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thesis entitled

FROM BACKWOODS PREACHER TO CELEBRATED REVIVALIST:
CHARLES GRANDISON FINNEY AND THE PURSUIT OF FAME

presented by

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has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

M. A. degree in HISTORY

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Major professor

Date May 13, 1991

FROM BACKWOODS PREACHER TO CELEBRATED REVIVALIST: CHARLES GRANDISON FINNEY AND THE PURSUIT OF FAME

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A THESIS

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of History

1991

ABSTRACT

FROM BACKWOODS PREACHER TO CELEBRATED REVIVALIST: CHARLES GRANDISON FINNEY AND THE PURSUIT OF FAME

By

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This thesis will examine the changing nature of the ministerial office in New England and the western frontier region of New York during the first half of the nineteenth century with a primary focus on the early evangelistic career of Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875). The evangelical emphasis upon the personal qualities of the minister as a regenerated Christian and the determination of his value which stressed his success in soul-winning efforts, granted opportunities to openly strive for prominent pulpits that would permit him, ostensibly at least, not only great chances to do good but also a visible position from where the whole nation might observe his grand accomplishments. It is the purpose of this thesis to examine how Finney epitomized this new type of clergyman--a man of opportunity seeking the pulpit of high visibility from where he could display his soul- saving talents.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to extend my sincerest thanks to Professor David Bailey. His apt and insightful comments proved extremely helpful. Most inspiring were the hours we spent discussing this project.

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Introduction:
The Changing Contours of the New England Ministry

Any analysis attempting to discover the reasons why Charles Finney's career sky-rocketed in the late 1820s, must examine the man, his message, and his methods. But, first, it will be most useful to begin looking at the historical context. Within this context, demographic and economic changes linked with a concurrent restructuring of the ministerial office to create a favorable atmosphere for Finney to thrive.

The New England ministry experienced a transformation during the nineteenth century which has been elucidated by Daniel Calhoun, Sidney Mead, and Donald Scott.[1] Each analysis details the transmutations of the nature and range of clerical authority. This transformation of the ministry created new opportunities for ministerial advancement on a national, rather than a solely local, scale. These opportunities, in turn, generated competition among ministers which allowed for more open and conscious striving for those pulpits and positions in national societies with

the greatest prestige and most visibility. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, there seems to have been a widespread concern throughout the ministerial "profession" of increasing pride and ambition. The evidence for these concerns becomes apparent when one examines ordination sermons which serve as good indicators of what problems worried the ministry.[2]

The Reverend Titus Strong delivered an ordination sermon in 1819 warning of devious ministers who "have used their offices as an engine of power, and a cloak for corruption." These same ministers, Strong continues, have sought worldly accouterments--"the splendor of wealth, the celebrity of fame, and the influence of power," and they have exhibited "the same devotedness to worldly vanities, [as] those who have made no profession of godliness."[3] In another ordination sermon from 1810 the Reverend Ambrose Hough felt compelled to express the following poetic caveat, about the temptations of greed and pride in light of the minister's role of disinterested service to God and humankind, to David Haskel:

> Oh, popular applause! what heart of man
> Is proof against thy sweet seducing charms?
> The wisest and the best feel urgent need
> Of all their caution in thy gentle'st gales -
> Praise from the rivel'd lyrs of toothless, bald
> Decrepitudes; and in the looks of lean
> And craving poverty, and in the bow
> Respectful of the smutch'd artificer;
> Is oft too welcome, and may much disturb
> The bias of the purpose.[4]

These installation sermons which evince a concern

about the ambitious motives of many of the ministry's new members during the early nineteenth century was a recent development. Throughout the eighteenth century, the ideas that "a ministerial career was something a young man consciously forged or that eminence was something for which he strove were largely unknown, and if admitted, totally unacceptable."[5]

The clergyman of eighteenth-century New England was an integral part of the ruling elite of the town. He stood within the upper echelon of an organic and hierarchically structured community. The minister's stature and authority "derived from his occupancy of office and from social standing, from his possession of the social stature that town leaders possessed whether they had earned or were born to it. The deference and obedience due nature and divine ordinance to all legitimately conferred authority was especially due to the pastor."[6]

The minister exercised a broad scope of power (with the implied consent of the congregation) by administering public rituals--funeral sermons, fasts, jeremiads, etc. . .--and enforcing the community's moral values by admonishing unacceptable behavior and serving as an arbiter of personal disputes. This ubiquitous influence within the daily life of the townspeople "gave such significance to permanence and such social importance to the office, for, symbolically, if not always actually, the presence of a good minister,

permanently installed and bound to a town and church, transformed a mere settlement into a genuine, organic community."[7]

Scott notes that in the early nineteenth century, the number of ministers and the method of recruitment changed. The number of people entering the ministerial profession had risen dramatically and out of proportion with the general population by 1840. In contrast, recruitment in the eighteenth century conducted by the local church and city fathers moved at a careful, deliberate pace in search of men of the highest piety, talent, and intellect. Increasingly, however, the dramatic revivals of the first decades of the nineteenth century garnered the lion's share of new ministers and converts. The western revivals and camp meetings in Kentucky and Tennessee greatly increased the membership of the Baptists and Methodists. Meanwhile, the dominant churches of the colonial period--Congregational, Presbyterian, and Episcopal--experienced a slower rate of growth in the west and Old Northwest. The problem of frontier expansion, especially for the Presbyterians, was their commitment to education and instruction within its dogmatic tradition. The doctrinal structure built around the Westminster Confession proved difficult to simplify for frontier preaching. Furthermore, the older eastern Presbyterian churches, appalled by the reported excesses of the western revivals viz., dancing jerking, and barking

etc. . ., disciplined its western members for any involvement in these revival aberrations. Soon, however, the Presbyterians experienced conflict and schism which also limited their effectiveness on the frontier.[8] Those ministers who decided to embrace the challenge of evangelizing the nation realized the consequent need to expand the ministry. The elitist and expensive colleges such as Harvard and Yale would be unable to supply a high demand of clergy. New England church leaders therefore, began actively to recruit promising young men and help provide them with the means necessary to receive a ministerial education. They built schools like Amherst, Williams, Bowdoin, and Hamilton to educate the aspiring ministers.[9] Many of these young men who now considered entering the ministry after their conversion were men of little or no monetary means and also lacked any solid educational background.[10] With the growth of the new provincial colleges and theological seminaries these new aspirants to the ministry could be accommodated. Such new conditions removed the decision making process from the local community, which knew the ministerial candidate well, and placed it in the control of outside recruiters who procured candidates from throughout the entire region.[11]

Scott attributes this shift in ministerial procurement to several factors. Economic hard times forced many young men to look beyond the family farm and local community to

the ministry as a possible livelihood. This conscious desire to enter the ministry for "worldly motives" rather than for "sanctified motives to do God's will," distinguishes an important change in the ministry from a "calling" to a "profession."[12] Also, the revival fervor which swept through the northeastern section of the nation led many to the calling of the ministry. Finally, the ministry itself deliberately sought to expand its numbers by creating new institutions for recruitment such as Andover Theological Society founded in 1808.[13] The catalyst that drove the demand for more ministers higher, was the perceived barbarism and godlessness of the West, which evangelicals such as Lyman Beecher saw as the key to success for America's future: "The West is a young empire of mind, and power, and wealth, and free institutions, rushing up to a giant manhood with a rapidity and a power never witnessed below the sum. And if she carries with her the elements of her preservation, the experiment will be glorious."[14] This popularly held concept of the importance of the West to the nation's future progress, necessitated a determined effort of dedicated New Englanders to civilize the region.[15] The new methods of recruitment and education contrasted with those of the eighteenth century by removing candidates from local influences. The new educational facilities "contained little that fostered the traditional organic and hierarchical social sensibility."[16] Furthermore, the new

schools offered a wide ranging educational opportunity, not to prepare the minister to assume the intellectual leadership of his community, but in order that he stand adequately armed to repel the assaults of the local skeptics and heretics.[17] Consequently, the new ministers of the first half of the nineteenth century remained relatively oblivious to notions of their social status as ministers. And although "their sense of their role and its social importance remained unchanged... their identity as ministers was now informed far more by their sense of belonging to a professional community than by a sense of their place in the status system of the local community."[18]

This new professional consciousness, along with the proliferation of evangelical and benevolent societies transformed the local scope of the clergyman's responsibilities to envelope assorted duties outside the local community. Opportunities ranged from pastorates to missionary posts, education positions, administrators, revivalists, and other capacities which were all viewed as valid components of church ministry.[19] The societies created many new opportunities which diminished the appeal of local pulpits and "introduced ways of ranking pastorates."[20]

In the eighteenth century ministers had sought stable pastorates in which they could (and usually did) remain for life unless formally requested to leave by a council of

churches. This changed, however, as churches and ministers negotiated contracts from one to five years in duration and which stipulated that either side may terminate the agreement before its completion.[21] Pastorates were soon viewed as useful tools in the greater evangelical cause. The best pulpits were those that offered opportunities for writing and activism and which allowed easy access to major cities that were headquarters for the national benevolent societies.[22] The explosive growth of the cities during the first half of the nineteenth century as a major force driving the revival furor must not be overlooked. In the West, by 1820, Cincinnati and New Orleans were important cities. Pittsburgh, Rochester, Buffalo, Louisville, and St. Louis had become flourishing cities by 1830. Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, and Chicago had reached big city status by 1840. Therefore, the revivals of the first half of the nineteenth century sought not only to convert and reinvigorate people in the West but also in the East; both of these goals "were closely interrelated and can be understood only as part of a single surge of new religious life and activity."[23]

The most efficient method of evangelization which could reach the people in these far-flung cities employed itinerant ministers who could quickly cover many miles of territory. One of the most mobile of clergymen, Charles Grandison Finney, traveled from Massachusetts to Ohio to

Pennsylvania. His lack of a permanent pastorate offered him a broader and more cosmopolitan view of Protestantism in the United States. Of course, the precedent for such a highly mobile ministry was established in the late eighteenth century by the Methodist "circuit system" which helped swell the number of Methodists by providing a way to reach the new wave of migrants settling new frontier communities beyond the mountains.[24]

Lacking a contractual obligation to a specific church, Finney could view the whole nation as his congregation.[25] Furthermore, Finney contributed to the emerging translocal ministry by stressing evangelical themes, rather than subjects such as baptism that often led to dissension. Finney advocated the direct reading of the Bible to sustain his theological beliefs; this practice avoided appeals to church dogma and rested upon authority all Protestants recognized. Finally, Finney, throughout his evangelical career, minimized and often ignored denominational lines. His ministry sought cooperation with other Protestants as brothers and sisters in Christ.[26] It is clear, therefore, that "Finney symbolized those forces which were giving ministers a translocal perspective and making them agents of a common culture."[27]

There was more, however, to the lack of ministerial permanency than just the developing professional consciousness of ministers; there also existed an economic

aspect. Conflicts sometimes flared between a minister and the congregation concerning his salary. The back country of New England suffered an economic decline, and communities had increasingly difficulty adequately supporting the local minister. Meanwhile, other regions prospered and the minister saw an opportunity to improve the economic conditions for himself and his family. Therefore, the decline of local economies, in part, spawned an increase in the frequency and intensity of salary disputes and further contributed to the erosion of pastoral permanency.[28]

At this point ambition for fame and prominence intersect with the new clerical structure. A "prestige ladder" had been created which had "undercut the sanctity of ordination bonds and eroded the tradition of pastoral permanence."[29] Dissatisfied with the security and local esteem offered by the community, the new clergymen actively sought the prestige that once had been assumed and "began to envision a career in the modern, technical sense - an occupational course composed of a sequence of steps upward to positions of greater prestige and influence."[30] During the eighteenth century, the belief that fame (i.e. wide acclaim and recognition) was the reserve of people of great achievement had been supplanted by the notion that fame itself was the only worthy goal. The new political and social forces unleashed by the English Industrial Revolution and the American Revolution helped undermined traditional

hierarchical authority and transformed fame into its modern meaning, "as a way of defining oneself, making oneself known, beyond the limitations of class and family. Economic, social, and political revolution had produced so many new ways of naming oneself that what had been an urge in few, in many became a frenzy."[31]

We can see how this battle of piety versus ambition tortured the soul of Lyman Beecher (1775-1863).[32] Beecher was the great promoter and organizer of the wave of revivals which swept through New England during the first decade of the nineteenth century. He attended Yale and studied under its president Timothy Dwight (1752-1817) and Ezra Stiles (1727-1795). Beecher graduated from Yale in 1797 and in 1798, as an unordained minister, he practiced preaching. During this period, Beecher expressed to his fiancee, Roxanna Foote, the growing despair over the state of his soul.[33] He felt motivated by feelings of ambition which strangled the sincerity and enthusiasm of his religious emotions. Distraught and anxious about his continuing doubts, he explained to Roxanna that mankind was created to "give God the glory" and resolved that his ministry would serve that end.[34]

Shortly thereafter, in 1799, Beecher was ordained over the church at East Hampton, Long Island. Beecher expected this appointment to be permanent. But eleven years later as he achieved a fair amount of public recognition through his

published sermons, especially "The Remedy for Duelling" (1806), Beecher entered a vast arena of contacts and activities which led him far beyond his local pastorate.[35] These outside distractions left the East Hampton congregation feeling neglected and friction increased between the minister and his parish. Beecher, assuming the differences would not be reconciled, leaked information that he may soon be available to fulfill any vacant pulpit. Beecher made this announcement while preaching in a vacant pulpit at Litchfield, Connecticut. Many people in East Hampton charged Beecher with ambition. They believed he was searching for a larger and more visible pastorate. Although Beecher was aware that he had outgrown East Hampton, he had done so by accident and not by deliberate effort. After an investigation by the Long Island Presbytery, Beecher was permitted to leave East Hampton and accept the offer extended at Litchfield. Donald Scott aptly states the consequence of this episode not only for Beecher but also for the New England ministry: "In leading Beecher to a pastorate that was better attuned to the more recent contours of his career, his eminence became less something to be passively accepted than the unwitting means to a new kind of ministerial mobility."[36]

As the career of Beecher suggests that ministers were becoming more mobile, there also exists limited evidence drawn from the Presbyterian and Congregational churches of

New Hampshire which shows that by 1830 larger towns consistently preferred younger ministers than their small town counterparts.[37] The larger towns containing proportionately more churches with larger memberships and thus more money could, one assumes, recruit the type of minister it wanted. And they desired young men in their thirties which was often younger than the leading laymen. Calhoun states that this seems to sustain one of the most

> subjective, biased complaints that ministers made during the middle years of the nineteenth century: that churches in looking for new ministers preferred, not the man of maturity and profundity, but the novelty, the fresh personality, and--often the specific complaint--the young man . . . it raises especially the question of whether the democracy of midcentury preferred superficial values and mere novelty as such.[38]

Calhoun's analysis seems consistent with that of the Reverend Leonard Withington who, in the Trumpet and Universalist Magazine of July 1836, described the religious atmosphere as one of "superficial tendencies," where people remain "asleep and retrograde, if they are not riding at the swiftest speed of the whirlwind." This shallow age, Withington continued, fosters a fickle church that sustains itself "on the circumstances of religion, not its essence . . . Like a vessel, now riding on the summit of a mountainous wave, they are diving into the yawning gulf, they are always above the proper level, or below it." Such people have a diseased spiritual life whose "whole moral existence is a fever or a sleep."[39]

Of course, "personality-centered" religion can be traced at least as far back as the Reformation, which elevated the preaching of the Word over the priestly function in Catholicism of administering the sacraments. This emphasis on preaching coupled with the development of voluntaryism among American churches fostered the proper conditions for an increased emphasis "on the personality of the preacher."[40] Beyond this emphasis on the personality or charisma of the individual minister, is a dialectic between the preacher or religious leader and his followers that exists during periods of revivalism when, as William McLoughlin argues, a revitalization of culture is necessary.[41] Revitalization is necessary when the values of a society have lost their relevance within the context of ordinary life. This failure generates much fear and trepidation among people as they find themselves unable to adequately cope with unstable social, political, economic, and demographic forces. When the established authorities and institutions fail to provide relief for the pressures of everyday existence, inevitably new voices arise and proclaim new solutions or reinterpretations of older answers. These prophets of hope validate their authority to overrule existing leaders by claiming divine favor. The claim itself, however, is not sufficient to gain a large following. The claims must be confirmed by positive changes in the prophets life and in the success his message achieves

among his followers. The dialectical process, therefore, is a method by which the followers select a leader based on the effectiveness of his message which relieves their anxieties. Therefore, "in America, revivalism is the process by which the people sort out from among their prophets those whom they consider legitimate voices of supernatural authority and power."[42]

Although Americans may have been "favorably disposed toward new prophets,"[43] there remained among a small portion of the populace a fear of novelty and superficiality that characterized the new leaders and which betrayed the trust of the people by placing private desires for power or notoriety above the needs of their devoted followers. The fear of novelty and superficiality, however, extended beyond the realm of religion to include social, political, and economic factors. A change in the understanding of the concept of fame supports the idea that Americans increasingly overlooked an individual's achievement in favor of novelty. Before the Industrial Revolution fame was attained through great achievements. This changed, however, with the advent of enormous population growth, increased literacy, wider political participation, less expensive methods of printing and engraving, and the overthrow of monarchism in the American and French revolutions. In these circumstances the opportunities for self-promotion abounded and fame itself, rather than achievement, became the

principle end.[44]

Daniel Boorstin describes, in his book The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America, a similar alteration of fame. He frames his discussion by distinguishing between the hero and the celebrity.[45] The hero rises to acclaim upon some great achievement. His reputation grows with the passage of time and with each succeeding generation he is reinterpreted as new virtues and adventures are ascribed to him. Furthermore, because heroes of the traditional mold lack a precisely defined face or image this vagueness enhances their heroic stature.[46] As the hero is idealized and immortalized he loses his real identity and many of his flaws.

Conversely, the celebrity is a creation of publicity in magazines, newspapers, movies, and television. This notoriety is fleeting and quite often the celebrity is reduced to oblivion with the passage of time.[47] The celebrity's descent into anonymity contains no tragedy as he returns to his proper place. The celebrity is returned by the advance of time to the more banal existence of his origin, unlike the tragic hero who falls from the heights of greatness because of a tragic flaw. While heroes were enhanced by an absence of an accurate and well defined image, celebrities, on the other hand, became vividly recognizable figures, too individualized to become idealizations.[48] Celebrities are often identified by

personality traits and idiosyncrasies, and thus another term for celebrity is "personality." At the most fundamental level, heroes make themselves while celebrities are created by the public which "can at will . . . make a man or woman well known; but we [i.e. the public] cannot make him great. We can make a celebrity, but we can never make a hero . . . all heroes are self-made."[49]

Boorstin, echoing Braudy, links the celebrity concept of fame to changing social and political elements. Both authors cite the overthrow of monarchism and the establishment of democracy as major factors. The rhetoric of equality and the rising stature of the common people entailed a distrust of heroic greatness.[50] While democracy tended to denigrate the traditional heroic mold, it simultaneously uplifted the more mundane existence of everyday life.

In partial agreement with Braudy, Boorstin points out that the celebrity "is usually nothing greater than a more publicized version of us."[51] Boorstin continues by adding that our most cherished heroes like Washington, Franklin, and Lincoln are admired because in them we see a part of ourselves. They "are revered not because they possess charisma, divine favor, a grace or talent granted them by God, but because they embody popular virtues. We admire them, not because they reveal God, but because they reveal and elevate ourselves."[52] These same sentiments are echoed

by Constance Rourke who wrote that leaders like Lyman Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Henry Ward Beecher, Horace Greeley, and P. T. Barnum were "nothing less than the vicarious crowd, registering much that is essential and otherwise obscure in social history, hopes and joys and conflicts and aspirations which may be crude and transitory, but none the less are the stuff out of which the foundations of social life are made."[53] As we shall see, in the case of the premiere revivalist of the second quarter of the nineteenth century, Charles Grandison Finney's strongest appeal was among farmers, small businessmen, mechanics, and lawyers. Bernard Weisberger characterized Finney as "plain-talking, respectful of solid rural achievement, but distrustful of ostentation, he belonged entirely to the people who made his reputation . . . the folkways of the frontier lingered in him."[54]

Yet the modern democratic hero, while often a reflection of ourselves, in some cases still stands for something beyond ourselves. One of the best examples of such a hero is Andrew Jackson. John W. Ward's classic study of Jackson's symbolic significance clearly details how much of Jackson's popularity was "because his countrymen saw their image and spirit in Andrew Jackson" and, therefore, "they bestowed their honor and admiration upon him."[55] But for many Americans Jackson's successful military and political career provided evidence of his role as God's

chosen instrument to lead the nation to its unique destiny. This belief in divine sanction, Ward believes, served to enhance the success of the American people as their experiment in democratic government pressed onward. Yet the notion of a chosen race bestowed with providential blessings undermines fundamental assumptions of the democratic foundation: "Although the democratic principle was constantly given divine sanction by making the voice of the people the voice of God, a different inference was always possible: the leader might maintain that as God's select instrument he knew the proper course to be pursued despite the will of the people."[56]

The claims upon divine sanction which proved useful in a political context were also advantageous in a religious context. Like Jackson's military and political achievements, Finney's success in converting souls was cited as evidence of divine sanction and, therefore, a justification of his forthright preaching style. This ability to motivate people to new heights of religious fervor became extremely valuable in American churches at the beginning of the nineteenth century. After the American Revolution active state support of churches began quickly to disintegrate; churches now relied upon their own initiative to replenish and bolster their membership.[57] The churches also constantly attempted to reinvigorate many of its lackadaisical brethren. The most effective instrument in

achieving these ends proved to be the revival. From Cane Ridge, Kentucky in 1801 to Rochester, New York thirty years later, revivals dominated the American religious landscape. With the fanaticism and emotional excesses of James Davenport, whose rantings tainted the First Great Awakening in the 1740s, still a vivid memory many revivalists in the early nineteenth century, such as Lyman Beecher and Asahel Nettleton, emphasized calm and orderly conduct in their revivals. Their tightly controlled meetings precluded excessive outbursts and rampant confusion. Their own comportment was one of restraint and reserved enthusiasm. Neither man gesticulated too vigorously nor spoke in a loud or offensive manner. They were proud of the dignity with which their revivals proceeded.

By the mid-1820s news received from western New York reported of a revivalist who was converting a record number of souls. Charles Grandison Finney swept eastward with his passionate style of preaching which some believed was as dangerous to the present revivals as Davenport's had been to the earlier awakening. Finney stands as the premiere evangelist of the first half of the nineteenth century. This is true not due to his forceful style of exhortation but because

> he was the most American of them [the revivalists] all, in vigor, in mind, in ruthlessness, passion . . . Finney's pre-eminence lies in his embracing the Revival out of no academic theological training, but fully imbued with the spirit of the nineteenth century . . . the most

> demonic of the whole fraternity, possessed of the shrewdness that enabled him to win such battles for the Lord as no other could match, Finney among the evangelicals was a Napoleon among his marshals.[58]

Finney was a man possessed of great dreams and tremendous ambition. It is the purpose of this thesis to examine how Finney epitomized this new type of clergyman--a man of opportunity always seeking the pulpit of high visibility from where he could display his soul-saving talents. In Finney we will see the nexus where ambition for fame and the desire to serve as the Lord's humble servant collide.

2

God will Raise up a Prophet....and You shall Listen to Him

(Deuteronomy 18.15)

The death of Charles Grandison Finney on Monday, 16 August 1875, was noted by newspapers throughout the country.[1] Yet it is startling to discover how little print-space was given to the "Moody of his day" by the newspapers.[2] Typical was the terse obituary printed in the Atlanta Constitution: "Charles G. Finney, for many years president of Oberlin College, died suddenly from heart disease."[3] Little or nothing was said of Finney's career as America's pre-eminent revivalist in the first half of the nineteenth century. One of the most extensive printed accounts of his controversial and stormy rise to national prominence came, not surprisingly, in the New York Times: "He began his career as an evangelist in 1824 and met everywhere with notable success. He was the Moody of his day, and great revivals followed his efforts."[4] The accounts are notably short and often found in the back pages. The newspapers remember the "venerable ex-President of Oberlin College,"[5] yet have almost completely forgotten the greatest evangelist of his day.

Finney's earliest revivals of western New York in 1824-25, comprise his initial evangelical labors which would soon bring him wide-spread attention and thrust him center-stage in the controversy over New School Presbyterianism. But before Finney became the renowned evangelist, he began as an unknown country preacher. How did Finney acquire fame and what was the source of his growing reputation? The source was a power to inspire hope in people and motivate them to seize God's grace by undergoing spiritual conversion. Through these soul-saving efforts Finney achieved substantial eminence. In order to discover how Finney rose to prominence we must first uncover a young evangelist full of doubt and unsure of his preaching style and reveal the moment when the pulpit manner which brought him initial success became a conscious means of manipulation, one which could compel people to publicly commit themselves to Christ. This deliberate attempt to instigate revivals exposes clearly the early wranglings within the Presbyterian church (hostilities did not erupt publicly until 1828 when Nathaniel W. Taylor published his sermon Concio Ad Clerum ["Advice to the Clergy"] which insisted sinning is an act of man's own free will)--between the Old School notion of revivals as miracles begun by God to save only a select few, and the New School notion that revivals require human agency and that God's grace is available to all who are willing to open their hearts and

accept salvation freely given--which reached denouement in the division of 1837.

The area of New York west of the Adirondack and Catskills Mountains became known as the "burned-over district" because of the many enthusiasms and crusades which inundated the entire area. Many of the people who led these movements came from New England and travelled to New York to alleviate the stress of the area's population explosion and social tension.[6] While most of these movements did not achieve fruition until the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the seeds were planted during the earliest settlements.

The reasons for western New York's susceptibility to these sometimes strange enthusiasms must include a study of the economic and demographic changes wrought by the construction of the Erie Canal. The canal, completed in 1825, links Buffalo with Albany, and consequently to New York City by way of the Hudson River. The enormous labor necessary to build the Erie Canal attracted thousands of workers into the area, many of whom settled not only along the course of the canal, but also eventually moved into the unsettled lands of Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. New York, like the rest of the nation, experienced unprecedented expansion which made delivery of goods to market especially difficult before 1825. The Erie Canal was designed to

rectify this problem by creating a cheap and efficient mode of exchange between farm produce and manufactured goods. Soon cities and towns with factories, packing houses, and mills sprung up along the canal. The population continued to swell with bankers, businessmen, factory workers, and unskilled laborers.[7]

This tremendous socio-economic upheaval with its growing corporate economy eroded the traditional mode of family production and exposed "the generational ties of the home economy [as] most vulnerable to the corrosive power of commerce." This effect had much to do with the growth of enthusiasms which served in one aspect as "new methods of securing these familial ties..."[8] But the causes of revivals attributed to the growth of capitalism in the early nineteenth century and which resulted in the disintegration of the family, the weakening of the hierarchical social structure, unrestrained greed, isolation, and cultural confusion has been challenged by Paul E. Johnson. The Rochester revival, Johnson contends, "had little to do with ruthlessness, isolation, and anomie," but, instead, it "reaffirmed the moral unity shared throughout the 1820s and 1830s" by both farmers and business leaders.[9] Revivals served as social controls that during the initial stages of industrialism offered the middle class "a means of imposing new standards of work discipline and personal comportment upon themselves and the men who worked for them."[10] While

Johnson rejects the suggestion that the Rochester revival was simply a "capitalist plot," he steadfastly maintains that it was a critical element in the development of free labor.[11] Whatever their causes, the enthusiasms which excited western New York ranged from anti-Masonry, to Mormonism, Spiritualism, millennialism, and perfectionism. The result of all this activity was years of "social ferment, sometimes a little mad, a little confused about directions, but always full of optimism, of growth, and of positive affirmation."[12]

Within this atmosphere of religious excitement and experimentation, Charles Finney grew to adulthood. On 29 August 1792, Charles Grandison Finney began life as the seventh child of Sylvester (1759-1842) and Rebecca (1759-1836) Finney of Warren Connecticut. The Finneys eventually had nine children. About 1794 Sylvester moved his family to a 109 acre farm in Brothertown, Oneida County, New York. Sylvester was among those New England farmers who were poor or dissatisfied with the outlook in their own locality and so moved to central New York in search of more sanguine prospects.[13] Western New York during the 1790s still retained frontier conditions with rudimentary economic and political structures. The individual household remained the primary locus of production.[14] The family, however, was bought out by the state of New York which needed the land for Indian resettlement.[15] Once again on 22

September 1798 Sylvester Finney moved his family seven miles north; this time to the small settlement of Hanover, near the town of Kirkland.[16]

Although there is some doubt,it is generally believed that Finney attended Hamilton Oneida Academy at Clinton, a few miles from Hanover, for two years beginning in 1806.[17] While at Hamilton Oneida Academy, Finney's desire for education was stimulated by the principal Seth Norton and Finney's lifelong passion for music began when L. Nelson Nichols encouraged Finney to play the violin and the bass viol.

The Finneys remained at Hanover until Charles was sixteen years old. In 1808 the family finally settled in Henderson, Jefferson County which stands on the shore of Lake Ontario, near Sackett's Harbor.[18] The people at Henderson chose sixteen year old Charles to teach school for four years. The students became infatuated with the charismatic and energetic young man. The athletic Finney participated in their sports and enjoyed sailing, swimming, wrestling, and rowing. He became his student's "idol." Finney's playful persona, however, quickly changed in the classroom: "He was very dignified and kept perfect order. Should any boy attempt to create a disturbance, one flash of Mr. Finney's eye would quell the sinner at once. Oh, I tell you, they all loved and worshipped him, and all felt that some day he would be a great man."[19]

In his Memoirs Finney described his early religious life as bleak, stating that neither of his parents were "professors of religion" and further recalling the "ignorance" of the itinerant preachers he heard which "was so great that the people would return from meeting and spend a considerable time in irrepressible laughter, in view of the strange mistakes which had been made and absurdities which had been advanced."[20] Finney characterized himself as a "young man who neither knew or cared anything about religion."[21]

In 1812 Finney returned to Warren, Connecticut to live with an uncle and attend a local academy. While at Warren, Finney regularly attended the Congregational church of Peter Starr (1744-1829). Starr's stiff preaching style, with its meticulous adherence to carefully scribed notes and lack of dynamism, Finney found numbingly tedious and dull. He stated that Starr "read his sermons in a manner that left no impression whatever on my mind. He had a monotonous, humdrum way of reading what he had probably written many years before."[22] The methodical and insipid prose of Starr which Finney disdained comes through in Starr's published sermon entitled, "The Nature and Importance of Covenanting with God":

> The nature of this covenant is to be considered. A covenant is a certain compact or agreement, between two or more parties, wherein certain conditions are proposed, with which there is a mutual compliance. Thus men often covenant with one another. The infinite Jehovah hath been

> pleased to treat with men, in a covenant way; in which he promiseth the bestowment of favors, on condition of certain things to be performed on their part.[23]

Finney's later denunciations of the dry and uninspiring sermons typical of many ministers was primarily a response to Starr's poorly delivered homilies.

While at Warren, Finney asked his teacher about his prospects for attending Yale. The teacher, for whatever reasons, told Finney that he need not attend Yale as he believed Finney could complete the four year program in two years on his own. Finney did acquire some knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Yet, even toward the end of his life Finney remained consciously aware of his educational short-comings: "But I was never a classical scholar, & never possessed so much knowledge of the dead languages as to think myself capable of independently criticizing our english translations of the bible. I have seldom ventured to attempt it when I was not sustained by the most respectable authority."[24] In this unusually revealing passage, Finney expressed some insecurity which must have been exacerbated by the scrutiny of the public eye which fame entails. The normally buoyant Finney occasionally offered such brief glimpses of his anxiety which suggests an underlying concern for the discomfiting affects of tremendous success that he never openly revealed.

Finney left Connecticut in 1814 and taught in the New

Jersey public schools. But he returned home to Henderson, New York in 1818 because of his mother's failing health. Finney had been gone for six years and while Jefferson County still remained a fairly primitive place culturally, its religious life had improved. Several denominations had started churches in the surrounding area. Furthermore, in 1815 a revival moved through the area. Whereas the Finneys previously had virtually no religious inclinations, by 1818 Charles discovered that his youngest brother had been converted.[25]

At age twenty-six Finney was an affable and handsome man. Self-confident almost to the point of arrogance, Finney possessed piercing blue eyes and a powerful voice. In later years his ability to draw people to him and command their allegiance was due, in part, to his striking appearance and his verbal potency. His rugged good looks, congenial personality, musical ability (which included singing), and his athletic skills made him popular among young people, especially the women who considered him one of Henderson's most eligible bachelors.[26]

Finney left the unstable and poorly remunerative teaching profession and pursued a career in the legal profession. The law offered more prestige and greater financial prosperity. Moreover, Finney's logical mind and persuasive abilities could lead him to the top of his profession and might even extend to the arena of power

politics. Finney began his study in 1818 under the tutelage of Benjamin Wright, of the law office of Wright and Wardell, in the town of Adams, New York. For the next three years Finney remained an apprentice to Wright.

But suddenly, on Wednesday, 10 October 1821, Finney converted to Christ, gave up his pursuit of a law career, and focused his energies on evangelizing the nation for God's millennial kingdom. Although Finney always attributed his conversion to the grace of God, there seems to have been a number of other factors which may have also contributed to his spiritual rebirth.

In his study of the law, Finney came across references to the Bible, especially the Mosaic law. These biblical quotes, Finney wrote, "excited my curiosity so much that I went and purchased a Bible, the first one I had ever owned . . . This soon led to my taking a new interest in the Bible, and I read and meditated on it much more than I had ever done before in my life."[27] Moreover, Finney's study of the law brought him into contact with the commentaries of Blackstone, whose concepts of guilt and punishment rested heavily upon individual free will. Blackstone asserted that punishment was justifiable only if the guilty party had freely chosen to act criminally. This assumption of moral free will Finney absorbed and, not surprisingly, when he discovered the determinism of the Westminster Confession which denied the freedom of the human will, he rejected the

doctrine. This doctrine, Finney believed, wrongly absolved human responsibility for good or evil acts.[28]

While at Adams studying law, Finney, for reasons he never details, began attending the local Presbyterian church. His attendance may have been connected with his musical ability as Finney became the choir director. Finney also developed a frank and friendly relationship with the minister, George W. Gale (1789-1861). Gale graduated from Union College and Princeton Theological Seminary. He later founded Galesburg Illinois and Knox College. Gale, like Peter Starr at Warren, preached Calvinism which emphasized God's sovereignty, predestination, and human inability to affect one's salvation. Finney often chided Gale for filtering the Scriptures through Calvinist dogma rather than making conclusions based on direct study of the Bible.[29] The lively discussions between Gale and Finney that ensued over these Calvinist doctrines may have also nudged Finney closer to conversion.[30] Although a more compelling speaker than Starr, Gale's reserved and calm pulpit style annoyed Finney. Gale's serene preaching style seemed dull and uninspiring. As a law student, Finney learned that direct address and enthusiastic delivery helped significantly convince juries of the merits of his case. A church is like a jury and, therefore, "a minister ought to do as a lawyer does when he wants to make a jury understand him perfectly. He uses a style perfectly colloquial. This

lofty, swelling style will do no good."[31]

Two other circumstances which may have propelled Finney towards conversion were the prayers of Lydia Andrews and the special interest Gale took in Finney. Lydia, Finney's future wife, often travelled from Whitestown to visit her sister in Adams where Charles was one of the most sought after bachelors by the towns unmarried women. As Lydia and Charles' relationship blossomed, Lydia, a very pious woman, prayed for Finney's conversion.[32]

Gale often stopped by the law office to visit Finney and discuss his Sunday sermon or other theological topics. These visits may have been part of Gale's attempt to convert Finney and many of the local youth. Many of the young people thought highly of the unregenerate Finney (in this sense, he already has a bit of local fame) and, therefore, Gale viewed him as a major obstacle in his attempts to convert the young people. But as Finney records, maybe Gale's pastoral patience expired. Shortly after his conversion Finney was informed by church members that Gale was disheartened because the young people "were so much under my [i.e. Finney] influence that he did not believe, while I remained in Adams, that they ever would be converted."[33] Gale had discouraged members of the church from praying for Finney's soul as Gale believed that Finney was a lost cause. Yet after learning of Finney's transformation Gale apologized to the church for his lack of

faith in discouraging others to pray for Finney.[34]

On Sunday, 7 October 1821, Finney determined to make his "peace with God" and secure the salvation of his soul. For the next two days while he poured over the Scriptures, he also avoided Gale and the other church elders because he felt embarrassed about his seeking salvation and, also, he feared that the church would wrongly counsel him.[35]

Finney's agony soon turned him toward depression but, two days later, on Wednesday morning his depression lifted as he realized that Christ's atonement was a mutual trust between the sinner and Christ: "Salvation, it seemed to me, instead of being a thing to be wrought out by my own works, was a thing to be ground entirely in the Lord Jesus Christ, who presented himself before me to be accepted as my God and my Savior."[36] On his way to the office that morning, Finney took a detour to a wooded area about a half a mile north of Adams where "I will give my heart to God, or I never will come down from there." But try as he might, Finney could not offer a sincere, heartfelt prayer: "I then reproached myself for having promised to give my heart to God before I left the woods. I thought I had made a rash promise, that I should be obliged to break." At this moment Finney became so dismayed that he nearly collapsed.[37]

Suddenly, however, Finney's spiritual crisis was resolved. The spirit of God came over him and Finney became painfully aware of his sinfulness. The Spirit

revealed to Finney that faith in God's promises and God's offer of salvation, consisted of a voluntary faith rather than an intellectual state. Before he knew it, Finney was off his knees and back on his feet walking toward town as an inner peace and tranquility overwhelmed him. Shortly past noon, Finney arrived at Wright's empty law office. He took down his bass viol and began to sing hymns but was soon overcome with tears. When Wright had returned from lunch, the two men spent the afternoon rearranging furniture and books. After Wright left for the evening, Jesus Christ appeared to Finney whereupon Finney again broke down and cried. Soon after he composed himself, Finney received a baptism of the Holy Spirit which seemed like "the breath of God."[38]

Having made his peace with God, Finney fell asleep. The next morning he explained to Wright the events of the previous day. Shortly thereafter, Wright left the office and Deacon Barney visited Finney and asked him if he was ready to present his case in court that morning. Finney answered, "Deacon Barney, I have a retainer from the Lord Jesus Christ to plead his cause, and I cannot plead yours." The confused Deacon asked Finney what he meant and Finney replied "I told him in a few words that I had enlisted in the cause of Christ; and then repeated that I had a retainer form the Lord Jesus Christ to plead his cause, and that he must go and get somebody else to attend his

law-suit, - I could not do it."[39]

The most striking characteristic of Finney's conversion account was his deliberate, conscious, and voluntary effort to secure his own salvation. William James, one of America's greatest philosophers, described Finney's conversion as the "volitional type" in which "the regenerative change is usually gradual, and consists in the building up, piece by piece, of a new set of moral and spiritual habits. But there are always critical points here at which the movement forward seems much more rapid."[40] For several days Finney struggled fiercely to gain salvation but grew increasingly frustrated as his efforts proved fruitless. Then, as Finney recounted, came the crucial moment when the terrible void between eternal life and eternal damnation was traversed and the Spirit revealed to him that faith in God was the key to salvation. With his spiritual life in order, Finney now pledged complete allegiance to the cause of Christ which would consume all his energy for the remainder of his years.

After his conversion, Finney presented himself to the St. Lawrence Presbytery as a candidate for the ministry. His pastor, George W. Gale, was appointed to supervise his studies. An extremely independent thinker, Finney adamantly opposed Gale's views of the atonement on the basis of his own understanding of the Bible. Repudiating Gale's position

that salvation was only for the elect, Finney insisted that it was made for all men who could either accept or reject God's offer. How could Finney be sure? "I had read nothing on the subject except my bible, & what I had there found upon the subject I had interpreted as I would have understood the same or like passages in a law book."[41] While other ministers might have their degrees, Finney felt confident that he had God's revealed word.

During this period of study with Gale, Bernard Weisberger declares that Finney began to develop a unique type of evangelism with a distinctly American character.[42] First, Finney spurned formal ministerial education. He was an ordained layman and no revivalist who followed him would graduate from a prestigious seminary or university. Further, Finney's brand of revivalism rested upon a strictly literal reading of the Bible which diametrically opposed any form of textual analysis. Also, Finney's outright rejection of the Calvinist notion of man's inability to effect his salvation meant that a sinner had the ability and a duty to repent. With tremendous confidence, therefore, "he could cast his net for sinners and expect it to return full every time."[43]

Finney's labors as an evangelist commenced in 1824 in the small towns and villages of Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties in western New York. Licensed to preach in December of 1823 by the Presbytery of St. Lawrence, Finney

then accepted on 17 March 1824 the commission of the Female Missionary Society of the Western District based in Utica, New York, to serve three months as a missionary to Jefferson County, New York.[44] Yet by the time the Presbytery of St. Lawrence ordained Finney as an evangelist in July of 1824[45], he had already gained some local prominence as an evangelist. In Evans Mills, LeRaysville, Rutland and throughout Jefferson County, Finney heightened religious interest, ignited revivals, and increased church membership. Simultaneously, however, reports of Finney's coarse, direct preaching style offended several ministers.[46] At his ordination, the presbytery asked Finney to deliver a sermon. Finney's delivery of the sermon (based on the text "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord") failed to impress some of the ministers. They criticized Finney for being too direct in his address to sinners, saying "you" instead of "they"; that he said "hell" only to shock the congregation; and that he repeated himself to the point of possibly offending the more educated members of his congregation.[47] Although some reservations may have existed about ordaining Finney because of his colloquial and churlish style, the presbytery unanimously approved his ordination because of his "already handsome reputation for conducting revivals."[48]

Finney's early success resulted, in part, because he audaciously and enthusiastically exhorted sinners to convert. He exuded confidence--based upon his firmly held

belief that he was God's instrument--which attracted people to him. He recognized God's hand in his work as he stated in his Memoirs that "it has pleased God in some measure to connect my name and labors with an extensive movement of the church of Christ, regarded by some as a new era in its progress. Especially has this been supposed to be true in respect to revivals of religion."[49]

In his own conversion, Finney clearly saw the power of God at work. At the time of his conversion Finney asked Gale if he "did not feel the house tremble while we kneeled,"[50] (Gale recalled no such event). In another instance, again in Gale's company, Finney stated that the "glory of God shone upon and around about me, in a manner most marvellous . . . I think I knew something them, by actual experience, of that light that prostrated Paul on his way to Damascus."[51]

Despite his pervasive self-confidence, Finney also had initial doubts about his abilities as a clergyman. Finney was often attacked by other ministers on the grounds that he had not undergone a proper education in one of the eastern seminaries. Finney was well aware of this supposed short-coming which made him somewhat self-conscious: "And so conscious had I been all along that I lacked those qualifications that would make me acceptable, especially to ministers, and I feared to the people in populous places, that I had never had any higher ambition or purpose than to

go into the new settlements and places where they did not enjoy the gospel."[52] Yet this temporary lapse in self-confidence was overcome by a conviction of the rightness and usefulness of his revival methods. As Finney explained, "the more experience I had; the more I saw the results of my method of preaching . . . the more I was confirmed in the fact that God had led me, had taught me, had given me right conceptions in regard to the best manner of winning souls."[53] In light of his educational deficiencies, it is quite tenable that Finney's unusual revival techniques served as compensation for his lack of theological sophistication.

Furthermore, Finney had no desire to attend one of the established seminaries as he told the St. Lawrence Presbytery: "Still I refused to go; and when urged to give my reasons, I plainly told them that I would not put myself under such an influence as they had been under; that I was confident they had been wrongly educated, and they were not ministers that met my ideal of what a minister of Christ should be."[54] But Finney's account neglects to mention that he had been rejected by Andover, Princeton, and Auburn.[55] Finney's sour-grapes recollection seems even more dubious when one tries to imagine the clergy of the presbytery accepting the bold and arrogant tone of the young man's explanation.

Finney also attributed his success to his instruction

given him directly by God. With the greatest confidence, and no less indignation, Finney responded to those who denounced him because he lacked a seminary education: "God taught me; and I know it must have been so, for surely I never had obtained these notions from man . . . I was not taught the Gospel by man but by the Spirit of Christ himself. And [therefore] no arguments of my ministerial brethren, with which I was plied so often and so long, had the least weight with me."[56] Moreover, he gained strength and stamina to ward off his detractors from his conviction that God was on his side. Every victory against his fellow minister's attacks served to buttress the confidence of a man already supremely convinced of the righteousness of his mission.

In one of his first stops at Evans Mills, Finney displayed some of the dramatic flare and bravado in the pulpit that brought him much success and popularity with the hearty western settlers. Evans Mills, which rests in the northern section of Jefferson County, had only a Congregational and a Baptist church. The two churches alternated Sunday worship services in a large brick schoolhouse, thus allowing Finney to preach every other Sunday at the Congregational service. Within the school walls, Finney's preaching raised the hopes of some church members that there might be a revival. In general, however, Finney's sermons, by his own admission, failed to inspire

widespread conviction.[57] A revivalist of lesser confidence may have been shattered by this less than enthusiastic response. Yet with his own sense of divine mission and his perceptive instinct about how to motivate an audience through psychological pressure, Finney averted failure and instead achieved a stunning success. He boldly challenged them with the following ultimatum: "You who now are willing to pledge to me and Christ that you will immediately make your peace with God, please to rise up. On the contrary, you that mean that I should understand that you are committed to remain in your present attitude, not to accept Christ--please, those of you that are of this mind, to sit still."[58] After a moment of silent disbelief during which no member stood up, Finney admonished them stating "You have rejected Christ and his Gospel . . . you have thus publicly committed yourselves against the Savior . . ."[59] As the people angrily left the schoolhouse, Finney told them he would preach to them once more on the following evening. Knowing that such an inflammatory approach would offend many in the school that evening, Finney also knew that his words would compel many other listeners to reexamine their present religious state and wonder if, in fact, they had not rejected their Saviour. The first step in a Finney revival was to realize that you were a sinner in need of redemption and that salvation was offered for <u>you</u> to <u>accept</u>. Finney calculated that his

verbal brazenness would stir controversy and attract many townsfolk to the next meeting. He was not disappointed; the schoolhouse was filled to its capacity.

Finney launched immediately into a powerful sermon and a general conviction overtook the congregation. In his Memoirs, Finney describes with a blend of piety and ambition how "the Spirit of God came upon me with such power . . . the Word of God came through me to them in a manner that I could see was carrying all before it. It was a fire and a hammer breaking the rock; and as the sword that was piercing to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit."[60] While acknowledging God's role in the conversion process, Finney does not neglect to remind us of his role as God's chosen instrument. Such a passage reveals something about why Finney became a revivalist and why he enjoyed tremendous success. Finney gave up a career as a lawyer and became a revivalist because he thrived on the exhilaration which comes from having a tremendous influence on people. This suggestion is not necessarily intended to question Finney's sincerity, but to emphasize that the potential for acquiring a vast influence over people could only have made a career in revivalism that much more attractive to the ambitious Finney.

Finney, throughout his Memoirs, relays accounts of his revival labors. While he almost never fails to give God the credit and glory for his victories in converting many people

to Christ and assumes an air of humility, Finney often presents his role as the primary catalyst behind the successful revival and seems to revel in his honored position as a kind of intermediary between God and humanity.

After leaving Evans Mills Finney traveled about eighteen miles north to the small village of Antwerp where he stayed from April to October of 1824. Although Antwerp had a Presbyterian church, few of the townspeople attended. By the time Finney arrived, he claimed that services had ceased altogether.[61] After contacting some of the more religiously minded people in Antwerp, Finney secured the use of the school building to conduct a Sunday service. The next day a notice was passed around town alerting people to the meeting on Sunday. Finney preached a powerful sermon that morning bringing himself and many others to tears. At the afternoon service, Finney relates that the Lord let him "loose" and at this point in his narrative we see how much he relishes his role as God's prophet with the power to "rain hail and love upon them at the same time; or in other words, that I could rain upon them hail in love. . . . I felt like rebuking them with all my heart, and yet with a compassion which they could not mistake."[62] Finney's emotional and compelling sermon not only converted many in the town, but also brought him some local recognition: "From that day, appoint a meeting when and where I would in that neighborhood anywhere round about, and the people would

throng to hear."[63] Finney was certainly humbled by his faith in God, but this humility rested upon the conviction of being God's instrument. Finney's modesty was based on this concept of his special relationship to God which granted him the unique power to break down the sinner's hardened heart and enable the sinner to seize God's gift of grace.

The concept of fame stands solidly based upon the foundation of publicity and power. Leo Braudy, in the Frenzy of Renown, states that "in great part the history of fame is the history of the changing ways by which individuals have sought to bring themselves to the attention of others and, not incidentally, have thereby gained power over them."[64] Through various modes of communication - e.g. literature, theater, monuments, paintings, and, in Finney's case, revivals - people come to live under the public eye.

Such seemingly contradictory motivations of ambition and piety, however, were not unique to Finney. Lois Banner believes that such motives drove men like William Lloyd Garrison, Theodore Dwight Weld, and a host of other anti-slavery activists. These were devoutly religious young men of talent and ambition who rejected business, politics, and the professions as too worldly but found in their reform efforts "a way of achieving aspirations of influence and leadership without violating ideals."[65]

Although the reformer understood he probably would never accumulate vast wealth, "he could achieve a great measure of personal fame and influence."[66] The quest for widespread recognition as a way to transcend social and economic boundaries and to define oneself sparked the urge for fame, once the reserve of the few, in the many.[67]

While Garrison and Weld chose to emphasize reform through modification of social institutions, Finney believed true social change could only occur when the heart of individuals underwent a conversion which allowed the needs of others to take precedence over self-interest.[68] Although they differed in their tactical approaches to social ills, Garrison, Weld, and Finney were a part of the post-Revolutionary generation who were instructed that "an active practical beneficence, a spirit of doing good" was a noble and fulfilling career.[69] As the antislavery activist, Lydia Maria Child, realized, "There is something in mere success which interests us--because it is a stimulus which the human mind spontaneously seeks, and without which it cannot long retain its energies."[70]

Finney's initial success involved more than just his own belief that he was a special instrument of God; for those who heard Finney's powerful sermons and were mesmerized, they also became convinced that God worked through him. Finney was a dynamic leader and his success was due not to an original theology or novel methods of

revivalism, but in his uniquely effective presentation of a message and method already established by others.

3

Success and Controversy

As Finney continued his successful labors in Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties larger towns began to invite him to lead revivals. Oneida County lies just south of Jefferson and St. Lawrence Counties and included the towns of Western, Rome, and Utica. In 1825 Finney began the Oneida County revivals which marked a significant turning point in his career as a revivalist. This area, located near the Erie Canal, held bright prospects for growth and offered a wider sphere of publicity. The churches in these towns were larger than those up north; their ministers more eminent; and their congregations more sophisticated and better educated. The next eighteen months transformed Finney into a "figure of national repute, and severed his ties to the crossroads hamlet forever."[1]

While laboring in Western, a rather insignificant village, Finney attracted attention from the Reverend Moses Gillet, the minister of the Congregational church at Rome. Rome, with a population of approximately 4000, was the first major town in which Finney labored.[2] Within the church and

particularly among Presbyterian and Congregational ministers and laymen, Finney was achieving significant name recognition. His fame grew as news of his wildly successful revivals in western New York spread rapidly. This extension of Finney's influence becomes apparent with a cursory perusal of his correspondence which reveals a multitude of requests from both ministers and laymen for Finney to come to their church to ignite a revival.

During the next several weeks, Finney and Gillet preached and held prayer meetings for the anxious inquirers in Rome. Finney met with little opposition in Rome and found the town generally prepared for a revival. The overall harmony with which the revival proceeded was exemplified by the closing of business and conversion of town leaders:

> Merchant's and mechanic's shops were many of them closed in the evening, that all might attend meeting . . . 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.[3]

News of the success of the revival in Rome moved quickly to the nearby communities and Finney began to visit these areas to spread the revival.[4] Ministers themselves "came in from neighboring towns, and expressed great astonishment at what they saw and heard, as well they might."[5] The relative calm and peace which accompanied this

revival was emphasized by Finney: ". . . the greatest order and solemnity prevailed, and the utmost pains were taken to guard against everything that was to be deplored. The Spirit's work was so spontaneous, so powerful, and so overwhelming, as to render it necessary to exercise the greatest caution . . . to prevent an undesirable outburst of feeling . . . and brought about a reaction."[6] Finney was in the process of developing his techniques as he moved to the more populous areas.[7] He had not yet employed all of the "new measures" that would soon cause much furor. Finney at this time stated the only means used were prayer, preaching, private conversation, visitation, and inquiry meetings.[8] Finney, however, did mention previously in his account of the revival at Evans Mills that occasionally he would call people forward at the end of his sermon to engage them in private conversation. From this practice would develop the anxious bench.[9]

By January 1826 the contagion of Finney's revival in Rome spread rapidly throughout the surrounding countryside. All the churches - Methodists, Episcopalians, Baptists, and Congregationalists - garnered new members and Gillet surmised that by autumn the total of new converts approached five hundred.[10] The Reverend Ira Manley, pastor at the Presbyterian church in Boonville, New York, attested to the favorable spread of the revival in Rome:

> About this time, also, I received an account of the revival at Rome, from two of our young men,

> who had been on a visit, and had become hopeful subject of grace. Their warmth and zeal were a blessing to me. The next evening, in meeting, I gave an account of the revival in Rome. It was attended with a divine impulse. From that time our meetings increased, till they were full to overflowing. Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists, rushed together, and seemed to participate of the same spirit. We endeavoured to avoid exciting any party feeling . . . Ministers from abroad preached with much engagedness. Conversions became frequent... Sixty-seven have been added to the Presbyterian church . . . The whole number of converts is probably towards one hundred.[11]

The loyalty and influence which Finney had gained among his youthful companions carried over into his career as an evangelist. In a letter Gillet and his wife warned Finney against some opposition to his revivals in Rome. The Gillets offered Finney words of encouragement and reassurance that back west in Oneida county there are "not only hundreds but thousands who would fight for him to the last moment."[12] One historian, Keith Hardman, notes that Finney's success in Rome must have boosted his already high self-esteem. Finney "had proved that his abilities were superior to those of the ordinary backwoods exhorter, and that he possessed the precise formula for revivalistic work in more urbane areas. His hopes and motivations kindled by success, his stature as an evangelist had grown in his own eyes and in those of his many colleagues."[13] Elizabeth Thomson, daughter of Reverend Israel Brainerd of Verona, remarking on Finney's growing public persona, recalled that during those revivals "at first all stood amazed and glorified God. At length

persons of ill-balanced minds and scanty knowledge of Bible truth, began to glorify Mr. Finney. To them it was plain he had caused the revival, he had converted souls..."[14] For many ministers who came to disapprove of Finney's brand of revivalism, it was, among other reasons, this kind of fanatical devotion to Finney which they vehemently opposed.

From February 1826 to April 1827 Finney preached in Utica, Auburn, and Troy. During this period, Finney moderated his style as he moved eastward to the more populous areas and solidified his national reputation--gaining supporters as well as detractors. The ensuing conflict between Finney and his opponents represents the larger conflagration within the Presbyterian church over theology and methods of revivalism between the Old and New Schools. Finally, the conflict culminated in a convention between the factions in New Lebanon, New York.

The early accounts of Finney by friend and foe alike agree that he was a man of tremendous zeal who spoke with utmost frankness and resolute persuasiveness. At the invitation of the Reverend Nathaniel S. S. Beman, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Troy, Finney initiated a series of evangelistic meetings in the fall of 1826. Soon afterwards there developed a strain of opposition to Finney and Beman. In one particularly vitriolic diatribe the writer stated that the "notorious" Finney "must be too well

known to require any illustration from us; and as we shall be compelled to make some allusions to him, we shall treat him with but little more ceremony than an acknowledged outlaw."[15] This disdainful attitude toward Finney, the writer claimed, resulted from "his shocking blasphemies, his novel and repulsive sentiments, and his theatrical and frantic gesticulations, [which] struck horror into those who entertained any reverence either for religion or decency."[16]

The writer continued by levelling many serious charges against Finney, the most serious being his use of crude and vulgar language. As evidence the writer related the story of Finney and Beman asking a women if she loved God. The women answered "I think I do." But Finney retorted "You lie! . . . You ought to go to hell, and you must repent." The woman said she could not convert immediately, but Finney insisted she could. Yet the women remained convinced otherwise, and Finney, exasperated, said "You ought to be damned."[17] Finney's colloquialism was part of a larger trend of Americanizing the English language.[18] In the political realm the declamatory speeches of Daniel Webster, Henry Clay, and John Calhoun parallel the impassioned sermons of Finney. Daniel Boorstin writes that "American religious leaders--like their political and educational counterparts--were noted less for their writing than for their speech."[19]

Many attacks on Finney were prompted by guilt by

association. As Finney's success and popularity grew so did the number of preachers who tried to emulate Finney's methods and thus his success. Many assumed the excesses and perversions of Finney imitators, such as Horatio Foote, Augustus Littlejohn, and Luther Myrick, were also those practiced by Finney himself; at the very least, Finney opened the door for such excesses to occur. The New York Evangelist noted that some revivalists endeavored "to ape or imitate other ministers of more eminence and celebrity, in their voice, style, phrases, and whole manner." The consequences of such irresponsible behavior is that it "always defeats its purpose, and destroys the efficacy of what is said, however pertinent and proper."[20] The imitators never achieved the same success as Finney because they mimicked his most unpleasant characteristics and lacked the graces which compensated for Finney's crudity: "They could shout and denounce as he did on occasion, but they lacked that deep tenderness and broad human sympathy which assured the listener that all that was said was for his own good."[21]

Finney's blunt and often harsh style of preaching depended on the "spirit" in which it was said. Finney was a great motivator and recognized the dynamics of human psychology. While he knew his harsh rebukes of sinners may outrage them, if "it is said in the spirit of love . . . [and] is coming right home to them to save them

individually,--there are very few people that will continue to resent this . . . [then] the conviction is upon them that they needed it, and it will surely ultimately do them great good."[22] Finney expressed adoration for the late Reverend James Patterson of Philadelphia whom, Finney stated, "always opposed sin with a most remarkable spirit--a spirit of inflexible decision and yet of great mellowness and tenderness. While he was saying the most severe things in the most decided language, you might see the big tears rolling down his cheeks."[23]

Yet Finney also gradually adjusted to the criticism. His earlier pulpit crudities were giving way to a more refined and sophisticated style. The moderating influence of certain New School ministers may have been responsible for Finney's tamer public actions. In particular, Samuel Aiken, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Utica, seemed to have had a moderating influence on Finney while Finney stayed with him.[24] In a letter addressed to Lyman Beecher, Aiken commented on Finney's change:

> When I first became acquainted with him, 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 he had never read the book, and here it was frequently in his hands during the revival; also other volumes of the great writer; and he often spoke of them with rapture.[25]

This modification of Finney's approach was also noted by his detractors. The Trumpet and Universalist Magazine

contained an article in which the writer compared Finney's style between his Troy and Boston revivals:

> Before Trojans his language was bold, daring, and blasphemous--but before Bostonians, it is simple, puerile, and ridiculously childish. In Troy he told sinners--"Why sinners, I tell you, if you could climb to heaven, you would hurl God from his throne; oh yes, if you could get there, you would cut God's throat! Yes, you would cut God's throat!" . . . So much for the pious Mr. Finney in Troy . . . But in Boston Mr. Finney is quite mild--says nothing about cutting God's throat--but here tells sinners that they do not love to read the "whole parcel of letters" contained in the Bible--and that they do not love long meetings, because they "interfere with their dinners." We presume Mr. Finney learned from Dr. Beecher, Dr. Weisner and others, that his Troy maneuvering would not answer in this region, and we think his childish performances will be little likely to please.[26]

The accuracy of this account may be questioned but it does underscore Finney's transformation from a linguistically crude and venomous back woods preacher to a somewhat more genteel and urbane man of God.

Was Finney's developing transformation a sincere attempt to reach his new audience or was it an attempt to further enhance his growing stature among his increasingly sophisticated constituents and colleagues? Or both? The person who acquires fame is often considered different by most members of society, yet they are not so different that people cannot relate to them. Finney almost certainly sensed that his new audience required a modification of his style if he was to effectively communicate with them. A famous person, according to Leo Braudy, must "be a socially

acceptable individualist, different enough to be interesting, yet similar enough not to be threatening or destructive."[27] The change in Finney might very well have been his attempt to "balance thinking about oneself with the obligations of belonging to a society."[28]

Instead of brow beating and hammering sinners into repentance as he did in the villages of western New York, Finney realized that the cities, with their wealthier and more educated constituents, required a subtler and more logical approach preparing them for salvation. This change of style could be viewed as a cynical attempt by Finney to mainstream his appeal, thus helping to fulfill his personal ambition for fame. This view, however, must be tempered by an understanding of Finney's philosophy of evangelism. Evangelism's primary objective is to convert souls to Christ and as a revivalist Finney believed that this was his sacred mission bestowed upon him by God.[29] Nothing was more important than regaining God's lost children and, therefore, far be it from any thing like a matter of style to hinder a sinners reconciliation with God. Finney was certainly no dogmatist; rather he was very practical--whatever methods hindered his message was dropped, conversely, whatever proved useful in awakening souls was kept even if it was controversial.

Finney made several public pronouncements on the subject of ministerial sincerity. In his Lectures to

Professing Christians he condemned ministers who "are more jealous for their own fame than for God's glory," as selfish men who "serve their own gods."[30] Elsewhere Finney explained that "some ministers dare not preach what they know is true . . . lest they should offend some whose good opinion they seek to retain. . . . Too many Gospel ministers are so troubled by it that their time-serving policy is virtually renouncing Christ and serving the world."[31]

Yet despite his public pronouncements against the dangers of pride, it seemed to many, especially close associates, that Finney himself was vulnerable to the sin of hubris. By 1829 Finney had achieved great successes. His revivals throughout western New York had brought him much recognition, which was evident by not only the enormous increase in the number of churches pleading for his presence to spark a revival, but also by the increased frequency and intensity of attacks against his methods by church leaders in the east who felt threatened by his growing authority. Even the most humble servant of God would at times find it difficult to keep his ego sufficiently in check--especially a young man who only a few short years before was an agnostic lawyer and now was at the pinnacle of the ministerial profession. So in a letter from Theodore Dwight Weld, the antislavery activist and himself a Finney convert, it is not surprising that Finney is queried as to what he is striving for: is it the completion of God's work which he

has been assigned or, Weld seems to worry, is it personal recognition. The warning from Weld is especially interesting in light of Weld's own reaction to fame--as I will discuss more fully later--in which he retreated from a life of public acclaim as America's premiere anti-slavery spokesman:

> Dear brother do tell me what mark you are pressing towards? The same that Paul did? Perfect sinlessness? Have you resolved thro [sic] Christ to reach it? And do expect to reach it? You see from day to day that you are nearing it? My dear father in Jesus you are in such a maddening whirl, care, responsibility, and toil, I do dreadfully fear that you neglect the culture of personal holiness.[32]

With Finney's increasing occupation with his own career and stature, it seemed to have had a deadening effect on the power of his revivals. Furthermore, Weld suggests that Finney appeared disinterested or just plain bored by revivals:

> I thought I saw when at Stephentown . . . that revivals have become with you matters of such every day commonness as scarcely to throw over you the least tinge of solemnity. I fear they are fast becoming with you a sort of trade, to be worked at so many hours every day and then laid aside. Dear brother do you not find yourself running into formality, a round of formality in the management of revivals? I mean of feeling. The machinery all moves on, every wheel and spring and chord in its place; but isn't the main spring waxing weaker?[33]

Weld was not alone in his concern for Finney. There were other letters which expressed concern about the effects the spotlight of the big cities and the opposition they unleashed, were having on Finney. Finney is warned against

arrogance in a letter from Joshua Leavitt who pleads with him to "look a little immediately at your inside, and see what makes you want all the ministers in the city to take off their hats to you, and ask you to come and help them, and promise to support you in every thing you do."[34] Once again, Weld admonishes his close friend and spiritual father to "dip not your pen in the gall of sarcasm, but dip it in tears and write with a trembling hand and a soul of sorrow."[35]

At the heart of the opposition to Finney were the so-called "new measures." Exactly what the new measures included was never altogether clear. However, among the most frequently cited measures were the following: allowing women to pray in public; protracted meetings during which all church members devoted themselves entirely to prayer meetings and preaching services; colloquial language used by the preacher to impress people with the need for total submission to God; the anxious seat which was a designated area near the pulpit where those troubled over the state of their souls would meet at the conclusion of the sermon; anxious meetings held in houses or church basements that involved ministers and laymen praying personally with those people anxious about salvation; praying for people publicly by name; and immediate church membership for converts.[36]

The new limits to which Finney pushed existing

parameters, not his methods per se, bothered many detractors. Richard Carwardine demonstrates quite convincingly that the new measures had deep roots in Methodism which predated Finney. The new measures "were involved in Methodist revivals in urban areas long before the Calvinist denominations in the East came to theological and personal blows over their propriety."[37] John Frost, a Presbyterian minister in Whitesboro, New York and a friend of Finney, offered the besieged revivalist some advice directing Finney to "say what is true, that you have introduced no new measures but have followed such as you found in the church when you entered it."[38]

The cause of friction between Finney and the eastern establishment, represented by Asahel Nettleton (1783-1844) and Lyman Beecher, involved more than just the new measures; ultimately it was a struggle for the leadership of the Presbyterian and Congregational evangelical effort to usher in God's Kingdom.[39] Beecher embarked on a two-pronged strategy to forge an internal alliance of orthodox groups--i.e. Old and New School Presbyterians--to halt the threat of the dangerously liberal Unitarians. Beecher's main strategy to thwart the Unitarian threat sought to broaden the appeal of Calvinist theology by incorporating Nathaniel William Taylor's New Haven theology. Taylor (1786-1858), who studied under the distinguished Yale president Timothy Dwight, became professor of theology at

Yale Divinity School from where he authored his Concio ad Clerum in 1828. The Concio ad Clerum challenged the strict Edwardeanism of the Old School. The New Haven Theology or Taylorism became the theological foundation of the New School. Both Beecher and Finney adhered to Taylor's "rationalistic revival theology." Taylor insisted that human nature is not innately sinful; God created each person as a free, rational, and moral being who always had the "power to the contrary." Taylor's formulations became important justifications of revivals as a cooperative effort between God, minister, and sinner, rather than "mighty acts of God."[40] Many old Calvinists hesitated to join Taylor and Beecher's liberalized orthodoxy, but acquiesced when the Old School revivalist, Asahel Nettleton, joined Beecher. Both sides were willing to overlook their differences in the face of the Unitarian threat.[41]

Upon receiving the first reports of the western revivals Beecher was optimistic stating that "Christians should be instant in prayer and fervent in their supplications at the throne of mercy that the blessing may be continued and extended."[42] Beecher's initial enthusiasm was not unlike that of other coalition members. In fact, several reports stated that Finney's revival techniques differed not in substance from already established norms but rather by Finney's unique style: "Beyond some unaffected, yet striking peculiarities of voice and manner there is

nothing to attract curiosity, or offend even the most fastidious . . . sense of propriety."[43] What bothered Beecher the most was that while Finney was bringing new members into the church, he was also cultivating loyalty to himself among the clergy and other ecclesiastical leaders. Especially bothersome to Beecher was the creation of the Oneida Evangelical Association by Finney, George W. Gale, Daniel Nash, Herman Norton, and Nathaniel Smith. The Association solicited funds for the purpose of sending forth evangelists to preach God's Word. Moreover, Finney was also able to establish friendships with established ministers like Moses Gillet in Rome, Samuel Aiken in Utica, John Frost in Whitesboro, Noah Coe in New Hartford, Dirck C. Lansing in Auburn, and Nathaniel S.S. Beman in Troy.[44] After failing to convince Finney to join his coalition, Beecher saw Finney as a threat to "not only the unity of Presbyterian and Congregational churches but also the eventual assimilation of all Protestants under the banner of Beecherism. Beecher had originally hoped to have a reformed Finney serving as his energetic subordinate . . . but this didn't happen and Beecher turned bitter."[45]

By early 1827 Beecher sought to crush Finney. The extent of Beecher's disdain for Finney at this time was evident in a letter he addressed to Nettleton, dated 30 January 1827 and which was later printed in the Utica Magazine. Finney had become so dangerous that he threatened

to destroy the foundation of God's kingdom on earth--i.e. the church:

> We are on the confines of universal misrule and moral desolation . . . The fear of opposing a work of God, if it prevails, will ruin us; for if it were in its commencement a work of God and is now the occasion of some conversions, it is rapidly changing its character and will become soon, one of the most powerful and successful assaults which satan ever made in the church . . .[46]

The ominous threat posed by Finney and his consorts must be met, Beecher advised, with a united wall of defense manned by the ecclesiastical leadership:

> There must be immediately an extensive correspondence and concert formed; ministers must come together and consult, and churches must be instructed and prepared to resist the beginnings of evil--the mark must be torn off from satan, coming among the sons of God and transforming himself into an angel of light. In the mean time, no pains should be spared to save if possible brothers Finney and Beman, both on account of the great evil they will not fail to do on lawless converts; and the great good they may do, if they can be kept within their orbit.[47]

The ministers finally did come together. Beecher, with the help of Beman, organized the New Lebanon Convention. A group of ministers met at Dr. Betts' home in New Lebanon on 18 July 1827. The ministers who came with Beecher from New England included: Heman Humphrey president of Amherst College; Asahel Nettleton, evangelist from Connecticut; Justin Edwards, of Andover, Massachusetts; Caleb J. Tenney, of Wethersfield, Connecticut; and Joel Hawes of Hartford. In addition, Beecher also invited Henry Weed, of Albany, New York; Asahel Norton, of Clinton, New York; and William R.

Weeks, of Paris Hill, New York. Those who came from the West along with Finney were Beman, of Troy; Moses Gillet, of Rome; Dirck Lansing of Auburn; John Frost, of Whitesboro; George W. Gale, of Western; Samuel C. Aiken, of Utica; Henry Smith, of Camden, New York; and the host pastor, Silas Churchill.[48]

The convention at New Lebanon was an informal gathering of ministers which had no official sanction by the presbytery or any other denominational authority. This series of meetings had been organized simply to discuss certain concerns that each side wished to express directly to one another.[49] Ostensibly, these concerns centered around the propriety of Finney's new measures and "was not in any sense an ecclesiastical court . . . [Finney] was not in any sense on trial."[50] Yet, the final outcome concerning the measures so closely associated with Finney would have a definite effect on Finney's future career. If the new measures were denounced Finney's future as a revivalist might be irrevocably damaged. Clearly, if the convention ended in denunciating the new measures, "that could well signal Finney's many enemies that the time was ripe, and sufficient support could be found to proceed to formal church court proceedings."[51]

The convention lasted several days and the participants debated and discussed their differences. That both sides were in fundamental agreement was evidenced by

the unanimous approval of the following resolution: "The idea that God ordinarily works independently of human instrumentality, or without reference to the adaptation of means to ends, is unscriptural."[52] Asahel Nettleton, however, remained intransigent and Finney refused to acquiesce. The convention settled very little and neither side made any significant compromise. Nettleton eventually parted company with Beecher and soon allied himself with the orthodox Presbyterians at Princeton. Beecher and Finney, on the other hand, finally came to a mutual understanding later that year in Philadelphia where an agreement was signed to end all public discussion of their differences.[53] Beecher signed the agreement because he believed that to persist in public contention with Finney over revival methods "would tend to keep up a party in the Church who, identified with their leader, might in self-defense be embodied to defend him and might introduce controversy in the Presbyterian Church . . ." Appeasement with Finney was necessary because the time would arrive when it "might be dangerous to oppose him."[54] Furthermore, a few years later, Finney labored in Boston with Beecher's complete support.[55]

The publicity which the convention attracted in the newspapers served to enhance Finney's reputation among the ecclesiastical establishment in the east.[56] Finney had held his own against two of the most prominent ministers from the east and therefore, even if begrudgingly, the eastern

ecclesiastical leadership had to recognize him as a new force within the Presbyterian ministry. No longer confined to the hamlets and villages of western New York, New Lebanon established Finney as a minister of the same stature as Beecher "the great gun at Boston." Assured that God had vindicated his methods at New Lebanon, Finney confidently strode eastward toward the cities where he presumed the results of his labors would further reveal God's spirit at work within his ministry.[57]

4

Creating a Legacy: The Revivalist Turns Educator

In the aftermath of New Lebanon, Finney prepared to forge eastward and confront the challenges of the large towns and cities. But the post New Lebanon Finney stands in contrast to the passionate and combative revivalist of an earlier day. He softened and refined his once rude and jagged manner and reached his high-water mark as an evangelist in the calm, dignified revival in Rochester, New York. With his reputation as America's premiere evangelist undeniably established, Finney came under tremendous demands, and the implications of encroaching fame become evident.

By 1830, Rochester flourished with a population of about ten thousand. The flour mill industry thrived on the Genesee Valley wheat and the Erie Canal, built five years earlier, provided cheap transportation to the east coast market. Within Rochester three Presbyterian churches had been established.[1] The Third Presbyterian Church pulpit had been vacated in 1830 by its pastor Joel Parker, a new

measures minister, who had assumed the pastorate of the First Presbyterian Church in New York City. Finney came to Rochester in September to fulfill Parker's pulpit and to revivalize the Presbyterian churches.[2]

Finney preached from 10 September 1830 to 6 March 1831 in Rochester and converted several hundred people.[3] This revival was widely reported by several newspapers and, as William McLoughlin notes, "deserves to be compared to the urban revivals of the post-Civil War era."[4] Unlike some of his previous revivals, Finney's Rochester revival proceeded without emotional excess and with almost no public rancor. Finney himself, dressed in a plain gray business suit acted "like a lawyer arguing . . . before a court and jury," speaking in a relaxed and logical manner.[5] This marked contrast with Finney's earlier revivals did not go unnoticed by contemporaries. The Rochester Observer, the local religious newspaper, commented that "on the Sabbath no place of worship is large enough to contain the multitude that assembles . . . such a revival, perhaps, was never experienced where less disorder was witnessed, or less open opposition manifested."[6] Finney now stood as the prototypical urban evangelist of the future with an efficient and tightly organized machine.[7]

Many of Finney's old friends and colleagues expressed their concern as he prepared to preach in the more populous eastern cities. These fears were given their fullest

expression in a letter written by Finney's pastor and theological teacher in Adams, George W. Gale in 1830. Gale warned that cities were poor places to promote revivals because the moral atmosphere could extinguish the fiery enthusiasm of the most committed revivalist who might become distracted from God's work: "I do not know that it is so, but so it would seem. Is it not a fact that good men and good ministers of the gospel undergo a good deal of change when exposed to the operation of such causes? . . . I have heard the question asked will not brother Finney catch the same fever . . . will he not have his mind turned off at least from the business of converting souls to Christ to the business of converting men to some peculiarity of sentiment--to some theory or speculation?"[8] Finney's newly refined style, many people believed, diminished his ability to break a sinner's hardened heart. A friend lamented that his preaching "failed to produce to the same extent those soul saving results as formerly"; the man then offered his analysis of what had dulled the once piercing sharpness of Finney's message:

> I fear that the peculiar circumstances in which you have been placed have led you rather to a discussion in your public ministrations, of abstract subjects, than to those soul stirring appeals to the heart and conscience by which you once brought so many sinners down at the feet of Jesus.[9]

It seemed as though George Gale's earlier warning to Finney to refrain from being diverted from preaching the Gospel by

espousing some "theory or speculation" was coming true.

Finney, however, seemed unconcerned. In his Memoirs, Finney noted with particular pride the fact that the revivals proceeded with much decorum among "the highest classes of society . . . lawyers, physicians, merchants, and indeed all the most intelligent class of society."[10] Finney worked diligently often preaching three times on Sunday and three nights a week, leading prayer meetings, using the anxious seat, employing enquiry meetings, and conducting protracted meetings which might last from dawn until midnight. Reports of the Rochester revival traveled far beyond the local area to New England and Ohio.[11] As early as 1826, some church members beckoned Finney to labor in New York City. Judge Jonas Platt and his two children, Helen and Zephaniah, moved from Utica to New York and joined the Second (Brick) Presbyterian Church. The Platt's relayed favorable accounts of Finney's revivals to their conservative pastor, Gardiner Spring. Zephaniah Platt wrote to Finney that "some of our N.Y. churches are in readiness for your preaching."[12] The Platts argued that with his young handsome figure, forceful voice, and powerful presence Finney was more than equal to the task of revitalizing the cities malaise.[13]

The Platts convinced, many of the influential laity, including Arthur and Lewis Tappan, that Finney's labors were needed in New York. Throughout 1829 Finney conducted a

number of revivals in New York City. Finney converted many and helped establish the Union Presbyterian Church--the first of several free Presbyterian Churches built throughout the northeast. Moreover, in 1830 Zephaniah Platt financed the New York Evangelist as a voice for new measure revivalism.[14] Finney's successful labors in the big city convinced the Tappans and "all the elders of the Free Pres[byterian] Churches that this city is the place for you to preach and that now is the time."[15]

The Tappans assured Finney that he would increase his usefulness by reaching more people. The Tappan's argument portrays pastorates as important primarily as buttresses of the greater evangelical cause. The cities were strategically important as influential centers encompassing the surrounding villages and as places of great wealth.[16] The most coveted pulpits were those which offered an array of outlets to accommodate ministerial activism and which situated the minister in close proximity to the urban centers where national benevolent societies established headquarters.[17] Lewis Tappan, who recognized Finney as a powerful force in the expansion of the benevolent empire [18], wrote to Finney explaining the importance of New York city as a key to converting the whole nation:

> This city must be converted or the nation is lost. Do what may be done elsewhere, and leave this city, be headquarters of Satan, and the nation is not save. It is truly wonderful what mighty influence New York has throughout the country.[19]

New York needed Finney because "the ministers here do not use the necessary means and will not."[20] With Finney's mission to win as many souls to Christ as possible, he could hardly resist. But it took more than just utilitarian arguments to convince Finney to venture into the big city, it also required a calculated appeal to Finney's ego:

> I do not think that powerful revival will take place here [i.e. New York] unless you do come. We are to rely upon God, it is true, and never for a moment to forget his power, and our weakness; but God honors instruments and chooses spiritual weapons . . . Why not then come, and come at once?[21]

Finney soon discovered that a consequence of achieving wide public recognition was the constant barrage of requests demanding his immediate and undivided attention regardless of any other issues or responsibilities that he must consider. What complicated matters for Finney and caused him to hesitate, however, were equally desperate pleas for his presence out west in Ohio. These pleas came most fervently from one of his closest and most trusted colleagues, Theodore Weld. Weld also consciously appealed to Finney's ego in order to convince him to leave the eastern cities and comeback to the West. Finney received Weld's letter dated 28 February 1832:

> I tell you my dear brother, the cure, the only cure for prejudice against you is contact. I say <u>contact</u>, not a brushing contact of a single sermon or two, but for weeks... The mere <u>fact of your</u> coming into the valley would win this population greatly. They would begin <u>to identify you with themselves</u>. The obstacles here are very few. You could command audiences of thousands. Their

> camp meetings all over this region would afford you immeasurably greater fields for effort than you have ever occupied. Think of fifteen thousand souls, and these mainly those who rarely hear the gospel.[22]

But why was the west so important when the great majority of Americans still lived back east? According to Weld the west "is half a century behind the East. Besides, here is to be the battlefield of the world. Here Satan's seat is. A mighty effort must be made to dislodge him soon, or the West is undone."[23] Whereas Lewis Tappan argued that the cities stood as the key strategical centers in converting the nation, Weld believed the exact opposite: "Don't be in too great haste to get hold of the cities . . . Kindle back fires, BACK FIRES, **BACK FIRES** far and wide. Let them stretch over the interior; the while you are engaged there the cities are preparing fast--when ripe--at the favorable nick of time--give the word--rally your forces and in the twinkling of an eye make a plunge--and they are a wreck."[24]

Finney resolved to concentrate his revival efforts in the New York metropolis. Although he realized New York contained formidable Old School opposition, Finney also recognized the exciting opportunity before him to minister to thousands of souls. Although the west could not be neglected, Finney proved unable to resist the opportunity of high visibility and extensive public exposure which a pulpit in New York would allow. Through the vast number of souls that he would convert in the metropolis, Finney believed

that the revival spirit would emanate throughout the rest of the country as these new Christians would stand as living testaments to the life-transforming quality of God's spirit. The most spectacular way for Finney to exhibit his prowess as a revivalist, was to establish a church in the midst of iniquity among dance halls, saloons, and decrepit, overcrowded buildings where sin and despair prevail.[25] The Chatham Garden Theatre, up for sale and the locus of much evil and debauchery on Chatham Street, provided the opportunity to establish a church in this spiritually desolate area within the city. The theatre, which could seat twenty-five hundred people, became the Chatham Street Chapel after it was acquired by Lewis Tappan and his associates. Possibly the most important factor that convinced Finney to settle in New York City was his growing family. Finney and his wife, Lydia, now had three children. Further traveling would have to be without Lydia who now had pressing domestic concerns. Besides, Finney's health suffered and a permanent pastorate seemed most appealing.[26]

In May of 1832, Finney preached his first sermon in Chatham Street and despite a raging cholera epidemic, many people attended the meeting and underwent conversion.[27] Finney approached revivals in a more refined and subdued manner, although he could still exhort with great emotional impact. But Finney did not labor alone. To assist him in the city, Finney secured the services of the Reverends

Herman Norton, Dirck C. Lansing, Joel Parker, and John Ingersoll.[28]

While at Chatham Street, Finney's poor health worsened in the winter of 1833 when he contracted cholera. In the fall of 1834, after a vacation designed to restore his health, Finney returned to Chatham Street while entertaining thoughts of retiring.[29] Finney seemed less than enthusiastic about his new chapel even though it was gaining recognition as the "'cathedral' of the new empire of expanding benevolence."[30] Not only was the chapel a huge place, in a poor neighborhood, which lacked any intimacy, Finney also feared the structure might collapse under the weight of a full house.[31] Finney, however, also anticipated prospects of greater influence as plans for the Broadway Tabernacle were prepared. The Tabernacle would be designed for Finney, according to his specifications. In 1836, Finney became installed as pastor at Broadway Tabernacle **Congregational** Church.[32]

The Presbyterian governance structure proved much too burdensome and restrictive for the independent and strong willed Finney. He not only resented the Old School theology but also the Presbyterian penchant for ecclesiastical bureaucracy imposed by the presbytery, synod, and general assembly. In his Lectures on Revivals, Finney expressed his utter contempt for the needless gatherings of his colleagues which often diverted the energies of ministers from their

soul saving efforts:

> These things in the Presbyterian church, their contentions and janglings are so ridiculous, so wicked, so outrageous, that no doubt there is a jubilee in hell every year, about the time of the meeting of the General Assembly. . . . Ministers have been dragged from home, year by year, and perhaps have left a revival in progress, and gone to the General Assembly, and there heard debates, and witnessed a spirit, by which their souls have been grieved and their hearts hardened . . .[33]

The presbytery demanded mandatory attendance at all meetings by ministers unless a valid reason could be presented. From 1824-1836, Keith Hardman has stated that Finney failed to attend approximately ninety percent of church meetings without offering any excuses.[34] Such blatant disregard for church authority would not have been tolerated by a minister of lesser stature. Fame had its privileges and Finney took advantage of them as the presbyteries made special allowances for Finney's demanding schedule and great prominence. Isolating himself from the church hierarchy "he squawked mightily when it did not defer to his wishes, and continued his high-flying, independent ways."[35] As one of the foremost clergyman in the country, Finney discovered the limits of fame's power to sway his colleague's opinions and, therefore, after a couple of inconsistent decisions in disciplining church members, a rankled Finney decided to switch to a Congregationalist affiliation when installed at the newly completed Broadway Tabernacle.[36]

With his custom built church and large, wealthy

congregation, Finney appeared to be settled for the rest of his career. However, a year before his installation at the Broadway Church, a determined effort was under way to lure Finney back west. In 1835 a group of students, led by Theodore Weld, left Lane Seminary because of the ban imposed upon their discussions of the slavery issue. They then founded a college in Oberlin, Ohio with the financial backing of Arthur Tappan. Both Tappan and Weld implored Finney to establish a theological department. Many of the Lane rebels wrote directly to Finney in New York City trying to persuade him to come west:

> Our eyes have for a long time been turned toward you, as possessing peculiar qualifications to fill a professorship in such an institution. Holding and teaching sentiments which we believe are in accordance with the Bible, and having been called by God to participate more largely in the revivals of the last 9 years than any other man in the church, we could not but fix our attention on you as one whom God had designated for such a work . . . .Recognizing these truths, and having full confidence in your qualifications, we strongly desire to become your pupils. . . . We need more practical preaching power-more knowledge of revival measures than we can obtain at any Seminary in the West, or perhaps in the country. . . . We cannot but think that the Providence of God calls upon you to become the professor of theology in that institution. If you should go there, nearly or quite all the theological students who left Lane, would place themselves at once under your instruction.[37]

With a minister of Finney's renown teaching at the fledgling college, this would go a long way towards establishing the institution's reputation and attracting some of the best ministerial candidates throughout the

country. Once again, Finney faced a tough choice. New York offered security and prestige as the center of the Benevolent Empire. Moreover, the Broadway Tabernacle had been constructed. Yet, there were several compelling reasons to journey west. Many of the Lane rebels had been converted in his revivals and the opportunity to teach them offered much pleasure. Plus, the schedule of an educator would be much less demanding than ministering in a pulpit at the center of the New York metropolis.[38] Finney, possibly in an effort to maintain his prominence in the big city while also soothing his conscience by fulfilling the responsibility he felt towards training these promising young revivalists, compromised and agreed to spend six months of the year at both New York and Oberlin.[39]

The arduous journey proved too taxing not only for himself but also for his wife and four children, while the overwhelming pressures of holding two such important posts exacted a heavy toll. Therefore, after two years of laboring at both places, Finney resigned from Broadway Tabernacle on 6 April 1837 and determined to devote himself completely to Oberlin. Although Oberlin faced an extreme financial crisis, inflicted by the Panic of 1837, Finney saw an opportunity to advance God's work by training generations of new ministers who would go forth and reform the whole country:

> I came here and saw that there was nothing to prevent the building up of a college on the

> principles that seemed to me not only to lie at the foundation of all success in establishing a college here at the West; but on principles of reform. . . .The brethren that were here on the ground were heartily in favor of building up a school on radical principles of reform.[40]

The prestige and renown of Finney may have played a significant part in helping Oberlin survive these initial economic storms. Oberlin's student enrollment increased from two hundred in 1835 to five hundred in 1840 and the number eventually reached one thousand in 1850.[41] In addition to serving as professor of theology, Finney accepted the pastorate of the First Congregational Church of Christ at Oberlin. Finney began a revival ministry with the intention of converting all the students and people of the surrounding area. To this effort he applied his customary diligence and enthusiasm.[42]

As pastor at Oberlin, Finney continued to mesmerize people with his magnetic personality and charm. Robert Fletcher wrote that "to go to Oberlin was to hear Finney, the great actor of the American pulpit."[43] The transformation of Finney from a harsh, controversial backwoods preacher to a much more dignified and sophisticated minister was now complete as "supplications took the place of warning, tears the place of sweeping, stabbing gestures."[44] Finney, in a mood of heart-felt concern and deep humility, fell down to his knees and

> poured out before God and his audience extemporaneous pleas for the sick and distressed of the congregation, for the welfare of the

> college, for the farmers, for the nation, and for any that needed divine assistance. Such a prayer could continue for five to seven minutes, and its effect would be melting, persuasive. Then, the prayer completed, Finney would rise to his feet, announce a hymn for all to sing, which would allow time for the transition in mood, and then launch into a penetrating discourse that riveted his hearers to their seats.[45]

Retiring from the front lines of battle to convert thousands of souls and to usher in the millennium, Charles Finney continued his efforts primarily within the friendly confines of Oberlin College among admiring supporters and devoted students.

Fame, as it so often does, presented many new avenues for increased recognition--in Finney's case, as God's greatest soul winner. As he traveled from village, to town, to metropolis, and finally to a western college in Ohio, Finney envisioned ever burgeoning opportunities to affect the destinies of countless souls. In order to succeed in converting his widely disparate audiences, Finney found it necessary constantly to modify his methods. What had inspired the simple people out west, only offended the sensibilities of the more sophisticated people in the east. This ability of Finney's to meet his audience on their own terms brought him unprecedented success and fame as God's greatest soul winner.

Yet, if wide public recognition entailed prestige and power among supporters and colleagues, it also involved

certain drawbacks. Harshly criticized by many detractors, confronted with limits on his ability to meet all the demands placed upon him by friends and co-workers, and frustrated with ecclesiastical bureaucracy Finney discovered the heavy toll that fame could exact. Mounting responsibilities at both New York and Oberlin, required more sacrifices which often compounded the burden of his poor health; but with the support of his friends and family he faced his struggles with resolve.[46]

Both the quest for personal glory and the desire to serve God and humanity drove Finney. In his early revivals, Finney sought to construct a reputation for himself. After having achieved tremendous renown, Finney settled at Oberlin to create a legacy which would inspire those who would follow him to continue his revival labors. Within the heart of ambitious men lies the ardent desire to live immortally within the bosom of succeeding generations. Pericles in "The Funeral Speech" observed that "the whole earth is the sepulcher of famous men and their story is not graven only on stone over their native earth, but lives on far away, without visible symbol, woven into the stuff of other men's lives."

5

Conclusion:
The Burden of Renown

The changing contours of ministerial responsibilities allowed for a more aggressive and overt pursuance of career advancement. As the minister's duties stretched beyond the local parish to the translocal evangelical and benevolent societies, a vast array of opportunities unfolded which summoned ministers to be evangelists, reformers, administrators, teachers, organizers, and lecturers to address a national audience.[1] When ministers vacated their local pulpits some of their parishioners accused them of pride, ambition, and vanity. Indeed, some of the ministers themselves questioned the purity of their own motives. In this last chapter I want to briefly explore this internal struggle between disinterested service to God and worldly ambitions among two other ministers and a social reformer: Lyman Beecher, William Ellery Channing, and Theodore Dwight Weld, respectively. Like Finney they also faced the issue of increased recognition as it conflicted with their duty to labor as God's humble servants, but as we shall discover each person responded differently.

Fifteen years after graduating form Yale in 1797, Lyman Beecher, minister of the First Congregational Church in Litchfield, Connecticut, stood as perhaps the nation's preeminent clergyman. In 1812 the fact that Beecher, rather than the esteemed President of Yale, Timothy Dwight, spoke at the inauguration of the Connecticut Society for the Reformation of Morals and the Suppression of Vice, signified the power and influence which he had acquired.[2] But long before he received such recognition, Beecher had agonized over his motivations and ambitions as a minister of God. Throughout his career, Beecher never shunned the spotlight or avoided controversy, yet, he questioned whether his vanity, rather than his duty to God, pressed him onward in his ministerial labors. The painful self- scrutiny which Beecher, and many other ministers, endured led "from ecstasy to despair, from certainty to doubt, sometimes to paralysis and frequently to illness."[3]

After graduating from Yale, Beecher began a period of training to preach under Timothy Dwight. In his letters to Roxanna Foote, his fiancee, Beecher confided that he seemed to have lost his religious zeal and that he remained uncertain as to his spiritual condition.[4] Beecher contemplated discussing his dilemma with Dwight but fearful and ashamed he kept his worries to himself.[5] A few days later, Beecher delivered a sermon in West Haven. Afterwards, his despair intensified and he wrote to Roxanna

that, "man was made to deserve but not to receive the applause of men. Give God the glory is the rule, while self lies humble in the dust rejoicing to be hid that God may appear. Oh! how horrid to enter the pulpit prompted by the desire of applause!"[6]

The next sentence demonstrates how the crisis was resolved: "Oh, how does our fame dwindle into nothing when employed to snatch immortal souls as brands from everlasting burning."[7] Beecher had convinced himself that his motivations and actions were sanctified because, as Scott explains, "the very abjectness of the surrender to God's will and desire becomes... the condition for acts far surpassing the applause of men."[8]

William Ellery Channing (1780-1842) achieved fame not only as a Unitarian minister at Boston's Federal Street Church, but also as a literary figure who - through his public essays on Milton, Fenelon, Napoleon and his Remarks on American Literature (1830)--influenced such writers as Emerson, Bryant, Longfellow, and Lowell. Channing became embroiled in the "Unitarian Controversy" within the Congregational churches. This storm had been brewing for some time when in 1815 the orthodox Calvinists insisted on stamping out heresy by challenging those Calvinists, like Channing, whom they accused of Arminianism and Socinianism. A period of furious pamphleteering ensued between the

orthodox and the liberal Calvinists eventually known as Unitarians.

Initially, Channing did not want to be labeled or limited by being designated a Unitarian. Channing wished "to escape the narrow walls of a particular church, and to live under the open sky, looking far and wide and seeing with my own eyes and hearing with my own ears."[9] His free-thinking ways led Channing to reject the Calvinist conceptions of a jealous God and an innately depraved humanity as unscriptural. Instead, he asserted the goodness of God, the perfectibility of mankind, and the ability of people to act of their own free will. Reluctantly, Channing assumed the leadership of the Unitarians and organized in 1825 the American Unitarian Association. The Christian Register became the unofficial publication of the Unitarian denomination and through this vehicle many encountered Channing's religious thought.

As a preacher, Channing was quite reserved. His sermons were didactic yet eloquent. His charisma rested upon a calm presence that, because of its peacefulness, appealed all the more strongly to others. Channing's nephew described him in the following manner: "The seriousness of his deportment, the depth and sweetness of his voice, the pathos with which he read the Scriptures... his humble trustful spirit of prayer, his subdued feeling, so expressive of personal experience, made religion a new reality; while his whole air

and look of spirituality won them to listen by its mild and somewhat melancholy beauty."[10] Extremely modest, Channing said it grieved him to be complimented for delivering an eloquent sermon: "If I had touched the depths of spiritual energy, my hearers would not express admiration for my words."[11] The best preaching, Channing believed, "leads the audience to lose sight of the speaker in the sublimity of his themes."[12] The minister must "preach the Gospel with earnestness, with affection, with a heart warmed by his subject, not thinking of himself, not seeking applause, but solicitous for the happiness of mankind."[13] Otherwise, Channing lamented, a minister "will be heard, admired, criticized, as an actor is, for the excitement he causes."[14]

Channing's natural humility and constant self-examination prevented him from being concerned and trapped by his growing public persona. He felt "almost an insuperable reluctance" when having to preach or visit when "people have taken it into their heads that they are to see or hear something like a prodigy." Channing possessed a heart-felt "conviction which contradicts this opinion of the world and renders their applause painful, mortifying." He further explained that fame was not his "right" and he prayed that it would never be his "wish and end."[15]

Theodore Dwight Weld (1803-1895) is the most enigmatic and intriguing of the three men under study. He spent most of his childhood in western New York, near Utica. Despite

his initial disdain and hostility towards Finney and his brand of revivalism, Weld's aunt coaxed him into attending one of Finney's meetings. Within the next few days, Weld converted and became a friend and devoted worker of Finney. As part of Finney's "holy band", Weld preached among the young men of western New York and became a popular figure. When he enrolled at Oneida Institute, Whitesboro, New York to prepare for the ministry, many young men followed him. During this time, Weld spent much energy fighting for the cause of temperance and by the end of the 1820s he became recognized as one of the temperance movements most effective speakers in the West.

A close friend of Weld, Charles Stuart, persuaded Weld to employ his speaking talents against the evil of slavery. By 1830, Weld was consumed by anti-slavery zeal and converted the New York philanthropists Arthur and Lewis Tappan to the cause of abolitionism. The Tappans created the American Anti-Slavery Society and by 1834 Weld had gathered a group of people together and sent them out as agents for the Anti-Slavery Society. Using Finney's methods, they preached with great ardor against slavery. The most passionate and effective speaker was Weld himself who spoke as "eloquent as an angel and powerful as thunder."[16] As an abolitionist speaker, Weld achieved more recognition in the 1830s than anyone except William Lloyd Garrison. Weld achieved success in Rochester and Utica in

New York State and his herculean efforts led Garrison to characterize Weld as "the lion-hearted, invincible Weld."[17]

Weld was a restless, tormented man often afflicted by dark moods of brooding. Apparently trying to hide being a son of a Congregational minister and descendent of several prominent New England families, Weld portrayed himself as a rustic farmer. Weld, however, owned no land, was unmarried, and had no settled roots in a particular community as he traveled extensively in his crusade against slavery. Weld believed that by ending slavery, he was also preparing the way for the Second Coming of Christ. In fact, he referred to his modest clothes as "John the Baptist attire."[18] Both as a revivalist and abolitionist, Weld's view of himself as part of a cosmic plan served to "satisfy his own heroic sense of self."[19]

Weld's grand self-image, however, seems to have been shattered at Troy in 1836. After his anti-slavery recruiting successes in Rochester and Utica, Weld felt confident that he knew Westerners and that God blessed his labors.[20] But in Troy Weld encountered tremendous opposition. Several times mobs attacked him and prevented him from speaking. Encouraged by the mayor, the crowds threw stones, bricks, eggs, and sticks at Weld. Twice he was wounded and if not for the aid of friends, Weld might not have survived. Weld loathed leaving Troy as his nature would not allow him to concede defeat. This was a test not

only of his bravery but his self-image; the people of Troy were westerners--like those of upstate New York and Ohio where he had enjoyed success. Besides, if he continued the fight, God would vindicate him. This fight had a cosmic dimension because "facing the mob was to Weld the essence of abolition, for it was in fact facing the Devil and his forces and defeating them."[21]

Weld finally had to concede defeat as the mayor threatened to have him forcibly removed out of the city. Although personally crushed by this defeat, Weld's reputation among abolitionists continued to surge. Indeed, anti-slavery leaders began to implement his strategies and granted him the authority to restructure the Anti-Slavery Society system. Weld recruited the most talented people he could find on a four month swing through Ohio, New York, and New England. Weld's visible recruiting efforts further diminished the small amount of anonymity he had left.[22]

In November of 1836 a convention of abolitionists in New York convened in order to educate and create a sense of comraderie among Weld's new recruits. As the chairman Weld pushed himself, as was his custom, to exhaustion. By the final day of the convention, Weld, the great speaker, could barely peak above a whisper. This convention marked the end of Weld's career as an orator.[23] Only infrequently during his remaining fifty-seven years would he speak publicly again. Equally surprising, Weld, who identified himself as

a westerner, remained within close vicinity to New York and Boston. Furthermore, although his revivalistic tactics gained favor among anti-slavery advocates, Weld himself withdrew "from revival-centered efforts toward an almost completely noninstitutional, body-based personal piety."[24]

The loss of Weld's voice struck at his ability to rally the people. Weld did regain his voice and lived the rest of his long life in relatively good health. So then why did he lose his voice? Robert Abzug has argued that this affliction fits into a pattern of physical ailments due to over-exertion.[25] For example, Weld suffered temporary blindness at Andover and collapsed from exhaustion while working for Finney. But why then did Weld at this point after losing his voice withdraw from public life? Weld was driven, in part, by a sincere conviction not only in the anti-slavery cause but also in his own self-image as a western yeoman. His whole self-identity existed "within that cause and image [and] when both began to crumble, a major reevaluation was bound to occur."[26]

The extent of Weld's efforts to escape into obscurity has been noted by Benjamin Thomas:

> Weld would never accept an office of authority or honor in any anti-slavery organization. He refused to speak at anti-slavery conventions or anniversaries, or even attend them if he could avoid it. He shunned the cities, and chose to labor in the country districts, where newspapers were few, and his activities were seldom reported except by abolition journals. His writings were published anonymously and he would seldom allow the content of his speeches or his letters to

appear in print at all.[27]

One of the greatest abolitionists, Weld resigned himself to a self-imposed exile from the public arena.

The choice of these three men, while somewhat arbitrary, provide interesting similarities and contrasts. First, Beecher, like Finney, was an evangelical Presbyterian minister who accepted the modified Calvinism of the New Haven theology formulated by Nathaniel William Taylor. Further, similar to Finney, Beecher welcomes the spotlight; but while the evidence only hints at the distress which Finney may have suffered, Beecher's letters reveal the overwhelming anxiety he confronted as he questioned his own motives.[28] Secondly, with much apprehension William Ellery Channing accepted the mantle of leadership from the Unitarians who emerged from the liberal wing of the Presbyterian and Congregational churches in New England and against whom the evangelicals, led by Beecher and Finney, fought. Contrary to Beecher and Finney, Channing's acclaim greatly disturbed him. Channing was aware of the trappings of fame and sought diligently to avoid the pitfalls while still contributing to Unitarianism. Finally, Theodore Weld, who was converted by Finney and early in his career promoted revivalism as part of Finney's band, gained celebrity as the recognized leader of the anti-slavery movement of the 1830s. However, his later anonymity can be traced to his almost

morbid modesty. His trepidation caused him to relinquish the reins of anti-slavery leadership to the more radical abolitionists like William Lloyd Garrison.

In each instance, the burden of fame placed these men at odds with their Christian duty to be pure in spirit and motive. Their struggle challenged them to reexamine their dedication to the ideal of disinterested benevolence in their service to God and humanity. Ironically, their roles as revivalist, minister, and social reformer were undergoing transformations that inadvertently had the effect of increasing the opportunities for public recognition which increased the temptations of vanity and avarice among Christian leaders dedicated to altruistic service.

Endnotes

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[1]Daniel H. Calhoun, Professional Lives in America: Structure and Aspiration, 1750-1850 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965); Sydney E. Mead, "The Rise of the Evangelical Conception of the Ministry in America: 1607-1850," The Ministry in Historical Perspective, eds. H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956); Donald M. Scott, From Office to Profession: The New England Ministry, 1750-1850 (Camden, New Jersey: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978).

[2]Donald M. Scott, "Watchmen on the Walls of Zion: Evangelicals and American Society, 1800-1860 (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1968), 2, n. 1.

[3]Reverend Titus Strong, sermon delivered in Claremont, New Hampshire, at the installation of Reverend James B. Howe, 15 September 1819 (Windsor, Vermont: Ide & Addrich, 1819), 5-6.

[4]Ambrose Hough, sermon preached 10 April 1810 at the ordination of Reverend Daniel Haskel (Burlington, Vermont: Samuel Mills, 1810), 19.

[5]Scott, "Watchmen," 1-2.

[6]Scott, Office, 11.

[7]Ibid., 16.

[8]Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 436-54.

[9]Scott, Office, 52.

[10]Mead, 234.

[11]Scott, Office, 56-57.

[12]Scott, "Watchmen," 2.

[13]Ibid., 54; Mead, 234.

[14]Lyman Beecher, Plea for the West (1835), quoted in Ahlstrom, 459.

[15]Ahlstrom, 459; Winthrop S. Hudson, Religion in America: An Historical Account of the Development of American Religious Life, 3rd ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981), 132-33.

[16]Scott, Office, 63.

[17]Mead, 239.

[18]Scott, Office, 64.

[19]Mead, 239; Calhoun, 94. Calhoun suggests a connection, although tenuous, between the rise of impermanency among Congregationalists and the growing influence of the Methodists. The Methodists with their itinerant ministers and lay preachers may have served as a model for other churches as competition for converts escalated: "Even during the stresses of the nineteenth century, traditional hierarchic organization like that of the Episcopalians made little appeal to the Congregationalists; it was the Baptist and Methodist examples that offered temptation."

[20]Calhoun, 88.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Scott, Office, 69.

[23]Hudson, 133-34.

[24]Ibid., 122-24.

[25]James H. Moorehead, "Charles Finney and the Modernization of America," Journal of Presbyterian History 62 (Summer 1984), 97.

[26]Ibid.

[27]Ibid., 98.

[28]Calhoun, 159-62. Calhoun notes that two common economic problems responsible for rising impermanency were the loss of parish lands and inflation. The lack of land deprived the minister from income as a part-time farmer and thus some measure of economic stability. Once dependent

solely upon a salary, the minister became vulnerable to periods of inflation such as in the late 1810s and middle 1830s. Such economic pressure combined with inadequate parish funds to relieve it, often led the minister to request dismission for greener pastures (p. 113).

[29]Scott, Office, 71.

[30]Ibid., 72.

[31]Leo Braudy, The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and its History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 13-14.

[32]Scott, "Watchmen," 4-5.

[33]Lyman Beecher, The Autobiography of Lyman Beecher, ed. Barbara Cross (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1961), I:50-67.

[34]Beecher to Roxanna Foote, 2 September 1798, Ibid., I:58.

[35]This paragraph is a synopsis of Scott's account in "Watchmen," 37-51.

[36]Ibid., 51.

[37]Calhoun, 152.

[38]Ibid., 152 & 108.

[39]Rev. Leonard Withington, Trumpet and Universalist Magazine, 30 July 1836.

[40]Richard Quebedeaux, By What Authority: The Rise of Personality Cults in American Christianity (San Francisco: Harper & Row Publishers, 1982), 19-20.

[41]William G. McLoughlin, "Charles Grandison Finney: The Revivalist as Culture Hero," Journal of American Culture, 5, No. 2 (Summer, 1982), 81.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Braudy, 13.

[45]Daniel Boorstin, The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America. Originally titled The Image: Or What Happened to the American Dream (New York: Atheneum, 1961; reprint, 1978), 48-9, 62-4.

[46]Ibid., 64.

[47]Ibid., 63.

[48]Ibid., 64.

[49]Ibid., 48.

[50]Ibid., 49; Braudy, 13.

[51]Ibid., 74.

[52]Ibid., 50.

[53]Constance Rourke, Trumpets of Jubilee (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & World Inc., 1927; New York: Harbinger Books, 1963), vii.

[54]Bernard Weisberger, They Gathered at the River: The Story of the Great Revivalist and their Impact upon Religion in America (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1958; reprint, Chicago: Quadrangle Paperbacks, 1966), 103-104; Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950; Cornell Paperbacks, 1982), 155; Paul E. Johnson, The Shopkeeper's Millenium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 102-108.

[55]Washington McCartney, "Eulogy [on the death of Andrew Jackson]," quoted in John William Ward, Andrew Jackson: Symbol for an Age (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 2.

[56]Ibid., 114.

[57]Ahlstrom, 382-83.

[58]Perry Miller, The Life of the Mind in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1965), 22-23.

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[1]Obituaries of Finney were found in the following newspapers: Alexandria (Va) Gazette, Atlanta Constitution, Cleveland Leader, Detroit Free Press, Daily Louisville (Ky) Commercial, Memphis Daily Appeal, New York Sun Times, New York Times, New York World, and the Philadelphia Inquirer. All ran the obituary on 17 August 1875.

[2]New York Times, 4.

[3]Atlanta Constitution.

[4]New York Times, 4.

[5]New York Sun Times, 1.

[6]Whitney Cross, The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950; Cornell Paperbacks, 1982), 14-15.

[7]Keith J. Hardman, Charles Grandison Finney, 1792-1875: Revivalist and Reformer (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 26.

[8]Mary P. Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 65; Cross, 84.

[9]Paul E. Johnson, A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), 36.

[10]Ibid., 138.

[11]Ibid., 141.

[12]Alice Felt Tyler, Freedom's Ferment: Phases of American Social History from the Colonial Period to the Outbreak of the Civil War (n.p.: University of Minnesota Press, 1944; reprint, New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962), 548.

[13]William C. Walzer, "Charles Grandison Finney and the

Presbyterian Revivals of Central and Western New York," (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1944), 8.

[14]Ryan, 24-25.

[15]Charles G. Finney, The Memoirs of Charles G. Finney, ed. Garth Rosell and Richard A. G. Dupuis (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Academie Books, 1989), 4, n. 14.

[16]Hardman, 30.

[17]Ibid. Hardman notes that while Finney's daughter, Julia Finney Monroe, and his grandson, William C. Cochran, believe he attended Hamilton, Finney never mentions it in his Memoirs. There remains no record from the academy proving Finney attended but this could be due to poorly kept and incomplete records.

[18]G. Fredrick Wright, Charles Grandison Finney (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, & Company, 1891), 2-3.

[19]William C. Cochran, "Charles G. Finney: Memorial Address," (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1908), 17-18, quoted in Hardman, 31.

[20]Finney, Memoirs, 5.

[21]Ibid., 9.

[22]Ibid., 8.

[23]Peter Starr, "The Nature and Importance of Covenanting with God," in Sermons on Important Subjects Collected from a Number of Ministers in some of the Northern States in America (Hartford, Conn.: Hudson and Goodwin, date--unreadable), 366.

[24]Finney, Memoirs, 7-8.

[25]Hardman, 34.

[26]Hardman, 36.

[27]Finney, Memoirs, 10.

[28]John S. Mattson, "Charles Grandison Finney and the Emerging Tradition of 'New Measure' Revivalism," (Ph.D. diss., Universtiy of North Carolina, 1970), passim; Hardman, 37-38.

[29]Perry Miller, The Life of the Mind in America from the

Revolution to the Civil War (San Diego: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1965), 24.

[30]Hardman, 39.

[31]Finney quoted in Miller, 32.
[32]Hardman, 39; Wright, 37.

[33]Finney, Memoirs, 30.

[34]Ibid., 31.

[35]Ibid., 16-17.

[36]Ibid., 18.

[37]Ibid., 20.

[38]Ibid., 22-24.

[39]Ibid., 27.

[40]William James, The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature (New York: Mentor Books, 1958), 169-70.

[41]Finney, Memoirs, 44.

[42]Bernard A. Weisberger, They Gathered at the River: The Story of the Great Revivalists and their Impact upon Religion in America (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1958; Chicago: Quadrangle Paperbacks, 1966), 94-5.

[43]Ibid., 95.

[44]Finney, Memoirs, 53, n. 41; Female Missionary Society of the Western District of the State of New York to Finney, 17 March 1824 (Finney Papers, microfilm, roll 1).

[45]Finney, Memoirs, 77, n. 20.

[46]Hardman, 60.

[47]Finney, Memoirs, 83.

[48]Cross, 159; Wright, 23.

[49]Finney, Memoirs, 1.

[50]George W. Gale, Autobiography of Reverend George W. Gale (New York: n.p., 1964), 184-5 quoted in Hardman, 49.

[51]Finney, Memoirs, 38-39.

[52]Ibid., 87.

[53]Ibid., 87.

[54]Ibid., 46-47.

[55]Hardman, 50.

[56]Finney, Memoirs, 87.

[57]Ibid., 64.

[58]Ibid., 66.

[59]Ibid., 66.

[60]Ibid., 67.

[61]Ibid., 98.

[62]Ibid., 99.

[63]Ibid., 100.

[64]Leo Braudy, The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and its History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 3.

[65]Lois Banner, "Religion and Reform: The Role of Youth," American Quarterly, 23 (December, 1971), 683.

[66]Ibid., 683.

[67]Braudy, 14.

[68]Finney to Weld, 21 July 1836, Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld, and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844, ed. Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1934), I:319.

[69]Banner, 682.

[70]Letters from New York, First Ser.(New York: C.S. Francis & Co., 1852), 65 quoted in Banner, 683.

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[1]Keith J. Hardman, Charles Grandison Finney, 1792-1875: Revivalist and Reformer (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 69.

[2]Ibid., 72.

[3]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: Hastings and Tracy, 1826), 7 quoted in Hardman, 74.

[4]Hardman, 74.

[5]Charles G. Finney, The Memoirs of Charles G. Finney, ed. Garth M. Rosell and Richard A.G. Dupuis (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Academie Books, 1989), 162 and n. 31.

[6]Ibid., 167.

[7]Hardman, 74.

[8]Finney, Memoirs, 158.

[9]Hardman, 75.

[10]Pomroy Jones, Annals and Recollections of Oneida County (Rome, New York: published by the author, 1851), 390 quoted in Hardman, 75.

[11]Presbytery of Oneida, Narrative, 15-16 quoted in Hardman, 75.

[12]Harriet and M. Gillet to Finney and Mrs., 28 February 1827 (Finney Papers, microfilm, roll 1).

[13]Hardman, 77.

[14]Mrs. G.W. Thomson, "Early Labors of President Finney," New York Evangelist, 9 December 1875, 2.

[15]A Brief Account of the Origin and Progress of the Divisions in the First Presbyterian Church in the city of Troy: containing also strictures upon the new doctrines

broached by the Rev. C.G. Finney and N.S.S. Beman, with a summary relation of the trial of the latter before the Troy Presbytery by a number of the late church and congregation (Troy, New York: Tuttle and Richards, 1827), 19-20.

[16]Ibid., 20.

[17]Ibid., 22.

[18]Daniel Boorstin, The National Experience (New York: Random House, 1965; Vintage Books, 1967), 277.

[19]Ibid., 318.

[20]New York Evangelist, 8 May 1830.

[21]William C. Walzer, "Charles Grandison Finney and the Presbyterian Revivals of Central and Western New York" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1944), 224.

[22]Finney, Memoirs, 91.

[23]Charles G. Finney, Sermons on Gospel Themes (Oberlin: Goodrich, 1876), 365-66.

[24]Finney, Memoirs, 186.

[25]Lyman Beecher, The Autobiography of Lyman Beecher, ed. Barbara Cross (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1961) II:67-8.

[26]Trumpet and Universalist Magazine, 19 November 1831.

[27]Leo Braudy, The Frenzy of Renown: Fame and its History (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 8.

[28]Ibid., 8.

[29]Finney to Weld, 21 July 1836, Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844, ed. Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (New York: Appleton-Century-Croft, 1934), I:319.

[30]Charles G. Finney, Lectures to Professing Christians (London: Milner, 1837; New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1985), 22.

[31]Finney, Sermons on Gospel Themes, 365.

[32]Weld to Finney, 22 April 1828 (Finney Papers, microfilm, roll 2).

[33]Ibid.

[34]Joshua Leavitt to Finney, 28 February 1831 (Finney Papers, microfilm, roll 2).

[35]Weld to Finney, 22 April 1828.

[36]William G. McLoughlin, ed., "Introduction," Lectures on Revivals of Religion, by Charles G. Finney (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960), xxxvi-xxxvii.

[37]Richard Carwardine, "The Second Great Awakening in the Urban Centers: An Examination of Methodism and the 'New Measures,'" The Journal of American History 59 (September, 1972), 335.

[38]John Frost to Finney, 22 March 1827 (Finney Papers, microfilm, roll 1).

[39]Alexander H. Morrison, "The Finney Takeover of the Second Great Awakening During the Oneida Revival of 1825-1827," New York History 59 (January, 1978), 53.

[40]Sydney E. Ahlstrom, A Religious History of the American People (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 419-20; Sidney E. Mead, Nathaniel William Taylor, 1786-1858: A Connecticut Liberal (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), 109-20.

[41]Morrison, 29.

[42]"Revivals in Oneida County," New York Observer, 21 January 1826.

[43]Thomas Seward, "Address: A Memorial of the Semi-Centennial of the Founding of the Sunday School of the First Presbyterian Church, Utica, New York," (Utica, 1867), 126-27 quoted in Morrison, 33.

[44]Morrison, 35-36.

[45]Ibid., 41.

[46]Lyman Beecher to Nettleton, 30 January 1827, printed in the Utica Magazine, 17 March 1827.

[47]Ibid.

[48]Minutes published in the New York Observer, 4 August 1827; Beecher's account is in his Autobiography, 2:74-80; Finney's is in his Memoirs, 216-25.

[49]Hardman, 134.

[50]G. Fredrick Wright, Charles Grandison Finney (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, & Company, 1891), 84-85.

[51]Hardman, 134-5.

[52]New York Observer, 4 August 1827.

[53]Robert Samuel Fletcher, A History of Oberlin College: From its Foundation through the Civil War (Oberlin, Ohio: Oberlin College, 1943), I:16, n. 29.

[54]Beecher quoted in William McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham (New York: Ronald Press Company, 1959), 45.

[55]Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York,1800-1850 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950; Cornell Paperbacks, 1982), 164.

[56]McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, 40.

[57]Ibid.; Hardman, 149; Fletcher, I:16.

[1]Robert Samuel Fletcher, A History of Oberlin College: From its Foundation through the Civil War (Oberlin, OH: Oberlin College, 1943), I:17.

[2]Ibid., I:18.

[3]Ibid., I:20-21.

[4]William G. McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham (New York: The Ronald Press Co., 1959), 54.

[5]Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950; Cornell Paperbacks, 1982), 155.

[6]Rochester Observer, 24 December 1830.

[7]McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, 55.

[8]George Gale to Finney, 21 January 1830 (Finney Papers, microfilm, roll 2).

[9]E.W. Clarke to Finney, 23 May 1832 (Finney Papers, microfilm, roll 3).

[10]Finney, Memoirs, 307; Paul E. Johnson, A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837 (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978). In his study of the Rochester revival, Johnson states that before the economic Panic of 1837 urban workers had no independent revivals but rather were only "adopting the religion of the middle class . . ." and therefore "evangelicalism was a middle class solution to problems of class, legitimacy, and order generated in the early stages of manufacturing." And yet "the revival was not a capitalistic plot. But it certainly was a crucial step in the legitimation of free labor.", 138-41.

[11]McLoughlin, Modern Revivalism, 57.

[12]Zephaniah Platt to Finney, 19 June 1826 (Finney

Papers, microfilm, roll 1).

[13]Fletcher, I:26.

[14]Ibid., I:28.

[15]Lewis Tappan to Finney, 16 March 1832 (Finney Papers, microfilm, roll 3).

[16]Winthrop S. Hudson, Religion in America: An Historical account of the Development of American Religious Life, 3rd ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981), 153.

[17]Donald M. Scott, From Office to Profession: The New England Ministry, 1750-1850 (Camden, NJ: University of Pennsylvania Press 1978), 69.

[18]Keith J. Hardman, Charles Grandison Finney, 1792-1875: Revivalist and Reformer (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 249.

[19]Lewis Tappan to Finney, 16 March 1832 (Finney Papers, microfilm, roll 3).

[20]Lewis Tappan to Finney quoted in Fletcher, I:29.

[21]Lewis Tappan to Finney, 17 March 1831 (Finney Papers, microfilm, roll 2).

[22]Weld to Finney, 28 February 1832, ed. Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond, Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York, 1934), I:50.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Weld [& M. Brayton] to Finney 19 March 1827 (Finney Papers, microfilm, roll 1).

[25]Lewis Tappan in Finney, Memoirs, 354, n. 110.

[26]Hardman, 251.

[27]Fletcher, I:31.

[28]Ibid., I:32.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Hardman, 257.

[31]Lewis Tappan to Finney, 22 March and 11 April 1832

(Finney Papers, microfilm, roll 2).

[32]Fletcher, I:33.

[33]Charles G. Finney, Lectures on Revivals of Religion, ed. William G. McLoughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1960), 291-92.

[34]Hardman, 310, n. 71.

[35]Hardman, 310.

[36]Hardman, 311; Finney, Memoirs, 364.

[37]George Whipple and Henry B. Stanton to Finney, 10 January 1835 (Finney Papers, microfilm, roll 3).

[38]Charles Finney to Lydia Finney, 10 November 1834 (Finney Papers, microfilm, roll 3); Finney, Memoirs, 378-79.

[39]Finney, Memoirs, 379-82; Finney to the Trustees of Oberlin College, 30 June 1835 (Finney Papers, microfilm, roll 3).

[40]Finney, Memoirs, 396.

[41]Hardman, 351; Fletcher, I:501; G. Fredrick Wright, Charles Grandison Finney (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, & Company, 1891), 157-58.

[42]Hardman, 351.

[43]Fletcher, II:576.

[44]Fletcher, II:578.

[45]Hardman, 353.

[46]Leonard I. Sweet, The Minister's Wife: Her Role in 9th Century American Evangelicalism (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), passim. Finney was married three times and the support and comfort he received from each of them contributed tremendously to his success. Sweet's book provides an excellent account of how Lydia Root Andrews, Elizabeth (Ford) Atkinson, and Rebecca (Allen) Rayl provided beneficial assistance to his ministry.

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[1]James H. Moorehead, "Charles Finney and the Modernization of America," Journal of Presbyterian History 62 (Summer 1984), 98.

[2]Donald M. Scott, "Watchmen on the Walls of Zion, Evangelicals and American Society, 1800-1860," (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1968), 2. In the first section of his dissertation, Scott elucidates how the development of Beecher's ministerial career reflects the significant change which the ministry underwent: namely, from a calling to a career which one consciously pursued.

[3]Ibid., 4.

[4]Lyman Beecher, The Autobiography of Lyman Beecher, ed. Barbara Cross (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1962), I:50-67. For the following account I have followed closely Scott's analysis in "Watchmen," 4-6.

[5]Beecher to Roxanna Foote, Sept. 2, 1798, Autobiography, I:58.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Scott,"Watchmen," 6.

[9]WEC quoted in Dictionary of American Biography, ed. Allen Johnson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1957), IV:5.

[10]William Henry Channing, Memoir of William Ellery Channing, with Extracts from his Correspondence and Manuscripts, 3 vols. (Boston: Wm. Crosby and H.P. Nichols, 1848), I:205, quoted in Jack Mendelsohn, Channing: The Reluctant Radical (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1971), 82.

[11]Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, Reminiscences of Rev. Wm. Ellery Channing, D.D. (Boston: Robert Brothers, 1880), 88 quoted in Mendelsohn, 10.

[12]William Henry Channing, II:150-51 quoted in

Mendelsohn, 91.

[13]WEC, "Preaching Christ. Discourse at the Ordination of the Rev. John Emery Abbot. Salem, 1815" quoted in Madeleine Hook Rice, Federal Street Pastor: The Life of William Ellery Channing (New York: Bookman Associates, 1961), 81.

[14]William Henry Channing, II: 150-51 qouted in Mendelsohn, 91.

[15]WEC to Susan A. Channing, 24 August 1812 (New York City: Pierpont Morgan Library), quoted in Mendelsohn, 151.

[16]The quote and preceeding background material was derived from the Dictionary of American Biography, X:625-26.

[17]Garrison to G.W. Benson, 27 November 1835, quoted in Robert H. Abzug, Passionate Liberator: Theodore Dwight Weld and the Dilemma of Reform (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 5.

[18]Weld to Sarah & Angelina Grimke, 28 December 1837 in Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844, ed. Gilbert H. Barnes & Dwight L. Dumond (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1934), I:508.

[19]Abzug, 50.

[20]Ibid., 147.

[21]Ibid., 149.

[22]Ibid., 151.

[23]Ibid., 152.

[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid., 153.

[26]Ibid., 154.

[27]Benjamin P. Thomas, Theodore Weld: Crusader for Freedom (New York: Octagon Books, 1973), vi.

[28]Whether or not Finney thought through the possible implications of his fame remains unclear. The reason for this is the dearth of his personal writings and letters. For a complete discussion of this problem consult the "Sources and Selected Bibliography" section by Garth M. Rosell and Richard A.G. Dupuis, ed., in The Memoirs of

Charles G. Finney (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Academie Books, 1989), 671-77.

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