1

The Origins of a "Christian Mission"

Introduction

The Methodist roots of William[1] and Catherine[2] Booth and The Salvation Army[3] which they founded, come as no surprise to Salvationists, bred on an understanding of William's teenage conversion in a Methodist chapel in Nottingham. The Salvation Army is viewed as the last of a series of schisms in the history of nineteenth-century Methodism.[4] On the other hand, The Salvation Army's origins in what is termed in this study the "holiness revivalism" of the nineteenth-century "holiness movement," are surprisingly poorly understood in Salvation Army literature, and much is still to be learned about these formative influences.[5] This book argues that William Booth's Methodism was mediated more through these influences, than directly from John Wesley. Paul Rader was right to recognise this in a brief article that just pre-

1. See in particular: Begbie, *Life of William Booth*; Ervine, *God's Soldier*; Stead, *General Booth*; Nicol, *General Booth*; Railton, *The Authoritative Life of General William Booth*; Bennett, *The General*; Green, *The Life and Ministry of William Booth*.

2. See in particular: Booth-Tucker, *The Life of Catherine Booth*; Stead, *Mrs. Booth of The Salvation Army*; Bramwell-Booth, *Catherine Booth*; Green, *Catherine Booth*; Kew, *Catherine Booth*.

3. The official history is recorded as *The History of the Salvation Army*, in 7 volumes. See in addition: Coutts, *No Discharge In This War*; Rhemick, *A New People of God*; Murdoch, *Origins of The Salvation Army*.

4. See Hattersley, *Blood and Fire*, 31.

5. See Kent, *Holding The Fort*; Carwardine, *Trans-Atlantic Revivalism*; Dieter, *The Holiness Revival*; Scotland, *Apostles of the Spirit and Fire*.

dated the research of John Kent and Richard Carwardine, who both linked William and Catherine Booth to holiness revivalism's predominant personalities:

> One can understand William Booth and The Salvation Army's heritage of holiness only in terms of the dynamic spiritual movement within which they were cradled. That movement may have had more to do with what the founders were and The Army became, than with their debt to Wesley and Methodism.[6]

In a letter of 1876 to his eldest son, Bramwell, whom he had been developing as a young leader,[7] William Booth wrote: "Making saints must be *our* work, that is *yours* and *mine*. G.S.R. [George Scott Railton] and others are all for converting sinners and making *workers*. We want *saints*."[8] He can scarcely contain his delight, when a month later he commented on Bramwell's reply:

> He wrote me last week saying that it is the *experimental realisation* and *definite teaching* of the blessing of holiness that alone can make us different from the other organisations around us. I say *Amen*. And only this, it seems to me, can justify us in having any separate existence at all.[9]

This "experimental realisation" and "definite teaching" which lay at the heart of the identity of Booth's mission and "alone" justified its existence as an "organization," can only be appreciated in a brief review of both his Methodist and holiness revivalist origins, in order that their influence on The Salvation Army's emerging ecclesiological convictions and practise may be charted.

William and Catherine Booth as Methodists

Though christened in an Anglican parish church in Sneinton, Nottingham, William Booth (1829–1912) experienced little religious influence at home or religious training at church. After his father died, the impoverished family was forced to move to the Goose Green area. A middle-aged couple took a special interest in him and introduced him

6. Rader, "Holiness, Revival and Mission," 74.
7. See Bramwell-Booth, *Bramwell Booth*.
8. Cited in ibid., 143. See Watson, *Soldier Saint*.
9. Cited in Bramwell-Booth, *Bramwell Booth*, 142.

to the Broad Street Wesley Chapel, where he attended Sunday services, became a member of Brother Henry Carey's midweek class, and in his early teens experienced a life-changing conversion. It propelled him into active evangelism with his boyhood friend, Will Sansom. They "conducted religious meetings on the streets, and led processions on Sunday evenings from street meeting to indoor meeting."[10] When in 1849, at the age of nineteen, he moved to London to find work in the familiar pawnbroker's trade in Walworth, he threw himself into the life of Wesleyan Methodism as a lay preacher.

It was a period of turmoil within Wesleyan Methodism. The so called "Fly Sheet" controversy came to a head in that year.[11] The annual Conference expelled three Ministers, one of whom was Samuel Dunn, Booth's Minister at Broad Street Chapel in Nottingham. Considerable unrest followed from what was considered a heavy-handed response. One hundred thousand Methodists, in sympathy with the reformers, found their membership tickets were not renewed, and were effectively expelled to join congregations with reforming sympathies. One of these members in London was Catherine Mumford (1829–1890). Her biographer records that, "the outspoken manner in which Miss Mumford had expressed her condemnation of the Conference and sympathy with the Reformers was naturally objected to by her class-leader, who remonstrated with her on the folly of her course, reminding her that in identifying herself with the malcontents she would not only forfeit her position in the church she loved, but seriously injure her worldly prospects."[12]

Equally, when William Booth resigned his appointment as a lay preacher with the Wesleyans in the Lambeth circuit, so that he could "better serve my generation by preaching in the streets" his superintendent minister, John Hall, most likely suspecting that he may have sympathies with the reformers, "without reply . . . withdrew my ticket of membership."[13] Mr. Rabbits, a wealthy businessman impressed by his preaching, decided to sponsor him. He preached his first sermon in the Walworth Road Chapel, which had gone over to the Wesleyan Reform movement. In the congregation that day was Catherine Mumford. They

10. Green, *The Life and Ministry of William Booth*, 13.
11. See Chadwick, *The Victorian Church: Part One*, 380–86.
12. Booth-Tucker, *The Life of Catherine Booth*, 49.
13. Stead, *General Booth*, 37.

soon became engaged to be married and together began a search for a spiritual home through a variety of early Methodist splinter groups. Booth's affections never lay heavily with the reformers and even more so when his opportunities for preaching were limited due to the democratic nature of the reformers belief that "priest and people were one in the sight of God."[14] There followed, at Catherine's suggestion, a brief flirtation with Congregationalism, in spite of what she describes as her husband's love for Methodism "that amounted almost to idolatry."[15]

It did not take Booth long to discover that his theology was out of harmony with a Congregational emphasis upon election.[16] He had never been quite as certain as his fiancée about this venture. He wrote to Catherine:

> It is one thing to forsake Methodism. It is quite another to abandon a doctrine which I look upon as a cardinal point in Christ's redemption plan—His universal love, and the possibility of all being saved who will avail themselves of His mercy.[17]

Within a week of leaving the Cotton End Congregational College,[18] he found his way back into the Wesleyan Reform movement, and was invited to become the minister of a Church in Spalding, Lincolnshire.

After eighteen months in this circuit, he joined the Methodist New Connexion, which in 1797 had been the first of the splinters from Wesleyan Methodism. Booth struggled with what he considered the Reformers' disorganization and democratic inclinations in making decisions that affected his ministry, as indicated by his fiancée Catherine:

> There is not the least security for the future, & the spirit of some may spread & become the spirit of many, and to be dependent on the will of a disorganized society for your position & bread will not be at all congenial to a temperament like yours . . . they are generally so democratical [*sic*], nay, absurdly, extravagantly so.[19]

14. Hattersley, *Blood and Fire*, 48.

15. Begbie, *William Booth*, 1:139.

16. Ibid., 1:139–40.

17. Booth-Tucker, *The Life of Catherine Booth*, 1:74.

18. The six months spent at this college represent the full extent of his formal theological education.

19. Bennett, *The Letters of William and Catherine Booth*, No. CM72, 184. Hereafter *Letters*.

This move is difficult to understand in that the New Connexion had seceded from Wesleyanism largely on the grounds of demanding greater local autonomy and congregational participation. Catherine argued:

> The Reform Movement is no home and sphere for you; whereas the principles of the Connexion you live in your very soul. I believe you will be satisfied, when once from under the influence of your Spalding friends.[20]

The Wesleyan community was principally divided by theological issues of authority and governance, inherited from Wesley. The Booths eventually left the Methodist New Connexion to become independent itinerant evangelists, frustrated by the Conference decision that William should remain a circuit minister in Gateshead, when his talents clearly lay in itinerant revivalist preaching. The decision launched them into an independent campaign, based largely on Methodist chapels that would welcome them. They finally settled in London in 1865, and joined the Special Services Committee's mission work in the East End. It was their Methodism that doctrinally shaped their understanding of that mission. A comparison of the twelve doctrines of the Methodist New Connexion (1838), the seven doctrines of the East London Christian Revival Society (1865), the ten doctrines of the Christian Mission, (1870) and the eleven doctrines of The Salvation Army (1878),[21] shows a remarkably close alignment. In John Rhemick's estimation they were "essentially the same statements of faith,"[22] bearing in mind that more of the New Connexion doctrines were added with each revision. Roger Green confirms that:

> One of the great faults of some of the previous biographies of Booth is that they have failed to understand that he was driven by a particular theological vision . . . not merely broadly Protestant or even generically Evangelical. It was Wesleyan, and Booth's theology of redemption—including his understanding of sin, grace, salvation, holiness—can be understood only if this is taken into account.[23]

20. Booth-Tucker, *The Life of Catherine Booth*, 1:109.

21. See Murdoch, *Origins of The Salvation Army,* 173–75; Rhemick, *A New People of God*, 30–34.

22. Rhemick, *A New People of God*, 34.

23. Green, *The Life and Ministry of William Booth*, 1. See also Green, "William Booth and Methodism"; Green, "The Salvation Army and the Evangelical Tradition," 51–69. See in particular Green's opposition to Murdoch, "Evangelical Sources of Salvation

Booth later revealed the depth of his own admiration for John Wesley:

> I worshipped everything that bore the name of Methodist. To me there was one God, and John Wesley was his prophet . . . and all that was wanted, in my estimation, for the salvation of the world was the faithful carrying into practice of the letter and the spirit of his instructions.[24]

When Booth addressed the Wesleyan Conference in 1880 he confidently informed them that The Salvation Army was, "the continuation of the work of Mr. Wesley, for we have gone on, only a great deal further, on the same lines which he travelled."[25]

Nineteenth-Century Trans-Atlantic "Holiness Revivalism"

If their Methodist roots offer little surprise to Salvationists, the foremost influence upon the young teenage convert in Nottingham was the visiting American Methodist and holiness revivalist preacher James Caughey. His influence on Booth has not escaped the attention of Salvation Army historians, but his brand of holiness revivalism and the tension that it precipitated amongst the Methodist churches in Britain, who eventually asked him to leave, has not been fully acknowledged. To appreciate the nature of this tension, it is necessary to understand the nineteenth century trans-Atlantic movement of holiness revivalism.

Wesley sent ten of his itinerants between 1769 and 1774, including Francis Asbury in 1771, to largely respond to the unofficial exploits of Methodist settlers in America. Asbury was made "General Assistant" for America in September 1783 and urged by Wesley to "keep to the British standards of the *Notes, Sermons and Minutes*."[26] According to Timothy Smith, despite Asbury's best efforts, Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection "did not occupy a chief place in early Methodist preaching in the New World . . . The moral needs of rural and Western America directed attention to the more elemental work of saving sinners."[27] The rise of interest in holiness in urban America may have been sparked by the publi-

Army Doctrine," 235–44, a view later modified in Murdoch, *Origins Of The Salvation Army*, 65–66. See also ibid., 173–75, appendix A.

24. Booth-Tucker, *The Life of Catherine Booth*, 1:52.
25. Booth, "The General's Address at the Wesleyan Conference," 1.
26. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast,* 409.
27. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 115.

cation in 1825 of Timothy Merritt's *Treatise on Christian Perfection, with Directions for Obtaining That State*. Merritt was a well-known minister in the New York City District, and his book appeared in 33 editions by 1871. A wave of other publications followed. The General Conference of 1832 called for a revival of holiness, and in 1841 Luther Meyrick and the Wesleyan Methodists seceded from the parent body citing both their objection to compromises on the issue of slavery, which they were against, and the neglect of Christian perfection teaching. In 1842 the Methodists and Oberlin College, where Charles Finney was Professor of Theology and Asa Mahan was President, combined in holiness conventions around the New York City and New England area, where both James Caughey and Phoebe Palmer were active in Methodism. Finney, Mahan, Caughey and Palmer were four leading personalities in holiness revivalism, who each made a significant impact across the Atlantic, an impact that did not escape the attention of William and Catherine Booth, eager to absorb revivalist influences that would further their cause.

Melvin Dieter, in *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, describes a developing synthesis between American revivalism and Wesleyan perfectionism that he believes can only be understood by looking back to both Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley for inspiration. Jonathan Edwards with his revival theology and methods shaped American revivalism in a way that his successors carried into the renewed search for holiness in the 1830s. Edwards' basic principle of evangelism was that the moment of salvation was "now." The gospel message was urgent and it was the immediate duty of everyone who heard its call to repent and be saved. The synthesis developed as Methodists translated this current sense of immediacy in the expectation of conversion, into the sphere of sanctification, or Christian perfection. As Dieter explains:

> To the Wesleyan perfectionists who believed that the sinner's response to the revivalist's appeal for justification by faith still left him, as a Christian convert, short of a life of uninterrupted love for God and man; it was but a short step given the prevailing mood and methods of American revivalism, to move in with the 'second blessing' message . . . of a second crisis in the Christian's life . . . The sense of immediacy was also there; the time to enter the "higher life" was "now."[28]

28. Dieter, *The Holiness Revival*, 19.

Dieter finds clear testimony to this development in the writings of Harriet Beecher Stowe who commented,

> that pressing men to an immediate and definite point of conversion produced immediate and definite results and so it may be found among Christians pressing them to an immediate and definite point of attainment (i.e. entire sanctification) will, in like manner, result in marked and decided progress.[29]

Holiness revivalism, as practiced by the Booths, is crucial to an understanding of the Salvationist ecclesiology that has emerged, especially in regard to an emphasis on individual salvation, a subjective focus on the conditions that the individual must fulfill in their "attainment" of personal justification and sanctification and the pragmatic methods that this revivalism espoused. Many of the itinerant or lay revivalists that most influenced the Booths, visited churches, but were not themselves primarily focused upon the life of the community. Their concern was the personal salvation and sanctification of individuals. These key individuals and their influence require introduction, before examining the outworking of this American synthesis in the ministry of William and Catherine Booth.

James Caughey

James Caughey was a Methodist minister, yet more pertinently a product of what Dieter describes as, "all that was American in the nineteenth century promotion and practices of the Wesleyan emphasis."[30] He was a leading exponent of this American synthesis of holiness revivalism—its message of entire sanctification and its pragmatic methods geared towards an immediate response. In his campaign in Britain (1841–1847), he brought both a renewed emphasis upon Wesleyan perfectionism to a Methodist tradition that had begun to lose its focus upon a second work of grace, and a new sense of urgency and immediacy in receiving it.

Born on 9th April, 1810, in the north of Ireland, he emigrated with his family to America, grew up in New York State, and became a Methodist, turning away from his family's Calvinism. He was caught up in the local revival, in 1830. Within two years he was a preacher on probation, in a further two years a deacon and by 1836 an ordained el-

29. Cited in ibid., 20.

30. Ibid.

der. Caughey became a successful preacher and a prolific writer, with dramatic appeals for the blessing of holiness. He arrived in England in July 1841, and at the Manchester Wesleyan Methodist Conference was offered a pulpit in Dublin by Thomas Waugh. His first sermon led to a five-month revival with seven hundred converts recorded. Not all in the Conference approved of his methods, but he was welcomed in particular by the Wesleyan Reformers, one of whom was the Rev. Samuel Dunn, minister of Broad Street Wesley Chapel in Nottingham, where Booth was a teenager. Caughey spoke in Nottingham and made a profound and lasting impact upon the young William Booth.[31] Whilst Booth's conversion pre-dated by two years his introduction to Caughey,[32] he recalled Caughey's immense impact upon him:

> He was an extraordinary preacher filling up his sermons with thrilling anecdotes and vivid illustrations, and for the straightforward declaration of scriptural truth and striking appeals to the conscience, I had up to that time never heard his equal . . . Multitudes were saved, many of whom became the most useful members of the society. All this had a powerful effect upon my young heart. The straightforward conversational way of putting the truth . . . the common-sense method of pushing the people up to decision . . . the corresponding results that followed, in the conversion and sanctification of hundreds of people, made an ineffaceable impression on my mind, filling me . . . with confidence in the power and willingness of God to save all those that come unto Him.[33]

Richard Carwardine records that "after nearly six years of revivals . . . including two trips to the Continent, Caughey could claim to have been instrumental in over twenty thousand conversions and to have brought nine thousand to experience 'entire sanctification.'"[34]

Booth witnessed and approved the dramatic, if divisive impact of holiness revivalism in Caughey's ministry, fresh as it was from the cauldron of New York State's "burned-over" district.[35] Carwardine suggests that whilst British Methodism instinctively understood revivalism, pos-

31. Sandall, *The History of The Salvation Army,* 1:3; Kent, *Holding The Fort*, 38; Dieter, *The Holiness Revival*, 60; Carwardine, *Trans-Atlantic Revivalism*, 102.

32. See Green, *The Life and Ministry of William Booth*, 237 n. 36.

33. Booth, "How We Began," 8.

34. Carwardine, *Trans-Atlantic Revivalism*, 111.

35. See Cross, *The Burned-Over District*, 173–84.

sessing "an Arminian theology that sanctioned an unrestricted appeal to all men,"[36] American Methodism was in Caughey's estimation "clearly more emotional, revival-centered, and tolerant of innovation than that of British Wesleyans."[37] He notes the measure of distrust that lingered in British Methodism against American revivalism and its camp meetings, from the earlier influence of Lorenzo Dow and the emergence of the Primitive Methodist movement with which he was associated:

> Dow and camp meetings had not inoculated Wesleyan Methodists against revivalism as such, but they had injected them with a fear of the schismatic tendencies of revival and a sense that American evangelicalism was less well disciplined than it ought to be . . . When . . . James Caughey, arrived to give them effect, he would find a residue of distrust for things American that no amount of practical success could ever remove.[38]

Despite the impressive statistics of those converted and sanctified,[39] Caughey's critics detected something new in his methods. In contrast to the spontaneity of previous revivals, such as those of the English Methodist, William Bramwell (1759–1818), "Caughey's meetings . . . were premeditated, part of a preconceived campaign to stir a religious awakening, more or less without regard to the initial receptiveness of the audience."[40] Carwardine comments that, "with James Caughey the day of the revival technician who was paid for his services had arrived."[41] Amongst the many elements in Caughey's preaching were methods he learned in the revival fervour of 1830s America, such as "knee work" (prayer meetings after preaching), and the altar call, where Caughey would invite people to move forward to either the communion rail or the "penitent's form" to make an immediate response. This method, Carwardine explains, was seen as "the 'most remarkable' feature of his

36. Carwardine, *Trans-Atlantic Revivalism*, 103.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., 107.

39. See the statistical list given in defense of Caughey in 1847 by a Wesleyan Methodist, cited in Kent, *Holding the Fort*, 312; and in Carwardine, *Trans-Atlantic Revivalism*, 4, 112–14.

40. Ibid., 127.

41. Ibid., 128.

work, for although an integral part of American services, it was not universally employed in British Methodism."[42]

Recalling his teenage "cottage meetings," Booth remembers, "we had lively songs, short and sharp exhortations insisting upon decision for Christ upon the spot, which was to be signified by coming out and kneeling at the round table that stood in the middle of the room."[43] The "mercy seat," as it became enduringly known in The Salvation Army, was a central feature of Booth's revivalism.[44] Norman Murdoch suggests:

> Booth was Caughey's heir. Caughey convinced Booth that converting the masses was possible through scientific, calculated means. Revivals which were planned, advertised, and prayed for would succeed.[45]

In Booth's own words:

> I saw as clearly as if a revelation had been made to me from Heaven that success in spiritual work, as in natural operations, was to be accounted for, not on any mere abstract theory of Divine sovereignty . . . but on the employment of such methods as were dictated by common sense, the Holy Spirit, and the Word of God.[46]

Caughey, this most influential influence upon the Booths, baptized their son Ballington in Sheffield, and Catherine remarked to her parents:

> After almost adoring his very name for ten years past, to be thus privileged was well nigh too much for me. When he took leave of me, I pressed one fervent kiss on his hand, and felt more gratified than if it had been Queen Victoria's.[47]

Charles Grandison Finney

The re-emphasizing of "Christian perfection" in American Methodism was paralleled by a movement that had its origin at Oberlin College,

42. Ibid., 120.

43. Booth, "How We Began," 9. See Booth, "Fifty Years' Salvation Services," 1–9, for his assessment of this early ministry as "a miniature Salvation Army."

44. See Bovey, *The Mercy Seat Revisited*.

45. Murdoch, *Origins Of The Salvation Army*, 12.

46. Booth, "How We Began," 8.

47. Booth-Tucker, *The Life of Catherine Booth*, 1:219.

Ohio, where the Professor of Theology, Charles Finney and the President, Asa Mahan, were the two leading proponents of what came to be known as "Oberlin perfectionism." Finney, born in 1792, converted on 10th October 1821, licensed to preach on 30th December 1823, was ordained as a Presbyterian minister on 1st July 1824. His successful revivalism in New York State led in 1835 to the publication of *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*,[48] (first published in Britain in 1837). Keith Hardman suggests that:

> The theology of revivals held both in the Old World and in eastern Massachusetts was that awakenings would come only at God's pleasure. The prevailing Calvinist concept of election had a massive dampening effect: people must simply wait, perhaps all their lives, and if they were of the elect, in God's own time salvation would surely come. Individual initiative was therefore discouraged.[49]

Hardman suggests this was first questioned in New England by Jonathan Edwards' grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, who asked the question, "To what extent can clergy and laity be partners with the Almighty in the bringing of awakenings?"[50] Finney represents the culminating force in promoting the potential for human cooperation in the effecting of revivals.

Converted under the ministry of Rev. George Gale, whom Finney admired, he nevertheless in Hardman's view found that Gale's Calvinism "overly demeaned human motivation and action" and that in this he was unconsciously "voicing the concerns of many Americans at that period who were abandoning Calvinism and predestination, or at least rejecting the very elements that were most repellent to the unconverted, the ideas that they were mired in sin and unable to exert moral choice."[51] Finney became armed with the New Divinity theology that emerged from the followers of Jonathan Edwards, through such men as Joseph Bellamy (1719–1790) and Samuel Hopkins (1721–1803), who sought to improve upon Edwards' ideas by developing a theology that resisted "original sin," placing responsibility upon the individual with the innate

48. Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*.
49. Hardman, *Charles Grandison Finney*, 19.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid., 47.

ability to exercise free will in making good choices. Timothy Smith summarizes this New Divinity:

> 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' idea that disinterested benevolence, or unselfish love towards God and man, was the sum of the Christian's duty [Nathaniel] Taylor and [Lyman] Beecher transformed Calvinist dogma into a practical Arminianism, without having to jettison Calvinist verbiage.[52]

This freedom and optimism in the human condition opened the way for a greater sense of human participation in the course of revivals. Finney confidently explained that a revival "is not a miracle, nor dependent on a miracle, in any sense," but "a purely philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means."[53] In his lecture on "Measures to Promote Revivals" Finney argued:

> Under the gospel dispensation, God has *established no particular system of measures* to be employed and invariably adhered to in promoting religion . . . our present forms of public worship, and every thing, so far as *measures* are concerned, have been arrived at by *degrees*, and by *a succession of New Measures* . . . It was left to the discretion of the church to determine, from time to time, what *measures* shall be adopted, and what *forms* pursued, in giving the gospel its power'. (Finney's emphasis).[54]

In this respect Finney was an admirer of John Wesley, whom he suggested "introduced so much of new measures, as to fill all England with excitement and uproar and opposition, and he was everywhere denounced as an innovator and a stirrer up of sedition, and a teacher of new things which it was not lawful to receive."[55] In the matter of preaching Finney declared:

52. Smith, "The Doctrine of the Sanctifying Spirit," 93. See Finney, "Natural Ability," in *Finney's Systematic Theology*, 303–21.

53. Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 13.

54. Ibid., 250–51.

55. Ibid., 260. Hardman, *Charles Grandison Finney*, 84, suggests that most of Finney's new measures came from Methodism.

> Look at the Methodists. Many of their ministers are unlearned, in the common sense of the term, many of them taken right from the shop or the farm, and yet they have . . . won souls every where . . . their plain, pointed and simple, but warm and animated mode of preaching has always gathered congregations.[56]

Hardman calls Finney "the 'pragmatist's pragmatist,'" a man who "did his best to remove the unpredictability in God's working, and operated on what John Calvin's followers would have called Pelagian principles."[57] Finney was himself clear that God remained central to the enterprise, willing to work in partnership with people of good faith:

> I said that a revival is the result of the *right* use of the appropriate means. The means which God has enjoyed for the production of a revival, doubtless have a natural tendency to produce a revival. Otherwise God would not have enjoined them. But means will not produce a revival, we all know, without the blessing of God. No more will grain, when it is sowed, produce a crop without the blessing of God.[58]

Whether or not Pelagian, Finney could be mistaken for implying that God responded to human initiative rather than *vice versa*. Catherine Booth's biographer reveals that she read church history and theology. "Wesley, Finney, Fletcher, Mosheim, Neander, and Butler were taken up, in turn, and in some cases carefully epitomized" and "Finney's lectures on theology she specially appreciated."[59] As Finney's *Lectures in Systematic Theology* were only published in Britain in 1851, it is most likely that it was his *Lectures on Revivals of Religion* that she was reading at this time. The Booths' intimate personal letters are littered with references to Finney, jealous as they were for the inheritance of John Wesley and his evangelistic success in their own day. Catherine wrote to William: "It would be a good plan to read Finney's tenth, eleventh & 12th lectures on revivals."[60] On the subject of excitement and shouting, Catherine, having spoken of "Caughey's silent, soft, heavenly carriage . . . he did not shout, there was no necessity," urged William to read

56. Ibid., 273.

57. Hardman, *Charles Grandison Finney*, 100. See Warfield, "Oberlin Perfectionism," 1–63.

58. Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, 13.

59. Booth-Tucker, *The Life of Catherine Booth*, 1:39.

60. *Letters*, No. CM98, 243.

Finney, where her views are found, "*exactly* [her emphasis] in Finney's *Lectures on Revivals*, which I consider the most beautiful & common sense work on the subject I ever read."[61] She also encouraged William to "read Finney's directions for the treatment of penitents; they are excellent, the best part of the work. If you are not well acquainted with them, be sure to read them. They are in his *Lectures on Revivals*."[62] Equally Catherine reveals her sermon preparation: "I have now to *begin* to think about a subject for Sheriff Hill in the morn'g. I think I shall take, 'Be filled with the Spirit', but I can only find one lecture in Finney's on it & that treats more on the *hinderances* (sic) to being filled with the spirit."[63] For his part William informed Catherine on one occasion that, "other matters of a more important kind and character demand my attention; Finney's Moral Theology for instance,"[64] on another, "our love has not been merely an emotion, but it is indeed of truth an *affection* . . . Bear in mind Finney's distinction between the two words,"[65] and on yet another, '" am reading Finney . . . on election and final perseverance, and I see more than ever reason to cling to my own views of truth and righteousness."[66] Catherine entitled one of her later addresses, "Adaptation of Measures"[67] in which, following Finney, she found six texts from the Bible that all exhibited this principle of adaptation, declaring, "While the Gospel message is laid down with unerring exactness, we are left at perfect freedom to adapt our measures and modes of bringing it to bear upon men to the circumstances, times, and conditions in which we live — free as air."[68] She did not refer directly to Finney but her claim to draw her convictions from, "some of the most thoughtful and spiritual men of this age,"[69] is unmistakable.

In spite of his evangelistic success, Finney recorded in his *Memoirs* that "on looking at the state of the Christian church as it had been revealed to me in my revival labors, I was led earnestly to inquire whether

61. *Letters*, No. CM29, 87.
62. Ibid.
63. *Letters,* No. CB152, 331.
64. *Letters*, No. WB6, 10.
65. *Letters*, No. WB145, 351.
66. *Letters*, No. WB8, 11.
67. Booth, *Papers on Aggressive Christianity*, 41.
68. Ibid., 50.
69. Ibid., 47.

there was not something higher and more enduring than the Christian church was aware of."[70] At Oberlin College, together with Asa Mahan and the other staff and students, a deepening search for this Christian life ensued. In 1839 Finney's *Memoirs* record that a student rose one day to ask, "whether sanctification was not attainable in this life, that is sanctification in such sense that Christians could have unbroken peace, and not . . . have the feeling of condemnation or a consciousness of sin."[71] Convinced that the answer was "yes," they began publishing this belief in *The Oberlin Evangelist* and *The Oberlin Quarterly*, and in 1840 Finney himself published his book *Views of Sanctification*. In an age in which the issue of slavery divided whole denominations, the founder of Oberlin College, Arthur Tappan, insisted that Finney, his New York City Pastor, be drafted in for six months each year as Professor of Theology, to develop an ideology of Christian perfection that would be the basis of a higher Christian life, capable of inspiring and reforming American society away from such evils as slavery and the growing urban culture.

Timothy Smith defends Finney against accusations of Pelagianism, suggesting that his mature covenant theology saw "entire sanctification," through the baptism of the Holy Spirit, as a sovereign work of grace, a new covenant outworking of God's promises, rooted in the OT covenant of holiness, in an unbroken chain from Abraham to Christ. Smith even suggests that "his covenant theology . . . opened the door to the evangelical unity for which Wesley and Whitfield prayed but were never able to grasp."[72] Nevertheless, in denying total depravity, he expressed this covenant in highly subjective terms that problematically emphasized human ability and initiative. Nevertheless, Catherine confided in William: "I often wish I could have an hour's talk with Finney. I think he would be able to advise me. He would understand me."[73] Finney's writings, including his autobiography, were reproduced in the *Christian Mission Magazine*, and as late as 1895 *The Officer* magazine declared that, "there are no books, other than our own publications, which we can recommend more heartily than those of Finney."[74]

70. Finney, *The Memoirs of Charles G. Finney*, 391.
71. Ibid., 409.
72. Smith, "The Doctrine of the Sanctifying Spirit," 103.
73. *Letters*, No. CM45, 126.
74. The Salvation Army, "Our Library—Finney's Works," 12.