterian), while many others united with other churches and denominations. Defections followed, but the pastor being a 'peace maker,' the wanderers were generally reclaimed, and that too without compromising any principle on his part." (9.)

Utica

The pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Utica was the Rev. Samuel Aikin (sometimes spelled "Aiken".), who provided the main report. The minister of the Second Presbyterian Church, the Rev. S. W. Brace, provided a shorter report. The minister of the Welsh Congregational Church in Utica also provided a brief verbal report.

"The revival in Utica commenced about the 1st of last January [1826]. For several weeks previous, however, there had been a movement upon the minds of the people somewhat uncommon, that could be seen on the Sabbath and on other days of the week, in the increase of numbers who attended meetings, and in their unusual solemnity. To this silent preparation for the Lord's appearance, soon a new impulse was given, by the daily reports of what was doing in Rome. Christians who visited that place returned with various feelings. Some were confounded, and knew not what to say; some without hope, and in deep distress for themselves; others weeping over the state of the church at home, and anxious that something should be done.

I resolved to call upon the members of the church, and either by myself or by the elders, most of the members were visited; and after a short and pointed conversation, the visit, if practicable, was closed with prayer, not general, but *adapted* to the individual or families conversed with. It now became a time of heart-searching in the church. Almost daily, persons who had long been professors, and who had maintained a respectable standing in the church, gave up their hopes, satisfied apparently that they had been deceived. Soon, numbers among the impenitent were awakened; but most of them lingered along without obtaining relief. Still there was but little of the spirit of prayer in Zion - but little of the power of supplication which prevails. Christians, instead of placing their confidence in God, were looking to arms of flesh; instead of having that faith which creates *expectation* of a

blessing, they were merely hoping it might come.

This state of things continued till about the 1st of February, when the Rev. Mr. Finney came to Utica, where, as in other places, his plain and pungent and faithful preaching was attended with evident and wonderful success. Christians had been told of their departures from God, their backslidings in heart, their lukewarmness, their love of the world and conformity to it, and of the necessity of a broken spirit, of deep and thorough repentance, before they could reasonably expect a general revival of religion. These solemn truths were pressed again and again, and along with them, the necessity of the influence of the Holy Spirit to rouse them from their slumbers. This influence they were urged to seek, as a blessing which God has promised, and will certainly give to those who seek it with faith.

An humble and fervent spirit of prayer, to a considerable extent, gradually increased; and as it increased, convictions and conversions took place among the impenitent. It was not long before the work became powerful. Places of worship were thronged, and the stillness of the sepulchre reigned, broken occasionally by a deep sigh from some heart that was writhing under the condemning influence of divine truth. Instead of noise and confusion, the meetings were solemn, and sometimes awfully so, by the presence of God, which made sinners 'afraid,' and Christians humble and still. True, there has been noise; there has been 'no small stir about these things;' but it has been on the other side - among the enemies of the revival, as it was in the days of the Apostles.

The general features of this revival are the same as have always marked every genuine out-pouring of the Spirit, since the apostolic age. I shall, therefore, not repeat them; but would here observe, that like some of the former revivals in Utica, this one has been confined to no particular class in community. Its sweet and saving influence has fallen upon the rich and the poor, the ignorant and the learned, and moulded into its own lovely image, as we humbly trust, the proud moralist and the polluted debauchee. It has made 'new creatures' of gamblers and drunkards, and swearers and Sabbath-breakers, and brought the self-righteous pharisee, the deluded skeptic, deist, and universalist, to abandon their dreams of happiness and heaven, without a holy heart, and to fly for cleansing to the blood of the Lamb.

The probable number of converts in Utica, is about five hundred. The number of hopeful converts in a population like this, it is not easy definitely to ascertain. Not far from sixty persons, some of whom were travellers, who 'turned in to tarry but for a night,' or day, or week; others belonging to the towns around, experienced, as we trust, the grace of God in this village. More than a hundred, the subjects of the revival, have united with the first Presbyterian church; numbers with the Methodists and the

Baptists; and how many with the second Presbyterian and Welch congregational churches, their pastors will tell in this report. Besides these, not less than fifty adults, belonging to the 1st Presbyterian society, are entertaining hopes, who for various reasons still remain outside the pale of the church. And to these we may add many children, from seven to thirteen years of age, whom, although they give evidence of piety, the session have thought best for a time to catechise and instruct, until their age and knowledge and experience with the world shall render it more safe to receive them. Accordingly, a class for this purpose has been already organized. Nor has this good work of the Lord ceased. The spirit of prayer still continues, though in a less degree, and consequently conversions are less frequent than they were last winter. Scarcely a week has passed during the last summer, when one or more has not been brought into the kingdom of Christ. For the last six weeks, twenty have hopefully experienced the grace of God.

Whether all the converts are what they profess to be, the great day of judgment must determine. It would be strange, if among so many, some are not deceived. As yet, however, there has not been a single instance of apostacy among adults, that has come to my knowledge; and, judging from the fruits, the only safe criterion, now, after the lapse of eight months, never did the subjects of a revival appear better. But observation, as well as the word of God, has taught me to expect tares among the wheat; and if in the end, there should be many of the former, it will be no argument that this revival is not the work of God. Indeed, I do feel and know that the Lord hath done it.

True, he has wrought through the instrumentality of men; but the power was his, and to him be the glory. Besides Mr. Finney, who has been signally owned and blessed, important services have been rendered by the Rev. D. Nash, Mr. N. Smith, and other brethren in the ministry, who are remembered with gratitude both by the church and their pastor.

With regard to the means used in this revival, I should say nothing, were it not for the gross misrepresentations that have gone abroad. They are substantially the same as were employed by Whitfield, Edwards, Brainard (sic), and by some still living, whose praise is in all the churches. The grand mean, and that into which all others are resolved, has been the *word of God;* the doctrines of salvation; the depravity of the heart, consisting not merely in the negative want of love to God, but in positive hatred to him; the law of God, its extent, purity, perfection, and binding influence; the sovereignty of God, illustrated and enforced not so much by abstract reasoning as by matters of fact; the nature and necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and justification by faith alone. These truths have been preached *constantly*, both in the pulpit and out of it. Nor have we failed to urge sinners to repent and submit to Jesus Christ, and that immediately, as the

only condition of forgiveness; warning them at the same time, that so long as they refused to comply, all their tears and prayers and efforts are not only vain, but sinful.

Believing it to be duty to use every lawful and proper measure to render effectual divine truth, we have, and we trust in humble dependence on God, visited from house to house, conversed freely with individuals, and fearlessly declared the truths in the street, in the grocery, the counting-room, and private dwelling. We have also had various small circles for prayer, as well as stated and public prayer-meetings; and in the former, females, in some cases, though more seldom than we could wish, have taken a part.

The instruction administered in Sabbath schools has been signally blessed, both to the teachers and taught. At the commencement of the revival, there was a bible class, consisting of forty-two young persons, under the sole direction of the elders of the church. Most of these are indulging hopes of eternal life. Their number has now increased to nearly one hundred, and the Lord is still blessing his word to the salvation of their souls. The bible is to them a precious book; nor to them alone. Never, in the same space of time, I am confident, was it so much read in Utica, as it has been for twelve months past. Besides these means, discipline, meetings of inquiry, days of fasting and prayer, and conference meetings for the church, have been very useful.

Nor is it true, that all, for this space of time, has been division and dissension in our village. Never was so large a church more happily united than we have been, during this revival; and it is so still. I verily believe there is here the 'unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.' Some few individuals may have differed from their brethren, with regard to the propriety of some measures; but I have seen none who were blind to the mighty hand of God, that was bowing down rebel sinners on every side, and none so hardened in unbelief, as not to adore and rejoice in it. The society, also, is evidently strengthened and built up; and we pray God to send down his spirit, and bring in those who are left, that all may 'worship him in spirit and in truth.'" (10.)

According to the "Narrative", the second Presbyterian church reported about eighty people joining the church, after a period of spiritual declension. The Welsh Congregational Church added forty to their members list.

Pomroy Jones said: "In 1826, this church (1st Presbyterian) with the others in this section enjoyed an extensive revival of religion. Rev. Charles G. Finney commenced his labors in this society about the 1st of February, and the number of the converts in the village was estimated at 500, of whom more than 100 united with this church this year, upwards of fifty with the Second church, forty with the Welsh Congregational church, many with the Baptist and Methodist churches, and others of this number united with these churches during the next year." (11.)

Characteristics of the Revival

The Narrative then provided a list of characteristics of the revival.

> **(1)** God, in His mercy, had clearly been at work. "*More than three thousand* are indulging hope that they have become reconciled to God through the Redeemer. About half this number have already united with the Presbyterian and Congregational churches, and a large portion of the remainder with the Baptist and Methodist churches. Never before have the churches in this region been blessed with so great a shower of divine grace."
>
> Amongst the twelve disciples there was a Judas. "We may reasonably hope that the proportion of deceivers and deceived, is not greater among those who are numbered as converts in this revival." (12.)

(2) This revival continued longer than has been usual in former revivals, especially in some of the societies. It still continues in some places, a year after it commenced. In most churches "an unusual spirit of prayer still prevails, and instances of conviction and conversion continue to occur." (13.)

(3) "Considering the number of converts, and the time that has elapsed since the revival commenced, the instances of backsliding have been fewer than usual."

(4) "In this revival there has been less appearance of mere sympathy and excitement of the passions, unaccompanied with *conviction of sin*, than usual. Most of the feeling, and the strongest feeling, which sinners have manifested, has arisen from the lashes of an accusing conscience. So far as this characteristic of the revival is owing to means, we believe it has been to the fact, that Christians have prayed much for the convicting and sanctifying influence of the Spirit, and that ministers have constantly pressed the consciences of sinners with those truths which show them their guilt, and their immediate duty to repent and believe. The whole man has been addressed - his understanding, his conscience, and his affections."

(5) "This revival has been characterized by a remarkable spirit of prayer. Often has it been said - 'Christians pray as they have never prayed before.' Many have been in deep distress, and felt what it was to *travail* in *birth* for souls. With this burden pressing upon their hearts, they have cried to God for help, feeling they could not let him go without a blessing, and where Christians have been united and persevering in their supplications, astonishing, and in some instances, overwhelming influences of the Spirit have been witnessed. So great, and so general has been the excitement, that worldly business was in a

considerable degree suspended, and religion was the common topic of conversation in all companies and in all places.

(6) "Unusual strength of faith in the promises and threatenings of God has been manifested in many of our churches." This has not only applied to their belief in the teachings of the New Testament, but also to the way they believed God's promises to those who pray. They were so concerned for the salvation of their family members and friends that they prayed with intensity and perseverance, because they did not want to be denied. The Lord answered their prayers, and they were not denied.

(7) "An unusual spirit of prayer has prevailed among converts, and they have manifested a disposition to converse with their friends and others on the subject of religion." This has helped to produce a good degree of maturity in many of these converts.

(8) The revival extended to all classes of society, and to all age groups. "Many men of wealth, and learning, and talents, have been converted, and become like little children. Many, who in common parlance were moral men, have seen that their morality was devoid of that holiness of heart 'without which no man shall see the Lord,' and have cried, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' Many, who had embraced universalism and other errors, have fled from their refuges of *lies*, to lay hold of the hope set before them in the gospel." The high and low, the rich and poor, the moral and the profane, were all touched, and converted.

(9) Great heart-searchings took place amongst many people who already professed faith in Christ, more so than in previous revivals, in the experience of the leaders. This led not only to the deepening of experience of God in many Christians, but also resulted in many people realising that they were not converted in the first place, and coming into a new experience of God, as a result.

(10) Converts have shown more joy and stronger hopes than in any previous revival in that area, especially during the time of greatest excitement.

(11) **"**Much opposition has been made to this revival. This appears from the preceding accounts. But the half is not told, and for the honour of the county, we think, ought not to be told. False reports have been circulated. Gross misrepresentations have been made of the preaching, and other means which have been employed to promote the work. Prejudices have thus been excited in the minds of some, who are doubtless the friends of religion, but who

have not been in circumstances favourable to judge for themselves." While absolute perfection cannot be expected, even amongst wise, discreet and zealous people who have the highest motives, yet, "the committee feel warranted in saying, that ministers and churches have exhibited as much sound wisdom and discretion (in this revival), as has ever been exhibited in any revival of which they have any knowledge."

It would be wrong to imply that the committee was willing to justify "every thing which has been said and done, in public and private, by the friends of the revival." The committee believed that most of the criticism was directed at the preaching and tactics which had been most blessed by "the great Head of the Church." Indiscretions, real and apparent, had occurred. But the criticisms had mostly been directed at "a naked exhibition of gospel truth", agonising prayers and faithful exertions of the people of God for the salvation of their fellow men.

The final paragraph in this section of the Narrative implies that some of the criticisms directed against aspects of the revival were made by (Christian) people who, nevertheless, underneath it all, were serving hidden idols, and had hidden agendas. These hidden idols or agendas might include pride, worldliness and ambition, or might be that a person was too much attached to his or her own theological outlook to see any value in what someone else thought or did. (14.)

What Means Seem to Have Been Blessed in Promoting This Revival?

The committee listed thirteen of these. (15.)

(1.) Seasons of fasting and prayer.
(2.) Confession of sin in churches, with *sincerity of heart*.
(3.) Church discipline, judiciously administered.
(4.) Visiting from house to house.
(5.) Preaching the gospel, its doctrines and precepts, its promises and threatenings, with *great plainness* and *earnestness.*
(6.) Union of feeling and effort in churches.
(7.) Meetings of inquiry have been greatly blessed.
(8.) Avoiding disputes over minor points.
(9.) Urging awakened sinners to *immediate* repentance and reconciliation with God
(10.) Ministers and lay people visiting areas which are experiencing revival has been a great cause of the revival spirit spreading to other areas.
(11.) The preaching and other labours of *evangelists* have been a very obvious and efficient means of originating and carrying forward the work.
(12.) United, agonising, persevering prayer has been a principal means of promoting the work.
(13.) "The instructions given in Sabbath schools and bible-classes have been

eminently blessed."

Comments

In preparing to look at this "Narrative", alongside the comments that William R. Weeks made about the revival situation in Oneida, a few comments might be helpful.

(a) When the "Narrative" says that the same methods, or means, were used in the 1826 revival as had been used in all the other revivals that those ministers were familiar with, we need to remember that the personality of Charles G. Finney could easily introduce a different "flavour" or "atmosphere" into everything that was done.

One example of this can be seen in the fact that, when Asahel Nettleton carried out his evangelistic work in a parish where there was a settled pastor, he always worked as the servant of the settled pastor, doing only those things that the pastor wanted him to do. When he was working in a church where there was no settled pastor, as did happen at times, he exercised more direction of what happened.

On the other hand, Finney was a much more dominating personality, who would be inclined to stand up for the methods which he thought ought to be used. He was also a totally different type of preacher, and a charismatic personality.

(b) Another point to remember concerns the theological differences that were at work. For example, the expression "the doctrines of grace" mean quite different things for a Calvinist like Weeks, from what it would have meant to Finney, or to a Methodist circuit rider. The ministers in all the Oneida churches, who wrote the reports for the Narrative, would have been much closer to Finney, in their theological outlook, than they would have been to Weeks. They would all say that they preached the doctrines of grace. But the words would have different meanings for the various preachers in question.

The same thing applies to many of the other words that they used.

(c) Again, in reflecting upon the reaction of Weeks, and Nettleton, and their friends, we have to remember the fear they had that someone would arise and seriously damage the work of God in their midst, and destroy the great good which *wisely managed revivals* might achieve, like Davenport had done in the 1740s, in the days of Jonathan Edwards. They were frightened that Davenport might rise from the dead, so to speak.

(d) Weeks, Nettleton, their friends, and others since then who have shared the same view as Weeks and Nettleton, have thought that the "Narrative" was

sanitised. That is, that the good features of the revivals were reported, but the features which might reflect badly upon their work for God were omitted by both reporters and editors. This, of course, is in direct conflict with the stated aims of the three men who prepared the "Narrative."

Part Two: Complaints about Finney's Work in these Revivals

The "Narrative" said that gross accusations were being made about the way the Oneida revivals were being conducted. Some of these complaints came from groups like the Unitarians, and Universalists, who would be expected to be unfriendly toward all evangelical revivals. Some criticisms came from other people who might be described as the "lunatic fringe" of the local churches. One of these was the so-called "Bunker Hill Contest." Some criticisms, however, came from respected laymen, and from other ministers, who were in favour of revivals, and considered revivals very important for the work of the Kingdom of God, but who, for one reason or another, thought that the Oneida revivals had serious problems associated with them.

It is into this last category that the Rev. William R. Weeks fitted, as also did the most famous revival preacher of that time, the evangelist Asahel Nettleton. Weeks was a strong supporter of revivals, so long as they followed a certain pattern, and fitted into a certain theological system.

The revivals we have described above, from the "Narrative", occurred mainly late in 1825, and through the first half of 1826, all in Oneida county.

Charles Hambrick-Stowe says that, even at this stage, while Finney was still working at Utica, Asahel Nettleton wrote to the Rev. Samuel Aikin, the Utica Presbyterian minister, complaining that certain things were happening in some of the meetings that he thought were very ill-advised. Aikin replied that these things of which Nettleton complained were not happening at all.

Hambrick-Stowe points out, however, that Aikin's reply was not strictly truthful. Some examples of the undesirable features were, in fact, occurring, although they were not major features of what was going on. For example, males and females had both led freely and publicly in prayer at one of the main prayer meetings, and some of the Oneida revival preachers were rather free in being critical of other ministers who did not share the same concern for revival that Finney and the others had. This last point was one of the main factors in the ministry of Davenport that the New England ministers wanted to avoid. Finney's free use of plain, strong, colloquial language was often seen by some as letting down the prim and proper standards of the pulpit. (16.)

Finney's First Meetings with Nettleton

Following the revival in Utica, Finney moved on into other counties. The overall impact of the Oneida revivals, and their fame, went considerably further than the geographical boundaries of the state.

In the first instance, Finney shifted his centre of operations to Auburn, where the Presbyterian minister was then the Rev. Dr. Dirck Lansing. There was also a seminary in Auburn, at which Lansing was one of the lecturers.

Following that, Finney spent time in Troy, which was across the river from the state capital city, Albany. At Troy, the Rev. Dr. Nathan S. S. Beman was the Presbyterian minister. There were some difficulties here, because a section of the church members had for some time been in an open conflict with Beman. This may have been partly a personality clash, but it was also partly because of Beman's support for the kind of Christian work that Finney represented. Consequently, when Finney arrived, this section took an open stand against him, as well, in due course splitting off to form a second Presbyterian Church in the town. One of the leaders of the disaffection in Beman's church was Josephus Brockway, who had recently arrived in Troy from Vermont. Brockway published two documents as part of the conflict. (17.).

A revival had started in Troy as early as January, 1826, but Finney did not arrive there until September, when a considerable boost in the "temperature" of the work occurred. The influence of the revival in Troy had the effect that some of the Christians in Albany wanted Finney's type of evangelism to be introduced there as well. In some others, this produced a negative reaction.

Several years earlier, in 1820, a major revival had occurred in Albany, and through much of the surrounding district, under the leadership of the famous evangelist, Asahel Nettleton. Many of Nettleton's friends in Albany became concerned that Finney's style of evangelism was different from the kind they had got to like, as a result of Nettleton's work in 1820, and they thought the new form would create damage, and bring discredit upon the cause of revivals. (18.)

Rosell and Dupuis quote an editorial in the *Hartford Watchman* to the effect that ministers in the Presbytery of Albany became concerned that "new measures" from the Central New York revivals might affect the work in Albany. Who else could they approach to get help than Asahel Nettleton, who had led the wonderful revival in Albany and the surrounding district in 1820? (19.)

In response, Nettleton left the meetings he had been conducting in Jamaica, Long Island, and came to stay with a friend in Albany, so that he could meet Finney, and discuss matters.

Finney met Nettleton twice, and Finney soon realised again that the difficulties were not matters of theology, but of practice. Nettleton and Finney both belonged to the New England school of theology, although to different branches of it. The question was really that of the wisdom, or otherwise, of the

way Finney was leading and managing the revival movements which were the matters of disagreement, or even of misunderstanding.

The minister at whose house Nettleton was staying in Albany had hoped that Nettleton would use this opportunity to urge Finney strongly to modify some of his methods. But, in the end, Nettleton did not make such use of these meetings, possibly because he came to realise that Finney was a strong, determined personality. Trying to re-educate him would not be a useful exercise. Nettleton himself was not a well man, having experienced a bad case of typhoid fever several years earlier, from which he never really recovered.

Then, it seems, that Nettleton wrote to Lyman Beecher for help in trying to overcome what he saw as the great evils which he expected to come out of the Western revivals, and the new measures which were being used there. The correspondence which developed out of this situation is what led, in due course, to the Convention on revivals at New Lebanon.

Examples of the letters which Beecher wrote to various people appeared in print, and seem to indicate that Beecher thought a major conspiracy was on foot, involving the widespread telling of lies by Finney and his friends, and the intention to destroy whatever remained of Nettleton's ministry and personal reputation. (20.)

Lyman Beecher wrote to Nathan Beman, and the New Lebanon Convention began to be organised to take place later in 1827, where all these matters could be aired. It involved a gathering of about an equal number of leading ministers from New England, led by Beecher, and other ministers from New York state, led by Beman.

The “Pastoral Letter” Issued by the Oneida Association

An unknown number of fairly local ministers in Oneida County belonged to a Congregational-style organisation called the Oneida Association. William Weeks belonged to this group. Normally such an Association had a similar standing to the Presbyterian Presbytery in the same area, where the Plan of Union churches existed. Fowler said that the Association was small, and that Weeks largely controlled the group by the power of his will. (21.)

Before the New Lebanon Convention gathered, the Oneida Association prepared and published a “Pastoral Letter” on the subject of revivals of religion, and addressed it to all the churches which these ministers served, outlining potential problems in the management of revivals which they considered their church members ought to be aware of, in view of the widespread movements that were taking place. At the time it was published, it is likely that this Pastoral Letter stirred up a good deal of disquiet about the New York revivals that were in progress, both within the local area, and at some distance from the

situation, where people had no direct way of verifying information for themselves. (22.)

The "Pastoral Letter" does not mention Finney by name, nor does it make any charges against anyone for doing those things which the writers complained about. The impression that the letter created, however, was that the problems all existed, and were major issues. After all, if a noted theological person like William Weeks was spreading these views around, something serious must be afoot.

.

The "Pastoral Letter" listed twenty-nine matters which the members of the Association wanted people to consider, and which they thought ought to be avoided.

(1) In order to stand firmly as people who were strongly in favour of wisely managed revivals, **indifference on the subject of revivals** was declared to be the first major mistake to avoid.

(2) Neglect to discriminate between true religion and false was the second point. The devil is able to transform himself into an angel of light, and people can easily be deceived by their feelings, by bad advice, by following some impulse, or by misunderstanding the Bible, into believing they are saved through Christ, when in fact they are not. So, discrimination is important, and false Christian experience is to be avoided.

(3) In times of religious excitement, the devil seeks to make the friends of the revival express their zeal so much that they go to unwise excesses and extravagances, and thus bring the work of God into disrepute. People can be **insensible to danger** of this kind. They might not be insensitive to other dangers, like being indifferent to God.

(4) All individuals, groups of people, and spiritual movements such as revivals, have faults. None are perfect. So, sweeping, generalised criticisms and comments should be avoided. **Condemning in the gross, or approving in the gross** should not be acceptable.

(5) Lack of willingness to learn, or being unteachable, or **indifference to instruction**, is a bad sign. Enthusiastic Christians can easily think that they know enough, and have no need to be taught. Or, they can think that someone with whom they might disagree has nothing worth listening to. They can think that others are less spiritual, or less holy, than themselves, and therefore cannot have anything to say which is worth listening to.

(6) There is a wide difference between speaking of others kindly, humbly, or lovingly, and speaking about them with abusive language. Enthusiastic Christians can easily **call men by hard names** if they think that these other people are misleading anyone spiritually, or helping people on the road to hell, or if they are less spiritual than themselves. This abusive way of talking about others should always be avoided.

(7) It is easy for people who are enthusiastic about a cause to use glowing superlatives in talking about what they are doing, far more than is warranted by the unvarnished truth. So, **making too much of any favourable appearances** should be avoided.

(8) Jesus taught us that, when we give, or when we pray, we should not advertise what we are doing, or sound a trumpet before ourselves. **Ostentation and noise** are deservedly suspect in any revival. Any announcement which will indicate a high opinion of ourselves, so that we may get some of the glory, should be avoided.

(9) Any claim that we have to **go to a certain place**, or go through a certain ritual, to obtain the workings of the Holy Spirit, should be avoided. For example, in order to be converted, or to have a revival ourselves, or be filled with the Spirit, we need to go to an inquiry room, or go where there is a revival already, or visit a certain person, and have hands laid upon us. While these things may play a role on occasions, they are not essential. Such claims are like practising magic.

(10) **Not guarding against false conversions** is a serious mistake. Only two examples are given in the "Pastoral Letter", where the range of possibilities is immense. For example, people should be given time to think quietly, and pray privately, about their conversion, and their surrender to God, and not be pressured too much. They should not need to depend upon other people praying for them, when they really need to pray themselves.

(11) It is a mistake **too hastily to acknowledge that a person is converted**, and to receive them into full church membership without an adequate probationary period, and good instruction. If the person has not really been converted, and yet they are told they are converted by someone who ought to know, lasting damage can be done to them, and there is good scope for dishonour to be brought to the name of Christ, as a result, when they fall by the wayside.

(12) **Unwise treatment of young converts** can also be a problem. In

the full flush of first enthusiasm, they can be put into places of leadership and responsibility too quickly, or without proper guidance. No doubt their testimony should be used, and they should have good chances to serve Christ, but care is needed.

(13) Enthusiastic people can easily **let their feelings rule their better judgment**, and new converts should be clearly instructed in these matters.

(14) Linked to this is the problem area that some people think their **impressions, impulses and supposed revelations** are good forms of being guided by God. In this way, delusions can determine the spiritual lives of people, and their misguided opinions can be passed on to others.

(15) **Allowing anybody and every body to speak and pray in mixed meetings, as they feel led**, can be a problem. If the leader knows that those present are all mature Christians, the problem may not exist, but this is not always so.

(16) There is enough in the Bible to frighten people, if it is stated plainly and directly. Deliberately **setting out to frighten people**, and thus to manipulate them, perhaps in order to produce a certain effect, is to be avoided.

(17) Similarly, it is wrong deliberately **to try to make people angry**, and for the same reasons.

(18) It is a mistake to **talk much about the opposition being faced** in the work of God, and to try to stir up further opposition, in the hope that this will prove what you are doing to be a work of God.

(19) In public prayer, or in our normal conversation, it is a mistake **to pretend that we are very familiar with Almighty God.**

(20) The above situation can allow **the name of God to be used without proper reverence**, if the pastors, or senior leaders, do not maintain a reasonable control of whatever happens. This is a serious matter, and is a breach of the third commandment.

(21) It is always wise for Christians to show a proper, and Scriptural respect for aged people, and senior leaders in the church. So, **disregard of the distinctions of age and station** are to be avoided.

(22) It is uncharitable to criticise other Christians of any kind, and

especially **to criticise those who are in good standing with the church, for being unconverted, cold, stupid and/or dead**, if we think they are not as enthusiastic as we are. This spirit of censorious criticism is the opposite of the fruit of the Spirit

(23) It is a mistake **to pray for people in public, by name**, and in an abusive manner..

(24) It is a mistake **to pray for God's judgments to fall on other people**, even if we think it is a means to the end of experiencing revival in our area, and of removing those who we think are an obstacle to it. The instances in Scripture when people prayed like this are, we believe, NOT good examples to follow. We should pray for blessings to come on people, and not curses.

(25) Similar to some points above, **it is a mistake to denounce as enemies to revivals those who do not approve of everything that is done,** or that we would like to see done. Weeks, and others like him, would have been on the receiving end of a good deal of that kind of treatment.

(26) Weeks, Nettleton, and many others at that time, thought it was totally inappropriate for **ladies to lead in prayer in mixed, public meetings, or to preach or exhort** in mixed meetings. This prohibition did not apply to ladies meetings, or to the school situation. This was partly a cultural feature, but was also seen by many as a Scriptural injunction, and as a possible source of bringing the work of God into disrepute.

(27) While strong feelings could often occur in revival meetings, allowing people to experience strong passions, and to give vent to these feelings in mixed meetings for worship, is to be avoided, if possible. These include such things as **loud groaning, speaking out, or falling down, in public worship.**

(28) If some tactic or method in evangelism or revival work is successful, it is wrong **to assume that such successful measures are therefore wise, right, or are approved by God.** Some other method might have been wiser.

(29) **Disorderly or disorganising measures** or methods during a revival should be avoided. God is a God of order, and not of chaos. For example, it is disorderly for a minister to interfere in an area, or a parish, in which he has no authority, and where another minister is responsible. This was one of the major problems raised by Davenport's work, so many years before, and it could easily

happen again. In many denominations, such activities are often seen as unethical.

The "Pastoral Letter" was signed by the Moderator and the Scribe. A minister by the name of Ralph Robinson was the chairman, or Moderator, of the Association, and William Weeks was the Secretary, or Scribe, and therefore probably wrote the whole thing, with consultation.

Nettleton's Letter

Prior to the Convention, also, Nettleton wrote a very long letter to over twenty ministers, outlining the issues he wanted to confront, and why. It is very likely that the basic "ammunition" for this letter was provided by Weeks, from the "Pastoral Letter," or through more personal correspondence. However, Nettleton's letters do seem to quote a range of people as sources of the complaints. Nettleton portrayed these problems of the management of revivals as things that were actually happening in New York state, and on a major scale, but which could get much worse..

This letter was eventually published (in 1828) as "*Letters of the Rev. Dr. Beecher and Rev. Mr. Nettleton on the 'New Measures' in Conducting Revivals of Religion."* Also included were several other letters by Nettleton, and two by Beecher. Reviews of a sermon by Finney, which Nettleton considered to be an attack upon himself, were also included. The sermon had, however, been preached a year earlier.

(a) The Preface set out very worthy goals for this publication. Truth and Order, it says, are key and inseparable factors in mature Christianity. The personal experience of Christianity happens when the Holy Spirit applies truth (the truth of Christ) to a person, restoring and establishing order in the mind. This truth cannot be known as well as might have been, or be promoted best, unless order is given its proper place. "Hence a religious man is one who, through the truth, becomes 'sober-minded;' having his thoughts, *feelings*, motives, and conduct, all *subordinated* to his divine Superior, and *ordered* in all relations according to the will of God." (23.)

So, when we consider the proper, wise ways of managing religious revivals, truth and soberness are the keys to spiritual manhood. (24.)

During the Reformation, in Luther's time, the truth had stood out in a new way, but the impact of it had been spoiled somewhat by the unruly extremes of the Anabaptists and Thomas Muntzer.

In the days of Oliver Cromwell in England, revival power had flowed, but, again, its impact had been affected by the civil war, and by the political extremism of many.

In the days of Jonathan Edwards and Whitefield, again truth had stood out in

a new way, but the disorders of James Davenport, and others, had created a spiritual desert where a garden had flourished shortly before.

At the present time, Nettleton wrote, great advances had occurred because of many outpourings of the Holy Spirit in many places. But, in the behaviour of Finney and his friends there lay the seeds of disorder bursting forth.

If his worst fears about the end results of these disorders were realised, there would be widespread spiritual devastations, which might have been avoided, but which would create spiritual darkness for many years. Nettleton was not optimistic that his call for wisdom would achieve much, but, at least these "Letters" would show that he, Beecher, and David Porter of Catskill, were not responsible for the sad results.

Nettleton hoped that candidates for the ministry especially would study these "Letters". If future church leaders were ignorant of the issues involved, they would look at the spiritual devastations resulting from these present disorders and draw the conclusion that all revivals were bad news. This would drain the life-blood of the church for many years. Or, if they liked the disorderly principles, through ignorance, they could help produce a spiritual desert which our children ought not to have to endure, and which could have been avoided.

(b) The first letter, that is, the one addressed to Samuel Aikin, was written from Albany, just after Nettleton had met Finney for the second time. He said that (now in 1827) events in Albany were interesting spiritually, but, back in 1820 there had been a revival in which 2,000 people were converted, which had been achieved without rudeness or excitement, indeed, without any bad side-effects. In fact, comparative stillness had prevailed throughout the movement.

Now, in Troy, where Finney was currently preaching, there had clearly been a work of God, for many conversions had occurred. But, according to information Nettleton had received, there was also "a revival of anger, wrath, malice, envy and evil speaking."

Both Nettleton and Beecher acknowledged that immature "friends", or imitators of Finney, were probably the main offenders, trying to achieve the same results as Finney by copying his actions and methods, but without having the same power or personality. Some of the imitators were trying to introduce Finney's methods into other churches by placing pressure upon ministers, or any leaders who did not want to co-operate. These leaders who were holding back would be branded as "enemies of revivals", or be accused of helping to send people to hell, or be accused of being "cold", or "dead." They would be shamed into co-operating in something in which they did not believe. This kind of criticism had been rife in Davenport's time.

In one case which Nettleton quotes, a great deal of pressure had been placed upon a certain minister, involving these abusive tactics. But when a report of it was read in the Oneida Presbytery, the offenders did not recognise that it was a

description of their own actions, and responded by saying that whoever did it was inspired by the devil. (25.)

(c) Another issue mentioned by Nettleton was Finney's irreverent language in the pulpit, including referring to God in a manner which sounded "like profanity." It was Edward D. Griffin who reported this, having heard several of Finney's sermons in Troy. A coloured lady in Troy was reported to have said, "I do wonder what has got into all the ministers to swear so in the pulpit." (26.)

Ladies praying aloud in mixed meetings was a big issue for the New England men. Beecher in particular argued against it at some length in his main letter included in the publication. (27.)

The prayer of faith, they said, had been misunderstood by many, who thought that somehow they had gained some sort of inside information about the will of God, and thus were somehow linked with infallibility. Their prayers could sound as if they were ordering God around.

People who lived some distance from Troy had visited the revival area, in order to 'catch the fire', and take it back home. But they had returned home saying, "We do not want *such* a revival as they have in Troy." (28.)

The preaching was at times too severe and overly repelling. The language was harsh and rude, and abusive names were too often used in addressing sinners, or people considered to be cold-hearted.

Professed converts were accepted simply upon their confession, and without any other evidence being sought to show that a real change of character had taken place. The same happened with applications for church membership. (29.)

The idea that the success of Finney's meetings was a proof that his work must have Divine approval, that therefore it could not be improved upon, or have any bad results, was used as an argument in defence of all of Finney's activities, and against any criticisms of them.

Furthermore, Finney and his friends could not be corrected by anyone. Force of personality had taken charge. Finney could make no mistakes. There was no real humility. If anyone tried to do the correcting, they would be publicly upbraided as opposers of the work of God.

The New Lebanon Convention, and After

The New Lebanon Convention lasted for the best part of two weeks. The clergymen from New England were Lyman Beecher, of Boston; Heman Humphrey, President of Amherst College; Asahel Nettleton from Connecticut; Justin Edwards, of Andover, Mass.; Caleb J. Tenney, of Wethersfield, and Joel Hawes, of Hartford, Connecticut. From New York state, there were Asahel S.

Norton, of Clinton; Moses Gillett of Rome; Nathan S. S. Beman of Troy; Dirck C. Lansing of Auburn; John Frost of Whitesborough; William R. Weeks, of Paris; Henry Smith of Camden; Charles G. Finney of Oneida County; George W. Gale of the Oneida Academy, and Silas Churchill, pastor at New Lebanon. (30.) (Henry Weed, who lived in Albany, was also present, at least part of the time. Heman Humphrey was elected Moderator, and William Weeks was elected as Scribe.)

(a) Wright said that "Upon assembling, it was proposed by the Western pastors that the brethren from the East should enter into an inquiry concerning the truth of the reports which had been so widely circulated as to the irregularities connected with the revivals in question. But for some reason they declined to enter upon any such investigation, though all the chief actors in those revivals were present in the convention, and from personal knowledge could have answered every inquiry that could have been put to them." (31.) The Eastern men clearly believed that the charges were all correct.

So, the debate and discussion wandered off in various directions, suffering from the fact that an agenda for the meetings, which might have contained any detail, was only made as they went along. With the passing of time, all, or nearly all, of Nettleton's charges against the New York men were introduced and discussed. Finney and his friends all denied that any of the things of which they were accused had happened at all, in the meetings for which they were responsible.

As was mentioned earlier, this disclaimer was not entirely true, as historical research has revealed some small number of instances which can be documented.

Also, Finney always admitted that he used very direct and colloquial speech in his sermons. So, it is to some degree a matter of opinion whether an example of very direct and blunt language is thought to be rude and abusive, or not. The decision about such a matter would depend upon cultural factors, such as what a person was used to hearing, and what was considered to be acceptable. This could vary a great deal. Also, the impact of such language would depend upon the circumstances in which the words were used, and what any individual considered to be offensive. It would also depend upon who was being asked the question, because the person to whom the abusive language was being directed might feel abused more readily than someone who simply heard the remarks being made about someone else.

Whatever we might think about that, a series of motions was moved at the New Lebanon Convention, which embodied the substance of all the abuses that Nettleton was complaining about, stating that such behaviour was not acceptable. These motions were passed unanimously by those present.

(b) After these matters had been dealt with, the New York men had their opportunity to introduce discussion which might have shown that Nettleton and the others had over-reacted, or reacted wrongly, in their attacks upon the Western revivals. But these motions did not enjoy the same kind of agreement from the Eastern ministers. These motions included:-

"As human instrumentality must be employed in promoting revivals of religion, some things undesirable may be expected to accompany them; and as these things are often proclaimed abroad and magnified, great caution should be exercised in listening to unfavorable reports."

"Attempts to remedy evils existing in revivals of religion may, through the infirmity and indiscretion of man, do more injury and ruin more souls than those evils which such attempts are intended to correct."

"The writing of letters to individuals in the congregations of acknowledged ministers, or circulating letters which may have been written by others, complaining of measures which may have been employed in revivals of religion; or visiting the congregations of such ministers and conferring with opposers, without conversing with the ministers of such places... or for ministers residing in the congregations of settled pastors to pursue the same course, thus strengthening the hands of the wicked, and weakening the hands of settled pastors, are breaches of Christian charity and ought to be carefully avoided." (32.)

The Eastern ministers refused to support these motions. If they had, they would have called into question the reasons behind what they were taking so much trouble to do.

(c) Partly because of his health, Nettleton did not attend many of the meetings of the convention. At one stage, near the end of the convention, Nettleton came in, and read a long letter which outlined all of his complaints against Finney's style of work. It was at least similar to, and may have been the same as, the first letter to Samuel Aikin, which was published in Nettleton's "Letters."

Finney himself described what happened. "Near the close of the Convention Mr. Nettleton came in manifestly very much agitated; and said that he would now give the convention to understand the reasons he had for the course he had taken..... He went on to read the letter. It was a statement, under distinct heads, of the things of which he complained; and which he had been informed were practised in those revivals, and especially by myself.....

When he sat down I arose and expressed my satisfaction that the letter had been read; and remarked that I had a copy of it, and should have read it in due time if Mr. Nettleton had not done so. I then affirmed that so far as I was personally concerned, not one of those facts mentioned there and complained of, was true. I had done no such thing. And I added, 'All the brethren are here

with whom I have performed all these labors, and they know whether I am chargeable with any of these things in any of their congregations. If they know or believe that any of these things are true of me, let them say so now and here, and I will immediately confess them.' They all at once affirmed, either by expressly saying so, or by their manifest acquiescence, that they knew of no such thing.

Mr. Weeks was present. I have said that we had supposed that some or many of those things communicated to Brother Nettleton had been given him by Mr. Weeks. I expected, therefore, that if anything was said in reply to my explicit denial of all the facts charged in Mr. Nettleton's letter with respect to myself, that it would come from Mr. Weeks. I did not know but he supposed himself in possession of all the facts, which he would there relate. I supposed also that if he had written to Dr. Beecher or Mr. Nettleton affirming those facts, that he would feel called upon then and there to speak out and justify what he had written. But he said not a word. No one there pretended to justify a single sentence in Mr. Nettleton's historical letter, that related to myself. This of course was astounding to Mr. Nettleton and Dr. Beecher. If any of their pretended facts had been received from Mr. Weeks, no doubt they expected him to speak out and justify what he had written. But he said nothing intimating that he had any knowledge of any of the facts that Mr. Nettleton had presented in his letter." (33.)

George W. Gale's Verdict

"Mr. Finney eased in his new measures, - new measures they were called by Mr. Nettleton and all who used them were called new measures men, - but Mr. N. did not take the right course to convert him. I told him (Nettleton).... that I thought he had not pursued the right course to rectify the errors of Mr. Finney. No one would have been so likely to do that as he. Mr. Finney had heard me speak of him (Nettleton) and his revivals in the most favorable manner, and he had great confidence in his wisdom and experience. The brethren in the West did not like Mr. Finney's management but God was with him, the work was powerful, and the feeling was such as a Professor of Princeton described, when told that some of the students that were not licensed had preached in a revival. 'Well,' said he, 'I would rather have a bone out of joint than a soul lost.'

Still, it is a matter of question whether we did our whole duty in this matter. Evils that ensued in some instances might have been prevented. These evils, however, resulted more from young men who attempted to follow Mr. Finney's lead, but who went much farther in the wrong direction than he did.

But Mr. Nettleton, and other good men who opposed these revivals, erred in the spirit with which they opposed them; gave credit to, and reported matters as

fact, to injure Mr. Finney that had little or no foundation. Mr. Finney's friends, knowing this, and that they and their people had received great spiritual benefit from his labors, stood firmly by him, and gave their sanction to some things which in other circumstances they would not." (34.)

Comments

(a) It is fairly clear from subsequent events that Lyman Beecher came around to the view that the grounds for Nettleton's complaints about the Western revivals were not nearly as substantial as had been made out. Only a few years later, he invited Finney to preach in his church in Boston. Letters from Beecher to Finney also illustrate this change in his attitude toward Finney, and his swing away from being so close to Nettleton. Finney was surprised, therefore, as others have been, that, when Lyman Beecher's Autobiography and Correspondence was finally published (in 1864) that the old attitude of opposition to the Western revivals was reported, without also reflecting the change in his attitude which had occurred such a short time later. The autobiography and correspondence was edited by his son, Charles Beecher, who must be responsible for this aspect of the publication.

Rosell and Dupuis also present letters by Finney, which show that, when Beecher invited Finney to Boston in 1831, although Beecher was very nice to him, Beecher claimed he was satisfied with their mutual relation by that time because Finney had changed his views, and toned down his way of doing things. In his letter, however, Finney stated clearly that his views and methods had not changed in the meantime, despite what Beecher has written. Dr. Beecher was a complex man. (35.)

(b) Various reports appeared about the New Lebanon Convention. After that, Mr. Nettleton's "Letters" were published. These, in turn created more published responses, in magazine articles and letters. It became evident to many that Beecher and his friends had been seriously mis-informed. Even if there were some grounds for their concerns, the problems were not nearly as serious as Nettleton and Beecher had tried to make out, or as they had been led to believe by their mystery informers.

(c) The General Assembly was held the following May (1828). At this gathering, the following document was signed and published:-

"The subscribers having had opportunity for free conversation on certain subjects pertaining to revivals of religion, concerning which we have differed, are of the opinion that the general interests of religion would not be promoted by any further publications on those subjects, or personal discussions; and we

do hereby engage to cease from all publications, correspondences, conversations, and conduct designed and calculated to keep these subjects before the public mind; and that, so far as our influence may avail, we will exert it to induce our friends on either side to do the same."

Those who signed it were:- Lyman Beecher, Dirck C. Lansing, S. C. Aikin, A. D. Eddy, Charles G. Finney, Sylvester Holmes, Ebenezer Cheever, John Frost, Nathan S. S. Beman, Noah Coe, E. W. Gilbert, and Joel Parker. Philadelphia. May 27th 1828. (36.)

When Finney drew up his memoirs, some years later, he said he could not remember signing this paper. But his signature is definitely on it.

(d) While some of those who opposed Finney's methods in managing revivals became reconciled to him, following these events, there were many who did not.

Nettleton was one who continued to believe all the criticisms he had made of Finney's work. So also did Bennet Tyler, his biographer. William Weeks certainly continued to believe that all the criticisms were true. A great many of the Old School Presbyterians seem to have done this, as well.

At the General Assembly of 1837, when the Presbyterian Church was being torn apart, or purified, by the Old School members, the Nettleton and Beecher criticisms against Finney were raised again, as one of the reasons being used to divide the Church. Beman was present, and said to the Assembly, "There was a Convention held at New Lebanon, growing out of this correspondence, where the brethren had an opportunity of conferring freely; and Dr. Beecher has since declared to me, that he had been misinformed with regard to many things, and that he was a great deal nearer to me than he was to Mr. Nettleton, who had put him up to write the letter; and the accusatory matter was all satisfactorily answered." (37.)

(e) Some modern historians have discussed why the New York men at the New Lebanon Convention stood behind Finney so solidly, when some of them knew of instances which might have been objectionable. We have already noted, above, what George W. Gale said about that, at the time these events occurred. Gale was present at the Convention, and had been Finney's theological tutor several years earlier. One thing seems clear. The New York men did not consider Finney's faults were serious enough to warrant the destruction of their work. (38.)

(f) Another issue is the reliability of Weeks as a source of information for historians on these matters. Rosell, in an earlier (1981) paper, emphasised that William Weeks was among a long list of people who took part in these conflicts, and who was not a reliable witness, so far as historians are concerned,

because Weeks was in the midst of waging a theological war against another theological faction in the overall New England Theology scene, which Finney was seen to represent. "Such witnesses, as every historian knows, are notoriously unreliable." (39.)

(g) Perhaps a principle of human nature lies hidden in this whole scene. Most of us are able to believe strange things when we have only explored one side of an issue, and have not looked properly at the evidence on the other side. There may even be several sides to explore. So, we get to believe half-truths, or distorted versions.

When a half-truth is stated often enough - even in an extreme form - it is surprising how many honest men will believe all of it - especially if it fits in well with a pre-existing world view that they have already embraced. Most of the personal allegations against Finney were not even half true. The degree of truth was small.

Furthermore, it is surprising how much damage such less-than-half-true beliefs can cause, and how long people will continue to believe them. In addition even to that, Nettleton's position is still believed by people in the Twenty-First Century, especially by those whose views are closer to the Old School Presbyterian outlook.

What Were the Reasons Behind William Weeks' Stand Against Finney?

We have seen, above, that William Weeks had the opportunity, at the New Lebanon Convention, to state clearly the reasons why he had written the "Pastoral Letter", and why he had played a role in trying to stand against the "new measures." At the Convention, Weeks had not said anything to explain his actions, or to justify what Nettleton has just read out from his "historical letter", as it was called.

As Finney mentioned, it is not clear to what extent he had supplied information to Nettleton or Beecher, but it was widely believed that he had played a major role in this. Especially was this so, in view of the fact that Nettleton's criticisms seemed to follow so closely what Weeks had already written. Rosell and Dupuis, for example, produced a number of examples of places where the Pastoral Letter was republished in its entirety in magazines which had a much wider circulation than the Association could have achieved unaided, such as in the *Christian Advocate* in Philadelphia, and the *Hopkinsian Magazine*, in Providence, Rhode Island. (40.)

Fowler reported that, on February 28th, 1828, the Oneida Presbytery appointed a committee, to wait upon Mr. Weeks. This committee consisted of Frost, Aiken and Gale. Their aim was to inquire "'whether he has evidence that

any member of this Presbytery used any of the exceptionable expressions quoted by him [in the “Pastoral Letter"], and the committee subsequently reported that 'he refused to give them any information' on the subject.” (41.)

Sadly, it was not until many years later that Weeks' reasons became evident. In one of the chapters of “Pilgrim's Progress in the Nineteenth Century”, Weeks reconstructs a conversation between himself [Thoughtful] and Aikin [Scribus]. Its place in the history of the new measures controversy, as it is portrayed in this book, seems to mean that it corresponds to this visit that he had from Aikin, and the other committee members, to which Fowler referred, in his quotation from the Presbytery records.

From a study of this passage in the “Pilgrim's Progress,” we can see that there are **TWO** reasons behind Weeks's actions.

The **first reason** was, basically, that the Association members believed firmly that everything in the Pastoral Letter was true, so it must have been true. Or, to put it another way, **they had seen it happen themselves, with their own eyes.**

The actual words are:- “Ministers of the Gospel, and members of the churches, whose word has never been called in question before, do affirm that they have seen these things with their own eyes, and heard them with their own ears; and shall we not believe them? Shall we reject this testimony on the credit of such vague and indefinite denials as you give us?”

Again:- “...if they verily believe that the evils set forth in their book do really exist, so that their churches are in danger from them, it cannot well be doubted, and it will not be doubted by those who know the men, that these things are so.” (42.)

No reply to this charge is offered in the “Pilgrim's Progress,” although in the dialogue form which this book follows, there are often arguments followed by counter-arguments. What might we say to the reason that Weeks offers here?

To this, we could perhaps reply that the opportunities of the members of the Association to see these objectionable things with their own eyes, and as part of their own experience, would be limited to fairly local events. So, whatever they saw locally would not qualify them to make charges which came to be believed as having happened on a major scale, and over a large area. They saw localised examples, only. And this would not necessarily implicate Finney personally, because he was not local very much of the time.

What had they seen?

“Pilgrim's Progress” gives us a clue to the answer to this question, also.

(a) The Moderator of the Association, at the time when the Pastoral Letter was written, had to resign his charge because of the “rashness and indiscretion” of a deliberate attempt by a group of people to introduce the “new measures” into his church, against the minister's wishes, and against the wishes of “their

most stable and experienced members."

(b) When the members of the Association tried to bring some moderation into the more violent behaviour in nearby places, they were abused, blamed for being cold and for opposing the work of God. They were driven away, and made to feel that they were not welcome. Moreover, they also had enough work to do in their own parishes, trying to hold them together, to spend overmuch time outside.

(c) They found other individuals who agreed with them, and who had other stories to relate.

(d) Although this is not mentioned in "Pilgrim's Progress," Weeks had his own problems with "new measures" in the Paris Hill congregation after 1831, which led to his removal to another place.

The **second reason** implied in this same passage in the "Pilgrim's Progress" is seen in the following words:-

"***Thoughtful***. 'And if it should be necessary to bring testimony in the matter, there is good reason to believe that you yourself will afford sufficient proof of some of the most objectionable things.'"

While this statement is not explained further by Weeks, it seems to imply directly either that Weeks believed that Aiken himself had been guilty of these most objectionable things, or that Aiken had seen them happen. Thus Aiken could provide the evidence himself, and there was no need for Weeks to provide it.

In this way it becomes clear that **Weeks believed that some, perhaps all, of the objectionable things had happened in Aiken's own church when Finney had been leading the revival work there.** If any evidence was required, Aiken could provide it himself.

Also, clearly, Aiken did **not recognise his own face** in the picture that Weeks was painting. Aiken did not believe, realise or recognise that these things had happened, in the way Weeks believed.

Concluding Comments

(a) It is evident from the foregoing that Weeks and his friends in the Association had some bad experiences with the "new measures", and with "new measures" people. They spoke to other people, and heard from them about their bad experiences. In this way, the "Pastoral Letter" was compiled.

The "Pastoral Letter" does not actually say that these things were happening, or that they were happening on a wide scale, but it was nevertheless a conclusion that everybody drew from it.

(b) In perusing the whole range of literature on this subject, many times it becomes evident that not everybody is able to relate a story with unvarnished

truthfulness, and without making changes, either unwittingly or deliberately. Many people dramatise a story, or garnish it with more colourful language than strict truthfulness would warrant. Especially is this so if they have been emotionally involved in the events themselves, and been hurt in the process. Some stories grow with the re-telling of them. Some stories are largely guess-work and imagination.

The evidence in the "Pilgrim's Progress" allows plenty of room for this kind of understanding of the events, despite Weeks' plea that we should take at face value all of the stories that he and his friends came across.

Take, for example, the following instance, quoted by Fowler. "An editorial of the *Journal and Telegraph*, March 9, 1833, relates: 'In the county of Oneida there has prevailed, and for aught we know, still prevails, to some extent, the practice of whipping children, to induce them to submit to God.'

President Davis, of Hamilton College, according to the minutes of Oneida Presbytery, vol. 6, p. 1, 'admits that in conversation with a gentleman in Albany, he was instrumental in the publication of the article', but that he 'made no such charge.'" Davis said that the charge was false, but he implied that it still might be true that some people in the churches do this kind of thing to their children.

> "The Presbytery proceeded to an investigation of the charge, and all that they could ascertain was that one good mother in her chamber did once whip a child to induce it to submit to God; but immediately after she was convinced of her mistake and bitterly bemoaned it." (43.)

It is strange that Weeks wanted to place such complete and total reliability on the words of his friends in the Association, and on the words of the people they happened to meet in their journeys, who told them various stories. But he would not extend the same courtesy to Finney, or Aikin, or to any of the other ministers, or Christians generally, who opposed him.

Why should we accept uncritically the words of his friends, and not accept the words of anybody else's friends? Obviously, this is not a safe means to determine accurate information.

The answer, from the passage, to this last question, seems to be that Weeks knew and trusted his friends, but he did not know or trust, in the same way, many other people, who held theological positions different from his own.

Fowler was ready to admit that some of the offences listed in the "Pastoral Letter" could have happened outside the bounds of the Presbyterian churches, but they did not happen within the bounds of the Oneida Presbytery in the way that the "Pastoral Letter" seemed to imply.

It is evident that the "Pastoral Letter" was used in a broad way, with a wide application. It ought not to have been used in this way. It became a vehicle causing great damage to the work of God, instead of being a helpful guide

about “things to be avoided”, as it could have been if used wisely.

The “Pastoral Letter” provided great advice to practice in managing a revival movement, or in many other aspects of the Christian life. It might have served a wonderful purpose if it could have been used in that way. But it is NOT a good guide in discovering what problems actually arose during the Oneida revivals in 1826.

CHAPTER TEN

HOW CAN REVIVALS BE MADE TO SERVE THE DEVIL?

A Summary of Five Chapters by William R. Weeks

Among the various materials written and published by William R. Weeks, before 1830, are twenty-seven articles which first appeared in periodicals, and which eventually formed the first 27 chapters in his "Pilgrim's Progress in the Nineteenth Century." Of these, the first 21 chapters appeared before the rise of Charles G. Finney to prominence in the role of an evangelist, and as one of the leaders in a revival movement.

Chapters 22 through to 27 appeared in 1828 and 1829, after the contests with Finney and his friends that we have been considering in earlier chapters. Of these six chapters, five chapters form an interesting unit, namely 22 through to 26, and bear directly upon the question so important to Weeks, warning about deceptions and abuses which might occur during revivals.

When "Pilgrim's Progress in the Nineteenth Century" was eventually published, these chapters appeared immediately before the chapters which provided lengthy descriptions of Finney and Nettleton, and the way they handled the questions between them. Naturally, these Finney - Nettleton chapters were written later.

Here is a summary of those five chapters. The character "Thoughtful" probably was supposed to represent Weeks, himself.

****

Thoughtful and Ardent were travelling together, and approached the town of Vanity, which was controlled by its Prince, Beelzebub. One night Thoughtful had a dream, and Ardent wanted him to explain it.

In this dream, Beelzebub called a Council of his chief officers to discuss the state of their affairs, and to sort out what was to be done to strengthen their power and influence, and to oppose Prince Emmanuel.

They met in the court of Pandemonium, and Thoughtful eavesdropped.

Beelzebub made a speech to declare the purpose of the meeting, and included in this speech a review of the devil's work in the past, and the degree of success that, together, they had achieved. Four other spirits also shared in this early part of the meeting. They discussed how to corrupt and pervert the benevolent institutions of the day. These four spirits were the Spirit of Persecution, the Spirit of Avarice, the Spirit of Vain Glory and the Spirit of Error.

Then, another question was raised. "How can revivals be turned to the devil's advantage?"
And the following discussion ensued.

Spirit of Persecution. Have everyone put them down as pests.

Spirit of Delusion. Not so fast! This will not work. Let counterfeit revivals be produced. While believers try to escape one deception they can be caught by another. Intermingle the counterfeit with the real. The more counterfeit that is mixed in, the better.

Let us encourage the view that evil spirits cannot counterfeit such things. Counterfeits will bring the real into disrepute. We can make people believe all revivals are real. Then, when the counterfeits produce no results, we can make people think that they are all of no value. This was done in the Eighteenth Century.

Subjects of a counterfeit work will be more fully in our power. If they can retain their false hopes, they will be ours. If they give up their false hopes we can make them think that all religion is false.

Spirit of Fanaticism. I agree. I will help.

Spirit of Error. This will give me full time work, too.

Spirit of Vain Glory. It will employ me, too.

Spirit of Delusion. Fill up the churches with spurious converts. Get as many of these as possible into doing missionary work for God. Those who have a false hope will do very well in leading others into having a false hope.

They can also be induced into making their own experience the touchstone by which to judge others.

We must reduce the amount of examination applied to candidates for church membership - reduce it to a mere form. Bring people into church membership during their first flush of enthusiasm, and before any change in their character has been tested.

Induce the idea that any strong excitement on religious issues represents true religion. If anyone wants to deny or question this, we must have them criticised as opposers of religious feeling.

Spirit of Error. People used to believe that it counted against a person's Christian profession if they did not accept all the major beliefs in the King's Book. But I have succeeded in changing this in recent years. Some churches have now altered their creeds. Others think it does not matter what opinions a

person has.

I will make UNION the watchword. Some now look as easily upon an heretic as they do on someone who believes the truth. When I cannot make people believe what I want, I will make them think that what a person believes is of no great importance.

Beelzebub. What about the true friends of Emmanuel?

Spirit of Delusion. There are probably very few of them who have not absorbed a mixture of counterfeit religion with the true. We will try to make them pay a great deal of attention to the counterfeit, and make them think it is good. When they do this in their own experience, they will treat others in the same way.

Spirit of Error. Let the words "charity" and "union" be emphasised by our agents. I will pursue the true friends of Emmanuel to look favourably upon those who disagree with their theology, and to ignore the differences. Let them emphasise points of agreement. Both parties can try to act unitedly.

Spirit of Fanaticism. Let the true friends of Emmanuel be drawn into counterfeit revivals. Let them cultivate the part which is counterfeit, and neglect the rest.

I can blow up their passions. I can flatter them, so that they will think they are very heavenly-minded, and specially favoured by God. We will make them think that their feelings and impressions are a better guide than the King's Book.

People like being admired. We can perhaps get the Christians to do things in order to be admired. A high reputation for superior piety is often in people's own interests.

Some high professors of Christianity may be concealing secret sins. If anyone points this out we can raise a cry of "uncharitable" against the critics. If the evil practises are ultimately found out, this will bring discredit upon their religious professions.

Spirit of Persecution. It will then become possible to raise persecution against the true friends of Emmanuel by those who have been affected by the influence of the spirits of Delusion, Error, Fanaticism and Vain Glory.

If the friends of Emmanuel are silent they can be reproached as cold and stupid and dead professors. If they complain about what is being said or done, then they can be held up as opposers of the work of God.

If a real revival begins, some of our friends can push on the friends of Emmanuel some of the extravagances which the more considerate ones would not like. So we can create division among brethren. If we can make them

denounce, oppose and persecute their own brethren - so much the better.

Spirit of Malevolence. What great expectations we have!

Spirit of Error. Our best tactic, therefore, is not to destroy the church, but to corrupt it - to introduce as many of our friends as possible into it, and by misleading the friends of Emmanuel as much as we can.

We can modify the truth so as to promote unholy living as much as if we suppressed it.

We can promote the practise of having different groups use basic theological terms with a variety of meanings. Terms like total depravity, regeneration, election, reprobation, Divine decrees, Divine sovereignty, etc., can be used by our friends as well as by the friends of Emmanuel. But the meanings can be varied.

Then our friends can preach to the friends of Emmanuel. They need not preach outright error. They can preach some truth, but not carry these truths too far. They can sometimes use the terms which the orthodox use, but use them with other meanings. They can ridicule those who always deal in fine-spun metaphysics and theology.

In this way a prejudice can be developed against those who explain and prove the doctrines in the King's Book. This will put down the spirit of enquiry into the truth. The popularity and trust placed in such preachers will mean that those who will not support them can be put down as opposers of every good thing.

Spirit of Error. People must think that the older orthodox theology and preaching cannot produce revivals. If people say that the older orthodox preaching has indeed produced revivals in the past, we must deny it. We will say "Times have changed." We will try to say that the old orthodoxy need not be believed in order to have revival.

Let the public mind be worked up into a fever, and the public attention directed to something new every day.

Spirit of Persecution. Everyone who preaches the older, orthodox truths will be driven from their post. Nobody will give them a place to live or work.

Spirit of Malevolence. The finger of scorn will be pointed at them, and they will be seen as the off-scouring of the earth.

Beelzebub. You are wandering from the subject. We are thinking of what can be done to manage revivals, so as to prevent them doing injury to our cause.

Those who are particularly zealous can help our cause most, if we can control

them, than one hundred outright opposers, as happened in Edwards' time. Let us repeat what we did then. Or, is it the case that Edwards, Brainerd and Bellamy managed to expose our work too much, so that we cannot repeat it now?

Spirit of Self Confidence. The present age is not an age of reading and thinking, as it was then. This is an age of feeling and acting - without much enquiry Why? or Wherefore?

Although those men (Edwards, and the others) exposed us, we have succeeded in blinding the crowds, and many of Emmanuel's true friends, also, as Edwards complained.

When people see great feelings, earnest talk, strong voice, assured looks, vast confidence, and bold assertions, their judgment will be swayed. They will say "Surely they have been with God!"

Others will imitate those who act in this way. We can puff them all up with pride. Very few will be bold enough to speak, in order to correct these things.

Spirit of Delusion. We will not find it difficult to destroy the credibility of those who can discriminate, and who can tell the difference between the real and the counterfeit. Present circumstances favour us highly. If the King's messengers will not teach anything about discrimination, it will be easier still for us.

Nothing must be said about the danger of having a false hope. Every hope must be considered good. Anyone who can make any kind of a claim to having a hope of being saved, or of being a Christian, must be classed as converted.

In Edwards' time, we mixed much of the corrupt with the good;

- great excitement of the natural affections and passions;
- great heats of the imagination;
- a high degree of self-righteousness and spiritual pride.

We created situations where what was genuine was despised and overlooked. Instead of people being aware that they were degenerating, they thought they were growing rapidly.

The man who thinks himself most secure, and most out of our reach, is then most within our reach.

Spirit of Self Confidence. Let us close the minds of those who are active in revivals against being corrected or admonished by others. Let us convince them that they are so full of the Spirit that everything they do is right, without question.

Let us persuade the leaders in revivals that they are full of light already, and have no need of instruction. They will then despise the offer of it, and feel themselves insulted by anyone who tries to correct them.

If we can get the leaders accused of spiritual pride at some point where they are NOT guilty, they will feel that all such accusations are equally wrong, and that all attempts to correct them proceed from a wrong spirit.

Spirit of False Zeal. That is an important suggestion. I have been able to work this in the past so that every suggested improvement is taken as a display of spiritual deadness or wrong feeling in those who offer the advice.

The leaders of revivals can then become very zealous, quick at seeing deficiencies in others, and sharp and severe in speaking. The moderation of some is called coldness and of the devil. The moderate people are then accused of being soul-murderers, and of doing the work of the devil. The words "devil" and "hell" are always being spoken of.

This violent language can become habitual. Those in superior positions are not honoured. Aged people are not respected. All meekness, gentleness and lowliness is thrown out. Vulgar and profane speech becomes a mark of great sanctity.

If anyone objects, they are treated with bitterest invectives and the most censorious remarks. They are treated with contempt.

The whole result is to bring revivals into disrepute and contempt.

Spirit of Error. Let the vitriolic language be applied even to those who are more even-handed in speaking of revivals - who praise what is good in revivals, but who also point out what is questionable.

Any objection to what is going on can be treated roughly like this. Perhaps we can make a link appear between supporting the truth, and opposing the work of revivals.

Spirit of False Zeal. As we did last century, we must get people to judge others as unconverted if they do not feel and speak in the same way as do the violent, over-zealous and loud-mouthed supporters of revivals.

If an ambassador of the King talks a lot about the difference between true and false Christian experience, urges self examination, and condemns the high excitements we have caused (saying that some of these excitements are selfish), it will not be hard to make the excited people condemn these ambassadors, as it will provide to those excited people conclusive proof that the ambassadors know nothing about experimental religion.

Everything the ambassadors do after that will only be seen as providing even more proof. The excited ones may then destroy the characters and influences of the King's ambassadors. They may even be driven out of their positions as pastors of a church.

This will make the King's ambassadors more fearful of saying anything to correct the situation. Moderation must be cried out against as a charity which

puts people into hell, as having the blood of eternal souls on its hands, and as being a work of people who are spiritually cold, dry and dead.

Spirit of Delusion. One way of doing this is to make people censure others, and cast reflections upon others, in their public prayers. This can appear to be a loving thing, and is a great way of blinding the eyes of those present. Under the pretence of praying, people can be made to say all kinds of bad things about others. It looks like they are appealing to God, who searches the hearts, to vindicate the truth of what is said about those being prayed for.

Spirit of False Zeal. We can take this even further, just as we did last century. We can induce some to go so far as to mix in their prayers harsh comments about some people, and to curse others in the name of the King. This will be a great triumph for us.

Let us induce them to pray that other people (perhaps those who appear to stand in the way of the revival) may be converted, or else removed out of the way. That is, converted quickly, or sent to hell quickly, before their guilt becomes greater.

They can pray like this both for those who they think are not converted, as well as for those who they think are spiritually cold, stupid and dead. After all, they will think that the spiritually dead Christians and ministers are hindering the work of God, and are leading more souls to hell than the unconverted are.

If we can make them believe it is right to pray like this, perhaps they can also believe they should actually DO things to help achieve these ends.

If people complain about these prayers, we must encourage the idea that such prayers are inspired, and it is the Spirit of God who leads them in these prayers. Perhaps others will then follow their example, because of the apparent great saintliness of those who pray like this.

At this point, Ardent interrupted Thoughtful's relating of his dream. Ardent said, “Surely the testimony of the great Edwards should limit some of these extreme actions.” To this, Thoughtful replied that Edwards did not expect his warnings to achieve very much. He did not think people would take much notice of what he had said, once the heat of excitement got hold of them.

Spirit of Delusion. We must lead those who are most forward in leading the revivals to look for opposition and persecution, and do extreme things in order to provoke it. When they get criticised for their extreme actions, it will be taken as evidence that what they are doing comes from God.

Spirit of Persecution. I can then urge these leaders on to persecute others, in their efforts to justify themselves.

Spirit of Self Confidence. And when they have provoked this persecution, and brought it upon themselves, I can whisper that this happens because they are so much better and more spiritual than others. Then I can make them more bold and dictatorial, both towards God and man. Familiarity with God can remove reverence, awe and dread of God.

Their apparent superiority in spiritual matters will make them believe that all others should defer to them, and obey whatever they say. If they are used in achieving what looks like great things, they will think more highly of themselves, and consider themselves "gods".

Spirit of Fanaticism. If we can make the more eminent of the leaders in this work believe that their "impressions" are Divine guidance, we can puff them up with pride, so that they look upon themselves as oracles. But this will allow us to put our own suggestions to them, which they will experience as "impressions" which they will receive as if they were infallible rules and guidance from the throne of God. In this way, we will be able to direct them at our pleasure.

Spirit of Error. Although the King's Book has now been completed, we must make them say loudly that they are "led by the Spirit." Not many will check out the reliability of these alleged leadings. If we make people to expect new revelations, suggestions or impulses, we can give them whatever impulses we please.

Also, when it is believed that they are being led by the Spirit, anybody who objects can be accused of opposing the Spirit of God.

Spirit of Delusion. We have been greatly assisted so far, in making people believe in impulses, by teaching wrong views about the prayer of faith.

When some have been led in prayer by the Spirit, and have received what they asked for, we have then given them strong feelings and imaginations, and excited strong persuasions that they would get what they asked for. They get a high conceit about these prayers. It is easy to make them stronger in it, and think it is from God, when it is only from their own excitement.

When they get what they ask for, we can make them think it was related to their impulses. This will give us a great instrument in making revivals what WE want them to be.

Spirit of Error. In these various ways we can achieve today what we achieved last century, to deceive and mislead many of the real friends of Emmanuel.

If leaders make mistakes, we must make use of their popularity to spread the error. There is also the idea that, if the King uses someone greatly, He must be specially pleased with them. We can use this to deflect corrections and good advice. The crowds can then blindly follow bad examples.

Beelzebub. These are the principal devices we must follow.

Get as many of our friends as possible introduced into the churches and the ministry.

Increase the prejudices that exist against the truth.

Get attention paid to passions more than to the understanding.

Fill the lives of those inquiring after salvation with activity, so they do not have time to think and pray.

Stop them from understanding themselves properly, and from knowing the King.

Give them false instruction, and false hopes.

Give weakened meanings to key terms related to conversion.

Flatter people that they are converted, when they are not.

Spirit of Delusion. One more thing. When sinners are awakened to their need of Christ, they must be prayed for, instead of praying themselves. Let people who are praying for them believe that these prayers will be answered. This will make the anxious person feel better, and make them think they are converted already, so, they will "rejoice in hope", when they do not yet have any hope. The teaching on the prayer of faith will contribute to this. When the sinner feels uncertain, his friends can bolster this false confidence.

Spirit of Error. Then we can mislead people about what constitutes proper evidence for a hope in God. Happy feelings and external acts will be accepted as evidence, such as praying, singing, hearing, and attending meetings (or gestures, bowing or kneeling).

We can play down the importance of self-denial, meekness, forbearance and love, a teachable disposition, and humility. Let them look for evidences that unconverted people can produce just as well.

Spirit of Delusion. We will bring forward novices to have places of prominence and leadership in the revivals.

Spirit of Persecution. If any older or more experienced people object, we must have their mouths stopped.

Beelzebub. Go and do it. Let them think devils are not smart enough. Don't let anyone realise they are wrong in following what we suggest to them, turn

away from their sins, or publish details about the mistakes they have made.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE PRAYER OF FAITH, or KNOWING THE WILL OF GOD IN PRAYER

One of the very important features of the Western Revivals in the 1820s and 1830s was the matter of the "prayer of faith." It has also been a major feature, and problem area, in more recent times, especially in Modern Pentecostalism, and in the Charismatic Movement, where the prayer of faith has been extensively taught by many, and practised properly by some. Whereas, by a great number of people, it has been widely abused and misunderstood.

What has now become the evangelical understanding of the prayer of faith, particularly over the last two hundred years, has been that, by walking closely with God, and by listening carefully to what God says to us through the Scriptures, it is at times possible for a believer to gain an unusual insight into the will of God, about a certain matter of prayer. This insight into God's will, can lead the believer to pray about that matter with a much greater degree of confidence about the outcome, according to certain relevant passages in the Bible. Naturally, it is very easy for anyone to make a mistake. But, where a mistake has not been made, the praying person will receive, in answer to their prayers, exactly what they have prayed for.

The prayer of faith is related to several other issues. One is the question of inspiration, which, by one means or another, allows a person to gain a deeper insight into the will of God in relation to the matter about which the prayer of faith is exercised.

Another related question is to what extent a Christian can use the prayer of faith as a tool for a pre-conceived project or purpose, such as vastly increasing the number of Christian believers in a community, and to raise the spiritual quality of Christian experience. This last question can also relate to any instance where a Christian seeks to exercise the prayer of faith as a tool, or as a means of achieving ANY answer to prayer about any matter.

Definitions

Nettleton challenged the "new measures" teaching on all these matters. Weeks discussed them at considerable length in his "Pilgrim's Progress in the Nineteenth Century."

The first reference that Weeks makes in this book to the prayer of faith is at the start of chapter 31. Here, he does not define what is meant by the term. He simply declares that Nettleton was completely opposed to it.

"Ardent. Does Mr. Meek [Nettleton] 'believe in any such notion of the prayer

of faith, as that it will always obtain the particular things prayed for, if we only believe we shall receive them.?'

Experience. So far from it, he says in reference to this theory, 'Some, in their zeal on the subject of the *prayer of faith,* are tormenting others with their peculiar sentiments, which, if correct, every-body sees must equally condemn themselves; thus making themselves and their sentiments perfectly ridiculous.'" (1.)

The main discussion of the *prayer of faith* is in chapter 36. The subject is raised again in chapter 43, where the main subject being discussed is *inspiration*, or the claim to have some better than normal access to the will of God. In chapter 43, we find Weeks' opinion of the "new measures" view of the prayer of faith. "...nothing, in my judgment, is more adapted to corrupt revivals, and produce spurious conversions and unfounded hopes." (2.)

Returning to chapter 36, we find the very concise definitions that Weeks used.

He defines ***his own view*** of the prayer of faith as follows:- It "is a prayer which refers everything to the will of God, and trusts in his superior wisdom and goodness. Its language is 'not my will, but thine be done.'" (3.)

In this view, therefore, we can see that prayer of this kind is a *prayer of faith* because it trusts in God, and not because it has any idea about what the answer to the prayer will be. Whatever happens in answer to the prayer will be accepted with thanks as God's will. It relies upon God to do what He sees as best, whatever that may be.

The "***new measures"*** definition or description which is offered in this passage is as follows, although here the order of the sentences given by Weeks has been reversed.

"When a person under the influence of, or moved by, the Holy Spirit, asks of God some particular blessing, exercising true faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, he *shall receive it;* not something as an equivalent, but *the thing itself.*"

"It pretends to know the will of God, and insists upon the identical thing asked for; and alleges that all ought to make this prayer for all spiritual blessings for themselves and others."

"It goes to God with the language of demand, and refuses to take any denial, or to exercise any submission." (4.)

Comments

(a) What people understood by "***the prayer of faith***" has varied from one period to another, and from one country to another.

This description of the "new measures" theory of the prayer of faith seems to have applied in the mid-1820's. Weeks held on to this understanding throughout the rest of his life, although Finney taught a somewhat modified

version of this view when he published the "Revival Lectures" in 1835.

In the later years of the Nineteenth Century, the traditional American evangelical understandings of the prayer of faith were not so aggressive as this "new measures" definition. They were much simpler, and became better expressed in the words of the famous hymn "Standing on the Promises of God."

On the other hand, in England, the understanding of the prayer of faith was substantially moulded by men like George Muller and Hudson Taylor, who had a very wide and powerful influence. As a result, the English approach had a different flavour, and a different atmosphere about it, quite different from the definition that Weeks gave above.

(b) Weeks' description of the "new measures" version of the prayer of faith really includes a number of separate matters which he is treating as a package deal. And he is criticising and condemning the whole package, without stopping to ask whether any parts of it might be worth further notice.

After all, it is well known in theological circles that a heresy is often at least half right, and that could easily be the case here.

The Package

(1.) the idea that we could discover God's will about some detail, and, on the basis of Scriptural teaching, become assured that our prayer would be answered. Finney discusses several ways in which this might happen in the "Revival Lectures."

(2.) a prayer for this object could then be offered with great confidence, but hopefully without lack of respect for God.

(3.) this would result in us receiving exactly what we asked for.

(4.) somehow we have managed to achieve this without making a mistake.

(5.) the idea that Christians ought to learn how to offer this kind of prayer for many things, or, indeed, for everything that we ever pray about. People who failed to do this were failing in their Christian duty to God.

(6.) the idea that the prayer of faith could become a primary evangelistic tool or method whereby everyone in the world could be won for Christ, if it was used by enough Christians on a sufficient scale. This was not entirely a new idea, as Edwards wanted widespread prayer for the outpouring of the Spirit, in order to achieve goals something like that. Edwards did not have teaching on the prayer of faith in the new measures sense, however.

(7.) Christian ministers and leaders are judged by the fact that this has not happened. It is evident they have not done their duty. They have not prayed and worked as they ought, and not seen the success that they might have seen.

It was this last point which made Nettleton and Weeks think that the whole package was ridiculous, and which showed that the new measures people were

condemned out of their own mouths. Not even the greatest of the new measures men had seen one hundred percent conversions in any area, even on a small scale. In some of the revivals, it was true, the number of conversions might have included a good proportion of the population in a town, but they had never made a clean sweep anywhere.

The character "*Thoughtful*", which was probably supposed to represent Weeks himself, is made to say the following:-

"***Thoughtful***. Mr. Bold [Finney] and his friends, who teach this duty, are condemned out of their own mouth. For, according to their theory, if ministers and Christians only did their duty, all men would be converted: but all are not converted, and therefore this prayer has not been rightly made." Another character calls it "a strange, absurd and self-condemning notion." (5.)

Examples of Practices Which Were Disapproved by Weeks

In chapter 36 of the "Pilgrim's Progress in the Nineteenth Century," Weeks provides twelve examples of happenings associated with the "new measures" conception of the prayer of faith, illustrating the things of which he disapproved. Some are quoted here in full, while others are summarised.

(1) "I heard Mr. Rash [Lucius Foote?] use language like this:- 'Here is a particular sinner. The Spirit *dictates* to me that I should pray for him. It is impressed upon my mind from this circumstance that he is to be brought in; and I can pray for him, believing that he will be brought in. I think it very important, that when we feel any such impression to pray for any one, we do not let it pass, but be careful to obey the dictates of the Spirit.'"

(2) An Oneida Presbytery minister said, "...if their petitions are indited by the Spirit, the influences of that Spirit will accompany the truth proclaimed by his spiritual watchmen. It is inconsistent with the character of the Almighty, that he should lead his children to pray for those things which he does not intend to give them."

(3) A new measures minister strongly affirmed that, if a person prayed in true faith, they should expect to receive exactly what they asked for, and not something else as a substitute.

(4) "A church member says, 'Mr. Bold said in my hearing... "All that God requires of you is to throw yourselves your whole length on the divine promises, with the determination to obtain what you desire, or die there.'"'

(5) A leading minister said that the prayer of faith and the prayer for miracles were one and the same. "He believed God would work miraculous deliverances for his people now, if they would only pray in faith. He says that all men can pray in faith, and ought to pray in faith for all men; and if one or two should do it, all men would be immediately converted."

(6) "Last spring, I heard a young church member, and a convert under the

preaching of Mr. Strangeways [Burchard], pray as follows: 'O Lord, now we have prayed, and we have prayed in faith, and thou hast promised to hear the prayer of faith, and we want the blessing, and we want it ***now***. We cannot be denied.'"

(7) "Two ministers heard an evangelist associated with the Presbytery of Oneida say, 'Now we have prayed in faith, and we must have what we have asked.'"

(8) As people prayed for the conversion of a particular person, they said they could not live if God did not give them what they asked for. They thanked God for the answer, in advance.

(9) A minister urged parents - if they would go home and pray, as he had directed, for their impenitent children that night, they might go about their houses and find them in their rooms, converted. "But the next day did not bring the news of the promise being fulfilled; either the prayers failed, or the promise failed."

(10) Mr. H. said... "that he did not wish to hear a person pray 'not my will, but thine be done' more than once or twice, before he knew that such an one is totally void of a spirit of true faith and prayer."

(11) **"**A new measure man said, about Mr. Bold and his labors, 'I have heard prayer, but I never heard a mortal pray with that fervor and assurance of faith, which seemed to take hold of God like Moses, and ***storm heaven with holy violence***, as this man."

(12) **"**The Presbytery in Westerly St. [Presbytery of Oneida] in their narrative say: 'Often has it been said, Christians pray as they have never prayed before. Many have been in ***deep distress***, and felt what it was to ***travail in birth*** for souls. They have laid hold of the arm of the Lord with a grasp which seemed to say, 'it is a case of life and death with our friends and neighbors, ***we cannot be denied***.'" (6.) This passage is quoted at length in another chapter, also.

So, one difficulty we have in handling Weeks' approach to the "New Measures" teaching (1826 version) on the prayer of faith, and his criticisms of it, is that he was attacking a whole package of ideas at one time, and was not trying to differentiate between the component parts of the package, to see if some parts of it were more worth-while than others.

Weeks' Use of the Bible

Another difficulty arises over Weeks' interpretation of the key verses upon which "prayer of faith" teaching is usually based.

Some of these verses from the Bible are quoted, and discussed, by Weeks in chapter 43, which deals with the subject of inspiration, and the claims that people make to have somehow received a message directly from God.

The main verses include:-

"And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

"Therefore I say unto you, what things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."

"The prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed any sins, they shall be forgiven him." "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."

"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." (7.)

Agreement

Both Finney and Weeks agreed about the basic meaning of these verses. They agreed that the verses teach that a person can be taught by the Holy Spirit how to pray according to the will of God, in such a way as to receive exactly what the person asked for.

They both agreed that, in order for the prayer to be made in faith, the believer had first of all to have some evidence to show that the Holy Spirit had given an indication about this petition being according to the will of God. When such evidence was available, then the person could believe that he or she would receive exactly what was asked for.

Differences

(a) Weeks took the view that the verses only applied to the apostles. Especially, the promises of Christ in the four Gospels which relate to this issue were only given to the apostles.

While he would like to have seen this kind of thing happening today, he said:- "But the age of miracles is past; the age of revelations and inspiration is past; and it is nothing but delusion for men now to apply to themselves promises which were made only to the apostles; and to believe they receive revelations from the Holy Ghost, which warrant them to believe what they desire. The faith exercised was the faith of miracles....." (8.)

So, Weeks believed that these promises do not apply to modern Christians.

Something like this opinion had been believed by Jonathan Edwards, in relation to the Biblical miracles, and the spiritual gifts mentioned in the First Corinthian Epistle, so it is not so unusual that Weeks should also believe it.

But Weeks seems to have gone a step further, which Edwards would not have done. Weeks said that no modern Christians can be so influenced by the Holy Spirit to receive any idea by inspiration.

In one sense, this is a denial of all of the work of the Holy Spirit in bringing a person to regeneration and repentance, and in guiding and teaching any believer. Clearly Weeks did not want to deny that.

Some people have taken the same position in opposition to many of the recent happenings and beliefs in modern Pentecostalism, and in the Charismatic Movement. But, it is nevertheless an extreme position, and one which many Christians would not want readily to accept. It places a straight-jacket on the workings of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is Lord, who is like the wind, blowing wherever He wills. He is not bound by theories like this.

In one sense, we can understand that Weeks was trying to defend the view that the Scriptures are inspired by God, and that alleged modern inspirations are not to be compared with that.

But in doing this, he has appeared to deny that the Spirit can speak to anyone, or do anything, with a lesser degree of inspiration, or with some other purpose in mind, such as guiding our prayers according to the will of God.

No doubt he had also come across an enormous number of instances where somebody claimed to have a message from God, or to have a prayer which was led by God, but who had made a mistake of one kind or another. It would seem that Weeks had, as a result, "thrown the baby out with the bathwater."

He said it was not possible even for SOME modern people to be prompted and guided in their prayers so that they could pray in faith, and receive an exact answer. He said that anyone now pretending to have received a message from the Holy Spirit, after this fashion, was **totally deluded.**

Finney's reply to this kind of thing appears in the "Revival Lectures."

> "Great evil has been done by saying that this kind of influence amounts to a new revelation. Many people will be so afraid of it, if they hear it called a new revelation, that they will not stop to inquire what it means, or whether the Scriptures teach it or not. The plain truth of the matter is, that the Spirit leads a man to pray; and if God leads a man to pray for an individual, the inference from the Bible is, that God designs to save that individual. If we find, by comparing our state of mind with the Bible, that we are *led by the Spirit* to pray for an individual, we have good evidence to believe that God is prepared to bless him." (9.)

(b) Weeks also raised the basic problem which is behind a great many of the mistakes that people make in this area, as seen in the following passage.

"Thoughtful. If the Holy Spirit suggests to you what to ask for, and promises that you shall have it, you may ask it believing you shall receive. But it is essential that you know it is the Holy Spirit which makes these suggestions to you, and not your own spirit; or your own imagination; or some other spirit..." To believe it is the Holy Spirit, "without evidence, would be a fatal mistake."

(10.)

We must not be sidetracked here into a futile infinite regress about what evidence we have that the evidence we have is reliable. Obviously, human experience cannot provide such absolute certainty. So, there is always the possibility that we will make a mistake.

Common Christian experience would lead us to believe that mistakes are frequent.

Some would claim that such mistakes are extremely common, and perhaps cover the vast majority of claims to inspiration. Weeks believed that they were ALL wrong, without exception.

However, Weeks demands that "new measures" people need to know that it is the Holy Spirit who has prompted their prayers, and to know that they are not mistaken. He believes that this is impossible in practice. If this is not possible, then the whole project of praying in faith - after the style of the "new measures" - is misconceived. (11.) Today, with the benefit of historical insights, we might conclude that, while, in one sense, this is a logical demand, it is ultimately pedantic and impractical.

(c) On the other hand, Finney taught that there were several ways in which people could get an insight into the will of God about a certain matter. Under specified circumstances, Finney believed that such learning could come from the Holy Spirit.

Finney states clearly, and at considerable length, in his "Revival Lectures," that he believed we can learn something about the will of God, regarding the things for which we pray. These methods are - through the principles in the Bible; through promises in the Bible; through prophecies in the Bible, or through providential circumstances.

Even when these things are not enlightening, sometimes the Holy Spirit will give us a deep burden and concern in prayer for a certain person or matter, which can give an indication about the will of God, because the Spirit always guides our prayers according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26 - 27.) (12.)

Finney provides an entire Lecture on this final point, entitled "The Spirit of Prayer." (No.6.)

Also, Finney directly denied that it is always the duty of Christians to exercise the prayer of faith about any and every matter. (13.) So, if the idea is correct, raised by Weeks, that "new measures" people in 1826 thought that the prayer of faith should be exercised about everything, Finney was either wrongly included by Weeks, or else, if Weeks is correct, Finney changed his mind on certain points between 1826 and 1835.

So, the legalistic criticism, that the "new measures" people believed it to be the duty of people to pray the prayer of faith on every occasion, cannot be

supported from Finney's later writings.

Finney's Examples

In the "Pilgrim's Progress," Weeks's characters, *Feel Well* and *Love Self*, could not provide any examples of Spirit-guided praying when *Thoughtful* and *Experience* called upon them to do so.

Finney, however, provides illustrations of these principles of Spirit-guided prayer.

The following example was intended to show that, sometimes, a praying person can be taught by the Spirit to recognise certain Providential indicators, which show something of God's plans.

> "There was a woman in New Jersey, in a place where there had been a revival. She was very positive there was going to be another. She wanted to have 'conference meetings' appointed. But the minister and elders saw nothing to encourage it, and would do nothing. She saw they were blind, and so she went forward, and got a carpenter to make seats for her, for she said she would have meetings in her own house; there was certainly going to be a revival. She had scarcely opened her doors for meetings, before the Spirit of the Lord came down with great power, and these sleepy Church members found themselves surrounded all at once with convicted sinners. They could only say: 'Surely the Lord is in this place, and we knew it not.' (Gen. 28:16.). The reason why such persons as this praying woman understand the indications of God's will is not because of the superior wisdom that is in them, but because the Spirit of God leads them to see the signs of the times. And this, not by revelation; but they are led to see that converging of providences to a single point, which produces in them a confident expectation of a certain result." (14.)

Obviously, one can easily see how people could make mistakes in work of this kind, and how people could conclude they were being taught by the Spirit when it was all their own imagination. They could even think they were being led by God, when an evil spirit of some kind had affected their thinking and praying. But that does not prove that all cases are mistaken. God can lead some people that way.

Another very interesting example comes from his chapter on being filled with the Spirit, in the "Revival Lectures".

> "If filled with the Spirit, you will be useful. You cannot help being useful. Even if you were sick and unable to go out of your room, or to converse, and saw nobody, you would be ten times more useful than a hundred of those common sort of Christians who have no spirituality. To give you an idea of this, I will relate an anecdote. A pious man in the western part of this state, was suffering from consumption. He was a poor man, and was ill for years. An unconverted merchant in the place, who had a

kind heart, used to send him now and then some things for his comfort, or for his family. He felt grateful for the kindness, but could make no return, as he wanted to do. At length he determined that the best return he could make would be to pray for the man's salvation. So he began to pray, and his soul kindled, and he got hold of God. No revival was taking place there, but, by and by, to the astonishment of everybody, this merchant came right out on the Lord's side. The fire kindled all over the place; a powerful revival followed, and multitudes were converted.

This poor man lingered in this way for several years, and died. After his death, I visited the place, and his widow put into my hands his diary. Among other entries was this: 'I am acquainted with about thirty ministers and Churches.' He then went on to set apart certain hours in the day and week to pray for each of these ministers and Churches, and also certain seasons for praying for different missionary stations. Then followed, under different dates, such facts as these: 'Today, I have been enabled to offer what I call the prayer of faith for the outpouring of the Spirit on ----- Church, and I trust in God there will soon be a revival there.' Under another date he had written: 'I have today been able to offer what I call the prayer of faith for ----- Church, and trust there will soon be a revival there. Thus he had gone over a great number of Churches, recording the fact that he had prayed for them in faith that a revival might soon prevail among them.

Of the missionary stations, if I recollect right, he mentioned one in particular at Ceylon. I believe the last place mentioned in his diary, for which he had offered the prayer of faith, was the place in which he lived. Not long after, the revival commenced, and went over the region of the country, nearly, if not quite, in the order in which the places had been mentioned in his diary; and in due time news came from Ceylon that there was a revival of religion there. The revival in his own town did not commence till after his death. Its commencement was at the time when his widow put into my hands the documents to which I have referred.

She told me that he was so exercised in prayer during his sickness, that she often feared he would 'pray himself to death.' The revival was exceedingly great and powerful in all the region, and the fact that it was about to prevail had not been hidden from this servant of the Lord. According to His Word, 'the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him.' (Psa. 25:14.). Thus, this man, too feeble in body to go out of his house, was yet more useful to the world and the Church of God than all the heartless professors in the country. Standing between God and the desolations of Zion, and pouring out his heart in believing prayer, 'as a prince he had power with God and with men, and prevailed.' (Gen. 32:28.)." (15.)

Again, it is not difficult to see why Finney, and others, thought that such spiritual workings as this might provide a tool which could be used, not only to

evangelise the world, but to convert it. In England, in later years, he taught about the "Prevailing Prayer Meeting" as the path to widespread revival.

But it is not a tool which lends itself to human control or manipulation. The Spirit is the Lord, who comes and goes, as strangely as the wind.

The Spirit of Prayer

Included within the package of practices that Weeks criticised about the "new measures" teaching on prayer was the attack he made upon a part of the subject which Finney called "the Spirit of Prayer."

(a) The best example from Weeks' list of twelve bad practices, listed earlier in this chapter, which is an example of "the Spirit of Prayer", is the last one, number twelve. Here, Weeks refers to the agony of mind experienced by the intercessor as he or she pleads with God to show his mercy in converting particular sinners. The mental agony is in part due to a great burden of concern which exercises the believer's mind because an insight has been given into the sinner's danger, and into the way God is being dishonoured. The concern continues until God grants release, and an assurance of the answer. It is also this "travail for souls" which can, at times, lead to dramatic words being used in prayer. This was another practice that Weeks objected to. The "new measures" position was that the Holy Spirit is able to produce this concern in a praying person, and that this work of the Spirit provides an indication of the will of God about the matter being prayed about. (Romans 8:26 - 27.)

In the "Pilgrim's Progress" Weeks does not produce any positive examples. It would not have been difficult for him to find some negative examples, where mistakes had been made, even serious blunders which were clearly dishonouring to God. Davenport's early ministry had been full of such mistakes. And now, with the advent of the "new measures" revivals, Davenport had risen from the dead.

In chapter 43 there is an extensive argument about different aspects of being guided by the Spirit in these matters, and Weeks finally returned to his conclusion that such guidance would be the same kind of thing as the gift of miracles. And we have already seen that he believed all such things had ended with the Apostolic Age. (16.)

(b) As mentioned earlier, Finney had an entire chapter on this subject in the "Revival Lectures," and he spoke about it, and published on it, on many other occasions. Care should be taken, however, to avoid confusing his later, more mature thought on the subject, with what he said in 1826, or with what was said by someone else.

In 1835, Finney taught that the Spirit teaches us, NOT by superseding the use

of our faculties. It is not by praying for us while we do nothing. Praying in the Spirit involves our full co-operation.

The Spirit can make us feel the value of eternal souls, and to feel the great dishonour which is done to God by their continued impenitence. The Spirit can help us to value eternal realities according to their true worth.

The Spirit can guide our thoughts as we study the Scriptures, to lead us to rely upon some promise in the Bible which is an indication of what God has in mind to do.

Finney believed that Christians had never been able to plumb the riches and depths of God's promises in Jesus Christ, and that they should pay a great deal of attention to that subject.

George Muller used also to include repeated prayers that God would graciously save him from making a mistake, at any of these points. This is very important, and is a point that Finney did not address well enough in his explanation of what should be done.

The Impact of Daniel Nash

Finney's own experience of the spirit of prayer was vitally important to the whole "new measures" conception of the prayer of faith, and of the spirit of prayer. These experiences are described in his "Memoirs" although the document as published was written many years later, near the end of his life. George Gale tells us that Finney was very intense in his sermons in emphasising the high value of eternal realities. When Finney was starting to preach, Gale tried to reduce this intensity, but without success. Later, Gale was glad he had not been successful at this point.

This intensity about the value of eternal realities would also impact upon the way Finney prayed, both in private and in public, so that his prayers for the conversions of people, would tend to be much more dramatic and intense than would be expressed by many other people. Linked to this is the fact that Finney possessed a strong personal charisma, when he preached and prayed, which would impress many people.

Perhaps the person who had the most impact in this area was Daniel Nash, or, as he was often called, Father Nash. Before outlining his biography, and commenting upon the impact that he made, we will look at a story about him that Finney relates in the "Revival Lectures," and which occurred at Evans' Mills, at a very early stage in Finney's ministry.

> "I was acquainted with an individual who used to keep a list of persons for whom he was especially concerned; and I have had the opportunity to know a multitude of persons, for whom he became thus interested, who were immediately converted. I have seen him pray for persons on his list when he was literally in an agony for them; and have

sometimes known him call upon some other person to help him pray for such-a-one. I have known his mind to fasten thus upon an individual of hardened, abandoned character, and who could not be reached in any ordinary way. In a town in a north part of this State, where there was a revival, there was a certain individual who was a most violent and outrageous opposer. He kept a tavern, and used to delight in swearing at a desperate rate, whenever there were Christians in hearing, on purpose to hurt their feelings. He was so bad that one man said he believed he should have to sell his place, or give it away, and move out of town, for he could not live near a man who swore so. This good man of whom I was speaking passed through the town, and, hearing of the case, was very much grieved and distressed for the individual. He took him on his praying list. The case weighed on his mind when he was asleep and when he was awake. He kept thinking about the ungodly man, and praying for him for days. And, the first we knew of it, the tavern-keeper came into a meeting, got up and confessed his sins, and poured out his soul. His bar-room immediately became the place where they held prayer-meetings. In this manner the Spirit of God leads individual Christians to pray for things which they would not pray for, unless they were led by the Spirit; and thus they pray for things 'according to the will of God.'" (17.)

Rosell and Dupuis tell us that Daniel Nash (1775 - 1831) was from Cummington, Massachusetts. He had been a carpenter before training for the ministry. He was ordained as a Congregational minister in 1809, in conjunction with the Union Association, which had just been formed by dividing the Oneida Association. In 1816 he became the Presbyterian minister in Stow's Square, Lowville, where he remained until 1823. Besides his pastoral duties he also ran a farm belonging to his second wife's family. He was twice moderator of the Presbytery of St. Lawrence. (18.)

On the day when Finney was examined by the Presbytery in order to be licensed to preach, after his training with George Gale, he saw a man [Nash] leading the Presbytery in prayer from the pulpit, but praying with his eyes open, looking all around at everyone as he prayed.. Soon after this Nash had problems with inflamed eyes, and a period of blindness, during which time a radical overhaul of his spiritual experience took place. Because he could not read or write, he gave himself to prayer. It was from this point that Nash had a special gift in prayer. He often described the whole episode as like a second conversion experience.

Years later, his son wrote, "Soon after his (second) conversion, he felt that God called him to leave his family and farm, and give himself wholly to the work of saving souls. This, I presume, he thought he could do without injury to his family, as, in one way and another they were all well provided for, so far as their temporal wants were concerned.... He made occasional visits to his family to look after their wants, frequently bringing home with

him, sums of money for this purpose, which he had received by way of contribution, in places where he had labored; but he never made it his permanent home with them again. He felt that his home was in God, and in the work he had given him to do." (19.)

Rosell and Dupuis add, "Nash's remarkable exploits in prayer became legendary, and he had many imitators, especially among the young converts. But he was also strongly condemned as being fanatical. He was largely responsible for popularizing the 'Prayer of Faith,' which became an essential feature of the New Measures revivals. In the last few years of his life, when his health had deteriorated, he devoted much time to writing on the subject. More than thirty articles that appeared in *The New York Evangelist* anonymously in the eighteen months before his death were from Nash's pen. John Humphrey Noyes considered that 'Father Nash was the highest type and best representative of the old revival spirit. In him the faith of the New Measure school reached its highest point.'" (20.)

Amongst Nash's peculiarities was his habit, at times, of praying at the top of his voice, during his private prayers. Finney had done the same thing when he was first converted. This meant that, at least on occasions, many people knew who Nash was praying for.

Weeks has very little of good to say about the type of prayer ministry represented by Nash, except to suggest that, people might have heard him praying for their conversion, and in this way the suggestion might have been put into their minds, leading to their apparent conversion. But Weeks had no faith in the spiritual value of such conversions.

At Gouverneur, in St. Lawrence County, Finney and Nash worked together from the end of April, 1825, till September. In the Presbyterian church, there was a group of wild young men who appeared to Finney to be resisting his message, and strengthening each other in their refusal to come out on the Lord's side. One of these young men later said that no such conspiracy existed, but it appeared to be so to Finney and Nash.

"The next Sabbath, after preaching morning and afternoon myself - for I did the preaching altogether, and Brother Nash gave himself up almost continually to prayer - we met at five O'clock in the church for a prayer meeting. The meeting house was filled. Near the close of the meeting Brother Nash arose and addressed that company of young men who had joined hand in hand to resist the revival. I believe that they were all there, and sat braced up against the Spirit of God. It was too solemn for them really to make ridicule of what they heard and saw; and yet their brazen-facedness and stiff-neckedness was apparent to everybody. Brother Nash addressed them in a very warm manner, and pointed out the guilt and danger of the course they were taking. Toward the close of his address he waxed exceeding warm, and said to them: 'Now, mark me, young men! God will

break your ranks in less than one week, either by converting some of you, or by sending some of you to hell. ***And he will do this as certainly as the Lord is my God.***' He was standing where he brought his hand down on the top of the pew before him so as to make it thoroughly jar. He sat immediately down, held down his head, and groaned with pain. The house was as still as death, and most of the people held down their heads. I could see that the young men were agitated. However I regretted that Brother Nash had gone so far. He had committed himself that God would either take the life of some of them and send them to hell, or convert some of them within a week. I was afraid that in his excitement he had said what would not turn out to be true, and that would embolden the young men all the more in their opposition. However I think it was on the Tuesday morning of the same week, the leader of these young men came to me in the greatest distress of mind. He was all prepared to submit and as soon as I came to press him he broke down like a child, confessed, and manifestly gave himself to Christ. Then he said, 'What shall I do, Mr. Finney?' I replied, 'Go immediately to all your young companions and pray with them, and exhort them at once to turn to the Lord.' He did so; and before the week was out, nearly if not all of that class of young men were hoping in Christ." John Humphrey Noyes suggested that his own conversion, and his work with the Oneida community, grew out of a visit to Putney by two of these converted 'roughs', namely Harvey and Henry Smith. Nash later said that, once the words were out of his mouth, he could not go back on them, as, "perhaps the hand of God might be in it." (21.)

Many years later, one of these young men said, "I suppose I was one of those young men to whom Mr. Finney referred. I was in those days a very wild boy, and said, with others, that I did not want the religion Finney preached. He was such an overbearing man, such an egotistical man, that we determined not to have anything to do with him, or his meetings. In fact, he did not know how to use people decently. He would go into our families, and if we did not happen to think alike, he would tell us that we were on the direct road to hell. But as for us young men banding together, there is no truth in it." (22.)

This story about Nash is, no doubt, one of those things which Weeks would have criticised, as an example of trying to frighten people into repentance. It certainly is not a recommended path to follow, from many points of view. One could easily imagine a similar threat being made by someone else whose life was not steeped in prayer in the same way as Nash's. Whatever we might think of this particular happening, or of the value of venturing out on God in this way, and acknowledging the fact that so much ridicule and abuse can come from the wrongful use of this method, this does not prove that God will never use this type of thing as part of His sovereign workings. There may be occasions when God uses situations like this. Nash's friends believed this

occasion was one of them.

Abel Clary, and Others Like Him

Abel Clary was one of the early pioneers in Jefferson County, moving from Conway, Massachusetts, to Adams in about 1803. He was made an elder of the Adams church on 27th January, 1821. The story of his experiences of the Spirit of Prayer make a famous part of Finney's "Memoirs." But Clary was not alone, as we shall see. He first figures largely in Finney's story during the Rochester revival in 1830.

> "And here I must introduce the name of a man, whom I shall have occasion to mention frequently, Mr. Abel Clary. He was the son of a very excellent man, and an elder of the church where I was converted. He was converted in the same revival in which I was. He had been licensed to preach but his spirit of prayer was such, he was so burdened with the souls of men, that he was not able to preach much, his whole time and strength being given to prayer. The burden of his soul would frequently be so great that he was unable to stand, and he would writhe and groan in agony in a most wonderful manner. I was well acquainted with him, and knew something of the wonderful spirit of prayer that was upon him. He was a very silent man, as almost all are who have that wonderful spirit of prayer. The first I knew of his being at Rochester, a gentleman who lived about a mile west of the city called on me one day, and asked me if I knew a Mr. Abel Clary, a minister. I told him that I did know him well. 'Well,' said he, 'he is at my house, and has been there for so long a time,' - I forget how long, but nearly from the first of my being in Rochester. Says he, 'I don't know what to think of him.' I said, "I have not seen him at any of our meetings.' 'No,' he replied, ' he cannot go to meeting, he says. He prays nearly all the time, day and night,' said he, 'and in such an agony of mind that I do not know what to make of it. Sometimes he cannot even stand on his knees, but will lie prostrate on the floor and groan and then throw himself upon the bed and roll from side to side, and groan and pray in a manner that quite astonishes me.' I inquired what he said. He replied, 'He does not say much. He cannot go to meeting he says; but his whole time is given to prayer.' I said to the brother, 'I understand it please keep still. It will all come out right; he will surely prevail.'
>
> I knew at the time a considerable number of men who were exercised in the same way. A Dea. Pond, of Camden, Oneida County a Dea. Truman, of Rodman, Jefferson County a Dea. Baker of Adams in the same county; this Mr. Clary, and many others among the men, and a large number of women, partook of the same Spirit, and spent a great part of their time in prayer. Brother, or as we called him, Father Nash, a minister who in several of my fields of labor came to me and aided me, was another of those men that had such a powerful spirit of prevailing prayer. This Mr. Clary continued in

Rochester as long as I did, and did not leave it until after I had left. He never, that I could learn, appeared in public, but gave himself wholly to prayer.

There were a good many cases in Rochester in which people were exercised with this spirit of agonizing travail of soul. I have said that the moral aspect of things was greatly changed by this revival. It was a young city, full of thrift and enterprize, and full of sin. The inhabitants were intelligent and enterprizing in the highest degree; but as the revival swept through the town and converted the great mass of the most influential people both male and female, the change in the order, sobriety, and morality of the city was wonderful." (23.) More detailed attention will be paid to the Rochester revival in a later chapter of this book.

Rosell and Dupuis were able to uncover extra details about one of these men. Deacon Pond's name was Billious Pond (1781 - 1874.). He emigrated with his parents to Oneida County from New England when he was a child. He became a deacon in the Camden Presbyterian church, when Henry Smith was the pastor. He visited Rome during the revival in 1826, and returned to Camden keen to see the same in his home town.

"H. H. Kellogg knew him well as a man 'gifted in exhortation and mighty in prayer. During the revivals which prevailed so extensively through Central New York from 1826 to 1836, he was ever welcomed by evangelists, pastors and churches as a most able, modest, and discreet lay laborer.' At the age of fifty-five and with only a common school education he was ordained, and for nearly forty years he was a minister in Illinois." (24.)

Finney believed that it was the Spirit of Prayer which constituted the main factor in the power and success of these revivals. This is what made the prayer of faith actually work.

Finney's View on "Trying the Spirits"

The question as to how we are to know whether it is the Spirit of God who is at work, influencing our minds, is mentioned several times in the "Revival Lectures."

The key to Finney's thought on this matter is that, if people have benevolent and compassionate thoughts about others, these thoughts come from God.

Remember that in the New England theology, by that time, "benevolent and compassionate" thoughts meant seeking the highest good of God and all creation, or of reality as a whole. So, Finney is not advocating mere humanitarianism, or simple kindheartedness by unconverted people. "Benevolence" is a technical theological term. "Benevolence" is only possible when God is put first, all along the way. It is the opposite of selfishness, or of wanting something because it satisfies us, in some way. As a result, all truly God-honouring thoughts had to come from the Holy Spirit.

After emphasising that we should not expect feelings of some external

influence, or any whispered voices in the ear, Finney says that we would see nothing special, only the workings of our own minds. He then goes on to say that we are not normally greatly concerned about a sinner's relationship with God, and if we do become greatly concerned about it, in a properly "benevolent" manner, we may be confident that we are led by the Spirit.

> The believer feels intensely, "but they know not what makes them feel. They are distressed about sinners; but should they not be distressed, when they think of their condition? They keep thinking about them all the time, and why should they not be distressed?
>
> Now the truth is, that the very fact that you are *thinking* about them is evidence that the Spirit of God is leading you. Do you not know that the greater part of the time these things do not affect you so? The greater part of the time you do not think much about the case of sinners. You know that their salvation is always equally important. But at other times, even when you are quite at leisure, your mind is entirely dark, and vacant of any feeling for them. But now, although you may be busy about other things, you think, you pray, and feel intensely for them, even while you are about business that at other times would occupy all your thoughts. Now, almost every thought you have is: 'God have mercy on them!'
>
> Why is this? Why, their case is placed in a strong light before your mind. Do you ask what it is that leads your mind to exercise benevolent feelings for sinners, and to agonise in prayer for them? What can it be but the Spirit of God? There are no devils that would lead you so. If your feelings are truly benevolent, you are to consider it as the Holy Spirit leading you to pray for things according to the will of God."

Finney's second point here is the one which we might normally have expected, although, be careful of his hidden meanings.

> "'Try the spirits' by the Bible. People are sometimes led away by strange fantasies and crazy impulses. If you compare them faithfully with the Bible, you never need to be led astray. You can always know whether your feelings are produced by the Spirit's influences, by comparing your desires with the spirit and temper of religion, as described in the Bible. The Bible commands you to 'try the spirits.' 'Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.' (1 John 4:1.)." (25.)

Actually, these first and second points are identical, in Finney's view. They are two ways of saying the same thing. To try the spirits by the Bible is the same as to use the particular version of New England theology that Finney had devised and adopted for himself. He would have seen this version of New England theology as simply the teaching of the Bible, and would have defended it as such.

In addition, Finney's view on "trying the spirits" must not be confused with a more elaborate and wider view that was expounded a hundred years later by

Jessie Penn-Lewis and Evan Roberts, and later by Watchman Nee. These two views are not the same, although they might complement one another.

The Witness of George Muller

It was mentioned at the start of this chapter that George Muller was an apostle of "the Prayer of Faith" in England, and that he helped produce a version of it which had a different flavour about it from that which we see anywhere in "New Measures" teaching, and especially different from the aggressive form of teaching in the 1826 version of new measures teaching that we have been considering.

Probably neither Nettleton nor Weeks knew anything about Muller's work or experiences, because they died in 1844 and 1848 respectively, which is little more than a decade after Muller's life-work had commenced. So it is difficult to know what they would have thought of it.

By the time Muller started out on his orphanage work in Bristol, late in the 1830's, he had learned implicit trust in the teaching of the Bible, and a very deep level of obedience, so that he would not be swayed from matters of spiritual principle in order to make life financially easier for himself, or even to finance his work better.

At each step of the orphanage work, he would take no steps until he had prayed at great length, and many times, about every detail of the work, asking for guidance, and asking to be saved from making a mistake, all for the honour of God. It was his aim that his work would be a testimony to the living God who hears and answers prayer, and would also be for the upbuilding of the faith of his fellow Christians.

His guidance came basically from his continual study of the Scriptures, although it would not be wise to dis-associate this entirely from the circumstances in which he lived, in which he had to practise obeying the Scriptures. When a certain step was being considered, after much prayer, he would weigh up all the factors, for and against the course of action he was considering. He would try not to have any will of his own, or pre-conceived ideas about what should be done. He tried to feel equally about either doing, or not doing, the thing under consideration. Further, he would wait until God opened the doors for the new opportunities to be entered upon, especially major steps which involved much money.

Often, it was the basic needs of life which were the immediate problem, and God's supply was waited upon, in simple trust. Muller knew that God would supply his needs, although he did not know, often not until the last moment, where the supply would come from.

Very often, in this kind of context, he would slowly become convinced about a certain matter being the will of God, and so knew in advance what was going to happen. But still he had to pray several times every day about the many

matters that concerned him, and for the many people for whose conversions he was praying, as well.

His testimony concerning the orphanage work was, that whenever he followed the teachings of the Gospels about prayer, in this meek and obedient way, he always received exactly what he asked for. This testimony related to many thousands of instances, spread over forty years in charge of the Bristol orphanages, as well as in his work as pastor of the Bethesda Assembly, his large-scale financial support of many missionary projects worldwide, and in his subsequent extensive preaching tours around the world when he was an old man.

There are many details about Muller's work which cannot be fully described here, and the reader is referred to many excellent books available about this matter. There is no doubt, however, that Muller's experience in the orphanage work involved him in practising a version of ***the prayer of faith***, on a large scale, and this kind of prayer was also practised by him in many other situations, as well. A great many other Christians followed his example, and the principles he followed in this matter became one of the foundations for scores of "faith" foreign missionary organisations, which have done so much to spread the Gospel around the world in the last century and a half. (26.)

Other Comments on Finney's Views about the Prayer of Faith

(a) Finney may have had his own theological rationale to explain how the prayer of faith works. This may have worked for him in some cases, and even for some others during the revivals. But, many other people do not have a sufficient insight into the depths of selfishness within their own personalities, or into the motives which drive their desires and prayers. Many people would find that the degree of spiritual maturity which they require to pray in faith, along the lines which Finney describes, would be beyond them completely. This does not imply that Finney was particularly mature, but it involves the fact that the Holy Spirit is Lord, and leads different people by different steps, along different paths, and involving different gifts. Human personalities also vary greatly, and what suits one person is quite unsuitable for someone else.

So, there is a range of reasons why other people who might try to follow Finney's teaching could run into problems, of one kind or another, experience many heart-aches, and perhaps by their misguided example and results bring dishonour upon the Lord.

(b) Up to the present time, the use of the prayer of faith as a tool to convert entire communities, has not worked. There have been occasions when, during a revival, almost everybody in a community, or in a city or town, has professed conversion, although it is not clear at present to what extent this happened as a result of the prayer of faith being offered for that result. But, we should not

look upon such things as impossible, but as something which may happen, as the Lord leads. After all, "All things are possible to him who believes."

Reference to the guidance of the Spirit, however, unearths a key problem. We normally think of such work as implying activities that **we** control, and that **we** can contribute to, by organisation and education, and by large-scale organised evangelistic effort. In other words, our brains and personalities are involved, strategically and tactically, along with all the bad possibilities of "the flesh.".

Apart from all the problems of human control, and of the "lower nature," the work of the Holy Spirit is not predictable in anything like the way required for such a project. (John 3.7.)

Using the prayer of faith to convert the whole world was a theoretical pipe-dream by the new measures people, but, nevertheless, was an inspiring thought.

(c) Like many Pentecostals and Charismatics today, Finney does not pay much attention to the very great number of times people make mistakes about the prayer of faith, nor did he take the trouble to illustrate some of the simple, yet ridiculous extremes to which these things might be taken by the foolish and the immature.

CHAPTER TWELVE

PROTRACTED MEETINGS and the ANXIOUS BENCH

These two features of "New Measures" Revivals, especially the second one, provided major factors in the discontent which Asahel Nettleton, William Weeks, the Old School Presbyterians, and those who agreed with them, felt towards Charles Finney, his friends and imitators, New School Presbyterians, and the whole New Measures scenery.

PROTRACTED MEETINGS

The Early History of Protracted Meetings in Scotland

For several centuries, the Scottish Presbyterians had celebrated the sacrament of Holy Communion once or twice a year, in any given congregation. These occasions were usually times of great celebration, and many people came from miles around to refresh their faith, and to worship God at these gatherings. The more devout people, indeed, might travel to a number of these special weekends, because the various parishes arranged these special events so that they would not conflict, and so that ministers from a number of parishes could help with the special preaching, and with the actual celebration of the Holy Communion. These special meetings could be highly charged occasions, with a strong evangelistic emphasis, and on some occasions, many conversions could occur.

Generally, these meetings lasted for three, four, or even five days, with preaching, praying, fellowship and exhorting taking place morning, afternoon and evening. The spiritual aspect of the occasion could be very intensive.

The first day was usually the "fast" day, dedicated to heart and soul-searching, the confession of sin, and repentance.

Other sermons before the Sunday emphasised the soul's preparation for partaking of the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ.

The actual Communion services took all day on the Sunday. There might be several sittings, depending upon how many people were there who wanted to take part, or who were entitled to take part.

The Monday services were usually based upon praise, as a response to the Sunday events, and could also emphasise the surrender of the person to God. The main sermon on Monday was often called the "Action" sermon.

The meetings were organised in such a way as to take up the whole of the attention of those present, for an extended period (usually four days), and this accentuated the impact that the Sacramental occasion could have. It was not

possible to take part fully in the happenings of the special meetings, and also to make use of breaks in which one could pursue one's own business or normal life, because there were no breaks which anyone could use for that purpose. Many visitors were also in the district for the gatherings, and had to be accommodated. These visitors were too far away from their homes or place of work to deal with the normal events of life.

This pattern was taken to the United States with the early Presbyterians, leading eventually to the most notable of such events, at Cain Ridge, Kentucky, in 1801. (1.)

Essentially, all of these meetings were "protracted meetings," in the proper sense of that term.

The Rise of the "Camp Meetings"

A second chapter in the history of protracted meetings developed with the appearance of the great Kentucky Revival in 1800 and 1801.

The population was then scattered thinly through the mid-west regions of the United States, and Presbyterian sacramental occasions developed into camp meetings, where those involved in the sacramental services came from long distances, and had to cater for their own accommodation, food, and needs of all kinds, as the settled population in the place where the service was to be held would not be able to cope with the great and sudden influx of people for the weekend.

Not only so, but, with the appearance of the revival, these occasions also provided the preachers with perfect evangelistic opportunities.

The revival began in the year 1800, in three Presbyterian frontier congregations at Gasper River, Muddy River and Red River, in Logan County, served by the Rev. James McGready. From the sacramental occasions associated with these congregations the revival spread steadily, the excitement grew, and the number of conversions multiplied.

As mentioned, the most notable of these camp meetings occurred at Cain Ridge, in central Kentucky, in August, 1801.

These revivals in Kentucky, and in nearby states, were very different from the revivals in the eastern states at the same time. The difference was that the Revival meetings in Kentucky became scenes of extensive emotional outbursts, noise, hysteria, and various strange phenomena.

These peculiarities not only reduced the enthusiasm of those who came to disrupt the meetings, but also created a great deal of curiosity, so that many people came to the camp meetings who would under normal circumstances never have darkened the door of a Christian gathering. So, many of the most unlikely characters were converted, as a result.

The fame of the Cain Ridge meeting, as well as the others, helped to make this kind of meeting appear as providing marvellous opportunities for

evangelism, which were likely to be very successful in winning conversions from the world. It all took place, as well, within a "post-millenial" outlook, where these kinds of successes looked as if they were steps towards the improvement of society, and the bringing in of the reign of Christ around the world. So, the successes of these meetings provided an immense optimism about the future.

As the next few years passed, the number of camp meetings which were organised steadily grew, and their influence spread quickly into neighbouring states, such as Tennessee and the Carolinas.

They were still mainly meetings which lasted for four days, starting on Friday, although sometimes it was possible to fit plans into the agricultural calendar which allowed for meetings to last for a week, including two Sundays.

Initially, these meetings were planned, staffed and managed by both Presbyterian and Methodist ministers. Baptist preachers might also be involved. After some years, the main denomination to benefit from camp meetings became the Methodists, who became the church with the largest membership, and with the fastest growing membership, in those parts of the United States.

By 1802, Bishop Francis Asbury was encouraging Methodists in the eastern states to follow the example of people in the west. But he also emphasised heavily the need for good order in all the meetings. He became very enthusiastic about them, and came to see them as Methodism's main method for achieving outstanding spiritual harvests. These early camp meetings were outstandingly successful. Although many people did not like the emotional and hysterical excesses, most of the Christians who were involved in the camp meetings recognised that the movement as a whole was manifestly from God. Whole communities were transformed. Indeed, the whole tenor of Kentuckian society was changed, as also occurred in many parts of the nearby states.

In 1809, Asbury wrote to one of his itinerant preachers:- "Camp-meetings, camp-meetings, Oh Glory! Glory! But I fear a backsliding among the professors, and some sudden conversions, not sound or not lasting and many Methodist families have neither the form nor power of goodness! Yea, practical religion is pretty wanting. I have started for 2,000 miles by Cincinnati to Charleston, there you will meet me with a letter if you get in a good harvest this fall in camp-meetings."

By 1810, Asbury had plans which included "600 camp-meetings and thousands converted." Between 400 and 500 were actually held.

The Methodists deliberately strove "to erase the stigma that had been attached to the revival since the wild excesses of Kentucky and Tennessee. Under their management, the camp meeting experienced its harvest time, when conversions were plentiful and when membership in the church was mushrooming.

The keynote of the Methodist way was planning. Nothing was left to chance, from the scheduling of the meetings and their advertisement to the sharing of duties among the camp leaders and management of the camp services." (2.)

Evidence assembled by Johnson indicates that the emotional and hysterical excesses disappeared fairly quickly after the Methodists became the main managers of the camp meetings. The excesses occurred only for a short period, up to about 1805, although they disappeared earlier in some areas well before that time. By 1810, the Methodist take-over of the movement was fairly complete, and the excesses had gone almost entirely by then.

For example, in the Sumter District of South Carolina, "strange and unaccountable bodily exercises" prevailed at camp meetings in 1802 and 1803.

But, William Capers wrote:- "such exercises were scarcely, if at all, present among the same people at the camp meeting in 1806. And yet this camp-meeting was no less remarkable... for the suddenness with which sinners of every description were awakened." (3.)

> "To preserve the religious impact of the forest revival while at the same time curbing the excesses of emotionalism proved to be a Herculean task, but one not impossible of attainment. There was less opportunity for meetings 'as wild as an autumn storm' when camp rules forbade night-long services, and less opportunity for promiscuity when women were forbidden to leave the encampment after dark. Lamps, torches and candles illuminated both the camp area and tent interiors through the night to prevent disorderly conduct; camp guards with distinctive armbands... toured the encampment to make sure that all visitors who had not provided tents for themselves were excluded until morning." (4.)

Even though eastern Calvinists would have been very suspicious of anything Methodist, and especially of their use of protracted meetings, they could not have been unaffected by the fame of these events. The very successes achieved by this method must have had an effect in making others think it would be a good path to follow.

The Methodists conducted many of these protracted meetings through the period up to 1830, in upstate New York. People from other churches could see the success that flowed from them.

"New Measures" Protracted Meetings

When we begin to consider "New Measures" protracted meetings, the basic feature to note is their purely evangelistic character. The traditional pattern used in Scotland was centred around the celebration of the Sacraments. On the other hand, the New Measures protracted meetings were not centred around the Sacraments, but were a tool chosen to be used as a direct evangelistic technique. The primary aim was evangelistic. This change of aim gave a different character to the meetings, which changed and evolved further as time

passed.

Charles Hambrick-Stowe describes the situation amongst Presbyterians in central and western New York as follows:- "The protracted meeting was adopted as a measure of promoting revivals around the time of the Rochester revival. Finney's correspondence during this period contains reference after reference to a 'four day meeting' being held here and a three day meeting being planned for there. The idea for this 'new measure' may have dated from the summer of 1828, when Finney received a letter from New Lebanon proposing a week-long '*great meeting* ... this summer' with 'some half dozen ministers whose hearts the Lord has opened.' The schedule would include 'three sermons a day and as many prayer meetings ... in the courthouse if the weather is bad and on the green if it is good.' Planners insisted, 'You cannot call it a *camp meeting*,' because 'it varies in the principal features.'

They may have meant that congregants would not be sleeping in tents and that there would be less singing and no altar call. By the 1820s the camp meeting had been so thoroughly taken over by the Methodists that these Presbyterians had forgotten that the practice was brought to America from Scotland a hundred years before.

The protracted meeting as Finney's associates developed it in the early 1830s was an urban and village evangelistic program. Several ministers would join together for an intensive campaign with meetings in the morning, afternoon and evening. In his *Lectures on Revival*, Finney listed protracted meetings along with inquiry meetings and the anxious seat as an essential revival 'measure.' He insisted, however, that they were really 'not new,' having developed naturally out of the evangelistic tradition. 'New measure' or not, Finney endorsed the practice. During the last week of February, 1831, for example, William Wisner of Ithaca was in Rochester to work with Finney in a 'four days meeting.' (5.)

A Description of a Four Days' Meeting in 1830

The Baptist evangelist Emerson Andrews provides us with an interesting description of a Four Days' Meeting, which was in fact the first one he attended after his conversion. Andrews had his own particular style of speaking and writing. "As soon as I was converted I cherished the good news of revivals; and I sought a place and portion with live Christians, that I might speak for Christ and win souls to salvation. I asked God for direction and help, and was answered.

Four Days' Meetings. The first 'day's meeting' that I attended after my regeneration was held in the town of Windsor, Vt. It was called a 'four days' meeting.' But many such were held in different places about that time. This came off in the summer of 1830. I was much delighted, fed, and strengthened by such a sight, experience, exercise, and spiritual supper. It was a precious banquet, adapted to develop and enlarge the young convert's soul.

Windsor, Vt. The four pastors of the town, with their respective churches and congregations, and some from neighboring towns, met with the Baptist church, of which Elder Leland Howard was the long honored pastor. Some twenty other pastors also came in from adjacent towns, and a few lawyers and teachers, who took leading parts in the services. Large congregations were constantly in attendance, and all the various exercises and meetings were interesting and profitable.

Order. Divine services began early in the morning with prayer and singing, attended with confessions, exhortation, reading Scripture, and telling experiences. Happy, melting seasons!

After an hour or two thus sweetly spent, a good, searching, arousing, convicting, sanctifying sermon was preached. Then followed warm exhortations. Then a hymn was sung, while all the church members assembled in the aisles, facing the pulpit. Then their four pastors rose, and successively confessed their own faults before God, the churches, and the world, asked pardon, and made good resolutions and promises for the future.

Next in order, a written confession for the church members was solemnly read to them, before all, to which they immediately and respectively assented. Then the pastors and members all knelt and bowed down, while a few able ministers led in confessing, beseeching, consecrating, grateful prayers, closing these thrilling exercises with singing and the benediction.

Good homes and hospitalities were amply provided, where we enjoyed precious reciprocity.

The same order was generally observed in the afternoon and evening, and so on for four days, - with the omission of the formal and general confessions, and the addition of verbal and written requests for special prayers, or some occasional and extra prayer or inquiry meeting.

Effect. Some of the sermons and prayers were most powerful, melting, and effective. Sinners often arose, requesting prayers, or sent up short petitions to be read. A lawyer by the name of Shepherd, from New York, was found to be very able, pointed, and specific in prayer, and so effective and precise in noting each different request more perfectly than the ministers, that he was often invited to lead in prayer - especially when there were some ten or twenty different, or some difficult requests presented. He seemed to be full of the Spirit, and was especially gifted and successful. Ministers learned something valuable from his wisdom and tact. I confess that his pointedness made a powerful and lasting impression on my mind and practice.

The professors and ministers were much blessed, and many sinners were converted in the meetings. The gospel was preached and the Spirit poured out, prayer and sacrifices made. Novelty and wonder attracted many. Here God crowned the effort." (6.)

The Prophet - Nathanael Emmons

The Rev. Nathanael Emmons, outstanding educator of prospective New England Congregational ministers, was a very conservative man in many ways, yet in other ways he was well able to take advantage of new trends. In some instances, Emmons used new things himself, if he was convinced of their worth. In a few of these cases, he was even in advance of his time. Also, when his fellow ministers wanted to use a new method, he would state his reservations about the method, but he would follow the majority decision, if he thought the results of the new method would be more good than bad. It was only when he was convinced that the results would be more bad than good that he took a stand, and was quite willing to make himself unpopular in the process.

For example, when **Sunday Schools** were first introduced, Emmons highly approved of Sunday Schools for the poor children, who had little opportunity to learn to read the Bible. But he was opposed to Sunday Schools being set up for the children of church-going people. He anticipated that the religious parents would be tempted to forgo their duties of maintaining the family altar. The family altar was, he believed, the main place where the religious instruction of children should take place.

He was also opposed to the formation of **national organisations**, such as the National Sunday School Movement, or any similar educational organisation that crossed denominational lines. The reason was that such organisations would produce materials for use in the various Sunday Schools which would be watered down doctrinally, in order to be acceptable to various denominations. In this way, he feared that Calvinistic literature would be down-played, and Methodist, Arminian literature would become the stock diet for children. He used to recommend good Calvinist literature for use in the families in his church. A national or interdenominational scheme would cause the study of Calvinist literature to nose-dive seriously.

Emmons was also opposed to the formation of state-wide, or **national denominational organisations.** He believed that these organisations would develop too much power. He believed that these organisations would take to themselves legislative powers, and these would become legal powers instead of simply moral influence. They would use their power to stifle free thought and free speech. As a Congregationalist, and as a son of the Republic, he believed in personal freedoms. Especially, he was concerned about the power of the Presbyterian Assembly, as Congregational bodies tried to organise union efforts with the Presbyterians. He feared what strong characters like Ashbel Green would make out of such a centralised power structure as the General Assembly.

"His revolutionary blood boiled at the idea of ecclesiastical control over the mind which God had made free. He feared that the weapon of church power, although forged for the cause of truth, might be silently turned against the very doctrines which it now defends." (7.)

In this way, Emmons anticipated the kind of problems which New School Presbyterians suffered at the hands of their Old School co-religionists. He anticipated that a spirit would arise amongst the Presbyterians aimed at excluding all who did not agree with the Old School theology.

Regarding **protracted meetings**, Emmons was the first person to take a public stand against them, and to state his reasons.

While it is not clear from Professor Park's biography of Emmons just when this happened, yet we know that it was quite early in the piece, at a time when protracted meetings were just beginning to become very popular. Emmons made himself quite unpopular by this stand.

(a) Firstly, he admitted that these meetings might be instrumental in achieving much good. Many conversions might occur within these meetings, and many of these conversions might be real. And it might even be possible for wise people to do many things to make the resulting problems less damaging.

(b) But, Emmons said, the protracted meetings constitute an unauthorised measure. It was a human devise, "which will in the end do more hurt than good." (8.)

The basic source of the problem, for Emmons, therefore, was that using protracted meetings for purely evangelistic purposes was not taught in the Scriptures, whereas using them for Sacramental purposes might be more acceptable, as practised by the apostolic church. In listening to this point, however, we need to remember that our forefathers were often not very aware of the extent to which their practices were culturally conditioned, and moulded by many factors, which would always make their practices different, more or less, from the practices in the New Testament. Indeed, these cultural factors would make copying the New Testament in matters such as this almost impossible.

Emmons believed that departing from the Scriptural example would create serious problems.

(c) For example, he feared "an undue excitement, which would lead ministers to give a distorted view of the Gospel, by dwelling upon those points only which are suited to produce the greatest present effects; and the people to mistake the feeling of interest awakened by the peculiar circumstances in which they are placed, for genuine piety." Those who know something of the history of American evangelism will know that these two prophesies were, in due course, very adequately fulfilled.

(d) As another example, Emmons "was afraid also, that these extraordinary meetings would create a disrelish for the common means of grace; and that the

performance of ministers invited from a distance for the occasion, being, of course, if not their most labored discourses, their most popular and interesting ones, would create dissatisfaction among the people with such sermons as their own pastor, in other circumstances, would be able to preach." (9.)

(e) "He used to say that a dreadful reaction would follow these proceedings; that in some cases there would be great stupidity, and in others great restlessness among the churches; that many churches would be divided, many ministers dismissed, many souls deceived by the encouragement of false hopes, and many sinners turned away in disgust from the ministry of the Gospel." (10.)

(f) While he admitted that much might be done to soften the effect of these bad things, he still thought that protracted meetings, when used principally as an evangelistic tool, represented a measure which was **not well suited** to the permanent welfare of the churches. It was a measure that the great Head of the Church did not see fit to appoint, and which no degree of wisdom or effort on the part of men could render generally and permanently useful. That is, nothing could turn such a measure into something which, in the end, did more good than harm, so far as the spiritual interests of the Kingdom of God were concerned.

Comments

(a) The idea that no church practice was acceptable unless there was a precedent for it in the New Testament was fairly widely held in the Nineteenth Century. Here we see Emmons saying that the Gospel ought not to be preached by a method or technique unless it enjoyed a New Testament precedent. In many quarters there was an urge to return to the practises of pristine Christianity. For example, this urge was fundamental to the rise of the Plymouth Brethren, and many other groups. It was also shared by many Presbyterians, and others in the Calvinist tradition. So, it is not surprising that someone like Nathanael Emmons should be influenced by it.

(b) Whatever we might think of this view, which was the basic premise for his view in this matter, there is hardly any doubt that his other reasons often proved to be well founded, in the light of future developments in evangelical history.

With the benefit of after sight, which the historian enjoys, all of the points raised by Emmons, and prophesied by him, have had a varied and extensive history since Emmons's time. They have all produced their share of damage to the cause of God, and the work of the Church of Jesus Christ, as well as being more or less useful.

(c) Whether we would also join with Emmons, and say that these factors have done more harm to the cause of God, than the good which has also been

achieved, is perhaps more of a debatable point. On either side many worthy people are now to be found.

William Weeks and his "Pilgrim's Progress"

(1) Perhaps because protracted meetings, as purely evangelistic tools, did not arise until after 1828, William Weeks does not say anything about them during his review of the "New Measures" controversy, around the time of the New Lebanon Convention. Protracted meetings are mentioned briefly at the end of this part of the "Pilgrim's Progress."

"***Thoughtful***. A minister in Westerly Street [Oneida] says: 'We hear much of the good effects resulting from a combined and powerful effort in the use of the means of grace. Protracted meetings, plainer preaching than usual, and more pastoral visitation, are among the means signally successful. In many, if not in the great majority of instances, however, the work is sudden, short, and then followed by a long winter of chilling spiritual frosts and moral death. But I ask, can the means of grace have been applied in their highest and best sense, where such bursts of feeling, such short-lived seasons of revival, are the principal and only fruits? Why is it that our churches, under the present method of preaching in this region, are so seldom favored with a *protracted revival;* that is, a revival that continues from month to month, and from year to year?'

Ardent. If these excitements are the work of man, it is easy to account for their ceasing as soon as men cease the efforts which produce them. And if the converts are only man-made converts, and have only been the subjects of a temporary excitement, it is easy to account for it that they disappear as soon as the excitement is past. It is not so with a real work of the Holy Spirit.

Feel Well. The converts fall away, because the means which are necessary to maintain their spiritual life are not employed.

Thoughtful. I think, however, that the stony-ground hearers, in our Lord's parable of the sower, are their true and proper representatives: unless, indeed, they are proclaimed as converts, without having been excited as much as they. 'These have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time.'" (11.)

Comments

Several comments about this short passage might be appropriate. Firstly, we do not know who the Oneida minister was who was being quoted by Thoughtful. We do not know whether this person was inclined to be sympathetic to one side of the issue, or the other.

Secondly, Thoughtful's comment about the fact that **protracted revivals** did not often occur, was more penetrating, however, because it showed that the use of particular means are not really so important as the real spiritual quality of what is going on. The spiritual quality of all this depended upon the Lordship

and workings of the Holy Spirit more than upon what any man did.

Also, this little passage again lays bare the terrible problem of poor quality in conversions, which affect not simply the human welfare of people, but their eternal welfare.

(2) After giving a fairly long description of selfishness, in chapter 52, Weeks makes the following statement about what he expected from protracted meetings.

"You have, then, the grounds of our fears in relation to the converts of the protracted meetings, and the new measures revivals, which have been so triumphantly proclaimed. We fear that a large part of them are the subjects of a false experience, made up of animal feeling and selfish affection. And we fear so because we think the means used to promote these conversions are adapted to produce animal feeling and selfish affection, and not adapted to produce genuine conviction of sin, or true conversion to God."

Weeks says that, instead of what is said and done at the protracted meetings, the proper method of preaching the Gospel is "to have truth and duty exhibited, and have them pressed upon the consciences of men." (12.) Weeks thought the context of the preaching in a protracted meeting, namely, the atmosphere of the meetings, and the way they were conducted, was a bad situation for the impact of the message. Animal feeling and a selfish outlook would be promoted. This would neutralise any good that the real Gospel might achieve in transforming the lives of people. It would mean that the change from selfishness to proper benevolence could not be properly upheld. ***The sinner's basic selfishness would tend to be replaced merely by another form of selfishness.*** So, the results would be bad.

To use the Lord's parable of the Sower, as Weeks did in one place, the results of these protracted meetings would be like the seed sown amongst thorns, and on the stony ground, which produced short-term results, but **no proper harvest.** Better, he thought, not to do such things, but instead to find some more suitable way of preaching the Gospel.

This attack on protracted meetings clearly represents something very serious.

In the following chapter we will be looking more at the subject of false conversions. That is the context in which this passage occurs in the "Pilgrim's Progress." This passage will be reintroduced, and reproduced in that chapter, and looked at more carefully, as it deserves.

The Witness of Andrew Reed and James Matheson

The witness of these two visitors from England is interesting. Although they were basically against the use of "new measures" protracted meetings, they do mention several factors which were supposed to be good uses of these meetings. Then they add the reasons why they did not like protracted meetings,

which are similar to what we have already seen from Nathanael Emmons.

Reed and Matheson were respected Congregational ministers from England who came to pay a deputational visit to the American Churches. They travelled widely in both the USA and Canada, and sent back their reports in the form of a series of letters, which were published in two volumes in 1835. These reports provide interesting insights into church life in America at that time.

Firstly, they commented that, in the past, special meetings of this kind had been held as the need arose, and as the case seemed to require. Examples of this are, that such meetings might be held when an agricultural people had more time available to attend meetings, or during the Scottish sacramental season, or to cater for the needs of a more scattered population.

Now, in the United States, protracted meetings were being held by the "new measures" people as a deliberate tool. The practice did *not* arise out of the needs of the case, they believed.

These protracted meetings were more like one lengthened meeting, filling a number of days, rather than a number of meetings interspersed by time for people to deal with their worldly needs.

Advantages of New Measures Protracted Meetings

Reed and Matheson list the alleged advantages of this new style of protracted meeting as:-

(a.) They help to give solemnity to a special occasion.

(b.) They help fix the attention of people to one subject.

(c.) By bringing the whole power of truth and sympathy to bear on the conscience and affections, these meetings may be attended with the most happy and striking results.

Disadvantages

These advantages are followed by a big "But". The evils of making such protracted meetings into an essential part of the system appear to be:-

(a.) That an undue importance may be given to them, at the expense of ordinary and stated means.

(b.) That such meetings may create emotional possibilities which are so different from normal life, and require such intensity in the minds of those involved, that the whole exercise may end in a great deal of weariness and exhaustion, and may, in the end, result in people being **less** inclined to take part in normal church life afterwards than they were before.

(c.) That many excellent ministers will break down under the strain of being involved in these protracted meetings. This, they claim, has already happened, and will continue to happen, and has thus damaged the ability of the overall ministerial ranks to cope with all the demands placed upon them by the congregations that they serve.

(d.) There is an added comment, to the effect that, the length of such a protracted meeting can become a popular test of its excellence. Competition can arise to see which congregation can mount the longest meeting. One example was known where a forty days meeting had been planned and commenced, but that support for the meetings had totally evaporated long before the fortieth day was reached. (13.)

Finney's Reply

In Lecture 14 of his "Lectures on Revivals", Charles Finney makes a most interesting reply to the criticisms such as we find above, concerning protracted meetings. And in doing this, he provides a fairly full "Apology" for his use of "New Measures" generally.

The **basic point** developed by Finney is that, throughout the history of the Bible, and of the Christian Church, every step of real progress has been marked **by a succession of new measures.** So, new measures, of one kind or another, have been the basic building blocks for the spread of the Gospel. Finney states, however, that we do not really know much about the methods used by the apostles, apart from a few hints, comments and stories contained in the Acts of the Apostles.

Lecture 14 provides a long series of examples of the way that church history is based upon a wide range of new measures.

(1) Finney discusses at some length the ways that ministerial dress has changed, from older habits in Roman Catholic countries, to the use of wigs, cocked hats, white hats, bands, black stockings, gowns, etc., and how each in its turn was seen as essential to the proper appearance of a minister or priest. Finney wore a grey suit in Rochester, which was then considered poor taste by some, as it did not keep up with the traditions that had held sway in the years before.

(2) Regarding the use of psalms in public worship, Finney mentions people who would get up and leave a service of worship if the version of the psalms was not used that they liked, or if anything else apart from the psalms was used. Nettleton issued a book of "Village Hymns", but many people had objected when efforts were made to introduce such things. At one stage, it was the custom that a deacon would read out each line of a hymn before it was sung, because the people did not have hymn books. There was also the introduction of pitchpipes, choirs, organs, and instrumental music of various kinds. Each new measure had been objected to, often for a number of reasons, such as, being contrary to the Scriptures, or as letting down the dignity of the ministry,

of Christian worship, or of Christianity generally. A famous example of attitudes to new measures was seen in the hostility which some Scottish people showed toward Ira D. Sankey playing an organ, and singing solos, and the use of mere “human hymns”, during the visit of Moody and Sankey to Edinburgh in 1873, and the way in which Sankey's songs helped to open up the use of hymn singing for many congregations, which we now consider to be totally normal, or even old-fashioned. [A subsequent editor inserted this example as a footnote in Finney's book.]

Finney also raises the changing attitudes toward the use of extemporary prayers, the practise of kneeling to pray, and of preaching without notes, which all had their periods when they were new measures. But they have, in due course, been accepted as normal practises, and have, in the long run, mostly been viewed as beneficial.

(3) The role of lay people in leading the prayers during public worship, and also in exhorting, and even in preaching, are raised by Finney as other examples of new measures which have been strenuously resisted by some, but have had a good place in the church's history. From our perspective nearly two hundred years later, we can see many instances where God has used lay people very extensively in glorious revival movements, as well as to a very great degree in the normal life of the denominations. In some cases, laymen and women have been used by the Holy Spirit instead of the ordained clergy.

(4) Prayer meetings for women were extensively opposed in the few years before 1835, according to Finney. “Serious apprehensions were entertained for the safety of Zion if women should be allowed to get together to pray, and even now it is not tolerated in some churches.”

Finney says, the same attitude of opposition has been shown toward “all of the active movements of the Church. Missions, and Sunday Schools have then gained their present hold only by a succession of struggles and a series of innovations. A Baptist Association in Pennsylvania, some years since, disclaimed all fellowship with any minister that had been liberally educated, or that supported Missions, Bible Societies, Sabbath Schools, Temperance Societies, etc. All these were denounced as New Measures, not found in the Bible, and that would necessarily lead to distraction and confusion in the Churches. The same thing has been done by some among the German Churches. And in many Presbyterian Churches there are found those who will take the same ground, and denounce all these things, with the exception, perhaps, of an educated ministry, as innovations, new measures, 'going in your own strength,' and the like, and as calculated to do great evil.”

(5) These four points are followed by a very brief survey of church history.

(a.) Finney says that the apostles were great innovators. "...after the Holy Spirit was poured out upon them, they set about to re-model the Church. They broke down the Jewish system of measures, and rooted it out, so as to leave hardly a vestige."

(b.) Luther and the Reformers had great problems to contend with, because they were trying to bring in new measures - "new modes of performing the public duties of religion, and new expedients to bring the Gospel with power to the hearts of men." Part of the excitement related to the impact of introducing changes from the old ways of Rome

(c.) "Wesley did not, at first, break from the Established Church, but formed little classes everywhere, which grew into a Church within a Church. ...he introduced so much of new measures as to fill all England with excitement, and uproar, and opposition; and he was everywhere denounced as an innovator and a stirrer up of sedition - a teacher of new things which it was not lawful to receive."

Whitefield was a man of the same school, and, like Wesley, was an innovator. "The General Association of Connecticut refused to countenance Whitefield, he was such an innovator. 'Why, he will preach out of doors, and anywhere!' Awful! What a terrible thing that a man should preach in the fields or in the streets! Cast him out!"

> After discussing the opposition that Whitefield endured, Finney says, "Now, everybody looks upon him as the glory of the age in which he lived. And many of our own denomination have so far divested themselves of prejudice as to think Wesley not only a good, but a wise and pre-eminently useful man. Then, almost the entire Church viewed them with animosity, fearing that the innovations that they introduced would destroy the Church."

(d.) President Edwards is then introduced as an innovator. For example, his opposition to the Half-Way Covenant is portrayed by Finney as an innovation, and it led to him being ejected from his pulpit at Northampton. It is something with which most people now agree.

(6) With respect to events in Finney's own time, he discusses only three subjects. These are anxious meetings, protracted meetings, and the anxious seat.

(a.) Anxious meetings had a certain history by the time Finney used them. But, still, people objected to them because they were thought to be new. They could be organised in a variety of ways, in order to discover, and to meet, the needs of individual enquirers after salvation.

(b.) Protracted meetings were then discussed, emphasising that they are not new, either, having been used in one form or another since the birth of the Church. He gives some examples of this. "Yet now, in our day, they have been opposed, particularly amongst Presbyterians, and called 'new measures,' and

regarded as fraught with all manner of evil, notwithstanding that they have been so manifestly and so extensively blessed."

As we have already noted, Finney's protracted meetings, and most of the others which were being held at that time in upstate New York, were principally special evangelistic meetings, and were not built around the sacraments.

Finney offers a number of points of advice about how this kind of protracted meeting might be arranged. He says that the circumstances of the people ought to be consulted, so that their other proper and reasonable responsibilities are not swept aside or brought to nothing. Family and private prayer should be maintained at all costs. So, families in the congregation ought not to have too many visitors or house guests from other areas to cope with. Meetings ought not to be let run too late, and should be run by the one minister, who can help weld the whole series of meetings together. All sectarianism should be banned, and the churches should work together, if they can.

But he emphasised that protracted meetings should not be relied upon. They are not essential. There can be revival without them. We must always emphasise that spiritual power comes from God, in answer to prevailing prayer, and not from the meetings we arrange.

(c.) Two points are raised in support of the use of the anxious seat, or anxious bench. When a person is concerned and disturbed about salvation, there is a natural tendency to conceal the matter, often as a matter of pride, and of avoiding embarrassment. The anxious seat is designed to break the hold of this factor, right at the beginning.

"Another bearing of the anxious seat is to detect deception and delusion, and thus prevent false hopes. It has been opposed on the ground that it was calculated to create delusion and false hopes. But this objection is unreasonable. The truth is the other way." Finney says that calling upon people to make a decisive move, such as coming to the anxious seat, actually helps them to firm up their commitment, and make their dedication to God into a life-changing and permanent thing which will survive.

So, he concludes, "If we examine the history of the Church we shall find that there has never been an extensive reformation, except by new measures." (14.)

Finney would have agreed with Nathanael Emmons, that protracted meetings ought to be used in the wisest and most constructive way, with the aim of producing the best quality of converts. Emmons, however, thought that this method was **not** best suited to this end. He would have supported Asahel Nettleton and Edward D. Griffin, in the way they did things, more than Finney.

As a final comment from Finney, we ought to mention a quotation which Fowler drew from one of Finney's private letters to a friend. He wrote:-

> "I do not ask whether the measure be old or new, expressly commanded or recognised in Scripture. The questions are:- Is it consistent with the Bible, i.e. is it not inconsistent with its spirit and letter? Is its tendency good

or bad? Is it so liable to abuse that the precedent would be dangerous or not? Is it a common sense way of bringing the truth in contact with the mind, or is it so strange as greatly to shock the church and lead to vain wrangling or, is it so in accordance with common sense, as to have the good sense of thinking men in its favor? Does God own and bless it? Is it consistent with order and conducive to deep thought and solemnity? Such questions as these I would ask, and the answer would settle my mind. As to everything like confusion, or that naturally leads to it, it should, in my judgment, by all means, be avoided." (15.)

There are further comments on this subject later in this book, in chapter sixteen.

THE ANXIOUS BENCH

The Methodist preacher, the Rev. Valentine Cook, who made a considerable impact in Western Pennsylvania and Western New York just before the turn of the Century, is thought to have been the first person to call the "anxious" to come to the front of the meeting, as a method of helping to counsel and pray with those anxious about salvation. He was a Presiding Elder in this area between 1794 and 1797. (16.)

This practice slowly became common, and almost universal. For many people, this practice became merely an extension of the use of protracted meetings, with prayer meetings, or meetings for inquirers following the main preaching.

Another variation was for some seats at the front of the preaching service to be either kept empty during preaching, or for those seats to be vacated quickly after the preaching, but before any appeal was made, so that the seats would be ready to be filled by inquirers.

Andrew Reed and James Matheson report about the "anxious seat" in their letters sent back to Great Britain.

Reed and Matheson on the Anxious Seat

Admitted uses and advantages

(a) "I can readily believe that the employment of it may have been attended with decided evidence of usefulness in many cases."

(b) There may also be a need to bring about a decision, instead of continued lack of decidedness in people's response.

But - It is unwise and unsafe

(a) "We have no right to establish new measures. It is not an apostolic method."

(b) "It is a bad auxiliary to the success of the ministry." That is, in the minds of ordinary people, the use of the anxious seat does not help to promote the effects of the actual message. Its general tendency is not to support the preached message. It raises other questions in the mind which may divert the person away from concentrating on his or her relationship with God. It creates a diversion and thus may not be helpful. People start to ask themselves, "Will anyone go out?" "Will I go out?" In many cases, these questions are not the same as the questions raised during the sermon about the person's relationship with God.

(c) Certain types of personalities could respond to that appeal more readily than others. It is highly inviting to someone wishing to show off, who is self-conceited, vain or ignorant. It is repulsive to a timid, modest and reflective person. "I can hardly conceive of a delicate and well-educated young female being able to meet such a demand in the face of a large congregation."

(d) Some people may use answering the call to come to the anxious seat as an evidence of conversion. Ministers may not make this mistake, but some enquirers could, and also others even less well informed. Linked to this is the practise in some churches of immediately admitting to church membership anyone who makes such a profession. Even if people are admitted to church membership less quickly, but still without being properly tested, to see if their conversion is real or not, then there is much greater likelihood of unconverted people filling the lists of church members. Insufficient time has been taken to judge whether the alleged evidences of regeneration are real, or not.

(e) The effect on the church is to fill it with unconverted, ignorant and presumptuous persons, and to produce defection (on the one hand), and corruption (on the other hand).

It will create a fearful amount of premature and unscriptural hope (that the person is saved), and therefore, of dangerous and destructive delusion.

If delusion is created, and people die, sincerely depending upon deluded hopes of salvation, where will the responsibility lie?

(f) Rash measures attract rash men. This last criticism offered by Reed and Matheson refers primarily to rash and enthusiastic young imitators of leaders like Finney and Nash, who copy their extremes without having their maturity, piety or wisdom, and can only maintain their position of influence in the churches by becoming more and more extreme.

Reed and Matheson emphasised, however, that the examples of this kind of thing which they actually saw, following on the great revival of 1831, were

only small and ephemeral compared to the great flood of blessing which came everywhere during the revival itself, and that the extremes were declining. So, some of what they say in the following quotation is hearsay, while much comes from men like Nettleton and Weeks, or else is speculation about the bad results which they expected in the future from this kind of extremism. This point needs to be remembered clearly, when considering what they wrote. What they actually saw was **not** the full range of what they describe, nor was it very widespread.

> "In fact, a number of young and raw men, previously unknown to the ministry, and without pastoral experience, instead of giving themselves 'to reading, meditation and prayer,' have chosen this shorter method to ministerial efficiency; and the effect, wherever it has reached, has been exceedingly calamitous. They have announced themselves as the revival preachers; and have chosen to itinerate over the church; unsettling every thing, and settling nothing. They have denounced pastors, with whom they could not compare, men of tried and approved piety, as hypocrites, formalists, 'dumb dogs,' and as 'leading their people to hell.' They have denounced the Christians who listened to them; and have made submission to their mechanism the test of their conversion. They have addressed the sinner, under the name of fidelity, in harsh, severe, and bitter terms; and have been covetous either of submission or opposition. The endearments and ties of relative life have been sacrificed to the bitter zeal which has taught the child to disrespect the parent, and the parent to cast off the child. They have made, as many have recently in our own land, great, if not full pretentions, to inspiration; and have taught people to rely on impulse and impression in offering what has been called the prayer of faith. They have encouraged females to lead in prayer in promiscuous and public assemblies; and, in fact, have revived all the irregularities of the Corinthian church, as though they had been placed on record, to be copied, and not avoided.
>
> The consequences have been most disastrous. Churches have become the sport of division, distraction, and disorder. Pastors have been made unhappy in their dearest connexions; they have stayed to mourn over diminished influence and affection; or they have been driven away to find in calmer regions a field of renewed labour. So extensive has been this evil, that in one presbytery of nineteen churches, there were only three that had settled pastors; and in one synod, in 1832, of a hundred and three churches, only fifty-two had pastors; the rest had stated supplies. The general effect has been to discourage revivals in their best form; to cast down the weak, to confound the sober-minded, and to confirm the formalist; and to dispose the censorious world to 'speak evil of the good way.'
>
> I was, as I have remarked, just in time to observe these effects;

and while it is needful that I should report them, I must be careful with you, as I was with myself, that a wrong impression should not be received from them. They followed on the great revival of 1831; but they are the mere sediments of that flood of life, which went over the land, and blessed all things where it came. Much as it may be lamented, and right as it is to use it for future caution, the evil is as nothing compared with the good consequent on the revivals generally. That evil, too, is subsiding. Those ministers of most talent and character, who were carried away partially by the heat and interest of the period, are now reviewing their course. The madness of others will make them perfectly sober. The leading ministers of the country, and amongst them the best friends of revivals, have entered their testimony against them." (17.)

In support of this last statement, that the leading ministers of the country were taking a stand against the excesses, and that this was a powerful force for good, Reed and Matheson proceed to quote extensively from the letters written by Nettleton and Beecher that were published before the New Lebanon Convention in 1827. They site these writers as providing expert evidence in favour of all that they have been saying about the extremes attending these "new measures" revivals. (18.)

Comment

It is not our purpose here to re-visit the New Lebanon Convention, or to consider whether the evidence provided there by Nettleton, Beecher, and Weeks, was good and reliable, as this has been treated in another chapter.

Our present purpose here is to consider what Reed and Matheson have said about the anxious seat, and the influence which, they thought, that particular measure was having on the work of God.

The View of Orson Parker

Parker was an evangelist who arose out of the revivals of the 1830s in central and western New York. He practised all of the normal means and techniques which arose from that period.

He makes the following comment about using the anxious seat, and about getting people to stand, so that Christians can pray for them.

"For about fifteen years I made use of the 'anxious seat,' till I saw that the people began to trust in it; and 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 the community generally became prejudiced

against it, and few would come forward when called, unless somebody went and urged them and almost pulled them forward.

For a long time I called upon the convicted to rise up for prayers. There is something gained in this, but not so much as is 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 till he is shaken off, and made to feel that Christians cannot save him. Now, 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." (19.)

The Views of John W. Nevin

John Williamson Nevin was born in 1803, and in due course graduated from Union College and from Princeton Theological Seminary. He taught at Princeton for a period, and then for ten years at the Western Theological Seminary, in Alleghany, Pennsylvania. The most notable and mature part of his teaching work occurred after he moved to the German Reformed seminary, at Mercersburg, Pennsylvania. He died in 1886. "The Anxious Bench" was first published in 1843, with a second edition following quickly in 1844. The third edition is a reprint, many years later, of the second edition, with the inclusion of a short introductory essay.

Nevin's personal theology was much closer to the Old School Presbyterian approach, than it was to anything in the New England Congregational theological stream. But his views were also peculiarly his own, and had a number of features which made him quite different from anyone we have considered in the previous chapters of this present book.

A short introductory essay by John S. Stahr, to the third edition, has good background information. Nevin was brought up and trained by a pious Presbyterian father "according to a system which honored the Church and the sacraments, and laid great stress on the catechism, and the proper training of the young.

At Union College he came under the influence of a different system, in which special stress was laid upon subjective experience - a system which was rapidly gaining ground in the American churches, and threatening to carry them altogether away from their moorings into all kinds of fanaticism and excess." (20.)

It was the childhood influence which was to mould his life-long outlook in such a marked way.

Nevin did not actually have to take a public stand, regarding the new measures, until he arrived in Mercersburg.

> "When Dr. Nevin was confronted with the revival services of Rev. William Ramsey in the Reformed church at Mercersburg, in which the anxious seat was used and the so-called mourners were asked to come

forward to the altar, he was personally challenged to decide for himself concerning the measures employed, and to give public expression to his views on the subject." (21.)

Nevin had enough talent as a theologian, and as an advocate and debater, that he was able to influence particularly the Reformed denomination, to which he belonged, and the Lutherans, to stand by their more conservative position on the new measures, and the related theological issues.

Nevin also recognised the Methodists and the Baptists as people who were promoting the practices and beliefs which he disliked so much, and against which he was arguing so strongly. However, his corrective influences did not spread to them.

Sketch of Some Main Points in His Theology

His views about the nature of sin was that sin infected the whole human race in a much deeper way than anything which fitted into the views of Edwards or Finney, where sin was linked only to voluntary actions. Consequently, regeneration was seen as a creative act of God, which did not depend in any way upon any human preparation, action, merit or decision. So, calling upon people simply to make a decision was a sure way to create a whole race of deformed and deluded Christians, or quasi-Christians. They could make decisions as much as they liked, but they would never be truly born again until the Holy Spirit had done his own creative work in their lives. It was entirely mistaken and basically flawed way of preaching the Gospel to confuse the human and the divine in people's minds.

People could be asked to decide, or to do all kinds of things, but none of these things were essential. The people would never be born again, and would never grow in grace, unless the real spiritual life came from above, and not from themselves.

His theology was "objective", as opposed to the "subjective" religion of much of the revivals. That means that salvation is achieved entirely apart from us, in the person and work of Jesus Christ, many centuries before any of us were born. As a result, Nevin saw great importance in anything which related us more directly to those events, described in the four Gospels of the New Testament. So, he viewed as greatly important the place and role of the sacraments in the life of the believer, and of the historic church, which had been founded by Christ, and built down through the years by the power of the Holy Spirit. This "objective" emphasis therefore points away from our own personal experience, and focuses squarely upon Jesus Christ, who is the author and finisher of our faith, and who works in us, to achieve His own eternal purposes.

Nevin believed that Christianity was essentially objective, focussing on Jesus Christ.

The theology of the "new measures" revivals tended, on the other hand, to

emphasise what God was doing within our own souls. Human ideas and responses were seen to be fundamentally important. While, in the revivals, there was clearly a pointing to Christ, and a call to have faith in Him, and to repent, the emphasis tended so easily to be upon ourselves, and upon the decisions we were making. So, it was much more subjective than the views portrayed by Nevin.

Naturally, there are both subjective and objective elements in all Christian theologies. But it is possible, nevertheless, to characterise the theologies of some people by what emphasis is being made in these particular subjective and objective aspects.

Nevin believed that teaching the catechism ought to be the key to Christian education generally, and to evangelism in particular, so that people could make a rational response to things that they had learned, and which they knew to be true.

His criticism of "the anxious seat" was really a criticism of the entire theological position that was being taken by Finney, and also by Nathaniel W. Taylor.

So, Nevin's approach was that Finney's and Taylor's whole theological understanding was shot through with so many mistakes, and was basically misguided in so many ways, that it would unavoidably produce disastrous results in many directions, on a major scale, and for the whole foreseeable future.

Nevin used "The Anxious Bench" as a title for Finney's whole theology, and his whole way of doing things. It was not a criticism of the practise of the anxious bench, on its own.

The following comments express various views expressed in Nevin's book.

The Anxious Bench, or the New Measures, or the theology of Finney and of Taylor, would produce many poor quality conversions, lacking greatly in "heart" work.

It would bring no real self-knowledge. It would fill the churches with lean professors, who would show subsequently but little concern to GROW in grace, and little capacity indeed to understand at all the free, deep, full life of the "new man" in Christ Jesus.

Such converts, if they did not altogether fall from grace, would be apt to continue at least babes in the gospel, as long as they lived.

The natural fruit of the system is a sickly Christianity, that is sure to be defective and one-sided, both in doctrine and practise. It proceeds upon a wrong conception of religion from the start. Finneyism is only Taylorism reduced to practice, and is heresy. It is a man-centred religion, and therefore basically mistaken and misguided.

This heresy is so constructed as naturally, and in time inevitably, to engender

false views of religion.

Having a purpose to serve God, as the evangelist calls, is like signing a temperance pledge. It is not regeneration. It is not the New Creation.

The theology of these New York revivals, Nevin believed, was based upon too narrow an idea of what constituted sin, a confused view of the difference between "flesh" and "spirit", involving in the end the gross and radical error that conversion is to be considered as the result of the sinner's will.

This more robust attack upon Finney, and the setting forth of such an extreme description of his theology, and of the New School theology generally, constituted an attack which led naturally to Finney being described as a Pelagian. And Nevin pressed that point, as did some of the Princeton theologians.

Wherever this new theology was given sway, Nevin believed, ample room would appear for novices, fanatics, charlatans and quacks. False and shallow converts were likely to multiply.

"The circulation of spurious coin, in the name of money, brings the genuine currency into discredit. So also the surest way to create and cherish prejudice against true piety is to identify it with counterfeit pretences to its name." (22.)

"If Finneyism and Winebrennerism, the anxious bench, revival machinery, solemn tricks for effect, decision displays at the bidding of the preacher, genuflections and prostrations in the aisle or around the altar, noise and disorder, extravagance and rant, mechanical conversions, justification by feeling rather than by faith, and encouragement ministered to all financial impressions; 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.

Only in this way may it be hoped that the reproach put upon revivals and other evangelical interests by some, under cover of their pretended connection with this system of New Measures in the true sense, will be in due course fairly rolled away." (23.)

Comment

If his attack is considered to be completely fair to Finney, then the entire framework of modern evangelicalism fits under the same Pelagian umbrella.

In some respects, it **is** a proper attack upon Finney, because the revivals were strongly "subjective," in many ways. The criticism does not really fit much to Finney, himself, but fitted some of his young, immature, and theologically ignorant imitators.

However, in another way, this attack is **not** fair to Finney, or his imitators. Finney's theology had a strong "objective" aspect, and this aspect was also of fundamental importance to the whole revival movement of the time. It was the key to the Gospel, and was thus the driving force behind the whole movement.

Indeed, all of the Protestant theologies include a subjective aspect, and an objective aspect. It is a question of balance. Certainly, the objective aspect focuses upon the person and work of Jesus Christ, which is the key to our redemption. Without that, there is no gospel. But, the subjective aspect also has to be taken seriously if Christianity is to know the power of the Holy Spirit in personal experience, and if Christianity is to portray its true colours to the world. The tension between objective and subjective is a balance which we all have to maintain as wisely as we can.

Without the objective redemptive facts and realities in Jesus Christ, there is no Gospel. Without the subjective aspect there is no personal experience of the Gospel, so far as the sinner is concerned. Both aspects are essential.

An attack by someone representing a theology on one end of the spectrum, upon another theology which was rather near the other end of the spectrum, is likely to be one-sided in its attack, even if there is a great deal of truth in what it might say.

In this way, Nevin's reliance upon the use of the catechism can be criticised as an inadequate answer to the subjective needs of the situation, because this approach does not cater for the needs of many types of human personalities who need to come to God by some other path than through learning a catechism. For some people at least, these other paths were provided by the events and influences of the “New Measures” revivals.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

TRUE AND FALSE CONVERSION in NEW ENGLAND THEOLOGY

One of the greatest motives and driving quests right throughout the history of New England Theology was the search to understand what constituted a true conversion to Jesus Christ. They wanted to achieve the highest quality of true conversions, which displayed the clearest evidences that these conversions had occurred. On the other side, they wanted to be able to recognise false conversions, expose them, and avoid anything which contributed to them. This quest was vitally important in understanding New England Theology.

Earlier Understandings

From our previous analyses of the leading participants in this history, we have noted the basic factors involved in this quest, including some of the reasons why the quest took the form that it did.

Here we will recount briefly the basic points about the doctrines of regeneration and conversion that were set forth, along with the evidences for regeneration.

This should enable us to see just what the various characters thought true and false conversion to be, and what was acceptable evidence.

We have seen that Edwards believed that sin flowed from voluntary choices by the sinner, and that the sinner shared with all humanity the natural bent towards committing sin which each person inherited from Adam. Sin consisted in choosing any other ultimate aim except the glory of God, and love towards being in general.

Regeneration was seen as a direct, creative act by the Holy Spirit, expressing in action the decision of God in His sovereign election, to create the new man in Christ Jesus within a person. It was an act of God, without any contribution being made by the sinner. It did not involve any act of choice or decision by the sinner, and in principle at least could not be prepared for, in any way.

This change would produce results in the person's life, some of which would be immediately obvious, and which would become more clearly obvious as time passed, and as the new life was tested in various ways. These results would be in the form of the full range of the signs of regeneration, and the appearance of the fruit of the Spirit, and of Christlike character. These, however, would all involve the decision processes of the new Christian, because the believer now had been given both the inclination and the ability to choose to glorify God, and to choose what would enhance the good of being in general.

Edwards took a lot of trouble to describe what he thought was acceptable

evidence of regeneration in his books on the revivals, and in the "Religious Affections," and to mark them off from all those factors which might look like the real thing, and which might be very worthy, but which would not constitute reliable evidence.

Counselling Prospective Converts

The catechising of children by the minister, and by the parents, provided an extremely important way in which young people could be prepared with suitable information and learning experiences which would provide the foundation upon which a good conversion experience might occur. Another obvious factor was provided by the fact that children heard sermons in church, and hopefully would be able to gain at least some benefit from them, especially if it was reinforced in their minds by family members.

But, when a person was "awakened," that is, when the person became deeply aware of their lost and undone condition before God, and started asking questions about how they might be saved, then suitable instruction would be given, either personally (one to one), or in an inquiry meeting.

This counselling would include questions aimed at helping the person to understand where they were at, so far as their response to God was concerned. People would normally go up one blind alley after another, seeking selfishly to find balm for their soul and peace of mind. They would be urged to give up completely the selfish element in this quest. They would be urged to rely upon the merits of Christ's atonement for the forgiveness of their sins and as the path to acceptance with God, and to surrender themselves completely to God, so that God's glory might be achieved through their lives, and their eternal destiny, whether God saw fit to save them from eternal hell or not. Thus, they were urged to adopt an attitude where God's glory was put first, regardless of what personal cost there might be to themselves.

One of the very important features of this preparation for conversion was that the person needed "deep heart work." That is, they needed to begin to grasp and feel the seriousness of their sin against God, the way in which sin was deeply ingrained into their makeup and personality, and that they could not change or avoid it by simple decisions or personal reformation. The corruption of their nature had to be understood. Then they would appreciate why sinners were rejected by God, and sent to hell, and why it applied to them. They would also appreciate more deeply the fact that God would need to produce a very wide sweeping change within them, and that it would all be an act of grace, which they did not deserve in any way. Then they would appreciate the extreme value of what Jesus Christ had done for them.

Regardless of the fact that, in theory, no preparations could be made for the soul's salvation, nevertheless, in practice, all these "preparations," described above, were vitally important. If these preparations did not take place, or did

not impact upon the person adequately, then false or shallow conversions could more easily follow. Regardless of what technical or theological terms one might use, or argue about, these were all essential "preparations" for regeneration.

The Testing of Regeneration

In the context of this kind of doctrine of regeneration, people would examine their own lives, and church leaders would examine the lives of converts who were applying for full church membership, in order to see whether the evidences of regeneration were present in the person's life. This sort of examination was usually the way the person gained a degree of assurance of personal salvation. That was how they would be able to get some idea whether they were among the elect, or not.

At the time when Edwards lived, there were a number of very popular theological handbooks in circulation which set out the full range of factors which were involved in personal regeneration. People often carried these books around with them, as books for personal meditation, and self-examination, so that they could learn what was involved in the Christian reformation of one's life. In a sense, Bunyan's original "Pilgrim's Progress" was one of these. Another was Henry Scougal's "The Life of God in the Soul of Man." Another was Philip Doddridge's "Practical Discourses on Regeneration." Doddridge also wrote "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul." Another pair came from William Guthrie, who was famous for writing "The Christian's Great Interest," and "The Trial of a Saving Interest in Christ." These were all very popular and widely read books, and served important purposes for many people.

Possible Sources of False Conversions and Deceptions

The above scenario points to several sources from which false conversions might flow.

(a) Incorrect doctrine related to these matters could vitiate the preaching in church, and family instruction, which might result in the young person being misinformed about what regeneration really involved. So, a false conversion might arise. For example, the mistake might involve a wrong understanding of the character and holiness of God, which would produce other bad consequences later in the process. Or, it might involve a failure to understand properly the nature and depth of sin, the deep-seated selfishness and corruption within the soul, the nature of the atonement, the work of God's Spirit in changing one's heart, or the full scope of the fruit flowing from the change of heart in the regenerate person.

(b) Unsuitable instruction at the point where the young person was "awakened," might result, for example, in an incomplete surrender to God, or one in which the selfish element had not been properly dealt with.

(c) Another form of unsuitable counsel would lead a person to rest upon a false hope. Men like Griffin and Nettleton had a complex form of advice to use in counselling, depending upon the situation of the inquirer. This was usually because these men judged that the inquirer had not been brought to the real point of regeneration, and was still at some point in the preparation process - rather like avoiding the picking of unripe fruit.

The basic advice always was to come to Christ, and to repent, immediately. But the wrong use and application of advice might result in the inquirer stopping prematurely, and developing hope of being saved at some mistaken point. Thus the inquirer might get hope, when none was warranted.

(d) It may be that the Holy Spirit had not made the creative change in a person, but all the appearances of change had arisen from some other set of causes. It would be very important to discover this, and to save the person from being misguided.

(e) "Animal excitement" could cause a person to **feel** that they were accepted by God, when the required surrender, repentance, and faith in Christ, had not occurred. There might even be strong feelings, or angelic visions and dreams. Similarly, the excitement from being in a large meeting might cause a person to think that the Holy Spirit was convicting them, and bringing them to conversion, when this was not the case. Or, the excitement in a meeting, and the impact of a certain sermon, might cause a person to think that a particular issue was the matter at issue between that soul and God, whereas a better understanding of the person might show that the real issue lay somewhere else. Sympathy or mass psychological factors might lead a person to think they were converted, when any change in them was not from God, and was very superficial - not likely to last longer than any other nine-day wonder.

The Importance of These Issues

We have already noted that these issues were seen as being of fundamental importance, right through the history of New England Theology.

(a) They were key matters for Edwards during the early Northampton revivals.

(b) They were major issues in the Great Awakening, especially during the peak period of the revival power, and also during the period of turmoil and confusion created by James Davenport.

(c) As a result, they were seen as key issues by those who attacked the revival, and by Edwards in his great defences and expositions about the revival.

(d) Similarly, they were seen as essential features of theology by the "Edwardeans."

(e) New England Theology rotated around those features of theology which had been basic in the defence of the Great Awakening. That is what marked off New England Theology from Calvinism generally, and from other areas of Protestant theology.

(f) Behind this, there is the importance of the issue for the preaching of the Gospel. The Gospel preacher who does not act responsibly in this matter, as Finney, Weeks, Nettleton, and others believed, would share responsibility before God for the damnation of the souls of their hearers. Not to be vitally interested in this matter was a dereliction of duty by a preacher.

Later Understandings (Weeks and Finney)

Several of the New England Theologians, such as Nathanael Emmons, helped to bring about changes in this overall picture, by saying that Regeneration and Conversion were different names for the same thing, or that human choice was involved at all stages of the process, or that everything was an act of God, whether it was something which involved human decisions or not.

William R. Weeks

Weeks's views on selfishness, and on disinterested benevolence, appear in chapter 52 of the "Pilgrim's Progress in the Nineteenth Century." In this chapter, *Ardent* and *Thoughtful* are arguing with *Love-Self.* So, naturally, it is the passage where the heavy things are said about selfishness.

Weeks adopts a Christian Common Sense scale of values, and selfishness is judged on this basis.

"The common sense of mankind decides that every interest and every object ought to be regarded according to its real worth. There is an inherent worth in some things above that of others. The good of a whole community is of more importance than that of any individual of that community. The life of a man is worth more than the life of an insect. The happiness of God is worth more than the happiness of Satan. These things are self-evident. And it is therefore self-evident that the inherent worth of these things, so far as it can be discovered, is the proper measure of my regard. But so far as I am selfish, I wholly disregard the inherent worth of things, and regard them only so far as I think it for my advantage. There is no obedience to God in selfishness."

"Selfishness is opposed to the supreme good, and would sacrifice it. It sets up a private good as the supreme object, and regards the public good, when it

comes in competition with it, as worth nothing. Place the greatest good of the universe in opposition to this private interest, and selfishness would sacrifice it all. It has been said to an individual, 'If your eternal happiness must be given up, or that of all others, God himself included, which would you choose?' and the answer has been, 'Let *my* happiness be secured, whatever becomes of the happiness of all others. Let God be dethroned, and the happiness of the whole universe besides be given up, rather than *mine*.' This has shown the supreme selfishness of the heart in its true colors. It needs no other temper than selfishness to account for any sin that ever was committed." (1.)

In true fashion as a follower of Hopkins, and as a true child of New England Theology, Weeks speaks about benevolence, as the Christian and Biblical duty of mankind.

Weeks on False Conversions

Weeks uses this exposition of the nature of selfishness as the basis for describing false conversion, although he speaks about these subjects in other passages, as well.

"Selfish religion is the religion of the unrenewed heart; and if trusted in, it will destroy the soul. 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' He may be greatly changed, without being born again. He may be changed from one degree of selfishness to another, or from one modification of selfishness to another, and yet be selfish still. He may be turned from seeking the things of this world to seeking the salvation of his soul. He may embrace a kind of religion which makes his own happiness his supreme object, and leads him to seek it because it is *his own*. He may be much engaged in this religion, and yet be wholly selfish in it all. And if his religion is wholly selfish, it is wholly sinful, and will not stand in the great day."

This is not only the concern that Weeks has about selfish religion generally, but is the point he wants to make about protracted meetings, in particular.

"You have, then, the grounds of our fears in relation to the converts of the protracted meetings, and the new measures revivals, which have been so triumphantly proclaimed. We fear that a large part of them are the subjects of a false experience, made up of animal feeling and selfish affection. And we fear so because we think the means used to promote these conversions are adapted to produce animal feeling and selfish affection, and not adapted to produce genuine conviction of sin, or true conversion to God."

Weeks says that, instead of what is said and done at the protracted meetings, the proper method of preaching the Gospel is to "have truth and duty exhibited, and have them pressed upon the consciences of men." (2.) If preachers at protracted meetings actually presented truth and duty in this way (although Weeks was sceptical about that), Weeks thought the context of the preaching, namely, the atmosphere of the meetings, and the way they were conducted,

produced a bad situation for the preaching, where animal feeling and a selfish outlook would be promoted. This would neutralise any good that the real Gospel might achieve in transforming the lives of people. It would mean that the change from selfishness to proper benevolence could not be properly upheld, portrayed or pressed upon the people. So, the results would be bad.

To use the Lord's parable of the Sower, as Weeks did in one place, the results of these protracted meetings would be like the seed sown amongst thorns, and on the stony ground, which produced short-term results, but **no proper harvest.** Better, he thought, not to do such things, but to find some more suitable way of preaching the Gospel.

Comments

(a) This analysis of false conversions from Weeks clearly raises some very serious matters. In one sense, it represents a major attack on almost everything which goes by the name of Christianity in the modern world. I believe that the degree of truthfulness which this analysis contains is an abiding judgment upon us all, and on all that we do.

(b) A weakness of New England Theology, and which applies also at this point, is that it is too black and white. It does not seem to allow sufficiently for the fact that professing Christians are all only partly renewed. There are still large parts of our lives where we are not born again, or not enough. The judgment line runs through every one of us, and we are all too much a mixture of good and bad. As Luther said, Christians are, at the same time, justified and yet still sinners.

(c) Despite the fact that this passage occurs in an overall context where Weeks is attacking Finney about all sorts of things, Finney would have agreed with everything that Weeks said about selfishness and disinterested benevolence. The main differences would have been in other areas, especially, what the Holy Spirit had to do in the believer, in order for the person to be converted, and the methods one used in the hope that the Spirit's workings would occur.

Finney on Spurious Conversions

Finney taught that people were regenerate because the Holy Spirit used persuasion to make a sinful and selfish person choose Christ. The Spirit did not actually create anything within a person, but brought truth to bear in such a way that the person turned to Christ, and was saved. Finney talked about "Surrender" as the key term describing what happened when the person actually became a Christian.

For Finney, this emphasis on "Surrender" had much the same value as it had for Emmons. Finney taught the same as Emmons about sin being described in the light of a fairly technical understanding of "selfishness". Conversion

involved changing from a life of selfishness into a life governed by "disinterested benevolence." This was much the same as what Edwards had understood by "love for being in general." So, Finney taught, just as Emmons had done, that "disinterested benevolence" was a life governed by a completely different set of principles from that of the life of selfishness, which had controlled the person before conversion. Thus, the Christian life should include certain recognisable features which make the Christian live a different life from that of an unconverted person.

Also, immediately after a person decided to become a Christian, as the first instruction to new converts, Finney declared that the person must start **living by principle, and not by feeling.** In other words, the convert must choose to do things because they are right, and not because they might feel in a certain way about this or that.

So, although Finney's actual doctrine of regeneration was not the same as that of Emmons and Edwards, the practical outworking and "fruitbearing" aspect of it was the same as his famous predecessors.

Amongst Finney's writings, we have at least two accounts of his analysis of the differences between the actions of the regenerate, and of those who are not. Basically, a deceived person, and a person who is truly regenerate, might do a long list of things which are superficially the same. But there will be a complete difference in the **motives** that they have for doing what they do.

All of the actions of a deceived person, or an unregenerate person, or of someone claiming to be a "Christian," but who has not been born again, are governed by "selfishness." This "selfishness" is not the sort defined by common language or the common meaning of the word. It is a technical term. Sinners are totally selfish, in the sense that they do not have gospel benevolence. Selfishness is regarding one's own happiness supremely, or doing what one sees to be good, because it is our own decision to do that. This is true, even if it involves making a great sacrifice, doing what is best for someone else, or giving my body to be burned for a worthy cause. The course of action is chosen by the sinner, because he or she wants to do it. The sinner is seeking his own good because it is his own. He who is selfish places his own interests above other interests which are of greater value, such as the glory of God, and the good of the universe.

Often the selfishness of the sinner is not recognised until there is a clash between what is for the glory of God, and what the sinner wants.

On the other hand, the converted person will always choose the glory of God above interests of his own, and will sacrifice his own interests in order to obey God, and in order to promote the interests of the Kingdom of God.

Sources of False Conversions

In Finney's teaching, therefore, the sources of spurious conversions are the

same as we saw for the earlier contributors on the subject, except there is a slight difference at one point.

(a) Incorrect doctrine, as explained above.

(b) Unsuitable counsel before conversion.

(c) Unsuitable counsel, with the need to renounce selfishness in all of its forms.

(d) Animal excitement, strong feelings, visions and dreams, crowd psychology, etc.

(e) Changes taking place in a person's life which **looked like** the result of the workings of the Holy Spirit, but which in fact flowed simply from other sets of causes. This problem obviously could not occur within Finney's system of theology in quite the same way as it could for Weeks and Nettleton, but it would still be potentially a major problem producing many false conversions.

As with Weeks and Nettleton, so also within Finney's theology, apparent conversions could flow from human argument, the influence of charismatic personalities and preachers, being impressed by miracles, being impressed by the conversion of someone else, selfish motives of all kinds, sympathy, crowd psychology, demonic or angelic influences, and many other possible causes, but in instances where the Holy Spirit happened NOT to be at work.

This is the kind of thing which Weeks alleged was actually happening in Finney's meetings. For various reasons, he thought the Holy Spirit was not at work, and the apparent conversions were taking place arising from other sets of causes. No doubt Weeks also thought the other four reasons listed here were all in operation as well, more or less.

A More Modern Parallel

Providing the two opposite positions, selfishness versus benevolence, were explained with sufficient detail to any prospective new convert, so that they understood as much as they could about the implications which a renunciation of selfishness would have in becoming a Christian, we have a fairly strong way of understanding and explaining what it means to become a Christian.

We need to remember that Nettleton, Weeks and Finney all agreed with each other basically about the content of these fundamental theological matters. They were all part of the stream of New England Theology.

Later on in the history of modern American evangelicalism - say, a hundred years later - the Gospel call was proclaimed in the following way. People were called **to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour**, because the issue of sin was the point at which the message, as it was proclaimed, made contact with the sinner's lifestyle. The need of forgiveness, and the need to know Jesus, was the contact point. It was later on in the life of this new convert that the Christian was challenged **to accept Jesus Christ as his Lord**, as well as his Saviour. This was presented as involving a deeper level of commitment and dedication

than the previous initial step had done.

In a superficial way, accepting Jesus Christ as both Saviour and Lord is the same as making a surrender to God which involves the renunciation of selfishness in all its forms. We can debate whether the more modern new Christian would actually have been brought to a level of dedication as deep as might have happened under the New England Theology, but the same basic principle lies behind the two systems of teaching about dedication.

The great difference between the two systems was this. In the more modern pattern of teaching, people have been encouraged to think that they could become a Christian at the first level, of knowing Jesus Christ as Saviour, and those involved in follow-up would hope that the new convert would also reach the point, one day, perhaps not too far into the future, when the new Christian would also make the dedication involved in accepting Jesus Christ as Lord.

Whereas, in New England Theology, the prospective convert was taught that he or she could not become a Christian **at all** until selfishness was renounced, and Jesus Christ was Lord of all.

The New Englanders would certainly have taken the view that someone merely accepting Jesus Christ as Saviour did not know the first thing about what it meant to become a Christian, and that taking that step, without taking the second step as well, did not make a person into a Christian. They would have thought that the prospective convert had been seriously mis-instructed, and had been given a false hope.

Fruits of Modern Evangelical Arminianism

In the more modern evangelical understanding of the Gospel, mentioned above, there is no real parallel to the New England teaching that God has to be chosen and loved for his own worth and beauty, as an essential part of the meaning of the message we must preach.

The modern American evangelical message, which has impacted so widely around the world, is congenitally man-centred, middle-class and entrepreneurial in ways which seriously damage the content of the message. It has now been a long time since the central and basic Gospel appeal has called people to love God for His own worth, as it was in New England Congregational theology, and in the older Calvinism.

It is not much use blaming Charles Finney and Nathaniel Taylor for this. Although their message was man-centred in certain ways, and partly Arminian, their theology had other elements in it which balanced this man-centredness. There was a heavy emphasis on God as Moral Governor of the Universe, on the need to renounce selfishness, and on the deepest possible surrender to God, as fundamental parts of the Gospel that was proclaimed, if a person was to be classed as a Christian at all.

Perhaps the blame should be placed more upon the Methodists, and later upon the Baptists, and also upon the changing spirit of the age. Nobody in the churches had control over the spirit of the age.

In the later parts of the Twentieth Century, when modern Pentecostalism was having such a widespread impact, and the Charismatic Movement was in full swing, the praise was great, but the worship and choruses were too often "I - me" centred, heavily emphasising "God for me." Much of the praise was about what "God had done for me," and about what "I" was going to do as a result.

Was this emphasis Biblical? Yes, but it was not enough. The emphasis should have been more on God, and less on ourselves. God is worthy because of Who He is. Relatively speaking, this element was too often lacking in the Charismatic Movement, and in Pentecostalism before it.

Perhaps there needs to be a renewal of the rather extreme emphasis of Emmons, that God is to be loved for His own intrinsic worth, even if it means that I am damned for my sins as I deserve. We have gone too far in the other direction.

This is part of the long-term fruits of modern man-centred Arminianism.

What Did They Do About It?

What did the New England preachers do to avoid false conversions?

Nettleton and Finney were very different personalities, with very different styles of evangelism, preaching and ministry. They shared, however, far more in their theological beliefs, and a far greater common heritage, than one would ever gather from the story of their conflicts.

(a) There was a heavy emphasis on the holiness of God, and on the reasonableness and power of God's moral law, and of His government of the universe. In answer to their earnest prayers, this kind of preaching helped to produce deep conviction of sin. For both of them, sin was defined in terms of selfishness, so salvation was also defined in terms of being saved from selfishness, and of renouncing it. When this was done properly, there was deep "heart work," so that people got a clear view of the depths of their own sinfulness, and their rebellion against God.

(b) Both Nettleton and Finney, in their own peculiar ways, were experts in chasing people out of all the blind alleys and "refuges of lies" into which they fled, in order to escape the force of the conviction of sin. They both knew that people have an inveterate habit of looking for anything which will provide some relief, but which saves them from confronting the issue of their sinfulness

as God sees it, and as the Spirit of God reveals it to them.

(c) By the nature of the case, therefore, salvation not only involved faith in the atonement of Christ as the means of our forgiveness, but also involved total surrender to God over any matter of selfishness, and the choice of disinterested benevolence as the ultimate good, instead.

A Basic Difference

(d) The difference between them, and which became the core of the problem in the "New Measures" debate, and ongoing conflict, resulted more from their differing personalities, and from the way these differences affected the manner in which they conducted revival meetings.

Nettleton hated any visible signs of excitement, and tried to enforce quietness upon people who were deeply convicted of their sins. He had almost a pathological hatred of visible signs of excitement, and he deeply feared the bad results which such excitement might produce. His meetings contained deep excitement, and solemnity, of course, but it was all kept seriously under control. Davenport had cast a very long shadow in New England. So, avoiding visible excitement arose largely from the desire to avoid bad results, such as had flowed from Davenport's activities. On the other hand, however, Nettleton's revivals had a character very similar to the movements which had blessed Connecticut, and other parts of the north-east, so extensively in 1799.

Finney was a totally different type of person. He was much more a dramatic preacher. He felt very strongly the impact and value of eternal realities himself, and through his preaching, through his personal charisma, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, he could impart that impact to a congregation. So, Finney was not so frightened of excitement being displayed, although he did not go deliberately looking for it. Hence, he was more inclined than Nettleton to do certain things which went with excitement, flowed from it, or helped to promote it, than Nettleton would have done. He was more willing to adopt new measures which looked like being helpful in his cause, and which some people thought had a "tendency to excitement" written on them. After all, everybody knew that animal excitement led people to make decisions which many times had proved to be unstable and unreliable.

(e) As many people pointed out, it was his imitators, and the less mature followers of Finney, who helped to accentuate the less desirable results of these new measures. We have also to remember that the Methodists had been doing many of these "new measures" things for quite some years before Finney started to use them. So, the "new measures" controversy was less because these things were new. It was more because the New York Plan of Union preachers, like Finney and his friends, introduced these new measures into the more staid

Calvinistic and Congregational churches around New York state, instead of leaving them as they were, simply relegated to being practised by the despised Methodists. After all, the Methodists were rank Arminians, mostly uneducated, and who did things in church which were quite beyond the pail, so that no self-respecting Calvinist would want to copy their practices. Methodist excitement was believed by the Calvinists to be quite unhealthy for body, mind and soul, because Methodist theology was faulty, and because excitement created unstable decisions.

Finney on True and False Repentance

As an example which shows clearly the way Finney's teaching fits into the general pattern of the New England school of theology, here is a very brief outline of Finney's teaching on the difference between true and false repentance. It is a summary of Lecture 9, of his "Lectures to Professing Christians."

True Repentance: What is it?

"It involves a change of opinion respecting the nature of sin, and this **change of opinion** followed by a corresponding **change of feeling** towards sin." (The emphases are not in the original.)

It must be a right opinion. It must be the view of sin taken by God, resulting in a deep sense of 'godly sorrow' with respect to our past life, attitude and actions.

(a.) It includes a change of opinion in regard to the nature of sin.

(b.) It involves a change of opinion about the character of sin, in respect to our relation to God.

(c.) It involves a change of opinion in regard to the tendencies of sin.

(d.) It involves a change of opinion in regard to the punishment which sin deserves.

In true repentance, there must be a corresponding change of feeling. That is, we must feel deeply the seriously bad nature of sin; that is a breach of fellowship with God who is the kindest and most loving Person; that our sins produce corruption and deterioration, morally and spiritually, and we must feel the blameworthiness of sin, and that sinners deserve everlasting punishment.

What are the works or effects of genuine repentance?

(a.) If your repentance is genuine, there is in your mind a conscious change of views and feelings in regard to sin (as described above).

(b.) We will lose our disposition to sin. We no longer will want to do it. It

will appear hateful to us.

(c.) It will produce a reformation of conduct.

(d.) This will lead us to confess our sins, and to make restitution for sins we have committed.

(e.) It is a permanent change of character and conduct.

"True repentance is such a thorough change of feelings, and the individual who exercises it comes so to abhor sin, that he will persevere of course, and not go and take back all his repentance and return to sin again."

False Repentance: What is it?

It is the sorrow of the world. It is a sorrow for sin rising from worldly considerations, and motives. It seeks its own happiness, even in the world to come. That is, it seeks its own safety and security in the world to come, regardless of what will glorify God, or be what is best for the universe.

(a.) It is not based upon the change of opinions described above.

(b.) It is based upon selfishness.

How is False Repentance to be Recognised?

(a.) There is no change of feelings. People still love sin, although it might not be expedient to love it. Sin is only rejected because of the bad consequences that it brings to the person. It is not rejected because it dishonours God.

(b.) It produces death. That is, it does not produce the life of Christ, and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

(c.) It produces only a partial reformation of conduct. It produces a change in the behaviour of the person only to the extent which is needed to serve that person's selfish purpose. The rest of the person's life is not changed, because that is not necessary in order to achieve the selfish goal.

(d.) False sorrow is often temporary.

(e.) It is a forced reformation. That is, it requires arm-twisting, and will-power. It does not flow naturally from the overflowing power of a new love. After all, the person is forcing himself to do something that he really does not want to do, in order to achieve some other selfish goal.

(f.) Spurious repentance leads to self-righteousness.

(g.) It leads to false security.

(h.) It hardens the heart.

(i.) It sears the conscience.

(j.) It rejects Jesus Christ as the ground of hope. That is because we are relying upon our own efforts at repentance to impress God, and to achieve the selfish goal.

(k.) It is transient and temporary.

Finney's Observations

Finney always finished his sermons and lectures with some observations which flowed logically from what he had said previously.

* Much religion is spasmodic, because people are convicted of their sins, without being properly converted to Christ.

* Convicted sinners are still selfish, and feel that it would cost them a great deal to become a Christian, and renounce selfishness. They love sin, and hate Christ.

* Some so-called Christians think it would be very costly to them to become more dedicated to Christ. They are still selfish in many ways, and following Christ more closely would cost them many things that they really want to do.

* So, we see why some do not enjoy their religion. They are **hypocrites**.

* There you see why many professed converts, who have had very deep exercises at the time of their conversion, afterwards apostatize.

* We see why backsliders are often so miserable.

* We see why convicted sinners are afraid to pledge themselves to give up their sins.

* We see why some who profess to be Christians are so opposed to making any promises or pledges about being further committed to Christ.

* Sinners with the worldly kind of sorrow for their sins, can now see why they are not converted, and what would need to happen for them to be truly converted.

What is The New Birth? What is Regeneration?

Although we have visited this subject in a previous chapter, it will be a good thing to pay attention to it again, here, in the light of what has been said about true and false conversion.

We will look at Finney's definition of Regeneration, as expressed in one of his later writings, and comment upon it from Weeks's viewpoint.

“Regeneration then is a radical change of the ultimate intention, and, of course, of the end or object of life. We have seen, that the choice of an end is efficient in producing executive volitions, or the use of means to obtain its end. A selfish ultimate choice is, therefore, a wicked heart, out of which flows every evil; and a benevolent ultimate choice is a good heart, out of which flows every good and commendable deed.

Regeneration, to have the characteristics ascribed to it in the Bible, must consist in a change in the attitude of the will, or a change in its ultimate choice, intention, or preference; a change from selfishness to benevolence; from choosing self-gratification as the supreme and ultimate end of life, to the supreme and ultimate choice of the highest well-being of God and of the universe; from a state of entire consecration to self-interest, self-indulgence,

self-gratification for its own sake or as an end, and as the supreme end of life, to a state of entire consecration to God, and to the interests of his kingdom as the supreme and ultimate end of life." (3.)

Note that this definition is based upon the idea that regeneration and conversion are two aspects of the same process, or two names for the same thing. This change of heart, or change of direction, is something that the sinner is quite able to do, and is justly damned for not doing it. While the sinner can do it, he does not want to do it, unless the Holy Spirit persuades him to choose God instead of selfishness.

Weeks and Nettleton would have said that regeneration is a creative action of the Holy Spirit within a person. This act of God creates the possibility for the sinner to do something that he was not able to do before. It creates the ability, and desire, for the sinner to turn to God, and to repent of all of his sins. The creative act of the Holy Spirit is something in which the sinner has **no** active part or choice.

As a result of this action by the Holy Spirit, the sinner would do all the things which Finney listed above, by his own choice, and because, now, he wanted to do it all. Previously, the sinner had no desire for God, or ability to turn from his selfishness.

For Weeks, regeneration and conversion are not the same thing. Regeneration refers to the creative act of the Holy Spirit, which actually creates the changed heart in the prospective Christian. Conversion, then, is the name for all the changes that Finney described, which will follow. All of these changes involve a decision by the new Christian. The Christian, however, is only working out in practice all of the various possibilities that were created in him by the action of the Holy Spirit.

So, Weeks would have agreed with Finney about the total and absolute change which should take place in the life of the Christian. He would disagree with Finney about the sinner having any ability to make this change himself. Weeks believed that the Holy Spirit did not merely place persuasion in front of the prospective Christian. In fact, the Holy Spirit would make the change of heart first, and then the new Christian would do what he could not do before. He would want to make the change, where he did not want to do it before. He would want to persevere in that path. So, it would be a life-long and complete change of direction, and of ultimate intention and goal.

Concluding Comment

Whether one agrees with Finney, or with Weeks and Nettleton, about the processes involved in regeneration, they both envisaged a complete and radical

change in any person who had truly become a Christian. So they all had powerful, detailed, and serious teaching about the nature of the new birth, and the radical change of life which was involved. They all believed that, if this radical change did not occur, then the "Christian" was deluded, and had not been converted at all. An alleged conversion with no radical change, and no real holiness, was a false conversion.

Although this cannot be proved, I cannot help feeling that Finney's extensive teaching about the radical nature of the change required in the new birth, and his repeated emphasis upon it, would probably have created a situation where a high percentage of his converts would have stood the tests of time. I do not really see that Finney would have seen the high proportion of spurious conversions in his work which Nettleton and Weeks prophesied would occur.

I think that it would be in the later periods of evangelicalism, when these strong teachings were no longer emphasised in the same way, when the great number of spurious conversions would be more likely to happen. When Jesus Christ was offered to people as Saviour, but not as Lord, and when the radical nature of regeneration was no longer spelled out with such force and detail, that is the time when the spurious conversions would much more easily occur.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

THE 1830-1831 REVIVALin CENTRAL and WESTERN NEW YORK

This chapter continues the story of the revivals which occurred in upstate New York after 1826, and places emphasis upon the next main period of revivals, which occurred in 1830 and 1831.

Our chapter about 1826 only dealt with revivals in Ithaca, and in the Presbytery of Oneida, and with the aftermath of the Oneida revivals. In fact, the 1826 movement was much more widespread.

The revivals in 1827 were far less common than in the previous year. In 1828 the number was slightly increased, and declined again in 1829. The eighteen months from the summer of 1830, through to the end of 1831, marked one of the two main peaks of revival activity during this entire period called the Second Great Awakening.

We saw that the first of these peaks occurred mainly in 1799, and continued for several years. Other lesser peaks, which were not so widespread in their impact, occurred in 1815 through to 1818, then in 1820, and 1826, although revivals occurred more or less every year.

The Presbyterians declared this period from mid-1830, to be "a year of the Right Hand of the Most High," as 1826 had also been.

The Baptists in Central New York saw the whole period from 1830 through to 1843 as a time of major advance. However, for all the denominations, the tempo rose and fell, reaching another peak in 1842 and 1843.

The Spirit of Prayer

There are a number of references scattered through the literature to the fact that the Concert of Prayer, which commenced in the 1790s, had been continued in many places through the intervening years. (1.)

This prayer ministry is really the basis beneath all of the successes of this period in which spiritual awakening was enjoyed. For example, Fowler says, "In 1815 the Presbytery of Oneida recommended the Monthly Concert of Prayer to its churches, and at its next session relates that it had been observed by all of the number to whom it was made known; and in its report of religion in 1818 it says: 'The Monthly Concert in Prayer is universally observed.' This was kept up in all the Presbyteries, and is frequently mentioned as long as the concert was generally maintained." (2.)

The main writer who provides details about the spirit of agonising intercessory prayer which undergirded the upsurge of revival in 1830 is Charles G. Finney. It appears, naturally, in the chapter about the 1830 revival in Rochester in his Autobiography. This is consistent with the emphasis upon

intercessory prayer which he outlined a few years later in his "Lectures on Revivals."

Finney had considerable personal experience of this kind of prayer, and knew many others who experienced it. He also knew the fundamentally important role it played in spiritual awakenings, and in many other aspects of the Christian life.

Finney's Testimony

Finney mentions, first of all, a fellow minister who came onto the canal boat, as Finney was travelling to Rochester. Upon learning where Finney was going, and why, this minister decided to go to Rochester with him.

> "He almost immediately fell under great conviction, and the work was very deep with him. We had been there but a few days when this minister became so convicted he could not help weeping aloud at one time as he passed along the street. The Lord gave him a powerful spirit of prayer, and his heart was broken. As he and I prayed much together, I was struck with his faith in regard to what the Lord was going to do there. I recollect he would say, 'Lord, I do not know how it is; but I seem to know that thou art going to do a great work in this city.' The Spirit of prayer was poured out powerfully, so much so that some persons stayed away from the public services to pray, being unable to restrain their feelings under preaching." (3.)

Also present in Rochester at that time was a Mr. Abel Clary.

> "He was converted in the same revival in which I was. He had been licensed to preach; but his spirit of prayer was such, he was so burdened with the souls of men, that he was not able to preach much, his whole time and strength being given to prayer. The burden of his soul would frequently be so great that he was unable to stand, and he would writhe and groan in agony in a most wonderful manner. I was well acquainted with him, and knew something of the wonderful spirit of prayer that was upon him. He was a very silent man, as almost all are who have that powerful spirit of prayer." (4.)

Finney relates an incident which occurred in Rochester involving Abel Clary, and then follows this incident with a more general comment.

> "I knew at the time a considerable number of men who were exercised in the same way,.. and a large number of women, partook of the same Spirit, and spent a great part of their time in prayer.... This Mr. Clary continued in Rochester as long as I did, and did not leave until after I had left. He never, that I could learn, appeared in public, but gave himself wholly to prayer. There were a good many cases in Rochester in which people were exercised with this spirit of agonizing travail of soul." (5.)

Finney mentions by name "Father" Nash, to whom reference is made in another chapter, and three Deacons. Rosell and Dupuis provide a little extra

information in their footnotes about two of these men. (6.)

Regarding the prayer movement behind this revival, Hotchkin notes, from the Presbytery of Tioga, “The people of God have been excited to pray with uncommon fervency, 'Thy Kingdom come,' and the promise has been, in many cases, most signally verified, 'Before they call, I will answer and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.'” (7.)

The Start of the 1830 Revival

The following analysis of the revival in central and western New York is based upon published **Presbyterian sources**, as these provide a fuller account of events than the published historical records of the other denominations.

However, **Methodist** material has been inserted into the story at relevant points.

Revivals continued more or less throughout the period, and so it is hard to say just where the great movement of 1830 began.

The Rev. Dr. Dirck Lansing described events in his church in Utica in 1829. “Early in the autumn of 1829, there were strong indications of the presence of the spirit of God among us, and by winter there was a general solemnity throughout the city. The two Presbyterian churches united in this work. More than 250 united with my church (Bleecker Street) during this revival, which continued for nearly eighteen months; about the same number with the First Church, and many with churches of other denominations.” (8.)

Finney arrived in Rochester in September, 1830, to supply for some months the vacant pulpit of the Third Presbyterian Church.

It should be noted that the revival did not start in Rochester, although many people at the time thought that it did. (9.) The widespread impact of Finney's ministry in Rochester provided a great impetus to the movement.

In The Synod of Geneva

The Synod of Geneva contained the Presbytery of Geneva, along with the Presbyteries of Chenango, Onondaga, Cayuga, Cortland, Tioga, Chemung and Bath. Regarding 1829, only a few churches in the whole synod had reported revivals. In 1830 - 1831 only a few churches were NOT blessed. Of these Presbyteries, Geneva, Cortland, Cayuga and Chenango reported especially good results for the year.

The **Presbytery of Geneva** published an account of the spread of the revival in its area. This Report was published again, in a much briefer, summarised form by Hotchkin, and parts of it were quoted, or were re-written, at some length by Reed and Matheson. These include:-

> “In **Geneva** the first indications of a work of grace were manifested in the Female Seminary, in the month of June, 1830. Others, not connected with the Seminary, soon became interested in the work, and though it was not

powerful, nor general, it continued with various degrees of interest through the summer and autumn, every week furnishing some new cases of hopeful conversion to God. Some time in January, 1831, the work appeared to receive a new impulse, and until about the last of March, the number of hopeful conversions was from twelve to twenty each week. From this time it gradually declined until, in about a year from the time of its commencement, it might be said to have closed.

When at its greatest height, no irregularities were witnessed, no crying out in public worship, no boisterous expressions of joy, no audible sighing or groaning, and, indeed, little else than the natural expression of a soul deeply impressed with a sense of guilt, or calmly reposing by faith on the Lord Jesus Christ. The whole number who professed a hope of renewing grace, was about two hundred and seventy; of these, forty or fifty were members of the Female Seminary, most of whom being from abroad, did not unite with the church of Geneva. The number of those who united with the Presbyterian church of Geneva, was more than two hundred." (10.)

In the township of Geneva, the Methodist minister, the Rev. Seth Mattison, wrote:- "The work of reformation is going on in Geneva, N.Y., and the number of awakened and converted is probably three hundred, forty of whom have joined on trial in our church." (11.)

"Some time in November, 1830, an unusual seriousness was observed in **Canandaigua**. An increased attention to the ordinary means of grace was manifest, and some of the church were encouraged to increase their efforts for a genuine revival of God's work. Special seasons of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, and religious conference, were observed with obvious benefit. About the middle of January, the work might be said to have become general. It continued with various degrees of interest until the approach of summer, and resulted in the hopeful conversion of about one hundred souls."

"The church of **Castleton,** in 1830, had been organised about three years previous, and consisted of thirty-four members... The first favorable indications of a revival... appeared in an increased spirit of prayer among a few female members of the church, at their weekly prayer-meeting. An increasing seriousness was visible in the congregation, but nothing of a very marked character till about the middle of December. At this time a few persons were known to be inquiring, and a meeting for such as desired personal conversation on the subject of religion, was appointed.

From this time the work became general. In the spring it declined, and through the summer no special interest was manifested. In October a protracted meeting was held, and, in connexion with it, a number more professed to embrace the Saviour. The whole number who united with the church during the year, as the result of this revival, was one hundred and

six. The subjects of the work were of all ages, from the child of ten to the man of seventy." (12.)

At **Seneca Falls**, signs of the revival began to appear in the autumn of 1830. In the previous three years there had been several "perplexing cases of discipline" which arose, one after the other in quick succession, and seemed to undermine the fabric of the church. "But even then there was praying and weeping in secret places. Some there were who even then could look through the darkness and the storm, and could lay hold upon the promises of God. A female prayer meeting, the monthly concert, and some other meetings, called together a few constant souls, who knew where their strength lay, and there they were strong in the Lord." In 1828 and 1829 a few conversions had occurred. Many people saw that a revival was needed, and began to expect that one would be granted.

> "At an evening prayer meeting, it was proposed that each Christian present should engage to converse faithfully with at least one impenitent sinner the next day, and several engaged to do it. The result was manifestly favorable. Some time in December, at a little prayer meeting, an unusual spirit of prayer, an earnest wrestling of the soul with God, was manifest. Towards the close of the meeting, a request was made to the impenitent who were present, and who desired an interest in the prayers of God's people, to signify it by rising. Five or six arose. This was the first *public* expression of anxiety on the part of the impenitent.
>
> A general visitation of the congregation was now commenced, and many were found anxiously concerned for their souls. The meetings became crowded, attentive, and solemn. On one occasion, near the close of the evening service, it was proposed to such as were resolved to submit to God that night, to signify it by rising; seven arose, and all but one were the next morning rejoicing in hope, and that one embraced a hope soon after. The same experiment was tried two or three times afterwards, but not with the same success.
>
> Meetings for the anxious inquirers, conducted in the usual way, were attended with very favorable results. These meetings were evidently much blessed. The work soon extended to other parts of the town, where frequent meetings were held, and the same general course of measuers pursued. The work continued through the winter, and resulted in the addition of one hundred and twenty-seven to the [Presbyterian] church." (13.)

The **Methodists** reported in Seneca Falls "more than a hundred converted to God within a few days, and the work still advancing." (14.)

> "In **Palmyra** the revival commenced near the last of September, 1830. A few individuals began to feel and deplore the state of spiritual declension which at that time existed; the spirit of prayer began to revive in the church, and the members, one by one, came up to the help of the Lord.

No uncommon measures were used to produce excitement; the principal means used, were the preaching of the word and prayer. The meetings were characterized by great stillness and solemnity. A deep solemnity pervaded the whole community, and few remained wholly unconcerned. Eighty-two united with the Presbyterian Church." (15.)

The Report from the Geneva Presbytery described similar events in a total of 28 places in their area. Every congregation in the Presbytery was blessed. The number of new members taken by churches in that Presbytery totalled about 1,800.

The **Presbytery of Chenango** submitted their annual Narrative of the work of God for 1831 to the Synod of Geneva.

"Most of our churches have shared more or less in the reviving influences of God's Spirit, and, with several of them, it has been truly a day of the right-hand of the Most High. An unusual number of all ages, from the child to the man of grey hairs, and from the self-righteous moralist to the most profligate and abandoned, has been hopefully brought into the kingdom of Christ; and in several places large accessions have been made to the visible church. In connexion with this, we deem it worthy of notice that God seemed to have owned, and signally blessed protracted meetings."

Remarks about the work of God from the **Presbytery of Cortland** included:-

"Most of the churches have been favored with a season of revival. The number of recent converts is estimated at about five hundred, most of whom have already been admitted to the fellowship of the churches. The congregations most favored, are Cazenovia, Smithfield, Preble, Homer, Pitcher, Freetown, and De Ruyter. From twenty to one hundred have been added to each of these churches."

The **Presbytery of Tioga** reported:-

"With many of our churches the past year has been a year of the right-hand of the Most High. These showers of heavenly influence, of which it has been our privilege to hear in so many places, and which seem to mark a new era in the church, have passed over our hills and our valleys, causing the parched desert to bloom like the garden of God. The churches which have been most distinguished by the divine mercy in these visitations, are those of Berkshire, Richford, Owego, Binghamton, Union, Nanticoke, Spencer, and Lislewest. The churches of Danby, Caroline and Virgil, have not been passed by, but some drops of mercy have descended upon them, and some precious souls, as we hope, have been born into the kingdom of God's dear Son. The number that has been added to the church, as the fruits of these revivals, is about four hundred, and the state of religion in the several places which have been named, is still interesting.

The different agencies which have been employed in the

production and promotion of this work, have been the ordinary means of grace; intelligence of revivals in other places; monthly tract distribution; temperance societies; morning prayer meetings; and days of special fasting and prayer. But in addition to all these, the special influences of the Holy Spirit, without which the combined influence of all other causes would be totally and for ever in vain. The people of God have been excited to pray with uncommon fervency, 'Thy kingdom come,' and the promise has been, in many cases, most signally verified, 'Before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.'" (16.)

Fowler tells us that the Presbytery of Tioga stated that the Holy Spirit had visited their area in a remarkable way. "Protracted meetings were introduced and blessed. One hundred joined the Newark Church on a single Sabbath, and seventy-three the church at Cortlandville during the year." (17.)

In April, 1831, the **Presbytery of Cayuga** recorded:-

"The Spirit of the Lord has been poured upon some of our churches in a manner which has gladdened saints on earth, and sent joy to the bosoms of kindred spirits above. The churches which have been more especially blessed with refreshing showers of grace, are those of Elbridge, Skeneatoles, Auburn, Cayuga, Ludlowville, and Ithaca."

On February 14th, 1832, this Presbytery reported:-

"It has pleased our glorious Redeemer, who sits as King in his holy hill of Zion, to grant to most of the churches within our bounds, the precious effusions of the Holy Spirit, by which the hearts of Zion's friends have been encouraged and made glad. The number of churches under the care of the Presbytery is thirty-one. Of these, twenty-two have been represented at our present meeting, and from their reports it appears that some addition has been made to each during the year, and that only two have been passed by in the general visitation of divine influences with which the church has been blessed. In some of the churches, the work has been more powerful and extensive than any they had before enjoyed; in others it was more gradual in its progress, and the Spirit's influence distilled like the dew. But in all, it has been of such a character, as clearly displayed the sovereignty of divine grace, and proved it to be the work of God. The whole number added to these churches the last year, exceeds twelve hundred. In the several congregations their number has varied from fifteen to two hundred. The churches which have received the largest accessions are the first and second churches of Auburn, while in other congregations less numerous, the work has been equally, or even more extensive and powerful, in proportion to their numbers." (18.)

In The Synod of Genesee

The other Presbyterian Synod in western New York was the Synod of

Genesee, which consisted of the Presbyteries of Rochester, Niagara, Buffalo, Genesee, Ontario and Angelica.

This Synod issued a "Narrative" for September, 1831, which said:-

"Last year only a few churches were reported as refreshed by the dews of divine grace; but this year, but few within our bounds are left without sharing more or less in the blessing of God.

The **Presbytery of Buffalo** report nine hundred communicants added to their churches during the year. Twenty churches have enjoyed a season of divine grace. Among the more favored in this respect, are, Buffalo, Sheridan, Evans, and Aurora. At Aurora, a protracted meeting was held the summer past, and continued during ten days. The assembly at last became so large, that they retired to a neighboring grove, where, it is thought, nearly three thousand people were present the last Sabbath of the meeting. During that meeting no less than from two hundred to three hundred hopeful conversions took place."

"In **Genesee Presbytery**, fifteen churches have been visited by the Holy Spirit; and about nine hundred members have been added to the churches.

In the **Presbytery of Rochester**, the work of God has been no less conspicuous. The three churches of Rochester have increased during the year by the number of six hundred and thirty-five members. Twelve or thirteen other churches have likewise been revived, and very considerable additions made to the most of them. Pittsford and North Bergen have experienced a more powerful work of the Spirit, perhaps, than any other in that Presbytery. The whole number reported as added to the churches last year, is twelve hundred and twenty-five.

The **Presbytery of Niagara** state that six hundred members have been added to the churches under their care, and twelve towns are reported as having received a revival from the Great Head of the Church. Among the churches most highly favored, we might name Lockport, Albion, Niagara Falls, and others. In Lockport, a very general effusion of the Spirit was had. Of one protracted meeting, the fruits in cases of professed conversion, were one hundred and fifty. To the church there, one hundred and ninety were added last year." (19.)

The **Ontario Presbytery** reported eleven churches revived, especially North Bristol, Lima and Richmond. 410 had already been added to the churches and more were expected.

The total of new members for twelve months in the Synod of Genesee was 4,035. About 74 churches saw revivals, and nine or ten new churches were founded.

In The Synod of Utica

While boundaries of the various Presbyterian Synods changed from time to time, the main Synod covering the central area of New York state was the Synod of Utica, which included the Presbyteries of Oneida, Oswego, Saint Lawrence, Watertown, Otsego, Ogdensburg and Delaware. The Synod of Albany was more to the east.

For 1830, the Synod of Utica reported:-

> "To the praise and glory of God, we record the heart cheering fact that he has graciously appeared to build up Zion among us. Sacketts Harbor, Brownville, Belleville, first and second Lowville, in the Presbytery of Watertown; Mexico, Parish and Camden, in the Presbytery of Oswego; Western, Remsen, Trenton, Holland Patent, Floyd, Rome, Augusta, Westmoreland, New York Mills and Utica, in the Presbytery of Oneida; and Hartwick and Morrisville in the Presbytery of Otsego, are most to be noted for the divine presence and power, while some revivals previously reported are in progress now and of growing interest. About six hundred have been gathered into these churches, and many more are likely to follow." (20.)

These places, however, represented only the tip of the iceberg.

The report submitted by the Presbytery of Oneida had other names added, as well as the ones mentioned by the Synod. This Presbytery mentioned that "union meetings," and "three days' meetings" have been held with happy results.

1831 seemed to be an even better year, overall, according to the reports on the state of religion issued by the General Assembly and the various synods.

The Synod of Utica reported:- "The places that have been visited the past year with the special effusions of the Spirit are more numerous, perhaps, in this part of the country than at any previous period."

The Synod listed especially:- in Saint Lawrence Presbytery, "Potsdam and Gouverneur and places in the vicinity." 700 conversions were claimed within the Presbytery.

In Watertown Presbytery, "Belleville, Sacketts Harbor, Adams, Brownville, Le Roy, Orleans, Watertown, Lowville, Martinsburg, Denmark, Turin and Leyden." Between two and three thousand conversions were estimated, with all the effectiveness ascribed to almighty power of God, and that their sufficiency was of God alone. Frequently, meetings had been protracted for many successive days. But, "plain preaching of the law and the gospel, preceded, accompanied and followed by fervent, effectual prayer" had been the chief means used, linked to "affectionate and urgent conversation with individuals," especially in the protracted meetings.

"Every town in Oswego Presbytery, with one exception, where the gospel is statedly preached, and particularly Camden, Florence, Volney, Oswego, New Haven, Mexico, Richland, Sandy Creek and Hannibal."

"Westford, Worcester, Fly Creek, Maryland, Cooperstown, Hartwick,

Milford, New Lisbon, Butternuts and Bowman's Creek, in the Otsego Presbytery."

"Many towns in Oneida county and particularly, Trenton, Floyd, Boonville, Rome, Bridgewater, Fairfield, Norway and Vernon, were copiously showered." (21.)

It is in some of these reports from Presbyteries in the Synod of Utica that we get news about protracted meetings which lasted for more than three or four days.

For example, part of the news from the Presbytery of Oneida says:- "A meeting of nine days' continuance at New Hartford was greatly blessed, and during the year between 50 and 60 were admitted to the church... A revival at Mount Vernon during the winter brought about 50 into the church, and a fourteen days' meeting there afterwards was blessed savingly to 50 or 60 souls.

A protracted meeting in the First Church, Rome, resulted in 20 professed conversions. In the course of the summer a meeting was appointed three miles from the village, and as no more convenient place could be procured, it was held in a mill. So much interest was excited, that the meeting was continued the next day, and from 15 to 20 rejoiced in the Saviour.

About 120 indulged hope for themselves in the congregation of the Second Church during the first year of its existence, which closed a month ago. A protracted meeting lasting for fifteen days was held there during the last month, and it is computed that, in the course of it, 300 were converted in the village and in the neighboring towns." (22.)

Rochester

Several difficulties existed in, and between, the three Presbyterian congregations in Rochester, as outlined by Finney in his "Memoirs." The arrival of Finney was apparently the catalyst which led to the solution of these problems, and the revival soon followed.

He arrived in Rochester on 10th September, 1830, and stayed until 6th March, 1831, to supply the pulpit of the Third Presbyterian church. During that time he preached 98 times in the three Presbyterian churches in Rochester.

He also gave some weekly lectures in the nearby town of Pittsford, and preached occasionally in the towns of Clarkson, Brockport, Ogden, Henrietta, and Penfield.

The first short period was spent preaching to the members, before he attempted to preach to the unconverted.

Bearing in mind what has already been said about the spirit of prayer which arose in relation to Finney's work here, there were immediate signs of revival, and soon conversions began to occur at a remarkable rate.

The First Church held a Communion service on January, 2nd, 1831, and received one hundred new members. Others were received later.

The Third Church received 83 new members on December 12th, 37 more on January 16th, and 39 more just after Finney had left, on March 20th.

As mentioned earlier, the three congregations added 635 members in the twelve months following the summer of 1830.

The means Finney used were preaching, much public and private prayer, personal conversation and inquiry meetings. A special four-days protracted meeting was held near the end of February in Rochester. It was in Rochester also that Finney began using the so-called "anxious seat," wherein people were asked to take special seats, and thus declare their anxious concern. He had not used it in that strict form beforehand.

Previously, people had perhaps been asked to stand, to indicate their need of prayer. George Gale had done that kind of thing before Finney was converted.

The **Methodist** congregations in the Rochester area were led by the Rev. Glezen Fillmore, Presiding Elder. On March 1st, 1831, he wrote:-

> "A sense of duty calls me to say a few words about the reformation in this place. At the commencement of the conference year [July, 1830] I found in this station a pious people in a good state of discipline, and united to pray for a reformation. Every succeeding Sabbath presented an increasing seriousness upon the face of the congregation until the last of August, when we joined with several neighboring circuits in a camp-meeting at Henrietta, about nine miles from this place. From this meeting we may date a powerful reformation in Rochester.
>
> After sixteen had professed conversion in our congregation the Rev. Mr. Finney commenced his labors in the Presbyterian congregations, and the work became general through the village. As the fruit of this reformation the Methodist Church has received two hundred and fifty-six members, the three Presbyterian churches together probably about three hundred and fifty, and the Baptist church probably about one hundred. Accessions are said to have been made to the Protestant Episcopal Churches, but to what amount I do not know.
>
> The work in the Methodist congregation has never been as powerful, nor appeared as promising, as at present. Our house, although respectable for size, is by no means sufficient for the congregation, and the society are preparing to erect a second to be eighty feet by one hundred. The site is as good as any one in the village, and the society is united, and abundant in zeal and liberality." (23.)

Dated September 12th, 1831, Fillmore wrote:- "For the last six months the reformation in this place has been confined chiefly to our Church. Though more moderate, a few are converted every week, and some of late have professed a deeper work of grace. The walls of our second meeting-house are nearly completed."

Dated March, 1832, Fillmore wrote:- "We closed a four days' meeting last Sabbath evening, at which seventy-five professed justifying faith, and about the same number the blessing of a clean heart. The work is still progressing. Since its commencement we have received six hundred and ninety-eight members, and others are ready to present themselves." (24.)

Reformation in Rochester

The population of Rochester at the time of this revival was about 10,000. From the foregoing descriptions, we can see that the number of professed conversions represented about fifteen or twenty percent of the population. This was quite apart from the number of citizens who were already members of one or another of the churches. Such happenings would of necessity produce a marked impact upon the lifestyle and manners of the people, and on the whole flavour of society.

This impact produced its results in Rochester for many years, despite the rapid changes and movements of population which occurred at that time. The steady migration west by many thousands of people meant that more than half of the population had either died or moved out of Rochester before 1840. The total population of the town was also climbing steadily.

Finney himself comments upon the reformation which took place in the town as a result of the revival, mentioning only one aspect of it. He said that the revival made a great change in the moral state and subsequent history of Rochester. The great majority of the leading men and women of the city were converted.

> "It was a young city, full of thrift and enterprize, and full of sin. The inhabitants were intelligent and enterprizing in the highest degree; but as the revival swept through the town and converted the great mass of the most influential people both male and female, the change in the order, sobriety, and morality of the city was wonderful.
>
> At a subsequent period,... I was conversing with a lawyer who was converted at this revival of which I have been speaking, and who soon after had been made district attorney of the city, the same that some call prosecuting attorney. His business was to superintend the prosecution of criminals. From his position he was made thoroughly acquainted with the history of crime in that city. In speaking of the revival in which he was converted, he said to me many years afterwards: 'I have been examining the records of the criminal courts, and I find this striking fact, that whereas our city has *increased* since that revival three-fold, there is not one third as many prosecutions for crime as there had been up to that time.'
>
> 'Thus crime,' he says, 'has *decreased* two thirds, and the population has *increased* two thirds. This is,' he said, 'the wonderful influence that that revival had had upon the community.' Indeed by the

power of that revival public sentiment has been molded (sic). The public affairs of the city have been, in a great measure in the hands of Christian men. The great weight of character has been on the side of Christ, and their public business had been conducted accordingly." (25.)

A second aspect of the reformation has been easier for historians to handle, and so has been studied in much more detail. That is the extent to which the Christians of Rochester got involved in the many and varied reform movements, such as the Temperance movement, the movements towards the abolition of slavery, women's rights, and Gospel outreach activities of many kinds. (26.)

Robinson quotes from an historical address, prepared in 1869, by the Rev. Dr. Charles P. Bush.

> "The grandeur of that revival is not to be estimated by numbers alone. The whole community was stirred, the highest and the lowest. Religion was the one topic of conversation... The change wrought by that revival in the whole face of society was simply amazing. Noise and confusion, rowdyism and lawlessness passed away. Sobriety and order, industry and thrift had taken their place. The only theatre, with which the village had been dishonored, was closed. So the meetings continued, week after week, and month after month, rising in interest and deepening in solemnity... It is worthy of special notice that an unusually large number of the leading men of the place, the lawyers, the judges, the physicians, the merchants and master mechanics were among the converts... That most of them were truly converted is attested by their lives... And, to his honor be it said, that Rev. Dr. Penney, then pastor of the First Church of this place, although highly conservative and cautious, both by nature and foreign education, took Mr. Finney by the hand when he first came, and stood by him to the last. His church was open for a part of the meetings until that disaster, the separating of the walls, by which it came so near falling on our heads... The revival of 1831 did not end suddenly. It seemed to run on for a series of years, 1832, '33, '34 and '35 all being distinguished by special effusions of the Spirit." (27.)

Dr. Penney resigned as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in 1833, for reasons of health. At that stage, the membership of the First Church totalled 477, which was the highest it had ever been, up to that time. In 1831 and 1832 there had been 251 additions to the membership, of whom 205 were by profession of faith. In one of the years, 85 baptisms took place. This peak of membership occurred in 1833 despite the fact that an outbreak of cholera took place in 1832, and continued for several years, in which many people died, and in which some of the leaders in the First Church took a major role in caring for the sick, and in dealing with the dead bodies. (28.)

But, news of what was happening during the revival at Rochester spread

throughout the surrounding districts, and helped promote other revivals in many places. The month of January, 1831, seems to have been the most powerful in this regard, in many places.

More Methodist Details and Statistics

The boundaries of the Methodist Conferences and Districts did not bear much relationship to the boundaries of the Presbyterian Synods or Presbyteries, nor did the Methodist circuits bear much relationship to the Presbyterian parishes or ministerial charges.

The Genesee Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church spread over most of western New York, as far west as Buffalo. It was divided into a number of Districts, and a Presiding Elder was appointed to have superintendence of each of these. The year 1828 had marked the formation of the Oneida Conference, to the east. This step naturally had a radical effect upon the statistics for the (slightly) older Genesee Conference, which had existed since 1810. Membership in the Methodist churches depended upon attending the class meetings regularly, and maintaining a standard of Christian living and witness.

Statistics for the Conference year **1829 - 1830** yielded a total membership for the Genesee Conference of 15,246, which was an increase of 1,674 over the previous year. (29.)

The Conference year for **1830 - 1831** saw a number of revivals taking place in various circuits around the area covered by the Genesee Conference.

For example, Methodists in the **Ulysses and Ovid Circuit**, Genesee Conference, reported a general revival in the second half of 1829, which spread through 1830, and into 1831.

In a letter dated December 23, 1829, the minister wrote:- "'The Lord of Hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.' We have on this circuit what may be called a general revival. The camp-meeting of August last is justly regarded as having very materially contributed to it. Our faithful brethren who have sown the good seed of the kingdom in former years will thank the great Husbandman for the harvest which we are permitted to gather. The revival is now going on in all the towns and in nearly all the congregations included in this circuit. The towns which are most particularly favored are Ulysses, Trumansburgh, Hector, Covent, Lodi and Ovid. In the place last mentioned the work is very powerful. Our November quarterly meeting was there, and seventeen were believed to be converted on the occasion.

As I have no correct data I am unable to mention the exact number admitted to our Societies since we came to the circuit (early in 1829). To be within bounds, I should say that it is probably from one hundred and fifty to two hundred."

Thirteen months later, in his peculiar Methodist way, he reported:- "The God

of all grace is still gloriously at work on this circuit The towns of Lodi, Ulysses and Ovid are particularly favoured. The peculiarities of Calvinism, Unitarianism, as well as infidelity, are giving way before the march of truth, and sinners by scores are turning to the Lord." (30.)

In this same general area, the **Presbyterian** Church in Ovid received 38 new members by profession of faith in the twelve months following the summer of 1830. In Hector, 24 joined the Presbyterian Church, when a period of "seriousness" followed a four-days protracted meeting. In the Ulysses - Trumansburgh area, the Presbyterian congregation received 125 new members by profession. (31.)

As far west as **Buffalo**, the Methodists had never seen a general revival in their area before 1830. In mid-1830, the minister (the Rev. L. B. Castle) said eighty names were on the circuit roll. His report, dated February 7th, 1831, said that thirty names had been removed from the roll, and fifty-two had joined.

> "God, in the plenitude of his grace, is now visiting us. Many of the old members have been renewed in the spirit of their minds. With scores of penitents we have wept and prayed, and with nearly fifty we have rejoiced in their resurrection from death unto life. We are encouraged to hope that this is but the beginning of good days." Months later, Castle thought that about three hundred had been brought from darkness to light, before the end of the winter, and between eighty and ninety had been admitted on trial for membership.
>
> In the **Warsaw Circuit**, and in the village of Warsaw, meetings were held in private dwellings, and then were moved to an old ashery, which was fitted up for meetings for several months. About one hundred and seventy-five conversions resulted from these meetings. Over the whole circuit, "there were some three hundred conversions, two hundred and sixty-seven being admitted to the church. The minister (the Rev. Hiram May) baptized one hundred and forty-seven. At one quarterly meeting, about seventy were converted. "Many of the converts were prominent citizens, and became eminent Christians. Several of them became ministers."

Abner Chase was Presiding Elder in the **Ontario District**. He wrote from Penn Yan:- "The great Head of the Church is triumphing gloriously in this part of the country. Hundreds have professed conversion within the Ontario District during the present Conference year. Such miracles of mercy I never witnessed before." Chase had indeed seen many revivals since he started preaching.

The following report concerned the **Sweden and Brockport circuit**, up to the middle of 1831.

> "This gracious work has been going forward for several months, desolating the ranks of error and infidelity, and laying the mighty at the foot of the cross; men of almost every profession and grade in society have yielded to its hallowing influences, and are now rejoicing in its saving results.

More than forty persons have been admitted as probationers for membership in our church in this village, (Brockport). Two new societies have been organized in the bounds of this circuit, one of which contains thirty or forty members, and most appointments are now sharing in the work, and all denominations among us are measurably participating in the blessing."

The Presiding Elder in the Genesee District had said that about one hundred had been converted in the village of **Le Roy** in the space of one week, and that he had scarcely witnessed such a season of general revival in the whole course of his ministry.

"On the **Ridgway Circuit** this year, Revs Mifflin Harker and J. Brakeman preachers, there were awakenings and conversions at several appointments, resulting from the labors of four-days' meetings; and especially at Yates, where the meeting was prolonged to seven days, there was an extensive work, some ninety or more bearing testimony to the joys of the religion of Jesus Christ." Harker stated that between four and five hundred had been received on trial, and the glorious work was still advancing.

About five hundred were converted during the year in the **Victor and Mendon Circuit**, with about one hundred conversions in the township of Victor itself. Philo Woodworth was the minister.

"Bishop Hedding declared his belief that this work on the Victor and Mendon Circuit was the greatest that had ever taken place in the Methodist Church within so small a territory. There was considerable opposition at several points, but the enemy was completely out-generaled, and from victory to conquest, on and on, marched the soldiers of Christ. It was one of the great years of Brother Woodworth's itinerant life. In an account to the 'Christian Advocate,' he said in concluding: 'We have received three hundred on trial since Conference! Glory to God in the highest! Our hearts are made glad in the rock of our salvation!'"

Statistics for the Conference year of **1830 - 1831** for the Genesee Conference show it "was one of the most extraordinary for evangelical labors and success." The increase of membership for the year was 4,884, bringing the total membership throughout the Conference to just over 20,000. Membership in the Ulysses Circuit jumped to 1,273 members, and the Perry and Le Roy Circuit rose to 1,378. (32.)

For the Conference year, **1831 - 1832**, another increase in total membership occurred. The increase was 1,370, making a total for the whole Conference of 21,471 members. (33.)

The increase for the next year, **1832 - 1833**, was 1,744 members, although the historian said allowance must be made for the fact that this Conference year lasted for fifteen months, instead of only twelve months. (34)

Whatever criticisms might be made of Methodist theology, or of their methods of evangelism, or of the way they counselled new converts, or of their

management of revivals, they were aggressively evangelistic, and the Lord was certainly blessing their work in many ways.

Edward D. Griffin's Evaluation

Edward D. Griffin represented the Old School Calvinist outlook on the "new measures," and upon the whole approach to the manner in which revivals ought to be managed.

(a) The Report of the special committee of the Presbytery of Geneva which described the progress of the revival in their area was, overall, a detailed and thorough document. One of the authors of the report was the Rev. Ansel D. Eddy, of Canandaigua. He had been trained at Princeton, and was a friend of such eastern Calvinist luminaries as Edward D. Griffin.

After he came to central New York, he maintained contact with his eastern friends, but also developed a keen interest in, and support for, the revival work of Charles G. Finney.

Eddy sent a copy of the report to Edward Griffin, President of Williams College, and he received a reply from Griffin dated 6th August, 1832, which was also published as a pamphlet shortly afterwards.

Griffin was enthusiastic about the extent and quality of the revival, as a true friend of the work of God and of the salvation of sinners.

A good deal of the pamphlet is taken up by further congratulations to the Presbytery of Geneva because their report includes almost no references to any use of the hated "new measures." A few instances only were mentioned in the report. Generally, the Geneva Presbytery revivals occurred following the older patterns. Griffin saw this as clear refutation of the "modern" claims that those who favoured the old methods were not friends of revivals, and that revivals now had to follow the new measures, or they could not occur at all.

For example, one contributor to the Report said:-

> "The religious services generally have been orderly, still, and solemn never interrupted by loud and boisterous expressions, either of grief or joy never rendered offensive to the ear of refinement by low allusions or coarse and vulgar expressions, nor painful to the ear of piety by an irreverent and affected familiarity with sacred things. No quaint and questionable expedients have been resorted to for the purpose of effect no audible praying of females in promiscuous assemblies."

Griffin's comment on this was:- "While passionate and disorderly revivals produce fatal delusions without number, your Presbytery have guarded with most commendable caution against false hopes. This has been done in three ways.

First, by substituting knowledge for high excitement." In some cases, people who professed conversion were carefully taught what it meant to be a Christian.

After such instruction, they realised that their first professed hope was not properly founded. As a result, they cast this first profession aside, and embraced one with better foundations.

> "Secondly, by inuring the subjects of the work to reserve and humility, instead of boldness and forwardness and rashness, which serve to hurry others into a passionate, showy, headlong delusion." This was done by private counsel, instead of having the events of conversion taking place in full public view, and at public meetings. "The young converts did not become exhorters, nor arrogate to themselves the prerogatives of teachers."

The third method was to hold new converts on trial for several months, before allowing them to make a public stand in becoming members of the church.

"As a consequence of all this caution, we are told by more than one, the subjects of the work wear well." (35.)

(b) Griffin's main point about "anxious seats" and "anxious meetings" was that these names represented a misuse of language, and this misuse brought discredit upon revivals in the minds of refined and educated people. It represented religious slang and cant. To call meetings "anxious" meetings was to name them after the supposed feelings of people who attended them, and not after the activity which took place at the meeting. They should be called "inquiry meetings," because that is what they were for. That is what people did at those meetings. They did not go to them in order to be anxious.

He applied the same criticism to the oft-repeated claim that a person was born again at such-and-such a time and place. That is, claims to being born again at a certain time and place was a misuse of language. Griffin thought regeneration was a creative act of the Spirit of God, which could happen without our knowing its time or place. The results in changed taste and life are the things human consciousness could be aware of with more certainty.

(c) A much more serious matter raised by Griffin was that the new measures tended to create a psychology in which people depended upon man, and upon their own efforts and ideas, instead of depending upon God. The Presbytery of Geneva was congratulated for avoiding this problem area.

> In the Presbytery's Report, someone was quoted as saying that Christians "manifested a deep sense of their dependence and unworthiness. In the early stages of the work, and while the church seemed relying on an arm of flesh, a desire was expressed by some to call in the aid of some itinerant evangelist, and that a course of measures might be introduced which had been said to have been employed with success in other places. But the people of God were soon brought to see and to feel that in God alone was their hope and no wish was afterwards expressed for any other means than

the means of God's own appointment, nor any other aid than the aid of the Holy Spirit."

Someone else had written in the Report:-

> "There was indeed much *conversation* about a revival previous to this, and a solicitude was often expressed to call in such foreign aid as some imagined would secure the desired result. At one period the solicitude on this subject was considerable: but in all this it could be distinctly seen that there was little or nothing of that deep self abasement, that humility and dependance upon God alone, which are ordinarily the first indications of a work of grace. They did not go directly to the throne of God. ...there was manifestly an unwarrantable reliance upon an arm of flesh. It was going 'down to Egypt for help, staying upon horses and trusting in chariots,' instead of looking 'to the Holy One of Israel and trusting in the Lord.' And it was not until all expectations of this description were cut off, and the church brought to realize that all their strength was in God, and all their hope was in his mercy, that the work of divine grace actually commenced."

This last point, of tending to lean upon human aid, instead of turning to God without any reservation, has been a very common failing in every age, especially since that time.

The Presbytery Committee said that in some instances the labour of itinerant preachers was employed. In a few churches the new measures were attempted, but these instances occurred in churches which had no settled pastors, and were done by visitors who did not belong to the Presbytery. In the area covered by this Presbytery, it seemed that God used most notably the work of the local pastors, and the ordinary services of the church, as opposed to methods of "human invention," and the work of itinerant evangelists. Without doubt, the revivals of 1830 in this Presbytery enjoyed outstanding success. All these things pleased Edward D. Griffin greatly. (36.)

Reed and Matheson's Evaluation

These British Congregational ministers made a deputation tour of the United States about this time. The report of their findings was published in the form of a series of letters, in a two-volume publication, which appeared in 1835.

(a) American revivals were described in some detail.

(b) Lengthy quotations were made from the "Narrative" of the Geneva Presbytery about the 1830 revival, taking an approach to it similar to that of Griffin.

(c) These writers are trenchantly critical of the "new measures."

(d) The evidence which Reed and Matheson used in support of these criticisms came, in the first instance, from a published report about the "anxious seat" being used in a Methodist meeting. Reports like it were said to be common. The other source of information was the material produced by

Nettleton and Beecher for the New Lebanon Convention in 1826. Long quotations are given from Beecher's document. These are presented as if they constitute conclusive evidence in favour of their negative evaluation of the new measures. (37.)

We have seen in earlier chapters that the documents published by Beecher and Nettleton did not possess substantial qualities of truthfulness, so far as the Presbyterian work in Central New York was concerned in 1826. Their allegations were still not true in any substantial way in 1830. Their negative comments may have applied, in some cases, to the Methodists, who were making substantial advances all through this period, or perhaps in other parts of the country, or to self-appointed "revival preachers."

Both Griffin, and the Reed and Matheson letters, represent viewpoints of people **outside of** upstate New York. So these were criticisms made by distant spectators, who probably did not have a good understanding of what was going on in Central and Western New York as well as the local historians did. They were more likely to be affected by innuendo and rumour, and by baseless and uncharitable criticisms.

Philemon Fowler's Evaluation

Fowler was one of the two main historians of upstate New York Presbyterianism (the other being Hotchkin). He portrays for us the attitude of Central New York Presbyterians to the New Measures, as it existed after 1826, and for the next ten years.

> "The Presbytery of Watertown condemned the naming of individuals without their desire, in public prayer, and so gave voice to the sentiment of Presbyterianism in Central New York, and there is no evidence that Mr. Finney and those who took part with him, transgressed against it."
>
> Regarding women praying in "promiscuous assemblies," Fowler quotes Dr. Samuel Aiken of Utica: "We have also had various *small circles for prayer*, as well as stated prayer meetings, and, *in the former,* females, in some cases, though more seldom than we could wish, have taken a part."

This comment applied only to what happened in larger centres.

In smaller communities, where the prayer circles were more like family circles, and consisted only of a few families, and where the men who led the praying were fewer in number, "women sometimes poured out at the mercy seat what was bursting the hearts of little companies, assembled generally in the homes of the people."

And when new converts were taken into church membership, discretion was left to the local church leaders to decide. There was danger "both from haste and delay."

Although all sorts of objections were made against accepting people quickly, and some gave various warnings of disastrous consequences, etc., "the converts

of the 'Oneida county revivals' [of 1826] have as generally persevered and run as well as professing Christians elsewhere, and during their generation they constituted largely the strength of the communities they joined." (38.)

What were "the Facts?"

According to Fowler, who was in a much better position to know the facts than Edward D. Griffin, or either Reed or Matheson, the facts were:-

(a) that Finney did not use the "anxious seat", in its objectionable form, in the "Oneida county revivals" of 1826, and only once or twice anywhere else, before 1830.

(b) that between 1826 and 1835, the various objectionable things did occur in upstate New York, but, they did not occur there any more than in other places where the revivals prevailed.

(c) that the bad effects which flowed from them were no worse in upstate New York than anywhere else.

(d) that upstate New York Presbyterian clergy and churches were generally not responsible for these cases of objectionable doings, and bemoaned them when they occurred.

(e) and that the converts of these New York revivals stood the test of time as well as converts anywhere else where the revivals prevailed.

It must also be admitted that Hotchkin reached a similar conclusion to Fowler about the nature and value of the revivals in Central and Western New York, and the role played by the "new measures' in those revivals, although he strongly disagreed with aspects of Finney's theology.

As evidence for his estimation about these revivals, Fowler refers in particular to the fact that, in 1832, the Presbytery of Oneida appointed a committee "to inquire into certain evils supposed to exist in the churches under our care."

The report from this committee implied that the evils had not been committed extensively in the Presbyterian churches. When they did occur in these churches they were not the work of the Presbyterian ministers or elders (that is, they were done by visitors), and that Presbyterian leaders were grieved by them, when they did occur.

The General Assembly had just (1832) issued a pastoral letter, signed by the Moderator. The Presbytery committee believed that the appearance of this letter rendered it unnecessary for the Presbytery to do anything else to prevent these evils appearing in their churches.

The Assembly's letter advised:-

(1.) The avoidance of undue excitement;

(2.) Against all bodily agitations and outcries;

(3.) Against indecorum in social worship;
(4.) Against excess of social meetings and exercises;
(5.) Against teaching, and exhorting, and leading in prayer by women in mixed assemblies;
(6.) Against using new converts to lead public worship rather than the appointed leaders;
(7.) Against the use of self-appointed or irregular preachers;
(8.) Against allowing teachings which were not consistent with the church standard;
(9.) Against hurrying apparent converts into church membership;
(10.) Against using "measures for promotion of revivals (which were) not sanctioned by some example or precept, or fair and sober inference from the Word of God." (39.)

What Would Charles G. Finney Have Thought of This Advise?

It is not hard to show that Finney himself would have agreed fully with all of these points, except that the last point (No. 10) would require a slightly longer explanation.

Fowler provides us with this information, from a private letter written by Finney to a friend.

> Finney wrote:- "I do not ask whether the measure be old or new, expressly commanded or recognised in Scripture. The questions are:- Is it consistent with the Bible, *i.e.* is it not inconsistent with its spirit and letter? Is its tendency good or bad? Is it so liable to abuse that the precedent would be dangerous or not? Is it a common sense way of bringing the truth in contact with the mind, or is it so strange as greatly to shock the church and lead to vain wrangling; or, is it so in accordance with common sense, as to have the good sense of thinking men in its favor? Does God own and bless it? Is it consistent with order and conducive to deep thought and solemnity? Such questions as these I would ask, and the answer would settle my mind. As to everything like confusion, or that naturally leads to it, it should, in my judgment, by all means, be avoided." (40.)

In his "Memoirs," Finney explained why he chose to start using the "anxious seat" in Rochester, in 1830, and his reasons were consistent with the ones given in his letter, quoted above.

Concluding Comment

It will be evident from what has been said so far that the methods used in the revivals during this period were going through a slow and steady process of evolution and change.

For example, protracted meetings had been taking place in one form or another for many years, as we have seen. During the period around 1830, some

examples of protracted meetings began to appear which were longer than previously, and which had a purely evangelistic emphasis. Some of these protracted meetings were more deliberately emotional, especially in the hands of emotional preachers, such as Jedediah Burchard. Finney was not personally responsible either for the trend to lengthen the meetings, or for any new emphasis on emotion, at least in 1830. His sermons were certainly dramatic, but were, even more, classic examples of logical argument. The Methodists and Baptists might more reasonably have been blamed for disorganised emotionalism, although even this charge would often be inaccurate, and based upon misinformation. Finney's theological enemies blamed HIM for any of the changes which occurred, and for any undesirable features which flowed from these changes.

Many have claimed that Finney's “Lectures on Revivals” tended to bring forward emotional techniques in promoting revivals. Gimmicks and emotional preaching came to be used, at times, to attract attention, and to create an impact. But these “Lectures on Revivals” had not been delivered in 1830, and did not exist. It is very unlikely that Finney ever advocated the use of gimmicks. Even those who used gimmicks, thinking that they were following Finney's advice, and hoping thereby to help promote revivals, were not the first to use such techniques. Men like Lorenzo Dow had used gimmicks many years before. He was a very unusual preacher, and had a remarkable impact, but men like him were not viewed as mainline preachers.

The Anxious Seat, also, as Finney began to use it in Rochester, was only slightly different from what had been done by many others for a number of years. Tactics very like the Anxious Seat had been used for some years by many staunch Calvinists.

The revivals in Rochester, however, did seem to mark a mile-post in this evolution. Features which gained some wider use at this time later became prominent features of modern American evangelism, and continued to be widely used in many places through to the Twenty-First Century.

Calvinists who belong to the “Old School” tradition have consistently viewed the “new measures” as the path by which certain features have entered the modern evangelical scene, and that these features have produced very undesirable effects in both the short and the long term.

Not the least of these undesirable things has been that:- questions such as “What does it mean to be a Christian?” and “How does one become a Christian?” have received a range of answers which are very poor in quality, so far as theological content is concerned.

This results in many people being deluded about whether they are “saved” or not. Their hopes of forgiveness, and of going to heaven are more likely to be mistaken. People think they are born again, when in fact they are not. To use an old-fashioned expression - the blood of many lost souls will be laid at the

feet of Christian preachers, who misled many people into false hopes.

Another result of this low-grade theology, or "false teaching," is that Christians who are influenced by this theology will practice a lower standard of holiness, or practice selfishness when they think they are being holy. Apart from being deluded themselves, all of these things bring dishonour upon the Lord, and upon the entire gospel of Jesus Christ.

From an evangelical point of view, all these things are very serious matters.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

EVANGELISM and REVIVALS from 1832 to 1840

Evangelism and/or Revivals

"Evangelism" is the term covering the various ways that members of the Church carry out the evangelistic commission which Jesus gave to His disciples, to preach to Gospel to every creature, to baptise, and to teach people all of the things that Christ said. This was the way that Jesus said He would build His Church, and that the gates of hell would not prevail against it.

"Mass evangelism" is one method of trying to carry out this evangelistic task. There are also many other methods of doing evangelism.

"Revival" is a modern term for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as on the Day of Pentecost. It usually results in evangelism, in one form or another, and may involve mass evangelism. But much evangelism of all kinds can occur without any revival being involved.

"Revivalism" is a modern term which applies to attempts to carry out mass evangelism, using techniques or methods which happen to have been made popular in periods of revival in the past.

At 1832, perhaps the best way to distinguish between revivals, and mass evangelism, is this:-

(a.) **Revivals** featured four factors:-

* intense, widespread and prevailing prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, as the Spirit worked on the Day of Pentecost;
* the deep convicting and converting work of the Holy Spirit, sent from heaven;
* certain organisational patterns for meetings;
* and follow-up instruction (including teaching about the Christian faith, the testing of alleged "new birth" experiences, church membership, and starting to serve God.)

Regarding this definition of "revival," the <u>second</u> point is absolutely essential. The <u>first</u> point may also be essential. The third and fourth points usually appear in some form or other, which may vary greatly from one period of history to another.

(b.) **Mass evangelism** featured:-

* some prayer, hopefully involving prevailing prayer for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the people
* hope that the Holy Spirit would convict and convert sinners
* a pattern of protracted meetings like those during revivals
* a well-oiled organisation

* and some follow-up.

In this scenario, mass evangelism and "revivalism" are the same thing. But they could easily occur without any revival being involved, or perhaps only to a small degree.

Some, but not all, early camp meetings and protracted meetings took place during revivals.

After the impact of the 1831 revival subsided, a good many of the protracted meetings would have been examples of simple mass evangelism. But if someone, anyone, was given the gift of prevailing prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, there could occur a local revival associated with the meetings, or even a revival which might have a wider impact. In a revival, the converts would tend to be of better quality, and probably more numerous than at other times, even if some aspects of the management of the meetings might have been undesirable.

An exciting preacher, or one with a "charismatic" personality, or with above average dramatic abilities, might create the impression that a revival had commenced, when this may not have been the case. If bad aspects also existed in the way everything was managed, or in the way the message was preached, then, poor quality results could easily occur.

William Weeks, and the other stricter Calvinists, were concerned that human powers, such as the above, may cause a person to believe that he was "born again," when the Holy Spirit had not been at work in the person in that way. After all, the Spirit of God has His own time-plan. In that way, the person would have been misled into believing he was a Christian, when that may not have been the case at all.

As we have seen, during the decade around 1832, there were quite a number of people who had enough of the gift of intercessory prayer for revival, given by the Holy Spirit, so that prevailing prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit occurred on many occasions. As a result, touches of revival occurred in some of the protracted meetings, as well as during some of the normal church activities.

Comment

It would seem to be a natural result of commitment to God that any Christian should desire to reproduce or achieve the four factors listed under "revival," if that could be done. Charles G. Finney believed it could be done any time it was needed, and that it was God's chosen way of spreading the Gospel around the world, and of bringing millennial wonders into existence in the world. That is what Finney's "Lectures on Revivals" sought to set out, when they were published in 1835.

The problem in putting this policy into action is that ability to practice "prevailing prayer" depends upon **the sovereignty of the Holy Spirit**, and is therefore **not** a **simple human possibility**.

The same applies to the convicting and converting work of the Holy Spirit, sent from heaven, as on the Day of Pentecost. Both of these are **not** things which can be achieved by simple human decisions. These two factors cannot be achieved simply because we decide we want to do them, or because we would like them to happen, or even because we think they are needed.

God has His own time and way for fulfilling His promises.

On the other hand, if, by waiting upon God, or by urgent intercession, a praying person can somehow gain insight into the will of God, so that prayer can prevail, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit can be obtained in a particular situation, then, clearly, the praying person should be strongly encouraged to do so. It is one of the workings of the Holy Spirit in the believer to achieve this, according to God's will, and not necessarily according to human hopes, plans, aspirations or theories.

Methodist Evangelists?

In this period, apart from differences in theology, and some details of practice, the main outstanding difference between Methodist revivals in upstate New York, and those experienced by the other denominations, was that the Methodists did **not** have specially designated evangelists within the ranks of their ministry.

The reason for this was, that amongst the Methodists, the entire ranks of the ministry were thought of as evangelists. So there was no need to have someone set aside specially for that purpose. Unlike clergy, ministers and pastors today, the Methodist preachers were not primarily pastors. They were primarily evangelists who also acted as pastors when they had time and chance. For the first one hundred years of Methodist history, the ministers (and most of the lay people) took very seriously the instruction of John Wesley - "You have nothing to do but to save souls."

This is one of the outstanding reasons why the Methodist Church grew at such a tremendous rate through much of that period of time.

For many years, in New York state, the Methodist revivals all took place on this basis.

After 1840, the first Methodist minister who wanted to be an evangelist, but who was not appointed to a Circuit, was the Rev. James Caughey. He was a member of the Troy Conference, and believed that God had called him specially to that work. After working in that way in eastern Canada, he went to England, where he saw some great evangelistic events, and touches of revival. One of his many converts was the young William Booth. In 1848, he returned to the United States, and worked in many places with good success. (1.)

Caughey was followed some years later by the Rev. William Taylor, who became known around the world as "California Taylor," and later as Bishop William Taylor.

After 1830, however, the Presbyterians and Baptists in New York state, and then the Roman Catholics, developed a number of full-time evangelists who were called upon by churches and congregations to conduct a series of special meetings. Most of these denominational evangelists performed good work, although a few did not.

There also developed a series of freelance evangelists. So far as denominational structures were concerned, most of these men, and women, were considered to be "self-appointed." God may or may not have called them, but no church had recognised this call, and formalised it. Some of these freelance workers did not show the fruits of such a calling. So, some of them were good news, some were good news only part of the time, and others were not good news much at all.

There had, of course, been a famous forerunner, one, George Whitefield, although he operated in a slightly different way.

Methodist Revivals

The force of the revival in 1830 - 1831 was felt for another year or more. For the (15 months) Conference year of 1832 - 1833, the increase of membership in the Genesee Conference was 1,744.

In December of 1832, a revival commenced in Manlius Square. It was led by some students from the seminary at Cazenovia, a few miles away, one of whom was Schuyler Seager. Ten days of meetings saw eighty people profess conversion. The work increased after that for several days. "Some were born of God almost every day or evening until our second quarterly meeting, which was a powerful season, resulting in the salvation of about thirty persons. The spirit of reformation is still among us. I think more than two hundred in all, up to this date, have found the pearl of great price... Nearly one hundred have joined on trial. Others design to join soon. I never witnessed a more consistent, uniform, and genuine revival than this... While I write my heart overflows with gratitude to God for his unspeakable gift." (2.)

About the same date, S. W. D. Chase reported about one hundred and fifty conversions in Brockport. The old Murray Circuit also saw "an extensive and powerful revival."

Conable also tells about a revival in January, 1834, at Tibbett's Hill, flowing from special meetings held in the local school house. It resulted in his own conversion, plus about sixty others. He was the schoolmaster.

Three preachers worked in the Sweden Circuit, and they saw about one hundred and seventy conversions. A number of other revivals are listed at this time.

The following year, revivals occurred in the Mount Morris area, at Beyersville, in West Sparta, with “more than eighty souls powerfully converted, and more than fifty of them in the ranks of our Zion, strongly walking in the 'way of holiness.'“ The Covington Circuit reported three local revivals. (3.)

In Rochester, there had been nine hundred conversions within Methodism in 1830 and 1831, and 1832 had also been a good year. “During the [1833] Conference year our Zion in this section appeared in a languishing state.” [as did much of the Methodist work nation-wide.] For **1834**, however, “in this limited sphere I have witnessed great manifestations of the power of God in the salvation of sinners.” “I have not means to know the precise number of conversions within the district during the winter, but it must exceed five hundred.” (4.)

1835 was a strong year in the Ridgeway and Medina Circuit. At Medina, one hundred and forty were converted, and most of them were received on trial for membership. At Canandaigua and at Phelps, there were many conversions and accessions to the church. In the Middleport Circuit, about one hundred conversions were reported, including thirty-five at Royalton Center.

At Brookfield, in the Knoxville and Troupsburgh Circuit, “there was a glorious work, represented by the preacher in charge as commencing in December and continuing into April. Within the time more than two hundred were converted, one hundred and thirty being added to the Church. During the continuance of this work infidelity and Universalism, which had for years been breathing mildew and pestilence over the land, were driven into the shade, and their advocates happily converted to God.” (5.)

1835 in Rochester was totally different. Early in the year, the new church was burned to the ground, and without insurance. The result was a very depressing outlook. But, the Conference appointed a minister to help raise funds, and many friends contributed greatly, far and wide. A new commodious church was soon opened debt free. No sooner had the rebuilding finished than... “God has graciously revived his work among us, and a goodly number have been converted within the walls which a few months since were a heap of ruins. We now have two congregations in the town, and both our altars have been crowded every night for several evenings past with trembling penitents. Forty have been added to our numbers in the last two weeks.” So 1836 began with interesting promise. (6.)

In **1836**, revivals were reported in the Elba Circuit; in the Hornellsville Circuit; at Elmira; at Rushville; at Waterloo, and in the Jersey Circuit in the Crooked Lake District.

At a place called Java, one of the circuit ministers asked a reclaimed backslider to start a class meeting and to preach. A two days' meeting was held, “and the glorious result was 'about eighty souls professed to find peace with God.'“

In the town of Warsaw, the Methodists and Presbyterians changed roles, and worked together. “The Presbyterians first held a protracted meeting, inviting all Christians to unite with them, one hundred and twenty obtained pardon. Then the Methodists commenced one, and reciprocated the kindness; and the Presbyterians accepted the invitation. About fifty being the immediate fruits of the meeting, the power of awakening and saving grace continuing thereafter in the congregations. The religious conditions of the congregations was greatly improved.” (7.)

Despite these interesting reports of spiritual activities, the membership for the entire Genesee Conference declined by 1,331.

That year, over the entire United States, the Methodist membership fell by 4,150.

Conable tells us that Bishop Clark published some observations about this decline in Methodist membership. These appeared in his biography of Bishop Elijah Hedding. Clark believed that these declines were due to having taken people into church membership too quickly, after emotional experiences at special meetings, and without proper instruction.

Bishop Clark wrote, “This result, so unusual in the history of Methodism, was sought to be accounted for on various hypotheses. A survey of the results in the several Conferences would indicate that, whatever the cause might be, it was general rather than local. A careful analysis of the returns for the few years immediately preceding brings to light the fact that those Conferences now presenting the most alarming diminution of numbers had within those few years reported at different times an extraordinary increase.

In those times of religious excitement multitudes undoubtedly had been gathered into the Church who were but poorly instructed in the doctrines and duties of religion, and but poorly prepared to stand the trial of faith and of patience to which they would inevitably be subjected in their religious experience. Accordingly, in 'time of temptation they fell away;' or in the time of 'sifting' they were blown away like chaff from the Church.

It may be seriously doubted whether the Church was not in a more healthful condition, and one equally compatible with sound and permanent prosperity, than when she was numbering her converts by tens of thousands.”

Conable comments that Bishop Clark believed this was the main reason for the decline, although other causes were put forward by other people, and in some of the religious journals. Conable thought Bishop Clark was qualified to speak, and was in a position to be wise about the matter. (8.)

Although the descriptions and comments we have given above are not complete up to 1840, these quotations and details provide a picture of the situation for the Methodists in central and western New York through this period. After 1832, there were sporadic revivals here and there. But there were

difficulties of one kind and another. There was not steady growth. It was an "up and down" path.

The next period of widespread revival appeared in the years around 1842.

Presbyterian Revivals

The General Assembly of **1832**, in reviewing the work of God over the previous year, listed "sixty-eight presbyteries and seven hundred congregations" as having been blessed with revivals.

The Synod of Utica reported 2,197 members added, making a total of 12,461. "Almost all of them [i.e. of their churches] have had precious seasons of revival, and these, with few exceptions, connected with what are called protracted meetings." "The Synod would notice with approbation the holding of these meetings, as by the churches of Rome and Oswego, in the outskirts of congregations, and thereby reaching many who have not felt interest enough in the gospel to go to places where the ordinances are established."

The Presbytery of Tioga reported revivals in Binghamton, Westville, Union, Nanticoke and Lisle West, "all of them in connection with protracted meetings." Ninety-three had been added to the church in Binghamton.

The Presbytery of Delaware reported:- "The Lord has added to all our churches of such, as we trust, will be remembered among the redeemed, the several additions ranging from twenty to one hundred and forty." The total added in the Presbytery was eight hundred and twenty. (9.)

In **1833**, the revivals were not so widespread. Nevertheless, the Synod of Utica reported:-

"Fourteen churches in four Presbyteries are reported as having enjoyed revivals of religion: eight of them in Watertown Presbytery, four in Otsego and two in Oneida, and one thousand and eighty-seven have been added to all the churches on examination."

The Presbytery of Tioga reported that Binghamton had gained 195 members, Union gained 145, amongst others. The Presbytery of Watertown reported revivals in sixteen of their twenty-eight churches, with three hundred and thirteen additions.

Protracted meetings had been held in the Presbytery of Otsego previously, with mixed success. But this time, **"**the blessing of God has attended them wherever they were repeated this past year." "Middlefield and Millford, two of our most feeble churches, have been more than doubled."

One instance is of special note. The Rev. H. H. Allen was pastor of the church at Oneonta.

"In the latter part of the spring of 1833, the Evangelist, Rev. Augustus Littlejohn, came here. For about four weeks in May and June he preached day by day in his peculiar manner, earnestly and fearlessly, the doctrine of repentance and salvation through Jesus Christ. The Spirit of God came down

upon the people the whole community was moved; the inhabitants of the surrounding country, within a radius of several miles, were drawn by an irresistible power to this spot whence the Word of God issued so unmistakably, accompanied by the divine energy.

Day after day, though in the very midst of the busy season of the year, the house was crowded with anxious listeners and earnest seekers after the way of salvation. Scores were converted and made to rejoice in the forgiveness of their sins, and the possession of a good hope of a blessed immortality. The little band of disciples, who had been struggling to maintain their existence as a church, were gladdened and strengthened by an accession that more than doubled their number - fifty-two having been added to their communion during the months of June and August."

Of special interest, also, was the fact that one of the converts who joined the Presbyterian Church was Timothy Sabin, who became one of the pillars of the church for more than three decades. Another was Eliakim R. Ford, who joined the Baptist Church, and served there with great acceptance for years.

From what will be said about Augustus Littlejohn later on, we see here an example of the strange and wonderful ways of God. (10.)

Fowler also tells us that, according to the Rev. D. D. Gregory,

> "In 1833 Jedediah Burchard preached at Binghamton and Union. His trumpet tones, his fire of love, his masterly power of description and riches of spiritual love, claiming also the highest Calvinism, drew multitudes to hear him. Hundreds suddenly embraced Christ - probably half a thousand in six weeks. His fault was not in the preaching and praying, but possibly in taking the converts into the church before they were proved.
>
> Ministers and laymen distrusted the soundness of their conversion the converts were in some cases neglected, and thus his faithful labors were brought into disrepute. Twenty years of agitation followed, while the long-suffering Saviour blessed ordinary and extraordinary means." (11.)

In **1834**, revivals seemed to be fewer, and produced smaller results. The same could be said for 1835 and 1836, as well.

For **1837**, the Presbytery of Tioga reported revivals in a number of parishes, and the Presbyteries of Chenango and Oneida reported several others, as did the Presbytery of Watertown, in the Synod of Utica.

For **1838**, the Presbytery of Oneida reported revivals in a number of places, as well as in Hamilton College. A revival in Utica included both the First Presbyterian Church as well as the Bleecker Street Church. This revival was led by the Baptist evangelist, Elder Jacob Knapp, and is described below.

The foregoing list of places which reported experiencing revivals is basically the list provided by Fowler, relevant to central New York. It is by no means exhaustive of upstate New York generally. Many more names are listed by Hotchkin.

From these reports, we can get some idea of the way in which protracted meetings became more widely used amongst both Presbyterians and Baptists. They were already widely used amongst the Methodists, mainly in the form of camp meetings.

Presbyterian Evangelists

Presbyterians and Congregationalists did not have the tradition of having all of their ministers expected to be able to lead in a series of special meetings, as the Methodists did. In some cases, the minister's talents did not lay in that direction. In a good many instances, however, the local pastor would have led any special meetings. Perhaps he would have brought in the help of neighbouring ministers, if he needed to do so.

As we noted before, however, a number of preachers already existed, and others arose, who had both talent, and perhaps experience, in leading protracted meetings, or in leading in revivals, whether or not protracted meetings were involved. Some of these became specialists in the leadership of protracted meetings.

As examples of the range of talent, consider the Rev. **Samuel W. Brace**, whom we met as pastor of the newly formed Second Church in Utica in 1826. He was born at Rutland, Vermont, in 1790, but soon the family moved to a succession of places in central New York. In 1809 he started studying at the Oneida Academy, and quickly rose to be assistant teacher. He graduated from Hamilton College in 1815 and from Andover Seminary in 1818.

After being licensed to preach, he preached for a few weeks during a revival at what is now Lowell, Mass., and then spent several months at Bridgewater, Oneida County, during an extensive revival there. He preached at Geneva while the minister was sick, and a revival followed his labours there, extending to the town of Phelps, where he settled for four years. New members were constantly being added to that church. In 1824, he came to Utica. During four years at the Second Church, two hundred and fifty were added to their roll. He then moved to Skaneateles as pastor, staying there for sixteen years. In that time, there were eight revivals.

In 1843, he went to the Congregational Church in Binghamton. After three years there, he retired to his own home in Utica. From there, he “went forth from time to time, and almost continuously, as the supply of numerous congregations,” or as an agent for the Bible and Colonization Society. “Eighteen special revivals of religion have attended his ministry.”

Pastor of the First Church in Utica at that time was the **Rev. Dr. Samuel Aiken**. Of Scotch-Irish ancestry, he was born in Windham, Vermont, graduated at Middlebury College in 1814, and at the Andover Seminary in 1817. “Set over the First Presbyterian Church, Utica, February, 1819, he performed an exceedingly prosperous and noteworthy pastorate of seventeen

years there. Seven or eight seasons of the special outpouring of the Spirit occurred in the course of it, - the number of communicants was much increased, and among them there were many of prominence and influence in the community, and many subsequently of eminent usefulness and conspicuousness as members of this particular church, and as ministers and missionaries in the church at large." He later moved to Cleveland. (12.)

Charles G. Finney began his preaching career as a missionary to the outback blocks. Before he left the Presbyterian ministry nearly ten years later, generally he acted as an evangelist, working with the local pastor by invitation, while at other times he was stated pulpit supply. He was providing stated pulpit supply at Rochester. He became a Congregational minister in New York City in 1836.

Finney was widely recognised as having outstanding talents as a preacher, and as a leader of evangelistic efforts, whether these involved protracted meetings or not, although he had weaknesses in other directions, as Fowler pointed out.

Another evangelist who served the New York churches well was the **Rev. Samuel G. Orton**. Fowler says:- "Evangelists can so perform their parts as to shun unhealthy excitement and painful agitation, and so as to produce solemnity and tenderness alone, and at the same time achieve notable success. Geneva and Genesee Synods enjoyed the labors of one of this class during the revivals of 1826-36. Samuel G. Orton was humble, serious, devout and discreet and 'clothed with salvation.' A work of grace conducted by him was too intense and spiritual in the feeling it produced to permit turbulance at the time or discussion afterwards, and to such an extent did he unite the favorable judgment of good men upon him, that the Presbytery of Buffalo not only voted their unanimous regard for him and an invitation to labor throughout their bounds, but provided for his support." (13.)

Fowler believed, as did many others, that Asahel Nettleton had been the evangelist, *par excellence*, who most embodied the virtues of an evangelist who performed his parts, shunning unhealthy excitement and painful agitation, and producing solemnity and tenderness, in such a way as to be a blessing to the pastor, who had to build upon what the evangelist did. (14.)

This was the sort of reason why William Weeks liked Nettleton's evangelism so much.

Jedediah Burchard was "born at Norwich, Ct., in 1790, of pious parents and a godly ancestry." The family moved to Utica. He entered as a partner in business at a young age, but was involved in the economic collapse after the war of 1812. Although he had been proud and ambitious, this reversal drove him to pray, and, following his conversion, he immediately testified. He did evangelistic work in Albany, and in Sacketts Harbor. We have already heard mention by George Gale of the work Burchard did in Adams, and the surrounding area, in 1821.

In 1825, he was ordained by the Black River Association (Congregational), and then joined the Presbytery of Watertown, working in revivals in Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties. In 1828, he organised the Fayette St. Church in Utica, and served as pastor for a while, but he knew his main work was as an evangelist. Although he served as pastor in two places later, "his professional life was mainly spent in special meetings in Central and Western New York, in Canada and in New England. Many of the most important churches in these districts were opened to him, and wherever he went large congregations came out and great interest was awakened."

Fowler says, "He cannot be judged by ordinary rules. Constitutionally eccentric, he was irresistibly erratic. A thorough Presbyterian and a hyper-Calvinist, he was of a mercurial disposition and a brilliant genius. His power of description has been seldom surpassed, and his fund of anecdote and fountain of humor were so overflowing that he could not seal them. Without culture and often crude and coarse, his picturing was always vivid and occasionally beautiful, and his delivery, though too obviously acting, well befitted it.

His preaching would have drawn crowds irrespective of its spiritual impression, but this did not by any means altogether fail in it, though disproportioned to the mere excitement it produced and not distinguished by him from that."

(Fowler's long and complicated sentences seem to point to the fact that Burchard was a very exciting preacher who could attract great crowds. His sermons had some good spiritual content, but he could not control his preaching talent enough to allow the spiritual to be in control of the sermon.)

One of the main criticisms often made against him was that he introduced his converts into the churches very quickly, before they were well instructed and tried.

Mrs Burchard was a good team worker with her husband. She developed a fine ministry amongst the women and children, which was managed by her in such a way as to avoid the various criticisms. Her work was widely and greatly appreciated. (15.).

The loss of an only child, at a young age, led to Mrs Burchard's interest in this work.

Whether speedy admission was the cause of the problem, or whether part of the problem lay elsewhere, Hotchkin thought that probably half of the converts brought into church membership by Burchard had not experienced a real change of heart, and he quoted from two reports to that effect. He believed that only a few Presbyterian ministers in central and western New York who had first-hand experience of a Burchard "revival" would want to be exposed to another of the same kind. (16.)

Burchard was also hated and ridiculed by his enemies. It was not hard to

portray him in a bad light, because of his peculiarities. The few publications which are specifically about Burchard, and which have survived until today, are of this kind. (17.) But, he not only had to fight the Unitarians, Universalists, agnostics and feral publishers. Although he preached a high form of Calvinism, his enemies included the Old School Calvinists, who attacked almost everything that the New School Presbyterians did, seemingly regardless of its quality. As a result, the only historical sources where Burchard's ministry receives any kind of a fair treatment are the general New School Presbyterian histories by Hotchkin and Fowler. George Gale knew him well in the early years, and gives us a good deal of information about these years in his "Autobiography.".

W. F. P. Noble provides three good quality reports about Burchard's evangelism, from ministers who were involved. Two of these reports came from Rochester.

The Rev. William Wisner was minister of the Second Presbyterian Church. Burchard preached at a series of meetings, commencing March, 1833. The pattern was that a prayer-meeting and an inquiry meeting were held each morning, with preaching in the afternoon and evening.

> "There have been, since the 14th day of March, about six hundred persons, who, in the judgment of charity, were converted to God within the walls of the second church, exclusive of the children of Sabbath-schools, of whom between two and three hundred are indulging hopes."
>
> "The instruction given, both to saints and sinners, has been substantially the same that the second church have been in the habit of receiving for two years past. Christians have been taught that the salvation of God must come out of Zion; that revivals did not depend upon the eloquence of the preacher, nor upon any system of measures, but upon the truth of God sent home to the heart of the sinner, by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; and that this descent of the heavenly Comforter was not to be expected but in answer to the agonizing and believing prayers of God's people."
>
> "The young converts have been assembled, as far as possible, every morning, in a room by themselves, to receive instruction and be examined in regard to their hope; and those who have given in this way an opportunity for us to become acquainted with them, appear to have obtained a good hope through grace. One hundred and eighty have already united with the second church, and many have gone to other churches; while numbers have so much reverence for the *good old way*, that they prefer testing the genuineness of their hope, by living a few months in disobedience to Christ, before they venture upon a public confession." (18.)

The second report from Rochester concerned meetings in 1841 in which

Burchard was involved. But the report was not written until 1850, when one would have thought the minister involved would have known about any bad results which followed from the meetings.

The Rev. James B. Shaw wrote:-

> "The Rev. J. Burchard labored in my church during the winter of 1841. A powerful revival attended his efforts, and a large number united with the church. These converts appear as well as any similar number of converts that I have ever known, and many of them are now among the most active and consistent Christians that we have. Mr. Burchard's preaching was always sound, occasionally very eloquent. No measures were adopted but such as the pastor approved, as the services were under his exclusive direction. Nor was anything done which did or could grieve any lover of truth and order.
>
> During the same winter Mrs. Burchard held meetings for mothers and children, which were highly useful and very discreetly conducted. I know of no female in this department of Christian effort to be compared with Mrs. Burchard, and I hope that she may so far regain her shattered health as to resume a work for which she is so peculiarly fitted." (19.)

Orson Parker was a young lawyer, who was converted in 1831, after being a universalist, during a series of revival meetings in the town of Adams, led by Jedediah Burchard. He immediately entered the Auburn Theological Seminary, but studied only for one year, returning to Adams, where he was licensed and ordained by the Black River Association. He began working with Burchard in his protracted meetings. During 1833, he was hired by the Presbyterian Church of Belleville, and a revival occurred under his preaching. In 1834 the Cassville church asked him to preach, and he stayed there for two years. Following this, he spent most of his life in the Western Reserve, Michigan and Ohio, although he held meetings in New York, on occasions. Although Parker learned a lot from Burchard, he developed his own style of work. He was looked upon as a reliable and useful evangelist. (20.)

Another pastor who did some evangelism during the 1830s was **Edward N. Kirk.** He was pastor of the Fourth Presbyterian Church in Albany for some years up to 1839, and became famous as an evangelist in later years.

Some Bad Reports

Hotchkin and Fowler provide bad reports about several other men who worked as evangelists, either in the Presbyterian and Congregational churches, or on their fringes.

One of these was **Luther Myrick**. According to Fowler, Myrick was an erratic personality.

> "He was an enthusiast, probably sincere, but wrought up to the

point of derangement, and while gathering large assemblies and exciting them, his proper place was the asylum rather than the pulpit." (21.)

Hotchkin believed that some of the evangelists were well trained in theology, and this showed in what they said and did. Others did not have such clear theological ideas, and the theology expressed in their preaching was perhaps faulty, and not outright heretical. Others were clearly heretical, and Hotchkin included Myrick in this heretical class. Hotchkin heard Myrick preach "once." He thought Myrick's theology was Pelagian. At least, that had been the impression created by that one sermon. (22.)

Another was the Rev. **James Boyle**. He came into the Presbytery of Oneida from the Methodist ministry. Hotchkin says that Boyle "for a season exercised the office of an evangelist, and conducted meetings principally within the bounds of the Presbyteries of Bath and Geneva. His doctrinal views and measures, in the estimation of the writer, were seriously objectionable, and time has shown that the number of estimated converts resulting from his labors very far exceeded the number of real ones. As far as is known to the writer, almost every church which was greatly enlarged in its number of members, through the instrumentality of his preaching, is now in a very decayed state." (23.) Fowler says Boyle was ultimately de-frocked by the Presbyterians for teaching "perfectionism".

The strongest statements by the historians are reserved, however, for **Augustus Littlejohn**, whom we met earlier in this chapter.

Hotchkin's account of him is as follows:-

He appeared first as a lay assistant early in the story of protracted meetings. He had been licensed to preach on 1st September, 1830, by the Presbytery of Angelica, although he had no classical or theological education. He was ordained as an evangelist in April, 1834, and became famous in many parts as a "revival preacher." He was indefatigable, with great apparent zeal for souls, and apparently with a deep piety. Many people thought very highly of him.

Hotchkin heard him preach "once," and declared that his manner and appearance was that of a mad enthusiast, characterised by coarseness, vulgarity and abuse. He seemed to address the impenitent in order to goad, repel and exasperate them. His theology was "grossly unsound." He was boisterous in manner, and irregular in almost every point of view.

Hotchkin thought Littlejohn's operations were exceedingly injurious to the interests of religion; that he introduced into the churches laxness of doctrine, fanaticism and many irregularities.

In March, 1841, he was deposed from the ministry for gross immorality, which had been practised secretly for some time. So, Hotchkin had hardly anything good to say about him. (24.)

Another side of the story appears when we look at the history of the

Presbytery of Angelica, to which Littlejohn belonged. Apparently, the Presbytery got into trouble many times with the Synod of Genesee for disregarding presbyterial rules. The historian of the Presbytery, the Rev. Dr. James Miller, tells us that:- "The case of Augustus Littlejohn was under consideration constantly for ten years." He then quotes from a book by the Rev. Dr. William Wraith, entitled "Recollections of an Emigrant's Family," which contained the following information about Littlejohn.

> "He was a common laborer, but was endowed with a natural eloquence which gave him the complete mastery over any group that he addressed. He would collect a gang of his fellow workmen and preach a funeral sermon over a dead horse, or dog, that would fill the eyes of his hearers with tears. This man professed conversion to Christianity, and began holding forth in school houses, or in churches to which pastors would admit him, and hearts were melted, and knees were bent in penitence, to such an extent that people thought this man 'the great power of God.'
>
> He offered himself as a candidate for the ministry; but the older heads of the presbytery, like Abiel Parmelee and Silas Hubbard, were unyielding in their opposition to his licensure. Littlejohn, however, went right on with his fervent appeals, and converts were multiplied within the parishes of the very pastors that opposed him. *** The pressure upon the presbytery became so strong that any longer to refuse licensure appeared like fighting against God."
>
> The historian, James Miller, continues:- "In 1830 he was licensed. In 1833 a day was set for his ordination as an evangelist. When the day came there were charges against him of doctrinal unsoundness and imprudent conduct, and his ordination was postponed. A month later Geneva Synod criticised the method of his licensure and directed presbytery to re-examine him.
>
> Instead of re-examining him for licensure presbytery ordained him. This action Genesee Synod censured. Difficulties arose later between Littlejohn and his wife, but presbytery exonerated him from blame and highly commended his work as an evangelist.
>
> In 1839 there were charges against his character. Presbytery appointed a committee to investigate, but in 1840, before that committee reported, made him moderator. About the same time presbytery refused a request of Ontario Presbytery to investigate charges against Littlejohn - not even recording the charges on the minutes. The Synod of Genesee censured presbytery very sharply for making him moderator while charges were pending against him, and for passing over the request from Ontario Presbytery.
>
> After a good many other actions, in 1841 he was cited to answer definite charges of grossly immoral conduct. There was an exhaustive trial at

Almond in March, 1841. At last presbytery saw him as he was, and unanimously deposed him from the ministry and excommunicated him from the church."

Apparently the Presbytery of Angelica used to overlook matters coming to it from the Synod quite often, calmly ignoring them, and not only before 1841. In the instance of Littlejohn, many of the Presbytery members had certainly been deceived by his ability to talk, and by the spell he seemed to cast over those who heard him.. As the years passed, the Presbytery slowly declined in numbers of members attending its meetings. Some congregations transferred to local Congregational Associations. The Presbytery was eventually wound up in 1856. (25.)

There were, however, **other evangelists** working in many parts of New York state, who were not affiliated with any of the mainline churches. As a result, they were not under any organised kind of control, and were not responsible to anyone for what they did.

Of course, people liked the excitement of protracted meetings. Conducting them was much easier than the slow slog of pastoral work. This led many people to want to be evangelists. They could possibly be successful, and become famous, and perhaps rich, without much hard work, cost or preparation. Hence the rise of the self-appointed evangelist, who might sincerely believe God had called him to be such, but whose call had not been officially tested or recognised by any church. So, safeguards were not in place for people of this kind.

Hotchkin says that many of these evangelists "were from other parts of the country, and not under the jurisdiction of the Presbyteries in this region. Many of them had no connexion with any Presbytery. Hence, the ecclesiastical judicatories could do nothing more than warn their churches not to employ them. This was done in repeated instances." Hotchkin provides several examples of this.

Hotchkin thought that "many of them were destitute of classical and theological furniture; of feeble natural abilities; erroneous in sentiments; boisterous, vulgar and abusive in their manner of preaching; irreverent and even dictatorial in prayer, and fanatical in their whole procedure. Their operations and influence were destructive in a high degree, and brought discredit on the revivals."

However, it was wrong to think that this kind of evangelist was recognised or encouraged by the ministers and churches of the Presbyterian denomination in western New York. That was by no means the case. Hotchkin had been a minister in the district for nearly fifty years when his "History" was written, and he knew the area well, and those who lived and worked in it. (26.)

Baptist Evangelistic Work in the 1830s

In upstate New York, some of the Baptists had a strong tradition of outreach and evangelism, and they experienced benefits from many of the revivals which occurred. Before 1830, many of the Baptists were Calvinistic in their theology, and they did not use the more Arminianised techniques in their evangelism. In some cases, hyper-Calvinism limited their interest and activities in outreach.

Elder Jacob Knapp claimed to be the first freelance-style evangelist to arise from amongst the Baptists in this part of the country. He was born in Delaware county, New York, on December 17, 1799. He was awakened and converted when seventeen years of age, at the time of the death of his mother. After two years of being a backslider, he was reclaimed. He studied at Gilbertsville Academy and the Hamilton Literary and Theological Institute, and became pastor of a church in Springfield, New York.

In 1830, he became pastor of the Baptist Church in Watertown, where a revival occurred through the prayers and efforts of a senior Deacon. In 1833, he left this pastorate, and for eighteen months conducted protracted meetings in churches around the Jefferson and Lewis counties.

"God was with me, and converts were multiplied. His Spirit was poured out plenteously in nearly every place in which I labored. My services were not confined to Baptist churches, but in Presbyterian and Methodist churches I preached repentance and faith as God gave me opportunity. It was thought by some, who were counted reliable judges, that not less than two thousand souls were converted during these eighteen months. As near as I can now remember, I baptized over four hundred converts into the fellowship of churches which were at the time destitute of pastors." (27.)

He was criticised by a wide range of people over a wide range of supposed faults. Dr Nathaniel Kendrick urged him to apply for a job as missionary with the Baptist Missionary Association of the State of New York, and to work in Jefferson and Oswego counties. Despite the backing of Kendrick, Knapp's application was rejected, helped along by several people at the Board meeting whom Knapp had thought were his friends. This commenced a string of rebuffs, humiliations and difficulties, and heart-felt dejection, which led him to rely upon God in a much deeper way.

The upshot of it all was that he became a freelance evangelist, relying upon God for the supply of all his needs, and those of his family.

> "A year did not elapse before I saw plainly that God's plan was much better than mine. I found it far more delightful and profitable to my soul to be directed by God's providence, where, and by His Spirit, how to labor, than to be prescribed in my field, and dictated to as to how to conduct my ministry, by others. The Lord carried me from place to place, even where I had the least expectation of going. In my perplexities, I was driven to God

in prayer for him to direct my steps, and mark out every inch of my path. And I have been led to understand since, that had not the furnace been heated seven times hotter than it was wont to be, the dross would never have been separated from the gold.

My kind and heavenly Father did not give me one blow that was not needful, nor one thorn that was not required to keep me from being exalted above measure, through the abundance of my success in winning souls, and the many flattering expressions of those who sympathized with my work.

The churches with which I labored were, for the most part, poor, and not well informed in relation to their duty of supporting the ministry. Sometimes I would receive thirty or forty dollars at the close of a protracted meeting, and sometimes nothing. I made up my mind, when I started, to make no demands, to do nothing, to say nothing in reference to the matter of compensation, but to leave it entirely with God and the people. Sometimes, after a hard, long, and laborious campaign, I would return home to my increasing family with little or nothing; and find the means I had previously accumulated fast wearing away, and my wife toiling day and night in taking care of our little ones. But I found good things mixed with these apparently evil things. My wife made no complaints, but cheerfully acquiesced in my convictions of duty. Besides, I was comforted in the remembrance of the charge and promise, 'Trust in the Lord and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed...'

I felt that I would prefer to live on bread and water, and do the work of an evangelist, - thus making full proof of my ministry, than to have all the good things of this world. I expected soon to wear out, and to be called to render my account. I realized, more and more, how deficient I was in knowledge, and prayed daily for wisdom rather than riches and long life, that I might honor God, and become wise to win souls. I often read God's offer to Solomon, and I believed that he would deal in the same way now as then, if his servants would plead in faith." (28.)

Elder Jacob Knapp's Meetings in Utica, 1838

In the "Presbyterian" section above, reference was made to a revival in Utica in 1838, led by Elder Knapp. He left this description of it in his "Autobiography."

"Although there had been much prejudice against me in the city, I was at length invited there and commenced in the Bethel Chapel, West Utica, February, 1838, and preached night and day for two weeks, and during the time there were some conversions, and many were awakened and Christians aroused to action.

The place becoming too small to contain the crowds that thronged

to hear the Word, we were invited to the Broad Street Baptist Church and to the first and second Presbyterian churches. After much prayer and deliberation it was resolved to take the second Presbyterian, because of its central location and because it was not so large as to make a fair-sized congregation appear small. But the power of God came down and the house was immediately filled to its utmost capacity.

After remaining here for about three weeks, it was found necessary to remove to the First Presbyterian Church. Here I preached twenty-one sermons, besides attending prayer and inquiry meetings, in two weeks, making the period of my stay in Utica seven weeks.

The cases of pungent conviction were so numerous that we could seldom close our evening services before 11 o'clock, although as many as wished to retire were seasonably dismissed. At the close of the meeting, all who had experienced a hope during the revival were seated in a body, making a company of nearly eight hundred persons; nor did this compose all, for many lived in the surrounding villages. 'Among the converts were people of all classes, many of them merchants, doctors, lawyers, judges and city officials. Four attorneys professed conversion in one day.'"

In one instance, two leading figures in the practice of the law stood side by side with a coloured woman, "in a crowd of anxious sinners", as people prayed after the service. (29.)

As time passed, he preached in a number of places in New York state, with good success like was described for the meetings in Utica. He also preached in many other parts of the country, in some of the largest cities. He took an extensive part in the revivals in 1842, and in 1860. His "Autobiography" was published in 1868, recounting many incidents from his ministry. He died in 1874.

His Meetings in Schenectady, 1838

After leaving Utica, Knapp preached for four weeks in Schenectady, firstly in the Baptist church, but mainly in the Presbyterian church. Dr. Eliphalet Nott, and all the faculty members of Union College, attended regularly and were actively involved. The Dutch Reformed people, the Methodists and Episcopalians were also involved. Between 300 and 400 professed conversions were estimated, including eighty students from the College. Although the Baptist church had no pastor, about fifty people were baptised into its membership.

Following these meetings, Dr. Nott was asked by a friend about Knapp's campaign. Nott had been absent for the start of the meetings at the General Assembly, but had to make a hurried return on College business. He wrote a penetrating letter in reply, dated at Union College, on 25th June, 1838, part of which is as follows:-

"Up to this time [that is, up to the move into the Presbyterian building] the meeting had been, I believe, conducted solely by the Rev. Mr. Knapp, a Baptist minister, who formerly preached in the city of New York. Though it seemed to be generally agreed that Mr. Knapp preached the Gospel with plainness and power, some of his arrangements were considered questionable; and not knowing at the outset to what they might lead, many Christians were in doubt whether to discountenance or favor the meetings. In college, too, the great majority seemed disposed to make light of it.

Just at this time Professor Potter, from whom I learned that, in his opinion, Mr. Knapp was a forcible and faithful preacher, took leave of college in a very solemn and affecting address, which was the means of awakening many individuals to a sense of their danger; and the cry began to be heard from different quarters, 'What shall we do to be saved?'

Under these circumstances, and inasmuch as the meeting in progress, though held in the Presbyterian Church, was not under the direction of its session, I made up my mind, at once, neither to condemn, nor defend, nor discuss, the question of measures which had been introduced; but avoiding this, as a false issue at such a time, to endeavor to impress on the mind of every one, especially of every student to whom I could gain access, the necessity of personal religion, urging them, in place of debating about *forms*, to give all diligence to make their own calling and election sure.

This course, after consultation, was agreed to by the clergy and laity of the city generally, who, availing themselves of the attention which had been excited, endeavored to direct that attention on the part of their friends and neighbors to the securing of the one thing needful.

From this time an uncommon seriousness seemed to pervade both the college and the city. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Dutch Reformed, Methodists, and Baptists met and worshipped together in unity, every evening for several weeks. They still meet together in a morning prayer-meeting, though the public protracted services have closed. What is peculiarly gratifying, the meeting terminated in the same spirit of brotherly love with which it was commenced and continued.

Without controversy or strife, the converts separated to receive instruction in the several churches with which they purpose to connect themselves; all of which churches will, I believe, receive additions about in proportion to their respective numbers previous to the commencement of the revival.

As to the number of converts in the college, I do not think it safe at this time to speak with confidence. An unusual seriousness has pervaded almost the entire institution. Numbers are rejoicing in hope, and numbers are still anxious. Time alone will show who and how many will endure to the

end.

From present appearances, a considerable number of candidates for the ministry, at home among the churches, or abroad among the heathen, will be furnished. In college, at least the individuals arrested, and the change wrought in them, have been so contrary to what might have been anticipated, as to furnish no ordinary evidence that "*This is the Lord's doing and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day that the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.*"

As no parties have been formed, or controversies commenced, either in town or in college, during this revival, I cannot but hope we shall escape those evils which are sometimes said to have followed such seasons. At present at least, there is every appearance of its issuing in blessing *only*, to the college, the city, and the adjacent country. May it continue to extend, and not only our schools and seminaries of learning, but our towns and hamlets, be visited in succession, till the nation shall become regenerate, and, our whole land filled with the knowledge of God.

Excuse this hasty scrawl, and believe me to be, with great esteem,

Your friend and brother,

E. Nott." (30.)

On many occasions, Eliphalet Nott tried to get Charles Finney to visit the college, and preach to the students. On the one occasion when Finney actually started out for Schenectady, to fulfil this request, he was forestalled by meeting with a revival in Auburn, *en route*.

Elder Jacob Knapp's Views on the "New Measures"

Jacob Knapp's approach to the various new measures was somewhat different from what we have struck so far.

(a) The most notable of these was the reasons he presented for baptising people immediately after their professed conversion, and accepting them quickly into full church membership, without making use of the long period of probation which the Old School Calvinists wanted, or the period of trial membership which was practised by the Methodists.

Knapp's reason was, that in the New Testament, the apostles accepted converts into full fellowship immediately. For example, on the Day of Pentecost, three thousand people responded to Peter's sermon, and became Christians, and were accepted into the disciples' fellowship. So, he protested, that he acted upon the basis of Scriptural example and precedent.

Again, when Peter preached at the house of Cornelius, the people were baptised immediately. In the same way, Philip the evangelist baptised the

Ethiopean eunuch immediately.

This was a very neat turning of Old School Calvinist arguments back upon the people who usually used these arguments against the new measures.

As we have seen, one of the main arguments used by the stricter Calvinists against the anxious seat, and against protracted meetings, was that these methods had no Scriptural warrant. It was considered to be a powerful argument in their eyes.

But Jacob Knapp has shown us that the Old School Calvinists really only used this argument from Scripture when it suited them. When it came to stopping converts from joining the churches quickly, until their Christian profession was tested, they took no notice of examples from the Bible. They suddenly became pragmatists, who adopted a policy because it was good, regardless of Scriptural example.

Of course, there were great and good practical reasons for taking prospective church members slowly, instructing them, and testing to see if they really had experienced a change of heart. Both the Calvinists and the Methodists knew this. And they pointed to these practical reasons when they had to explain themselves, and their policies.

The Calvinists did not realise that they were not being consistent in the reasons they were offering. The Methodists were more pragmatic about it all, anyway, and used different types of reasons.

(b) Knapp believed that the New Testament prescribed certain basic methods for conducting Christian evangelistic work, such as preaching and teaching, baptising, exercising discipline, and building up church members, etc.

The details about how, when and where the preaching and teaching was done, what teaching techniques were to be used, and so on, was meant to be decided wisely when each new situation arose. It was not right to place these things in a straight-jacket, and fail to change with changing needs and situations.

As a result, he was quite happy to use protracted meetings and anxious seats, if these served the purpose wisely in the overall task of preaching the Gospel.

In the Twenty-First Century, we are even more aware than ever Jacob Knapp was, of the cultural diversity which exists around the world, the great variety of human personalities, and the enormously changing possibilities provided by the growth of modern technology, so we are even more aware of the need to adapt methods to situations, within the overall task of spreading the Gospel.

(c) Another small part of Knapp's "Autobiography" which would have annoyed the Old School Calvinists was a section entitled "How To Get Up a Reformation." Of course, Knapp knew that this title would offend some people, including many Baptists, because hyper-Calvinism was still fairly strong amongst some Baptists in those days. However, he used the expression

simply because it was the way many ordinary people talked. So, instead of using what we would now call "politically correct language," he used ordinary colloquial expressions.

The way to get up a reformation was to pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and to pray in such a way as to prevail, if that could be done. There should also be full repentance of all known sins, involving the leaders of the congregation. Then one should embark upon normal church work, and, where possible, evangelistic work, such as special meetings. And if this was not fruitful, then special efforts should be made by the church to fast and pray, perhaps on some regular basis.

So, his instructions in this regard were basically the same as those set out at much greater length in Finney's "Lectures on Revivals."

The article is only a few pages long, and so it does not have the long chapters of instructions on this and that issue which were included by Finney, and which helped to make his book appear very Arminian. This made the actual contents of Knapp's little article (that is, apart from the heading) rather like instructions which a Calvinist like W. B. Sprague might have written, if Sprague had ever written an article of the same small size on that subject. (31.)

Before 1840, there appeared a number of other Baptist evangelists in parts of upstate New York. One notable example was **the Rev. Jabez S. Swan**. Others included A. C. Kingsley and Lewis Raymond. The Rev. Emerson Andrews also appeared as an evangelist in New York late in the 1830s.

Swan was born on 23rd February, 1800, was licensed to preach on 12th May, 1822, studied at Hamilton College from 1825, graduating in 1827.

He held a pastorate at Stonington, Connecticut for two years, and then moved to Norwich, New York in 1830. Whilst at Norwich, he was often engaged, with other ministers, in protracted meetings, and saw touches of revival in Hamilton, at Norwich and Owego.

He spent two years pastoring at Preston, from 1837, before moving to Oxford, and then starting itinerant evangelism.

He describes the revival in Norwich as follows:- "In the struggle of the kingdom of God with the powers of darkness I introduced an all-night prayer meeting at my residence. Besides members of my own church I invited Deacon Chamberlain of the Congregational church, and Brother Stanton, a Methodist. We had a room full, and held on all night in prayer and supplication for the triumphs of Christ in saving souls in Norwich. It was a remarkable meeting. A revival had commenced, and it continued through the whole summer. I saw and felt the influence of the all-night meeting. After this, all-night meetings became quite common. When all other means seemed to fail, churches resorted to crying to God day and night." (32.)

Concluding Comment

In the period covered by the last two chapters we have seen the sudden appearance, and the wide use of protracted meetings, and of the so-called anxious seat, in many Presbyterian and Congregational churches, and even in a widening circle of Baptist churches, where the tight strings of hyper-Calvinism had often restricted what evangelistic techniques were used.

As Iain Murray has described for us, this was all part of a great sea-change in evangelistic style, and in the theology which undergirded American evangelism. This was particularly noticable in the Baptist and Presbyterian churches. (33.) The Methodists had been using Arminianised techniques for quite some years, but even in their circles, their evangelistic methods seemed slowly to develop even more of a new flavour, indicating that human effort was more the centre of attention than it had been.

The spirit of the age seemed to indicate that this period of history was a time of action, decision and drive. This cut across the grain of the older Calvinist approach to the work of God, and made it easier for an Arminian approach to become dominant. Revivalism (or mass evangelism) became increasingly the religion of many of the people, and of many of the churches.

Indeed, this type of Arminian Protestant Revivalistic Evangelicalism became the unwritten national religion of the United States of America, and it maintained that position through until the First World War.

Naturally, in that longer period, this American religion went through further changes, and impacted widely upon many other parts of the world. But a study of these changes would take us far beyond the scope of this present volume.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

VARIOUS REACTIONS

Part One: Was The District Burned-Over?

In analysing the history of American Evangelicalism in upstate New York between 1800 and 1840, the main controversial area has centred in Presbyterian history. So, it is to this area that we will turn first

Presbyterian History - Whose Testimony is to be Believed?

In the past, many of the subjects which have been considered throughout this book have been very controversial.

For example, whether the revivals in the "Burned-Over District" were good, simply bad, or positively demonic, has been argued strongly ever since they happened nearly two hundred years ago.

As mentioned beforehand, Charles Finney has been loved and hated, believed and derided, upheld as a great spokesperson for the work of God and rejected as a heretic. His theology has been seen by some as a worthy step in the history and evolution of popular New England theology, and it has also been labelled as a modern example of the ancient Pelagian heresy, which was rejected by the Church fifteen hundred years ago, in the time of Saint Augustine of Hippo.

Finney has been set out as a great champion of evangelicalism, and as one of the worst things that ever happened to the preaching of the Gospel.

Those in Finney's tradition of evangelism believe that a very high proportion of the converts of the "western" revivals maintained their commitment to Christ throughout their lives, and were a blessing to their churches. Those on the "Old School" side usually take the view that the percentage of converts from these revivals who maintained a credible Christian witness on the long term was very low indeed. They cannot both be right.

In these, and related matters, the question of **whose testimony is to be believed, and to what extent,** has depended, not so much upon the quest for historical truth, and where it might have led us. People who looked at this period tended to believe that version of the story which was closest to their own pre-conceived theological ideas. The understanding of it has depended upon whether the person studying the subject was a Calvinist or an Arminian before he or she began the research. This was true in 1840, and it has been true for many ever since.

In other words, the outlook and understanding of the history of this period which has been embraced by many evangelical Christians, since 1840, generally speaking, has been **ideologically driven**. This was very strongly true

in many cases at the time, and it still tends to be true today.

This has even been true, in a strange way, of many of the academic historians who have entered this area. Their research has been moulded by their secular assumptions, or by some sociological or psychological model that they wanted to use in analysing the historical material. The fact that the sociological or psychological model had not been thought of, in the 1840s, did not seem to matter. The ancients of 1840 were being forced into a mould which was quite foreign to their world-view.

People who are dis-satisfied with the approach I have taken in this book will probably accuse me of being guilty of the same kind of partiality.

One thing is certain. The events were complicated, and involved many people who had a wide range of agendas of their own. The authors of every kind whose documents we now consult, and the historians who recorded the events, all wrote from their own perspective, whatever that might have been. So, there will probably be some degree of truth in almost any description of the period, so long as we are trying to be faithful in expressing the hopes, fears, personal drives, world-views and beliefs of the people who lived in that time, and in describing what they did.

Thankfully, there is a slowly increasing number of these historical writers now, who have a better degree of objectivity in what they contribute.

The Basic Historical Attitude in this Book

My basic aim, as an historical writer about this period, has been to pay the most attention to those writers who seemed to be the most accurate in recording the history of the period, regardless of their theological orientation. This has been decided:-

(a) by the talents they showed as accurate historians,

(b) and by how close they were to the events they were describing.

(c) Yet I have always tried to see value in what others wrote, as well.

Two writers especially lived in central and western New York right through the period, from 1800 to 1840. Both were ministers, who played a significant role in the story.

One of these was the Rev. James H. Hotchkin, who must therefore be treated as the foremost authority, especially about Presbyterianism, and about the revivals which were so common. He shows many characteristics of a careful and accurate historian. Theologically, he was closer to the Old School Calvinists. He had less liking for the theology of Finney, and liked even less the theology and actions of the more extreme evangelists who arose in our period. Hotchkin's book is a basic source.

The other, who wrote much less, but who has deliberately tried to set the story straight, is the Rev. Dr. William Wisner.

The other historian, who took a similar stance to Hotchkin, but who appeared on the scene a little later, was the Rev. Dr. Philemon Fowler, the official historian of the Synod of Central New York for the Presbyterian Church. His book has been relied upon substantially.

Historians and writers of various kinds who have written from a stance other than the stances represented by Hotchkin, Fowler and Wisner, have been extensively used. I have tried to include their insights as often as I could. An example of this is seen in the way some of William Weeks's various concerns have been raised and aired, and his general position described. Some of his concerns are centrally important to the main purpose of this book. Indeed, attention has been paid to a range of people who were not necessarily in harmony with the New School outlook.

Both Hotchkin and Fowler pay a great deal of attention to the New York revivals. This is an indication of the role and value that these movements played in the history of the period.

It may be noted that I have not made much use of Samuel J. Baird's "History of the New School," published in 1868. His book is almost totally interested in theology and church politics, especially relating to the Presbyterian Schism of 1837. It pays little attention to the revivals, which were my main focus. Baird was an Old School Presbyterian, and a strong supporter of Robert J. Breckenridge, and of the Schism of 1837. Indeed, he dedicated the book to Breckenridge, and to a long list of other worthies who supported Presbyterian orthodoxy in 1835, and after. So, he was not a supporter of the New School, about which he wrote, but stood in the opposite camp. This does not imply, of course, that the book is not good in many ways. If I had been concentrating upon the Schism in the Presbyterian Church, I would have used his book much more extensively.

James H. Hotchkin's Testimony

After spending three extensive chapters describing when and where the revivals took place, after 1799, in the different parts of the area, Hotchkin addresses the question of the character of these revivals.

He begins by describing his qualifications for that task, and then he passes his considered judgment. His book was published in 1848.

> "The writer of these pages has labored in the work of the ministry in Western New York, during a period of forty-seven years. He has not been an inattentive observer of the events which have a bearing on the interests of the church of Christ, which have transpired, and especially those, in which the purity, prosperity, and enlargement of the Presbyterian church in that territory is involved. He has long been a member of that church, cordially attached to its faith, form of government, and order of worship.
>
> His opportunity to inform himself respecting these circumstances

has been somewhat extensive, and sufficient time has elapsed to test the true character of the work wrought.

In view of all circumstances the writer feels no hesitancy in giving his decided sentiment, that in the great religious movements denominated revivals, which have taken place in Western New York within the last twenty years, God has been carrying on a most glorious work of his grace, which will eventuate in the final salvation of many thousands of the human family.

At the same time, it is most apparent, that circumstances have occurred in connexion with these revivals, which give the most painful exhibition of the wickedness and folly of man, when, leaving the divine word, he imagines himself wiser than God. It is not, however, to be understood as the opinion of the writer, that there have been circumstances connected with the revivals in Western New York, greatly distinguishing them from revivals occurring at the same period in other parts of the land.

Perhaps in every period, in which God has remarkably appeared to bless his church with great and plentiful outpourings of the Holy Spirit, the enemy has been busy in sowing tares with the wheat; and whenever the religious excitement has been strong, a spirit of fanaticism has been induced, and greatly hindered the good work, and marred its beauty.

So it was in the glorious revival at the period of the reformation under Martin Luther. So it was in the days of President Edwards; and so it has been in later times. *'Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light,'* and no wonder, if his ministers sometimes come in the character of *'revival preachers;'* no wonder if warm-hearted Christians are led astray, and, to some extent, follow false lights."

Were These Revivals Better or Worse Than Others?

"With respect to the revivals of Western New York, within the last twenty years, the same means have been employed to promote them as have usually been employed in revivals which preceded.

In 1830, the General Assembly, with reference to the revivals generally, which had been enjoyed within the bounds of the Presbyterian church, say, 'Sabbath schools, bible classes, pastoral visitations; plain, direct preaching of the word have been the instrumentality employed in promoting these revivals of religion.'

In the narrative for 1831, in speaking of the revivals, the Assembly say, 'In some congregations, especially in the western section of the State of New York, the work has been so general and thorough, that the whole customs of society have been changed. Amusements and all practices of a doubtful character, the object of which is simply pleasure, have been abandoned far higher and purer enjoyment is found in exercises of devotion,

and engagements for the glory of God, and the salvation of men. Sabbath schools, Bible classes, the distribution of religious tracts, faithful private conversation, three and four days' meetings, observing seasons of fasting and prayer, frequent prayer meetings, especially at sunrising, have been mentioned as means which God has blessed.

But especially from every Presbytery where revivals exist, we learn that God is pleased to mark with peculiar favor every well directed effort to promote entire abstinence from ardent spirits.' [Excessive alcohol consumption had been, and was then an enormous social problem.]

In the narrative for 1832, adopted at the meeting of the General Assembly which immediately followed the most remarkable period ever experienced in the Presbyterian church in the United States [that is, the revival of 1831], ten of the thirteen Presbyteries then existing in Western New York, are particularly noticed as having been blessed with revivals. From the other three it is supposed that no reports were sent up.

In this narrative the Assembly say, 'A harmonious testimony comes from the north and the south, the east and the west, proclaiming that the past has been a year of the right hand of the Most High."

Peculiar Features of These Revivals

"Among the circumstances which peculiarly distinguish these revivals, the narrative mentions the extension of the work of grace; the circumstances that so many of the subjects of renewing grace have been found in those classes of society in which instances of conversion have usually been of rare occurrence; the resistless energy which accompanied the work, and the extraordinary extension of this gracious influence.

The Assembly go on to say, 'It is a very interesting and gratifying circumstance, that the same reports which announce these revivals, so wholly unexampled in number and extent, generally contain direct testimony as to the means which have been blessed to their production and promotion.'

'A spirit of fervent prayer, deep humiliation, and active effort in the churches, and a course of devoted, persevering, and judicious labors on the part of the ministry, uniformly preceded the displays of pardoning mercy.'

'Upon another subject of deep interest, there is a general, unbroken testimony from all parts of the church, which have been blessed with a refreshing from the presence of the Lord. We refer to the rich and precious blessings which have attended the numerous *protracted meetings* which have been held throughout our borders. Whatever honest difference of opinion there may have been as to the utility of such convocations; whatever fears may have been cherished as to their tendency, the question now seems decided, that the Lord has signally owned and abundantly blessed them, and that the seal of divine approbation is visibly and indelibly fixed upon them.

From all portions of the church we hear the language of praise, for the great things God has done by means of *protracted meetings*, and of the glorious displays of converting grace which have rendered them eminently seasons of mercy.'"

Hotchkin goes on to quote a number of other official Presbyterian documents which report extensively about these revivals. They all tell the same story. Many of them refer at length to the role played by the protracted meetings. (1.)

The evangelists are then discussed, as a group, and individually, with complete candour as to their positive and negative qualities, as we have seen in an earlier chapter.

Summary of Main Points Made by Hotchkin

* These revivals were wonderful examples of the gracious and merciful actions of God.

* The means used were basically the same as had been used in other parts of the country, and in the past history of the church.

* There was nothing intrinsically bad about protracted meetings, nor did they produce bad results, simply because of what they are.

Poor or bad results could flow, however, because of the way the meetings were managed, or because of the personality or spirituality of the preacher, or because the Holy Spirit was not poured out upon the people in answer to their prayers.

* While we know that normal evangelistic efforts, and modern mass evangelistic campaigns, usually only reach people within the churches, or on the fringes of the churches, Hotchkin said that the "western" revivals were noted for being unusually successful in winning converts directly out of the world.

* These revivals were NOT specially flawed, nor did the spurious things appear worse than what happened in any of the other revivals around the country, or in past ages of the church.

* The revivals affected such a wide range of people that the fabric of society was substantially transformed.

* The revivals provided solid support for a number of efforts to improve society morally and socially. Especially this applied to the Temperance movement, as excessive consumption of alcohol had been an endemic problem of frontier life in the United States, which produced disastrous results. Issues relating to slavery were also strongly affected by sections of the church.

William Wisner's Testimony

In 1851, Wisner published a book entitled "Incidents in a Pastor's Life," containing events spreading back over thirty years. He had been pastor in Ithaca for fifteen years, before moving to the Brick Church (Second

Presbyterian) in Rochester in 1831, where he was pastor for about five years, before moving elsewhere.

"When the writer came into this region in 1800, it was, with a very few exceptions, one wide-spread moral desolation. In the entire district north of the Pennsylvania line, and west of Oneida county, there were but three settled Presbyterian ministers. The residue of the country was missionary ground. This destitution of the Lord's instituted means, for restraining the corruptions of the human heart, and reforming society, produced its natural fruits.

The good seed which was, at long intervals, sown by a few godly missionaries, generally fell by the way side, or where it had no depth of earth, or among thorns, and was unfruitful; while the tares which the enemy was continually sowing, falling in a more congenial soil, brought forth its hundred fold.

I spent the first twelve years, after coming into this country, in the study, and the practice of the legal profession, in one of those thriving and beautiful villages, which ornamented the banks of the Susquehanna and the Tioga rivers, and as I was in the habit of attending the courts in the counties of Tioga, Broome, Steuben, Seneca and Alleghany, and occasionally in Ontario and Cayuga, I had a good opportunity of knowing what the state of society was.

The use of intoxicating drinks was almost as universal as the use of bread, and drunkenness was so common, that occasional intoxication brought no disgrace upon the inebriate. In the village where I resided, it was common in the fall and winter for the most respectable inhabitants to meet at each other's houses, five nights in the week, to play cards and drink hot punch. At those meetings they would usually remain together until eleven or twelve o'clock, and often till two or three in the morning.

In addition to this every-day habit of meeting to drink at each other's houses, there were frequent occasions when the men would get together without their wives, and with a very few exceptions would get what we should now call drunk. I have seen, during the time to which I have alluded, a first judge of a county, a state senator, who was at that time one of our most distinguished lawyers, the high sheriff, his deputy, many of the leading merchants, and a justice of the peace, all so much intoxicated that they were not fit to transact business, and many of them unable to walk without staggering.

Nor was the village in which I resided singular in this respect; most of the neighboring villages had fallen into habits like our own. Now these men were none of them abandoned drunkards. On the contrary, they were sober men, when about their business, and despised the street drunkard,

as much as any men could do. They merely yielded to the fashion of the country, and when that fashion passed away, most of them became habitually sober men, though some died drunkards.

The first check given to these dreadful habits, was by the introduction of the stated preaching of the gospel. As ministers became settled in our large villages, intemperance, in these dreadful forms, became confined to a comparative few, who were too far gone to be reclaimed. But habitual and excessive drinking still continued to be fearfully common through the whole country, for a long time after respectable men became ashamed of the habits to which I have alluded.

It may seem incredible to men who have always lived in well-regulated society, that such a state of things could exist among civilized people, but I speak only of the things which I have seen, and testify only to what I know to have been the state of society in what now constitutes the beautiful and orderly congregations of Central and Western New York.

And what has been the instrumentality which the Almighty has employed in bringing about this wonderful change? It was the glorious gospel of the blessed God, preached in simplicity, and with fidelity, by the gospel ministry. Such godly missionaries as Bushnell and Williston, laid the foundation of a religious reformation in Western New York, by awakening the slumbering graces of a few Christians, who were scattered up and down in the land, and organizing them into churches, which were by degrees supplied with pastors, and occasional supplies, who, by preaching the truth in love, amid reproach, and persecution, and poverty, lengthened the cords, and strengthened the stakes of Zion.

They went forth weeping, bearing the precious seed, but according to the promise, they were permitted to come again rejoicing, bringing their sheaves with them. In answer to the prayers of these pioneers, and of their little trembling flocks, which were offered up with much fasting, and with many tears, the Holy Spirit came down, and our congregations were blessed with revivals of religion.

At first, these mercy drops were few and far between, but in 1825, they became more general and more powerful, and multitudes of new churches were constituted, and the old ones were strengthened and built up in their most holy faith.

But as Satan would have it, some of the brethren among us, from what motives I will not undertake to decide, made such representations, to some good ministers at the east, as prejudiced their minds against the men whom the Lord was employing to carry forward his work, and those churches among us which had been most favored by these outpourings, were represented as having been burnt over by unholy fire, and it was predicted

that good men would mourn for years the deleterious influence of these excitements.

It was in this way that our eastern brethren, some of them, became prejudiced against what were called *western revivals*, and many became afraid of any excitement on religious subjects. It was to be expected that in those powerful outpourings of the Holy Spirit, when an entire congregation would be either agonizing in prayer, or trembling under a sense of the divine displeasure, some things would take place which sober piety would not approve, and which the careless looker-on might make a subject of ill-natured remarks; but as a general thing those revivals with which the writer was personally acquainted, were conducted with as much prudence, and presented as few objectionable features as could be expected, when we consider the imperfection of human instrumentality.

It is true, that there were some rash and inexperienced young men, who, like the seven sons, *Sceva*, attempted to imitate Mr. Finney, and other successful ministers, and who, as is common of imitators, getting hold of little but the faults of those whom they intended to copy, did some mischief, but with all the faults of those men, and with all the mistakes which were made by good ministers, it is still true that the period which was most complained of, in some quarters, was the most blessed season that Western New York ever enjoyed.

The men who were the subjects of those revivals were not exclusively the ignorant, the weak, and the excitable; but among them were an unusually large proportion of educated and talented men. Among the converts of those days were many who belonged to the learned professions.

The prediction which was made, that the churches would mourn over these seasons, has been so far from being fulfilled that I have never known a single church, which was a partaker of those outpourings of the Spirit, that did not pray for their return. We speak of them as of the days of the right hand of the Lord, and while we praise him for his past kindness, we ardently pray that the world at large may soon be the partaker of such seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

I should not have alluded to the prejudices which prevailed, and the things which were written against what were called *western revivals*, if I had not felt that they must form a chapter in the history of the Church in our land, which those who come after us will peruse with intense interest, and that the honor of religion required that every page should be examined and corrected by men who can speak of what they know, and testify to what they have seen of the good works of the Lord.

That class of men are rapidly passing away, and the time is near

at hand when nothing can be known of those seasons of refreshing, but what will have been handed down from father to son, except such things as may be found on the printed page.

Then it would not be strange if the enemies of our holy religion should republish what some good men who lived at a distance from us, through a want of correct information, have written, to prejudice the public mind against the genuineness of those revivals, and against the means which were blessed of God to the salvation of many souls.

To guard against such a state of things, I have in this volume given a brief narrative of some of the revivals with which I have been personally acquainted, and have borne my testimony to their general character and to their fruit." (2.)

A Conversation with a Minister from New England

A little before Wisner provides us with the testimony which has been reproduced above, he records for us a conversation that he had with a minister from New England who had been influenced by the criticisms of these revivals raised in 1826 by Weeks and Nettleton.

"In 1832 as I was travelling on a packet-boat on the Erie canal, I found myself in company with a very worthy old minister from the State of Connecticut.

While we were engaged in pleasant conversation, respecting the rapid increase of Christian churches in the region through which we were passing, within a few years preceding, the old minister said with a sigh:

'It is painful to contemplate the blighting influence of those religious excitements which have passed over this region within a short period.'

'Do you mean,' said I, 'those revivals which have prevailed in Western New York between 1825 and 1831?'

'I would not include them all, but I have supposed that the most of them were conducted in such a manner as to weaken the bands of religious order, and introduce subordination and confusion in the churches where they prevailed.'

I said, 'You must pardon me, sir, for differing with you on this subject. I have been intimately acquainted with Western New York for more than thirty years, and I am satisfied that those excitements of which you speak, were precious revivals of pure and undefiled religion, and that the churches in Western New York were never in a more healthy state than they are at this moment.'

He looked at me with manifest surprise, and said, 'Is it not a fact that churches are divided, and that pastors are being unsettled, and their

places filled with temporary supplies?'

'There is more of this among us than we could wish, but not as much in proportion to the number of churches, as there was ten years ago. We are making as rapid progress in steady habits, and in religious order, as could reasonably be expected in our circumstances.'

“I am glad if it is indeed so, but I had thought it was quite otherwise.'

'Will you be good enough to tell me, how many of your parishioners, you think, do not live where their fathers did?'

After a little reflection, he replied, 'There are not many who do not occupy the places of their parents.'

'How many have you who live where their grand-parents lived?'

'Quite a number.'

'If while you are from home this homogeneous population should be removed, and their places filled by men from the four quarters of the earth, who should be thrown promiscuously together; how long would it take to make them the harmonious, steady, and orderly people that you now have?'

'O, it would take a great while.'

'Well, sir, the towns in Western New York were settled with very much such a heterogeneous population as I have proposed to put into your parish. My own congregation was made up, when I came among them, of men from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Germany, Ireland, Scotland, New York, and a few from different New England States. Now is it wonderful that there should be occasional disputes, and that the pastoral office should have less permanency attached to it, in such a population, than in the land of steady habits?'

'I confess I have never thought of the subject in that light. There certainly should be a great allowance made for such a heterogeneous population.'

The time had now arrived for the berths to be made, and as I left the boat early the next morning, we had no opportunity to renew our conversation, and I have not met with the good brother since, except once in a large assembly.

I have published this incident for the purpose of showing how little our eastern brethren know of the difficulites with which the pioneer ministers have had to contend, in making our western wilderness bud and blossom as it does at the present day; and for the further purpose of bearing my testimony to the permanently blessed influences of those precious outpourings of the Spirit of God, which were enjoyed in our region of country during the period alluded to in the preceding conversation; and which I am constrained to believe have been generally misrepresented by good men, who became prejudiced against some of the agents who were used by the Almighty in the promotion of these works of grace.” (3.)

Concluding Comment to Part One

In the Introduction of this book, we saw how these parts of upstate New York came to be called "The Burned-Over District."

Particularly amongst those who used the term as a name of abuse, or as a name to cover their criticisms of what went on, the term "The Burned-Over District" implied that many of the spiritual fires had been bad ones, and that the area had been desolated, as a result. All sorts of undesirable results, both short term and long term, had arisen.

Nathanael Emmons had said this would happen. William Weeks thought he could see it happening in 1826, and by 1840, all of the worst things which had been prophesied had actually occurred. So, the district had been burned-over repeatedly with false fire. The fire had not come from God, or not enough of it had come from God.

We have seen the testimony of men who were admirably qualified to speak, and who had first-hand knowledge of what went on. We have seen that these dire events did not occur in the sweeping way which had been suggested. In so far as the bad features existed, they did not happen in the Presbyterian churches in the ways that the enemies alleged.

Around 1800, some of these things might have happened amongst the Methodists. But, by the 1820s and 1830s, a much better control was in place in Methodist evangelism. In the days of William Weeks, happenings which the Methodists would have considered extreme and undesirable either did not occur, or, if they did, they were very limited, in Methodist circles.

In Baptist churches, before 1830, their outreach would generally have been controlled by a Calvinistic style of theology which would not have allowed extremes to happen. It was only after the advent of Jacob Knapp, and others like him, that extremes might have occurred, and there is very little evidence that such was the case.

There probably was some truth in the view that extremes happened under the inspiration of self-appointed preachers and workers, and immature and unwise imitators of men like Finney and "Father" Nash, who were not under the control or supervision of any denomination, and therefore were not responsible to any human authority for what they did.

So, I believe it is clear that, ***as a general feature***, the "false fire" element of "burned-over with false fire" was **totally unjustified**.

The only correct sense in which the district was "burned-over" was in the way many spiritual fires swept over the area, repeatedly, over many years. ***The overwhelming historical evidence is that these revivals were wonderful displays of the grace of God, affected quite naturally by the fact that unwise and immature human involvement is an inevitable part of these movements.***

There is no doubt that, in many instances, unworthy features might have been

avoided, if a greater degree of wisdom had been available to those involved; if they could have recognised that wisdom when it was available, and if they all had a sufficient desire to benefit from that wisdom. But, despite this fact, these revivals were clear examples of the prophetic word - "This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel. In the last days, says God, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh."

Part Two: Finney's "Letters on Revivals"

"Revival" becomes "Revivalism"

The techniques which were used in these revivals, especially after 1830, went through a process of evolution or development, which slowly changed the character of what was happening.

Finney's "Lectures on Revivals" appeared in print in 1835 as a series of articles in the "New York Evangelist." They were subsequently published as a book, and became enormously popular. These Lectures express Finney's opinions about revivals as they existed in the period around 1830, and before these changes, referred to in the previous paragraph, had evolved or worked their way. So the "Lectures on Revivals" represent his opinions before "Revival" had become "Revivalism."

The "Lectures on Revivals" set forth an Arminianised dream or vision. The dream was simply an extension of what had occurred in Finney's career, up to that point. It was a vision in which a method was described whereby the revivals in New York could spread all over the world. Indeed, the evangelistic commission and goal of the church could be achieved by this method within a short time, if Christians took hold of their duty properly.

The vision was that many Christian people would deliberately learn to practice prevailing prayer for revival, and that this prevailing prayer would become practised on a major scale. The prayer of faith was the key to success. After all, there were plenty of promises in the Bible to guide their prayers, so that the Holy Spirit would be poured out everywhere, and wherever revival was needed.

Finney included in the "Lectures" several examples of the way this vision had worked out in the past, and mostly these examples did **not** involve formally organised protracted meetings. But, most of the chapters of the book were taken up with various instructions as to how to preach the gospel, organise and run prayer meetings, how to instruct convicted people and new converts, etc. So, protracted meetings were to be a normal part of this method of spreading the New York revival all around the world. In this way, the whole world would become a huge "burned-over" area, and would stay that way. Truly, as the old prophet said, "the earth would be filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the

waters cover the sea."

Comment

At this stage, we should remember one important comment, perhaps critical, about Finney's vision, and his description of evangelistic work in the "Lectures on Revivals." He did not take enough notice of the fact that the Holy Spirit is Lord, and of the related fact that the Spirit of God moves like the wind, unpredictably. You cannot set down laws which determine when or where He will act. It is essential that the Spirit of God should work in this way, otherwise His work would be classified by the intellectuals as some natural law, perhaps a law of the mind.

The Changing Landscape

Over the ten years following the publication of the "Lectures on Revivals," quite normal change, social evolution, the work of many different personalities, and natural processes, produced a different situation from what Finney had really expected. He found that the great vision was not working out as he had hoped it would. For example:-

(a) There developed a certain psychology about protracted meetings. When people began to think that it was time to win more people for Christ, or when they thought revival was needed amongst themselves, the natural reaction was to think, "We must have some special meetings." As a result, these meetings became seen as the main way that revival could come, or even the only possible way. Having special meetings also became the natural way to win converts to Christ. When revival was desired, other methods were not seriously considered. This not only coloured what the Christians did, but, also, in a certain way, limited God, as well. The "revivalist" style of meetings had become institutionalised.

(b) Another factor flowing from the above is, that when there was a touch of revival coming through the special meetings, the revival did not last long. As soon as the special meetings ended, so did the revival. In any case, everyone was exhausted by all the extra effort, and they could not keep it up.

(c) But the overall vision depended upon people being able to practice the prayer of faith for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. As time passed, the prayer support for these meetings declined, and slowly became to appear less important. Running around and organising things was much easier.

As the quality of spiritual life declines, after a revival, the prayer-life of the church is usually the first area to become a casualty.

(d) Winning people for Christ is very exciting for a keen Christian. It is also much easier to be excited about than the pursuit of holiness. The immature or new Christian can understand the business of winning others to Christ more easily than the slog of the pursuit of holiness, because that is where they have just been, themselves. So, the trend in special meetings is naturally to emphasise evangelism increasingly, and slowly to lose sight of the pursuit of holiness, and that is what happened here.

This had the effect of making so-called "revival" efforts very superficial.

It did not happen for the Methodists in quite the same way, because in the 1830s the impact of John Wesley's great emphasis on entire sanctification was still being felt. This did not decline amongst the Methodists for several more decades.

(e) A matter related to the last point was that the preaching at the protracted meetings tended also to become much more superficial, theologically, and limited in content to appeal to unconverted people who had very limited knowledge, or incorrect knowledge, of what it meant to be a Christian. Anecdotal and emotional preaching became more common, depending more and more upon the charisma and magnetism of the preacher than on the content of the sermon.

(f) The result flowing from the last two points is that increased superficiality of aim, and of the theology preached, has a natural impact upon the quality of converts flowing from these efforts, who tended to have a much simpler idea of what it means to be a Christian, and they also practice a much simpler form of holiness, often narrow and legalistic.

Also, this superficial approach tended to generate a "popular theology," which did not have the depth and richness of any of the more traditional strands of Protestant orthodoxy, and which could easily be mixed with various ideas from the world, which were not particularly Christian at all..

(g) Great visions always slowly become secularised, and they become compromised with various other agendas which various people might have. This certainly happened to Finney's vision. For example, it became entangled with the drive to abolish African slavery in America, with the Temperance Movement, and with other social improvement efforts, such as the conflict with the Masonic Lodges after the murder of William Morgan. It seems that Finney tried to stop his vision being identified too much with these other things. But social improvement was vital to Finney's gospel, and each of these other goals (very worthy in themselves) had very strong personalities driving them with all their might. These other people did not necessarily make the same distinctions and value judgments as Finney did.

(h) The psychology of the protracted meeting also operated in that, after a while, people got tired of that method, and it became increasingly less effective. Because they had depended upon it so much, there was no obvious alternative method which looked like being so successful. That is the situation that we are still in, today, so far as mass evangelism is concerned.

Finney's "Letters on Revival"

By 1845, Finney was realising that some of these changes were taking place, and that he had made mistakes at certain points, both in some of the emphases he had placed on certain theological points in his preaching over the years, and in some of the things he had said in the "Lectures on Revivals."

As a result, he wrote a series of letters to the editor of the "Oberlin Evangelist," in order to make some wise (he hoped) comments on current trends in revivals and evangelism, and in an effort to make some corrections to his previous published opinions,

These letters were later published in a separate small book, but have never had the circulation or popularity of his first book. This, despite the fact that these letters include his more mature thought on the subject. However that might be, these letters are clearly **not** a new substantive book intended to replace the "Lectures on Revivals." They are merely a corrective, and seem to assume a knowledge of the earlier book, and of all the recent happenings in the religious newspapers and magazines of the time.

The reader should beware that various shortened versions of these letters have been published, from time to time. It is wise to use a version which provides the full text of Finney's articles. In that way we are less likely to be affected by someone's censorship or editorial policy.

As we list some of the things Finney commented upon, or complained about, in his "Letters," we will see how these matters relate to the issues I have listed, above.

* Revivals of religion have been gradually becoming more superficial.
* There is much less deep conviction of sin, or breaking up of the heart.
* There is now much less depth of humility, much less strength of grace, than in 1830.
* Revivals are much shorter.
* A reaction comes much more suddenly and disastrously than formerly.
* Fewer of the converts make stable and efficient Christians.
* Those who persevere have much less of the Spirit of Christ than in former revivals.
* There is not so much of the spirit of prayer.
* Christians are less spiritual, less prevalent in prayer, than in previous

revivals.

* People are not so thoroughly quickened, or so thoroughly baptised with the Spirit, as before.
* In preaching, there is now much less probing of human depravity.
* There is much less display of its horrible guilt.
* The work of the Holy Spirit is not emphasised enough.
* There is too much emphasis on human ability. (Finney admitted his mistake.)
* There is bad instruction about what true religion is.
* There is an unhealthy degree of excitement. (4.)

(Exceptions, of course, were admitted to exist.)

Finney said that all these things tended to lead to two extremes. One extreme was Antinomianism, and the other was Legalism.

Antinomianism was imagining that a person could be a Christian without repentance, and without embracing the pursuit of New Testament holiness.

The other extreme, Legalism, was to adopt a series of superficial rules of behaviour, which did not display the fruits of the Spirit, impose them upon one's self, and expect them of everybody else. Legalism, therefore, was a holiness based upon making human decisions, and not upon faith in the Person and Work of Jesus Christ. It was holiness by works. (5.)

Finney said that preachers could help to create fanaticism in several ways. One way was to speak with bitterness, especially against those who criticised us. It was easy for the censorious spirit to arise when we are attacked. A little leaven affects the whole lump. Finney said revival preachers should be very honest with themselves about this matter. Indeed, preachers could themselves easily have imbibed the spirit of fanaticism.

Sectarianism

Finney thought that sectarianism was only a modified form of fanaticism. The conflict between Old School and New School was an example of this. So were conflicts between Reformers and Conservatives, and High Church versus Low Church. So he was not speaking simply of sectarianism based upon denominational differences, or about cults which claimed sole access to heavenly glories for their members, and a monopoly of the truth. Special meetings of a sectarian kind work against revival.

Many ministers, and other Christians, are so imbued with sectarianism that they are not aware of it. Finney said that **all** of the great revivals had been broken up, and their revival influences set aside, by ecclesiastical and sectarian jangling.

He included the violent antagonism to his teaching about “perfection” in this

category. So were the fights over Popery, Universalism, and all of the other "isms."

False Excitements and Impulses

Many excitements have been supposed to be revivals, when in truth there was very little real religion in what was happening. Very excited prayers, censoriousness, complaining, fault-finding, directed against people of all kinds, everywhere.

Too many people were inclined to think that their impulses came from the Holy Spirit. This was especially a problem when people wanted to be guided by the Spirit, in their prayers, or anywhere else.

When people are in a spiritual frame of mind, simple-hearted, and willing to be led, then Satan succeeds in making them rely upon impulses and impressions. Many problems arise by this means. (6.)

Hindrances to Revivals

Finney lists a number of these. An important one was our lack of feeling for souls, and for eternity, as Christ feels about people. When we do not have this sense of the relative importance of things, we cannot tell the difference between true revivals and spurious ones, and thus we produce spurious converts in our revival efforts.

> "The more such efforts are multiplied, the more spurious converts there are, so much the more are revivals brought into contempt, and so much the more deeply the cause of Christ is injured."
>
> Because "the true revival spirit has been grieved away... efforts to promote revivals of religion have become so mechanical, there is so much policy and machinery, so much dependence upon means and measures, so much of man and so little of God, that the character has greatly changed in the last few years." (7.)

Around 1830, the revivals which had then occurred had been earnestly desired, and ministers who experienced them had eagerly prayed for their return. By 1845, the nature of the revivals had changed so much that Finney thought it was no wonder that ministers did not want to see such revivals in their congregations again. They have good reason for thinking like that. Finney said that those ministers who had witnessed none but the later revivals were almost afraid of them. They had seen the disastrous results of "modern" revivals so frequently that they doubted whether they were on the whole desirable. Those who saw the earlier revivals greatly preferred them. They were distressed with the superficiality of many of the more recent revivals.

A great many other bits could be quoted from Finney's "Letters." But what has been included here will give the impression of the kind of thing Finney was saying.

Concluding Comment to Part Two

A few comments are in place here.

(a) One thing for us to remember especially about the many series of protracted meetings which were held up to 1845, about which Finney was commenting, and also for many years after that date, is that on many occasions a touch of revival occurred, by the superabundant grace of God, during and through the series of meetings in question. I think that the previous chapter of our book provided some examples of this. There were many other instances when nothing special happened at all, and a whole spectrum of examples would have existed in between.

So, it becomes very difficult to distinguish between revival and revivalism, if we are considering particular instances of special meetings. Somehow it is true that revival and revivalism merged into each other. Slowly the instances where revivalism, pure and simple, were taking place, became more common.

It is true that the period around 1842 was a better time, when there were more widespread signs of revival, and greater effectiveness in evangelistic outreach.

The revival which commenced in 1857, and spread all around the world, was a movement of a different kind, and was not based upon protracted evangelistic meetings. It became known as the "Prayer Meeting Revival," because prayer meetings were the main focus of the spiritual power associated with this movement.

There have been other periods, also, when revival has seemed closer, even when protracted meetings have been the main vehicles of the movement. The years around 1873 in England, with Moody and Sankey, and the work of E. P. Hammond in many places, appeared closer to revival. Also, in the early ministry of B. Fay Mills, some very astonishing things happened.

So, it is a difficult matter to draw an hard-and-fast line between revival and revivalism, except in theory. The Spirit moves as He chooses, and does not obey neat human ideas.

(b) Some peoples who have tended to favour the "Old School" attitude toward Finney, and who criticised extensively the 1835 "Lectures on Revivals," have tried to make out that Finney's criticisms of recent revivals in the "Letters" are really an admission by Finney that the "Old School" people had been right all along. They thought that Finney was admitting defeat. They thought he was agreeing with them in their criticisms of his past beliefs, behaviour, policies and actions.

It is not hard, however, to realise that this view is mistaken. One has only to read his "Memoirs" to see that he continued to believe many of the things he had believed in his younger days. Not only did he NOT change his views about many things, but he became more convinced that he had been correct, as he got

older.

In the “Letters,” he certainly admitted having made a small number of mistakes, but not anything like a total turn-around that such an Old School view would have required.

Part Three: Ultraism

Whitney Cross raised the issue of Ultraism in more recent times. It had also been mentioned by Finney. The person who wrote most extensively about it was William B. Sprague, who seems to have coined the word. It appeared in a sermon he preached at the installation of the Rev. John Hunter as pastor of the First Congregational Chuch in West Springfield, Massachusetts, on August 25th, 1835. It was duly published as a small booklet later that year.

(a) Sprague's general definition of “ultraism” is that it refers to “wild and extravagant action.” “There is a large class who have been not only zealous, but over-zealous; not only wise, but over-wise; - who have seemed to rue the day that such words as *caution*, and *prudence*, and *discretion*, ever found their way into the Christian's vocabulary; and to regard all the old ways of doing good as well enough in their time, but as quite unworthy of this enlightened age.

The spirit to which I refer, is not confined to any particular department of religious action: if it were, it would be an occasion for much less alarm; - but you have to encounter it, like an all pervading energy, in almost every good enterprize of the day; and it has gathered so much strength, that he who thinks to oppose it, may well gird himself for conflict with a giant.” (8.)

Sprague was not in favour of the opposite extreme, either. He knew the dangers of Formalism. But he wanted a middle path to be followed.

(b) The spirit of ultraism, he said, sprang from a **person's temperament,** and from **mistaken ideas about religion.**

These personal features include allowing passion and intensity to dominate one's actions, and for rational, careful and prudential considerations to be pushed into the background. This Sprague defines as “an ardent temperament.” Also included may be a restless desire for change, a love of distinction.

Mistaken religious ideas which tend to undergird Ultraism include giving too much attention and importance to human agency. This was one of Finney's mistakes, which he admitted in his “Letters on Revival.” (9.)

Another was to over-emphasise the importance of excitement and action in religious activities.

Some people were guilty of this, flowing from some comments Finney made

in the “Lectures on Revivals,” and was something he criticised extensively in his “Letters on Revival.” Many people would be guilty of it as a natural thing, and without knowing anything Finney had written. It is a normal way of approaching projects where people think they can achieve something by being very busy and active.

Many people have said that, about Finney's time, the spirit of the age seemed to make popular the idea that a great deal could be achieved in many ways if people became very active. And, for a great many purposes, such an approach is well founded.

In the work of the Kingdom of God, however, **human busyness** is not so important, because progress can only be made through spiritual power, flowing from such passages in the New Testament as the words of Christ about “the true vine and the branches” in John's Gospel, chapter 15.

This mistake seemed to be our propensity to over-emphasising the value of human actions as a means of achieving spiritual goals. (10.)

The ultraist partly gains his power by affecting public opinion, and, in turn, public opinion helps his efforts to influence the whole situation.

(c) The elements of ultraism include **self-righteousness,** which tends to be enormously prevalent amongst zealous and enthusiastic people of every description. (11.)

We have seen that Finney complained at length about lack of humility, meekness, being teachable, and lowliness of mind. He thought these qualities were common in the revivals of 1826 to 1836, but were not present so much in the so-called revivals by 1845, when he wrote the “Letters on Revival.”

No doubt Finney, himself, hoped that he had a certain degree of humility, and lowliness of mind, although there were many others who thought they could not recognise it in him.

Another factor which is strongly related to self-righteousness is the propensity of enthusiastic people to be strongly critical of everyone and everything which does not measure up to the self-righteous person's high standard, and to their theological purity. So, Sprague says that **censoriousness** is a key feature of ultraism.

Finney agreed with this view, both in the “Lectures on Revivals”, and in the “Letters on Revival”. Finney was very strong against censoriousness. There were, however, many things about which Finney was critical, although he tended to attack issues, and not to say the rude things about individuals.

(d) Sprague said that this spirit of ultraism produced **inconsistency** in certain matters. They say that they accept the Word of God as their rule and guide, but then they follow their own devices.

For example, there are so many boisterous reformers who need very much to

be reformed themselves. There are so many people of the "ultraist" variety, who display zeal without knowledge, zeal without discretion, zeal without honesty, and zeal without Christian graces. (12.)

(e) Aspects of **fanaticism** which appear in ultraism, Sprague says, are a pretended superior sanctity. One of the forms in which this has appeared many times in evangelicalism is that people say and do things which imply that there are two grades of Christians - those who have been filled with the Spirit, and who therefore can do the new thing, and the others who are not filled with the Spirit.

Another example is seen when the ultraist talks about the success of his evangelistic work, numbers of conversions are reported with great certainty, as if such a thing could be known with certainty by someone else, or even by the new converts themselves. (13.)

(f) It shows itself in opposing wrong with an **improper spirit**. Projects and goals are urged with an intensity beyond the real value of the thing desired. It promoted "right" at the expense of integrity and charity, according to Sprague. These are all factors which enthusiastic Christians can easily recognise, although we usually see it in other people more easily than we can recognise it in ourselves, and in the way we pursue the goals which interest us greatly. (14.)

(a) Another feature of ultraism, according to Sprague, is the use of the principle that the end justifies the means. This point was directed most of all against the "new measures," based upon the claim that the new measures people would use any tactic or method which best served their purpose, regardless of whether it was good in other ways, or was justified in the Scriptures. To this point he gives the very long name of **disingenuousness.** (15).

Bringing Revivals into Disrepute

Whenever these ugly factors and aspects appear in people who are either involved in revivals, or who are strong supporters of revivals, more thoughtful people become afraid of revivals. They do not want to have them in their churches because the revival probably would produce many of these ugly features in their churches, where they might not yet exist.

Sprague said that extreme activities in favour of revivals, or during revivals, make moderate people afraid to do anything toward revivals. This is very sad, of course, when this happens, as undoubtedly it does, more often than we care to think.

William Weeks did not want anything to "bring revivals into disrepute." He thought the "new measures." would bring revivals into disrepute. That is how

they are presented in the “Pilgrim's Progress.” Many of the issues he raises are matters of major concern. They are not simply the bleatings of an insignificant and frustrated man.

This was the kind of thing behind Finney's criticisms of “recent revivals” [around 1845] in his “Letters.” He said that the pastors had good reason to be concerned over these matters.

There are other, longer term, side effects of this sort of problem which Sprague mentions. He said it tends to open the floodgates to doctrinal error. It tends to drive many people to the opposite extreme. It weakens the moral energies of the church, by dividing its counsels. And it provides the non-believers, and people who are careless about spiritual matters, with a good excuse for neglecting the Christian religion, and the need of salvation. With respect to this last point, the moderate Christian has to take the side of the non-believer against the extremes practised by the ultraist, which are being criticised. As a result, the non-believer is provided with a reason for ignoring Christianity by the moderate Christian. It is sad to fracture the Christian's witness in this way.

Sprague's Remedy

To combat ultraism, Christians need **careful discrimination**, in order to understand and recognise the various examples of ultraism, wherever it might appear, and in deciding what to do about it.

Moral Courage was also needed. The reason for this is seen clearly in what happened to Weeks and Nettleton, when they attacked Finney and his revivals. The reaction against Weeks and Nettleton, and of all those who sided with them, was to accuse them of being enemies of revivals. It is a natural and understandable reaction from enthusiastic people who have little wisdom or depth in their knowledge.

To accuse Nettleton of being an enemy of revivals is certainly very strange, considering his previous experiences in leading such movements of the Spirit. A better criticism of Nettleton, perhaps, might be to point out that he seemed unable to realise that change was inevitable, and that his own methods of managing revivals would be changed by other people, as time proceeded.

William Weeks could have been criticised for being an enemy of revivals, because of the way he stood against Finney. In fact he strongly wanted to see revivals, except that the revivals he wanted to see were of a different kind - rather like the manner in which Nettleton used to lead his meetings, and his work generally. Many other people would also have liked to see the return of revivals such as those that Nettleton led.

Sprague said that **eminent piety** was also needed. Clearly, the fruits of the Holy Spirit have to be shown by those who oppose the ultraist, and try to bring back some balance into the way things are done. If that is not the case, the

moderate person becomes an ultraist in the way he or she opposes the ultraism of others. The fruits of the Spirit provide the key to the situation. The ultraist can return to normal by having a deeper experience of these fruits. The moderate person must show these fruit, or else will become the same kind of person as the ones he is trying to resist.

Fervent and persevering prayer was also an important part of the remedy. God would Himself create a better wisdom, even if it became apparent by means of the ultraist overstepping the mark, and showing his own foolishness to the world. But, such prayer would also lead to better revivals, in the short term, and also in the long term. Here the providential dealings of God are important. (16.)

Concluding Comment to Part Three

Many of Sprague's comments are of good interest, and deserve much thought. When we consider the whole spectrum of positions which different people took about these matters, Sprague generally represented a fairly strongly conservative position.

Part Four: The Presbyterian Schism of 1837

This Schism was, in part, something which flowed from the "western" revivals of central New York, between 1826 and 1836. The emphasis, however, should be upon the words - "in part."

It is not a part of my purpose in this book to offer an historical description of this Schism, or to analyse it in much detail.

The series of events involved in the Schism can be seen in any of the books about it. There is no debate about the series of events.

There is more debate about the attitude which ought to be taken toward those events. The reader is referred to the titles about 1837 listed in the Bibliography. Crocker was a New England Congregationalist. Woods was New School. Baird and Wood were Old School. Their books naturally reflect their own viewpoints, although they agree about the basic events.

There had been a Schism in the Presbyterian Church in 1741, back in the days of the First Awakening, which produced the Old Lights, who did not look with favour upon the more enthusiastic activities which flowed from the revival. The New Lights were supporters of these enthusiastic activities.

In 1801, the Plan of Union was formed, whereby co-operation was possible between the General Assembly and the General Association of Connecticut, in doing missionary work in the new areas in upstate New York, as those areas

became open to habitation and cultivation by the white population. South of the Pennsylvania line, white settlement had been in process for many years.

Nathanael Emmons' Prophecy about the Plan of Union of 1801

Nathanael Emmons had prophesied that Congregationalism (with its emphasis on freedom and local autonomy) would not be able to work well alongside Presbyterianism, which was much more centralised in its power structure, and could therefore exert power over everyone within its structures much more easily. This sort of thing could not be done in Congregationalism. Emmons thought the Plan of Union would not survive, and that Congregational influences would be swallowed up in the centralised Presbyterian power juggernaut.

Emmons furthermore believed that the highly centralised Presbyterian organisation, where everything was controlled by the General Assembly, was a place where one very powerful personality could come to dominate the whole church, in a way which was impossible in Congregationalism. A good example of this occurred in the sway that Ashbel Green gained in the General Assembly, incidentally supporting the Plan of Union in 1801, and helping to bring it down in 1837.

Emmons believed in liberty, and local autonomy. The Puritans had fled from being dictated to. But he was well aware of the sway that Ashbel Green was able to gain, and of his powers of argument and criticism. Emmons "inferred that, sooner or later, an '*exscinding*' spirit would arise in the Presbyterian Assembly, and he wrote many nervous letters that he might forestall even the temptation to 'exscind' the churches of New England. His aim was pacific. The result of such letters has been comparative peace. The children who are free, forget the perils and ridicule the anxieties of their fathers, who gave them liberty." (17.)

We have seen that New England Congregational Calvinism was not quite the same as the Calvinism generally espoused by the General Assembly. These two strands went through a different evolution, over a period of time. In due time, these two strands came into conflict, and this contributed to the Schism of 1837.

Around 1821, a plan of union was made between the General Assembly and the Associate Reformed Church. The Associate church was apparently even more conservative in their approach to Calvinism than the General Assembly, and more inclined to high-church attitudes in defending their theology. George Gale believed that it was from this union that the trouble of 1837 came. People from the Associate church taught the mainstream Presbyterians to fight for orthodoxy by using the power structures available in the General Assembly.

The "western" revivals caused an enormous growth in the membership of churches in the New York area, swollen even further by Congregational

members who were allowed to sit in the General Assembly under provisions laid out in the Plan of Union. In this way, people who were not really Presbyterians, and who had never formally accepted Presbyterian theological standards, were given the power to vote in the General Assembly. More conservative Presbyterians saw this as a sell-out.

The Plan of Union churches, and the presbyteries which covered them, often did begin to develop a somewhat different character from what the more conservative Presbyterians would have liked, and did not follow the Presbyterian protocols with enough rigidity.

The churches of upper New York, therefore, became objects of suspicion regarding theological orthodoxy, so far as the Old School Presbyterians were concerned.

When the 1826 revivals took place, and William Weeks wrote to Nettleton making his range of accusations against the revivals, and against Finney in particular, the accusations were widely advertised by Nettleton's friends, and people in the eastern states widely believed that Weeks's and Nettleton's version of events was correct.

Even after Nettleton's death in 1844, Bennet Tyler, his biographer, still believed that all the things said by Nettleton about the western revivals were correct. Somehow it did not matter that efforts had been made to set the story straight. Tyler did not believe any of it. There were many others like him.

Apart from Ashbel Green being a dominating personality in the General Assembly, as we noted above, a part of the conflict between Presbyterians from upstate New York and the more conservative members of the General Assembly, came from personality conflicts. Lyman Beecher was the kind of powerful personality who would easily generate conflicts, and so was Nathan S. S. Beman. In due course, both Beecher and Beman came together on the New School side. There were many other powerful personalities in the Assembly, as well, on both sides. So a clash of personalities could happen easily.

H. B. Stanton tells us, with Ashbel Green and Nathan Beman in mind particularly:- "The combatants fought just like the world's people, and kept the Church in turmoil for years." (18.)

The main cause of the Schism of 1837 arose from a high-church attitude which was developing amongst the more conservative people in the General Assembly. The "New School" faction was increasing in size and power. In the eyes of the conservatives, it would not be long before the more "liberal" party would be strong enough to control the Assembly. That, they thought, would lead inevitably to the liberalisation of the church, and the destruction of the real standards of Presbyterianism.

It was not that the New School people wanted to get rid of the conservatives. This was never their aim. But, the Old School decided that the only way they had to defend the truths of their faith was to get rid of the New School people

out of the Presbyterian church.

The opportunity to do this occurred at the General Assembly of 1837, where the Old School people had a small majority, possibly for the last time. They seized their chance with both hands.

The Plan of Union of 1801 was unilaterally abrogated. Whole sections of the church were cut off and expelled from the church, because the Old School people did not believe that these Synods and Presbyteries were truly Presbyterian in their organisation and membership, or in their doctrinal orthodoxy. The doctrinal heresies alleged to exist in these parts of the church were the heresies which Weeks and Nettleton had said were true of Finney, and had been preached in the western revivals.

The Schism was an exhibition of the use of sheer "church" political power exercised by a faction within the General Assembly. Nearly half the membership of the Presbyterian church was cast out of the church, without referring the matter to the Presbyteries, without anyone being tried for the heresies or organisational maladies which were alleged to exist, and without anyone being given a right to defend themselves, to reply to accusations, or having the right of appeal.

Two court cases followed this decision by the General Assembly.

The first court decision was that the Assembly had the right to make any decision they might like to make about the Presbyterian church, seeing it was the supreme body in the church.

A higher court, however, decided that the General Assembly had not acted legally, nor had it extended normal natural rights to its members. They had in fact instituted a revolution, a kind of "coup d'etat" within the church.

The New School had to organise themselves into a second Presbyterian denomination, which existed alongside the Old School one, and this situation continued to exist for about forty years, until a reunion took place. When the reunion occurred, all of the factors which had figured so largely in the Schism were surrendered, and the new, united church was not distinguishable from the New School church, in its theology, or in its practices and attitudes during protracted meetings.

Was the Schism a Reverse Kind of Ultraism?

The Schism was one of a long series of events which have occurred over a number of years wherein an attempt was being made to defend Presbyterian orthodoxy. The value of this kind of defence depends upon the theological viewpoint that one might take. The Old School Presbyterians believed that their understanding of the Presbyterian standards was the best expression of the teaching of the Bible. So they had a right, and an obligation, to defend their beliefs as best they could.

Whether such a defence should have been undertaken by this method is

another matter again, which is much more open to debate.

Other efforts were made some years later by various professors and teachers at Princeton Theological Seminary, involving the influence of men like Charles Hodge, A. A. Hodge, Benjamin Warfield and J. Gresham Machen.

The description of "Ultraism" given by William B. Sprague highlights many features which are similar to what happened in 1837.

For example, these might include:-

* The exercise of power being used by Christians to achieve a goal, without any reference to the "golden rule," the fruits of the Spirit, or anything in New Testament ethical behaviour.

* "Right belief" was placed before integrity and charity, and before democratic rights.

* Right organisation was asserted by a means which denied that organisation.

* The end justified the means.

* People who professed to respect the Word of God, followed their own devices instead of obeying the Scriptures. Obedience to the Scriptures would have led them to sacrifice their own position in the church, instead of using the power of church structures to throw out others.

* Many Old School followers, such as Tyler, refused to believe good things about the "western" revivals in upstate New York. Bad things, however, were accepted readily. After all, the "New Measures" mistakes arose from wrong theology. The mistaken theology included such things as an over-emphasis on human ability, and a turning away from the Calvinist doctrine of regeneration, wherein a person is born again because of the creative action of the Holy Spirit, and without our participation in any way. Conversion happened after this regenerating, creative act by the Spirit.

It is from this source that the danger of spurious conversions arose, so Weeks said.

* Many unbelievers were astonished at the very severe way the Old School faction had treated their fellow Presbyterians, and fellow Christians.

Undoubtedly, many other arguments could also be offered which might lead us in the opposite direction.

Fowler wrote after the reunion had occurred. He thought that, although a great deal of acrimonious feeling had been generated by it, on the whole, the Schism had been a good thing. It had brought the New School people up with a shock, and made them look more carefully at how well they were conducting their Presbyterian procedures. It allowed the two churches each to go their own ways, and do their work for God without being affected or restricted by the other faction.

"The excision proved a blessing to the churches in Central New York. There had been alienations among them growing out of differences of judgment

about incidents to revivals of religion and the abolition of slavery and other reforms, but they rushed together under their common excitement, and firmly clasped then, they have remained in the closest embrace since.

And it relieved them, too, of errors and evils that had existed, not so much in them as about them, and led them to a more unanimous recognition of the truth and importance of some controverted and depreciated articles of our faith, and of the need of care in the selection of measures for revivals and reforms, and to an improvement of their character generally.

And very few churches were lost by the exscinded Synods. The Assembly directed those that were 'strictly Presbyterian in doctrine and order' to apply for admission to those Presbyteries retained by it nearest and most convenient to them; but none left in the eastern and western part of our territory, but one in its southern part, three in the northern part, and two or three in the central part. The Congregational Association of the State also issued an address to the Congregational churches connected with our Presbyteries, urging them to leave; but with a like unanimity they preferred to remain." (19.)

Whatever one might think of the rights or wrongs of the Presbyterian Schism of 1837, it represented a sad chapter in church history, which is also, to some extent, a chapter in the history of American revivals. For these reasons, it should be seen as a potent source from which we can all learn to be wise.

Two Concluding Comments

(a) The Short Term Effects of the "New Measures"

In chapters fifteen and sixteen we have tried to look in some detail at the way the "new measures" made progress, and became used more widely in upstate New York, through the ten or fifteen years following the great revival of 1831. In this way perhaps we can judge whether the fears that Nettleton and Weeks voiced about the "new measures" were fulfilled - at least in the short term.

We saw that these new measures became increasingly entrenched, but by no means were they all used universally.

We saw also the appearance of evangelistic preachers who would have been considered irregular by the New England Congregational establishment, and by the General Assembly, whose usefulness depended upon native talent and charisma rather than on education and ordination.

We saw a growth in the practice of deliberately organising special efforts at times which suited the programme of the local churches, and the season of the year, instead of relying primarily upon the moving of the Holy Spirit, or ability first of all to prevail in prayer. After all, from a purely human point of view, it is much easier to run a local church, or take steps to build up a congregation, if the human leader has all the important factors relating to growth under his

control, and can make decisions about any of them when he sees fit.

In a good many instances, alleged conversions took place on a shallower basis than before, and these converts were not so well instructed about the meaning of their faith.

Many other such factors could be mentioned as beginning to appear, but by 1840 none of them had developed to the extreme which occurred later in the story.

Some of the special efforts were very successful. Some of them showed signs of revival. But, some of them appeared to produce very little fruit, and none which appeared to last very long. So, some of the things which Nettleton and Weeks had predicted were beginning to appear.

Our conclusion and evaluation, therefore, should probably be that, by 1842, there was still enough of real revival in the churches in upstate New York, and enough quality in their work, to save them from the worst of what Nettleton and Weeks had predicted.

To put it another way - from many points of view, the period up to 1842 in upstate New York was very successful indeed for many of the churches. Yet, increasingly, the things of which Finney complained in his 1845 "Letters," plus other problems, were slowly becoming apparent. Even worse features - if they were to happen - had not yet been given sufficient time to develop their full character.

(b) Spiritual Deceptions

Each of the sections in this chapter reflects the problems of spiritual deceptions, in one way and another.

In Part One, the question as to whose testimony is to be believed revealed ways in which people refused to believe the truth about some parts of the church, and about the work of God. History thus comes to be written on pre-conceived assumptions, which are believed to have certain specific historical consequences. These assumed historical consequences were not questioned in the face of contrary historical evidence. This is a form of spiritual deception.

In Part Two, a distinction between "revival" and "revivalism" is important. There is spiritual deception in an inability to distinguish between the work of the Holy Spirit, and other aspects of the work of the church. Finney himself seemed, at times, unable to make this distinction very well.

Ultimately, by failing to make this distinction, people attribute to man or to the devil what is actually the work of God. In the opposite way, people can attribute to the Holy Spirit something which is purely human, or is demonic. These are fundamental forms of spiritual deception.

In Part Three, Sprague's analysis of Ultraism whether given from an overly conservative viewpoint, or not, reveals some very interesting insights into the many ways that people deceive themselves, or are deceived by the devil. As

William Weeks taught us, we can see clearly how revivals can be made to serve the devil, and to further the cause which is exactly opposite to what we want to achieve.

In Part Four, I have tried to point out some aspects of spiritual deception which the Old School stalwarts of orthodoxy were committing. Without too much difficulty, one could make a list of corresponding deceptions which were being made by their opponents in the New School.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

THE LONGER - TERM RESULTS

We have seen in our analysis so far that Charles Finney's "New Measures" were at least partly responsible for the short-term rise of a kind of mass evangelism which emphasised the more human side of evangelism, and of responding to God, and which became known in later years as "revivalism." By 1845, Finney himself began to realise some of the problems which this kind of thing involved.

In this chapter we will be concerned to ask what were the long-term results of "revivalistic evangelism," and to try to assess Finney's role in this larger picture.

The chapter will be divided into two parts. The first will present an overview of the history of evangelicalism in the United States during the Nineteenth Century, particularly as it bears upon our overall subject of interest. This will provide a context to answer the more direct question which follows. The second part will approach the question underlying our book - whether the prophesies made by Nettleton and Weeks about this kind of evangelism came true, in the end, and if so, why.

Part One: Overview of Nineteenth Century Evangelical History in the U.S.A.

In recent years, several good quality studies covering this subject have been published, written by some highly qualified and competent historians. We will be relying upon the work of some of these people in setting out this overview.

The Period up to 1865

(a) We saw that the Nineteenth Century began with several periods of powerful revivals, which have been called the Second Great Awakening. It has been estimated that, between 1800 and 1830, on the average, revivals occurred in over five hundred churches each year throughout the country, resulting in fifty thousand conversions each year.

Our story told only a little about the revivals in New England. Much more was told about the revivals in upstate New York, as this was the main focus of our interest.

However, there were many other revivals in other parts of the country which played roles of great importance in the history of the nation. One of these was called the Kentucky Revival, which turned that part of the country from being a

haven for criminals, and a show-case of godlessness, into one of the most Christian places in the world. This revival spread into Tennessee, the Virginias and Georgia, creating what became known as "The Bible Belt." It spawned the great "Camp Meeting" movement, and "Country and Western" Gospel music. The early years of this revival included displays of certain psychological peculiarities and emotional excesses which were quite unlike the revivals in New York and Connecticut.

These revivals also laid the foundations for the great numerical strength of the Methodist and Baptist Churches in years to come, and saw the rise of several other new denominations. (1.)

(b) Our story has mentioned a little about the evangelical impact upon institutions of higher learning in the East, and that the influences of Deism, and student disrespect for Christianity, received a severe blow as a result of these early revivals. As a result, Evangelicalism was viewed with a much greater degree of intellectual respect at that time than ever since. In part, this arose from Timothy Dwight's preaching against "Infidel Philosophy," but more largely it was because powerful revivals occurred in many of the places of higher learning, more than once, and were usually supported by the academic leaders. (2.)

(c) Ardent evangelism was pursued right through the first half of the Nineteenth Century, especially by the Methodists, and increasingly by the other churches. Outbreaks of revival were seen by the Methodist preachers in many places in the mid-west. The percentage of people who were active church members grew steadily, especially in the mid-west and frontier states of the Union. There were some brief periods of decline, but the Methodist Church in particular grew strongly throughout this period.

Although the church was split along slavery lines, at the time of the Civil War there were more Methodists than there were members in any other single denomination in the country.

This rapid growth continued for several decades after the War, and it was only after some time that the combined Baptist denominations became more numerous.

From the very beginning the Methodists had practised high energy evangelism, with the emphasis on human response. The Methodists were even more the chief exponents of revivalist principles than the New School Presbyterians. In this way, as time passed, the Methodists helped to create the confusion between revival and revivalism. (3.)

(d) We have seen in a previous chapter that 1842 was a year when revival was seen in many parts of the U.S.A. We noticed especially the way

that upstate New York tasted some of this. Mass evangelistic efforts formed a part of this period of revival in many places. For example, Elder Jacob Knapp experienced some of it during his campaign in Boston. (4.)

(e) It was a peculiarly optimistic period for evangelicals, before 1860, and many people expected that the Millenium was just around the corner. There were high hopes that the Gospel would progress so well in the near future that large percentages of the population would be converted to Christ, and that the quality of society would be greatly improved. Many voluntary societies were formed, both small and large, to pursue goals of social and moral improvement. Especially was this so in regard to the defeat of slavery. The excesses of alcohol abuse were also very widespread, and this provoked a strong evangelical response. Overseas missions were also developing rapidly. Wonderful revival movements occurred in many parts of the world, transforming native populations into worshipping Christians. This kind of success was expected to continue and increase.

This optimism about the future was fostered by the emphasis upon human effort and organisation which was part of the new spirit of the age, and was furthered by the Arminian theology of the Methodists. Finney's "new measures" headed in a similar direction. Things which could be done were under human control, giving a new sense of power and purpose to people. Even the prayer of faith was in this category to some degree. Christian workers were no longer at the mercy of things they could not control, such as suggested by the more Calvinistic idea of God's sovereignty. God had made many promises in the Bible. These provided sources of power which could be tapped by energetic and purposeful people. (5.)

(f) The Great Revival which commenced in 1857 did not fit into the "Methodist" or "New Measures" style of work quite so much. This revival commenced in several places in America and Canada. The best-known source of the movement was in the Fulton Street Dutch Reformed Church in New York. The main vehicles used by the Spirit of God in this revival were prayer meetings. Within the next three years, this revival had spread to every country in the world where the evangelical message was being preached. (6.)

So, although this revival followed a different pattern from what many people expected, it nevertheless fostered even further the great expectations that evangelicals had about the success of their work. It represented a very high point in the story of evangelical religion.

(g) The impact of the 1857 movement was still being felt when the American Civil War began, and much prayer led to the outbreak of revival, generally amongst the population in the southern states, and more particularly

amongst the soldiers. Good accounts exist describing the revival amongst the soldiers in the Southern armies, but there were also many conversions in the Northern armies. So, the period up to 1865 should also be included as a period of notable revival in many parts of the United States. (7.)

The "Gilded Age"

Wars very often serve to accentuate changes that are taking place in a society, and this certainly happened after the American Civil War, which had such a devastation effect upon so many of the citizens. There was also immense social disruption after the War, especially in the South, where the slaves were now free, and the entire social fabric had to be re-arranged.

The impact of the earlier revivals, and the popularity of "revivalism," helped to produce a situation where evangelical Protestant Christianity was almost the undeclared religion of the nation.

With many people, of course, this devotion to God was a deep and heart-felt reality. Many others followed the prevailing winds, but in a much more superficial way. For them, the religion was only skin deep. Mark Twain, more than many others, could see how shallow was the hold of this religious impact upon society, and coined the expression "The Gilded Age" to describe it.

Society was flawed in many serious ways. Revivalism had its own inner problems, also. The surface appearance was good. The paint looked good. But, underneath, all was not so well.

So, overtly Christian values were widely taught and believed, but they were slowly and increasingly becoming obeyed in shallower ways. (8.)

In Many Ways, Revivalism was Enormously Successful

Reference has already been made to the great success of revivalism in many parts of the U.S.A. Although it had problems such as we have been discussing, it was the method used to bring the message of salvation to an enormous number of people, and to which they responded positively. It had such an impact upon the American psyche that it became almost the undeclared religion of the nation.

Revivalistic methods became so ingrained into the evangelical picture that people saw their calling to serve God in terms of this style of religion, and believed that God had called them to work in this manner.

There were many areas of the country where the majority of people in many communities believed themselves to be born again Christians, in terms of revivalistic theology. In many other communities, the number of those professing to be born again might not have been in the majority. In those communities, many others who thought they were not born again, also believed that they ought to be. Through until the start of the First World War, revivalism exercised an enormous influence throughout the country, and touched

profoundly the lives of millions of Americans.

The Challenge of Social Issues Becomes More Superficial

The social issues about which the churches were most active also became more legalistic and superficial. They did not question many of the basic features of their society, such as the abuses of capitalism, personal and corporate greed, political or economic corruption, or the abuse of the poor by the rich and powerful. The Southern Baptists were especially guilty in this regard. They wanted to establish existing trends. They did not challenge the status-quo. There was no prophetic voice about many matters of injustice, or about basic things that were wrong in the fabric of society itself. They continued, however, to crusade against the old chestnuts of alcohol abuse and breaches of personal morality.

When evangelists did challenge aspects of society, they tended to become spokes-people for a political party, or a political view, which fitted in with their own cultural background, instead of being a prophet in a deeper sense. Both Sam Jones and Billy Sunday provided examples of this.

The evangelists also usually failed to challenge social sins being committed by people who were financial backers of the large and expensive campaign meetings. (9.)

Preaching to the Converted

Revivalism continued to be very successful, but its appeal was slowly being felt only by people who were already converted, by younger members of their families, and by people who were already on the fringe of the churches. There began to be whole sections of society who never went to church and never heard a sermon.

By the end of the century, while some evangelists still hoped to win converts out of the world, their main messages had to be delivered to Christian people, because the congregation who listened to them were already church people. To an increasing degree, members of the unconverted public were not present.

This process had reached maturity early in the Twentieth Century. Harold Murray tells us that Gipsy Smith's later ministry was mainly directed toward the Christians in the congregation, telling them that they would be more winsome if they were more like Christ. (10.)

Urbanisation

After 1865, the nature of society changed in that children of farmers began the migration process to cities in pursuit of work. Before the Civil War, the main successes of revivalism had been amongst rural people who were occupying and taming the frontier. Slowly, the frontier became the city, and the cities got bigger and bigger. The evangelists tried to have big crusades in the

big cities, but these somehow did not seem to work as well as the previous evangelism had worked in the country-side and the small towns. Indeed, many of the new city workers were from overseas, and could not be appealed to on the same basis as a person in from the country. (11.)

With migration to the cities, decline in the quality of rural life naturally followed.

Secularisation

The great influx of immigrants from many countries produced a multi-cultural society, where many religions had to be allowed to exist, side by side. There had already been a situation where many brands of Christianity had worked side by side. Now the differences within the community increased. So this created trends in society where everything had to begin to operate without reference to Christian mores and traditional habits.

Business and politics seemed to operate according to their own rules, more than according to Christian rules. The churches never seemed to be able to find satisfactory ways of challenging these other rules. So, the life-style offered in the name of Christ became increasingly superficial and inadequate.

George Marsden tells us that one of the main causes of secularisation came about because the universities were re-organised according to the German pattern - into independent disciplines - where a scholar could spend his entire life studying a subject without ever asking what relation the subject matter bore to Almighty God. (12.)

Attacks Upon the Credibility of the Bible

These, of course, had existed beforehand, in the form of Tom Paine and the French philosophers. But new attacks arose in two forms - that of Charles Darwin's "Origin of Species," and German Higher Criticism of the Bible.

On the basis of Darwin's scientific researches, his arguments using the latest understanding of the scientific method, along with many speculations, Darwin proposed a theory which did not really require the existence of a God in order to account for the existence of life on earth, as we know it. This created a tremendous stir in many quarters.

On top of that, geological studies had also been showing for some time that the earth was a great many years older than a few thousand. This conflicted with dates that had been inserted into the King James' Version of the Bible by Archbishop Ussher, dating the creation in the fourth millenium B.C.

The German Higher Critics of the Bible produced arguments which portrayed the Bible as something else other than what everybody had always believed it to be.

As the Nineteenth Century drew to a close, many educated Christians felt the urge to modify their old beliefs, in order to include these newer ideas, and to

create a situation where the new ideas no longer conflicted with their faith in God.

But, many other Christians tried to resist the new ideas. They declared them all bad, and as worthy of being fought against, at all costs. The new ideas betrayed the Faith. At that stage of the story, however, these "defenders of the old faith" had not yet found the best ways of conducting this fight. So, it was not an easy task.

The New Theology

Towards the end of the Nineteenth Century, a new type of theology began to be promoted, by personality-type orators. The new teaching was called "The New Theology," and was promoted by men like Henry Ward Beecher and Phillips Brooks. In a way, it was like evangelical theology, but in another way it tended to equate the higher aspects of the American way of life with proper Christianity.

It was true that the impact of the previous revivals, and the widespread evangelism, had been effective in modifying many aspects of normal American life so that, in a superficial way, it looked like Christianity. The New Theology served to water down the Christian message so that it became even more like "the world" as it existed around them. But it was captivating, because of the personalities of the men who promoted the message. (13.)

Modernist Theology, and the Fundamentalist Reaction

Modernist theology was also appearing toward the end of the Nineteenth Century. Later, in the early years of the Twentieth Century, Liberal Theology also had a major impact on the psyche of the churches. Modernism was part of an intellectual attempt, by some Christians, to incorporate the most recent thinking in the academic world into the Christian Message, so that the two could exist together. It was an attempt to serve the Gospel.

It generally had the effect of changing the Gospel into another message altogether. To an increasing degree, it involved denying the truthfulness of all the standard doctrines of the Christian Faith. The ultimate extremes to which this went did not become evident immediately. And those who promoted these views usually managed to state their case in such a way that unlettered people could not see how much of the Faith was being denied, nor could they see the serious logical conclusions which lay at the end of this way of thinking.

Modernism had the appearance of intellectual superiority, and many Modernists certainly claimed such superiority, looking down their noses at anyone who tried to practice the old evangelism. Actually, Modernism was not particularly intellectually sophisticated. It was a form of sentimentalism, in which only those parts of the Bible, and the Creeds, were accepted, which passed the sense of taste which was current in the mind of the Modernist at the

time. There was no final authority, or ultimate way of knowing which of the modern standards was more reliable. The more severe forms of Higher Criticism of the Bible, flowing from seminaries in Germany, also fitted into this category, and had a similar impact on the churches around the world.

The sentimental nature of Modernism arose partly because it was based upon a theology of feeling. The greatest exponent of this theology was the German theologian, Friedrich Schleiermacher.

The other side of this coin was the role played in American history by the Fundamentalist Movement. Fundamentalism arose as an attempt to defend the Faith from the attack upon it posed by the Modernists. It was not the only way of fighting the new ideas, but many people followed this method. It involved using a certain manner of interpreting the Scriptures which was prevalent at the time. Some historians have pointed to the rise of Pre-Millenial Dispensational theology for the impact of this particular literalistic way of interpreting the Bible. Whether this is so, or not, Fundamentalist thinking helped to foster the idea that conservative evangelical Christians were anti-intellectuals, as Modernists continually said that they were. They appeared to adopt ideas which could not be rationally defended.

The "Sea Change"

Some historians talk about great pervasive changes which can take place in a culture or society, which seem to arrive unexpected and unwanted, but which create such alterations that it can take many years for people to realise what has happened, and to get used to it. Professor Herbert Butterfield called these "the imponderables." The Old Testament prophets would have seen them as the providential dealings and judgments of God. (14.)

A change of this kind overtook American revivalism in the late Nineteenth Century and early Twentieth Century. The reasons for it probably included all of the factors we have mentioned so far. But, perhaps these were not enough to account for it. Revivalism also had inner weaknesses, which we will consider shortly.

If we treat this "sea-change" as a factor in its own right, even simply for the sake of analysis, it is the factor which perhaps did the most to change the course of American evangelism, and to bring revivals into disrepute. The ideas as to what was acceptable or fashionable in the American culture changed, as time passed. The flavour of the society changed. This was one of those cultural things which are not organised or aimed at by anyone, but which affect what kind of church work people will see as most effective at any stage of a nation's history. Such things also affect what a congregation will accept from a preacher.

Revivalism went out of fashion. By association, revivals also became

discredited. This change reached its maturity in the United States just after the end of the First World War, but had been developing steadily for some time.

Interest in revivals disappeared in many places. People who were interested in revivals were pushed onto the fringe in many denominations and churches, or were forced to leave.

Academics (many of whom have always tended to follow the current intellectual fashions) forgot about that part of the American heritage which had to do with Puritans, or with revivals. It was no longer fashionable or interesting to study such matters. These subjects were beneath the dignity of academic interest. Other subjects seemed much more interesting and valuable. This amnesia and twisted set of values continued in U.S. academic circles for many years.

Since about 1950, thanks be to God, a change in academic interest has slowly and steadily been taking place in some institutions of higher learning in the United States. Academic centres in other countries are taking even longer to recover from the effects of this sea-change. (15.)

Edwards, Nettleton, Weeks and Finney, and many others of their time, believed that revivals were the key to the success of the spread of the Gospel around the world. But it is still the case, at the beginning of the Twenty-First Century, in many churches that someone who talks about revival (in the sense meant by Nettleton, Weeks or Finney) is still considered to be decidedly odd, and to be someone who is pursuing a useless pastime, unworthy of serious consideration.

Revivals Around 1905 - 1908

The years from 1905 to 1908 were also years when real revival was seen in various parts of the United States. Dr. J. Edwin Orr has documented as many of these as he could trace. The aspect of these revivals which subsequent generations have noticed most was the revival in Azusa Street, Los Angeles, because of its link with the rise of modern Pentecostalism, but it was by no means the most powerful aspect of this period of revival. (16.)

Part Two: How Their Worst Fears Were Realised

"Revival" Becomes "Revivalism" Completely

(a) Earlier in this book, "revival" was defined as a movement of the Holy Spirit in terms of the Biblical description of events on the Day of Pentecost. Similar quality of events were seen during the Great Awakening of 1740, and its kindred happenings. The movements around 1800, and the revivals seen by Asahel Nettleton, fostered this understanding of revival.

The events around 1740 in New England, and around 1800 in both New England and upstate New York, were based in a strong Calvinistic theology, which naturally flavoured what occurred, and flavoured the way these events were understood. The French and Swiss Reformation, and the English Reformation and subsequent Puritan movement, had provided the context upon which the influence of this Calvinist theology had grown.

The same definition still prevailed in the period between 1824 and 1831, which we considered in the main part of this present book, when Arminian theology was steadily becoming more influential, arising initially from the impact of the Methodists, from the spirit of the age, and later in part from the impact of the New School Presbyterian revivals. The early years of Methodist evangelism used this same basically Calvinist understanding of the nature of revival.

(b) **"**Revivalism" has been defined as organised efforts at evangelism, especially mass evangelism, wherein techniques and methods are used which previously appeared in times of real revival.

After 1831, organised effort became the central feature of evangelism, as opposed to turning to God, and relying more simply upon the coming of the Holy Spirit, in answer to prayer.

The period from 1865 to 1915 was the time when "revivalism" reached its zenith of popularity, and also when it had its maximum impact upon every aspect of life through the whole country. Indeed, popular Protestant evangelicalism, driven largely by the practices of revivalism, became almost the unofficial religion of the nation. In this period, therefore, revivalism had its greatest successes.

But, while this was true of the period from 1865 to 1900, it was **not** especially a period of real revival, in any sense that Nettleton or Weeks would have recognised.

While it is true that several American evangelists (especially James Caughey and Dwight L. Moody) were involved in movements in England which were described as movements of real spiritual revival, the same quality of success did not follow when they returned to the United States.

The Meaning of the Word "Revival" Changed

Particularly after 1865, and with the heavy emphasis on organised effort, many people began to use the old word "revival" to refer to the new organised effort.

The penchant for using organised effort in pursuit of the desire to save souls, and to further the Kingdom of God in America, became so entrenched that, every time a church leader wanted his congregation to be revived, or to expand, it became natural to turn to organised effort, instead of turning primarily to

agonising prayer, and expecting something like the Day of Pentecost, or the Great Awakening, in answer to those prayers.

As a result, great city-wide campaigns were routinely called "great revivals." While great things sometimes happened in these campaigns, there were also other things which were less desirable.

Amongst some people, this trend to use an altered meaning of the word "revival," increased through the Twentieth Century. Individual churches could advertise their special meetings by saying, "Revival every day except Monday." Another church down the street could advertise, "Revival every Monday." In this way they might advertise which nights their special meetings were to be held.

Another minister from Texas was heard to say, "We had a revival last Fall, but nobody got revived." By this he meant that there were no new professions of conversion, and the depth of spiritual life in the congregation was not noticeably improved, as a result of their special meetings. (17.)

Perhaps the changing of the meaning of the word, in popular usage, was the simplest indicator, that the fears of Nettleton and Weeks were being fulfilled to a greater degree. The word which previously applied to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit was now being used to apply to something which was largely a work of man. Real revival had now become mere revivalism. Counterfeit revivals were now accepted as the real thing.

This must not be taken as a claim that revivalism did not achieve anything positive. As mentioned, there were many ways in which revivalism was very successful.

Did The High Point of Revivalism Dishonour the Holy Spirit?

(a) There can be little doubt that the emphasis on human effort, human organisation, on the human decision of the new convert, and on the human responsibility of the individual Christian, reduced greatly any emphasis that there might have been upon the workings of the Holy Spirit, in what was taught to prospective converts, and to Christians generally. The necessary workings of the Holy Spirit in conversion and in Christian growth, were known about, and there were certain ways in which they were strongly appreciated and emphasised. But the emphasis on human effort was so strong that, relatively speaking, much less was said about the Holy Spirit.

(b) In most quarters, the work of the Holy Spirit was still seen as a necessary part of conversion and the new birth. The Methodists, for example, still taught the Wesleyan doctrine of "Prevenient Grace," and they believed those verses in St. John's Gospel which said that a convert had to be born of the Spirit of God.

(c) In the teachings of Moody, Chapman, Torrey, and many others, including B. Fay Mills (in 1890 at least,) there was a strong emphasis on "the

Baptism with the Holy Spirit" as necessary for mature Christian living and effective service, as Finney had also taught.

(d) The Holiness Movement, and other similar aspects of revivalism, also had strong teachings about the workings of the Holy Spirit.

(e) Many of the evangelists used a teaching about the unpardonable sin, wherein sinners were told that they could not repent whenever they liked, but only when the Spirit of God was calling them. This was used as one of the preacher's weapons, or arguments, to entice the sinner to repent now, instead of later.

Although there continued to be a strong doctrine of the Holy Spirit in revivalist theology, there was definitely not the strong emphasis upon the work of the Holy Spirit which had existed in the New England Calvinistic School of Theology at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, and which had coloured so strongly the preaching of men like Nettleton and Edward D. Griffin.

So, there were certain ways in which the Spirit of God was dishonoured in revivalism. Finney admitted in his "Letters" that he had contributed to this situation.

But, people who said that the Holy Spirit was no longer needed, because we had now learned how to win the world for Christ without the Spirit's help, were definitely not typical of revivalism.

The Ultimate Tragedy - Revivals Come Into Disrepute

However, the revivalism of the period contained inner weaknesses of several kinds, and it had to confront new enemies with which it could not cope.

The practices of mass evangelism in themselves went through an evolutionary process, as well, and changed in a number of ways. Changes of some kind are, of course, inevitable, and cannot be avoided, even if people wanted to avoid them. As a result of these factors, and many other factors, some of which will be mentioned later, a sweeping "sea-change" occurred in the attitudes of many people.

The pre-eminence that revivalism enjoyed through the second half of the Nineteenth Century came slowly to an end, and revivalism became widely rejected by many who might have been its friends.

Although this whole process had seen "revival" itself become widely misunderstood, by association with "revivalism" it also became widely despised and rejected.

Thus occurred the ultimate reality that Nettleton and Weeks had feared. Revivals had come into disrepute.

As with Jonathan Edwards before them, Nettleton, Weeks, Finney and Beecher had all believed that outpourings of the Holy Spirit were God's appointed way of bringing the Gospel to the world, in the most effective manner. Now, because these outpourings of the Spirit were being despised and

rejected by many Christians, opportunities for the Gospel to bless people were being lost on a grand scale.

Furthermore, "revivalism" seemed to be at least partly responsible for it.

James Davenport - Risen From the Dead!

Dr. J. Edwin Orr, who must be considered one of the best authorities in recent times on the subject of modern revivals, has provided us with an explanation of this "sea change," referred to above. Orr's analysis shows that the sea change occurred because of many factors immediately present, and that it was not based primarily upon factors in the distant past.

In his view, the sea change was caused mainly by the foolishness of freelance evangelists in the early Twentieth Century, and only to a smaller degree by the impact of Liberal Theology in the mainline churches.

Orr first set out these views in 1940 when he was himself a young evangelist, and reaffirmed them in 1973, when he was a mature historian. (18.)

In speaking of the years immediately following the 1905 - 1908 revivals, he said, "Evangelism in the United States suffered much...chiefly because of the commercialism and sensationalism and irresponsibility shown by freelance evangelists without loyalty to any organisation or submission to any discipline."

Billy Sunday's campaigns became much more big business than a movement of the Spirit. Orr says this was shown by his lame excuse for the huge offerings which Sunday accepted over a period of time. Sunday is reported to have said: "What I'm paid for my work makes it only about two dollars a soul, and I get less proportionately for the number I convert than any other living evangelist."

Orr refers to a source which said that, in 1911, there were more than 600 professional evangelists working in the United States, most of whom copied Billy Sunday in style and method.

For example, Sunday operated through city-wide sponsoring committees consisting of many of the local ministers and responsible laymen, and temporary tabernacles were built, to hold the crowds.

His freelance imitators also used tabernacles. They found that this method enabled them to work independently of the local ministers, and their evangelism became divisive and crassly commercial.

During the hey-day of Billy Sunday's work, Bishop J. F. Berry voiced commonly-expressed objections to this freelance tabernacle-style of evangelism.

(a) The freelance tabernacle-based missions would commence with two weeks of vitriolic attacks upon local ministers and church members.

(b) There would be an exaltation of the role of the visiting evangelist and lack of recognition of local supporting pastors.

(c) There was a "shake-my-hand" method of dealing with those who

inquired after salvation.

(d) There was an over-emphasis on statistics and their misleading character.

(e) There was vulgar display of gifts to the visiting evangelist.

(f) And high-pressure methods were used to obtain free-will offerings for the evangelist.

Not only were many low-quality evangelists rejected by the churches, but many good-quality ones were rejected, as well. These better-quality evangelists also adopted the tabernacle method, and would invade a town, preaching away, despite the fact that the churches were not listening. This helped further to antagonise the congregations. The evangelists replied by making scathing attacks on pastors, churches and members, and, as a result, their meetings were boycotted by the church people.

When the evangelist made some converts, they could not be sent to the churches. So, the tabernacles became more permanent. The tabernacle-class of churches started to work together, making a sub-culture of evangelical churches which operated in their own separatist way.

It was a popular trick to announce a "union campaign professedly to help the churches: and when the evangelist departed, lo! a cuckoo in the nest in the form of an independent tabernacle or gospel centre trying hard to revive 'Laodicea' by stealing away the church members."

The distrust between the community led by the evangelists, and church leaders and members, became a self-perpetuating vicious circle, which forced the evangelists back again to the tabernacle-type centres, where their style of evangelism was easier, and their part of the evangelical world became increasingly separatist, belligerent and gospel-hardened.

Although Orr did not make excuses for Liberal Theology and its impact, he concluded that "Much of the so-called 'apostasy' of the churches is a reaction to the shameful exploitation of evangelism for profit on the part of popular evangelists." (19.)

This was exactly the kind of thing which the Eastern Congregational Calvinists, and William Weeks, would have seen as "James Davenport - risen from the dead."

The Worst Long Term Results

In our survey of the theological opinions of the preachers who followed the New England Congregational School of Calvinistic theological thinking, and of the happenings during the revivals in upstate New York from 1799 to 1831, we have noted the extensive efforts which were made to instruct congregations, and especially inquirers after salvation, and new converts, exactly what it meant to become and be a Christian. Much attention was paid to the need for a church

member to make an informed and constructive profession of the faith, and to have a reasonable understanding of Christian theology. Much concern was shown to avoid the dangers of someone making a Christian profession, but later departing from it.

Serious lessons had been learned by the New England Calvinists from the story of James Davenport. They did not want it to happen again.

One strong precaution was that qualified ministers did all the preaching and instructing. Regardless of what role lay people provided in other aspects of the church's life, they did not lead worship, or give the main instruction.

The depravity and selfishness of the sinner was emphasised, and the concept of selfishness was spelled out in great detail. Great emphasis was placed upon the sinner's need of a Saviour, and that no human works could contribute to that salvation. Without the regenerating power and workings of the Holy Spirit, the sinner could not be saved.

The concept of selfishness in New England theology also directly implied that a convert had to adopt a totally new orientation of life, created by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit, and this involved the renunciation of all forms of self-centredness. The new centre was Jesus Christ. So, Christ could not be the sinner's Saviour without also being his or her Lord and God.

We will look here at some of the main changes which occurred before 1917, and which would have been seen by Nettleton and Weeks as fulfilments of what they had prophesied. Nettleton, Weeks and Finney would all have seen these things as very serious departures from what ought to be done in Christian evangelism.

Most of the following comments must be seen as *highly generalised remarks*, arising from what several highly qualified historians have said about the situation.

(a) The Whole Message Became Much More Superficial

By the time Billy Sunday reached the zenith of his career in 1917, the theology preached in a so-called "revival" was much more superficial.

Sidney Mead emphasised that the later "revivalists" tended "to produce an oversimplification of all problems, both because the effective revivalist must appeal to the common people in terms they can understand and because he must reduce all the complex of issues to a simple choice between two clear and contrasting alternatives." (20.)

(b) The "New Birth" Was Not Explained Fully

For many people major changes of life-style were not called for. Many were asked simply to sign the temperance pledge, or to adopt certain easily recognisable Americanised customs which could also easily be followed by an unconverted person. For many people, the new birth did not involve a complete

re-orientation of life. It involved only a simple decision, which might not have had much depth.

In terms of the Biblical Parable of the Sower, it is not hard to see why many people fell by the wayside, or to see why they gave up when the new decision clashed with other pressing interests, or when they found that the simple decision had not solved the problem of sin in their lives.

(c) Repentance Was More Limited

Because of the change in the message which was being preached, the call for repentance often only required people to forsake the more blatant social sins, such as adultery and drunkenness, and not to face up to the fundamental questions of selfishness and total depravity, such as were raised by Nettleton and Finney.

(d) Alleged "Converts" Were Often Not Converted

Lyle Dorsett's sympathetic and insightful book about Billy Sunday contains the following paragraph. "Well-attended meetings were not the only evidences of success. Trail hitters were coming forward by the hundreds and thousands, though some people questioned whether these were genuine converts, people who were making sincere rededication of their desire to live a more righteous and Christ-like life, or merely hordes of people wanting to shake famous Billy's hand. To be sure, he always said such things as 'Come on down here and shake my hand and tell me you'll walk with Jesus beginning tonight.' Still if as little as five percent of the people who streamed forward between 1908 and 1920 were truly transformed, then Billy Sunday was reaching many more people than any other preacher in America." (21.)

Undoubtedly there were converts arising from Billy Sunday's meetings. Many letters arrived at the Sunday residence at Winona Lake from individuals saying that they had been converted at one of the "revival" meetings. Other letters came from ministers saying "Thank you" for new converts joining their congregations. Other trail hitters were making a response to the famous "Booze" sermon that Sunday preached everywhere he went. But there were many who hit the sawdust trail who were not converts.

In the mid-1950's, when I left High School, I worked for a few years in a large city bookstore in Sydney. One of the customers I met several times, and talked with at some length, was a retired American minister who had edited a famous "Ministers' Manual" for some years. He told me he had been a young assistant minister in New York in 1917, at the time of the great "revival" that Billy Sunday had led there. As part of his work he had been given a large handful of decision cards from people who had answered the appeal, and who had mentioned his church in the information they had provided. It was his

work to follow up all these people.

Many of the trail hitters had provided non-existent or false addresses. Others had given false names. Others were making rededications, or were signing the temperance pledge. He found that there was ***not one new convert*** represented by all of these decision cards. However, my aged ministerial customer freely admitted that this total negative wipe-out that he had found was ***not*** a universal experience by all others.

Billy Sunday knew that the real conversion percentage rate was not high. He pondered that question, himself. But he also knew he was called by God to this work, and that there was a degree of good success.

(e) Disillusionment

The results of revivalism, therefore, served to highlight the potential for people to become disillusioned about the Christian Gospel. They might have professed conversion, when hearing the message stated simply, but found that it did not work for them. This would bring dishonour upon Christ.

Many thinking people would also see that the message was inadequate, and would reject it, without trying it out.

(f) False Conversions, and a False Church

A manifestly inadequate statement of the Gospel message, and a message which leaned so much upon human decision, would also lead some people to rely upon the message they had heard, and to think they had become Christians, when in fact they had not. This was one of the great fears that concerned William Weeks, so many years before. The centrality of human decision removed the need for the Holy Spirit's life-giving work to be central. This would be overlooked and ignored. So, some of the converts would not have been truly converted by the power of God at all.

They, in turn, would produce another generation of "Christians" without true spiritual life, and the church would lose its Scriptural character as the body of Christ..

If one operates within the parameters of a strongly Arminian theology, this is not seen as a problem, however. A human decision is what counts. If the Holy Spirit was not at work, the human decision would not have occurred. The Spirit was using whatever events and influences there were which led to the human decision. If a person later turns his or her back upon a decision about salvation, then it is unfortunate, but people have to carry responsibility for their own decisions, and abide by the consequences.

But, within the parameters of a strongly Calvinistic theology, or a theology which contained a strong Calvinist element, the problem of false conversions is a major issue. It can involve spiritual deception of serious proportions.

What would Nettleton, Weeks or Charles Finney have thought of all this?

They would have recognised it as a catastrophe of the highest order.

The Crystallising Process

Another way of looking at this whole situation is to consider what we might call "the Crystallising Process."

There are a number of factors which can, perhaps, be seen as playing a role in the great changes we have noted in the value placed upon outpourings of the Holy Spirit. These factors can perhaps be listed under the heading of changes which affect a dynamic spiritual movement when it begins to cool down. There is an ossifying process, or a crystallising process, when what has been dynamic becomes more static; when what has broken out of cultural or organisational moulds becomes institutionalised; when what was wild-fire becomes the fire in the grate.

In the case of "revival" becoming "revivalism," some of these factors in the crystallising process have already been listed above. But other factors also could be added to the list, and played a role at certain stages of the process.

(a) Loss of crisis in repentance.

(b) Loss of the full-orbed doctrine of regeneration.

(c) Legalism and Moralism take over from Evangelical Ethics and the Gospel.

(d) The Secularisation of Ideals. For example, the strongly evangelistic emphasis of the Y.M.C.A., in its early days, was soon lost to its purely social purpose.

(e) Evangelicals were often content to establish existing social trends, instead of challenging them.

(f) Stereotyped ideas about conversion developed in some cases. For example, people could not be converted except by answering an appeal at a revivalistic meeting.

(g) Enthusiastic people easily become self-righteous and unteachable.

(h) Being side-tracked into the search for a perfect or utopian society or community.

(i) Millenialism, despite being part of the revival message, became a distraction for some.

(j) Placing too much trust in organisation and education.

(k) Relying upon excitement, and upon extrovert preachers.

(l) The Democratisation of Religion and the Avalanche of Cults.

Some of these factors have been explored in detail by recent academic historians in the United States, and their work is well worth exploring. (22.)

Was Weeks Right in Blaming Finney for These Bad Results?

An historian is able to look back at a period in the past and see more clearly many of the causes of the changes which occurred, as, for example, in the fortunes of revivals, and in the value that was placed upon outpourings of the Holy Spirit.

After having perused the foregoing range of factors, I think it is fairly clear that it is a mistake to blame Finney over-much for his role in causing these things. Certainly, he played a role. He provided a strong stimulus in the process of making revival into revivalism. Probably it would have happened anyway, if Finney had never been born. But, I think the Methodists had a much bigger influence in spreading the Arminian version of the Gospel, and causing the Gospel message to become lined up with the spirit of the age.

As Sidney Mead has said, "the free individual" was the central concept or motif in American history between the Revolution and the Civil War. (23.) The Methodist version of the Gospel was much more akin to this than was the Calvinism of the New England School, or of the Old School Presbyterians.

Possibly, Nettleton and Weeks saw Finney as a greater threat because he was close at hand, and was supposed to be one of their own group. They saw him as the main threat. But, in the end, the Methodist Gospel had a greater impact on the nation, and worked the greater changes.

Concluding Comment

(a) Many of the worst things which Nettleton and Weeks had predicted actually came to pass well within one hundred years of them making their statements.

(b) Charles G. Finney promoted a certain style of Christian work, in managing revivals, and in organising mass evangelism, between 1825 and 1835, which, through a process of development, became known as "revivalism." This method of conducting evangelism was ***one*** of the major factors which led to this undesirable result.

(c) But there were many other major and essential factors involved in this process. It is a mistake to blame Finney alone, or revivalism alone, for these outcomes.

(d) Despite some notable exceptions, powerful and widespread revivals have been relatively absent in the United States since 1865. This absence is not necessarily a result of the bad things which Nettleton and Weeks predicted. The revivals between 1857 and 1865 are witness to this, because they did not reflect the revivalistic character. Also, the powerful revivals which have occurred in many other parts of the world, where the revivalistic practices are also often in use, show that God has many ways of working His wonders. He is not limited by revivalism or bad practices.

God does, however, often require us to reap what we sow. If we do second-rate work, or act foolishly, we may not have the kind of results we would like.

This is an aspect of God's judgments, which can be seen as a reason why revivals have not been so widespread or so powerful in the United States since 1865 as they were before that time.

(e) The lessons that Nettleton, Weeks and Finney have taught us, however, certainly provide us with a serious test of our willingness to be better stewards of the things of God in future, and provide us with an interesting and important lesson in the nature and practice of spiritual deceptions.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

SPIRITUAL DECEPTIONS

A Summary of the Evangelical Understanding of Them

The Twentieth Century has seen an enormous outbreak of new religions and cults, often quite strange, which are in some way related to Christianity, however remotely. This has happened even more so in the Twentieth Century than happened in the Nineteenth Century, although people who lived through the previous century might have thought that they saw so many new religions and cults that a great increase in them would not be possible.

This new upsurge has created a further enormous literature relating to this whole area of interest. Although many insights were available about the subject in the Nineteenth Century, this new literature and research has enabled us to gain some better insights into the whole subject than was possible in the previous century.

In the first instance, we will here attempt to summarise the subject, although this will be done from a very specific point of interest, namely, that of understanding spiritual deceptions in terms of Protestant Evangelical theology.

Foundational Statements

The question of spiritual deceptions, as viewed from the stance of evangelical revivals, raises a considerable range of subjects and issues. Despite its scope and diversity, an attempt will be made here to summarise this area. First of all, a few basic assumptions must be set out.

(a) All spiritual movements are mixed in quality. Many things occur in revival movements which seem to be the direct work of the Holy Spirit of God. But, as soon as these workings of the Spirit have been understood or expressed by a human mind, they become mixed with misunderstandings, workings of "the lower nature", selfish motives, psychological factors, various forms of sin, unscriptural ideas, and demonic activity. This mixed nature of things is both recognised in the New Testament (Matthew 13), and is also a matter of continual experience.

(b) Every person is different. God deals with us all differently. Everybody has different experiences, including our personal contacts with God. Although common principles and factors can be recognised and studied, each

personal experience has to be evaluated on its merits.

(c) Each claim that we have been deceived, or that someone else is deceived, has to be evaluated separately, and on its own merits, in the light of all the wisdom that we have to draw upon.

(d) The only ultimate test for any deception, whether real or imagined, is the best understanding that we have of the Scriptures. Under this general heading, the main test is the one mentioned by Jesus, that it is by their ***fruit*** we shall know them. Another secondary level test is that the accumulated wisdom of God's mature, saintly people is to be ignored at our peril.

(e) It is desirable, however, to be able to recognise, and take evasive action about, as many deceptions as possible before they produce bad fruit, if we can wisely do so. Regrettably, at times, this is not possible.

(f) It is important to remember that a heresy, and belief on which deceptions are based, are usually at least ***half true***. They are rarely totally incorrect. There are Scriptural teachings to support them. The problem arises because people unwisely make a part into the whole. There are other Biblical passages relevant to the matter which have been ignored, and which would have provided the healthy and wise balance. If enough mature Christians had a knowledge of heresies and problems which occurred in the past, we would have been saved from being so affected by our present heresies and problems.

What is Being included Here?

Every time a person believes that something has come from God, when in fact it did not, that person is deceived at that particular point, and is open to further deception at that point. This holds true, regardless of what the deception was, or where it came from. Every person who believes a thing to be true, when in fact it is not, is deceived at that point, and is open to other deceptions at that point. Any of the deceptions can be simple mistakes, even the result of ignorance. They can be of human origin, or demonic in nature.

Four basic kinds of deception will be described here.

(a) Many deceptions arise from mistakes, shoddy work, uneducated guesses, or heresies in theology, and wrong understandings of the Scriptures.

(b) Many deceptions arise from sinful, foolish or immature behaviour, or from actions prompted by “the lower nature”.

(c) Many deceptions arise from misunderstandings of psychological factors, or from the mis-use of psychic or psychological factors.

(d) Other deceptions arise from demonic sources.

(a) Deceptions Based in Theology, or Mis-interpreted Scriptures

This kind of deception has a very long history, of course, and many classic examples could be quoted.

Very basic kinds of deceptions can occur when a person does not understand correctly what the character of God is like, as revealed in the Scriptures, or does not understand what it means to become and be a Christian. This can lead people to believe they are saved, or born again, when they are not, or some similar fundamental mistake about their relationship with God. So, deceptions like this can be very important.

Deceptions can arise when someone becomes too entrenched in the supposed correctness of their own understanding of the Bible. Arrogance can make a person very determined that what they believe is true, and make them unable to appreciate the value embedded in contrary opinions, and see the degree of truth they might contain. Without realising it, they equate their own human views with the infallible eternal thoughts of God Himself.

A simple deception is seen in the claim to know when the Second Coming will occur. Such claims upon someone's belief that they have a much more reliable source of knowledge about this subject than anyone else's. They display their own unwillingness to learn from ***all*** that the New Testament says.

In recent decades, a new crop of deceptions have appeared under this general heading. For example, some preachers have claimed to have won enormous numbers to Christ. In most cases the number can very easily be shown to have been seriously over-estimated. Some instances of speaking in tongues are believed to come from God, when the source may be psychological, or demonic, or exercising the gift may have become simply a matter of habit. Many instances of alleged physical healings have later been shown to be fraudulent, because no improvement occurred. Many alleged prophetic messages have not come true as stated, or when the events prophesied were supposed to have happened. Prophetic words which predicted the time of coming revivals have often been notorious examples of this, indicated by the fact that the revivals did not occur in the year which was predicted.

This difficulty has been made worse because many Pentecostal and Charismatic preachers have not taken the care to warn their people about these possible deceptions. They have been more willing to assume that everything came from God, unless there was some obvious, and overwhelming reason for not accepting it.

Also included in this kind of deceptions are such American folk religion theories as the Prosperity theology, and much woolly-headed teaching about healing. Disguised claims to infallibility by ordinary people, because “God told me so”, and by many preachers claiming Divine guidance for their opinions, who ought to have known better, are fertile sources of heresies, and of divisions

in the body of Christ.

(b) Deceptions Based in Immature Behaviour, or "The Lower Nature"

Deceptions of this kind cover a wide range. A simple example during a revival movement is that very often young people, or new converts, can be pushed forward to testify, and take part in meetings. This can often be a very good idea, but such people should not be given responsible leadership roles, as Saint Paul plainly taught us. When they are, unwise things can often be said and done which can damage the work, mislead others, spread strange opinions, and promote lop-sided views of the Gospel.

Charles Finney emphasised that the first lesson a new convert should be taught is to act on principle, instead of on feelings. In other words, they should learn quickly to do something because they know it is right, and not because it feels right, good, or happy, or will "save face". It is regrettable that vast numbers of Christians, who one might hope would know better, continue to act according to their feelings, and their intuitions, in all sorts of ways. Our feelings can lead us to do foolish and un-Scriptural things, and can thus create deceptions for ourselves, and for others with whom we might associate.

Many times people decide what they think the will of God is, by means of some feeling or intuition. This can lead us to pray for some particular thing to happen, and to believe that we are praying in faith. While sometimes God might lead us to pray that way, it is very unreliable, as a general principle. Many times we will find our prayer is not answered as we expect. This proves that the idea we had about the will of God was mistaken, when we followed our feeling or intuition. Such a thing can confound some people, and cause them to lose their faith. Generally, guidance should be through the Scriptures, as interpreted by people who know the Bible best.

Following feelings and intuitions can be useful, at times, but it is a notorious source of deceptions which cause many and major problems.

(c) The Mis-use or Mis-understanding of Psychological Factors

The work of the Kingdom of God is always achieved through the merits of Christ crucified and risen, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, who acts to glorify Christ, and not Himself. Our role in God's Kingdom is simply as a channel or instrument for God, and yet God has also made us into partakers or team-members. The Spirit can also use many other means in doing His work, but the real, operative power is all of God.

As a result, God may use our minds, words, actions and our natural abilities, in His work of implanting eternal life within people. But, if we try to do the Spirit's work ourselves; if we try to create an effect, and manipulate and manage the situation ourselves, and take charge of producing results, these results may be on the human level only, and God may not have imparted any eternal life at

all. In such a case, we may have led people to believe they have eternal life when they do not have it.

We can use the force of our personalities, personal magnetism and charisma, the forces of mass psychology, dominating or domineering personal force, a commanding presence, argument, or psychic and hypnotic powers, to achieve something which looks like the work of the Spirit of God, to all outward appearances. The deception will only be revealed if we realise the mistake we have made, and try to recover the situation, which may be very difficult. Or, we will have to wait until the fruit appears, which will reveal the emptiness in spiritual quality of all we have done. Deceptions of this kind can occur on a massive scale, especially within the various forms of mass evangelism.

In recent years, an entire literature has also developed around the abusive methods of some cults and religious groups in brainwashing their followers, depriving them of normal contacts with family and the outside world, maintaining control over their personalities, and swindling them out of their worldly wealth. The practise of dominating and controlling the personality of another is far more widespread than many people realise. It is unwise to say that the Holy Spirit never does a certain thing, but, as a general rule, the Holy Spirit does ***not*** use this kind of behaviour in the work of the Kingdom of God. It is contrary to the great commandments and the golden rule, and represents great arrogance on the part of the leaders of such activities. The long-term spiritual fruit resulting from it will be very poor, or non-existent.

Many cults today are dominated by a leader, or by a committee, who tell the other people what to believe. This is the case with such groups as the Moonies, and the Exclusive Brethren. In considering this kind of deception, it becomes clear that people can become bound to an organisation which controls and dominates their lives, rather than by a leader. The Jehovah's Witnesses fit into this category. Rank and file members are dominated by the local group activities, as well as by the central committee in New York.

As we will consider later, the situation with the Mormons, or the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, is somewhat different. This is not a cult splitting off from normal Christianity, but is now believed by the experts to be a different religion, although it happens to involve a personality called Jesus Christ, and who is believed by Mormons to be the same person who figured in the New Testament story. The records of Joseph Smith's visions and revelations, and his inspired instructions to his followers, effectively replace the New Testament as the final authority. Despite this, the religion is controlled by a committee.

The range of different religions and cults which exist today, and which claim to depend upon visions from God, emphasises the need of every Christian to be very wary of anyone who professes to have visions, or to receive messages from God, or from angels. It is not impossible for such visions to come from

God, but, overall, their track record is so bad that they should be avoided. As a general rule, new revelations and visions alleged to come from God should ***not*** be believed, especially if they include new doctrines. They are either demonic, or are based in mental peculiarities.

(d) Deceptions More Directly Related to Demonic Activity

In one sense, everything which achieves the goal of being a deception can be said to be demonic. However, most people do not see value in using the term "demonic" in this very wide sense, but restrict it simply to those things which can be attributed more directly to demonic activity, or to the influence of evil powers of one kind or another.

Evil spirits are able to deceive Christians in many ways. The unconverted are already successfully deceived. (2 Cor. 4:3-4.) The New Testament says that the devil is able to make himself look like an angel of light. Jesus said that, at the last day, many people would say "Have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, and in your name done many wonderful works?" - only to find that they were deceived.

The activity of evil spirits can be linked with many of the forms of deception listed already, especially where someone carelessly leaves themselves open to the workings of evil spirits. For example, where a person is in an attitude of prayer, with their minds open to impressions from outside of themselves, if that person leaves their mind blank, instead of concentrating upon Christ, and His victory, as revealed in the Scriptures, the impressions they receive may well come from an evil spirit. If the mind is allowed to go blank, while open to outside impressions, there is then no guarantee where the impressions may come from.

The person may have enough perception to recognise that the impression in their mind is purely psychological in origin, or is demonic, or comes from God, for reasons that they can understand, and explain.

There has to be some way of testing these things, both by the person who has the impression on his or her mind, as well as by other people to whom the impression might be described and explained.

If an incoming impression is accepted by any person as if it came from God, when in fact it did not, that person has been deceived. The impression may have been purely mental, or may have been demonic. It does not matter where the impression actually came from. If the person believes it came from God, when it did not, that person is deceived at that point, and can be deceived again in the same way.

We are enjoined in the New Testament to test all things, and to cleave to that which is good. So it is perfectly in order for any Christian to pray for wisdom in making such enquiries. Further, the Christian does not need to fear offending God through unbelief, until such enquiries are wisely concluded, if one is

diligently seeking such wisdom and guidance from God, and is willing to be fully obedient.

The only remedies for deceptions of this kind are for people to realise where and how they have been deceived. Then, deliberately to reject the deception, claiming victory over it through Jesus Christ, concentrating one's thoughts and prayers upon Him. We need to pray repeatedly that God will save us from being deceived, and will show where any deception has occurred to us. Jesus Christ has victory over all evil, and His Spirit is able to guide and enlighten people. We need to be open to the light that the Spirit is giving us, particularly through the Scriptures, and not determine beforehand how or when we will receive this guidance, or what conclusion will be reached at the end of it.

Other Comments

Many other sundry comments could no doubt be made about this whole area of spiritual deceptions. These will, however, be limited to a few only.

(a) If an alleged prophetic word, vision or dream, is experienced which says that someone will perform a great work for God here on earth, or has a special relationship with God, or has a special role to perform in the Kingdom of God which will somehow put them into a special place in heaven, then very special care should be taken before these words, visions or dreams are ever believed to be true.

There is no doubt that God calls people to special works, but He nearly always does it in such a way that we do not know what the next step is, or where the present situation will lead. God keeps us humble in the process, and continually dependent upon Himself.

The thought that "I will have a special work for God." or "I will have a special place in heaven because of what God has called me to do." is very well calculated to feed our ego, and to make us proud. It is a recipe for spiritual pride.

Several times I have seen examples of someone getting a "prophetic word from God" to say that a certain person has a special task to perform which will transform the nation's history. This information is duly announced as a message from God, so that the person concerned becomes a centre of attention. (That is, either the prophet becomes a person of note, or the person apparently destined to perform the great work.) These situations are usually a complete deception, and a recipe for spiritual pride. They normally do not lead to anything special at all. But, if they lead to any great work, it is more than likely to have large elements of "a new cult" mixed up with it. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. The devil will use any opportunity possible to make a person proud, and therefore much less useful to God.

(b) While definitions of magic, and of the occult, will be discussed later, here it needs to be said that - If a message comes to a person, and they believe it could come from God, and if it has anything to do with magic, or with some aspect of the occult, then very special care should be taken before such a message is ever believed to be truly from God.

If a message appears to come from God, and the person who receives the message has ever had anything to do with the occult, in the past, then very special care should be taken before the message is ever believed to be truly from God.

The Biblical story contains descriptions of several occultic events, and this kind of thing was a very large part of life for many people in Biblical times. A substantial range of magical and occultic practises are very strongly condemned in the Bible. But, occultic practices, and the use of magic, are NEVER recommended in the Bible. There is always the possibility that such things are somehow linked with God, but extreme care should be taken in testing such things. The track record of such things as a revelation from God is so bad that they should all be earnestly avoided. It is a wise and great guiding principle that magic and the occult should never be part of the practice of the Christian life.

People linked to the occult, and to the world of magic, are far more prone than others to have strange spiritual experiences. They are much more likely to be mistaken about where these experiences come from, unless they are absolute experts in the subject. Many people who dabble in these areas of spiritual experience are relatively uneducated, and are practising some form of popular religion. If such people get the idea that their experiences come straight from God, or are angelic and therefore are from heaven, there is a great likelihood that they are mistaken, and therefore that they are deceived.

Who Is Open to Being Deceived?

The simple answer is that ANYONE can be deceived in these various ways. Nobody is safe. The only real safety is in Christ Jesus, in living the fruit of the Holy Spirit, in resisting the devil, and in practising the humility that the New Testament speaks of so widely. We must be ready at all times to admit our mistakes, confess the stubbornness with which we have clung to some of these mistakes, confess our sins, and admit that our only true righteousness is someone else's, namely, Christ's.

While admitting that we are all liable to be misled, we can easily make a list of the kinds of people who are more prone than others to be misled. This list might include:-

Uneducated, or insufficiently educated preachers and teachers;

Preachers who are not aware of the implications of what they say;

People using unusual or unwise methods of interpreting the Scriptures;

People using unwise methods of conducting Christian work;
Difficult, strong and "magnetic" personalities;
Preachers who have special abilities to sway their audiences;
People who have a secret, or special liking to exercise power over others;
Those claiming knowledge which is more advanced than the Bible;
Academic theologians who are exploring new ideas, and trying to build their careers;
Those who have already been deceived;
People whose theology is affected by popular ideas in society;
People with wrong personal motives;
People who are uncritical about their alleged experiences of God;
People who live by their emotions, feelings and intuitions;
People with very big egos;
People who are stubborn and unteachable;
People who believe anything they are told;
People with insufficient humility.

What to do When Confronted with an Apparent Deception?

Whether we come across this apparent deception in our personal experience, or we read about it, several initial points should be remembered:-

(a) Because of the importance of the issue, each claim needs to be investigated, but ***not necessarily*** accepted as true in any sense, or believed.

(b) We must be careful about the meanings of words. Probably, some words will be involved which have special or technical meanings quite different from the normal meaning of the word in ordinary language. Also many words which have a technical meaning in ordinary Christian theology may have special meanings in the viewpoints which have to be explored in understanding an alleged deception.

There may be a need to understand a whole range of words with special meanings. If this is not handled wisely and properly, no useful outcome will flow from the exercise. Further misunderstandings may well abound.

(c) The alleged deception may indeed function on the basis of an entirely different theology from the one we are used to, and this should be explored.

Tests

As mentioned earlier, the primary test for any deception is found in the Scriptures, as they are understood by mature and experienced Bible experts in

the mainline Christian denominations. The best wisdom should be used that has come down to us through the history of the Church, and through the great theologians of the Church.

However, a test of beliefs and ideas is only a part of what is required. Holiness of life must be produced, as well.

The test of any so-called Church, as to whether it is a real Church of Jesus Christ, or not, has always been - **Does it produce great saints?**

Similarly, the test of any personal profession to be a Christian is - Is that person progressing in holiness of life? **Does the "new birth" produce its proper fruits of repentance, and faith in Christ, and the fruit of the Spirit?**

Any alleged deception, in ourselves, or in anyone else, must pass the same test - Am I progressing in holiness, as a result of this experience? What negative results are there? Am I fleeing from these negative factors?

So, the touchstone is obedience to the Scriptures, greater Christlikeness, more fruit of the Spirit, more holiness, more humility, more love for all God's people, more meekness, more teachableness.

There will be a corresponding decline in all forms of pride and arrogance, less criticism of God's people, more willingness to sacrifice myself in the service of Christ, greater love for God, more desire for open truthfulness, more willingness to admit my own nothingness, and that Christ is all. There will be continued willingness to admit that others are better than I am. My only righteousness is Christ's. My only hope is in Christ. All of God's people are my people. The little use I am, or value that I have, comes from God, and is not my own. If I am kept from great deceptions, the thanks belongs to God.

So, safety is only found in being close to God, in being covered by Christ's blood, and in obeying Him, in all humility and meekness.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

EARLY MORMONISM and SPIRITUAL DECEPTIONS

Introductory Considerations

(a) The Context of our Study in This Chapter

One of the main forms of spiritual deception which has featured in our story throughout this book has been related to the tendency of many people to have an idea, impulse, feeling or belief, and to imagine that this thought is inspired, and has somehow come from God.

William Weeks believed that this claim to special inspiration lay at the basis of what the New School people called "the prayer of faith." Weeks believed that in all such instances the people who had such thoughts, and who believed that they were somehow inspired, were deceived in every case.

This problem does not apply simply to the prayer of faith. It can apply to any situation at all, where someone believes that they have come to know the mind of God on some matter. It also applies to the dogmatic assertions that many people make in trying to understand the Bible, that their understanding of it is the same as "the Word of God."

On the other hand, Charles Finney described ways in which he believed people could be led by God in such matters. This was very important for him, and for many others, in their prayers for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Lord's work in their hands. We saw also that men like George Muller and Hudson Taylor became exponents of the prayer of faith, although perhaps slightly different in emphasis from Finney at certain points.

It was suggested, also, that Finney did not allow enough in his exposition of the subject for many mistakes that ordinary people make in trying to practice the prayer of faith, or to follow God in other ways, because they are unwise, inexperienced, immature or unscriptural in what they do. In our own day, many Pentecostal and Charismatic preachers have also failed to give wise instruction in this area.

If we consider now the fairly obvious fact that a great many people make mistakes in thinking that their ideas, impulses, feelings and beliefs come from God, when in fact they do not - we must also consider the question of where these ideas, impulses and beliefs do, indeed, actually come from. Where do they come from?

In the previous chapter, we looked at these (and other) deceptions, as viewed from the stance of evangelical Protestant theology.

From this analysis, we can see that ideas, impulses, feelings and beliefs - mistakenly thought to have come from God - can originate (a.) simply from our own mental processes and imagination, or (b.) that they originate from demonic sources.

With regard to the first of these options, perhaps we should say that ALL of these mistaken ideas come from our own mental processes. Otherwise we could not think them.

But, whether we ought to say that ALL these mistaken ideas come ONLY and ULTIMATELY from our own mental processes and sources, and from no other source, is another question.

This is the question which leads us to the possibility of option (b.) - that some of these mistaken ideas may have a demonic origin, or an origin in some spiritual source outside of ourselves, or greater than ourselves, other than God.

The following study of EARLY MORMONISM provides us with a very interesting example at this particular point. Many of the basic events in this story occurred in Central New York, between 1810 and 1830, and involved thought processes and beliefs which were common and widespread at the time, and played a role in the minds of many people who were affected by the revivals which have been described at length in this book. The preachers in the New York revivals had to face the context of ideas described in this chapter, and try to come to terms with it. In the so-called "new age," at the commencement of the Twenty-First Century, preachers still have to face the same kind of situation.

(b) Upstate New York Society and the Magic World-View

One of the great services which is now flowing to us from the most recent study of early Mormonism, is the realisation that occultic beliefs and practices, dependence upon astrology, and ritual magic, were very widespread, in central New York State, and beyond, during the time of the Second Great Awakening.

Such beliefs and practices strongly affected many people who had no links with the Churches, as well as many others who were on the fringes of the Churches, and even including some who were deeply involved in the life of the Churches. These are insights which have tended to be lost by evangelical church historians, as well as by many secular historians who have studied the period.

This great service helps us not only to realise another important aspect of the history of the period, but reveals a context for the preaching of the Gospel in those days which bears such a great parallel to the rise of "New Age" beliefs and practices in our own day, throughout the Western World.

In this respect especially, the context in which we have to preach the Gospel at the beginning of the Twenty-First Century, appears increasingly like the context which existed in Central New York in the days of the Second Great

Awakening.

Our study of early Mormonism in this chapter, therefore, will serve two purposes. The first is to help reveal the importance of the magic world-view in the age of the Second Great Awakening. The second is to explore further the question of spiritual deceptions associated with revivals and evangelical outreach.

Part One: An Historical Sketch of Early Mormonism

Historiography.

The history of early Mormonism has been written in three chronological stages, and has changed somewhat, from stage to stage.

(a) In the first instance, there were the original documents, including the publication of the Book of Mormon itself, and the early accounts about who were the main characters involved in producing it, and what they believed and did. This period spread through about fifty years, commencing about 1823.

During this period, many people left documentary evidences about the early years of Mormonism. Some were sympathetic to Mormonism and its early leaders, and others were not. In some cases, sympathetic and recognised witnesses state that Joseph Smith the Prophet, and his family, possessed substantial and developed links with various occult beliefs and practices, that they were often guided in their decisions by astrological factors, and that they understood the world, at least in part, in terms of what might be called the "magic world-view".

Also, for many years astrological information was spread amongst the early Mormons. Astrology was also used by some of the second generation of leaders, including Brigham Young.

(b) The second stage in the writing of Mormon history stretched from about 1875, for a hundred years. Like many other Americans, the leaders of the Latter-day Saints (LDS) Church during that period became affected by the prevailing view in American society, that, somehow, ritual magic, astrology and occult practices, were not seen as an appropriate way by which revelations should be received from God. As a result, it was no longer appropriate, or "politically correct," or culturally acceptable, to view the writing of the Book of Mormon as taking place against such a background, or within such circumstances.

The history of early Mormonism therefore began to be portrayed in a different way, and took on a different form, in which all references to magic and the occult were downplayed or eliminated. The coming forth of the Book

of Mormon was still seen as miraculous, of course, but as no longer involving any practices viewed from the stance of the magic world-view. This involved, therefore, a revision of early Mormon history to accommodate itself better to the prevailing outlook of the average American. The testimony that Joseph Smith was involved in such practices was set aside, downplayed, or ignored. Mormonism came to be seen as a Protestant denomination, although somewhat different, instead of a new religion, or as a branch of the occult. For many years this view of Mormonism has been the "traditional" or "orthodox" way of viewing the early events in the history of the LDS Church.

(c) In the last twenty years of the Twentieth Century, several academic historians of high standing have tried to revise the way early Mormonism is understood, in order to return to the earlier way of viewing the original documents, and to the full range of understanding which appears from these early documents.

Several of these "revisionist" historians of the new and latest generation are practising Mormons, and are in good standing with their Church. (e.g. Arrington and Bushman.) One is not a Mormon, but is nevertheless respected by the Mormons as a well-qualified and sympathetic historian. (Schipps.) The last professes still to be a Mormon (indeed, a fifth-generation Mormon), although having been "disfellowshipped", and sacked from his job at Brigham Young University, because he expressed views that the traditional and orthodox hierarchy found repugnant. (Quinn.)

Jan Schipps' main book on the subject sees Mormonism as a new religion, and not as an off-shoot of traditional Christianity. This is because Mormonism introduces substantial new doctrines which are different in many ways from all forms of traditional Christianity. These new doctrines are based upon new alleged Divine inspiration, and involve a complete revision of the New Testament to make it conform to the new theology. This Divine inspiration, through the Prophet, Joseph Smith Junior, involves the use of occultic and magical procedures.

It is the work of this last mentioned historian, Professor D. Michael Quinn, which was found to be so disturbing by the "traditional" Mormons, which will receive our attention here. Indeed, Professor Quinn has written several other high quality works on aspects of Mormonism, but the publication of his "Early Mormonism and the Magic World-View", which first appeared in 1987, not only created great pain and anxiety for himself, but has re-focussed the attention of historians on the degree to which Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet, and his family and friends, were involved in ritual magic and occultic practices governed by astrology. Not only so, but their understanding of the Bible, and their whole view of life and the world, was extensively dependent upon the magic world-view. As we view early Mormonism today, this is a

much more truthful, a wiser, and a more valuable way of understanding it.

Copies of Quinn's book, which so annoyed the traditionalists, rapidly became scarce, and had become an expensive collector's item less than a decade after the book was first published. Thankfully, "Early Mormonism and the Magic World-View" has now been fully revised and enlarged, and in 1998 became again readily available to the public. This has not only given Quinn the opportunity to refine and re-state his case, but also he has had a chance to reply to many of the attempts which were made to reduce his arguments to nothing, or simply to pour scorn upon them.

Our treatment of this matter will, in the first instance, attempt to follow historical methods, such as Quinn tried to use, and with as much objectivity as possible.

Definitions.

Every thinking person in the world has a "world-view" of some sort, which provides a context of ideas about reality, which is used to understand what is happening around us. The normal events of life are understood in terms of the world-view that we happen to have adopted.

A "**world-view**" is a set of beliefs and principles which undergird our understanding of the nature and value of life, and of the world. Religious beliefs, about the nature of God, man, the purpose of life, and the world to come, are important parts of any world-view.

We gain our first beliefs about the world with our mother's milk, and with family love. These beliefs are tested, expanded and modified, as we grow up, and as our experience develops. This is certainly what happened to Joseph Smith, and is completely normal.

The Smith family's "world-view" included the fact that Joseph Smith senior (father of the Mormon Prophet) possessed several occultic artifacts which were based upon the governing astrological factors concerning his birth. He used these artifacts extensively throughout his life.

Joseph Smith senior, and his wife Lucy, produced a number of children. It would be normal that the eldest son (Alvin Smith) should inherit his father's occultic artifacts and his powers in working magic. Alvin died suddenly whilst still a young man, at a critical point in the story, as we shall note later, and it seems that these occultic powers devolved upon the third child, Joseph Smith junior, instead.

(a) Firstly, simple definitions will be considered, from a small dictionary. (1.)

Magic is always sincere and straightforward. It means the art of influencing events by occult control of nature or spirits; by witchcraft (black or white); with or without the invocation of devils. It means the manipulation of mysterious

agencies or powers.

Occult has a wide meaning. It means something esoteric, involving the supernatural, mystical or magical. In that way, the term covers some parts of religion that Christians would hope to embrace, as well as many things they would not embrace.

Esoteric means something that is meant for the initiated only.

Astrology means the study of the occult influence of the stars on human affairs.

Divination means to divine, especially by the use of magic. It means to make out something by means apparently independent of observation, evidence and inference. It means to tell future events, person's intentions, or the answers to problems - by intuition or magic or inspiration - why? and how?

Thaumaturgy is the working of wonders, and of the miraculous.

Incantations are magical formulae, spells or charms.

The common use of the word "magic" also includes trickery, or **legerdemain**. This is sleight of hand, juggling, sophistry.

However, when we consider the **magic world-view**, we have to remember clearly that trickery is NEVER included. Magic never implies any sleight of hand, or attempt to deceive. As a result, the magic world-view does NOT include the "magician" who visits town, and makes people disappear, or cuts the teacher's head off and puts it back on again, or makes someone lie on a table and then pulls out the table from underneath, or pulls rabbits out of his hat.

(b) Quinn uses longer definitions which he gathered from an 1820s edition of Webster's Dictionary, in order to get back to the meanings of words, as found in the original Mormon documents that he was dealing with.

In that case, **occult** means deliberately kept hidden, secret, and requiring the action or influence of supernatural agencies, or some secret knowledge about these agencies. Something not detectable by clinical methods.

Magic is the use of means (such as ceremonies, charms, spells) that are believed to have supernatural power to cause a supernatural being to produce or prevent a particular result (such as rain, death, healing, etc.) which could not be attained by natural means. Also included is the art of divination, incantation, sympathetic magic and thaumaturgy. It means the control of natural forces by rites, objects, materials or words which are considered supernaturally potent. It means using an extraordinary power or influence seemingly from a supernatural source.

Magic may generally be described as supposing the existence and agency of certain excessive and undefinable powers; or extending the range of powers with which we are acquainted to a new height beyond the limits which experience authorises.

Quinn emphasises, however, FOUR other basic factors in the magic world-

view.

(i) The magical or mystical perception of reality does not distinguish between lifeless and living things, or between organic and inorganic things. They all have "power", or "life", or a "soul".

(ii) There are no symbols in the occult world-view. Words, signs, numbers and objects all have power themselves. In the scientific world, words are symbols, and simply point to realities. But in the magic world-view, the words or symbols have power. So, an incantation can achieve something.

(iii) All events are driven by a "power", or by lack of power, and this is the key thing. Nothing happens by accident.

(iv) The magical world-view (like most others) is emotionally satisfying, and is rational also, for all those who accept the range of beliefs and assumptions about the nature of things which undergird this world-view. (2.)

Religion and Magic have certain similarities. Most religions involve prayers to supernatural beings of some kind, attempts to coerce the supernatural beings, or to get the deity on-side. This can involve intricate rituals. They also include efforts to understand things which are sublime, otherworldly or ineffable. It is important, especially for a Christian, to learn to differentiate between the two.

Religion, Magic and Ethics. One way that Quinn lists as a help to differentiate between Religion (as a general subject including all religions) and Magic is to point to any possible link that Religion or Magic might have with Ethics. (3.)

On the one hand, he says that Religion often prescribes views on what is right or wrong in the daily conduct of its adherents, as well as for those in ministerial positions. A religion will contain goals for human conduct, and goals about the worship of God, which will judge a person's conduct. A religion will generally teach that certain types of behaviour are not acceptable, or that some kinds of behaviour are more acceptable than others.

On the other hand, Magic does not try to tell us which basic goals we should pursue. It does not tell us about a supreme God, or about the meaning of life, or about the ethical demands of such a God. As a result, our behaviour is not judged as morally right or wrong. According to Quinn, the ethical demands of magic tend to be limited to ritual purification. A person must be ritually pure in certain ways in order to be able to perform a magical ceremony successfully. If ritual purity is not required, then magic does not make any ethical demands upon a person.

Joseph Smith Senior, Father of the Mormon Prophet (born 1771)

Quinn produces an interesting array of details showing that the Smith family had many links with astrology and ritual magic over several generations, before the Prophet was born. This, of course, was nothing unusual. A long history of

treasure hunting had gone on in New England, ever since the very early days of the Massachusetts settlement. Divining rods had often been used, as well as other forms of divination. Astrological advice and direction had often been sought. A range of literature existed, and was available, covering all areas of ritual magic. A New York Medical Journal reported in 1812:- "These irrational and preposterous opinions are still found to predominate over the minds of a numerous class of honest, but credulous and unlettered citizens. Indeed, they are sometimes cherished by those who have just pretensions to information above mediocrity." (4.) The journalist obviously looked down on such things, but nevertheless recognised how widespread these beliefs were. Many people, therefore, did not see anything strange in the magic world view at all.

Joseph Smith Senior possessed and cherished several items which had clear links to ritual magic and astrology. One of these was a ceremonial dagger.

The Ceremonial Dagger

In September, 1840, a younger son, Hyrum Smith, was ordained as patriarchal heir by Joseph Smith Senior, on the older man's death bed. As such, he inherited his father's magic dagger, which had been used by both Joseph Senior, and Joseph Junior, for drawing magic circles in the ground, as they searched for treasure. (5.)

In astrology, there are various characteristics for a person born under a certain zodiac sign. In those days, a person's ruling planet was also very important, as well as the planet or star which governed the constellation.

Smith Senior's dagger was engraved with three astrological details. The central one was the symbol of the zodiacal sign of Scorpio. On one side was the astrological sign of Mars, and on the other side, the magic seal of the Intelligence of Mars.

Mars was the planet governing the year 1771, the year of Smith Senior's birth. Mars was also the ruling planet over Scorpio, which was his zodiacal sign.

The Parchments

Also among Hyrum Smith's possessions, at his death, were three magic parchments, or Lamen, which had been part of the Smith family's valued artifacts for many years. The "provenance" of these parchments can hardly be denied. Quinn provides photographs of them.

The three parchments have different purposes, but these are inter-related.

(a) The "Holiness to the Lord" parchment is a lamen of ceremonial magic to receive visitation from "good angels". One of the symbols is intended to combat melancholy. This symbol is linked to a large astrological symbol of Jupiter. (We shall see that this readily complemented a Jupiter talisman owned by Joseph Smith Junior, who was under the astrological influence of Jupiter.)

(b) The "Saint Peter bind them" parchment is a talisman for personal protection.

(c) The faded "Jehovah-Jehovah-Jehovah" parchment is a house-amulet.

Quinn explains the details on these parchments, and their meaning, and is able to argue conclusively that many of the symbols are based upon information in Sibly's "Occult Sciences", thirteen editions of which were published between 1784 and 1826. It was the academic work on ceremonial magic which was most widely available in Joseph Smith Junior's generation. (6.)

He is able also to show that two other major possible sources are NOT the sources of these symbols. These were the King James Version of the Bible, and Scot's "Discourse Concerning Devils and Spirits", published in 1665.

Joseph Smith Junior, the Mormon Prophet

Joseph Smith Junior was born on 23rd December, 1805. The constellation involved, from an astrological viewpoint, was Capricorn, of which Saturn was the ruling planet. However, he was born in the first of three ten-degree arcs (decans) of Capricorn. This decan was, in the year 1805, ruled by Jupiter, although this did not occur every year.

So, Jupiter ruled both his birth year, 1805, and his birthdate within the zodiacal sign. Within the magic world-view, Jupiter had enormous significance for Joseph Smith. According to a widely stated view, in astrology books from 1647 - 1820s, the Decans "preside over everything and maintain cosmic order." (7.). Thus Jupiter was more significant for Smith than Saturn.

Many of the Smith family occult artifacts eventually came into the museums and archives of the Latter Day Saints Church in Salt Lake City. They were readily admitted to belong to the Prophet, but, by the time they became archival material, nobody realised their meaning, or the value they had possessed for Joseph Smith.

By delving into the magic world-view, as it was understood at the time that Smith was alive, Quinn has been able to explain many things about these artifacts.

The Silver Jupiter Medallion

One of the most important occult artifacts owned by Joseph Smith was a silver medal which was in his pocket at the time when he was murdered.

One subsequent owner displayed it as a Masonic Jewel belonging to Joseph Smith the Prophet. But, upon proper analysis, it is not Masonic at all, but is a silver Jupiter medallion constructed according to instructions found in Barrett's "Magus," for making magic seals or talismans.

The medal is one and a half inches in diameter. On one side there is the symbol of Jupiter, the magic seal of Jupiter, the magic sigil of the Intelligence

of Jupiter, and the words, “Confirmo O Deus potentissimus.” These words are a prayer for the purpose of conjuring spirits according to occult practices, and are NOT a Christian prayer.

On the other side are the astrological symbols of Jupiter, Jupiter's magic number - 136, and a magic square or table of numbers (in Hebrew) that add up to 136. To the right of the square or table of Jupiter is the familiar Hebrew word for Father/God - ABBA. To the left is the Hebrew name for the Intelligence of Jupiter, spelled JOHPHIEL (according to Barrett), but more often JOPHIEL.

Above the square on the medallion is the Hebrew word with the first character missing, “EL - AB” which is one of the divine names reserved for Jupiter in magic.

Quinn says that a very similar medallion made in England provides confirmation of these views. This design by Joseph Smith Junior follows Barrett's instructions, and not earlier books. (8.)

Barrett said that the Jupiter talisman described in his book could serve “to gain riches and favour, love, peace, and concord, and to appease enemies, and to confirm honours, dignities and counsels.” It was also a protection against witchcraft or sorcery. Barrett said silver talismans (as opposed to ones made of other materials) were especially potent against evil spirits, and would block “enchantments”. Smith often said that enchantments blocked his ability to see where buried treasure was located with his special seer stones. So a silver talisman would have been especially useful to him in the 1820s, when he was involved in locating buried treasures. They were supposed to be even more effective if worn under ones clothes, close to the skin. (9.)

Another of Smith's artifacts now in the LDS museums was a cane, or walking stick, with a carved serpent's head, inscribed “J.S.”, under a carved crown. By Smith's time, it was believed that the serpent was an animal governed by both Jupiter and Saturn. “The traditional magic world-view was that those born in the first degrees of Capricorn could 'soothe poisonous snakes.'“ The crown of the cane also had a symbol very like the magic seal of Jupiter. So, the seal, the crown, and the initials, conveyed the meaning that Jupiter rules over Joseph Smith. (10.)

Smith also owned a Venus medallion. It is possible this was important to him, especially following his marriage to Emma in 1827, and then in the light of the long list of polygamous marriages he was involved in, during the 1840s.

Seer Stones

Over the years Smith owned five special stones that he used, at different times, for various occult purposes. (11.) One of these was a brown coloured stone which Smith often used during his teenaged years in searching for buried treasure. According to a number of the early sources, it was this stone which

Smith used to translate the Book of Mormon, and which later became known as the Urim and Thummim, because it had revelatory powers. Quinn discusses various aspects of this issue.

Before 1826, both Joseph Smith Senior and Junior were involved in searching for treasures which were widely believed to exist. Often these treasures were thought to have magical powers, because they might move when a searcher or a digger got close to them. They might move deeper into the ground, or move to a completely different location. The Smiths did not do any of the actual digging, but used their seer stones to discover where abouts others might dig in order to find something. This was partly because the family was so poor that they could not afford to re-allocate their time away from agricultural work, although they would share in the proceeds of any treasure that was found. During this time, Smith Junior was not successful in finding any treasures.

The normal procedure was for Joseph Smith to put his hat, brim-side up, on a table, and then place the seer stone inside the hat. He would then put his face into the hat in such a way as to shut light out, and, in due time, he would get a picture, either before his eyes, or in his mind's eye, showing where the treasure was hidden. As we shall see later, that this method, with slight variations, was the **only** method used in translating the Book of Mormon.

Allied with this method, however, astrological considerations would also be taken into account in trying to determine what course of action should be taken. This applied not only to treasure seeking, and in seeking for the golden plates, but it applied to all sorts of decisions about any serious event in life.

After September 22nd, 1826, Smith gave up all his treasure-seeking, because the angel had told him to keep his work with the golden plates a secret. It had been normal for all the local treasure seekers to share any treasure they found, but Smith's old friends were rebuffed when they came around to collect their share, when they heard that Smith had found golden plates. Smith even moved away, to escape pressure from that source.

Joseph Smith Junior's First Vision

During this period, Joseph Smith lived at the family home in Palmyra, New York State.

His first vision occurred in 1820, and it did not seem to have quite the same occultic connections which were associated with the later visions. He was fourteen or fifteen years old, and was trying to cope with the sexual urges and fantasies involved in the onset of puberty. He became very concerned about his need for forgiveness, and he began to pray for it. Probably he was affected by his conscience, because sexual purity was seen as a condition of success in the occultic activities involved in locating hidden treasure. His father was already doing this, and Joseph Junior was becoming more involved in it.

Apart from the year, the date of the vision is not recorded, but he saw two angelic beings. “I saw two personages (whose brightness and glory defy all description) stand above me in the air. One of them spake unto me, calling me by name, and said (pointing to the other), 'This is my beloved Son. Hear him.'“ (12.) They assured Smith that his sins were forgiven. This eased his conscience. The angels also told him that all the normal Christian denominations were corrupt, and that their creeds were an abomination to God. (13.)

Smith returned to the same life pattern that he had lived beforehand, including his growing interest in magic. There was no “new birth”, or regeneration, in the evangelical sense. Indeed, he developed an antipathy to the churches, their people and their message, as his father had done some years before. This concern about forgiveness did not return until 1823, when the next visions occurred.

Visions or dreams of one kind or another were not uncommon in those days. While this vision was important for Joseph, it did not mark him out as an unusual person in any way.

Church Life and Revivals in Palmyra

Most members of the Smith family to which Joseph belonged did not have more than “fringe” contacts with any of the churches. There were, however, a few strong churches in the area, and several powerful revivals had taken place at different times. The influence of these revivals, or ones in neighbouring towns, may have contributed to Joseph Junior's concern for forgiveness before 1820.

The largest church in Palmyra, when the Smith family lived there, was the Presbyterian Church, which, in the 1830s had a membership of one thousand. There were also Baptist, Methodist and Episcopalian churches in the town, the last of these being the smallest.

Revivals had affected Palmyra in 1799, during which time this Presbyterian church was founded. There were also notable revivals in 1817, 1824, 1831 and 1843.

It was the 1817 revival which was the most powerful of all these movements. The number of professed conversions reported was 126, with 106 of them joining the Presbyterian church. (14.)

The Second Vision, and Appearance of the Angel Moroni

This vision occurred in the context of his unsuccessful search for treasure, by the method which has been described above, using one or another of his seer stones. He was naturally frustrated by a series of failures, upset, and keen to know why, so that there might be some success.

Smith determined to spend time in prayer, in order to get into

communication with the spirit which was in charge of all the hidden treasures.

In preparing for this, he carefully noted all of the normal preparations which were needed in the occult books of the time, and in normal magic practice, in order to increase the possibility of success in making contact with the spirit. (15.)

There are also clues that were available to him on the three family magic parchments. “Designed to enable a pure youth to contact a good spirit, the 'Holiness to the Lord' parchment's inscriptions indicate that 12 - 21 September was one of the periods [for which] it was constructed. Also the inscriptions show that 1823 was one of only nine years the lamen could have been inscribed. Finally, for those who shared a magic world-view, the times and seasons of Smith's 1823 visitation fulfilled instructions for spirit incantation by Scot, Agrippa, pseudo-Agrippa, Sibly, Erra Pater, Barrett and other occult works in frequent circulation in early America.” (16.)

“Smith began praying late Sunday night on 21 September 1823 'to commune with some kind of messenger.' Astrological guides specified that Sunday night was the only night of the week ruled by Jupiter. Jupiter, Smith's ruling planet, was the most prominent astrological symbol on his family's golden lamen ("Holiness to the Lord") for summoning a good spirit” (17.)

“Pseudo-Agrippa's *Fourth Book of Occult Philosophy* also specified that 'the Lord's day' was the occasion for a person 'to receive an Oracle from the good spirits.' This text continued that the humble supplicant should place 'upon his forehead a golden lamen, upon which there must be written the name *tetragrammaton*'. As instructed by occult handbooks, the syllables of Tetragrammaton were inscribed within compartments of a symbol on the Smith family's golden lamen. In terms of digging for treasure, 21 September was also the last night of mild weather in 1823 that conformed to the date references in the central figure of this parchment for magical incantation. The next applicable period was the last week of November.” (18.)

According to Smith's own account, and the account given by Cowdery, Smith began his praying about eleven o'clock on Sunday night, the 21st. This is the time specified in Reginald Scot's instructions. His writings were the basis for the Smith family's “Jehovah, Jehovah, Jehovah” parchment. Scot also says that two other symbols must be present. These were both on the “Holiness to the Lord” parchment. Scot wrote that these two symbols were needed. “...they will engage to bring him the most pretious [sic] of their Jewels and Riches in twenty-four hours; discovering unto him the way of finding hidden treasures and the richest mines.” (19.)

The full moon had occurred the previous night. Such times were naturally the preferred times for treasure-digging. Also, an occult book printed in New York in 1800 stated: “Dreams are most to be depended on by men at the full of the moon.” (20.) It was also the equinox, which figured as important in some

of the other occult books.

The praying lasted until dawn, by which time the angel had appeared to Smith three times. The angel appearing three times was also explicitly set out in the instructions directed to someone seeking to commune with good spirits.

The angel Moroni introduced himself as the spirit of someone who had lived there many years before. Smith was instructed to translate golden plates which would tell the story of what had happened in years past in that part of the world. He was told to return the same night next year with his oldest brother, Alvin, and he would be given the plates.

Smith's plan was thrown into confusion, however, because Alvin died fairly suddenly about two months later. So, Smith was not able to carry out his instructions from Moroni. There was some kind of rumour that Joseph might need to exhume Alvin's body, so that Moroni's instruction could be carried out, but no exhumation was ever attempted.

When news of this vision slowly spread around amongst friends and neighbours, Joseph became aware that he had apparently been given a very high position and role. (21.)

The Later Visions up to 1827

The years 1824 and 1825 were failures, so far as the golden plates were concerned. The details need not concern us here, except for a few comments. Joseph Junior's mother, Lucy Smith, said that Joseph found the plates in 1824, 22nd September, and actually held them in his hands, but they disappeared from his sight after he laid them on the ground to look for something else in the hole "which might be of some pecuniary advantage to him." The plates disappeared back into the earth by a magical process, and he was "hurled back upon the ground with great violence" when he tried to retrieve them. Smith already knew that there was no monetary interest for him in the plates, having been told so by the angel. At that point the angel disappeared, and Smith returned home "weeping for grief and disappointment." (22.) Quinn has a long discussion as to why the 1825 attempt to find the plates did not succeed. The astrological indicators were all against it, as well.

One of the problems for Smith in 1824 and 1825 was that he knew he was supposed to take someone with him to get the plates. Since Alvin was dead, Joseph did not know who the extra person was supposed to be. The angel had not revealed it, nor had he found out by using the seer stones. If he took the wrong person, there could be major trouble with the angel, and even the loss of the whole project.

In 1826, 22nd September, Smith met the angel, and by looking into his seer stones he discovered that the person he should take with him in 1827 was a teenaged girl, Emma Hale, whom he must marry first. The Hale family objected, as Smith had no wealth or prospects. So, to overcome the family

prejudice, the happy couple eloped. (23.)

On 22nd September, 1827, the astrological factors were all in favour. Smith uncovered the plates while Emma's back was turned. He wrapped them in a black cloth, and hid them in a tree, until he could suitably remove them to his home. The evidence which is discussed by Quinn seems to be that Smith obtained two white stones along with the plates to help him with the translation. According to Emma, these were used for the first part of the translation, described in the next paragraph. After that, it was a brown stone that Smith had possessed for some time that was used for most of the work.

The Translation Work Begins

By December, some Egyptian-style hieroglyphics were transcribed. We do not know if this was done directly from the plates, or through the seer stones. Early in 1828 these were sent to an authority on such matters, who could not make any sense out of them. After April, 1828, 116 pages of the Book of Mormon were translated and dictated, with Martin Harris acting as scribe. This work was all done at Smith's home, in Harmony, Pennsylvania. Much against Smith's advice, Harris borrowed these pages to show them to his family, but the pages all disappeared. Probably Harris' wife stole them, because she was not in favour of her husband's involvement in the project, and did not believe in the truthfulness of what she was being told about it. These pages were never replaced. Smith was frightened that, if he made new translations of them, somebody might produce alleged evidence (whether truthful or fraudulent) claiming that the new translation was mistaken. This would create unnecessary problems for them all.

In 1829, Harris described for a local newspaper how the first part was translated. “By placing the spectacles in a hat and looking into it, Smith interprets the characters into the English language. He later said that it was necessary for Smith to put the two [white] stones of the Urim and Thummim into his hat because the spectacles of the breastplate into which they fit were too large.” [to fit into the hat?] “Joseph's brother William also gave this same description.” (24.)

After losing this first major part of the manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Martin Harris was replaced as scribe. Also, the white stones seem no longer to be used after this point, and the brown stone alone was used instead.

For a little while, both before and after Harris, Emma did the writing. Years later she said to her son, “In writing for your father I frequently wrote day after day, often sitting at the table close by him, he sitting with his face buried in his hat, with the stone in it, and dictating hour after hour with nothing between us.” (25.) One of Emma's cousins said that Joseph “translated the Book of Mormon by means of the same peep stone, and under the same inspiration that directed his enchantments...” (26.)

As Smith looked into his hat in this way, a kind of parchment appeared before his eyes, upon which sentences were written, and these were dictated to the waiting scribe.

Oliver Cowdery began working as scribe on 7th April, 1829, and the translating went on very well from that point. The task was completed by June that year, at a rate of about eight pages of dictation each day. The location of the work was transferred to the home of David Whitmer.

Richard Bushman tells us how Oliver Cowdery wanted to have the power to make some of the translation as well. He prayed for this power, and a revelation through the stones guided him in this quest. "He would know through the Holy Ghost, which was none other than the spirit of revelation that guided Moses and the children of Israel through the Red Sea on dry ground."

"The experiment was less than successful. Oliver was no more able to translate on his first attempt than Joseph was. Oliver began all right but then stopped. He had mistakenly believed that he needed only to ask God and look in the stones. 'Behold, I say unto you,' the revelation gently chided him, 'that you must study it out in your mind and if it is right I will cause that your bosom will burn within you.' Oliver had underestimated the concentration of mind Joseph exercised as he dictated day by day." (27.)

We might ask where abouts were the golden plates while Smith was translating them into English? The most probable answer is that they were always wrapped up in a cloth near where he was dictating (28.), or in some other part of the room. It would be quite mistaken to think that the plates were physically scrutinised, or were visually examined in detail, as part of the translating. Indeed, they were never on display, and were seen directly only by Smith, and by the three witnesses.

According to Emma, at the time of the translation, Joseph was quite incapable, according to his normal and natural abilities, of composing a well written letter, or of setting out a connected story. Yet, as the Book of Mormon was translated, a long, complex and connected story unfolded, without any planning by Smith. He was just as excited about the story as it unfolded as someone who read an exciting story for the first time. He was keen to find out what happened next. So, how he could manage to produce a large book such as he did was a miracle to her, as well as to others. (29.)

In What Sense Did the Golden Plates Ever "Exist"?

It is quite possible that nobody except Smith himself ever physically handled the plates uncovered and exposed, as separate plates, during the translation. Even Emma only handled them wrapped up, and said, "They seemed to be pliable like thick paper, and would rustle with a metalic (sic) sound when the edges were moved by the thumb, as one does sometimes thumb the edges of a book." She also moved them around the room, as her work required. (30.)

The three witnesses, whose declaration appears in the front of the Book of Mormon, said that they saw the golden plates, and the characters upon them, by the power of an angel of God. The voice of God also testified to it in their hearing. It must also be stated, however, that this occurred in a supernatural "vision"-type experience some time after the translation had been completed, and the plates had been returned. As a result, it is hard to know what weight can be placed upon this testimony.

Were the plates real - in the sense of being physically present? Did they have an existence apart from being objects in the minds of four excited people involved together in an occult experience? If the spirit that they saw was not God - in the normal Christian sense of "God" - the whole experience becomes ethereal and peculiar. So, in what sense did the plates that they saw "exist"?

Again, the magic world view must be invoked. The answer seems fairly certainly to be that the plates that the three witnesses saw "existed" in the same magic, occult sense as Smith's golden plates, and the treasures that Smith had tried to find some years earlier, which could be "slippery", and which could move about from one location to another without any physical cause. If this is so, then these plates existed in the same way as the magic treasures that could be dug up, and which then could suddenly disappear back beneath the ground, or vanish into thin air, in the dead of night, at the whim of the magic, occult spirit which was in charge of all buried treasures.

Later Mormon Revelations

It is apparent that the Book of Mormon was used extensively as a missionary tool by the early Mormons. People became fascinated by the story, or became amazed that a book of such qualities could be produced by someone like Smith, and by such methods as are described above.

However, the main doctrines and organisation of the Latter-day Saints Church came through later revelations which Smith obtained in the same way, and with the help of the same magical artifacts, that we have seen used in the production of the Book of Mormon. As time passed, more than a hundred revelations were announced in this way, plus a revision of the King James Bible.

Even the date on which Smith founded his Church, 6th April, 1830, less than two weeks after the Book of Mormon was published, was chosen for its astrological significance. One might have thought that the Church would have been founded on a Sunday. But, "...published nine miles from the Smith home, an astrological almanac showed that on Tuesday, 6th April 1830, Joseph Smith's governing planet Jupiter was in 'quadrature' with the sun. This was the first reference to Jupiter in the monthly calendars of the 1830 almanac published in Canandaigua and sold by 'E. P. Grandin, Palmyra.' There was no better day for Jupiter-born Joseph Smith to select as the organisational date for

the new church. This was a fitting conclusion to nearly seven years of astrological connections for the coming forth of the *Book of Mormon*." (31.)

Astrology and the Dates of Joseph Smith's Marriages

Michael Quinn has also unravelled many other examples of the role of astrology in the life of the Mormon Prophet. One of these concerns the dates of his various marriages, in so far as these are known. Smith Junior had already married Emma Hale in 1827, as we have noted. But, during the 1840s he married a long line of other women (polygamy), some of whom were at the time still legally married to other men (polyandry). Eventually, he had over forty wives. He also performed marriages of these kinds for many others among his followers.

Quinn tells us that "there is evidence for exact or probable dates for seventeen of Smith's marriages, and all of these wedding dates have astrological correlations. By contrast, of the eight marriage dates of Smith's brothers and sisters from 1826 to 1841, only two correspond with astrological guides." (32.)

Although this might have been a co-incidence, Quinn says that the likelihood of all this happening by chance is reduced by the fact that "there is an overwhelming pattern of astrological correlations in the marriage dates for Joseph Sr. and Jr. They were the only members of the Smith family identified by neighbours as performing ritual magic."

A number of these marriages took place on days which were multiples of seven after the new moon, which was the advice found in Barrett. In other instances, he followed the advice of other astrological guides. For example, "Smith married Emily Partridge and Elvira Cowles Holmes three days after the new moon, one of the best days each month for spiritual communication. [In many astrological guides, Venus, the planet governing love, had the number three.] He married Zina D. Huntingdon Jacobs thirteen days after the new moon. This was consistent with Erra Pater's popular occult *Book of Knowledge*...." (33.) Smith was "sealed for time and eternity" to his wife Emma on 28th May, 1843, which was twenty-nine days after the new moon. This was a good day to marry, according to a commonly available publication called *The Book of Fate*. Quinn gives a lot of other details about these matters.

Smith fathered many children through Emma. "Consistent with his astrologically recommended time to father children, most (and possible all) of Emma's children were conceived in either February or September, when their father's ruling planet of Jupiter governed sexual generation." (34.)

He also fathered children through both his polygamous wives, and his polyandrous wives. Three of the polygamous children lived to adulthood, although their identity was shrouded by their being given names other than Smith. Dates of these births are uncertain. He did not co-habit with any of his polygamous wives on a regular basis, so this made family planning difficult.

And it was not possible for him to schedule the conception of any polyandrous children, as the women would be having sexual relations with other men, such as their legal husbands, as well. An example of this is given by Quinn.

Joseph Smith's More Peculiar Doctrines.

Quinn provides us with an abbreviated list of Mormon doctrines which all traditional Christians would find peculiar. "Smith's more distinctive teachings qualify as heresies among traditional Christians. For example, humanity's God is subject to his God who is subject to his God and so forth without beginning or ending. Humanity's God was once a mortal man. On another earth, this God-in-embryo was a human, experienced mortal death, was resurrected, and 'went from one small degree to another' to become our Heavenly Father of eternal flesh and bone. In addition, all humans on this earth are literally spirit children of this God, but human intelligence is individual and uncreated.

As a further refinement of his doctrine of God's literal paternity, Smith taught that unmarried people cannot achieve their godly potential. Instead, husband and wife can be married for 'time and eternity.' Ultimately each eternally 'sealed' couple becomes God and Goddess to their own 'increase' (spirit children) and will reign over their own worlds of mortals whom they are preparing for similar godhood. Ruled by their own 'exalted' Gods, these inhabited planets are 'millions of earths like this.'

If unable or unwilling to achieve their highest heritage as children of God, all other mortals will be 'ministering angels' to the Gods. For the billions of God's children who do not receive these doctrines and divine ordinances in mortality (in this earthly life), Mormons will provide those opportunities as a labor of love after death. God allows some of his saints to do things that most people call sins, and punishment for mortal sins is temporary, not endless. Nearly all of God's children will ultimately experience eternal happiness. The only humans who never have complete salvation are 'sons of Perdition' because they steadfastly refuse - in mortality and after death - to accept God's plan of happiness. This breath-taking theology and cosmology had tremendous appeal." (35.)

Conclusion to our Partial Sketch of Early Mormonism

It is evident, I think, that before 1830 in the United States there were a considerable number of people who included in their understanding of the world many insights from the magic world-view. Many of these were relatively uneducated, but some were well educated. Many of these people mixed their beliefs and practices about magic with popular religious beliefs of the time, which included many Christian concepts and practices. Also, visions of God, or visions which appeared to be of God, seemed to be more common in this period than they were some decades later.

It was quite possible for a person to pray after the Christian fashion for part of the time, to read the Bible, and to think using Christian concepts. At other times they might pray to occultic spirits, consult occult almanacs and manuals, and practice ritual magic, such as using magical incantations in pursuit of some desired goals in life. Many of these people did not see any inconsistency in all that. They saw life as a whole, and thought it was rational and satisfying. Indeed, Christian and occultic insights might be mixed extensively, and in complex ways.

People who thought like this included many members of Joseph Smith's family, and a great many of the early converts to Mormonism, but not all of them. However, they were not alone, and were part of a widespread scene where these things were understood and practised by many people as a normal part of life. As Quinn tells us, "Like many early Americans, Joseph Smith and his family were 'religious seekers' who did not accept the limits imposed by secular rationalists and mainline Protestant clergymen." They were drawing on a larger frame of reference, and therefore included other additional things in their world-view than fitted into traditional Christianity. (36.)

Joseph Smith's 1820 vision perhaps fitted partly into a Christian framework, although the angel made him turn from the churches and their creeds, and the vision did not produce in him any evangelical outcomes. But his subsequent visions, through to the end of his life, fitted best into the framework of centuries of occult tradition, and NOT into traditional Christianity or modern Freemasonry.

Modern Mormonism

Quinn explains carefully that modern Mormons are educated differently from their predecessors of 1830. They are secular and more critical. But he notes how surprising it is that traces of the magic world-view still survive amongst many modern Mormons. "Surprisingly *BYU Studies* published William A. Wilson's candid assessment: 'So long as present-day Mormons continue to believe, as did their predecessors, that through prayer and ritual they can manipulate supernatural powers to their advantage, much will remain constant.' Drawing on decades of interviews with Mormons, this LDS folklorist concluded: 'Many Mormons today still divine the future, seek hidden treasure, use home remedies, tell ghost stories, experience dreams and visions, invoke angels and spirits, exorcise devils, seek information from the spirits of the dead, heal the sick through ceremonial means, and use talismans to ward off evil.' Wilson describes what is common in Mormon culture, not what is normative." (37.)

What has changed in the modern world? With the spread of "new age" ideas of all descriptions, we face these same popular ideas about religion everywhere we look, whether people are Mormons or not.

Part Two: Spiritual Deceptions?

At this point it needs to be stressed that the magic world-view is based upon a number of beliefs and assumptions about the nature of reality. People who accept this world-view, and the associated beliefs and assumptions, may well have no difficulty in accepting the truthfulness of everything that Joseph Smith Junior believed.

Even modern Mormons, who may not be so sure about the magic world-view, may not have any problems in believing in Joseph Smith's doctrines, and accepting the authority of the Church he founded.

In this part of the chapter, however, we will make a change from being historians into being Protestant Evangelical theologians. We will adopt the evangelical outlook, and theological stance, instead of adopting a view which is not so inclined to question the truthfulness of Smith's doctrines, and his claims to have received revelations, or to challenge the understanding that he had about what was going on in his life.

What questions can we ask about this story of early Mormonism?

It is easy, of course, for an evangelical to be critical because occultic features, and the practice of ritual magic, appear in the story of early Mormonism. Quinn argues strongly that the Bible contains much of this kind of thing as well. While this may be true to some degree (not as much as Quinn made out), there are also a great many occultic and magical practices which are strongly condemned in the Bible, and in which followers of the Lord are strictly forbidden to take any part. These include making contact with the spirits of the dead, contacting elemental spirits, or being deceived by “angels of light.” Care is needed in directing any criticism.

(a) Joseph Smith's contact with the angel Moroni is portrayed by Smith as consulting the spirit of a departed or dead person. Moroni was supposed to be the spirit of a person who had lived in that area in ancient times. Moroni was presenting the story of what had happened in those times, and asking Smith to translate the story. What does the Bible say about that sort of thing? Although the Bible includes at least one instance where someone contacted a spirit of the dead, such as the time when King Saul consulted the spirit of the dead Samuel, all similar activities are directly condemned in several passages as contrary to the will of God for us.

It needs to be noted, also, that this contact with Moroni came as the result of occultic prayers, and reliance upon ritual magic. It was NOT the answer to Christian prayers.

(b) Linked to this is the question raised by many people back in Smith's own day. Should we accept the idea that the equivalent of crystal-ball-gazing is an acceptable method of being guided by God, or of getting detailed messages from God? The use of a crystal ball was not yet in vogue in Smith's day, but the practice of using seer stones by people involved in the occult later developed into the use of crystal balls, for the same kind of purpose.

This method was used, of course, with the real Urim and Thummim in the Old Testament. The casting of lots can also be seen as an occult practice, and was used in the Bible on a number of occasions. But should we use seer stones, or crystal balls, for Divine purposes today, especially in view of their strong link with so many questionable practices over many centuries? Also, especially where radical departures from the New Testament in theology and church practices are being proposed? Many wise people would want to say, "No. We now have the New Testament. The Bible is sufficient. That is our guide."

(c) This last point leads us to one of the great basic principles of the Protestant Reformation. The Scriptures, interpreted as a whole, and with the help of the combined wisdom of Christians everywhere, are the one sufficient rule and guide to our faith and practice as Christian people. This is part of what it means for Protestants to believe in Jesus Christ.

The point raised by Jan Schipps and others, in saying that Mormonism is really a new religious tradition, different from Christianity, rests in this issue. Mormonism has extra and new alleged revelations from God, which make radical departures in theology from what is taught in the Bible. The Book of Mormon, and the Doctrines and Constitution of the LDS Church, effectively replace the Bible as a whole, and the New Testament in particular, as the basic Scriptures upon which the faith of people rests. That is why Joseph Smith used his seer stones to make a revision of the New Testament, and indeed of the whole Bible, in order to alter or remove those parts which were different from his new teachings.

(d) A point where great care is needed is that Joseph Smith soon became aware that he had a unique, God-given role and position in the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, and as the Prophet and founder of what they saw as the one true Church, which alone preached an uncorrupted message. This is always a danger point, so far as spiritual deceptions are concerned. If a person believes that he or she has a unique God-given position and role, that person is probably deceived by evil spirits, or by their own pride, because God's method is humble obedience, with any greatness being unexpected, from a human point of view. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. The path to greatness in God's Kingdom is always an obedient path, down - down - down, to greater degrees of suffering, meekness and humility, just as Jesus showed

Himself.

(e) From an evangelical point of view, one point in the story provides **conclusive proof** that the entire story, from 1823 onwards, was **NOT** the result of Divine inspiration.

This is the fact that in 1823 the angel Moroni told Joseph Smith to bring his oldest brother, Alvin, with him when he came to pick up the golden plates the following year, on 22nd September, 1824. Alvin died on 19th November, 1823, making it impossible for Smith to obey the angel's command.

The God of the Bible would have known beforehand when Alvin's death would occur. As a result, any message from God would have allowed for this forthcoming event. No instruction which was truthfully coming from God would include a mistake like that. Again I repeat, that, from an evangelical point of view, this is **conclusive proof** that none of Moroni's messages, or anything associated with them, came from God. Almighty God, who has shown in the Bible that He can foretell the future hundreds of years in advance, does not make mistakes like that.

(f) In the sketch history of early Mormonism which has been given in the main part of this chapter, no details were mentioned about the many later revelations through Joseph Smith after 1830, or any details about the journey of the Saints through Ohio, Illinois, and eventually out to Utah.

At every stage of the organisation of the LDS Church, and of the journey of the Saints up to the period in Illinois, they were guided by Joseph's revelations. However, these revelations included many instances of guidance which had disastrous effects, and led many of the Saints into financial ruin.

Included was an instance of the building of a very expensive Mormon temple, declared by Smith to be their base of operations, and the land of Zion. But, within twelve months after it was finished, they were forced by local gangs to leave it empty and deserted. Does this sound like Divine guidance?

In another instance, Smith chose as the Land of Zion for the Saints a piece of territory which turned out to be seriously unsuitable for their agricultural needs. This kind of thing led McKiernan to say that a good many of Smith's revelations were impractical. (38.) This, of course, simply displayed a part of Smith's normal human personality. But we are not talking about merely human things. We are talking about revelations coming from God. Revelations from God ought to be models of wisdom and truthfulness, like the words of Christ Himself in the Gospels.

McKiernan said that some of these revelations inflicted upon individual Saints huge debts, many instances of personal ruin and disasters, widespread bad economics, and even illegal practices. This is not what one would expect if it was the work of the God of the Bible. McKiernan also said that when Smith's

policies were not working properly, or proved disastrous, Sidney Rigdon was often blamed by various leaders. After all, someone who had received a revelation could not make mistakes. The mistake must come from someone else. (39.)

A very simple example of a mistake occurred a little earlier in the story. It concerned a man named Ryder, who became an interested enquirer. Smith had a revelation from God for him, to encourage Ryder in his search for the truth. But in writing out the revelation, the man's name was spelled wrongly - "Rider." This should not have been possible if the inspired words appeared in front of Smith's eyes, as he looked at the stone in his hat. Ryder said that if God was really addressing him, He ought at least to know how to spell his name correctly. (40.)

All of these happenings are simple illustrations of the dangers one can get into if we think that we are getting messages directly from God, by angelic inspiration, or from some superior intelligence. The fact that such mistakes are made proves that the claims to inspiration are not reliable.

(g) Also, from the stance of the New Testament, it is not really balanced to portray God as saying that all the Christian denominations were corrupt. It was said of Jesus that "A bruised reed he would not break, and a smoking flax he would not quench." The love of Jesus for His people is deeper than that. It is uncharitable, to say the least, to accuse the denominations of being corrupt, as a general statement. This has serious implications for all the individual members of these churches, implying that none of them are truly saintly people, as a general and broad fact, which does not allow for a great many exceptions.

From the point of view of evangelical theology, it is completely unacceptable to say that the creeds of the Church are an abomination to God. Such a statement is completely contrary to the teachings of the New Testament. This should set the alarm bells ringing for any traditional Christian, that the angel concerned is not speaking a message from God.

(h) This should lead us to another question. If the revelations which came through Joseph Smith Junior did not come from God, where did they come from? Certainly, in the early days of Mormonism, when the Book of Mormon was being dictated, at least, the revelations do not seem to have come simply from Joseph Smith himself. His wife, Emma, saw clearly that such an explanation was not a reasonable possibility. Many others realised this, also.

Again, the magic world view must be invoked. The fairly obvious answer is that the inspiration, and the revelations, came from the spirits of the occult world to which Joseph Smith prayed. This is the source of the entire contents of the Book of Mormon, of the Doctrines and Constitution of the Church of

Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints, and of the many other revelations which came through Joseph Smith.

The evangelical understanding of the occultic world of spirits, and their various activities, is that they are part of the large and complex world of evil which is set against the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as witnessed to in the New Testament.

They are part of the "principalities and powers" against which Christians fight, and over which Christ is victorious, through His death and resurrection. They are part of what the New Testament describes as the god of this world which has blinded the eyes of those who do not believe in the real Jesus Christ, lest they should believe and be saved. Christians should avoid them, and resist them.

APPENDIX

THE RECENT REVIVALS OF RELIGION

The following "Communication" was published in August, 1831, in a monthly publication entitled THE SPIRIT OF THE PILGRIMS. (Vol. 4. number 8. pages 404 - 415.). This was published in Boston, in twelve issues for each year, from the years 1828 to 1833, expressing an evangelical point of view held by many Congregationalists in the states of New England. In many parts of the United States, the revivals spreading from Rochester in the autumn of 1830 were still in progress, and the impact of these revivals were still in the process of being accessed.

"A Revival of Religion is a season when the children of God are specially engaged in the duties of religion, and feel and exemplify in an unusual degree its power; and when sinners, in considerable numbers, are awakened and converted. It is evident both from scripture and facts, that revivals of religion are to be attributed to the special operations of the Spirit of God, exerted through the instrumentality of truth, and with the concurring prayers and labors of his people.

Revivals of religion have not been peculiar to any country or period of the church, but in every place, and in every age, when the people of God have awaked to their duty, and his ministers have faithfully dispensed his word, he has followed their labors with a blessing.- The primitive age of the church was a season of special and powerful revivals of religion. The Spirit of God was gloriously shed forth, sinners in vast numbers were converted, and the religion of the cross spread, in a few centuries, over the greater part of the then known world.

The reformation from Popery was accomplished, in no small degree, by revivals of religion. The phraseology at present applied to them was not, indeed, at that time in use, but the things signified by it were every where visible. God's ministers were excited to great earnestness in prayer, and boldness and faithfulness in preaching the gospel, and their labors were eminently successful. Sinners by hundreds and thousands were converted, churches were purified and established, and the professors of a corrupt religion were induced to forsake it and embrace the gospel.

Near the commencement of the eighteenth century, there were powerful revivals of religion in some parts of Germany, in connexion with the labors of Arndt, Franke, Spener, and others.- The history of the Moravians, and of their various settlements, is little else than a continued narrative of revivals of religion.- The times of Owen, Bunyan, and Baxter were seasons of spiritual

refreshing in many parts of England. No one can read the accounts of Baxter's labor and success at Kidderminster, without perceiving that the scenes there exhibited, in every thing except the name, resembled the modern revivals of religion. In the next century, religion was greatly revived in England, under the ministry of Whitefield and the Wesleys.

There have been revivals at different periods in Scotland, from the reformation to the present time. Mr. Fleming records 'an extraordinary outpouring of the Spirit in the West of Scotland about the year 1625,' called by the 'profane rabble the *Stewarton sickness*.' He also mentions a season of 'communion at the Kirk of the Shots, June 20, 1630,' when as many as *five hundred* were hopefully converted in a day. In the Christian History, a periodical published in Boston, in the year 1743-4, more than forty places are mentioned in Scotland in which revivals of religion were at that time in progress.- A revival took place in the north of Ireland, about the year 1628, which Mr. Fleming regards as 'one of the largest manifestations of the Spirit, and of the most solemn times of the down-pouring thereof, that hath been seen, since the days of the apostles.'- There have been frequent revivals of religion, during the last half century in Wales, by means of which the number of hopeful Christians in the Principality has been greatly increased. A revival commenced there so late as 1827, in consequence of which, within about fifteen months, more than 3,000 persons were added to the independent churches.- 'There is,' says a sensible writer, 'a nearer approximation to what are called revivals of religion in some of the Congregational churches in England, than is usually supposed in this country. The admission of two hundred members in one year to a single church, as at Manchester, would be thought a Revival in America. Yet it is not *spoken of* as such in the religious circles in England.'- The revivals which have occurred, within a few of the last years, at the Society and Sandwich Islands, at Ceylon, and at various other places among the heathen, show also, that these visits of mercy are not, as has been sometimes sneeringly represented, peculiar to the United States, but are enjoyed in every place, where there is earnest effectual prayer, connected with the faithful ministrations of the gospel.

It would be wrong, however, not to admit, with humble gratitude and joy, that our country has been distinguished, perhaps above every other, by the special operations of the Divine Spirit, and by the frequency and power of the revivals of religion. Revivals commenced here almost as soon as the country was settled. 'It pleased the Lord,' says Gov. Winthrop, 'to give *special* testimony of his presence in the church of Boston, after Mr. Cotton was called to office there. More were converted and added to that church, than to all the other churches in the Bay. Diverse profane and notorious evil persons came and confessed their sins, and were comfortably received into the bosom of the church.' It appears from the records that *thirty-seven* were added to the church

in Boston (for there was then but one church) in the space of three months. Similar tokens of the presence of the Holy Spirit were manifest at that early period in Dorchester, in Cambridge, and in several other places.

The general and powerful revivals with which our country was visited near the middle of the last century, have been often described. The work commenced in Northampton, under the searching and powerful ministry of Mr. Edwards. Here it continued and prevailed, 'till there was scarcely a person in the town, either young or old, that was left unconcerned about the things of the eternal world.' In the spring of the next year, it extended into the neighboring region, and nearly all the towns in old Hampshire county were visited and revived. It also prevailed in different parts of Connecticut, and in New Jersey.

In 1738, the celebrated Mr. Whitefield first visited the country. He commenced his labors in the southern provinces, and did not visit New England, until the autumn of 1740. During his first visit, his labors in Boston and other places, were followed by a very unusual and general attention to religion. 'Multitudes were greatly affected, and many awakened, with his lively ministry. Great numbers in Boston,' says Mr. Prince, 'were so happily concerned about their souls, as we had never seen anything like it before.' In the winter following, Mr. Gilbert Tennent came into New England, where his labors also were more abundant, and were greatly blessed. The revival in Boston exceeded any thing ever before witnessed in this part of the country. 'The very face of the town seems to be changed,' so as to occasion 'great surprise' to the strangers who visited it. From Boston the work spread in every direction over the settled portions of New England. In the Christian History, mention is made of nearly fifty towns in the several provinces on which the Spirit of God was specially poured out, nearly at the same time.

From the close of this season of refreshing, until after the termination of the revolutionary war, the work of God in this country was fearfully at a stand. The minds of people, ministers and others, were engrossed with other subjects, and the interests of religion and the soul were neglected. But near the beginning of the present century, a new era seemed to have commenced. Revivals became more frequent, and were marked with more signal tokens of the Divine presence and power. And from that period to the present, the work may be said, in general, to have continued and increased. There have been intervals, indeed, of religious declension, and the withdrawment of the Holy Spirit; but these have been followed, in most instances, with humiliation and prayer, and by a speedy renewal of the Divine blessing.

The year 1829 was one of uncommon spiritual desertion. The number of revivals was comparatively few, and the inquiry was often urged upon the hearts of Christians, 'Wherefore is the Lord contending with us'? Near the commencement of the last year, the prospect became more cheering. Drops of mercy were scattered here and there, and revivals occurred in different places.

It was not, however, till the latter part of the year, that these drops began to thicken, and to show indications of a general shower.

The *recent revivals of religion*, as they have been termed, appear to have commenced in the Western part of New York, in Rochester and the surrounding region, in the autumn of 1830. During the next three or four months, the work spread rapidly, and extended itself over a considerable portion of the state. In the course of the winter, favorable appearances were observed in the city of New York, which, at the opening of the spring, assumed a most cheering and decisive character. Nearly all the evangelical churches in the city have shared in the revival, and thousands, it is hoped, have been born of God. Whilst the work was thus pervading the city and state of New-York, it made its appearance in the Western parts of Massachusetts, and in various places in Connecticut. At the same time, the tokens of God's presence and power were displayed in some of the principal towns in Maine. About the first of March, an unusual spirit of prayer was imparted to the churches in Boston, and it began to be apparent that the Lord was there. From that time, the work has been in progress in Boston, and the surrounding region, and many have been made the happy subjects of renewing grace. At the same time as the revival was extending itself Eastward, it was also spreading itself to the South and West. Philadelphia, Charleston, the District of Columbia, Cincinnati, and various places in the Middle, Southern and Western states, have been visited, and in nearly every place to which the work has come, it is still in progress. It has been estimated by one who has paid particular attention to the subject, and has the best means of forming a judgment [The Secretary of the American Education Society], that as many as a 'thousand congregations in the United States have been visited within six months, to a greater or less extent, with revivals of religion; and that the whole number of conversions is probably not less than fifty thousand.'!! Truly this is a great and glorious work - sufficient to fill the hearts of God's people with humility and gratitude, and their mouths with thanksgiving! A work, in the promotion of which holy beings on earth and in heaven have combined their influence and rejoiced together!

This work derives additional importance from the *situation and rank* of many of the principal places that have been visited. 'It is worthy of special notice that those places have partaken most largely of the blessing which exert the greatest influence upon society. *Cities* and *colleges* have been the scenes of the deepest interest, as if the divine Spirit would correct the streams of moral influence by purifying the fountains. The colleges which have been most favored are Yale, Amherst, Middlebury, Bowdoin, Williams, Hamilton, Jefferson, Kenyon, Union, Hampden Sidney, New-Jersey, Western Reserve, Brown University, and the University of Ohio. The whole number of students who appear to have become subjects of piety in these institutions, during the present revival, is *three hundred and twenty*. The effects of this change will not

be limited to these young men. Hundreds and thousands will, doubtless, experience in consequence of it a similar change in their characters and destiny for eternity, and a multitude which no man can number will rejoice in the result for ever.'

'The character of this work,' say the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, 'so far as we can learn, has generally been such as the friends of God must approve, and desire to see continued, - still, solemn, and in some cases overwhelming. In general, there has been but little to produce distrust, or to awaken fear in the mind of the most timid and cautious Christian. And it is worthy to remark, that we hear but little of open and violent opposition. The presence and power of God have been so manifest, that the most vile, though they refuse to repent, have not the hardihood to oppose or revile. And for this we should give thanks to God, that while revivals are becoming more frequent, and more powerful, they are also becoming more pure from every thing of human origin.'

In this work of salvation, individuals of all ranks, ages, and characters have been included. 'The child of six and seven years, yet in the infants school, and the aged sinner who has passed his fourscore years in rebellion, have, in the same congregation, been brought together at the feet of Jesus, and some of all the intermediate ages. The great and learned officers of state, and the most illiterate servants, have been found together in the same prayer meeting, on a level before the throne of God. The man of wealth and the poor man, have united in *begging for mercy* of Him who is no respecter of persons. It is however believed that no previous revival ever took so large a proportion of the wealth and learning and influence of society as this has done. Literary and professional men who are at the head of society, giving the tone to public sentiment, have been brought into the kingdom in far greater numbers than ever before was known. Moral men, who have regarded themselves as approved of God on account of the purity of their lives, and the openly vicious and profane, have been alike humbled before God on account of their vileness, and the just sentence of wrath which was upon them. In many instances the intemperate, tottering upon the verge of a drunkard's grave, have been rescued by the sovereign mercy of God, and made temperate, sober Christians. Some of every character and condition in life have been taken, so that we need not despair of any, but should labor and pray in hope and faith for all.

'In some congregations, especially in the Western section of New-York, the work has been so general and thorough, that the whole customs of society have been changed. Amusements and all practices of a doubtful character, the object of which is simple pleasure, have been abandoned, and far higher and purer enjoyment is found in exercises of devotion, and engagements for the glory of God, and the salvation of men. The new converts come at once into all the designs and plans of benevolence which are the glory of the present day, and

rejoice in bearing their part in the conversion of the world. It is also worthy of remark, that in many instances, and we do not know but in all, where a person has wronged another, on his professing repentance before God, he has been solicitous to make a speedy and full restitution for the injury; and in all cases, the converts are immediately zealous friends of the temperance reformation, and friends of everything that favors the cause of the Redeemer. Should these revivals continue and increase, as we pray they may, and produce no other effects than they have already done, they will shortly bring into our country all the blessings promised of God to the church in the latter days. They multiply the families that call on the name of the Lord; they change the moral aspect and habits of society, by giving the tone of Christianity to public sentiment and practice; they silence the clamor of opposers, and close the lips of the profane; they rescue the Sabbath from under the feet of the impious, break up the deep and strong foundations of iniquity, disperse the assemblies of the wicked, and fill the churches of God from the haunts of dissipation. They close up the fountains from whence flow the desolating streams of intemperance, licentiousness, and every vice, and give increasing energy and triumph to all the plans of benevolence, by which this revolted world is to be brought back to the service and favor of God. What more, or what different, then, does the church need, to bring in her millenial glory?'

Among the means which have been instrumental in *preparing the way* for this general and mighty movement of Divine grace, three deserve particular mention: Sabbath schools, the distribution of Tracts, and the measures which have been taken for the promotion of temperance. By means of the system of Sabbath school instruction, which has been in vigorous operation for several years, a vast amount of good seed has been sown, and sown in a soil where there was comparatively little resistance to its springing up. A portion of it has now sprung up, and the result is glorious. Thousands of persons connected with the Sabbath schools have, within a few months, been hopefully gathered into the fold of Christ.

By the general distribution of religious tracts, divine truth has been brought in contact with another class of minds, scarcely more instructed in some instances than those of children, though much more prejudiced and hardened. Here also it has taken effect, and those who were farthest removed from the ordinary channels of saving mercy have tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious.

In years past, the general use of ardent spirit has proved a mighty hindrance to the progress of truth, and the free course of the gospel. Little can be done, as is now seen and acknowledged, for the spiritual good of any person, so long as he continues to use this poison. But in consequence of measures recently pursued, the use of it is greatly diminished. Thousands, and it may be hundreds of thousands, who a few years since were drinkers of rum, have now done with

the practice for ever. In all these minds, an effectual bar to the saving influence of truth has thus been removed, and the consequence is, that the Divine word, when exhibited, almost immediately makes an impression.

A principal *direct* means of promoting the existing revivals has been *the preaching of the gospel*. The sinner has been shewn his exceeding sinfulness and danger, as a transgressor of God's law, as a rebel against his government, as lying in his hands and at his mercy, and as constantly and justly exposed to feel his righteous indignation. Under deep impressions of this nature, he has been led to Calvary, to the cross of Christ, to the finished and accepted atonement of him whose blood was shed for the remission of sins. And here he has been urged, by all the motives of the gospel, to lay down his weapons, and submit - to do it *freely* - *unconditionally* - and IMMEDIATELY. If the preaching in these revivals has been peculiar in any thing, it has been in urging, with unwonted power, the obligation and motives to *immediate* repentance. Religion has been presented as a concern in which sinners must themselves *act*, and act on the spot. They have been warned against quieting themselves in sin, under the impression that they must wait God's time for God's time is the present time, and they have no occasion to delay a moment. Ministers have preached on these subjects, not with a half-suppressed incredulity, as doubting whether anything could or would be done, but as though they believed what they said, were in earnest about it, and expected sinners would give immediate attention; and in thousands of instances they have given immediate attention, and soon have found joy and peace in believing.

These revivals of religion were preceded, and have been attended, by a very unusual spirit of prayer. Christians have been led to feel, that they needed a blessing, and that it must come from God and they have gone to him in humble earnest supplication that he would bestow it. While obligation and immediate action have been urged upon the sinner, the influence of the Holy Spirit has been sought, as that *without which nothing could be done*.- The spirit of prayer here spoken of has manifested itself in the establishment of *morning prayer meetings*. These meetings, which have not been common in previous revivals, have been attended with much interest and profit. The morning is, on many accounts, a favorable season for *social* as well as secret prayer. The mind is then vigorous through relaxation and rest, is free from distracting worldly cares, and is prepared (if ever) to rise in humble devotion to the God of grace. A prayer meeting in the morning will moreover exert a salutary influence through the day. It will not be easy for the Christian to go from such a meeting into the business of life, and forget his heavenly Father, and give his heart supremely to the world.

Another mean employed in these revivals with great success, has been the *protracted meetings*, or meetings continued at intervals through several successive days.- Objections have been made to these meetings which it may

be proper briefly to notice.- By some they have been represented as *disorderly* meetings.- That they may be made disorderly meetings, there is no doubt; and that in some few instances may have been such, is not improbable. But surely they need not be attended with disorder, and in no instance of which we have any personal knowledge, has this been the case. They are capable of being conducted with the utmost stillness and decorum, and are scarcely more liable to abuses of the kind referred to than in the ordinary services of the Sabbath.

These meetings, it has been said again, consume an unreasonable portion of time. But what is an unreasonable portion of time to be devoted to the concerns of the soul? What is time compared with eternity? What are the body and the world, in comparison with the soul? And for what was our time on earth given us, but as a space in which to prepare for future scenes? If it is true, then, that the protracted meetings have been instrumental in promoting revivals, and in the awakening and conversion of immortal souls; if it shall appear that they have a tendency, an adaptation to produce such results; who shall say, that the time devoted to them is unreasonably spent?- It is admitted that the bodies, the families, and the necessary worldly avocations of most persons require a considerable portion of their time; and were these meetings held frequently in any particular church or town, they might interfere with other duties. But this has not been the case, and is not likely to be; nor would it appear, on examination, that the friends of protracted meetings have not attended as diligently and as successfully to their ordinary business, as the generality of their neighbors. There is a degree of sensitiveness, on the part of many, as to the time proper to be spent in religious duties, which requires to be corrected. Persons may devote whole days, and many days in succession, to journeys, visits, diversions, and amusements - yea, if they have the means of subsistence, they may spend their lives in literal idleness, and no fault is found, no objection uttered but, if, in a few instances, they think proper to devote two or three days in succession to the services of religion, there is a great complaint of the waste of time.

It has been thought by some, that the meetings in question are calculated for excitement, rather than for permanent benefit, as they hurry people along, without sufficient opportunity for retirement and reflection. But is this true? During the days of meeting, not more than four or five hours are ordinarily spent by any individual in the place of worship, leaving nearly *twenty hours* of the twenty-four for sleep, meals, relaxation, and private religious duties. And, if well improved, is this not enough? To those who attend the meetings and wish to profit by them, a sufficient space is *not* furnished for worldly thoughts and cares to intrude, and banish the pleading Spirit from the soul; but may not time enough be secured, in addition to that spent in the meetings, for all the necessary purposes of relaxation and reflection?

It has been objected, finally, that the protracted meetings were unknown to

our fathers - that they are *new* measures. Meetings, continued at intervals through several successive days, have been known in the church perhaps in all ages. Such were the festivals under the former dispensation and we read in one instance, that when the people had feasted seven days, 'they took counsel to keep other seven days.' It is said of the early disciples, that they 'continued *daily* with one accord in the temple, and in breaking bread from house to house.' Sacred seasons are enjoined in the Episcopal church, during which the people are expected to assemble daily for purposes of devotion. From time immemorial, the sacramental seasons in some parts of the Presbyterian church have been attended by daily successive meetings. And in our own churches, and our own times, what are the General Associations, the Church Conferences, and many of our religious anniversaries, but a series of successive meetings?- Should it be admitted however, as it must be, that the class of meetings of which we have spoken are in some respects *new* measures, still, this is no valid objection to them. As the kingdom of Christ advances, and we approach millenial scenes, are we not to expect new modes of disseminating truth, and promoting the salvation of men? And besides, how many of the most popular and useful modes of religious operation at the present day, might be stigmatized as new measures? How old are Sabbath schools and Bible classes? How old are the monthly concerts of prayer? How long is it since most of the existing charitable institutions were put in operation? It is too late for Christians to object to tried and approved methods of doing good, on the mere ground that they are new.

Whatever objections may be made to the protracted meetings, experience has shown them to be eminently useful. That they have been blessed of God beyond almost any other means, in promoting the awakening and conversion of sinners and extending revivals of religion, there can be no doubt. Instances too numerous to be mentioned are before the public, in which revivals have either commenced, or have received a new and powerful impulse, in the progress of these meetings. Nor is there anything mysterious in this. The reasons for the efficacy which has attended them, and why they have been so honored of the Holy Spirit, are beginning to be obvious. These meetings serve to restrain and hold in check, for a time at least, that overflowing tide of worldliness, by which serious impressions ordinarily are swept away. They keep divine truth before the mind, till an impression is made too deep to be effaced. It is not uncommon, at the close of public worship on the Sabbath, for persons to leave the house of God with very serious impressions. They feel the importance of religion, feel their need of it, and are ready to resolve that they will give it their attention. But as the cares and business of the week press upon them, their feelings subside, and their good resolutions are forgotten. Perhaps the same process of awakening and relapsing is often repeated, until the conscience becomes seared and the heart is hardened. This difficulty in the way of

conversion (which all who understand the subject know is as common as it is formidable) the protracted meetings are adapted to obviate; and it is to this circumstance in great measure, that their power, under God, is to be attributed. Religious impression, in these meetings, is followed up before the benefit of one sermon is lost, another is heard and soon the arrow of truth has pierced too deep to be easily withdrawn. A wound is inflicted, which none but the Great Physician can heal. The current of the affections is turned, and the soul is born of God.

That these meetings, like every other good thing, may be abused, - or that they may be called so frequently, or with so little previous preparation, or under circumstances so unfavorable, as to be productive of little good, - there can be no doubt. But it can be as little doubted that, when judiciously called, and judiciously conducted, they may be productive of immense advantage. Indeed, like many other important measures, now that they are frequently attended, and the tendency and benefits of them are seen, we are ready to wonder why they have been, in the past, so much neglected.

The present is unquestionably a most interesting and important crisis to the churches of this land. Should the existing revivals continue and prevail, free from disorders and objectionable mixtures, as we hope and trust in God they may, there is no estimating, even as it respects this world, their blessed and glorious results. Our land may soon become Immanuel's land - the glory of all lands; and we may be that happy people whose God is the Lord. But should the Divine Spirit be grieved to depart from us, and the revivals cease, a season of coldness, hardness, and outbreaking iniquity may be expected to ensue, the disastrous consequences of which can be fully estimated only in eternity. May every Christian be grateful, and humble, and in a state of preparation for further blessings; and may every one, who has a heart to feel, or a hand to labor, or a tongue to plead, resolve that nothing shall be wanting which he can do, to aid in promoting the work of the Lord."

NOTES

REFERENCES for the Introduction

1. Finney's Memoirs. edited by Rosell and Dupuis. pages 78 - 79.
2. Fowler. Presbyterianism in Central New York. pages 176 - 177.
3. Taylor. Journal of Missionary Tour in 1802. pages 1113, 1114, 1116, 1123, 1134, 1136.
4. Finney's Memoirs. pages 78 - 79.

REFERENCES for Chapter One

1. Foster. "Genetic History." page 31.
2. Gaustad. "Great Awakening in New England." page 17.
3. op cit. page 19.
4. op cit. page 17.
5. op cit. page 18.
6. ibid.
7. op cit. page 18.
8. op cit. page 23.
9. op cit. page 27.
10. op cit. page 27 - 28.
11. Stanton. "Random Recollections." page 13.
12. Gaustad. page 29.
13. op cit. page 32 - 33.
14. Sprague. "Annals." Vol.3. page 35.
15. op cit. page 35 - 36.
16. Coalter. "Gilbert Tennent." pages 64 - 65.
17. op cit. page 73.
18. Sprague. page 36.
19. Gaustad. page 34.
20. Sprague. page 37.
21. Coalter. page 74.
22. op cit. page 75.
23. Gaustad. pages 44 - 45.
24. ibid.
25. M'Clure and Parish. (ed.) "Memoirs of Wheelock." pages 13 - 15.
26. Murray. "Jonathan Edwards." pages 189 - 190.
27. Gaustad. page 30.
28. op cit. page 35.

REFERENCES for Chapter Two

1. Sprague. "Annals of the American Pulpit." Vol 3. page 81.
2. op cit. page 81- 82.
3. Tracy. "The Great Awakening." page 232.
4. ibid. Paragraphing added.
5. op cit. page 233.
6. Sprague. page 82.
7. Tracy. page 234.
8. op cit. page 235.
9. op cit. pages 235 - 236.
10. op cit. page 236.
11. ibid.
12. op cit. page 246.
13. op cit. pages 237 - 238.
14. op cit. page 234.
15. op cit. page 236.
16. Sprague. page 84.
17. op cit. pages 84 - 86. Paragraphing added.
18. op cit. page 86.
19. Williams and Wheelock "Two Letters." pages 3 - 31. (especially pages 14 - 16, and 19 - 22.) Paragraphing added.
20. Sprague. pages 87 - 88.
21. Weeks. "Pilgrim's Progress." page 274.
22. Sprague. pages 90 - 92.

There are no references for Chapter Three

REFERENCES for Chapter Four

1. Connecticut Evangelical Magazine. Volume 1. pages 136 - 137. Also Yale. Jeremiah Hallock. page 107.
2. Keller. Second Great Awakening in Connecticut. page 37.
3. Yale. page 316.
4. Orr. The Eager Feet. page 52.
5. Yale. page 14.
6. Orr. chapters 2 - 6.
7. op cit. pages 52 - 53. (see also Gillett History of Presbyterian

Church. Vol. 1. pages 296 - 299.)
8. Walker. History of Congregational Churches in the United States. page 321.
9. Orr. chapter 11.
10. Woodward. Surprising Accounts of the Revival of Religion. Extract 16. pages 25 - 26.
11. Hotchkin. History of Western New York, etc. pages 35 - 36.
12. op cit. pages 36 - 37.
13. op cit. pages 37 - 38.
14. op cit. pages 39 - 40.
15. Connecticut Evangelical Magazine. Volume 1. page 119.
16. Connecticut Evangelical Magazine. Volume 2. pages 100 - 105. (Italics are in the original. Subheadings and emphases to names have been added.)
17. Hotchkin. page 45.
18. op cit. page 74.
19. Fowler. Presbyterianism within the Synod of Central New York. page 168.
20. op cit. pages 169 - 170.
21. op cit. page 170.
22. op cit. pages 173 - 174.
23. op cit. pages 176 - 177. (for John Taylor, see Introduction, page vii.)
24. Peck. Methodism. pages 179 - 181.
25. op cit. pages 187 - 188.
26. Stevens. American Methodism. page 364.
27. op cit. pages 362 - 363. (Paragraphing added.)
28. Peck and Lawton. Baptist Missionary Convention. page 9.
29. op cit. pages 10 - 11, 19.
30. op cit. page 29.
31. Brooks. Empire State. Pages 60 - 61.
32. Fowler. Presbyterianism. pages 55 - 57.
33. Peck. page 141.
34. Hotchkin. pages 122 - 123. Also Robbins Diary. Volume 1. page 176.

REFERENCES for Chapter Five

1. Conable. Genesee Conference. pages 21 - 26.
2. op cit. pages 103 - 104, and Peck. Methodism. page 394.
3. op cit. page 108, and Chase Recollections. Numbers 20 & 21. (especially page 111.)
4. Chase. pages 114 - 115.

5. Peck. pages 385 - 387, and Chase. pages 116 - 118..
6. Conable. pages 119 - 120. (Italics in the original.)
7. Peck pages 392 - 394.
8. Conable. page 175.
9. op cit. page 181.
10. Fowler. Central New York. pages 179 - 181. Bradley Accounts of Revivals. pages 167, 280.
11. Bradley pages 164 - 166.
12. Hotchkin. Western New York. page 126.
13. op cit. pages 126 - 127.
14. Bradley. page 208.
15. Hotchkin. pages 127 - 128.
16 op cit. page 128.
17. op cit. page 134.
18. Bradley. pages 219 - 220.
19. Hotchkin. page 135.
20. Fowler. pages 184 - 185.
21. Hotchkin. page 135.
22. Fowler. pages 187 - 188.
23. op cit. page 189. (The expression "social religious excuses" is correctly quoted from Fowler, but "social religious exercises" may have been intended.)
24.. Tyler. Asahel Nettleton. (English edition.) pages 110 - 111.
25. Smith. The Great Revival of 1820. pages 48 - 52. (paragraphing added.)
26. op cit. page 56.
27. op cit. page 66.
28. op cit. pages 67 - 70.
29. op cit. page 73.
30. op cit. pages 74 - 76.
31. op cit. pages 87 - 91.
32. Van Santvoord and Lewis. Memoirs of Dr. Nott. page 229.
33. Tyler. pages 112 - 113. (Italics in the original. Paragraphing added.))
34. Van Santvoord. pages 227 - 228.
35. Tyler. page 128.
36. Smith. pages 108 - 109.
37. op cit. page 110.
38. op cit. pages 114 - 116.
39. op cit. page 116.
40. op cit. page 117.
41. op cit. page 118.
42. op cit. pages 119 - 129.
43. Griffin. Letter to a Friend. (This is an eight page pamphlet.)

REFERENCES for Chapter Six

1. Fowler. Presbyterianism. pages 189 - 192.
2. Rosell and Dupuis. Memoirs of Finney. page 678.
3. Gale. Autobiography. pages 81 - 83.
4. Jones, Ashbel Green. pages 618 - 626.
5. Gale. pages 161 - 166. (Paragraphing added.)
6. op cit. pages 174 - 181.
7. op cit. page 204. (Paragraphing added.)
8. op cit. pages 186 - 187. (Paragraphing added.)
9. op cit pages 187 - 188.
10. Peck and Lawton. Baptist Missionary Convention. pages 80 - 81.
11. Peck. Methodism. page 446.
12. Fowler. pages 192 - 194.
13. American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer. July, 1824. pages 384 - 385.
14. Fowler. pages 197 - 199.
15. Christian Spectator. July, 1823. pages 385 - 387.
16. op cit. May, 1823. page 279.
17. Fowler. pages 198 - 200.
18. op cit. page 200.
19. Conable. Genesee Conference. pages 231 - 232.
20. Blakeslee. Methodism in Phelps. pages 20 - 24.
21. Conable. page 247.
22. op cit. pages 254 - 255.
23. Blakeslee. pages 20 - 24.
24. Conable. pages 263 - 264.

REFERENCES for Chapter Seven

1. Walker. Congregational Churches. page 304.
2. Elwell. Dictionary of Evangelical Theology. page 1060.
3. Park. Atonement. Introductory Essay.
4. Elwell. page 249.
5. see Pettit. A Heart Prepared.
6. Elwell. pages 79 - 81.
7. op cit. page 345.
8. op cit. page 344.
9. ibid.

10. Foster. Genetic History. page 86.
11. op cit. page 153.
12. Elwell. page 345.
13. op cit. page 346.
14. Walker. page 286.
15. Foster. page 110 - 111.
16. Gerstner. Jonathan Edwards. chapter 6.
17. Foster. page 113.
18. op cit. page 129.
19. Walker. page 288.
20. Foster. page 172.
21. op cit page 153.
22. Elwell. page 760.
23. Walker. page 300.
24. Foster. page 341.
25. op cit. page 343.
26. op cit. page 345.
27. Park. Memoir of Emmons. pages 412 - 417.
28. op cit. pages 350 - 351. (Paragraphing added.)
29. op cit. page 352. (Quoted from Dr. Ide.)
30. Walker. page 302.
31. op cit. page 355.
32. Elwell. page 1070.
33. ibid.
34. Sprague. Annals of the American Pulpit. Vol. 4. pages 473 - 476.
35. Weeks. Nine Sermons on the Decrees and Agency of God.
36 . Rosell and Dupuis (editors) Memoirs of Charles G. Finney. pages 142 - 143.
37. Weeks. Pilgrim's Progress in the Nineteenth Century. page 276.
38. Oneida Presbytery. Pastoral Letter. page 3,
and Weeks, "Pilgrim's Progress." pages 167 and 215.
39. Weeks. Pilgrim's Progress. pages 276 - 278.

REFERENCES for Chapter Eight

1. Miller. Charles Finney. page 10.
2. op cit. page 13.
3. Gale. Autobiography. pages 161 and 163.
4. op cit. pages 175 - 176.
5. Miller. page 18.
6. Rosell and Dupuis. Memoirs. page 19, note 15.

7. op cit. pages 55 and 57.
8. Gale. Autobiography. page 186. (Gale wrongly said that this Presbytery meeting was in 1822. Rosell and Dupuis cite Fowler, who quoted from the Presbytery minutes.)
9. Wright. Charles G. Finney. pages 177 - 178. (Paragraphing added.)
10. Rosell and Dupuis. page 44.
11. Wright. page 178.
12. Beecher. Autobiography. Volume 2. page 91 - 92.
13 Wright. page 178 - 179.
14. op cit. pages 179 - 180.
15. op cit. page 181.
16. Gale. pages 182 - 183. (Paragraphing added in some of these quotes.)
17. op cit. pages 269 - 270.
18. op cit. pages 271 - 272.
19. Edman. Finney Lives On. page 191. (The sermon "Moral Insanity" is summarised in Edman. pages 203 - 214. The original version is in Finney. Gospel Themes. chapter 9.)
20. Oswald J. Smith. The Battle for Truth. chapter one. For example, the prize-winning sermon was entitled "The Madhouse of the Universe," and contained many of Finney's ideas.
21. Gale. pages 272 - 273.
22. Stanton. Random Recollections. pages 40 - 42.
23. Wright. Charles Grandison Finney. pages 105 - 106.
24. Rosell and Dupuis. pages 23 - 24.
25. Finney. Power From on High. chapter 3, and Revival Lectures. lecture 7.
26. Finney. Power From on High. chapter 5.
27. Rosell and Dupuis. pages 57 - 58.

REFERENCES for Chapter Nine

1. Finney's Memoirs. edited by Rosell and Dupuis. page 141.
2. Hotchkin. Western New York.. page 138.
3. Wisner. Incidents in the Life of a Pastor. pages 66 - 80.
4. Conable. Genesee Annual Conference. page 247.
5. Narrative of the Presbytery of Oneida. pages 7 - 8. (Paragraphing added.)
6. op cit. pages 9 - 13.
7 Jones. Annals and Recollections of Oneida County. page 390.
8. Narrative. pages 14 - 15.
9. Jones. page 135.
10. Narrative. pages 23 - 26.

11. Jones. page 569.
12. Narrative. page 35.
13. op cit. page 36.
14. op cit. pages 35 - 39.
15. op cit. pages 40 - 46.
16. Hambrick-Stowe. Charles G. Finney. pages 58 - 61.
17. op cit. page 64.
18. Murray. Revival and Revivalism. page 230.
19. Finney's Memoirs. page 204. (ed. Rosell and Dupuis.)
20. op cit. pages 228 - 230.
21. Fowler. Historical Sketches of Presbyterianism. page 274.
22. Finney's Memoirs. page 142.
23. Nettleton and Beecher Letters.. page iv.
24. op cit. page v.
25. op cit. page 12.
26. op cit. page 13.
27. op cit. pages 89 - 90.
28. op cit. page 10.
29. op cit. page 84.
30. Wright. Charles Grandison Finney. page 85.
31. ibid.
32. op cit. pages 91 - 93.
33. Finney's Memoirs. page 220.
34. George W. Gale. Autobiography. pages 295 - 296.
35. Finney's Memoirs. pages 224 - 227.
36. Wright. pages 94 - 95.
37. Finney's Memoirs. page 224. (Quoted from the "New York Evangelist" 17th June, 1837. page 99.) Regarding the expression "to write the letter," the original NYE says "to write that letter," but "the" is mistakenly used in Rosell and Dupuis' edition of Finney's "Memoirs." (Dupuis, private communication.)
38. Hardman. Seasons of Refreshing. page 155.
39. Rosell. Charles G. Finney. in Sweet (ed.). pages 135 - 137.
40. Finney. Memoirs. page 142.
41. Fowler. page 274. (Also quoted in Finney's "Memoirs" page 221.)
42. Weeks. Pilgrim's Progress in the Nineteenth Century. page 259 especially. (The discussion between Thoughful and Scribus about the "Pastoral Letter" takes up all of chapter 35.)
43. Fowler. page 275.

There are no references for Chapter Ten

REFERENCES for Chapter Eleven

1. Weeks. Pilgrim's Progress. pages 225 - 226.
2. op cit. page 315.
3. op cit. page 260.
4. op cit. pages 260 - 261.
5. ibid.
6. op cit pages 260 - 262.
7. (Matthew 21:22, Mark 11:24, James 5:15, 17 - 18, 1 John 5:14 - 15. All from King James' Authorised Version, used by both Finney and Weeks.)
8. Weeks. page 317.
9. Finney. Revival Lectures. Lecture 6. Part 4. Point 4.
10. Weeks. page 318.
11. op cit. page 328.
12. Finney. Lecture 4. Part 2.
13. op cit. Lecture 5. Part 6. Point 2.
14. op cit. Lecture 6. Part 4. Point 5.
15. op cit. Lecture 7. Part 5. Point 10.
16. Weeks. page 322.
17. Finney. Lecture 6. Part 4. Point 4.
18. Rosell and Dupuis. page 54. note 45.
19. op cit. page 71.
20. op cit. page 72.
21. op cit. page 120.
22. op cit. page 119. note 19.
23. op cit. pages 316 - 318.
24. op cit. page 317. note 85.
25. Finney. Lecture 6, part 6. points 1 & 2.
26. Pierson. George Muller. chapter. 12.

(Many other sources of this information also exist.)

REFERENCES for Chapter Twelve

1. For a much fuller description of these matters, see Schmidt, Holy Fairs, and Westerkamp, Triumph of the Laity.
2. Johnson. Frontier Camp Meeting. page 85 - 86.
3. op cit. page 95.
4. op cit. page 92.

5. Hambrick-Stowe. Charles G. Finney. page 114.
6. Andrews. Living Life. pages 116 - 118.
7. Park. Nathanael Emmons. page 158.
8. op cit. page 174.
9. ibid.
10. op cit. page 175.
11. Weeks. Pilgrim's Progress. page 409.
12. op cit. pages 379 - 380.
13. Reed and Matheson. Vol.2. page 30.
14. Finney. Lectures on Revivals. (All quotes are from Lecture 14.)
15. Fowler. Presbyterianism in Central New York. pages 268 - 269.
16. Sprague. Annals of the American Pulpit. Vol. 7, page 152.
17. Reed and Matheson. Vol.2. pages 32 - 37.
18. op cit. pages 37 - 42.
19. Parker. The Fire and the Hammer. page 48.
20. Nevin. Anxious Bench. page iv.
21. op cit. page iii.
22. op cit. page 31.
23. op cit. page 30.

REFERENCES for Chapter Thirteen

1. Weeks. Pilgrim's Progress. pages 377 - 378.
2. op cit. pages 379 - 380.
3. Finney. Systematic Theology. page 287.

REFERENCES for Chapter Fourteen

1. Gillett. Presbyterian Church. Vol.1. pages 296 - 299, and Orr. Eager Feet. page 118.
2. Fowler. Presbyterianism. page 124.
3. Rosell and Dupuis. Finney's Memoirs. page 316.
4. op cit. pages 316 - 317.
5. op cit. pages 317 - 318.
6. op cit. page 317.
7. Hotchkin. Western New York. page 143.
8. Fowler. pages 226 - 227.
9. Orr. page 197.
10. Hotchkin. page 144.
11. Conable. Genesee Conference. page 317.

12. Hotchkin. pages 144 - 145. (Emphases on names in this chapter have been added.)
13. Reed and Matheson. Visit to the American Churches. Vol.2. pages 24 - 25.
14. Conable page 315.
15. Hotchkin. page 147.
16. op cit. pages 142 - 143.
17. Fowler. page 232.
18. Hotchkin. page 143.
19. op cit. pages 141 - 142. (Emphases and some parapraphing added.)
20. Fowler. page 227.
21. op cit. pages 228 - 230.
22. op cit. pages 230 - 231.
23. Conable. pages 317 - 318.
24. op cit. pages 325 - 326.
25. Rosell and Dupuis. pages 318 - 319.
26. e.g. McElroy. Social Reform.
27. Robinson.. First Church Chronicles. pages 74 - 75.
28. op cit. pages 80 and 82.
29. Conable. pages 308 - 309.
30. op cit. pages 307 - 308, and 317.
31. Hotchkin. pages 145 - 147.
32. Conable. pages 316 - 322.
33. op cit. page 331.
34. op cit. page 348.
35. Griffin. Letter to Ansel D. Eddy. pages 7 - 8.
36. op cit. pages 10 - 11.
37. Reed and Matheson. Vol. 2. letter 30.
38. Fowler. pages 269 - 270.
39. op cit. pages 270 - 272.
40. op cit. pages 268 - 269.

REFERENCES for Chapter Fifteen

1. Beardsley. History of American Revivals. pages 201 - 202.
2. Conable. Genesee Annual Conference. page 359.
3. op. cit. page 374.
4. op. cit. page 372.
5. op. cit. page 386.
6. op. cit. pages 384 - 385.
7. op. cit. pages 395 - 396.

8. op. cit. page 392. See also Clark. Life of Elijah Hedding. pages 455 - 457.
9. Fowler. Presbyterianism in Central New York. pages 232 - 233.
10. op. cit. pages 233 - 235.
11. op. cit. page 236.
12. op. cit. pages 209 - 212.
13. op. cit. page 292.
14. op. cit. page 293.
15. op. cit. pages 278 - 280.
16. Hotchkin. History of Western New York. page 170.
17. e.g. C. G. Eastman. Jedediah Burchard, and R. Streeter. Mirror of Calvinistic Fanaticism.
18. Noble. Century of Gospel Work. pages 404 - 405.
19. op.cit. page 406.
20. Parker. The Fire and the Hammer. chapter 1.
21. Fowler. page 278.
22. Hotchkin. page 169.
23. op. cit. page 171.
24. op. cit. pages 171 - 172.
25. Miller. Presbytery of Steuben. pages 15 - 16.
26. Hotchkin. page 172.
27. Knapp. Autobiography. page 30.
28. op.cit. pages 30 - 34.
29. Fowler. pages 239 - 240, and Knapp. pages 85 - 87. (The quotation provided here is from Fowler. When this is compared with what Knapp wrote in his published autobiography, we see that Fowler took many liberties with the wording of the passage, but the meaning has not been changed.)
30. Van Santvoord and Lewis. pages 223 - 224.
31. Knapp. pages 202 - 217.
32. Denison. (ed.) Jabez Swan. chapters 2 - 9. espec. page 127.
33. Murray. Revival and Revivalism. page xx.

REFERENCES for Chapter Sixteen

1. Hotchkin. Western New York. pages 159 - 167.
2. Wisner. Incidents in a Pastor's Life. pages 275 - 283.
3. Wisner. pages 271 - 275.
4. Finney's Letters on Revival. pages 11 - 22.
5. op cit. pages 22 - 27
6. op cit. pages 47 - 66.

7. op cit. pages 101 - 102.
8. Sprague. Religious Ultraism. page 7.
9. op cit. page 8 - 11.
10. op cit. pages 12 - 13.
11. op cit. page 16.
12. op cit. pages 20 - 22.
13. op cit. page 22.
14. op cit. pages 23 - 25.
15. op. cit. page 19.
16. op cit. pages 37 - 45.
17. Park. Memoir of Nathanael Emmons. page 172.
18. Stanton. Random Recollections. page 45.
19. Fowler. Presbyterianism in Central New York. pages 80 - 81.

REFERENCES for Chapter Seventeen

1. Fish. Handbook of Revivals. page 65.
   Orr. The Eager Feet. chapters 7 - 9, 17 and 19.
   Boles. The Great Revival.
2. Dwight. Infidel Philosophy.
   Orr. Campus Aflame.
   Tewkesbury. The Founding of American Colleges, etc.
3. Goss. Statistical History of the First Century of American Methodism.
   Stevens. Compendious History of American Methodism.
4. Moore. Boston Revival, 1842.
   Knapp. Autobiography.
5. Tuveson. Millenium and Utopia.
   Pierson. The New Acts of the Apostles.
   Barnes. The Anti-Slavery Impulse.
   Barkun. Crucible of the Millenium.
6. Orr. The Fervent Prayer.
   Orr. The Event of the Century. chapters 23 - 24.
   Timothy Smith. Revivalism and Social Reform.
   Prime. The Power of Prayer.
7. Jones. Christ in the Camp.
   Bennett. The Great Revival in the Confederate Armies.
8. Marsden. Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism. page 10.
9. Eighmy. Churches in Cultural Captivity.
   Spain. At Ease in Zion.
   Thomas. Revivalism and Cultural Change.
10. Harold Murray. Sixty Years an Evangelist. pages 44 - 48.

11. Marsden. Understanding Fundamentalism.. page 13.
12. Marsden. op cit. page 14.
(see also his The Soul of the American University.)
13. Marsden Understanding Fundamentalism. page 17 - 19.
14. Butterfield. Christianity and History. chapter 5.
15. Marsden. Understanding... page 16.
Evans. article in Hutchinson. pages 68 - 69.
16. Orr. Flaming Tongue. chapters 9 - 12.
Bartleman. Azusa Street.
17. Orr. A Re-study of Revival and Revivalism.
18. Orr. Always Abounding. (1940.) 2nd edition. 1948. page 89.
Orr. Flaming Tongue. (1973.) 2nd edition. 1975. pages 95 - 96.
19. Orr. Always Abounding. (2nd ed.) pages 90 - 91.
20. Mead. The Lively Experiment. page 123.
21. Dorsett. Billy Sunday. page 108.
22. For further references relating to the Crystallising Process see my article in Hutchinson.
23. Mead. pages 90 - 92.

There are no references for Chapter Eighteen

REFERENCES for Chapter Nineteen

1. Pocket Oxford Dictionary. 1947 corrected edition.
2. Quinn. Early Mormonism and the Magic World View. page xxiv.
3. op cit. pages xxv - xxx.
4. op cit. page 30.
5. op cit. page 72.
6. op cit. page 104.
7. op cit. page 72.
8. op cit. page 83 - 85.
9. op cit. page 89.
10. op cit. page 90.
11. op cit. page 246.
12. McKiernan. Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness. page 32.
13. Bushman. Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism. page 58.
14. Gillett. Presbyterian Church. Vol.2. page 264, and Hotchkin. Western New York. page 378.
15. Quinn. page 140 - 142.
16. op cit. page 142.

17. op cit. page 143.
18. ibid.
19. ibid.
20. ibid.
21. Bushman. page 57.
22. Quinn. page 159 - 160.
23. op cit. page 164 - 165.
24. op cit. page 169.
25. op cit. page 171.
26. op cit. page 172.
27. Bushman. page 99.
28. Quinn. page 170.
29. Bushman. page 96.
30. ibid.
31. Quinn. page 176.
32. op cit. page 76.
33. op cit. page 77.
34. op cit. page 79.
35. op cit. page 237 - 238.
36. op cit. page 322.
37. op cit. page 320.
38. McKiernan. page 57.
39. op cit. page 99.
40. op cit. page 40.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alexander. Archibald, The Log College.
Biographical Sketches of William Tennent and his students, together with an account of the revivals under their ministries.
London. Banner of Truth Trust. 1968. (1st edition, 1851.)

Altschuler. G. C., and J. M. Saltzgaber, Revivalism, Social Conscience and Community in the Burned-over District. - The Trial of Rhoda Bement. Ithaca. Cornell University Press. 1983.

An Association of Friends to Evangelical Truth.
The Panoplist and Missionary Magazine.
for the Year 1817. Boston. Samuel T. Armstrong. 1817.

An Association of Gentlemen. The Christian Spectator. for the year 1823
New Haven. S. Converse (for the editor.) 1823.

Andrews. Emerson, Living Life, or Autobiography of the Rev. Emerson Andrews. Boston. James H. Earle. 1872.

Asbury. Francis, Journals and Letters. Three volumes. (Chief editor: Elmer T. Clark.) Nashville. Abingdon Press. 1958.

Baird. Samuel J., A History of the New School,
and of the Questions Involved in the Disruption of the Presbyterian Church in 1838. Philadelphia. Claxton, Remsen and Haffelfinger. 1868.

Bangs. Nathan, A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church.
Third edition, revised and enlarged. Two volumes.
New York. Mason and Lane. 1839.

Barkun. Michael, The Crucible of the Millenium.
The Burned-Over District of New York in the 1840s.
Syracuse. Syracuse University Press. 1986.

Barnes. Gilbert H., The Anti-Slavery Impulse.
Gloucester. Peter Smith. 1973. (1933.)

Bartleman. F. G., Azusa Street. (Complete text edition. ed. Dayton.)
South Plainfield. Bridge Publ. Co. 1980.

Beardsley. Frank G., A History of American Revivals.
New York. American Tract Society. 1904.

Beecher. Lyman, Autobiography and Correspondence, etc., of Lyman Beecher D.D. Edited by Charles Beecher.
New York. Harper and Brothers. 1864.

Belden. A. Russell, History of the Cayuga Baptist Association.
Compiled from Authentic Records, at the Request of the Association.
Auburn. Derby and Miller. 1851.

Bennett. William W., The Great Revival in the Confederate Armies.
Harrisonburg. Sprinkle Publ. Co. 1976. (1876.)

Bergin. G. Fred., (compiler.) Autobiography of George Muller, or, a Million and a Half in Answer to Prayer.
London. James Nisbet. 1906. (second edition.)

Berk. Stephen, Calvinism Versus Democracy.
Timothy Dwight and the Origins of American Evangelical Orthodoxy.
Hamden, Conn. Archon Books. 1974.

Blakeslee. Marvin P., Notes for a History of Methodism in Phelps, Delivered in Two Addresses. 1st and 8th August, 1886.
Phelps, N.Y. Published by the Author. 1886.

Bogue. Carl W., Jonathan Edwards and the Covenant of Grace.
Cheery Hill, N. J. Mack Publishing Co. 1975.

Boles. John B., The Great Revival. 1797 - 1805.
Lexington. University of Kentucky Press. 1972.

The Book of Mormon. An Account Written by the Hand of Mormon upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi. Translated by Joseph Smith Jun.
Salt Lake City. The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints. 1961.

Boardman. George N., A History of New England Theology.
New York. A. D. F. Randolph. 1899.

Bradley. Joshua, Accounts of Religious Revivals in Many Parts of the United States from 1815 – 1818. (Reprint of G. J. Loomis edition, 1819.)

Wheaton. Richard Owen Roberts. 1980.

Bradstreet. Benjamin, Sermon on Godly Sorrow.
Boston. Kneeland and Green. 1742.

Brockway. Josephus, A Delineation of the Characteristic Features of a Revival of Religion in Troy, in 1826 and 1827.
Troy, New York. Published by the Author. 1827.

Brooks. Charles W., A Century of Missions in the Empire State
as Exhibited by the Work and Growth of the Baptist Missionary Convention of the State of New York.
Philadelphia. American Baptist Publication Society. 1909.

Brown. Elijah P., The Real Billy Sunday.
Dayton. Otterbein Press. 1914.

Burchard. Jedediah, Sermons, Addresses and Exhortations.
with an Appendix by C. G. Eastman.
Burlington. Chauncey Goodrich. 1836.

Bushman. Richard L., From Puritan to Yankee.
Character and the Social Order in Connecticut 1690 - 1765.
Cambridge. Harvard University Press. 1980. (1st edition. 1967.)

Bushman. Richard L., Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism.
Urbana. University of Illinois Press. 1988.

Bushman. Richard L., The Great Awakening.
Documents on the Revival of Religion. 1740 - 1745.
Chapel Hill. University of North Carolina Press. 1989. (1st edition, 1969.)

Butler. Jon., Awash in a Sea of Faith. Christianizing the American People.
Cambridge. Harvard University Press. 1990.

Butterfield. H., Christianity and History.
London. G. Bell & Sons. 1950.

Calm Observer. A Calm Review of the Spirit and Incidents of the Late 'Oneida Revival' as Exhibited in Various Presbyterian Societies. Utica, New York. Published by the Author. 1827.

Chase. Abner, Recollections of the Past.
New York. Published for the Author at the Conference Office. 1848.

Clark. D. W., Life and Times of Rev. Elijah Hedding. D.D.
New York. Carlton and Phillips. 1855.

Coalter. Milton J., Gilbert Tennent, Son of Thunder.
New York. Greenwood Press. 1986.

Conable. F. W., History of the Genesee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. (1810 - 1872.) New York. Nelson and Phillips. 1876.

Conforti. J. A., Samuel Hopkins and the New Divinity Movement.
Washington. Christian University Press. 1981.

Connecticut Evangelical Magazine.
Hartford. Published by the Editors. 1800 - 1807 (7 volumes.)

Crocker. Zebulon, The Catastrophe of the Presbyterian Church in 1837.
including a full view of the recent theological controversies in New England.
New Haven. B. and W. Noyes. 1838.

Cross. Whitney R., The Burned-Over District.
The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York. 1800 - 1850.
New York. Harper Torchbooks. 1965. (First published 1950.)

Cuningham. Charles E., Timothy Dwight. 1752 - 1817. A Biography.
New York. AMS Press. 1976. (Reprint of the 1942 edition.)

Dallimore. Arnold George Whitefield.
The Life and Times of the Great Evangelist of the Eighteenth Century.
London. Banner of Truth Trust. Vol.1. 1970. Vol.2. 1980.

Delattre. Roland A., Beauty and Sensibility in the Thought of Jonathan Edwards. An Essay in Aesthetics and Theological Ethics.
New Haven. Yale University Press. 1968.

Denison. F., (editor.) The Evangelist: or Life and Labors of Rev. Jabez Swan.
Waterford, Conn. William L. Peckham. 1873.

Dewey. Orville, Letters of an English Traveller to His Friend in England on the 'Revival of Religion' in America.
Boston. Bowles and Dearborn. 1828.

Dorsett. Lyle W., Billy Sunday and the Redemption of Urban America.
Grand Rapids. Eerdmans. 1991.

Drummond. Lewis A., Charles G. Finney and the Rise of Modern Evangelism.
London. Hodder and Stoughton. 1983.

Dwight. Timothy, The Nature and Danger of Infidel Philosophy. in two discourses. Dr. Dwight's sermons to the candidates for the Baccalaureate in Yale College, Sept. 9, 1797.
New Haven. Printed by G. Bunce. 1798.

Dwight. Timothy, Theology Explained and Defended in a Series of Sermons.
Glasgow. Blackie and Sons. 1837.

Eaton. S. J. M., History of the Presbytery of Erie.
New York. Hurd and Houghton. 1868.

Edman. V. Raymond, Finney Lives On. The Man, His Revival Methods, and His Message. New York. Revell. 1951.

Edwards. Jonathan, A Narrative of Surprising Conversions. (Northampton, 1736.)
An Account of the Revival of Religion in Northampton 1740 - 1742.
The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God.
The Religious Affections.
Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God.
An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer, for the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth, Pursuant to Scripture-promises and Prophecies Concerning the Last Times.
Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in New England.
(These titles by Edwards are mostly available separately, but can all be found in collected works. For example:- Edwards. Works. Edinburgh. Banner of Truth Trust. 1974. (Two volume edition.). Also Works. Four volumes. Reprint of Worcester edition. Leavitt, Trow and Co. 1844.
Two supplementary volumes. Edinburgh. Robert Ogle, Oliver and Boyd. 1846

Eighmy. J. L., Churches in Cultural Captivity.
Knoxville. University of Tennessee Press. Revised 1987. (1972.)

Elwell. Walter A., (editor.) Evangelical Dictionary of Theology.
Grand Rapids, Michigan. Baker Book House. 1984.

Evans. Robert, Collecting for Revival: Library Resources Relating to the Subject of Revival. in Hutchinson, Campion and Piggin. (eds.) Reviving Australia. Studies in Australian Christianity. Vol.3. Sydney. Centre for the Study of Australian Christianity. 1994.

Ferm. Robert L., (editor.) Issues in American Protestantism.
A Documentary History from the Puritans to the Present.
New York. Anchor Books. 1969.

Ferm. Robert L., Jonathan Edwards the Younger.
Grand Rapids, Mich. W. B. Eerdmans. 1976.

Finke R., and R. Stark. The Churching of America. 1776 - 1990.
New Brunswick. Rutgers University Press. 1992

Finney. Charles G., Finney's Lectures on Theology.
(Reprint of "Skeleton of a Course of Theological Lectures.")
Minneapolis. Bethany Fellowship. 1968.

Finney. Charles G., Lectures on Revivals.
Many editions are available. The standard Revell edition has been used in this book. The edition produced by W. G. McLoughlin differs at certain points.

Finney. Charles G., Lectures on Systematic Theology.
Edited by J. H. Fairchild. Reprint of 1878 revised edition.
Grand Rapids, Michigan. William B. Eerdmans. 1951.

Finney. Charles G., Lectures to Professing Christians.
Manchester. Thomas Jackson. 1847.

Finney. Charles G., Memoirs. The Complete Restored Text.
Annotated Critical Edition. Editors: Garth M. Rosell and Richard A. G. Dupuis. Grand Rapids, Michigan. Academie Books (Zondervan). 1989.

Finney. Charles G., Power From on High.
A Selection of Articles on the Spirit-filled Life.
London. Victory Press. 1944.

Finney. Charles G., The Prevailing Prayer Meeting.
Sermon preached September 4, 1859, on the occasion of the reopening of Blackfriars Street Congregational Chapel, Glasgow, Scotland. The text of the sermon has been reintroduced to the public, and circulated by Richard A. G. Dupuis, and edited for modern readers by Jonathan Duttweiler.

Finney. Charles G., Reflections on Revival. Full text edition of "Letters on Revival." Minneapolis. Bethany Fellowship. No Date.

Finney. Charles G., Sermons on Gospel Themes.
New York. Fleming H. Revell. (Copyright date 1876.)

Fish. Henry Clay, Handbook of Revivals.
Harrisonburg. Gano Books. 1988. (1874.)

Fletcher. Robert S., A History of Oberlin College -
from its Foundation through the Civil War. Two volumes.
Oberlin, Ohio. Oberlin College. 1943.

Foster. Frank H., A Genetic History of the New England Theology.
New York. Russell and Russell. 1963. (1st edition, 1907.)

Fowler. Philemon H., Historical Sketch of Presbyterianism within the Bounds of the Synod of Central New York.
Utica, New York. Curtiss and Childs. 1877.

Gale. George W., Autobiography (to 1834) of George Washington Gale (1789 - 1861) Founder of Galesburg, Illinois, and of Knox College.
New York. Published Privately. 1964.

Gardiner. H. Norman, (editor.) Jonathan Edwards: A Retrospect.
New York. Houghton Mifflin and Co. 1901.

Gaustad. Edwin S., The Great Awakening in New England.
Gloucester, Mass. Peter Smith. 1965. (1st edition, 1957.)

Gerstner. John H., Jonathan Edwards: a Mini - Theology.

Wheaton. Tyndale House Publishers. 1987.

Gillett. E. H., History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Revised Edition.
Philadelphia. Presbyterian Board of Publications. 1873.

Gillies. John, Historical Collections of Accounts of Revival.
(1st edition 1754. Revised and enlarged in 1845, and edited by Horatius Bonar.) London. Banner of Truth Trust. 1981.

Goen. Clarence C., Revivalism and Separatism in New England. 1740 – 1800. Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening. New Haven. Yale University Press. 1962.

Gorrie. P. Douglass, The Black River Conference Memorial: containing sketches of the life and character of the deceased members of the Black River conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.
New York. Carlton and Phillips. 1852.

Gorrie. P. Douglass, Black River and Northern New York Conference Memorial. Second Series. Watertown. C. E. Holbrook, Printer. 1881.

Goss. Charles C., Statistical History of the First Century of American Methodism. New York. Carlton and Porter. 1866.

Graham. Henry, History of the Troy Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Albany. Published for the Author. 1908.

Griffin. Edward D., A Letter to a Friend on the Connexion Between the New Doctrines and the New Measures.
Albany, New York. Hosford and Wait. 1833.

Griffin. Edward D., A Letter to the Rev. Ansel D. Eddy, of Canandaigua, N.Y., on the Narrative of the Late Revivals of Religion in the Presbytery of Geneva. Williamstown. Printed by Ridley Bannister. 1832.

Hackett. David G., The Rude Hand of Innovation.
Religion and Social Order in Albany, New York. 1652 - 1836.
New York. Oxford University Press. 1991.

Hambrick-Stowe. Charles E., Charles G. Finney and the Spirit of American Evangelicalism. Library of Religious Biography.

Grand Rapids, Michigan. W. B. Eerdmans. 1996.

Hardesty. Nancy A., Your Daughters Shall Prophesy.
Revivalism and Feminism in the Age of Finney.
(Chicago Studies in the History of American Religion.)
Brooklyn. Carlson Publ. Inc. 1991.

Hardman. Keith J., Charles Grandison Finney 1792 - 1875. Revivalist and Reformer. Syracuse. Syracuse University Press. 1987.

Hardman. Keith J., (editor.) Issues in American Christianity.
Primary Sources with Introductions.
Grand Rapids. Baker Book House. 1993.

Hardman. Keith J., Seasons of Refreshing. Evangelism and Revivals in America. Grand Rapids. Baker Book House. 1994.

Hewitt. Glenn A., Regeneration and Morality.
A Study of Charles Finney, Charles Hodge, John W. Nevin and Horace Bushnell. Brooklyn. Carlson Publ. Co. 1991.

Hibbard. F. G., History of the Late East Genesee Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. New York. Phillips and Hunt. 1887.

Hillman. Joseph, The History of Methodism in Troy, N.Y.
Troy. N.Y. Published by the Author. 1888.

Hopkins. C. Howard, History of the Y. M. C. A. in North America.
New York. Association Press. 1951.

Hotchkin. James H., History of the Purchase and Settlement of Western New York, and of the Rise, Progress and Present State of the Presbyterian Church in that Section. New York. M. W. Dodd. 1848.

Humphrey. Heman, Revival Sketches and Manual.
New York American Tract Society. 1859.

Hutchison. William R., The Modernist Impulse in American Protestantism.
New York. Oxford University Press. 1982. (1976.)

Johnson. Charles A., The Frontier Camp Meeting: Religion's Harvest Time.
Dallas. Southern Methodist University Press. 1955.

Johnson. Curtis D., Islands of Holiness. Rural Religion in Upstate New York. 1790 – 1860. Ithaca. Cornell University Press. 1989.

Johnson. Paul E., A Shopkeeper's Millenium. Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815 to 1837. New York. Hill and Wang. 1983. (1st ed. 1976.) (Also, Ph.D thesis by this name. U.C.L.A. 1975.) University Microfilms. 1975.

Jones. Brynmor P., An Instrument of Revival. The Complete Life of Evan Roberts. South Plainfield. Bridge Publishing Co. 1995.

Jones. Brynmor P., The Trials and Triumphs of Mrs Jessie Penn-Lewis.
New Brunswick. Bridge Logos. 1997.

Jones. Joseph H., (editor.) The Life of Ashbel Green. (written by himself.) New York. Robert Carter and Bros. 1849.

Jones. J. William, Christ in the Camp.
Richmond. B. F. Johnson. 1887. (1986 reprint also.)

Jones. Pomroy, Annals and Recollections of Oneida County.
Rome. New York. Published by the Author. 1851.

Kane. H. Victor, The River that Flowed Upstream.
The Story of American Baptists in New York State. (175th Anniversary.)
Rome. American Baptist Churches of New York State. 1982.

Keller. Charles R., The Second Great Awakening in Connecticut.
Archon Books. 1968. (Unaltered reprint of the Yale University Press edition of 1942.)

Kennedy. William Sloane, The Plan of Union.
or a History of the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches of the Western Reserve. Hudson, Ohio. Pentagon. 1856.

Kimball. Frederick H., Years of Faith.
A History of the First Presbyterian Church of Watertown, N.Y. 1803 - 1953.
Watertown. Published by the Author. 1953.

Kirk. Edward N., Lectures on Revivals.
Boston. Congregational Publishing Society. 1875.

Kling. David W., A Field of Divine Wonders.
The New Divinity and Village Revivals in Northwestern Connecticut. 1792 – 1822. University Park. Penn. State Press. 1993.

Knapp. Elder Jacob, Autobiography of Elder Jacob Knapp.
New York. Sheldon and Co. 1868.

Lang. G. H., The History and Diaries of an Indian Christian. (J. C. Aroolappen.) London. Thynne and Co. 1939.

Lippy. Charles, Seasonable Revolutionary. The Mind of Charles Chauncy.
Chicago. Nelson Hall. 1981.

Loud. Grover C., Evangelised America.
New York. Lincoln Mac Veagh. 1928.

M'Clure. David, and Elijah Parish. (editors.)
Memoirs of the Rev. Eleazar Wheelock. D.D.
New York. Arno Press. 1972. (Reprint of 1811 edition.)

McElroy. James L., Social Reform in the Burned-Over District: Rochester, New York as a Test Case, 1830 - 1845.
Ph.D Thesis. State University of New York at Binghamton.
Ann Arbor, Mich. University Microfilms. 1974.

McGiffert. Jr. Arthur C., Jonathan Edwards.
New York. Harper and Brothers. 1932.

McKiernan. F. Mark, The Voice of One Crying in the Wilderness:
Sidney Rigdon, Religious Reformer. 1793 - 1876.
Lawrence, Kansas. Coronado Press. 1973.

McLoughlin. William G., Billy Sunday Was His Real Name.
Chicago. University of Chicago Press. 1955.

McLoughlin. William. G., Modern Revivalism.
New York. Ronald Press. 1959.

Marsden. George M., The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience. A Case Study of Thought and Theology in Nineteenth Century America. New Haven. Yale University Press. 1970.

Marsden. George M., Fundamentalism and American Culture.
New York. Oxford University Press. 1982.

Marsden. George M., The Soul of the American University.
New York. Oxford University Press. 1994.

Marsden. George M., Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism.
Grand Rapids. Eerdmans. 1991.

Mead. Sidney E., The Lively Experiment.
New York. Harper and Row. 1963.

Mead. Sidney E., Nathaniel William Taylor, 1786 - 1858. A Connecticut Liberal. Archon Books. 1967. (1st edition 1942.)

Mears. David O., Life of Edward Norris Kirk. D. D.
Boston. Lockwood, Brooks and Co. 1878.

Miller. Basil, Charles G. Finney. He Prayed Down Revivals.
Grand Rapids. Zondervan. 1942.

Miller. James A., History of the Presbytery of Steuben.
Angelica. Published by the Presbytery. 1897.

Miller. Perry, Jonathan Edwards.
New York. Delta Publishing Co. 1967. (1st edition. 1949.)

Miller. Samuel, Jonathan Edwards.
Volume 1. of "American Biography" Series. ed. Jared Sparks.
New York. Harper and Brothers. 1902.

Mills. B. Fay, Power From On High.
New York. Revell. 1890.

Mitchell. Mary H., The Great Awakening and Other Revivals in the Religious Life of Connecticut. Published for the Tercentenary Commission by the Yale University Press. 1934.

Moore. Martin, Boston Revival - 1842.
Wheaton. Richard Owen Roberts. 1980. (1842.)

Muller. George, A Narrative of the Lord's Dealings with George Muller. (written by himself.) London. James Nisbet. various dates.

Murray. Harold, Sixty Years an Evangelist. (Gipsy Smith.)
London. Marshall, Morgan and Scott. No Date.

Murray. Iain H., Jonathan Edwards. A New Biography.
London. Banner of Truth Trust. 1987.

Murray. Iain H., Pentecost Today?
The Biblical basis for Understanding Revival.
Edinburgh. The Banner of Truth Trust. 1998.

Murray. Iain H., Revival and Revivalism.
The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism. 1750 - 1858.
Edinburgh. Banner of Truth Trust. 1990.

Nee. Watchman, The Latent Power of the Soul.
Various publishers and dates.

Nee. Watchman, The Spiritual Man. (usually in three volumes.)
New York. Christian Fellowship Publishers Inc. 1968

Nettleton. Asahel, Letters of the Rev. Dr. Beecher and Rev. Mr. Nettleton on the "New Measures" in Conducting Revivals of Religion.
New York. G. and C. Cargill. 1828.

Nevin. John W., The Anxious Bench. A Tract for the Times.
Reading, Pa. Daniel Miller. 1892. Third edition.

Niebuhr. H. Richard, The Kingdom of God in America.
New York. Harper Torchbooks. 1959. (1st edition. 1937.)

Niebuhr. H. Richard, The Social Sources of Denominationalism.
Meridian Books. World Publishing Co. 1957. (1929.)

Nissenbaum. Stephen, (editor.) The Great Awakening at Yale College.
Belmont. Wadsworth Publishing Co. 1972.

Noble. W. F. P., A Century of Gospel Work.
A History of the Growth of Evangelical Religion in the United States.
Philadelphia. H. C. Watts. 1876.

Oneida Association. Pastoral Letter of the Ministers of the Oneida Association to the Churches under their Care on the Subject of Revivals of Religion. Utica, New York. Published by the Association. 1827.

Orr. J. Edwin, Always Abounding.
London. Marshall, Morgan and Scott. 1948. 2nd edition. (1940.)

Orr. J. Edwin, Campus Aflame. A History of Evangelical Awakenings in Collegiate Communities. First edition. Ventura. Regal Books. 1971.
Second edition. Wheaton. International Awakenings Press. 1994.

Orr. J. Edwin, The Church Must First Repent.
London. Marshall, Morgan and Scott. No Date. (1937?)

Orr. J. Edwin, The Eager Feet. Evangelical Awakenings: 1790 - 1830.
Chicago. Moody Press. 1975.

Orr. J. Edwin, The Event of the Century.
Wheaton. International Awakening Press. 1989.

Orr. J. Edwin, The Fervent Prayer.
Chicago. Moody Press. 1974.

Orr. J. Edwin, The Flaming Tongue.
Chicago. Moody Press. 1973. (2nd ed. 1975.)

Orr. J. Edwin, The Re-Study of Revival and Revivalism.
Pasadena. Fuller School of World Mission. 1981.

Park. Edwards A., (editor.) The Atonement: Discourses and Treatises by Edwards (the Younger), Smalley, Maxcy, Emmons, Griffin, Burge and Weeks. With an Introductory essay by Edwards A. Park.
Boston. Congregational Board of Publication. 1859.

Park. Edwards A., Memoir of Nathanael Emmons with Sketches of his Friends and Pupils.
Boston. Congregational Board of Publication. 1861. (Part of a six-volume set of Emmons' Works.)

Parker. Orson, The Fire and the Hammer;
or, Revivals, and How to Promote Them.

Boston. James H. Earle. 1877.

Parks. Stephen, Troy Conference Miscellany.
New York. Carlton and Phillips. 1854.

Parsons. Levi, History of Rochester Presbytery.
from the Earliest Settlement of the Country, etc.
Rochester. Published by the Presbytery. 1889.

Peck. George, Early Methodism within the Bounds of the Old Genesee Conference, from 1788 to 1828. New York. Carlton and Porter. 1860.

Peck. John and John Lawton. An Historical Sketch of the Baptist Missionary Convention of the State of New York, embracing a Narrative of the Origin and Progress of the Baptist Denomination in Central and Western New York, etc.
Utica. Baptist Missionary Convention of the State of New York. 1837.

Penn-Lewis. Jessie, Soul and Spirit.
Dorset. Overcomer Literature Trust. No Date.

Penn-Lewis. Jessie, and Evan Roberts. War on the Saints. Full text.
New York. Thomas E. Lowe. 1973. Ninth edition.
(An expurgated edition is more readily available, published by the Overcomer Literature Trust. This should be used with care, and avoided if possible.)

Pettit. Norman, The Heart Prepared. Grace and Conversion in Puritan Spiritual Life. New Haven. Yale University Press. 1966.

Pierson. Arthur T., George Muller of Bristol.
London. Pickering and Inglis. (many printings.)

Pierson. Arthur T., The New Acts of the Apostles.
London. James Nisbet. 1901.

The Pocket Oxford Dictionary.
edited by H. G. Le Mesurier and E. McIntosh. Fourth Edition.
Oxford. The Clarendon Press. Corrected. 1947.

Pope. Robert G., The Half-Way Covenant. Church Membership in Puritan New England. Princeton, N.J. Princeton University Press. 1969.

Porter. Ebenezer, Letters on the Religious Revival which Prevailed about the

Beginning of the Present Century. Boston. Congregational Board of Evangelism. 1858.

Presbytery of Oneida., A Narrative of the Revival of Religion in the County of Oneida, particularly in the Bounds of the Presbytery of Oneida, in the Year 1826.
Utica, New York. Published by the Presbytery. 1826.

Prime. Samuel I., The Power of Prayer.
Edinburgh. Banner of Truth Trust. 1991. (1859.)

Prince. Thomas, Jr., The Christian History. Containing Accounts of the Revival and Propagation of Religion in Great Britain and America in 1743 (Volume One.) Ditto for 1744. (Volume Two.)
Boston. Printed by Kneeland and Green for Thomas Prince Jr. 1744 (Vol.1.) 1745 (Vol.2.)

Quinn. D. Michael, Early Mormonism and the Magic World View.
Salt Lake City. Signature Books. Revised and Enlarged. 1998.

Reed. Andrew, and James Matheson. A Narrative of the Visit to the American Churches by the Deputation from the Congregational Union of England and Wales. Two volumes.
New York. Harper and Brothers. 1835.

Robbins. Thomas. Diary of Thomas Robbins. D.D. 1796 - 1854.
Edited and Annotated by Increase N. Tarbox. Two volumes.
Boston. Beacon Press. 1886.

Roberts. Richard Owen, An Annotated Bibliography of Revival Literature.
Wheaton. Richard Owen Roberts, Publishers. 1987.

Roberts. Richard Owen, Whitefield in Print.
A Bibliography of George Whitefield, and of everyone who was with, for or against him. Wheaton. Richard Owen Roberts. 1988. (An enormous literature exists on both George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards.)

Robinson. Charles M., First Church Chronicles. 1815 - 1915.
Centennial History of the First Presbyterian Church, Rochester, New York.
Rochester. The Craftsman Press, for the Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church.. 1915.

Rosell. Garth M., Charles G. Finney: His Place in the Stream of American Evangelicalism. Chapter 4 in Sweet. Leonard I., (editor.) The Evangelical Tradition in America. Macon, Ga. Mercer University Press. 1997. (1st edition, 1984.)

Rowe. David L., Thunder and Trumpets.
Millerites and Dissenting Religion in Upstate NewYork. 1800 - 1850.
Chico, Cal. Scholars Press. 1985.

Ryan. Mary P., Cradle of the Middle Class.
The family in Oneida County, New York, 1790 - 1865.
New York. Cambridge University Press. 1981.

Schipps. Jan, Mormonism. The Story of a New Religious Tradition.
Urbana. University of Illinois Press. 1985.

Schmidt. Leigh Eric, Holy Fairs. Scottish Communions and American Revivals in the Early Modern Period. Princeton, N. J. Princeton University Press. 1989.

Schwartz. C. D., and O. D., A Flame of Fire. The Story of Troy Annual Conference. Rutland. Academy Books. United Methodist Church.
Troy Annual Conference, Commission on Archives and History. 1982.

Simonson. Harold, Jonathan Edwards: Theologian of the Heart.
Grand Rapids, Mich. W. B. Eerdmans. 1974.

Smith. Gary Scott, The Seeds of Secularisation.
Saint Paul. Christian College Consortium. 1985.

Smith. Oswald J., The Battle for Truth.
London. Marshall, Morgan and Scott. No date..

Smith. Reuben S., Recollections of Nettleton and the Great Revival of 1820.
Albany, N. Y. E. H. Pease. 1848.

Spain. Rufus B., At Ease in Zion. A Social History of Southern Baptists. 1865 – 1900. Nashville. Vanderbilt University Press. 1967.

Speer. William, The Great Revival of 1800.
Philadelphia. Presbyterian Board of Publication. 1872.

The Spirit of the Pilgrims. Volume 2, for the year 1829. Boston. Pierce and Williams. 1829. Volume 4, for the year 1831. Boston. Pierce and Williams. 1831.

Sprague. William B., Annals of the American Pulpit; or Commemmorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations. Vols.3 and 4.. Presbyterian. New York. Robert Carter and Brothers. 1858. Volume 7. Methodist. Arno Press and the New York Times. 1969. (Reprint of 1865 edition.)

Sprague. William B., Lectures on Revivals.
London. Banner of Truth Trust. 1957. (1832.)

Sprague. William B., Religious Ultraism: a sermon.
Albany, New York. Published by the Author. 1835.

Stanton. Henry B., Random Recollections.
New York. Harper and Brothers. 1887.

Stauffer. Henry, (ed.) The Great Awakening in Columbus, Ohio, under the Labors of the Rev. B. Fay Mills and his associates.
Columbus. Rev. W. L. Lennon. 1895.

Stevens Abel, A Compendious History of American Methodism.
New York. Eaton and Mains. No Date.

Sweet. William Warren, Revivalism in America.
Gloucester, Mass. Peter Smith. 1965. (1st edition, 1944.)

Taylor. John. Journal of the Rev. John Taylor's Missionary Tour through the Mohawk and Black River Countries in 1802. from Documentary History of the State of New York. Vol. 3. Pages 1105 - 1150.

Thomas. George M., Revivalism and Cultural Change.
Chicago. University of Chicago Press. 1989.

Tracy. Joseph, The Great Awakening.
New York. Arno Press and the New York Times. 1969. (1845.)

Trustees of the American Baptist Missionary Society of Massachusetts. The American Baptist Magazine and Missionary Intelligencer. New Series. Vol 4.

(1823 and 1824.)
Boston. James Loring, and Lincoln and Edmands. 1823.

Turner. Orsamus. History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase, and Morris's Reserve.
Geneseo, New York. James Brunner. 1976. (Reprint of 1851 edition.)

Tuveson. E. L., Millenium and Utopia.
New York. Harper Torchbooks. 1964. (1949.)

Tuveson. E. L., Redeemer Nation.
Chicago. University of Chicago Press. 1968.

Tyler. Bennet, The Life and Labours of Asahel Nettleton.
Remodelled in Parts by Andrew Bonar.
(First published, 1854.) London. Banner of Truth Trust. 1975.

Tyler. Bennet. Memoir of the Life and Character of Rev. Asahel Nettleton. D. D. Boston. Congregational Board of Publication. 1856.
(5th edition, being a reprint of the second edition, corrected, 1845.)

Tyler. Bennet, New England Revivals.
Wheaton. Richard Owen Roberts Publishers. 1980. (1846.)

Tyler. Bennet. (editor.) Remains of the Late Rev. Asahel Nettleton. D. D.
Sermons, outlines, plans for sermons, etc.
Edinburgh. Ogle, Murray, and Oliver and Boyd. 1868.

Van Santvoord. Cornelius, and Tayler Lewis. Memoirs of Eliphalet Nott. D. D. For Sixty-two Years President of Union College.
New York. Sheldon and Co. 1876.

Walker. Williston, A History of the Congregational Churches in the United States. The American Church History Series, Volume 3.
New York. The Christian Literature Company. 1894.

Wallace Irving, The Twenty-Seventh Wife. The story of Ann Eliza, last wife of the Mormon Prophet, Brigham Young, who led the fight against the American harem.
London. Arthur Barker. 1961.

Walzer. William, Charles G. Finney and the Presbyterian Revivals of Central

and Western New York. Unpublished PhD thesis.
University of Chicago Library. 1944.

Ward. F. DeW., Churches of Rochester. Ecclesiastical History of Rochester, New York. Narrative of the Rise, Progress and Present Condition of Each Religious Organisation; Biographical Sketches of Pastors, and of Clergymen Born in the City with Miscellanies Items, from August, 1815 to July, 1871. Rochester. Erastus Darrow. 1871.

Weddle. David, The Law as Gospel.
Revival and Reform in the Theology of Charles G. Finney.
New Jersey. Scarecrow Press. 1985.

Weeks. William R., A Catechism of Scripture Doctrine.
Albany. E. and E. Hosford. 2nd edition. 1818.

Weeks. William R., A Catechism of Scripture Doctrine.
Hartford. Samuel G. Goodrich. 1822. 3rd edition.

Weeks. William R., Nine Sermons on the Decrees and Agency of God.
Newark, N.J. Ecclesiastical Board of Trustees for the Propagation of the Gospel. 1839. 3rd edition. (1st edition, 1813.)

Weeks. William R., Pilgrim's Progress in the Nineteenth Century.
New York. M. W, Dodd. 1849.

Weeks. William R., Withholding a Suitable Support from the Ministers of Religion is Robbing God: a Sermon. Albany, New York. Published by the Author. 1814.

Weisberger. Bernard A., They Gathered at the River.
Boston. Little, Brown and Co. 1958.

Wentz. Richard E., John Williamson Nevin. American Theologian.
New York. Oxford University Press. 1997.

Westerkamp. Marilyn J., Triumph of the Laity.
Scotch-Irish Piety and the Great Awakening. 1625 - 1760.
New York. Oxford University Press. 1988.

Whitefield. George, George Whitefield's Journals. A new edition containing fuller material than any hitherto published. London. Banner of Truth Trust.

1960.

Whitefield. George, Letters. 1734 to 1742
Facsimile of Vol. 1, with supplements.
London. Banner of Truth Trust. 1976.

Williams. Solomon, and Eleazar Wheelock. Two Letters from the Reverend Mr. Williams and Wheelock of Lebanon to the Rev. Mr. Davenport, Which were The principal Means of his late *Conviction* and *Retraction*, with a Letter from Mr. Davenport, desiring their Publication for the Good of others, and His Explanation of some usages in his late *Confession*. Boston. Kneeland and Green. 1744.

Wisner. William, Incidents in the Life of a Pastor.
New York. Charles Scribner. 1851.

Wood. James, Old and New Theology, or the Doctrinal Differences which have Agitated and Divided the Presbyterian Church.
Philadelphia. Presbyterian Board of Publication. 1855. New edition.

Woods. H., The History of the Presbyterian Controversy, with early Sketches of Presbyterianism. Louisville. Printed for the Author. 1843.

Woodward. William W., Surprising Accounts of the Revival of Religion in the U. S. A., and in Different Parts of the World, and Among Different Denominations of Christians, with a Number of Interesting Occurrences of Divine Providence.
Philadelphia. Printed and published by the Author. 1802.

Wright. Conrad, The Beginnings of Unitarianism in America. 1735 – 1805.
The Revolt Against Calvinism in 18th Century New England.
Boston. Starr King Press. 1955.

Wright. George F., Charles Grandison Finney.
(American Religious Leaders Series.)
Boston. Houghton, Mifflin and Co. 1891.

Yale. Cyrus, The Godly Pastor.
The Life of the Rev. Jeremiah Hallock, and a Sketch of the Life of the Rev. Moses Hallock.
Boston. American Tract Society. 1854.