

THE DOCTRINE OF THE SANCTIFYING SPIRIT:

Charles G. Finney's Synthesis Of Wesleyan And Covenant Theology

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The year 1835 was the *annus mirabilis* of both liberation theology and the doctrine of sanctification in the United States. Phoebe Palmer professed the experience of perfect love at a weekly ladies' prayer meeting held at her sister's home in New York City that year, and for the next four decades made the "New York Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness" the center of Methodist perfectionism and spiritual feminism, and the source of much of its social concern.¹ That year, also, Orange Scott, presiding elder in Springfield, Massachusetts, won over a majority of the New England Methodist ministers to abolitionism by sending each one a three-month subscription to William Lloyd Garrison's *The Liberator*. Scott's subsequent agitation of this issue, in defiance of the bishops, led eight years later to the secession of the Wesleyan Methodists in upstate New York and, in a move to prevent New England from joining them, to the division of the Methodist church, north and south, at the General Conference of 1844.²

Methodists scarcely dominated the scene, however. Evangelicals of New England Congregationalist backgrounds, who when residing west of the Hudson River were required by the terms of the plan of union of 1801 to become Presbyterians, moved in parallel directions in the year 1835. In January, John J. Shipherd and Asa Mahan came to New York City to persuade Arthur Tappan to locate at Oberlin, Ohio, the college he planned to support for the students who had withdrawn from Presbyterian Lane Theological Seminary, in Cincinnati, when the trustees forbade their anti-slavery activities the year before. Tappan, who had been a mainstay of Lane, and who had supported the students during much of the year of feverish antislavery activity which followed their withdrawal, agreed to the plan, and named Mahan, a Cincinnati Presbyterian pastor who had sustained the students against the trustees, to be president at Oberlin. Tappan's conditions were, however, that evangelist Charles G. Finney, recently pastor of the congregation of revivalists and reformers which he and his brother Lewis Tappan had helped organize in New York City, should spend half of each year in Oberlin as professor of theology; that the faculty, and not the trustees, should be in control of the college; and that it should be committed to "the broad ground of moral reform in all its departments."³

Oberlin became at once the vital center of Christian reflection and action aimed at the liberation of Black people from slavery and racism; of women from the male oppression which excluded them from the higher professions, but exploited them in the oldest; of poor people from ignorance, alcohol, and the greed of merchants and land speculators; and of American society generally from all those forms of institutionalized evil which stood in the way of Christ's coming kingdom.⁴ Theodore Dwight Weld, whose perfectionist view of Christian faith underlay his recent emergence as the most prominent evangelical abolitionist in the country⁵, appeared at Oberlin in the fall of 1835, just as Finney completed his first half-year as professor there, to give a series of lectures on

abolition and train students as anti-slavery agents. Finney, whose New York congregation had meanwhile erected the Broadway Tabernacle for his church and revival center, began that fall the Lectures to Professing Christians which signaled his growing involvement with the doctrine of the sanctification of believers, which he thought crucial to further progress in Christendom's march toward the millennium.⁶ The widespread merging of Christian perfection with moral reform, in a theology no longer Calvinist, though professedly Puritan, was too much for the more conservative of the Scotch-Irish preachers in the Presbyterian church, U. S. A.⁷, and certainly too much for the Princeton Seminary faculty. Within two years, that denomination also divided, ostensibly over theological but in fact also over social issues.

The broader significance of these events has been obscured by the tendency of historians, recently being reversed, to view perfectionists and abolitionists as eccentric if not lunatic strains in American religion. Another series of events in the same year 1835 suggest, rather, that Christian radicalism was for the moment in the mainstream. Nathaniel W. Taylor, professor of theology at Yale and the chief architect with Lyman Beecher of the "New Divinity," or the "New England Theology," as it was called, published four essays in his journal, *The Christian Spectator*, which placed him firmly in the camp of those to whom sanctification had become the crucial issue. By grafting onto covenant theology the doctrine of the moral nature of divine government, which required the consent of the human will to all that God provided or demanded; by locating depravity not in our natures, as Jonathan Edwards had, but in our dispositions our selfish wills; and by adopting Samuel Hopkins's idea that disinterested benevolence, or unselfish love toward God and man, was the sum of the Christian's duty, Taylor and Beecher transformed Calvinist dogma into a practical Arminianism, without having to jettison Calvinist verbiage.⁸ Meanwhile, Lyman Beecher's son Edward, who joined the famous "Yale Band" to become the first president of Illinois College, spoke for many of the young New Englanders whom Yale and Andover seminaries sent out as missionaries to the Midwest in the 1830's.⁹ He called in 1835 for "the immediate production of an elevated standard of personal holiness throughout the universal church-such a standard . . . as God requires, and the present exigencies of the world demand." With Finney, Edward Beecher believed that on its creation depended all hopes for the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth.¹⁰

The ethical seriousness of the New Divinity equaled that of the Methodists on one hand, or the Unitarians on the other. The title of the first of the four articles Taylor published indicated its content:¹¹ "The Absolute Necessity of the Divine Influence for Holiness of Heart and Life." The second began with refreshing directness: "The promised agency of the Holy Spirit, for the conversion of sinners and the sanctification of saints, is the rock of safety to the church, and the hope to the world. All preaching and prayer which dispenses with the necessity of this divine influence . . . tends to drive revivals of religion, and religion itself, from the earth." This divine influence, however, Taylor went on to say, "never violates the great laws of moral action or contravenes the freedom of the subject." It does not leave man "the mere creature of passive impressions or a machine operated upon by compulsory force." As such radical moralism became the central expression of evangelical piety, Boston's Unitarians could no longer claim a monopoly on

ethical concern. In the years 1834 and 1835 their most honored leader, William Elderly Changing, brought to a climax his series of twelve sermons on The Perfect Life which closely paralleled the radical ethics of both Methodism and the New Divinity. In each of them he insisted that absolute personal righteousness, attained by obedience to the commands and imitation of the character of Jesus, was the only standard of Christian virtue and the only assurance of everlasting life.¹²

The year 1835, finally, was crucial in the history of the movement to free the slaves. Lewis Tappan helped William Lloyd Garrison out-manuever his brother Arthur and two other Tappan brothers, both of them Unitarians living in Boston, who wanted to moderate the abolitionist crusade for a moment in search of broader popular support. Arthur then joined Lewis in financing an immense expansion of abolitionist propaganda through four monthly journals, one appearing in each week of the month. They flooded the country in the twelve months after July, 1835 with a million pieces of abolitionist literature. The anti-slavery movement, having mounted this radical and "public" challenge to the South, could never again unite moderate Christians in a genteel moral consensus.¹³

That year also, Garrison embraced radically perfectionist piety as the only way to motivate the nation to free the slaves, liberate women, renounce warfare, and substitute love for force in the administration of justice. A company of able scholars have recently underlined the essentially evangelical commitments which governed the abolitionist crusade, not only in its earliest years, but during and after the year 1835, when Garrison began advocating a platform of "universal reform." He aimed to overthrow "the empire of sin" by an agitation whose only weapons were truth and love.¹⁴ Aileen Kraditor has shown that Biblical ideas of righteousness dominated his thought down until 1843, when he began to question the authority of the Scriptures, and 1845, when he discovered Thomas Paine. That before those dates Garrison's position paralleled that of Finney, Weld, and Orange Scott is evident from an editorial entitled "Perfection" which he published in *The Liberator* on October 15, 1841. "Whether this or that individual has attained to the state of 'sinless perfection'" is not the issue, the unsigned editorial began. What matters is "whether human beings, in this life, may and ought to serve God with all their mind and strength, and to love their neighbors as themselves!" Instead of assailing the doctrine "be ye perfect," Garrison continued, believers who were "not wholly clean, not yet entirely reconciled to God, not yet filled with perfect love," should acknowledge that "freedom from sin is a Christian's duty and privilege," and obey St. Paul's injunction to "put on the whole armor of God."¹⁵

Garrison's use of Wesleyan terms and concepts is a reminder that Methodist clergyman believed God had raised up their movement in order "to reform the nation, and spread scriptural holiness over the land." Since my days in graduate school, when I wrote *Realism and Social Reform*, evidence has multiplied that holiness preaching was from Francis Asbury's time onward an important catalyst to Methodist participation in movements for social justice. Philip Bruce, a preacher stationed in Portsmouth, Virginia, wrote Bishop Thomas Coke on March 25, 1788, of immense revivals among African slaves as well as free whites. "Here liberty prevails," he wrote. On one preacher's circuit in nearby Sussex and Brunswick Counties, between twelve and fifteen hundred whites

besides a great number of Blacks had been converted; and a friend had informed him that at the February court in Sussex, Methodists had filed deeds of manumission setting free over a hundred slaves.¹⁶ By the 1830's, Wesley's followers in New England had established a reputation of commitment to the popular side in such political issues as universal white manhood suffrage, workingmen's rights, and a tax-supported system of free public schools. They generally endorsed the crusade for total abstinence earlier than others, in response not only to Wesley's influence, but to the cry of their American Indian converts, and of free Blacks and working class whites in Northern cities, who insisted that liquor was for their people a tragic curse.¹⁷ And at the end of the century, Norris Magnuson has shown, such Wesleyan organizations as the Salvation Army and the Door of Hope Mission learned from the poor people they served the necessity for a moral reconstitution of the social and legal structures which allowed the exploitation of the indigent. Evangelicals of many persuasions, including Methodist William Arthur, author of the famous holiness tract, *The Tongue of Fire*, had come by the same route to a similar conclusion during the 1850's.¹⁸

But on the American scene, at least, the denominational approach is myopic, as indeed I find it to some extent to be in Bernard Semmel's study of what he calls *The Methodist Revolution in England*. I have briefly examined the reports of Moravian missionaries in Antigua, in the years between 1800 and 1833, comparing them with those of the Methodists who were equally effective on that island, and find little difference between the efforts of the two missions to liberate Black people from the molds in which their African past and their American enslavement had imprisoned them. An immensely detailed plan of personal interviews and moral instruction for individual converts kept Moravian missionaries busy from dawn to dark of every day. True, they scorned preaching theology, being convinced that to tell the story of the cross of Jesus was the surest way to awaken the hearts and minds of the Africans. Once awakened, however, the converts found Biblical teachings about purity, honesty, unselfishness, loyalty to marital bonds, and a forgiving spirit—in short, about the life of holiness—defined the character of a Moravian, despite what Methodists complained (and Semmel argues) was the antinomian character of the Moravian doctrine of justification.¹⁹

The same is true for the home missionary movement which swept American Congregationalism in the early decades of the nineteenth century. Whether at Yale College, or along the advancing frontier of Yankee settlement in New York, Pennsylvania, and the upper Midwest, revivalists and home missionaries whose doctrines were still cast in Calvinist language displayed the same purpose as the Methodists: to produce, through a free response to the gracious truth of the gospel, the sanctification of disorganized and demoralized persons.²⁰

The rising expectations of the millennium which both home and overseas missions inspired did not glorify the American Empire or rationalize westward expansion, but demanded holiness. The millennial vision seems to have been a thoroughly internationalist one—at least as ecumenical as Wesley's view of the world parish. Those who shared it proclaimed the judgments of God upon all laws, governments, and social

institutions, whether in the United States or elsewhere, which stood in the way of hope for a just and holy future for human kind.²¹

Spokesmen for the New Divinity were never able to see, or at least to admit, what their critics readily perceived was their adoption of many Methodist doctrines.²² In the same year 1835 when the columns of Nathaniel Taylor's *Christian Spectator* made the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit the central issue in New England theology, he published an attack on Wesley's doctrine of the witness of the Spirit which misconstrued the founder of Methodism to teach that a subjective and personal revelation from God, rather than a transformed ethical life, attested one's conversion. Nathan Bangs remonstrated, but Taylor stuck to his charge. Methodists were only partially dismayed to hear themselves denounced by Congregationalism's greatest intellectual leader for not making personal holiness the only assurance of saving grace.²³

For these reasons, then, the story of how Charles G. Finney forged in the crucible of Oberlin's social activism a theology of liberation in which the Arminianized Calvinism of the New Divinity was the chief element, and the doctrine of what Finney called "perfect sanctification" through the baptism of the Holy Spirit was the catalyst, seems to me to illuminate best the history of radical religious thought in nineteenth-century America. Among Congregationalists and New School Presbyterians, the notion of Christian perfection was new and, therefore, almost impossible to associate with a traditional order. Although Methodists occasionally preached or wrote on the theme without reference at all to the social crisis of the 1830's for which their founder's message was newly relevant, antiquarian or individualistic views of that doctrine were not possible for preachers whose roots lay in Calvinism. At Oberlin especially, the interaction of theological reflection and spiritual experience with revolutionary ideology and political action was evident in all parties, and most especially in the evangelist whom Arthur Tappan made a professor of theology, Charles G. Finney.

Finney consented, after some initial reluctance, to accept the appointment at Oberlin because, during the previous two years, he had become convinced that the church could not save the nation unless its members found a way to translate the doctrine of sanctification into concrete experience. He had carried his evangelistic crusade from western New York to Philadelphia, New York, Providence and Boston and then had become pastor of Arthur Tappan's circle of revivalist and antislavery radicals in New York City. There, however, amidst the institutionalized evil evident in urban culture, the optimism with which he had in preceding years anticipated the early onset of the millennium was harder to sustain. Reform crusades—even one mounted to liberate "fallen women"—encountered withering opposition, some of it from less aggressive New School Presbyterians. Finney saw in the invitation to Oberlin an opportunity to develop a company of leaders who would make the idea of Christian holiness the center of a renewed campaign to subject American society to the rule of Christ.²⁴ There he could help train and inspire a corps of revivalists, ready to declare judgment upon all institutions which ran counter to the law of God and to affirm the dawn through His grace of a new day.²⁵

Finney's role, as he conceived it, was not to agitate for particular reforms so much as to provide spiritual inspiration and a Christian ideology for them all. When Arthur Tappan guaranteed that the Oberlin faculty and students would be free of interference from trustees or other outsiders, and then guaranteed not only Finney's salary but whatever might become necessary to maintain the solvency of the school, the evangelist agreed to plant himself for half of each year at what he thought were the two arenas where America's moral destiny would be decided—New York City and the upper Midwest. The Oberlin venture did not in any sense, therefore, isolate him from the main currents of American social idealism. Rather, the college and community furnished him with a laboratory of both spirituality and radical social action, in which the idea of Christian perfection soon reigned supreme.²⁶

Both Finney and Mahan left behind autobiographies, written in their old age, which recounted with some improvement from hindsight the events at Oberlin between 1835 and 1840. Far from fitting the image of a backwoods evangelist, Mahan was a moral philosopher of great sophistication. His textbook asserting an absolute standard of righteousness and directly challenging the increasingly popular utilitarian views of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill was the second most widely used in the standard course which college presidents taught for senior classes in nineteenth century America. Both Mahan and Finney, moreover, were very close students of the English Bible; and their study aimed not only at understanding theology but at cultivating their own spiritual life. They freely acknowledged that during Oberlin's first five years a deep hunger for the highest personal achievements of piety and righteousness was their primary motivation. Mahan wrote that though he had been an effective evangelist, and preached often at Methodist camp meetings, he found in St. Paul's writings evidence of a personal relationship with Christ which he did not know, and for which he continually prayed.²⁷ Not since Luther and Wesley had theology and experience been so closely intertwined.

In September, 1836, in the middle of the revival with which the college opened its second year, a student asked whether Christians had Biblical grounds to anticipate a relationship with Christ which would enable them to live without committing such sins as produced guilt and condemnation—in short, to live a morally sanctified life. President Mahan answered, passionately, "yes," though acknowledging he had not yet attained such a relationship. During that evening and the following day, however, he broke through to what he saw was the way to the experience of Christian perfection: faith in Christ's atonement. "When I thought of my guilt, and the need of justification," he recalled, "I had looked at Christ exclusively, as I ought to have done; for sanctification, on the other hand, to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, I had depended mainly on my own resolutions."²⁸ The next evening, Mahan preached to the revival congregation on the text "the love of Christ constraineth us," declaring both from Scripture and his own experience "that we are to be sanctified by faith, just as we are justified by faith." Although he did not use in the sermon the phrase "baptism of the Holy Spirit," as he remembered having done when writing his autobiography over thirty years later, the version of the sermon which appeared in print in 1839 declared that "the appropriate office of the Holy Spirit" is to reveal the love of Christ so powerfully as to enable Christians fully to consecrate themselves to Him.²⁹ Later, in a thoughtful discourse

entitled "The Divine Teacher," the president explained that the Holy Spirit "enlightens the intellect, and carries on the work of sanctification in the heart," presenting Christ to our minds "in such a manner, that we are transformed into His image" and freed from forlorn reliance upon "our own natural powers as moral agents."³⁰

Finney was not present that second evening, and probably did not yet approve Mahan's decisive turn toward the idea that a "second crisis" of Christian experience was necessary to a life of sanctity. But he began immediately what proved a three-year process of working his way through the teachings of the Bible concerning the covenant of holiness. As always, his head must go ahead of his heart. That fall and winter, however -which proved to be his last in New York City-Finney included in the second series of his Lectures to Professing Christians one entitled "Sanctification by Faith," two on the subject of "Christian Perfection," another declaring "Love is the Whole of Religion" and a final one entitled "Rest of the Saints." The last defined faith as "yielding up all our powers and interests to Christ, in confidence, to be led, and sanctified, and saved by Him." All of these lectures took as their starting point the general outlines of the New Divinity.³¹

In the fall of 1838, when ill health prevented his spending the winter traveling in evangelistic work, Finney undertook to deliver and publish in *The Oberlin Evangelist*, the faculty's new organ of religious and social reformation, a series of lectures on Christian perfection. In a letter to readers, printed along with the third lecture, he explained that in the years before 1835 he had been wholly and, he believed in retrospect, wisely committed to revival preaching aimed at securing the conversion of sinners. During his years in view York City, however, he became "fully convinced, that converts would die" and "that revivals would become more and more superficial, and finally cease, unless something effectual was done to elevate the standard of holiness in the church." He subsequently realized that he had known Christ "almost exclusively, as an atoning and justifying Savior," but not as a sanctifying one. In the last two or three years, he continued, "I have felt as strongly and unequivocally pressed by the Spirit of God to labor for the sanctification of the Church, as I once did for the conversion of sinners....God has been continually dealing with me in mercy....How often I have longed to unburden myself, and pour out my whole heart to the dear souls, that were converted in those powerful revivals." Through the lectures, then, he hoped to correct the deficiencies of his earlier ministry.³²

The suggestion some scholars have made, following William McLoughlin, that such high-blown spirituality indicated a turning away from the movement to reform society will not fit the facts. 1839 and 1840 were vintage years for Christian revolutionary ideology at Oberlin. Finney's *Skeletons of a Course of Theological Lectures* published in the latter year included several on human government, in which he declared that "when one form of government fails to meet any longer the necessities of the people, it is the duty of the people to revolutionize.... In such cases it is vain to oppose revolution; for in some way the benevolence of God will bring it about.... God always allows His children as much liberty as they are prepared to enjoy."³³ Finney claimed, in a passage cut from his *Memoirs* before their publication in 1876, that he led the college that year also in

resistance to racism. When students from the South questioned the propriety of Black students eating with them at the same tables, he wrote, the faculty adopted his proposal to set up separate tables where any who did not wish to eat with the Blacks might take their meals; the historic arrangements thus being reversed, the separate tables remained empty.³⁴ Moreover, the lectures on sanctification themselves contained a radical attack on prevailing legal standards of business ethics which left little room of the profit motive.³⁵

As for slavery, then in 1839 the Ohio legislature, as Donald Dayton has recently pointed out,³⁶ adopted a statute which seemed to extend to all of that state the jurisdiction of Kentucky law over fugitive slaves, Finney introduced a resolution at the next meeting of the Ohio Anti-slavery Society declaring the statute "a palpable violation of the Constitution of this state, and of the United States, of the common law and of the law of God," and announced it "as a well-settled principle of both Common and constitutional law, that no human legislation can annul or set aside the law or authority of God is At the commencement exercises in September, 1839, Jonathan Blanchard presented his famous address, "A Perfect State of Society" to the Oberlin Society of Inquiry. Over a thousand persons attended a meeting of the Lorain County Anti-slavery Society on commencement evening; they denounced "the disgraceful 'Black laws' of Ohio" and resolved that the membership would "not support any man for the legislature" who did not favor the repeal of all Ohio laws "founded on a distinction of color."³⁷ The report of these events in the Evangelist accompanied a stirring account of schools for the children of fugitive slaves which Oberlin graduates were maintaining in Canada and a denunciation of the "blood-thirsty and land-coveting whites" of Florida who had waged a three years war against the Seminole Indians and now were resisting their permanent settlement in the southern part of that state out of fear that runaway slaves would find protection among them.³⁸

The development of Finney's doctrine of Christian perfection, then, reflected and reinforced his revolutionary concern, and that of the Oberlin community generally, to reform society. The lectures of 1838 and 1839, which we shall examine in a moment, demonstrate that Oberlin's political radicalism was rooted in the central theme of the Old and New Testament Scriptures: the God of eternity had bound himself in covenant with those who would be his people, making them morally responsible to him and to one another to help his kingdom come, as Jesus put it, and his will to be done, on earth as it was in heaven. Unlike John Wesley, Finney drew deeply upon Moses and the prophets, and upon the long tradition of Puritan or covenant theology. Moreover, his starting point in New Testament studies was not Moravian pietism, but Samuel Hopkins's distillation of the ethical teachings of Jesus and Paul into the law of disinterested benevolence-what Wesley called perfect love. When Finney discovered, apparently out of his own study of the English Bible, the logical and historical links between covenant and promise in the Old Testament, and Jesus' covenant and promise in the New of His continuing presence through the sanctifying comforter, the Holy Spirit, the circle was complete. He then proclaimed, as Wesley refused to allow his preachers to say, that the entire sanctification of the believer's moral will was achieved through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. That proclamation did not reduce but in fact radicalized Christian concerns for social justice. For it offered to Calvinist, Pietist, and Arminian alike a way of repossessing the doctrine of the sovereignty of God over individuals as well as over the structures of society.

The result, Finney recognized, would be a radical reshaping of what the next year he called the "science of theology." Like other branches of knowledge, he declared, theology must be open to "new truth" and ministers of the Gospel should cast aside the fear of changing their opinions about what the Scriptures teach. "I was to a wonderful extent blind to my profound ignorance of the word of God, till about three years past," he wrote. "Since that time I have been able to read it with a degree of astonishment in respect to my former ignorance which I cannot express." And he added, "I pray the Lord to deliver me, and to deliver the ministry, from the absurd prejudice that chains them and the Church to a set of stereotyped opinions on all religious subjects."³⁹

Finney began the lectures, then, with one on "eternal life" which, based on a text from the fifth chapter of I John, equated it with the present experience of sanctity, rather than a future experience of blessedness. True faith, he said, is "receiving Christ as in dwelling Savior," who becomes "the eternal life of the soul." God's presence does not alter human nature, but enables the Christian to begin a life of complete obedience.⁴⁰ The second lecture, on faith, based on Jesus' response to those who asked him "what shall we do," insisted that Calvinists and Arminians alike were trying to produce faith by obedience, despite God's directive that holiness flows from "faith which works by love." Finney declared that in his earlier Lectures on Revivals he had erred in not showing "that the exercise of faith is the first thing to be done." The key element in that faith, he wrote, was "the consent of the heart or will" to the truth of God's faithful love, as it is "perceived by the intellect." Trust stemmed from "confidence in the character of God."⁴¹ The third in this trilogy on hope, faith, and love was entitled "Devotion," which Finney defined, with characteristic concreteness, as "that state of the will in which the mind is swallowed up in God, as the object of supreme affection." In such a life of devotedness, "we not only live and move in God, but for God." He renounced the tendency to separate devotion from duty, including faithfulness to the ordinary duties of business life. And he rebuked those who forget that "devotion belongs to the will," not to the "ever-varying states of emotion," which some "are prone to call religion."⁴²

For lecture four, Finney revised one of his earlier Lectures to Professing Christians entitled "True and False Religion," based on Galatians 5:1. The true, he said, is the opposite of slavery: genuine liberty to act out of love. "The true Christian never yields to the will of God by constraint" but is drawn and persuaded, engaged and committed, by joyous awareness that "infinite wisdom and love" makes Christ the soul's "supreme, eternal choice."⁴³ Slavery consisted in being obliged to choose between two evils. The slaves in the American South were not strictly speaking in a state of involuntary servitude, he said, for they "prefer being as they are, to being in a worse condition-to being imprisoned or whipped for attempting to escape." Though the religion of many persons is analogous to such slavery, he said, true faith brings genuine liberty.⁴⁴

Finney then turned to two lectures on "the law of God." Its demands were wholly fulfilled, he said, following both Moses and Jesus, in the commandment to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and to love your neighbor as yourself. Drawing upon but expanding Samuel Hopkins's idea of disinterested benevolence, he made a crucible distinction between loving one's self as an act of benevolence, and mere self-indulgence

Even more important, however, was Finney's explanation that by love of the heart" he did not mean simply an emotional attachments "By the heart I mean the will," he wrote; "emotions, or what are generally termed feelings, are often involuntary states of mind . . . and of course do not govern the conduct. Love, in the form of an emotions may exist in opposition to the will...." Since "the will controls the conduct," he continued, "it is, therefore, of course, the love of the heart or will, that God requires."⁴⁵The second talk on divine law set forth the doctrine that behind the American constitution stood a higher law, defined by what Hopkins had declared was the nature of God and the sum of man's duty: disinterested benevolence, or pure love. "In the light of this law," Finney wrote, "how perfectly obvious is it, that slavery is from hell. Is it possible that we are to be told that slavery is a divine institution? What! Such a barefaced, shameless, and palpable violation of the law of God authorized by God himself? And even religious teachers, gravely contending that the Bible sanctions this hell-begotten system? 'Oh shame where is thy blush?' What! Make a man a slave-set aside his moral agency-treat him as a mere piece of property . . . and then contend that this is in keeping with the law of God. . . ?"⁴⁶

The two lectures came to a climax, characteristically, in a concrete application of the law of radical love to the ethics of conducting business. Every violation of the rule of disinterested benevolence, or perfect love, "is fraud and injustice," Finney said, not only toward God but "toward every individual in the universe." To transact business merely upon the "principles of commercial justice" upheld by courts of law is "rebellion against God"; in a Christian, such behavior is "real apostasy," for which restitution must be made in all cases possible, "or there is no forgiveness." Fiercely denouncing on this ground not only slaveholders and merchants who priced goods beyond their real value, but speculators in Western lands, Finney declared such offenders must "give back their ill-gotten gains," or suffer damnation. He then outlined the proper Christian attitude toward wealth in terms which differed from John Wesley's. "The law of love," he said, "requires that we should afford everything as cheap as we can, instead of getting as much as we can. The requirement is that we do all the good we can to others, and not that we get all we can ourselves. The law of God is, sell as cheap as you can-the business maxim, as dear as you can." Not content to leave the matter there, Finney added a third lecture, entitled "Glorifying God," which defined holiness as faith in practice. In it he decried the love of money and praised simplicity of life, particularly in clothing and food, then came back, grandly, to link the idea of holiness to the first question of the Westminster catechism.⁴⁷

The eighth lecture, on "True and False Peace" followed a letter to readers of the Evangelist which revealed Finney's doctrine of "sin in believers" to be very close to Wesley's, as was his appeal to converts to have faith in Christ, the sanctifying Savior. The lecture itself dealt with the psychic dimension of choice. When conscience and will unite in holy commitment to God, peace is complete. But to yield one's will to conscience or persuasion without a deep conviction that God is trustworthy-that is, without a motive rooted in the assurance of His love-is to paper over cracks in the wall.⁴⁸

By late April, both the lectures and Finney's accompanying letters revealed the results of his deepening personal quest for Biblical understanding. The scriptural promise of a

renewed covenant of grace, taken from the prophecy of Jeremiah as well as the epistle to the Hebrews, laid a basis in logic for the emphasis upon the work of the Holy Spirit which preoccupied him in the succeeding months. And his dawning awareness that the Christian needs divine help beyond that of merely the illumination of the intellect was evident in his thoroughly Wesleyan exposition of chapters 7 and 8 of the epistle to the Romans.⁴⁹

Five lectures on "The Promises," printed from May to July, bore the fruits of his study of the Old and New covenants. "We never keep the commandments, only as we take hold of the promises," Finney began; "by this I mean that grace alone enables us, from the heart, to obey the commandments of God." In a vastly complex recitation of the Old Testament promises which, he said, "belong emphatically to the Christian church" and especially of God's pledge recorded in Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36 to put a "new heart" within His people-passages which he quoted at length three or four times in the first of these five lectures-Finney burst through to an assertion that holiness consists in partaking of the divine moral nature. This did not mean that God had promised "to change our constitution-to destroy our personal identity-and make our spiritual existence identical" with his. Rather, Christians were invited to become "partakers of the moral nature, or attributes or perfections of God" which are "by the Spirit, through the promises, begotten in our minds." This assertion, though couched in the language of God's moral government, was staggering to anyone not teathed on St. Paul. It clearly made the work of the Holy Spirit central to the new covenant. And that covenant, Finney now declared, was not the promise itself, nor an "outward precept," nor "any outward thing whatever, but an inward holiness brought about by the Spirit of God-the very substance and spirit of the law written in the heart by the Holy Ghost."⁵⁰

This study of the promises inspired Finney's decisive turn to the language of Pentecost to expound the covenant of grace. On further examination of the Scriptures, he concluded that "the blessing of Abraham," which Paul wrote had "come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ," was not simply Christ himself but, rather, the Holy Spirit. The promises of His coming formed "one unbroken chain from Abraham to Christ," completed when the risen Lord pledged to his disciples that they should be baptized with the Spirit. This "blessing of Abraham," Finney declared, Christians must receive by faith which, though it began in "perception of the truth," was complete only when they yielded their wills to "the guidance, instruction, influences, and government of the Holy Spirit."⁵¹ It was now clear to him, he said, that Christ and the apostles regarded the day of Pentecost "as the commencement of a new dispensation, in which the old covenant was set aside only in the sense that it was fulfilled in the new."⁵²

In this rich context of scriptural and covenant theology, Finney was finally able to declare the doctrine of sanctification through the baptism of the Holy Spirit. "Every individual Christian may receive and is bound to receive this gift of the Holy Ghost at the present moment," he proclaimed Christians who have been born again do not have that gift "in such a sense as it is promised in these passages of the Holy Scripture, or in a higher sense than he was received by the Old Testament saints . . . of whom it was said that 'they all died in the faith, not having received the promise.'" ⁵³

The next year, Finney's "Letters to Ministers of the Gospel" urged them to preach earnestly the doctrine he had so recently come to understand himself. They should spare no pains to help new converts realize their need of the experience of entire sanctification. He acknowledged again that his instruction to converts had in former times "been very defective," for he had not clearly seen "that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is a thing universally promised . . . to Christians under this dispensation, and that this blessing is to be sought and received after conversion." That baptism "is the secret of the stability of Christian character," he declared; new converts need "to be baptized into the very death of Christ, and by this baptism to be slain, and buried, and planted and crucified, and raised to a life of holiness in Christ."⁵⁴

Throughout all of their lectures and letters of these years, Finney and Mahan consistently declared that the only assurance that God was accomplishing his purpose in human lives was ethical: the righteousness which showed itself in radical rejection of all sin, whether individual or structural, through faith in Jesus Christ. Again and again, they and other members of the Oberlin faculty rang the changes on this theme, renouncing what they alleged was the antinomianism of the Oneida "perfectionists" on one hand and, on the other, the unwillingness of conservative Calvinists to trust the promises of God.⁵⁵

Here was a theology cradled in experience and nurtured in Scripture, just as Wesley's had been. And the experience was of persons ready to organize their lives around the pursuit of a right relationship with God, which they believed would be attested by just and loving relationships with their fellow human beings and a holy war on the corrupted structures of society. The immediate background, however, was the revitalized Calvinist ethics of Samuel Hopkins, rather than the Anglican moralism which launched Wesley on his quest, or the pietism which helped him at a crucial juncture to see he could realize it through trust in Christ. The social contest, moreover, was the optimism of a new nation, where hopes were blossoming of a social order hallowed by divine grace and hence characterized by justice and love.

Finney's earlier preaching had stressed so much the freedom and responsibility of human beings to repent and make a new life as to allow the charge that he ignored the role of God's grace in sanctification. Now, however, he was affirming that divine grace, poured out in the baptism of the Holy Spirit, was indispensable to the sanctification of both persons and the structures of society. Individual Christians must receive that divine gift by a faith so reasonable and a consecration so deliberate as to leave fully intact their moral responsibility to help build a righteous society and a holy character. Never a Pelagian, I think, Finney had found a way to reclaim the doctrine of God's sovereignty without becoming a Calvinist, either. He had discovered, he believed in Scripture, a Pentecostal version of covenant theology which opened the door to the evangelical unity for which Wesley and Whitefield prayed but were never able to grasp. Rooting the experience of the baptism of the Spirit in the Old Testament covenant of holiness also insulated it against the anti-intellectual and mystical corruptions of it which Wesley feared and which, alas, forgetting Finney, twentieth-century Pentecostals seem often to have embraced.

Interestingly enough, Finney did not profess to have attained this experience himself until three years after these lectures were completed. They provide the context necessary to understand the little-noticed passage of his autobiography, describing his supply pastorate during the winter of 1843-1844 at Marlborough Chapel, in Boston. This was a newly-organized Congregationalist group which, he said, was "composed greatly of radicals," most of them holding "extreme views" on such subjects as non-violence, women's rights, or anti-slavery. During this winter, he declared, "my mind was exceedingly exercised on the question of personal holiness." After many weeks of Bible reading and prayer during which he avoided visiting with individuals, Finney found himself, as he remembered it, in "a great struggle to consecrate myself to God, in a higher sense than I had ever before seen to be my duty, or conceived as possible." In particular, he felt unable to give his ailing wife up without reservation to the will of God. "What if, after all this divine teaching, my will is not carried," he asked himself, "and this teaching takes effect only in my sensibility? May it not be that my sensibility is affected by these revelations from reading the Bible, and that my heart is not really subdued by them?" The issue was the same one he had raised at the revival in Oberlin in 1836: desire versus will, sentiment versus choice.⁵⁶

One memorable day, however, the evangelist was able, as he put it, "to fall back, in a deeper sense than I had ever before done, upon the infinitely blessed and perfect will of God." Then, in an act of consecration which fit precisely Samuel Hopkins's description of the Christian's duty, but which Wesleyans thought outrageous, Finney recalled, "I went so far as to say to the Lord, with all my heart, that He might do anything with me or mine, to which His blessed will could consent, that I had such perfect confidence in His goodness and love, as to believe that he could consent to do nothing, to which I could object," including "the salvation or damnation of my own soul, as the will of God might decide." In this moment he said he also gave up his former assurance of salvation, and took it for granted from that day forward that he would be saved, as he put it, "if I found that . . . [God] kept me, and worked in me by His Spirit, and was preparing me for heaven, working holiness and eternal life in my soul."⁵⁷

Looking back at this experience when writing his Memoirs thirty-two years later, Finney declared:

As the great excitement of that season subsided, and my mind became very calm, I saw more clearly the different steps of my Christian experience, and came to recognize the connection of all things, as all wrought by God from beginning to end. But since then I have never had those great struggles, and long protracted seasons of agonizing prayer, that I had often experienced. It is quite another thing to prevail with God, in my own experience, from what it was before.... I have felt since then a religious freedom, a religious buoyancy and delight in God, and in his word, a steadiness of faith, a Christian liberty and overflowing love, that I had only experienced, I may say, occasionally before.... Since then I have had the freedom of a child with a loving parent.

This testimony to the fruits of a second work of grace would have suited any Methodist. Certainly the evangelist did not describe it in the terms of man's natural ability to obey God's absolute moral law which had pervaded his earlier preaching. The full cooperation of God with man, an immersion in the divine presence which both made possible and hallowed the free act of full consecration, had become for him, as for John Wesley's Methodists, the way to spiritual peace and moral triumph.⁵⁸

The transfer of Finney's Pentecostal language into American Methodism was direct and immediate. George O. Peck, editor of the influential Methodist weekly, the *New York Christian Advocate*, paid close attention to Finney's lectures as they appeared in *The Oberlin Evangelist* in 1839 and 1840. In the fall of the latter year, he became the first Methodist since John Fletcher to equate the experience of entire sanctification with the baptism of the Holy Ghost.⁵⁹ Others followed at once, and by 1855 reports of Methodist camp meetings and revivals in a variety of periodicals frequently referred to persons being "baptized" or "filled with the Spirit," and used the terms interchangeably with "heart purity," "perfect love," or "entire sanctification."⁶⁰ Phoebe Palmer, leader of the holiness awakening among Methodists, was so deeply involved in the elaboration of John Wesley's language of Calvary that she was one of the last to adopt the new terminology; but she did adopt it, in the fall of 1856, after a summer of immense spiritual refreshing in camp meetings in Western New York.⁶¹ Her next major book, *Promise of the Father for the Last Days*, made Peter's text at Pentecost the basis of faith for the "second blessing" and the foundation as well of a Biblical argument in favor of women's right to preach the gospel—a right which she had exercised, but refused to claim, for the previous 20 years.⁶²

During the succeeding decade Wesleyans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists and Friends devoted to the proclamation of Christian holiness intermingled, in preaching and in witness, the language of Pentecost and the language of Calvary. The imagery of the Spirit did not displace the cross, certainly. Holiness camp meetings, especially Methodist ones held along the eastern seaboard, closed with long Sunday night communion services, at the end of which Christians who had prayed throughout the week for the baptism of the Holy Spirit were urged to open their hearts and sing "The cleansing stream I see, I see, I plunge, and oh, it cleanseth me."⁶³

What Methodists did not adopt from Finney, however, and possibly did not even seriously consider, was the revitalized form which his Biblical study gave to covenant theology. Grafted onto the tap-root of the Wesleyan doctrine of a sanctifying atonement, this Puritan perspective on Old and New Testament truth would have deeply enriched the Methodist tradition, I believe. John Wesley, as Professor John N. Oswalt has recently pointed out, did not rely very much upon the Old Testament as a source for the doctrine of Christian perfection. The immense revival of Old Testament studies in our time, illustrated in reference to these questions by Rudolf Otto's volume, *The Idea of the Holy*, offers insight into what it might have meant had Wesley's study of the Bible rooted itself more deeply in Moses and the prophets. But in Wesley's century, those who made a specialty of Old Testament theology were the Calvinistic preachers whom he found it important to resist, because he thought their doctrine of election undermined the call to Christian perfection. The theology of Charles G. Finney, however, brought the whole of

both the old and new covenants to bear upon God's purpose to create his children in holiness and righteousness.

Methodists shared Finney's deep consciousness of sin-especially his awareness of its stubborn social character-and his fierce loyalty to the law of righteous love offered an alternative to the sentimentalizing of New Testament doctrine which lay immediately in the future. By the end of the century evangelicals of many backgrounds had romanticized the doctrine of the Atonement, separating their understanding of God's love from his judgments which are "true and righteous altogether." The liberal heirs of the New England theology had meanwhile pulled loose the idea of the Incarnation from its rooting in God's covenant of grace. Moreover, the social gospel, which began in the sturdy Biblical theology of Oberlin and Wesleyan preaching before the Civil War, was shorn of its strength when nothing but a humanized conception of the love of Jesus was its motive power. Charles M. Sheldon's question, "What would Jesus do" is always a crucial one; but what God's law and our faithfulness to Him require should always be the context in which Christians ask that question. That context is precisely what the Biblical idea of a covenant of righteousness offered to those who were awakened to the promise of a sanctifying Spirit.

In retrospect, this story of the maturing of Charles G. Finney's theology, and of its rooting in the clash of events and ideas in which the Biblical notion of righteousness was central, bears in important ways on issues of great significance today. The central one, of course, is the ethical problem raised by the more ecstatic, subjective, and individualistic character of contemporary witnesses to the experience of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, both in and outside Wesleyan circles. These have allowed if not encouraged an unbiblical divorce of individuals from corporate or social ethics, of personal from what Wesley called "social holiness." Finney's systematic interpretation of Biblical teachings also suggests a Scriptural authentication for a set of beliefs about the baptism of the Holy Spirit which some have suspected were an imposition from a folk theology upon Wesleyan doctrine. Dealing with that issue in Biblical terms, will I think, shed important new light on the nature of the link or, as I would incline to put it, the gap between nineteenth-century Wesleyan and twentieth-century Pentecostal and charismatic perceptions of higher Christian experience.

The story also returns us to the problem of evangelical ecumenicity. Christ calls to unity in doctrine and practice those who believe the Bible to be a sufficient rule of both. Finney's labored effort to put together Wesleyan and covenant theology reminds us that since the days when Wesley and Whitefield found themselves pulled apart, their followers have never been able to pull themselves together. And the problem is larger than, merely, the dialogue between neo-Arminian and neo-Calvinist positions. For the world-wide mosaic of Bible-believing Christians today includes also the evangelicals in the Mennonite, Brethren, and Quaker traditions; the Pentecostals and their new-found allies in the broader charismatic movement; the modern heirs of continental Pietism, whether in Lutheran, Reformed, or Moravian communities; the Southern Baptists and their extended family of spiritual kinfolk in the South, which in some ways includes and in other ways does not include the many millions who follow in Alexander Campbell's

train and call themselves Disciples of Christ; the Adventists, most of them now, perhaps, in the Seventh Day Adventist Church; those properly called fundamentalists, who look back to the Biblicist, millenarian, and Christological doctrines forged into an anti-modernist credo during the controversies of the first three decades of this century; and what I have called elsewhere the post-fundamentalist evangelicals of the center, mostly of Presbyterian, Baptist, and Congregationalist backgrounds, who dominate the headlines of church news in the great cities of the nation, maintain theological seminaries such as Fuller, Gordon, Trinity, and Bethel, and share in a network of evangelistic enterprises for which Christianity Today is the voice and Billy Graham the symbol. Finney's pilgrimage through New England Theology to the doctrine of a baptism of the Holy Spirit which he believed would both inwardly sanctify and consecrate to radical ethical ideals the whole of the covenanted community of Bible-believing Christians speaks to all these evangelical movements. His enrichment of Wesleyan doctrine reminds us that Jesus concluded his last-supper homily on the coming of an illuminating and sanctifying spirit with the prayer that his followers should be one, "as I Father am in you, and you in me."

Finally, Finney's intellectual pilgrimage through the Scriptures (passing from the nature of the original covenants of holiness made between God and his people represented by Abraham, Moses, and David, through the prophetic translation of the ideas of both blessing and covenant into the promise of the Holy Spirit's coming, and thence through the preaching of John the Baptist and the teaching of Jesus to the fulfillment of all these promises in the experience of Pentecost) challenges as a fundamental distortion of Christian theology the dialectical approach to the question whether Christology or Pneumatology are the vital center of Christian faith. What Finney proposed in the lectures I have summarized, and what, in my judgment, the Old and New Testament Scriptures repeatedly affirm, is that the three persons of the Trinity are united in all the mighty acts of redemption by which God renews and sanctifies His people. To extend the distorting dialectic between Christ-centered and Spirit-illuminated religion to an historical contrast of nineteenth and twentieth century faith compounds this bad theology with poor history; for from 1839 forward, evangelical believers in America moved steadily toward the conviction that the God who came near in covenant with Israel and in redemption through the life and death and life again of His Son remains savingly near in all ages through the sanctifying presence of the Holy Spirit.

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FOOTNOTES

¹ Documentation for this (as for other points in this essay where the work is cited) appears in my *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (Nashville, Tennessee, 1957), 105, 116- 117.

² The same, 181, 184-185. Cf. Donald Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (New York, 1976), 73-85; Donald G. Mathews, "Orange Scott: The Methodist Evangelist as Revolutionary," in Martin Duberman, ed., *The Antislavery Vanguard: New Essays on the Abolitionists* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1965), 71-101; and Smith, *Revivalism*, 181, 184-185.

³ Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Lewis Tappan and the Evangelical War Against Slavery* (New York, 1971), 129-130.

⁴ Smith, *Revivalism*, 104-105, 108-113; Dayton, *Evangelical Heritage*, 15-24, 35-43.

⁵ Wyatt-Brown, *Tappan*, 131

⁶ Charles G. Finney, *Lectures to Professing Christians* (New York, 1837), lectures no. 17, 19, 20. This work has appeared in many subsequent editions.

⁷ George M. Marsden, *The Evangelical Mind and the New School Presbyterian Experience: A Case Study of Thought and Theology in Nineteenth-Century America* (New Haven, Connecticut), 59-87; Nathaniel W. Taylor, "The Revolution in the Presbyterian Church," *The Quarterly Christian Spectator*, IX (December, 1837), 597-646, a little-noticed article in which Taylor equated New School doctrine with the New England Theology and raised the slavery issue, 629; Smith, *Revivalism*, 26-27, 185-187

⁸ Taylor, "Revolution in the Presbyterian Church," loc. cit., 599, 604-17. Sidney E. Mead, *Nathaniel William Taylor, 1786-1858: A Connecticut Liberal* (Chicago, 1942), underplays the perfectionist ethics in Taylor's theology.

⁹ Robert Meredith, *The Politics of the Universe: Edward Beecher, Abolition and Orthodoxy* (Nashville, Tennessee, 1968), 73-84.

¹⁰ Edward Beecher, "The Nature, Importance, and Means of Eminent Holiness Throughout the Church," *The American National Preacher: Or Original Sermons - Monthly*, X (June and July, 1835), 193-194, 197, 203. Meredith, *Politics of the Universe*, 91-101, shows the relationship of these sermons to Beecher's friendship and alliance with abolitionist Elijah P. I. Lovejoy from 1834 to the latter's death at the hands of a mob in October, 1837.

¹¹ The articles, which appeared unsigned, as did all the others of which I presume Taylor to be the author, are: "Man's Dependence on the Grace of God, for Holiness of Heart and Life," *The Christian Spectator*, II (March, 1835) 76-89; "The mature and Application of Divine Influence in the Salvation of Man," the same (June, 1835), 301-321; "An Inquiry into the True Way of Preaching on Ability," the same, 223-257; and "The Scriptural view of Divine Influence," the same, (December, 1835), 591-597, in which the discussion of the work of the Holy Spirit, 595-597, seems to me to lay down the basis in logic for Charles G. Finney's later use of the terminology, "baptism of the Holy Ghost."

¹² William Ellery Channing, *The Perfect Life*, in *Twelve Discourses* (Boston, 1873). I have recently discovered that the "Dr. C." to whom Charles G. Finney refers in his *Memoirs* (New York, 1876), 356-357, is identified in the Ms. version at the Oberlin College Archives as William Ellery Channing.

¹³ Wyatt-Brown, Tappan, 131.

¹⁴ Aileen S. Kraditor, *Means and Ends in American Abolitionism: Garrison and His Critics in Strategy and Tactics, 1834-1850* (New York, 1967), 59, 79-82.

¹⁵ The same, 90-91; cf. pp. 24-25, showing Garrison's agreement with the New Divinity and, hence, with Finney and Mahan, on the nature of depravity and of free will, a context for Garrison's thought of which Professor Kraditor is largely unaware.

¹⁶ Philip Bruce, "An Extract of a Letter . . . to Bishop Coke, dated Portsmouth, Virginia, March 25, 1788," *The Arminian Magazine* (American), II (November, 1790), 563-564, came to my attention through my student, Thomas C. Johnson. Cf. the idea of sanctification as liberation from sin through love, "the inward law of the gospel, The law of the Spirit of life," in a sermon by "Dr. Cutworth," the same, I (September, 1789), 444-445.

¹⁷ George Claude Baker, *An Introduction to the History of Early New England Methodism, 1789-1839* (Durham, North Carolina, 1941), 37-38, 45-82; Smith, *Revivalism*, 154-159, 169, 172, 184-185; James B. Finley, Dayton, Ohio, December 3, 1819, to the editor, *The Methodist Magazine*, III (January, 1820), 34-40, quoting statements by Indian chiefs praising the liberating power of the "good Spirit" from addiction to whiskey; "State Legislation on The Temperance Question," *The A. M. E. Christian Recorder*, no. 18 (August 17, 1854), 70.

¹⁸ Norris Magnuson, *Salvation in the Slums: Evangelical Social Work, 1865-1920* (Metuchen, New Jersey, 1977), 165-178 and, generally, 101-102, 117, 124-126, 140-142; Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 148-177; William Arthur, *The Tongue of Fire; or, The True Power of Christianity* (New York, 1880), 52-57, 110-132, 145-146.

¹⁹ Accounts of British Methodist overseas missions in *The (American) Methodist Magazine*, I (1819), 30-36, 193-200, 313-319, and passim do not refer at all to the doctrine of sanctification, though the journal shows Methodists in the United States continuously interested in the subject. For the Moravians, see their American journal, *The United Brethren Missionary Intelligence and Religious Miscellany . . .*, II (First Quarter, 1825), 9-10; and cf. *Periodical Accounts Relating to the Missions of the Church of the United Brethren*, I (1790), 7-15.

²⁰ Robert T. Handy, *A Christian America: Protestant Hopes and Historical Realities* (London, 1971), 27-35; review of Thomas H. Skinner, *Thoughts on Evangelizing the World* (New York, 1836), in *The Christian Spectator*, IX (June, 1837), 291-295; and

"Encouragement to Effort, for the Speedy Conversion of the World," the same, VII (March, 1835), 1-8.

²¹ Garth M. Rosell, "The Millennial Roots of Early Nineteenth-Century Reform: An Examination of Charles G. Finney's Theology of Social Action," presented to the Hopkins Harwichport Seminar in American Religious History, 1975.

²² Asa Rand's description of Lyman Beecher's New Divinity as resembling "in its prominent features and bearing Wesleyanism," a "strange mingling of evangelical doctrine with Arminian speculation, . . . tending to produce spurious conversions," quoted in *The Baptist Weekly Journal of the Mississippi Valley* (August 9, 1833), is typical of scores I have seen.

²³ "Wesleyan Methodism on the 'Witness of the Spirit'," *The Christian Spectator*, IX (June, 1837), 176-182 and passim; and W. M. B., "Letter to the Christian Spectator on the Witness of the Spirit," *Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review*, n. s. VIII (October, 1837), 457-576, review the controversy.

²⁴ Wyatt-Brown, *Tappan*, 65-70, 129-131, 133-141.

²⁵ The same, 109-114, 121-123; Kraditor, *Means and Ends*, 22-25, 78-81; Finney, *Memoirs*, 333-343.

²⁶ William G. McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York, 1959), 108-113, misunderstands Finney's choice of role as a pietistic withdrawal from social action, an interpretation which the events at Oberlin, described below, do not sustain. Cf. Dayton, *Evangelical Heritage*, 15-14.

²⁷ Edward H. Madden, *Civil Disobedience and Moral Law in Nineteenth-Century American Philosophy* (Seattle, Washington, 1968), 44-45, and passim. Cf. D. H. Meyer, *The Instructed Conscience: The Shaping of the American National Ethic* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1972), 89-97, on Mahan as moral philosopher; Finney, *Memoirs*, 340-351; and Asa Mahan, *Out of Darkness Into Light . . .* (Boston, 1876), 125-131, 133-136.

²⁸ Asa Mahan, *Scripture Doctrine of Christian Perfection . . .* (4th ed., Boston, 1840), 185-187.

²⁹ The same, 186-187; cf. Mahan, *Out of Darkness*, 139-147.

³⁰ Mahan, *Scripture Doctrine*, 163-193, prints this lecture, which includes his personal testimony cited above; the quotation is from p. 172. This volume, printed on a Methodist press in Boston, uses Wesleyan terms such as "perfect love" and "entire sanctification" freely.

³¹ Finney, *Memoirs*, 340; Finney, *Lectures to Professing Christians*, 213.

- ³². Charles G. Finney, "Letter to Readers," *The Oberlin Evangelist* (cited hereinafter as OE), January 30, 1839.
- ³³. Charles G. Finney, *Skeletons of a Course of Theological Lectures* (Volume I, Oberlin, 1840), 24.
- ³⁴. Finney, Ms. for Memoirs, 1875, Oberlin College Archives. Garth Rosell called my attention to this passage in the manuscript.
- ³⁵ OE, I (March 14, 1839), 51, and (March 27, 1839), 57.
- ³⁶. Dayton, *Evangelical Heritage*, 47.
- ³⁷. OE, I (September 11, 1839), 157.
- ³⁸. The Same
- ³⁹. OE, II (April 22, 1840), 67-68.
- ⁴⁰. OE, I (January 1, 1839), 9-10.
- ⁴¹. OE, I (January 16, 1839), 18-19.
- ⁴². OE, I (January 30, 1839), 26-27.
- ⁴³. OE, I (February 13, 1839), 34.
- ⁴⁴. OE, I (February 13, 1839), 34.
- ⁴⁵. OE, I (February 27, 1839), 41.
- ⁴⁶. OE, I (March 13, 1839), 50.
- ⁴⁷. OE, I (March 13, 1839), 50-51.
- ⁴⁸. OE, I (March 27, 1839), 65-67. Cf. Mahan, *Scripture Doctrine*, 52-58, 101-103, on Romans 7 and 8; and Cutworth's sermon, *The Ar1ninian Magazine*, I (September, 1789), 429, 444, 446, on the "law of the Spirit of life," in Romans 8.
- ⁴⁹. OE, I (April 24, 1839), 74-75.
- ⁵⁰. OE, I (June 19, 1839), 106, for the quotation, and for the other four lectures, the issues for May 22 to July 17.
- ⁵¹. OE, I (August 14, 1839), 137-138. Cf. Finney's letter "To Ministers of the Gospel of all Denominations," the same, II (June 3, 1840), 92, also using the terminology, "baptism of

the Holy Ghost" freely. The two references thus bracket the writing of the summary lectures early in 1840 which were published in Charles G. Finney, *Views of Sanctification* (Oberlin, 1840) in which the term does not appear, but in which, pp. 194-195, Finney explains his preference for "entire sanctification" over "entire consecration," on both Biblical and practical grounds.

⁵². OE, I (August 28, 1839), 147.

⁵³. OE, I (August 14, 1839), 138.

⁵⁴. OE, II (May 6, 1840), 76. Cf. the letters in the same series in the two succeeding issues: (May 20, 1840), 84, and (June 3, 1840), 92. Finney composed these letters shortly after completing the last seven lectures in the series on Christian Perfection, printed in OE from January through mid-April, 1840 and, in July of the same year, in his volume titled *Views of Sanctification*. These concluding lectures recapitulated the logic of the earliest ones in the series and did not employ the terminology of Pentecost, leading scholars (including myself) who previously relied chiefly on that volume and neglected to read the *Evangelist* carefully, to suppose Finney did not at this stage teach the doctrine of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

⁵⁵. OE, I (August 14, 1839), 140.

⁵⁶. Finney, *Memoirs*, 350-351, 373-375.

⁵⁷. The same, 375-376.

⁵⁸. The same, 381, and, for testimony that his subsequent preaching promoted such a "second experience" of sanctification through the baptism or filling with the spirit, 422-425. Charles G. Finney, *Sermons on Gospel Themes* (transcribed by B. J. Goodrich; Oberlin, 1876), of which I have seen an undated New York edition, contains, pages 406-410, a passage which replicates all the teachings of Phoebe Palmer on the experience of sanctification.

⁵⁹. (George O. Peck), "Christian Perfection," *The Methodist Quarterly Review*, XXIII (January, 1841), 128-132, 151-152. The same author's *The Scripture Doctrine of Christian Perfection Stated and Defended . . .* (New York, 1841), 224-244, set forth a detailed summary of literature pertaining to the Oberlin perfectionists which shows his close reading of the *The Evangelist*; the volume consists of his lectures delivered in New York City in response to developments at Oberlin. Cf. John Fletcher, *Works*, (4 vols.; New York, 1851), I, 160, 167-168.

⁶⁰. See "Faith an Element of Power," *Zion 's Herald*, XXV (September 8, 1852), 2; "How Souls are Purified," the same, (August 25, 1852), 4; Peck, *Scripture Doctrine*, 416; John H. Wallace, *Entire Holiness* (Auburn, New York, 1853), a Methodist tract, 91-95; and editor Fletcher Harper's use of the terms as synonyms in *Harper's Monthly*, XVIII, number 109 (June, 1859), 841.

⁶¹ Richard Wheatley, *The Life and Letters of Mrs. Phoebe Palmer* (New York, 1876), 312-317, 326-327, and (for an important quotation of an undated article of hers in 'The Guide to Holiness') 544-546.

⁶² Phoebe Palmer, *Promise of the Father, or a Neglected Specialty of the Last Days . . .* (Boston, 1859).

⁶³ Henry B. Ridgeway, *The Life of the Rev. Alfred Cookman . . .* (New York, 1874), 115, 193-198, 229, 235-236, 239, 258, 281, 292-293, 311, 345, 402-405. Cf. my *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 135-141, for numerous references; and, for surprisingly thoughtful discussions combining Wesleyan and Oberlin concepts in the seedbed of what became Midwestern holiness radicalism, *Proceedings of the Western Union Holiness Convention, held at Jacksonville, Ill., Dec. 15th-19th, 1880* (Bloomington, Ill., 1881), 28, 38, 41, 47-48, and 63-69.

*Minor typographical errors have been corrected, 8/16/2005 avb.