



Glenn Brown

June 2019

441 ½ Lark Drive

Grand Junction, Colorado 81504

telephone 970-434-1377

CHARLES FINNEY - - Keys to Revival

(I've just read a biography of the life of Charles Finney and was amazed at the way God used one person's life to impact a nation. Mr. Finney lived and preached the Gospel exactly 200 years ago, in the formative years of the United States, and I think his life has much to teach us.)

Charles Finney was born in 1792, only nine years after the end of the Revolutionary War with Great Britain, and raised in what was then the wilderness of central New York State. New York was one of the original colonies that became states in 1788 when the Constitution was ratified. Charles was a farm boy, educated in a one-room school house where he proved to be very smart. He went on to a two-year "academy" in Connecticut where he acquired a working knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew. What a surprising education for someone raised in the wilderness! Charles then determined to be an attorney and for two years read law under Judge Benjamin Wright in the little town of Hanover, New York.

His Conversion

Charles was not born into a Christian home and at age 28 had rarely heard a prayer and had never owned a Bible. The local pastor in Hanover, Rev. George Gale, was a graduate of Princeton University. Rev. Gale invited Charles to lead the church choir since he had a beautiful singing voice and played the cello. So he started listening to Christian preaching for the first time, but it was preaching not designed to win anyone to Christ. Rev. Gale was a hyper-Calvinist who informed his congregation that repentance was impossible unless God arbitrarily chose us as one of the "elect." So he taught that we have no personal responsibility to repent since it is solely the decision of God - - who chooses some men to go to heaven and some to go to hell! Charles bought a Bible to compare it to what the minister said. He discovered that the minister was misrepresenting what the Bible actually said and told him so. He also noticed that the church people prayed and prayed but never believed or received what they prayed for. But somehow he became settled in his mind that the Bible was the word of God. Also, at that time a band of young people of the church started praying for Charles' conversion. Among the group was the young lady who was later to become his wife.

Months passed, and in October, 1821, the Spirit of God was working mightily in Charles Finney's heart. He began to see clearly his desperate condition before a holy God. He was consumed with the desire to be right with God but didn't know how. After struggling for many days, he went deep into the woods with his Bible and paced back and forth all day crying out to God. Finally, "It seemed as if I met the Lord Jesus Christ face to face. He looked at me in such a manner that I broke right down at His feet and bathed His feet with my tears."

He returned to his office and prayed until late at night, and "Without expecting it, the Holy Spirit descended upon me in a manner that seemed to go through me body and soul. I could feel the impression like a wave of electricity going through and through me. Indeed it seemed to come in waves and waves of liquid love, like the very breath of God, it seemed to fan me like immense wings. I wept aloud with joy and love. I cried out, 'Lord, I cannot bear any more.' I could now understand the passage, 'Being justified by faith, we have peace with God'"

The next day Charles realized that his legal practice was a thing of the past. He had been resisting the idea of preaching the Gospel, "But now after receiving the baptism of the Spirit I found I was unwilling to do anything else. I had no longer any desire to practice law, I had no disposition to make money."

One of the first people Charles talked to after this transforming experience was a young man sitting at the dining table of a friend. "Charles became so agitated about this young man's unsaved condition that he began to weep. The young man rushed from the table and locked himself in a near-by room and was not seen again till the next morning when he came out and said that he was now a Christian. He subsequently became a minister of the Gospel." You can see that something unusual was going on.

Repent and Believe

From the moment of this transforming experience with the Holy Spirit, Charles Finney carried within himself a holy anointing, the mystical presence of Christ, so that those to whom he gave his testimony or those that heard him preach the Word immediately became aware (a) of the love of God for them personally, (b) of God's holiness and their sinfulness, (c) of the salvation that was being offered to them, and (d) of their desperate need to repent and surrender their lives to Christ. Let me emphasize that Charles Finney's ministry communicated to people the necessity to believe in Jesus Christ, but more than that to repent and believe.....to give up their former way of life and become followers of Jesus.

By God's mysterious gifting, Charles' preaching and his very presence conveyed this deep understanding to people - - the same as happened when Jesus Christ walked among men. That is why people could not be neutral about Jesus then or now. Listen to how the people in one of Charles' early church meetings responded to his preaching: "The brothers and sisters that were on their knees began to groan and sigh and weep and agonize in prayer. No one in the room could get off of their knees. They could only weep and confess and all melt down before the Lord."

Do you see the strange effect that Charles Finney's preaching had on the crowd? Why? What was going on? They were becoming aware of who they really were before a holy God and what He was requiring of them. To awaken to such reality is terrifying. If men do not wake up now in this life, then at the end of this life they will awaken at the final judgment when their opportunity has been forfeited. Listen to the cry of desolation as recounted by one of the prophets in ancient Israel: "*The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved*" (Jeremiah 8:20) And listen to the words of grief from Jesus as he prayed and wept over his generation: "*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!*" (Luke 13:34)

You will recall that when Jesus started His work of preaching the Good News, healing the sick, and casting out demons, news about him spread all across the land and to the surrounding area, *so that large crowds from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea and the region across the Jordan followed Him.* (Matthew 4:23-25) The same thing happened under Finney's ministry. Everywhere he went people were saved, healed, and set free, so that his fame spread far and wide. And everywhere he went there were revivals, and revivals where many church people realized they were not right with God and wept their way to deep repentance and transforming joy.

The Opposition

Of course, Finney's preaching and his success stirred up great opposition;

1. Among "infidels." This is what atheists and scoffers were called in that day. They were "intellectuals" and resented the idea that they were sinners that needed to be saved. In many cases, atheists and unbelievers that came to debate and mock Finney came to repentance and salvation in that very meeting.

2. Among many ministers and churches that believed in a hyper-predestination. (They believed that repentance and salvation are limited to the few that have been predestined by God and that it is useless to preach that people should repent and believe because they cannot do it. They denied free will and that "whosoever will" may come to Him. Their churches were as cold and dead as an ice palace.) Church leaders were also increasingly envious of Finney's popularity and great success among the people, even as the Jewish leaders were envious of Jesus in His day.

3. In newspapers, the media of that day. Some newspapers reported favorably on Finney's revivals and his ministry, but many repeated outrageous lies and attacks invented mostly by ministers and church people. These church folks concocted fictional accounts of the terrible things that happened in Finney's revivals. Some communities, stirred up by these false stories, threatened Finney and tried to prevent his coming into their city. Of course, in most cases all this emotional hype just stirred up more interest and more attendance in his meetings.

4. Among the "Universalists" and Unitarians that had their own churches and their strong anti-Christian doctrines. Universalists in that time, as well as today, believe that all men are going to heaven, that there is no hell, and that Jesus Christ was not divine but was a good man whose death on the cross was a tragedy that has nothing to do with man's salvation. They denied that the Bible is the Word of God, and they denied the Christian faith. Universalists are strongly represented in our day by the New Age movement which is actually Buddhist in its theology, by many main-line denominations that have fallen from their biblical roots, and by some "seeker-friendly" churches that present a nice Jesus who never demands repentance from ungodly lifestyles.

Consequences of Resistance

But it was not a safe thing to resist this great move of God. During Finney's meeting in Utica, New York, a Presbyterian minister violently denounced Finney's form of evangelism. The next morning it was found that that preacher had died in bed. A similar thing happened later to a minister in Stephentown, New York. And in the Lancaster revival everyone in a large audience stood to receive Christ except for two men. While walking home in the dark, one of those men fell over the curbstone and broke his neck. Periodically, all during Finney's ministry, dramatic and fatal consequences happened to certain ministers or public figures that set themselves as enemies of the revival. It seems that God was determined to plant a Gospel foundation in the new United States of America, and woe to anyone that became His enemy in this work.

The Centrality of Prayer

Finney knew and constantly declared that this was a work of God and that he was only the weak vessel that God chose to use. Therefore, his was a life of prayer and crying out to God for the souls of men. The work of the Kingdom is never a one-man show but is always a work of the body, and God raised up many faithful men and women to assist in the work wherever Finney went. Finney well understood this truth, and he enlisted praying men and women wherever he went to assist in praying the revival down. Some people were even called by God to focus the rest of their lives on praying for the revival that God was originating.

Finney often spent whole days or nights in prayer and long periods of time in prayer and fasting. He prayed until he had a sense of exactly what Scriptures he should preach about in each of his meetings.

Instant Surrender

He shared in his memoirs that, "We pressed the duty of instant surrender to God. We insisted on immediate submission as the only thing God could accept at their hands and that all delay under any pretext was rebellion against God. Many became instantly convicted and came forward in brokenness to cast themselves on the mercy of God."

The Revival Spreads

Finney's fame spread and he was finally invited to the larger cities. In Rochester, "A large number of the lawyers, physicians, merchants, judges, bankers, master mechanics, and leading men and women in the city were converted. The only theater in the city was changed into a livery stable, and the grog shops were closed." Ten thousand were said to be converted during the meeting. Ministers and prominent people from neighboring cities and even neighboring states came under the influence of the revival and on returning home spread the evangelistic fire. Finney moved on to preach in Philadelphia (then the new nation's capital), New York and Boston. A large church was built for Finney in New York and he preached to great crowds of people for several years. A book that he wrote called "Finney's Lectures on Revival" became famous around the world. One publisher in London published eighty thousand volumes. The book was said to have promoted revivals in England, Scotland, Wales, France, Germany, Canada, and all over the United States.

Ministry in England

In 1850 Finney responded to an invitation to preach in a large church in London. He insisted that a room be provided for "inquirers," that is, for those people in his meetings that came under deep conviction and required a special place to pray, weep and agonize their way to full surrender to God. When he was offered a small room, he kept insisting on a larger room until he was finally given a warehouse that would hold 1,500 or 1,600 inquirers. This huge room was filled night after night with men and women in the process of being born again. (You may not recall, but being born physically is not a pleasant experience for the participants. There is a lot of discomfort, blood and anguish in the process. The physical experience was created and ordained by God as a type and foreshadow of the spiritual experience.)

Training Ministers

As if he was not doing enough, Charles Finney was simultaneously training young men for the ministry in a college in Oberlin, Ohio. For many years he held revivals in the summer months and trained ministers during the winter. Eventually, he trained more than 20,000 men in theology and soul winning. The ministry and influence of these men spread all across the new nation and into the mission field around the world.

Final Days

Finney lived to be 80 years old. His health broke down in his final years because of his years of continuous service to His Lord: non-stop preaching; teaching and training young pastors and raising up schools for their training; writing books and training material; travel to many communities and cities in the United States and in Europe in a time when travel was by horseback and by sailing ship; and incessant days and nights spent in prayer. There were months when he was laid up and unable to get about. But each time he recovered he resumed his service to the Lord.

Reflection

I think that Charles Finney's life has much to teach us. Please reflect on the following:

- That God saw the need for our young nation to have a Christian foundation and raised up a man, actually many men and women, to stand in the gap and lay down their lives in this great purpose.
- That this work would be centered on a man who determined that the Bible is the Word of God, and that he had a deep experience of the love of God and the sacrifice of the Son of God on the cross
- That he also had an experience subsequent to his salvation that he knew was a filling or baptizing by the Holy Spirit that he credited with preparing him for God's assignment.
- That he understood that this work must be founded on prayer. He knew that God was the one who began this work and only God could complete it, and it could not happen without a deep and ongoing connection with God through prayer.
- Finney emphasized instant surrender when a man or woman came under conviction. He knew that "Now is the day of salvation," and delay equaled rebellion and resulted many times in the eternal loss of souls.
- He emphasized total surrender to God and knew that this requires deep repentance. He knew that such repentance is an agonizing process and made provision in his revival services for this to take place.
- He emphasized training children and young people and those embarking on a life of ministry.

Dear friends, it may well be that God is even now preparing His people for a great new work of revival in our nation. God knows that we desperately need it. And He may be preparing and calling you to do your part in this new Kingdom work.

PSYCHIATRY IS BOGUS!

This is not a declaration that I came up with, it is the apparent conclusion of Dr. Gary Greenberg, a practicing psychotherapist and author of *The Book of Woe: the Unmasking of Psychiatry*. Dr. Greenberg excerpts his book and his extensive study of psychiatry in the April, 2018, issue of [The Atlantic Magazine](#) in an article titled, *Psychiatry's Incurable Hubris*. Dr. Greenberg also quotes from numerous studies, including Anne Harrington's book, *Mind Fixers: Psychiatry's Troubled Search for the Biology of Mental Illness*.

That is a lot of quotes, but we need to understand that many people in the church have been right all along in questioning the legitimacy of psychiatry. Psychiatry's convincing "scientific pronouncements" about mental illness, its cause and its cure, have clearly been built on air. Human nature seems to be broken, and these studies recount the history of psychiatry and its attempts to comprehend the brain, the mind, and human nature to explain why. (The Bible has something to say about that.) They trace the many false starts in attempting to help and to heal: punishment of the insane, Sigmund Freud, the lobotomy, ice-baths, electro-convulsive therapy, insulin coma, antidepressant drugs, etc. But, he says, "The pathological basis of almost all mental disorders remains as unknown today as it was in 1886 – unsurprising, given that the brain turns out to be one of the most complex objects in the universe."

Harrington, in her book, chronicles another debacle: the rise of the "chemical imbalance" theory of mental illness, especially depression. She documents ad campaigns for Prozac and Zoloft that assured the public that the new medications were not simply treating patients' symptoms, like recreational drugs, but were repairing an underlying biological problem. The strategy worked brilliantly in the market-place, but there was a catch. Researchers were forming a new consensus

about the idea behind that theory: It was “deeply flawed and probably outright wrong.” At last count, more than 12 percent of Americans ages 12 and older were taking antidepressants. The chemical-imbalance theory may fail as science, but as rhetoric it has turned out to be a wild success.

“If you convince people that their moods are merely electrochemical noise, you are also telling them what it means to be human, even if you only intend to ease their pain.”

MY CONCLUSIONS

As a Christian, I (Glenn) always had doubts about the doctrines behind psychiatry because I considered them contrary to Christian doctrine; for instance, that alcoholism, drug addiction, sexual sins, etc., were simply biological conditions and had nothing to do with our life decisions or our brokenness and sinfulness as human beings. But I didn't want to be narrow minded or judgmental and tried to accommodate the conclusions of psychiatry to biblical faith. But over the years my experience with people who had been under the care of psychiatrists was that they had spent months and years in “treatment,” spent a fortune in money, and in many cases were no better off and in some cases had become deeply addicted to the drugs that had been prescribed for them. These patients had been taught to ascribe all their problems to chemical and biological issues that were beyond their control or responsibility. One time I read the results of an extensive survey showing that patients who spent X number of years under the care of a psychiatrist were in the end no better off than those who did nothing or who depended on the advice and comfort of a family member or friend.

The personal experience of one of my family members who struggled for many years with a mental-emotional condition was that when she became out of control and was taken to a mental-care facility she was kept completely zoned out with strong meds for several days, then returned to her family no better off, and with a bill of thousands of dollars. This happened time after time until finally she has been healed because of love and prayer. A lady in my cell group has worked for years in the mental-care facility here in Grand Junction. When I told her about the experience of my family, she said that was about the norm for their patients. What! Our community has recently raised millions of dollars to add a wing and more beds for this facility and people are spending thousands and millions of dollars for a service that is bogus! I do understand that sometimes people have mental/emotional conditions that cause them to be a danger to themselves and others and medications or confinement are the only options available. I also recognize that mental/emotional problems have become one of the huge, unsolvable problems of our society, and our jails and prisons have become the default mental health facilities across the land.

I don't pretend to have all the answers, nor does the church have all the answers, for the many who suffer depression, fear, anxiety, addictions, etc. But I believe that ultimately Jesus Christ is the answer for suffering humanity. I believe that the “inner healing,” or “soul healing,” or “prayer healing” ministry in many churches has been raised up by God as a part of the answer to desperate human need. These types of ministries are based on timeless biblical truths and not on the fictions sometimes promulgated by secular minds.

Then does psychiatry and psychotherapy offer any legitimate help to people? Yes, to the extent that their counseling is based on biblical truths such as forgiving others and taking personal responsibility for our choices. No, when they create fictionalized diagnoses such as “social-anxiety disorder” and a list that grows longer every year. (But the studies of PTSD, Alzheimer's disease, and autism have, I believe, been helpful.) No, when they teach that all mental malfunctions and human suffering are chemical and biological on the premise that humans are biological automatons. No, when they over-prescribe strong medications, even for the very young, that cause addictions and who-knows-what long term complications. And, of course, psychiatry and the secular mind dismiss and ridicule the biblical truth that demons are real and the root of many mental/emotional/physical problems. Nor do they comprehend the great reality that God created everything, including mankind, and that He loves us and has provided salvation, healing, and deliverance through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us pray.

God Bless
Glenn

e-mail address casabrn441@gmail.com

WEBSITE: www.glennbrownministries.com

I would like to thank each of you for your support of this ministry.

If any of you want to receive tax credit for your financial contributions,
you may send them to:

CANYON VIEW VINEYARD CHURCH

736 24 ½ Road Grand Junction, Co. 81505