



## Revivals And Church History :: A testimony from the Cane Ridge Revival, 1801

### A testimony from the Cane Ridge Revival, 1801 - posted by twayneb (), on: 2009/9/28 20:09

The following is taken from the autobiography of Rev. James Finley, published in 1853 (My copy is really that old). It is the story of the authors salvation at the Cane Ridge revival of 1801. Thought it would bless you all.

In the month of August, 1801, I learned there was to be a great meeting at Cane Ridge, in my father's old congregation. Feeling a great desire to see the wonderful things which had come to my ears, and having been solicited by some of my old schoolmates to go over into Kentucky for the purpose of revisiting the scenes of my boyhood, I resolved to go. Obtaining company, I started from my woody retreat in Highland county. Having reached the neighborhood of the meeting, we stopped and put up for the night. The family, who seemed to be posted in regard to all the movements of the meeting, cheerfully answered all our inquiries, and gave us all the information we desired; The next morning we started for the meeting. On the way I said to my companions, " Now, if I fall it must be by physical power and not by singing and praying ;" and as I prided myself upon my manhood and courage, I had no fear of being overcome by any nervous excitability, or being frightened into religion. We arrived upon the ground, and here a scene presented itself to my mind not only novel and unaccountable, but awful beyond description. A vast crowd, supposed by some to have amounted to twenty-five thousand, was collected together. The noise was like the roar of niagara. The vast sea of human beings seemed to be agitated as if by a storm. I counted seven ministers, all preaching at one time, some on stumps, others in wagons, and one the Rev. William Burke, now of Cincinnati-was standing on a tree which had, in falling, lodged against another. Some of the people were singing, others praying, some crying for mercy in the most piteous accents, while others were shouting most vociferously. While witnessing these scenes, a peculiarly-strange sensation, such as I had never felt before, came over me. My heart beat tumultuously, my knees trembled, my lip quivered, and I felt as though I must fall to the ground. A strange supernatural power seemed to pervade the entire mass of mind there collected. I became so weak and powerless that I found it necessary to sit down. Soon after I left and went into the woods and there I strove to rally and man up my courage. I tried to philosophize in regard to these wonderful exhibitions, resolving them into mere sympathetic excitement-a kind of religious enthusiasm, inspired by songs and eloquent harangues. My pride was wounded, for I had supposed that my mental and physical strength and vigor could most successfully resist these influences. After some time I returned to the scene of excitement the waves of which, if possible, had risen still higher. The same awfulness of feeling came over me. I stepped up on to a log, where I could have a better view of the surging sea of humanity. The scene that then presented itself to my mind was indescribable. At one time I saw at least five hundred swept down in a moment, as if a battery of a thousand guns had been opened upon them, and then immediately followed shrieks and shouts that rent the very heavens. My hair rose up on my head, my whole frame trembled, the blood ran cold in my veins, and I fled for the woods a second time, and wished I had staid at home. While I remained here my feelings became intense and insupportable. A sense of suffocation and blindness seemed to come over me, and I thought I was going to die. There being a tavern about half mile off, I concluded to go and get some brandy, and see if it would not strengthen my nerves. When I arrived there I was disgusted with the sight that met my eyes. Here I saw about one hundred men engaged in drunken revelry, playing cards, trading horses, quarrelling, and fighting. After some time I got to the bar, and took a dram and left, feeling that I was as near hell as I wished to be, either in this or the world to come. The brandy had no effect in allaying my feelings, but, if any thing, made me worse. Night at length came on, and I was afraid to see any of my companions. I cautiously avoided them, fearing lest they should discover something the matter with me. In this state I wandered about from place to place, in and around the encampment. At times it seemed as if all the sins I had ever committed in my life were vividly brought up in array before my terrified imagination, and under their awful pressure I felt that I must die if I did not get relief. Then it was that I saw clearly through the thin veil of Universalism, and this refuge of lies was swept away by the Spirit of God. Then fell the scales from my sin-blinded eyes, and I realized, in all its force and power, the awful truth, that if I died in my sins I was a lost man forever. Oh how I dreaded the death of the soul; for

"There is a death whose pang  
Outlasts the fleeting breath:  
Oh what eternal horrors hang  
Around the second death!"

Notwithstanding all this, my heart was so proud and hard that I would not have fallen to the ground for the whole state of Kentucky. I felt that such an event would have been an everlasting disgrace, and put a final quietus on my boasted man

hood and courage. At night I went to a barn in the neighborhood, and creeping under the hay, spent a most dismal night. I resolved, in the morning, to start for home, for I felt that I was a ruined man. Finding one of the friends who came over with me, I said, "Captain, let us be off; I will stay no longer." He assented, and getting our horses we started for home. We said but little on the way, though many a deep, longdrawn sigh told the emotions of my heart. When we arrived at the Blue Lick Knobs, I broke the silence which reigned mutually between us. Like long-pent-up waters, seeking for an avenue in the rock, the fountains of my soul were broken up, and I exclaimed, "Captain, if you and I don't stop our wickedness the devil will get us both." Then came from my streaming eyes the bitter tears, and I could scarcely refrain from screaming aloud. This startled and alarmed my companion, and he commenced weeping too. Night approaching, we put up near Mayslick, the whole of which was spent by me in weeping and promising God, if he would spare me till morning I would pray and try to mend my life and abandon my wicked courses. As soon as day broke I went to the woods to pray, and no sooner had my knees touched the ground than I cried aloud for mercy and salvation, and fell prostrate. My cries wore so loud that they attracted the attention of the neighbors, many of whom gathered around me. Among the number was a German from Switzerland, who had experienced religion. He, understanding fully my condition, had me carried to his house and laid on a bed, The old Dutch saint directed me to look right away to the Savior. He then kneeled at the bedside and prayed for my salvation most fervently, in Dutch and broken English. He then rose and sung in the same manner, and continued singing and praying alternately till nine o'clock, when suddenly my load was gone, my guilt removed, and presently the direct witness from heaven shone full upon my soul. Then there flowed such copious streams of love into the hitherto waste and desolate places in my soul, that I thought I should die with excess of joy. I cried, I laughed, I shouted, and so strangely did I appear to all but my Dutch brother, that they thought me deranged.

**Re: A testimony from the Cane Ridge Revival, 1801, on: 2009/9/28 20:46**

Brother, that is the first post on this forum in a very long time that just warmed my heart with Jesus love, edified me, blessed me and encouraged me.

I thank you, I bless you and I love you in the love of Messiah for taking the time to post that heavenly testimony.  
neil

**Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2009/9/29 0:08**

hi,WOW!!!

**Re: - posted by Galations220, on: 2010/6/29 22:58**

Wow, that was amazing! I just read it to my family. What awesome conviction! I especially like this part

"At times it seemed as if all the sins I had ever committed in my life were vividly brought up in array before my terrified imagination, and under their awful pressure I felt that I must die if I did not get relief. Then it was that I saw clearly through the thin veil of Universalism, and this refuge of lies was swept away by the Spirit of God. Then fell the scales from my sin-blinded eyes, and I realized, in all its force and power, the awful truth, that if I died in my sins I was a lost man forever."

I liked that part because i too was once deceived by the false doctrine of universalism. Thank God I'm not any more.