

**THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF
CHARLES FINNEY**

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CHAPTER 1

BIRTH AND EARLY EDUCATION

It has pleased God in some measure to connect my name and labours with an extensive movement of the church of Christ, regarded by some as a new era in its progress, especially in relation to revivals of religion. As this movement involved, to a considerable extent, the development of views of Christian doctrine which had not been common, and was brought about by changes in the means of carrying forward the work of evangelisation, it was very natural that some misapprehension should prevail in regard to these modified statements of doctrine, and the use of these measures; and consequently that, to some extent, even good men should call in question the wisdom of these measures and the soundness of these theological statements; and that ungodly men should be irritated, and for a time should strenuously oppose these great movements.

I have spoken of myself as connected with these movements; but only as one of the many ministers and other servants of Christ, who have shared prominently in promoting them. I am aware that by a certain portion of the church I have been considered an innovator, both in regard to doctrine and measures; and that many have looked upon me as rather prominent, especially in assailing some of the old forms of theological thought and expression, and in stating the doctrines of the Gospel in many respects in new language.

I have been particularly importuned, by the friends of those revivals with which my name and labours have been connected, to write a history of them. As so much misapprehension has prevailed respecting them, it is thought that the truth of history demands a statement of the doctrines that were preached, so far as I was concerned; of the measures used, and of the results of preaching those doctrines and the use of those measures.

My mind seems instinctively to recoil from saying so much of myself as I shall be obliged to do, if I speak honestly. For this reason I have declined, up to this time, to undertake such a work. Of late the trustees of Oberlin College have laid the matter before me, and urged me to undertake it. Other friends in this country and in England, have urged that it was due to the cause of Christ, that a better understanding should exist in the church than has hitherto existed, in regard especially to the revivals that occurred in central New York and elsewhere, from 1821 and onward for several years, because those revivals have been most misrepresented and opposed.

I approach the subject, I must say, with reluctance, for many reasons. I have kept no diary, and consequently depend on my memory. It is true, that my memory is naturally very tenacious, and the events that I have witnessed have made a very deep impression on my mind. Everyone who has witnessed powerful revivals of religion is aware that many cases of conviction and conversion are daily occurring, of the greatest. Where all the facts and circumstances are known, a thrilling effect is often produced; and such cases are frequently so numerous that if all the highly interesting facts of even one extended revival, in a single locality, should be narrated, it would fill a large volume.

I do not propose to pursue this course in what I am about to write. I shall only sketch such an outline as will, upon the whole, give a tolerably clear idea of the type which these revivals took on; and shall only relate a few of the particular instances of conversion which occurred in different places.

I shall also endeavour to give such an account of the doctrines which were preached, and of the measures which were used, and shall mention such facts, in general, as will enable the church hereafter, partially at least, to estimate the power and purity of those great works of God.

But I hesitate to write a narrative of those revivals, because I have often been surprised to find how much my own remembrance of facts differs from the recollection of other persons. Of course I must state the facts as I remember them. A great many events have been often referred to by myself in preaching, as illustrative of the truths that I was presenting to the people. I have been so often reminded of them, and have so often referred to them, that I can not but have strong confidence that I remember them substantially as they occurred. If I shall in any case misstate the facts, or if in any case my recollections shall differ widely from those of others, I trust that the church will believe that my statements are in entire accordance with my present remembrance of those facts.

To give any intelligible account of the part which I was called to act in those scenes, it is necessary that I should give a little history of the manner in which I came to adopt the doctrinal views which I have long held and preached.

I must commence by giving a very brief account of my birth, and early circumstances and education, my conversion to Christ, my study of theology, and my entering upon the work of the ministry. I am not about to write an autobiography, let it be remembered; and shall enter no farther into the details of my own private life than shall seem necessary to give an intelligible account of the manner in which I was led, in relation to great movements of the church.

I was born in Warren, Litchfield county, Connecticut, August 29, 1792. When I was about two years old, my father removed to Oneida county, New York, which was, at that time, to a great extent, a wilderness. No religious privileges were enjoyed by the people. Very few religious books were to be had. The new settlers, being mostly from New England, almost immediately established common schools; but they had among them very little intelligent preaching of the Gospel. I enjoyed the privileges of a common school, summer and winter, until I was fifteen or sixteen years old, and advanced so far as to be supposed capable of teaching a common school myself, as common schools were then conducted.

My parents were neither of them professors of religion, and among our neighbours there were very few religious people. I seldom heard a sermon, unless it was an occasional one from some travelling minister, or some miserable holding forth of an ignorant preacher. The ignorance of the preachers that I heard was such, that the people would return from meeting and spend a considerable time in irrepressible laughter at the strange mistakes which had been made and the absurdities which had been advanced.

In the neighbourhood of my father's residence we had just erected a meeting house and settled a minister when my father was induced to remove again into the wilderness skirting the southern shore of Lake Ontario, a little south of Sackett's Harbor. Here again I lived for several years, enjoying no better religious privileges than I had in Oneida county.

When about twenty years old I returned to Connecticut, and from thence went to New Jersey, near New York city, and engaged in teaching. I taught and studied as best I could; and twice returned to New England and attended a high school for a season. While attending the high school I meditated going to Yale College. My preceptor was a graduate of Yale, but he advised me not to go. He said it would be a loss of time, as I could easily accomplish the whole curriculum pursued at that institution, in two years; whereas it would cost me four years to graduate. He presented such considerations as prevailed with me, and as it resulted, I failed to pursue my school education any farther at that time. Afterward I acquired some knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. But I was never a classical scholar, and never possessed so much knowledge of the ancient languages as to think myself capable of independently criticising our English translation of the Bible.

The teacher to whom I have referred, wished me to join him in conducting an academy in one of the Southern States. I was inclined to accept his proposal, with the design of pursuing and completing my studies under his instruction. But when I informed my parents, whom I had not seen for four years, of my contemplated movement south, they both came immediately after me, and prevailed on me to go home with them to Jefferson county, New York. After making them a visit, I concluded to enter, as a student, the law office of Squire W., at Adams, in that county. This was in 1818.

Up to this time I had never enjoyed what might be called religious privileges. When I was teaching school in New Jersey, the preaching in the neighbourhood was chiefly in German. I do not think I heard half a dozen sermons in English during my whole stay in New Jersey, which was about three years.

Thus when I went to Adams to study law, I was almost as ignorant of religion as a heathen. I had been brought up mostly in the woods. I had very little regard to the Sabbath, and had no definite knowledge of religious truth.

I had never, until this time, lived where I could attend a stated prayer meeting. As one was held by the church near our office every week, I used to attend and listen to the prayers, as often as I could be excused from business at that hour.

In studying elementary law, I found the old authors frequently quoting the Scriptures, and referring especially to the Mosaic Institutes, as authority for many of the great principles of common law. This excited my curiosity so much that I went and purchased a Bible, the first I had ever owned; and whenever I found a reference by the law authors to the Bible, I turned to the passage and consulted it in its connection. 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. However, much of it I did not understand.

Mr. Gale (the Presbyterian minister) was in the habit of dropping in at our office

frequently, and seemed anxious to know what impression his sermons had made on my mind. I used to converse with him freely; and I now think that I sometimes criticised his sermons unmercifully. I raised such objections against his positions as forced themselves upon my attention.

We had a great many interesting conversations; but they seemed rather to stimulate my own mind to inquiry, than to satisfy me in respect to the truth. But as I read my Bible and attended the prayer meetings, heard Mr. Gale preach, and conversed with him, with the elders of the church, and with others from time to time, I became very restless. A little consideration convinced me that I was by no means in a state of mind to go to heaven if I should die. It seemed to me that there must be something in religion that was of infinite importance; and it was soon settled with me, that if the soul was immortal I needed a great change in my inward state to be prepared for happiness in heaven. But still my mind was not made up as to the truth or falsehood of the Gospel and of the Christian religion. The question, however, was of too much importance to allow me to rest in any uncertainty on the subject.

I was particularly struck with the fact that the prayers that I had listened to, from week to week, were not, that I could see, answered. Indeed, I understood from their utterances in prayer, and from other remarks in their meetings, that those who offered them did not regard them as answered.

When I read my Bible I learned what Christ had said in regard to prayer, and answers to prayer. He had said, "Ask, and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. For everyone that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." I read also what Christ affirms, that God is more willing to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him, than earthly parents are to give good gifts to their children. I heard them pray continually for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and as often confess that they did not receive what they asked for.

They exhorted each other to wake up and be engaged, and to pray earnestly for a revival of religion, asserting that if they did their duty, prayed for the outpouring of the spirit, and were in earnest, that the Spirit of God would be poured out, that they would have a revival of religion, and that the impenitent would be converted. But in their prayer and conference meetings they would continually confess, substantially, that they were making no progress in securing a revival of religion.

This inconsistency, the fact that they prayed so much and were not answered, was a sad stumbling block to me. I knew not what to make of it. It was a question in my mind whether I was to understand that these persons were not truly Christians, and therefore did not prevail with God; or did I misunderstand the promises and teachings of the Bible on this subject, or was I to conclude that the Bible was not true? Here was something inexplicable to me; and it seemed, at one time, that it would almost drive me into scepticism. It seemed to me that the teachings of the Bible did not at all accord with the facts which were before my eyes.

On one occasion, when I was in one of the prayer meetings, I was asked if I did not desire that they should pray for me! I told them, no; because I did not see that God

answered their prayers. I said, "I suppose I need to be prayed for, for I am conscious that I am a sinner; but I do not see that it will do any good for you to pray for me; for you are continually asking, but you do not receive. You have been praying for a revival of religion ever since I have been in Adams, and yet you have it not. You have been praying for the Holy Spirit to descend upon yourselves, and yet complaining of your leanness." I recollect having used this expression at that time: "You have prayed enough since I have attended these meetings to have prayed the devil out of Adams, if there is any virtue in your prayers. But here you are praying on, and complaining still." I was quite in earnest in what I said, and not a little irritable, I think, in consequence of my being brought so continually face to face with religious truth; which was a new state of things to me.

But on farther reading of my Bible, it struck me that the reason why their prayers were not answered, was because they did not comply with the revealed conditions upon which God had promised to answer prayer; that they did not pray in faith, in the sense of expecting God to give them the things that they asked for.

This thought, for some time, lay in my mind as a confused questioning, rather than in any definite form that could be stated in words. However, this relieved me, so far as queries about the truth of the Gospel were concerned; and after struggling in that way for two or three years, my mind became quite settled that whatever mystification there might be either in my own or in my pastor's mind, or in the mind of the church, the Bible was, nevertheless, the true word of God.

This being settled, I was brought face to face with the question whether I would accept Christ as presented in the Gospel, or pursue a worldly course of life. At this period, my mind, as I have since known, was so much impressed by the Holy Spirit, that I could not long leave this question unsettled; nor could I long hesitate between the two courses of life presented to me.

CHAPTER 2

CONVERSION TO CHRIST

On a Sabbath evening in the autumn of 1821, I made up my mind that I would settle the question of my soul's salvation at once, that if it were possible I would make my peace with God. But as I was very busy in the affairs of the office, I knew that without great firmness of purpose, I should never effectually attend to the subject. I therefore, then and there resolved, as far as possible, to avoid all business, and everything that would divert my attention, and to give myself wholly to the work of securing the salvation of my soul. I carried this resolution into execution as sternly and thoroughly as I could. I was, however, obliged to be a good deal in the office. But as the providence of God would have it, I was not much occupied either on Monday or Tuesday; and had opportunity to read my Bible and engage in prayer most of the time.

But I was very proud without knowing it. I had supposed that I had not much regard for the opinions of others, and I had been quite singular in attending prayer meetings, and in the degree of attention that I had paid to religion, while in Adams. In this respect I had been so singular as to lead the church at times to think that I must be an anxious inquirer. But I found, that I was very unwilling to have anyone know that I was seeking salvation. When I prayed I would only whisper my prayer, after having stopped the key-hole to the door, lest someone should discover that I was engaged in prayer. Before that time I had my Bible lying on the table with the law books; and it never had occurred to me to be ashamed of being found reading it, any more than I should be ashamed to be found reading any of my other books.

But after I had addressed myself in earnest to the subject of my own salvation, I kept my Bible, as much as I could, out of sight. If I was reading it when anybody came in, I would throw my law books upon it, to create the impression that I had not had it in my hand. Instead of being outspoken and willing to talk with anybody and everybody on the subject as before, I found myself unwilling to converse with anybody. I did not want to see my minister, because I did not want to let him know how I felt, and I had no confidence that he would understand my case, and give me the direction that I needed. For the same reasons I avoided conversation with the elders of the church, or with any of the Christian people. I was ashamed to let them know how I felt, on the one hand; and on the other, I was afraid they would misdirect me. I felt myself shut up to the Bible.

Just at this point the whole question of Gospel salvation opened to my mind in a manner most marvellous to me at the time. I think I then saw, as clearly as I ever have in my life, the reality and fullness of the atonement of Christ. I saw that his work was a finished work; and that instead of having, or needing, any righteousness of my own to recommend me to God, I had to submit myself to the righteousness of God through Christ. Gospel salvation seemed to me to be an offer of something to be accepted; and that it was full and complete; and that all that was necessary on my part, was to get my own consent to give up my sins, and accept Christ. Salvation, instead of being a thing to be wrought out, by my own works, was a thing to be found entirely in the Lord Jesus Christ, who presented himself before me as my God and my Saviour.

Without being distinctly aware of it, I had stopped in the street right where the inward voice seemed to arrest me. How long I remained in that position I can not say. But after this distinct revelation had stood for some little time before my mind, the question seemed to be put, "Will you accept it now, today?" I replied, "Yes; I will accept it today, or I will die in the attempt."

North of the village, and over a hill, lay a piece of wood, in which I was in the almost daily habit of walking, more or less, when it was pleasant weather. It was now October, and the time was past for my frequent walks. Nevertheless, instead of going to the office, I turned toward the woods, feeling that I must be away from all human eyes and ears, so that I could pour out my prayer to God.

But still my pride must show itself. As I went over the hill, it occurred to me that someone might see me and suppose that I was going away to pray; and so much was I possessed with the fear of man, that I recollect that I skulked along under the fence, till I got so far out of sight that no one from the village could see me. I then penetrated into the woods, went over on the other side of the hill, and found a place where some large trees had fallen across each other, leaving an open place between. There I saw I could make a kind of closet. I crept into this place and knelt down for prayer. As I turned to go up into the woods, I recollect to have said, "I will give my heart to God, or I never will come down from there."

But when I attempted to pray I found that my heart would not pray. I had supposed that if I could only be where I could speak aloud, without being overheard, I could pray freely. But lo! when I came to try, I was dumb; at least I could say but a few words, and those without heart. I would hear a rustling in the leaves, as I thought, and would stop and look up to see if somebody were not coming.

Finally I found myself verging fast to despair. I said to myself, "I can not pray. My heart is dead to God, and will not pray." I then reproached myself for having promised to give my heart to God before I left the woods. I began to feel deeply that it was too late; that it must be that I was given up of God and was past hope.

Just at this moment I again thought I heard someone approach, and I opened my eyes to see whether it were so. But pride of heart, as the great difficulty in the way, was distinctly shown to me. An overwhelming sense of wickedness in being ashamed to have a human being see me on my knees before God, took such powerful possession of me, that I cried at the top of my voice, and exclaimed that I would not leave that place if all the men on earth and all the devils in hell surrounded me. "What!" I said, "such a degraded sinner as I am, on my knees confessing my sins to the great and holy God; and ashamed to have any human being, and a sinner like myself, find me on my knees endeavouring to make my peace with my offended God!" The sin appeared awful, infinite. It broke me down before the Lord.

Just at that point this passage of Scripture seemed to drop into my mind with a flood of light: "Then shall ye go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. Then shall ye seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." I instantly seized hold of this with my heart. I had intellectually believed the Bible before; but never had the truth been in my mind that faith was a voluntary trust instead of an

intellectual state. I was as conscious as I was of my existence, of trusting at that moment in God's veracity. Somehow I knew that that was a passage of Scripture, though I do not think I had ever read it. I knew that it was God's word, and God's voice, as it were, that spoke to me. I cried to Him, "Lord, I take thee at thy word. Now thou knowest that I do search for thee with all my heart, and that I have come here to pray to thee; and thou hast promised to hear me."

That seemed to settle the question that I could then, that day, perform my vow. The Spirit seemed to lay stress upon that idea in the text, "When you search for me with all your heart."

He then gave me many other promises, both from the Old and the New Testament, especially some most precious promises respecting our Lord Jesus Christ. I seized hold of them, appropriated them, and fastened upon them with the grasp of a drowning man.

I continued thus to pray, and to receive and appropriate promises for a long time, I know not how long. I prayed till my mind became so full that, before I was aware of it, I was on my feet and tripping up the ascent toward the road. The question of my being converted, had not so much as arisen to my thought; but as I went up, brushing through the leaves and bushes, I recollect saying with emphasis, "If I am ever converted, I will preach the Gospel."

I soon reached the road and began to reflect upon what had passed; and I found that my mind had become most wonderfully quiet and peaceful. I said, "What is this? I must have grieved the Holy Ghost entirely away. I have lost all my conviction. I have not a particle of concern about my soul; and it must be that the Spirit has left me." "Why!" thought I, "I never was so far from being concerned about my own salvation in my life."

Then I remembered what I had said to God while I was on my knees - that I had said I would take him at his word; and indeed I recollected a good many things that I had said, and concluded that it was no wonder that the Spirit had left me; that for such a sinner as I was to take hold of God's word in that way, was presumption if not blasphemy. I concluded that in my excitement I had grieved the Holy Spirit, and perhaps committed the unpardonable sin.

I walked quietly toward the village; and so perfectly quiet was my mind that it seemed as if all nature listened. It was on the 10th of October, and a very pleasant day. I had gone into the woods immediately after an early breakfast; and when I returned I found it was dinner time. Yet I had been wholly unconscious of the time that had passed; it appeared to me that I had been gone but a short time.

But how was I to account for the quiet of my mind? I tried to recall my convictions, to get back again the load of sin under which I had been labouring. But all sense of sin, all consciousness of present sin or guilt, had departed from me. I said to myself, "What is this, that I can not arouse any sense of guilt in my soul, as great a sinner as I am?" I tried in vain to make myself anxious about my present state. I was so quiet and peaceful that I tried to feel concerned about that, lest it should be a result of my having

grieved the Spirit away. But take any view of it I would, I could not be anxious at all about my soul, and about my spiritual state. The repose of my mind was unspeakably great. I never can describe it in words. The thought of God was sweet to my mind, and the most profound spiritual tranquillity had taken full possession of me. This was a great mystery; but it did not distress or perplex me.

I went to my dinner, and found I had no appetite to eat. I then went to the office, and found that Squire W. had gone to dinner. I took down my bass-viol, and, as I was accustomed to do, began to play and sing some pieces of sacred music. After trying in vain to suppress my tears, I put up my instrument and stopped singing.

After dinner we were engaged in removing our books and furniture to another office. We were very busy in this, and had but little conversation all the afternoon. There was a great sweetness and tenderness in my thoughts and feelings. Everything appeared to be going right, and nothing seemed to ruffle or disturb me in the least.

Just before evening the thought took possession of my mind, that as soon as I was left alone in the new office, I would try to pray again - that I was not going to abandon the subject of religion and give it up, at any rate; and therefore, although I no longer had any concern about my soul, still I would continue to pray.

By evening we got the books and furniture adjusted; and I made up, in an open fireplace, a good fire, hoping to spend the evening alone. Just at dark Squire W., seeing that everything was adjusted, bade me goodnight and went home. I had accompanied him to the door; and as I closed the door and turned around, my heart seemed to be liquid within me. All my feelings seemed to rise and flow out; and the utterance of my heart was, "I want to pour my whole soul out to God." The rising of my soul was so great that I rushed into the room behind the front office, to pray.

There was no fire, and no light, in the room; nevertheless it appeared to me as if it were perfectly light. As I went in and shut the door after me, it seemed as if I met the Lord Jesus Christ face to face. It did not occur to me that it was wholly a mental state. On the contrary it seemed to me that I saw him as I would see any other man. He said nothing, but looked at me in such a manner as to break me right down at his feet. I have always since regarded this as a most remarkable state of mind; for it seemed that he stood before me, and I fell down at his feet and poured out my soul to him. I wept aloud like a child, and made such confessions as I could with my choked utterance.

I must have continued in this state for a good while; but my mind was too much absorbed with the interview to recollect anything that I said. But I know, as soon as my mind became calm, I returned to the front office, and found that the fire that I had made of large wood was nearly burned out. But as I turned and was about to take a seat by the fire, I received a mighty baptism of the Holy Ghost. Without any expectation of it, without ever having the thought in my mind that there was any such thing for me, without any recollection that I had ever heard the thing mentioned by any person in the world, the Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me, body and soul.

(This parenthesis is in an earlier American edition: I could feel the impression, like a

wave of electricity, going through and through me. Indeed it seemed to come in waves and waves of liquid love for I could not express it in any other way. It seemed like the very breath of God. I can recollect distinctly that it seemed to fan me, like immense wings.) No words can express the wonderful love that was shed abroad in my heart. I wept aloud with joy and love; and I do not know but I should say, I literally bellowed out the unutterable gushings of my heart. These waves came over me, and over me, and over me, one after the other, until I recollect I cried out, "I shall die if these waves continue to pass over me." I said, "Lord, I can not bear any more;" yet I had no fear of death.

How long I continued in this state I do not know. But it was late in the evening when a member of my choir came to see me. He was a member of the church. He found me in this state of loud weeping, and said, "Mr. Finney, what ails you?" I could make him no answer for some time. He then said, "Are you in pain?" I gathered myself up as best I could, and replied, "No, but so happy that I can not live.

He left the office, and in a few minutes returned with one of the elders of the church, whose shop was nearly across the way from our office. This elder was a very serious man; and in my presence had been very watchful, and I had scarcely ever seen him laugh. He asked me how I felt, and I began to tell him. Instead of saying anything, he fell into a most spasmodic laughter. It seemed as if it was impossible for him to keep from laughing from the very bottom of his heart.

There was a young man in the neighbourhood who was preparing for college, with whom I had been very intimate. Our minister, as I afterward learned, had repeatedly talked with him on the subject of religion, and warned him against being misled by me. He informed him that I was a very careless young man about religion; and he thought that if he associated much with me his mind would be diverted, and he would not be converted.

After I was converted, and this young man was converted, he told me that he had said to Mr. Gale several times, when he had admonished him about associating so much with me, that my conversations had often affected him more, religiously, than his preaching. I had, indeed, let out my feelings a good deal to this young man.

But just at this time when I was giving an account of my feelings to this elder of the church, and to the other member who was with him, this young man came into the office. I was sitting with my back toward the door, and barely observed that he came in. He listened with astonishment to what I was saying, and the first I knew he partly fell upon the floor, and cried out in the greatest agony of mind, "Do pray for me!" The elder of the church and the other member knelt down and began to pray for him; and when they had prayed, I prayed for him myself. Soon after this they all retired and left me alone.

The question then arose in my mind, "Why did Elder B. laugh so? Did he not think that I was under a delusion, or crazy?" This suggestion brought a kind of darkness over my mind; and I began to query with myself whether it was proper for me - such a sinner as I had been - to pray for that young man. A cloud seemed to shut in over me; I had no hold upon anything in which I could rest; and after a little while I retired to bed, not

distressed in mind, but still at a loss to know what to make of my present state. Notwithstanding the baptism I had received, this temptation so obscured my view that I went to bed without feeling sure that my peace was made with God.

When I awoke in the morning the sun had risen, and was pouring a clear light into my room. Words can not express the impression that this sunlight made upon me. Instantly the baptism that I had received the night before, returned upon me in the same manner. I arose upon my knees in the bed and wept aloud with joy, and remained for some time too much overwhelmed with the baptism of the Spirit to do anything but pour out my soul to God. It seemed as if this morning's baptism was accompanied with a gentle reproof, and the Spirit seemed to say to me, "Will you doubt?" "Will you doubt?" I cried, "No! I will not doubt; I can not doubt." He then cleared the subject up so much to my mind that it was in fact impossible for me to doubt that the Spirit of God had taken possession of my soul.

In this state I was taught the doctrine of justification by faith, as a present experience. That doctrine had never taken any such possession of my mind, that I had ever viewed it distinctly as a fundamental doctrine of the Gospel. Indeed, I did not know at all what it meant in the proper sense. But I could now see and understand what was meant by the passage, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." I could see that the moment I believed, while up in the woods all sense of condemnation had entirely dropped out of my mind; and that from that moment I could not feel a sense of guilt or condemnation by any effort that I could make. My sense of guilt was gone; my sins were gone; and I do not think I felt any more sense of guilt than if I never had sinned.

CHAPTER 3

BEGINNING OF HIS WORK

This morning, of which I have just spoken, I went down into the office, and there I was having the renewal of these mighty waves of love and salvation flowing over me, when Squire W. came into the office. I said a few words to him on the subject of his salvation. He looked at me with astonishment, but made no reply whatever. He dropped his head, and after standing a few minutes left the office. I thought no more of it then, but afterward found that the remark I made pierced him like a sword; and he did not recover from it till he was converted.

Soon after Mr. W. had left, Deacon B. came and said to me, "Mr. Finney, do you recollect that my cause is to be tried at ten o'clock this morning? I suppose you are ready?" I had been retained to attend this suit as his attorney. I replied to him, "Deacon B. I have a retainer from the Lord Jesus Christ to plead his cause, and I can not plead yours." He looked at me with astonishment, and said, "What do you mean?" I told him, in a few words, that I had enlisted in the cause of Christ; and then repeated that I had a retainer from the Lord Jesus Christ to plead his cause, and that he must go and get somebody else to attend his lawsuit; I could not do it. He dropped his head, and without making any reply, went out. A few moments later, in passing the window, I observed that Deacon B. was standing in the road, seemingly lost in deep meditation. He went away and immediately settled his suit. He then betook himself to prayer, and soon got into a much higher religious state than he had ever been in before.

I soon sallied forth from the office to converse with those whom I should meet about their souls. I had the impression, which has never left my mind, that God wanted me to preach the Gospel, and that I must begin immediately. I seemed to know that the Lord commissioned me to preach the gospel.

When I was first convicted, the thought had occurred that if I was ever converted I should be obliged to leave my profession, of which I was very fond, and preach the Gospel. This at first stumbled me. However, I at last came to the conclusion that I must submit that question to God.

But now after receiving these baptisms of the Spirit I was quite willing to preach the Gospel. Nay, I found that I was unwilling to do anything else. I had no disposition to make money. I had no hungering and thirsting after worldly pleasures and amusements in any direction. My whole mind was taken up with Jesus and his salvation; and the world seemed to me of very little consequence.

I spoke with many persons that day, and I believe the Spirit of God made lasting impressions upon every one of them. I can not remember one whom I spoke with, who was not soon after converted. Just at evening I called at the house of a friend, where a young man lived who was employed in distilling whisky. The man of the house and his wife were both professors of religion. But a sister of the lady, who was present, was unconverted and a young man, a distant relative of the family, was a professed Universalist. He was rather outspoken and talkative, and a young man of a good deal of energy of character.

I sat down with them to tea, and they requested me to ask a blessing. It was what I had never done; but I did not hesitate to ask the blessing of God as we sat around the table. I had scarcely more than begun before the state of these young people excited so much compassion that I burst into weeping, and was unable to proceed. Everyone sat speechless for a short time, while I continued to weep. Directly, the young man moved away from the table and rushed out. He fled to his room and locked himself in, and was not seen again till the next morning, when he came expressing a blessed hope in Christ. He has been for many years an able minister of the Gospel.

In the course of the day, a good deal of excitement was created in the village by its being reported what the Lord had done for my soul. At evening, without any appointment having been made, the people were going to the place where they usually held their conference and prayer meetings. I afterward learned that some time before this some members of the church had proposed, in a church meeting, to make me a particular subject of prayer, and that Mr. Gale had discouraged them, saying that he did not believe I would ever be converted; that from conversing with me he had found that I was very much enlightened upon the subject of religion, and very much hardened. And furthermore, he said he was almost discouraged; that I led the choir, and taught the young people sacred music; and that they were so much under my influence that he did not believe that, while I remained in Adams, they would ever be converted.

I found after I was converted, that some of the wicked men in the place had hidden behind me. One man in particular, a Mr. C., who had a pious wife, had repeatedly said to her, "If religion is true, why don't you convert Finney? If you Christians can convert Finney, I will believe in religion."

An old lawyer by the name of M., living in Adams, when he heard it rumoured that day that I was converted, said that it was all a hoax; that I was simply trying to see what I could make Christian people believe.

However, with one consent the people seemed to rush to the place of worship. No one seemed ready to open the meeting; but the house was packed to its utmost capacity. I did not wait for anybody, but arose and began by saying that I then knew that religion was from God. I went on and told such parts of my experience as it seemed important to tell. Mr. C., who had promised his wife that if I was converted he would believe in religion, was present. Mr. M., the old lawyer, was also present. Mr. C. got up, pressed through the crowd, and went home, leaving his hat. Mr. M. also left and went home, saying I was crazy. "He is in earnest," said he, "there is no mistake; but he is deranged, that is clear."

As soon as I had done speaking, Mr. Gale, the minister, arose and made a confession. He said he believed he had been in the way of the church; and then confessed that he had discouraged the church when they had proposed to pray for me. He said also that when he had heard that day that I was converted, he had promptly said that he did not believe it. He said he had no faith. He spoke in a very humble manner.

I had never made a prayer in public, but Mr Gale he called on me to pray. We had a

wonderful meeting that evening; and, from that day, we had a meeting every evening for a long time. The work spread on every side.

As I had been a leader among the young people, I immediately appointed a meeting for them, which they all attended - that is, all of the class with which I was acquainted. They were converted one after another, with great rapidity; and the work continued among them until but one of their number was left unconverted.

The work spread among all classes; and extended itself, not only through the village, but out of the village in every direction. My heart was so full that, for more than a week, I did not feel at all inclined to sleep or eat. I went on in this way for a good many days, until I found that I must rest and sleep, or I should become insane. From that point I was more cautious in my labours; and ate regularly, and slept as much as I could.

The word of God had wonderful power; and I was every day surprised to find that the few words, spoken to an individual, would stick in his heart like an arrow.

After a short time I went down to Henderson, where my father lived, and visited him. He was an unconverted man; and only one of the family, my youngest brother, had ever made a profession of religion. My father met me at the gate and said, "How do you do, Charles?" I replied, "I am well, father, body and soul. But, father, you are an old man; all your children are grown up and have left your house; and I never heard a prayer in my father's house." Father dropped his head, and burst into tears, and replied, "I know it, Charles; come in and pray yourself."

We went in and engaged in prayer. My father and mother were greatly moved; and in a very short time thereafter they were both hopefully converted. I do not know but my mother had had a secret hope before; but if so, none of the family, I believe, ever knew it.

I remained in that neighbourhood, I think, for two or three days, and conversed more or less with such people as I could meet with. They had a monthly concert of prayer in that town. There was there a Baptist church that had a minister, and a small Congregational church without a minister. The town was very much of a moral waste, however; and at this time religion was at a very low ebb.

My youngest brother attended this monthly concert of which I have spoken, and afterward gave me an account of it. The Baptists and Congregationalists were in the habit of holding a union monthly concert. But few attended, and therefore it was held at a private house. On this occasion they met, as usual, in the parlour of a private house. A few of the members of the Baptist church, and a few Congregationalists, were present. The deacon of the Congregational church was a spare, feeble old man, of the name of M. He was quiet in his ways, and had a good reputation for piety; but seldom said much upon the subject. He was a good specimen of a New England deacon. He was present, and they called upon him to lead the meeting. He read a passage of Scripture according to their custom. They then sung a hymn, and Deacon M. stood up behind his chair, and led in prayer. The other persons present, all of them professors of religion, and younger people, knelt down around the room.

My brother said that Deacon M. began as usual in his prayer, in a low, feeble voice; but soon began to wax warm and to raise his voice, which became tremulous with emotion.

In the meantime the brethren and sisters that were on their knees, began to groan, and sigh, and weep, and agonise in prayer. From this meeting the work of the Lord spread forth in every direction all over the town. And thus it spread at that time from Adams as a centre, throughout nearly all the towns in the county.

I have spoken of the conviction of Squire W. in whose office I studied law. Very soon after my conversion, several other cases of conversion occurred that were reported to have taken place under similar circumstances; that is, persons went up into the grove to pray, and there made their peace with God.

When Squire W. heard their experience in our meetings, he thought that he had a parlour to pray in; and that he was not going up into the woods. To this, it appeared, he strongly committed himself.

I have found a great many cases of this kind; where upon some question a sinner's pride of heart would commit him. In all such cases the dispute must be yielded, or the sinner never will get into the kingdom of God. I have known persons to remain for weeks in great tribulation, pressed by the Spirit; but they could make no progress till the point was yielded. Mr. W. was the first case of the kind that had ever come to my notice.

After he was converted, he said the question had frequently come up when he was in prayer; and that he had been made to see that it was pride that made him take that stand, and that kept him out of the kingdom of God. But still he was not willing to admit this, even to himself. He tried in every way to make himself believe, and to make God believe, that he was not proud. One night, he said, he prayed all night in his parlour that God would have mercy on him; but in the morning he felt more distressed than ever.

But one afternoon I was sitting in our office, and two of the elders of the church with me; when the young man that I had met at the shoemaker's shop, came hastily into the office, and exclaimed as he came, "Squire W. is converted!" and proceeded to say: "I went up into the woods to pray, and heard someone over in the valley shouting very loud. I went up to the brow of the hill, where I could look down, and I saw Squire W. pacing to and fro, and singing as loud as he could sing; and every few moments he would stop and clap his hands with his full strength, and shout, 'I will rejoice in the God of my salvation!' While the young man was telling us this, behold, Squire W. appeared in sight, coming over the hill. As he came down to the foot of the hill we observed that he met Father T., as we all called him, an aged Methodist brother. He rushed up to him, and took him right up in his arms. After setting him down, and conversing a moment, he came rapidly toward the office. When he came in, he was in a profuse perspiration and he cried out, "I've got it! I've got it!" He then gave us an account of what had been passing in his mind, and why he had not obtained a hope before. He said as soon as he gave up that point and went into the woods, his mind was relieved; and when he knelt down to pray, the Spirit of God came upon him and

filled him with such unspeakable joy that it resulted in the scene which the young man witnessed. Of course from that time Squire W. took a decided stand for God.

Toward spring the older members of the church began to abate in their zeal. I had been in the habit of rising early in the morning, and spending a season of prayer alone in the meeting house; and I finally succeeded in interesting a considerable number of brethren to meet me there in the morning for a prayer meeting, and we were generally together long before it was light enough to see to read. I persuaded my minister to attend these meetings.

One morning I had been around and called the brethren up, and when I returned to the meeting house few of them had got there. Mr. Gale, my minister, was standing at the door of the church, and as I came up, all at once the glory of God shone round about me, in a manner most marvellous. The day was just beginning to dawn. But all at once a light perfectly ineffable shone in my soul, and almost prostrated me to the ground. In this light it seemed as if I could see that all nature praised and worshipped God except man. It was too intense for the eyes. I recollect breaking into a flood of tears, in view of the fact that mankind did not praise God. I think I knew something then, by actual experience, of that light that prostrated Paul on his way to Damascus. It was surely a light such as I could not have endured long.

When I burst out into loud weeping, Mr. Gale said, "What is the matter, brother Finney?" I could not tell him. I found that he had seen no light; and that he saw no reason why I should be in such a state of mind. I therefore said but little. I merely replied, that I saw the glory of God; and that I could not endure to think of the manner in which he was treated by men. Indeed, it did not seem to me at the time that the vision of his glory which I had, was to be described in words. I wept it out; and the vision, if it may be so called, passed away and left my mind calm.

I used to have, when I was a young Christian, many seasons of communing with God which can not be described in words. And not unfrequently those seasons would end in an impression on my mind like this: "Go, see that thou tell no man." I did not understand this at the time, and several times I paid no attention to this injunction; but tried to tell my Christian brethren what communications the Lord had made to me, or rather what seasons of communion I had with him. But I soon found that it would not do to tell my brethren what was passing between the Lord and my soul. They could not understand it.

Sometimes I would pursue a wrong course in fasting, and attempt to examine myself according to the ideas of self-examination then entertained by my minister and the church. I would try to look into my own heart, in the sense of examining my feelings; and would turn my attention particularly to my motives, and the state of my mind. When I pursued this course, I found invariably that the day would close without any perceptible advance being made. Afterwards I saw clearly why this was so. Turning my attention, as I did, from the Lord Jesus Christ, and looking into myself, examining my motives and feelings, my feelings all subsided of course. But whenever I fasted, and let the Spirit take his own course with me, and gave myself up to let him lead and instruct me, I universally found it in the highest degree useful. I found I could not live without enjoying the presence of God; and if at any time a cloud came over me, I could not

rest, I could not study, I could not attend to anything with the least satisfaction or benefit, until the medium was again cleared between my soul and God.

The Lord taught me, in those early days of Christian experience, many very important truths in regard to the spirit of prayer. Not long after I was converted, a woman with whom I had boarded - though I did not board with her at this time, was taken very sick. She was not a Christian, but her husband was a professor of religion. He came into our office one evening, being a brother of Squire W., and said to me, "My wife can not live through the night." This seemed to plant an arrow, as it were, in my heart. It came upon me in the sense of a burden, but with it came an intense desire to pray for that woman. I left the office almost immediately, and went up to the meeting house. There I struggled, but could not say much.

I stayed a considerable time in the church, in this state of mind, but got no relief. I returned to the office; but I could not sit still. I could only walk the room and agonise. I returned to the meeting house, and went through the same process of struggling. For a long time I tried to get my prayer before the Lord; but somehow words could not express it. I returned to the office again, and still found I was unable to rest; and I returned a third time to the meeting house. At this time the Lord gave me power to prevail. I obtained the assurance that the woman would not die, and indeed that she would never die in her sins.

I returned to the office. My mind was perfectly quiet; and I soon left and retired to rest. Early the next morning the husband of this woman came. I inquired how his wife was. He, smiling said, "She's alive, and to all appearance better this morning." I replied, "Brother W., she will not die with this sickness; you may rely upon it. And she will never die in her sins." She did recover, and soon after obtained a hope in Christ.

At first I did not understand what this exercise of mind that I had passed through, was. But shortly after in relating it to a Christian brother he said to me, "Why, that was the travail of your soul." A few minutes' conversation, and pointing me to certain scriptures, gave me to understand what it was.

Another experience which I had soon after this, illustrates the same truth. I have spoken of one young woman as belonging to the class of young people who remained unconverted. This attracted a good deal of attention; and there was considerable conversation among Christians about her case. She was naturally a charming girl, and very much enlightened on the subject of religion, but she remained in her sins.

One of the elders of the church and myself agreed to make her a daily subject of prayer, to continue to present her case at the throne of grace, morning, noon, and evening, until she was either converted, or should die, or we should be unable to keep our covenant. I soon found, however, that the elder who had entered into this arrangement with me, was losing his spirit of prayer. But this did not discourage me. I continued to hold on with increasing importunity. I also availed myself of every opportunity to converse plainly and searchingly with her on the subject of her salvation.

After I had continued in this way for sometime, one evening I called just as the sun was

setting. As I came up to the door I heard a shriek and confusion inside; and stood and waited for the confusion to be over. The lady of the house soon came and held in her hand a portion of a book, which had evidently been torn in two. She was pale and very much agitated and said, "Mr. Finney, don't you think my sister has become a Universalist?" The book was a defence of Universalism. Her sister had detected her reading it in a private way. She tried to get it away from her; and it was the struggle to obtain that book which I had heard.

I received this information at the door; whereupon I declined to go in. It struck me very much in the same way as had the announcement that the sick woman, was about to die. As I returned to my room, at some distance from that house, I felt almost as if I should stagger under the burden that was on my mind; and I struggled, and groaned, and agonised, but could not frame to present the case before God in words, but only in groans and tears.

The discovery that young woman, instead of being converted, was becoming a Universalist, so astounded me that I could not break through with my faith, and get hold of God in reference to her case. There seemed to be a darkness banging over the question, as if a cloud had risen up between me and God, in regard to prevailing for her salvation.

However, I was obliged to retire that night without having prevailed. But as soon as it was light I awoke; and the first thought that I had was to beseech the God of grace again for that young woman. No sooner was I upon my knees than the darkness gave way, and the whole subject opened to my mind; and as soon as I pleaded for her God said to me, "Yes! yes!" If he had spoken with an audible voice, it would not have been more distinctly understood than this word spoken within my soul. It instantly relieved all my solicitude. My mind became filled with the greatest peace and joy; and I felt a complete certainty that her salvation was secure.

Soon after I was converted, the man with whom I had been boarding, a magistrate, and one of the principal men in the place, was deeply convicted of sin. He had been elected a member of the legislature of the state. I was praying daily for him, and urging him to give his heart to God. His conviction became very deep; but still, from day to day, he deferred submission, and did not obtain a hope. My solicitude for him increased.

One afternoon several of his political friends had a protracted interview with him. On the evening of the same day I attempted again to carry his case to God. I do not remember ever to have been in more intimate communion with the Lord Jesus than I was at that time. I was bathed in tears of joy, and gratitude, and love; and in this state of mind I attempted to pray for this friend. But the moment I did so, my mouth was shut. The Lord seemed to say to me, "No; I will not hear." An anguish seized upon me; I thought at first it was a temptation.

The next morning I saw him; and as soon as I brought up the question of submission to God, he said to me, "Mr. Finney, I shall have nothing more to do with it until I return from the legislature. I stand committed to my political friends to carry out certain measures in the legislature, that are incompatible with my first becoming a Christian;

and I have promised that I will not attend to the subject until after I have returned from Albany.”

From the moment of that exercise the evening before, I had no spirit of prayer for him at all. As soon as he told me what he had done, I understood it. I could see that his convictions were all gone, and that the Spirit of God had left him.

When the time arrived he went to the legislature; and in the Spring he returned an almost insane Universalist. I say almost insane, because, instead of having formed his opinions from any evidence or course of argument, he said, “I have come to that conclusion, not because I have found it taught in the Bible, but because such a doctrine is so opposed to the carnal mind. It is a doctrine so generally rejected and spoken against, as to prove that it is distasteful to the carnal, unconverted mind.” This was astonishing. But everything else that I could get out of him was as wild and absurd as this. He remained in his sins, finally fell into decay, and died at last, as I have been told, a dilapidated man, and in the full faith of his Universalism.

CHAPTER 4

HIS DOCTRINAL EDUCATION AND OTHER EXPERIENCE AT ADAMS

Soon after I was converted I called on my pastor, and had a long conversation on the atonement. He was a Princeton student, and of course held the limited view - that it was made for the elect and available to none else. He held that Jesus suffered for the elect the literal penalty of the Divine law; that he suffered just what was due to each of the elect on the score of retributive justice. I objected that this was absurd; as in that case he suffered the equivalent of endless misery multiplied by the whole number of the elect. He insisted that this was true. He affirmed that Jesus literally paid the debt of the elect, and fully satisfied retributive justice. On the contrary it seemed to me that Jesus only satisfied public justice, and that that was all that the government of God could require.

I was however but a child in theology, a novice in religion and in Biblical learning; but I thought he did not sustain his views from the Bible, and told him so. I had read nothing on the subject except my Bible; and what I had there found. I had interpreted as I would have understood the same or like passage in a law book. I thought he had evidently interpreted those texts in conformity with an established theory. I had never heard him preach the views he maintained in that discussion. I was surprised in view of his positions, and withstood them as best I could.

He was alarmed, I dare say, at what appeared to be my obstinacy. I thought that my Bible clearly taught that the atonement was made for all men. He limited it to a part. I could not accept this view, for I could not see that he fairly proved it from the bible. His rules of interpretation did not meet my views. They were much less definite and intelligible than those to which I had been accustomed in my law studies. To the objections which I urged, he could make no satisfactory reply. I asked him if the Bible did not require all who hear the gospel to repent, believe the Gospel, and be saved. He admitted that it did require all to believe, and be saved. But how could they believe and accept a salvation which was not provided for them?

We went over the whole field of debate between the old and new school divines, upon the subject of atonement, as my subsequent theological studies taught me. I do not recollect to have ever read a page upon the subject except what I had found in the Bible. I had never, to my recollection, heard a sermon or any discussion whatever upon the question.

This discussion was often renewed, and continued through my whole course of theological studies under him. He expressed concern lest I should not accept the orthodox faith. I believe he had the strongest conviction that I was truly converted; but he felt the greatest desire to keep me within the strict lines of Princeton theology.

He had it fixed in his mind that I should be a minister; and he took pains to inform me that if I did become a minister, the Lord would not bless my labours, and his Spirit would not bear witness to my preaching, unless I preached the truth. I believed this myself. But this was not to me a very strong argument in favour of his views; for he

informed me that he did not know that he had ever been instrumental in converting a sinner.

I had never heard him preach particularly on the subject of the atonement; I think he feared to present his particular views to the people. His church, I am sure, did not embrace his view of a limited atonement.

In the spring of the year the older members of the church began manifestly to decline in their engagedness and zeal for God. This greatly oppressed me, as it did also the young converts generally. About this time I read in a newspaper an article, "A revival revived." The substance of was, that in a certain place there had been a revival during the winter; that in the spring it declined; and that upon earnest prayer being offered for the continued out-pouring of the Spirit, the revival was powerfully revived.

I was at that time boarding with Mr. Gale, and I took the article to him. I was so overcome with a sense of the divine goodness in hearing and answering prayer, and with a felt assurance that he would hear and answer prayer for the revival of his work in Adams, that I went through the house weeping aloud like a child. Mr. Gale seemed surprised at my feelings, and my expressed confidence that God would revive his work. The article made no such impression on him.

At the next meeting of the young people, I proposed that we should observe a closet concert of prayer for the revival of God's work; that we should pray at sunrise, at noon, and at sunset, in our closets, and continue this for one week; when we should come together again and see what further was to be done. No other means were used; but the spirit of prayer was poured out wonderfully upon the young converts. Before the week was out I learned that some of them, when they would attempt to observe this season of prayer, would lose all their strength and be unable to rise to their feet, or even stand upon their knees in their closets; and that some would lie prostrate on the floor, and pray (American edition, not slightly abridged like this version includes: 'with unutterable groanings') for the out-pouring of the Spirit of God.

The Spirit was poured out, and before the week ended all the meetings were thronged; and there was as much interest in religion, as there had been at any time during the revival.

And here a mistake was made, or, perhaps, a sin committed, by some of the older members of the church, which resulted in great evil. As I afterward learnt, a considerable number of the older people resisted this new movement among the young converts. They were jealous of it: and felt that the young converts were getting out of their place, in being so forward and so urgent upon the older members. This state of mind finally grieved the Spirit of God. It was not long before alienations began to arise among these older members, which finally resulted in great evil to those who had allowed themselves to resist this revival.

In the Spring of 1822, I put myself under the care of the Presbytery as a candidate for the Gospel ministry. Some of the ministers urged me to go to Princeton to study theology, but I declined. I told them that my pecuniary circumstances forbade it. This was true; but they said they would see that my expenses were paid. 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. They appointed my pastor to superintend my studies; but my studies, so far as he was concerned as my teacher, were little else than controversy. He held to the old school doctrine of original sin, or that the human constitution was morally depraved. He held also, that men were utterly unable to comply with the terms of the Gospel, to repent, to believe, or to do anything that God required them to do; that while they were free to all evil, in the sense of being able to commit any amount of sin, yet they were not free to perform any good; that God had condemned men for their sinful nature; and for this, as well as for their transgressions, they deserved eternal death.

He held also that the influences of the Spirit of God on the minds of men were physical, acting directly upon the substance of the soul; that men were passive in regeneration; and in short he held all those doctrines that logically flow from the fact of a nature sinful in itself. These doctrines I could not receive.

He used to insist that if I would reason on the subject, I should probably land in infidelity. And then he would remind me that some of the students who had been at Princeton had gone away infidels, because they would reason and would not accept the confession of faith, and the teaching of that school. He furthermore warned me repeatedly, and very feelingly, that as a minister I should never be useful unless I embraced the truth, meaning the truth as he believed and taught it.

We used to have many protracted discussions; and I would often come from his study greatly depressed and discouraged, saying to myself, "I can not embrace these views come what will. I can not believe they are taught in the Bible." And several times I was on the point of giving up the study for the ministry altogether.

There was but one member of the church to whom I opened my mind freely on this subject; and that was Elder H., a very godly, man. He held pretty strongly the higher doctrines of Calvinism. Nevertheless, he became satisfied that I was right; and he would call on me frequently to have seasons of prayer with me, to strengthen me in my studies.

Several times he fell in with me when I was in a state of great depression. He would go with me to my room; and sometimes we would continue till a late hour at night crying to God for light and strength, and for faith to accept and do his perfect will. He lived more than three miles from the village; and frequently he has stayed with me till ten or eleven o'clock at night, and then walked home.

After I got into the ministry and great opposition was raised to my preaching, I met Elder H., and he alluded to the opposition, and said, "Oh! my soul is so burdened that I pray for you day and night. But I am sure that God will help. Go on, go on, brother Finney; the Lord will give you deliverance."

One afternoon Mr. Gale and I had been conversing on the subject of the atonement, and the hour arrived for us to attend the conference meeting. As we were early, and

very few persons had arrived, we continued our conversation. The people kept coming in; and they would sit down and listen with the greatest attention to what we were saying. The people became more and more interested and when we proposed to stop and commence our meeting, they earnestly begged us to proceed with our discussion. We did so; and spent the whole evening, very much to the satisfaction of those present, and I trust to their permanent edification.

After I had been studying theology for a few months, and Mr. Gale's health was such that he was unable to preach; a Universalist minister came in and began to promulgate his objectionable doctrines. The impenitent part of the community seemed very much disposed to hear him, and finally people became so interested that there was a large number that seemed to be shaken in their minds, in regard to the commonly received views of the Bible.

Mr. Gale, together with some of the elders, desired me to address the people on the subject, and see if I could not reply to the arguments of the Universalist.

I arose in one of our evening meetings and said, "This Universalist preacher holds forth doctrines that are new to me, and I do not believe they are taught in the Bible. But I am going to examine the subject, and if I can not show that his views are false, I will become a Universalist myself." I then appointed a meeting the next week, at which time I proposed to deliver a lecture in opposition to his views. The Christian people were startled at my boldness in saying that I would be a Universalist, if I could not prove that his doctrines were false.

When the evening came for my lecture, the house was crowded. I took up the question of the justice of endless punishment, and discussed it through that and the next evening. There was general satisfaction with the presentation.

I then appointed to lecture on the Universalists argument founded on the Gospel. I delivered two lectures upon the atonement. This answered the Universalist, and put a stop to any further proceedings or excitement on that subject. But what was very striking, these lectures secured the conversion of the young woman for whom, as I have said, such earnest and agonising prayer had been offered.

After many such discussions with Mr. Gale in pursuing my theological studies, the presbytery was finally called together at Adams to examine me; and, if they could agree to do so, to license me to preach. This was in March 1824. I expected a severe struggle with them in my examination; but I found them a good deal softened. The manifest blessing that had attended my conversations, and my teaching in prayer and conference meetings, and in these lectures of which I have spoken, rendered them, I think, more cautious than they would otherwise have been in getting into any controversy. In the course of examination they avoided asking any such questions as would naturally bring my views into collision with theirs.

When they had examined me, they voted unanimously to license me to preach. Unexpectedly they asked me if I received the confession of faith of the Presbyterian church. I had not examined it - that is, the large work containing the catechism and confession. I replied that I received it for substance of doctrine, so far as I understood

it. However, I answered honestly. They heard the trial sermons which I had written, on texts which had been given by the presbytery; and went through with all the ordinary details of such an examination.

At this meeting of presbytery I first saw the Rev. Daniel Nash, who is generally known as "Father Nash." He was a member of the presbytery. A large congregation was assembled to hear my examination. I got in a little late, and saw a man standing in the pulpit speaking to the people, as I supposed. He looked at me, I observed, as I came in; and was looking at others as they passed up the aisles.

As soon as I reached my seat and listened, I observed that he was praying. I was surprised to see him looking all over the house, as if he were talking to the people; while in fact he was praying to God. Of course it did not sound to me much like prayer; and he was at that time indeed in a very cold and back-slidden state. I shall have occasion frequently to mention him hereafter.

The next Sabbath after I was licensed, I preached for Mr. Gale. When I came out of the pulpit he said to me. "Mr. Finney, I shall be very much ashamed to have it known, wherever you go, that you studied theology with me." This was much like him, and like what he had repeatedly. I held down my head, and felt discouraged. He afterwards viewed this subject very differently; and told me that he blessed the Lord that in all our discussion, and in all he had said to me, he had not had the least influence to change my views.

At first, being no theologian, my attitude in respect to his peculiar views was rather that of negation or denial, than that of opposing any positive view to his. I said, "Your positions are not proved. They are insusceptible of proof." But after all, he would insist upon it that I ought to defer to the opinions of the great and good men who, after much consultation and deliberation, had come to those conclusions. He believed that the decisions of the church ought to be respected by a young and that I should surrender my own judgement to that of others of superior wisdom.

But not only were Mr. Gale's theological views such as to cripple his usefulness; his practical views were equally erroneous. Hence he prophesied, with respect to my views, every kind of evil. He assured me, that the Spirit of God would not approve and cooperate with my labours; that if I addressed men as I told him I intended to, they would not hear me; that if they came for a short time, they would soon become offended, and my congregation would all fall off; that unless I wrote my sermons I should immediately become stale and uninteresting, and could not satisfy the people; and that I should divide and scatter instead of building up the congregation, wherever I preached. Indeed I found his views to be almost the reverse of those which I entertained, on all such practical questions relating to my duty as a minister.

(This paragraph was, for some reason, left out of the edited British edition but was in the original American edition. It probably reflects the prevailing conservative British attitude towards the miraculous: I do not wonder, and did not at the time, that he was shocked at my views and purposes in relation to preaching the gospel. With his education it could not be otherwise. He followed out his views with very little practical result. I pursued mine, and by the blessing of God the results were the opposite of

those which he predicted. When this fact came out clearly, it completely upset his theological and practical ideas as a minister. This result, as I shall mention in its place, at first annihilated his hope as a Christian, and finally made him quite another man as a minister. But there was another defect in brother Gale's education, which I regarded as fundamental. If he had ever been converted to Christ, he had failed to receive that divine anointing of the Holy Ghost that would make him a power in the pulpit and in society, for the conversion of souls. He had fallen short of receiving the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is indispensable to ministerial success. When Christ commissioned his apostles to go and preach, he told them to abide at Jerusalem till they were endued with power from on high. This power, as everyone knows, was the baptism of the Holy Ghost poured out upon them on the day of Pentecost. This was an indispensable qualification for success in their ministry. I did not suppose then, nor do I now, that this Baptism was simply the power to work miracles. The power to work miracles and the gift of tongues were given as signs to attest the reality of their divine commission. But the baptism itself was a divine purifying, an anointing bestowing on them a divine illumination, filling them with faith, and love, with peace and power; so that their words were made sharp in the hearts of God's enemies, quick and powerful, like a two-edged sword. This is an indispensable qualification of a successful ministry; and I have often been surprised and pained that to this day so little stress is laid upon this qualification for preaching Christ to a sinful world. Without the direct teaching of the Holy Spirit, a man will never make much progress in preaching the Gospel. The fact is, unless he can preach the Gospel as an experience, present religion to mankind as a matter of consciousness, his speculations and theories will come far short of preaching the Gospel. I have said that Mr. Gale afterward concluded that he had not been converted. That he was a sincere, good man, in the sense of honestly holding his opinions, I do not doubt. But he was sadly defective in his education, theologically, philosophically and practically; and so far as I could learn, his spiritual state, he had not the peace of the Gospel, when I sat under his ministry.

Let not the reader, from anything that I have said, suppose that I did not love Mr. Gale, and highly respect him. I did both. He and I remained the firmest friends, so far as I know, to the day of his death. I have said what I have in relation to his views, because I think it applicable, I am afraid I must say, to many of the ministers even of the present day. I think that their practical views of preaching the Gospel, whatever their theological views may be, are very defective indeed; and that their want of unction, and of the power of the Holy Ghost, is a radical defect in their preparation for the ministry. I say not this censoriously; but still I would record it as a fact which has long been settled in my mind, and over which I have long had occasion to mourn. And as I have become more and more acquainted with the ministry in this and other countries, I am persuaded that, with all their training, and discipline, and education, there is a lack in practical views of the best way of presenting the Gospel to men, and in adapting means to secure the end; and especially in their want of the power of the Holy Ghost.

When I came to read the Confession of Faith, and saw the passages that were quoted to sustain these peculiar positions, I was absolutely ashamed of it. I could not feel any respect for a document that would undertake to impose on mankind such dogmas as those, sustained, for the most part, by passages of Scripture that were totally irrelevant; and not in a single instance sustained by passages which, in a court of law,

would have been considered at all conclusive. But the presbytery, so far as I know, were all of one way of thinking at that time. They subsequently, however, I believe, all gave in; and when Mr. Gale changed his views. I heard no more from any of the members of the presbytery in defence of those views.

CHAPTER 5

PREACHING AS A MISSIONARY

Having had no regular training for the ministry I did not expect or desire to labour in large towns or cities, or minister to cultivated congregations. I intended to go into the new settlements and preach in schoolhouses, and barns, and groves. Accordingly, soon after being licensed to preach, for the sake of being introduced to the region where I proposed to labour, I took a commission, for six months, from a female missionary society located in Oneida. I went into the northern part of Jefferson county, and began my labours at Evans' Mills, in the town of Le Ray.

At this place I found two churches, a small Congregational church without, and a Baptist church with a minister. I presented my credentials; they were very glad to see me, and I soon began my labours. They had no meeting house; but the two churches worshipped alternately in a school-house, large enough, I believe, to accommodate all the children in the village. The Baptists occupied the house one Sabbath, and the Congregationalists the next; so that I could have the house every other Sabbath, but could use it evenings as often as I pleased. I therefore divided my Sabbaths between Evans' Mills and Antwerp, a village some sixteen or eighteen miles still further north.

I will relate first some facts that occurred at Evans' Mills, during that season; and then give a brief narrative of the occurrences at Antwerp. But as I preached alternately in these two places, these facts were occurring from week to week in one or the other of these localities. I began to preach in the stone schoolhouse at Evans' Mills. The people were very much interested, and thronged the place. They extolled my preaching; and the Congregational church became hopeful that they should be built up, and that there would be a revival. More or less convictions occurred under every sermon but still no general conviction appeared upon the public mind.

I was very much dissatisfied with this state of things; and at one of my evening services, after having preached there two or three Sabbaths, and several evenings in the week, I told the people that I had come there to secure the salvation of their souls; that my preaching, I knew, was highly complimented by them; but that, after all, I did not come there to please them but to bring them to repentance; that it mattered not to me how well they were pleased with my preaching, if after all they rejected my Master; that something was wrong, either in me or in them; that the kind of interest they manifested was doing them no good; and that I could not spend my time with them unless they were going to receive the Gospel. I then, quoting the words of Abraham's servant, said, "Now will you deal kindly and truly with my master? If you will, tell me; and if not, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left." I turned this question over, and pressed it upon them, and insisted upon it that I must know what course they proposed to pursue. If they did not purpose to become Christians, and enlist in the service of the Saviour, I wanted to know that I might not labour with them in vain. I said, "You admit that what I preach is the Gospel. You profess to believe it. Now will you receive it? Do you mean to receive it, or do you intend to reject it? You must have some mind about it. And now I have a right to take it for granted, in as much as you admit that I have preached the truth, that you acknowledge your obligation at once to become Christians. This obligation you do not deny; but will you

meet the obligation? Will you discharge it? Will you do what you admit you ought to do? If you will not, tell me; and if you will, tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left.”

After turning this over till I saw they understood it well, and looked greatly surprised at my manner, I then said to them, “Now I must know your minds, and I want that you who have made up your minds to become Christians, and will give your pledge to make your peace with God immediately, should rise; but that, on the contrary, those of you who are resolved that you will not become Christians, and wish me so to understand, and wish Christ so to understand, should sit still.” After making this plain, so that I knew that they understood, I then said: “You who are now willing to pledge to me and to Christ, that you will immediately make your peace with God, please rise. On the contrary, you that mean that I should understand that you are committed to remain in your present attitude, not to accept Christ - those of you that are of this mind, may sit still.” They looked at one another and at me, and all sat still just as I expected.

After looking around for a few moments, I said, “Then you are committed. You have taken your stand. You have rejected Christ and his Gospel; and ye are witnesses one against the other, and God is witness against you all. This is explicit and you may remember as long as you live, that you have thus publicly committed yourselves against the Saviour, and said, ‘We will not have this man, Christ Jesus, to reign over us.’” This is the purport of what I urged upon them, and as nearly in these words as I can recollect.

When I thus pressed them they began to look angry, and arose, en masse, and started for the door. When they began to move, I paused. As soon as I stopped speaking they turned to see why I did not go on. I said, “I am sorry for you; and will preach to you once more, the Lord willing, tomorrow night.”

They all left the house except Deacon McC. who was a deacon of the Baptist church. I saw that the Congregationalists were confounded. They were few in number and very weak in faith. I presume that every member of both churches who was present, except Deacon McC., was taken aback, and concluded that the matter was all over - that by my imprudence I had dashed and ruined all hopeful appearances. Deacon McC. came up and took me by the hand and smiling said, “Brother Finney, you have got them. They can not rest under this, rely upon it. The brethren are all discouraged,” said he; “but I am not. I believe you have done the very thing that needed to be done, and that we shall see the results.” I thought so myself, of course. I intended to place them in a position which, upon reflection, would make them tremble in view of what they had done. But for that evening and the next day they were full of wrath. Deacon McC. and myself agreed upon the spot, to spend the next day in fasting and prayer - separately in the morning, and together in the afternoon. I learned in the course of the day that the people were threatening me - to ride me on a rail, to tar and feather me, and to give me a walking paper, as they said. Some of them cursed me; and said that I had put them under oath, and made them swear that they would not serve God; that I had drawn them into a solemn and public pledge to reject Christ and his Gospel. This was no more than I expected. In the afternoon Deacon McC. and I went into a grove together, and spent the whole afternoon in prayer. Just at evening the Lord gave us great

enlargement, and promise of victory. Both of us felt assured that we had prevailed with God; and that, that night, the power of God would be revealed among the people.

As the time came for meeting, we left the woods and went to the village. The people were already thronging to the place of worship; and those that had not already gone, seeing us go through the village turned out of their stores and places of business, or threw down their ball clubs where they were playing upon the green, and packed the house to its utmost capacity.

I had not taken a thought with regard to what I should preach. The Holy Spirit was upon me, and I felt confident that when the time came for action I should know. As soon as I found the house packed, I arose, and, without any formal introduction of singing, opened upon them with these words: "Say ye to the righteous that it shall be well with him; for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe to the wicked! it shall be ill with him; for the reward of his hands shall be given him." The Spirit of God came upon me with such power, that it was like opening a battery upon them. For more than an hour, 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. I saw that a general conviction was spreading over the whole congregation.

As the people withdrew, I observed a woman in the arms of some of her friends, who were supporting her, in one part of the house; and I went to see what was the matter, supposing that she was in a fainting fit. But I soon found that she was not fainting, but that she could not speak. There was a look of the greatest anguish in her face. I advised the women to take her home, and pray with her, and see what the Lord would do. They informed me that she was Miss G., sister of the well-known missionary, and that she was a member of the church in good standing, and had been for several years.

Instead of going to my usual lodgings, I accepted an invitation, and went home with a family where I had not before stopped over night. Early in the morning I found that I had been sent for to the place where I was supposed to be, several times, to visit families where there were persons under awful distress of mind. This led me to sally forth among the people, and everywhere I found a state of wonderful conviction of sin and alarm for their souls.

After lying in a speechless state about sixteen hours, Miss G.'s mouth was opened, and a new song was given her. She was taken from the horrible pit of miry clay, and her feet were set upon a rock; and it was true that many saw it and feared. It occasioned a great searching among the members of the church. She declared that she had been entirely deceived; that for eight years she had been a member of the church, and thought she was a Christian, but, during the sermon the night before, she saw that she had never known the true God; and when his character arose before her mind as it was then presented, her hope "perished like a moth." She said, such a view of the holiness of God was presented, that like a great wave it swept her away from her standing, and annihilated her hope in a moment.

I found a number of deists; some of them men of high standing in the community. One of them was a keeper of a hotel in the village; and others were respectable men, and of

more than average intelligence. But they seemed banded together to resist the revival. When I ascertained exactly the ground they took, I preached a sermon to meet their wants; for on the Sabbath they would attend my preaching. I took for my text: "Suffer me a little, and I will show you that I have yet to speak on God's behalf. I will bring my knowledge from afar, and I will ascribe righteousness to my Maker." I went over the whole ground, so far as I understood their position; and God enabled me to sweep it clean. As soon as I had finished and dismissed the meeting, the hotel keeper, who was the leader among them, came up to me, and taking me by the hand, said, "Mr. Finney, I am convinced. You have met and answered all my difficulties. Now I want you to go home with me, for I want to converse with you." I heard no more of their infidelity; and if I remember, that class of men were nearly, or quite, all converted.

There was one old man, who was not only an infidel, but a great railer at religion. He was very angry at the revival. I heard every day of his blaspheming, but took no public notice of it. He refused altogether to attend meeting. But in the midst of his opposition he suddenly fell out of his chair in a fit of apoplexy. A physician was immediately called told him that he could live but a very short time; and that if he had anything to say, he must say it at once. He had just strength and time to stammer out, "Don't let Finney pray over my corpse." This was the last of his.

During that revival my attention was called to a sick woman in the community, who had been a member of a Baptist church, and was well-known; but people had no confidence in her piety. She was fast failing and they begged me to call and see her. I went, and had a long conversation with her. She told me a dream which she had when she was a girl, which made her think that her sins were forgiven. Upon that she had settled down, and no argument could move her. I tried to persuade her, that there was no evidence of conversion, in that dream. I told her plainly that her acquaintances affirmed that she had never lived a Christian life, and had never evinced a Christian temper; and I had come to try to persuade her to give up her false hope, and see if she would not now accept Jesus Christ that she might be saved. I dealt with her as kindly as I could, but did not fail to make her understand what I meant. But she took great offence; and after I went away complained that I tried to get away her hope, and distress her mind; that I was cruel to try to distress a woman as sick as she was, in that way - to try to disturb the repose of her mind. She died not long afterward.

While at this place, one afternoon, a Christian brother called and wished me to visit his sister, who was fast failing with consumption, and was a Universalist. Her husband, he said, had led her into Universalism. He said he had not asked me to go and see her when her husband was at home, because he feared that he would abuse me; as he was determined that his wife's mind should not be disturbed on the question of universal salvation. I went, and found her not at all at rest in her views of Universalism; and during conversation with her, she gave up these views entirely, and appeared to embrace the Gospel. I believe she held fast to hope in Christ till she died.

At evening her husband returned, and learned from herself what had taken place. Greatly enraged, and swore he would "kill Finney." As I learned afterward, he armed himself with a loaded pistol, and that night went to meeting where I was to preach. Of this, however, I knew nothing at the time. The meeting was in a schoolhouse out of the village. The house was packed. I went on to preach with all my might; and in the midst

of my discourse I saw a powerful looking man, in the middle of the house, fall from his seat. As he sunk he groaned, and then cried that he was sinking to hell. He repeated that several times. The people knew who he was, but he was a stranger to me. I think I had never seen him before. Of course this created a great excitement. It broke up my preaching; and so great was his anguish that we spent the rest of our time in praying for him. When the meeting was dismissed his friends helped him home. The next morning I inquired for him; and found that he had spent a sleepless night, in great anguish of mind, and that at the early dawn he had gone forth, they knew not whither. He was not heard of till about ten o'clock in the morning. I was passing up the street, and saw him coming, apparently from a grove at some distance from the village. He was on the opposite side of the street, and coming toward me. When he recognised me, he came across to meet me, when I saw that his countenance was all in a glow. I said to him, "Good morning Mr. C." "Good morning," he replied. "And," said I, "how do you feel in your mind this morning?" "Oh, I do not know," he replied; "I have had an awfully distressed night. But I could not pray there in the house; and I thought if I could get alone, where I could pour out my voice with my heart, I could pray. In the morning I went into the woods; but when I got there I found I could not pray. I thought I could give myself to God; but I could not. I tried, and tried, till I was discouraged. Finally I saw that it was of no use; and I told the Lord that I found myself condemned and lost; that I had no heart to pray to him, and no heart to repent; that I found I had hardened myself so much that I could not give my heart to him, and therefore I must leave the whole question to him. I was at his disposal, and could not object to his doing with me just as it seemed good in his eyes, for I had no claim to his favour at all. I left the question of my salvation or damnation wholly with the Lord." "Well, what followed?" I inquired. "Why," said he, "I found I had lost all my conviction. I got up and came away, and my mind was so still and quiet that I found the Spirit of God was grieved away, and I had lost my conviction. "But," said he, "when I saw you my heart began to burn and grow hot within me; and instead of feeling as if I wanted to avoid you, I felt so drawn that I came across the street to see you." But I should have said that when he came near me, he leaped, and took me right up in his arms, and turned around once or twice, and then set me down. This preceded the conversation that I have just related. After a little further conversation I left him. He soon came into a state of mind that led him to indulge a hope. We heard no more of his opposition.

At this place I again saw Father Nash, the man who prayed with his eyes open when I was licensed. After he was at presbytery he was taken with inflamed eyes; and for several weeks was shut up in a dark room. He could neither read nor write and gave himself up almost entirely to prayer. He had a terrible overhauling in his whole Christian experience; and as soon as he was able to see, with a double black veil before his face, he sallied forth to labour for souls.

When he came to Evans' Mills he was full of the power of prayer. He was another man from what he had been at any former period. I found that he had "a praying list," of the names of persons whom he made subjects of prayer every day, and sometimes many times a day.

There was a man by the name of D., who kept a low tavern in the village, the resort of all the opposers of the revival. The bar-room was a place of blasphemy; and he was

himself a most profane, abusive man. He went railing about the streets respecting the revival; and would take particular pains to swear and blaspheme whenever he saw a Christian. One of the young converts lived almost across the way; and he told me that he meant to sell and move out of that neighbourhood, because every time he was out of doors and D. saw him, he would come out and swear, and curse, and say everything he could to wound his feelings. He had not, I think, been at any of our meetings.

Father Nash heard us speak of this Mr. D. as “a hard case;” and immediately put his name upon his praying list. He remained in town a day or two, and went on his way, having in view another field of labour.

Not many days afterward, as we were holding an evening meeting, a very crowded house, who should come in but this notorious D.? His entrance created a considerable movement in the congregation. People feared that he had come in to make a disturbance. The fear and abhorrence of him had become very general; I believe; so that when he came in, some of the people got up and retired. I knew his countenance, and kept my eye upon him; I very soon became satisfied that he had not come to oppose, and that he was in great anguish of mind. He sat and writhed upon his seat. He soon arose, and tremblingly asked me if he might say a few words. I told him that he might. He then proceeded to make one of the most heart-broken confessions that I ever heard. His confession seemed to cover the whole ground of his treatment of God, and of his treatment of Christians, and of the revival, and of everything good.

This thoroughly broke up the fallow ground in many hearts. It was the most powerful means that could have been used, just then, to give an impetus to the work. D. soon came out and professed a hope, abolished all the revelry and profanity of his bar-room; and from that time, as long as I stayed there, and I know not how much longer, a prayer meeting was held in his bar-room nearly every night.

CHAPTER 6

REVIVAL AT EVANS' MILLS AND ITS RESULTS

A little way from the village of Evans' Mills, was a settlement of Germans, where there was a German church with several elders, and a considerable membership, but no minister, and no regular religious meetings. Once each year they were in the habit of having a minister come up from the Mohawk Valley, to administer the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper. He would catechise their children, and receive such of them as had made the required attainments in knowledge. This was the way in which they were made Christians. They were required to commit to memory the Catechism, and to be able to answer certain doctrinal questions; whereupon they were admitted to full communion in the church. After receiving the communion they took it for granted that they were Christians, and that all was safe.

But mingling, as they did more or less, in the scenes that passed in the village, they requested me to go out there and preach. I consented; and the first time I took this text: "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

The settlement turned out en masse; and the schoolhouse was filled to its utmost capacity. They could understand English well. I began by showing, what holiness is not. Under this head I took everything that they considered to be religion, and showed that it was not holiness at all. In the second place I showed what holiness is. I then showed, thirdly, what is intended by seeing the Lord; and then, why those that had no holiness could never see the Lord - why they could never be admitted to his presence, and be accepted of him. I then concluded with such pointed remarks as were intended to make the subject go home. And it did go home by the power of the Holy Ghost. The sword of the Lord slew them on the right hand and on the left.

In a very few days it was found that the whole settlement was under conviction; elders of the church and all were in the greatest consternation, feeling that they had no holiness. At their request I appointed a meeting for inquiry, to give instruction to inquirers. This was in their harvest time. I held the meeting at one o'clock in the afternoon, and found the house literally packed. People had thrown down the implements with which they were gathering their harvest, and had come into the meeting.

I took a position in the centre of the house, as I could not move around among them; and asked them questions, and encouraged them to ask questions. They became interested, and were free in asking questions, and in answering the questions which I asked.

One woman came in late, and sat near the door. When I came to speak to her, I said, "You look unwell." "Yes," she replied, "I am very sick, I have been in bed until I came to meeting. But I can not read; and I wanted to hear God's word so much that I got up and came to meeting." "How did you come?" I inquired. She replied, "I came on foot." "How far is it?" was the next inquiry. "We call it three miles." On inquiry I found that she was under conviction of sin, and had a most remarkably clear apprehension of her character and position before God. She was soon after converted, and a remarkable

convert she was. My wife said that she was one of the most remarkable women in prayer that she ever heard.

I addressed a tall dignified-looking woman, and asked her what was the state of her mind. She replied immediately that she had given her heart to God; and went on to say that the Lord had taught her to read, since she had learnt to pray. I asked her what she meant. She said she never could read, and never had known her letters. But when she gave her heart to God, she was greatly distressed that she could not read God's word. "But I thought," she said, "that Jesus could teach me to read; and I asked him if he would not please to teach me to read his word. I thought when I had prayed that I could read. The children have a Testament, and I went and got it; and I thought I could read what I had heard them read. But I went over to the school ma'am, and asked her if I read right; and she said I did; and since then, I can read the word of God for myself."

I said no more; but thought there must be some mistake about this, as the woman appeared to be quite in earnest, and quite intelligent in what she said. I took pains, afterwards to inquire of her neighbours about her. They gave her an excellent character; and they all affirmed that it had been notorious that she could not read a syllable until after she was converted. I leave this to spoke for itself; there is no use in theorising. Such, I think, were the undoubted facts.

But the revival among the Germans resulted in the conversion of the whole church and of nearly the whole community of Germans.

While I was labouring at this place, the presbytery were called together to ordain me, which they did. Both churches were so strengthened, and their numbers so greatly increased, that they soon went forward and built each of them a commodious stone meeting house, and I believe have had a healthy state of religion there since that time.

I have only narrated some of the principal facts that I remember as connected with this revival. But I would further say that a wonderful spirit of prayer prevailed among Christians, and great unity of feeling. The Congregational church, as soon as they saw the results of the next evening's preaching, recovered themselves; for they had been scattered, discouraged, and confounded the night before. Though a feeble and inefficient band, with one or two exceptions, still they grew in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, during that revival.

The German woman of whom I have spoken as being sick when she came to the meeting, united with the Congregational church. A very affecting incident, I recollect, occurred at the time she gave a relation of her Christian experience. There was a mother in Israel by the name of S., a very godly woman, of ripe age, and piety. We had been sitting for a long time, and, hearing the narration of the experience of one after another who came forward as candidates for admission. At length this German woman arose and related her experience, one of the most touching, childlike, interesting Christian experiences that I ever listened to. I observed that old Mrs. S. rose up and as the house was filled, crowded her way around as best she could. I was so occupied with the woman's narrative, that I was scarcely conscious of Mrs. S.'s moving. As soon as she came near to where the woman stood relating her experience, she stepped

forward, and threw her arms round her neck and burst into tears, and said, "God bless you, my dear sister! God bless you!" They wept on each other's necks. It was too moving a scene to be described in words.

The means used were simply preaching, prayer and conference meetings, much private prayer, much personal conversation, and meetings for the instruction of earnest inquirers. These, and no other means, were used for the promotion of that work.

I have spoken of cases of intensified opposition to this revival. One circumstance, I found, had prepared the people for this opposition, and had greatly embittered it. I found that region of country what, in the western phrase, would be called, "a burnt district." There had been, a few years previously, a wild excitement which they called a revival, but which turned out to be spurious. It was reported as having been a very extravagant excitement; and resulted in a reaction so extensive and profound, as to leave the impression on many minds that religion was a mere delusion.

After the revival took thorough hold, opposition entirely ceased so far as I could learn. I spent more than six months at this place and at Antwerp, labouring between the two places; and for the latter part of the time I heard nothing of open opposition.

I was obliged to take much pains in giving instruction to inquirers. The practice had been, I believe, universal, to set anxious sinners to praying for a new heart, and to using means for their own conversion. The directions they received either assumed or implied that they were very willing to be Christians, and were taking much pains to persuade God to convert them. I tried to make them understand that God was using the means with them, and not they with Him; that God was willing, and they were unwilling; that God was ready, and they were not ready. In short, I tried to shut them up to present faith and repentance, as the thing which God required of them, present and instant submission to his will, present and instant acceptance of Christ. I tried to show them that all delay was only an evasion of present duty; that all praying for a new heart, was only trying to throw the responsibility of their conversion upon God; and that all efforts to do duty, while they did not give their hearts to God, were hypocritical and delusive.

During the whole six months that I laboured in that region, I rode on horseback from town to town, and from settlement to settlement, and preached the Gospel as I had opportunity. When I left Adams my health had run down a good deal. I had coughed blood; and at the time I was licensed, my friends thought that I could live but a short time. Mr. Gale charged me not to attempt to preach more than once a week, and then to be sure not to speak more than half an hour at a time. But instead of this, I visited, attended prayer meetings, and preached and laboured every day, and almost every night, through the whole season. Before the six months were completed my health was entirely restored, and I could preach two hours, and longer, without feeling the least fatigue. I think my sermons generally averaged nearly or quite two hours. I preached out of doors; I preached in barns; I preached in schoolhouses; and a glorious revival spread all over that new region of country.

All through the earlier part of my ministry especially, I used to meet from ministers a great many rebuffs and reproofs, particularly in respect to my manner of preaching.

The fact is, their education had been so entirely different from mine, that they disapproved of my manner very much. They would reprove me for illustrating my ideas by reference to the common affairs of men, as I was in the habit of doing. Among farmers and mechanics, and other classes, I borrowed my illustrations from their various occupations. I tried also to use such language as they would understand. I addressed them in the language of the common people.

Before I was converted I had a different tendency. In writing and speaking, I had sometimes allowed myself to use ornate language. But when I came to preach the Gospel, my mind was so anxious to be thoroughly understood, that I studied in the most earnest manner, on the one hand to avoid what was vulgar, and on the other to express my thoughts with the greatest simplicity.

About the time that I left Evans' Mills our presbytery met, and I attended the meeting. I left the revival work at the particular request of some brethren, and went over to the presbytery. The brethren had heard of my manner of preaching - those of them who had not heard me preach. The presbytery met in the morning, and went on with the transaction of business; and after our recess for dinner, as we assembled in the afternoon, the mass of the people came together and filled the house. I had not the remotest thought of what was in the minds of the presbytery. I therefore took my seat in the crowd, and waited for the meeting to be opened.

As soon as the congregation was fairly assembled, one of the brethren arose and said: "The people have come together manifestly to hear preaching; and I move that Mr. Finney preach a sermon." This was seconded, and unanimously carried. I saw in a moment that it was the design of the brethren to put me on trial, that they might see if I could do as they had heard that I did - get up and preach on the spur of the moment, without any previous preparation. I made no apology or objection to preaching; for I must say that my heart was full of it, and that I wanted to preach. I arose and stepped into the aisle; and looking up to the pulpit, I saw that it was a high up against the wall. I therefore stood in the aisle and named my text: "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." The Lord helped me to preach. I walked up and down the broad aisle; and the people were evidently interested and much moved.

But after the meeting one of the brethren stepped up to me and said: "Brother Finney, if you come up our way, I should like to have you preach in some of our school districts. I should not like to have you preach in our church. But we have got schoolhouses in some of the districts, away from the village - I should like to have you preach in some of those." I mention this to show what their ideas were of my method of preaching. But how completely they were in the dark in regard to the results of that method of addressing people! They used to complain that I let down the dignity of the pulpit: that I was a disgrace to the ministerial profession; that I talked like a lawyer at the bar; that I talked to the people in a colloquial manner; that I said "you," instead of preaching about sin and sinners, and saying "they;" that I said "hell," and with such an emphasis as often to shock people; furthermore, that I urged the people with such vehemence, as if they might not have a moment to live; and sometimes they complained that I blamed people too much. One doctor of divinity told me that he felt a great deal more like weeping over sinners, than blaming them. I replied to him that I

did not wonder, if he believed that they had a sinful nature, and that sin was entailed upon them, and they could not help it.

After I had preached some time, and the Lord had everywhere added his blessing, I used to say to ministers, whenever they contended with me about my manner, and desired me to adopt their ideas and preach as they did, that I dared not make the change. I said, "Show me a more excellent way. Show me the fruits of your ministry; and if they so far exceed mine as to give me evidence that you have found a more excellent way, I will adopt your views. But do you expect me to abandon my own views and practices, when you yourselves can not deny that, whatever errors I may have fallen into, yet the results justify my methods?"

They used to complain, oftentimes, that I was guilty of repetition. I would take the same thought and turn it over and over, and illustrate it in various ways. I assured them that I thought it was necessary to do so, to make myself understood; and that I could not be persuaded to relinquish this practice. Then they would say, "you will not interest the educated part of your congregation." But facts soon silenced them on this point. They found that, under my preaching, judges, and lawyers, and educated men were converted by scores; whereas, under their methods, such a thing seldom occurred.

CHAPTER 7

REMARKS UPON MINISTERIAL EDUCATION

In what I say upon this subject I hope my brethren will not impute to me any other motive than a kind and benevolent regard for their highest usefulness. I have always taken their criticisms kindly, and given them credit for benevolent intentions. Now I am an old man, and many of the results of my views and methods are known to the public. Is it out of place to speak freely upon this subject? In reply to their objections, I have sometimes told them what a judge of the supreme court remarked to me. "Ministers do not exercise good sense in addressing the people. They are afraid of repetition. They use language not well understood by the common people. Their illustrations are not taken from the pursuits of life. They write in too elevated a style, and read without repetition, and are not understood. Now, if lawyers should take such a course, they would ruin themselves and their cause. When I was at the bar I used to take it for granted, when I had before me a jury of respectable men, that I should have to repeat over my main positions about as many times as there were persons in the jury-box. I learned that unless I did so, illustrated, and repeated, and turned the main points over - the main points of law and of evidence, I should lose my cause." "Our object in addressing a jury, is to get their minds settled before they leave the jury-box; not to make a speech in language but partially understood by them; not to let ourselves out in illustrations entirely above their apprehension; not to display our oratory, and then let them go. We are set on getting a verdict. Hence we are set upon being understood."

I never entertained the least hard feeling toward my brethren for the roughness with which they often treated me. I knew that they were very anxious to have me do good; and really supposed that I should do much more good, and much less evil, if I should adopt their views. But I was of a different opinion.

The more experience I had, the more I saw the results of my method of preaching, the more I conversed with all classes, high and low, educated and uneducated, the more was I 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. I say that God taught me; and I know it must have been so; for surely I never had obtained these notions from man. And I have often thought that I could say with perfect truth, as Paul said, that I was not taught the Gospel by man, but by the Spirit of Christ himself. And I was taught it by the Spirit of the Lord in a manner so clear and forcible, that no argument of my ministerial brethren, with which I was plied so often and so long, had the least weight with me.

One great thing above all others ministers need, and that is singleness of eye. If they have a reputation to secure and to nurse, they will do but little good. Many years ago a beloved pastor of my acquaintance, left home for his health, and employed a young man, just from the seminary, to fill his pulpit while he was absent. This young man wrote and preached as splendid sermons as he could. The pastor's wife ventured to say to him, "You are preaching over the heads of our people. They do not understand your language or your illustrations. You bring too much of your learning into the pulpit." He replied, "I am a young man. I am cultivating a style. I am aiming to prepare myself for occupying a pulpit and surrounding myself with a cultivated congregation. I can not

descend to your people. I must cultivate an elevated style." I have had my thought and my eye upon this man ever since. I am not aware that he is yet dead; but I have never seen his name connected with any revival, amidst all the great revivals that we have had, from year to year, since that time; and I never expect to, unless his views are radically changed, and unless he addresses the people from an entirely different standpoint, and from entirely different motives.

I could name ministers who are yet alive, old men like myself, who were greatly ashamed of me when I first began to preach because I was so undignified in the pulpit, used such common language, addressed the people with such directness, and because I aimed not at all at ornament, or at supporting the dignity of the pulpit.

Dear brethren they were; and I always felt in the kindest manner toward them, and do not know that in a single instance I was ruffled or angry at what they said. I was from the very first aware that I should meet with this opposition; and that there was this wide gulf in our views, and would be in practice, between myself and other ministers. I seldom felt that I was one of them, or that they regarded me as really belonging to their fraternity. I was bred a lawyer. I came right from a law office to the pulpit, and talked to the people as I would have talked to a jury.

It was very common, as I learned, among ministers in my earlier years of preaching, to agree among themselves that if I were to succeed in the ministry, it would bring the schools into disrepute; and men would come to think it hardly worth while to support them with their funds, if a man could be accepted as a successful preacher without them. Now I never had a thought of undervaluing the education furnished by colleges or theological seminaries; though I did think, and think now, that in certain respects they are greatly mistaken in their modes of training their students. They do not encourage them to talk to the people, and accustom themselves to extemporaneous addresses to the people in the surrounding country, while pursuing their studies. Men can not learn to preach by study without practice. The students should be encouraged to exercise, and prove, and improve, their gifts and calling of God, by going out into any places open to them, and holding Christ up to the people in earnest talks. They must thus learn to preach. Instead of this, the students are required to write what they call sermons, and present them or criticism; to preach, - that is, read them - to the class and the professor. Thus they play at preaching. No man can preach in this manner. These so-called sermons will of course, under the criticism they receive, degenerate into literary essays. The people have no respect for such sermons, as sermons. This reading of elegant literary essays, is not to them preaching. It is gratifying to literary taste, but not spiritually edifying. It does not meet the wants of the soul. It is not calculated to win souls to Christ. The students are taught to cultivate a fine, elevated style of writing. As for real eloquence, that gushing, impressive, and persuasive oratory, that naturally flows from an educated man whose soul is on fire with his subject, and who is free to pour out his heart to a waiting and earnest people, they have none of it.

A reflecting mind will feel as if it were infinitely out of place to present in the pulpit to immortal souls, hanging upon the verge of everlasting death, such specimens of learning and rhetoric. They know that men do not do so on any subject where they are really in earnest. The captain of a fire company, when a city is on fire, does not read to

his company an essay or exhibit a fine specimen of rhetoric, when he shouts to them and directs their movements. It is a question of urgency, and he intends that every word shall be understood. He is entirely in earnest with them; and they feel that criticism would be out of place in regard to the language he uses.

So it always is when men are entirely in earnest. Their language is in point, direct and simple. Their sentences are short, cogent, powerful. The appeal is made directly for action; and hence all such discourses take effect. This is the reason why, formerly, the ignorant Methodist preachers, and the earnest Baptist preachers produced so much more effect than our most learned theologians and divines. They do so now. The impassioned utterance of a common exhorter will often move a congregation far beyond anything that those splendid exhibitions of rhetoric can effect. Great sermons lead the people to praise the preacher. Good preaching leads the people to praise the Saviour.

Our theological schools would be of much greater value than they are, if they were much more practical. I heard a theological teacher read a sermon on the importance of extemporaneous preaching. His views on that subject were correct; but his practice entirely contradicted them. He seemed to have studied the subject, and to have attained to practical views of the highest importance. But yet I have never known one of his students, in practice, to adopt those views. I have understood that he says that if he were to begin his life anew as a preacher, he would practice according to his present views; and that he laments that his education was wrong in this respect, and consequently his practice has been wrong.

In our school at Oberlin our students have been led - not by myself, I am bound to say - to think that they must write their sermons; and very few of them, notwithstanding all I could say to them, have the courage to launch out, and commit themselves to extemporaneous preaching. They have been told again and again: "You must not think to imitate Mr. Finney. You can not be Finney's."

Ministers do not like to get up and talk as best they can, and break themselves at once into the habit of talking to the people. They must preach; and if they must preach in the common acceptance of the term, they must write. Hence, according to that view, I have never preached. Indeed, people have often said to me: "Why, you do not preach. You talk to the people." A man in London went home from one of our meetings greatly convicted. He had been a sceptic; and his wife seeing him greatly excited, said to him, "Husband, have you been to hear Mr. Finney preach?" He replied: "I have been to Mr. Finney's meeting. He don't preach; he only explains what other people preach." This, in substance, I have heard over and over again. "Why!" they say, "anybody could preach as you do. You just talk to the people. You talk as if you were as much at home as if you sat in the parlour." Others have said: "Why it don't seem like preaching; but it seems as if Mr. Finney had taken me alone, and was conversing with me face to face."

Ministers generally avoid preaching what the people before them will understand as addressed particularly to them. They will preach to them about other people, and say, "You are guilty of these sins;" and, "The Lord requires this of you." They often preach about the Gospel instead of preaching the Gospel. They often preach about sinners instead of preaching to them. They studiously avoid being personal, in the sense of

making the impression on anyone present that he is the man. Now I have thought it my duty to pursue a different course; and I always have pursued a different course. I have often said, "Do not think I am talking about anybody else; but I mean you, and you, and you."

My experience has been, that even in respect to personal popularity, "honesty is the best policy" in a minister; that if he means to maintain his hold upon the confidence, and respect, and affection of any people, he must be faithful. He must let them see that he is not courting them for any purpose of popularity, but that he is trying to save their souls. Men are not fools. They have no solid respect for a man that will go into the pulpit and preach smooth things. They cordially despise it in their inmost souls. And let no man think that he will be permanently honoured by his people, unless as an ambassador of Christ he deals faithfully with their souls.

The great argument in opposition to my views of preaching the Gospel was, that I should not give nearly so much instruction to the people, as I should if I wrote my sermons. They said I would not study; and consequently, although I might succeed as an evangelist, where I laboured but a few weeks or months in a place, still it would never do for a pastor to preach extemporaneously.

I have been a pastor now for many years - indeed, ever since 1832; and I have never heard any complaint that I did not instruct the people. I do not believe it is true that my people are not as well instructed, so far as pulpit instruction is concerned, as those people are who sit under the preaching of written sermons.

My habit has always been to study the Gospel, and the best application of it, all the time. I do not confine myself to hours and days of writing sermons; but my mind is always pondering the truths of the Gospel, and the best ways of using them. I go among the people and learn their wants. Then, in the light of the Holy Spirit, I take a subject that I think will meet their present necessities. I think intensely on it, and pray much over the subject on Sabbath morning, for example, and get my mind full of it, and then go and pour it out to the people. Whereas one great difficulty with a written sermon is, that a man after he has written it, needs to think but little of the subject. He needs to pray but little. He perhaps reads over his manuscript Saturday evening, or Sabbath morning; but he does not feel the necessity of being powerfully anointed, that his mouth may be opened and filled with arguments, and that he may be enabled to preach out of a full heart. He is quite at ease. He has only to use his eyes and his voice, and he can preach, in his way. It may be a sermon that has been written for years; it may be a sermon that he has written, every word of it, within the week. But on Sabbath-day there is no freshness in it. It does not come necessarily new and fresh, and as an anointed message from God to his heart, and through his heart to the people.

I am prepared to say, most solemnly, that I think I have studied all the more for not having written my sermons. I have been obliged to make the subjects upon which I preached familiar with my thoughts, to fill my mind with them, and then go and talk them off to the people.

(This is in the American edition only: I simply note the heads upon which I wish to dwell in the briefest possible manner and in language not a word of which I use,

perhaps, in preaching. I simply jot down the order of my propositions, and the petitions which I propose to take; and in a word, sketch an outline of the remarks and inferences with which I conclude.) But unless men will try it, unless they will begin and talk to the people, as best they can, keeping their hearts full of truth and full of the Holy Ghost, they will never make extemporaneous preachers. I believe that half an hour's earnest talk to the people from week to week, if the talk be pointed, direct, earnest, logical, will really instruct them more than the two laboured sermons that those who write, get off to their people on the Sabbath. I believe the people would remember more of what is said, be more interested in it, and would carry it away with them to be pondered, vastly more than they do what they get from the laboured written sermons.

I have spoken of my method of preparing for the pulpit in more recent years. For some twelve years of my earliest ministry, I wrote not a word; and was most commonly obliged to preach without any preparation whatever, except what I got in prayer. Oftentimes I went into the pulpit without knowing upon what text I should speak, or a word that I should say. I depended on the occasion and the Holy Spirit to suggest the text, and to open up the whole subject to my mind; and certainly in no part of my ministry have I preached with greater success and power. If I did not preach from inspiration, I don't know how I did preach. It was a common experience with me, and has been during all my ministerial life, that the subject would open up to my mind in a manner that was surprising to myself. It seemed that I could see with intuitive clearness just what I ought to say; and whole platoons of thoughts, words, and illustrations, came to me as fast as I could deliver them. When I first began to make "skeletons," I made them after, and not before I preached. It was to preserve the outline of the thought which had been given me, on occasions such as I have just mentioned. I found when the Spirit of God had given me a very clear view of a subject, I could not retain it, to be used on any other occasion, unless I jotted down an outline of the thoughts. But after all, I have never found myself able to use old skeletons in preaching, to any considerable extent, without remodelling them, and having a fresh and new view of the subject given me by the Holy Spirit. I almost always get my subjects on my knees in prayer; and it has been a common experience with me, upon receiving a subject from the Holy Spirit, to have it make so strong an impression on my mind as to make me tremble, so that I could with difficulty write. When subjects are thus given me that seem to go through me, body and soul, I can in a few moments make out a skeleton that shall enable me to retain the view presented by the Spirit; and I find that such sermons always tell with great power upon the people.

Some of the most telling sermons that I have ever preached in Oberlin, I have thus received after the bell had rung for church; and I was obliged to go and pour them off from my full heart, without jotting down more than the briefest possible skeleton, and that sometimes not covering half the ground that I covered in my sermon.

I tell this, not boastfully, but because it is a fact, and to give the praise to God, and not to any talents of my own. Let no man think that those sermons which have been called so powerful, were productions of my own brain, or of my own heart, unassisted by the Holy Ghost. They are not mine, but from the Holy Spirit in me.

And let no man say that this is claiming a higher inspiration than is promised to ministers, or than ministers have a right to expect. For I believe that all ministers,

called by Christ to preach the Gospel, ought to be, and may be, in such a sense inspired, as to “preach the Gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven.” What else did Christ mean when he said, “Go and disciple all nations; and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world?” What did he mean when he said, speaking of the Holy Spirit, “He shall take of mine and show it unto you?” “He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you?” What did he mean when he said, “If any man believe in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water?” “This spake he of the Spirit, that they which believe on him should receive.” All ministers may be, and ought to be, so filled with the Holy Spirit that all who hear them shall be impressed with the conviction that “God is in them of a truth.”

CHAPTER 8

REVIVAL AT ANTWERP

I must now give some account of my labours, and their result, at Antwerp, a village north of Evans' Mills.

I arrived there, the first time, in April, and found that no religious services were held in the town. The land in the township belonged to a Mr. P., a rich land holder residing in Ogdensburgh. To encourage the settlement of the township, he had built a brick meeting-house; but the people had no mind to keep up public worship, the meeting-house was locked up, and the key was in the possession of Mr. C., who kept the village hotel.

I soon learned that there was a Presbyterian Church consisting of but few members. They had, some years before, tried to keep up a meeting at the village, on the Sabbath; but one of the elders, who conducted their Sabbath meetings, lived about five miles out, and was obliged, in approaching the village, to pass through a Universalist settlement. The Universalists had broken up the village meeting, by rendering it impossible for Deacon R., as they called him, to get through their settlement to meeting. They would even take off the wheels of his carriage; and finally they carried their opposition so far that he gave up attending meetings at the village; and all religious services were relinquished.

I found Mrs. C, the landlady, a pious woman. There were two other pious women in the village, a Mrs. H, the wife of a merchant, and a Mrs. R., the wife of a physician. It was on Friday, if I remember, that I arrived. I called on those pious women and asked them if they would like to have a meeting. They said that they would, but they did not know that it would be possible. Mrs. H agreed to open her parlour if I could get anybody to attend. I went about and invited the people, and secured the attendance, I think, of some thirteen. I preached to them; and then said, that, if I could get the use of the village schoolhouse, I would preach on the Sabbath. I got the consent of the trustees; and the next day an appointment was circulated around among the people, for a meeting at the school-house on Sabbath morning.

In the village I heard a vast amount of profanity; I thought I had never heard so much in any place that I had ever visited. It seemed as if the men, in playing at ball upon the green, and in every business place, were all cursing and swearing, and I felt as if I had arrived upon the borders of hell. The very atmosphere seemed to be poison; and a kind of terror took possession of me.

I gave myself to prayer on Saturday, and finally urged my petition till this answer came: "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee. For I have much people in this city." This completely relieved me of all fear. I found, however, that the Christian people there were really afraid that something serious might happen, if religious meetings were again established in that place. I spent Saturday very much in prayer; but passed around the village enough to see that the appointment that had been given out for preaching at the school-house was making quite an excitement.

On Sabbath morning I arose and left my lodgings in the hotel; and in order to get alone, where I could let out my voice as well as my heart, I went up into the woods at some distance from the village, and continued for a considerable time in prayer. However, I did not get relief; but the load upon my mind increased. I went up a third time; and then the answer came. I found that it was time for the meeting, and went immediately to the school-house. I found it packed to its utmost capacity. I had my pocket Bible in my hand, and read to them: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish but have everlasting life." The point on which my mind principally laboured, was the treatment which God received in return for His love.

I saw several men there from whom I had, the day before, heard the most awful profanity. I pointed them out in the meeting, and told what they said-how they called on God to damn each other. I told them they seemed "to howl blasphemy about the streets like hellhounds;" and it seemed to me that I had arrived "on the very verge of hell." Everybody knew that what I said was true, and they quailed under it. They did not appear offended; but the people wept about as much as I did myself. I think there were scarcely any dry eyes in the house.

In the afternoon the meeting-house was nearly as much crowded as the school-house had been in the morning. Everybody was out at meeting; and the Lord let me loose upon them in a wonderful manner. My preaching seemed to them to be something new. Indeed it seemed to myself as if I could rain hail and love upon them at the same time; or, in other words, that I could rain upon them hail, in love.

The labours of this day were effectual to the conviction of the great mass of the population. From that day, appoint a meeting when and where I would, the people would throng to hear. The work immediately commenced and went forward with great power. I preached twice in the village church on Sabbath, attended a prayer-meeting at intermission, and generally preached in a school-house at five o'clock in the afternoon.

On the third Sabbath, an aged man came to me as I was entering the pulpit, and asked if I would preach in a school-house in his neighbourhood, about three miles distant; saying that they had never had any services there. I appointed the next day, at five o'clock in the afternoon. It was a warm day. I left my horse at the village, and thought I would walk down, so that I should have no trouble in calling on the people in the neighbourhood. However, before I reached the place, having laboured so hard on the Sabbath, I found myself much exhausted, and sat down by the way, and felt as if I could scarcely proceed. I blamed myself for not having taken my horse.

But at the appointed hour I found the school-house full; and I could only get a standing-place near the open door. I read a hymn; and I can not call it singing, each one bawled in his own way. My ears had been cultivated by teaching music; and their horrible discord distressed me so much that, at first, I thought I must go out. I finally put both hands over my ears until they were through; and then I cast myself down on my knees, almost in a state of desperation, and began to pray. The Lord opened the windows of heaven, and the spirit of prayer was poured out, and I let my whole heart out in prayer.

I had taken no thought with regard to a text; but watched to see the congregation. I arose from my knees and said: "Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will destroy this city." I did not recollect where that text was; but I told them very nearly where they would find it, and then went on to explain it. I told them that there was such a man as Abraham; and that there was such a man as Lot; their relations to each other; their separating from each other on account of differences; and that Abraham took the hill country, and Lot settled in the vale of Sodom. I then told them how exceedingly wicked Sodom became, and what abominable practices they fell into. I told them that the Lord decided to destroy Sodom, and visited Abraham and informed him what He was about to do; that Abraham prayed to the Lord to spare Sodom, if He found so many righteous there; and the Lord promised to do so for their sakes; that then Abraham besought him to save it for a certain less number, and the Lord said He would spare it for their sakes; that he kept on reducing the number, until he reduced the number of righteous persons to ten; and God promised that, if He found ten righteous persons in the city, he would spare it. It was found that there was but one righteous person there, and that was Lot, Abraham's nephew. "And the men said to Lot, Hast thou here any besides? Son-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place; for we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it."

While I was relating these facts I observed the people looking as if they were angry. Many of the men, in their shirt sleeves, looked at each other and at me, as if they were ready to chastise me on the spot. I could not understand what had offended them. However, it seemed that their anger rose higher and higher as I continued. As soon as I had finished, I turned and said, that I had understood that they had never had a religious meeting in that place; and that therefore I had a right to take it for granted that they were an ungodly people. I pressed that home upon them with energy, with my heart full almost to bursting.

I had not spoken in this strain more than a quarter of an hour, when an awful solemnity seemed to settle upon them; the congregation began to fall from their seats in every direction, and cried for mercy. If I had had a sword in each hand, I could not have cut them down as fast as they fell. Nearly the whole congregation were either on their knees or prostrate, I should think, in less than two minutes from this first shock that fell upon them. Every one prayed who was able to speak at all.

I was obliged to stop preaching; for they no longer paid attention. I saw the old man who had invited me, sitting in the middle of the house, and looking around with amazement. I raised my voice to make him hear, and said, "Can't you pray?" He instantly, fell upon his knees, and with a stentorian voice poured himself out to God; but he did not at all get the attention of the people. I then spake as loud as I could, and tried to make them attend. I said, "You are not in hell yet; and now let me direct you to Christ." For a few moments I tried to hold forth the Gospel; but scarcely any of them paid attention. My heart was so overflowing with joy that I could scarcely contain myself. It was with much difficulty that I refrained from shouting, and giving glory to God.

As soon as I could control my feelings I turned to a young man close to me, engaged

in praying for himself, laid my hand upon his shoulder, and preached in his ear Jesus. As soon as I got his attention to the cross Christ, he believed, was calm and quiet for a minute or two, and then broke out in praying for others. I then turned to another, and took the same course with him, with the same result; and then another, and another.

In this way I kept on, until I found the time had arrived when I must leave and fulfil an appointment in the village. I told them this, and asked the old man who invited me, to take charge of the meeting. But there was too much interest, and there were too many wounded souls, to dismiss the meeting; and so it was held all night. In the morning there were still those that could not get away; and they were carried to a private house to make room for the school. In the afternoon they sent for me to come, as they could not break up.

When I went down the second time, I heard an explanation of the anger manifested during my sermon the day before. The place was called Sodom, but I knew it not; there was but one pious man in the place, and him they called Lot-the old man that invited me. The people supposed I had chosen my subject, and preached in that manner, because they were so wicked. This was a striking coincidence; but it was altogether accidental. I have not been in that place for many years. A few years since, I was labouring in Syracuse, in the State of New York. Two gentlemen called upon me; one an elderly man; the other not quite fifty. The younger introduced the elder as Deacon W., elder in his church: saying he had called to give a hundred dollars to Oberlin College. The elder in turn introduced the younger, saying, "This is my minister, the Rev. Mr. Cross. He was converted under your ministry." Whereupon Mr. Cross said, "Do you remember preaching in Antwerp, in the school-house, in the afternoon, and that such a scene, describing it, occurred there?" I said, "I remember it very well, and can never forget it while I remember anything." "Well," said he, "I was then but a young man, and was converted in that meeting." He has been many years a successful minister. Several of his children have obtained their education in our college at Oberlin.

Although that revival came upon them suddenly, and was of such a powerful type, the converts were sound, and the work genuine. I never heard of any disastrous reaction.

I have spoken of the Universalists having prevented Deacon R- from attending meetings on Sabbath, in Antwerp, by taking off the wheels of his carriage. When the revival was in full strength, Deacon R- wanted me to preach in that neighbourhood. Accordingly I made an appointment. When I arrived I found the school-house filled. I engaged in prayer, and then arose and took this text "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"

I saw that Deacon R. was very uneasy; and he soon went and stood in the open door. As there were some boys near, I supposed that he had gone to keep the boys still; but I afterwards learnt it was through fear. He thought that if they set upon me, he would be where he could escape. I proceeded out, and before I could get through, there was a complete upturning of the very foundations of Universalism. It was a scene that almost equalled that in Sodom. Thus the revival penetrated to every part of the town, and some of the neighbouring towns shared the blessing.

When we came to receive the converts, after a great number had been examined, and

the day approached for their admission, I found that several of them had been brought up in Baptist families, and asked them if they would not prefer to be immersed. They had no choice; but their parents would prefer to have them immersed. I told them I had no objection to immersing them, and accordingly, I arranged to baptise by immersion. We went down to a stream that runs through the place; and there I baptised a dozen or more.

When the hour for afternoon service arrived, we went to the meeting House; and there I baptised a great number of persons by taking water in my hand and applying it to the forehead. The administration of the ordinance was so manifestly owned and blessed of God, as to do much to satisfy the people that that mode of baptism was acceptable to Him.

Among the converts was also a considerable number whose friends were Methodists. On Saturday I learned that some were saying to the converts, "Mr. Finney is a Presbyterian. He believes in the doctrine of election and predestination; but he has not preached it here. He dare not preach it, because if he should, the converts would not join his church." This determined me to preach on the doctrine of election, the Sabbath morning previous to their joining the church.

While I was preaching, I observed a Methodist sister with whom I had become acquainted, weeping. I feared that I was hurting her feelings. After the close of the meeting, she remained weeping; and I said, "Sister, I hope I have not injured your feelings." "No," said she, "you have not injured my feelings, Mr. Finney; but I have committed a sin. No longer ago than last night, my husband, who is an impenitent man, was arguing this very question; and maintaining, the doctrine of election. I resisted it, and told him that it was not true. And now, to-day, you have convinced me that it is true; and instead of forming any excuse for my husband, or anybody else, it is the only hope that I can have that he will be saved, or anybody else." I heard no further objection to the converts joining a church that believed in the doctrine of election.

There were many interesting cases of conversion and two very striking cases of instantaneous recovery from insanity. As I went into meeting in the afternoon of one Sabbath, I saw several ladies in a pew, with a woman dressed in black who seemed to be in great distress; and they were partly holding her, and preventing her from going out. As I came in, one of the ladies came and told me that the one in black was an insane woman; that she had been a Methodist, but had, as she supposed, fallen from grace; which led to despair, and finally to insanity. Her husband was intemperate and lived several miles from the village; and had brought her down and left her at the meeting, and had himself gone to a tavern. I said a few words to her; but she replied that she must go; that she could not hear any praying, or preaching, or singing; that hell was her portion, and she could not endure anything that made her think of heaven.

I cautioned the ladies, privately, to keep her in the seat, if they could, without disturbing the meeting. I then went into the pulpit and read a hymn. As soon as the singing began, she struggled hard to get out; but the ladies prevented her escape. After a few moments she became quiet; but seemed to avoid hearing or attending at all to the singing. I then prayed. I heard her struggling to get out; but before I had done she became quiet, and the congregation was still. I took my text from Hebrews: "Let us

come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

My object was to encourage faith, in ourselves, and in her, and in ourselves for her. When I began to pray, she at first made quite an effort to get out. But the ladies resisted, and she finally sat still, but held her head very low, and seemed determined not to attend to what I said; But as I proceeded she began gradually to raise her head, and to look at me from within her long black bonnet. She looked until she sat upright, and looked me in the face with intense earnestness. As I proceeded to urge the people to be bold in faith, to launch out, and commit themselves with confidence to God, through the atoning sacrifice of our great High Priest, all at once she uttered a loud shriek. She then cast herself almost entirely from her seat, held her head very low, and I could see that she “trembled very exceedingly.” The ladies in the pew partly supported her, and watched her with manifest prayerful sympathy. As I proceeded she began to look up again, and soon sat upright, with face wonderfully changed, indicating triumphant joy and peace. There was such a glow upon her countenance as I have seldom seen in any human face. Her joy was so great that she could scarcely contain herself until meeting was over; and then she soon made everybody understand around her, that she was set at liberty. She glorified God, and rejoiced with amazing triumph. About two years after, I met her, and found her still full of joy and peace.

The other case of recovery was that of a woman who had also fallen into despair and insanity. I was not present when she was restored; but was told that it was almost or quite instantaneous, by means of a baptism of the Holy Spirit. Revivals of religion are sometimes accused of making people mad. The fact is, men are naturally mad on the subject of religion; and revivals rather restore them.

During this revival, we heard much of opposition from Gouverneur, a town about twelve miles further north. The wicked threatened to come and mob us. However we paid no attention. Having received the converts, and having laboured in Antwerp together with Evans’ Mills, until the fall of the year, I sent and procured for them a young man of the name of Denning, whom they settled as pastor. I then suspended my labours at Antwerp.

CHAPTER 9

RETURN TO EVANS' MILLS

AT this time I was earnestly pressed to remain at Evans' Mills, and finally gave encouragement that I would abide with them, at least one year. Being engaged to marry, I went from there to Whitestown, Oneida county, and was married in October, 1824. My wife had made preparations for housekeeping; and a day or two after our marriage I left her, and returned to Evans' Mills, to obtain conveyance to transport our goods to that place.

Previous to this, I had preached at a place called Perch River, still farther north-west about a dozen miles. I spent one Sabbath at Evans' Mills, and intended to return for my wife, about the middle of that week. But a messenger from Perch River came that Sabbath, and said there had been a revival among the people ever since I preached there; and he begged me to go down and preach there, at least once more. I finally sent an appointment to be there Tuesday night. But found the interest so deep that I stayed and preached Wednesday night, and Thursday night.

The revival soon spread in the direction of Brownville, a considerable village several miles in a south-western direction from that. Finally, under the pressing invitation of the minister and church at Brownville, I went there and spent the winter, having written to my wife, that such were the circumstances that I must defer coming for her, until God seemed to open the way.

I was the guest at that place of a Mr. B., one of the elders of the church, and the most intimate and influential friend of the minister. One day as I came down from my room, and was going out to call on some inquirers, I met Mr. B. in the hall; and he said, "Mr. Finney, what should you think of a man that was praying week after week for the Holy Spirit, and could get no answer?" I replied that I should think he was praying from false motives. "But from what motives should a man pray? If he wants to be happy, is that a false motive?" I replied, "Satan might pray with as good a motive as that;" and then quoted the words of the Psalmist: "Uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners shall be converted unto thee." "See!" said I, "the Psalmist did not pray for the Holy Spirit that he might be happy, but that he might be useful, and that sinners might be converted to Christ."

I remained out till dinner time; and when I returned, he met me, and said "Mr. Finney, I owe you a confession. I was angry when you said that to me; and I must confess that I hoped I should never see you again. What you said forced the conviction upon me, that I never had been converted, that I never had had any higher motive than a mere selfish desire for my own happiness. I went away after you left the house, and prayed to God to take my life. I could not endure to have it known that I had always been deceived. I have been most intimate with our minister. I have journeyed with him, and slept with him, and conversed with him, and have been more intimate with him than any other member of the church; and yet I saw that I had always been a deceived hypocrite. The mortification was intolerable; and I wanted to die, and prayed the Lord to take my life." However, from that time became a new man.

Early in the spring, 1825, I left Brownville, with my horse and cutter, to go after my wife. I had been absent six months since our marriage; and as mails then were we had seldom been able to exchange letters. I drove some fifteen miles, and the roads were very slippery. My horse was smooth shod, and I found I must have his shoes re-set. I stopped at Le Rayville, a small village about three miles south of Evans' Mills. While my horse was being shod, the people ran to me, and wanted to know if I would preach, at one o'clock, in the schoolhouse.

At one o'clock the house was packed; and while I preached, the Spirit of God came down with great power. So great and manifest was the outpouring, that in compliance with their earnest entreaty I concluded to spend the night there, and preach again in the evening. But the work increased more and more; and I appointed another meeting in the morning, and I appointed another in the evening; and soon I saw that I should not be able to go any farther after my wife. I told a brother that if he would take my horse and cutter and go after my wife, I would remain. He did so, and I went on preaching, and there was a powerful revival.

While I was at Brownville, God revealed to me that he was going to pour out his Spirit at Gouverneur, and that I must go and preach. Of the place I knew nothing, except that there was so much opposition manifested to the revival in Antwerp, the year before. I can never tell why the Spirit of God made that revelation. But I knew then, and I have no doubt now, that it was a direct revelation to me. I had not thought of the place for months; but in prayer the thing was all shown to me, as clear as light, that I must go and preach in Gouverneur, and that God would pour out his Spirit there.

Very soon after this, I saw one of the members from Gouverneur, who was passing through Brownville. I told him what God had revealed to me. He stared as if he supposed that I was insane. But I charged him to go home, and tell the brethren, that they might prepare themselves for my coming, and for the outpouring of the Lord's Spirit. From him I learned that they had no minister; that there were two churches and two meeting houses, in the town, standing near together; that the Baptists had a minister, that an elderly minister lived there who had formerly been pastor, but had been dismissed; and that they were having, in the Presbyterian church, no regular Sabbath services.

But now I return to Le Rayville. After labouring there a few weeks, the great mass of the inhabitants were converted; and among the rest Judge C., a man in point of influence, standing head and shoulders above the people around him. My wife arrived; and we accepted the invitation of Judge and Mrs C., to become their guests. But after a few weeks, the people urged me to go and preach in a Baptist church at Rutland, where Rutland joins Le Ray. I made an appointment to preach there. The weather had become warm, and I walked through a pine grove, about three miles, arrived early, and found the house open, but nobody there. I was warm and took my seat near the broad aisle, in the centre of the house. Very soon people began to come and take their seats here and there. Soon the number increased so that they were coming continually.

Presently a young woman came in, who had two or three tall plumes in her bonnet, she was slender, tall, dignified, and decidedly handsome. I observed that she waved her head and gave a very graceful motion to her plumes. She came as it were sailing along,

and up the broad aisle toward where I sat, mincing as she came, at every step, waving her great plumes most gracefully, looking around just enough to see the impression she was making. For such a place the whole thing was so peculiar that it struck me very much. She entered a pew in which nobody was sitting. Thus we were near together but each occupying a separate pew. I turned partly around, and looked at her from head to foot. She saw that I was observing her critically, and looked a little abashed. In a low voice I said to her, very earnestly "Did you come in here to divide the worship of God's house, to make people worship you, to get their attention away from God and his worship?" This made her writhe; and I followed her up, in a voice so low that nobody else heard me, but I made her hear distinctly. She quailed under the rebuke, and could not hold up her head. She began to tremble, and when I had said enough to fasten the thought of her vanity on her mind, I arose and went into the pulpit. As soon as she saw me go into the pulpit, and that I was the minister that was about to preach, her agitation began increased so as to attract the attention of those around her. The house was soon full, and I took a text and went on to preach.

The Spirit of the Lord was evidently poured out; and at the close of the sermon, I called upon any who would give their hearts to God, to come and take the front seat. This young woman was the first to arise. She burst out into the aisle, and came forward, like a person in a state of desperation. She seemed to have lost all sense of the presence of anybody but God. She came rushing forward, until she finally fell in the aisle, and shrieked with agony. A large number arose in different parts and came forward; and a goodly number appeared to give their hearts to God upon the spot, and among them this young woman. On inquiry I found that she was rather the belle of the place; that she was an agreeable girl, but was regarded by everybody as vain.

Many years afterwards, I saw a man who called my attention to that meeting. I inquired after this young woman. He informed me that he knew her well; that she still resided there, was married, and was very useful; and had always, from that time, been a very earnest Christian.

I preached a few times at this place, and then the question of Gouverneur came up again; and God seemed to say, "Go to Gouverneur; the time has come." Brother Nash had come a few days before, and was spending some time with me. At the time of this last call to Gouverneur. I had some two or three appointments ahead, in that part of Rutland. I said therefore to brother Nash, "You must go to Gouverneur and see what is there, and come back and make your report."

He started the next morning, and after two or three days, he returned, saying, that he had found a good many professors of religion, under considerable exercise of mind, and that he was confident that there was a good deal of the Spirit of the Lord among the people; but that they were not aware what the state of things really was. I then informed the people that I was called to Gouverneur, and could make no more appointments to preach in that place.

CHAPTER 10

REVIVAL AT GOUVERNEUR

Brother Nash returned the next day, and made the appointment as I desired. I had to ride nearly thirty miles. In the morning it rained very hard; but abated in time for me to ride to Antwerp. While I was getting dinner at that place, the rain came on again until quite late in the afternoon. However, the rain abated again, in time for me to ride rapidly to Gouverneur. I found that the people had given up expecting me that day, in consequence of the great rain.

Before I reached the village, I met Mr. S., one of the principal members returning from the church meeting to his house, which I had just passed. He stopped his carriage, and said, "Is this Mr. Finney?" After my reply in the affirmative, he says, "Please to go back to my house, for I shall insist on your being my guest. You are fatigued with the long ride and the roads are so bad, you will not have any meeting tonight." I replied that I must fulfil my appointment, and asked him if the church meeting had adjourned. He said it had not, when he left; and he thought it possible I might reach the village before they would dismiss.

I rode rapidly on, alighted at the meeting house door, and hurried in. Brother Nash stood in front of the pulpit, having just risen to dismiss the meeting. In a word I informed them that I had come to fulfil my appointment; and, the Lord willing, I would preach.

When the hour arrived, the house was filled. The people had heard enough, for and against me, to have curiosity excited. The Lord gave me a text, the word took powerful effect.

The village hotel was at that time kept by a Dr. S., an avowed Universalist. The next morning I went out, to call on the people, and converse with them about their souls, and found the village excited. After making a few calls, I dropped into a tailor's shop, where I found a number discussing the subject of the sermon the night before.

Dr. S., I had never heard of; but I found him at this tailor's shop, defending his Universalist sentiments. As I went in, the remarks made immediately opened the conversation; and Dr. S. stepped forward to dispute the positions that I had advanced. Somebody introduced him to me; and I said, "Doctor, I should be very happy to converse with you; but if we are going to have a conversation, we must first agree upon the method." I was too much used to Universalists, to expect any good to come of it, unless certain terms were agreed upon and adhered to. I proposed, therefore, first that we should take up one point at a time, and settle it, and then another, and another; confining ourselves the point immediately in debate; secondly, that we should not interrupt, but each one should be at liberty to give his views, and thirdly, that there should be no cavilling, but that we should observe candour and courtesy, and give to every argument due weight. I knew they were all of one way of thinking; and I could easily see that they were banded together, and had come together that morning, for the sake of sustaining each other.

Having settled the preliminaries, we commenced. It did not take long to demolish every position assumed. He really knew but little of the Bible. He had a way of disposing of the principal passages that are generally arrayed against the doctrine of Universalism. But he dwelt mainly on the utter injustice of endless punishment.

I showed him that he had but slender ground to stand on; and he took the position, that whatever the Bible said, endless punishment was unjust; and that therefore, if the Bible threatened men with endless punishment, it could not be true. This settled the question, so far as the Bible was concerned. I could easily see that they were all sceptics, and would not give in because they saw that the Bible contradicted their views. I then closed in with him on the justice of endless punishment. I saw that his friends became agitated, and felt as if the foundations were giving away. Soon one of them went out; and as I proceeded, another went out, and finally they all forsook him, seeing, one after the other, that he was utterly wrong.

He had been their leader; and God gave me an opportunity to use him entirely up, in the presence of his followers. When he had nothing more to say, I urged question of immediate attention to salvation, and very kindly bid him good morning, and went away, feeling sure that I should soon hear from that conversation again.

The doctor's wife was a member of the church. She told me a day or two after, that her husband came home from that conversation apparently greatly agitated, though she did not know where he had been. He would walk the room, and then sit down, but not remain sitting. She said to him, "Doctor, what is the matter?" "Nothing," was his reply. But his agitation increased; and she inquired again, "Doctor, do tell me what is the matter." She suspected that he had somewhere fallen in with me; and she said, "Doctor, have you seen Mr. Finney this morning.?" This brought him to a stand; and he burst into tears and exclaimed, "Yes! and he has turned my weapons on my own head!" His agony became intense; and as soon as the way was opened he surrendered himself up to conviction, and soon after expressed hope in Christ. In a few days his companions were brought in, one after the other, till the revival made a clean sweep of them.

As soon as the revival broke out, and attracted general attention, the Baptist brethren began to oppose it. A set of young men to join hand in hand, to strengthen each. Those young men seemed to stand like a bulwark in the way of the progress of the work. In this state of things.

Brother Nash and myself, after consultation, made up our minds that that thing must be overcome by prayer. We therefore retired to a grove and gave ourselves up to prayer until we prevailed, and we felt confident that no power which earth or hell could interpose, would be allowed permanently to stop the revival.

The next Sabbath, after preaching morning and afternoon myself - for I did the preaching, and brother Nash gave himself up almost continually to prayer - we met at five o'clock in the church, for a prayer meeting. The meeting house was filled. Near the close of the meeting, brother Nash arose, and addressed that company of young men who had joined hand in hand to resist the revival.

Brother Nash addressed them very earnestly, and pointed out the guilt and danger of the course they were taking. Toward the close of his address, he waxed exceeding warm, and said, "Now, mark me, young men! God will break your ranks in less than one week, either by converting some of you, or by sending some of you to hell. He will do this as certainly as the Lord is my God!" He was standing where he brought his hand down on the top of the pew before him, so as to make it jar. He sat immediately down, dropped his head, and groaned with pain.

The house was as still as death, and most of the people held down their heads. I could see that the young men were agitated. For myself, I regretted that brother Nash had gone so far. He had committed himself, that God would either take the life of some of them, and send them to hell, or convert some of them, within a week. However on Tuesday morning of the same week, the leader of these young men came to me, in the greatest distress, prepared to submit; and as soon as I came to press him he broke down like a child, confessed, and manifestly gave himself to Christ. Then he said, "What shall I do, Mr. Finney?" I replied "Go immediately to all your companions, and pray with them, and exhort them, at once to turn to the Lord." He did so; and before the week was out, nearly if not all of that class of young men, were hoping in Christ.

There was a merchant living in the village of the name of S. He was a very amiable man, a gentleman, but a deist. His wife was the daughter of a Presbyterian minister. She was his second wife; and his first had also been the daughter of a Presbyterian minister. He had thus married into two ministers' families. He was a reading, reflecting man. Both of his fatherS.in-law were old school Presbyterians, and had put into his hands the class of books that presented their peculiar views. This had greatly stumbled him; and the more he had read, the more he was fixed in his convictions that the Bible was a fable.

His wife urgently entreated me to come and converse with her husband. She informed me of his views, and of the pains that had been taken to lead him to embrace religion. But she said he was so firmly settled, she did not know that any conversation could meet the case. I promised to call and see him, and did so. His store was in the front part of the building in which they resided. She went into the store, and requested him to come. He said it would do no good; that he had talked with ministers enough; that he knew just what I would say, and he could not spend the time; beside, it was very repulsive to his feelings. She replied, "Mr. S., you have never been in the habit of treating ministers, who called to see you, in this way. I have invited Mr. Finney to call, and I shall be greatly mortified, if you decline to see him."

He greatly respected and loved his wife; and she was indeed a gem of a woman. To oblige her, he consented to come. Mrs. S. introduced me, and left the room. I then said to him, "Mr. S., I have not come in here to have any dispute; but if you are willing to converse, it is possible that I may suggest something that may help you over some difficulties, in regard to religion, as I probably have felt them all myself." As I addressed him in great kindness, he immediately seemed to feel at home, and sat down near me and said, "Now, Mr. Finney, there is no need of our having a long conversation on this point. We are both of us so familiar with the arguments, that I can state to you, in a very few minutes, just the objections on which I rest, and which I find myself utterly unable to overcome. I suppose I know beforehand how you will answer

them, and that the answer will be utterly unsatisfactory. But if you desire it, I will state them.”

I begged him to do so; and he began, as nearly as I can recollect, in this way: “You and I agree in believing in the existence of God.” “Yes.” “Well, we agree that he is infinitely wise, and good, and powerful.” “Yes.” “We agree that he has, in our very creation, given us certain irresistible convictions of right and wrong, of justice and injustice.” “Yes.” “Well, we agree, then, that whatever contravenes our irresistible convictions of justice, can not be from God.” “Yes.” “What, according to our irresistible convictions, is neither wise nor good, can not be from God.” “Yes, we agree in that.” “Well now,” said he, “the Bible teaches that God has created us with a sinful nature, or that we come into existence totally sinful and incapable of any good, and this in accordance with certain pre-established laws of which God is the author; that notwithstanding this sinful nature, which is utterly incapable of any good, God commands us to obey him, and to be good, when to do so is utterly impossible; and he commands this on pain of eternal death.”

I replied, “Mr. S., have you a Bible? Will you not turn to the passage that teaches this?” “Why, there is no need of that,” he says; “you admit that the Bible teaches it.” “No,” I said, “I do not believe any such thing.” “Then,” he continued, “the Bible teaches that God has imputed Adam’s sin to his posterity; that we inherit the guilt of that sin by nature, and are exposed to eternal damnation.” “Now, I do not care who says it, or what book teaches such a thing, I know that such teaching can not be from God. This is a direct contradiction of my irresistible convictions of right and justice.” “Yes,” I replied, “and so it is directly in contradiction of my own.” “But now, where is this taught?”

He began to quote the catechism, as he had done before. “But,” I replied, “that is catechism, not Bible.” “Why,” said he, “you are a Presbyterian minister, are you not? I thought the catechism was good authority.” “No,” I said; “we are talking about the Bible. Can you say that this is the doctrine of the Bible?” “Oh,” he said, “if you are going to deny that it is taught in the Bible - why, that is taking such ground as I never knew a Presbyterian minister to take.” He then proceeded to say that the Bible commanded men to repent; it commanded them to obey and believe, and yet at the same time taught them that this was impossible. I of course closed with him again, and asked him where these things were taught. He quoted catechism; but I would not receive it.

He went on to say that the Bible taught also, that Christ died only for the elect; and yet it commanded all men everywhere, whether elect or non-elect, to believe, on pain of eternal death. “The fact is,” said he, “the Bible, in its commands and teachings, contravenes my innate sense of justice. I can not, I will not receive it!” He became very positive and warm. But I said to him: “Mr. S., there is a mistake. These are not the teachings of the Bible. They are the traditions of men.” “Well then,” said he, “Mr. Finney, tell me what you do believe!” This he said with a considerable degree of impatience. I said, “If you will give me a hearing for a few moments, I will tell you what I believe.” I then began and told him what my views of both the Law and the Gospel. He was intelligent enough to understand me easily and quickly. In the course

of an hour I took him over the whole ground of his objections. He became intensely interested; and I saw that the views were new to him.

When I came to the atonement, and showed that it was made for all men - dwelt upon its nature, its design, its extent, and the freeness of salvation through Christ, I saw his feelings rise, till at last he put both hands over his face, threw his head forward upon his knees, and trembled with emotion. I saw that the blood rushed to his head, and that the tears began to flow. I rose quickly and left the room without saying another word. I saw that an arrow had transfixed him, and I expected him to be converted immediately. It turned out that he was converted before he left the room.

Very soon after, the meeting house bell tolled for a prayer and conference meeting. I went, and soon Mr. and Mrs. S. came in. His countenance showed that he had been greatly moved. The people looked around, and appeared surprised to see Mr. S. He had been in the habit of attending worship on the Sabbath; but to come to a prayer meeting, and that in the daytime, was something new. For his sake, I took up a good deal of the time in remarks, to which he paid the utmost attention.

His wife afterward told me, that as he walked home he said, "My dear, where has all my infidelity gone? I can not recall it. I can not make it look as if it had any sense in it. It appears to me as if it always had been perfect nonsense. And how I could ever have viewed the subject as I did, or respected my own arguments as I did, I can not imagine. It seems to me as if I had been called to pass judgement on some splendid piece of architecture, some magnificent temple; and that as soon as I came in view of one corner of the structure, I fell into disgust, and turned away and refused to inspect it farther. I condemned the whole, without at all regarding its proportions. Just so I have treated the government of God. He had always been bitter against the doctrine of endless punishment; but on this occasion he said that, for the manner in which he had treated God, he deserved endless damnation.

He warmly espoused the cause of Christ, enlisted heartily in the promotion of the revival, joined the church, soon after became a deacon; and to the day of his death was a very useful man.

After the conversion of Mr. S., I thought it was time to put a stop to the opposition of the Baptist church. I therefore had an interview first with a deacon, who had been very bitter in his opposition; and said, "Now you have carried your opposition far enough. You must be satisfied that this is the work of God.

He confessed that he was sorry; and promised that he would not oppose any more. He said that he had made a great mistake, and had been deceived. He then went after his minister; and I had a long conversation with them together.

I then said to him, "A considerable number of the young people, whose parents belong to your church, have been converted." If I recollect, as many as forty of their young people had been converted in that revival. "Now, if you go to proselytising, that will create a sectarian feeling, and will be worse than any opposition which you have offered. In spite of your opposition, the work has gone on; because the Presbyterian

brethren have kept clear of a sectarian Spirit, and have had the spirit of prayer. But will stop the revival immediately.”

This was on Friday. The next day, Saturday, was the day for their monthly covenant meeting. When they had gathered he threw the doors of the church open and invited the converts to come forward, tell their experience and join the church. As many as could be persuaded to do so, told their experience; and the next day there was a great parade in baptising them. The minister sent off immediately, and secured the help of one of the most proselytising Baptist ministers that I ever knew. He came in and began to preach and lecture on baptism.

They traversed the town for converts in every direction; and whenever they could find anyone to join, they would get up a procession, march, and sing, and make a great parade in going to the water. This soon so grieved the Presbyterian church, as to destroy their spirit of prayer and faith, and the work came to a dead stand. For six weeks there was not a single conversion. All, both saints and sinners, were discussing the question of baptism.

There was a considerable number of men, and some of them prominent men, in the village, that had been under strong conviction, and appeared to be near conversion, who had been entirely diverted by this discussion; and indeed, this seemed to be the universal effect. Everybody could see that the revival had stopped.

I said to the people on the Sabbath, “You see how it is - that the work of conversion is suspended, and we do not know that a conversion has occurred for six weeks. Now I do not want to take up a Sabbath in preaching on this subject; but if you will come on Wednesday afternoon at one o’clock, and bring your Bibles, and your lead pencils to mark the passages, I will read to you all the passages in the Bible that relate to the mode of baptism; and I will give you as nearly as I understand them, the views of Baptist brethren on all those passages, together with my own; and you shall judge for yourselves where the truth lies.”

When Wednesday came, the house was crowded. I saw quite a number of Baptists present. I read, first in the Old Testament, then in the New, all the passages that had any reference to the mode of baptism. I gave the views that the Baptists had of those texts, and the reasons. I then gave my own views, and my reasons. I saw that the impression was good, and that no bad spirit prevailed; and the people appeared satisfied. The Baptists were quite satisfied that I stated their views fairly, and as strongly as they could state them themselves, and also their reasons. Before I dismissed the meeting I said, “If you will come tomorrow, at the same hour, at one o’clock, I will read to you all the passages in the Bible that relate to the subjects of baptism, and pursue the same course as I have done today.”

The next day the house was crowded more than the day before. Quite a number of the principal Baptists were present. After going through with the introductory services, I arose and commenced reading. At this point the elder arose and said, “Mr. Finney, I have an appointment, and can not stay; but I shall wish to answer you; and how shall I know what course you take?” I replied, “Elder, I have a little skeleton, wherein I quote the passages that I read, and note the order in which I discuss the subject. You can

have my skeleton, if you please, and reply.” He then went out, and, as I supposed, went away.

I then took up the covenant made with Abraham; and read everything in the old Testament that directly bore upon the question of the relation of families and of children, to that covenant. I gave the Baptist view of the passages, together with my own with the reasons on both sides. I then took up the New Testament, and went through with all the passages, referring to the subject. Tears flowed very freely when I held up that covenant, as still the covenant which God makes with parents and their household.

Just before I was through, the deacon of the Presbyterian church had occasion to go out, with a child. He told me afterwards that, as he went into the vestibule, he found the old elder sitting there with the door ajar, listening, and weeping.

When I was done, the people thronged around me and with tears thanked me for so full an exhibition of that subject. The meeting was attended by the community generally. The question was intelligently settled, and the people ceased to talk about it. In a few days the spirit of prayer returned, and the revival was revived and went on again with great power, the ordinances were administered, and a large number of converts united with the church.

Mr. S. had a very interesting family; and his wife, - called “Aunt Lucy” - had no children, but they had adopted one child after another, until they had ten; and they were so nearly of an age that the family was composed of himself, and his wife, and ten young people, about equally divided, young men and young women. They were all converted, and their conversions were very striking. They were bright converts, and very intelligent; and a happier and more lovely family I never saw.

But Aunt Lucy had been converted under other circumstances; and she had never before seen the freshness, strength, and joy of converts in a powerful revival. Their faith, love, joy and peace, completely stumbled her. She began to think that she was never converted; and although she had given herself, heart and soul, to the promotion of the work, yet, right in the midst of it, she fell into despair, in spite of all that could be said or done. She concluded that she never had been converted, and of course that she never could be.

This introduced into the family a matter of great pain and concern. Her husband thought she would go deranged. The young people, who regarded her as a mother, were filled with concern; and the house was thrown into mourning. Mr. S. gave his time to converse and to pray with her, and to try to revive hope. I had several conversations with her; but in the great light which the experience of those young converts threw around her, she could not be persuaded to believe, either that she was converted, or ever could be.

This state of things continued, till I began to think that she would be deranged. The street where they lived was thickly settled, almost a village, for three miles in extent. The work had extended in that street until there was but one adult unconverted person left. He was a young man, and was almost frantic in his opposition to the work. Almost

the whole neighbourhood gave themselves to prayer for this young man, and his case was in almost everybody's mouth.

One day I found Aunt Lucy taking on much about this B. H. "Oh dear!" she said; "what will become of him? Why, Mr. S.! he will certainly lose his soul. What will become of him?" She seemed to be in agony. I listened for a few moments, and then looked gravely at her, and said: "Aunt Lucy, when you and B. H. die, God will have to make a partition in hell, and give you a room by yourself." She opened her large blue eyes, and looked with a reproving look. "Why, Mr. Finney!" said she. I said. "Do you think God will be guilty of so great an impropriety, as to put you and B. H. in the same place? He is raving; and you are almost insane in feeling the abuse which he heaps upon God, and with fear that he is going to hell. Now can two such persons, in two such opposite states of mind be sent to the same place?" I calmly met her reproving gaze. In a few moments her features relaxed, she smiled, the first time for many days. "It is just so, my dear," said Mr. S., "just so. How can you and B. H. go to the same place?" She laughed and said, "We can not." From that moment despair cleared up; and she came out clear, and as happy as any of the young converts. B. H. was afterward converted.

About three-quarters of a mile from Mr. S.'s lived a Mr. M., a strong Universalist. One morning, Father Nash, who was at the time with me, rose up at a very early hour; and went back to a grove some fifty rods from the road, to have a season of prayer. It was one of those clear mornings, on which it is possible to hear sounds a great distance. Mr. M. was out of doors and heard the voice of prayer; he could distinctly hear Father Nash's voice. It lodged an arrow in his heart. He said it brought a sense of the reality of religion over him, such as he never had experienced. He found no relief, till he found it in believing in Jesus.

I do not know the number converted in that revival. It was a large farming town, settled by well-to-do inhabitants. The great majority, I am confident, were converted.

I have not been in that place for many years. But I have often heard from there; and have always understood that there has been a very healthful state of religion in that place, and that they have never had a discussion on the subject of baptism since.

The doctrines preached were those that I have preached everywhere. The total moral, voluntary depravity of unregenerate man; the necessity of a radical change of heart, through the truth, by the agency of the Holy Ghost; the divinity and humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ; his vicarious atonement, equal to the wants of all mankind; the gift, divinity and agency of the Holy Ghost: repentance, faith, justification by faith, sanctification by faith; persistence in holiness as a condition of salvation; indeed all the distinctive doctrines of the Gospel, were stated and set forth with as much clearness as were possible. A great spirit of prayer prevailed; and after the discussion on baptism, a spirit of unity and brotherly love prevailed also.

CHAPTER 11

REVIVAL AT DE KALB

From Gouverneur I went to De Kalb, a village further north sixteen miles. Here were a Presbyterian Church and minister, and the minister was decidedly a good man; but the church *was* small. I began to hold meetings in De Kalb. The village was small, the people scattered, the country was new, and the roads bad; but a revival commenced, and went forward with power.

A few years before, there had been a revival there under the Methodists, attended with a good deal of excitement; and many cases had occurred of, what Methodists call, "Falling under the power of God." This the Presbyterians had resisted, and a bad feeling had arisen, the Methodists accusing the Presbyterians of having opposed the revival because of these cases of falling.

I had not preached long before, one evening, just at the close of my sermon, I observed a man fall from his scat, and the people gathered round to take care of him. From what I saw, I was satisfied that it was a case of falling under the power of God, as the Methodists would express it. I had a fear that it might reproduce that state of division and alienation that had before existed; but on inquiry I learned that it was one of the principal members of the Presbyterian Church that had fallen. It was remarkable that during this revival there were several cases of this kind among the Presbyterians, and none among the Methodists. This led to such confessions and explanations among the different churches, as to secure a state of great cordiality and good feeling.

While labouring at De Kalb I first became acquainted with Mr. F. of Ogdensburgh. He heard of the revival in De Kalb, and came from Ogdensburgh, sixteen miles, to see it. He was wealthy, and very benevolent. He proposed to employ me as his missionary, to work in the towns throughout that county, and he would pay me a salary. However, I declined to pledge myself to preach in any particular place, or to confine my labours within any given lines.

Mr. F spent several days with me in visiting, and in attending our meetings. He had been educated in Philadelphia, an old school Presbyterian, and was himself an elder in the church in Ogdensburgh. On going away he left a letter for me, containing three ten-dollar bills. A few days later he came again, and spent two or three days, attended our meetings, and became very much interested. When he went away he left another letter, containing, as before, three ten-dollar bills. Thus I found myself possessed of sixty dollars, with which I immediately purchased a buggy. Before this time, though I had a horse, I had no carriage; and my young wife and myself used to go a good deal on foot.

The revival took a very strong hold in this place, and among others, one of the elders of the church, of the name of B. was thoroughly broken down, and became quite another man.

One Saturday, just before evening, a German merchant tailor from Ogdensburgh, of

the name of F., called and informed me that Squire F. had sent him from Ogdensburgh, to take my measure for a suit of clothes.

I asked him if he would stay over the Sabbath, and take my measure on Monday morning. I said, "It is too late for you to return to-night, and if I allow you to take my measure to-night you will go home to-morrow." He admitted that he expected to do so. I said, "Then you shall not take it. If you will not stay till Monday, I will not be measured." He remained.

The same afternoon there were among other arrivals from Ogdensburgh, Elder S., who was in the same church with Mr. F. Mr. S.'s son, an unconverted young man, came with him.

Elder S. attended meeting in the morning, and at the intermission was invited by Elder B. to go home with him and get some refreshment. Elder B. was full of the Holy Spirit, and on the way home he preached to elder S., who was at the time very cold and backward. Elder S was very much penetrated by his words.

Soon after they entered the house the table was spread, and they were invited to take some refreshment. As they drew round the table S. said to B. "How did you get this blessing?" B. replied, "I stopped lying to God. All my Christian life I have been making pretences, and asking God for things that I was not, on the whole, willing to have, and I had gone on and prayed, and often had been insincere. As soon as I made up my mind that I never would say anything in prayer that I did not really mean, God answered me, and I was filled with the Holy Ghost."

At this moment Mr. S, who had not commenced to eat, pushed his chair back, and fell on his knees and began to confess how he had lied to God, and how he had played the hypocrite in prayer, as well as in life. The Holy Ghost fell upon him immediately.

In the afternoon the people assembled for worship; and as I was in the pulpit reading a hymn I heard somebody talking very loud, and approaching the house. Directly two men came in. Elder B. I knew, the other was a stranger. As soon as he came in, he came straight into the desk - "God bless you!" said he, "God bless you!" He then told me and the congregation what the Lord had just done for his soul.

His countenance was all aglow, and he was so changed that those who knew him were perfectly astonished. His son, who had not known of this change, rose up and was hastening out of the church. His father cried, "Do not leave the house, my son, for I never loved you before." He went on to speak, and the power with which he spoke was perfectly astonishing. The people melted down on every side, and his son broke down almost immediately.

Very soon the Roman Catholic tailor, Mr. F., rose and said, "I must tell you what the Lord has done for my soul. I was brought up a Roman Catholic, and I never dared to read my Bible. I was told that if I did the devil would carry me off. Sometimes, when I dared to look into it, it seemed as if the devil was peering over my shoulder. But I see it is all a delusion." He went on to tell what the Lord had done for him, just there on the spot-what views the Lord had given him of the way of salvation by Jesus Christ.

This made a great impression; I could not preach. The whole course of the meeting had taken on a type which the Lord had given it. I sat still, and saw the salvation of God. All that afternoon conversions were multiplied. As they arose one after another and told what the Lord had done, and was doing, for their souls, the impression increased; and so spontaneous a movement by the Holy Ghost in convicting and converting sinners I had scarcely ever seen.

The next day Elder S. returned to Ogdensburgh; but, as I understand, he made many calls, conversed and prayed with many families, and thus the revival was extended to Ogdensburgh.

It was the early part of October, the synod to which I belonged met in Utica. I took my wife, and went down to Utica to visit her father's family living near.

Mr. Gale had left Adams not long after I left, and had removed to a farm in the town of Western, Oneida county, where he was endeavouring to regain his health, and was employed in teaching some young men, who proposed to preach the Gospel. I spent a few days at the synod, and then set out on my return to my former field of labour in St. Lawrence county.

We had not gone more than a dozen miles when we met Mr. Gale on his way to Utica. He leaped from his carriage and said, "God bless you, Brother Finney! I was going down to the synod to see you; you must go home with me; I can not be denied. I do not believe that I ever was converted, and I wrote the other day to Adams to know where a letter would reach you, as I wanted to open my mind to you." He was so importunate that I consented, and we drove immediately to Western.

In reflecting upon what I had said of the revivals of religion in Jefferson and St. Lawrence counties, I am not quite sure that I have laid as much stress as I intended upon the manifest agency of the Holy Spirit. I wish it to be distinctly understood in all my narrative, that I always laid the utmost stress upon this fact, underlying, directing, and giving efficiency to the means, without which nothing would be accomplished.

I have said more than once, that the spirit of prayer that prevailed was a very marked feature. It was common for young converts to be greatly exercised, and in some instances so much so that they were constrained to pray whole nights, and until their bodily strength was exhausted, for the conversion of souls. There was a great pressure of the Holy Spirit upon Christians, and they seemed to bear about with them the burden of immortal souls. They manifested the greatest solemnity of mind and the greatest watchfulness in all their words and actions. It was common to find Christians, when they met, instead of engaging in conversation to fall on their knees in prayer.

Not only were prayer-meetings multiplied and fully attended, not only was there great solemnity in those meetings, but there was a mighty spirit of secret prayer. Christians prayed a great deal, many of them spending many hours in private. It was also the case that two or more would take the promise: "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven," and make some particular person a subject of prayer; and it was wonderful to

what an extent they prevailed. Answers were so multiplied that no one could escape the conviction that God was daily and hourly answering.

If anything occurred that threatened to mar the work, if there was any appearance of any root of bitterness springing up, or any tendency to fanaticism, Christians would take the alarm, and give themselves to prayer that God would direct and control all things, and it was surprising to see to what extent, and by what means, God would remove obstacles out of the way.

In regard to my own experience, unless I had the spirit of prayer, I could do nothing. If even for a day or an hour I lost the spirit of grace and supplication, I found myself unable to preach with power and efficiency, or to win souls by personal conversation.

For several weeks before I left De Kalb to go to the synod, I was very strongly exercised. I found myself so borne down with the weight of immortal souls, that I was constrained to pray without ceasing. Some of my experiences, indeed, alarmed me. A spirit of importunity sometimes came upon me so that I would say to God that He had made a promise to answer prayer, and I could not, and would not, be denied. I can not tell how absurd unbelief looked to me, and how certain it was, in my mind, that God would answer prayer-those prayers that, from day to day, and from hour to hour, I found myself offering in such agony and faith. I had no idea of the shape the answer would take, the locality in which the prayers would be answered, or the exact time of the answer. My impression was, that the answer was near, even at the door; and I felt myself strengthened in the divine life, put on the harness for a mighty conflict with the powers of darkness, and expected soon to see a far more powerful outpouring of the Spirit in that new country.

CHAPTER 12

REVIVAL AT WESTERN

I have spoken of my turning aside to Western, as I was returning from the synod at Utica. At this place, commenced that series of revivals, afterward called, The Western Revivals.

The churches in that region were mostly Presbyterian. There were in that county, however, three Congregational ministers who called themselves "The Oneida Association," who, at the time, published a pamphlet against those revivals. This we knew; but as the pamphlet made no public impression, no public notice was taken of it. We thought it likely that that association had much to do with the opposition that was raised in the East. Their leader embraced and propagated the peculiar doctrines of Dr. Emmons, and insisted very much upon what he called "The divine efficiency scheme." His peculiar views on this subject naturally led him to be suspicious of whatever was not connected with those views, and in the means that were used to promote a revival. He seemed to have little or no confidence in any conversions that did not bring men to embrace his views of divine efficiency and divine sovereignty; and as those of us who laboured in those revivals had no sympathy with his views in that respect, it was very natural for him to have but little confidence in the genuineness of the revivals. But we never supposed that the whole of the opposition could have originated in representations made by any of the members of that association.

No public replies were made to the letters in public prints, nor to anything that was published in opposition. Those of us who were engaged had our hands too full, and our hearts too full, to turn aside, to reply to letters, reports, or publications, that so manifestly misrepresented the character of the work. The fact that no answers were made, left the public, where the facts were not known, to misapprehend their character. So much misapprehension came to exist, that it has been common for good men, to assume, that although they were, revivals of religion; yet, that great disorders were manifest in them, and that there was much to deplore in their results.

All this is an entire mistake. I shall relate the characteristics of these revivals, the measures that were used in promoting them, and disclose, their real character and results; understanding well that there are multitudes of witnesses, who can attest the truth of what I say.

And now I will turn to Western, where these revivals commenced. Mr. Gale had settled upon a farm in Western; and was employing some young men, and was engaged in teaching them, and endeavouring to repair his health. For several weeks was his guest. We arrived on Thursday afternoon, and there was a stated prayer meeting, in the schoolhouse. The church had no settled minister, and Mr. Gale was unable to preach. I believe they usually had a minister, only a part of the time; and for some time previous to my going they had had no stated preaching in the Presbyterian church. There were three elders, and a few members; but the church was very small, and religion at low water mark. There seemed to be no life, or courage, or enterprise.

In the afternoon Mr. Gale invited me to go to the prayer meeting. They asked me to

take the lead; but I declined, expecting to be there only for that afternoon, and preferring rather to hear them pray and talk. The meeting was opened by one of the elders, who read a chapter, then a hymn. After this he made a long prayer, or an exhortation, or a narrative - I hardly know what to call it. He told the Lord how many years they had been holding that prayer meeting weekly, and that no answer had been given to their prayers. He made such statements and confessions as greatly shocked me. After he had done, another elder took up the same theme. He read a hymn, and, after singing, engaged in a long prayer, in which he went over very nearly the same ground, making such statements as the first had omitted. Then followed the third elder, in the same strain. By this time I could say with Paul, that my Spirit was stirred within me. They were about to dismiss the meeting. But one of the elders asked if I would not make a remark. I took their statements and confessions for a text; and it seemed at the time, that God inspired me to give them a terrible searching.

When I arose, I had no idea what I should say; but I took their prayers, statements and confessions, and dissected them. I asked if it had been understood that that was a mock prayer meeting - whether they had come together professedly to mock God, by implying that all the blame of what had been passing all this time, was to be ascribed to his sovereignty?

At first they all looked angry. Some afterward said, that they were on the point of going out. I followed on the track until the elder, who was the principal man, bursting into tears, exclaimed, "Brother Finney, it is all true!" He fell upon his knees and wept aloud. This was the signal for a general breaking down. Every man and woman went down upon their knees. There were probably not more than a dozen present; but they were the leading members in the church. They wept, confessed, and broke their hearts before God. This scene continued for an hour.

As soon as they recovered, they besought me to remain and preach on the Sabbath. I consented to do so; my mind was greatly exercised. I went off frequently into the church, to engage in prayer. On Sabbath the church was full. I preached all day, and God came down with great power. It was manifest that the work of grace had begun. I made appointments to preach in different parts of the town, in schoolhouses, and at the centre, during the week; and the work increased.

In the meantime, my own mind was much exercised; and I found that the spirit of prayer was prevailing, especially among the female members. Mrs. B. and Mrs. H., the wives of two of the elders, were greatly exercised in prayer. Each of them had families of unconverted children; and they laid hold in prayer with an earnestness that gave promise that their families must be converted. Mrs. H., however, was a woman of feeble health, and had not ventured out to meeting, for a long time. But, as the day was pleasant, she was at the prayer meeting, and seemed to catch the inspiration.

It was the next week, that I called in at Mr. H.'s, and found him pale and agitated. He said "Brother Finney, I think my wife will die. She is so exercised that she can not rest, but is given up entirely to prayer. She has been all the morning," said he, "in her room, groaning and struggling; and I am afraid it will entirely overcome her strength." Hearing my voice, she came out from her room, and upon her face was a most heavenly glow. Her countenance was lighted up with a hope and a joy that were plainly

from heaven. She exclaimed, "Brother Finney, the Lord has come! This work will spread over all this region! A cloud of mercy overhangs us all; and we shall see such a work of grace as we have never yet seen." Her husband looked surprised. It was new to him, but not to me. I had witnessed such scenes before, and believed that prayer had prevailed.

The work spread, until it began to exhibit unmistakable indications of the direction in which the Spirit of God was leading. The distance to home was nine miles. About half way, was a small village, called Elmer's Hill. There was a large schoolhouse, where I held a weekly lecture; and it soon became manifest that the work was spreading in the direction of Rome and Utica. There was a settlement north-east of Rome, about three miles, called Wright's settlement. Large numbers of persons came to attend the meetings at Elmer's Hill, from Rome and from Wright's settlement; and the work soon began to take effect among them.

I must relate a few incidents that occurred in the revival at Western. Mrs. B., had a large family of unconverted children. One of the sons was a professor of religion at Utica; the rest were at home. They were a very amiable family; and the eldest daughter, especially, had been regarded as almost perfect. I went in several times to converse with her; but I found that the family were so tender of her that I could not strip away her self-righteousness. She had evidently been made to believe that she was almost, if not quite a Christian. Her life had been so irreproachable, that it was very difficult to convict her of sin. The second daughter was also very amiable; but she did not regard herself as worthy to be compared with the.

When I was talking with the eldest, trying to make her see herself as a great sinner, notwithstanding her morality, C., the second daughter said, "Mr. Finney I think that you are too hard upon S. If you should talk so to me, I should feel that I deserved it; but I don't think she does." After being defeated several times in attempts to secure the conviction and conversion of S., I made up my mind to bide my time, and improve some opportunity when I should find her away from home, or alone. It was not long before the opportunity came. I entered into conversation with her, and by God's help stripped the covering from her heart, and she was brought under powerful conviction. The Spirit pursued her with mighty power. The family were surprised and greatly distressed; but God pushed the question home till, after a struggle of a few days, she broke down, and came out into the kingdom. Her convictions were so thorough, that she was strong in faith, clear in her apprehension of duty and of truth, and immediately became a power for good among her friends and acquaintances.

The second daughter, became very much alarmed, and very anxious for the salvation of her own soul. The mother seemed to be in real travail of soul day and night. I called in to see the family almost daily, and sometimes, two or three times a day. One child after another was converted; and we were expecting to see C. come out a bright convert. But she lingered. It was plain the Spirit was resisted; and one day I found her alone. I asked her how she was getting on, and she replied, "Mr. Finney, I am losing my conviction. I do not feel nearly as much concerned about myself as I have done." Just at this moment, a door was opened, and Mrs. B. came in, and I told her what C. had said. It shocked her so that she groaned aloud, and fell prostrate on the floor. Unable to rise; she struggled and groaned out her prayers, in a manner that immediately

indicated that C. must be converted. She was unable to say much in words, but her groans and tears witnessed extreme agony. As soon as this scene had occurred, the Spirit of God manifestly came upon C. afresh. She fell upon her knees and broke down; and became to all appearance as thorough a convert as S. The B. children, sons and daughters, were all converted at that time, except the youngest, then a little child. One of the sons has preached the gospel for many years.

Among other incidents, I recollect the case of a young woman, in a distant part of the town, who came to the meeting at the centre almost every day. I had conversed with her, and found her deeply convicted. I was expecting to hear that she had been converted; but she remained stationary, or rather despair increased. This led me to suspect that something was wrong. I asked if her parents were Christians. She said they were members of the church. I asked her if they attended meetings. She said, "Yes, on the Sabbath." "Do not your parents attend meetings at other times?" "No." "Do you have family prayers at home?" "No sir, we used to have; but we have not had family prayers for a long time." This revealed the stumbling block, at once. I inquired when I could probably find her father and mother at home. She said they were seldom away. Feeling that it was infinitely dangerous to leave this case as it was, I went to see the family.

This daughter was the only child. I found her bowed down and said to the mother, "The Spirit of the Lord is striving with your daughter." "Yes," she said, "I don't know but he is." I asked her if she was praying for her. She gave me an answer that led me to understand that she did not know what it was to pray. I inquired for her husband. She said that he was in the field. I asked her to call him in. I said to him, "Do you see the state that your daughter is in?" He replied that he thought she felt very bad. "And are you awake, and engaged in prayer for her?" His answer revealed the fact that if he was ever converted he was a backslider, and had no hold upon God. "And," said I, "you do not have family prayers." "No sir." "Now," said I, "I have seen your daughter bowed down, and I have learned that the difficulty is at home. You have shut up the kingdom of heaven against your daughter. You neither enter yourself, nor will you suffer her to enter. Now you must repent. I do not intend to leave until you and your wife repent. You must establish family prayer, and build up the altar that has fallen down.

I was so earnest that they both began to weep. My faith was so strong, that I did not trifle when I told them that I would not leave the house, until they repented. I felt that the work must be done, and done then. I cast myself down upon my; and they knelt down and wept sorely. I confessed for them and tried to lead them to God, and to prevail in their behalf. They both broke down, confessed their sins; and the arose rejoicing in Christ. Many answers to prayer, and many scenes of great interest were presented in this revival.

One passage of my own experience, for the honour of God, I must not omit to relate in this connection. I had preached and prayed almost continually during the time that I had been at Mr. Gale's. As I was accustomed to use my voice in private prayer, for convenience' sake, that I might not be heard, I had spread a buffalo robe on the hayloft; where I used to spend much of my time. Mr. Gale had admonished me, several times, that, if I did not take care, I should go beyond my strength and break down. It was November, the weather was becoming cold. Mr. Gale and I had been out visiting

inquirers. We came home and went into the barn, and put out the horse. Instead of going into the house, I crept up into the hayloft to pour out my burdened soul to God in prayer. I prayed until my burden left me. I was so far exhausted that I fell down, and lost myself in sleep. I must have fallen asleep almost instantly. The first I knew, Mr. Gale came climbing up into the hayloft, and said, "Brother Finney, are you dead?" I awoke, and at first could give no account why I was there asleep, and could form no idea how long I had been there.

I was ordained to the ministry years before the division of the Presbyterian church into what is known as the Old and New School Assemblies. The well known doctrine of natural and moral ability and inability, was held by the Presbyterian church, almost universally, in the region where I commenced. Mr. Gale held firmly to the doctrine of the sinner's inability to obey God; and the subject as he presented it in his preaching, as was the case with most of the Presbyterian ministers of that day, left the impression upon the people that they must wait God's time.

They held the doctrine that moral depravity belonged to the nature; that the will, though free to do evil, was utterly impotent to all good; that the work of the Holy Spirit was a physical operation on the substance or essence of the soul; that the sinner was passive in regeneration, till the Holy Spirit had implanted a new principle in his nature, and that all efforts on his part were utterly unavailing; that properly speaking, there were no means of regeneration, this being a physical recreation of the soul by the direct agency of the Holy Ghost; that the atonement was limited to the elect, and that for the non-elect to be saved was an utter impossibility.

In my studies and controversies with Mr. Gale, I had maintained the opposite of this. I assumed that moral depravity is, and must be, a voluntary attitude of the mind; that it does, and must, consist in the committal of the will to the gratification of the desires, or as the Bible expresses it, of the lusts of the flesh, as opposed to that which the law of God requires. In consistency with this I maintained that the influence of the Spirit upon the soul of man is moral, that is persuasive; that Christ represented him as a teacher; that his work is to convict and convert the sinner, by divine teaching and persuasion.

I held also that there are means of regeneration, and that the truths of the Bible are, in their nature, calculated to lead the sinner to abandon his wickedness and turn to God. I held also that there must be an adaptation of means to the end to be secured; that the intelligence must be enlightened, the unreasonableness of moral depravity must be set before the sinner, and its wickedness and ill-desert clearly revealed; that when this was done the mission of Christ could be strongly presented, and could be understood; that taking this course had a tenderness to convert; and that when this was faithfully and prayerfully done, we had a right to expect the Holy Spirit to co-operate, giving effect to our feeble effort.

Furthermore, I held that the Holy Spirit operates in the preacher, clearly revealing these truths in their proper order, and enabling him to set them before the people, in such proportion, and in such order as is calculated to convert them. I understood, the charge and promise which Christ gave to the apostles and to the church, to be applicable in the present day: "Go and disciple all nations, baptising them in the name

of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.”

This I regarded as a charge committed to me, to all ministers, and to the church; with the express promise that when we go forth with a single eye, Christ will be with us by his Spirit, giving efficiency to our efforts. It appeared to me then that the great failure of the ministry in promoting religion, consisted, in great measure, in the want of a suitable adaptation of means to that end.

But at that time, Mr. Gale could not see it; for what connection was there between means and ends, upon his view of what regeneration consisted in, and the manner in which the Holy Spirit changed the heart?

As an illustration, soon after I began to preach, in the midst of a powerful revival, a young man from the theological seminary at Princeton, came into the place. The former pastor of the church lived there, and had a great curiosity to hear this young man. The church had no pastor; I therefore had the sole charge. He said he had known the young man before he went to college, and he desired to see what proficiency he had made. I said I was afraid to set him to preach, lest he should mar the work, by not preaching that which was needed. “Oh,” said the old gentleman, “he will preach the truth; and there is no connection in religion, you know, between means and ends, and therefore there is no danger.” I replied, “That is not my doctrine. I believe there is as much connection between means and ends in religion as in nature; and therefore can not consent.”

I have often found it necessary to take substantially the same course in revivals; and sometimes, by doing so, I have found that I gave offence; but I dared not do otherwise. In the midst of a revival, and when souls needed peculiar instruction, adapted to their condition and their wants, I dared not put a stranger into the pulpit, where I had the charge, to preach any of his great sermons, and generally too, a sermon not at all adapted to the wants of the people. For this course I have frequently been accused of supposing that I could preach better than others. And I confess I did suppose that I could meet the wants of the people, better than those who knew less about them, or than those that would preach their old written sermons to them; and I supposed that Christ had put the work into my hands in such a sense, that I was under obligation to adapt means to ends, and not call upon others who knew little of the state of things, to instruct the people.

Mr. Gale told me the progress of his mind; that he had firmly believed, as he had so frequently urged upon me, that God would not bless my labours, because I would not preach what he regarded as the truths of the Gospel. But when he found that the Spirit did accompany my labours, it led him to the conclusion that he was wrong; and this led to such an overhauling of his whole state of mind, and of his views as a preacher, as resulted the conclusion that he had never been converted, and did not understand the Gospel himself. During the revival in Western, he attended nearly all the meetings; and before many weeks, he had come into an entirely different state of mind, and thought I was right. He said he thanked God that he had had no influence with me, to lead me to adopt his views; that I should have been ruined as a minister if he had prevailed. From

this time he became a very efficient worker, so far as his health would permit, in that region.

The doctrine upon which I insisted, that the command to obey God implied the power to do so, created in some places considerable opposition. Denying also that moral depravity is physical, or the depravity of the nature, and maintaining that it is altogether voluntary, and therefore that the Spirit's influences are those of teaching, persuading, convicting, and a moral influence, I was regarded by many as teaching new doctrines. As late as 1832, when I was labouring in Boston for the first time, Dr. Beecher said that he never had heard the doctrine preached before, that the Spirit's influences are moral, as opposed to physical. Therefore, to a considerable extent, ministers and Christians regarded that doctrine as virtually a denial of the Spirit's influence; and hence, although I ever insisted very much, and incessantly, upon the divine agency in conviction and regeneration, and in every Christian exercise; yet it was long before the cry ceased to be heard that I denied the agency of the Holy Ghost, in regeneration and conversion. It was said that I taught self-conversion, self-regeneration; and not infrequently was I rebuked for addressing the sinner, as if the blame of his impenitence all belonged to himself, and for urging him to immediate submission. However, I persisted, and it was seen by ministers and Christians that God owned it as his truth, and blessed it to the salvation of thousands of souls.

CHAPTER 13

REVIVAL AT ROME

AT this time Rev. Moses Gillett, pastor of the Congregational Church in Rome, came, in company with a Miss H., one of the prominent members of his church, to see the work that was going on. They were both greatly impressed. Miss H. was a very devout and earnest Christian girl. On their second coming, Mr. Gillett said, "Brother Finney, it seems to me that I have a new Bible. I never before understood the promises as I do now; I never got hold of them before; I can not rest, my mind is full of the subject, and the promises are new." This conversation gave me to understand that the Lord was preparing him for a great work in his own congregation.

Soon after this, and when the revival was in its full strength at Western, Mr. Gillett persuaded me to exchange a day with him.

On the Saturday before the day of our exchange, on my way to Rome, I greatly regretted that I had consented. I felt that it would greatly mar the work in Western, because Mr. Gillett would preach his old sermons, which could not be adapted to the state of things. However the people were praying; and it would not stop the work, although it might retard it. I went to Rome and preached three times. To me it was manifest that the word took great effect. I preached in the morning on "The carnal mind is enmity against God;" and followed it up with something in the same direction, in the afternoon and evening. I waited on Monday till Mr. Gillett returned. I told him what my impressions were in respect to the state of the people. He did not seem to realise that the work was beginning with such power, but he wanted to call for inquirers, if there were any, and wished me to be present at the meeting.

(In the earlier American edition: I have said before, that the means that I had all along used, thus far, in promoting revivals, were much prayer, secret and social, public preaching, personal conversation, and visitation from house to house; and when inquirers became multiplied, I appointed meetings for them, and invited those that were inquiring to meet for instruction, suited to their necessities. These were the means and the only means, that I had thus far used, in attempting to secure the conversion of souls.)

Mr. Gillett asked me to be present at the proposed meeting. I told him I would; and that he might circulate information that there would be a meeting of inquiry, on Monday evening. The meeting was at the house of one of his deacons. We found the large sitting room crowded. Mr. Gillett looked around with surprise, and agitation; for he found that the meeting was composed of many of the most intelligent and influential members of his congregation; and especially was largely composed of the prominent young men in the town. We spent a while in attempting to converse with them; and I soon saw that there was danger of an outburst of feeling, that would be almost uncontrollable. I said to Mr. Gillett, "It will not do to continue the meeting in this shape. I will make some remarks and then dismiss them."

Nothing had been said or done to create excitement; the feeling was all spontaneous. It would probably not be possible for one who had never witnessed such a scene, to

realise what the force of the truth sometimes is, under the power of the Holy Ghost. It was indeed a sword, and a two-edged sword. The pain that it produced when searchingly presented in a few words of conversation, would create a distress that seemed unendurable.

Mr. Gillett became much agitated. He turned pale; and with a good deal of excitement he said, "What shall we do?" I put my hand on his shoulder, and in a whisper said, "Keep quiet, brother Gillett." I then addressed them in as gentle but plain a manner as I could; calling attention at once to their only remedy, and assuring them that it was present and all-sufficient. I pointed them to Christ, as the Saviour of the world; and kept on in this strain as long as they could well endure it, which, was but a few moments.

Mr. Gillett became so agitated that I stepped up to him, and taking him by the arm said, "Let us pray." We knelt down in the middle of the room. I led in prayer, in a low, unimpassioned voice; but interceded with the Saviour to interpose his blood, then and there, and to lead all these sinners to accept the salvation which he proffered, and to believe to the saving of their souls. The agitation deepened; and as I could hear their sobs, and sighs, I closed my prayer and rose from my knees. They all arose, and I said, "Now please go home without speaking a word to each other. Try to keep silent, and do not break out into any boisterous manifestation of feeling."

At this moment a young man, a clerk in Mr. H. 's store, so nearly fainted, that he fell upon some that stood near him; and they all partially swooned away, and fell together. This had well-nigh produced a loud shrieking; but I hushed them, and said, "Please set that door wide open, and go out, and let all retire in silence." They did not shriek; but they went out sobbing and sighing.

This Mr. W. kept silence till he entered the door where he lived; but he could contain himself no longer. He shut the door, fell upon the floor, and burst out into a loud wailing. This brought the family around him, and scattered conviction among the whole of them.

Similar scenes occurred in other families. Several were converted at the meeting, and went home so full of joy, that they could hardly contain themselves.

The next morning, as soon as it was fairly day, people began to call at Mr. Gillett's, to have us go and visit members of their families, whom they represented as being under the greatest conviction. We took a hasty breakfast, and as soon as we were in the streets, the people ran out from many houses, and begged us to go. When we went into a house, the neighbours would rush in and fill the largest room, We would stay and give them instruction for a short time, and then go to another house, and the people would follow us.

We found a most extraordinary state of things. Convictions were so deep and universal, that we would sometimes go into a house, and find some kneeling, and some prostrate. We visited, conversed, and prayed in this manner till noon. I then said to Mr. Gillett, "This will never do; we must have a meeting of inquiry. We can not go from

house to house, and we are not meeting the wants of the people.” He agreed with me; but the question arose, where shall we have the meeting?

Mr. F., a religious man, kept a hotel at the centre of the town. He had a large dining room; and Mr. Gillett said, “I will step in and see if I can be allowed to appoint the meeting in his dining room.” Without difficulty he obtained consent, and then went immediately to the public schools, and gave notice that at one o’clock there would be a meeting of inquiry. We went home, took our dinner, and started for the meeting. We saw people hurrying, and some of them actually running. They were coming from every direction. By the time we were there, the room, large one, was crammed.

This meeting was very much like the one we had the night before. Some men of the strongest nerves were so cut down by the remarks which were made, that they were unable to help themselves, and had to be taken home by friends. This meeting lasted till nearly night. It resulted in a great number of hopeful conversions, and was the means of greatly extending the work on every side.

I preached that evening, and Mr. Gillett appointed a meeting for inquiry, the next morning, in the courthouse. This was a much larger room than the dining hall, though not so central. At the hour, the court house was crowded; and we spent a good part of the day in giving instruction, and the work went on with wonderful power. I preached again in the evening, and Mr. Gillett appointed a meeting of inquiry, the next morning, at the church; as no other room in the village was then large enough to hold the inquirers.

At evening we undertook to hold a prayer and conference meeting in a large schoolhouse. But the meeting was hardly begun before the feeling deepened so that, to prevent an undesirable outburst of overwhelming feeling, I proposed to Mr. Gillett that we should dismiss the meeting, and request the people to go in silence, and Christians to spend the evening in secret prayer, or in family prayer, as might seem most desirable. Sinners we exhorted not to sleep, until they gave their hearts to God. After this the work became so general that I preached every night, for twenty nights in succession, and twice on the Sabbath. Our prayer meetings during this time were held in the church, in the daytime. The prayer meeting was held one part of the day, and a meeting for inquiry the other part.

Ministers came in from neighbouring towns, and expressed astonishment at what they saw and heard. Conversions multiplied so rapidly, that we had no way of learning who were converted. Therefore every evening, at the close of my sermon, I requested all who had been converted that day, to come forward and report themselves, that we might have a little conversation. We were every night surprised by the number and the class of that came forward.

At one of our morning prayer meetings, the lower part of the church was full. I arose and was making some remarks, when an unconverted man, a merchant, came in. He came along till he found a seat near where I stood. He had sat but a few moments, when he fell from his seat as if he had been shot. He writhed and groaned in a terrible manner. I stepped to the pew door, and saw that it was an agony of mind.

A sceptical physician sat near. He stepped out of his pew, and came and examined this man who was thus distressed. He felt his pulse, and examined the case for a few moments. He said nothing, but turned away, and leaned his head against a post that supported the gallery, and manifested great agitation.

He said afterward that he saw at once that it was distress of mind, it took his scepticism entirely away. He was soon after converted. We engaged in prayer for the man who fell; and before he left the house, I believe, his anguish passed away, and he rejoiced in Christ.

Another physician, very amiable, but a sceptic, had a little daughter and a praying wife. Little H., a girl eight or nine years old, was strongly convicted of sin, and her mother was greatly interested in her state; but her father was, at first, indignant. He said, "The subject of religion is too high for me. I never could understand it. And do you tell me that that little child understands it so as to be intelligently convicted? I do not believe it. I know better. I can not endure it. It is fanaticism; it is madness." Nevertheless the mother of the child held fast in prayer. The doctor made these remarks with a good deal of spirit. Immediately he took his horse, and went several miles to see a patient. On his way, that subject took possession of his mind in such a manner, that it was opened to his understanding; and the plan of salvation by Christ was so clear that he saw that a child could understand it. He wondered that it had ever seemed so mysterious. He regretted exceedingly that he had said what he had about little H., and felt in haste to get home that he might take it back. He came home, another man; told his wife what had passed in his own mind; encouraged little H. to come to Christ; and both father and daughter have since been earnest Christians, and have lived long and done much good.

But in this revival, God did some terrible things in righteousness. On one Sabbath while I was there, as we came out of the pulpit, and were about to leave the church, a man came in haste to Mr. Gillett and myself, and requested us to go to a certain place, saying that a man had just fallen down dead. I was engaged in conversing with somebody, and Mr. Gillett went alone. When I was through with the conversation, I went to Mr. Gillett's house, and he soon returned and related this fact. Three men had been opposing the work, had met that Sabbath-day, and spent the day in drinking and ridiculing the work. They went on in this way until one suddenly fell dead. When Mr. Gillett arrived and the circumstances were related, he said, "There! there is no doubt but that man has been stricken down by God, and has been sent to hell." His companions were speechless. They could say nothing; for it was evident that their conduct had brought upon him this awful stroke of divine indignation.

As the work proceeded, it gathered in nearly the whole population. Nearly every one of the lawyers, merchants, physicians, and almost all the principal men, and nearly all the adult population, were brought in, especially those who belonged to Mr. Gillett's congregation. He said to me, "So far as my congregation is concerned, the millennium is come already. My people are all converted. Of all my past labours I have not a sermon that is suited at all to my congregation, for they are all Christians. During the twenty days that I spent at Rome, there were five hundred conversions.

During the progress, a good deal of excitement sprung up in Utica, and some, were

disposed to ridicule the work at Rome. Mr. E., who lived at Rome, was a very prominent citizen, and was regarded as standing at the head of society. But he was sceptical; or he held Unitarian views. He was very moral and respectable, and held his peculiar views unobtrusively, saying very little about them. The first Sabbath I preached, Mr. H. was present; and was so astonished at my preaching, that he made up his mind that he would not go again. He went home and said: "That man is mad, and I should not be surprised if he set the town on fire." He stayed away from the meeting for some two weeks. In the meantime the work became so great as to confound his scepticism, and he was in a state of great perplexity.

He was president of a bank in Utica, and used to go down to attend the weekly meeting of directors. On one of these occasions, one director began to rally him on the state of things in Rome, as if they were all running mad there. Mr. H. remarked, "Gentlemen, say what you will, there is something very remarkable in the state of things in Rome. Certainly no human power or eloquence has produced what we see. I can not understand it. You say it will soon subside. No doubt the intensity of feeling must soon subside, or the people will become insane." "But, gentlemen, there is no accounting for that state of feeling by any philosophy, unless there be something divine in it."

After Mr. H. had stayed away from the meeting about two weeks, a few assembled one afternoon, to make him a special subject of prayer. When he came into the house, Mr. Gillett whispered as he sat in the pulpit, "Brother Finney, Mr. H. has come. I hope you will not say anything that will offend him." "No," said I, "but I shall not spare him." In those days I was obliged to preach altogether without premeditation; for I had not an hour in a week, which I could take to arrange my thoughts beforehand.

I chose my subject and preached. The word took a powerful hold; and as I hoped and intended, it took a powerful hold of Mr. H. I think it was that very night, when I requested all those who had been converted that day to come forward and report themselves, Mr. H. was one who came solemnly forward, and reported himself as having given his heart to God. He appeared humble and penitent, and I have always supposed, was truly converted.

The state of things in the neighbourhood was such that no one could come into the village, without feeling awe-stricken with the impression that God was there. As an illustration, I will relate an incident. The sheriff of the county resided in Utica. There were two courthouses, one at Rome, and the other at Utica; consequently Sheriff B., had much business at Rome. He heard of the state of things at Rome; and, with others, had a good deal of laughing, in the hotel where he boarded, about what they had heard.

But one day it was necessary for him to go. to Rome. He said that he was glad to have business there; for he wanted to see for himself what it was that people talked so much about, and what the state of things really was. He drove on in his one horse sledge, as he told me, without any particular impression upon his mind, until he crossed what was called the old canal, a place about a mile from the town. He said as soon as he crossed, a strange impression came over him, an awe so deep that he could not shake it off. He felt as if God pervaded the whole atmosphere. He said that this increased, till he came to the village. He stopped at Mr. F.'s hotel, and he observed that the hosteller looked

just as he himself felt, as if he were afraid to speak. He went into the house, and found the gentleman there with whom he had business. He said they were manifestly much impressed; they could hardly attend to business. He said that several times, in the course of the short time he was there, he had to rise from table abruptly, and go to the window and look out, and try to divert his attention, to keep from weeping. He observed, he said, that everybody else appeared to feel just as he did. Such an awe, such a solemnity, such a state of things, he had never had any conception of before. He hastened, and returned to Utica; but never to speak lightly of the work at Rome again. A few weeks later, at Utica, he was hopefully converted.

The means used at Rome, were such as I had used before; preaching, public, social, and private prayer, exhortations, and personal conversation. It is difficult to conceive so deep and universal a state of religious feeling, with no instance of disorder, tumult, fanaticism, or anything that was objectionable, as was witnessed at Rome. There are many of the converts of that revival, scattered through the land, living to this day; and they can testify that 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 and wisdom, in conducting the meetings, in order to prevent an undesirable outburst of feeling, that soon would have exhausted the sensibility of the people, and brought about a reaction. They kept up a sunrise prayer meeting for several months; and for more than a year afterwards, at all seasons of the year, that was very fully attended, and was as full of interest as perhaps a prayer meeting could be. The moral state of the people was so greatly changed, that it did not seem like the same place. Sin was obliged to hide its head. No open immorality could be tolerated for a moment.

It was on a Saturday that I came down from Western to exchange with Mr. Gillett, that I met the church in a prayer-meeting, in their house of worship. I endeavoured to make them understand that God would immediately answer prayer, provided they fulfilled the conditions; and especially if they believed, in the sense of expecting him to answer their requests.

I observed that the people were startled with my expression of earnestness and faith in respect to an immediate answer to prayer. I had so often seen this result in prayer, that I made the remark without any misgiving. Nothing was said by any of the members of the church; but I learned after the work had begun, that three or four members called in at Mr. Gillett's study, and felt so impressed with what had been said, that they determined to take God at his word, and see whether he would answer while they were yet speaking. One of them told me afterwards that they had wonderful faith given them by the Spirit of God, to pray for an immediate answer; and he added, "The answer did come quicker than we could have got an answer from Albany, by the quickest post we could have sent."

The town was full of prayer. Go whither you would, you heard the voice of prayer. Wherever there was a sinner unconverted, especially if he manifested opposition, you would find some two or three brethren or sisters agreeing to make him a particular subject of prayer.

There was the wife of an officer in the United States army residing at Rome, the daughter of a prominent citizen. This lady manifested opposition to the work, and said some strong things against it; and this led to her being made a particular subject of prayer. This lady was educated, of great force of character, and of strong will; and of course she made her opposition felt. But almost as soon as this was known, and the spirit of prayer was given for her in particular, the Spirit of God took her case in hand. One evening, perhaps the evening of the very day that the facts came to my knowledge, Mr. Gillett and myself had remained to the very last, conversing with some persons who were deeply bowed down with conviction. As they went away, and we were about to retire, the sexton came hurriedly as we were going out, and said, "There is a lady in yonder pew that can not get out; she is helpless?" We returned, and lo! down in the pew, was this lady, perfectly overwhelmed with conviction. The pew had been full, and she had attempted to retire with the others; but as she was the last, she found herself unable to stand, and sunk down, and did so without being noticed by those that preceded her. We had some conversation, and found that the Lord had stricken her with unutterable conviction of sin. After praying, and giving her the solemn charge to give her heart immediately to Christ, I left; and Mr. Gillett, helped her home. When she got home she went into a chamber by herself and spent the night - a cold winter night. The next day she expressed hope in Christ and proved to be soundly converted.

Mrs. Gillett was a sister of the missionary Mills, was one of the young men whose zeal led to the organisation of the American Board. She was a beautiful woman, considerably younger than her husband, and his second wife. She had been, before Mr. Gillett married her, under conviction, and had become almost deranged. She had the impression that she was not one of the elect, and that there was no salvation for her. Soon after the revival began in Rome, she was powerfully convicted again by the Spirit.

She was a woman of refinement, and fond of dress; and wore upon her person some trifling ornaments; nothing, however, that I should have thought of as being any stumbling block. Being her guest, I conversed repeatedly with her as convictions increased; but it never occurred to me that her fondness for dress could stand in the way of her being converted. But as the work became so powerful, her distress became alarming; and Mr. Gillett, knowing what had formally occurred, felt quite alarmed lest she should get into that state in which she had been before. She threw herself upon me for instruction. She would come to me and beg me to pray for her, and tell me that her distress was more than she could bear. She was evidently going fast to despair; but I could see that she was depending too much on me; therefore I tried to avoid her.

It went on thus, until one day I came into the house, and turned into the study. In a few moments, as usual, she was before me, begging me to pray for her, and complaining that there was no salvation for her. I got up abruptly and left her, without praying with her, and saying to her that it was of no use for me to pray for her, that she was depending upon my prayers. When I did so, she sunk down as if she would faint. I left her alone, notwithstanding, and went abruptly from the study. In a few moments she came rushing into the parlour, with her face all in a glow, exclaiming, "O Mr. Finney! I have found the Saviour! Don't you think that it was the ornaments in my hair that stood in the way of my conversion? As soon as I promised to give them up, the Lord

revealed himself to my soul; and oh! I wonder I have never understood this before. This was really the great difficulty with me before, when I was under conviction, my fondness for dress; and I did not know it.”

CHAPTER 14

REVIVAL AT UTICA, NEW YORK

When I had been at Rome about twenty days, one of the elders of Mr. Aiken's church in Utica, a prominent and a very useful man, died; and I went down to attend his funeral. Mr. Aiken conducted the funeral; and I learned that the spirit of prayer was already in that city. He told me that one of his principal women had been so deeply exercised about the state of the church, and the ungodly in that city, that she had prayed for two days and nights, almost incessantly, until her strength was quite overcome; that she had travail of soul, to such an extent that when her own strength was exhausted, she could not endure the burden of her mind, unless somebody was engaged in prayer with her, upon whose prayer she could lean - someone who could express her desires to God.

I understood this, and told Mr. Aiken that the work had already begun in her heart. He recognised it, and wished me to commence labour with him and his people immediately. I did so, and the word took immediate effect, and the place became filled with the influence of the Holy Spirit. Our meetings were crowded and the work spread and went on powerfully in the two Presbyterian congregations; of one of which Mr. Aiken was pastor, and Mr. Brace of the other.

Soon after, I observed to Mr. Aiken, that Mr. B., the sheriff, did not attend the meetings. But a few evenings afterward, Mr. Aiken whispered that Mr. B. had come. He pointed him out to me, as he made his way up the aisle. I had spoken but a few moments, when I observed Mr. B. rise in the slip, turn deliberately round, wrap his great coat about him, and kneel down. I observed that it excited attention in that part of the house. The sheriff continued on his knees during the service; he then retired to the hotel in which he boarded.

He told me that his mind was greatly burdened when he went home, and brought up the subject to which he had been listening. I had pressed the congregation to accept Christ, just as he was presented in the gospel. He said that he had treasured up in his mind the points made, and that he presented them solemnly before himself. He said he had thrown himself, in agony of his mind, upon his bed. He made this point with himself, and conjured his soul, to accept "now, and here." Right there, he said, his distress left him so suddenly that he fell asleep, and did not wake for several hours. When he did awake, he found his mind full of peace; and he became an earnest worker for Christ.

The hotel at which he boarded, was at that time kept by Mr. S. The Spirit took powerful hold in that house. Mr. S. was soon made a subject of prayer, and became converted; and a large number of his family and of his boarders. That largest hotel in the town became a centre of spiritual influence. The stages, as they passed, stopped at the hotel; and so powerful was the impression in the community, that I heard of several cases of persons that just stopped for a meal, or to spend a night, being powerfully convicted and converted before they left. Indeed, both in this place and in Rome, it was a common remark that nobody could be in the town, or pass through it, without being

aware of the presence of God; that a divine influence seemed to pervade the place, and the whole atmosphere to be instinct with a divine life.

A merchant from Lowville came to Utica, to do business. He stopped at the hotel where Mr. B. boarded. He found the whole conversation in the town was such as greatly to annoy him, for he was unconverted. He said he could do no business; it was all religion; he resolved not to go into a store, but religion was intruded upon him. That evening he would go home.

These remarks had been made in the presence of some young converts who boarded at the hotel, and especially in the presence of Mr. B. As the stage was expected to leave late, he was observed to go to the bar, just before he retired, to pay his bill; saying that Mr. S. would not probably be up when the stage passed through, and he wished therefore to settle his bill before he retired. Mr. S. said that he observed, while he was settling, that his mind was very much exercised, and he suggested to several of the gentleman boarders that they should make him a subject of prayer. They took him, to Mr. B.'s room, and conversed with him, and prayed with him and before the stage came, he was converted; and so concerned did he feel immediately about the people of his own place, that when the stage came, he went home. He told his family his experience, and called them together and prayed with them. As he was a very prominent citizen, and very outspoken, and everywhere proclaiming what the Lord had done for his soul, it produced a very solemn impression in Lowville, and resulted in a great revival.

It was in the midst of the revival in Utica, that we first heard of opposition that was springing up in the East. Mr. Nettleton wrote some letters to Mr. Aiken, with whom I was labouring; in which it was manifest that he was very much mistaken with regard to the character of those revivals. Mr. Aiken showed me those letters; and they were handed around among the ministers, as they were intended to be. Among them was one in which Mr. Nettleton stated fully what he regarded as objectionable; but as no such thing as he complained of were done, or had been known, we took no other notice of the letters than let them pass. Mr. Aiken, however, replied privately, assuring Mr. Nettleton that no such things were done. I do not recollect now whether Mr. Nettleton complained that women would sometimes pray in the social meetings. It was true, however, that in a few cases some very prominent women, who were strongly pressed in spirit, would lead in prayer, in the social meetings which we held daily. No opposition was manifested to this, either at Utica or at Rome. I had no agency in introducing the practice, and do not know whether it had existed there before or not. It was not a subject of much conversation or thought in the neighbourhood.

Mr. Weeks, was known to be opposed to those revivals. Mr. Weeks held that both sin and holiness were produced in the mind by a direct act of almighty power; that God made men sinners or holy, at his sovereign discretion, but in both cases by a direct act of almighty power, an act as irresistible as that of creation itself; that God was the only proper agent in the universe, and that all creatures acted as they were moved and compelled to act, by his irresistible power.

The work, however, went on with great power, converting all classes, until Mr. Aiken reported the hopeful conversion of five hundred, in the course of a few weeks.

Revivals were comparatively new in that region; and the people had not become convinced that they were the work of God. They were not awed by them, as they afterwards became. It seemed to be extensively the impression that revivals would soon pass away, and would prove to have been but a mere excitement.

One circumstance occurred that made a powerful impression. The Oneida presbytery met there. Among others there was an aged clergyman who was very much annoyed by the heat and fervour of the revival. He found the public mind absorbed on the subject of religion; that there was prayer and religious conversation everywhere, even in the stores and public houses. He had never seen a revival, and had never heard what he heard there.

Before presbytery adjourned, he arose and made a violent speech against the revival, as it was going on. What he said, greatly shocked and grieved Christian people. They felt like falling on their faces before God, crying to him to prevent what he had said from doing any mischief.

The presbytery adjourned. Some of the members went home, and others remained overnight. Christians gave themselves to prayer. The next morning, this man was found.

In the course of these revivals, persons from a distance, in almost every direction, hearing what the Lord was doing, or being attracted by curiosity and wonder at what they heard, came to see for themselves; and many of them were converted. Among these visitors, Dr. Garnet Judd, who soon after went to the Sandwich Islands as a missionary, and has been well-known to lovers of missions for many years. He belonged to the congregation of Mr. Weeks. His father, old Dr. Judd, was an earnest Christian and sympathised greatly with the revival.

About the same time Miss F. T., from New England, came to Utica. She was teaching a high school, in the neighbourhood of Newburgh, New York. As much was said in the newspapers about the revival in Utica, Miss T., among others, became filled with astonishment, and with a desire to see for herself what it meant. She dismissed her school for ten days, and took the stage for Utica. As she passed through Genesee street to the hotel, she observed on one of the signs, the name of B. T. She was an entire stranger in Utica, and did not know that she had an acquaintance or relative there. But after stopping a day or two, and inquiring who B. T. was, she sent him a note, saying that the daughter of a Mr. T., was at the hotel, and would be pleased to see him. Mr. T. waited upon her and found that she was a distant relative of his, and invited her immediately to his house. She accepted his invitation, and he being an earnest Christian, immediately took her to the meetings, and tried to interest her in religion. She was greatly surprised at all that she saw, and a good deal annoyed.

She was an energetic, cultivated, and proud young lady; and the manner in which people conversed with her, and pressed upon her the necessity of giving her heart to God, very much disturbed her. The preaching which she heard took a deep hold upon her.

I had not seen her, to converse with her; but had heard of her state of mind. After

writhing under the truth for a few days, she called at my lodging. I began to press her with the claims of God. She referred to my preaching that sinners deserved to be sent to hell; and said that she could not receive it, that she did not believe that God was such a being. I replied, "Nor do you yet understand what sin is, in its true nature and desert; if you did, you would not complain of God for sending the sinner to hell." I conversed in this strain for some time; and then I said a few words about the place which Jesus holds, and what is the real situation of things, in regard to the salvation of those who thus deserved to be damned.

Her countenance waxed pale, she threw up her hands and shrieked, and fell forward upon the sofa, and let her heart break. I think she had not wept at all before; but now the flood gates were opened, she let her whole gushing heart out before God. She soon arose and went to her own lodgings. She gave up her school, offered herself as a foreign missionary, was married to a Mr. Gulick, and went out to the Sandwich Islands. Her history, as a missionary, is well known. She has been very efficient, and has raised several sons, who also are missionaries.

I preached frequently in New Hartford, four miles south of Utica. There was a precious and powerful work of grace, a Mr. Coe being pastor of the Presbyterian church. I preached also at Whitesborough, another beautiful village, four miles west of Utica; where also was a powerful revival. The pastor, Mr. John Frost, was a most efficient labourer.

There was a cotton manufactory on the Oriskany creek, a little above Whitesborough, a place now called New York Mills. It was owned by a Mr. W., unconverted, but a gentleman of high standing and good morals. My brother-in-law, Mr. G. A., was superintendent of the factory. I was invited to go, and went up one evening, and preached in the village schoolhouse, which was large, and crowded with hearers. The word took powerful effect among the people, especially among the young who were at work in the factory.

The next morning, I went into the factory, to look through it. I observed there was a good deal of agitation among those who were busy at their looms, and their mules, and other implements. On passing through one of the apartments, where a great number of young women were attending to weaving, I observed a couple of them eyeing me, and speaking very earnestly; and I could see that they were a good deal agitated, although they laughed. I went slowly towards them. They saw me coming, and were evidently much excited. One of them was trying to mend a broken thread, and her hands trembled so that she could not mend it. I approached slowly, looking at the machinery, as I passed; but this girl grew more and more agitated, and could not proceed with her work. When I came within eight or ten feet of her, I looked solemnly at her. She was quite overcome, sunk down, and burst into tears. The impression caught almost like powder, and in a few moments nearly all in the room were in tears. This feeling spread through the factory. Mr. W., the owner, was present, and seeing the state of things, he said to the superintendent, "Stop the mill, and let the people attend to religion; for it is more important that our souls should be saved than that this factory run." The gate was shut down, and the factory stopped; but where should we assemble? The superintendent suggested that the mule room was large; and, the mules being run up, we could assemble there. We did so, and a more powerful meeting I scarcely ever

attended. It went on with great power. The revival went through the mill with astonishing power, and in the course of a few days nearly all in the mill were hopefully converted.

As much has been said about the hopeful conversion of Theodore D. Weld, at Utica, it may be well for me to give a correct report of the facts. He had an aunt, Mrs. C. living in Utica, who was a praying, godly woman. He was the son of an eminent clergyman in New England, and his aunt thought he was a Christian. He used to lead her family in worship. Before the commencement of the revival, he had become a member of Hamilton College, at Clinton. The work at Utica had attracted so much attention, that many persons from Clinton, and among the rest some of the professors of the college, had been down to Utica, and had reported what was doing, and a good deal of excitement had resulted. Weld held a very prominent place among the students of Hamilton College, and had a very great influence. Hearing what was going on at Utica, he became very much excited, and his opposition was greatly aroused.

This fact became known in Utica; and his aunt became very anxious. His aunt wrote to him, and asked him to come home and spend a Sabbath, hear the preaching, and become interested in the work. He at first declined, but finally got some of the students together, and told them that he had made up his mind to go down to Utica; that he knew it must be fanaticism or enthusiasm; that it would not move him. He came, and his aunt soon learned that he did not intend to hear me preach. Mr. Aiken had usually occupied the pulpit in the morning, and he expected Mr. Aiken to preach; but he was determined not to hear me.

Mr. Aiken suggested that I preach in the morning. Mr. Aiken took the introductory exercises, as usual. Mrs. C. came with her family, and among them Mr. Weld. She took pains to have him so seated in the slip that he could not well get out, without herself, and one or two others, stepping out before him; for she feared that he would go out when he saw that I was to preach. I knew that his influence among the young men of Utica was very great, and that his coming there would have a powerful influence to make them band together in opposition. Mr. Aiken pointed him out to me, as he came in and took his seat.

After the introductory exercises, I named this text: "One sinner destroyeth much good." I had never preached from it, or heard it preached from; but it came home with great power to my mind. I began to show how one sinner might destroy much good, and how the influence of one man might destroy a great many souls. I suppose that I drew a pretty vivid picture of Weld, and of what his influence was, and what mischief he might do. Once or twice he made an effort to get out; but his aunt, would throw herself forward, and lean in front, and engage in silent prayer, and he could not get out without arousing and annoying her; and therefore he remained in his seat till meeting was out.

The next day I called at a store in Genesee street, to converse with some people there, as it was my custom to go from place to place for conversation; and whom should I find there but Weld? He fell upon me very unceremoniously, and I should think, for nearly or quite an hour, talked to me in a most abusive manner. I got an opportunity to say but very little. He was very gifted in language. It soon attracted the attention of all

in the store and the news ran along the streets, the clerks gathered in from the neighbouring stores, and stood to hear what he had to say. All business ceased in the store, and all gave themselves up to listening to his vituperation. But finally I said, "Mr. Weld, are you the son of a minister of Christ, and is this the way for you to behave?" I said a few words in that direction, and I saw that it stung him; and throwing out something very severe, he immediately left.

I went out also, and returned to Mr. Aiken's. I had been there but a few moments when somebody called, and I went to the door myself. And who should come in but Mr. Weld? He looked as if he would sink. He began immediately to make apology for the manner in which he had treated me; and expressed himself in terms of self-condemnation. I took him kindly by the hand and had a little conversation with him, assured him that I had laid up nothing against him, and exhorted him earnestly, to give his heart to God.

That evening I preached at New Hartford. The next morning I heard that he went to his aunt's, greatly impressed and subdued. She asked him to pray in the family. He said that he was at first shocked at the idea. But his enmity arose so much, that he thought that that was one way in which he had not yet expressed opposition, and therefore he would comply. He knelt down, and kept on in a most wonderful way, until they all became convulsed with astonishment. His aunt attempted to converse with him, and to pray with him; but the opposition of his heart was terrible.

He walked his room by turns, and by turns he lay upon the floor. He continued the whole night in that terrible state, angry, rebellious, and yet so convicted that he could scarcely live. Just at daylight, while walking back and forth in his room, he said, a pressure came upon him that crushed him down to the floor; and with it came a voice that seemed to command him to repent, to repent now.

The next night he rose in meeting, and asked if he might make confession. I answered, yes; and he made public confession. He said it became him to remove the stumbling block which he had cast before the whole people; and he wanted opportunity to make the most public confession he could.

From that time he became a very efficient helper; and being a powerful speaker, and gifted in prayer, he was instrumental in doing a great deal of good. At length his health became enfeebled by labour. He went on a fishing excursion to the coast of Labrador. He returned with health renewed.

This revival occurred in the winter and spring of 1826. When the converts had been received into the churches throughout the county, Rev. John Frost, pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Whitesborough, published a pamphlet giving some account of the revival, and stated that within the bounds of that presbytery, the converts numbered three thousand. The work spread from Rome and Utica, as from a centre. Ministers came from a considerable distance, and spent more or less time in attending meetings, and in various ways helping forward the work. I spread my own labours over as large a field as I could, and laboured more or less throughout the bounds of the presbytery. The pastors of all these churches sympathised deeply with the work.

The doctrines preached in these revivals were the same that have been already presented. Instead of telling sinners to use the means of grace and pray for a new heart, we called on them to make themselves a new heart and a new spirit, and pressed the duty of instant surrender. We told them the Spirit was striving with them to induce them now to give him their hearts, now to believe, and to enter at once upon a life of devotion to Christ. We taught them that while they were praying for the Holy Spirit, they were constantly resisting him; and that if they would at once yield to their own convictions of duty, they would be Christians. We tried to show them that everything they did or said before they had submitted, believed, given their hearts to God, was sin, was not that which God required them to do, but was simply deferring repentance and resisting the Holy Ghost.

Such teaching as this was opposed by many. It had formerly been supposed necessary that a sinner should remain under conviction; and it was not uncommon to hear old professors, say that they were under conviction many months, or years, before they found relief. We taught the opposite of this. We told them that under protracted conviction, they were in danger of grieving the Spirit of God away, and when their distress of mind ceased, a reaction would naturally take place.

We insisted on immediate submission, as the only thing that God could accept; and that all delay was rebellion. It became very common under this teaching, for persons to be convicted and converted, in the course of a few hours, and sometimes in the course of a few minutes. Such sudden conversions were alarming to many good people; and they predicted that the converts would fall away. But the event proved, that among those sudden conversions, were some of the most influential Christians that ever have been known in that region; and this has been in accordance with my own experience, through all my ministry.

CHAPTER 15

REVIVALS AT AUBURN IN 1826

Dr. Lansing, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church at Auburn, came to Utica, to witness the revival, and urged me to go out and labour for a time with him. In the summer of 1826, I went there and laboured with him for a season. I found that some of the professors in the theological seminary in that place, were taking an attitude hostile to the revival. I had before known that ministers east of Utica were holding correspondence with reference to these revivals, and taking an attitude of hostility.

However, until I arrived at Auburn, I was not fully aware of the amount of opposition I was destined to meet, ministers where I had not laboured, and knew personally nothing of me, but were influenced by the false reports. I learned from various sources that a system of espionage was carried on, that was intended to result, in an extensive union of ministers and churches to hedge me in, and prevent the spread of the revivals.

I return to what passed at Auburn. My mind became, very much impressed with the extensive working of that system of espionage of which I have spoken. Mr. Frost, of Whitesborough, had come to a knowledge of the facts and communicated them to me. I said nothing publicly, or privately, to anybody; but gave myself to prayer. I looked to God with great earnestness, to be directed; asking him to show me the path of duty, and give me grace to ride out the storm.

One day at Dr. Lansing's, the Lord showed me as in a vision what was before me. He drew so near to me, while I was engaged in prayer, that my flesh literally trembled on my bones. I shook from head to foot, under a full sense of the presence of God. At first, and for some time, it seemed more like being on the top of Sinai, amidst its full thundering, than in the presence of the cross of Christ.

Never in my life, was I so awed and humbled before God as then. Nevertheless, instead of feeling like fleeing, I seemed drawn nearer and nearer to God - seemed to draw nearer and nearer to that Presence that filled me with such unutterable awe and trembling. After a season of great humiliation before him, there came a great lifting up. God assured me that he would be with me and uphold me; that no opposition should prevail; that I had nothing to do, in regard to all this matter, but to keep about my work, and wait for the salvation of God.

The sense of God's presence, and all that passed between God and my soul at that time, I can never describe. It led me to be perfectly trustful, perfectly calm, and to have nothing but the most perfectly kind feelings toward all the brethren that were misled, and were arraying themselves against me. I felt assured that all would come right; that my true course was to leave everything to God; and as the storm gathered and the opposition increased, I never for one moment doubted how it would result. I was never disturbed, I never spent a waking hour in thinking of it; when to all outward appearance, it seemed as if all the churches of the land, except where I had laboured, would unite to shut me out of their pulpits.

A passage in the twentieth of Jeremiah was repeatedly set home upon me with great

power. It reads thus: "O Lord, thou hast deceived me and I was deceived." In the margin it reads, enticed. "Thou art stronger than I, and hast prevailed. I am in derision daily, everyone mocketh me. For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the Lord was made a reproach unto me, and a derision daily." Then I said, "I will not make mention of him nor speak any more in his name." But his word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay. For I heard the defaming of many, and fear was on every side. Report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, saying, peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him. But the Lord is with me as a mighty, terrible one; therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail. They shall be greatly ashamed, for they shall not prosper; their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten. But O Lord of hosts that triest the righteous, and seest the reins and the heart, let me see thy vengeance on them; for unto thee have I opened my cause." (Jeremiah 20:7-12)

I do not mean that this literally described my case, or expressed my feelings; but there was so much similarity, that this passage was often a support to my soul.

Those who are acquainted with the history of Mr. Weeks, recollect that he began to write a book which he called "The Pilgrim's Progress in the Nineteenth Century." He was a man of considerable talent, and I hope a good man; but as I think much deluded in his philosophy, and exceedingly out of the way in theology. I do not mention him because I wish to say any evil of him, or of his book; but merely to say that he never ceased, so far as I can learn, to offer more or less opposition, direct and indirect, to revivals that did not favour his peculiar views.

Notwithstanding the attitude that some of the professors at Auburn were taking, in connection with so many ministers abroad, the Lord soon revived his work in Auburn. Mr. Lansing had a large congregation, and a very intelligent one. The revival soon took effect among the people, and became powerful.

At that time that Dr. S of Auburn, who still resides there, was so greatly blessed in his soul, as to become quite another man. Dr. S. was an elder in the Presbyterian church. He was a very timid and doubting Christian; and had but little Christian efficiency, because he had but little faith. He soon, however, became deeply convicted of sin; and descended into the depths of humiliation, almost to despair. He continued in this state for weeks, until one night, in a prayer meeting, he was quite overcome, and sunk down helpless on the floor. Then God opened his eyes to the reality of salvation in Christ. Dr. S. followed me to Troy, and the first time I saw him there he exclaimed with an emphasis peculiarly his own, "Brother Finney, they have buried the Saviour, but Christ is risen." He received such a wonderful baptism of the Holy Ghost, that he has been ever since the rejoicing and the wonder of God's people.

Partly in consequence of the known disapproval of my labours on the part of many ministers, a good deal of opposition sprung up in Auburn; and a number of the leading men took strong ground against the work. But the Spirit of the Lord was among the people with great power.

One Sabbath morning, while I was preaching, I was describing the manner in which some men would oppose their families, and if possible, prevent their being converted. I said, "Probably if I were acquainted with you, I could call some of you by name, who treat your families in this manner." At this instant a man cried out, "Name me!" and then threw his head forward and he trembled with great emotion. It turned out that, that morning he had done the same things that I had named. His crying out, "Name me!" was so spontaneous and irresistible that he could not help it. But I fear he was never converted.

There was a hatter, of the name of H., in Auburn. His wife was a Christian; but he was a Universalist. He carried his opposition so far, as to forbid his wife attending our meetings; and, for several successive evenings, she remained at home. One night, as the warning bell rang half an hour before the assembly met, Mrs. H. was so much exercised in mind about her husband, that she retired for prayer, and spent the half hour in pouring out her soul to God. She told him how her husband behaved, and that he would not let her attend meeting; and she drew very near to God.

As the bell was tolling she came out of her closet and found that her husband had come in; and, as she entered the room, he asked if she would go to meeting; and said that if she would go, he would accompany her. He had made up his mind to attend meeting that night, to see if he could not get something to justify his opposition; or at least, something to laugh about, and sustain him in ridiculing the work. When he proposed to accompany his wife, she was very much surprised, but they came to meeting.

Of all this, I knew nothing at the time. I had been visiting and labouring with inquirers the whole day, and had had no time whatever to even settle upon a text. During the introductory services, a text occurred. The words of the man with the unclean spirit, "Let us alone." I took those words and went on to preach, and endeavoured to show up the conduct of those that wanted to let be alone, that did not want to have anything to do with Christ.

In the midst of my discourse, I observed a person fall from his seat, who cried out in a most terrific manner. The congregation were very much shocked; and the outcry of the man was so great, that I stopped preaching and stood still. After a few moments, I requested the congregation to sit still, while I should go down and speak with the man. I found him to be Mr. H. The Spirit of the Lord had powerfully convicted him. When I reached him, he had so far recovered strength as to be on his knees, with his head on his wife's lap. He was weeping aloud, confessing his sins, and accusing himself in a terrible manner. When I told the congregation who it was, they knew him and his character; and it produced tears and sobs in every part of the house. I stood for some time, to see if he would be quiet enough for me to go on; but his loud weeping rendered it impossible. I can never forget the appearance of his wife, as she sat and held his face in her hands. There appeared in her face a holy joy and triumph that words can not express.

We had several prayers, and then I dismissed the meeting, and some persons helped Mr. H. to his house. He wished them to send for certain of his companions, with whom he had been in the habit of ridiculing the work of the Lord. He could not rest until he

had sent for a great number, and had made confession; which he did with a very broken heart.

He was so overcome that for two or three days he could not get about town, and continued to send for such as he wished to see, that he might confess, and warn them to flee from the wrath to come. As soon as he was able to get about, he took hold of the work with the utmost humility, but with great earnestness. Soon after, he was made an elder, and he has ever since been very exemplary and useful. His conversion was so marked and so powerful, and the results were so manifest, that it did very much to silence opposition.

At Auburn, my wife and myself were guests of Dr. Lansing, the pastor of the church. The church was much conformed to the world, and was accused by the unconverted of leading in dress, and fashion, and worldliness. I directed my preaching to secure reformation, and to get them into a revival state. One Sabbath I had preached, as searchingly as I was able, to the church, in regard to their attitude before the world. The word took deep hold of the people.

At the close of my address, I called upon the pastor to pray. He was much impressed with the sermon, and instead of immediately engaging in prayer, he made a short but very earnest address to the church, confirming what I had said. At this moment a man in the gallery said in a very deliberate manner, "Mr. Lansing, I do not believe that such remarks from you can do any good, while you wear a ruffled shirt and a gold ring, and while your wife and the ladies of your family sit, as they do, before the congregation, dressed as leaders in the fashions of the day." It seemed as if this would kill Dr. Lansing outright. He made no reply, but cast himself across the side of the pulpit, and wept. The congregation was almost as much shocked and affected as himself. They almost universally dropped their heads upon the seat in front of them, and many of them wept. I offered a short prayer and dismissed the congregation.

I went home with the dear, wounded pastor, and when all the family were returned, he took the ring from his finger - it was a slender gold ring that could hardly attract notice - and said, his first wife, when upon her dying bed, took it from her finger, and placed it upon his, with a request that he should wear it for her sake. He had done so, without a thought of its being a stumbling block. Of his ruffles he said, he had worn them from his childhood, and did not think of them as anything improper. Indeed he could not remember when he began to wear them, and of course thought nothing about them. "But," said he "if these things are an occasion of offense to any, I will not wear them." He was a precious Christian, and an excellent pastor.

Almost immediately after this, the church were disposed to make to the world a public confession of backsliding, and want of a Christian spirit. Accordingly a confession was drawn up, covering the whole ground. It was submitted for approval, and then read before the congregation. The church members stood, many of them weeping while the confession was read. From this point the work went forward, with increased power.

CHAPTER 16

REVIVAL AT TROY AND AT NEW LEBANON

Early in the autumn of, 1826, I accepted an invitation from Dr. Beman and his session, to labour in Troy, and the revival was powerful in that city. Mr. Nettleton had been sent to Albany, to make a stand against the revivals that were spreading in central New York. I had had the greatest confidence in Mr. Nettleton. I had had the greatest desire to see him; so much so that I had frequently dreamed of visiting him, and obtaining information in regard to the best means of promoting a revival. I felt like sitting at his feet, almost as I would at the feet of an apostle, from what I had heard of his success in promoting revivals. At that time my confidence in him was so great that I think he could have led me, almost or quite, at his discretion.

Soon after my arrival at Troy, I went to Albany to see him. He was the guest of a family with which I was acquainted. I spent part of an afternoon with him, and conversed in regard to his doctrinal views; especially of those held by the Dutch and Presbyterian churches in regard to the nature of moral depravity. I found that he entirely agreed with me on all the points of theology upon which we conversed. Indeed there had been no complaint of our teaching in those revivals. They complained of something objectionable in the measures used.

Our conversation was brief, upon every point. I observed that he avoided the subject of promoting revivals. When I told him that I intended to remain in Albany, and hear him in the evening, he manifested uneasiness, and remarked that I must not be seen with him. Hence Judge C., who accompanied me from Troy, and who had been in college with Mr. Nettleton, went with me to the meeting, and we sat in the gallery together. I saw enough to satisfy me that I could expect no advice or instruction from him, and that he was there to take a stand against me.

Since writing the last paragraph, my attention has been called to a statement in the biography of Mr. Nettleton, to the effect that he tried in vain to change my views and practices in promoting revivals of religion. I can not think that Mr. Nettleton ever authorised such a statement, for certainly he never attempted to do it. As I have said, at that time he could have moulded me at discretion; but he said not a word to me about my manner, nor did he ever write a word to me upon the subject. He kept me at arm's length; and although we conversed on some points of theology, it was plain that he was unwilling to say anything regarding revivals, and would not allow me to accompany him to meeting. This was the only time I saw him, until I met him in the convention at New Lebanon.

We began to feel, in Troy, the influence of Dr. Beecher's letters, over some of the leading members of Dr. Beman's church. The opposition increased, and was doubtless fomented by an outside influence, until finally it was determined to complain of Dr. Beman, and bring his case before the presbytery.

I went on in my labours in the revival. Christian people continued praying mightily to God. I kept up preaching and praying incessantly, and the revival went on with increasing power; Dr. Beman, in the meantime, being under the necessity of giving

almost his entire attention to his case before the presbytery. When the presbytery had examined the charges and specifications, I think they were nearly or quite unanimous in dismissing the whole subject, and justifying the course which he had taken.

In the midst of the revival it became necessary that I should leave Troy for a week or two, and visit my family at Whitesborough. While I was gone, Rev. Horatio Foote was invited. I do not know how often he preached; but he gave great offence to the already disaffected members. He bore down upon them with the most searching discourses. A few of them finally made up their minds to withdraw and establish another congregation.

In this revival, there was a very earnest spirit of prayer. We had a prayer meeting from house to house, daily, at eleven o'clock. At one of those meetings I recollect that a Mr. S., cashier of a bank in that city, was so pressed by the spirit of prayer, that when the meeting was dismissed he was unable to rise from his knees. He remained upon his knees, writhed and groaned in agony, and said, "Pray for Mr. _," president of the bank of which he was cashier. This president was a wealthy, unconverted man. When it was seen that his soul was in travail for that man, the praying people knelt down, and wrestled in prayer for his conversion. As soon as the mind of Mr. S. was so relieved that he could go home, we all retired; and soon after the president of the bank, for whom we prayed, expressed hope in Christ. He had not before this, I believe, attended any of the meetings; and it was not known that he was concerned about his salvation.

The father of Judge C. who was at Albany with me, was living with his son whose guest I was. The old gentleman had been a judge in Vermont. He was remarkably correct in his life, a venerable man, whose house, in Vermont, had been the home of ministers who visited the place. His wife had told me of her anxiety, and his son had repeatedly expressed fear that his father's natural amiability would ruin his soul.

One Sabbath morning, the Holy Spirit opened the case to my apprehension, and showed me how to reach it. In a few moments I had the whole subject in my mind. I went down, and told the old lady and her son what I was about to do, and exhorted them to pray earnestly. I followed out the divine showing, and the word took such powerful hold that he spent a sleepless night of anguish. He soon became clearly converted, and lived a Christian life to the end.

Before I left Troy, a Miss S., from New Lebanon, in Columbia county, came to purchase a dress for a ball which she wished to attend. She had a young relative in Troy, who was numbered among the converts, and was a zealous Christian. She invited Miss S. to attend with her the meetings. This aroused the enmity of her heart; but before she left, she was thoroughly converted.

As soon as her eyes were opened, she went home, and began her labours for a revival. Religion in New Lebanon was in a very low state. The young people were nearly all unconverted; and the old members were in a very cold and inefficient state. Miss S.'s father had become very formal; and for a long time religious matters had been neglected. They had an aged minister, a good man, but a man that did not seem to know how to perform revival work.

Miss S. first began at home, and besought her father to give up his "old prayer," as she expressed it, and wake up, and be engaged in religion. As she was a great favourite, her conversion and conversation greatly affected him. He was soon aroused, and became another man, and felt deeply that they must have a revival. The daughter went also to the house of her pastor, and began with a daughter of his who was in her sins. She was soon converted; and they two united in prayer, and went to work, from house to house, in stirring up the people.

In the course of a week or two, there was so much interest excited that Miss S. came out herself to Troy, to beg me to go, requested to do so by the pastor and members of the church. I went and preached. The Spirit of the Lord was poured out, and the revival soon went forward with power. Striking conversions were multiplied, and a great and blessed change came over the whole place.

We heard but little of opposition at this place during the revival, especially from professors of religion. Everything seemed to go on harmoniously in the church. They were soon led to feel that they greatly needed revival, and seemed to be very thankful that God had visited them. Most of the prominent men in the community were converted.

Among these was Dr. W., who was said to be an infidel. He at first manifested hostility, and declared that the people were mad. But he was made a particular subject of prayer by some who laid hold upon his case, and who had faith that he would soon be converted. One Sunday he came to meeting, and I could see that those who felt for him were burdened. Their heads were down, and they were in a prayerful state during the sermon. It was plain, however, before night, that the doctor's opposition began to give way. He listened, and that night he spent in a deeply exercised state of mind. The next morning he called on me, subdued like a child, and confessed that he had been wrong. From that day he took hold of the work and went forward with all his might.

There was also a Mr. T., a merchant, probably the most prominent and wealthy citizen of the town, but a sceptic. One evening I preached on the text, "The carnal mind is enmity against God" He had been a very moral man, and it had been very difficult to fasten anything upon his mind that would convict him of sin. His wife was a Christian, and the Lord had converted his daughter. The state of things in the town and in his family, had so far interested him, that he would come to meeting and hear what was said. The next day after this sermon on moral depravity, he confessed himself convinced. He saw it was all true, and assured me his mind was made up to serve the Lord the rest of his life.

John T. Avery, a noted evangelist, who has laboured in many places for many years, was present at that meeting. His family lived in New Lebanon. He was at this time a lad, fifteen or sixteen years of age. The morning after that sermon was preached, he came to me, one of the most interesting youthful converts that I have ever seen. He told me what had been passing in his mind for days; and added, "I was completely rolled up in the sermon, and it carried me right along. I could understand it. I gave up; I gave all to Christ."

The presbytery of Columbia had a meeting, within its bounds, and being informed that

I was labouring in one of their churches, they appointed a committee to visit the place, and inquire into the state of things; for they had been led to believe, from Troy and other places that my method of conducting revivals was so very objectionable, that it was the duty of presbytery to inquire into it. They appointed two of their number to visit the place; and they attempted to do so. Some of the most engaged Christians made this a particular subject of prayer; and for a day or two before the time when they were expected, they prayed much that the Lord would overrule this thing, and not suffer it to introduce any element of discord. The committee was expected to be there on the Sabbath, and attend the meetings. But the day before, a violent snowstorm set in; and they found it impossible to get through, were detained over the Sabbath, and on Monday, found their way back to their own congregations.

I received a letter from Mr. B., informing me that the presbytery had appointed him one of a committee to visit me, and make some inquiry in regard to my mode of conducting revivals, and inviting me to come and spend a Sabbath with him, and preach. I did so. As I understood afterward, his report to the presbytery was, that it was unnecessary and useless for them to take any farther action in the case; that the Lord was in the work, and they should take heed lest they be found fighting against God. I heard no more of opposition from that source.

About this time, a proposition was made by somebody, to hold a convention on the subject of conducting revivals. Correspondence was entered into between the Western brethren who had been engaged in revivals, and the Eastern brethren who had been opposing. It was finally agreed to hold the convention on a certain day, in July, 1827, in New Lebanon, where I had been labouring. I had been spending a short time at the village of Little Falls, on the Mohawk, near Utica. Some very interesting incidents occurred there during my stay; but I was obliged to leave to attend the convention.

It would seem that the design of this meeting has since been, by many, very much misunderstood. There is an impression in the public mind, that some complaint had been alleged against myself; and that this meeting was for the trial of myself, as complained of, before a council. But this was by no means the case. The design was to get at the facts of those revivals that had been so opposed, to consult in reference to them, compare views, and see if we could not come to a better understanding.

I arrived in New Lebanon a day or two before the convention met. The members were not men that had been appointed by any ecclesiastical bodies; but they had been invited by brethren, East and West, to come together for consultation. None were men representing any churches or ecclesiastical bodies. We came with no authority to act for the church, but simply to consult, to compare views, to see if anything was wrong in fact; and if so, to agree to correct what was wrong, on either side. I supposed that as soon as the brethren came together, exchanged views, and the facts were understood, that the brethren from the East who had opposed the revivals, would see their error, and that they had been misled; and that the thing would be disposed of; for I was certain that the things of which they complained had no foundation in fact.

Of the brethren that composed this convention I can remember the following: from the East there were Dr. Beecher and Mr. Nettleton, Dr. Joel Hawes from Hartford, Dr. Dutton from New Haven, Dr. Humphrey, president of Amherst College, Rev. Justin

Edwards of Andover, and a considerable number of other brethren whose names I do not recollect. From the West, that is from central New York where those revivals had been in progress, there were, Dr. Beman of Troy, Dr. Lansing of Auburn, Mr. Aiken of Utica, Mr. Frost of Whitesborough, Mr. Gillett of Rome, Mr. Coe of New Hartford, Mr. Gale of Western, Mr. Weeks of Paris Hill, and perhaps some others whose names I do not recollect.

We soon discovered that some policy was on foot in organising the convention, on the part of Dr. Beecher. However we regarded it not. The convention was organised, and I believe Dr. Humphrey presided as moderator. There was not the least unkindness of feeling existing among the members. It is true that members from the West regarded with suspicion Mr. Weeks, as being the man who was responsible, in a considerable degree for the misapprehension of the Eastern brethren. As soon as the convention was duly organised, and the business before us was stated and understood, the inquiry was raised by brethren from the West in regard to the source whence Dr. Beecher and Mr. Nettleton had received their information. We had been particularly solicitous to find out who it was that was misleading those brethren, and giving them such a view of revivals, as to make them feel justified in the course they were taking. We wanted to know whence all this mysterious opposition had proceeded. We therefore raised the inquiry at once.

No opposition had been manifested by any of the ministers from the East, except Dr. Beecher and Mr. Nettleton. It was not difficult to see from the outset that Dr. Beecher felt himself committed, and that his reputation was at stake; that as his letters, some of them, had found their way into the public prints, he would be held responsible for them, should they not prove to have been called for. It was also very apparent, that Dr. Beecher had secured the attendance of these most influential of the New England ministers, in order to sustain himself before the public, and justify himself in the course he had taken. As for Mr. Nettleton, Dr. Beecher had assured him that he would be sustained by New England.

When the question was raised, Dr. Beecher replied: "We have not come here to be catechised; and our spiritual dignity forbids us to answer any such questions." For myself I thought this was strange, but we found ourselves utterly unable to learn anything about it.

The convention sat several days; but as the facts came out in regard to revivals, Mr. Nettleton became so nervous that he was unable to attend several sessions.

When the question came up, how the facts were to be learned about those revivals, Dr. Beecher took the ground that the testimony of those brethren from the West, who had been engaged in promoting them, should not be received; that as we were, in a sense, parties to the question, and had been ourselves, the objects of censure, it was like testifying in our own case; that we were therefore not admissible as witnesses, and the facts should not be received from us. But to this, the brethren from the East would not listen. Dr. Humphrey very firmly remarked, that we were the best witnesses; that we knew what we had done, and that our statements were to be received without hesitation. To this there was a universal agreement, with the exception of Dr. Beecher and Mr. Nettleton.

There were several points of discussion during the convention, especially one on the propriety of women taking part in social meetings. Dr. Beecher argued at length, that the practice was unscriptural and inadmissible. Dr. Beman replied that this practice was familiar to the apostles; and that in the eleventh chapter of Corinthians, the apostle called the attention of the church to the fact that Christian women had given a shock to Eastern ideas, by their practice of taking part, and praying in their meetings, without their veils. He showed clearly that the apostle did not complain of their taking part in the meeting, but of the fact that they did so, laying aside their veils; which had given a shock to the prevalent sentiment, and occasion of reproach to heathen opposers.

Near the close of the convention, Mr. Nettleton came in, manifestly very much agitated; and said that he would now give the convention to understand the reasons he had for the course he had taken. He had what he called "a historical letter," in which he professed to give reasons, and state facts, upon which he had founded his opposition. I was glad to hear the announcement that he wished to read this letter. A copy of it had been sent to Mr. Aiken, when I was labouring in Utica, and Mr. Aiken had given it to me.

He read the letter. It was a statement, under distinct heads, of the things of which he complained; and which he had been informed, were practised in revivals, especially by myself. It is evident that the letter was aimed at me particularly, though, perhaps, I was seldom mentioned. Yet the things complained of were so presented, that there was no mistaking the design. The convention listened attentively. Mr. Nettleton then observed, that the convention had before them the facts upon which he had acted, and which he supposed had called for and justified his proceedings.

When he sat down, and expressed my satisfaction that that letter had been read; and remarked that I had a copy, and should have read it in due time. I then affirmed that not one of those facts complained of, was true. I added, "All the brethren are here, with whom I have performed all these labours and they know whether I am chargeable with any of these things, in any of their congregations. If they know or believe that any of these things are true, let them say so now and here."

They all at once affirmed that they knew of no such thing. Mr. Weeks was present; and I expected, therefore, that if anything was said in reply to my explicit denial, that it would come from Mr. Weeks. I supposed that if he had written to Dr. Beecher or Mr. Nettleton, affirming those facts, that he would feel called upon to justify what he had written. But he said not a word. No one there pretended to justify a single sentence in Mr. Nettleton's historical letter, that related to myself. The reading of this letter prepared the way for closing up the convention.

Mr. Justin Edwards had been present during the discussions. Near the close he brought in a string of resolutions, in which, from step to step, he resolved to disapprove of such and such measures in the promotion of revivals. He went over nearly, if not quite, every specification contained in Mr. Nettleton's historical letter, disapproving of all the things of which Mr. Nettleton had complained.

It was said by several of the brethren from the West, "We approve of these resolutions, but what is their design? It is manifest that their design is to make the public believe

that such things have been practised; and that this convention, condemning those practices, condemns the brethren that have been engaged in revivals justifies the opposition.” Dr. Beecher insisted that the design of the resolutions was entirely prospective; that nothing was implied with respect to the past, but that they were merely to serve as landmarks, and to let it be known that the convention disapproved of such things, with no implication that any such things had been done.

It was replied, that from the fact that such complaints had gone abroad, and it was known that such charges had been made, that these resolutions were designed to sustain the opposition, and to make the impression that such things had been done as were condemned.

The brethren from the West said, “Of course we shall vote for these resolutions. We believe in these things as much as you; and we as much disapprove of the practices condemned as you do; but we believe that they are intended to justify opposition, to have a retrospective rather than a prospective application.” We passed the resolutions unanimously; and I recollect saying that I was willing that they should go forth, and that all the facts should be left to the publication and adjudication of the solemn judgement. I then proposed that we should pass a resolution against lukewarmness, and condemning it as strongly as any of the practices mentioned in the resolutions. Dr. Beecher declared that there was no danger of lukewarmness at all; whereupon the convention adjourned sine die.

How the publication of the whole proceedings was received by the public, I need not say. In the second volume of the biography of Dr. Beecher, page 101, I find the editor says, “A careful perusal of the minutes of this convention has satisfied us, that there was no radical difference of views between the Western brethren and those from New England, and that but for the influence of one individual, the same settlement might have been made there, which was afterward effected at Philadelphia.” This is no doubt true. The fact is that had not Mr. Nettleton listened to false reports, and got committed against those revivals, no convention would have been held or thought of. It was all the more wonderful that he should have credited such reports, since he had so often been made the subject of manifold misrepresentations.

The reaction of public feeling was overwhelming. Late in the fall of the same year I met Mr. Nettleton in New York. He told me he was there, to give his letters against the Western revivals to the public. I asked him if he would publish his “historical letter”. He said he must publish his letters, to justify what he had done. I told him if he published that letter it would react against himself, as all who were acquainted with those revivals would see that he was acting without a valid reason. He replied that he should publish his letters, and would risk reaction. He published several other letters, but that one he did not publish, so far as I could learn.

Dr. Beecher’s biography represents him as having justified his opposition to those revivals until his death; and as having maintained that the evils complained of were real and were corrected by the opposition. If this was his opinion after that convention, he must have wholly rejected our united testimony. But as he and Mr. Nettleton were exceedingly anxious to justify their opposition, if they still believed those statements in

the “historical letter” why did they not publish it, and appeal to those who witnessed the revivals?

I find in the biographies of Dr. Beecher and Mr. Nettleton, complaint of the bad spirit that prevailed. I never heard the name of Dr. Beecher or Mr. Nettleton mentioned, during those revivals censoriously. They were never, even in private conversation, spoken of, with the least bitterness. The promoters of revivals were in a Christian spirit, and far from being denunciatory. If they had been, those blessed revivals could never have been promoted, and could never have turned out as gloriously as they did. A quotation from Dr. Beecher’s biography will illustrate the animus of the opposition. In the second volume, page 101, Dr. Beecher is represented as saying to me, at the convention at New Lebanon, “Finney, I know your plan, and you know I do; you mean to come to Connecticut, and carry a streak of fire to Boston. But if you attempt it, as the Lord liveth, I’ll meet you at the state line, and call out all the artillery-men, and fight every inch of the way to Boston, and then I’ll fight you there.” I do not remember this; but, as Dr. Beecher does, let it illustrate the spirit of opposition. He was grossly deceived at every step. I had no design nor desire to go to Connecticut, nor to Boston.

After this convention I heard no more of the opposition of Dr. Beecher and Mr. Nettleton. The results of the revivals were such as to shut the mouths of gainsayers, and convince everybody that they were indeed pure and glorious, and as far from anything objectionable as any revivals that ever witnessed. Let any one read the Acts of the Apostles, and the record of the revivals of their day; and then read what they say, in their epistles, of reaction, backsliding, and apostasies that followed. Then let them find out the truth respecting the glorious revivals of which I have been writing, their commencement, progress, and results, which have been more and more manifest for nearly forty years, and they can not fail to see that these revivals were as truly from God as those.

Revivals should increase in purity and power, as intelligence increases. The converts in apostolic times were either Jews, with all their prejudice and ignorance, or degraded heathen. Copies the written word of God, were not to be had, except by the rich who were able to purchase manuscript copies. Christianity had no literature that was accessible to the masses. The means of instruction were not at hand. With so much darkness and ignorance, with so many false notions, with so much to mislead and debase, and so few facilities for sustaining a reformation, it was not to be expected that revivals of religion should be pure and free from errors.

We have, and preach, the same Gospel that the apostles preached. We have every facility for guarding against error in doctrine and practice, and for securing a sound Gospel religion. The people among whom these great revivals prevailed, were intelligent, cultivated. They had not only the means of secular, but also of religious education. Nearly every church had an educated, able, and faithful pastor, well able to judge of the soundness, and discretion of an evangelist God set his seal to the doctrines that were preached, and to the means that were used to carry forward that great work, in a most striking and remarkable manner. The results are now found in all parts of the land. The converts are still living, and labouring for Christ and for souls, in almost or quite every state in this Union. They are among the most intelligent and useful Christians in this, or any other country.

As I have since laboured extensively in this country, and in Great Britain, and no exceptions have been taken to my measures, it has been assumed and asserted that since the opposition I have given up the measures complained of. I have always and everywhere, used all the measures I used in those revivals and have often added other measures, whenever I have deemed it expedient. Were I to live my life over again I should use substantially the same measures.

It was no wisdom of my own that directed me. I was made to feel my ignorance and dependence, and led to look to God continually for guidance. I had no doubt that God led me by his Spirit, to take the course I did. So clearly did he lead me, that I never did or could doubt that I was divinely directed.

That the brethren who opposed those revivals were good men, I do not doubt. That they were misled, I have just as little doubt. If they died under the belief that they had just reasons for what they did, wrote, and said, and that they corrected the evils of which they complained, they died deceived. It is not for the safety of the church, the honour of revivals, or the glory of Christ, that posterity should believe that those evils existed, and were corrected, by such a spirit, and in such a manner as has been represented.

I have no doubt that Dr. Beecher was led to believe that his opposition was called for. From his biography, it appears that at Philadelphia, the next spring after the convention, it was agreed by himself, Dr. Beman and others, to drop the subject and publish no more in regard to those revivals. All the publishing had been on the side of the opposition. Previously to the meeting at Philadelphia, Mr. Nettleton had published his letters, and I saw nothing farther in print upon the subject.

I was not a party to the agreement entered into at Philadelphia; nevertheless, had not Dr. Beecher's biography reopened this subject, with the manifest design to justify the course that he took, I should not feel called upon to say, what I can not now be justified in withholding. I write from personal knowledge, and to me it matters not who may have given to Dr. Beecher the supposed facts upon which he acted. Those asserted facts were no facts, as I stated before the convention; to which statement every brother with whom I had laboured assented. This testimony, it would seem, Dr. Beecher did not believe. It matters not who Dr. Beecher's informants were; certainly none of the pastors where those revivals prevailed, ever gave him information that justified his course; and no other men understood the matter as well as they did. They were the best possible witnesses of what was said and done in their own congregations; and their testimony was unanimous that no such things were done as were charged.

I had read the strong, and even terrible charges against the brethren who laboured in those revivals, contained in Dr. Beecher's letter to Dr. Taylor, in which he states that his correspondence will justify what he was doing and writing against those brethren. When I learned that this matter was to be in Dr. Beecher's biography, I hoped that we should get at the authors of those reports. But I see nothing to justify his course. Are these charges to be virtually repeated and stereotyped, and the correspondence, by which they are said to be justified, concealed?

On page 103, of the second volume of Dr. Beecher's autobiography, we have the

following: “In the spring of 1828,” said Dr. Beecher in conversation on the subject, “I found out that Mr. Finney’s friends were laying their plans to make in impression on the general assembly, that held its session at Philadelphia, and to get one of their men into Mr. Skinner’s place. Skinner’s church had just asked me to preach for them; and I wrote back that I would supply, if they wished, while the assembly was in session. That blocked somebody’s wheels. I stayed till the close, when Beman preached half a day. That defeated their plans. They failed.” In reading the above, together with what I find elsewhere in this biography, I stand amazed in view of the suspicions and delusions under which Dr. Beecher’s mind was labouring. I was, at that time, a minister in the Presbyterian church, and was preaching in Philadelphia when the assembly was in session and while Dr. Beecher was there. I was ignorant as a child of all this management revealed in the biography.

I bless the Lord that I was kept from being diverted from my work by opposition, and that I never gave myself any uneasiness about it. When at Auburn God had given me the assurance that he would overrule all opposition, without my turning aside. Under this divine assurance I went forward with a single eye, and a trustful spirit; and now when I read what agitations, suspicions, and misapprehensions possessed the minds of these brethren, I stand amazed at their delusion and consequent anxiety, respecting myself and my labours. At the very time that Dr. Beecher was in Philadelphia, managing with members of the general assembly, as related in his biography, I was labouring in that city, and had been for several months, in different churches, in the midst of a powerful revival, perfectly ignorant of Dr. Beecher’s errand there. I can not be too thankful that God kept me from being agitated, and changed in my spirit, or views of labour, by all the opposition of those days.

CHAPTER 17

REVIVAL IN STEPHENTOWN

After this I remained a short time in New Lebanon. I do not think the convention injured the religious state of the people in that place. It would have done so, had any facts come out to justify the opposition which had been made to the revivals, but, as it resulted, the church in New Lebanon was, I believe, edified and strengthened by what they knew of the convention.

Soon after the adjournment of the convention, on the Sabbath, as I came out of the pulpit, a young lady from Stephentown, was introduced to me. She asked me if I could not go to their town and preach. I replied that I did not see that I could. I saw her utterance was choked with deep feeling; but as I had not time to converse with her then, I went to my lodging.

Afterward I made inquiry about Stephentown, a place north of, and adjoining New Lebanon. Many years before, a wealthy individual had died, and given to the Presbyterian church a fund, the interest of which was sufficient to support a pastor. Soon after, a Mr. B., who had been a chaplain in the Revolutionary army, was settled as pastor. He remained until the church ran down, and finally became an open infidel. This had produced a most disastrous influence in that town. He remained among them, openly hostile to the Christian religion.

After he had ceased to be pastor, one or two ministers settled. Nevertheless, the church declined, and grew worse and worse; until, finally, they left their meeting-house and held their services on the Sabbath, in a small school-house, which stood near.

The last minister, affirmed that he stayed until not more than half-a-dozen people in the town would attend; and although his salary was regularly paid, yet he could not think it his duty to spend time in such a field. He had, therefore, been dismissed. No other denomination had taken possession, so as to excite public interest, and the town was a complete moral waste. Three elders of the Presbyterian church remained, and about twenty members. The only unmarried person in the church, was Miss S., of whom I have spoken. It was a large, rich, farming town, with no considerable village in it.

On the next Sabbath, Miss S. met me again, begged me to go up and preach; and asked me if I knew anything of the state of things there. I informed her that I did; but I told her I did not know how I could go. She seemed greatly affected, too much to converse. My mind began to be profoundly stirred in respect to the state of things in Stephentown. I finally told her that if the elders of the church desired me to come, she might have a notice given out that I would, the Lord willing, preach in their church, the next Sabbath at five o'clock in the afternoon. She went home and had the notice given.

The next Sabbath, one of the young converts at New Lebanon offered to take me to Stephentown. When he came in his buggy, I asked him, "Have you a steady horse?" "O yes!" he replied, "perfectly so;" and smiling, asked, "What made you ask the question?" "Because," I replied, "if the Lord wants me to go to Stephentown, the devil will prevent it if he can; and if you have not a steady horse, he will try to make him kill

me.” He smiled, and we rode on; and, strange to tell, before we got there, that horse ran away twice, and came near killing us. His owner expressed the greatest astonishment, and said he had never known such a thing before.

In due time we arrived at Mr. S.’s, the father of Miss S., about half a mile from the church, in the direction of New Lebanon. As we went in, Maria tearfully, yet joyfully received us, and showed me to a room. Soon after I heard her praying in a room over my head. The congregation was solemn and attentive, but nothing very particular occurred that evening. I spent the night at Mr. S.’s, and Maria seemed to be praying over my room nearly all night. I could hear her low, trembling voice, interrupted by sobs and weeping. I had made no appointment to come again; but before I left in the morning, she plead so hard, that I consented to have an appointment made for the next Sabbath.

When I came on the next Sabbath, nearly the same things occurred; but the congregation was more crowded; and as the house was old, for fear the galleries would break down, they had been strongly propped during the week. I could see a increase of solemnity and interest. At the third service the Spirit of God was poured out on the congregation.

Judge P. lived in a small village in one part of the town, who had a large family unconverted. At the close of the service, Miss S. stepped up, and pointed to a pew in which sat a young woman greatly overcome. I went in to speak to her, and found her to be one of the daughters of Judge P. Her convictions were very deep. I sat down by her and gave her instructions; and I think, before she left the house she was converted. She was a very intelligent, earnest young woman, and became very useful. She was afterwards the wife of the evangelist Underwood, well known in New Jersey and in New England. She and Miss S. seemed immediately to unite their prayers. But I could not see as yet, much movement among the older members. They stood in such relations to each other, that a good deal of repentance and confession had to pass among them, as a condition of their getting into the work.

The state of things in Stephentown, demanded that I should take up my quarters there. The spirit of prayer in the meantime had come powerfully upon me, as had been the case with Miss S. The praying power spreading and increasing, the work took on a very powerful type; so much so that the word of the Lord would cut the strongest men down, and render them entirely helpless.

I was preaching on the text, “God is love.” There was a man by the name of J., a man of strong nerves, and of considerable prominence as a farmer, in the town. He sat almost immediately before me. He fell, and writhed in agony for a few moments; but afterwards became still, and nearly motionless, but entirely helpless. He remained in this state until the meeting was out, when he was taken home. He was very soon converted, and became an effective worker.

In the course of this revival, Zebulon R. Shipherd, a celebrated lawyer from Washington county, New York, being in attendance upon the court at Albany, and hearing of the revival at Stephentown, so disposed of his business as to come and labour with me. He was an earnest Christian man, attended all the meetings, and

enjoyed them greatly. He was there when the November elections occurred through the State. I looked forward to the election day with considerable solicitude, fearing that the excitement of the day would greatly retard the work.

On the evening of election day, when I came out of the pulpit, Mr. Shipherd - who was the father of Rev. J. J. Shipherd who afterward established Oberlin - beckoned to me from a pew to come to him. I went and found one of the gentlemen who had sat at the table to receive votes during the day, so overcome with conviction of sin as to be unable to leave his seat. I had some conversation with him, prayed with him, and he was manifestly converted. A considerable portion of the congregation had, in the meantime, sat down. As I was about to retire, my attention was called to another pew, where was another of those men who had been prominent at the election, and had been receiving votes, precisely in the same condition of mind. He was too much overpowered by feeling to leave the house. I conversed with him and he was converted before he left.

I mentioned the family of Mr. P. as large; there were sixteen members of that family, children and grandchildren, hopefully converted; all of whom I think, united with the church before I left. There was another family in the town of the name of M., also a large and very influential. Most of the people lived scattered along on a street which, if I recollect right, was about five miles in length. There was not a religious family on that whole street, and not a single house in which family prayer was maintained.

I made an appointment to preach in a schoolhouse, in that street, and the house was much crowded. I took for my text: "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked." The Lord gave me a clear view of the subject, and I was enabled to bring out the truth effectively. The town was in an awful state. The influence of Mr. B., their former minister, now an infidel, had borne its legitimate fruit; and there was but very little conviction of the truth and reality of religion left. This meeting resulted in the conviction of nearly all that were present. The revival spread and in this M. family, there were seventeen hopeful conversions.

But there were several families who were quite prominent in influence, who did not attend the meetings. They were so much under the influence of Mr. B. However, in the midst of the revival, Mr. B. died a horrible death; and this put an end to his opposition.

There were several families that did not attend the meeting; and I could devise no means by which they could be induced to attend. Miss S. came up to Stephentown; and as her father was a man very well known and very much respected, she was received with respect and deference in any family that she wished to visit. She called on one of these families; she was acquainted with their daughters, and induced them to accompany her to meeting. They soon became so interested that they needed no influence to persuade them to attend. She then went to another, with the same result; and finally, secured the attendance of all that had stayed away. These families were nearly or quite all converted before I left. Indeed nearly all the principal inhabitants were gathered into the church, and the town was morally renovated. I have never been there since 1827, but the revival produced permanent results.

The striking characteristics of this revival, were a mighty spirit of prevailing prayer;

overwhelming conviction of sin; sudden and powerful conversions to Christ; great love and abounding joy of the converts, and their great earnestness, activity, and usefulness in prayers and labours for others. I have seldom laboured in a revival with greater comfort to myself, or with less opposition, than in Stephentown. At first the people chafed a little under the preaching, but with such power was it set home by the Holy Spirit, that I soon heard no more complaint.

CHAPTER 18

REVIVALS AT WILMINGTON AND AT PHILADELPHIA

While I was labouring at New Lebanon, Rev. Mr. Gilbert of Wilmington, Delaware, came on a visit. Mr. Gilbert was very old-school in his theological views, but love of souls overruled all difficulty on nice questions of difference, between himself and myself. He heard me preach, saw the results; and was very earnest that I should aid him in Wilmington.

I went to Wilmington, and engaged in labours with Mr. Gilbert. I found that his teaching had placed the church in a position that rendered it impossible to promote a revival till their views could be corrected. They seemed afraid to make any effort, lest they should take the work out of the hands of God. Their theory was that God would convert sinners in his own time; and that to urge them to immediate repentance was to attempt to make men Christians by human agency, and thus to dishonour God. In their prayers there was no urgency for an immediate outpouring of the Spirit.

It was plain that nothing could be done, unless Mr. Gilbert's views could be changed. I therefore spent hours each day in conversing with him; and after two or three weeks his mind was prepared to have my own views brought before his people. The next Sabbath, I took for my text: "Make to yourselves a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die?" I went thoroughly into the subject of the sinner's responsibility; and showed what a new heart is not, and what it is. I preached about two hours.

The congregation became interested, numbers rose, and the house was completely filled. Some looked distressed and offended, others interested. When I brought out strongly the contrast between my views, and the views in which they had been instructed, some laughed, some wept, some were manifestly angry; but I do not recollect that anyone left. It was a strange excitement.

In the meantime, Mr. Gilbert moved from one end of the sofa to the other, in the pulpit. I could hear him breathe and sigh, and could not help observing that he was himself in the greatest anxiety. However, I knew I had him, in his convictions, fast; but whether he would make up his mind to withstand what would be said by his people, I did not know. I was preaching to please the Lord, and not man.

I did not call upon Mr. Gilbert to pray, but prayed myself that the Lord would set home the Word, and make it understood. The congregation withdrew very slowly, and many seemed to be standing and waiting, as if they supposed they should hear from Mr. Gilbert, upon what had been said.

I observed two ladies sitting on the left hand of the aisle to whom I had been introduced, and who, I knew, were friends and supporters of Mr. Gilbert. I saw that they looked grieved, and offended, and astonished. The first who was near, took hold of Mr. Gilbert and said, "Mr. Gilbert, what do you think of that?" in a loud whisper. He replied, "It is worth five hundred dollars." That greatly gratified and affected me. She replied, "Then you have never preached the Gospel." "Well," said he, "I am sorry to say I never have." We passed along, and then the other lady said about the same

things, and received a similar reply. That was enough. Those who had gone out were standing, many of them, in front of the house, discussing vehemently the things that had been said. As I passed along the streets, I found excitement and discussion. People were comparing views; and from the few words that escaped as I passed, I saw the impression was in favour of what had been said.

When I arrived at Mr. Gilbert's, his wife accosted me as soon as I entered, "Mr. Finney, how dared you preach any such thing in our pulpit?" I replied, "Mrs. Gilbert, I did not dare to preach anything else; it is the truth of God." She replied, "Well, it is true that God was in justice bound to make an atonement for mankind. I have always felt it, though I never dared say it. I believed that if the doctrine preached by Mr. Gilbert was true, God was under obligation, as a matter of justice, to make an atonement, and to save me from those circumstances in which it was impossible for me to help myself, and from a condemnation which I did not deserve."

Just at this moment Mr. Gilbert entered. "There," said I, "Brother Gilbert, you see the results of your preaching, here in your own family;" and then repeated to him what his wife had just said. He replied, "I have sometimes thought that my wife was one of the most pious women; and at other times I have thought that she had no religion." "Why!" I exclaimed, "she has always thought that God owed her, as a matter of justice, the salvation provided in Christ; how can she be a Christian?" This was all said, by each, with the greatest solemnity. Upon my making the last remark, she got up and left the room. The house was very solemn; and for two days I did not see her. She then came out clear, having passed through a complete revolution.

From this point the work went forward. The truth was worked out admirably by the Holy Spirit. Mr. Gilbert's views remained corrected.

The effect upon many of Mr. Gilbert's church members was peculiar. I have spoken of the lady who asked him what he thought of it. She told me that she was so offended, to think that all her views of religion were so overthrown, that she promised she never would pray again. She had been in the habit of so far justifying herself because of her sinful nature, and had taken such a opposition as Mrs. Gilbert had held, that my preaching on that subject had completely subverted her views, her religion, and all. She remained in this state of rebellion for some six weeks. She then broke down, and became thoroughly changed in her views and this, I believe, was the case with a large number.

I had been induced to go up and preach for Mr. Patterson, at Philadelphia, twice each week. I went in the evening, and returned the next day and preached at Wilmington; thus alternating my evening services between Wilmington and Philadelphia. The distance was about forty miles. The word took so much effect in Philadelphia as to convince me that it was my duty to leave Mr. Gilbert to carry on the work in Wilmington, while I gave my whole time to Philadelphia.

Rev. James Patterson, with whom I first laboured in Philadelphia, held the views of the old school Presbyterians; but he was a godly man, and cared more for the salvation of souls, than for nice questions, or any points of doctrine upon which the old and new school differ. His wife believed in a general, as opposed to a restricted atonement, and

agreed with what was called New England orthodoxy, as distinguished from Princeton orthodoxy.

At this time I belonged to the Presbyterian church; I had been licensed and ordained by a presbytery, composed mostly of men educated at Princeton. When I was licensed to preach the gospel, I was asked whether I received the Presbyterian confession, as containing the substance of Christian doctrine. I replied that I did, so far as I understood it. But not expecting to be asked any such question, I had never examined it. When I came to read the confession of faith and ponder it, I saw that although I could receive it, as I now know multitudes of Presbyterians do, as containing the substance of Christian doctrine, yet there were several points upon which I could not put the same construction that was put on them at Princeton; and I accordingly, everywhere, gave the people to understand that I did not accept that construction; or if that was the true construction, then I differed from the Confession. Mr. Patterson, when I took that course in his pulpit, expressed no surprise. He did not object.

The revival took hold in his congregation; and as he saw that God was blessing the Word, he stood firmly by me, and never, objected to anything advanced. Sometimes when we returned from meeting, Mrs. Patterson would smilingly remark, "Now you see Mr. Patterson, that Mr. Finney does not agree with you on those points upon which we have often conversed." He would always reply, "Well, the Lord blesses it."

The interest became so great that our congregations were packed. One day Mr. Patterson said, "Brother Finney, if the Presbyterian ministers in this city find out your views, and what you are preaching to the people, they will hunt you out as they would a wolf." I replied, "I can not help it. I can preach no other doctrine; and if they must drive me out, let them do it, and take the responsibility. But I do not believe that they can get me out."

The ministers did not take the course predicted; but nearly all received me to their pulpits. When they learned what was going on and that many of their own church members were interested, they invited me to preach; and I preached in all of the Presbyterian churches except that in Arch street.

Philadelphia was at that time a unit, almost, in regard to the views held at Princeton. Dr. Skinner held to some extent, new school views; and differed enough from the tone of theology about him, to be suspected as not altogether sound. I have ever regarded it as a most remarkable thing that my doctrinal views did not prove a stumbling block in that city; nor was my orthodoxy openly called in question, by ministers or churches. I preached in the Dutch church to Dr. Livingston's congregation; and found that he sympathised with my views, and encouraged me to go on preaching that the Lord had bidden me. I did not hesitate everywhere to present my own views which I had everywhere presented.

Mr. Patterson was himself greatly surprised that I met no open opposition from ministers or churches. I did not present them at all in a controversial way; but simply employed them in my instructions to saints; and sinners, in a way so natural as not, perhaps, to excite very much attention, except with discriminating theologians. But many things that I said were new to the people. For one night I preached on this text:

“There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” This was on those points of difference between my own views and those held by limited atonement theologians. This attracted so much attention, and excited so much interest, that I was urged to preach on the same subject in other churches. The more I preached, the more desirous people were to hear; and the excitement became so general, that I preached seven different evenings in succession, in as many different churches.

It would seem that the people had heard much said against Hopkinsianism; the two great points of which were, that man ought to be willing to be damned for the glory of God, and that God was the author of sin. In preaching, I sometimes took occasion to denounce Hopkinsianism; and said that they appeared to have too much of it in Philadelphia; that their great neglect in attending to the salvation of their souls looked very much as if they were willing to be damned; and that they must hold that God was the author of sin, for they maintained that their nature was sinful. This I turned over and over, and these two points I dwelt upon. The people said, “Well, he is no Hopkinsian.” Indeed, I felt it my duty to expose all the hiding places of sinners, and to hunt them out from under those peculiar views of orthodoxy, in which I found them entrenched.

The revival spread, and took a powerful hold. All our meetings for preaching, for prayer, and for inquiry, were crowded. There were a great many more inquirers than we could well attend to. It was late in the fall when I took lodgings in Philadelphia, and I continued to labour there without any intermission until the following August, 1828.

There were some cases of bitter opposition. One man whose wife was deeply convicted, was so enraged that he came and took his wife out of meeting by force. Another case, a very striking one, was of a German tobacconist. He had a very amiable and intelligent wife; and was intelligent. He was, however, a sceptic. His wife, came to our meetings, and became concerned about her soul; and after a struggle of many days, she was thoroughly converted. As she attended frequently, it attracted the attention of her husband, and he began to oppose her. He had a hasty temper, and was a man of athletic frame, and of great resolution and fixedness of purpose. As his wife became more interested, his opposition increased, till finally he forbade her attending meetings any more.

She then called to see me, and asked advice. I told her that her first obligation was to God; that she was undoubtedly under obligation to obey his commands, even if they conflicted with the commands of her husband; and that, while I advised her to avoid giving offense, and do her duty to God, still in no case to omit, what she regarded as duty to God. I told her that, as her husband was an infidel, his opinions were not to be respected, and that she could not safely follow his advice. She was well aware of this. He was a man that paid no attention to religion, except to oppose it.

In accordance with my advice; she attended the meetings and received instruction; and she soon came into the liberty of the Gospel, had great faith and peace, and enjoyed much of the presence of God. This highly displeased her husband; and he finally went so far as to threaten her life, if she went to meeting again. She had so frequently seen him angry, that she had no confidence that he would fulfil his threat. She told him

calmly that whatever it cost her, her mind was made up to do her duty to God; that she felt it her duty to avail herself of the opportunity to get the instruction needed; and that she must attend those meetings, whenever she could do it without neglecting her family.

One Sabbath evening, when he found she was going to meeting, he renewed his threat that if she went he would take her life. She told me afterward that she had no thought that it was anything but a vain threat. She calmly replied to him that her duty was plain; that there was no reason why she should remain at home, but simply to comply with his unreasonable wishes; and that to stay, under such circumstances; would be entirely inconsistent with her duty to God and to herself. When she returned from meeting, she found him in a great rage. As soon as she entered the door he locked it, and took out the key, and then drew a dagger and swore he would take her life. She ran upstairs. He caught a light to follow. The servant girl blew out the light as he passed by her. She ran up and through the rooms in the second story, found her way down into the kitchen, and then to the cellar. He could not follow in the dark; and she got out of the cellar window, and went to a friend's house and spent the night.

Taking it for granted that he would be ashamed of his rage before morning, she went home early, and found things in the greatest disorder. He had broken the furniture, and acted like a man distracted. He again locked the door, and drawing a dagger, he threw himself upon his knees and held up his hands, and took the most horrible oath that he would there take her life. She looked at him with astonishment and ran up stairs, but he followed her. She ran from room to room, till finally, she entered the last, from which there was no escape. She turned round and faced him. She threw herself upon her knees, as he was about to strike her with his dagger, and lifted up her hands to heaven, and cried for mercy upon herself and upon him. At this point God arrested him. She said he looked at her for a moment, dropped his dagger, and fell upon the floor and cried for mercy himself. He then and there broke down confessed his sins to God and to her; and begged God, and begged her, to forgive him.

From that moment he was a wonderfully changed man. He became one of the most earnest converts. He was greatly attached to myself; and some year or two after, as he heard that I was to come to Philadelphia he was the first Philadelphia that met and greeted me. I received him and his wife into the church, before I left, and baptised their children. I have not seen or heard from them for many years.

While there were individual cases of singular bitterness and opposition, still I was not annoyed or hindered by anything like public opposition. The ministers received me kindly; and in no instance that I did they speak publicly, if indeed they did privately, against the work.

After preaching in Mr. Patterson's church for several months, and in nearly all the Presbyterian churches, it was thought best that I should take up a central position, and preach in one place. In Race street there was a large German church, the pastor of which was a Mr. Helfenstein. The elders, together with their pastor, requested me to occupy the pulpit. Their house was then the largest house of worship in the city. It was always crowded; and it seated three thousand people, when packed and the aisles were

filled. I had an opportunity to preach to many Sabbath-school teachers. It was said that the Sabbath-school teachers throughout the city generally attended my ministry.

About Midsummer of 1829, I left for a short time, and visited my wife's parents in Oneida county, and then returned, and laboured there until about mid-winter. I think that I laboured in Philadelphia about a year and a half. In all this time there was no abatement of the revival, that I could see. The converts became numerous; but I never had any knowledge of their exact number. I never laboured anywhere where I was received more cordially; and where Christians, and especially converts, appeared better than they did there. There was no jar or schism, that I ever knew of; and I never heard of any disastrous influence resulting from that revival.

A young woman who was the daughter of a minister of the old school, attended my ministry, and became awfully convicted. Her convictions were so deep, that she finally fell into despair. She told me she had been taught from her childhood, that if she was one of the elect, she would be converted; and that until she was converted, and her nature changed by the Spirit of God, she could do nothing for herself, but to read her Bible, and pray for a new heart.

When quite young she had been greatly convicted of sin, but had followed her father's instruction, and thought that was all that was required of her. She waited for evidence that she was one of the elect. In the midst of her struggle of soul on the subject of her salvation, something had come up relative to the question of marriage; and she promised God that she would never give her hand to any man till she was a Christian. When she made the promise, she said that she expected God would very soon convert her. But her convictions passed away. She was not converted; and that promise to God she dared not break it.

When she was about eighteen years old, a young man proposed to make her his wife. She approved, but could not consent to be married until she was a Christian. They greatly loved each other, and he urged her to be married without delay. But without telling him her reason, she kept deferring it for five years, waiting for God to convert her. Finally in riding one day, the young man was thrown from the carriage, and instantly killed. This aroused the enmity of her heart against God. She accused God of dealing hardly with her. She said that she had been waiting for him to convert her, and had been faithful to her promise, not to get married; that she had kept her lover waiting for her to get ready; and now, behold! God had cut him off, and she was still unconverted.

She had learned that the young man was a Universalist; and now she was much interested to believe that Universalism was true, and would not believe that God had sent him to hell; and if he had sent him to hell, she could not be reconciled. Thus she had been warring with God, before she came to our meetings, supposing that the blame of her not being converted, was chargeable upon God, and not upon herself.

When she heard my preaching, and found her refuges of lies torn away, and saw that she should have given her heart to God long before, and all would have been well; she saw that she herself had been entirely to blame, and that the instructions of her father had been wrong; and remembering how she had blamed God, and what a blasphemous

attitude she had maintained before him, she naturally despaired of. I reasoned with her, and tried to show her the long suffering of God, and encouraged her to hope, to believe, and to lay hold upon eternal life. But her sense of sin was so great, that she seemed unable to grasp the promise, and sunk deeper into despair, from day to day.

I became distressed about her case. At the close of every meeting she would follow me home, with, and would exhaust me by appeals to my sympathy and Christian compassion. After this had continued for weeks, one morning she called upon me in company with an aunt, who had become concerned about her, and who thought her on the very verge of insanity. I was myself of the opinion that it would result in that, if she would not believe. Catherine came into my room in her usually despairing way; but with a look of wildness that indicated a state unendurable; and at the moment, I think it was the Spirit of God that suggested to my mind, to take a different course with her from what I had taken.

I said, "Catherine, you profess to believe that God is good." "O yes! I believe that." "Well, you have often told me that His goodness forbids Him to have mercy on you - that your sins have been so great that it would be a dishonour to forgive you and save you. You have often confessed that you believed that God would forgive you if He wisely could; but that your forgiveness would be an injury to Him, to His government, and to His universe, and therefore He can not forgive you." "Yes, I believe that." I replied, "Then your difficulty is that you want God to sin, to act unwisely and injure Himself and the universe for the sake of saving you." She opened and set her large blue eyes upon me, and looked surprised and indignant. I proceeded: "Yes! you are in great trouble and anguish, because God will not do wrong, because he will persist in being good, whatever may become of you. You go about in the greatest distress, because God will not be persuaded to violate his own sense of duty, and save you to his own injury, and that of the entire universe. You think yourself of more consequence than God and all the universe; and can not be happy unless God makes himself and everybody else unhappy, in making you happy."

I pressed this upon her. She looked with the utmost astonishment at me, and after a few moments she submitted. She seemed to be almost instantly subdued. She said, "I accept it. Let God send me to hell, if He thinks that best. I do not want Him to save me at the expense of the universe. Let Him do what seemeth Him good." I got up instantly and left, and to get entirely away I got into a carriage and rode away. When I returned she had gone; but in the afternoon she and her aunt returned, to declare what God had done for her soul. She was filled with joy and peace, and became one of the most submissive, humble, beautiful converts.

Another very beautiful girl called to see me under great conviction of sin. I asked, among other things, if she was convinced that she had been so wicked that God might in justice send her to hell. She replied in strongest language, "Yes! I deserve a thousand hells." She was richly dressed. I had a very thorough conversation with her; she broke down and gave herself to Christ. She was a very humble, broken-hearted convert. I learned that she went home and gathered up a great many of her artificial flowers and ornaments, of which she was very vain, and passed through the room with them in her hands. They asked what she was going to do. She said she was going to burn them up. Said she, "I will never wear them again." "Well," they said, "if you will

not wear them, you can sell them; don't burn them." But she said, "If I sell them, somebody else will be as vain of them as I have been; I will burn them." She actually put them into the fire.

A few days after, she called on me, and said that she had, in passing through the market, observed a richly dressed lady. Her compassions were so stirred, that she asked if she might speak to her. The lady replied that she might. She said, "My dear madam, are you not proud of your dress, and are you not vain, and neglecting salvation?" She said that she herself burst into tears as she said it, and told the lady a little of her own experience, how she had been attached to dress, and how it had well-nigh ruined her soul. "Now," said she, "you are a beautiful lady, and are finely dressed; are you not in the same state of mind that I was in myself?" The lady wept, and confessed that that had been her snare; and she was afraid that love of dress and society would ruin her. She confessed that she had been neglecting salvation, because she did not know how to break away from the circle in which she moved. The young lady wanted to know if I thought she had done wrong, in what she said to the lady. I told her that I wished all Christians were as faithful; and that I hoped she would never cease to warn her own sex against that which had so nearly ruined her own soul.

In the spring of 1829, when the Delaware was high, the lumbermen came down with their rafts from the region of the high land, where they had been getting the timber out, during winter. At that time there was a large tract of country along the northern region of Pennsylvania, called the lumber region, that extended toward the head waters of the river. Many were engaged in getting out lumber summer and winter. Much of this was floated down in the spring, when the water was high, to Philadelphia. They would get out their lumber when the river was low; and when the snow went off, and spring rains came on, they would float it down to where they could build rafts, or otherwise embark it for the Philadelphia market.

Many of the lumbermen were raising families, and there was a large tract unsettled and unoccupied, except by these men. They had no schools, and no churches or religious privileges. I knew a minister who was born in that lumber region; and when he was twenty years old, he had never attended a religious meeting, and did not know his alphabet.

These men attended our meetings, and quite a number of them were hopefully converted. They went back into the wilderness, and began to pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and to tell the people around them what they had seen in Philadelphia, and to exhort them to attend to salvation. Their efforts were blessed, the revival began to take hold, and to spread. It went on in a remarkable manner. It spread to such an extent that in many cases persons would be convicted and converted, who had not attended any meetings, and who were almost as ignorant as heathen. Men who were getting out lumber, and were living in little shanties alone, or where two or three or more were together, would be seized with such conviction that it would lead them to wander off and inquire what they should do and they would be converted. There was the greatest simplicity manifested by the converts.

An aged minister who had been acquainted with the state of things, related the following fact. One man had a shanty by himself. He began to feel that he was a sinner,

convictions increased until he broke down, confessed his sins, repented, and the Spirit of God revealed to him so much of the way of salvation, that he evidently knew the Saviour. But he had never attended a prayer-meeting, or heard a prayer, that he recollected, in his life. His feelings became such, that he finally felt constrained to go and tell his acquaintances how he felt; but he found that they felt, a good many of them, just as he did; and that they were holding prayer-meetings. He heard them pray, and finally prayed himself; and this was the form of his prayer: "Lord, you have got me down and I hope you will keep me down. And since you have had so good luck with me, I hope you will try other sinners."

This work began in the spring of 1829. In the spring of 1831 I was at Auburn again. Two or three men from this lumber region came to see me, and to inquire how they could get some ministers to go there. They said that not less than five thousand people had been converted in that region; that the revival had extended for eighty miles, and there was not a single minister of the Gospel there.

I have never been in that region, but from all I have ever heard, I have regarded that as one of the most remarkable revivals that have occurred. It was carried on almost independently of the ministry, among a class of people very ignorant; and yet so clear and wonderful were the teachings of God, that I have always understood the revival was remarkably free from fanaticism, or wildness, or anything objectionable. I may have been misinformed in some respects, but report the matter as I have understood it. "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth! "The spark that was struck into the hearts of those few lumbermen that came to Philadelphia, spread over that forest, and resulted in the salvation of a multitude.

I found Mr. Patterson to be one of the truest and holiest men that I had ever laboured with. He preached with great earnestness; but there was often no connection, and very little relation to his text. He has often said to me, "When I preach, I preach from Genesis to Revelation." He would take a text, and after making a few remarks upon it, or perhaps none at all, some other text would be suggested to him, upon which he would make some very pertinent and striking remarks, and then another text; and thus his sermons were made up of pithy and striking remarks upon a great number of texts, as they arose in his mind.

He was tall, of striking figure and powerful voice. He would preach with tears rolling down his cheeks, and with an earnestness and pathos that were striking. It was impossible to hear him without being impressed with a sense of his earnestness and honesty. I only heard him occasionally; and when I first did so, was pained, thinking that it could not take effect. However, I found that notwithstanding the rambling, his earnestness and unction fastened the truth on the hearts of hearers; and I think I never heard him without finding that some were convicted.

He used to have a revival every winter; when I laboured with him, he told me he had had a revival for fourteen winters in succession. He had a praying people. For two or three days, at one time, there seemed to be something in the way. The work seemed to be suspended; and I began to feel alarmed lest something had grieved the Holy Spirit. One evening, at prayer-meeting, one of his elders said "Brethren, the Spirit of God has been grieved, and I have grieved Him. I have been in the habit of praying for brother

Patterson, and for the preaching, on Saturday night, until midnight. This has been my habit for years, to spend Saturday night, till midnight, in imploring the blessing of God upon the labours of the Sabbath. Last Saturday night I was fatigued, and omitted it. I thought the work was going on so pleasantly and so powerfully, that I might indulge myself, and go to bed without looking to God for a blessing. On the Sabbath I was impressed with the conviction that I had grieved the Spirit. I have felt convicted ever since and have felt that it was my duty to make this confession.”

I have spoken of Mr. Patterson’s orthodoxy. When I first began to labour with him, I felt tried with what he would say to convicted sinners. The first meeting for inquirers that we had, the number in attendance was very large. We spent some time in conversing with different persons, and moving around from place to place, giving instructions. Mr. Patterson arose, and in a very excited manner, said, “My friends, you have turned your faces Zion-ward, and now I exhort you to press forward.” He went on in an exhortation of a few moments, in which he made the impression that they were in the right way; and that they had only to press forward and they would be saved. His remarks seemed to tend to self-righteousness, that they were doing well, and that if they continued to do as they were doing, they would be saved.

This was not my view of their condition, and I felt perplexed with the question how I should counteract it. However, at the close of the meeting, I remarked that they must not misunderstand what he had said; that it was true of those that had really turned to God; but they must not think of applying this to those of them who were convicted, but had not yet repented, believed, and given their hearts to God; that instead of their faces being turned Zion-ward, they were really turning their backs upon Christ; that they were still resisting the Holy Spirit; that they were still in the way to hell that every moment they resisted they were waxing worse; and that every moment they remained impenitent, without submission, repentance, and faith, they were increasing their condemnation. Mr. Patterson listened with attention. He looked at me, and saw the discriminations that I made.

I kept on until I felt that the impression made had not only been corrected, but that a great pressure was bearing upon them to submit immediately. I then called upon them to kneel down, and then and there commit themselves to the Lord, renouncing their sins, and giving themselves up to the disposal of sovereign goodness, with faith in Christ. I explained the nature of the atonement, and the salvation presented in the Gospel. I then prayed, and have reason to believe that a great number were converted.

After this I never heard anything from Mr. Patterson that was objectionable, in giving instruction to inquiring sinners. I found him remarkably teachable, and his mind open to just discriminations. He seemed particularly quick to get hold of truths that needed to be presented to inquiring sinners; and I presume he never again presented such a view of the subject as the one to which I have alluded. I respect and reverence his very name. He was a lovely Christian, and a faithful minister.

CHAPTER 19

REVIVAL AT READING

As I found myself in Philadelphia, in the heart of the Presbyterian Church, and where Princeton views were almost universally embraced, the greatest difficulty I met with in promoting revivals was the false instruction given to the people, and especially to inquiring sinners. In all my ministerial life, in every place, I have found this difficulty; and I am satisfied that multitudes are living in sin, who would immediately be converted if they were truly instructed. The foundation of the error is the dogma that human nature is sinful in itself; and that, therefore, sinners are unable to become Christians.

It has been the practice, when ministers were preaching repentance, and urging people to repent, to save their orthodoxy by telling them that they could not repent, any more than they could make a world. But the sinner must be set to do something; and with all their orthodoxy, they could not bear to tell him that he had nothing to do. They must, therefore, set him self-righteously to pray for a new heart. They would sometimes tell him to press forward in duty, read his Bible, use the means of grace; in short, they would tell him to do anything and everything but the very thing which God commands him to do. God commands him to repent now, to believe, to make him a new heart now. But they were afraid to urge God's claims, because they were continually telling the sinner that he had no ability to do these things.

I will refer to a sermon that I heard from the Rev. Baptist Noel, in England, a good man, and orthodox. His text was "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." First, he represented repentance, not as a voluntary, but as an involuntary change, as consisting in sorrow for sin, a mere state of the sensibility. He then insisted upon its being the sinner's duty to repent, and urged the claims of God. But he was preaching to an orthodox congregation; and did not fail to remind them that they could not repent; that although God required it of them, still He knew that it was impossible for them to repent, only as He gave repentance. "You ask, then," he said, "what you shall do. Go home and pray for repentance; and if it does not come, pray again for repentance; and still if it does not come, keep praying till it does come." Here he left them. The congregation was large and attentive; and I actually found it difficult to keep from screaming to the people to repent, and not to think that they were doing their duty in merely praying for repentance.

Such instructions always pained me; and much of my labour had consisted in correcting these views, and in pressing the sinner immediately to do just what God commands. When he has inquired if the Spirit of God has nothing to do, I have said, "Yes; as a matter of fact you will not do it of yourself. But the Spirit of God is now striving with you to lead you to do what He would have you do. He is striving to lead you to repentance; and is striving with you, not to secure the performance of mere outward acts, but to change your heart." The Church, to a very great extent, has instructed sinners to begin by an outward performance of duty, to secure an inward change.

Almost innumerable instances have occurred, in which I have found the results of this teaching to be a misapprehension of duty; and I have found thousands who are living under this delusion, and would never think themselves called upon to do anything more than merely to pray for a new heart, live a moral life, read their Bibles, attend meeting, use the means of grace, and leave all the responsibility of conversion and salvation with God.

From Philadelphia, in the winter of 1829-30, I went to Reading, a city about forty miles west. An incident occurred, which I shall mention in its place, that was a striking illustration of the kind of teaching to which I have alluded, and of its natural results, In Reading there were several German and one Presbyterian Church. The pastor of the latter was the Rev. Dr. Greer. At his request, and that of the elders, I went out there for a time.

I soon found that neither Dr. Greer nor any of his people had any just idea of what they needed, or what a revival was. Revival efforts, for that winter, had been forestalled, by an arrangement to have a ball every alternate week, which was attended by many of the members of the church, one of the leading elders being one of the managers. They had no preaching during the week, and I believe no religious meetings.

I thought it was my duty to tell Dr. Greer that those balls would very soon be given up, or I should not be allowed to occupy his pulpit; that balls attended by church members, and headed by one of his elders, would not consist with my preaching. He said, "Go on; take your own course." I preached three times on the Sabbath, and four times during the week, for three weeks, before I said anything about any other meetings.

On the third Sabbath, I gave notice that a meeting for inquiry would be held in the lecture-room, on Monday evening. I stated the object, and mentioned the class of persons that I desired to attend; inviting those only that were seriously impressed, and had made up their minds to receive instruction on the question of what they should do to be saved. Mr. Greer made no objection; but I do not think he had an idea that many would attend such a meeting; as to do so would be to make an acknowledgment that they were anxious for salvation.

Monday was a snowy day. I observed that conviction was taking hold of the congregation; yet I felt doubtful how many would attend a meeting of inquirers. When evening came, Dr. Greer came in, and behold! the lecture-room, nearly as large as the body of the church above, was full; and on looking around, Dr. Greer observed that most of the impenitent persons in his congregation were present; and among them, those who were regarded as the most respectable and influential.

He said nothing publicly. But he said to me, "I know nothing about such a meeting as this; take it into your own hands, and manage it in your own way." I opened by a short address, in which I explained what I wished; that is, to have conversation with each, and to have them state frankly what their convictions, determinations, and difficulties were.

I told them that if they were sick and called a physician, he would wish to know their symptoms. I said, "I can not adapt instruction to your present state, unless you reveal

it. The thing, therefore, that I want, is that you reveal your exact state at the present time. I will now pass round among you, and give each an opportunity to say, in the fewest words, what your state is." Dr. Greer said not a word, but followed. He kept near me, for I spoke to each so as not to be heard by others. I found a great deal of conviction and feeling. Conviction had taken hold of all classes, the high, the low, the rich, and the poor.

Dr. Greer was moved. Though he said nothing, still it was evident that his interest was intense. To see his congregation in such a state, was what he had never had any conception of. I saw that with difficulty he controlled his emotions.

When I had spent as much time as was allowed in conversation, I went back to the desk, and gave an address, in which I summed up the results of what was interesting in the communications made. Avoiding personalities, I took up representative cases, dissected, corrected, and taught them. I tried to strip away mis-apprehensions, to correct the impression that they must simply use means and wait for God to convert them and I set before them the whole situation. After praying, I called on those that felt prepared to submit, and who were willing then and there to pledge themselves to live to God, to kneel down, and while I prayed, to commit themselves to Christ, and inwardly to do what I exhorted them. I called on those only to kneel, who were willing to do what God required, and what I presented before them.

As soon as I saw that they thoroughly understood, I called on them to kneel, and knelt myself. Dr. Greer knelt by my side. I presented the case in prayer, and held to the point of now submitting, believing, and consecrating themselves to God. There was an awful solemnity pervading the congregation, and the stillness of death, with the exception of my own voice, the sobs, sighs, and weeping.

After spreading the case before God, I pronounced the blessing and dismissed them. Dr. Greer took me cordially by the hand, and smiling said, "I will see you in the morning." At about eleven o'clock a messenger came to my lodgings, and said that Dr. Greer was dead. I inquired what it meant. He said he had retired, was taken with a fit of apoplexy, and died. He was greatly respected and beloved by his people, and deserved to be. He was a man of thorough education and earnest piety.

Although I found a goodly number had, to all human appearance, submitted at the meeting still the death of Dr. Greer, under such extraordinary circumstances, proved a great diversion for a week or more; but after his funeral was over, and the usual evening services got into their proper channel, the work took on a powerful type, and went forward in a most encouraging manner.

Many very interesting incidents occurred. On one very snowy night, when the snow was drifting under a fierce gale, I was called up about midnight, to visit a man who was under such awful conviction that he could not live, unless something could be done. He was a stalwart man, very muscular, of great force of will and strength of nerve, physically a fine specimen of humanity. His wife was a professor of religion; but he had "cared for none of these things."

He had been at the meeting, and the sermon had torn him to pieces. He went home in a

terrible state, his convictions and distress increasing till it overcame bodily strength; and his family feared he would die. I heard his moanings, or rather howlings, before I got near. I found him sitting on the floor, his wife supporting his head-and a look in his face which was indescribable. Accustomed as I was to seeing persons under convictions, his appearance gave me a shock. He was writhing in agony, grinding his teeth, and literally gnawing his tongue for pain. He cried out, "Oh, Mr. Finney! I am lost! I am a lost soul!" "I was greatly shocked, and exclaimed, "If this is conviction, what is hell?"

However, I recovered myself, and sat down. At first he found it difficult to attend; but I soon led his thoughts to the way of salvation through Christ. His burden was soon removed. He was persuaded to trust, and he came out free and joyful in hope.

From day to day, I had my hands, my head, and my heart entirely full. There was no pastor to help me, and the work spread. The elder of the church, to whom I have alluded as being one of the managers of their balls, broke down before the Lord, and entered into the work; and his family were soon converted.

Very early one morning a lawyer, belonging to one of the most respectable families in the town, called, in the greatest agitation. I saw he was a man of first-rate intelligence, and a gentleman; but I had nowhere seen him, to know him. He introduced himself, and said he was a lost sinner-that he had made up his mind that there was no hope for him. He then informed me that when he was in Princeton College, he and two of his classmates became very anxious about their souls. They went together to Dr. Ashbel Green, who was then president, and asked what they should do to be saved. The doctor told them he was very glad to have them come and make the inquiry; and then told them to keep out of all bad company, to read their Bible stately, and to pray God to give them a new heart. "Continue this," he said, "and press forward in duty, and the Spirit of God will convert you; or else He will leave you, and you will return back to your sins." "Well," I inquired, how did it terminate?" "Oh," said he, "we did just as he told us to do. We kept out of bad company, and prayed that God would make us a new heart; but after a little while, convictions wore away, and we did not care to pray any longer. We lost interest in the subject," and then, bursting into tears, he said, "My two companions are in drunkards' graves, and if I can not repent I shall soon be in one myself."

I tried to instruct him, and to show the error that he had fallen into, and that he had resisted and grieved the Spirit. I tried to show that God required him to repent, but God could not repent for him; required him to believe, but God could not believe for him; God required him to submit, but could not submit for him. I then tried to make him understand the agency that the Spirit of God has in giving the sinner repentance and a new heart; that it is a Divine persuasion; that the Spirit leads him to see his sins, urges him to give them up, and to flee from the wrath to come. He presents to him the Saviour, the atonement, the plan of salvation, and urges him to accept it.

I asked if he did not feel this urgency upon himself, in these truths revealed in his mind; and a call now to submit, to believe, to make himself a new heart. "Oh, yes I" he said, "I see and feel all this; but am I not given up of God? Is not my day of grace past?" I said, "No! It is plain the spirit of God is still calling, still urging you to repentance; you

acknowledge that you feel this in your mind.” He inquired, “Is this, then, what the Spirit of God is doing, to show me all this? “I assured him that it was; and that he was to understand this as a Divine call, and as evidence conclusive that he was not abandoned, and had not sinned away the day of grace, but that God was striving to save him still. I then asked if he would respond to the call.

When I saw that the way was fully prepared, I called on him to kneel and submit; and he did so, and, to all human appearance, became a thorough convert. “Oh!” he afterwards said, “if Dr. Green had only told us this that you have told me, we should all have been converted immediately. But my friends and companions are lost; and what a wonder of mercy it is that I am saved!”

There was a merchant in Reading, one branch of whose business was the making of whisky; he had just been fitting up a very large distillery. He had constructed it with all the latest improvements, on a large scale; but as soon as he was converted, he gave up all thought of going any further with that business. He said, “I shall have nothing to do with that; I shall tear my distillery down; I will neither work it nor sell it.”

His wife was a good woman, and a sister to Mr. B., whose conversion I have mentioned as occurring on that stormy night. The merchant’s name was O’B. The revival took a powerful hold in his family, and several were converted. I do not recollect now how many there were; but I think every impenitent person in his household was converted. His brother also, and his brother’s wife, and quite a large circle of relatives were among the converts. Mr. O’B. himself was in feeble health, and was rapidly passing away. I visited him frequently, and found him full of joy.

We had been examining candidates for admission to the church, and a large number were to be admitted. Among them were those members of his family and those relatives that had been converted. Sabbath morning came. It was soon found Mr. O’B could not live through the day. He called his wife and said, “My, dear, I am going to spend the Sabbath in heaven; let all the family go, and all the friends, and unite with the church below; and I will join the church above.” Before meeting time he was dead. Friends were called in to lay him in his shroud; his family and relatives gathered around, and then turned away and came to meeting; and, as he had desired, united with the Church Militant, while he went to unite with the Church Triumphant.

Their pastor had but just gone before; and I had said to Mr. O’B, “Give my love to brother Greer, when you get to heaven.” He smiled and said, “Do you think I shall know him?” I said, “Yes, undoubtedly you will. Give him my love, and tell him the work is going on gloriously.” “I will, I will,” said he. His wife and family sat at the Communion table, showing in their countenances mingled joy and sorrow.

There was much that was moving and interesting in that revival. It was among a population that had had no conception of revivals. The German population supposed themselves to have been made Christians by baptism, and by receiving the Communion. Nearly every one, if asked when they became Christians, would reply that they took their Communion of Dr. M., or some other divine. When I asked if they thought that was religion, they would say, Yes, they supposed it was.

The revival had to encounter that view of things; and the influence was, at first, almost altogether in that direction. It was held, that for them to think of being religious by being converted, and to establish family prayer, or to give themselves to prayer, was not only fanaticism, but was virtually saying that their ancestors had all gone to hell; for they had done no such thing. The German would preach against those ministers things, and speak severely of those that forsook the ways of their fathers, and thought it necessary to be converted, and to maintain family and secret prayer.

The great majority of Dr. Greer's congregation were converted in this revival. At first I had considerable difficulty in getting rid of the influence of the press. The people were a good deal under the influence of the daily press; I mean the German population particularly. Editors began to give people religious advice, and to speak against the revival. This threw the people into a state of perplexity. It went on from day to day and from week to week, till finally the state of things became such that I thought it my duty to notice it. I took for my text: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." I went on to show in what way sinners would fulfil the desires of the devil, pointing out many ways in which they would perform his dirty work, and do for him what he could not do for himself

After I had got the subject before the people, I applied it to the course pursued by the editors. I asked people if they did not think that those editors were fulfilling the desires of the devil; if they did not believe the devil desired them to do just what they did? I asked if it was suitable and decent for men of their character to attempt to give religious instruction to people? I said, "If I had a family in the place, I would not have such a paper in the house; I should fear to have it under my roof; I should consider it too filthy to be touched, and would take the tongs and throw it into the street." In some way the papers got into the street the next morning, pretty plentifully, and I neither saw nor heard any more of their opposition. I continued in Reading until late in the spring. There were many very striking conversions; and Dr. Greer's congregation was left united, encouraged, and strengthened, with large additions made to their number.

From Reading I went to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, at that time, and until his death, the home of the late President Buchanan. The Presbyterian Church at Lancaster had no pastor, and I found religion in a low state. They had never had a revival, and manifestly had no just conception of what it was, or of the means of securing it. I remained at Lancaster a short time. However, the work of God was revived, the Spirit of God being poured out almost at once upon the people. I was the guest of an aged gentleman, one of the elders, and the leading man in the church.

A fact occurred in relation to him, that revealed the real state of things in that church. A former pastor had invited Mr. K- to join and hold the office of elder. One Sabbath evening, after hearing a couple of very searching sermons, the old gentleman could not sleep. He was so greatly exercised that he could not endure it until morning. He called me up in the middle of the night, stated what his convictions were, and then said that he knew he had never been converted. He said that when he was requested to join the church and become an elder, he knew that he was not converted; but the subject was pressed upon him till he finally consulted an aged minister not far from Lancaster. He stated that he had never been converted, and yet that he was desired to join the church

that he might become an elder. Dr. C. in view of all the circumstances, advised him to join and accept the office, which he did.

His convictions at the time were very deep. I gave him such instructions as I thought he needed, pressed him to accept the Saviour; and dealt with him just as I would with any other inquiring sinner. He professed at the time to submit and accept the Saviour.

One evening I preached on a subject that led me to insist upon the immediate acceptance of Christ. The house was crowded. I made a strong appeal. I called on those whose minds were made up, and who would then accept the Saviour, to rise, that we might make them subjects of prayer. There were two men sitting near, one of whom was much affected under the appeal, and could not avoid manifesting very strong emotion, which was observed by his neighbour. However, the man did not rise, nor give his heart to God. I had pressed the thought upon them, that that might be the last opportunity that some of them would ever have, to meet and decide; that in so large a congregation it was not unlikely that there were those there who would then decide their everlasting destiny, one way or the other. It was not unlikely that God would hold some of them to the decision that they then made.

After the meeting these two men went out together, and one said, "I saw you feel very deeply under the appeals Mr. Finney made." "I did, I never felt so before in my life; and especially when he reminded us that that might be the last time we should ever have an opportunity to accept the offer of mercy." They went on conversing in this way for some distance, and then separated, each going to his own home. It was a dark night, and the one who had felt so deeply, and was so pressed with the conviction that he might then be rejecting his last offer, fell over the curb-stone, and broke his neck.

I established prayer-meetings in Lancaster, and insisted upon the elders taking part. This they did, although they had never been accustomed to do it. The interest seemed to increase, and hopeful conversions multiplied.

CHAPTER 20

REVIVALS IN COLUMBIA AND NEW YORK CITY

From Lancaster, about midsummer, 1830, I returned to Oneida county, New York, and spent a time at my father-in-law's. During my stay in Whitestown, a messenger came from Columbia, in Herkimer county, requesting me to go and assist in a work of grace which was already commenced. I went to see, and to lend such aid as I was able.

At Columbia was a large German church, the membership of which had been received upon examination of their doctrinal knowledge, instead of their Christian experience. Their pastor was a young man of the name of H-, of German descent, and from Pennsylvania.

He said he studied theology with a German doctor of divinity, at the place where he lived, who did not encourage experimental religion; and that one of his fellow-students was religiously inclined, and used to pray. Their teacher suspected this, and in some way came to a knowledge of the fact. He warned the young man against it, as a very dangerous practice, and said he would become insane if he persisted. Mr. H- said that he himself had no religion. He had joined the church in the common way, and had no thought that anything else was requisite to become a minister. But his mother was a pious woman; she knew better, and was greatly distressed that a son should enter the ministry, who had never been converted. When he received a call to the church in Columbia, and was about to leave home, his mother had serious talk with him, impressed upon him his responsibility, and said things that bore powerfully upon his conscience. He said that this conversation of his mother he could not get rid of; that it bore upon his mind heavily, and his convictions of sin deepened until he was nearly in despair.

This continued for many months. He had no one to consult and did not open his mind to anybody; but after a severe and protracted struggle he was converted, came into the light, saw where he was, where he had been, saw the condition of his church, and of all those churches which had admitted their members in the way in which he had been admitted. His wife was unconverted. He immediately gave himself to labour for her conversion, and, under God, he soon secured it. His soul was full of the subject; he read his Bible, prayed, and preached with all his might. He was a young convert, and had had no instruction such as he needed, and he felt at a loss what to do. He rode about and conversed with the elders and principal members, and satisfied himself that one or two knew what it was to be converted.

After much prayer and consideration, he made up his mind what to do. On the Sabbath he gave them notice that there would be a meeting of the church, during the week, for the transaction of business, and wished all the church to be present. His own conversion, preaching, visiting, and conversing, had already created a good deal of excitement, so that religion came to be the common topic of conversation; and his call for a church-meeting was responded to on the day appointed.

He addressed them in regard to the real state of the church, and the error they had fallen into in regard to the conditions on which members had been received. He

proposed to disband the church and form a new one, insisting that this was essential to the prosperity of religion. He had an understanding with those members that were converted, that they should lead in voting for the disbanding. The motion was put; whereupon the converted members arose as requested. They were very influential, and the people looking around and seeing those on their feet, rose, and finally kept rising till the vote was nearly or quite unanimous. The pastor then said, "There is now no church in Columbia; and we propose to form one of people who have been converted."

He then related his own experience, and his wife did the same. Then the converted members and elders followed. He then said, "Your church relations are dissolved. You are out in the world; and until you are converted, and in the church, you can not have your children baptised, and you can not partake of the ordinances," This created a panic; for, according to their views, it was an awful thing not to partake of the Sacrament, and not to have children baptised; for this was the way in which they themselves had been made Christians.

Mr. H. then laboured with all his might; he visited, preached, prayed, held meetings, and the interest increased. Thus the work had been going on for some time, when he sent the messenger for me. A warm-hearted young convert, he listened to my preaching with almost irrepressible joy. I found the congregation large and interested; and the work was in a very prosperous state. That revival continued until it reached nearly all the inhabitants. Galesburg, in Illinois, was settled by a colony from Columbia, who were nearly all converts of the revival. The founder of the colony and of Knox College, located there, was Mr. Gale, my former pastor at Adams.

Mr. H., I found evangelical, and his heart warm he was surrounded by a congregation thoroughly interested in religion. They would hang on my lips with an interest, attention, and patience, in the highest degree interesting and affecting. Mr. H. was like a little child - teachable, humble, and earnest. That work continued for over a year, spreading throughout that large and interesting population of farmers.

After I returned to Whitestown, I was invited to visit New York. Anson G. Phelps, since well known as a great contributor, by will, to benevolent institutions, hearing that I had not been invited to that city, hired a vacant church in Vandewater Street, and sent me a request to preach. I did so, and we had a powerful revival. I found Mr. Phelps very much engaged in the work, and not hesitating at any expense that was necessary to promote it. The church hired, could be had only for three months. Accordingly Mr. Phelps purchased a church in Prince Street, near Broadway, built by the Universalists, and sold to Mr. Phelps, who paid for it himself. We there formed a church, mostly of persons that had been converted in Vandewater Street. I continued my labours until quite the latter part of the summer.

I was very much struck with the piety of Mr. Phelps. While we continued at Vandewater Street, myself and wife, with our only child, were guests in his family. I had observed that, while Mr. Phelps was a man literally loaded with business, somehow he preserved a highly spiritual frame; and that he would come directly from business to our prayer-meetings, and enter into them with such spirit as to show clearly that his mind was not absorbed to the exclusion of spiritual things. As I watched him from day to day, I became more and more interested in his life. One night I had

occasion to go down stairs about twelve or one o'clock. I supposed the family were all asleep, but I found Mr. Phelps sitting by his fire, in his night-dress, and saw that I had broken in upon his secret devotions. I apologised by saying that I supposed he was in bed. He replied, "Brother Finney, I have a great deal of business pressing me during the day, and have but little time for secret devotion; and my custom is, after having a nap at night, to arise and have a season of communion with God." After his death it was found that he had kept a journal during these hours in the night, comprising several manuscript volumes. This revealed the secret workings of his mind, and the real progress of his interior life.

There was one case of conversion. A young woman visited me under great conviction of sin. I found that she had many things upon her conscience. She had been in the habit of pilfering from her very childhood. She was the daughter, and the only child of a widow; and she had been in the habit of taking, from her schoolmates and others, handkerchiefs, breastpins, pencils, and whatever she had an opportunity to steal. She made confession to me, and asked what she should do. I told her she must return them, and make confession to those from whom she had taken them.

This greatly tried her: yet her convictions were so deep that she began the work of making confession and restitution; but as she went forward with it, she continued to recall more and more instances, and kept visiting me frequently, and confessing thefts of almost every kind of articles that a young woman could use. I asked her if her mother knew that she had these things. She said, yes; but that she had always told her mother that they were given. She said to me, "Mr. Finney, I suppose I have stolen a million of times. I find I have many things that I know I stole, but I can not recollect from whom." I refused altogether to compromise with her, and insisted on her making restitution in every case which she could, by any means, recall. From time to time she would come and report. I asked what the people said when she returned the articles. She replied, "Some of them say that I am crazy; some of them say that I am a fool; and some of them are very much affected." "Do they all forgive you?" I asked. "Oh, yes!" said she, "they all forgive me; but some of them think that I had better not do as I am doing."

She informed me that she had a shawl, stolen from a daughter of Bishop Hobart, of New York. I told her she must restore it. A few days after, she called and related the result; she folded up the shawl, went with it, and rung the bell at the Bishop's door; and handed the bundle, directed to the Bishop. She made no explanation, but turned immediately away, and ran round the corner into another street, lest some one should see which way she went, and find out who she was; but conscience smote her, and she said, "I have not done right. Somebody else may be suspected of having stolen the shawl, unless I make known who did it."

She went back, and inquired if she could see the Bishop. Being informed that she could, she was conducted to his study. She then confessed about the shawl, and all that had passed. "Well," said I, "and how did the Bishop receive you?" "Oh," said she, "When I told him, he wept, laid his hand on my head, and said he forgave me, and prayed God to forgive me." "And have you been at peace in your mind about that transaction since?" "Oh, yes I" said she. This process continued for weeks. This girl was going from place to place, restoring things stolen, and making confession.

Sometimes her convictions would be so awful, that it seemed as if she would be deranged.

One morning she sent for me to come to her mother's residence; and I found her with her hair hanging over her shoulders, and her clothes in disorder, walking the room in despair, and with a look that was frightful, because it indicated that she was well-nigh deranged. Said I, "My dear child, what is the matter?" She held in her hand, as she was walking, a little Testament. She turned to me and said, "Mr. Finney, I stole this Testament. I have stolen God's Word; and will God ever forgive me? I can not recollect which of the girls it was that I stole it from. I stole it from one of my schoolmates, and it was so long ago that I had really forgotten that I had stolen it. It occurred to me this morning; and it seems to me that God can never forgive me for stealing His Word." I assured her that there was no reason for despair. "But," said she, "what shall I do? I can not remember where I got it." I told her, "Keep it as a constant remembrance of your former sins, and use it for the good you may now get from it."

"Oh," said she, "if I could only remember where I got it, I would instantly restore it." "Well," said I, "if you can ever recollect where you got it, make an instant restitution, either by restoring that, or giving another as good." "I will," said she.

All this was affecting; but the state of mind that resulted was truly wonderful. A depth of humility, a deep knowledge of herself and her depravity, a brokenness of heart, and contrition of spirit, and finally a faith, joy, love, and peace, like a river, succeeded; she became one of the most delightful young Christians that I have known.

When I expected to leave New York, I thought that some one ought to watch over her. Up to this time, whatever had passed between us had been sacredly kept to myself; but as I was about to leave, I narrated the fact to Mr. Phelps, and the narration affected him greatly. He said, "Brother Finney, introduce me too. I will be her friend; I will watch over her for good." He did so, as I afterwards learned. I have not seen the young woman since I related the fact to Mr. Phelps. But when I returned from England the last time, in visiting one of Mr. Phelps's daughters, in the course of the conversation, this case was alluded to. I inquired, "Did your father introduce you to that young woman?" "Oh, yes I" she replied, "we all knew her; meaning, as I supposed, all the daughters of the family. "Well, what do you know of her?" "Oh, she is a very earnest Christian woman. She is married, and her husband is in business in this city. She is a member of the church." I inquired, "Has she always maintained a consistent Christian character?" "Oh, yes" was the reply; "she is an excellent, praying woman." In some way, I have been informed that the woman said that she never had had a temptation to pilfer, from the time of conversion; that she had never known what it was to have the desire.

This revival prepared the way in New York for the organisation of the Free Presbyterian Churches, composed afterward, largely, of the converts. Many had belonged to the church in Prince Street.

At this point, in order to render intelligible many things that I shall have to say, I must give a little account of circumstances connected with the conversion of Mr. Lewis Tappan, and his connection afterward with my own labours. This I received from

himself. He was a Unitarian, and lived in Boston. His brother Arthur, then a very extensive dry-goods merchant in New York, was orthodox, and an earnest Christian. The revivals through Central New York had created excitement among Unitarians; and their newspapers had a good deal to say against them. Especially were there strange stories, representing me as a half-crazed fanatic. These had been related to Lewis Tappan by Mr. W., a leading Unitarian minister of Boston, and he believed them. They were credited by many in New England, and throughout the State of New York.

While these stories were in circulation, Lewis Tappan visited his brother Arthur in New York, and they fell into conversation in regard to those revivals. Lewis called Arthur's attention to the strange fanaticism connected with what was said of myself. He asserted that I gave out that I was "the brigadier-general of Jesus Christ." This and like reports were in circulation, and Lewis insisted upon their truth. Arthur told Lewis that they were false. Lewis, relying upon the statements of Mr. W., proposed to bet five hundred dollars that he could prove these reports to be true. Arthur replied, "Lewis, you know that I do not bet; but I will tell you what I will do. If you can prove by credible testimony that that is true, and that the reports about Mr. Finney are true, I will give you five hundred dollars. I make this offer to lead you to investigate. I want you to know that these stories are false, and that the source whence they come is utterly unreliable." Lewis, not doubting that he could bring proof, wrote to Rev. Mr. P, at Trenton Falls, New York, to whom Mr. W. had referred him, and authorised him to expend five hundred dollars, if need be, in procuring sufficient testimony that the story was true-such testimony as would lead to the conviction of a person in a court of justice. Mr. P. undertook to procure the testimony; but, after great painstaking, was unable to furnish any, except what was contained in a Universalist newspaper, printed in Buffalo, in which it had been asserted that Mr. Finney claimed that he was a brigadier-general of Jesus Christ. Many persons heard, and believed, that I had said these things somewhere; but he could not learn that these things had been said anywhere.

This, in connection with other matters, led him to reflect seriously upon the nature of the opposition; and knowing what stress had been laid upon these stories by Unitarians, and the use they had made of them, his confidence was greatly shaken. His prejudices against revivals became softened; he was led to review the theological writings of the Orthodox and the Unitarians with seriousness; and the result was that he embraced orthodox views. The mother of the Tappans was a very godly, praying woman; she had never had any sympathy with Unitarianism.

Lewis Tappan became as firm and zealous in support of orthodox views and revivals, as he had been in opposition. About the time that I left New York, after my first labours there in Vandewater and Prince Streets, Mr. Tappan and some other good brethren became dissatisfied with the state of things in New York, and, after much prayer and consideration, concluded to organise a new congregation, and introduce new measures for the conversion of men. They obtained a place, and called the Rev. Joel Parker, then pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church in Rochester, to come to their aid. Mr. Parker began his labours about the time that I closed mine in Prince Street. The First Free Presbyterian Church was formed, and Mr. Parker became its pastor. They laboured especially among that class that had not been in the habit of attending meeting anywhere, and were very successful. They finally fitted up the upper

story of some warehouses in Dey Street, that would hold a good congregation, and there they continued.

CHAPTER 21

A REVIVAL IN AUBURN, BUFFALO, PROVIDENCE AND BOSTON

During the latter part of the time I was at Rochester I was overdone; and some leading physicians made up their minds that I never would preach any more. My labours had continued through six months; and near their close, Rev. Dr. Wisner, of Ithaca, came and spent some time, witnessing and helping forward the work. I was invited to many fields; and among others was urged by Dr. Nott, president of Union College, at Schenectady, to labour with him, and if possible secure the conversion of his students.

In company with Dr. Wisner and Josiah Bissell, I started in the spring of 1831. I left my wife and children at Rochester; as the travelling was too dangerous and too fatiguing for them. When we arrived at Geneva, Dr. Wisner insisted on my going home with him, to rest awhile. He pressed me hard; and finally told me that the physicians in Rochester had told him to take me home, for I was going to die; that I would never labour any more, for I had consumption. I replied that I had been told this before; but that the doctors did not understand my case; that I was only fatigued, and a little rest would bring me up.

Dr. Wisner finally gave up his importunity, and I passed on to Auburn. The going was so bad, that sometimes we could not get on more than two miles an hour. As I had many dear friends in Auburn, and was much fatigued, I made up my mind to stop and rest till the next stage. I stopped at the house of Mr. T. - a son of Chief Justice S. He was an earnest Christian, and a dear friend.

After sleeping quietly, I had risen, and was preparing to take the stage, which was to arrive early, when a gentleman came in with the request for me to remain, signed by that large number of influential men of whom I have spoken as resisting the revival in 1826. These, on the former occasion carried their opposition so far as to break from Dr. Lansing's congregation, and form a new one. In the meantime, Dr. Lansing had been called to another field; and Rev. Josiah Hopkins, of Vermont, was settled as pastor of the First Church. The paper contained an earnest appeal to me to stop and labour for their salvation. This was very striking. They alluded to the opposition formerly made, and besought me to overlook it, and stop and preach the Gospel.

This request did not come from the pastor, riot from his church, but from those who had formerly led in the opposition. But the pastor and his church pressed me to comply with the request. They appeared as much surprised as myself at the change. I went and spread the subject before God, and soon made up my mind what to do. I told the pastor and his elders that I was fatigued, and nearly worn out; but that upon certain conditions I would remain. I would preach twice upon the Sabbath, and two evenings during the week; but that they should take all the rest upon their own hands; that they must not expect me to attend other meetings than those at which I preached; that they must themselves instruct inquirers, and conduct prayer and other meetings. I knew that they understood that part of the work. I furthermore stipulated that neither they nor their people should visit me, except in extreme cases; for that I must have my days, Sundays excepted, that I might rest.

On the first or second Sabbath that I preached, I saw that the Word was taking such powerful hold, that at the close I called for those whose minds were made up, to come forward and give themselves to Christ. Much to my surprise, and to the surprise of the pastor and many members, the first I observed coming forward was the man that had exerted more influence than any other in opposition to the former revival. He came forward followed by a number of the persons who had signed that paper; and that evening there was such a demonstration as to produce general interest.

I have spoken of Mr. Clary as the praying man at Rochester. He had a brother, a physician, living in Auburn. I observed in the congregation the solemn face of this Mr. Clary; he looked as if he was borne down with an agony of prayer. Being well acquainted with him, and knowing the great gift of God that was upon him, I was glad to see him. He sat in the pew with his brother, the Doctor, who was also a professor of religion by experience.

At intermission, as soon as I came from the pulpit, Mr. Clary, with his brother, invited me to go home, spend the intermission, and get some refreshments.

At his house we gathered about the table, and Dr. Clary turned to his brother and said, "Brother Abel, will you ask a blessing?" Brother Abel bowed his head and began, audibly, to ask a blessing. He had uttered but a sentence or two when he broke instantly down, moved suddenly back from the table, and fled to his chamber. The Doctor supposed he had been taken suddenly ill, and rose and followed him. In a few moments he came down and said, "Mr. Finney, brother Abel wants to see you." Said I, "What ails him?" Said he, "I do not know; but he says you know. He appears in distress, I think it is the state of his mind." I understood in a moment, and went. He lay groaning upon the bed, the Spirit making intercession for him, and in him, with groanings that could not be uttered. I had barely entered the room, when he made out to say, "Pray, Brother Finney." I knelt down and helped in prayer, by leading his soul out for the conversion of sinners. I continued to pray until his distress passed, and then I returned to dinner.

I understood that this was the voice of God. I saw the Spirit of prayer was upon him, I felt His influence upon myself, and took it for granted that the work would move on powerfully. I believe that every one of those men that signed, making a long list, was converted. But a few years since, Dr. S., of Auburn, wrote to me to know if I had preserved that paper, wishing, as he said, to ascertain whether every one of the men that signed was not converted. The paper has been mislaid; and although it may some time be found, yet I could not answer his inquiry.

I stayed at Auburn six Sabbaths, leaving the rest of the labour for the pastor and members of the church. There was little or no opposition. Ministers and Christians took hold of the work, and everybody that had a mind to work found enough to do, and good success.

The pastor found that in the six weeks five hundred souls had been converted. This revival seemed to be only a wave of Divine power, reaching Auburn from the centre at Rochester, whence such a mighty influence had gone out over the length and breadth of the land.

Near the close, a messenger arrived from Buffalo, with an earnest request that I should visit that city. The revival in Rochester had prepared the way in Auburn, and had also prepared the way in Buffalo. The messenger informed me, the work had begun, a few had been hopefully converted; but they felt that other means needed to be used, and they urged me so hard, that I turned back through Rochester to Buffalo. I spent about one month at Buffalo; during which time a large number of persons were hopefully converted.

The work, as at Auburn and Rochester, took effect very generally among the more influential classes. Dr. Lord, then a lawyer, was converted at that time; also Mr. H, the father of Dr. H. He was most wealthy and influential, and a man of good morals, fair character, and high standing as a citizen, but impenitent. His wife was a Christian, and had long been praying for him; but when I began to preach, and insisted that the sinner's "can not" is his "will not," that the difficulty to be overcome was voluntary wickedness, Mr. H rebelled very decidedly against such teaching. He insisted that it was false in his case; for he was conscious of being willing to be a Christian, and that he had long been willing.

As his wife informed me of the position he occupied, I did not spare him; but hunted him from his refuges, and answered all objections, and met all excuses. He became excited. A man of strong will, he declared that he did not, and would not, believe such teaching. He said so much in opposition as to draw around him some with whom he had no sympathy, except in their opposition; but I did not hesitate to press him in every sermon with his unwillingness to become a Christian.

After his conversion, he told me that he was shocked and ashamed, when he found that some scoffers had taken refuge behind him. One evening, he said, he sat directly across the aisle from a most notorious scoffer. Repeatedly, while I was preaching, this man, with whom he had no sympathy at all on other subjects, would look toward him and smile, and give indications of fellowship with Mr. H's opposition. He said that, on discovering this, his heart rose with indignation; and he said: "I am not going to be in sympathy with that class; I will have nothing to do with them."

However, that very night, I pressed the consciences of sinners so hard, and made so strong an appeal to them to come to Christ, that he could not contain himself. As soon as the meeting was out, he began to resist, and to speak against what had been said. The aisles were full, and people were crowding on every side.

That night he could not sleep. His mind was so exercised that he rose as soon as there was any light, and went off to a place where he had some waterworks which he called the Hydraulics. There, in the grove he knelt down to pray. He said he had felt, during the night, as if he must get away by himself, so that he could speak aloud and let out his voice and heart, as he was pressed beyond endurance with the sense of sin, and with the necessity of immediately making peace with God. To his mortification, when he knelt down he found that his heart would not pray. He had no words; he had no desires that he could express in words. It appeared that his heart was as hard as marble, and that he had not the least feeling.

In this state it occurred that he could say the Lord's prayer. So he began, "Our Father,

which art in heaven.” He said, as soon as he uttered the words, he was convicted of his hypocrisy in calling God his Father. When he added, “Hallowed be Thy name,” it almost shocked him. He saw he was not sincere, that the words did not express the state of his mind. Then he uttered, “Thy kingdom come.” Upon this he almost choked. He saw that he did not want the kingdom of God to come; that it was hypocritical in him to say so, and that he could not say it, as really expressing the sincere desire of his heart. And then came, “Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.” Here he was brought face to face with the will of God. He had been told from day to day that he was opposed to this will; that he was not willing to accept it; that it was his voluntary opposition to God, to His law, and His will, that was the only obstacle in the way of his conversion. This consideration he had resisted and fought with desperation. But here, on his knees, he was brought face to face with that question; and he saw with perfect clearness that what he had been told was true: that he was not willing that God’s will should be done; and that he did not do it himself, because he would not.

Here the question of his rebellion was brought so strongly before him, that he saw it would cost a mighty struggle to give up voluntary opposition to God. And then he gathered up all the strength of his will and cried aloud, “Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven.” He said he was perfectly conscious ‘that his will went with his words; that he made a full surrender, and accepted Christ just as He was offered in the Gospel. He gave up his sins, and embraced the will of God as his universal rule of life. The language of his heart was “Lord, do with me as seemeth Thee good. Let Thy will be done with me, and with all creatures on earth, as it is done in heaven.” He said he prayed freely, as soon as his will surrendered; and his heart poured itself out like a flood. His rebellion passed away, his feelings subsided into a calm, and a sweet peace seemed to fill his soul.

He rose and went to his house, and told his anxious wife, who had been praying for him, what the Lord had done for his soul; and confessed that he had been all wrong in his opposition, and entirely deceived as it respected his willingness to be a Christian. From that time he became an earnest labourer for the promotion of the work of God.

Early in the autumn of 1831, I accepted an invitation to hold what was then called “a protracted meeting,” or a series of meetings, in Providence. I laboured mostly in the church of which Dr. Wilson was pastor I remained about three weeks, holding meetings every evening, and preaching three times on the Sabbath. The Lord poured out His Spirit upon the people, and the work of grace commenced and went forward.

I had observed in the congregation, on the Sabbath, a young woman of great beauty, sitting in a pew with her brother. She had a very intellectual and earnest look, and seemed to listen to every word I said, with attention and seriousness.

I was the guest of Mr. Josiah Chapin; and in going from the church I observed this young brother and sister going up the same street. I pointed them out to Mr. Chapin, and asked who they were. He informed me that they were Mr. and Miss A., brother and sister, and remarked that she was considered the most beautiful girl in Providence. I asked if she was a professor; and he said, no. I told him I thought her very seriously impressed, and asked him if he did not think it would be well for me to call and see her. He spoke discouragingly, and thought that possibly I might not be cordially received.

He thought that she was a girl so much caressed and flattered, and that her surroundings were such, that she probably entertained but little serious thought in regard to salvation. But he was mistaken; and I was right in supposing that the Spirit of the Lord was striving with her.

A few days after, she called to see me. I knew her at once; she was very thoroughly awakened; but her real convictions of sin were not ripened into that state which I thought was necessary, before she could be really brought intelligently to accept the righteousness of Christ. I therefore spent an hour or two, trying to show her the depravity of her heart. She recoiled from my searching questions; but convictions seemed to ripen and she became more serious.

When I had said what I thought was necessary, she got up with a manifest feeling of dissatisfaction, and left. I was confident the Spirit of God had so thoroughly taken hold of her, that what I had said would not be shaken off.

Two or three days afterwards she called again. I could see that she was greatly bowed down in spirit. She sat down, and with candour said, "Mr. Finney, I thought when I was here before, that your questions and treatment of me were pretty severe. But I see now that I am all you represented me to be. Indeed, had it not been for my pride and regard for my reputation, I should have been as wicked a girl as there is in Providence. I can see clearly that my life has been restrained by pride, and not from regard to God. I see that God has made use of my pride and ambition, to restrain me from disgraceful iniquities. I have been petted and flattered, and have stood upon my dignity; and have maintained my reputation, from purely selfish motives." She went on and showed that her convictions were thorough and permanent. She did not appear to be excited, in anything she said. She had a fervent nature, a strong will, an uncommonly well-balanced and cultivated intellect.

After conversing with her, and giving thorough instruction, we bowed before the Lord in prayer; and she gave herself unreservedly to Christ. She was in a state of mind that seemed to render it easy to renounce the world. She has always been a very interesting Christian. Not many years after conversion, she was married to a wealthy gentleman in New York. For several years I had no direct correspondence with her. Her husband took her into a circle with which I had no particular acquaintance. Since, I have had Christian correspondence with her, and have never ceased to be interested. The grace of God was too strong for the world, even in a case like this, in which every worldly fascination was surrounding her.

While I was at Providence, the question of my going to Boston was agitated by the ministers and deacons of the several Congregational Churches. I was not aware of what they were doing; but Dr. Wisner, pastor of the Old South Church, came to Providence and attended our meetings. I learned that he was sent by the ministers, "to spy out the land and bring back a report."

The work at Providence was of a searching character, as respected professors. Old hopes were shaken, there was a shaking among the dry bones in the different churches. So terribly was a deacon of one of the churches searched, that he said, "Mr. Finney, I do not believe there are ten real Christians in Providence. We are all wrong, we have

been deceived.” Dr. Wisner was thoroughly convinced that the work was genuine and extensive, and that there was no indication of influences or results to be deplored.

After Dr. Wisner returned to Boston, I received a request from the Congregational ministers and churches, to go to that city. Dr. Lyman Beecher was pastor of the Bowdoin Street Church; his son, Edward Beecher, was either pastor or stated supply at Park Street; Mr. Green was pastor of the Essex Street Church, but had gone to Europe for his health, and that church was without any stated supply. Dr. Fay was pastor of the Congregational Church in Charlestown; and Dr. Jenks was pastor of the Congregational Church in Green Street.

I began by preaching in the different churches on the Sabbath, and on week evenings I preached in Park Street. I saw that the word of God was taking effect, and that the interest was increasing. I perceived also that there needed to be a great searching among Christians. I could not learn that there was among them anything like the spirit of prayer that had prevailed in the revivals in the West and in New York. There seemed to be a peculiar type of religion, not exhibiting that freedom and strength of faith which I had been in the habit of seeing in New York.

I therefore began to preach searching sermons. I gave out on the Sabbath, that I would preach a series of sermons to Christians, in Park Street on certain evenings; but I found that these were not at all palatable to the Christians of Boston. It was something they had never been used to, and the attendance at Park Street became less, especially on evenings when I preached to Christians. This was new to me. I had never before seen Christians shrink, as they did in Boston, from searching sermons; but I heard, again and again, “What will the Unitarians say, if such things are true of us who are orthodox ?” “If Mr. Finney preaches in this way, Unitarians will triumph, and say, that at least the orthodox are no better than Unitarians.” They resented my plain dealing; my searching sermons astonished, and even offended, very many. However, as the work went forward, things changed; and after a few weeks they would listen to searching preaching, and came to appreciate it.

I found in Boston that there was a method of dealing with inquiring sinners that was very trying. I used to hold meetings with Dr. Beecher, in the basement of his church. One evening, when there was a large attendance, I tried to point out exactly what the Lord required. My object was to bring them to renounce themselves and give all they possessed to Christ. I tried to show that they were not their own, but were bought with a price; and pointed out the sense in which they were expected to forsake all, and deliver everything to Christ.

I made this point clear, and saw that the impression seemed to be deep. I was about to call on them to kneel down, while we presented them to God in prayer; when Dr. Beecher said, “You need not be afraid to give up all to Christ, your property and all, for He will give it right back to you.” Without making any just discriminations at all, as to the sense in which they were to give their possessions, and the sense in which the Lord would allow them to retain them, he simply exhorted them not to be afraid to give all, as they had been urged to do, as the Lord would give it right back. I saw that he was making a false impression, and I felt in agony.

After he had finished, I led them to see that, in the sense in which God required them to give up possessions, He would never give back, and they must not entertain such a thought. I tried to say what I said in such a way as not to appear to contradict Dr. Beecher, but yet thoroughly to correct the impression that he had made. I told them that the Lord did not require them to relinquish all their possessions, to quit their business, and houses, and possessions, and never to have possession of them again; but He did require them to renounce the ownership of them, to understand and realise that these things were not theirs, but the Lord's; that His claim was absolute, and His property in themselves and in everything else so entirely above the right of every other being, that what He required was to use themselves and everything else as belonging to Him; and never to think that they had a right to use their time, strength, substance, influence, or anything else, as if it were their own, and not the Lord's.

Dr. Beecher made no objection; and it is not probable that he intended anything inconsistent with this, in what he said.

The members of the orthodox churches of Boston received my doctrine without question. Dr. Beecher told me that he had never seen a man with whose theological views he so entirely accorded. There was one point of my orthodoxy, however, to which many of them at the time objected. There was Mr. R. and, who published a periodical in Boston, who wrote an earnest article against my views on the subject of the Divine agency in regeneration. I preached that the Divine agency was that of teaching and persuasion. President Edwards held the contrary; and Mr. Rand held that the Divine agency was physical; that it produced a change of nature, instead of a change in the voluntary attitude of the soul.

Dr. Wisner wrote a reply, and justified my views, with the exception of those on the persuasive or moral influence of the Holy Spirit. He was not then prepared to take ground against Edwards and the general orthodox view of New England. Dr. Woods, of Andover, also published an article in one of the periodicals published at Andover; "The Holy Ghost the Author of Regeneration." The design was to prove that regeneration was the work of God.

I made no reply in writing; but in preaching I said that that was only a half truth; that the Bible as plainly asserts that regeneration is the work of man; and I quoted passages that affirm it. Paul said to one of the churches, that he had begotten them, that is regenerated them; for the word is used as in other passages, where regeneration is ascribed to God.

After I had spent some weeks, in preaching in the different congregations, I consented to supply Mr. Green's church in Essex Street for a time. We had a blessed work of grace; and a number were converted in the city.

I had become fatigued, as I had laboured about ten years without anything more than a few days or weeks of rest, during the whole period. The ministerial brethren were true men, had taken hold of the work as well as they knew how, and laboured faithfully and efficiently in securing good results.

By this time, a second Free Church had been formed in New York. Mr. Joel Parker's

church, the first Free Church, had grown so large, that a colony had gone off, and formed a second; to which Rev. Mr. Barrows, professor at Andover, had been preaching. Some earnest brethren wrote to me from New York, proposing to lease a theatre, upon condition that I would come. They proposed to get what was called the Chatham Street Theatre, in the heart of the most irreligious population of New York. It was owned by men who were very willing to have it transformed. We had three children, and I could not well take my family, while labouring as an evangelist. My strength, too, had become a good deal exhausted; and on praying and looking the matter over, I concluded that I would accept the call from the Second Free Church, and labour, for a time at least, in New York.

CHAPTER 22

LABOURS IN NEW YORK, IN 1832, AND ONWARD

Mr. Lewis Tappan, with other brethren, leased Chatham Street Theatre, and fitted it up as a suitable place to accommodate the various charitable societies, in holding their anniversaries. They called me, and I accepted the pastorate of the Second Free Presbyterian Church. I left Boston in April, 1832, and commenced labours in that theatre. The Spirit of the Lord was poured out, and we had an extensive revival.

About midsummer the cholera appeared; the panic became great, and many Christian people fled into the country. The cholera was very severe that summer, more so than it ever has been since; and it was especially fatal in the part where I resided. I recollect counting, from our house, five hearses drawn up at the same time, at doors within sight. I remained until the latter part of the summer, not being willing to leave while the mortality was so great; but I found that the influence was undermining my health. I went into the country, for two or three weeks. On my return, I was installed as pastor of the church. During the installation services, I was taken ill; and it was plain that I was seized with cholera. The gentleman next door was seized about the same time, and before morning he was dead. The means used for recovery gave my system a shock from which it took long to recover. However, toward spring I was able to preach again. I invited two brethren to help in holding meetings. We preached in turn for two or three weeks, but little was accomplished. I saw that it was not the way to promote a revival there and I drew the meeting, in that form, to a close.

On the next Sabbath, I made appointments to preach every evening during the week; and a revival immediately commenced, and became powerful. I continued to preach for twenty evenings in succession, besides preaching on the Sabbath. The converts known to us numbered five hundred, and our church became so large, that very soon a colony was sent off to form another church; and a suitable building was erected at the corner of Madison and Catherine Streets.

The work continued to go forward. We held meetings of inquiry once or twice a week, and oftener, and found a goodly number of conversions reported. The people were thoroughly united, were well-trained in labours for the conversion of sinners, and were a most devoted and efficient church. They would go out into highways and hedges, whenever called upon to do so. When we wished to give notice of extra meetings, little slips of paper, on which was printed an invitation to attend the services, would be carried from house to house, in every direction, by members of the church; and the house could be filled any evening in the week. Our ladies were not afraid to go and gather in all classes.

There were connected with the front of the theatre, large rooms, which were fitted up for prayer meetings; they were exceedingly convenient. There were three galleries; and those rooms were connected with the galleries, one above the other.

I instructed my church members to scatter themselves over the house, to keep their eyes open, in regard to any that were seriously affected, and, if possible, to detain them for conversation and prayer. They were true to their teaching, and were on the look-

out at every meeting; and they had faith to dismiss fears, and speak to any whom they saw affected. In this way the conversion of many was secured.

The firm of Naylor and Company, who were the great cutlery manufacturers in Sheffield, England, had a house in New York, and a partner of the name of H. Mr. H. was worldly, had travelled a good deal, and had resided in several of the principal cities of Europe. One of the clerks had come to our meetings, and been converted, and felt anxious for the conversion of Mr. H. The young man, for some time, hesitated about asking him to attend, but he finally ventured; and in compliance with his earnest entreaty, Mr. H. came. He sat near the broad aisle. Mr. Tappan saw that he manifested emotion; and seemed uneasy, as if on the point of going out. Mr. H. acknowledged that he was several times on the point of leaving, because affected; but he remained till the blessing was pronounced. Mr. Tappan, as soon as the blessing was pronounced, introduced himself as a partner of Arthur Tappan and Co., a firm well known in New York.

I have heard Mr. H. relate the facts with emotion. He said that Mr. Tappan took him gently by the button of his coat, and spoke kindly, and asked if he would not remain for prayer and conversation. He tried to excuse himself and to get away; but Mr. Tappan was so gentlemanly and kind, that he could not well get away. He was importunate, and “he held fast to my button, so that,” said he, “an ounce weight at my button was the means of saving my soul.” The people retired, and Mr. H. among others, was persuaded to remain. We had a thorough conversation; and Mr. H. became hopefully converted.

When I first went to Chatham Street Chapel, I informed the brethren that I did not wish to fill the house with Christians from other churches; my object was to gather from the world. We gave ourselves to labour with good success. Conversions were multiplied, and when I left New York we had seven free churches, whose members were labouring to secure the salvation of souls. They were supported by collections taken from Sabbath to Sabbath. If at any time there was a deficiency, there was a number of brethren who would supply the deficiency from their own purses; we never had difficulty in meeting pecuniary demands.

A more harmonious, prayerful, and efficient people, I never knew, than the members of those churches. They were not among the rich, although there were several men of property belonging to them. In general they were gathered from the middle and lower classes. We aimed to preach the Gospel to the poor.

When I first went to New York, I made up my mind on the question of slavery, and was exceedingly anxious to arouse public attention. I did not, however, turn aside to make it a hobby, or divert attention from the work of converting souls. Nevertheless, in my prayers and preaching, I so often alluded to slavery, and denounced it, that considerable excitement came to exist among the people.

While I was labouring at Chatham Street Chapel, some events occurred connected with the presbytery, that led to the formation of a Congregational Church, and to my becoming pastor. A member came from one of the old churches; and we were soon informed that he had committed an offence for which he needed to be disciplined. I

supposed that, since he had been recommended as a member of another church in good standing, and since the offence had been committed before he left that church, that it belonged to them to discipline him. The question was brought before the Third Presbytery of New York, and they decided that he was under our jurisdiction, and that it belonged to us to take the case in hand.

But soon another case occurred, in which a woman came from one of the churches and united with us, and we found that she had been guilty of an offence which called for discipline. In accordance with the ruling of the presbytery in the other case, we went forward and excommunicated her. She appealed to the presbytery; and they decided that the offence was not committed under our jurisdiction, and ruled in a manner directly opposite to their former ruling. I expostulated, and told them that I did not know how to act; that the two cases were precisely similar, and that their rulings were inconsistent and opposed to each other. Dr. Cox replied that they would not be governed by their own precedent, or by any other precedent; and talked so warmly, and pressed the case so hard, that the presbytery went with him.

Soon after, the question came up of building the Tabernacle in Broadway. The men that built it, and the leading members who formed the church, built it with the understanding that I should be pastor; and they formed a Congregational Church. I then took my dismissal from the presbytery, and became pastor of that Congregational Church.

In January, 1834, I was obliged to leave on account of my health, and take a sea voyage. I went up the Mediterranean. We had a stormy passage. My state room was small, and I was very uncomfortable; and the voyage did not much improve my health. I was gone about six months. On my return, I found that there was a great excitement in New York. The members of my church, together with other Abolitionists, had held a meeting on the fourth of July, and had had an address on the subject of slave-holding. A mob was stirred up, and this was the beginning of that series of mobs that spread in many directions, whenever and wherever there was an anti-slavery gathering, or a voice lifted up against the abominable institution.

I went forward in my labours. The work of God revived, numbers being converted at almost or quite every meeting. I continued to labour thus in Chatham Street, and the church continued to flourish, and to extend, until the Tabernacle in Broadway was completed.

The plan of the interior of that house was my own. I had observed the defects of churches in regard to sound; and was sure that I could give the plan of a church in which I could speak to a much larger congregation than any house would hold that I had even seen. An architect was consulted, and I gave him my plan but he objected, and feared that it would injure his reputation, to build a church with such an interior. I told him that if he would not build it on that plan, he was not the man to superintend its construction. It was finally built in accordance with my ideas; and it was a most commodious and comfortable place.

When I first went to New York, and before I went, *The New York Observer*, in the hands of Mr. Morse, had gone into the controversy originating in Mr. Nettleton's

opposition to revivals in Central New York. The *Observer* had sustained Mr. Nettleton's course, and refused to publish anything on the other side. The writings of Mr. Nettleton and his friends, Mr. Morse would publish in the *Observer*; but if any reply was made, he would not publish it. In this state of things, our friends had no organ to correct misapprehensions.

Judge Jonas Platt, of the Supreme Court, then living in New York, was a friend of mine. His son and daughter had been converted in the revival at Utica. Considerable effort was made, by the friends of those revivals, to get a hearing on the question in debate, but in vain. Judge Platt found one day, pasted on the inside of the cover of one of his books, a letter written by one of the pastors in New York, against Whitefield, at the time he was in this country. That letter struck Judge Platt as so strongly resembling the opposition made by Mr. Nettleton, that he sent it to *The New York Observer*; and wished it to be published as a literary curiosity. Mr. Morse refused to publish it, assigning as a reason, that the people would regard it as applying to the opposition of Mr. Nettleton.

At length, some of the friends of the revivals in New York assembled and talked the matter over, of establishing a paper that should deal fairly with those questions. They finally commenced the enterprise; I assisted them in getting out the first number.

The editor was Mr. Saxton, a young man who had formerly laboured with Mr. Nettleton, but who disapproved of the course he had been taking. This young man continued in the editorial chair about a year, and discussed, with considerable ability, many of the questions proposed. The paper changed editors two or three times; and finally Rev. Joshua Leavitt accepted the chair. He was an able editor. The paper soon went into extensive circulation, and proved a medium through which friends of revivals could communicate their thoughts to the public.

When the Tabernacle was in the process of completion, a story was set in circulation that it was going to be "an amalgamation church," in which coloured and white people were to be compelled to sit promiscuously. Such was the state of the public mind that this report created great excitement, and somebody set the building on fire. The firemen refused to put it out, and left the interior and roof to be consumed. However, the gentlemen who had undertaken to build it, went forward and completed it.

As the excitement increased, Mr. Leavitt espoused the cause of the slave, and advocated it in *The New York Evangelist*. I watched the discussion with attention and anxiety; and when I was about to leave for a sea voyage I admonished Mr. Leavitt to be careful, lest he should destroy his paper. On my homeward passage my mind became exceedingly exercised on the question of revivals. I feared that they would decline. I feared that the opposition that had been made had grieved the Holy Spirit. My own health, it appeared, had broken down and I knew of no other evangelist that would take the field. This view of the subject distressed me so much that one day I found myself unable to rest. My soul was in an agony. I spent almost the entire day in prayer in my state room; I felt crushed with the burden that was on my soul. There was no one on board to whom I could say a word.

It was the spirit of prayer that was upon me; that which I had often before experienced

in kind, but perhaps never before to such a degree. I besought the Lord to go on with His work, and to provide Himself with such instrumentalities as were necessary. It was a long summer day in July. After a day of wrestling and agony, just at night the subject cleared. The Spirit led me to believe that all would come right, and that God had yet a work for me to do; that I might be at rest that the Lord would go forward with His work, and give me strength to take any part in it that He desired.

At New York I found the mob excitement very intense. I remained a day or two, and went to the place where my family were spending the summer. On my return in the fall, Mr. Leavitt came and said, "Brother Finney, I have ruined the *Evangelist*. I have not been as prudent as you cautioned me to be, and I have gone so far ahead of public intelligence and feeling that my subscription list is rapidly failing; and we shall not be able to continue its publication beyond the first of January, unless you can do something to bring the paper back to public favour." I told him my health was such that I did not know what I could do; but I would make it a subject of prayer. He said, if I could write a series of articles on revivals, he had no doubt it would restore the paper immediately to public favour. After considering a day or two, I proposed to preach a course of lectures to my people on revivals, which he might report. He caught at this. Says he, "That is the very thing; "and in the next number of his paper he advertised the course of lectures. This had the effect desired. He told me that the subscription list was very rapidly increasing; and said, "I have as many new subscribers every day, as would fill my arms with papers, to supply each a single number." He told me before, that his subscription list had fallen off at the rate of sixty a day.

I began the lectures, and continued them through the winter each week. Mr. Leavitt could not write short-hand, but would sit and take notes, abridging what he wrote, in such a way that he could understand it himself; and then the next day he would sit down and fill out his notes, and send them to the press. I did not see what he had reported, until I saw it published. The lectures averaged not less than an hour and three quarters in delivery; but all he could report, could be read, probably, in thirty minutes.

These lectures were afterwards published and called, "Finney's Lectures on Revivals." Twelve thousand copies were sold as fast as they could be printed. And here, for the glory of Christ, I would say, that they have been reprinted in England and France; they were translated into Welsh; and on the Continent were translated into French and, I believe, into German; and were very extensively circulated throughout Europe and the colonies of Great Britain. After they had been printed in Welsh, the Congregational ministers of the Principality appointed a committee to inform me of the revival that had resulted from the translation. One publisher in London informed me, that his father had published eighty thousand volumes of them. These Revival Lectures, meagre as was the report, and feeble as they were in themselves, have been instrumental in promoting revivals in England, Scotland, Wales, on the Continent in various places, in Canada East and West, in Nova Scotia, and in some of the islands of the sea.

In England and Scotland I have often been refreshed by meeting with ministers and laymen who had been converted, directly or indirectly, through the instrumentality of those lectures. The last time I was abroad three very prominent ministers introduced themselves, and said that when they were in college my Revival Lectures had resulted in their becoming ministers. I found persons in England, in all denominations, who had

not only read those lectures, but had been greatly blessed in reading. When they were published in *The New York Evangelist*, the reading of them resulted in revivals in multitudes of places throughout this country.

This was not of man's wisdom. Let the reader remember that long day of prayer at sea, that God would do something to forward revivals, and enable me to take such a course. I felt certain that my prayers would be answered; and I have regarded all that I have since been able to accomplish, as, in a very important sense, an answer to the prayers of that day.

Soon after I returned to New York, I commenced my labours in the Tabernacle. The Spirit of the Lord was poured out, and we had a precious revival, as long as I continued pastor. I had applications from young men, to take them as students in theology. I had too much on my hands, to undertake such a work; but brethren who built the Tabernacle prepared a room, which we expected to use for prayer meetings, but more especially for a theological lecture-room. The number of applications had been so large, that I had made up my mind to deliver a course of lectures each year, and let such students as chose, attend them gratuitously.

But about this time the breaking up at Lane Seminary took place, on account of the prohibition, by the trustees, of the discussion of the question of slavery. When this occurred, Mr. Arthur Tappan proposed, that if I would go to some point in Ohio, and take rooms where I could gather those young men, and give them my views in theology, and prepare them for preaching throughout the West, he would be at the expense of the undertaking. He was very earnest; but I did not know how to leave, although I strongly sympathised with him in regard to helping those young men. They were most of them converts in those great revivals in which I had taken more or less part.

In January, 1835, Rev. John Jay Shipherd, of Oberlin, and Rev. Asa Mahan, of Cincinnati, arrived in New York, to persuade me to go to Oberlin, as Professor of Theology. Mr. Mahan had been one of the trustees of Lane Seminary-the only one that had resisted the prohibition of free discussion. Mr. Shipherd had founded a colony, and organised a school at Oberlin, about a year before, and had a charter broad enough for a university. Mr. Mahan had never been in Oberlin. The trees had been removed from the college square, dwelling-houses and one college building had been erected, and about a hundred pupils had been gathered in the preparatory or academic department.

The proposal they laid before me was, to come and take those students that had left Lane Seminary. These students had themselves proposed to go to Oberlin, in case I would accept the call. This proposal met the views of Arthur and Lewis Tappan. The brethren in New York who were interested, offered, if I would spend half of each year in Oberlin, to endow the Institution.

I understood that the trustees of Lane Seminary had acted "over the heads" of the faculty; and, in the absence of several, had passed the obnoxious resolution that had caused the students to leave. I said, therefore, to Mr. Shipherd, that I would not go, at any rate, unless two points were conceded. One was, that they should never interfere with the internal regulation of the school, but should leave that entirely to the

discretion of the faculty. The other was, that we should be allowed to receive coloured people on the same conditions that we did white people.

When these conditions were forwarded to Oberlin, the trustees were called together, and after a struggle to overcome the prejudices of the community, they passed resolutions complying with the conditions. This difficulty being removed, the friends in New York were called together, to see what they could do about endowing the Institution. In the course of an hour or two, they had a subscription filled for the endowment of eight professorships; as many, it was supposed, as the Institution would need for several years.

But after this fund was subscribed, I felt a difficulty in giving up that admirable place for preaching the Gospel. I felt assured that in this new enterprise we should have great opposition from many sources. I therefore told Arthur Tappan that my mind did not feel at rest; that we should meet with opposition because of our anti-slavery principles; and that we could expect to get but very scanty funds to put up buildings, and to procure all the apparatus; that therefore I did not see my way, after all, to commit myself, unless something could be done that should guarantee us the funds that were indispensable.

Arthur Tappan's heart was as large as all New York, and I might say, as large as the world. When I laid the case thus before him, he said, "Brother Finney, my own income averages about a hundred thousand dollars a year. Now, if you will go to Oberlin, take hold of that work, and go on, and see that the buildings are put up, and a library and everything provided, I will pledge you my entire income, except what I need to provide for my family, till you are beyond pecuniary want." Having perfect confidence in brother Tappan, I said, "That will do. Thus far the difficulties are out of the way."

But still I had never thought of having my labours at Oberlin interfere with my preaching. It was therefore agreed between myself and the church, that I should spend my winters in New York, and my summers at Oberlin. I took my family, and arrived at Oberlin in the beginning of summer, 1835.

CHAPTER 23

EARLY LABOURS IN OBERLIN

The students from Lane Seminary came to Oberlin, and the trustees put up “barracks,” in which they were lodged; and other students thronged to us from every direction. After I was engaged to come, brethren at Oberlin wrote, requesting me to bring a large tent, as there *was* no room in the place large enough to accommodate the people. I made this request known to some, and they handed me the money to pay for a circular tent, a hundred feet in diameter, furnished with all equipments. At the top of the centre pole was a streamer, upon which was written, “Holiness to the Lord.” This tent was of great service. When the weather would permit, we spread it upon the square every Sabbath; and several of our earliest commencements were held in it. It was used, to some extent also, for holding protracted meetings in the region round about, where there were no churches large enough to meet the necessities.

I have spoken of the promise of Arthur Tappan to supply funds; but it was further understood that his pledge should not be known to the trustees, lest they should fail to make due efforts to make the wants and objects of the Institution known. In accordance with this understanding, the work here was pushed as fast as it could be, considering that we were in the heart of a great forest, a location, in many respects undesirable.

We had only fairly entered upon the work of putting up buildings, and had arranged to need a large amount of money, when the commercial crash prostrated Mr. Tappan, and nearly all the men who had subscribed to the fund for the faculty. The crash left us, not only without funds, but thirty thousand dollars in debt; without any prospect of obtaining funds from friends in this country. Mr. Tappan wrote to me, acknowledging the promise he had made, and expressing the deepest regret that he was wholly unable to fulfil his pledge.

The great mass of people of Ohio were opposed to our enterprise, because of its abolition character. The towns around were hostile, and threats were made to come and tear down our buildings. A Democratic Legislature was endeavouring to get some hold of us, that would enable them to abrogate our charter. There was a great crying to God among the people.

My Revival Lectures had been very extensively circulated in England; and we were aware that the British public would strongly sympathise with us, if they knew our objects, prospects, and condition. We therefore sent an agency to England, composed of Rev. John Keep, and Mr. William Dawes. They laid our objects and wants before the British public. They gave us six thousand pounds sterling. This very nearly cancelled our indebtedness.

Our friends throughout the Northern States, Abolitionists and friends of revivals, aided us to the extent of their ability; but we had to struggle with poverty and trials for a course of years. Sometimes we did not know how we were to be provided for.

At one time I saw no means of providing for my family through the winter.

Thanksgiving-day came, and found us so poor that I had been obliged to sell my travelling trunk, to supply the place of a cow which I had lost. I spread our necessities before the Lord, saying that if help did not come, I should assume that it was best that it should not; and would be entirely satisfied with any course the Lord would see it wise to take. I preached, and enjoyed my own preaching as well as I ever did. I had a blessed day; and I could see that the people enjoyed it exceedingly.

After the meeting, I was detained in conversation with brethren, and my wife returned home. When I reached the gate, she was standing with a letter in her hand; she smilingly said, "The answer has come, my dear;" and handed me the letter containing a cheque from Mr. Josiah Chapin, of Providence, for two hundred dollars. I had said nothing about my wants at all, as I never was in the habit of mentioning them to anybody but in the letter he said he had learned that the endowment had failed and that I was in want. He intimated that I might expect more from time to time. He continued to send six hundred dollars a year, for years; and on this I managed to live.

I spent my summers at Oberlin, and my winters at New York, for two or three years. We had a blessed reviving, whenever I returned; also a revival here continually. Very few students came without being converted. I found, I must relinquish one of these fields but the interests of the college, seemed to forbid that I should leave. I therefore took a dismission from New York, and the winter months I spent in labouring in various places, to promote revivals.

The two following winters, I gave lectures to Christians in the Broadway Tabernacle which were published in *The New York Evangelist*. These also have been printed in a volume. Those sermons were the result of a searching that was going on in my own mind. The Spirit of God was showing many things, in regard to sanctification, that led me to preach those sermons.

Many Christians regarded those Lectures as rather an exhibition of the Law, than of the Gospel. For me the Law and Gospel have but one rule of life; and every violation of the spirit of the Law, is also a violation of the spirit of the Gospel; but I have long been satisfied that the higher forms of experience are attained only as a result of a terribly searching application of God's Law to the human conscience and heart. The result of my labours had shown more clearly the great weakness of Christians, and that the older members were making little progress in grace. I found that they would fall back from a revival state, even sooner than young converts. I saw that this was owing to their early teaching.

I was also led into dissatisfaction with my own want of stability in faith and love. God did not suffer me to backslide, to anything like the same extent to which manifestly many did; but I often felt weak in the presence of temptation; and needed frequently to hold days of fasting and prayer, in order to retain that communion, and that hold upon Divine strength, that would enable me efficiently to labour.

In looking at the state of the Christian Church, I was led to inquire whether there was not something higher and more enduring than the Church was aware of; whether there were not promises, and means provided, in the Gospel, for the establishment of Christians in a higher form of life. I had known somewhat of the view of sanctification

entertained by Methodist brethren; but as their idea of sanctification seemed to relate to states of the sensibility, I could not receive their teaching. I gave myself earnestly to search the Scriptures, and to read whatever came to hand upon the subject, until my mind was satisfied that a higher and more stable form of Christian life was attainable.

This led me to preach in the Broadway Tabernacle, two sermons on perfection, those now included in the volume of Lectures. I defined Christian perfection, and endeavoured to show the sense in which it is attainable. But about this time the question in the Antinomian sense came to be agitated at New Haven, at Albany, and in New York. I examined these views, as published in *The Perfectionist*, but could not accept them. Yet I was satisfied that the doctrine of entire sanctification, in the sense that it was the privilege of Christians to live without known sin, was taught in the Bible, and that means were provided for its attainment.

The last winter I spent in New York, the Lord was pleased to visit my soul with a great refreshing. After a season of great searching of heart, He brought me into a large place, and gave me much of that divine sweetness, of which President Edwards speaks as attained in his own experience. That winter I had a thorough breaking up; for a considerable period, I could not refrain from loud weeping in view of my sins, and of the love of God in Christ.

It is well known that my views on the question of sanctification have been the subject of a good deal of criticism. Oberlin College was established by Mr. Shipherd, very much against the feelings and wishes of the men most concerned in building up Western Reserve College, at Hudson. Mr. Shipherd informed me that the principal financial agent of that college asserted that he would do all he could to put this college down. As soon as they heard, at Hudson, that I had received a call to Oberlin, the trustees elected me as professor of "pastoral theology and sacred eloquence," at Western Reserve College. I did not, in writing, commit myself to either, but came to survey the ground, and decide upon the path of duty.

That spring, the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church met at Pittsburgh. At Cleveland, I was informed that two professors from Hudson had been waiting for my arrival, designing to have me go first, at any rate, to Hudson. I found a letter from Arthur Tappan; he had become acquainted with the fact that efforts were making to induce me to go to Hudson rather than to Oberlin.

The college at Hudson had its buildings and apparatus, and was already established. Oberlin had no permanent buildings, and was a colony in the woods, just beginning to put up houses, clear away the forest, and make a place for a college. It had its charter, and perhaps a hundred students; but everything was still to be done. Brother Tappan put me on my guard against supposing that I could be instrumental in securing, at Hudson, what we desired to secure at Oberlin.

I thought I would see Oberlin first. At Elyria I found some old acquaintances, whom I had known in Central New York. They informed that the trustees of Western Reserve College thought that, if they could secure my presence at Hudson, it would, at least in measure, defeat Oberlin; and that at Hudson there was an old-school influence of

sufficient power to compel me to fall in with their views and action. This was in precise accordance with the information which I had received from Mr. Tappan.

I came to Oberlin, and saw there was nothing to prevent the building of a college on principles that lie at the foundation of success - on principles of reform, dear to the hearts of those who had undertaken the support and building of Oberlin College. Brethren on the ground were in favour of building up a school on radical principles of reform. I therefore took up my abode at Oberlin.

After a year or two, the cry of Antinomian Perfectionism was heard, and this charge brought against us. Letters were written, and ecclesiastical bodies were visited, and much pains taken to represent our views as heretical. Such representations were made, as to lead many to pass resolutions, warning the churches against Oberlin theology. There seemed to be a general union of ministerial influence against us. We understood very well by what means this excitement was raised; but said nothing. Suffice it to say, that the weapons that were formed against us, reacted disastrously upon those who used them, until there was a change of nearly all the members of the board of trustees and the faculty, at Hudson, and the management fell into other hands.

We kept about our own business, and felt that our strength was to sit still. We felt confident that it was not God's plan to suffer such opposition to prevail.

A convention was called to meet at Cleveland, to consider the subject of Western education, and the support of colleges. The call had been so worded that we went, expecting to take part in the proceedings. When we arrived, we found Dr. Beecher on the ground; and proceedings were on foot to shut out Oberlin brethren. I was not allowed a seat in the convention as a member; yet I attended several sessions. I recollect hearing it said, by one of the ministers, that he regarded Oberlin doctrines and influence as worse than Roman Catholicism.

That speech seemed to be the view entertained by that body; not by all of them. Some who had been educated at Oberlin, were related to the churches and the convention; these were very outspoken. The object evidently was to hedge in Oberlin, and crush us by a public sentiment that would refuse support.

A few years after, one of the leading ministers who was there, spent a day or two at our house. He said, "Brother Finney, Oberlin is a great wonder. I have for many years been connected with a college. College life and principles are familiar to me. We have always thought that colleges could not exist unless they were patronised by the ministry. We knew that young men would generally consult their pastors, in regard to what colleges they should select, and be guided by their judgement. Now, the ministers almost universally arrayed themselves against Oberlin. They warned their churches against you, discouraged young men from coming to Oberlin, and still the Lord has built you up. You have been supported better than almost any college in the West; you have had more students, the blessing of God has been upon you, so that your success has been wonderful. Now this is a perfect anomaly."

It is difficult now for people to realise the opposition. I had occasion to go to Akron, to preach. On my way, beyond the village of Medina, I observed before me a woman

with a little bundle in her hand. I observed she was an elderly woman, nicely dressed, but walking, as I thought, with difficulty, on account of age. I reined up my horse, and asked her how far she was going; and asked if she would ride. "Oh," she replied, "I should be very thankful, for I find I have undertaken too long a walk."

After riding for some distance, she said, "May I ask to whom I am indebted for this ride?" I told her. She then inquired whence I came. I told her from Oberlin. This startled her. "From Oberlin!" said she, "why, our minister said he would just as soon send a son to state-prison as to Oberlin!" I smiled and soothed the old lady's fears, and made her understand she was in no danger. I relate this as an illustration of the spirit that prevailed.

However, there was a number of laymen, and no inconsiderable number of ministers, in different parts of the country, who had no confidence in this opposition who sympathised with our aims, views, efforts, and who stood firmly by us.

Mr. Chapin, of Providence, for several years sent six hundred dollars a year to support my family. When he had done it until financial difficulties rendered it inconvenient for him longer to do so, Mr. Willard Sears of Boston suffered me to draw on him for the same amount annually that Mr. Chapin had paid. Efforts were made to sustain the other members of the faculty; and by the grace of God we rode out the gale.

President Mahan, Professors Cowles, Morgan, and myself established a periodical, *The Oberlin Evangelist*, and afterwards, *The Oberlin Quarterly*, in which we disabused the public in regard to what our views were. In 1846, I published two volumes on systematic theology, and discussed the subject of entire sanctification more at large. This work was reviewed by a committee of the Presbytery of Troy, New York. Then Dr. Hodge, of Princeton, published, in *The Biblical Referory*, a lengthy criticism from the old-school stand-point. Then Dr. Duffield, of the New School Presbyterian Church, reviewed me, professedly from the new-school standpoint, though his review was far enough from consistent new-schoolism. To these I published replies; and for years past, no disposition has been shown to impugn our orthodoxy.

During these years of smoke and dust, of misapprehension and opposition from without, the Lord was blessing us richly within. Our students were converted by scores; and the Lord overshadowed us continually with the cloud of His mercy.

I have always attributed our success to the grace of God. Nothing but continued Divine influence, pervading the community, kept us efficient in the work.

We had trials among ourselves. Frequent subjects of discussion have come up; and we have spent days, and even weeks, in discussing duty and expediency. But our principle has been to accord to each other the right of private judgement. We have generally come to a substantial agreement; and when unable to see alike, the minority have submitted to the majority, and the idea of rending the church has never been entertained.

When the question of entire sanctification came up, and first attracted general attention, we were in the midst of a revival. One day President Mahan had been

preaching a searching discourse. I observed that he left one point untouched, that appeared to me of great importance. He would often ask me, when he closed his sermon, if I had any remarks to make; and he did so on this occasion. I pressed the point omitted, the distinction between desire and will. From the course of thought he had presented, I thought I saw that the pressing of that distinction would throw much light upon the question whether they were really Christians or not, whether they were really consecrated, or whether they merely had desires without being willing to obey God.

When this was made clear, the Holy Spirit fell upon the congregation. A number dropped down their heads, some groaned so that they could be heard throughout the house. It cut up the false hopes of deceived professors on every side.

The work went on; old professors obtained new hopes, so that a very great and important change came over the community. President Mahan had been greatly blessed, among others, with some of our professors. He came manifestly into an entirely new form of Christian experience at that time.

A few days after this, one of our theological students put the inquiry, whether the Gospel did not provide for Christians all the conditions of an established faith and hope and love; whether there was not something better and higher than Christians had generally experienced in short, whether sanctification was not attainable in this life; that is, sanctification in such a sense that Christians could have unbroken peace, and not come into condemnation, or have the feeling of condemnation or a consciousness of sin. Brother Mahan immediately answered, Yes. what occurred, brought the question of sanctification prominently before us, as a practical question. We had no theories, no philosophy, but simply took it as a Bible question.

CHAPTER 24

LABOURS IN BOSTON AND PROVIDENCE

I must dwell a little more upon the progress of the antislavery movement, not only at Oberlin, but elsewhere. I have mentioned that the Legislature of the State endeavoured to find some pretext for repealing our charter, because of our sentiments and action. It was at first reported that we intended to encourage marriage between coloured and white students, and even to compel them to intermarry. I called upon a farmer on some errand. He looked sullen and suspicious, when he found who I was and whence I came; and intimated that he did not want to have anything to do with Oberlin; that our object was to compel white and coloured to intermarry; that we also intended to bring about the union of Church and State; and that our ideas and projects were revolutionary and abominable. He was quite in earnest about this; but the thing was so ridiculous, that I knew that if I attempted a serious answer, I should laugh him in the face.

We had reason for apprehension that a mob would come and destroy our buildings; but circumstances occurred that created a reaction. This place became one of the points on "the underground railroad" where escaped slaves, on their way to Canada, would take refuge, until the way was open to proceed. Several cases occurred in which fugitives were pursued by slave-holders; a hue and cry was raised, not only in this neighbourhood, but in neighbouring towns, by their attempting to carry the slaves back into slavery. Slave-catchers found no practical sympathy; and scenes like these aroused public feeling, and began to produce a reaction. It set the farmers and people to study more particularly our aims and views; and our school became known and appreciated.

Excitement on the subject of slavery was agitating the Eastern cities, as well as the West and South. Our friend, Mr. Willard Sears, of Boston, was braving a tempest of opposition; and in order to open the way for a free discussion, and for the establishment of religious worship where a pulpit should be open to all questions of reform, he had purchased the Marlborough Hotel, Washington Street, and had connected with it a chapel for public worship and for meetings. In 1842, I was urged to go and occupy the Marlborough Chapel, and preach for a few months. I went for two months. The Spirit of the Lord was poured out, there was a general agitation among the dry bones. I was visited at my room almost constantly, during every day, by inquirers. Elder Knapp, the well-known Baptist revivalist, was in Providence, but under opposition. He was invited by Baptist brethren at Boston to come there. At the same time Mr. Josiah Chapin and others were insisting upon my coming and holding meetings in Providence. I felt very much indebted to Mr. Chapin for what he had done for Oberlin, and for myself personally. I went to Providence. This was the time of the great revival in Boston. It prevailed wonderfully, especially among the Baptists, and more or less throughout the city. The Baptist ministers took hold with brother Knapp, and many Congregational brethren were greatly blessed.

I commenced in Providence. The work began almost immediately, and the interest visibly increased. There were many cases of conversion; among them was an elderly gentleman whose father had been a Judge of the Supreme Court in Massachusetts. I observed a venerable gentleman come into meeting, who paid strict attention to the

preaching. I observed that he continued, night after night, to come; and could easily perceive that his mind was agitated, and interested on the question of religion.

One evening, this venerable man rose, and spoke in substance as follows: "My friends and neighbours, you are probably surprised to see me attend these meetings. You have known my sceptical views, and that I have not been in the habit of attending religious meetings. But hearing of the state of things in this congregation, I came and I wish to have my friends know that I believe that the preaching we are hearing, is the Gospel. I have altered my mind, I believe this is the truth, and the true way of salvation. I say this that you may understand my motive for coming that it is not to criticise, but to attend to salvation, and encourage others to attend." He said this with much emotion, and sat down.

There was a Sabbath-school room in the basement. The number of inquirers had become too large, and the congregation too much crowded, to call the inquirers forward; and I therefore requested them to go down to the lecture-room. The room was nearly as large as the audience room of the church, and would seat nearly as many, aside from the gallery. The work increased, and spread until the number of inquirers became so great, together with the young converts, as nearly or quite to fill that room. This continued for two months. I was then completely tired out; having laboured incessantly for four months, in Boston and Providence. Besides, the time had nearly come for the opening of our spring term in Oberlin. I therefore started for home.

A Unitarian woman had been converted in Boston, who was an acquaintance of the Rev. Dr. C-. Hearing of her conversion, Dr. C- sent for her, as he was in feeble health, and could not call on her. He wished her to tell him the exercises of her mind, and Christian experience, and the circumstances of her conversion. She did so, and the Doctor manifested a great interest; and inquired if she had anything that I had published. She told him that she had a little work on sanctification. He told her that he would read it; and if she would call again, he should be happy to have further conversation. At the close of the week, she returned for her book, and the Doctor said, "I am very much interested in the views here set forth. I understand, that the orthodox object to this view of sanctification; but I can not see, if Christ is Divine and truly God, why this view should be objected to; nor can I see any inconsistency in holding this as a part of the orthodox faith. I should like to see Mr. Finney. Can not you persuade him to call?" After an absence of two months I was in Boston, and this lady called and gave me the information related. But as he had gone into the country on account of his health, I regretted not having an opportunity to see him. He died shortly after. The next time I met Dr. Beecher, Dr. C-'s name was mentioned, and I related this fact. The tears started in his eyes, and he said, "I guess he has gone to heaven!"

CHAPTER 25

THE REVIVAL IN ROCHESTER IN 1842

After resting in Boston, I left for home. Being very weary, I called on a friend at Rochester to take a day's rest. Judge G. called, and with much earnestness, requested me to stop and preach. Some of the ministers, also, insisted upon my stopping. I informed them that I was worn out, and the time had come for me to be at home. However, I consented to stop and preach; but this brought upon me a more importunate invitation, to remain and hold a series of meetings.

Mr. George S. Boardman was pastor of the Bethel, or Washington Street Church; and Mr. Shaw, of the Second or Brick Church. Mr. Shaw was anxious to unite with Mr. Boardman, and have meetings at their churches alternately. Mr. Boardman was indisposed to take this course, saying that his congregation was weak, and needed the concentration of my labours at that point. I regretted this; and went on with my labours at the Bethel, or Washington Street Church. Soon after, Dr. Shaw secured the labours of Rev. Jedediah Burchard in his church, and undertook a protracted effort there.

Judge G. had united with other members of the bar in a written request to me to preach to lawyers.

Judge G. was then one of the Judges of the Court of Appeals in the State, and held a high place in the estimation of the profession. I consented to deliver the lectures. I was aware of the half-sceptical state in which those members of the bar were, who were still unconverted. There was still left in the city a number of pious lawyers, converted in the revival of 1830 and 1831.

I began by asking this question "Do we know anything?" My congregation became select. Brother Burchard's meetings opened an interesting place for one class of the community, and made more room for the lawyers, and those especially attracted by my course of lectures, in the house where I was preaching. It was completely filled, every night.

Judge G. remarked to me, "Mr. Finney, you have cleared the ground to my satisfaction, thus far; but when you come to the question of endless punishment you will slip; you will fail to convince on that question." I replied, "Wait and see." This hint made me the more careful. The next day he volunteered the remark at once, "Mr. Finney, I am convinced. Your dealing with that subject was a success; nothing can be said against it." The manner in which he said this, indicated that the subject had not merely convinced his intellect, but had deeply impressed him.

I was going on from night to night, but had not thought my select audience yet prepared for me to call for any decision on the part of inquirers; but I had arrived at a point where I thought it was time to draw the net ashore. I had carefully been laying it around, and hedging them in by a train of reasoning that they could not resist. I was aware that lawyers are accustomed to listen to argument, to feel the weight of a logically presented truth; and had no doubt that the majority were thoroughly convinced, as far as I had gone; consequently I had prepared a discourse which I

intended should bring them to the point, and if it appeared to take effect, I intended to call on them to commit themselves. Judge G. had opposed the anxious seat; I expected he would do so again, as I knew he had strongly committed himself. When I came to preach the sermon of which I have spoken, I observed Judge G. was not in the seat he usually occupied; and I could not see him anywhere among the members of the bar or the judges. I felt concerned, for I had prepared myself with reference to his case. I knew that if he would take a decided stand, it would have a very great influence upon all the legal profession in the city. However, I observed that he had come into the gallery, and had found a seat just at the head of the stairs. I went on; but near the close, I observed that Judge G. had gone. I felt distressed, for I concluded he had gone home; and that the sermon prepared with my eye upon him, had failed!

Just as I was drawing to a close, and my heart almost sinking with fear that I was to fail, I felt some one pulling at the skirt of my coat. I looked, and there was Judge G. He said "Mr. Finney, won't you pray for me by name? and I will take the anxious seat." I had said nothing about an anxious seat. There was a great gush of feeling, in every part of the house. Many held down their heads and wept; others seemed to be engaged in earnest prayer. He crowded around in front of the pulpit, and knelt immediately down. The lawyers arose and crowded into the aisles, and filled the open space in front, wherever they could get a place to kneel. The movement had begun without my requesting it; but I then publicly invited any who were prepared to renounce their sins, and to accept Christ, to come forward or wherever they could, and kneel down. We prayed, and I dismissed the meeting.

I appointed a meeting for inquirers, the next day at two o'clock, in the basement. I was surprised to find the room nearly full, and that the audience was composed almost exclusively of prominent citizens. This I continued from day to day, having an opportunity to converse freely, with numbers; and they were as teachable as children. A large number of lawyers were converted, Judge G. at their head; as he had taken the lead in coming out on the side of Christ.

I remained there two months. The revival resulted in the conversion of numbers. It took a powerful hold in one of the Episcopal churches, St. Luke's, of which Dr. Whitehouse, the present Bishop of Illinois, was pastor. When I was in Reading, Pennsylvania, several years before, Dr. Whitehouse was preaching to an Episcopal congregation; and was blessed in his soul in that revival. When I came to Rochester, in 1830, he was the pastor of St. Luke's, and encouraged his people to attend our meetings; and I was told that many were converted. So also in this revival, in 1842, he encouraged his people, and advised them to attend the meetings. He was himself a successful pastor, and had great influence in Rochester. In this revival in 1842, not less than seventy, and those almost all among the principal people of his congregation, were converted and confirmed.

I had insisted much upon entire consecration to God, giving up all, body, soul, possessions, and everything, to be thereafter used for His glory, as a condition of acceptance. One day as I went into meeting, one of the lawyers who had been in deep anxiety, took out of his pocket a paper, and handed me, remarking, "I deliver this to you as the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ." On examining it, I found it to be a quit-claim deed, made out in regular order, and executed ready for delivery, in which he

quit-claimed to the Lord Jesus Christ all ownership of himself, and of everything he possessed. The deed was in due form, with all the peculiarities and formalities of such conveyances.

The measures were simply preaching the Gospel, and abundant prayer, in private, in social circles, and in public; much stress always being laid upon prayer as an essential means of promoting the revival.

Meetings of inquiry were held, for those who were in the different stages of conviction; and after conversing with them, I was in the habit of summing up, and taking representative cases, and meeting objections, answering questions, correcting errors, and pursuing such a course as was calculated to strip them of every excuse, and bring them face to face with the question of present, unqualified, universal acceptance of the will of God in Christ Jesus.

The doctrine of endless punishment was fully insisted upon; and not only its justice, but the certainty that sinners will be endlessly punished, if they die in their sins, was strongly held forth.

Sinners were taught, that if they regarded iniquity in their hearts, the Lord would not hear them; and that while they remained impenitent, they did regard iniquity in their hearts. They were informed that God required them to pray, but to pray in faith, to pray in the spirit of repentance; and that when they asked God to forgive them, they were to commit themselves unalterably to His will.

I have always been particularly interested in the salvation of lawyers, and of all men of the legal profession. I understood pretty well their habits of reading and thinking. I have always found that when the Gospel was properly presented, they were the most accessible class; and I believe that, in proportion to their relative number, more have been converted than of any other class. I have never seen a case, in which Judges were not convinced of the truth of the Gospel, where they have attended meetings, in the revivals. I have often been affected, in conversing with members of the legal profession, by the manner in which they would consent to propositions, to which persons of ill-disciplined minds would have objected.

There was one of the Judges of the Court of Appeals, living in Rochester, who seemed to be possessed of a chronic scepticism. He was a reader and a thinker, a man of refinement and of intellectual honesty. His wife, having experienced religion under my ministry, was a particular friend. I have had very thorough conversation with that man. He said, "Mr. Finney, you always in your public discourses carry me right along with you; but while I assent to the truth of what you say, I do not feel right; somehow my heart does not respond." He was one of the loveliest of unconverted men, and it was both a grief and a pleasure to converse with him. I have conversed with him when his whole mind seemed to be agitated. And yet he has never been converted; his praying and idolised wife has gone to her grave; his only son was drowned before his eyes. After these calamities, I wrote him a letter, referring to conversations I had had with him, and trying to win him to a source from which he could get consolation. He replied in all kindness; but dwelling upon his loss, said, there could be no consolation to meet a case like that. He was truly blind to all consolation he could find in Christ. He could

not conceive how he could ever accept this dispensation, and be happy. He had lived through one revival after another; and although his mouth was shut, so that he had no excuse, and no refuge, still he mysteriously remained in unbelief.

Several of the lawyers, at this time converted, gave up their profession and went into the ministry. Among these was one of Chancellor W- 's sons, who appeared to be soundly converted. For some reason he went to Europe and to Rome, and finally became a Roman Catholic priest. He has been for years labouring zealously to promote revivals among them, holding protracted meetings; and, as he told me when I met him in England, trying to accomplish in the Roman Catholic Church what I was endeavouring to accomplish in the Protestant Church. Mr. W- seems to be an earnest minister of Christ, given up, heart and soul, to the salvation of Roman Catholics. He sought me out, and came very affectionately to see me; and we had just as pleasant an interview as if we had both been Protestants. He said nothing of his peculiar views, but only that he was labouring among the Roman Catholics, to promote revivals. Many ministers have been the fruits of the revivals in Rochester.

It was a fact that often interested me, that lawyers would come to my room, when pressed hard, and were on the point of submission, for conversation and light, on some point which they did not apprehend; and I observed, again and again, that when those points were cleared up, they were ready at once to submit. Indeed, they take a more intelligent view of the plan of salvation than any other class to whom I have preached, or with whom I have conversed.

Very many physicians have also been converted, in the revivals I have witnessed. I think their studies incline them to scepticism, or to materialism. Yet they are intelligent; and if the Gospel is set before them, stripped of those peculiar features which are embodied in hyper-Calvinism, they are as readily converted as any other class. Their studies have not prepared them so readily to apprehend the moral government of God, as those of the legal profession; but I have found them open to conviction, and by no means a difficult class to deal with.

CHAPTER 26

ANOTHER WINTER IN BOSTON

In the fall of 1843, I was called again to Boston. At my last visit it was the time of excitement on the subject of the Second Advent of Christ. Mr. Miller, at the head of the movement, was lecturing, and holding daily Bible classes, in which he was inculcating his peculiar views; and his teaching led to excitement, involving much that was wild and irrational. I attended Mr. Miller's Bible class once or twice; after which I invited him to my room, and tried to convince him that he was in error. I called his attention to the construction which he put on the prophecies; and showed him that he was mistaken in some of his fundamental views. He replied, that I had adopted a course of investigation that would detect his errors, if he had any.

The last time that I had attended his class, he was inculcating the doctrine that Christ would come personally, and destroy his enemies, in 1843. He gave what he called an exposition of the prophecy of Daniel. He said, the stone cut out of the mountain without hands, that rolled down and destroyed the image was Christ. When he came to my room I called his attention to the fact, that the prophet affirmed expressly that the stone was not Christ, but the kingdom of God; and that the prophet there represented the Church, or the kingdom of God, as demolishing the image. This was so plain, that Mr. Miller was obliged to acknowledge that that was indeed a fact; and that it was not Christ that was going to destroy those nations, but the kingdom of God. I then asked him if he supposed that the kingdom of God would destroy those nations, in the sense in which he taught that they would be destroyed, with the sword, or with making war upon them? He said, No, he could not believe that. I then inquired, "Is it not the overthrow of the governments that is intended, instead of the destruction of the people? and is not this to be done by the influence of the Church of God, in enlightening their minds by the Gospel? And if this is the meaning, where is the foundation for your teaching, that, at a certain time, Christ is coming in person to destroy all peoples? Now this is fundamental to your teaching. This is the great point to which you call attention; and here is a manifest error, the very words of the prophet teaching the direct opposite to what you teach." But it was vain to reason with him and his followers. Believing that the advent of Christ was at hand, it was no wonder that they were too wild with excitement to be reasoned with to any purpose.

When I arrived I found that that particular form of excitement had blown over; but many forms of error prevailed. Indeed, I have found that to be true of Boston, of which Dr. Beecher said to me, "Mr. Finney you can not labour here as you do anywhere else. You have got to pursue a different course of instruction, and begin at the foundation; for Unitarianism is a system of denials, and under its teaching, the foundations of Christianity are fallen away. You can not take anything for granted; for the Unitarians and the Universalists have destroyed the foundations, and the people are all afloat. The masses have no settled opinions, and every 'lo here,' or 'lo there,' finds a hearing; and almost any conceivable form of error may get a footing."

I have since found this true, to a greater extent than in any other field. The people in Boston are more unsettled in their religious convictions than in any other place that I have ever laboured in, notwithstanding their intelligence on all questions but that of

religion. Their theology is negative. They deny almost everything, and affirm almost nothing. Error finds the ears of the people open; and the most irrational views come to be held.

I began in the Marlborough Chapel, and found a very singular state of things. A church had been formed, composed greatly of Radicals; and most of the members held extreme views. They had come from orthodox churches, and united in a church of their own. They were many of them consistent reformers; but I can not say that they were united. Some were extreme non-resistants, and held it to be wrong to use physical force, or any physical means, even in controlling children. Everything must be done by moral suasion. Upon the whole, however, they were a praying, earnest, Christian people.

A young man of the name of S. had risen among them, who professed to be a prophet. I had many conversations with him, and tried to convince him that he was wrong; and I laboured with his followers, to try to make them see that he was wrong. I found it impossible to do anything with him, or with them, until he finally committed himself on several points, and predicted that certain things would happen at certain dates. One was, that his father would die on a certain day. I then said to him "Now the truthfulness of your pretensions will be tested. If these things come to pass, as you say, then we shall have reason to believe that you are a prophet; but if they do not, it will prove that you are deceived." He had staked his reputation as a prophet upon the truth of predictions, and of course they every one of them failed, and he failed with them. I never heard anything more of his predictions. He had confused many minds, and really neutralised their efforts; and I am not aware that those who were his followers ever regained their former influence.

During this winter, the Lord gave my soul a fresh baptism of His Spirit. I boarded at the Marlborough Hotel, and my study and bedroom were in one corner of the chapel building. My mind was greatly drawn out in prayer. In Boston I have been favoured uniformly with a great deal of the spirit of prayer; but this winter my mind was exceedingly exercised on the question of personal holiness; and in respect to the state of the church, its want of power with God; the weakness of the orthodox churches in Boston, the weakness of their faith. The fact that they were making little or no progress in overcoming the errors of that city, greatly affected my mind.

After evening services, I would retire as early as I could; but rose at four o'clock in the morning and engaged in prayer. So deeply was my mind absorbed, that I frequently continued from the time I arose till the gong called to breakfast, at eight o'clock. My days were spent, so far as I could get time, in searching the Scriptures. I read nothing else, all that winter, but my Bible; and a great deal of it seemed new to me. Again the Lord took me, as it were, from Genesis to Revelation. He led me to see the connection of things, the promises, threatenings, the prophecies and their fulfilment; and indeed, the whole Scripture seemed ablaze with light; it seemed as if God's word was instinct with the very life of God.

After praying in this way for months, one morning the thought occurred, What if after all this Divine teaching, my will is not carried, and this teaching takes effect only in my sensibility? May it not be that my sensibility is affected by these revelations from

reading the Bible, and that my heart is not really subdued by them? At this point several passages of Scripture occurred to me, such as this: "Line upon line, line upon line precept upon precept, precept upon precept, here a little, and there a little, that they might go and fall backward, and be snared and taken." The thought that I might be deceiving myself, when it first occurred to me, created a pang that I can not describe. The passages of Scripture that occurred to me, in that direction, for a few moments greatly increased my distress. But directly I was enabled to fall back upon the perfect will of God, I said to the Lord, "Do with me as seemeth Thee good."

Just before this, I had a great struggle to consecrate myself to God, in a higher sense than I had ever before conceived as possible. I had often laid my family upon the altar of God, and left them to be disposed of at His discretion; but now, I had a great struggle about giving up my wife to the will of God. She was in very feeble health, and it was evident that she could not live long. I had never before seen so clearly what was implied in laying her, and all that I possessed, upon the altar; and for hours I struggled upon my knees. I found myself unable to do it. I was so shocked and surprised, that I perspired with agony. I struggled and prayed until I was exhausted, and found myself entirely unable to give her altogether up to God's will, in such a way as to make no objection to His disposing of her just as He pleased.

This troubled me. I wrote to my wife, telling her what a struggle I had had, and the concern that I had felt at not being willing to commit her, without reserve, to the perfect will of God. This was but a very short time before I had this temptation, when those passages of Scripture came up distressingly, and when the bitterness, almost of death, seemed to possess me, at the thought that my religion might be of sensibility only, and that God's teaching might have taken effect only in my feeling. This I have since attributed to a fiery dart of Satan. I then told the Lord that I had such confidence in Him, that I felt perfectly willing to give myself, wife and family, to be disposed of according to His own wisdom.

I then had a deeper view of what was implied in consecration, than ever before. I felt a kind of holy boldness, in telling Him to do with me just as seemed to Him good; that He could not do anything that was not perfectly wise and good; and therefore, I had the best of grounds for accepting whatever He could consent to, in respect to me and mine.

What appeared strange is, that I could not get hold of former hope; nor could I recollect, with freshness, any former seasons of communion and Divine assurance experienced. I may say that I gave up hope, and rested everything upon a new foundation. I said that, if I found that He kept me, and worked in me by His Spirit and was preparing me for heaven, working holiness and eternal life in my soul, I should take it for granted that He intended to save me; that if, on the other hand, I found myself empty of Divine strength and light and love, I should conclude that He saw it wise and expedient to send me to hell; and that in either event I would accept His will.

This was early morning; and through the whole of that day I seemed to be in a state of rest. The question frequently arose, "Do you still adhere to your consecration, and abide in the will of God?" I said without hesitation, "Yes, I take nothing back. I went no further in pledges and professions than was reasonable." The thought that I might

be lost did not distress me. Indeed, think as I might, I could not find the least disturbing emotion. My confidence in God was perfect, and my mind was as calm as heaven.

Just at evening the question arose, "What if God should send me to hell, what then?" "Why, I would not object." "But can He send a person to hell who accepts His will, in the sense in which you do?" This inquiry was no sooner raised than I said, "No, it is impossible. Hell could be no hell to me, if I accepted God's perfect will." This sprung a vein of joy in my mind, that kept developing for years. For years my mind was too full of joy to feel much exercised with anxiety on any subject. My prayer, that had been so fervent, and protracted during so long a period, seemed all to run out into, "Thy will be done."

Here I lost that struggle in which I had been engaged, and began to preach in accordance with my enlarged experience. There was a number in the church who understood me; and they saw what had been, and what was, passing in my mind.

It seemed as if my soul was wedded to Christ, in a sense in which I had never had any thought or conception of before. The language of the Song of Solomon, was as natural to me as my breath. I thought I could understand well the state of mind he was in, when he wrote; and concluded that that song was written after he had been reclaimed from backsliding. I not only had all the freshness of my first love, but a vast accession to it. I then realised what is meant by the saying, that He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." I had had no conception of the length and breadth, and height and depth, and efficiency of His grace.

It seemed that that passage, "My grace is sufficient for thee," meant so much, that it was wonderful I had never understood it before. I found myself exclaiming, "Wonderful! Wonderful! Wonderful!", I could understand then what was meant by, "His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." I spent nearly all the remaining part of the winter, till I was obliged to return home, in instructing the people in regard to the fullness there is in Christ; but found that I preached over the heads of the majority. A goodly number were wonderfully blessed, and made more progress in the Divine life, as I have reason to believe, than in all their lives before.

The little church that was formed there was not composed of materials that could, to any considerable extent, work healthfully. The outside opposition was great. The mass, even of professors of religion, did not sympathise with them. The churches generally were in no state to receive my views of sanctification; and although there were individuals in nearly all who were deeply interested, yet, as a general thing, the testimony that I bore was unintelligible.

Some could see where I was. One evening, Deacon P- and Deacon S., after hearing my preaching, came and said, "Why, you are a great way ahead of us in this city, and a great way ahead of our ministers. How can we get our ministers to come and hear these truths?" I replied, "I do not know; but I wish they could see things as I do; for it does seem to me infinitely important that there should be a higher standard of holiness

in Boston.” They seemed exceedingly anxious to have those truths laid before people in general.

I laboured that winter for a revival among Christians. Although I had had much of the Divine life working within me; yet so far did what I experienced that winter exceed all that I had before experienced, that at times I could not realise that I had ever before been truly in communion with God.

It appeared to me, that probably when we get to heaven, our views, joys, and holy exercises will so far surpass anything that we have ever experienced in this life, that we shall be hardly able to recognise the fact that we had any religion while in this world. I oftentimes experienced inexpressible joys, and very deep communion with God; but all this had fallen so into the shade under my enlarged experience, that frequently I would tell the Lord that I had never before had any conception of the wonderful things revealed in His blessed Gospel, and the wonderful grace there is in Christ Jesus.

As the great excitement of that season subsided, and my mind became calm, I saw more clearly the different steps of Christian experience, and came to recognise the connection of things, as all wrought by God; but since then I have never had those great struggles, and long protracted seasons of agonising prayer, that I had experienced.

I speak of these exercises as habitual, since that period; but I can not affirm that they have been altogether unbroken; for in 1860, during a period of sickness, I had a season of great depression and wonderful humiliation. But the Lord brought me out of it, into an established peace and rest.

A few years after this season of refreshing, that beloved wife, of whom I have spoken, died. This was to me a great affliction. However, I did not feel any murmuring, or the least resistance to the will of God. The night after she died, I was lying in my room alone, and some friends were in the parlour watching out the night. I had been asleep; and, as I awoke, the thought of my bereavement flashed over my mind with such power! My wife was gone! I should never hear her speak again, nor see her face! Her children were motherless! What should I do? My brain seemed to reel, as if my mind would swing from its pivot. I rose instantly from my bed, exclaiming, “I shall be deranged if I can not rest in God!” The Lord calmed my mind for that night; but still, at times, seasons of sorrow would come over me, that were almost overwhelming.

One day I was upon my knees, communing with God upon the subject, and all at once He seemed to say to me, “You loved your wife?” “Yes,” I said. “Well, did you love her for her own sake, or for your sake? Did you love her, or yourself? If you loved her for her own sake, why do you sorrow that she is with Me? Should not her happiness with Me make you rejoice instead of mourn, if you loved her for her own sake? Did you love her,” He seemed to say to me, “for My sake? If you loved her for My sake, surely you would not grieve that she is with Me. Why do you think of your loss, and lay so much stress upon that, instead of thinking of her gain? Can you be sorrowful, when she is so joyful and happy? If you loved her for her own sake, would you not rejoice in her joy, and be happy in her happiness?”

I can never describe the feelings that came over me, when I seemed to be thus addressed. It produced an instantaneous change in my mind. From that moment, sorrow, on account of my loss, was gone for ever. I no longer thought of my wife as dead, but as alive, and in heaven. My faith was so strong and my mind so enlightened, that it seemed as if I could enter into the very state in which she was; and if there is any such thing as communing with one in heaven, I seemed to commune with her.

My wife had died in a heavenly frame of mind. Her rest in God was so perfect, that it seemed that, in leaving this world, she only entered into a fuller apprehension of the love and faithfulness of God, so as to confirm and perfect for ever her trust and her union with His will. I have found that nowhere can I preach those truths, on which my own soul delights to live, and be understood, except it be by a very small number. I have never found that more than a very few appreciate and receive those views of God and Christ, and the fullness of free salvation. Everywhere, I am obliged to come down to where the people are, in order to make them understand; and in every place I have found the churches in so low a state, as to be utterly incapable of apprehending and appreciating what I regard as the most precious truths.

When preaching to sinners, I am obliged to go back to first principles. In my own experience, I have so long passed these outposts and first principles, that I can not live upon those truths. I, however, have to preach them to the impenitent, to secure their conversion. When I preach the Gospel, I can preach the atonement, conversion, and many of the prominent views, that are appreciated and accepted by those who are young in the religious life, and by those also who have been long in the Church of God, and have made very little advancement in knowledge; but it is only now and then that I find it really profitable to the people of God, to pour out to them the fullness that my own soul sees in Christ.

I felt very confident that, unless the foundations could be re-laid in some sense, and unless Christians in Boston took on a higher type of Christian living, they never could prevail against Unitarianism. I knew that ministers had been preaching orthodoxy, as opposed to Unitarianism, for many years; and that all that could be accomplished by discussion, had been accomplished; but I felt that what Unitarians needed, was to see Christians live out the Gospel of Christ. They needed to hear them say, and prove what they said by their lives, that Jesus Christ was a Divine Saviour, and able to save them from all sin. Their professions of faith in Christ did not accord with their experiences. There is needed the testimony of God's living witnesses, the testimony of experience, to convince the Unitarians; and mere arguments, however conclusive, will never overcome their errors and their prejudices.

The orthodox churches there are too formal; they are in bondage to certain ways; they are afraid of measures, afraid to launch forth in freedom, in the use of means to save souls. They have always seemed to be in bondage in their prayers, insomuch that what I call the spirit of prayer, I have seldom witnessed in Boston. The ministers and deacons, though good men, are afraid of what the Unitarians will say, if, in their measures to promote religion, they launch out in such a way as to wake the people up. Everything must be done in a certain way.

The Holy Spirit is grieved by their yielding to such a bondage.

I have laboured in Boston in five powerful revivals; and I must express my sincere conviction, that the greatest difficulty in the way of overcoming Unitarianism, and the forms of error there, is the timidity of Christians. Knowing that they are constantly exposed to the criticisms of Unitarians, they have become over-cautious. Their faith has been depressed; and I do fear that the prevalence of Unitarianism and Universalism has kept them back from holding forth the danger of the impenitent, as President Edwards presented it. The doctrine of endless punishment, the necessity of entire sanctification, or the giving up of all sin, as a condition of salvation, indeed the doctrines that are calculated to arouse men, are not, I fear, held forth with that frequency and power that are indispensable to the salvation of that city.

The little church at the Marlborough Chapel was desirous that I should become their pastor; and I left Boston with this question before my mind. Afterward Brother Sears came with a formal call to take up my abode there; but when he arrived in Oberlin, and consulted the brethren about the propriety of my going, they so much discouraged him, that he did not lay the question before me at all.

CHAPTER 27

FIRST VISIT TO ENGLAND

Having had repeated and urgent invitations to visit England, and labour for the promotion of revivals in that country, I embarked with my wife, (ed. Mr. Finney had remarried at this time. The fortunate lady was Mrs. Elizabeth F. Atkinson, of Rochester) in the autumn of 1849, and, after a stormy passage, arrived at Southampton early in November. There we met the pastor of the church in Houghton, a village situated midway between the market towns of Huntingdon and Saint Ives. Mr. Potto Brown, a very benevolent man, had sent Mr. James Harcourt, his pastor, to meet us.

Mr. Potto Brown was, by parentage and education, a Quaker. He and a partner were engaged in the milling business, and belonged to a congregation of Independents, in Saint Ives. They became affected in view of the state of things in their neighbourhood. The Church seemed to be effecting very little for the salvation of souls; there were no schools, outside of the Church schools, for the education of the poor; and the mass of the people were neglected. After prayer and consultation with each other, they agreed to adopt measures for the education of the children in the villages around them, and to extend this influence. They also agreed to apply their means, to the best advantage, in establishing worship, and in building up churches independent of the Establishment.

Not long after this enterprise was commenced, Mr. Brown's partner died. His wife had died before him; and his partner committed his family, consisting of several sons and daughters, to the fraternal care of Mr. Brown, who committed them to the training of a judicious widow, in a neighbouring village. Mr. Brown's partner, at his death, begged him not to neglect the work which they had projected; but to pursue it with vigour and singleness of eye. Mr. Brown's heart was in the work. His partner left a large property to his children. Mr. Brown had but two sons. He was a man of simple habits, and expended but little money upon himself or his family. He employed a school-teacher in the village where he resided, and built a chapel. They called a minister, who held hyper-Calvinistic views; and consequently he laboured year after year with no results.

Mr. Brown had frequent conversations with his minister, about the want of results. He was paying salary, and laying out money in various ways, to promote religion, but few or none were converted. He laid this matter before his minister so frequently, that he finally replied, "Mr. Brown, am I God, that I can convert souls? I preach to them the Gospel, and God does not convert them; am I to blame?" Mr. Brown replied, "Whether you are God or no, we must have conversions. The people must be converted." So this minister was dismissed. Rev. James Harcourt was employed, an open communion Baptist, a talented man, a rousing preacher, and an earnest labourer. Under his preaching, conversions began to appear, and the work went on hopefully.

Their little church increased in numbers and in faith and the leaven was extending gradually, but perceptibly, on every side.

They soon extended their operations to neighbouring villages; but still they did not know how to promote revivals. The children of his partner, who had been left under his charge, and had grown up to be young men and women, were not converted. Mr.

Brown had a large number of very interesting and influential friends, for whose salvation he felt deep interest. He was also very anxious about the children of his deceased partner. For the education of his sons he had employed a teacher; and a considerable number of young men had studied with his sons. This family school, to which young men in various parts of the county had been invited, had created a strong bond of interest between Mr. Brown and these families. Mr. Harcourt's labours, for some reason, did not reach these families. He was successful among the poorer and lower classes, was zealous and devoted, and preached the Gospel. As Mr. Brown said, "He was a powerful minister of Jesus Christ." But still he wanted experience, to reach the class of persons that Mr. Brown had more particularly on his own heart. These brethren frequently talked the matter over and inquired how they could reach that class of persons, and draw them to Christ. Mr. Harcourt said that he had done all that he could, and that something else must be done, or he did not see that this class would be reached at all.

He had read my Revival Lectures, and he finally suggested to Mr. Brown the propriety of writing to me, to see if I would not come and labour with them. This led to my receiving a very earnest request from Mr. Brown, to visit them. He conversed also with many other people, and with some ministers; which led to my receiving divers letters of invitation to visit England.

When we arrived, and had rested a few days, I began in the village chapel. I soon found that Mr. Brown was a remarkable man; he was catholic in his views, and was labouring, in an independent way, directly for the salvation of the people. He had wealth, and his property was constantly and rapidly increasing. His history his reminded me many times of the proverb: "There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty."

While we were there, he threw his house open morning, noon, and evening, and invited friends, far and near, to come. They came in great numbers, so that his table was surrounded, at nearly every meal, with divers persons who had been invited, that I might have conversation with them, and that they might attend our meetings.

A revival commenced, and spread. The children of his partner were soon interested in religion, and converted. The work spread among those that came from neighbouring villages. They heard and gladly received the Word; and so extensive and thorough was the work that, before I left, he said that the Lord had not left one out, for whom he had felt anxiety, and for whose conversion he had been praying.

The conversion of this large number of persons, scattered over the county, made a very favourable impression where they were known. The house of worship at Houghton was small, but was packed at every meeting; and the devotedness and engagedness of Mr. Brown and his wife, were affecting. There seemed to be no bounds to their hospitality. Their schoolmaster was a religious man, and would run in every day, and almost every meal, and sit down to enjoy the conversation. Gentlemen would come in from a distance of many miles, early enough to breakfast. The young men who had been educated with his sons, were invited, and came; and I believe every one of them was converted. Thus his largest desires in regard to them were fulfilled; and very much more among the masses was done, than he had expected. Mr. Harcourt had at that

time several preaching places in the villages. The savour of this work at Houghton continued for years. Mr. Harcourt informed me, that he preached in a praying atmosphere, and with a melting state of feeling around, as long as he remained.

I did not remain long in Houghton at this time. Among the brethren who had written, urging me to come to England, was Mr. Roe, a Baptist minister of Birmingham. He came to Houghton, and spent several days, attending the meetings and witnessing the results.

About the middle of December we went to Birmingham, to labour in the congregation of Mr. Roe. Here we were introduced to Rev. John Angell James, a good, and a great man, who wielded a very extensive influence throughout England.

When my Revival Lectures were first published in England, Mr. James wrote an Introduction, highly commending them; but when I arrived in Birmingham, I was informed that, after Mr. James had publicly recommended them, in meetings of ministers, and by his pen, he had been informed, by men belonging to certain circles on this side of the Atlantic, that those revivals that had occurred, under my ministry especially, had turned out very disastrously; and that to such an extent had these representations been made to him, that he had taken back what he had said publicly, in favour of those Lectures.

However, when he saw me, he called the Independent ministers to a breakfast at his house, and requested me to attend. This is the common way of doing things in England. After breakfast, he said to his brethren, that he had been impressed that they were falling greatly short of accomplishing the end of their ministry; that they were too well satisfied to have the people attend meeting, pay the minister's salary, keep up the Sabbath school, and move on with an outward prosperity; while the conversions were few, and, after all, the people were going to destruction. I was told by Mr. Roe, that there were, in Mr. James's own congregation, not less than fifteen hundred impenitent sinners. At the breakfast at Mr. James's, he expressed himself very warmly, and said that something must be done.

Finally the ministers agreed upon holding meetings, as soon as I could comply with their request, in the different churches, in succession; but for some weeks, I confined my labours to Mr. Roe's congregation, and there was such a movement as they had never seen, The revival swept through the congregation, and a very large proportion of the impenitent were turned to Christ. Mr. Roe entered heart and soul into the work. He was not at all sectarian or prejudiced; but he opened his heart to Divine influence, and poured out himself in labours for souls, like a man in earnest. Day after day he would sit and converse with inquirers, and direct them to Christ. His time was almost entirely taken up with this work, for many days. His church was one of the few close-Communion churches in England, as nearly all the Baptists in England are open-Communionists.

After the number of conversions had become large, the church began to examine converts for admission. They examined a number, and were about to hold Communion. I preached in the morning, and they were to hold their Communion in the afternoon. When the morning service was closed, Mr. Roe requested the church to remain for a

few moments. My wife and myself retired after the morning service, and went to our lodgings. After a little time, Mr. Roe came home, and entered our room with a smile on his face, saying, "What do you think our church has done? They have voted unanimously to invite you and Mrs. Finney to our Communion." Their close Communion was more than they could sustain, on such an occasion as that. However, we concluded that we had better not accept their invitation, lest they had taken the vote under a pressure that might create reaction and regret afterwards.

I accepted the invitations to labour in their pulpits. The congregations were crowded; a great interest was excited; and the numbers that would gather after preaching, under an invitation for inquirers, was large. Their largest vestries would be packed with inquirers.

I soon found that Mr. James was receiving letters from various quarters, warning him against the influence of my labours. He had acquaintances on this side of the Atlantic; and some of them had written. From various parts of his own country, the same pressure was made. He was frank, and told me how the matter stood; and I was as frank with him. I said, "Brother James, your responsibility is great. I am aware that your influence is great; and these letters show both your influence and your responsibility. You are led to think that I am heretical in my views. You hear my preaching, and know whether I preach the Gospel or not."

I had taken with me my two volumes of Systematic Theology. I said to him, "Have you heard me preach anything that is not Gospel?" He said, "No, not anything at all." "Well," said I, "now I have my Systematic Theology, which I teach to my classes at home, and which I everywhere preach; and I want you to read it." He was very earnest to do so. I soon saw that there was a venerable gentleman with him at our meetings; and when I called for inquirers, they would stand where they could get a place, and hear all that was said. Who this gentleman was, I was not aware. For several nights they came; but Mr. James did not introduce me, nor come near to speak.

After things had gone on in this way for a week or two, Mr. James and his friend called at our lodgings. He introduced me to Dr. Redford, informing me that he was one of their most prominent theologians; that he had more confidence in Dr. Redford's theological acumen than he had in his own; and that he had requested him to visit Birmingham, attend the meetings, and especially to unite with him in reading my Theology. He said they had been reading it; and Dr. Redford would like to have some conversation on certain points of theology. We conversed freely; and Dr. Redford said, frankly, "Brother James, I see no reason for regarding Mr. Finney, in any respect, as unsound. He has his own way of stating theological propositions; but I can not see that he differs, on any essential point, from us."

They had with them a little manual, published by the Congregational Union of England and Wales, in which was found a brief statement of their theological views. They read to me certain portions of this manual; and in my turn I questioned them. I heard their explanations, and was satisfied that there was a substantial agreement between us.

Dr. Redford remained some time longer, then went home, and with my consent took my Systematic Theology, and said he would read it carefully, and write to me his

views. I observed that he was indeed at home in theology, was a scholar and a Christian, and thoroughly educated. I was, therefore, the more willing to have him criticise my theology, that if there was anything that needed to be retracted or amended, he might point it out. I requested him to do so, thoroughly and frankly. I received a letter from him, expressing his strong approbation of my views, saying that there were a few points upon which he would like to make some inquiries; and he wished me, as soon as I could get away, to preach for him.

I continued in Birmingham about three months. There were many interesting conversions; and yet the ministers were not then prepared to commit themselves heartily to the use of the necessary means, to spread the revival.

It is generally known, that Unitarianism in England was first developed and promulgated in Birmingham. That was the home of old Dr. Priestley, who was one of the principal, if not one of the first, Unitarian ministers in England. His congregation I found still in existence. One evening, I preached on “Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost.” I dwelt first upon the Divinity and Personality of the Holy Ghost. I then endeavoured to show in how many ways, and on how many points, men resist the Divine teaching; that when convinced by the Holy Spirit, they still persist in taking their own course; and that in all such cases they are resisting the Holy Spirit.

A lady who was present at the meeting, and who came into the family where we were guests, remarked that she observed a Unitarian minister present. I remarked that that must have sounded strangely in the ears of a Unitarian. She replied, she hoped it would do him good. Not long after this, and when I was labouring in London, I received a letter from this minister, giving an account of the great change wrought in his experience by means of that sermon. This letter I give, as follows:

August 16, 1850.

Rev. and Dear Sir:

Learning from the *Banner* that you are about to take your departure from England, I feel it would be somewhat ungrateful, if I allow you to go, without expressing the obligation I am conscious of being under to you, for the benefit I received from a sermon of yours, preached in Steel-house Lane, Birmingham. I think it was the last sermon you preached, and was on resisting the Holy Spirit; but I have never been able to find the text. Indeed, in the interest of the points that most concerned me, I thought no more about the text for two or three days after. In order that you may understand the benefit I received from that sermon, it is necessary that I should recount, briefly, my peculiar position at the time.

I was educated at one of our Dissenting colleges, for the ministry among the Independents. I entered upon the ministry, and continued to exercise it about seven years. During that time, I gradually underwent a change in my theological views. The change was produced, I think, partly by philosophical speculations, and partly in the deterioration that had taken place in my spiritual condition. I would say with deepest sorrow, my piety never recovered the tone it lost in my passage through college. I attribute all my sorrows principally to this. My speculations led me, without ever

having read Dr. Williams's book on Divine Sovereignty and Equity, to adopt fundamentally his views. The reading of his book fully perfected my system. Sin is a defect, arising out of the necessary defectibility of a creature, when unsupplied with the grace of God. The fall of man, therefore, expresses nothing but the inevitable original imperfection of the human race. The great end of God's moral government, is to correct this imperfection by education and revelation, and to ultimately perfect man's condition. I had already, and long previously, adopted Dr. Jenkyn's views of spiritual influence.

Under the guidance of such principles, you will understand, without my explaining, how sin became a mere misfortune, temporarily permitted; or rather a necessary evil, to be remedied by infinite wisdom and goodness how eternal punishment became a cruelty, not for one moment to be thought of, in the dispensation of a good Being; and how the Atonement became a perfect absurdity, founded upon unphilosophical views of sin. I became thoroughly Unitarian; and in the beginning of the year 1848, I professed my Unitarianism, and became minister of a church. The tendencies of my mind, however, were fortunately too logical for me long to be able to rest in Unitarianism. I pushed my conclusions to simple Deism, and then found they must go still further. For this I was not prepared. My whole soul started back in horror. I reviewed my principles. A revolution took place in my whole system of philosophy. The doctrine of responsibility was restored to me, in its most strict and literal sense, and with it a deep consciousness of sin. I need not enter into minute details, with reference to my struggles and mental sufferings.

About two weeks before I heard you, I saw clearly I must some day or other re-adopt the Evangelical system. I never had doubted it was the system of the Bible. I became Unitarian upon purely rationalistic grounds. But now I found I must accept the Bible, or perish in darkness. You may imagine the agonies of spirit I had to endure. On the one hand were convictions, becoming stronger every day, the sense of sin, and the need of Christ, obtaining a firmer hold over my heart, and the miserable condition of withholding the truth I knew from the people looking up to me for instruction. On the other hand, if I professed myself, I instantly, in the sight of all parties, - especially with that great majority having no sympathy with such struggles, ruined my character by my apparent fickleness, and threw myself, my wife and children upon the world. I could not make up my mind to this alternative. I had resolved to wait, gradually to prepare the people's minds for the change, and by exercising a more rigid economy for some months, to make provision for our temporal wants during the period of transition. In this state of mind I heard your sermon. You will recollect it, and easily comprehend the effect it produced. I felt the truth of your arguments. Your appeals came home irresistibly to my heart; and that night, on my way home, I vowed before God, come what would, I would at once consecrate myself afresh to that Saviour whose blood I had so recently learned to value, and whose value I had done so much to dishonour.

The result is, through the kind influence of Mr., I have lately become the minister of the church in this town. The peace of mind I now enjoy does indeed surpass all understanding. I never before found such an absorbing pleasure in the work of the ministry. I enter fully into the significance of what Paul says, 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.' I can not tell you, therefore, with how many feelings of gratitude your name will be associated in my soul. I bless God for the kind providence that

brought me to hear you. It seems to me, now, more than probable, had I not heard you, my newly-awakened religious life would soon have been destroyed by continued resistance to my deep convictions. My conscience would again have become hardened, and I should have died in my sins. Through the grace of God, I shall trace up to you any usefulness God may hereafter crown my labours with; and I feel it would be unjust to withhold from you the knowledge of this fruit of your labours. May God, of His infinite mercy and grace, grant you a long life of even greater usefulness than He has yet blessed you with, will be the constant prayer.

Yours very truly,

When I received this letter, I was labouring with Rev. John Campbell in the old Tabernacle of Whitefield in London. He read it over with emotion, and exclaimed, "There, that is worth coming to England for!"

From Birmingham I went to Worcester, about the middle of March, to labour with Dr. Redford. I had with me my replies to various criticisms which had been published, and these I handed to Dr. Redford. He read them through, and then said, "Those replies have cleared up all the questions on which I wished to converse; therefore I am fully satisfied that you are right." After that, in no instance did he make a criticism upon any part of my Theology. Those who have seen the English edition of that work, are aware that he wrote a preface, in which he commended it to the Christian public.

When he had read through my replies to those reviews, he expressed a strong desire that the work should immediately be published in England; and said that he thought the work was greatly needed. His opinion had great weight in England, upon theological questions. Dr. Campbell affirmed in his newspaper, that Dr. Redford was the greatest theologian in Europe. I remained in Worcester several weeks, and preached for Dr. Redford, and also for a Baptist congregation. There were many conversions; and the work was interesting.

Some wealthy gentlemen in Worcester proposed to erect a movable house of worship—one that could be taken down and transported from place to place upon the railway, and, at slight expense, set up, with its seats and furniture. They proposed to build it one hundred and fifty feet square, with seats so constructed as to provide for five or six thousand people. They said, if I would consent to use it, and preach in it as circumstances might demand, for six months, they would be at the expense; but on consulting the ministers, they advised me not to do it. They thought it would be more useful for me to occupy pulpits in established congregations, in different parts, than to go preaching in an independent way, such as was proposed.

As I had reason to believe the ministers generally would disapprove of a course then so novel, I declined to pledge myself. I have since thought that I probably made a mistake; for when I came to be acquainted with the churches of the Independent congregations, I found them generally so small and badly ventilated, so hedged in and circumscribed by the Establishment, that it has since appeared doubtful whether I was right; as I have been of opinion that I could have accomplished much greater good by carrying my own place of worship with me, going where I pleased, and providing for the gathering of

the masses, irrespective of denominations. If my strength were now as it was then, I should be inclined to visit England and try an experiment of that kind. Dr. Redford was affected by the work in Worcester; and at the anniversaries in London, he addressed the Congregational Union, and gave a very interesting account of this work. I attended those May meetings, being about to commence labour with Dr. John Campbell.

Dr. Campbell was a successor of Whitefield, and pastor of the church at the Tabernacle in Finsbury, and also of the Tottenham Court Road Chapel. These chapels are both in London, and about three miles apart. They were built for Whitefield, and occupied by him for years. Dr. Campbell was also at that time editor of *The British Banner*, *The Christian Witness*, and one or two other periodicals. His voice was such that he did not preach, but gave his time to editing. He lived in the parsonage in which Whitefield resided, and used the same library that Whitefield had used. Whitefield's portrait hung in his study; the savour of his name was still there; yet the spirit that had been upon him was not very apparent in the church. Dr. Campbell supplied his pulpit by employing, for a few weeks at a time, the most popular ministers that could be engaged.

Dr. Campbell's house of worship was compactly seated, and could accommodate three thousand persons. A friend took particular pains to ascertain which would hold the greater number of people, the Tabernacle in Moorfields, or Exeter Hall. It was ascertained that the Tabernacle would seat some hundreds more.

CHAPTER 28

LABOURS IN THE TABERNACLE, MOORFIELDS, LONDON

I accepted Dr. Campbell's invitation to supply his pulpit for a time; and after the May meetings I went in earnest for a revival, though I said no such thing to Dr. Campbell. I preached a course of sermons designed to convict people of sin, as deeply and as universally as possible. I saw that the Word was taking effect.

Religion had so declined throughout London, that very few weekly sermons were preached; and Dr. Campbell said that he believed I preached to more people during the week evenings, than all the rest of the ministers in London together. I found Dr. Campbell to be an earnest man, much given to controversy.

After preaching for weeks in the manner described, it was time to call for inquirers; but Dr. Campbell had no such idea in his mind. Indeed, he had not sat where he could witness what was going on in the congregation, as I could from the pulpit; and if he had done, he probably would not have understood it. The practice in that church is, to hold a Communion service every alternate Sabbath evening. On these occasions they would have a short sermon, then dismiss the congregation; and all would retire, except those that had tickets for the Communion, who would remain while that ordinance was celebrated.

On the Sabbath morning to which I have referred, I said to Dr. Campbell, "You have a Communion service to-night, and I must have a meeting of inquiry at the same time. Have you any room to which I can invite inquirers?" He hesitated, and expressed doubts whether there were any that would attend such a meeting. However, as I pressed the matter, he replied, "Yes, there is the infant school-room, to which you might invite them." I inquired how many persons it could accommodate. He replied, "From twenty to thirty, or perhaps forty." "Oh," I said, "that is not half large enough. Have you not a larger room?" At this he expressed astonishment; and inquired if I thought there was interest enough in the congregation to warrant any such invitation. I told him there were hundreds of inquirers in the congregation; but at this he laughed, and said it was impossible. I asked him if he had not a larger room. "Why, yes," he said, "there is the British School-room. But that will hold fifteen or sixteen hundred; of course you don't want that." "Yes," said I, "that is the very room. Where is it?" "Oh," said he, "surely you will not venture to appoint a meeting there. Not half as many would attend, I presume, as could get into the infant school-room. Mr. Finney, remember you are in England, and in London; and that you are not acquainted with our people. You might get people to attend such a meeting, under such a call as you propose to make, in America; but you will not get people to attend here. Remember that our evening service is out before the sun is down, at this time of year. And do you suppose that in the midst of London, under an invitation to those that are seeking the salvation of their souls, and are anxious on that subject, that they will single themselves out, right in the daytime, and, under such a call as that, publicly given, to attend such a meeting as that?" I replied, "Dr. Campbell, I know what the state of the people is, better than you do. The Gospel is as well adapted to the English as to American people; and I have no fears that pride will prevent their responding, any more than it would in America.

I asked him where that room was; and so to specify it, that I could point it out to the people, and make the appeal that I intended to make. The Doctor reluctantly consented; but told me expressly, that I must take the responsibility, that he would not share it. I replied that I expected to take the responsibility, and was prepared to do so. He then gave me particular directions about the place, which was but a little distance from the Tabernacle. We went to meeting; I preached in the morning, and again in the evening, a short sermon, and then informed the people what I desired. I called upon all who were anxious, and who were then disposed to make peace with God, to attend a meeting for instruction adapted to their state. I said, "Professors of religion are not invited to attend this meeting. There is to be a Communion service here; let them remain. Careless sinners are not invited. Those, and those only, are expected, who are not Christians, but who are anxious for salvation, and wish instruction given them upon the question of present duty." Dr. Campbell listened with attention; and I presume he expected that few, if any, would attend. I was determined not to have the mass of the people go into that room; and that those who did go, should go with the understanding that they were inquiring sinners. I felt entirely confident that hundreds were prepared to respond.

Dr. Campbell looked to see which way the congregation went; and Cowper Street was perfectly crowded with people pressing into the British School-room. I passed out, and waited at the entrance till the multitude went in. Dr. Campbell's impression was, that there were not less than fifteen or sixteen hundred present.

I soon discovered that the congregation were pressed with conviction, that great care needed to be taken to prevent an explosion of feeling. Dr. Campbell, observing such a crowd, was full of anxiety to be present, and hastened through his Communion services. He looked amazed at the crowd, and especially at the feeling manifested. I addressed them on the question of immediate duty; and endeavoured to make them understand that God required of them then to yield entirely to His will, to ground their weapons of rebellion, make their submission, and accept Jesus as their Redeemer.

I had been in England long enough to feel the necessity of being particular in giving such instructions as would do away their idea of waiting God's time. I aimed my remarks at the subversion of those ideas, in which many of them had been educated; for but few belonged to Dr. Campbell's congregation. I tried to guard them, on the one hand, against hyper-Calvinism, and on the other against low Arminianism.

I then, after I had laid the Gospel net, prepared to draw it ashore. As I was about to ask them to kneel and commit themselves for ever to Christ, a man cried out in distress, that he had sinned away his day of grace. There was danger of an uproar; and I called on the people to kneel; but to keep so quiet that they could hear the prayer. They did keep still, although there was sobbing and weeping in every part of the house.

After this I held similar meetings, with similar results, while I remained with that congregation, in all nine months. The interest extended so far, that inquirers could not be accommodated in that school-room; and frequently, when I saw that the impression was general, after giving suitable instructions, and bringing them face to face with the question of present surrender to Christ, I would call on those prepared to do this to stand while we offered them to God in prayer. The aisles were so narrow and so

packed, that it was impossible to use the anxious seat, or for people to move about in the congregation.

When I made calls for people to arise, hundreds would arise; and on some occasions, if the house seated as many as was supposed, not less than two thousand people arose; and yet I did not call upon church-members to stand.

Dissenters in England had been for a good while endeavouring to persuade the Government to have more respect in their action to the Dissenting interest in that country; but they had always been answered in a way that implied that the Dissenting interest was small, as compared with that of the Established Church. So much had been said on this subject, that the Government determined to take measures to ascertain the relative strength of the two parties. On a certain Saturday night, without previous warning, a message was secretly sent to every place of worship in the kingdom, requesting that individuals should be selected to stand at the doors of places of worship in the whole kingdom, on the next morning, to take the census of all that entered. Such a notice was sent to Dr. Campbell; but I did not know it till afterward. In obedience to directions, he placed men at every door of the Tabernacle, with instructions to count every person that went in; during morning service. I believe this census proved that Dissenters were in the majority; but however this may be, Dr. Campbell told me that the men stationed at the doors of the Tabernacle reported several thousands more than could at any one time get into the house. This arose from the fact that multitudes entered, and finding no seat would give place to others. The interest was so great, that a building that would hold many thousands would have been just as full as the Tabernacle.

Whence they all came, Dr. Campbell did not know, and no one could tell; but that hundreds and thousands of them were converted, there is no reason to doubt. Indeed, I saw and conversed with vast numbers, and laboured in this way to the full limit of my strength.

On Saturday evening, inquirers and converts would come for conversation. Great numbers came every week, and conversions multiplied. People came from every part of the city. Many walked several miles every Sabbath to attend. Soon I began to be accosted in the streets by people who knew me, and had been blessed in our meetings. Indeed, the word of God was greatly blessed in London at that time.

One day Dr. Campbell requested me to make a few remarks to the scholars in the British School-room. I began by asking what they proposed to do with their education, and dwelt upon their responsibility. I tried to show how great a blessing their education would be to them and to the world, if they used it aright; and what a curse it would be if they used it selfishly. The point was strongly urged. Dr. Campbell afterward remarked that a goodly number had been received into the church, who were awakened and led to seek salvation. He said he had no expectation that such a result would follow.

The ministers in England as well as in this country, had lost sight, in great measure, of the necessity of pressing present obligations home upon the consciences of the people. "Why," said Dr. Campbell, when he told me of this, "I don't understand it. You did not

say anything but what anybody else might have said just as well.” “Yes,” I replied, “they might have said it; but would they have said it? Would they have made as direct and pointed an appeal to the consciences as I did?” This is the difficulty. Ministers talk about sinners; and do not make the impression that God commands them now to repent; and thus they throw their ministry away.

Two young men who were acquaintances, but had very different views of preaching, were settled at no great distance from each other. One had a revival in his congregation, the other had none. One was having continual accessions to his church, the other none. They met one day, and he who had no accession inquired the cause of the difference; and asked if he might take one of his sermons and preach it, and see if it had any different effect. The arrangement was made; he preached the borrowed sermon, a sermon, though written, yet constructed for the purpose of bringing sinners face to face with their duty to God. At the close he saw that many were affected, and remained in their seats weeping. He therefore made a profound apology, saying he hoped he had not hurt their feelings, for he did not intend it.

My own mind was exercised in view of the moral desolation of London. The places of worship were sufficient to accommodate only a small part of the inhabitants. But I was greatly interested in a movement that sprang up among the Episcopalians. Numbers of their ministers attended our meetings. One of the rectors, Mr. Allen, became much engaged, and made up his mind that he would try to promote a revival in his own parish. He went round and established twenty prayer-meetings in his parish, at different points. He went to preaching with all his might, directly to the people. The Lord greatly blessed his labours; and before I left, not less than fifteen hundred persons had been hopefully converted. Several other Episcopal ministers were stirred and quickened in their souls, and went to holding protracted or continuous services. When I left, there were four or five Episcopal churches that were holding daily meetings, and making efforts to promote a revival. In every instance they were blessed and refreshed. It was ten years before I visited London again; and the work had never ceased; it had been enlarging its borders, and spreading in different directions. I found many converts labouring in different parts in various ways, and with great success.

I was scarcely ever more drawn out in prayer for any place than I was for London. Sometimes, when I prayed, in public especially, it seemed, with the multitudes before me, as if I could not stop; that the spirit of prayer would almost draw me out of myself, in pleadings for the city at large. I had hardly more than arrived in England, before I began to receive multitudes of invitations to preach, for the purpose of taking collections to pay the pastor’s salary, to pay for a chapel, or to raise money for the Sabbath-school, or some such object. Had I complied with their requests, I could have done nothing else; but I told them I had not come to get money; my object was to win souls to Christ.

After I had preached for Dr. Campbell about four months and a half I became hoarse; and my wife’s health also became affected.

Up to this time she had attended and taken part only in meetings for women; so new a thing in England that she had done but little thus far in that way. But while we were at Dr. Campbell’s, a request was made that she would attend a tea-meeting of poor

women without education and without religion. Tea-meetings in England bring together people for any special object. Such a meeting was called by some benevolent Christian gentlemen and ladies, and my wife found the place crowded and, in addition to the women, a considerable number of gentlemen, who were interested. She waited a little, expecting that they would retire; but as they remained she arose, apologised for being called to speak in public, informing them that she had never been in the habit of doing so. She had then been my wife a little more than a year, and had never been abroad to labour in revivals, until we went to England. She made an address of about three-quarters of an hour in length, and with manifest good results. The poor women seemed to be moved and interested; and when she had done speaking some gentlemen arose, and expressed their satisfaction. They said they had had prejudices against women speaking in public; but they could see no objection under such circumstances, and they saw that it was calculated to do good. They therefore requested her to attend other meetings, which she did. She told me what she had done, and said that she did not know but it would excite the prejudices of the people of England, and perhaps do more harm than good. I feared this myself and so expressed myself; yet, after more consideration, I encouraged it. From that time she became more accustomed to that kind of labour; and after we returned she continued to labour with her own sex wherever we went.

There were a number of interesting cases of conversion in London, from almost all classes. I preached on confession and restitution; the results of which were wonderful. Almost every form of crime was thus searched out and confessed. Hundreds, and I believe thousands, of pounds sterling were paid over to make restitution.

Every one acquainted with London is aware that from November to March the city is gloomy, and has a miserable atmosphere either to breathe or to speak in. We went early in May. In September my friend Brown, of Houghton, called, and seeing the state of health that we were in, said, "This will never do. You must go to France, or somewhere on the Continent where they can not understand your language; for there is no rest for you in England as long as you are able to speak." After talking the matter over, we concluded to go for a while to France. He handed me fifty pounds sterling, to meet our expenses. We went to Paris, and various other places in France. We avoided making acquaintances, and kept ourselves quiet. The influence of the change upon my wife was very marked; she recovered her full tone of strength very rapidly. I gradually got over my hoarseness; and after an absence of six weeks we returned to the Tabernacle, where we continued till early in April, when we left for home. I left England with great reluctance; we had become interested in the people, and desired very much to remain and protract our labours; but the prosperity of our College seemed to require that I should return. On the day that we sailed, a multitude of people who had been interested in our labours, gathered upon the wharf. A great majority of them were young converts. The ship had to wait for the tide; and for several hours there was a vast crowd waiting to see it off. Tearing away from such loving hearts, completely overcame my wife. As soon as the ship was clear of the dock, she retired to our state-room. I remained upon deck and watched the waving of handkerchiefs until we were out of sight.

CHAPTER 29

LABOURS IN HARTFORD AND IN SYRACUSE

We arrived at Oberlin in May, 1851, and after the labours of the summer, left for New York, expecting to spend the winter, as I had been invited, in Dr. Thompson's church, the old Broadway Tabernacle. But after preaching there a short time, I found so many hindrances, especially the interruption of our evening services by the practice of letting the Tabernacle for lectures, that I despaired of success. I therefore left, and accepted an invitation to go to Hartford; I was invited by Rev. William W. Patton, pastor of one of the Congregational Churches of that city.

Soon after I began, a revival influence was manifested; but there was an unhappy disagreement between Dr. Hawes and Dr. Bushnell. The orthodoxy of Dr. Bushnell had been called in question. Dr. Hawes was himself of the opinion that Dr. Bushnell's views were highly objectionable. However, both attended our meetings, and manifested interest in the work, which they saw begun. They invited me to preach in their churches; still the lay brethren through the city felt as if the disagreement was a stumbling-block: and there was urgency expressed to have the ministers come more fraternally together, and take a united stand before the people. The people generally did not sympathise with strong views in regard to the orthodoxy of Dr. Bushnell.

I had a fraternal conversation with Dr. Hawes, and told him that he was in a false position, that people felt tried with his laying so great stress upon what he called errors of Dr. Bushnell, and that they generally did not justify him in the position occupied. Dr. Hawes was a good man, and manifestly felt his responsibility deeply.

One evening I had been preaching for Brother Patton, and the three congregational ministers were present. They followed me to my lodgings, and Dr. Hawes said, "Brother Finney, we are satisfied that the Spirit of the Lord is poured out; and now, what can we as ministers do to promote this work?" "I told them freely what I thought; that a great responsibility rested upon them, and it seemed to me that it was for them to say whether the work should become general or not; that if they could reconcile their differences, and come out before the churches, and be united, and take hold of the work, a great obstacle would be removed; and that I thought we might expect the work to spread rapidly on every hand. They saw their position; Dr. Hawes and Dr. Bushnell came to an understanding to lay aside difficulties, and promote the work.

Dr. Hawes was too good a man to persist in anything that would prevent his doing whatever he could consistently do; therefore from that time we seemed to work together with cordiality. The work spread into all the congregations, and went on hopefully; but there was one peculiarity that I have never forgotten. I believe every Sabbath that I was in that city, it stormed furiously; such a succession of stormy Sabbaths I almost never witnessed. However, our meetings were fully attended; and for a place like Hartford the work became extensive.

Those who are acquainted with Hartford know how fastidious and precise the people are in all they do. They were afraid of measures other than prayer-meetings, preaching, and meetings for inquiry. It was out of the question to call on sinners to break away

from fear of man, and give themselves to God. Consequently I could do no such thing there. One night the number of inquirers was large; and I called on those that were willing to give themselves to God, to kneel. This startled Dr. Hawes; and he remarked that none were requested to do so unless they did it cheerfully, of their own accord. They did kneel, and we prayed. Dr. Hawes remarked, as the inquirers rose: "I have always felt the necessity of some such measure, but have been afraid to use it. I have always seen that something was needed to bring persons to a stand, and to induce them to act on their present convictions; but I have not had courage to propose anything of the kind." I said that I had found some such measure indispensable, to bring sinners to submission.

In this revival there was a great deal of praying young converts, especially, gave themselves to prayer. One evening one invited another to go home with him, and they would hold a season of prayer together. The Lord was with them; the next evening they invited others, the next more still, until the meeting became so large that they were obliged to divide. These meetings were held after the preaching. The second meeting soon became too large for the room, and that again was divided. These multiplied, until the young converts were almost universally in the habit of holding meetings for prayer, in different places, after the preaching. Finally, to these meetings they invited inquirers, and such as wished to be prayed for. This led to an organised effort for the salvation of souls.

A very interesting state of things sprung up in the public schools. Ministers had agreed that they would not make any religious efforts there, because it excited jealousy on the part of different denominations. One morning a large number of lads were so affected that they could not study, and asked their teacher to pray for them. He was not a professor of religion, and sent for one of the pastors, informing him of the state of things, and requesting him to come and hold some religious service. He declined, saying that there was an understanding among pastors that they would not go to schools, to hold any religious services. He sent for another, and another; but they told him he must pray for the scholars himself. This brought a severe pressure upon him; but it resulted in his giving his own heart to God, and in his taking measures for the conversion of the school. A goodly number of scholars in various common schools were converted.

Every one acquainted with Hartford knows that its inhabitants are very intelligent, that all classes are educated, and that there is, perhaps, no city in the world where education of so high an order is so general. When the converts came to be received, some six hundred united with their churches. Dr. Hawes said, "What shall we do with these young converts? If we should form them into a church by themselves, they would make admirable workers for the salvation of souls. If, however, we receive them to our churches, where we have so many elderly men and women, who are always expected to take the lead in everything, their modesty will make them fall in behind; and they will live as they have lived, and be inefficient." However, as I understood, the young converts, of both sexes, formed themselves into a kind of city missionary society, and organised for the purpose of making efforts to convert souls throughout the city. One of the principal young ladies undertook to reclaim, and if possible save, a class of young men who belonged to prominent and wealthy families, but had fallen into bad habits and moral decay, and had lost the respect of the people.

The position and character of this lady rendered it proper for her to make such an effort, without creating a suspicion of any impropriety. She sought an opportunity to converse with this class; and brought them together for conversation and prayer, and was very successful in reclaiming numbers. The converts of that revival were a great power in that city for good; and many remain, and are very active in promoting religion.

Mrs. Finney established prayer-meetings for ladies, which were held in the vestry of the churches. These were largely attended, and became very interesting. The ladies were united, and very much in earnest, and became a principal power, under God, in promoting His work.

We left about the first of April, and went to New York on our way home. There I preached for Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, in Brooklyn; and there was a growing and deepening religious influence among the people. I preached but a few times, because health gave way, and I was obliged to desist. We came home, and went on with our labours here as usual, with the almost uniform result of a great degree of religious influence among our students, and extending more or less generally to the inhabitants.

Next winter we left Oberlin to occupy a field to which we had been invited. While we were in Hartford we had a pressing invitation to go to the city of Syracuse. The minister of the Congregational Church came to persuade me to return with him. I could not go at that time, and thought on more about it; but on our way East, we met this minister at Rochester. He was not then the pastor of the church in Syracuse; but he felt so much interest for them, that he induced me to promise that I would stop and spend at least one Sabbath. We found the little church very much discouraged; their number was small and was mostly composed of persons of Radical views. The Presbyterians and the other churches did not sympathise with them, and it seemed as if the Congregational Church must become extinct.

I preached one Sabbath, and learned so much about the state of things as to remain another Sabbath. I began to perceive a movement among the dry bones. Some of the leading members of the Congregational Church began to make confession to each other, and public confession of wanderings from God, and of other things that had created prejudice against them. This conciliated the people around, they began to come, and soon their house was too narrow to hold the people; and although I had not expected to stay more than one Sabbath, I kept on. The interest continued to increase. The Lord removed the obstacles, and brought Christian people nearer together.

The Presbyterian churches were thrown open to our meetings, and conversions were multiplied. I directed my preaching very much to Christian people. There had been very little sympathy; and a great work was needed among professors, before the way could be prepared outside of the churches. Thus I continued to labour in the different churches, until the Second Presbyterian Church was left without a pastor; after which we concentrated our meetings and held on throughout the winter.

Here Mrs. Finney established her ladies' meetings with success. She generally held them in the lecture room of the First Presbyterian Church, commodious and convenient for such meetings. Many interesting facts occurred. Christians of different

denominations seemed to flow together, and difficulties that had existed seemed to be done away. The Presbyterian and the Congregational Churches were without pastors, and hence, none opened their doors to receive converts. I was very willing that this should be so, as I knew that there was danger, if they began to receive converts, that jealousies would spring up and mar the work.

As we were about to leave in the spring, I gave notice from the pulpit, on my own responsibility, that on the next Sabbath we should hold a Communion service, to which all Christians, who truly loved the Lord Jesus Christ, were invited. That was one of the most interesting seasons I ever witnessed. The church was filled. Two aged ministers, Fathers Waldo and Brainard, attended and helped at the service.

After I left, the churches secured pastors. That revival resulted in permanent good. The Congregational church built a larger house; and has been ever since a healthy church. The Presbyterian and the Baptist churches were much strengthened in faith and increased in numbers.

The work was deep among many professors. There was a lady of the name of C-, the wife of an unconverted husband, a lady of refinement and beauty of character and person. Her husband was a merchant, a man of good moral character. She attended our meetings, and became much convicted for a deeper work of grace in her soul. She called on me, in a state of anxious inquiry. I had conversation with her, and directed attention especially to the necessity of a thorough and universal consecration of herself and all to Christ. I told her that when she had done this, she must believe for the sealing of the Holy Spirit. She had heard the doctrine of sanctification preached, it had interested her; and her inquiry was how she should obtain it. I gave her brief direction, and she hastily left me. Such a pressure was upon her mind, that she seemed in haste to lay hold of the fullness there was in Christ. In the afternoon she returned as full of the Holy Spirit, to all human appearance, as she could be. She said she hurried home in the morning, and went to her chamber, and cast herself before God, and made a thorough consecration of herself and all to Him. She said she had clearer apprehensions of what was meant by that, than she had ever had before. Her mind became calm, she felt that she began to receive of the fullness of the Holy Spirit.

A few days afterwards her husband called with his sledge, and asked me to take a ride with him. I found that his object was to talk about his wife. He said that she was brought up among Friends, and when he married, he thought she was one of the most perfect women he ever knew; but finally she became converted, and then he observed a greater change than he thought was possible; for he thought her as perfectly moral in her outward life before as she could be. Nevertheless, the change in her spirit and bearing, at the time of her conversion, was so manifest that no one could doubt it. "Since then," he said, "I have thought her almost or quite perfect. But now she has manifestly passed through a greater change than ever. I see it in everything. There is such a spirit in her, such a change, such an energy in her religion, and such a fullness of joy and peace and love! What shall I make of it? How am I to understand this? Do such changes really take place in Christian people?"

I tried to make him understand what she was by education as a Quaker, and what conversion had done for her; and then told him that this was a fresh baptism of the

Holy Spirit, that had so greatly changed her. She has since passed away to heaven; but the savour of that anointing remained to the day of her death.

I have heard Mrs. Finney relate, that her meetings were composed of the more intelligent ladies in the different churches. There was an elderly and uneducated woman that attended, who used to speak, apparently to the annoyance of the ladies. She had the impression that it was her duty to speak at every meeting; and sometimes she would get up and complain of the Lord, that He laid it upon her to speak, while so many ladies of education were allowed to attend and take no part- to "have no cross to take up." She seemed to speak in a whining, complaining manner; and discouraged my wife. She saw that it did not interest the ladies; and it seemed an element of disturbance.

One day this old woman arose, and a new spirit was upon her. As soon as she opened her mouth it was apparent that a great change had come over her. She had come to meeting full of the Holy Ghost, and she poured out her fresh experience, to the astonishment of all. The ladies were interested; and she went forward with an earnestness in relating what the Lord had done for her, that carried conviction to every mind. All turned to hear every word, tears began to flow, and a great movement of the Spirit seemed to be visible. Such a change wrought immense good, and the old woman became a favourite. After that they expected to hear from her; and were delighted from meeting to meeting to hear her tell what the Lord had done and was doing for her soul.

I found in Syracuse a Christian whom they called Mother Austin, a woman of remarkable faith. She was entirely dependent upon charity for subsistence. She was uneducated, and had been brought up in a family of little cultivation; but she had such faith as to secure the confidence of all. The conviction seemed to be universal among both Christians and unbelievers, that Mother Austin was a saint. Many facts were related respecting her, that showed her trust in God, and in what a remarkable manner God provided for her wants. She said to me, "Brother Finney, it is impossible for me to suffer for any of the necessaries of life, because God has said: 'Trust in the Lord and do good: so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.'" She related many facts in her history, and many facts were related by others, illustrative of the power of her faith.

She said, one Saturday evening a friend, an impenitent man, called to see her; and after conversing awhile offered her, as he went away, a five dollar bill. She said that she felt an inward admonition not to take it. She felt, that it would be an act of self-righteousness on the part of that man, and might do him more harm than it would do her good. She therefore declined to take it, and he went away. She said she had just wood and food enough to last over the Sabbath; and she had no means of obtaining more; but still she was not afraid to trust God in such circumstances, as she had done for many years.

On the Sabbath there came a violent storm; on Monday the snow was several feet deep, the streets were blocked up so that there was no getting out without clearing the way. She had a son that lived with her, the two composing the family. They arose and found themselves snowed in. They contrived to muster fuel enough for a fire, and the boy began to inquire what they should have for breakfast. She said, "I do not know,

my son; but the Lord will provide." She looked out, and nobody could pass the streets. The lad began to weep bitterly, and concluded that they would freeze and starve to death. However, she said she went on and made such preparations as she could, to provide for breakfast, if any should come. I think she said she set her table, and made arrangements for breakfast, believing that some would come in due season. Very soon she heard loud talking in the streets, and went to the window to see what it was, and beheld a man in a single sledge, and some men with him shovelling the snow so that the horse could get through. They came to her door, and behold! they had brought fuel and provision, everything to make her comfortable for several days. But time would fail to tell the instances in which she was helped in a manner as striking as this. Mother Austin's faith was like a bank; she never suffered for want of the necessaries of life, because she drew on God.

CHAPTER 30

LABOURS IN WESTERN AND IN ROME, 1854-55

The next winter, at Christmas, we went to Western, Oneida county, where I commenced in 1825. The people were without a minister; and we spent several weeks in interesting labour.

One young man was the son of pious parents, and had long been made the subject of prayer. His parents were prominent members of the church; his father was one of the elders, and his mother *was* a praying woman. When I commenced he became exceedingly bitter against the preaching, and all that was done for the promotion of the revival. He committed himself with the strength of his will against it; and affirmed that neither Finney nor hell could convert him. He said very hateful and profane things; but I am not aware that he had ever been suspected of outward immorality.

But the word of God pressed him, till he could stand it no longer. He came to my room; his appearance was truly startling. I seldom if ever saw a person whose mind had made such an impression upon his countenance. He appeared almost insane; and trembled in such a manner that when he was seated, the furniture was jarred by his trembling. When I took his hand, it was cold; his lips were blue; his whole appearance was alarming. The fact is, he had stood out against convictions as long as he could endure. When he sat clown, I said, "My dear young man, what is the matter?" "Oh," said he, "I have committed the unpardonable sin." I replied, "What makes you say so?" "Oh," said he, "I know that I have; and I did it on purpose."

He said, "Several years ago a book was put into my hands called, 'The Pirate's Own Book.' I read it, and it produced a most extraordinary effect upon my mind. It inspired me with a kind of terrible and infernal ambition to be the greatest pirate that ever lived. I made up my mind to be at the head of all the highway robbers, and bandits, and pirates whose history was ever written. But my religious education was in my way. The teaching and prayers of my parents seemed to rise up before me, so that I could not go forward. But I had heard that it was possible to grieve the Spirit of God away, and to quench His influence so that one would feel it no more. I had read also that it was possible to sear conscience, so that that would not trouble me; and after my resolution was taken, my first business was to get rid of religious convictions, so as to be able to go on and perpetrate robberies and murders without compunction. I therefore set myself deliberately to blaspheme the Holy Ghost." He then told me in what manner he did this, and what he said; but it was too blasphemous to repeat.

He continued "I then felt that it must be that the Spirit of God would leave me, and that conscience would no more trouble me. After a while I made up my mind that I would commit some crime, and see how it would affect me. There was a school-house across the way from our house; and one evening I went and set it on fire. I then went to bed. Soon, however, the fire was discovered. I arose, and mingled with the crowd that gathered to put it out; but all efforts were in vain, and it burnt to the ground." To burn a building in that way, was a state-prison offence. He was aware of this. I asked him if he had gone farther in crime. He replied, No. And I think he added, that he did not find his conscience at rest about it, as he expected. I asked if he had ever been

suspected of having burnt it. He replied that he did not know that he had; but that other young men had been suspected, and talked about. I asked what he proposed to do. He replied that he was going to the trustees to confess; and he asked if I would accompany him.

I went with him to one of the trustees, and the young man asked if I would not tell the facts. The trustee was a good man, and a great friend of the parents of this young man. The announcement affected him deeply. The young man stood speechless. After a while I said, "We will go and see the other trustees." The gentleman replied, "No, you need not go; I will see them myself, and tell them the whole story." He assured the young man that he himself would freely forgive him; and he presumed that the other trustees, and the people in the town, would forgive him, and not subject him or his parents to any expense.

I then returned to my room, and the young man went home. Still he was not at rest. As I was going to meeting in the evening, he met me at the door and said, "I must make a public confession. Several young men have been suspected of this thing; and I want people to know that I had no accomplice, that nobody but God and myself knew it. Mr. Finney, won't you tell the people?" "I will be present, and say anything that may be necessary to say, if anybody should ask any questions; but I do not feel as if I could open my mouth. You can tell them all about it."

When the people were assembled, I related the facts. The family was so well known and beloved in the community, that the statement made a great impression. The people sobbed and wept all over the congregation. After he had made this full confession he obtained peace. Of his religious history since, I have recently learned that he retained his hold upon Christ, and did not seem to backslide. He went into the army during the rebellion, and was slain at the battle of Fort Fisher.

I have passed over a number of cases of crime committed by persons who came for advice, and told me the facts. In many instances, restitution, sometimes to the amount of many thousands of dollars, was made by those whose consciences troubled them, either because they had obtained the money directly by fraud, or by some selfish over-reaching in business relations.

The winter that I first spent in Boston, resulted in making many such revelations. I had preached there one Sabbath in the morning upon, "Whoso covereth his sins shall not prosper;" and in the afternoon on the remainder of the verse, "But whoso confesseth and forsaketh them, shall find mercy." The results of those sermons were extraordinary. For weeks afterwards, persons of almost all ages, and of both sexes, came for spiritual advice, disclosing the fact that they had committed frauds, and sins of almost every description. Some young men had defrauded employers; women had stolen watches, and almost every article of female apparel. Indeed, it seemed as if the word of the Lord was sent home with such power as to uncover a very den of wickedness. It would certainly take me hours to mention the crimes that came to my knowledge through the confessions of those who had perpetrated them but in every instance the persons seemed to be penitent and were willing to make restitution to the utmost of their ability.

But to return to Western. The revival was interesting; and there was a goodly number of souls born to God. One young lady was teaching the village school. Her father was a sceptic; she was an only daughter; and a great favourite. He was a man of considerable influence, but did not attend our meetings. He lived on a farm away from the village. Indeed, the village is very small, and the inhabitants are scattered through the valley of the Mohawk, and over the hills on each side; so that the inhabitants have to come a considerable distance to meeting.

I heard that this young woman did not attend our meetings much, and that she manifested considerable opposition to the work. In passing the school-house one day I stepped in to speak with her. At first she appeared surprised; I had never been introduced, and should not have known her, if I had not found her in that place. She knew me, however, and appeared as if she recoiled from my presence. "My child, I said, "how is it with you? Have you given your heart to God?" This I said while I held her hand. Her head fell, and she made no effort to withdraw her hand. I saw in a moment that a subduing influence came over her, and so deep and remarkable, that I felt almost assured that she would submit to God on the spot.

The most that I expected, was to have a few words with her that might set her thinking, and to appoint a time to converse more at large; but the impression was at once so manifest, and she seemed to break down, with a few sentences quietly and softly spoken to her; she seemed to give up opposition, and to be in readiness to lay hold on the Lord Jesus Christ. I then asked if I should say a few words to the scholars; and she wished I would. I did so, and then asked if I should present herself and scholars to God in prayer. She said she wished I would, and became deeply affected in the presence of the school. We engaged in prayer, and it was a very solemn, melting time. The young lady from that time seemed to be subdued, and to have passed from death unto life. She did not live long before she passed, I trust, to heaven.

These two seasons of my being in Western were about thirty years apart. Another generation had come to live in that place. I found a few of the old members; but the congregation was composed principally of younger people who had grown up after the first revival.

The people in Rome heard what was passing in Western, and came in considerable numbers to attend our meetings. This led, after a few weeks, to my spending some time in Rome.

The state of religion in Western has been improved since this last revival. The ordinances of the Gospel have been maintained, and progress has been made in the right direction. The B's have all gone from Western, with the exception of one son and his family. That large and interesting family has melted away; but one of them being left, one in Utica, and one son who was converted in the first revival there, and who has for many years been pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Watertown, New York.

When I was at Rome the first time, the church was Congregational; but a few years before I was there the last time, they had settled a young man, and he felt that the church ought to be Presbyterian. He proposed and recommended this, and succeeded

in bringing it about but to the great dissatisfaction of a number of influential persons. This created a very undesirable state of things in Rome.

When I learned the state of things, I felt that but little could be done to promote a revival, unless that difficulty could be healed. But it had been talked over so much, and the persons first concerned had so committed themselves, that I laboured in vain to produce a reconciliation. It was not a thing to preach about; but in conversation I tried to pluck up the root of bitterness. I kept preaching; the Spirit was poured out, conversions were occurring very frequently, and I trust good was done.

CHAPTER 31

REVIVAL IN ROCHESTER IN 1855

In the autumn of 1855, we were called again to the city of Rochester. At first I had no mind to go, but a messenger arrived with a pressing request, bearing the signatures of a large number both of professors of religion and non-professors. We commenced our labours, and it was soon apparent that the Spirit of God was working among the people. Some Christians, and especially the brother who came after me, had been praying all the summer for the outpouring of the Spirit. A few souls had been wrestling with God until they felt that they were on the eve of a revival.

When I stated my objections to going to Rochester again, the brother who came after me set that aside by saying, "The Lord is going to send you to Rochester, and you will go this winter, and we shall have a revival." I made up my mind with much hesitancy; but when I arrived, I was soon convinced that it was of God. I began preaching in different churches. The First Presbyterian Church was old-school, and it did not open its doors to our meeting; but the Congregational Church, and the two other Presbyterian Churches, with their pastors, took hold of the work and entered into it with spirit. The Baptist Churches also entered into the work; and the Methodist Churches laboured in their own way to extend the work. We held daily noon prayer-meetings, largely attended, in which a most excellent spirit prevailed.

Soon after I commenced, a request was sent, signed by members of the bar and two judges of the Court of Appeals, and one or two judges of the Supreme Court, asking me to preach again a course of lectures to lawyers, on the moral government of God. I began my course this time by preaching first on the text "Commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God." I began by remarking that the text assumed that every man has a conscience. I then gave a definition of conscience, and proceeded to show what every man's conscience does truly affirm; that every man knows himself to be a sinner; that therefore he knows that God must condemn him; and that every man knows that his own conscience condemns him. I was aware that among the lawyers were some sceptics. Indeed one of them had a few months before declared that he would never again attend a Christian meeting; that he did not believe in religion, and would not appear to do so; that it placed him in a false position, and his mind was made up to pay no more respect to Christianity.

I shaped my lectures with the design to convince the lawyers that, if the Bible was not true, there was no hope for them. I endeavoured to show that they could not infer that God would forgive them because He was good, for His goodness might prevent His forgiving them. It might not, on the whole, be wise and good to pardon such a world of sinners as we know ourselves to be; that, left without the Bible to throw light upon that question, it was impossible for human reason to come to the conclusion that sinners could be saved. Admitting that God was infinitely benevolent, we could not infer from that, that any sinner could be forgiven; but must infer from it, on the contrary, that impenitent sinners could not be forgiven. I endeavoured to clear the way so as to shut them up to the Bible as revealing the only rational way in which they could expect salvation.

At the close, I heard that the lawyer, who said he would never attend another Christian meeting, remarked to a friend that he had been mistaken, that he was satisfied there was more in Christianity than he had supposed, and he did not see any way to escape the argument to which he had listened; and furthermore that he should attend all those lectures, and make up his mind in view of the facts and arguments that should be presented.

I continued to press this point upon their attention, until I felt that they were effectually shut up to Christ, and the revelations made in the Gospel, as their only hope. But as yet I had not presented Christ, but left them shut up under the Law, condemned by their own consciences, and sentenced to eternal death. This, as I expected, prepared the way for a cordial reception of the Gospel. When I came to bring out the Gospel as revealing the only possible or conceivable way of salvation, they gave way, as they had done under former lectures. They began to break down, and a large proportion were converted.

What was quite remarkable in the three revivals in Rochester, was, that they all commenced and made progress among the higher classes. This was very favourable to the general spread of the work, and to the overcoming of opposition.

The work spread, and excited so much interest that it became the general topic of conversation through the surrounding country. Merchants arranged to have their clerks attend, a part of them one day, and a part the next day. The work became so general throughout that in all places of public resort, in stores and public-houses, in banks, in the street, in public conveyances, and everywhere, the work of salvation going on was the absorbing topic.

Men that had stood out in former revivals bowed to Christ in this. Some who had been open Sabbath-breakers, others that had been profane, indeed, all classes of persons, were visited by the power of this revival and brought to Christ. I continued there throughout the winter, the revival increasing continually. Rev. Dr. Anderson, president of the University, engaged in the work with cordiality, and a large number of the students were converted. The pastors of the two Baptist Churches took hold of the effort, and I preached several times in their churches.

Mrs. Finney was well acquainted with Rochester, having lived there many years, and having witnessed the two revivals that preceded this. She took an absorbing interest in this revival, and laboured with zeal and success. I found the people like the noble Bereans, "in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so." Many ladies exerted their influence to bring all classes to Christ. Some of them would visit stores and places of business, and use their influence to secure the attendance of persons engaged. Many men connected with the railroad were converted, and finally much of the Sabbath business was suspended, because of the religious movement in the city and among those employed.

The blessed work of grace extended until it seemed as if the whole city would be converted. The work spread from this centre to surrounding towns and villages. Revivals in Rochester have had great influence upon other cities and villages far and near.

When I was labouring in Hartford I was visited by a minister from Central Yew York who had witnessed the revivals in that region. He attended our meetings and observed the type and progress of the work. I said nothing to him of the formality of our prayer-meetings, or of the timidity of people in the use of measures, but he remarked, "Why, Brother Finney, your hands are tied, you are hedged in by their fears and by their stereotyped way of doing everything." This was strong, but he was a godly, earnest, humble minister of Jesus Christ, and expressed just what he saw and felt, and just what I saw and felt, that the Holy Spirit was restrained by the fears and the self-wisdom of the people.

CHAPTER 32

REVIVALS IN BOSTON IN 1856-58

The next autumn we accepted an invitation to labour again in Boston. We began at Park Street, and the Spirit of God manifested His willingness to save. The first sermon was directed to the searching of the church; for I always began by trying to stir up a thorough and pervading interest among professors of religion.

After the congregation was dismissed, the pastor said, Brother Finney, I wish to have you understand that I need to have this preaching as much as any member of this church. I have been very much dissatisfied with my religious state; and have sent for you on my own account, and for the sake of my own soul, as well as for the sake of the people." We had at different times protracted conversations. He seemed thoroughly to give his heart to God; and one evening, at a prayer and conference meeting, he related that he had been that day converted.

This produced a deep impression upon the congregation and upon the city. Some of the pastors thought that it was injudicious to make a thing of that kind public; but I did not. It manifestly was the best means he could use for the salvation of his people, and highly calculated to produce among professors a great searching of heart.

The work was extensive that winter in Boston, and many cases of conversion occurred. We laboured there until spring, and then thought it necessary to return home; but we left with the promise that, the Lord willing, we would return the next winter.

One of the pastors of the city, who had been in Europe the previous winter, had been writing articles, which were published in *The Congregationalist*, opposing our return. He regarded my theology on the subject of sanctification, as unsound. This opposition produced effect, and we felt that there was a jar among Christian people. Some of the leading members, who the winter before had entered heart and soul into the work, stood aloof, and it was evident that his influence, which was considerable, was against the work. This made some good people very sad.

This winter of 1857-58 will be remembered as the time when a revival prevailed throughout all the Northern States. It swept over the land with such power, that for a time it was estimated that not less than fifty thousand conversions occurred in a single week. This had some peculiarly interesting features. It was carried on to a large extent through lay influence, so much so as almost to throw ministers into the shade. There had been a daily prayer-meeting observed in Boston for years; and in the autumn previous to the outburst, the daily prayer-meeting had been established in Fulton Street, New York, which has been continued to this day. Indeed, daily prayer-meetings were established throughout the Northern States. In one of our meetings in Boston, a gentleman said, "I am from Omaha, in Nebraska. On my journey East I have found a continuous prayer-meeting all the way. We call it about two thousand miles from Omaha to Boston and here was a prayer-meeting about two thousand miles in extent."

In Boston we had to struggle against divisive influence, which set the religious interest a good deal back from where we left it the spring before. However, the work

continued to increase, in the midst of unfavourable conditions. It was evident that the Lord intended to make a general sweep in Boston. Finally it was suggested that a businessmen's prayer-meeting should be established, at twelve o'clock, in the chapel of the Old South Church, which was central for businessmen. The Christian friend, whose guests we were, secured the use of the room, and advertised the meeting; but whether such a meeting would succeed in Boston was considered doubtful. However, to the surprise of almost everybody, the place was not only crowded, but multitudes could not get in. This was continued, with wonderful results. The place was, from the first, too strait, and other daily meetings were established in other parts of the city.

Mrs. Finney held ladies' meetings daily at Park Street. These meetings became so crowded, that the ladies would fill the room, and then stand about the door as far as they could hear on every side.

One of our daily prayer-meetings was held at Park Street Church, which would be full whenever it was open; and this was the ease with many other meetings in different parts of the city. The population seemed to be moved. The revival became too general to keep any account of the number of conversions, or to allow of any estimate being made that would approximate the truth. All classes were inquiring. Many Unitarians became interested, and attended our meetings in large numbers.

This revival became almost universal throughout the Northern States. A Divine influence seemed to pervade the whole land. Slavery seemed to shut it out from the South. People there were in such a state of irritation, of vexation, and of committal to their peculiar institution, which had come to be assailed, that the Spirit of God seemed to be grieved away. There seemed to be no place found for Him in the hearts of the Southern people. It was estimated that during this revival not less than five hundred thousand souls were converted.

It was carried on very much through the instrumentality of prayer-meetings, personal visitation and conversation, by the distribution of tracts, and by the energetic efforts of the laity, men and women. There was such a general confidence in the prevalence of prayer, that people seemed to prefer prayer to preaching. The general impression seemed to be, "We have had instruction until we are hardened; it is time to pray." Answers to prayer were constant, and striking. The windows of heaven were opened, and the Spirit poured out like a flood. *The New York Tribune* at that time published several extras, filled with accounts of the revival.

One day I received an anonymous letter from a lady, asking advice in regard to the state of her soul. Usually I took no notice of anonymous letters; but the handwriting, the talent displayed, together with the earnestness of the writer, led me to give it attention. She concluded by requesting me to answer direct to Mrs. M. and leave it with the sexton of the church where I was to preach. I replied that I could not give the advice sought, because I was not well enough acquainted with her history, or with the real state of her mind; but I would venture to call attention to one fact, which was very apparent, she was a very proud woman; and that that fact she needed thoroughly to consider.

I left my reply with the sexton, and the next morning a lady called. She informed me

that she was the lady who wrote and she had called to tell, me I was mistaken in thinking she was proud. She said that she was far enough from that; but she was a member of the Episcopal Church, and did not want to disgrace her church by revealing she was not converted. I replied, "It is church pride, then, that kept you from revealing your name." This touched her so deeply that she left the room. I expected to see her no more; but that evening I found her, after preaching, among inquirers in the vestry. She was a woman of intelligence and education, and belonged to cultivated society; but as yet I did not know her name; for our conversation had not lasted more than a minute or two, before she left. In passing round, I remarked quietly, "And you here?" "Yes," she replied, and dropped her head as if she felt deeply. I had a few words of conversation with her, and it passed for that evening.

The next morning she called again. She said, "I see, Mr. Finney, that I have been very proud. I have come to tell you who I am, and to give you such facts in regard to my history, that you may know what to say to me." She was, as I had supposed, a woman in high life, the wife of a wealthy gentleman, who was a sceptic. She had made a profession of religion, but was unconverted. She was very frank, and threw her mind open to instruction; and, either at that time or immediately after, expressed hope in Christ, and became a very earnest Christian. She is a remarkable writer, and could more nearly report my sermons, without shorthand, than any person I ever knew. She used to come and sit and write my sermons with a rapidity and an accuracy that were astonishing. She sent copies of her notes to her friends, and exerted herself to the utmost to secure the conversion of friends in Boston and elsewhere. With this lady I have had much correspondence. She has always manifested that same earnestness that she did at that time. She has always some good work in hand and is an earnest labourer for the poor, and for all classes that need instruction, sympathy, and help. She has passed through many mental struggles, surrounded as she is by temptations; but I trust that she has been, and will be, an ornament to the church.

The revival extended from Boston to Charlestown and Chelsea. I preached in East Boston and Charlestown; and for a time in Chelsea, where the revival became general and precious. We continued in Boston that winter, until it was time to return home in spring. When we left, the work was in its full strength, without any apparent abatement.

CHAPTER 33

SECOND VISIT TO ENGLAND

We sailed for Liverpool in the *Persia*, in December, 1858. Our friend Brown came to Liverpool to meet us, to induce us to labour in Houghton, before we committed ourselves to any other field. I received a number of letters from different parts, expressing joy at our return and inviting us to come and labour in different fields. However, I spent several weeks in Houghton and Saint Ives, where we saw precious revivals. In Saint Ives they had never had a revival before. In Houghton we laboured during our first visit to England, and saw a very interesting work of grace.

At this time we found at Saint Ives a very singular state of things. There was but one Independent Church, the pastor of which had been there a good many years, but had not succeeded in doing much. We held our meetings in a hall which would accommodate more people than the Congregational Church. I sometimes preached, however, in the church; but it was less desirable than the hall, as it was a small and incommodious house.

The revival took effect, notwithstanding the position of the minister. He stood firmly against it until the interest became so great that he left, and was absent, I know not where, for weeks. Since that time the converts, together with my friend Brown and some of the older members, have put up a fine chapel, and the religious condition of the place has been exceedingly different from what it ever had been before.

Mr. Harcourt, the former pastor at Houghton, had proved successful, and had been called to London, to Borough Road Chapel. Here I found him on my second visit. He had been awaiting, with anxiety, our return to England; and as soon as he heard we were there, he used most strenuous efforts to secure our labours with him in London. The church over which he presided had been torn to pieces by most ultra and fanatical views on the subject of temperance. They had had a lovely pastor; whose heart had been almost broken by their feuds; and he had finally left the church in discouragement. Their deacons had been compelled to resign, and the church was in a sad state of disorganisation. Brother Harcourt informed me that unless the church could be converted, he was satisfied he never could succeed in doing much in that field.

As soon as we could leave Saint Ives we went to London, to see what could be done in his congregation. We found them in so demoralised a state that it seemed questionable whether the church could ever be resuscitated. However we went to work, my wife among the ladies, and I to preaching to the utmost of my strength. It was soon perceptible that the Spirit of God was poured out, and that the church were very generally in a state of conviction. The work deepened and spread till it reached every household belonging to that congregation. All the old members were so searched that they made confession one to another, and settled their difficulties; and Mr. Harcourt told me, that his church was entirely new; that the blessing of God had been universal among them, so that all, their animosities were healed; and that he had the greatest comfort in them. Indeed, the work in that church was really wonderful.

Some years after my return to this country, Mr. Harcourt made us a visit, a little while

after the death of my dear wife. He then told me that the work had continued in his church to that time, that his people felt that if there were not more or less conversions every week, something was wrong. They were frightened if the work was not perceptibly and constantly going forward. They stood by him, and he felt every Sabbath as if he was in the midst of a praying atmosphere.

In this place, as had been the case before at Dr. Campbell's, there were great revelations made of iniquity that had been covered up for a long time, among professors of religion. These cases were frequently brought to my notice by persons coming to me to ask advice, Not only did professors come, but numbers that had never made a profession, became terribly convicted of sin.

Soon after I began in London, Dr. Tregelles, a distinguished literary man and professed theologian, wrote to Dr. Campbell, calling attention to what he regarded as great error in my theology. In treating upon the conditions of salvation, I had said in my Systematic Theology, that the atonement of Christ was one of the conditions. I said that God's infinite love was the foundation from which the movement sprung, but that the conditions upon which we could be saved, were the atonement, faith, and repentance. To this statement Dr. Tregelles took exceptions.

Instead of going to my theology, and seeing what I did say, Dr. Campbell agreed with Dr. Tregelles, and wrote several articles in opposition to what he supposed to be my views. They, both of them, misunderstood my position, and got up in England a good deal of opposition. Dr. Campbell, it appeared, after all, had no doubt of my orthodoxy. Dr. Redford insisted that my statement of the matter was right, and that any other statement was far from being right. I paid no attention to Dr. Campbell's strictures. He afterwards wrote me a letter subscribing fully to my orthodoxy and to my views; but saying that, unfortunately, I made discriminations in theology that common people did not understand. The fact is, many people understood them better than the Doctor himself.

He had been educated in Scotland, and was, after the strictest sect, a Scotch theologian; consequently my new-school statements puzzled him, and it took him some time to understand them. I found, when I first arrived, that theology was to a very great extent dogmatic, in the sense that it rested on authority. They had their Thirty-nine Articles in the Established Church, and their Westminster Confession of Faith; and these they regarded as authority. They were not at all in the habit of trying to prove the positions taken in these standards; but dealt them out as dogmas. When I began to preach they were surprised that I reasoned with people. Dr. Campbell did not approve, and insisted that it would do no good; but people felt otherwise; and it was not uncommon for me to receive intelligence, that my reasonings had convinced; that my preaching was logical instead of dogmatic, and therefore met the wants of people.

I had myself before I was converted, felt the want of instruction and logical preaching. This experience always had a great influence upon my own preaching. I knew how thinking men felt when a minister took for granted the very things that needed proof. I therefore used to take great pains to meet the wants of persons who were in this state of mind. I knew what my difficulties had been, and I endeavoured to meet the intellectual wants of my hearers.

I told Dr. Campbell this; but at first he had no faith that people would understand and appreciate my reasonings. But when he came to receive the converts and to converse personally with them, he confessed to me his surprise that they had so well understood my reasonings. "Why," he would say, "they are theologians." He was very frank, and confessed to me how erroneous his views had been upon that subject.

After I had finished at Borough Road Chapel, we left London and rested a few weeks at Houghton. Such was the state of my health that I thought I must return home; but Dr. F., an excellent Christian living in Huntingdon, urged us to go to his house and finish our rest, and let him do what lie could for me as a physician. He had a family of eight, all unconverted. The oldest son was also a physician, a young man of remarkable talents, but a sceptic. He had embraced Comte's philosophy, and had settled down in extreme views of atheism, or of nihilism. He seemed not to believe anything. He was very affectionate; but his scepticism deeply wounded his father, and for his conversion he had come to feel an unutterable longing.

After remaining at the Doctor's two or three weeks, without medicine, my health became such that I began to preach. There never had been a revival at Huntingdon, and they really had no conception of what a revival would be. I occupied what they called Temperance Hall, the only large hall in the town. It was filled, and the Spirit of the Lord was poured out. I found opportunity to converse with young Dr. F. I drew him out into some long walks, and entered fully into an investigation of his views; and finally, under God, succeeded in bringing him to a perfect standstill. He saw that all his philosophy was vain. At this time I preached one Sabbath evening on the text: "The hail shall sweep away the refuges of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding places. And your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with hell shall not stand." I spent my strength in searching out the refuges of lies, and exposing them; and concluded with a picture of the hail-storm, and the descending torrent of rain that swept away what the hail had not demolished. The impression on the congregation was at the time very deep. That night young Dr. F. could not sleep; his father found him in consternation and agony of mind. At length he became calm, and to all appearance passed from death unto life. The prayers of the father and the mother for their children were heard. The revival went through their family, and converted every one. It was a joyful house, and one of the most lovely families that I ever had the privilege of residing in. We remained at their house while we continued in Huntingdon.

The revival took a very general hold of the church, and of professors of religion, and spread among the unconverted; and greatly changed the religious aspect of the town. There was then no Congregational church there. There were two or three churches of the Establishment, one Methodist, and one Baptist. Since then the converts of that revival, together with Mr. Brown, his son, and those Christians that were blest, have united and built a commodious chapel.

Mr. Brown had pushed his work of evangelisation with such energy, that when I arrived in England the second time, I found that lie had seven churches in as many different villages, and was employing preachers, teachers, and labourers, to the number of twenty. His means of doing good have fully kept pace with his princely outlays. When I first arrived, he was running a hired flour mill, with ten pairs of stones; the

second time I was there, in addition to this, he was running a mill which he had built at Saint Ives, at an expense of twenty thousand pounds, with sixteen pairs of stones. He afterward built, at Huntingdon, another mill of the same capacity. Thus God poured into his coffers as fast as he poured out into the treasury of the Lord.

From Huntingdon we returned to London, and laboured for several weeks in the north-eastern part of the city, in several chapels occupied by a branch of the Methodist Church. One of the places of worship was in Spitalfields, the house having been originally built by the Huguenots. It was a commodious place, and we had a glorious work of grace there, which continued till late in the summer.

CHAPTER 34

LABOURS IN SCOTLAND AND IN ENGLAND

While in London, I was invited to visit Edinburgh and about the middle of August we took passage by steam through the German Ocean. I had been urged to go there by Dr. Kirk, who belonged to the Evangelical Union Church. Their leading theologian was Mr. Morrison, who presided over a theological school at Glasgow. I found Mr. Kirk an earnest man, and a great lover of revival work. This Evangelical Union had grown out of a revival in Scotland at the time of the first publication of my Revival Lectures. A number of Scotch ministers, and a larger number of laymen, had made many successful revival efforts.

I remained three months, preaching, mostly in Mr. Kirk's church, one of the largest places of worship in Edinburgh. We had a revival, and many were converted. Church members were blessed, and Mr. Kirk's hands were full of labours among inquirers. I soon found that he was surrounded by a wall of prejudice. The Presbyterian Churches were opposed to this E.U. branch; and I found myself hedged in, as it respected openings for labour.

Mr. Kirk was not only pastor, but also editor of *The Christian News*, published at Glasgow. In that paper he represented my views as identical with the views of their church. But on some points I found that I very considerably differed from them. Their views of faith as a mere intellectual state I could not receive. They explained away, in a manner to me unintelligible, the doctrine of election. However, Mr. Kirk insisted that he entirely accepted my views as he heard me preach them, and that they were the views of the E.U. Church. Thus, without intending it, he shut the doors of other pulpits against me.

Mrs. Finney's labours were blessed. Mrs. Kirk was a very earnest Christian; and with my wife established a ladies' prayer-meeting, which is continued to this day, reports of which have been made from year to year in *The Christian News*; and Mrs. Kirk has published a small volume, giving an account of the establishment and progress of that meeting. The answers to prayer vouchsafed were wonderful. Requests have been sent from various parts of Scotland to them, to pray for places, persons, and objects. The history has been one of uncommon encouragement. From that sprung up similar meetings in various parts of Scotland; and these have put the women of Scotland very much in a new position, in regard to personal efforts in revivals.

After remaining three months, and seeing there a blessed work of grace, we accepted an invitation to go to Aberdeen; and in November we found ourselves in that city, which is near the northern extremity of Scotland. We were invited by Mr. Ferguson, also a minister of the E.U. Church, and an intimate friend of Mr. Kirk. He had been irritated with the opposition from the Presbyterian and Congregational Churches. His congregation was still more closely hedged in by prejudice than Mr. Kirk's. He was an earnest Christian. At first I could not get a hearing except with his own people; and I became a good deal discouraged, and so did Brother Ferguson himself.

Mr. Davison, Congregational minister of Bolton, in Lancashire, wrote me a letter to

come and labour with him. The state of things was so discouraging at Aberdeen that I gave him encouragement that I would go but in the meantime the interest increased, and other ministers and churches began to feel the influence of what was going on. The Congregational minister invited me to preach for a Sabbath. Mr. Brown, in one of the Presbyterian Churches, also invited me to preach; but my hands were too full, though I intended to preach for him at another time. The work in Mr. Ferguson's congregation had begun, and was getting interesting. Numbers had been converted, and a change was coming over his congregation and over that city. We left Aberdeen just before Christmas, and went to Bolton.

While I was with Mr. Ferguson at Aberdeen, I was urged by his son, who was settled over one of the E.U. Churches in Glasgow, to labour with him for a season. This had been urged upon me before I left Edinburgh but I was unwilling to continue longer with that denomination; their controversies brought them into such relations to the surrounding churches as to shut me out from sympathy and co-operation, except with those of their peculiar views. I had been accustomed to labour freely, and I desired to get a hearing among the Presbyterians and Congregationalists of Scotland. In labouring with the E.U. Churches I found myself in a false position. What had been said in *The Christian News*, and the fact that I was labouring in that denomination, led to the inference that I agreed with them in their views, while I did not.

Bolton is a city of about thirty thousand inhabitants, lying a few miles from Manchester. It is in the heart of the great manufacturing district of England. It lies within the circle of that immense population that spreads itself out from Manchester as a centre. It is estimated that at least three millions of people live within a compass of sixty miles round about Manchester.

In this place the work of the Lord commenced immediately. We were received as guests by Mr. J. B.; he belonged to the Methodist denomination was a man of sterling piety, very unsectarian in his views and feelings. The evening after we arrived, he invited a few friends for conversation and prayer; and among them a lady, in an inquiring state. My wife knelt near this lady, and observed that she was much affected. As we rose, Mrs. Finney took her by the hand, and then beckoned to me to come and speak with her. The lady had been brought up a Quakeress, but had married a Methodist. She had been for a long time uneasy about her soul; but had never been brought face to face with the question of instantaneous submission.

I saw in a moment that her distress of mind was profound. I therefore asked if she would see me a little time, for personal conversation. I asked her if she would then and there renounce herself, everything, and give her heart to Christ. She replied, "I must do it sometime; and I may as well do it now." We knelt down; and, so far as human knowledge can go, she did submit to God. We returned to the parlour; and the scene between herself and husband was affecting. As soon as she came into the room he saw such a change manifested in her countenance, that they seemed spontaneously to clasp each other in their arms, and knelt down before the Lord.

We were scarcely seated before the son of Mr. B. came in, announcing that one of the servants was deeply moved. In a short time that one also gave evidence of submission to Christ. Then I learned that another was weeping in the kitchen, and went to her; and

after a little conversation and instruction, she too appeared to give her heart to God. Thus the work had begun. Mrs. B. herself had been in a doubting and discouraged state for years; and she, too, appeared to melt down, and get into a different mind. The report of what the Lord was doing was spread; and people came in almost hourly, for conversation. The first week of January had been appointed to be observed as a week of prayer; and the different denominations agreed to hold Union meetings.

Our first meeting was in the chapel occupied by Mr. Davison. His chapel was filled. The meeting was opened by a Methodist minister, who prayed with a liberty that indicated that the Spirit of God was upon the congregation, and that we should have a powerful meeting. I occupied a little space in speaking upon prayer. I tried to impress upon them as a fact, that prayer would be immediately answered, if they took the stumbling-blocks out of the way, and offered the prayer of faith. The Word seemed to thrill through the hearts of Christians. I find it so everywhere. Praying people are immediately stirred up to lay hold of God for a blessing.

Through the whole of that week the spirit of prayer seemed to be increasing, and our meetings had greater and greater power. About the third or fourth day, it fell to the turn of Mr. Best, a Congregational minister, to have the meeting in his chapel. After addressing the congregation in a strain calculated to lead to that point, I called for inquirers, and his vestry was thronged. We had an impressive meeting; and many, I trust, submitted to God.

There was a Temperance Hall, which would accommodate more people than any of the chapels. After this week of prayer, the brethren secured the hall; and I began to preach there twice on the Sabbath, and four evenings in the week. Soon the interest became general. The hall would be crowded every night. The Spirit of God was poured out copiously.

I then recommended the brethren to canvass the city; to go two and two, and visit every house; and, if permitted, to pray in every house. They courageously rallied to perform this work. They got bills, tracts, posters, and all sorts of invitations printed, and began the canvassing. Congregationalists and Methodists took hold of the work with earnestness.

The Methodists are strong in Bolton; it was one of Wesley's favourite fields; and they have always had there an able ministry, and strong churches. Their influence was in the ascendancy, over all other denominations. The canvassers met once or twice a week to make reports, and to consider further arrangements. It was common to see a Methodist and a Congregationalist, hand in hand and heart in heart, going from house to house with tracts, and praying wherever they were permitted, in every house, and warning men to flee from the wrath to come, and urging them to come to Christ.

All classes became interested. Every evening I called upon inquirers to come forward and take seats in front. Great numbers would come through the dense masses that filled every nook and corner of the house. We engaged in a prayer-meeting while the inquirers knelt before the Lord.

The Methodist brethren were much engaged, and for some time were quite

demonstrative in their prayers, when sinners came forward. For some time I said nothing, lest I should lead them to grieve the Spirit. I saw that their impression was, that the greater the excitement, the more rapidly would the work go forward. They therefore would pound the benches, pray exceedingly loud, and sometimes more than one at a time. I was aware that this distracted the inquirers, and prevented their becoming truly converted; and although the number was constantly increasing, yet conversions did not multiply as fast as I had been in the habit of seeing them.

After letting things pass on so for two or three weeks, I suggested that we should take a different course. I told them that I thought inquirers needed opportunity to think; that they needed instruction, and needed to be led by one voice in prayer, and that there should not be confusion, or anything bordering on it, if we expected them to listen and become intelligently converted. I asked if they would not try to follow my advice, and see the result. They did so; and at first I could see that they were in bondage when they attempted to pray, and discouraged, because it crossed their ideas of what constituted powerful meetings. However, they soon seemed to recover, because they were convinced that, although there was less excitement, yet there were many more converted.

The fame of this work spread, and persons began to come from Manchester; and this created excitement in that city, and a desire to have me go thither. However, I remained in Bolton about three months, perhaps more.

Brother B. had an extensive cotton mill, and employed a great many men and women. I went down to his mill once or twice, and held meetings with his operatives. The first time we went we had a powerful meeting. I remained with them till I was fatigued and then returned, leaving Brother B. still to pray with and instruct them. When he came home he reported that not less than sixty appeared clearly to be converted. These meetings were continued till nearly all his hands expressed hope in Christ.

One night, as I was preaching, a man rose and crowded his way to the platform, and said, "I have committed a robbery." He began to make a confession, interrupting me. I saw he was excited; and Brother Davison whispered to him, and took him down into a side room. He found that he had committed a crime for which he was liable to be transported. He gave him advice, and I heard no more of it that evening. In a few days the man obtained a hope.

One evening I preached on confession and restitution, and it created a most tremendous movement among business men. One told me that he had been and made restitution of fifteen hundred pounds, in a case where he thought he had not acted upon the principle of loving his neighbour as himself. The consciences of men under such circumstances are exceedingly tender. The gentleman told me that a dear friend had died and left him to settle his estate. He had done so, and simply received what the law gave him for labour and expense; but in hearing that sermon, it occurred to him that as a friend and a Christian he could better afford to settle that estate without charging anything, than the family could afford to allow him the fees. The Spirit of God that was upon him led him to feel so keenly, that he went and refunded the money.

There was a case in Rochester, in New York, of the same kind. A tender conscience led a man to feel keenly on the subject of acting on the principle of doing to others as we would that they should do to us. A man of considerable property was converted in one of the revivals, who had been transacting business for a widow, in a village not far distant. The business consisted in the transfer of real estate, for which he had been paid for services some fifteen or sixteen hundred dollars. As soon as he was converted he thought of this; and upon reflection thought he had not done by that widow and those fatherless children as he would wish another to do by his widow and fatherless children. He therefore went over, and stated his view of the subject as it lay before his mind. She replied that she did not see it in that light; that she considered herself very much obliged to him, that he had transacted her business in such a way as to make for her all she could ask or expect. She declined, therefore, to receive the money which he offered to refund.

He told her that he was dissatisfied, and wished that she would call in some of her trustworthy neighbours. She called in some Christian friends, men of business and they laid the matter before them. They said that the affair was a business transaction, and it was evident that he had transacted the business to the acceptance of the family and to their advantage; and they saw no reason why he should refund. He heard what they had to say; but before he left he called on the lady again, and said, "My mind is not at ease. If I should die and leave my wife a widow and children fatherless, and a friend of mine should transact such business for them, I should feel as if he might do it gratuitously. I can not take any other view of it than this." Whereupon he laid the money upon her table and left.

In preaching in one of the large cities, I was dwelling upon the dishonesties of business, and the over-reaching plans of men; and how they justify themselves in violations of the golden rule. Before I was through, a gentleman arose and asked if he might propose a question. He then supposed a case; and he asked if that would come under the rule I had propounded. I said, "Yes, I think that it clearly would." He sat down; but I learned that he went away and made restitution to the amount of thirty thousand dollars. I could relate great numbers of instances in which persons have been led to act in the same manner, under the powerfully searching influences of the Spirit of God.

The work spread in Bolton until one of the ministers who had been engaged in directing canvassing, said publicly that they found that the revival had reached every family in the city; and that every family had been visited.

If we had had any place of worship large enough, we should probably have had ten thousand persons in the congregations. All we could do was to fill the hall, and then use such other means as we could to reach the multitudes in other places of worship.

I had been told one of the great mill-owners was very miserly; he had a great thirst for riches, and had been spoken of as being a very hopeless case. The revival had reached a number of that class; but this man seemed to stand out, and his worldly-mindedness and miserly spirit had seemed to eat him up. Contrary to expectations, he called on me. I had a serious conversation with him. He acknowledged that he had been a great miser; and that he had once said to God, that if He would give him another hundred

thousand pounds, he would be willing to be eternally damned. I was shocked at this; but could see that he was terribly convicted of the sinfulness of that state of mind.

I repeated to him a part of the sixth chapter of Matthew, where Christ warns men against laying up treasure on earth, and recommends them to lay up treasure in heaven. I finally came to that verse "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." He leaned toward me, and appeared to be as much interested as if it were all new. When I repeated this verse, he said with earnestness, "Do you believe that?" I said, "Be sure I believe it. It is the word of God." Well then," said he, "I'll go it;" and sprang upon his feet in the utmost excitement. "If that is true," said he, "I will give up all to Christ at once." We knelt down, and I presented his case to God; and he seemed to break down like a child. From that time he appeared to be a very different man. His miserly feelings seemed to melt away. He took hold of that work like a man in earnest, and went and hired a city missionary, and set him to work to win souls.

Mrs. Finney's meetings were very largely attended. She held them in the day-time; and sometimes the Temperance Hall would be nearly full. The Christian ladies of different denominations encouraged her; and great good, I trust, was done through the instrumentality of those ladies' meetings.

My wife and myself were both of us a good deal exhausted; but in April we went to Manchester. In Manchester the Congregational interest rather predominates over that of other denominations. The manufacturing districts have a stronger democratic element than other parts of England. I had not been long there before I saw that there was a lack of mutual confidence among the brethren. I could see that there was a jar among the leaders; and frequently I heard expressions that indicated a want of heart-union. This I was convinced was a difficulty to be overcome; and that if it could not be overcome, the work could never be as general as it had been in Bolton. There was soon manifest a dissatisfaction with some of the men who had been selected to engineer the work, and provide for carrying on the general movement.

Although from the first the Spirit of God attended the Word; yet the work never so thoroughly overcame the sectarian disagreements, that it could spread over the city in the way it had done at Bolton. When I went to that city, I expected that the Methodist and Congregational brethren would work harmoniously. However, our meetings were interesting, and numbers of inquirers were found on every side. Still, what I longed to see was a general overflowing of the Spirit's influences in Manchester. I did not learn the cause - perhaps it was something in myself.

When we came away, a meeting was called for those who had been blessed; and the number in attendance was much larger than was expected by the ministers. I do not think that any of the ministers were aware of the extent of the work, for they did not generally attend our meetings; they were seldom seen in the meetings of inquiry. We continued till about the first of August; and the revival continued to increase and to spread up to that time.

But both myself and my wife had become exhausted, and some leading brethren proposed to us to suspend labour, go into Wales and rest, and then return and resume

our labours. What they proposed was, to secure a large hall, and thus to go on with our meetings in an independent way. They thought, and I thought myself that we should secure a greater amount of good in that way than by labouring with any particular congregation. Denominational lines are much more strongly marked in that country than they are in this. It is difficult to get the people of the Church of England to attend a dissenting place of worship. The Methodists will not generally and freely attend with other denominations. The same is true of all denominations in England and Scotland. I am persuaded that the true way to labour for a revival movement there, is to have no particular connection with any denomination; but to preach the Gospel, and make a stand in halls, or even in streets, when the weather is favourable, where no denominational feelings and peculiarities can straiten the influences of the Spirit of God.

On the second of August, 1860, we left, and went to Liverpool. A goodly number of friends went with us and remained over night. On the morning of the third, we left in the *Persia* for New York. We found that numbers of friends had assembled from different parts of England to bid us good-bye. We took an affectionate and affecting leave of them, and the glorious old steamer rushed out to sea, and we were on our way home.

CHAPTER 35

WORK AT HOME

We had had little rest in England for a year and a half; and those who are used to the sea will not wonder that I did not rest much during our voyage home, indeed we arrived a good deal exhausted. I was myself hardly able to preach at all. However, the state of things was such, and the time of year such, that I could not, as I supposed, afford to rest. There were many new students here, and strangers had been moving into the place; so that there was a large number of impenitent persons residing here at that time. The brethren were of opinion that an effort must be made immediately to revive religion in the churches, and to secure the conversion of the unconverted students. During my absence the congregation had become so large that the house could not, with any comfort, contain them; and after considering the matter, the church concluded to divide and form a second Congregational Church. They did so; the new church worshipping in the College chapel, and the First Church continuing to occupy their usual place of worship. The Second Church invited me to preach a part of the time to them, in the College chapel; but that would hold scarcely more than half as many as the church; and I could not think it my duty to divide my labours, and preach part of the time to one congregation and part to the other; and therefore took measures to secure a revival, holding meetings at the large church. The Second Church people came in, and laboured; but the preaching devolved almost altogether upon myself.

We held daily prayer-meetings which were largely attended. The body of the church would generally be full. At these meetings I laboured hard to secure the legitimate results of a prayer-meeting judiciously managed. Besides preaching twice on Sabbath, and holding a meeting of inquiry in the evening of every Sabbath, I preached several evenings during the week. In addition I was obliged to use up my strength in conversing with inquirers, who were almost constantly visiting me. These labours increased in intensity and pressure. The revival became general, and seemed to bid fair to make a clean sweep of the unconverted in the place. But after continuing these labours for four months, until I had very little rest day or night, I came home one Sabbath afternoon, from one of the most powerful and interesting meetings I ever witnessed, and was taken with a severe chill; and I was confined to my bed between two and three months.

It was found that the change of preaching soon let down the tone of the revival; and gradually it ceased. There was not any reaction; but conversions grew less frequent, and the week-day meetings gradually fell off in attendance; so that by the time I was able to preach, I found the state of religion interesting, but not what we here call a revival. However, the next summer, a goodly number of students were converted, and there was a very interesting state of religion during the season.

During the summer months there is a great pressure upon the people here. The students are engaged in preparing for the anniversaries of their various college societies, for their examinations, and for Commencement; and of course during the summer term there is a great deal of excitement unfavourable to the progress of a revival. We have much more of this excitement in later years than we had when we first commenced, College societies have increased, and the class exhibitions and other

interesting occasions have multiplied; so that it has become more difficult to secure a powerful revival during the summer term.

Before I went to England the last time, an impression seemed to be growing in Oberlin, that during term we could not expect to have a revival; and that our revivals must be expected to, occur during the long vacations in the winter. This was not deliberately avowed and yet it was plain that that was coming to be the impression. But I had come to Oberlin for the sake of the students, to secure their conversion and sanctification; and it was only because there was so great a number of them, which gave me so good an opportunity to work upon so many young minds in the process of education, that I had remained here. I had frequently almost made up my mind to leave, and give myself wholly to the work of an evangelist; but the plea always used with me had been, that we could not do so much in this country in promoting revivals anywhere, except at that season of the year when we have our long vacation; furthermore, that my health would not enable me to sustain revival labour the year round; and that, therefore, I could do more good here during the term time, - that is, in the spring, summer, and early autumn, - than I could anywhere else. This I myself believed to be true; and therefore had continued here during term, for many years after my heart strongly urged me to give up my whole time in labouring as an evangelist.

While I was last in England, and was receiving letters to return, I spoke of the impression to which I have alluded, that we could not expect revivals in term time; and said, that if that was going to be the prevalent idea, it was not the place for me; for during our long vacation our students were gone, and it was for their salvation principally that I remained. I had been afflicted too, by finding, when an effort was made to secure the conversion of students during term, that some excursion would be planned, some amusement or entertainment would counteract all that we could do to secure the conversion of students. I never supposed that that was the design; but such was the result, inasmuch that, previous to going to England, I had become almost discouraged making efforts to secure revivals during term. In my replies to letters received while in England, I was very free and full upon this point, in saying that, unless there could be a change, Oberlin was not my field of labour any longer.

Our fall term is properly our harvest here. It begins about the first of September, when we have a large number of new students, and many of these unconverted. I have always felt that during that term was the time to secure the conversion of new students. This was secured, to a very great extent, the year that we returned. The idea that during term we could not expect a revival, seemed to be exploded; the people took hold of the work, and we had a powerful revival.

Since then we have been much less hindered in our revival efforts in term time, by counteracting influences, than we had been for years before. Our revival efforts have taken effect among the students from year to year, because they were aimed to secure the conversion especially of the students. Our general population is a changing one, and we very frequently need a sweeping revival through the whole town, among the householders as well as the students, to keep up a healthy tone of piety. A goodly number of students learn to work themselves in promoting revivals, and are very efficient in labouring for the conversion of fellow-students. The young men's prayer-meetings have been greatly blessed. The young people's meetings, where all meet for a

general prayer-meeting, have also been blessed. The efforts of brethren and sisters in the church, have been increasingly blessed from year to year. We have had more or less of a revival continually, summer and winter.

Since 1860, although continually pressed to labour as an evangelist, I have not dared to comply. I have been able, by the blessing of God, to perform a good deal of labour here; but I have felt inadequate to the exposure and labour of attempting to secure revivals abroad.

Last winter, 1866-7, the revival was more powerful among the inhabitants than it had been since 1860. However, I broke down in the midst, and was unable to attend any more meetings. The brethren went forward with the work, and it continued with great interest until spring.

Thus I have brought my revival narrative down to this time, the 13th of January, 1868.

Yesterday, Sabbath, we had a very solemn day in the First Church. I preached all day upon resisting the Holy Ghost. At the close of the afternoon service I called, first, upon all professors of religion who were willing to commit themselves against all resistance offered to the teachings of the Holy Spirit, to rise and unite in prayer, under the solemnity of this promise. Nearly all the professors rose. I then called upon those who were not converted to rise, and take the same stand. I had been endeavouring to show that they were stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, and had always resisted the Holy Ghost. I asked those of them who were willing to pledge themselves to do this no more, and to accept the teachings of the Holy Spirit and give themselves to Christ, also to rise, and we would make them subjects of prayer. Nearly every person in the house stood up under these calls. We then had a very solemn season of prayer, and dismissed the meeting.

CONCLUSION

Those who have read the preceding pages, will naturally inquire in reference to the closing years of a life so full of labour and of usefulness. The narrative - completed with the beginning of 1868 - leaves Mr. Finney still pastor of the First Church in Oberlin, and lecturer in the seminary. The responsibilities of pastor he continued to sustain, with the help of his associate, some four or five years longer, preaching, as his health would admit, usually once each Sabbath. At the same time, as Professor of Pastoral Theology, he gave a course of lectures, each summer term, on the pastoral work, on Christian experience, or on revivals. He resigned the pastorate in 1872, but still retained his connection with the Seminary, and completed his last course of lectures in July, 1875, only a few days before his death. He preached from time to time, as his strength permitted; and during the last month of his life, he preached one Sabbath morning in the First Church, and another in the Second.

Notwithstanding the abundant and exhausting labours of his long public life, the burden of years seemed to rest lightly upon him. He still stood erect as a young man, retained his faculties to a remarkable degree, and exhibited, to the end the quickness of thought and feeling and imagination which always, characterised him. His life and character, perhaps, never seemed richer in the fruits and the beauty of goodness, than in these later years.