

Charles G. Finney:

LEAVING New York I spent a few weeks in Whitestown; and, as was common, being pressed to go in many directions, I was greatly at a loss what was my duty. But among others, an urgent invitation was received from the Third Presbyterian church in Rochester, of which Mr. Parker had been pastor, to go there and supply them for a season.

I inquired into the circumstances, and found that on several accounts it was a very unpromising field of labor. There were but three Presbyterian churches in Rochester. The Third church, that extended the invitation, had no minister, and religion was in a low state. The Second church, or the Brick Church, as it was called, had a pastor, an excellent man; but in regard to his preaching there was considerable division in the church, and he was restive and about to leave. There was a controversy existing between an elder of the Third church and the pastor of the First church, that was about to be tried before the presbytery. This and other matters had aroused unchristian feeling, to some extent, in both churches; and altogether it seemed a forbidding field of labor at that time. The friends at Rochester were exceedingly anxious to have me go there--I mean the members of the Third church. Being left without a pastor, they felt as if there was great danger that they would be scattered, and perhaps annihilated as a church, unless something could be done to revive religion among them.

With these pressing invitations before me, I felt, as I have often done, greatly perplexed. I remained at my father-in-law's, and considered the subject, until I felt that I must take hold and work somewhere. Accordingly we packed our trunks and went down to Utica, about seven miles distant, where I had many praying friends. We arrived there in the afternoon, and in the evening quite a number of the leading brethren, in whose prayers and wisdom I had a great deal of confidence, at my request met for consultation and prayer, in regard to my next field of labor. I laid all the facts before them in regard to Rochester; and so far as I was acquainted with them, the leading facts in respect to the other fields to which I was invited at that time. Rochester seemed to be the least inviting of them all.

After talking the matter all over, and having several seasons of prayer, interspersed with conversation, the brethren gave their opinions one after another, in relation to what they thought it wise for me to do. They were unanimous in the opinion that Rochester was too uninviting a field of labor, to be put at all in competition with New York, or Philadelphia, and some other fields to which I was then invited. They were firm in the conviction that I should go east from Utica, and not west. At the time, this was my own impression and conviction; and I retired from this meeting, as I supposed, settled not to go to Rochester, but to New York or Philadelphia. This was before railroads existed; and when we parted that evening I expected to take the canal boat, which was the most convenient way for a family to travel, and start in the morning for New York.

But after I retired to my lodging the question was presented to my mind under a different aspect. Something seemed to question me: "What are the reasons that deter you from going to Rochester?" I could readily enumerate them, but then the question returned: "Ah! but are these good reasons? Certainly you are needed at Rochester all the more because of these difficulties. Do you shun the field because there are so many things that need to be corrected, because there is so much that is wrong? But if all was right, you would not be needed." I soon came to the conclusion that we were all wrong; and that the reasons that had determined us against my going to Rochester, were the most cogent reasons for my going. I felt ashamed to shrink from undertaking the work because of its difficulties; and it was strongly impressed upon me, that the Lord would be with me, and that was my field. My mind became entirely decided, before I retired to rest, that Rochester was the place to which the Lord would have me go. I informed my wife of my decision; and accordingly, early in the morning, before the people were generally moving in the city, the packet boat came along, and we embarked and went westward instead of eastward.

The brethren in Utica were greatly surprised when they learned of this change in our destination, and awaited the result with a good deal of solicitude.

We arrived in Rochester early in the morning, and were invited to take up our lodgings for the time with Mr. Josiah Bissell, who was the leading elder in the Third church, and who was the person that had complained to the presbytery respecting Dr. Penny. On my arrival I met my cousin, Mr. S, in the street, who invited me to his house. He was an elder in the First church, and hearing that I was expected at Rochester, was very anxious to have his pastor, Dr. Penny, meet and converse with me, and be prepared to cooperate with me in my labors. I declined his kind invitation, informing him that I was to be the guest of Mr. Bissell. But he called on me again after breakfast, and informed me that he had arranged an interview between myself and Dr. Penny, at his house. I hastened to meet the doctor, and we had a cheering Christian interview. When I commenced my labors, Dr.

Penny attended our meetings, and soon invited me to his pulpit. Mr. S exerted himself to bring about a good understanding between the pastors and churches and a great change soon manifested itself in the attitude and spiritual state of the churches.

There were very soon some very marked conversions. The wife of a prominent lawyer in that city, was one of the first converts. She was a woman of high standing, a lady of culture and extensive influence. Her conversion was a very marked one. The first that I saw her, a friend of her's came with her to my room, and introduced her. The lady who introduced her was a Christian woman, who had found that she was very much exercised in her mind, and persuaded her to come and see me.

Mrs. M had been a gay worldly woman, and very fond of society. She afterward told me that when I first came there, she greatly regretted it, and feared there would be a revival; and a revival would greatly interfere with the pleasures and amusements that she had promised herself that winter. On conversing with her I found that the Spirit of the Lord was indeed dealing with her, in an unsparing manner. She was bowed down with great conviction of sin. After considerable conversation with her, I pressed her earnestly to renounce sin, and the world, and self, and everything for Christ. I saw that she was a very proud woman, and this struck me as rather the most marked feature of her character. At the conclusion of our conversation we knelt down to pray; and my mind being full of the subject of the pride of her heart, as it was manifested, I very soon introduced the text: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." I turned this subject over in prayer; and almost immediately I heard Mrs. M, as she was kneeling by my side, repeating that text: "Except ye be converted and become as little children as little children Except ye be converted and become as little children." I observed that her mind was taken with that, and the Spirit of God was pressing it upon her heart. I therefore continued to pray, holding that subject before her mind, and holding her up before God as needing that very thing, to be converted--to become as a little child.

I felt that the Lord was answering prayer. I felt sure that He was doing the very work that I asked Him to do. Her heart broke down, her sensibility gushed forth, and before we rose from our knees, she was indeed a little child. When I stopped praying, and opened my eyes and looked at her, her face was turned up toward heaven, and the tears streaming down; and she was in the attitude of praying that she might be made a little child. She rose up, became peaceful, settled into a joyous faith, and retired. From that moment she was outspoken in her religious convictions, and zealous for the conversion of her friends. Her conversion, of course, produced much excitement among that class of people to which she belonged.

I had never, I believe, except in rare instances, until I went to Rochester, used as a means of promoting revivals, what has since been called the anxious seat. I had sometimes asked persons in the congregation to stand up; but this I had not frequently done. However, in studying upon the subject, I had often felt the necessity of some measure that would bring sinners to a stand. From my own experience and observation I had found, that with the higher classes especially, the greatest obstacle to be overcome was their fear of being known as anxious inquirers. They were too proud to take any position that would reveal them to others as anxious for their souls.

I had found also that something was needed, to make the impression on them that they were expected at once to give up their hearts; something that would call them to act, and act as publicly before the world, as they had in their sins; something that would commit them publicly to the service of Christ. When I had called them simply to stand up in the public congregations I found that this had a very good effect; and so far as it went, it answered the purpose for which it was intended. But after all, I had felt for some time, that something more was necessary to bring them out from among the mass of the ungodly, to a public renunciation of their sinful ways, and a public committal of themselves to God.

At Rochester, if I recollect right, I first introduced this measure; This was years after the cry had been raised of new measures. A few days after the conversion of Mrs. M, I made a call, I think for the first time, upon all that class of persons whose convictions were so ripe that they were willing to renounce their sins and give themselves to God, to come forward to certain seats which I requested to be vacated, and offer themselves up to God, while we made them subjects of prayer. A much larger number came forward than I expected, and among them was another prominent lady; and several others of her acquaintance, and belonging to the same circle of society, came forward. This increased the interest among that class of people; and it was soon seen that the Lord was aiming at the conversion of the highest classes of society. My meetings soon became thronged with that class. The lawyers, physicians, merchants, and indeed all the most intelligent people, became more and more interested, and more and more easily influenced.

Very soon the work took effect, extensively, among the lawyers in that city. There has always been a large number of the leading lawyers of the state, resident at Rochester. The work soon got hold of numbers of these.

They became very anxious, and came freely to our meetings of inquiry; and numbers of them came forward to the anxious seat, as it has since been called, and publicly gave their hearts to God. I recollect one evening after preaching, three of them followed me to my room, all of them deeply convicted; and all of them had been, I believe, on the anxious seat, but were not clear in their minds, and felt that they could not go home until they were convinced their peace was made with God. I conversed with them, and prayed with them; and I believe, before they left, they all found peace in believing in the Lord Jesus Christ.

I should have said that very soon after the work commenced, the difficulties between Mr. Bissell and Dr. Penny were healed; and all the distractions and collisions that had existed there were adjusted; so that a spirit of universal kindness and fellowship pervaded all the churches.

On one occasion I had an appointment in the First church. There had been a military parade in the city that day. The militia had been called out, and I had feared that the excitement of the parade, might divert the attention of the people, and mar the work of the Lord. The house was filled in every part. Dr. Penny had introduced the services, and was engaged in the first prayer, when I heard something which I supposed to be the report of a gun, and the jingling of glass, as if a window had been broken. My thought was that some careless person from the military parade on the outside, had fired so near the window as to break a pane of glass. But before I had time to think again, Dr. Penny leaped from the pulpit almost over me, for I was kneeling by the sofa behind him. The pulpit was in the front of the church, between the two doors. The rear wall of the church stood upon the brink of the canal. The congregation, in a moment, fell into a perfect panic, and rushed for the doors and the windows, as if they were all distracted. One elderly woman held up a window in the rear of the church, where several, as I was informed, leaped out into the canal. The rush was terrific. Some jumped over the galleries into the aisles below; they ran over each other in the aisles.

I stood up in the pulpit, and not knowing what had happened, put up my hands, and cried at the top of my voice, "Be quiet! Be quiet!" Directly a couple of women rushing up into the pulpit, one on the one side, and the other on the other side, caught hold of me, in a state of distraction. Dr. Penny ran out into the streets, and they were getting out in every direction, as fast as possible. As I did not know that there was any danger, the scene looked so ludicrous to me, that I could scarcely refrain from laughing. They rushed over each other in the aisles, so that in several instances I observed men that had been crushed down, rising up and throwing off others that had rushed upon them. All at length got out.

Several were considerably hurt, but no one killed. But the house was strewn with all sorts of womens apparel. Bonnets, shawls, gloves, handkerchiefs, and parts of dresses, were scattered in every direction. The men had very generally gone out without their hats, I believe; and many persons had been seriously bruised in the awful rush.

I afterwards learned that the walls of the church had been settling for some time, the ground being very damp from its proximity to the canal. It had been spoken of, in the congregation, as not in a satisfactory state; and some were afraid that either the tower would fall, or the roof, or the walls of the building would come down. Of this I had heard nothing myself. The original alarm was created by a timber from the roof, falling end downwards, and breaking through the ceiling, above the lamp in front of the organ.

On examining the house, it was found that the walls had spread in such a manner, that there was indeed danger of the roof falling in. The pressure that night in the gallery was so great as to spread the walls on each side, until there was real danger. At the time this occurred, I greatly feared, as I suppose others did, that the public attention would be diverted, and the work greatly hindered. But the Spirit of the Lord had taken hold of the work in earnest, and nothing seemed to stay it.

The Brick church was thrown open to us, and from that time our meetings alternated between the Second and Third churches, the people of the First church and congregation attending as far as they could get into the house. The three churches, and indeed Christians of every denomination generally, seemed to make common cause, and went to work with a will, to pull sinners out of the fire. We were obliged to hold meetings almost continually. I preached nearly every night, and three times on the Sabbath. We held our meetings of inquiry, after the work took on such a powerful type, very frequently in the morning.

One morning I recollect we had been holding a meeting of inquiry, and a gentleman was present and was converted there, who was the son-in-law of a very praying, godly woman belonging to the Third church. She had been very anxious about him, and had been spending much time in prayer for him. When he returned from the meeting of inquiry, he was full of joy and peace and hope. She had been spending the time in earnest prayer that God would convert him at that meeting. As soon as she met him and he declared his conversion to her, and

from his countenance she saw that it was really so, it overcame her, and she swooned away and fell dead.

There was at that time a high school in Rochester, presided over by a Mr. B, the son of A B, then pastor of the church at Brighton, near Rochester. Mr. B was a skeptic, but was at the head of a very large and flourishing school. As the school was made up of both sexes, a Miss A was his assistant and associate in the school, at that time. Miss A was a Christian woman. The students attended the religious services, and many of them soon became deeply anxious about their souls. One morning Mr. B found that his classes could not recite. When he came to have them before him, they were so anxious about their souls that they wept, and he saw that they were in such a state, that it very much confounded him. He called his associate, Miss A, and told her that the young people were so exercised about their souls that they could not recite; and asked if they had not better send for Mr. Finney to give them instruction. She afterwards informed me of this, and said that she was very glad to have him make the inquiry, and most cordially advised him to send for me. He did so, and the revival took tremendous hold of that school. Mr. B himself was soon hopefully converted, and nearly every person in the school. A few years since, Miss A informed me that more than forty persons, that were then converted in that school, had become ministers. That was a fact that I had not known before. She named many of them to me at the time. A large number of them had become foreign missionaries.

After remaining a few weeks at Josiah Bissell's, we took lodgings in a more central position, at the house of Mr. B, a lawyer of the city, who was a professedly Christian man. His wife's sister was with them, and was an impenitent girl. She was a young woman of fine appearance, an exquisite singer, and a cultivated lady; and, as we soon learned, was engaged in marriage to a man, who was then judge of the supreme court of the state. He was a very proud man, and resisted the anxious seat, and spoke against it. He was absent a good deal from the city, in holding court, and was not that winter converted. A large number of the lawyers, however, were converted; and the young lady to whom he was engaged was converted. I mention this because the Judge afterwards married her; which no doubt led to his own conversion in a revival which occurred some ten years later, the leading particulars of which I shall mention in another part of my narrative.

This revival made a great change in the moral state and subsequent history of Rochester. The great majority of the leading men and women in the city, were converted. A great number of very striking incidents occurred, that I shall not soon forget. One day the lady who first visited me and whose conversion I have mentioned, called on me in company with a friend of hers with whom she wished me to converse. I did so, but found her to all appearance very much hardened, and rather disposed to trifle with the subject. Her husband was a merchant, and they were persons of high standing in the community. When I pressed her to attend to the subject, she said she would not do it, because her husband would not attend to it, and she was not going to leave him. I asked her if she was willing to be lost because her husband would not attend to it; and if it was not folly to neglect her soul because he did his. She replied very promptly, "If he goes to hell, I want to go. I want to go where he does. I do not want to be separated from him, at any rate." It seemed that I could make very little, if any, impression upon her. But from night to night I had been making appeals to the congregation, and calling forward those that were prepared to give their hearts to God; and large numbers were converted every evening.

As I learned afterwards, when this woman went home, her husband said to her, "My dear, I mean to go forward tonight, and give my heart to God." "What!" said she; "I have today told Mr. Finney that I would not become a Christian, or have anything to do with it; that you did not become a Christian, and I would not; and that if you went to hell, I should go with you." "Well," said he, "I do not mean to go to hell. I have made up my mind to go forward tonight, and give my heart to Christ." "Well," said she, "then I will not go to meeting, I do not want to see it. And if you have a mind after all, to become a Christian, you may; I won't." When the time came, he went to meeting alone. The pulpit was between the doors, in the front of the church. The house was a good deal crowded; but he finally got a seat near one of the aisles, in quite the back path of the church. At the close of the meeting, as I had done at other times, I called for those that were anxious and whose minds were made up, to come forward, and take certain seats and occupy a certain space about the pulpit, where we could commend them to God in prayer. It afterward appeared that the wife herself had come to the meeting, had passed up the other aisle, and taken a seat almost opposite him, in the extreme part of the house. When I made the call, he started immediately. She was watching, and as soon as she saw him on his feet, and making his way along the crowded aisle, she also started down the other aisle, and they met in front of the pulpit, and knelt down together as subjects of prayer.

A large number obtained hope on the spot; but this husband and wife did not. They went home, too proud to say much to each other about what they had done, and spent a very restless night. The next day, about ten o'clock, he called to see me, and was shown into my room. My wife occupied a front room on the second floor; and I a room in the rear on the same floor. While I was conversing with him, the servant informed me that a lady was waiting in Mrs. Finney's room to see me. I excused myself for a few moments, and requested him to wait,

while I went in to see her. I found that it was the woman who but the day before had been so stubborn, and the wife of the man who was then in my room. Neither of them knew that the other had called to see me. I conversed with her, and found that she was on the very verge of submitting to Christ. I had learned that he was also, to all appearance, in the same state. I then returned to him and said, "I am going to pray with a lady in Mrs. Finney's room, and we will go in there, if you please, and all join in prayer, together." He followed me, and found his own wife. They looked at each other with surprise, but we were both greatly affected, each to find the other there. We knelt down to pray. I had not proceeded far in prayer before she began to weep, and to pray audibly for her husband. I stopped and listened, and found that she had lost all concern for herself, and was struggling in an agony of prayer for his conversion. His heart seemed to break and give way, and just at this time the bell rang for our dinner. I thought it would be well to leave them together alone. I therefore touched my wife, and we rose silently and went down to dinner, leaving them in prayer. We took a hasty dinner and returned, and found them as mellow, and as humble, and as loving as could be desired.

I have not said much, as yet, of the spirit of prayer that prevailed in this revival, which I must not omit to mention. 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 canalboat, 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 stayed away from the public services to pray, being unable to restrain their feelings under preaching.

And here I must introduce the name of a man, whom I shall have occasion to mention frequently, Mr. Abel Clary. He was the son of a very excellent man, and an elder of the church where I was converted. He was converted in the same revival in which I was. He had been licensed to preach; but his spirit of prayer was such, he was so burdened with the souls of men, that he was not able to preach much, his whole time and strength being given to prayer. The burden of his soul would frequently be so great that he was unable to stand, and he would writhe and groan in agony. I was well acquainted with him, and knew something of the wonderful spirit of prayer that was upon him. He was a very silent man, as almost all are who have that powerful spirit of prayer.

The first I knew of his being at Rochester, a gentleman who lived about a mile west of the city, called on me one day, and asked me if I knew a Mr. Abel Clary, a minister. I told him that I knew him well. "Well," said he, "he is at my house, and has been there for some time, and I don't know what to think of him." I said, "I have not seen him at any of our meetings." "No," he replied, "he cannot go to meeting," he said. "He prays nearly all the time, day and night, and in such an agony of mind that I do not know what to make of it. Sometimes he cannot even stand on his knees, but will lie prostrate on the floor, and groan and pray in a manner that quite astonishes me." I said to the brother, "I understand it; please keep still. It will all come out right; he will surely prevail."

I knew at the time a considerable number of men who were exercised in the same way. A Deacon P, of Camden, Oneida county; a Deacon T, of Rodman, Jefferson county; a Deacon B, of Adams, in the same country; this Mr. Clary, and many others among the men, and a large number of women, partook of the same spirit, and spent a great part of their time in prayer. Father Nash, as we called him, who in several of my fields of labor came to me and aided me, was another of those men that had such a powerful spirit of prevailing prayer. This Mr. Clary continued in Rochester as long as I did, and did not leave it until after I had left. He never, that I could learn, appeared in public, but gave himself wholly to prayer.

I have said that the moral aspect of things was greatly changed by this revival. It was a young city, full of thrift and enterprise, and full of sin. The inhabitants were intelligent and enterprising, in the highest degree; but as the revival swept through the town, and converted the great mass of the most influential people, both men and women, the change in the order, sobriety, and morality of the city was wonderful.

At a subsequent period, which I shall mention in its place, I was conversing with a lawyer, who was converted at this revival of who I have been speaking, and who soon after had been made district attorney of the city. His business was to superintend the prosecution of criminals. From his position he was made thoroughly acquainted with the history of crime in that city. In speaking of the revival in which he was converted, he said to me, many years afterward: "I have been examining the records of the criminal courts, and I find this striking fact, that whereas our city has increased since that revival, threefold, there are not one-third as many prosecutions for crime, as there had been up to that time. This is," he said, "the wonderful influence that revival

had upon the community. Indeed by the power of that revival, public sentiment has been molded. The public affairs of the city have been, in a great measure in the hands of Christian men; and the controlling influences in the community have been on the side of Christ."

Among other conversions I must not forget to mention that of Mr. P, a prominent citizen of that place, a bookseller. Mr. P was an infidel; not an atheist, but a disbeliever in the divine authority of the Bible. He was a reader and a thinker, a man of keen, shrewd mind, strong will, and most decided character. He was, I believe, a man of good outward morals, and a gentleman highly respected. He came to my room early one morning, and said to me, "Mr. Finney, there is a great movement here on the subject of religion, but I am a skeptic, and I want you to prove to me that the Bible is true." The Lord enabled me at once to discern his state of mind, so far as to decide the course I should take with him. I said to him, "Do you believe in the existence of God?" "O yes!" he said, I am not an atheist. "Well, do you believe that you have treated God as you ought? Have you respected His authority? Have you loved Him? Have you done that which you thought would please Him, and with the design to please Him? Don't you admit that you ought to love Him, and ought to worship Him, and ought to obey Him, according to the best light you have?" "O yes!" he said, I admit all this. "But have you done so?" I asked. "Why, no," he answered, "I cannot say that I have." "Well then," I replied, "why should I give you farther information, and farther light, if you will not do your duty and obey the light you already have? Now," said I, "when you will make up your mind to live up to your convictions, to obey God according to the best light you have; when you will make up your mind to repent of your neglect thus far, and to please God just as well as you know how, the rest of your life, I will try to show you that the Bible is from God. Until then it is of no use for me to do any such thing." I did not sit down, and I think had not asked him to sit down. He replied, "I do not know but that is fair;" and retired.

I heard no more of him until the next morning. Soon after I arose, he came to my room again; and as soon as he entered, he clapped his hands and said, "Mr. Finney, God has wrought a miracle! I went down to the store," he continued, "after I left your room, thinking of what you had said; and I made up my mind that I would repent of what I knew was wrong in my relations to God, and that hereafter I would live according to the best light I had. And when I made up my mind to this," said he, "my feelings so overcame me that I fell; and I do not know but I should have died, if it had not been for Mr. --, who was with me in the store." From this time he has been, as all who know him are aware, a praying, earnest Christian man. For many years he has been one of the trustees of Oberlin College, has stood by us through all our trials, and has aided us with his means and his whole influence.

During this great revival, persons wrote letters from Rochester, to their friends abroad, giving an account of the work, which were read in different churches throughout several states, and were instrumental in producing great revivals of religion. Many persons came in from abroad to witness the great work of God, and were converted. I recollect that a physician was so attracted by what he heard of the work that he came from Newark, New Jersey, to Rochester, to see what the Lord was doing, and was himself converted there. He was a man of talents and high culture, and has been for years an ardent Christian laborer for immortal souls.

One evening, I recollect, when I made a call for the anxious to come forward and submit, a man of influence in a neighboring town came forward himself, and several members of his family, and gave themselves to God. Indeed, the work spread like waves in every direction. I preached in as many places round about, as I had time and strength to do, while my main labors were in Rochester. I went to Canandaigua and preached several times. There the Word took effect, and many were converted. The pastor, Rev. Ansel Eddy, entered heartily into the work. A former pastor, an elderly man, an Englishman by birth, also did what he could to forward the work. Wherever I went, the Word of God took immediate effect; and it seemed only necessary to present the law of God, and the claims of Christ, in such relations and proportions as were calculated to secure the conversion of men, and they would be converted by scores.

The greatness of the work at Rochester, at that time, attracted so much of the attention of ministers and Christians throughout the State of New York, throughout New England, and in many parts of the United States, that the very fame of it was an efficient instrument in the hands of the Spirit of God in promoting the greatest revival of religion throughout the land, that this country had then ever witnessed. Years after this, in conversing with Dr. Beecher about this powerful revival and its results, he remarked: "That was the greatest work of God, and the greatest revival of religion, that the world has ever seen, in so short a time. One hundred thousand," he remarked, "were reported as having connected themselves with churches, as the results of that great revival. This," he said, "is unparalleled in the history of the church, and of the progress of religion." He spoke of this having been done in one year; and said that in no year during the Christian era, had we any account of so great a revival of religion.

Revival in Rochester, 1830

From the time of the New Lebanon convention, of which I have spoken, open and public opposition to revivals of religion was less and less manifested, and especially did I meet with much less personal opposition than I had met with before. It gradually but greatly subsided. At Rochester I felt nothing of it. Indeed the waters of salvation had risen so high, revivals had become so powerful and extensive, and people had time to become acquainted with them and their results, in such measure, that men were afraid to oppose them as they had done. Ministers had come to understand them better, and the most ungodly sinners had been convinced that they were indeed the work of God. So manifestly were the great mass of the conversions sound, the converts really regenerated and made new creatures, so thoroughly were individuals and whole communities reformed, and so permanent and unquestionable were the results, that the conviction became nearly universal, that they were the work of God.