

Evangelistic Labors

by Frank Grenville Beardsley

Charles Finney's revival work had a profound impact on the spiritual landscape of the United States, leading to the conversion of thousands of people and the formation of new churches and denominations.

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 7:14, Isaiah 55:11, Matthew 5:16, Matthew 9:37, Acts 1:14, 2 Corinthians 10:4, Ephesians 6:12, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 1 Timothy 2:1, James 5:16

Topics: "Evangelism", "Revival"

Description

Frank Grenville Beardsley preaches about the remarkable revivals led by Charles G. Finney in various cities, including New Lebanon, Stephentown, Philadelphia, Rochester, Boston, and more. Despite initial challenges and opposition, Finney's powerful preaching and prayerful approach led to extensive conversions and spiritual awakenings, transforming communities and individuals across the nation. The revivals in Rochester, Boston, and other cities saw significant societal changes, with businesses transformed, crime rates dropping, and influential individuals embracing Christianity. Finney's emphasis on prevailing prayer, his confrontations with theological opponents like Theodore Parker, and his dedication to reaching all classes of society were key aspects of his impactful ministry.

Transcript

ALTHOUGH the convention at New Lebanon had been characterized by more or less acerbity of spirit, as has been stated, it did not affect seriously the revival which was then in progress. From New Lebanon the work extended to Stephentown where Mr. Finney labored for a time with excellent results.

Before he went to Stephentown, the Rev. Mr. Gilbert, pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Wilmington, Delaware, visited his father who resided in New Lebanon. So deeply impressed was he by the character of Finney's work that he gave him an urgent invitation to labor with his church at Wilmington. At the close of his labors at Stephentown this invitation was accepted and as a consequence an extensive revival visited that church and community.

While at Wilmington Mr. Finney was invited to Philadelphia. At first he preached but twice a week, alternating his services between that city and Wilmington, going back and forth by boat on the Delaware River. The interest soon became such, however, that he was obliged to devote his whole time to the work in the City of Brotherly Love.

The Rev. James Patterson, with whose church he labored at first in Philadelphia, held to the old school theology of the Presbyterians, whose views were then in the ascendency at Princeton. Soon after the commencement of his labors, Mr. Patterson said, "Brother Finney if the Presbyterian ministers in this city find out your views and what you are preaching, they will hunt you out of the city as they would a wolf."

Matters, however, did not turn out as Mr. Patterson had predicted. On the contrary Finney was invited to preach in nearly every Presbyterian church in the city. One sermon, There is one God and one Mediator between God and Man, he was asked to repeat seven different evenings in succession in as many different churches. Finally it was decided that he should confine all of his efforts to some one church centrally located. A large German church was placed at his disposal and it became the scene of many triumphs. The whole city was stirred. His congregations often numbered three thousand persons and upwards. Multitudes among all classes of society were converted. Mr. Finney labored in Philadelphia until the winter of 1828-1829, having spent nearly a year and a half in the city.

In the spring of 1828 the lumbermen who came down the Delaware River with their rafts heard of the revival in Philadelphia and attended some of the meetings. A number of these men were converted and on their return to the lumber camps told the story of salvation. Although there were no churches or ministers among them, a revival commenced which extended eighty miles along the river. Within two years five thousand persons were converted solely through the instrumentality of the men who had accepted the Gospel in Finney's meetings at Philadelphia.

During the winter of 1828-1829 Finney conducted successful revivals in Reading and Lancaster, Pennsylvania; and in Columbia, New York, as a result of his visit nearly every one in the town was converted. The City of Galesburg, Illinois, was settled by a colony of persons from Columbia, most of whom had been converted in this revival. With Mr. Gale, Finney's former pastor and theological instructor, they went to the prairies of Illinois and there laid the foundations of the town and college.

The following summer while on a visit to his wife's parents in Oneida County, the revivalist was invited by Anson G. Phelps, the philanthropist, to labor in New York. His methods were regarded by most of the ministers of the city with more or less suspicion and not a church would invite him. So Mr. Phelps hired a vacant Presbyterian church on Vandewater Street. Two or three months later a Universalist church in the neighborhood of Niblo's Garden was offered for sale under foreclosure of mortgage, and this building was purchased and fitted up for Finney's use. Here he preached for about fifteen months. Night after night the church was crowded and multitudes were hopefully converted.

During Finney's stay in New York at this time Arthur Tappan, the philanthropist, formed a lifelong attachment for Finney. His brother, Lewis, who lived in Boston, was a Unitarian and a member of Dr. William Ellery Channing's church. Rev. Henry Ware, who had visited western New York, informed Lewis that Mr. Finney, who had been preaching at Auburn and elsewhere, had announced himself a "brigadier general of Jesus Christ." Of this he had been told by a Unitarian clergyman in Oneida County, who assured him that the story was absolutely true. Not long afterwards when in New York he reported this story to his brother Arthur, who pronounced it a fabrication and said that innumerable fictitious stories were circulated about Mr. Finney by those who were opposed to his preaching and measures.

Having unbounded confidence in Mr. Ware, as a cautious, candid, and truthful man, Lewis said to his brother, "I will wager five hundred dollars that the story is true." Arthur replied: "You know that I am not a betting man, but if you can prove by credible testimony that the reports about Finney are true, I will give

you five hundred dollars. I make this offer to lead you to investigate. I want you to know that these stories are utterly unreliable."

Lewis Tappan thereupon wrote to Mr. Ware's informant in Oneida County asking for evidence of the truthfulness of the report, "such evidence as would lead to the conviction of a party in a court of justice," and authorizing him to procure it regardless of expense. Of the outcome Tappan wrote: "He undertook the task with commendable zeal, and prosecuted his inquiries from Albany to Buffalo. It is unnecessary to relate the details of the laborious investigation. Suffice it to say, the only evidence he was able to produce, was a small Universalist newspaper, printed in Buffalo, in which it was charged, on an anonymous authority, that Mr. Finney had made the absurd and impious declaration."

As a consequence Lewis Tappan was led to review his whole position, with the result that he was soon converted and changed his views from Unitarianism to orthodoxy. Throughout the remainder of his life he was a devoted friend of Finney.

One of the results of the revival in New York was the Presbyterian Free Church movement. Impressed by "the almost total exclusion of the poor from the Presbyterian and Dutch churches; the great neglect of the careless and impenitent on the part of professing Christians; and the importance of more direct and faithful efforts for their conversion," a small group of men united in the formation of the First Free Presbyterian Church, which should be supported by voluntary contributions, and the seats of which should be free, whence the name, the Free Presbyterian Church. Such was the growth of this church that within two years the Second Free Presbyterian Church was formed. Within five years five such churches had been organized. In February, 1835, Lewis Tappan wrote to the English commissioners who came to study the state of religion in America, "A new church might be organized in this city every year, out of each of the Free churches, provided suitable ministers could be obtained."

In the summer of 1830, while again visiting in Oneida County, Mr. Finney was invited to supply for a time the pulpit of the Third Presbyterian Church at Rochester. He was disinclined at first to accept the invitation. The outlook was most unpromising. The church was in a low state spiritually and a spirit of dissension existed among the Presbyterian churches of the city. At a loss to know just what should be done, he went to Utica to confer with several of his friends in whose judgment he placed the highest confidence. Their views seemed to coincide with his own, and he had about made up his mind to decline the invitation, but after a more mature deliberation on the matter he was convinced that the reasons for which he was holding back were, after all, the very reasons why he ought to accept the invitation. So, much to the surprise of the friends whom he had consulted, he finally decided to go. A most remarkable revival attended his labors. Upwards of twelve hundred members were received into the churches of the Rochester Presbytery besides great numbers who united with churches of other denominations.

Charles P. Bush, who afterwards became an influential minister in New York, but at that time was a student in the Rochester Academy and had united with the Third Presbyterian Church under Mr. Finney's ministry, wrote:

"The whole community was stirred. Religion was the topic of conversation, in the house, in the shop, in the office, and on the street The only theatre in the city was converted into a livery stable; the only circus into a soap and candle factory. Grog shops were closed; the sabbath was honored; the sanctuaries were thronged with happy worshippers; a new impulse was given to every philanthropic enterprise; the fountains of benevolence were opened, and men lived to do good.

"And it is worthy of special notice that a large number of the leading men of the place were among the converts--the lawyers, the judges, physicians, merchants, bankers, and master mechanics. These classes were more moved from the very first than any other. Tall oaks were bowed as by the blast of the hurricane. Skeptics and scoffers were brought in, and a large number of the most promising young men. It is said that no less than forty of them entered the ministry

"It is not too much to say that the whole character of the city was changed by that revival. Most of the leaders of society being converted, and exerting a controlling influence in social life, in business, and in civil affairs, religion was enthroned as it has been in few places Even the courts and the prisons bore witness to its blessed effects. There was a wonderful falling off in crime. The courts had little to do, and the jail was nearly empty for years afterward."

The influence of this revival was felt throughout the length and breadth of the land. The great cities especially were moved. It was estimated that more than fifteen hundred towns and cities were blessed with revivals of religion and as many more felt the impulse of the movement. During the first five months fifty thousand were converted, and before the movement had spent its force more than one hundred thousand had been gathered into the churches of the nation.

Underlying this mighty work of grace was a spirit of prevailing prayer, of which Finney wrote: "When I was on my way to Rochester, as we passed through a village, some thirty miles east of Rochester, a brother minister whom I knew, seeing me on the canal-boat, jumped aboard to have a little conversation with me, intending to ride but a little way and return. He, however, became interested in conversation, and upon finding where I was going, he made up his mind to keep on and go with me to Rochester. We had been there but a few days when this minister became so convicted that he could not help weeping aloud, at one time, as he passed along the street. The Lord gave him a powerful spirit of prayer, and his heart was broken. As he and I prayed much together, I was struck with his faith in regard to what the Lord was going to do there. I recollect he would say, 'Lord, I do not know how it is; but I seem to know that Thou art going to do a great work in this city.' The spirit of prayer was poured out powerfully, so much so, that some persons staid away from the public services to pray, being unable to restrain their feelings under preaching."

Among those who were associated with him in this way in Rochester and at Auburn, where he went immediately afterwards, was Mr. Abel Clary, a ministerial licentiate whom Finney had known intimately from boyhood and who had been converted in the same revival. Like "Father" Nash he was a man mightily given to prayer. Although he was an educated man he did not attempt to preach much and seldom even appeared in public. He was so burdened for the souls of men that he gave almost his entire time and strength to intercession. When Finney would be preaching he would be apart by himself agonizing and praying for an outpouring of the Spirit of God in the salvation of souls.

In 1842 and 1855 Mr. Finney again conducted revivals in the city of Rochester with notable results. In 1842 the invitation came from the lawyers of the city while he was passing through Rochester en route to Oberlin. This invitation he decided to accept. During the progress of his work the Rev. Jedidiah Burchard, an eccentric evangelist who was popular for some years in New York and New England, also labored in the city, but as entirely different classes were reached by these two men, their efforts proved mutually supplemental and as a consequence the religious interests throughout the city were greatly quickened.

Finney was requested to deliver a series of lectures adapted to the needs of the legal profession. He had been forewarned that many of the lawyers were Deists who, accepting the philosophy of Tom Paine and rejecting the Bible, were merely curious to know what sort of argument a lawyer would put up in behalf of religion. He accordingly took as the subject of his first discourse, Do We Know Anything? For nine consecutive sessions of two hours each he laid down his premises and drew his conclusions from the dictates of common sense and the facts of common experience.

Having shown in this manner the inevitable consequences of the infractions of the Moral Law, he turned to the Bible and the plan of salvation which it revealed, emphasizing its teachings as to the love of God and His fatherly solicitude for sinning men. Then he said: "This is the book which you have removed from your shelves to make room for Tom Paine's shallow 'Age of Reason!' How can you escape if you neglect so great salvation?" A powerful impression was made and the interest deepened from night to night as the lectures progressed.

Among the attendants was Judge Addison Gardner of the New York Court of Appeals who during Finney's first visit to Rochester had strongly opposed the "anxious seat." As he attended these lectures from night to night Finney cherished the hope that he might be converted. One evening, when he was speaking in a way especially applicable to the Judge, he observed that he had vacated his seat and he supposed that he had gone home; but just as Finney was drawing his address to a close the Judge, who had ascended a narrow stairway from the basement to the back of the pulpit, plucked at the skirt of Finney's coat and said, "Mr. Finney, I wish you would pray for me by name, and I will take the anxious seat."

Nothing had been said by Finney about an anxious seat and when he announced to his audience what the Judge had said, a profound impression was created, and as the Judge knelt in front of the pulpit the lawyers present, rising up almost en masse and filling the aisles and vacant space about the pulpit, expressed a desire to consecrate their lives to the service of Jesus Christ.

Large numbers of the better class of citizens were reached by this revival. The churches of the various religious denominations shared in its fruits. Dr. Whitehouse, afterwards Bishop of Illinois, was rector of Saint Luke's Episcopal Church in Rochester at that time. Seventy of the prominent members of his church were confirmed, nearly all of whom had been converted in Finney's meetings. All told, about a thousand conversions were reported throughout the city.

In the autumn of 1855 Mr. Finney was invited for the third time to labor in Rochester. At first he was disinclined to accept the invitation, but finally was prevailed upon to attempt another season of revival effort in that city. He continued his labors for a period of three months and was warmly supported by pastors of the Presbyterian, Congregational, and Baptist churches. The influence of the revival became all-pervasive. A considerable number of students in the University of Rochester were converted, and by special request Mr. Finney delivered a series of lectures to lawyers on The Moral Government of God, as a result of which a number of leading attorneys were influenced to embrace religion.

Of this revival Professor William Cleaver Wilkinson, who at that time was a student in the University of Rochester, wrote: "The interest was extraordinary. The city was taken possession of. Scarcely anything else was talked about. The atmosphere was full of a kind of electricity of spiritual power. The daily papers all reported the meetings at great length. The railroads at one time, I remember, were obstructed by a snowstorm, which detained large numbers of passengers temporarily in the city. A large proportion of these were attracted into the meetings. The result was that a great many, during this brief interval, were

converted. People accosted each other on the street, and began an exchange of question and reply on the subject of personal religion, as naturally and easily almost as in time of commercial distress they would talk of the financial condition of the country; or to use an apter illustration, as in a time of epidemic disease they would talk of their own health and that of their families and friends."

The influence of this revival, as in the two preceding ones, was far reaching. Merchants arranged to have their clerks attend. Many of the railroad men of the city became deeply interested in the services, and much of the Sunday business of the roads was suspended so the men could attend to the salvation of their souls. The ladies of the city did their utmost to bring all classes to the meetings and to Christ. Some of them visited stores and business places to secure the attendance at the meetings of those engaged there. One thousand persons were led to unite with the churches in the city of Rochester, while the influence of the work extended to the towns and cities in the outlying districts.

Mr. Finney always had a high regard for the city of Rochester. It is said that in his old age nothing seemed to rouse him more than mention of that city. He would inquire after his spiritual children there, the converts of his various revivals, and would ask whether they were true to their earlier professions and if they still were laboring in the vineyard of the Lord. Then he would go over some of the scenes and incidents of those early days, relating with great minuteness and accuracy how one and another wrestled against his convictions and how finally they were subdued by divine grace. He wrote of his revivals there:

"What was quite remarkable in the three revivals that I have witnessed in Rochester, they all commenced and made their first progress among the higher classes of society. This was very favorable to the general spread of the work, and to the overcoming of opposition.

"I never preached anywhere with more pleasure than in Rochester. They are a highly intelligent people, and have ever manifested a candor, an earnestness, and an appreciation of the truth excelling anything I have seen, on so large a scale, in any other place. I have labored in other cities where the people were more highly educated than in Rochester. But in those cities the views and habits of the people were more stereotyped; the people were more fastidious, more afraid of measures than in Rochester. In New England I have found a high degree of general education, but a timidity, a stiffness, a formality, and a stereotyped way of doing things, that has rendered it impossible for the Holy Spirit to work with freedom and power."

In 1831, following the first Rochester revival, Finney conducted a second series of meetings at Auburn, described in a previous chapter. Towards the close of his labors in this city he was visited by a messenger from Buffalo who brought an urgent request to conduct a revival in that city, for which the way had been prepared through the influence of his labors in Rochester. He spent about a month in Buffalo, where a large number of accessions to the churches was reported. From Buffalo he went to Providence, Rhode Island, remaining three weeks, and although there were many conversions, because of the brevity of his stay his labors were not so fruitful as in some of the places which he had previously visited.

While the revival at Providence was in progress Dr. Wisner, pastor of the Old South Church in Boston, visited the city "to spy out the land and bring back a report." He did not make himself known until he had heard three sermons. Then he went to Finney and said, "I came here as a heresy hunter; but here is my hand, and my heart is with you." When he returned home he met the pastors and turning to Dr. Beecher he said: "When Dr. Beecher preaches, he has prepared himself, and makes a profound impression; but what the next blow will be we cannot tell. Mr. Finney strikes home, and repeats the blow on the same spot,

only harder, until the driven wedge splits the log, and there is no help for it."

An invitation was extended to Finney from the Congregational churches and ministers of the city to conduct a revival in Boston. He was not disposed at first to accept it because, four years previously at the New Lebanon convention, Dr. Lyman Beecher, the leading pastor in the city, had said: "Finney I know your plan, and you know I do; you mean to come to Connecticut and carry a streak of fire to Boston. But if you attempt it, as the Lord liveth, I'll meet you at the State line, and call out all the artillery-men, and fight every inch of the way to Boston, and then I'll fight you there."

After Finney was invited to Boston he chanced to meet Beecher's youngest daughter, Miss Catherine, and to her he confided, "At the New Lebanon Convention your father solemnly vowed to fight me if I came to Boston, and I cannot go unless he asks me." "So," said Beecher in his Memoirs, "we wrote and invited him, and he came in August, 1831, and did very well."

Finney conducted four subsequent revivals in Boston. In 1841-1842 the city was visited with a very remarkable religious awakening known as "the Great Boston Revival." Charles G. Finney, Elder Jacob Knapp, the well known Baptist revivalist, and Edward N. Kirk successively conducted revival services in the city. It was estimated that more than four thousand members were added to the churches of the various denominations in Boston. Mr. Finney, however, did not take a very active part in this work, because, by reason of ill health, he was unable to preach a great deal.

At this time Millerism was at its height in various parts of the country, and Captain Miller was in Boston, confidently affirming that the second advent of our Saviour would take place April 23, 1843. At that time, he declared, Christ would destroy His enemies. He gave an exposition of the prophecy of Daniel on the subject, declaring that the stone which was cut out of the mountain and destroyed the image there spoken of was Christ. With his usual open-mindedness Mr. Finney attended some of Miller's Bible classes and frankly invited him to his room, stating that the prophet did not teach that the stone was Christ, but the Kingdom of God, and that it was the church, or the Kingdom of God, which should destroy the image. Captain Miller agreed that it was the church, or Kingdom of God, and not Christ, which was to destroy those nations. Finney then endeavored to convince him that the kingdoms of the world would be overthrown by the church through the preaching of the Gospel. But Miller was so obsessed with the idea of Christ's speedy coming that it was useless to attempt to reason with him.

William Ellery Channing, the great Unitarian divine, died during Finney's second revival in Boston. He had expressed a desire to see Finney but circumstances forbade. It seems that a Unitarian woman of his acquaintance had been converted in Finney's meetings. Dr. Channing was too feeble to leave his home, so he requested her to visit him and tell him of her change in views. She complied with his request and he seemed to be very much interested. He asked if she had any of Finney's publications that he could read. She loaned him the former's Views of Sanctification, which had just been published. A week later she returned, when Channing said: "I am very much interested in this book, and in the views that are here set forth. I understand that the orthodox object to this view of sanctification, as it is presented by Mr. Finney; but I cannot see, if Christ is divine and truly God, why this view should be objected to; nor can I see any inconsistency, in holding this as a part of the orthodox faith. Yet I should like to see Mr. Finney. Cannot you persuade him to call on me? for I cannot go to see him." Before a meeting could be arranged, however, Channing left the city for Rutland, Vermont, where he died.

In 1843 Finney was again in Boston laboring at the Marlboro Chapel, or the First Free Congregational Church as it was called. Dissensions in the church interfered with any extensive awakening at this time and his efforts were confined chiefly to Christian people.

During the winter of 1856-1857 Mr. Finney spent several months in Boston, laboring principally at the Park Street and Shawmut Congregational churches. The Congregationalist said that "never within the memory of man have there been in Boston so many cheerful tokens of the universal presence of the Holy Spirit." The Oberlin Evangelist reported that when Finney "commenced his labors in Boston, the tone of religious feeling was very low. But the Lord's blessing came in answer to prayer and patience; and now the results are every way cheering. Many of the most important places near Boston have felt this reviving and refreshing influence. Ipswich, Andover, Lawrence, and Lowell, we learn from private sources, are among this number."

The following winter President and Mrs. Finney were again in Boston.*

Of the several revivals which he conducted in the city, none was more fruitful in good results than this one, which was conducted during the Great Revival which swept over the country in 1857-1858.

The great national revival of 1857-1858 originated at the old North Dutch Church, Fulton Street, New York. For some years the church had been declining in numbers through the removal of members on account of the encroachment of business upon that section of the city. In order to stem the tide and if possible to reach the unchurched masses which had gathered about it, Mr. Jeremiah Lanphere was employed as a lay missionary. While a measure of success attended his labors, he met with various difficulties, in the midst of which he found help and comfort in prayer.

It occurred to him that a prayer meeting at a suitable hour might be of service to the business men of the city. A noon prayer meeting was accordingly appointed for Wednesday, September 23, 1857, in a room on the third floor of the Consistory building of the church. Only six persons attended this meeting. The week following twenty were present, and at the third meeting this number had doubled. It was then decided to hold the noon prayer meeting daily. Little by little the attendance and interest increased until the rooms on all three floors of the Consistory building were in use for simultaneous meetings. The influence of this work extended throughout New York and Brooklyn, until by spring in New York alone there were more than twenty places where daily prayer meetings were conducted.

From New York the work extended to other cities, to Philadelphia, Albany, Boston, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, and elsewhere, until there was scarcely a city or hamlet throughout the Northern States that was not affected by the revival. The daily papers of the great cities devoted much space to the reports of this remarkable religious awakening, and for a time casualties, crime, and other secular matters were overshadowed by the religious interest. Within a year's time it was estimated that more than half a million persons had been converted.

While for a time there were daily preaching services at Burton's Theatre in New York, and in Boston where Finney was laboring, for the most part the revival was carried on by the daily union prayer meetings which as a general thing were conducted by laymen. Speaking of this phase of the revival Finney said:

"There was such a general confidence in the prevalence of prayer, that the people very extensively seemed to prefer meetings for prayer to meetings for preaching. The general impression seemed to be 'We have had instruction until we are hardened; it is time for us to pray.' The answers to prayer were

constant, and so striking as to arrest the attention of the people generally throughout the land. It was evident that in answer to prayer the windows of heaven were opened and the Spirit of God poured out like a flood."

During the progress of this revival Finney preached in Boston, Charlestown, Chelsea, and East Boston. Noon prayer meetings were instituted in the Old South Church, which attracted such multitudes that many could not get in, and at the Park Street Church, which was the principal scene of Finney's labors. In the spacious vestry of Park Street Church Mrs. Finney conducted meetings for women. These meetings were so largely attended that the women would fill the room, and then stand about the door on the outside as far as voices could be heard. The various meetings were attended by large numbers, both of orthodox people and Unitarians, with the result that many were converted.

There was much opposition to the revival in Boston. In his addresses at Music Hall Theodore Parker hurled ridicule upon the meetings and denounced the "God of the Park Street theology." In one address he said: "Just now there is a revival of religion, so called, going on in the land. The newspapers are full of it. Crowds of men and women throng the meeting-houses. They cannot get preaching enough. The poorer the article, the more they want of it The newspapers tell us fifty thousands are converted in a week. That is a great story, but it may be true. The revival may spread all over the land. It will make church members--not good husbands, good wives, daughters, uncles, aunts; not good shoemakers, farmers, lawyers, mechanics, merchants, laborers Suppose you could convert all the merchants, all the mechanics, all the laborers of Boston, and admit them to the churches that are getting up this revival, you would not add one ounce to the virtue of the city, not one cent's work of charity to the whole town. You weaken its intelligence, its enterprise; you deaden the piety and morality of the people The churches need a revival. No institution in America is more corrupt than her churches. No thirty thousand men and women are so bigoted and narrow as the thirty thousand ministers."

The friends of the revival were deeply disturbed and distressed by Parker's attacks. It was observed that many who had been almost persuaded to become Christians were intimidated and kept back through his antagonistic utterances. Such was Finney's confidence in the persuasive power of truth that he thought a brief conference would correct Parker's theological errors. So he made repeated calls at the residence of Mr. Parker, and although the latter was at home at the time, he refused to see the evangelist. Finally a special day of prayer was appointed in the vestry of the Park Street Church that God might either convert Theodore Parker or in some way counteract his pernicious influence. Not long afterwards he obtained a leave of absence and went to Europe in quest of his health. He never returned, but died in Florence, Italy.

While there were notable results in each of the revivals which Finney conducted in Boston, on the whole they were neither so remarkable nor so wide-reaching in their influence as his labors elsewhere. The type of religion which he found prevalent in Boston impressed him as peculiar and he wrote:

"The mass of people in Boston were more unsettled in their religious convictions than in any other place I have ever labored in, notwithstanding their intelligence; for they are surely a very intelligent people on every other subject but that of religion. It is extremely difficult to make religious truths lodge in their minds because the influence of Unitarian teaching has been to lead them to call in question all the principal doctrines of the Bible. Their system is one of denials. Their theology is negative. They deny almost everything, and affirm almost nothing. In such a field error finds the ears of the people open, and the most irrational views on religious subjects come to be held by a great many people."

* During one of the revivals conducted by Finney in Boston a gentleman called one day on business. The evangelist's small daughter answered the door bell. "Is your father in?" inquired the visitor. "No," was the startling reply, "but come in, poor dying sinner, and mother will pray for you."

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