A Prayer Gone Unheeded:
Taylor's and Finney's Competition for the Souls of Humanity

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Following the end of the American Revolution in 1783, with an acknowledgement of "a more perfect union," the people found themselves in a crisis of purpose. This is not to differentiate from the tide of unsettled souls that existed prior to the Americans' victory over the preeminent power of the time. It is difficult to deny that the growing numbers of individuals concerned over the fate of their souls became a compelling lure to those that had either lacked the conviction or crowd desire to follow the tenets found in the Christian Bible. By 1796, a movement referred to as the Second Great Awakening sprang forth, spreading the word of God across nearly all of the developed United States. Taking on the attributes of wildfire, the movement's conversions stuck and extended to the surrounding provinces that were connected to those previously exposed.

Many prominent figures took the opportunity to share the Christian message with their fellow man.[1] Two of the more recognized evangelists, Charles Finney and Timothy Dwight, are best known for

[1] These individuals include, though not limited to, James McGready, Charles G. Finney, Timothy Dwight IV, Richard Allen, Henry Ward Beecher, Lyman Beecher, Leonard Bacon, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Leonard Woods, Ebenezer Porter, Asahel Nettleton, Bennet Tyler, Silas Tertius Rand, and Nathanael William Taylor.

their influences on conversions, but deciding which of the two had the more pronounced effect has been subject to debate amongst historians.[2] Likewise, Bennet Tyler and Nathanael W. Taylor are two that are often mentioned together, if at all, on account of the rivalry the two had on their contrasting views of New Divinity Calvinism.[3] What remains peculiar is that both Finney and Taylor shared incredibly similar ideas of the dynamic between God and the rest of humanity, and yet the reputation of the former vastly overshadows that of the latter. While difficult, it is possible to get an idea as to why a phenomenon such as this could have occurred by examining the characters and personalities of Finney and Taylor, the individuals they associated with, who may or may not have enhanced their popularity, and the territory they traversed in their campaigns. Finney has been portrayed as a stern and intimidating man that would not be found appealing to modern tastes, with Beecher describing Finney as a man whose "boldness and severity appeared to some to verge upon rashness and denunciation."[4] Taylor, meanwhile, was a close friend and partner to Timothy Dwight IV, which should have

[2] For example, U.S. Religious historian Mark Noll states that "Charles Grandson Finney exemplified the power of revivalism" with "his clear penetrating gaze, vigorous speaking voice, and relentlessly logical style-[which] made every bit as influential as the era's great politicians."; Mark Noll, *The Work We Have to Do: A History of Protestants in America* (New York: Oxford University Press Inc., 2000), 58-59.
[3] One prominent example is Douglas Sweeney's book, *Nathaniel Taylor, New Haven Theology, and the Legacy of Jonathan Edwards*.
[4] Lyman Beecher, *Autobiography, Correspondence, Etc,* (New York: Harper and Brothers, Publishers, Franklin Square, 1865), 91.

given Taylor enough prominence to be remembered much more than he is.

Before getting into the more nuanced character traits demonstrated by Finney and Taylor, it is crucial to examine the similarities and differences in their principles. Furthermore, their ideas need to be compared to other theologies in order to best understand the religious environment the two preachers found themselves in during the time of their campaigns. Of the variety of theologies that existed at the time, the one that is most important in relation to Finney and Taylor is Calvinism, for while neither ultimately follows this system completely, it greatly influenced their beliefs as well as their fellow Christians. The origin of Calvinism goes too far back—and in itself is too fractured—to give any justice to it in the space provided. Instead, it would be best to begin where Finney and Taylor branched out from it.

During the First Great Awakening in 1741, a Christian preacher and theologian named Jonathan Edwards delivered his famous work, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." In it, Edwards portrayed humanity on the brink of damnation if not for the grace of God. The sermon, like many during the Great Awakening, also emphasized the conception of predestination, the idea that God had already chosen those who would be saved from damnation. Edwards, however, followed the

understanding that choice played a vital role in establishing a relationship with God, but ultimately felt that free will would always result in the act of sinning.[5] The problem lay in the omniscience of God versus humans' lack of omniscience, which made it difficult to determine who was and was not among the Elect, or among the saved. It is this feature of Calvinism that may perhaps be what Finney and Taylor most questioned, and both men moved away from the Calvinistic system when each developed his own.

Finney's Presbyterian affiliation derived from Calvinism, and taking this into consideration, it is understandable to identify Finney's shared similarities with Edwards' tale of fire and brimstone, but there are enough differences easily seen even at first glance. Both men played with the notion that God's will was infinitely freer than human will, and that any absence of action that would correspond with the desires of God would demonstrate that that individual's soul has not been saved. This is interesting as Finney, like most Protestants of the time, believed that grace was rewarded by faith, not action. Edwards and other Calvinists worked around this idea by stating that even actions that would correspond with those desired by God without the intervention of the

[5] Bruce Kuklick, *Churchmen and Philosophers: From Jonathan Edwards to John Dewey* (New York: Yale University Press New Haven and London, 1985), 35.

Holy Spirit would be subject to damnation, thus allowing that only the pure-hearted who had communion with God to receive salvation, an ideology Finney thought unsupported by the Bible; however, Finney had no such neat argument he could use to secure the damned in their respective positions. Having been a lawyer prior to his revelation of God's blessings, Finney was not a man who would rest on his Calvinist laurels. While no longer in the legal profession, Finney could never fully escape the passion of his youth. Though he saw the Bible as Holy Scripture, he also viewed the book as a contract that had been established between God and all of humanity for the latter's rehabilitation.

Finney's views on atonement contrasted with the previously established role of Christ in humanity's salvation, believing that "Christ, in his atonement, merely did that which was necessary as a condition of the forgiveness of sin; and not that which canceled sin, in the sense of literally paying the indebtedness of sinners."[6] It is because of this unorthodox idea that B.B. Warfield later stated that "It is quite clear that what Finney gives us is less a theology than a system of morals. God might be eliminated from it entirely without essentially changing its character."[7] He therefore advocated the use of what he described as

[6] Charles Finney, *Autobiography* (New Jersey: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1906), 59.
[7] Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Perfectionism, Part Two* (Oxford University Press, 1931), 193.

"retributive justice." This justice, much like Dante Alighieri's *Purgatorio*, although on Earth rather than Purgatory, sought out the purification of souls via services that provided punishment rather than rehabilitation. These services included a variety of activities, usually including, but not limited to, the abolishment of slavery, and the advancement of women's, native, and black liberties. Finney's more prominent activist in these services was a man named Theodore Dwight Weld, who became one of the leading abolitionists in American after meeting Finney in the spring of 1826, demonstrating how important Finney's theology was to the development of the United States in the 19th century.

Taylor's New Haven Theology also came from Calvinism, but unlike Finney's Presbyterian system, it demonstrated much more aggression toward its forebear. Expanding on the ideas presented by Jonathan Edwards, who happened to be the grandfather of his friend and mentor Timothy Dwight IV, Taylor also tried to connect actions humans perform with the free will to do otherwise. While Taylor agreed with Edwards when portraying humanity as tainted souls, unlike Edwards—who thought no one person had the ability to outweigh the destiny prescribed by God—Taylor felt that, although very unlikely, an individual had the distinct possibility that the odds would turn in their

favor.[8] Every other moment in which an individual exists is in a state of sin, for it is in humanity's nature to do so.[9] This can be seen in his response to accusations of un-Christian-like teachings, Taylor stated that while he did "not believe that the nature of the human mind… is itself sinful," he did "believe that sin is universally is no other than … preference of one's self to all others," though "such is the nature of the human mind" and thus "they are truly and properly said to be sinners by nature."[10] While confusing, the implication of Taylor's believes results that all people were inherently sinful because of selfishness imbued in human nature.

This momentary act of non-sinning would not diminish the necessity of God, since the chances of not sinning without the assistance of God were small, making the chances of living a non-sinful existence without God impossible. Nevertheless, Taylor's theology made God's *will* less important to the affairs of humanity than it was in classic Calvinism, and thus a controversial idea to those that remained faithful to older traditions. By granting sinners the chance to participate in divine activity without God's foresight, Taylor threatened to undermine the omniscience of the Lord's character and make folly of His grand design.

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[8] Kuklick, 102.
[9] Ibid, 102.
[10] Nathanael William Taylor, "New Haven Divinity," *Vermont Chronicle* (Bellows Falls, VT), Mar. 02, 1832.

These arguments opened Finney and Taylor up to opportunists who saw the elitist nature of Edwards' theology as oppressive, and in doing so exposed them to criticism for challenging established notions of what made God a deity worthy of worship. These criticisms lead one to wonder why Finney became as well-known and respected in later times.

Perhaps one of the more intriguing aspects of Finney's popularity has to be attributed to the man's personality. Even before his conversion, Finney had been recognized as a knowledgeable, intelligent and trustworthy man. In his autobiography, Finney recalled a man whom he referred to as Mr. C who told his wife, who was trying to convert him, "If religion is true, why don't you convert Finney? If you Christians can convert Finney, I will believe in religion."[11] Another man, an old lawyer whom Finney named Mr. M, thought Finney was playing a hoax by "simply trying to see what [he] could make Christians believe."[12] After discovering Finney at a town meeting elucidating the experiences that drove him toward Christianity, these men responded in shock, as Mr. C "got up, pressed through the crowd, and went home, leaving his hat," while Mr. M also went back to his house, but before he stated "there is no mistake; but [Finney] is deranged, that is clear."[13] Prior to Finney's

[11] Finney, 40.
[12] Ibid, 40.
[13] Ibid, 40.

conversion, even the town minister, Mr. Gale, confessed in discouraging the church's wishes to pray for Finney's soul after Gale's multiple encounters with Finney led him to believe that Finney was "very much enlightened upon the subject of religion, and very much hardened." Although after Finney's public confession, Gale humbly admitted that his examination of Finney's character was premature.[14]

His intelligence and talent for manipulation passed down from his tenure as a lawyer, which allowed him to take advantage of insecurities of the masses that, at the time, other ministers were either unable or unwilling to penetrate. An anonymous author for *The Congregationalist* recalled Finney coming to his hometown of Reading, Pennsylvania "like one of the old prophets suddenly rising up in a group of easy-going, careless idolaters, and disturbing them with premonitions of quick-coming judgments."[15] While Finney was at Reading "many of his personal addresses to unconverted men were so brusque and abrupt as to repel them, and some carried the impression of evangelical religion thus made with them, to their graves."[16] During this time, the author stated that Finney believed himself as "God's messenger to dying men," which emphasized the need for Finney's revival because everyone is

[14] Ibid, 40, 41.
[15] "Recollections of Charles G. Finney," *Congregationalist* (Boston, MA), Oct. 07, 1875.
[16] "Recollections of Charles G. Finney."

dying, and anyone who had died but was not saved by Christ was subject to damnation.[17] This message was assisted by what the author described as his "Tall, severe of aspect, harsh at time in his tones, and breaking out occasionally into terrible denunciation of sins and sinners" which allowed him to "stir men's wrath."[18] This stirring may have contributed to "the young theological students," that had "become his followers" who "endeavour[ed] to ape his style and manner," though they became "harder and [more] outrageous [than Finney]."[19]

If it was Finney's ability to place the fear of God in the hearts of men and women that allowed him to be successful in conversions, what attributes did Taylor possess, or not possess, that would have assisted him in his sermons? Though it is uncertain to determine Taylor's behavior toward those he addressed, as is the case with Finney, it is possible to indirectly decipher Taylor's characteristics, and by extension how he conducted himself around others, by examining materials he left behind. In March of 1832, Taylor had published at least two variations of a letter explaining his theology. This was due to allegations made that he had "departed from the true faith respecting the influences of the Holy

[17] Ibid, "Recollections of Charles G. Finney."
[18] Ibid, "Recollections of Charles G. Finney."
[19] Ephraim Perkins, *"Bunker Hill" Contest* (New York: H. & E. Phinney & Co. Gen'l Agents, 1826), 57-8.

Spirit, even denying his influences altogether."[20] These letters are summaries of his theology, but they also help illustrate contextual characteristics of Taylor's personality. The first clue to understanding Taylor is the existence of the letter itself. Given that, according to Taylor's accounts, he was accused of rejecting fundamentals of Christianity, it appears that Taylor was uncomfortable with the notion that any such pretense would look poorly on him, which implies that Taylor cared about how others perceived him. Though Taylor was concerned with public image, there is reason to think that he found the whims of additional denominations "to denounce others as heretics, merely because they differ" in theological beliefs to be uncomplimentary to the practice.[21] This may be a jab on Taylor's part for the anguish and annoyance placed on him during this ordeal, but there are grounds that suggest Taylor may have believed this strategy. Beginning with eleven conditions which connect Taylor's beliefs with those of his opponents, it would seem that he wished to extend an olive branch and hoped "that they might be satisfactory to all Orthodox … brethren," before he went into the more nuanced characteristics of his theology.[22]

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[20] Taylor, "New Haven Divinity."
[21] Ibid, "New Haven Divinity."
[22] Ibid, "New Haven Divinity;" Nathanael William Taylor and J. Hawes, "Dr. Taylor's Letter," *Observer and Telegraph* (Hudson, OH), Mar. 15, 1832.

While these letters are useful in this regard, the lack of additional materials outside written variations of his sermons also provide insights about Taylor. The examination of personal letters and writing help separate Taylor's personal life from his professional, and thus is crucial in finding Taylor the man from Taylor the theologian. It is either the case that Taylor had many personal writings published, and time has been unfavorable to preserve a legacy of outspoken behavior similar to Finney, or Taylor was not the kind of man that opened himself often to the trails of public image, and only did so as he felt was necessary. The former situation is unlikely given that difference the moment of his death was a century and a half ago, which if the statement is true would make his legacy very unlucky. More importantly however, the existence of Finney's activities from witnesses into modern times would indicate that Taylor's activities would also survive if there were any truth to this statement. With only rare specimen of personal materials available, evidence suggests that Taylor may have been a shy man that preferred to restrict himself from interacting with individuals outside his familiarity.

The way Finney and Taylor presented themselves during their sermons had a large impact on the success of their campaigns. The impressions left behind by their onlookers played perhaps as much, if not more of a role in their success and failure. Theologians who attended the

lectures of Finney and Taylor found themselves reacting more to the mechanics of their deliveries and interpretations of Christianity than was the norm of the masses. There were, however, those that found Finney's methods unsatisfying to the cause of regeneration. While he became recognized for his effective evangelistic campaigns, converting around 500,000 people, multiple members of different theologies opposed Finney's antagonistic behavior to the onlookers during his sermons.[23] By the time Finney arrived in Pennsylvania, the author mentioned that rumors circulated which "denounced him as a fanatic, or ridiculed as an intemperate zealot."[24] During Finney's time at Bunker Hill, a man named Ephraim Perkins, a Unitarian minister, wrote that in regards to Finney, "It is with his professional character only, that we have any concern."[25] Unitarians, though awed with Finney's undeniable talents for luring people to God's love, believed Finney's judgmental performances went contrary to "God as a kind and tender father," that bestows mercy and forgiveness toward humanity.[26] For them, preaching was best delivered with "vital piety" so that they could "forgive freely, without atonement, even seventy times seven in a day."[27]

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[23] Sproul, 169.
[24] "Recollections of Charles G. Finney," 2.
[25] Perkins, 56.
[26] Ibid, 69.
[27] Ibid, 69.

There were others that were more antagonistic toward Finney's theology and technique. Asahel Nettleton had been a theologian for twenty-five years prior to meeting Finney in Albany in 1827. After two meetings with each other, both Finney and Nettleton claimed to have been disappointed at the other for being unable to merge their teachings into one coherent thought. Finney found Nettleton to be "very reserved and distant, so much so that he was unable to approach him, or enter much into conversation."[28] Nettleton, meanwhile, "found that Mr. Finney was unwilling to abandon certain measures which he had ever regarded as exceedingly calamitous to the cause of revivals."[29] In a letter Nettleton sent to Beecher by May 10th of that year, Nettleton wrote:

> You may think it strange that I did not receive [Mr. Finney] and run the risk of moulding him. But I could not do it without sanctioning all he had done, and joining disorganizers all over the world; for…if I should not succeed, it would ruin us both, and if I should have succeeded, the disorganizers would say I had spoiled him.[30]

Nettleton not only had issues with Finney's theology, but also with how Finney conducted his sermons. In contrast to Finney, who lashed out onto the crowds with such conquering zeal of conquest, Nettleton preferred the company of people who could keep themselves still.[31]

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[28] S.C. Aikin in discussion with Beecher, April 1827.
[29] Bennet Tyler, *The Memoirs of Dr. Nettleton,* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark), 342.
[30] Beecher, 93-4.
[31] Ibid, 94.

Throughout this process, Nettleton was not without friends that had his best interests in mind. On May 28, 1828, a year after Nettleton's initial encounter with Finney, Beecher in a resonance to Nettleton's crusade against Finney, told Nettleton he should not have entered into "a personal collision with Mr. Finney" as Nettleton's "character and high standing in the Church [was] too important to be brought down into a protracted controversy of this kind."[32] Much like Taylor, Nettleton was a "reverential, timid, secretive" man, which might explain how Finney's popularity may have been able to outshine Nettleton with the "great zeal and of considerable native eloquence" Nettleton despised.[33] That is not to say Nettleton saw no value in Finney's work, merely that "*we can not justify his faults for the sake of his excellencies.*"[34]

While many individuals tended to agree with Nettleton's sentiments toward Finney's conduct, most decided to stand aside on account of Finney's results in conversions. Even Canadian Baptist Silas Tertius Rand, though found "some things [he] disapproved in Finney" but he thought Finney was a "good and useful man."[35] Beecher, in regards to Finney' preaching, stated, "There is such an amount of truth and power…and so great an amount of good hopefully done, that if he

[32] Ibid, 105.
[33] Tyler, 339.
[34] Beecher, 96-7.
[35] Ibid, 303.

can far restrained as that he shall do more good than evil, then it would be dangerous to oppose him, lest at length we might be found to fight against God."[36] In 1827, Beecher "vowed solemnly" that "he would fight" Finney if he "came to Boston." By August, 1831 however, Finney arrived at Boston after getting approval to do so at Beecher's request. Within four years, Finney's influence had begun to be felt by even the most prominent of theologians of the time, and allies who were once enemies were beginning to open new locations not previously available.[37]

Finney's ministry took place in what he described as "a burnt district," which experienced "a reveal of religion…[that] resulted in an reaction so extensive and profound as to leave the impression on many minds that religion was a mere delusion."[38] As Finney made his way these areas of central and western New York, spreading controversy as fast as his theology, Taylor faced challenges of his own. Beecher "acknowledged that Taylorism's freedom fit Finney's revivals," but this was not a boon that assisted Taylor as much as it did Finney.[39] This disturbed Beecher enough to advise Taylor "to use the amputating knife

[36] Ibid, 106.
[37] Ibid, 108.
[38] Finney, 83.
[39] Kuklick, 107.

until all the diseased limbs of theology shall be removed."[40] More interesting, however, was that Taylor "was blamed for Finney."[41] During Nettleton's dispute with Finney in 1828, Beecher described Nettleton's frustration when "He got the notion that the New Haven brethren were currying favor with Finney and…felt as though he had fought a battle, and we had not duly appreciated it" as "the real origin of all his bitterness against Taylor."[42] Throughout Beecher's trial narrative in 1835, he used Taylor and Finney in conjunction with the other, demonstrating the connection Beecher saw between the two men.[43] Despite the growing opinion that Taylor's relation to Finney's campaign was as a catalyst at best and as mastermind at worst, these held no grounds that would assist Nettleton from removing Taylor and Finney from his self-constructed theological war. It was lucky for Nettleton, then, that during this time Taylor "had been openly charged by Messrs. Hewitt, and Harvey, and other with Arminian and Pelagian heresy," claiming that "He has adopted principles in his explanations and statements which will lead, by inevitable consequence, to the denial of important doctrines; and that his speculations will pave the way for the

[40] Finney in discussion with Leonard Bacon, April 1831.
[41] Kuklick, 107.
[42] Beecher, 108.
[43] Ibid, 376, 381, 383-4, 389,

gradual influx of error upon the American churches."[44] Nettleton found these charges sound, claiming that "the New Haven system [is] radically Arminian."[45] But even if these claims had no validity, Taylor's enemies were capable of attacking him via the negative impact his presence was providing toward student enrollment at Yale. Because of this anomaly, Porter, a friend to Beecher, expressed his annoyance by stating that with "Taylor's views, one of the worst faults I find is the indefinite and obscure character" and that of "all annuals of theological discussion, I have seen no match for Dr. Taylor's obscurity."[46]

That is not to say that Taylor had no allies that defended him. Perhaps the greatest advocate of Taylor's theology was Beecher, whom when the latter was told by Leonard Woods to abandon the former, stated "I'll never denounce Taylor. To reach Taylor… [you] must pass over my dead body. My bones shall whiten on the battlefields besides Taylor's."[47] Beecher was prepared to fight in Nettleton's theological war if it meant defending Taylor's theology from molestation. It seems Beecher's infatuation with Taylor was already intact by March 31, 1826, when Beecher requested Taylor to attend at his "late charge Saturday after next, and as many Sabbaths as may be agreeable to you and to [the

[44] Ibid, 199-200.
[45] Ibid, 203.
[46] Ibid, 159
[47] Kuklick, 108.

people at the church]" as "It will comfort my people much, and bring them around you for advice, and give you a commanding power to aid them in the settlement of minister."[48] Beecher's loyalty toward Taylor would not go unpunished, for people he called friends became his opponents. Bennet Tyler, who was a great force that endorsed against New Haven Theology, reflected on his feelings toward Beecher once he appeared to be sided with Taylor, stating, "I love the man. I have confidence in his piety. I shall cherish with warm affection my long and intimate acquaintance with him…yet, if he lends his influence to promote what I believe to be dangerous error, I shall feel it my duty to oppose him."[49] Even Porter's testimony, whilst criticizing Taylor, served to warn Beecher of the dangers he was opening himself to as a result of his alignment with Taylor; though Porter made sure to include that Beecher was an "*old friend*, and…[Porter had] much confidence in [Beecher's] integrity as a man and a minister as [Beecher] could demand."[50] Nevertheless, Beecher did not lose his faith in Taylor's theology, with Finney's initial emergence the brief exception.

If Finney was Taylor's untamed sword for New Haven Theology, Beecher was Taylor's compliant shield that protected him from harm,

[48] Beecher, 48.
[49] Ibid, 377.
[50] Ibid, 159.

even at the expense of his own well-being. Perhaps nothing demonstrated this incidence more thoroughly about Beecher's affiliation with Taylor and Finney's cause than in 1837/8 when Beecher was charged with heresy. When explaining the reasoning for this accusation, Tyler wrote that "Had it not been for his connection with these men…he never would have been the object of such jealousy and suspicion," and that "had he been understood to sympathize with men such as Dr. Porter, Dr. Woods, Dr. Humphrey, etc., in relation to New Haven speculations, he might have gone to the West and taught the New England divinity, as it was taught by [their] standard divines, without molestation."[51] The war Nettleton referred to, and what Beecher was prepared for, had begun, and the outcome would determine the superiority of Old School Presbyterianism versus the New School Presbyterianism that rose from Taylor's and Finney's efforts.

Finney and Taylor were salesmen, their brand of theology their product. If they were to have any hope of overcoming the antagonism displayed by Nettleton, Tyler, and other follows of Old School Presbyterianism, they had reach out to as many people as possible. Throughout his travels in the Burnt Over District, Finney found that "in all their prayer meetings…[there was] a custom that prevail[ed]… to the

[51] Ibid, 376.

same effect [as]: Religion is good; I do not enjoy it; I have nothing else to say, but I must do my duty. I hope you will all pray for me."[52] Because of these "offensive, and calculated" customs, Finney's crusade was one of reeducation for the purpose of teaching the correct methods of talking to Christ and fellow Christians.[53] Places Finney traversed after the Western Reveal were Auburn, Troy, Little Falls, Wilmington, Philadelphia, Reading, Lancaster, New York City, and intermediate points.[54] These locations are trivial though when compared to his campaign at Rochester, where Finney made the most impact. In September, 1830, Finney moved there at the bequest of Elder Josiah Bissell after word that "the state of religion is so low [there, and] the good people of Rochester felt powerless to do anything about it."[55] During Bissell's tenure as Rochester preacher, his inability to maintain stability within his denomination and failure to convert new members resulted in a split in the religious community and "Bissell's attempt to Christianize the post office…the butt of jokes."[56] Within six months, the presence of Finney and his wife Lydia had already made a dramatic

[52] Finney, 83-4.
[53] Ibid, 83-4.
[54] Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (London: Cornell University Press, 1950), 154.
[55] Josiah Bissell in discussion with Charles Finney, September 1829; Paul E. Johnson, *A Shopkeeper's Millennium: Society and Revivals in Rochester, New York, 1815-1837* (London: Cornell University Press, 1950), 94.
[56] Cross, 92-3.

influence on the town's inhabitants. The streets were paved with Christian activity, as "Pious women went door-to-door praying for trouble souls. The high school stopped classes and prayed. Businessmen closed their doors and prayed with their families" and "[no one] could not go upon the streets and hear any conversation, except religion."[57] He accomplished this by converting "the great mass of the most influential people," which resulted in an increase of new church members that were "men of wealth, talents, and influence--those who move in the highest circles of society."[58] This would give Finney's contributions to the revival a lasting economic contribution as well as a spiritual one.

Taylor had neither the time or will to compete with Finney's campaigns during the Western Reveal. First and foremost a teacher, Taylor was appointed Professor of Didactic Theology at Yale in 1822. Alongside this position, Taylor was minister of the first New Haven church which opened ten years earlier. If Taylor was to find any of the success Finney had found, he would have had to follow Finney's example and abandon he work in New Haven. This could have been detrimental to the cause according to Hudson, who stated, "Beecher was to be the great organizer and promoter of the New England Awakening,

[57] Ibid, 95; Robert L. Stanton in discussion with Charles Finney, January 1872.
[58] Finney, 273; *Observer*, November 12, 1830

while Taylor was the theologian who worked out the appeal and provided the intellectual defense."[59] In Taylor's absence, the theology would have had no intellectual capable of maintaining its development while Taylor and Beecher were involved with their travels.

It was lucky for Taylor, then, that Finney came along with Bible at hand and a theology similar to Taylor's at heart. There were, however, other ways Taylor stayed out of the limelight when compared to people like Beecher and Finney. As previously discussed, it appears that Taylor was not one for interacting with individuals outside his familiarity. If he was shy toward strangers, this bit of character would not have helped him in his cause, as people are most drawn to leaders that exhibit a charismatic persona toward their followers. Taylor, meanwhile, might have had little interest in understanding how the hearts and minds of people work when he had the opportunity to understand the heart and mind of God. The letters he sent in defense of his theology also demonstrated that Taylor had little concern for the ideas and opinions of other theologians when he stated that it was not his "practice to denounce others as heretics."[60] This would also interfere with any recognition he would have received had he been an evangelist because the Western

[59] Winthrop S. Hudson, *Religion In America: An historical account of the development of American religious life* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 136.
[60] Taylor, "New Haven Divinity."

Reveal did not take place in a vacuum. Any criticisms directed toward New Haven Theology would had to have been either been redirected or reevaluated in a manner that would portray them in a sympathetic light, though doing the latter requires the presence of the former to some degree. Beecher did this when he stated to Taylor, "I did not think the controversy necessary, and should have preferred the purification of the truth by an unrepulsive peaceable process," but continued, "God saw that error which lay at the bottom of New England philosophy of free agency, depravity, and regeneration, both the Taste and Exercise schemes, demanded a convulsion to root them up, and cast them out of the vineyard as plants not of his own planting."[61] However, considering it would take some time to discredit other theologies while promoting his own, it is unlikely that Taylor would have the heart to follow toward this necessity of marketing.

The examination and analysis of the success Finney's campaigns in comparison to Taylor's has demonstrated that the results of their work were the product of three factors: presentation, allies/enemies, and exposure. While these attributes first appear to be separate in their influence, in truth they are connected to each other. The personality and character Finney and Taylor portrayed themselves determined the

[61] Beecher, 344.

enemies and allies they collected during their ministries. This can be seen in Nettleton's distain for Finney's "great zeal and of considerable native eloquence" displayed in his preaching. Taylor also faced troubles in this regard, but confronted more distress due to his inability to dismiss other's theologies that made him an easier target for than Finney. These enemies and allies in turn governed what locations Finney and Taylor would be able to travel, such as when Beecher allowed Finney to preach in Boston. Finally, their activity throughout the Western Reveal was a reflection of their personality, such as Finney's constant traveling mirrored in his inability to stay still, and Taylor's more passive demeanor that kept him confined in one location. It is easy to understand why Finney's more aggressive performances and multiple places of conversions helped him become better known among the average citizen.

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