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Short Title

SECTS IN WESTERN NEW YORK 1815-1850

by

Gordon E. Coates

June 1966

35759

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FACTORS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH OF SECTS
IN WESTERN NEW YORK FROM 1815 TO 1850


A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,
Department of Historical Theology
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Sacred Theology

by

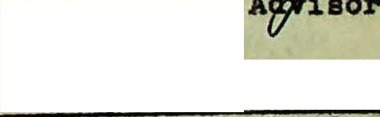
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Advisor



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. THE CHURCH	1
II. THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS	3
Theology and Philosophy	3
Theology and Science	20
Theology and Culture	34
III. THEOLOGICAL METHODS	41
Theology and Hermeneutics	41
Theology and Dogmatics	47
Theology and Ethics	51
Theology and Liturgy	59
Theology and Mysticism	76
IV. THEOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL	79
The Church and Society	79
The Church and the World	103
V. THE CHURCH AND THE FUTURE	117
APPENDICES	129
INDEX	138

CHAPTER I

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. THE PROBLEM	1
II. GENERAL CONDITIONS	5
Church and Community	5
Church and Mission	20
Early Sects	34
III. SPECIFIC PROBLEMS	41
Anti-Catholicism and Antimasonry	41
Unitarians and Universalists	54
Premillennialism and William Miller	61
The Mormons	69
Spiritualism	76
IV. REVIVALISM AND REFORM	79
The Finney Story	79
Moral Reform and Social Betterment	103
V. THE PROBLEMS REMAIN	113
APPENDICES	119
BIBLIOGRAPHY	128

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Western New York in the period from 1815 to 1850 offers the church historian a picture in miniature of what happened to the Protestant churches across the nation during the following hundred years. In this section of New York State, termed the "Burned-over District" by contemporary observers, there are already evidences of the social gospel in embryo form. Here certain Protestant churches were torn by schism and splintered into sects. The Biblical concepts of the Trinity, the divine-human Christ, the atonement, man's total depravity, and justification by faith are replaced by various types of man-made theology which deny the teachings of the Holy Scriptures and which attempt to make God into a human concept of what God ought to be like.

These theological changes were accomplished by various means: appeals to the emotions, appeals to man's reason, moral appeals, appeals to contemporary prophets and to contemporary revelations, and appeals to the spirit world. The crack-pot became the idol of the masses and the masses became crack-pots. All this took place while these people of Western New York sought a god who would be compatible with their own religious thinking, a god whom they could

manipulate while they fled from the true God. They wanted a god who would be nice and friendly, a god with the common touch. They were fed up with the awful Sovereign Lord presented in the pulpit and in religious writings by the predominant Calvinistic theology. They wanted a god who would be democratic, a god with whom they could disagree without incurring his wrath.

In the matter of time alone, these people are removed from the present generation by over a hundred years, but their attempts to escape the true God are contemporary with every age beginning with the fall of man in the Garden of Eden. Their attempts at rationalizing God's revelation of Himself in the Holy Scriptures and in the historic person of the Christ are comparable with many modern religious experiments among present day denominations. Some of the sects established in those years near or between 1815 and 1850 in Western New York have become sizable religious bodies, such as the Unitarians, the Universalists, the Mormons, the Adventists, and the Spiritualists. These sects have tailored gods to their own liking, and now they are busily engaged in propagating their ideas about these man-made gods. Their own growth in numbers and the modification of at least some if not all of the doctrines of many of the larger Protestant denominations so that they now often conform to the thinking of these sects testifies to the success of their religious venture.

The purpose of this thesis is to study the religious climate which helped to produce these various sects so that that particular age in American history might be better evaluated and so that the present age might be better understood. The topics that will be most explicitly dealt with are: Anti-Catholicism and Antimasonry, Revivalism, the Unitarians and Universalists, Moral Reform and Social Betterment, Premillennialism especially as it is exhibited in the ideas of William Miller, Mormonism, and Spiritualism.

The books that have been most helpful in writing this thesis are as follows: for a general overview: Autobiography, Correspondence, Etc., of Lyman Beecher, D.D., Vols. I and II, edited by Charles Beecher; The Protestant Clergy and Public Issues 1812-1848, by John R. Bodo; The Social Ideas of the Northern Evangelists, 1826-1860, by Charles C. Cole, Jr.; The Burned-over District, by Whitney R. Cross; Revivalism and Social Reform, by Timothy L. Smith; Church and State in the United States, 3 vols., by Anson Phelps Stokes; and The Turner Thesis Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History, edited by George Rogers Taylor; on Anti-Catholicism: The Protestant Crusade 1800-1860 (biased toward the Roman Church), by Ray Allen Billington; on Revivalism: Lectures to Professing Christians, by Charles G. Finney; Lectures on Revivals of Religion, by Charles G. Finney; and Memoirs of Rev. Charles G. Finney, by Charles G. Finney; on Unitarians and

Universalists: The Religious History of New England, King's Chapel Lectures, by John Winthrop Platner and Others; on Moral Reform and Social Betterment: The Berean, by John H. Noyes; and Escape to Utopia, by Everett Webber; on Premillennialism and William Miller: Days of Delusion, A Strange Bit of History, by Clara Endicott Sears; on Mormons: The Mormons, by Thomas F. O'Dea; and The Doctrine and Covenants, by Joseph Smith, Jun.; on Spiritualists: Seers of the Ages: Embracing Spiritualism, Past and Present, by J. M. Peebles; and on the Lutherans in Western New York: History of the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England, Vol. I, by Harry J. Kreider.

during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The population was dense and homogeneous since most of the early settlers came from similar sections of New England. Whitney L. Cross says that "Genesee Peter" struck entire neighborhoods and often whole New England communities moved

James M. Hutchins, History of the Furmen and Settlement of Western New York, and of the Erie, Champlain, and Ontario Basins of the American Lakes in that Region (New York: R. W. Dorr, c. 1860), p. 25. "Emigrants to Western New York were generally drawn thither by a regard for temporal circumstances. They were not like the original emigrants to New England, fleeing from persecution, and seeking a place where they might worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, without solicitation. It was not a missionary enterprise to civilize and christianize the aborigines of the country. But the great object with them was to improve their temporal circumstances. Land of an excellent quality might be obtained at a very cheap rate."

CHAPTER II

GENERAL CONDITIONS

Church and Community

During this period from 1815 to 1850 Western New York was strategic for the great westward migration as well as for the heavy immigration from Europe. Until about 1825 Western New York itself was still a frontier section. The Yankees from New England were moving into the regions of the fertile plains in Western New York in order to farm the rich virgin soil.¹ The culture remained mostly rural during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. The population was quite homogeneous since most of the early settlers came from similar sections of New England. Whitney R. Cross says that "Genesee Fever" struck entire neighborhoods and often whole New England communities moved

¹James H. Hotchkin, History of the Purchase and Settlement of Western New York, and of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Presbyterian Church in That Section (New York: M. W. Dodd, c.1848), p. 25. "Emigrants to Western New York were generally drawn thither by a regard for temporal circumstances. They were not like the original emigrants to New England, fleeing from persecution, and seeking a place where they might worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences, without molestation. It was not a missionary enterprise to civilize and christianize the aborigines of the country. But the great object with them was to improve their temporal circumstances. Land of an excellent quality might be obtained at a very cheap rate."

to Western New York.²

In 1817 the construction of the Erie Canal was begun. This brought migrant laborers to the region, many of whom were rough men who were unfettered by close family ties. The completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 gave a great impetus to population growth and it helped to stabilize the economy of the whole state of New York.³ During the twenties population grew more rapidly here in Western New York than in any other part of the United States. The towns of Albany, Utica, Syracuse, Buffalo, and Rochester showed tremendous growth during the twenties.⁴ These were the same towns in which the Finney revivals stirred up so much controversy beginning in 1826.

The year 1825 might with good reason be designated as the dividing line between frontier civilization and a more settled type of community in Western New York. And yet,

²Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-over District (New York: Cornell University Press, c.1950), p. 5.

³James Stuart, Three Years in North America (New York: J. & J. Harper, 1833), I, 43. "Albany consists of one street of very considerable length, parallel with the river, from which the rest of the city rises abruptly. . . . The population rapidly increases: in 1800, only 4000; in 1810, 10,000; in 1825, 15,000; and now certainly above 20,000. This is easily accounted for by the far greater facilities that have followed the introduction of the steam-boats and the establishment of the Erie Canal. Albany is now the second city in the state in point of population."

⁴Cross, op. cit., p. 56.

in a sense, Western New York remained frontier country even after 1825, since it became the middle country across which thousands of foreign immigrants migrated to the western parts of the United States. Frederick Jackson Turner calls this region a mediating region, a region that was typical of a more modern United States. Here the ideas of many types of people rubbed against each other and this interchange of ideas quickened the pace toward individualism and democracy. The people of this region came to expect innovations in all fields, not only in the field of religion. For instance, it was here that Frances Wright's labor party agitated and campaigned in order to gain better conditions for working men. Turner described this region in this way:

The Middle region was less English than the other sections. It had a wide mixture of nationalities, a varied society, the mixed town and country system of local government, a varied economic life, many religious sects. In short, it was a region mediating between New England and the South and the East and the West. . . . It was typical of the modern United States. . . . Thus it became the typically American region.⁵

It was here, too, that the old colonial society with its theocratic churches met the "New Measures" men. These Calvinistic theocrats who were entrenched in churches like the Congregational, the Presbyterian, and to some extent,

⁵George Rogers Taylor, editor, The Turner Thesis Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, c.1949), p. 13.

the Episcopalian did not favor innovations in church or in politics. They favored the status quo, not because they were undemocratic but because they feared that the old institutions might become undermined as were the institutions of France during the French Revolution. These theocrats were opposed to rule by the masses. They favored rule by the educated aristocracy since in their opinion this was the only way to save the union. The individualists and the foreign immigrants on the frontier were more democratic and often more original in their thinking, and so they opposed theocratic thinking both in theological matters and in politics.

The theocrats were not idle, however, they did not simply sit back and dream of the days that used to be when they held the privileged position as the established church in several of the colonies. They had fought hard to keep their position as the established church and even after they had been disestablished they fought on as though they did not realize that they had lost their exclusive position. In spite of the strong opposition from the independent churches, like the Methodist and the Baptist, several of the states let the established church keep its privileged position until quite a late date. The Anglicans were for the most part disestablished during the Revolutionary War in the six colonies where they had been the established church. Thus New York had supported the Anglican church

as its established church until the time of the Revolution. The Congregationalists remained entrenched in their states much longer. In New Hampshire disestablishment came in 1817, in Connecticut in 1818, and in Massachusetts disestablishment did not come until 1833.⁶ In several of these states disestablishment probably would have come later still if the Methodists and the Baptists had not fought so long for equal privileges.

These are the sentiments of Lyman Beecher, an ardent theocrat, written in a sermon anticipating the disestablishment of the Congregationalist church in the state of Connecticut. He titled this sermon "Building of Waste Places." Here are some extracts from this sermon:

"It was the fundamental maxim of the fathers of this state that the preaching of the Gospel is, in a civil point of view, a great blessing to the community, for the support of which all should contribute according to their several ability. This law, while the inhabitants of the state were all of one creed, was entirely efficacious, and secured to the people of the state at least four times the amount of religious instruction which has ever been known to be the result of mere voluntary associations for the support of the Gospel.

"But at length the multiplication of other denominations demanded such a modification of the law as should permit every man to worship God according to the dictates of his conscience, and compel him to pay only for the support of the Gospel in his own denomination. The practical effect has been to liberate all conscientious dissenters from supporting a worship which they did not approve--which the

⁶William Warren Sweet, The Story of Religion in America (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, c.1939), p. 275.

law intended, and to liberate a much greater number, without conscience, from paying for the support of the Gospel any where--which the law did not intend.

"While it accommodates the conscientious feelings of ten, it accommodates the angry, revengeful, avaricious, and irreligious feelings of fifty, and threatens, by a silent, constant operation to undermine the deep-laid foundations of our civil and religious order."⁷

This opposition of the theocrats to disestablishment became a cause for regret in later years after they realized how much more effectively the church could operate when it was separated from the state. A few years after the disestablishment of the Congregationalist church in Connecticut Lyman Beecher felt much differently on the subject, for then he wrote:

The injury done to the cause of Christ, as we then supposed, was irreparable. For several days I suffered what no tongue can tell for the best thing that ever happened to the State of Connecticut. It cut the churches loose from dependence on state support. It threw them wholly on their own resources and on God.

They say ministers have lost their influence; the fact is, they have gained. By voluntary efforts, societies, missions, and revivals, they exert a deeper influence than ever they could by queues, and shoe-buckles, and cocked hats, and gold-headed canes.⁸

The European traveler to North America during this period marveled at the zeal exhibited in the free churches of the United States. Everywhere the traveler went he

⁷Lyman Beecher, Autobiography, Correspondence, Etc., of Lyman Beecher, D.D., edited by Charles Beecher (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1864), I, 274-75.

⁸Ibid., p. 344. Italics are in the original.

seemed to see growing churches which were interested in the public issues of the day; and the churches often led the way in moral and social crusades. James Stuart, an English traveler in America during the late twenties, praised the free church system and said of it:

The United States being free from any religious establishment, every one is not only tolerated in the exercise of the religion he believes, but is at full liberty, without the fear, except in very few and very peculiar cases, of his temporal concerns being at all affected by his religious profession, (whatever it may be,) to embrace those religious doctrines which he conceives on due consideration are true. It follows from this state of things, that there is much less hypocrisy in the professors of religion in this than in other countries. Those in this country, who voluntarily go to a Protestant church, and who voluntarily pay for the ministrations of a Christian clergyman, may be generally, (I do not mean to say universally,) held to have made the necessary examination, and to be real believers of the doctrines of the Christian religion;--whereas those from other countries, who have travelled in the United States, and who have put forth sneering and ill-founded statements on the subject of revivals, camp-meetings, &c. are generally Christians professing that religion, merely because their parents did so, or because Christianity is the religion of their country, and not because they ever investigated its truth.⁹

In this same chapter Stuart extolled a Methodist camp meeting which he attended in New York state. He said that this particular camp meeting was conducted with the greatest dignity and decorum. From other accounts of Methodist camp meetings it may be concluded that they were not all conducted in such a dignified and quiet manner. Clara Sears

⁹Stuart, op. cit., I, 265.

in her book concerning the Adventist story says that the Adventist camp meetings were patterned after the Methodist example and these Adventist meetings were so emotional and loud that they could be heard for miles around the camp grounds. But that is a story that will be dealt with in a later chapter.

It was not too many years after disestablishment had taken place that the Congregationalists of America became more like their forebears in England in being ardent supporters of the idea of separation of Church and State. But even then they still attempted to work out their theocratic ideal whereby the American government would enforce morality by using legal means. These theocrats felt that morals could be legislated and so they threw their full force into the fight to see that moral legislation was put on the statute books. This attitude prepared the way for the passage of the Prohibition Amendment to the Constitution of the United States in a subsequent period of American history.

The liberal churchmen of that time opposed this theocratic ideal of enforcing morality by enactment of legislation. The liberals accused the theocrats of using an Old Testament concept of living by the law when the church was living in a New Testament age. The Episcopalians and the Lutherans were also generally opposed to the theocratic ideal. Notable exceptions among the Lutherans were Samuel

S. Schmucker who was an ardent Lutheran theocrat and members of the Hartwick and Franckean Synods of New York State, all of whom believed strongly in the legislation of morals.

Even after losing their privileged place as state churches the theocrats still exerted a lot of influence in the daily life of the public at large. For instance, a good deal of doctrinal teaching got into the public schools by way of text books which stressed Biblical concepts. John R. Bodo quotes a passage from Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson:

In the New England colonies, heirs of the British Puritan tradition, religion and education were inseparable. "The child began his reading with that time-honored device, the hornbook--a printed alphabet list of one-syllable words, together with the Lord's Prayer, held in a wooden frame, the whole covered by a sheet of horn. He was advanced next to the spelling book, and thence to a primer and a catechism. 'In Adam's Fall / We sinned all' begins that most famous of American readers, The New England Primer, or Milk for Babes, of which it is estimated that seven million copies were printed before 1840."¹⁰

Since the Protestant churches were early leaders in the field of education it is not at all strange to see such religious doctrines in school books. But in 1837 the first state Board of Education in the United States was formed in the state of Massachusetts. This board became a pattern

¹⁰Perry Miller and Thomas H. Johnson, The Puritans (New York: n.p., 1938), p. 696, quoted in John R. Bodo, The Protestant Clergy and Public Issues 1812-1848 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, c.1954), p. 165.

for similar boards of education throughout the country. The Massachusetts Board of Education elected Horace Mann as its secretary. Under his leadership the state developed a compulsory education system of secular schools which were to be free from all sectarian influence. The Unitarians and the Roman Catholics were early leaders in this fight to secularize the public schools of America. They were strongly opposed by the American Sunday School Union which tried in 1837 to get the Massachusetts Board of Education to use the Sunday School Union's "select library" in the public schools of that state. Both the governor of Massachusetts and Horace Mann declared this to be a sectarian proposal. The Sunday School Union's agent, Frederick A. Peckard and Horace Mann argued the point but the proponents of secularization won the battle.¹¹

After losing control of the public schools the theocrats built up a strong Sunday School system in their own churches in order to educate both the young and the old. The Sunday School and the denominational college were powerful forces in the theocratic battle for the mind of the fast growing West. Lyman Beecher became the leader of Lane Theological Seminary in Cincinnati in 1832; and Charles G. Finney became a leading light at Oberlin College

¹¹Anson Phelps Stokes, Church and State in the United States (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, c.1950), II, 54-56.

in Ohio. Amherst College, founded in 1821, prepared many men for Andover Theological Seminary, which was Congregationalist. Another important denominational institution was the College of New Jersey at Princeton. Princeton Seminary and the New Haven Seminary prepared men for the ministry of the Presbyterian church. Other important institutions were Yale, Dartmouth, Harvard (which was Unitarian), Brown (which was Baptist), and the University of Vermont.

The American Education Society was the coordinating agency of the theocrats in promoting the work of higher education. Although it was established as an undenominational society its leadership was mainly Congregational and Presbyterian.¹² The Methodists and the Baptists were slow in the development of denominational institutions. This was no doubt due mainly to the fact that their ministry was the least well trained of the Protestants in America during this period. It was probably their zeal to convert the West that finally brought them into the field of higher education.¹³ The Lutherans were also slow to enter into the field of higher education. They were largely dependent upon Europe to supply pastors; most of these European pastors came from Germany. In 1815 the Hartwick Seminary was

¹²Bodo, op. cit., p. 14.

¹³Ibid., p. 170.

established in New York State for the purpose of training missionaries to the Indians.¹⁴ It was 1826 before the General Synod established its seminary at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.¹⁵

In the early part of the nineteenth century the theocrats pretty much dominated American education and theology. But not all of the theologians were theocrats. Even in the Congregationalist and the Presbyterian churches the theocrats were not the only formers of theological policy. As was mentioned before, there were "new measures" men who were trying to liberalize the old Calvinistic theology. Through their efforts Arminianism was brought in to change the old Calvinistic type of theological thinking. Often this produced liberal-conservative cleavages within a single denomination which were more severe than the differences that separated liberals from other liberals in opposed denominations or that separated conservatives from other conservatives in opposed denominations. Perhaps this helps to explain why church members changed denominational affiliation quite often.¹⁶ Even clergymen seemed to have

¹⁴Henry Eyster Jacobs, A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, in The American Church History Series (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), IV, 333.

¹⁵Abdel Ross Wentz, A Basic History of Lutheranism in America (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1955), p. 85.

¹⁶Gress, op. cit., p. 8.

changed their denominational loyalties from time to time. Lyman Beecher, Charles G. Finney and Calvin Colton are prominent examples of ministers who left one denomination in order to join another. In Lyman Beecher's case he changed his denominational preference three times.

These theological differences within a denomination sometimes caused splits to develop within the various churches. At other times the differences caused bitterness but did not split the church. Sometimes, too, these splits within a church body had political as well as theological causes. This was especially true where the question of slavery was concerned. Nearly every denomination was strongly rocked by the slavery question even though it may not have been split by the issue. Eventually the Baptists, the Methodists, and the Presbyterians were split into Northern and Southern churches. In the Methodist church the Wesleyan Antislavery Societies eventually brought the Wesleyan Methodist church into existence in 1843 as a protest body against the parent body's alleged soft attitude on the slavery question.¹⁷ The split in the Presbyterian church in 1837 was partially on account of the slavery issue, but there was an even bigger cause in the differences in theology as exemplified in the Old and New Schools of the Presbyterian church. The Old School had

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 265-66. *History of Antislavery* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1903), pp. 280f.

its theological fortress at Princeton while the New School was dominated by the New Haven theologians. This split will be discussed in more detail when the Plan of Union is examined in the next section of this chapter.

The Lutherans of New York State were also split into new synods by a combination of slavery and theological issues. This resulted in the formation of the Hartwick Synod in 1831 and the further split of the Hartwick Synod to form the Franckean Synod in 1837.¹⁸ These two synods will be discussed in greater detail under the topic of revivalism in the next chapter. The Lutherans of this period had their Old School and New School divisions just like the Presbyterians. The Episcopal church had two parties, the High Church Party and the Low Church Party. Even the Quakers were split by the Hicksite division in the period around 1827 and 1828. The Hicksite branch of the Quaker church was formed in opposition to the Orthodox branch.¹⁹ Among the Baptists the theology of John Calvin was almost universally adhered to except for the Freewill Baptists who operated under the Arminian system of theology. Arminianism was invading all of the churches during this period.

¹⁸Harry J. Kreider, History of The United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1954), I, 79, 97.

¹⁹Elbert Russell, The History of Quakerism (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943), pp. 280f.

The age was marked by both cooperation and antagonism between denominations. There was cooperation in the revival crusades and in the support of the benevolent societies. But even while the denominations cooperated with one another there was a certain amount of jockeying for position to see which body could wield the greatest power. There was also a lot of competition on the frontier to see which church body would grow the fastest. In New England and the older settled regions the Congregationalists and Presbyterians seemed to have the edge numerically, but on the frontier the Methodists and Baptists seemed to grow most rapidly. All denominations evidently used revivalism in order to try to gain new members; this is even true of many of the Quaker congregations. The Methodists also popularized the camp meeting approach to evangelism whereby believers and other interested persons would gather on a camp ground to hold protracted meetings. Although the camp meeting was first used by the Presbyterians, it was the Methodist circuit rider who perfected this technique in his effort to evangelize the frontier.²⁰ As was mentioned before, the Adventist groups adopted this procedure to help spread their millennial message. The so-called "new measures" will be discussed in the next chapter under revivalism.

²⁰Charles A. Johnson, The Frontier Camp Meeting (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, c.1955), p. vii.

Two union schemes ought to be mentioned in closing this section on church and community. In 1838 Samuel S. Schmucker, the liberal voice of Lutheranism, if indeed he can be called Lutheran at all, issued his "Fraternal Appeal to the American Churches" calling for them to reunite on the basis of the Apostles' Creed. This appeal did not seem to gain much support among the churches. Schmucker was also prominently identified in 1846 with the formation of the Evangelical Alliance. This was a union of individual Christians who wanted to promote religious toleration.²¹ But like the "Fraternal Appeal," the Evangelical Alliance was doomed to failure.

Church and Mission

All of the Protestant churches were interested in reaching the unchurched on the vast frontier of America during this period of American history. The Presbyterians, the Congregationalists, the Episcopalians, and the Lutherans probably had the best educated ministry at this time. In fact, the Methodists and the Baptists seem to have taken pride during the early years of the nineteenth century that they did not waste their time on preparing a

²¹Wentz, op. cit., p. 139.

highly educated ministry.²² They preferred to stress consecration by the Holy Spirit as the sole test of a man's fitness for the ministry. Written sermons were somehow thought to be inferior to extemporaneous preaching under the supposed guidance of the Holy Spirit. Charles G. Finney was also a disciple of this type of thinking.

Since the denominations which preferred to send out educated ministers were often short on such educated manpower the Baptist farmer preacher and the Methodist circuit rider frequently beat the others to the new frontier settlements.²³ These uneducated ministers probably did talk on a level that was easily understood by their hearers who were usually as uneducated as they themselves. Later in the nineteenth century, however, the Baptists and the

²²"Suppose, now, Mr. Wesley had been obliged to wait for a literary and theologically trained band of preachers before he moved in the glorious work of his day, what would Methodism have been in the Wesleyan connection to-day? Suppose the Methodist Episcopal Church in these United States had been under the necessity of waiting for men thus qualified, what would her condition have been at this time? In despite of all John Wesley's prejudices, he providentially saw that to accomplish the glorious work for which God had raised him up, he must yield to the superior wisdom of Jehovah, and send out his 'lay preachers' to wake up a slumbering world. If Bishop Asbury had waited for this choice literary band of preachers, infidelity would have swept these United States from one end to the other." Peter Cartwright, Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, edited by Charles L. Wallis (New York: Abingdon Press, c.1956), pp. 63-64.

²³Johnson, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

Methodists also became interested in education and then they established their own denominational schools and colleges.

The Protestants were not the only ones who were interested in the frontier though. With the great Roman Catholic immigration after 1825 the Roman church fielded three mission enterprises in order to keep their people in the fold after they arrived in the new world. These societies were:

The Society for Propagating the Faith, founded at Lyons in 1822; the Leopold Foundation, organized in Vienna in 1828; and the Ludwig Mission, established by Louis I of Bavaria in 1838.²⁴

These Roman Catholic mission efforts figured prominently in Protestant opposition to the Roman church in America during this period.²⁵ The establishment of Roman Catholic parochial schools also aided the mission effort of the Roman church on the American frontier.

The economic declines of 1819 and 1837 slowed the rate of growth in all American churches and some probably even lost members as a result of these two depressions. Milder economic declines seemed to have accelerated the growth of the church, but during severe depressions the churches lacked the money to send men and supplies to new fields of

²⁴Bodo, op. cit., p. 69.

²⁵Infra, p. 46.

labor. It was all the churches could do in tight economic periods to hold the line while they waited for a better day to come. Then, too, during periods of mild economic decline men seemed able to speculate more freely upon the deliverance which would come with the millennium, whereas during really hard times the church members had all that they could do to keep soul and body together and this left little time for speculation on matters theological.²⁶

This was an age though in which nearly all churchmen were looking for a millennium of one type or another. The theocrats wanted to perfect an American theocracy so that all would be in readiness when the Lord returned to set up His kingdom. The benevolent groups were enthusiastic in their support of moral and social reform, also ostensibly with some such plan of preparing the way for the Lord. It was an age when men seemed to feel that they could clean themselves and the world up so that all would be acceptable to the Lord when He returned. The idea seemed to be that America was the Zion referred to in Biblical prophecy. And religious groups of all shades of theological opinion seemed to share in the enthusiasm for America's key role in bringing about the millennial reign of Christ.

This millennial expectancy helped to make the churches zealous in setting up benevolent societies to extend the

²⁶Cross, op. cit., p. 269.

kingdom of God and to further the cause of moral and social reform. These societies indicate the growing power of the laymen in the Protestant churches because most of them were under the control of laymen. There were often auxiliary female organizations so that the women of the church could put their talents to work. There were organizations to help spread the Gospel, to promote temperance, to promote the proper observance of the Sabbath, to help free the slaves, to help paupers, to curb vice, and to do many other works of reform.

The majority of these benevolent societies met annually in New York City during the month of May.²⁷ These simultaneous meetings were almost a necessity since the membership and particularly the executive officers often overlapped. Arthur Tappan, a wealthy layman in New York City, was one of those prominent men who had his fingers in many benevolent pies at the same time.

One of the more important early societies engaged in evangelism, which was especially active in Western New York, was the Connecticut Society formed about 1798. This society poured many men and supplies into Western New York during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. It

²⁷Charles C. Cole, Jr., The Social Ideas of the Northern Evangelists 1826-1860 (New York: Columbia University Press, c.1954), p. 109.

became a model for other mission societies.²⁸

The first really national evangelism society was the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions which was organized in 1810. The New England Tract Society which was founded in 1814 merged with a similar group in New York State about 1825 in order to form the American Tract Society. This tract society was preceded by the American Bible Society which was founded in 1816. The American Education Society started its work in 1815. Then there were the American Colonization Society (1817), the American Sunday School Union (1824), the American Home Missionary Society (1826), the American Temperance Society (1826), and the American Sabbath Union (1828).

All of these societies were set up to be nonsectarian in character, but in almost every case the Congregational and Presbyterian churches controlled them through their laity which held all or most of the top offices in the societies. Naturally under these circumstances the literature produced by these societies had a very strong sectarian bias. This probably was one of the main reasons why the Baptists and the Methodists set up their own missionary societies.

The Plan of Union which had a tremendous effect on theological thinking, especially in Western New York, should

²⁸Gress, op. cit., pp. 19f.

be dealt with in some detail. This Plan of Union was devised in 1801 to be a cooperative home mission enterprise between the General Congregational Association of Connecticut and the Presbyterian General Assembly.²⁹ It seems that there was a certain similarity between the doctrines of the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians and the Edwardean branch of New England Congregationalists. These two churches had both fought deism and Unitarianism and both groups were having difficulty in supplying adequately trained clergymen for their home mission program.³⁰ Therefore, they worked out this Plan of Union for establishing new churches in central New York and northern Ohio.

In each case the new church could decide for itself which of the two denominations it wished to join. The ministers also were given the privilege of choosing between the two denominations. In practice the plan worked in favor of the Presbyterian church whose more rigid polity made it more efficient in the frontier situation. A new church could readily enter the presbytery by a simple application for membership that did not have to be ratified by the vote of the presbytery. But the presbytery had to give its vote of approval before a church could be dropped from its ranks. According to Congregational principles,

²⁹For the official regulations which governed the Plan of Union cf. Appendix A.

³⁰Cross, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

however, a single congregation could by simple majority vote sever itself from other Congregational churches and enter into the Presbyterian fold.³¹ As a result of this situation the Presbyterians added many new churches and became quite strong in central New York and in Ohio.

Unfortunately, however, the theology of these new union churches was strongly influenced by the New Haven theology of Professor Nathaniel W. Taylor. This type of liberal theology known as "Taylorism" was strongly infiltrated by Arminianism. This distressed the Old School Presbyterians. When they found themselves in the majority at the meeting of the General Assembly in 1837 they seized the opportunity to abrogate the Plan of Union. They declared the plan to be null and void from the beginning, since the General Assembly of 1801, which made the plan, had no right to enter into such an agreement with the General Congregational Association of Connecticut, which was not a national body and could not, according to the Old School Presbyterians, even speak or legislate for the churches that composed it. The Presbyterian General Assembly then went on to excise the four synods which were made up of the union churches. Three of these synods were in the state of New York; the fourth was in Ohio. The

³¹John Winthrop Platner and Others, The Religious History of New England, King's Chapel Lectures (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, c.1917), pp. 64-65.

Congregationalists did not get around to abrogating the Plan of Union until their Albany convention which took place in 1852.³²

The Old School Presbyterians excised these four synods mainly because they held New School doctrines. But there was another disagreement between the Old and the New School Presbyterians that encouraged this split. Most of the Old School Presbyterians favored mild solutions to the slavery issue. They tried not to offend their southern constituency. They supported the Colonization Society,³³ which will be discussed later with the abolition movement. The New School Presbyterians favored more drastic solutions to the slavery question, however. They preferred to have an immediate abolition of slavery.

The doctrines that were most hotly contested by the Old School Presbyterians centered around the questions of original sin, election, the atonement, free will, and conversion. The Old School Presbyterians said that man is born into this world with an inherently sinful nature. The New School Presbyterians said that man is not condemned by his sinful nature but by his voluntary sinful acts. The Old School said that God had elected certain men to salvation and therefore the atonement of Christ was only for the

³²Ibid., pp. 65-66.

³³Esdo, op. cit., pp. 140f.

elect. The New School replied that Christ's atonement was for all men. The Old School said that because of original sin the will of the natural man is not free but bound to commit sin. The New School said that man's will must be free so that he can choose between good and evil. The Old School said that conversion was entirely the work of the Holy Spirit. The New School believed that man cooperated in conversion and that conversion was brought about by the moral influence exerted on man by the Holy Spirit.³⁴

The Rev. James Hotchkin, writing about eleven years after this excising act of 1837 had taken place, seems to have been quite perturbed about this split between the Old and the New School Presbyterians. His sympathies seem to lie with the New School and he gives the impression that doctrine ought to be considered as secondary to fellowship and union. He indicates that one ought to be tolerant of heresy for the sake of unity. In discussing the problem he said:

On "the great errors in doctrine," prevailing to an alarming extent, as is asserted, it may be proper to make some observations. It is not to be expected in this imperfect world that any considerable number of Christians will entertain views precisely alike, on all subjects which relate to religious truth. All do not understand the teaching of the Scriptures alike; neither is there an entire agreement among

³⁴For the official text of the errors condemned by the General Assembly of 1837, and for the "True Doctrine" formulated by the New School Presbyterians in their Auburn convention of August, 1837, cf. Appendix B.

Presbyterians, as to what is taught in the Confession of Faith and Catechisms of the Presbyterian Church. If perfect agreement in sentiment were essential to church fellowship, no church could exist upon earth. As there are shades of difference in the views of Christians respecting what is truth, so there are different opinions respecting what constitutes essential truth, or the truths in which it is essential that Christians should be agreed, in order to their composing one church. One person would denominate a certain sentiment a "great error," while another, believing it an error, might however consider it of comparatively little consequence. Some Presbyterians of the old school would consider it as a great error, to maintain, that "impenitent sinners have any ability of any kind to do anything which God requires," or "that God may not, with perfect consistency, require the sinner to do, and punish [sic] him for not doing, all holy acts, when he has no ability of any kind to do them." Many of them, probably, consider it a great error to maintain,-- that the atonement of Christ was made for any but the elect. What is meant by the assertion that great "errors in doctrine" prevailed to an alarming degree in the excised Synods, is somewhat vague.³⁵

This idea of tolerance and the desire to play down doctrine for the sake of unity seems to have been prevalent in Western New York and the rest of the nation during this period. Piety and morals were usually stressed at the expense of the truths contained in the Holy Scriptures. The religious publications of that day, and they were many and loud in their editorials, often stressed the idea that the good men of a community by leading moral lives would so influence the other potentially good men that finally the whole community would be living the "good life." To such

³⁵Hotchkin, op. cit., p. 233. Italics are in the original.

advocates of this do good policy, Christ's whole life was a pattern from His birth to His death on the cross which was meant to show men how to live this "good life." Christ was not the Saviour from sin to these moralists, He was simply the great example.

But not all of the propaganda urging moral and social reform came from the churches. The free thinkers and the agnostics also had their propagandists who urged moral and social reform. Only they felt that this would be accomplished quicker if the churches would all fold up. Robert Owen and Frances Wright exemplify active agnostics who opposed the Christian religion. In New York City they edited a weekly paper called the Free Inquirer which was dedicated to the task of disproving the teachings of Christianity. Frances Wright was also an avid lecturer in spreading her radical ideas. James Stuart gives an interesting description of a lecture meeting conducted by Frances Wright in the Walnut-street theatre in Philadelphia in 1829. Mr. Stuart attended this lecture and he said that the audience often seemed unsympathetic when Frances Wright made disparaging remarks about the churches. He records part of her lecture in the first volume of his writings describing his American trip. In this lecture Frances Wright extolled science and advised her hearers to learn more of science and forsake religion. To put it in her words:

"The master science,--the centre path, and fairest avenue in the field of knowledge, and from which, and

into which, all others, if rightly followed, would be found to branch and converge,--the science of human life remains to this hour in its infancy. We have dived into the secrets of external nature;--we have pierced the blue ether, and tracked the courses and revolutions of its planets, its systems, its comets, and its universe of suns;--we have laid bare the bowels of earth, disclosed their hidden treasures, and brought to light the past phenomena of primeval worlds;--we have passed over our globe, and explored its realms and climates through the scorching tropics, to the icy barrier of the poles;--we have torn the lightning from the clouds, and jewels from the depths of the ocean;--we have bowed the elements to our will, and, appropriating and guiding their strength, have achieved more than the fabled exploits of demi-gods, or the miracles of prophets and saints;--we have, in truth, in ingenuity, proved ourselves magicians; in power, all but gods;--yet is our knowledge only ignorance, and our wisdom that of babes, seeing that, while exploring the universe, we have left unexplored the human heart, and while mastering the earth, we have still to master ourselves.

"Oh let us not fear, that within the atmosphere of our own world,--in the powers and wants of our own nature,--and in the woes of human life, as originating in human error,--that we may not find a field of inquiry more than sufficient to fill our time, enchain our thoughts, and call into action every latent faculty and feeling of our nature.

"Let, then, morals, or the science of human life, assume, among a people boasting themselves free, (and free, rightly interpreted, would mean rational,) the place of religion. Let us, instead of speculating and disputing where we can discover nothing, observe and inquire where we can discover every thing."³⁶

This was also a time when men were still reading Thomas Paine's Age of Reason. It was an age which heard Emerson and Thoreau praise the accomplishments of man while they extolled the virtues of man's free will. Much of this

³⁶Stuart, op. cit., pp. 239-40.

optimism concerning man and his native abilities was imported from Europe with Transcendentalism. But a lot of optimism seemed to be home grown too. Many uneducated frontiersmen had a lot of faith in man's ability as well as the nation's ability to become perfect. Even Andrew Jackson praised the virtues of man in his inaugural address of 1829. He said:

"I believe man can be elevated; man can become more and more endowed with divinity; and as he does, he becomes more God-like in his character and capable of governing himself. Let us go on elevating our people, perfecting our institutions, until democracy shall reach such a point of perfection that we can acclaim with truth that the voice of the people is the voice of God."³⁷

It was no doubt popular for the politicians of that day to be church members and to voice pious sounding phrases since many community leaders were at least nominally Christian. How Biblically oriented the religion of many public figures was, might be open to serious question, however. But certainly this address by President Andrew Jackson extolling man's ability to attain perfection gave voice to an idea that was popular both in and out of the churches.

Agnostics, free thinkers, deists, moralists, advocates of free love, transcendentalists, liberals, conservatives, zealots, perfectionists, theocrats, patriots,

³⁷Quoted in Bodo, op. cit., p. 176.

Federalists, Whigs, Republicans, and many other special party groups were present in Western New York as well as in the other parts of the country to oppose, promote, uphold, modify, or change the message of the various branches of the Christian Church as they went about their business of doing mission work. With so much confusion in thought and policy the crack-pots were able to find willing hearers when they went to work to establish their sects.

Early Sects

The first sect important to this period in Western New York was imported from England. The leader was Mother Ann Lee, the prophet and founder of Shakerism. She had grown up in a slum section of Manchester, England where she had apparently been a witness from early childhood to all types of immorality. This, coupled with a marriage forced upon her by her father, was probably the main reason why she concocted the idea that the cause of the fall of man had a sexual basis. To her, sex was the greatest of all evils and one of the main tenets of her faith was the preaching of celibacy.

She had been an early convert to Quakerism and eventually she added her own theological ideas to those she had picked up from the Quakers. One of these ideas gave her followers the name Shaking Quakers or Shakers. Her followers would work themselves into a frenzy by shaking

or dancing. This dancing became an important part of the Shaker services. They already were practicing this dancing when they came to America in 1774. In America they founded a large community at New Lebanon, New York. Other Shaker communities were set up during the first half of the nineteenth century in New York State. These communities were set up on Communistic lines. This Communistic plan was borrowed from an earlier sect headed by Shadrach Ireland, whose followers had been known as "New Lighters." The Shakers were also millennialists. They called themselves the Millennialist Church, or the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing. This second appearing of Christ was in the person of Ann Lee herself. She claimed to be the female member of the Godhead. According to her God had a bisexual nature.³⁸

Another important part of Shaker theology was the doctrine that the dead might still be converted. This could be accomplished by dead Shakers who were obliged to descend into hell to preach for three days to the lost. After this descent into hell they would then ascend into the seven heavens. These seven heavens were arranged in concentric spheres where the saved could progress toward the most inward of the seven.³⁹

³⁸Everett Webber, Escape to Utopia (New York: Hastings House Publishers, c.1959), pp. 43-44.

³⁹Ibid., p. 50.

Spiritualism was another part of Shaker belief. Ten years before the rappings in the Fox sisters' home near Rochester, New York, the Shakers were going into trances during which they supposedly communicated with the dead.⁴⁰ They spoke in unknown tongues and had a generally wild time in their meetings.

In summary, the Shakers taught that God was not a trinity but a dual being made up of the Father and Mother. Ann Lee, their first prophet, was a female counterpart of Christ. The sexes were equal but marriage was sinful and celibacy was to be practiced. Men and women and boys and girls were to live in separate quarters in the Shaker communities. Ann Lee taught her followers that there is no resurrection of the body, only the soul is resurrected from sin to a life of righteousness. Christ was the great example whose death was not the vicarious atonement but merely an example of obedience. By following this example man works out his own salvation and becomes one with God. By obedience to Christian principles the soul inherits eternal soul life and is set on a road of eternal progress toward perfection of the Divine character. Heaven and hell are simply conditions and states of the soul. Jesus was not divine since he was a Jew, born of human parents. But

⁴⁰Anna White and Leila S. Taylor, Shakerism, Its Meaning and Message (Columbus, Ohio: Press of Fred J. Heer, c.1904), pp. 221f.

he was obedient and so the Christ Spirit rested upon him, just as it rested on Mother Ann Lee.⁴¹

After Ann Lee's death in 1784 Mother Lucy Wright became the ruling spirit of the Shakers. And eventually Philemon Stewart became an enlivening spirit in the Shaker movement. He had a revelation concerning what he called the Holy Mount or Holy Hill. These holy hills became centers near the Shaker meeting houses where the members could conduct outdoor worship. The faithful could see a fountain on each of these hills and these fountains were representative of the Fountain of Life. A lively imagination would no doubt have been of help in seeing these fountains.⁴²

Philemon Stewart also was given a holy book in flames of fire. This book was titled The Holy, Sacred, and Divine Roll and Book, from the Lord God of Heaven to the Inhabitants of the Earth. It contained the testimonials of such important personages as Noah, Elisha, St. Peter, and St. John. Other lesser known members of the Shaker church also had signed the book. This book seems to have had a certain resemblance to the earlier Book of Mormon which was said to have been communicated to Joseph Smith, Jr. by an angel. Eventually the Shaker elders had to remove this book from

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 253f.

⁴²Webber, op. cit., p. 62.

display since it had become the signal for the dictation of many other so-called inspired works. Webber facetiously comments on this episode of Shaker history:

Whole battalions of angels then began dictating similar tomes to other Shakers, but by then even the chief ministry dared defy the thunderings of Jehovah therein and refused to publish them.⁴³

Before the 1820's the Shakers were a persecuted sect but by the 1820's they had become financially successful through hard work, and they seemed to have become generally respected. This probably indicates that fanaticism had become an accepted part of community life in Western New York by the 1820's.

The other early sect in Western New York was the community of the Publick Universal Friend. The founder was a woman known as Jemima Wilkinson or Wilkerson. She established her communal community on Seneca Lake in 1787. Later she moved the community to Jerusalem in Yates County, New York. In this second community she ran competition to the Shakers and she was accused by the Shakers of imitating their leader Ann Lee. There was some similarity between these two women prophets. Both women had been Quakers and both of them gained their first converts from the Quaker churches. The Universal Friend numbered several prosperous Yankee Quakers among her early followers. These early followers were called Jemimakins by the onlookers.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 64-66.

Jemima claimed, too, that she was a woman Christ. Supposedly she was against sex and preferred celibacy, but she seems to have become rather involved with certain male members of her sect and as a result she became the subject of gossip. She said that she was a heavenly being who had been sent down to live in Jemima's resurrected body after Jemima's death. In 1776 Jemima Wilkinson was ill with typhus or at least she pretended to be ill and she claimed that she had died. Her doctor attributed these statements to a fever-produced delusion but others claimed that she never had been sick and that she had pretended the whole episode.⁴⁴

Jemima's doctrines have not been preserved as well as have the doctrines of the Shakers. But then she never gained the following that the Shakers did. After her death in 1819, the leadership of her colony passed into the hands of Rachel Malin. Her death was a shock to her followers since they thought that she would never die. Her death brought many lawsuits over the property owned by the Jemimakers. These court suits had already begun to shape up before Jemima's death since some of her followers felt that she was a fraud.

In commenting on the doctrines preached by the

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 75-76.

Universal Friend Cross wrote:

Apparently her preaching emphasized the gentler and more liberal doctrines to be built from the Scriptures rather than the more harsh and limiting ones then in style. She probably preached love, charity, resignation, unlimited salvation, and good works. In any case, persons once in her society proved singularly resistant to the less gentle persuasions of Calvinist ministers.⁴⁵

Most of these early sects in Western New York as well as those that came later in the nineteenth century seemed to have had sex tied up in some way with their religious schemes. Either sex was dirty and the source of all evil according to this type of thinking, or it was made to be the subject of license. Most of these sects also preached perfection and the eventual salvation of all men, and man and God were made to be a part of one another. A surprising number of the leaders of these sects were looked upon as being in some way divine. This was usually used as the authority for proclaiming doctrines that opposed the established mores of a community. Thus, the members of these sects were set apart from the community as a special chosen race.

⁴⁵Cross, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

CHAPTER III

SPECIFIC PROBLEMS

Anti-Catholicism and Antimasonry

Since many of the early settlers of Western New York were Yankees with a Puritan background it is not strange that they held at least some anti-Catholic prejudice. Nor is it strange that the theocrats were suspicious of a church with strong foreign ties like the Roman Catholic church. These theocrats saw America as the fortress of Protestantism, a Protestant theocracy, if you please. They felt that all that was best in the American Republic was directly attributable to the free spirit of Protestantism which encouraged individual initiative. They resented a church which was set up with strong hierarchical principles like the Roman Catholic church. Such a church was too reminiscent of some of the despotic absolute governments of Europe.¹ The free churches felt the same way and were perhaps even more anti-Catholic than the theocrats since they abhorred all types of priestcraft.

It was natural, therefore, for the Protestants to

¹John R. Bodo, The Protestant Clergy and Public Issues 1812-1848 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, c.1954), p. 62.

support the principle of lay-ownership of church property in the Roman church during the "trusteeism controversy" in Philadelphia and New York during the 1820's. There had been controversies of this nature in other Roman Catholic dioceses but they were not as well publicized as the controversies in Philadelphia and New York, which drew nationwide attention and which pointed up the autocratic government of the Roman church. The laymen of the Roman churches in the cities of Philadelphia and New York claimed the right to choose their own priests. The Roman bishops opposed this attempt at making the American Roman Catholic church democratic. The bishops insisted that control of church property was vested in the office of the bishop and that only the bishop could name the priests who would serve the various congregations. The struggle lasted about ten years until the bishops were able to impose their will on the laymen through the use of excommunication and of the interdict. The hierarchy won its case but it was a victory that brought the Roman church a lot of bad publicity, and that rallied the Protestants for battle.²

The Protestant church papers ran articles attacking the Roman church and special anti-Catholic papers were

²Ray Allen Billington, The Protestant Crusade 1800-1860 (New York: Rinehart and Company, Inc., 1952), pp. 38-41. See also John Tracy Ellis, American Catholicism (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, c.1956), pp. 41-46.

published which challenged the Romanists to doctrinal debate. The Reverend John Hughes, who later became the Roman Bishop of New York, founded a Catholic Tract Society in Philadelphia in 1827 for the sole purpose of defending Catholicism and attacking Protestantism. The Roman Catholics also founded papers like The Jesuit in Boston to answer Protestant charges against Romanist doctrine. The name of this paper was later changed to the Boston Pilot.³ On the Protestant side, The American Tract Society became active in the production of anti-Catholic literature. Anti-Catholic societies like the American Protestant Association were formed, usually on an interdenominational basis. The battle lines were drawn and individual priests met Protestant ministers in public debate. The longer the battle lasted the hotter it became.

On January 2, 1830, The Protestant appeared in New York under the editorship of the Reverend George Bourne.⁴ In his editorials the Reverend George Bourne violently attacked the Roman church. He published exposés of allegedly bad moral and religious conditions within the Roman church. This anti-Catholic paper underwent a number of changes in name, editorial leadership, and in editorial content in its opposition to Romanism. All of these anti-Catholic papers

³Ibid., p. 47.

⁴Ibid., p. 53.

reflected the popular Protestant attitude toward the Roman church. When the issues were hot the editorials reflected this heat and circulation went up. Then as issues became resolved public interest dropped and the paper's circulation dropped.

Anti-Catholic sentiment became more extreme as the tide of Roman Catholic immigration began to climb. "The 40,000 Roman Catholics of 1800 had increased to 1,606,000 by 1850, a forty-fold growth."⁵ Most of these new Catholics were Roman Catholic immigrants who had come from Ireland and Germany. Also, when Louisiana, the Floridas, Texas, New Mexico and California became a part of the United States many Roman Catholics of French and Spanish background became citizens of the United States.

The immigrants from Europe often stayed in the cities of the East and so the anti-Catholic opposition was greatest in urban centers. Not all stayed in the East, however; many went west to claim free land. The Roman church followed these immigrants and built parochial schools in order to keep them and their children in the Roman church. These parochial schools were sometimes the only schools that had been built in some areas so that the Protestant children attended them and became indoctrinated

⁵Bodo, op. cit., p. 62.

by the Roman church.⁶

In Boston many wealthy Unitarians sent their daughters to a school which was run by the Roman Ursuline order of nuns. These Unitarians objected to the rigid control which the Congregationalists had over the public school system. The Congregationalists were afraid of an alliance between the Unitarians and the Roman Catholics and so opposition to this convent school grew. Dr. Lyman Beecher, in 1830, began a series of anti-Catholic sermons in Boston to point up the despotism of Romanism. Other ministers took up the cry against Rome until the people of Boston were thoroughly roused. An anti-Catholic novel entitled The Nun gained popularity at this time because of its sensationalism. Everything came to a head when a nun by the name of Elizabeth Harrison fled from this Ursuline convent which was located in Charlestown. As a result of the growing tension a mob formed and burned the convent on the night of August 9, 1830.⁷ The Roman Catholics tried to get public funds to restore the convent but public sentiment was against them and this attempt ended in failure.

There were other physical clashes between Roman Catholics and Protestants in the years that followed 1830. In 1844 riots broke out in Philadelphia when Roman Catholics

⁶Ibid., p. 67.

⁷Billington, op. cit., pp. 70-76.

fired on a group of American Republicans who were gathering for a political meeting to protest Roman Catholic immigration. In retaliation the nativists destroyed some Roman churches as well as private homes which were owned by Roman Catholics. This American Republican party had been formed in 1843 in order to make it harder for immigrants to become citizens.⁸ This party proposed a twenty-one year waiting period before an immigrant was given the right of franchise.⁹ Since the immigrants were numerous they did wield a formidable political force and this attempt to stiffen immigration policies was defeated.

There were other exposés of the Roman church. In 1836 Maria Monk wrote a book which she entitled Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery of Montreal. The book was filled with sensational charges and it became a best seller. A more important book which provided ammunition for the anti-Catholic forces was the book written by Samuel F. B. Morse, entitled Foreign Conspiracy Against the Liberties of the United States. In this book Morse charged that the Austrians were the power behind the Roman pope and Morse felt that the Austrians were trying to subvert the democratic institutions of America. The Leopold Foundation,

⁸Bodo, op. cit., p. 76.

⁹Billington, op. cit., p. 203.

already mentioned in the second chapter,¹⁰ exemplified a Catholic mission institution that could be used by Austria to infiltrate America with subversive political ideas. Thus, the Protestants of America were aroused to the political dangers as well as the religious threats involved in foreign-dominated Roman Catholic mission enterprises. To give further emphasis to the Roman threat to American liberty Morse quoted from the Encyclical Letter of Gregory XVI, which was dated September, 1832. In this encyclical letter Pope Gregory XVI had condemned the idea of liberty of conscience.¹¹

The anti-Catholic crusade went on into the 1850's and it was during this period that the Know-Nothing Party came to prominence. But that is beyond the period under discussion. In concluding the anti-Catholic story it should be pointed out that there was truth in charging the Roman church with having political as well as religious motives behind many of their public actions. In 1840, for instance, Archbishop Hughes of New York did make a grab for public school funds to support the Roman parochial school system.¹² Archbishop Hughes also voiced strong disapproval of the use of the Authorized King James version of the Bible in

¹⁰Supra, p. 22.

¹¹Bodo, op. cit., pp. 69-71.

¹²Billington, op. cit., p. 146.

the public schools. And there was truth in the charge made by anti-Catholics that some Roman Catholic countries were dumping their paupers and criminals into America via the immigration route.¹³

Another "anti-movement" of this period was the movement against Masonry. During the 1820's and 1830's the Anti-Masonic party was active in American politics. There was opposition, especially among the rural districts, to the rituals and secrecy of the Masonic Lodge. The Anti-Masonic Inquirer, published in Rochester, New York, had a large circulation among the farmers of the Genesee country.¹⁴ The Anti-Masonic party objected to the way in which the Masons had taken over political offices, especially in the older settled regions of the country. The Masonic Lodge had been busy entrenching itself in American politics both before and during the American Revolution and it claimed many early statesmen as brother Masons. Even pastors of the larger Protestant churches had become active members of the Masonic Lodge.

Some Protestant churches were opposed to the Masonic Lodge, however. In 1808 the New York Baptist Association excluded Masons from church membership. In 1820 the

¹³Bodo, op. cit., p. 73.

¹⁴Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-over District (New York: Cornell University Press, c.1950), p. 73.

Presbyterian Synod of Pittsburgh said that Masonry was unfit for professing Christians.¹⁵

It took the Morgan trials of 1826 in Western New York to produce a general opposition to the Masonic Lodge. In 1826 William Morgan was kidnaped by members of the Masonic Lodge. It was later alleged that he was killed by Masons because of a book that he had written to expose the secrets of Masonry.¹⁶ It was claimed that the Masonic oath prevented a Mason from acting as a juror when a brother Mason was involved.

The Morgan case put a blot on the Masonic Lodge so that many members quit the lodge. "For instance, in New York many Masons renounced their vows, and the membership dwindled from about twenty thousand to about three thousand in the decade from 1826 to 1836."¹⁷ The churches began to look on the Masonic Lodge as detrimental to democracy and as a distraction from active participation in the activities of the church. Sometimes congregations became split over the Masonic issue.

In 1831 the Anti-Masonic party nominated a candidate

¹⁵Anson Phelps Stokes, Church and State in the United States (New York: Harper and Brothers, c.1950), II, 20.

¹⁶A Narrative of the Circumstances Relating to the Kidnaping and Murder of William Morgan (Chicago, Illinois: Ezra A. Cook, Publisher, n.d.), pp. 9f.

¹⁷Stokes, op. cit., p. 21.

for president of the United States. His name was William Wirt. His home state was Maryland. In the election of 1832 the Anti-Masonic party secured 2.65 per cent of the popular vote. The party received seven electoral votes from Vermont. The Anti-Masonic party elected governors in the states of Vermont and Pennsylvania. "This was the first 'third party' with its own national ticket," and "its convention was the first to adopt a written platform."¹⁸

The antimasonic movement exposed the antichristian character of Masonry. It showed how incompatible Freemasonry is with true Christian religion. Even so, the Masonic movement bounced back from this period of defeat to become stronger than it had been before. In the 1860's Charles G. Finney, who had been a member of the Masonic Lodge, wrote a refutation of Masonry. In the preface to this book Finney apologized for not writing such a book of refutation sooner:

Should I be asked why I have not spoken out upon this subject before, I reply that until the question was sprung upon us in this place a year ago, I was not at all aware that Freemasonry had been disinterred and was alive, and stalking abroad over the face of the whole land.¹⁹

Finney also quoted a renunciation of Freemasonry written in 1829 by a man who had become fed up with the

¹⁸Ibid., pp. 22-23.

¹⁹Rev. Charles G. Finney, The Character, Claims and Practical Workings of Freemasonry (Chicago, Illinois: National Christian Association, 1924), p. 2.

Masonic Lodge.

"To the Editor of the Anti-Masonic Beacon.

"SIR: The time has come when I feel constrained, from sense of duty to God, my neighbor, and myself, to make void my allegiance to the Masonic Institution. In thus taking leave of Freemasonry, I am not sensible of the least hostility to Masons; but act under a solemn conviction that Masonry is a wicked imposture, a refuge of lies, a substitute for the Gospel of Christ; that it is contrary to the laws of God and our country, and superior to either, in the estimation of its disciples; and lastly, that it is the most powerful and successful engine ever employed by the devil to destroy the souls of men.

"I was initiated into Masonry in 1821, and have taken eighteen degrees. My motives were curiosity and the expectation of personal advantage, while, at the same time, I was dishonest enough to profess that disinterested benevolence to my fellow-men was my object. I have been intrusted with the highest offices in the gift of a Lodge and Chapter, viz.: Worshipful Master and Most Excellent High Priest, which I acknowledge, at that time, I considered very flattering distinctions. I approved of the abduction of William Morgan as a just act of Masonry, and had I been called upon to assist should, under the opinions I then held, have felt bound to attend the summons and obey it. I remained in favor of the Institution several months after the abduction of Morgan.

"I was convinced of the evil and folly of Masonry from an inquiry instituted in my own mind, which I was determined should be conducted privately, candidly, impartially, and, if possible, without prejudice. Under the scrutiny of the investigation I brought the Law of God contained in the Old and New Testaments, the laws of our country, the Masonic oaths (so many as I have taken), Masonic professions, and Masonic practice. I then resolved not to be influenced by the fear or favor of man, who can only 'kill the body, and after that has no more that he can do,' but by the fear of God, 'who, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell.' (Luke xii. 4,5.) I feel assured that any Mason, or any man, taking the same course, must arrive at the same conclusion.

Yours, JARVIS F. HANKS.
 "New York, February 13, 1829."²⁰

It seems a bit strange that Charles G. Finney had waited so long to speak out on the Masonic issue considering the fact that he had probably been more active than any other preacher in leading crusades for moral and religious reform. He gave the reason for his long silence in this refutation of Masonry. He did not speak out during the 1820's because, as he said:

At that time, and for years afterward, I remained silent and said nothing against the institution; for I had not then so well considered the matter as to regard my Masonic oaths as utterly null and void.²¹

This seems like sheer hypocrisy for Finney to have felt bound to his blasphemous oath to the Masonic Lodge since he indicated in his memoirs that he was in disagreement with the doctrines of the Presbyterian church at the time that he took an oath to uphold them as a Presbyterian preacher. His oath before the presbytery did not seem to have meant as much to him as the Lodge oath.

He had studied under the Reverend George Gale, a Princeton graduate and a supporter of orthodox Presbyterian doctrines. Finney said that he did not agree with these doctrines. In his own words he said:

These doctrines I could not receive. I could not

²⁰Ibid., pp. 56-58. Italics are in the original.

²¹Ibid., p. 6.

receive his [Gale's] views on the subject of atonement, regeneration, faith, repentance, the slavery of the will, or any of the kindred doctrines.²²

Yet, even though Finney knew that these doctrines, which were supported by the Reverend Gale, were the doctrines upheld by the Presbyterian church he engaged in pure sophistry in order to justify his becoming a Presbyterian preacher. In an obvious attempt to salve his own conscience on this matter he wrote:

After many such discussions with Mr. Gale in pursuing my theological studies, the presbytery was finally called together at Adams to examine me to preach the Gospel. 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, [lectures purported to refute Universalist doctrines but which actually upheld the Universalist view of man's free will] rendered them, I think, more cautious than they would otherwise have been in getting into any controversy with me. In the course of my examination they avoided asking any such questions as would naturally bring my views into collision with theirs.

When they examined me, they voted unanimously to license me to preach. Unexpectedly to myself 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. This had made no part of my study. I replied that I received it for substance of doctrine, so far as I understood it. But I spoke in a way that plainly implied, I think, that I did not pretend to know much about it. However, I answered honestly, as I understood it at the time.²³

²²Charles G. Finney, Memoirs of Rev. Charles G. Finney (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, c.1876), p. 46.

²³Ibid., p. 51.

Later Finney became even more opposed to orthodox Presbyterian doctrine, but this did not stop him from letting the presbytery ordain him about 1825. He remained in the Presbyterian church several years before he finally left it to become a Congregationalist preacher and educator. One could seriously question the ethical motivation of a man like Finney and yet he was accepted as the leading revivalist and innovator of this age of extremists.

Unitarians and Universalists

In point of time the Universalists antedate the Unitarians since the first Universalist church was organized in 1774 in Gloucester, Massachusetts. The church called itself "the Independent Christian Society of Gloucester." The founder was John Murray, a disciple of James Rely of England who had written a book entitled Union. This book preached universal salvation. Universal salvation and independence in theological thinking were the two key principles underlying early Universalism and Unitarianism. About thirty years after Universalism came out from Congregationalism Hosea Ballou wrote a theological work entitled A Treatise on Atonement. This treatise denied all of the cardinal doctrines of Calvinism and set the Universalists solidly on the road toward the most

liberal type of theology.²⁴

"The Independent Christian Society of Gloucester" objected to the compulsory tax that they had to pay for the support of the Congregationalist church, which was the established church in several of the New England states. Therefore these Universalists took their grievances to court. After a long and costly lawsuit the case was decided in their favor. This court decision in June, 1786, set a precedent which gave recognition to the Universalists as a distinct sect.²⁵

The Unitarians were more successful in their separation from the Congregationalist church. By the time that the Unitarians were forced to separate from the Congregationalists they had gained control of a large number of the established Congregationalist churches in eastern Massachusetts. "Only one of the colonial churches of Boston maintained its orthodoxy, the Old South."²⁶ The liberal Congregationalists who were destined to become Unitarians had enough strength so that they could elect Henry Ware, a liberal, as Hollis Professor of Divinity at

²⁴John Winthrop Platner and Others, The Religious History of New England, King's Chapel Lectures (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, c.1917), pp. 300f.

²⁵Ibid., pp. 310f.

²⁶Ibid., p. 59.

Harvard University in 1805.²⁷ This caused the Hopkinsians and the Old Calvinists to join forces in the establishment of Andover Theological Seminary in 1808. The liberals and the orthodox engaged in bitter controversy until the courts were called upon to settle their differences. State law said that the constituency of the parish determined ownership of church property. This meant that even if the orthodox were the majority in church membership the liberals were given the property if they were the majority in the parish. This caused much bitterness since it gave the advantage to the smaller liberal group. The liberals became a distinct denomination in 1825 when they organized the American Unitarian Association.²⁸

The Calvinist view of human nature gave more offense to the early Unitarians than did the doctrine of the Trinity.²⁹ The Unitarians believed that man was inherently good. The purpose of life was so that man might perfect himself. This idea had much in common with Arminianism. Arminianism had also taught that "life is a time of trial and discipline and gradual transformation of

²⁷George Huntston Williams, editor, The Harvard Divinity School (Boston: The Beacon Press, c.1954), p. 23.

²⁸Platner and Others, op. cit., pp. 61f.

²⁹Ibid., p. 60.

character, by which man is fitted for eternal happiness."³⁰
 Conrad Wright says: "Two generations of Arminians amassed the intellectual capital on which the liberals drew in the Unitarian Controversy."³¹

The Unitarians were aristocratic and they were conservative in everything but their theology. They were ardent Congregationalists who dreaded ecclesiastical domination which would interfere with individual freedom. This respect for individual freedom kept them from doing much mission work. In fact they were a rather exclusive academic group. According to their way of thinking, God, in His fatherly mercy would guide all men to heaven so they could afford to be exclusive and neglect mission work.³²
 The Unitarians were even exclusive with regard to their country cousins, the Universalists, who were socially and culturally beneath them.³³

The Unitarians interpreted the Scriptures rationally and came up with these doctrines. God is a unity and not a trinity, therefore, Christ must not be the divine Son of

³⁰Conrad Wright, The Beginnings of Unitarianism in America (Boston: published by Starr King Press, distributed by the Beacon Press, c.1955), p. 199.

³¹Ibid., p. 252.

³²Platner and Others, op. cit., pp. 98, 113-15.

³³Thomas F. O'Dea, The Mormons (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, c.1957), p. 17.

the Father. Man is not totally depraved but has a native dignity which he must develop. God stands ready to help man develop his inherently good qualities and this process of development might be called regeneration. Since God loves man and since man is inherently good, man will not be eternally condemned. In time Biblical criticism, the advance of science, and a widening acquaintance with other religions pushed Unitarianism even farther from Christianity than it was in the first years of its existence.³⁴

From its earliest years of existence to the present the Unitarian sect has been marked by diversity of opinion among its membership. About the middle of the nineteenth century a Unitarian warned against trying to attribute similar religious beliefs to every member of the sect. He said:

Unitarians do not think alike or believe alike, and they protest against being classified under or committed to any view which one of them or any number of them may advance. They insist upon being left individually free to their speculations, and as free to attach what value they may judge right to these speculations, while in the spirit of fidelity and docility they search the Scriptures.³⁵

The early Universalists were just as independent as the Unitarians. Their prophet Hosea Ballou led the way in

³⁴Platner and Others, op. cit., pp. 119-26.

³⁵George E. Ellis, A Half-Century of the Unitarian Controversy (Boston: Crosby, Nichols, and Company, 1857), p. xxi.

the condemnation of all the major doctrines of orthodoxy. He condemned the doctrine of the trinity, the fall of man, total depravity, the governmental theory of the atonement, salvation by faith alone, and eternal punishment. The Universalists taught salvation by character. They claimed to be prophets of a larger faith. They taught "the doctrine of the final harmony of all souls with God."³⁶ This universal salvation was possible, according to the Universalists, because God is good and man is also good. The early Universalists held the doctrine of a limited term of punishment for the wicked. In 1831, however, there was a split over this issue. By 1841 the differences were settled. Many of the early Universalists were extremely anti-orthodox and they welcomed controversy. This spirit made them aggressive in spreading their new doctrines.³⁷

At Winchester, New Hampshire, in 1803 the Profession of Belief was adopted by the "Churches and Societies of Universalists of the New England States, assembled in General Convention." This Profession of Belief became known as the "Winchester Profession." It consisted of three articles:

ARTICLE I. We believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain a revelation of the character of God and of the duty, interest, and final

³⁶Platner and Others, op. cit., pp. 304-05.

³⁷Ibid., pp. 315, 318-19.

destination of mankind.

ARTICLE II. We believe that there is one God, whose nature is love, revealed in one Lord Jesus Christ, by one Holy Spirit of Grace, who will finally restore the whole family of mankind to holiness and happiness.

ARTICLE III. We believe that holiness and true happiness are inseparably connected, and that believers ought to be careful to maintain order and practice good works; for these things are good and profitable unto men.³⁸

Peter Cartwright wrote an interesting evaluation of Universalist doctrine:

Before this meeting closed in Naples, which was crowned with such signal success, our quarterly meeting commenced in a little town in the same circuit called Exeter. There Satan had long reigned without a rival, wickedness of all kinds abounded, and what made it the more deplorable, the wickedness of the people was sanctified by a Universalist priest or preacher, who assured them all of eternal salvation in heaven, irrespective of their moral conduct here on earth. I have thought, and do still think, if I were to set out to form a plan to contravene the laws of God, to encourage wickedness of all kinds, to corrupt the morals and encourage vice, and crowd hell with the lost and wailings of the damned, the Universalist plan should be the plan, the very plan, that I would adopt. What has a Universalist, who really and sincerely believes that doctrine, to fear? Just nothing at all; for this flesh-pleasing, conscience-soothing doctrine will not only justify him in his neglect of duty to God and man, but gives fallen nature an unlimited license to serve the devil with greediness, in any and every possible way that his degenerate, fallen soul requires or desires.³⁹

To Peter Cartwright the Universalist plan of salvation seemed demonic since it destroyed the basis for moral

³⁸Ibid., pp. 307-08.

³⁹Peter Cartwright, Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, edited by Charles L. Wallis (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 258.

righteousness.

Premillennialism and William Miller

Millennialism occupied the thoughts of many churchmen of the first half of the nineteenth century but the 1840's produced several millennialists who set actual dates for this event. A converted Jew in Palestine named Joseph Wolff predicted that the Second Advent would appear on the Mount of Olives and Christ would go to Jerusalem to set up His thousand year reign. Harriet Livermore, the daughter of a Massachusetts Congressman also set 1847 as the date for the Second Advent. She even preached her doctrines on four different occasions in the Hall of Representatives at Washington, D. C. Miss Livermore also tried to get Congress to send the Indians to Palestine to prepare for the event since she said they were the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel. Lady Hester Stanhope, a niece of William Pitt, lived on Mount Lebanon so that she would be ready for Christ's coming. She kept two white Arabian horses ready in a stable, one for Christ and one for herself.⁴⁰

The best known millennialist prophet and date setter of this period was William Miller. He had started making his calculations about 1818. The book of Daniel and the

⁴⁰Clara Endicott Sears, Days of Delusion, A Strange Bit of History (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, c.1924), pp. xxii-xxiii.

book of Revelation, as well as other prophetic books of the Bible, furnished him with material for speculation. He finally concluded that Christ would return some time between 1843 and 1844. The righteous dead would be raised and together with the righteous living would face judgment, after which they would be caught up to meet Christ in the air. The earth would be purified by fire which would consume the wicked. Their souls would be sent to the place prepared for the devil and his angels. Then Christ, along with the righteous saints, would reign on the new earth for a thousand years. After this thousand years the devil and the wicked dead would be raised in the second resurrection, and after being judged they would war against the saints, be defeated, and be cast into hell forever.⁴¹

Miller, who was a farmer from Low Hampton, New York, began preaching these doctrines in various rural congregations near his home. He was a member of the Baptist church but other churches besides the Baptists called him to their pulpits. Since Millerites were supposed to live to see the Second Coming Miller made many converts who wanted to avoid death. On November 13, 1833 Miller's cause was boosted by a great meteorite display. In 1843 the appearance of a comet gave another boost to the message. The money panic of 1837 also turned the thoughts of many

⁴¹Ibid., pp. xxiv-xxv.

to millennial speculation. But it is doubtful if the Millerite movement would have become national without the guiding hand of Joshua V. Himes who helped Miller to reach the urban masses. Himes was the pastor of the Chardon Street Baptist Chapel in Boston. He had the contacts that opened new doors to Miller's message.⁴²

The first appointed date for Christ's Second Advent, April 23, 1843, came and went. The Millerites had donned their white robes, had gone to the hilltops to wait but nothing happened. Today the Adventists deny that any robes were worn either on the first appointed day for the Second Advent or on the second appointed day in October, 1844.⁴³ Himes said that it was the enemies of the Adventists who had spread the word that April 23 was the correct date. Miller was stunned as he went back to his figures. He decided that he had failed to use Hebrew chronology and that this had thrown him off a year. He said that the next year was the Jewish Year of Jubilee so that must be the year. Miller's disciples took up the cry, "Tenth day of the seventh month, year of Jubilee!"⁴⁴ The new date set was October 20, 1844.

⁴²Everett Webber, Escape to Utopia (New York: Hastings House Publishers, c.1959), pp. 303f.

⁴³Francis D. Nichol, "The Growth of the Millerite Legend," Church History, XXI (December, 1952), 296-312.

⁴⁴Sears, op. cit., p. 154.

Miller wrote to Himes in these words:

"I see a glory in the seventh month which I never saw before. Although the Lord had shown me the typical meaning of the seventh month one year and a half ago, yet I did not realize the force of the types. . . . Thank the Lord, O my soul! Let Bro. Snow, Bro. Storrs, and others be blessed for their instrumentality in opening my eyes! I am almost home. Glory! Glory! Glory! I see that the time is correct; yes, my brother, our time 1843 was correct. How so, say you? Did not the Lord say: 'Unto two thousand three hundred days, then shall the sanctuary be cleaned.' But when? When the seventh month comes. . . . That is the typical time; then will the people and place be sanctified. When did the twenty-three hundred days end? Last spring. Then the vision tarried. How long? Until the seventh month, and will not tarry another year, for if it should, then it would be twenty-three hundred and one years.⁴⁵

As October 20, 1844 neared the Millerites were in more of a frenzy than they had been the year before. After this new date had been set Jewish rabbis began pointing out that the next year of jubilee was about a quarter of a century away. This did not dampen the enthusiasm of the Millerites, however.⁴⁶ Clara Sears gave a detailed picture of the preparations of the Millerites for the Second Coming. In some places they moved into communities of their own so that they could prepare to be caught up together when the Lord returned. The unbelieving neighbors looked upon some of these Millerites as very peculiar people. Here is an eye-witness account which tells how the neighbors of a

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 164-65.

⁴⁶Webber, op. cit., p. 310.

Massachusetts Millerite community felt about them:

They ridiculed their predictions; they pointed at a number of families living in the neighborhood of what is now Harvard Depot, declaring them to be "no better than crazy folks"; they frowned upon the camp-meetings that were being held on the rocky pasture of the Whicomb farm, now known as Beaver Brook Farm, close to Littleton, from whence, it was rumored, the singing and shouting could be heard a mile away. They pointed to the "Community" at Groton, and again cried, "Crazy folks! Crazy folks!" and they actually forbade her going near Josiah Withington's farm on the road from Harvard to Stow. "The goings-on there," they said, "from all accounts were something terrible."

This was true, for those still living who remember it say that no one who was not a believer in the prophecy dared to go near the place, so terrifying were the shouting and singing and sometimes the shrieking that could be heard coming from that lonely spot a long distance off. It was called by many "the craziest spot in Massachusetts."⁴⁷

When the second date came and went like the first date many more Millerites found themselves to be destitute and thoroughly disillusioned because they had either given their property away or had sold it at a loss. Clara Sears said:

As has been stated further back, statistics show that the Worcester Insane Asylum was full of unfortunate men and women at that time whose minds had given way under the strain of awaiting the summons that would precede the awful destruction of the world.⁴⁸

There were about fifty thousand sincere and genuine Millerites at the peak of the movement and there might have

⁴⁷Sears, op. cit., p. 220.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 196.

been many more who tentatively believed.⁴⁹ Cross said that more sects came out of this Adventist movement than from any other movement in Burned-over District history. In 1844 George Storrs started preaching "the annihilation of the wicked." This belief has been carried into the Advent Christian church.⁵⁰

In July, 1845, William Miller dictated his "Apology and Defense," a tract of thirty-six pages, which was published by Himes in Boston. At one point in this tract Miller said:

"I have thus given a plain and simple statement of the manner of my arriving at the views I have inculcated, with a history of my course up to the present time. That I have been mistaken in the time, I freely confess; and I have no desire to defend my course any further than I have been actuated by pure motives, and it has resulted to God's glory. My mistakes and errors God, I trust, will forgive. I cannot, however, reproach myself for having preached definite time; for, as I believe that whatsoever was written aforetime was written for our learning, the prophetic periods are as much a subject of investigation as any other portion of the word.

"I, therefore, still feel that it was my duty to present all the evidence that was apparent to my mind; and were I now in the same circumstances, I should be compelled to act as I have done. I should not, however, have so done, had I seen that the time would pass by; but not knowing that it would, I feel even now more satisfaction in having warned my fellow-men than I should feel, were I conscious that I had

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 244.

⁵⁰Cross, op. cit., pp. 209-10.

believed them in danger and had not raised my voice.⁵¹

It is not quite clear how Miller could have felt that his debacle had brought any glory to God. Certainly it brought nothing but ridicule to his followers. The Protestant churches that had supported Miller in the beginning had deserted him and he had been excommunicated from his own Baptist congregation. On April 29, 1845 the Millerites gathered in Albany, New York to draw up a declaration of principles. At this conference they set forth these ten "Important Truths":

- "1. That the heavens and earth which are now, by the word of God, are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of Judgment and perdition of ungodly men. . . .
- "2. That there are but two advents or appearings of the Saviour to this earth. That both are personal and visible. . . .
- "3. That the second coming or appearing is even at the doors, by the chronology of the prophetic periods, the fulfillment of prophecy, and the signs of the times. . . .
- "4. That the condition of salvation is repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. . . .
- "5. That there will be a resurrection of the bodies of all the dead . . . those who are Christ's will be raised at his coming. That the rest of the dead will not live again until after a thousand years. . . .

⁵¹Elder James White, Sketches of the Christian Life and Public Labors of William Miller (Battle Creek, Mich.: Steam Press of the Seventh-Day Adventist Publishing Association, 1875), p. 368.

- "16. That the only millennium taught in the word of God is the thousand years which are to intervene between the first resurrection and that of the rest of the dead. . . .
- "17. That the promise, that Abraham should be the heir of the world, was not to him, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. . . .
- "18. That there is no promise of this world's conversion. That the horn of papacy will war with the saints, and prevail against them, until the Ancient of Days shall come, and judgment be given to the saints. . . .
- "19. That it is the duty of the ministers of the word to continue in the work of preaching the gospel to every creature, even unto the end. . . .
- "10. That the departed saints do not enter their inheritance, or receive their crowns, at death. That they without us cannot be made perfect. . . .⁵²

In typical Millerite fashion these ten articles of doctrine dwelt almost exclusively upon Christ's Second Advent and the final judgment. William Miller gave his life to the preaching of the Second Advent. In so doing he erroneously and presumptuously set certain dates when the Second Advent should take place. Miller's arrogance in setting these dates in spite of Christ's warning that no man knows the time of the Second Coming brought discredit to the original Millerite movement. His followers have gone even farther than Miller in their misuse of Scripture. For instance, later Adventists denied the existence of

⁵²Ibid., pp. 344-49.

hell. They also insisted that men are obligated to keep the Sabbath Day in the same way that it was kept by the Israelites in the Old Testament.⁵³

The Mormons

The Mormons have, to all practical purposes, supplanted the Scriptures entirely by an allegedly revealed book. "Early in 1830 the Book of Mormon was published by the Wayne Sentinel."⁵⁴ This marked the beginning of a new sect founded by Joseph Smith, the first prophet of Mormonism. Smith, who was only twenty-six years of age at the time, claimed to be the restorer of primitive Christianity. His Book of Mormon was cited as proof of his direct contact with God since he claimed that he had translated it from golden plates given to him by the Angel Moroni who was the alleged son of Mormon, the original compiler of the plates. Oliver Cowdry (or Cowdery) was named by Smith to be second in command in the new sect. Cowdery had been mixed up with an earlier discredited prophet of millennialism by the name of Winchell who had predicted the end of the world for the night of January 14, 1801.⁵⁵ Smith described the founding

⁵³White, op. cit., pp. 230, 368-70.

⁵⁴O'Dea, op. cit., p. 20.

⁵⁵Webber, op. cit., p. 96.

of the Mormon church in these words:

1. The rise of the church of Christ in these last days, being one thousand eight hundred and thirty years since the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the flesh, it being regularly organized and established agreeable to the laws of our country, by the will and commandments of God, in the fourth month, and on the sixth day of the month which is called April;
2. Which commandments were given to Joseph Smith, jun., who was called of God, and ordained an apostle of Jesus Christ, to be the first elder of this church;
3. And to Oliver Cowdery, who was also called of God, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to be the second elder of this church, and ordained under his hand;
4. And this according to the grace of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom be all glory, both now and for ever. Amen.⁵⁶

Smith claimed to be divinely inspired in his new venture. He ruled the Mormons like a demigod. This authority now vested in the president of the church puts the Mormon church completely under the autocratic leadership of the president. Only the president can be considered as God's spokesman and he bears the title of prophet, seer and revelator. This central authority helped to hold the church together during adverse times.⁵⁷

It was Smith's absolute control of the church that permitted him to introduce polygamy. He simply had a

⁵⁶Joseph Smith, Jun., The Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City, Utah: The Deseret Printers and Publishers, 1911), p. 121.

⁵⁷O'Dea, op. cit., pp. 159-60.

divine revelation that countermanded a previous revelation.

In the Book of Mormon, Jacob 2:27-28 we read:

27. Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none;
28. For I, the Lord God, delight in the chastity of women. And whoredoms are an abomination before me; thus saith the Lord of Hosts.⁵⁸

In The Doctrine and Covenants, section 132, verses 61-62 this is all changed:

61. And again, as pertaining to the law of the Priesthood: If any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent; and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then he is justified; he cannot commit adultery, for they are given unto him; for he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and to no one else;
62. And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him, therefore is he justified.⁵⁹

Smith wrote in The Doctrine and Covenants that the first wife had to give her consent but in his own case he had a difficult time convincing his first wife, Emma, that polygamy was ordained of God. Fawn M. Brodie, in her book depicting the life of Smith, gave a description of this battle between Smith and his first wife. Fawn Brodie also has a list of forty-nine women whom Smith is alleged to

⁵⁸The Book of Mormon, translated by Joseph Smith, Jun. (Salt Lake City, Utah: Published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1921), p. 111.

⁵⁹Smith, op. cit., p. 473.

have married.⁶⁰

Polygamy was announced to the general membership for the first time at a conference held in Salt Lake City on August 28, 1852. The Reorganized Church of Latter Day Saints, headed by Smith's son after Smith's death, does not practice polygamy, nor does it preach polytheism as do the Latter-day Saints of Salt Lake City. This reorganized group has its headquarters in Independence, Missouri.⁶¹

The Book of Mormon claims to be the record of the aboriginal inhabitants of the Western Hemisphere and it covers the period between 600 B. C. and 400 A. D. Some scholars have said that Sidney Rigdon reworked a romance of Solomon Spaulding which told a fictional story of the origin of the American Indian. Other scholars claim that Smith alone is responsible for the book. Whoever wrote the book used a popular theme of the day in speculating about the origin of the American Indian. Other popular themes of the day which appear in the book are millennial overtones and the Arminian recognition of the freedom of man's will. This Arminian optimism concerning man's free will became a basic doctrine in Mormon theology.⁶²

⁶⁰Fawn M. Brodie, No Man Knows My History, The Life of Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), pp. 335f.

⁶¹Ibid., pp. 72, 104.

⁶²Ibid., pp. 18-22.

Mormonism repudiated original sin. Adam's fall was a fall upward because it enabled man to choose between good and evil. Right knowledge is necessary for advancement in the Mormon theocracy and this is what gives the Mormon the edge over his gentile neighbor in progressing toward godhood. In the Mormon theology there is a plurality of gods. The Mormons use traditional language in speaking of their theology but the content is totally different. In Abraham 4:1-3 Smith paraphrased the creation account of Genesis in these words:

1. And then the Lord said: Let us go down. And they went down at the beginning, and they, that is the Gods, organized and formed the heavens and the earth.
2. And the earth, after it was formed, was empty and desolate, because they had not formed anything but the earth; and darkness reigned upon the face of the deep and the Spirit of the Gods was brooding upon the face of the waters.
3. And they (the Gods) said: Let there be light; and there was light.⁶³

On the subject of baptism Smith wrote Moroni 8:10-11:

10. Behold I say unto you that this thing shall ye teach--repentance and baptism unto those who are accountable and capable of committing sin; yea, teach parents that they must repent and be baptized, and humble themselves as their little children, and they shall all be saved with their little children.
11. And their little children need no repentance, neither baptism. Behold, baptism is unto repentance to the fulfilling the commandments unto the

⁶³Joseph Smith, The Pearl of Great Price (Salt Lake City, Utah: Published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, c.1929), p. 38.

remission of sins.⁶⁴

The Mormons practice a baptism for the dead so that the dead who were not Mormon in this life may become Mormon by proxy. Sealing ceremonies are practiced by the Mormons to perpetuate marriage in the afterlife so that if a man is sealed to many women he will advance faster in the materialistic Mormon life after death. The Mormon religion is very materialistic and promises earthly and heavenly rewards to those who live the good life. To live the good life you must avoid the use of coffee, tea and liquor. Much of the ritual used by the Mormons was borrowed from the Masonic Lodge. Smith and his followers were members of this lodge while they lived at Nauvoo.⁶⁵

The "saints" set up a stronghold in Nauvoo, Illinois. Smith headed a large military force called the "Nauvoo Legion." He gained considerable political power in the state of Illinois because of his ability to control the votes of his followers. Political power, strange doctrines, and the desire to build a Zion in the midst of their gentile neighbors brought persecution to the Mormons. This persecution had driven them from their first home in Palmyra, New York. They went west, first to Ohio and then to Missouri. From Missouri they had been driven to Illinois.

⁶⁴The Book of Mormon, op. cit., p. 516.

⁶⁵O'Dea, op. cit., pp. 57-60, 144.

For a time all went well in Illinois until Smith's ambition got him and his followers into trouble again. Finally, on June 27, 1844, Joseph Smith, his brother Hyrum, John Taylor, and Willard Richards were killed while they were being incarcerated in the Carthage, Illinois jail.⁶⁶

Smith's death caused a contest for power among the Mormons. There was some splintering of the sect but the largest group followed Brigham Young. Young led the Mormons on their exodus from Nauvoo which began on the morning of February 4, 1846. Under Young's leadership the Mormons built their Zion in the west with its headquarters in Salt Lake City, Utah, which the Mormons founded. In March, 1849 a group called by Brigham Young assembled in Salt Lake City as a constituting convention. They adopted a constitution for the "Provisional Government of the State of Deseret."⁶⁷

Joseph Smith used many of the prevailing religious ideas in the Burned-over District when he gathered together his first followers in Palmyra, New York. As time passed he added ideas of his own invention such as his concept of plural gods. He carried the idea of the perfectibility of man to its ultimate conclusion when he made God to be an

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 68.

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 76, 97.

exalted man and man to be a god.⁶⁸

Spiritualism

The Spiritualists are as unchristian in their doctrines as are the Mormons. The spiritualist fiasco was the last adventure in sectarianism in Western New York during the period from 1815 to 1850. It began in the Fox home near Hydesville, New York. The Fox family had moved into a farmhouse near this town. Supposedly a peddler had been murdered in the house before it fell into the hands of the Fox family. The neighbors claimed that the previous owners of this house had heard loud knocks. The members of the Fox family were not very impressed by these tales. During the first months of 1848, however, Mrs. Fox heard rappings in the house. The young Fox sisters, Katherine and Margaret, seemed to be able to get answers to questions by asking for a given number of knocks. For instance, a yes answer might require one knock and a no answer, two knocks. This attracted the curiosity of many surrounding neighbors and the Fox sisters became celebrities. Under the tutelage of an enterprising older sister, Mrs. Leah Fish, the sisters went on a tour to demonstrate their

⁶⁸See Appendix C for the official articles of faith of the Salt Lake City Mormons.

ability to communicate with the spirit world.⁶⁹

On October 21, 1888, the Fox sisters exposed their fraud at the Academy of Music in New York. Margaret bared her right foot and showed a large audience how she had made the rapping noises with her big toe.⁷⁰ Even this disclosure did not discourage those who had become spiritualists, however. By 1888 many people had become the deluded followers of the religion of spiritualism. Cross said that according to a survey made in 1859 there were 350,000 spiritualists in New York alone.⁷¹

Spiritualists have no authoritative religious books or creeds. They worship the "Infinite Esse." This god of spiritualism is, according to one source, the book of nature since it is "the only one which by inward and outward evidence can be ascribed to divine authorship." This same source says that salvation for the spiritualist is a matter of progression.⁷² The basis of man's immortality is "deific substance." This spirit substance can never die. Jesus is a kind of super medium, according to the

⁶⁹Carl Carmer, Listen for a Lonesome Drum, A York State Chronicle (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., c.1936), pp. 188f.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 193.

⁷¹Cross, op. cit., p. 349.

⁷²Robert Hare, Experimental Investigation of the Spirit Manifestations (New York: Partridge & Brittan, 1856), pp. 138-39.

spiritualists. Jesus supposedly taught a salvation of self-growth. The apostles were also mediums. John the Baptist was a partially developed medium. Men create their own punishment when they violate natural law. Vicarious atonement is a primitive idea that has no basis in fact. Future judgment is a myth. "This life determines the commencement of the next stage of existence." Heaven is a state of contentment. The doctrine of the resurrection is repudiated by spiritualism. Spiritualism is eclectic and borrows from all religions. The greatest duty is to love.⁷³

Spiritualism is one of the most bizarre products of an age that specialized in unusual religious phenomena and belief. It is amazing to see to what lengths men will go in the name of religion. It is even more amazing when one remembers that this spiritualist movement was perpetrated by a self-confessed fraud.

⁷³J. M. Peebles, Seers of the Ages: Embracing Spiritualism, Past and Present (Boston: William White and Company, 1870), pp. 254f.

CHAPTER IV

REVIVALISM AND REFORM

The Finney Story

This revivalism episode might be called the Finney success story since his name overshadowed all others after the revival that started in the town of Western, New York in 1825. From here revival waves spread out in all directions and through the emotionalism that the "new measures" engendered, the way was psychologically prepared for the enthusiastic reception of the several sects that arose between 1830 and 1850 here in Western New York. A member of one of the major Protestant denominations of today might wonder how the bizarre religious thinking of a Joseph Smith or a John Humphrey Noyes could have gained any hearers at all, to say nothing of the fact that Smith's rantings produced a sect which is still very active and which now has a world-wide constituency.

The step from Finney-produced emotionalism to the crackpot religions does not seem like a long step, however. Finney admitted that he had never had any formal religious education.¹ He was simply converted amid a great deal of

¹Charles G. Finney, Memoirs of Rev. Charles G. Finney (New York: A. S. Barnes and Company, c.1876), p. 42. Hereafter this work will be referred to as Memoirs.

weeping and mental anguish which made even he himself wonder at the time if perhaps he was a victim of mental illness. After his conversion he seems to have had some sort of visions and direct communications at times from God and these phenomena became foreshadowings of similar manifestations claimed by the later self-styled prophets. His optimism concerning man's free will and man's ability to become perfect helped to prepare the way for religious perfectionism. Finally, his moral influence theory of regeneration was in agreement with the religious ideas of the Unitarians and the Universalists as well as with the perfectionist sects. This moral influence theory became a cardinal doctrine of the Mormon sect. Finney claimed that God would never ask a man to do what was impossible, therefore you must believe and you must become perfect as God has commanded. This could be accomplished because of the moral influence exerted on man by the Holy Spirit.²

In some ways Finney's conversion experience was similar to Joseph Smith's experience when Smith was supposedly visited by messengers from heaven. Both men had these emotional upheavals while they sought God in the woods. And both claimed to be in direct communication with God. Finney described some of his early religious experiences

²Ibid., pp. 29, 36, 154.

in his memoirs:

One morning I had been around and called the brethren up, and when I returned to the meeting-house but 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 upon and 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 that almost prostrated me to the ground. In this light it seemed as if I could see that all nature praised and worshiped God except man. This light seemed to be like the brightness of the sun in every direction. It was too intense for the eyes. I recollect casting my eyes down and 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.³

A heavenly light! Certainly this must have been a man who had been marked for special favor by God! Nevertheless, his acquaintances during this period were not too sympathetic when Finney related these religious experiences to them because Finney said:

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. They would look surprised, and sometimes, I thought, incredulous; and I soon learned to keep quiet in regard to those divine

³Ibid., p. 34.

manifestations, and say but little about them.⁴

Frequently Finney encountered opposition. Sometimes this opposition came from the clergy who objected to his revival methods and to his doctrines but at other times it was individuals who opposed him and his message. In his memoirs Finney mentioned several opponents who dropped dead because they had opposed him. One of these opponents was described by Finney as an infidel. Finney tells the story of this man's opposition and death:

There was one old man in this place, who was not only an infidel, but a great railer at religion. He was very angry at the revival movement. I heard every day of his railing and blaspheming, but took no public notice of it. He refused altogether to attend meeting. But in the midst of his opposition, and when his excitement was great, while sitting one morning at the table, he suddenly fell out of his chair in a fit of apoplexy. A physician was immediately called, who, after a brief examination, 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, as I was informed, to stammer out, "Don't let Finney pray over my corpse." This was the last of his opposition in that place.⁵

During a time when Finney was conducting a revival in Utica, New York, a Presbyterian clergyman opposed the revival and was punished with death according to Finney:

One circumstance occurred, in the midst of that revival, that made a powerful impression. The Oneida presbytery met there, while the revival was going on in its full strength. Among others there was an aged clergyman, a stranger to me, who was very much annoyed

⁴Ibid., p. 35.

⁵Ibid., p. 67.

by the heat and fervor of the revival. He found the public mind all absorbed on the subject of religion; that there was prayer and religious conversation everywhere, even in the stores and other public places. He had never seen a revival, and had never heard what he heard there. He was a Scotchman, and, I believe, had not been very long in this country.

On Friday afternoon, 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 the Christian people who were present. They felt like falling on their faces before God, and crying to him to prevent what he had said from doing any mischief.

The presbytery adjourned just at evening. Some of the members went home, and others remained over night. Christians gave themselves to prayer. There was a great crying to God that night, that he would counteract any evil influence that might result from that speech. The next morning, this man was found dead in his bed.⁶

Evidently not all of Finney's opponents were punished by immediate death, however, because Finney was called before a Presbyterian conference in New Lebanon, New York in 1827 so that he could defend himself against the charge of using "new measures." Before discussing this meeting in New Lebanon the "new measures" will be identified. Finney says that he was first charged with using "new measures" in the revival at the town of Western in 1825. He wrote in his memoirs: "So far as I know these revivals first attracted the notice, and excited the opposition of certain prominent ministers at the East, and raised the cry of

⁶Ibid., p. 180.

'New Measures.'⁷ In speaking of the revival in Rome, Finney said:

The means that were used at Rome, were such as I had used before, and no others; preaching, public, social, and private prayer, exhortations, and personal conversation.⁸

Finney preached, by his own admission, for two hours at a time.⁹ His sermons were rantings and ravings that called for decision and that produced emotional weeping and trance-like conditions in his hearers. People fell off their chairs amidst loud wailing. He described one such meeting which took place in the revival at Auburn:

The Lord gave me power to give a very vivid description of the course that class of men were pursuing. In the midst of my discourse, I observed a person fall from his seat near the broad aisle, 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 this Mr. H___, of whom I have been speaking. The Spirit of the Lord had so powerfully convicted him, that he was unable to sit on his seat. When I reached him, he had so far recovered his strength as to be on his knees, with his head on his wife's lap. He was weeping aloud like a child, confessing his sins, and accusing himself in a terrible manner. I said a few words to him, to which he seemed to pay but little attention. The Spirit of God had his attention so thoroughly, that I soon desisted from all efforts to make him attend to what I said. When I told the congregation who it was, they all knew him and his character; and it produced tears and sobs in

⁷Ibid., p. 144.

⁸Ibid., p. 169.

⁹Ibid., p. 80.

every part of the house. I stood for some little time, to see if he would be quiet enough for me to go on with my sermon; 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 upon her lap. There appeared in her face a holy joy and triumph that words cannot express.¹⁰

Finney used protracted meetings. He called on individuals for testimonies and for prayers. He even let women pray in these prayer meetings, which was just not done in that age.¹¹ In fact, Finney's greatest appeal seems to have been to women. Finney's first commission came from a female missionary society in Oneida County.¹² He called at the homes and told the people that they had to believe before he would leave their homes.¹³ He insisted that people were not saved until they had been baptized by the Holy Ghost. This was especially necessary if a man was to preach. Finney said: "Without the direct teaching of the Holy Spirit, a man will never make much progress in preaching the Gospel."¹⁴ He even depended on the Holy Spirit to supply him with sermons since he did not believe in written sermons which had been worked out in advance. On the

¹⁰Ibid., p. 198.

¹¹Gilbert Hobbs Barnes, The Antislavery Impulse 1830-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company Incorporated, c.1933), pp. 12-13.

¹²Finney, Memoirs, p. 61.

¹³Ibid., p. 152.

¹⁴Ibid., pp. 55-56.

subject of sermonizing he said:

I had not taken a thought with regard to what I should preach; indeed, this was common with me at that time. The Holy Spirit was upon me, and I felt confident that when the time came for action I should know what to preach.¹⁵

In another place in his memoirs he wrote with the same type of extemporaneous preaching in mind:

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 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.¹⁶

Finney fully believed that God spoke to him directly. Here is a scene that he described in his memoirs. It took place just before the Antwerp revival.

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.¹⁷

Of the Antwerp revival Finney said: "There were in Antwerp two very striking cases of instantaneous recovery from insanity during this revival."¹⁸ Finney claimed that a woman was given the ability to read in another revival.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 65.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 95.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 99.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 108.

In describing this incident Finney said:

I addressed another, 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 learned how 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." Said she, "I thought when I had prayed that I could read. The children have a Testament, and I went and got it; and thought I could read what I had heard them read. But," said she, "I went over to the school ma'am, and asked her if I read right; and she said I did; and since then," said she, "I can read the word of God for myself."¹⁹

So in a sense, Finney seems to have been a forerunner of present day self-styled healers and miracle workers. In 1825 Finney introduced the use of the mourner's bench or anxious seat. This was done at a revival in Rutland, New York. Finney said,

At the close of the sermon, I did what I do not know I had ever done before, called upon any who would give their hearts to God to come forward and take the front seat.²⁰

Finney's mind must have been playing tricks on him when he wrote his memoirs, however, because in another place he told a somewhat different story:

I had never, I believe, except in rare instances, until I went to Rochester, used as a means of promoting revivals, what has since been called "the anxious

¹⁹Ibid., p. 75.

²⁰Ibid., p. 116.

seat." I had sometimes asked persons in the congregation to stand up; but this I had not frequently done. However, in studying upon the subject, I had often felt the necessity of some measure that would bring sinners to a stand. From my own experience and observation I had found, that with the higher classes especially, the greatest obstacle to be overcome was their fear of being known as anxious inquirers. . . . I had found also that something was needed, to make the impression on them that they were expected at once to give up their hearts; something that would call them to act, and to act as publicly before the world, as they had in their sins; something that would commit them publicly to the service of Christ.²¹

Finney likened the "anxious seat" to baptism in these words:

The church has always felt it necessary to have something of the kind to answer this very purpose. In the days of the apostles baptism answered this purpose. The Gospel was preached to the people, and then all those who were willing to be on the side of Christ were called on to be baptized. It held the precise place that the anxious seat does now, as a public manifestation of their determination to be Christians.²²

These then were the "new measures" that Finney popularized. He never ceased to brag about how effective these techniques were. He said their effectiveness proved that they were vehicles of the Holy Spirit. From the chaotic conditions that these measures fostered in the churches of that period, as well as during the years that followed, it seems more likely that a diabolical spirit was behind this whole movement. Finney told in his memoirs what some of

²¹Ibid., p. 288.

²²Charles G. Finney, Lectures on Revivals of Religion (Oberlin, Ohio: E. J. Goodrich, 1868), p. 254.

his fellow clergymen thought of his preaching and use of these new techniques:

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 people in a colloquial manner . . . 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.²³

Another point that should be cleared up before discussing the New Lebanon Conference is the question of just what doctrines Charles G. Finney taught. It must be remembered that Finney was a lawyer at the time of his conversion and he never had any formal theological training. He did study for a time under the Reverend George Gale, but Finney disagreed with Gale's theology and claimed that there was nothing in Gale's theological library with which he could agree.²⁴ Finney's law training had taught him to think rationally and all of the teachings of Scripture were put to the test of human reason by Charles Finney. Finney said: "I insisted that our reason was given us for the very purpose of enabling us to justify the ways of God."²⁵

Finney presented his own doctrinal position very

²³Finney, Memoirs, p. 83.

²⁴Ibid., p. 53.

²⁵Ibid., p. 59.

clearly in his memoirs:

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 of God 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.²⁶

This moral influence theory with the stress on the necessity for gaining right religious knowledge might have been borrowed by the Mormons from Finney. In any event, the two doctrinal systems, Finneyism and Mormonism, are in close agreement on this point. In another place in his memoirs Finney wrote:

The doctrine upon which I insisted, that the command to obey God implied the power to do so, created in some places considerable opposition at first. Denying also, as I did, that moral depravity is physical, or the depravity of nature, and maintaining, as I did, that it is altogether voluntary, and therefore that the Spirit's influences are those of teaching, persuading, convicting, and, of course, a moral influence, I was regarded by many as teaching new and strange doctrines. Indeed, as late as 1832, when I was laboring 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.²⁷

In the Buffalo revival Finney insisted that the sinner's "cannot" is his "will not."²⁸ In other words, the

²⁶Ibid., p. 154.

²⁷Ibid., pp. 157-58.

²⁸Ibid., p. 307.

sinner, according to Finney's way of thinking, has the power to convert himself. Finney spelled this out in no uncertain terms:

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 to God. 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, of faith, and love, and Christian obedience. 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 all sin; was not that which God required them to do, but was simply deferring repentance and resisting the Holy Ghost.²⁹

Finney said that many opposed this type of preaching but it made converts and that, to Finney, was the only true measure of a preacher's success. What did it matter to Finney if most of these so-called converts were already church members? The first thing that he would do upon entering a new community would be to visit the church and accuse the membership of not being truly Christian.

The Reverend Calvin Colton described this kind of an approach to church members in these words:

No matter how good and thorough the Christian education of the subjects of this influence may have been, yet they must be startled--shocked; they must be invaded by some new and unexpected access to their

²⁹Ibid., p. 189.

imaginations, fears, hopes, passions;--in short, their minds must be entirely dislodged from accustomed positions and from all former ground, however good and proper it may have been, and they must be compelled, in a moment of the greatest possible excitement, to yield themselves entirely--their intellect, their reason, their imagination, their belief, their feelings, their passions, their whole souls--to a single and new position, that is prescribed to them.³⁰

Finney described two German congregations in his memoirs that used the Catechism to prepare prospects for membership. He described this means of religious indoctrination as worse than useless. He also deplored their dependence on the Sacraments as means of grace and told them that they needed to get holy. He said that this message succeeded and almost all of these Germans became converted. Many who lived in the Evans' Mills community left their German church and joined the Congregational church at Evans' Mills. The last German congregation that Finney mentioned in his memoirs was in the town of Columbia in Herkimer County.³¹

Finney insisted that a sinner had to convert himself.

Finney said:

Sinners were not encouraged to expect the Holy Ghost to convert them, while they were passive; and never told to wait God's time, but were taught, unequivocally, that their first and immediate duty was, to submit

³⁰ Calvin Colton, Thoughts on the Religious State of the Country; With Reasons for Preferring Episcopacy (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1836), p. 177. Italics are part of the original.

³¹ Finney, Memoirs, pp. 73f. and 272f.

themselves to God, to renounce their own will, their own way, and themselves, and instantly to deliver up all that they were, and all that they had, to their rightful owner, the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . The point was frequently urged upon them to give their consent; and they were told that the only difficulty was, to get their own honest and earnest consent to the terms upon which Christ would save them, and the lowest terms upon which they possibly could be saved.³²

Things finally came to a head in 1827 when the New Lebanon Conference was called. There, Charles G. Finney met some of his opponents face to face. Finney had been opposed by three Congregational ministers who called themselves "The Oneida Association."³³ And in 1826 when he preached at a revival in Auburn some of the professors in the Auburn Theological Seminary opposed him.³⁴ But one of Finney's greatest opponents was a revivalist of the old school by the name of Asahel Nettleton. Nettleton held to the old Calvinist doctrines as well as a much quieter and less emotional type of revivalism. Nettleton charged Finney with certain deplorable practices. Lyman Beecher stood with Nettleton in his opposition to Finney. About all that was accomplished by the New Lebanon Conference, however, was the passing of a few resolutions which disapproved of certain measures used in the promotion of revivals.

³²Ibid., pp. 363-64.

³³Ibid., p. 144.

³⁴Ibid., p. 192.

The passing of these resolutions probably was aimed directly at Finney but Finney felt that he had come out of this conference as the winner. He said that after this conference opposition to his revivals died very rapidly. All this Finney attributed to a vision of victory given to him by God just before the conference. Whatever the cause of Finney's victory it does seem that revivalism became an accepted procedure in most of the Protestant churches in Western New York by 1830.³⁵

Nettleton seems to have felt that Lyman Beecher had let him down during this New Lebanon Conference. Evidently there is some justification for this feeling. At the time of this New Lebanon Conference Lyman Beecher told Finney that he would keep him out of Boston at all costs. In a few years, however, Finney was invited to preach in Beecher's church and Finney accepted the invitation.³⁶ In 1835 Lyman Beecher was tried for heresy by the Presbyterian church.³⁷ Although Beecher admitted that he held the New School doctrines he was acquitted because of the prevalence and strength of these new doctrines in the Presbyterian

³⁵Ibid., pp. 211f.

³⁶Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-over District (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, c.1950), p. 164.

³⁷E. H. Gillett, History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Publication Committee, c.1864), II, 464.

church at that time. In commenting on his trial Lyman

Beecher said:

You see, in my trial, I had taken the New School doctrines, and expounded and proved them under the Confession, and now, if the trial went on, these doctrines would be sustained by the General Assembly. The fact was, that in the discussion between New Haven and Princeton, conducted in the Christian Spectator and the Repertory, New Haven had pushed them so, and they had made such concessions and distinctions, that some of my strongest testimonies were drawn from their own documents.

Now this would make trouble among themselves. Many of the Old School would be scandalized to find Princeton had been on New School ground, and to have New School doctrine sustained by General Assembly through their aid.³⁸

The split that took place in the Presbyterian church in 1837 has already been discussed in the second chapter of this thesis. This split came about largely because of the boost that revivalism had given to the New School doctrines of the Presbyterian church. Revivalism, with its popularizing of new techniques, such as the anxious seat, its preaching of new doctrines, and its frequent support of abolition also brought a split in the Lutheran ranks in New York State. Frederick Quitman had already brought German rationalism into the New York Ministerium of the Lutheran church in the early part of the nineteenth century. Quitman's Catechism, which was published in 1814, was

³⁸Lyman Beecher, Autobiography, Correspondence, Etc., of Lyman Beecher, D.D., edited by Charles Beecher (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1865), II, 360-61.

thoroughly rationalistic and it no doubt helped to prepare the minds of the New York Lutherans for the doctrines of the revivalists which were anything but Lutheran.³⁹

Quitman himself does not seem to have been sympathetic to revivalism. He expressed his feelings on revivalism in these words:

Things change here. Since there is no opportunity of speculating in lands and money, we begin to speculate in religion. New sects spring up daily. We are surrounded with frantic Methodists, Erastians or New Lights, Baptists, Universalists, etc. There is continually preaching (so called) in our neighborhood. The Methodists are at present in camp-meeting two miles beyond the Flats. This, and the sitting of the convention in democratic majesty, give us alternately sufficient reason for pity and laughter.⁴⁰

This was representative of the thinking of the Lutheran ministers of the eastern part of New York State. In Western New York, the Lutheran ministers felt differently. They lived in the part of the state where revivals were highly regarded and they felt that there was much to be gained by participating in the revival movement. The differences grew between Eastern and Western New York until the Hartwick Synod was finally formed in October, 1830 by the Western New York Lutherans.⁴¹ The first convention of the

³⁹Harry J. Kreider, History of the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England, 1786-1860 (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, c.1954), I, 42f.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 71.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 79.

Hartwick Synod was held in the fall of 1831 at Johnstown, New York. President Lintner conducted a communion service on Sunday morning at the Lutheran church and in the afternoon President Lintner preached in the Presbyterian church. Another Lutheran pastor, who attended this convention, preached in both the Presbyterian and Methodist churches while the convention was in session.

At seven in the evening a prayer meeting was held in the Lutheran church and "religious exercises and preaching were also performed in different parts of the congregation."⁴²

This indicates that the Hartwick Synod had close relations with other Protestants. This may help to explain the growing opposition to the Augsburg Confession in the Hartwick Synod. "Just when opposition to the Augsburg Confession became vocal is not stated in the records, but by 1837 it was quite strong."⁴³ This opposition was aimed particularly at the doctrine of original sin and the Lutheran view of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Although the Hartwick Synod participated in revivalism, the excesses of Finney and his imitators seem to have been avoided. Holiness of life was stressed and the Hartwick Synod participated in moral reforms such as the temperance movement and the promotion of stricter Sabbath

⁴²Ibid., pp. 82-83.

⁴³Ibid., p. 85.

observance. There was not very much agitation in the Hartwick Synod on the slavery question. This caused some pastors to separate themselves from the Hartwick Synod in order to form the Franckean Synod in May, 1837.⁴⁴

The Franckean Synod was much more extreme in its revivalism, and rejection of the Augsburg Confession was complete for the Franckean Synod. The anxious seat was deemed to be of greater importance than the use of the Catechism.⁴⁵ Holiness was said to have been of much greater importance than creeds or confessions. The Franckeans were first class pietists. A religious experience had to precede admission to Franckean Lutheran congregations. Baptism and the Lord's Supper were not sacraments, they were merely "gospel ordinances." This was the same word that Charles G. Finney used in speaking of the sacraments. A prospective Franckean pastor had to sign a pledge of total abstinence and he had to be an abolitionist. The use of tobacco was also condemned. The strictest type of Sabbath observance was urged upon all church members. In their objections to war the Franckeans were almost, if not complete, pacifists. Licentiousness was a subject to be roundly condemned in the pulpit. The Gospel

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 89-94.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 163.

was evidently replaced in Franckean pulpits by moralizing.⁴⁶

In their condemnation of creeds and confessions the Franckeans were in complete agreement with Professor George B. Miller of Hartwick Seminary, who delivered an address in 1831 on the "Fundamental Principle of the Reformation." Professor Miller condemned creeds in these words:

All human creeds in short are no better than a Chinese shoe, by which the living foot, being cramped, never attains its proper shape and natural proportions. A better taste, if not a holier spirit is gaining ground in the Christian world. These wretched partition walls that have so long separated those who ought to look upon each other as brethren of one family are beginning to be less regarded, and the shibboleths of a darker age are no longer employed as signals to murder the character, if not the person, of one that belongs to a different tribe. And as the Lutheran Church took the lead in the first Reformation, may it not be behindhand in the second! God forbid that I should submit to any other yoke than the yoke of Christ, or call any other master besides him.⁴⁷

Most of the ministerial candidates in both the Hartwick Synod and the Franckean Synod received their training at the Hartwick Seminary. The professors at this seminary were Ernest Louis Hazelius and George B. Miller. Professor Hazelius was raised in the Moravian church and therefore he also carefully avoided precise doctrinal distinctions.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 105f.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 110.

⁴⁸ Henry Eyster Jacobs, A History of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the United States, in The American Church History Series (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899), IV, 368.

With professors like these to train them the theological students at Hartwick Seminary could not have received much training in the Lutheran Confessions. But then the Hartwick Synod and the Franckean Synod were more Lutheran in name than in theological convictions.

In concluding this discussion of revivalism a few remarks from contemporary observers who were opponents of revivalism indicate its defects. The Reverend Alexander Blaikie, who was the pastor of a Presbyterian church in Boston during this period, was critical of the revivalists. He felt the reason that the revivalists used such noisy theatrical measures might be attributed to "the pride of the unrenewed heart"⁴⁹ that likes to feed its own pride by drawing attention to the self. This idea certainly has a good deal of merit. The egotistical boasting of men like Charles G. Finney and Lyman Beecher in their memoirs raises a question concerning their motives in conducting revivals. And their bitter attitude toward opponents can hardly be taken as examples of Christian love.

Reverend Blaikie summarized his thoughts on revivalism with these words:

From these alternating seasons of apathy and excitement, true Presbyterians desire deliverance. To them the soul is always valuable, and while under "the covenant of works," its danger is always imminent.

⁴⁹Alexander Blaikie, The Philosophy of Sectarianism (Boston: Phillips, Sampson, and Company, 1855), p. 164.

Consequently, "knowing the terror of the Lord," they endeavor to "persuade men." They "preach the word, are instant in season and out of season, exhort, instruct, rebuke with all long suffering and doctrine, teaching publicly and from house to house." Thus they trust more for success in "the work of the ministry," to the faithful use of the varied appointed means of grace at all seasons of the year, than to anxious seats and the other instrumentalities of religious excitement, whether "revivals" are "got up" at a camp meeting under Sirius, or during the chosen "season for revivals" under the auspices of Capricorn; and they do this, not only as it relates to the conviction and conversion of sinners, but also as it promotes the edification of the just.⁵⁰

Calvin Colton also deplored the fact that revivalism seemed to have been the cause of insanity in quite a number of people. He tells of visiting a mental hospital in which he was surprised to meet a patient who had been a former colleague in the ministry. The man had been worn out emotionally by conducting protracted meetings and from working at fever-pitch to convert all who crossed his path.⁵¹

Calvin Colton said that he tried to find out what proportion of mental patients were disturbed because of religious mania.

This unexpected occurrence has induced me to embrace all convenient opportunities of inquiring into the different species of mania, which prevail in our insane hospitals. From personal observation, except in the scene just described, I can say little; but I am so credibly informed as for the present to rest under the conviction, that religious mania is greatly the prevalent species in the land; and a Christian gentleman of the highest respectability, intimately conversant with

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 170-71.

⁵¹Colton, op. cit., pp. 41-43.

this subject, has told me that it comprehends a numerous class. I feel inclined to give much credence to this statement, from the recent religious history of our country, and from the known susceptibilities of our nature under those startling and astounding shocks, which are constantly invented, artfully and habitually applied, under all the power of sympathy and of a studied, enthusiastic elocution, by a large class of preachers among us. To startle and to shock is their great secret--their power.⁵²

Calvin Colton gave a true evaluation of revival techniques in these words:

But I refer exclusively to a system of measures of that specific character, which I have now been considering, so well known to have been recently and widely introduced into this country; which seems to be based upon a theory, that can dispense with Divine influence, and substitute the power of man; and which has so extensively changed the character and revolutionized the operations of the religion of this land. They are an entirely new state of things; they are, as seems to me, the work of man, and not of God. It may fairly be inferred from the spirit that is in them, and from the pretensions which they carry upon their face, that they claim to be the work of man. There is a broad phylactery on the forehead, a legible inscription on the front, of these enterprises: It all depends on our will. And it may easily be believed; it is sufficiently manifest.⁵³

The freedom of man's will was a recurring theme used by most of the revivalists. But even before the revivalists had popularized this theme the religious liberals in America had contended that man had the will and the inherent ability to perfect himself. The Unitarians and the Universalists built their entire doctrinal system on man's ability to save himself.

⁵²Ibid., pp. 43-44.

⁵³Ibid., p. 180. Italics are in the original.

Moral Reform and Social Betterment

In 1826 the American Society for the Promotion of Temperance was organized as a national body. Another national group called the United States Temperance Union organized in Philadelphia in 1833. In 1836 these two bodies merged into the American Temperance Union at Saratoga, New York. This merged group claimed the allegiance of nearly every major Protestant denomination in America. Only the Episcopalians and the Lutherans remained lukewarm to the temperance crusade.⁵⁴ Some Lutheran groups like the Hartwick and Franckean Synods supported the temperance movement.

There evidently was much intemperance in America during this period. The frontier was often a scene of drunkenness.⁵⁵ Peter Cartwright was sometimes plagued by drunken rowdies at his camp meetings and he mentioned a Presbyterian preacher who made a public apology for having been drunk.⁵⁶ Hotchkin said that in Western New York, "Drinking and

⁵⁴John R. Bodo, The Protestant Clergy and Public Issues 1812-1848 (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, c.1954), pp. 184-85.

⁵⁵Charles A. Johnson, The Frontier Camp Meeting (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, c.1955), pp. 8f.

⁵⁶Cartwright, op. cit., pp. 67f. and 213f.

carousing were frequent concomitants."⁵⁷ Lyman Beecher deplored the drinking that he witnessed at an ordination service. He became instrumental in setting up a committee to combat the use of alcohol. The abstract of the committee's report condemned intemperance in these words:

"The General Association of Connecticut, taking into consideration the undue consumption of ardent spirits, the enormous sacrifice of property resulting, the alarming increase of intemperance, the deadly effect on health, intellect, the family, society, civil and religious institutions, and especially in nullifying the means of grace and destroying souls, recommend,

- "1. Appropriate discourses on the subject by all ministers of Association.
- "2. That District Associations abstain from the use of ardent spirits at ecclesiastical meetings.
- "3. That members of Churches abstain from the unlawful vending, or purchase and use of ardent spirits where unlawfully sold; exercise vigilant discipline, and cease to consider the production of ardent spirits a part of hospitable entertainment in social visits.
- "4. That parents cease from the ordinary use of ardent spirits in the family, and warn their children of the evils and dangers of intemperance.
- "5. That farmers, mechanics, and manufacturers substitute palatable and nutritious drinks, and give additional compensation, if necessary, to those in their employ.
- "6. To circulate documents on the subject, especially a sermon by Rev. E. Porter and a pamphlet by Dr. Rush.

⁵⁷James H. Hotchkin, History of the Purchase and Settlement of Western New York, and of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Presbyterian Church in That Section (New York: M. W. Dodd, c.1848), p. 27.

"7. To form voluntary associations to aid the civil magistrate in the execution of the law."⁵⁸

Lyman Beecher's solution to intemperance was typical of many other preachers of his day. He felt sure that if morals were legislated men could be taught to become moral. In one of his sermons on intemperance he said:

"What, then, is this universal, natural, and national remedy for intemperance?

"IT IS THE BANISHMENT OF ARDENT SPIRITS FROM THE LIST OF LAWFUL ARTICLES OF COMMERCE BY A CORRECT AND EFFICIENT PUBLIC SENTIMENT, SUCH AS HAS TURNED SLAVERY OUT OF HALF OF OUR LAND, AND WILL YET EXPEL IT FROM THE WORLD."⁵⁹

The Sabbath controversy brought similar pleas from the pulpits for more laws to keep the Sabbath holy. There was cause for consternation because of irreligion and desecration of the Sabbath, especially on the frontier. Gillett described the situation in Western New York at the beginning of the nineteenth century in these words:

While the progress east of the Genesee had been comparatively rapid, so that in 1812 the Synod of Geneva, embracing the Presbyteries of Cayuga, Onondaga, and Geneva, was constituted by the Assembly, the region west of the river was left comparatively neglected. For several years after the commencement of the present century its prospects were dark indeed. Joseph Ellicott, agent of the Holland Land Company, exerted a very pernicious and disastrous influence. He disregarded the Sabbath, and was opposed to all religious institutions. The whole surrounding region was long noted for its irreligion. It was a common remark

⁵⁸Lyman Beecher, Autobiography, Correspondence, Etc., of Lyman Beecher, D.D., edited by Charles Beecher (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1864), I, 247-48.

⁵⁹Beecher, op. cit., II, 35.

that the Sabbath had not found its way across the Genesee River. An infidel club was early formed, and by them a circulating library containing the works of Voltaire, Volney, Hume, and Paine was established.⁶⁰

The preachers demanded that all men must keep the Sabbath on pain of hell fire. Caughey, a Methodist revivalist, became very articulate in his condemnation of Sabbath breakers. He condemned them in these words:

That butcher and bookseller there must shut up their shops on the Lord's day. I tell you, you must pay this price--you must shut up that shop of yours. You sometimes shed a tear, and intend to do better; you sometimes read a chapter in the Bible, and attend the preaching of the word. But it's all of no use. Your coming to chapel is all in vain; your prayers and vows are an abomination to God;--and, unless you take care, amidst your contributions, tears, efforts, and prayers, you will go down to hell with a lie in your right hand. I tell you, God would as soon save the devil as you, while you keep that shop open on a Sabbath. You must pay this price, or there is no salvation for you. I once more deliver my solemn message from God to you, and I tell you, unless you shut up your doors on the holy Sabbath, God will soon shut your body up in the grave, and your soul in the prison of hell.⁶¹

Agitation for stricter Sabbath observance became a national issue in 1825 when a federal law was passed requiring all post offices, where mail was delivered on Sunday, to remain open the entire day. In 1828 the General Union for Promoting the Observance of the Christian Sabbath was formed to direct a campaign to have this federal law

⁶⁰ Gillett, op. cit., pp. 108-09.

⁶¹ James Caughey, Helps to a Life of Holiness and Usefulness, or, Revival Miscellanies (Boston: J. B. Magee, Agent, 1852), p. 148.

changed. Petitions from all parts of the nation were sent to Congress. In 1830 Congress answered with the report by Richard M. Johnson which upheld freedom of conscience and pointed up the principle of noninterference in religious matters. This rebuke by Congress marked the failure of the Sabbatarian movement to gain its objectives.⁶²

Another national issue that brought some violent statements from the pulpit was the slavery issue. This issue played a role in the Presbyterian split of 1837, the formation of the Lutheran Hartwick and Franckean Synods in 1830 and 1837 respectively, and in the formation of the Wesleyan Methodist church in 1843. In each of these separations there was a dissatisfaction on the part of the come-outers over the softness of the parent body's attitude toward slavery. These come-outers looked upon slavery as a national sin that called for immediate abolition. The greatest single voice that favored abolition was William Lloyd Garrison. But Charles G. Finney probably won as many converts to the cause as Garrison.⁶³

Charles Hodge, an eminent Princeton Seminary professor, rejected abolition because he felt that the Bible did not

⁶²Charles C. Cole, Jr., The Social Ideas of the Northern Evangelists 1826-1860 (New York: Columbia University Press, c.1954), pp. 107-09.

⁶³Timothy L. Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform (New York: Abingdon Press, c.1957), pp. 180f.

condemn slavery as a sin per se. Southerners went even farther by upholding slavery on Scriptural grounds. Hodge also condemned abolition as dangerous to the union. He and other conservative theologians felt that the American Colonization Society would bring about an eventual settlement of the slavery question.⁶⁴

The American Colonization Society founded in 1817 proposed to eliminate slavery and to free the Negro by deporting all Negroes to a strip of jungle on the coast of Liberia in Africa. The agents of this society spoke of this program in the North as an antislavery measure and in the South as a safeguard for slavery. The free Negroes were a disturbing element in the South so the southerners supported this society until they began to fear that it might go too far with its program.⁶⁵ This society was popular for a time and a few free Negroes were settled in Africa but it ended in eventual failure. It was supplanted in the North by more vigorous antislavery groups like the American Anti-Slavery Society.

One of the strangest solutions to the slavery problem was conceived in the mind of Frances Wright. She established a communistic community called "Nashoba" in the wilderness a few miles from Memphis. She brought slaves to

⁶⁴Bodo, op. cit., pp. 139f.

⁶⁵Barnes, op. cit., pp. 27f.

this colony so that they could work out their freedom. A few whites also lived in the colony. Frances Wright was too busy lecturing on social reform to give personal supervision to this venture and it ended in eventual failure.⁶⁶

Temperance, strict Sabbath observance in the old Puritan tradition, and speculation concerning the slavery question were the chief topics in many pulpits during this period of American history. Many preachers forsook the proclamation of the Gospel which tells what God has done for man in order to preach moralism which stressed what man could and should do to make himself acceptable to God. This was done because there was a general optimism engendered by Arminianism's proclamation of man's natural ability to do good.

This optimism concerning the inherent goodness of man was graphically illustrated by the perfectionistic Oneida Community founded by John Humphrey Noyes. This community was set up on communistic principles and Noyes, a disciple of Charles G. Finney, instituted a system of wife sharing ostensibly to demonstrate truly unselfish love. The highest form of sin in this community was to "fall in love," because love was a thing to be shared with the whole community. These people believed themselves to be perfect

⁶⁶Everett Webber, Escape to Utopia (New York: Hastings House Publishers, c.1959), pp. 126f.

and unable to commit sin after they had endured a time of testing. The members kept one another in line by "mutual criticism." The victim of a "mutual criticism" session stood before others of the group and let them dissect his moral and spiritual character in order to point out his shortcomings. The community practiced a rigid type of planned parenthood with Noyes as the sole arbiter of the mating pattern. This dictatorial policy by Noyes, coupled with the disapproval of neighbors of Oneida eventually caused the cessation of mate sharing and the deposition of Noyes as the head of the community. The Oneida Community was a perfect example of antinomian license.⁶⁷

John Humphrey Noyes claimed that he had re-established the primitive Christian Church. He wrote a summary of his doctrines in nine articles.

I. The first article stated that God is neither a trinity nor a unity but a duality. This duality is represented in the personality of the first man who was both male and female.

II. The second article dealing with election and reprobation started by saying that evil is eternal. God elected some to reprobation because he knew they were of the evil seed. Others he elected to salvation because he knew they were of the good seed.

⁶⁷Ibid., pp. 361f.

III. Article three, dealing with depravity, said that those of the evil seed are depraved while another part of mankind is inherently good.

IV. The main thrust of the fourth article on the atonement is that Christ became the head of a spiritual body which is free from the law.

V. Article five concerning regeneration also stresses this freedom from the law. In this article Noyes says that he agrees generally with the antinomians and spiritualists on this point.

VI. Article six says that whoever is born of God is completely free from sin. There is a class of believers or disciples, however, who are still in the process of becoming completely holy and free from sin.

VII. Article seven deals with the perseverance of the saints and states simply that some will persevere in holiness unto salvation and others will not.

VIII. In the eighth article Noyes agrees with the Universalists concerning the judgment, that the second coming of Christ took place with the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. This was a literal coming in the spiritual world. Noyes also said that he believed that the final judgment of man was still future.

IX. In article nine dealing with future retribution Noyes said that those who sow to the flesh will reap eternal punishment and he concluded that,

if the Calvinistic theory of the divine origin of the devil, and of the unnecessitated fore-ordination of human wickedness, were true, the doctrine of universal salvation would be justly inferred from the benevolence and omnipotence of God.⁶⁸

Oneida exemplified the self-styled perfect community of this age of perfectionism. This community felt that it had become so reformed in its morals that it no longer needed to be guided by the law. This stress on perfectionism led ultimately to antinomianism.

⁶⁸John H. Noyes, The Berean: A Manual for the Help of Those Who Seek the Faith of the Primitive Church (Putney, Vermont: Published at the Office of the Spiritual Magazine, 1847), pp. v-viii.

CHAPTER V

THE PROBLEMS REMAIN

Arminianism had replaced Calvinism as the prevailing theology of Protestant America by the mid-nineteenth century.¹ Total depravity was rejected and man was pictured as having a free will with which he could choose good or evil. If he continued choosing the good he would become good but if he chose evil this would eventually incapacitate him so that he could no longer do the good. To do good man must know what is good, and so moral and social crusades swept the nation so that men could be informed that they must be good. If legislation could be passed which would curtail or better still which would stop the manufacture of liquor this would make America truly moral. Or so the temperance crusaders thought. If men did not honor the Sabbath out of love for God they would have to be forced to honor it by the laws of the land.

If men were, or seemed to be, unchristian the revivalist would come to the community and bawl out exhortations for hours at a time until everyone was emotionally exhausted. Then the prospective converts were called to the front so that they could occupy the "anxious seat" where

¹Timothy L. Smith, Revivalism and Social Reform (New York: Abingdon Press, c.1957), p. 80.

they could be prayed into the church. Laymen were so taken up with the emotional appeal of revivalism that they sometimes forced their pastors to call in a revivalist to hold protracted meetings even though the pastor was opposed to revival techniques. The power of the layman was growing so that it was not surprising when the Mormon church was organized in 1830 for Joseph Smith to depend entirely on lay preachers to spread his doctrines. Such lay preachers were probably just as well educated in their doctrines as were the farmer preachers and circuit riders who traveled the frontier for the older denominations.

In the frontier community there was often only one church to serve a wide area. That church might be far different doctrinally from the church that the frontiersman had attended in his old home town. The frontier was a rough and tumble place that was not very conducive to any type of religious thinking. Many people on the frontier had never been more than nominal church members in their former communities and the frontier gave them the opportunity to forget religion entirely. Sometimes a frontier community had one church building that served all denominations. Services were scheduled so that each denomination took its turn at using the building. When this situation prevailed a revival naturally became a union endeavor. But then many preachers and laymen of that day preferred to think in terms of deeds rather than creeds so doctrine did not

mean much.²

All of these conditions prevailed in Western New York as well as in other frontier areas. But in Western New York there had been a continual play on the people's emotions by religious crackpots. This had started already in the eighteenth century. The name, Burned-over District was applied to Western New York even before Charles G. Finney called it by that name.³ Western New York seemed to have been especially susceptible to superstition from its earliest days.⁴ The early state mission organizations of New England poured a disproportionate amount of money into Western New York in the early part of the nineteenth century.⁵ This was done for the simple reason that the return was greater in this area than in any other mission area of the country.

Many men looked upon America as the land of promise during this period. The native son felt it was a land of promise because of its accomplishments in fields of liberty and democracy. The man on the frontier reflected the

²Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-over District (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, c.1950), pp. 41f.

³Ibid., p. 3.

⁴Carl Garmer, Listen for a Lonesome Drum, A York State Chronicle (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., c.1936), p. xvii.

⁵Cross, op. cit., p. 21.

independent democratic spirit by being inventive and by being willing to try out new ideas. The immigrant saw America as a millennial land of milk and honey in comparison with the old country. It became only too easy for the immigrant to break his old religious ties in this new land of opportunity. In the more settled regions the search for prosperity sometimes led men into a materialistic outlook upon life. The hardship of the frontier did the same thing. When a man became so involved with the taming of the elements he often forgot about the needs of his soul.

The shortage of qualified ministers and the lack of educational facilities to train new men made it possible for sects and self-styled prophets to take over a community before the more orthodox churches could establish congregations. But the greatest tragedy was the fact that Protestant theology in that period had built its center around man and his moral and social obligations. By displacing the Gospel in the pulpit the Protestant churches prepared the way for the social gospel which had little or no connection with the Gospel of Christ.

The Unitarians had separated from the Congregationalist church at the beginning of the nineteenth century mainly over the Calvinist teaching that stressed man's

total depravity.⁶ The Unitarians centered their theology around man and man's inherent ability to progress unaided by outside forces toward righteousness. About a hundred years after this split between Unitarians and Congregationalists a Unitarian said in a King's Chapel Lecture:

Preachers, especially those of the revival sort among the Hopkinsians, dwelt upon natural ability with ever increasing emphasis, which however rested, as time went on, more upon the noun than the adjective. They whispered natural and shouted ability. Meanwhile the doctrine of moral inability slipped imperceptibly away, until, almost before it was realized what was happening, the distinction was out of mind, full ability was getting itself preached, and the preachers were trying to persuade themselves and others that nothing else had ever been meant. So to all intents and purposes the anti-Unitarian ministers had dropped the doctrine of divine sovereignty and were affirming human ability and freedom as stoutly as their old-time opponents. Indeed, it is probable that there are very few Trinitarian churches in New England, even in the remote back country, where the old doctrine of man would be any more acceptable today than it would in the Unitarian church across the village green.⁷

Natural theology had replaced the revealed theology of the Scriptures. God-centered theology gave place to man-centered theology and the doors opened wide to theological innovations. Little wonder then that the sects began to spring up. And without exception the new sects of the first half of the nineteenth century had as their cardinal doctrine the inherent ability of man to progress toward

⁶John Winthrop Platner and Others, The Religious History of New England, King's Chapel Lectures (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, c.1917), p. 60.

⁷Ibid., pp. 130-31. Italics are in the original.

perfection. Man no longer needed God and so man deified himself and the churches changed from religious institutions to secularized moral and social uplift societies. That process of changing the Christian Church into a mutual admiration society is still going on in many of America's churches and sects. The only way that the trend away from God can be reversed is by a return to the Gospel of Christ as it is revealed in the Holy Scriptures and in the Holy Sacraments of the Church. God alone can redeem fallen man and this He has already done in the vicarious atonement of His divine-human Son, the protests of man-centered theology notwithstanding.

1. If a Congregational Church shall settle a Minister of the Presbyterian order, that Church may, if they choose, still conduct their discipline according to the Congregational principles, settling their difficulties among themselves, or by a council actually agreed upon for that purpose. But if any difficulty shall arise between the Minister and the Church, or any member of it, it shall be referred to the Presbytery to which the Minister shall belong, provided both parties agree to it; if not, to a council consisting of an equal number of Presbyterians and Congregationalists, agreed upon by both parties.

2. If a Presbyterian Church shall settle a Minister of Congregational principles, that Church may still conduct their discipline according to Presbyterian principles, excepting that if a difficulty arise between him and his Church, or any member of it, the same shall be tried by the Association to which the said Minister shall belong, provided both parties agree to it; otherwise by a council, one-half Congregationalists and the other Presbyterians, actually agreed upon by the parties.

3. If any Congregationalist accept partly of those who hold the Congregational form of discipline, and partly of those who hold the Presbyterian form, we recommend to both parties that this be no obstruction to their

APPENDIX A

Plan of Union Regulations

Regulations adopted by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America, and by the General Association of the State of Connecticut, (provided said Association agree to them,) with a view to prevent alienation, and to promote union and harmony in those new settlements which are composed of inhabitants from these bodies.

1. It is strictly enjoined on all their missionaries to the new settlements, to endeavour, by all proper means, to promote mutual forbearance, and a spirit of accommodation between those inhabitants of the new settlements who hold the Presbyterian, and those who hold the Congregational, form of Church government.
2. If in the new settlements any Church of the Congregational order shall settle a Minister of the Presbyterian order, that Church may, if they choose, still conduct their discipline according to the Congregational principles, settling their difficulties among themselves, or by a council mutually agreed upon for that purpose. But if any difficulty shall exist between the Minister and the Church, or any member of it, it shall be referred to the Presbytery to which the Minister shall belong, provided both parties agree to it; if not, to a council consisting of an equal number of Presbyterians and Congregationalists, agreed upon by both parties.
3. If a Presbyterian Church shall settle a Minister of Congregational principles, that Church may still conduct their discipline according to Presbyterian principles, excepting that if a difficulty arise between him and his Church, or any member of it, the cause shall be tried by the Association to which the said Minister shall belong, provided both parties agree to it; otherwise by a council, one-half Congregationalists and the other Presbyterians, mutually agreed upon by the parties.
4. If any Congregation consist partly of those who hold the Congregational form of discipline, and partly of those who hold the Presbyterian form, we recommend to both parties that this be no obstruction to their

uniting in one Church and settling a Minister; and that in this case the Church choose a standing committee from the communicants of said Church, whose business it shall be to call to account every member of the Church who shall conduct himself inconsistently with the laws of Christianity, and to give judgment on such conduct. That if the person condemned by their judgment be a Presbyterian, he shall have liberty to appeal to the Presbytery; if he be a Congregationalist, he shall have liberty to appeal to the body of the male communicants of the Church. In the former case, the determination of the Presbytery shall be final, unless the Church shall consent to a further appeal to the Synod, or to the General Assembly; and in the latter case, if the party condemned shall wish for a trial by mutual council, the case shall be referred to such a council. And provided the said standing committee of any Church shall depute one of themselves to attend the Presbytery, he may have the same right to sit and act in the Presbytery, as a Ruling Elder of the Presbyterian Church. (Minutes of the General Assembly, 1801, 224.)¹

¹Maurice W. Armstrong, Lefferts A. Loetscher, and Charles A. Anderson, editors, The Presbyterian Enterprise (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, c.1946), pp. 102-04.

APPENDIX B

Errors Charged to the New School Presbyterians

1. That God would have prevented the existence of sin in our world, but was not able without destroying the moral agency of man: or, that for aught that appears in the Bible to the contrary, sin is incidental to any wise moral system.
2. That election to eternal life is founded on a foresight of faith and obedience.
3. That we have no more to do with the first sin of Adam than with the sins of any other parent.
4. That infants come into the world as free from moral defilement as was Adam when he was created.
5. That infants sustain the same relation to the moral government of God in this world, as brute animals, and that their sufferings and death are to be accounted for on the same principle as those of brutes, and not by any means to be considered as penal.
6. That there is no other original sin than the fact that all the posterity of Adam, though by nature innocent, or possessed of no moral character, will always include a sinful bias of the human mind, and a just exposure to penal suffering; and that there is no evidence in Scripture, that infants, in order to salvation, do need redemption by the blood of Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Ghost.
7. That the doctrine of imputation, whether of the guilt of Adam's sin, or of the righteousness of Christ, has no foundation in the Word of God, and is both unjust and absurd.
8. That the sufferings and death of Christ were not truly vicarious and penal, but symbolical, governmental, and instructive only.
9. That the impenitent sinner is by nature, and independently of the renewing influence or almighty energy of the Holy Spirit, in full possession of all the ability necessary to a full compliance with all the commands of God.

10. That Christ does not intercede for the elect until after their regeneration.
11. That saving faith is not an effect of the special operation of the Holy Spirit, but a mere rational belief of the truth, or assent to the Word of God.
12. That regeneration is the act of the sinner himself, and that it consists in a change of his governing purpose, which he himself must produce, and which is the result, not of any direct influence of the Holy Spirit on the heart, but chiefly of a persuasive exhibition of the truth, analogous to the influence which one man exerts over the mind of another; or that regeneration is not an instantaneous act, but a progressive work.
13. That God has done all that he can do for the salvation of all men, and that man himself must do the rest.
14. That God cannot exert such influence on the minds of men, as shall make it certain that they will choose and act in a particular manner without impairing their moral agency.
15. That the righteousness of Christ is not the sole ground of the sinner's acceptance with God; and that in no sense does the righteousness of Christ become ours.
16. That the reason why some differ from others in regard to their reception of the gospel, is that they make themselves to differ.¹

True Doctrine

1. God permitted the introduction of sin, not because he was unable to prevent it, consistently with the moral freedom of his creatures, but for wise and benevolent reasons which he has not revealed.

¹Rev. James H. Hotchkin, History of the Purchase and Settlement of Western New York, and of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Presbyterian Church in That Section (New York: M. W. Dodd, c.1848), p. 234. Italics are in the original.

2. Election to eternal life is not founded on a foresight of faith and obedience, but is a sovereign act of God's mercy, whereby, according to the counsel of his own will, he has chosen some to salvation; "yet so as thereby neither is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established;" nor does this gracious purpose ever take effect independently of faith and a holy life.

3. By a divine constitution, Adam was so the head and representative of his race, that, as a consequence of his transgression, all mankind became morally corrupt, and liable to death, temporal and eternal.

4. Adam was created in the image of God, endowed with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness. Infants come into the world, not only destitute of these, but with a nature inclined to evil, and only evil.

5. Brute animals sustain no such relation to the moral government of God as does the human family. Infants are a part of the human family, and their sufferings and death are to be accounted for on the ground of their being involved in the general moral ruin of the race induced by the apostasy.

6. Original sin is a natural bias to evil, resulting from the first apostasy, leading invariably and certainly to actual transgression. And all infants, as well as adults, in order to be saved, need redemption by the blood of Christ, and regeneration by the Holy Ghost.

7. The sin of Adam is not imputed to his posterity in the sense of a literal transfer of personal qualities, acts, and demerit; but by reason of the sin of Adam, in his peculiar relation, the races are treated as if they had sinned. Nor is the righteousness of Christ imputed to his people in the sense of a literal transfer of personal qualities, acts, and merit; but by reason of his righteousness, in his peculiar relation, they are treated as if they were righteous.

8. The sufferings and death of Christ were not symbolical, governmental, and instructive only, but were truly vicarious, i.e. a substitute for the punishment due to transgressors. And while Christ did not suffer the literal penalty of the law, involving remorse of conscience and the pains of hell, he did offer a sacrifice which infinite wisdom saw to be a full

equivalent; and by virtue of this atonement, overtures of mercy are sincerely made to the race, and salvation secured to all who believe.

9. While sinners have all the faculties necessary to a perfect moral agency and a just accountability, such is their love of sin, and opposition to God and his law, that, independently of the renewing influence or almighty energy of the Holy Spirit, they never will comply with the commands of God.

10. The intercession of Christ for the elect is previous, as well as subsequent, to their regeneration, as appears from the following scripture, viz. "I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word."

11. Saving faith is an intelligent and cordial assent to the testimony of God concerning his Son, implying reliance on Christ alone for pardon and eternal life; and in all cases it is an effect of the special operations of the Holy Spirit.

12. Regeneration is a radical change of heart, produced by the special operation of the Holy Spirit, "determining the sinner to that which is good," and is in all cases instantaneous.

13. While repentance for sin and faith in Christ are indispensable to salvation, all who are saved are indebted, from first to last, to the grace and Spirit of God. And the reason that God does not save all, is not that he wants the power to do it, but that in his wisdom he does not see fit to exert that power further than he actually does.

14. While the liberty of the will is not impaired, nor the established connexion betwixt means and ends broken by any action of God on the mind, he can influence it according to his pleasure, and does effectually determine it to good, in all cases of true conversion.

15. All believers are justified, not on the grounds of personal merit, but solely on the ground of the obedience and death, or, in other words, the righteousness of Christ. And while that righteousness does not become theirs, in the sense of a literal transfer of personal qualities and merit; yet, from respect to it, God can and does treat them as if they were righteous.

16. While all such as reject the gospel of Christ, do it, not by coercion, but freely, and all who embrace it, do it, not by coercion, but freely, the reason why some differ from others is, that God has made them to differ.

In further illustration of the doctrines prevalent in these sections of the church, the Convention declare that the authors whose exposition and defence of the articles of our faith are most approved and used in these Synods, are President Edwards, Witherspoon, and Dwight, Dr. Smalley, and Andrew Fuller, and the Commentators, Henry, Doddridge, and Scott.²

²Ibid., pp. 238-39. Italics are in the original.

APPENDIX C

The Articles of Faith of the Church of
Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

1. We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.
2. We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.
3. We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.
4. We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.
5. We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands, by those who are in authority to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.
6. We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, viz., apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, etc.
7. We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, etc.
8. We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.
9. We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.
10. We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion will be built upon this [the American] continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that

the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.

11. We claim the privilege of worshiping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.

12. We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.

13. We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul--We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.--Joseph Smith.¹

¹Joseph Smith, The Pearl of Great Price (Salt Lake City, Utah: Published by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1929), p. 58.

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