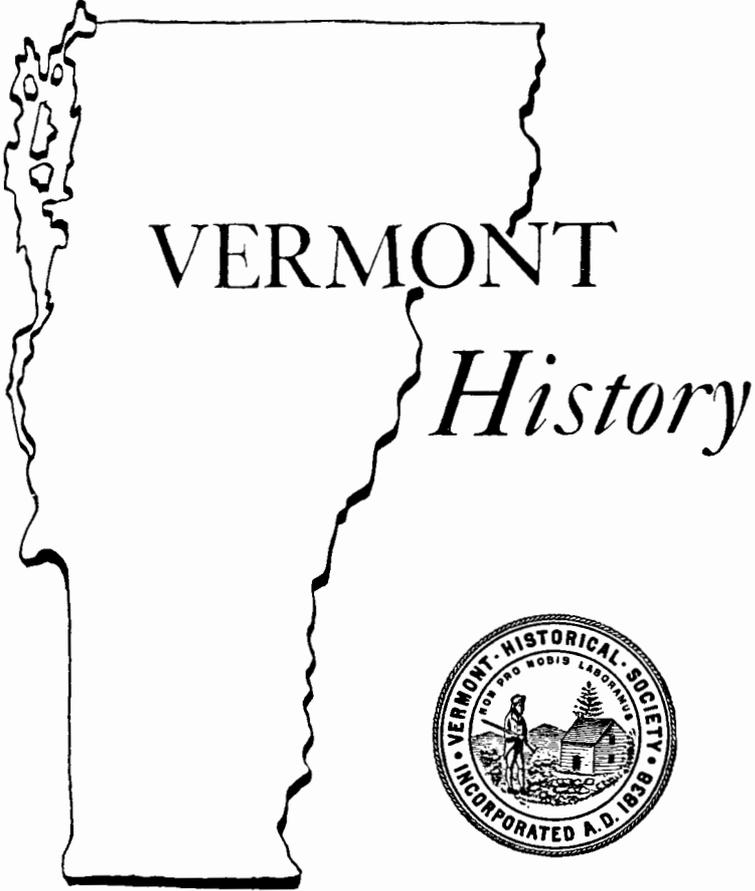


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Jedidiah Burchard and Vermont’s “New Measure” Revivals; Social Adjustment and the Quest for Unity

By H.N.MULLER, III and JOHN J. DUFFY

During the turbulent decade of the 1830’s it was clear that vast changes had come to Vermont, and particularly worrisome, that they showed every sign of permanency. Perhaps the War of 1812 signalled a turning point in the small state’s fortunes, at least in men’s minds. Actually the War with its economic dislocations, the severe epidemic of the mysterious and deadly “spotted fever” (cerebro-spinal meningitis) and the isolation brought on by Federalist politics may only have punctuated changes already well under way. Before the unpopular War the burgeoning state had experienced the nation’s fastest rate of population growth and exulted in the easy promise that most ventures would succeed, and many handsomely. Only a few short years later the boom psychology and its attendant sense of confidence in the future was badly shaken and in steady retreat.

As if pre-ordained by some higher power, a series of natural disasters afflicted Vermont. In the terrible summer of 1816 frost and snow came every month destroying several successive plantings and provoking a trickle of discouraged emigration that in a few years broadened into a rushing stream. By the 1830’s Vermonters had wantonly cut off most of their rich heritage of timber and with the forest gone had begun to experience the harmful effects of “dry spells.” Conversely a series of disastrous storms and the resultant freshets washed out mill sites (two-thirds of the mills in Rutland and Windsor Counties in 1811),¹ carried away much of the rich alluvial soil of the intervalles, destroyed bridges, barns and crops, and drowned livestock. Then came a plague of grasshoppers, the wheat rust, and the dis-

troubling evidence of general soil exhaustion, and with all of them the yield of Vermont's fields rapidly declined. The canals that had promised a much needed outlet for Vermont's produce instead perversely became arteries for the migration of her sons and daughters stricken with the "Western craze" and for the introduction of competitive products from the new West. Even the game animals and fish that had once abounded in her forests and waters were all but extinct by the mid-1830's.²

The drastic change in the pace of life in Vermont was starkly apparent by the 1830's, and it was evident that serious adjustments would have to be realized, though there was little agreement as to the direction the adjustments should take. In 1820 liabilities exceeded assets, and ten years later the growth of population barely kept pace with the emigration. The newcomers seldom resembled the familiar old Yankee stock. In 1832 the threat of cholera posed a frightening menace and during the next decades rude sheds dotted the Burlington waterfront housing Irish immigrants waiting to die or be released to find meagre sustenance in a hostile environment.³ The old family farms frequently gave way to sheep folds in a northern New England version of the enclosures, and the shift away from labor-intensive agriculture helped alter both the economic base and the traditional pattern of land-holding. In sheep-crazed Addison County the woolly animals grazed 373 to the square mile.⁴ Bitter enemies of the Jacksonians who dominated national policy throughout the 1830's, Vermonters felt hostile and politically cut off and were quick to hold "King Andrew" and his political henchmen responsible for many of their economic woes, especially after the Panic of 1837.

Such a setting in which people had experienced a rapid and sometimes violent reversal in their prospects for their future, provided fertile ground for a lively, almost frenetic political and social ferment. The voters turned to the Anti-Mason Party, which held the governor's office from 1831 through 1836, and provided all seven of the electoral ballots cast for the Anti-Mason William Wirt in 1832. The state quickly embraced, one on top of the other, most of the national movements and fads and even generated a number of its own. The temperance crusade headed by the Vermont Temperance Society after 1828 worked through its more than 200 local clubs to dry up the state by force of moral suasion. The temperance activities had to compete for enthusiasm with the Working Men's movement, prison reform, care for the unfortunate, education reform, the abolition of imprisonment for debt and the mounting fury over slavery. William Lloyd Garrison published one of his first anti-slavery blasts in Bennington in 1828 and helped evoke the early rumblings of the issue that gripped the state for three decades.

In 1837 when the *Patriotes* of lower Canada declared independence from Britain and started an optimistic but short-lived rebellion, Vermonters eagerly embraced the cause, though their

raucous din faded quickly when the situation demanded a commitment to bearing arms.⁵ In their noisy enthusiasm for the *Patriotes* as in their anxious ardor for a host of other movements that swept the state, Vermonters tried to adjust to new circumstances and regain that nebulous but nonetheless important collective sense of self-identity and common purpose.

In the forefront of the ferment in Vermont were the millennialists, visionaries and evangelists who criss-crossed the state with a variety of religious peregrinations. In Putney John Humphrey Noyes began his celebrated community based on spiritual communism and the widening of sexual bonds including the formula of male continence. Joseph Smith, the founder of the Latter Day Saints, grew up in Sharon; Swedenborgianism flourished in Cambridge in the Lamoille River valley; and William Miller brought many adventist converts across the entire state to his exuberant view of the Second Coming and the imminent end of the world.

In 1810 and then in 1816, 1821 and 1826 waves of revivalism rolled across the state engendering profound mental and even physical upset. Thousands were prostrated with religious fervor. Few orthodox churches escaped the disruption, and many were permanently split. The revivals continued unabated in the 1830's and in many aspects paralleled the more secular movements of the decade as Vermonters sought to deal with their prevailing discontent.

Students of collective behavior point to the development of social movements as the remedial actions of groups of people to allay the strains of uncertainty and confusion in changing times. The strain can often be ambiguous, the mysterious product of many tangled and complex factors, which though sensed in perplexing, vague and muddled terms, present a very real threat to men's ambitions and to permanent social institutions. When, in a given social situation, a threat can be clearly perceived — George III's Hessions in the 1770's, Jefferson's Embargo later, or armed forces on the U.S.-Canadian border during the lower Canadian rebellion in 1837-38 — energies can be directed into battles, public meetings, and strongly worded resolutions of defense and mutual support. When its origin proves nebulous, difficult to isolate and define, the menace can be nonetheless real, and the society eagerly seeks outlets which frequently assume a dynamic of their own. Throughout the 1830's a growing volume of social pressure generated social movements, and when the religious revival that Charles Grandison Finney had fired into life nearly a decade earlier made its way through Vermont in 1835 and 1836, many habitually taciturn Yankees flocked to it with anxious zeal. At the same time the revival provoked a serious and lively public debate that measured the intensity of the issue and spoke directly to the immediate questions of the organization of societal relationships and the direction in which they should proceed.

The revival came first to the Connecticut River valley towns and swept westward across Vermont largely on the feverish efforts of the itinerant revivalist, the Reverend Jedidiah Burchard.⁶ Once a haberdasher, travelling actor and a circus rider,⁷ he had been converted in the early thirties by Finney at a revival in the Oneida region of New York's "Burnt-Over District." The "celebrated revival preacher" came into Vermont in 1835 and held a series of "protracted meetings" mostly in the Congregationalist churches in "Woodstock, Windsor, Weathersfield, Springfield, Cornish (Baptist Society), Claremont, Charlestown, Croyden, Lebanon, Hannover [sic], Norwich and some other towns," including Montpelier, Rutland, Middlebury, Williston, Hinesburg, Royalton and Burlington.⁸

In this version of the Lord's battle "all the preaching and exhortation [were] to bring saints and sinners to feel that they must have all their hopes of good upon the [grace] of God and upon the Holy Spirit . . . [for] without his agency no permanent good could be done."⁹ Burchard conducted revival meetings with the "*new measure system*" he had learned from Finney and had refined through his own practice. He reserved special pews or seats, called "anxious seats," in the front of the church for those who were especially concerned for their souls, and mass public prayers were elicited from the meeting for designated sinners in the town, often those who publicly opposed or resented Burchard. "Protracted meetings" usually lasted several weeks, such as the revival in Burlington in December 1835, which endured for twenty days with Burchard preaching at most of the "public services in the afternoon and evening" while "neighboring clergymen sustained chiefly the other parts of the labor."¹⁰

Burchard's own enormous talent for oratory was thoroughly exercised in arousing the congregation to a fever-pitch of excitement and overwhelming expressions of emotion which convinced the congregation that they had been witnesses to conversions or had themselves been saved and thus became rightful members of a holy community. "In the transports of exhortation," the former circus performer "would leap from the pulpit and do acrobatic stunts in front of it and walk among the people on the tops of the backs of the square pews."¹¹

Burchard drew large groups to the meetings he held in Vermont and claimed hundreds of successful conversions to Christ and new members for the church in each town he visited. The new measures also attracted a wide cross-section of the predominantly Protestant communities. In his revival in the First Congregational Church in Burlington, "the members of the church with few exceptions came into the work." During the twenty-day meeting "there were about 200 cases of professed submission to Jesus Christ. Of these about one third were male and female heads of families."¹² According to the account of an eager university student, "the converts . . . included men of all

ages and ranks. The old and the young, the sick and poor, the learned and the illiterate" shared in the experience. Among the young, five students from the University of Vermont (more than ten percent of the tiny student body) and several Sunday school boys gave "themselves to Christ."¹³ The First Congregationalist Church counted 101 new members, five of whom "were received from other churches."¹⁴ When Burchard journeyed out of Burlington, his "converts follow[ed] him about everywhere. Many of them went to Williston . . . and some . . . followed him to Hinesburg" where he brought "together all the country round."¹⁵ Ministers of congregations that had experienced Burchard's spell testified to the strength of his evangelical persuasion. The "minister of Woodstock stated . . . that he never had had the least cause to regret that such a meeting was holden in his church."¹⁶

But not everyone in Woodstock shared the pastor's enthusiasm for Burchard, and at a town meeting the selectmen branded him "a public nuisance."¹⁷ From the very start of his Vermont campaign, Burchard antagonized many citizens. Usually, though not always, the anti-Burchardites were led by "the soundest clergymen," who opposed the itinerant preacher on social as well as theological grounds.¹⁸

In February 1836, the Congregationalist ministers in the Rutland area known as the Rutland Association met because "the system of meas[ures] means for exciting + promoting revivals of religion . . . in operation during the year past among the churches of Vermont was expected soon to be introduced within their own limits." Clearly threatened, these "ministers of the gospel and stewards of the household of God" resolved to a man to try to keep the revivals out of their churches. In their view the New Measure "system of operations . . . strongly tend to interfere with the responsibilities of the established clergy." The revivals stripped spiritual guidance from those "who by their office must be responsible," and forfeited it to "those who have never qualified themselves for the task, and who cannot be supposed to feel the same responsibility."¹⁹

Their objections, however, went beyond the immediate threat to their own status. They thought Burchard's movement endangered the very institution of the church by "compromising + exposing to dishonor the sound congregationalism of New England" itself. The Measures turned people from the true meaning of the church by introducing "an unsubdued spirit of levity + of bustling disorder." The revivalists were "not merely untasteful, but indecently low + personal . . . + harsh + [used] unchristian language . . . wholly at variance with elevated christian feeling." They declared that "such things cannot fail to expose to profane scoffing, that religion, which they so grievously misrepresent." The revivals, concluded these self-proclaimed "authorized spiritual guides" of the Rutland Association, "must tend very essentially + very injuriously to alter the character of the congregational churches."²⁰

Except at Williston and Middlebury, where local ministers warmly received Burchard and supported his revivals, especially Middlebury where the President of Middlebury College, Joshua Bates, stood four-square behind Burchard, town fathers or members of the professional classes generally shunned the "New Measures."²¹ President Bates' spirited stance on the revival cost him support among his faculty, who in large part joined their counterparts at the University of Vermont in outspoken criticism of "Burchardism."²² Along with college faculty and the "powerful" of the community, opposition came from the "Episcopals and Unitarians," who direly predicted that the movement would "give triumph to the cause of infidelity and everything that is bad."²³ For their role in opposing Burchard, University of Vermont's President John Wheeler and Professor James Marsh, the former president and noted Coleridge scholar, "were accused of truckling to the Unitarians, [or] of being Unitarians at least."²⁴ Because of his publications alluding to the "highly pernicious" results of Burchard's measures in New York, Bishop John Henry Hopkins of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont brought both himself and his flock into "bad odour with the *majority*."²⁵

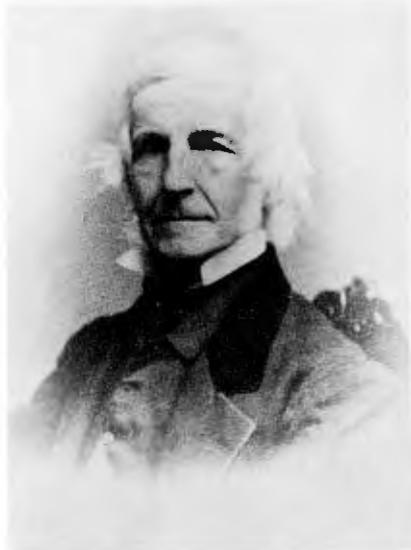
Burchard's Burlington converts were extremely unhappy with the Rutland Association's stance on the revival and feared that the Chittenden County group might adopt it also. They issued a brief rebuttal of the Rutland report in defense of the New Measures. While the Rutland divines "more than insinuate that there [sic] effects are fanatical+devisive", the Burlington men professed to "believe + firmly believe" the movement to be wrought by the "truth+spirit of God." There was little room for compromise between two groups who each opposed the other in the firm belief that they knew the will of God.²⁶

The revivals sharply divided both churches and communities, leaving little room for neutrality. While its enthusiastic adherents publicly committed their souls, the detractors believed that the "New Measures" rendered "the churches in a dissipated state of mind, which unfits them for all common duties and creates a disrelish for the daily routine of life."²⁷ Good Christians took firm stands on either side of the issue and quickly discarded the standard virtues of tolerance and forbearance. "We are almost at loggerheads here about what is called 'Burchardism,' " wrote University of Vermont Professor G. W. Benedict. "Some of our friends," he continued, "who are carried away with Mr. Burchard's quackery think it next to a mortal sin that we do not think him as great an Aesculapius of souls as they do especially that we should have the boldness to say so frankly."²⁸

Even Burchard's admirers admitted that "in the heat of his zeal he says some things which he had better not say."²⁹ When his opponents, possibly including leaders of the University of Vermont faculty, in an appeal to public common sense took steps to publish his most

**PROFESSOR GEORGE W.
BENEDICT**

A Professor of Mathematics and Natural Philosophy who joined the faculty of the University of Vermont in 1825. Courtesy of University of Vermont Archives, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont.



outrageously unsound theological statements, the resultant furor endangered the very existence of the University.

During the protracted meetings at Woodstock, Burchard's antagonists had dispatched a reporter to the church where he preached to take notes from the sermons and other proceedings. Russell Streeter gathered together the notes and printed the most flamboyant and offensive parts along with the selectmen's resolution condemning the itinerant preacher.³⁰ When Burchard came to Burlington, Chauncey Goodrich, publisher and bookseller as well as brother-in-law of Professor Marsh, hired two undergraduates, Charles G. Eastman and B. J. Tenney, to attend the concurrent meetings in Burlington and nearby Williston in order to transcribe Burchard's sermons for publication. Russell Streeter's *Mirror of Calvinistic Fanatical Revivals* had cast Burchard in such a repulsive form and broadcasted Woodstock's (or at least the town's fathers') low opinion of the revivalist, that Burchard and his supporters, suspecting Marsh and other University people of plotting another episode in the campaign to defame him, took countermeasures.

First Burchard tried to make a convert of B. J. Tenney in order to "extract the notes from him," and failing in that endeavor, then attempted to purchase his silence by "offering him a large sum" of money rumored to be "more than 150 dollars." Pretending to sell his notes, "Tenney pocketed the money," but did not surrender them. Burchard greatly feared the publication of transcripts of the meetings and next suggested that the deacons physically restrain Eastman from taking notes. He also urged President Bates, who had travelled to



CHARLES G. EASTMAN
(1813-1860)

The editor and co-owner of The Vermont Patriot and State Gazette in Montpelier, Eastman achieved a national reputation for his poetry and the epithet "The Burns of New England" from a British reviewer. As a student in 1835, he took notes on Burchard's sermons. From frontispiece, Poems of Charles G. Eastman (Montpelier, 1880).

Williston for the occasion, to denounce the students from the pulpit. Totally frustrated in his attempts to prevent the note-taking, Burchard, as a last recourse, tried "to foil them . . . by holding his tongue" and refused to preach when the offensive students were present. His silence provoked "the great vexation of his followers," who became "mad because they came to see the elephant, and the elephant won't play off for fear his tricks shall be noted down."

Burchard's enraged disciples pinned responsibility for the affair on Goodrich, James Marsh, and the faculty of the University of Vermont who had openly expressed their disdain for the measures, calling them "fanaticism" or a deplorable "infatuation which has seized our churches." "What is in store for the College," wrote Professor Torrey's worried wife, "I do not know — but fear a storm is pending — There is great bitterness of feelings towards the faculty (particularly Mr. Marsh) for the part they took in reference to Burchard." Leaders of the revivalist faction, such as the merchant Samuel Hickok, who had sponsored the resolution that invited Burchard to Burlington, claimed that publication of the notes would be tantamount to proof of the faculty's guilt in the affair, and in such circumstances it would be "their duty to withdraw their patronage from an institution one of the teachers of which was engaged in so base a transaction." While the storm blew itself out shortly after Burchard moved on, the revival movement had provoked a debate of great importance.³¹

The reason contemporaries often stated for their opposition to Burchard's revivals was that the introduction of large numbers of new

JAMES MARSH
The fifth President of the University of Vermont and well known scholar from portrait by Joseph Greenleaf Cole, University of Vermont Collections, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont. Gift of Joseph Walker Marsh on behalf of the Class of 1857.



converts to the church by the "New Measures" threatened the structure and meaning of Congregationalism as a holy community. While the anti-Burchardites believed that the Congregational Church was a truly democratic institution, they generally felt that Burchard's converts paid too little of themselves as a price for participation in that democracy. The commitment to Christ made while gingerly perched on an "anxious seat" in the heat of a revival, they charged, could hardly endure the cooling aftermath of day-to-day Christian experience, especially if that experience ever called for any sacrifice of those emotions aroused by the revival. For instance, one critic reported to James Marsh that the questions asked by Burchard of the tenants of the "anxious seats" hardly tested the depth of the conversion. "Do you prefer going to meetings to going to shows and balls . . .?" he asked one anxious sinner in Burlington.³² Hardly a searching question to put to an excited person being examined for church membership, Burchard's critic charged. Instead, they charged the time for examination should be when one's intellect and emotions are in harmony, a moment seldom observed at a meeting led by Jedidiah Burchard.³³ The pastors of the Rutland Association found the revival contained "too little to enlighten the mind, awaken and invigorate the power & authority of the conscience." Instead, they commented disparagingly, "the system of measures adopted, + a variety of motives urged for the purpose of exciting the mind to immediate action" rather than evoking "the sober reflection of men acquainted with the truths of spiritual religion."³⁴

Moreover, as one report claimed, Burchard's converts were so young or so ignorant as not to understand the full implications of questions the revivalist asked about their spiritual state at the moment of conversion.³⁵ Cheap prices buy cheap goods, the anti-Burchardites argued, and if church membership is cheaply bought its value is depreciated.

Those Congregationalists who held the orthodox, though perhaps elitist, view of their churches as democratic communities in which full participation was dearly bought, greatly feared that the heated and acrimonious argument surrounding the revivals would split their churches and in the guise of spiritual democracy weaken both their community and the "real" democracy along with it. From Germany and France, with the breadth of the Atlantic Ocean to promote objectivity, University of Vermont Professor of Languages Joseph Torrey warned his wife to exercise a good measure of forbearance to prevent a serious split in the church. "When from this great distance I look back to Burlington . . . I can easily overlook the misguided zeal of a few individuals, and convince myself they mean right after all. I hope you all feel just as I do," he continued. "If you do there will yet be no bridge in the church, and in a short time, all will look back upon the whole matter with the same sentiments."³⁶

In 1831 when Asahel Nettleton had brought "New Measures" to Hartford, Connecticut, similar criticisms lodged against him and those he converted, convinced them of the need to establish a new, separate congregation, which they called the Free Church of Hartford. The original congregation of the Free Church of Hartford consisted of thirty-three members of Hartford's population. With pews and membership free, unlike other churches in the city, its membership was open to all who sought it. Intensely democratic, the Free Church grew in membership to two hundred soon after its founding in 1832 and at the same time became the focal point in Hartford for the discussion and support of the major liberal causes of the mid-thirties. Eventually, however, membership declined, curiously enough because of objections to free pews. Apparently some church members there too came to think that cheap prices bought cheap goods. In any event, the Free Church dissolved as a free church in 1838, charged pew-rent, and reorganized as the Fourth Congregational Church of Hartford.³⁷

In Vermont, despite serious threats, no successful counter-congregations actually resulted from Burchard's "New Measures." The nearest thing to Hartford's Free Church in Vermont came in an attempt by John Truair, the prophetically named Congregational minister in Fletcher, to found the Union Church of Christians in 1833. Dismissed from the Northwest Association of Congregational Ministers because of his Swedenborgian professions, Truair founded a congregation which tried, like Burchard, to avoid the sectarian

**PROFESSOR JOSEPH
TORREY**

A pioneer in the instruction of modern languages in a university curriculum, Professor Torrey was in Europe during the Burchard revival meetings in Burlington. He later served as the ninth President of the University of Vermont from 1862 until his death in November, 1866. Courtesy of University of Vermont Archives, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont.



professions of Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists, and Episcopalians, the major Protestant sects in Vermont at the time. He achieved little success with the Union Church of Christians, however, even in Fletcher, where, the town's historian noted with superior sarcasm some thirty years later, Truair's Union Church lived about as long as Jonah's gourd.³⁸

Unlike the early supporters of the Free Church in Hartford or Truair's United Church of Christians, members of the University of Vermont faculty, the Rutland Association, and other detractors did not acknowledge Burchard's revivals as a democratizing force in Vermont life. Instead they saw the "New Measures" as a threat to what many believed was the oldest social and religious institution in New England, the Congregational Church. "It seems to me," James Marsh said in a lengthy letter written to President Nathan Lord of Dartmouth in late 1835, ". . . that [Burchard] tends, with direct and irresistible force, to do that for the church, which sheer jacobinical radicalism will do for the State, . . . may God preserve his Church!"³⁹ For many of those most staunchly against the revivals, their opposition transcended theological grounds and rested on their concept of the proper organization of society. The Rutland Association was convinced that "the system of measure" could not help but diminish "the ordinary ministrations of the Gospel, upon the sound sense and the enlightened conscience of the community at large."⁴⁰

The main points of James Marsh's criticism of Burchard's measures were both social and theological. Burchardism, Marsh argued, strayed from the intellectual rigor and emotional purity of traditional evangelical religious revivalism as expressed in such

religious writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as John Bunyan or David Brainerd, whose spiritual journal Jonathan Edwards had published. In both Bunyan's *Pilgrims Progress* and Brainerd's *Journal*, just as in the religious discourses of such seventeenth-century English divines as Henry More, Isaac Barrow, and John Bates, Marsh pointed out, there could be found clear expressions of profound spiritual humility and emotional emptiness as conditions of conversion, conditions hardly possible in the face of Burchard's vigorous and vulgar self-assertiveness. Moreover, Marsh found Burchard's Biblical knowledge and critical intellect inadequate to the task he set out to perform as clearly demonstrated when the spirited evangelist answered a question about how Peter reckoned a figure of three-thousand converts on a single occasion by saying that the Apostle counted his converts in the same way as Burchard did himself, by dividing them into sheep and goats.

The most damaging criticism against Burchard in the eyes of Professor Marsh, who was recognized at the time as the leading American spokesman for Samuel Taylor Coleridge's spiritual philosophy, was that Burchard's measures for conversion lacked any truly spiritual dimension. Instead Burchard's revival meetings played on the mass emotions of congregations and brought attendants at "protracted meetings" to a sense of conversion largely through the compulsion of mass emotional outpourings. Such measures, Marsh charged, relied on materialistic mass psychology and certainly not the workings of the Holy Spirit. Because of what he considered the transitory nature of manipulated emotions, Marsh saw the "New Measure" revivals as a threat to the very basis of the established church; for they brought to the church new members who lacked the deep, unified emotional and intellectual commitment which the church community needed to sustain itself and even survive.⁴¹

Marsh thought his anxiety over the future of Congregationalism in Vermont after Burchard's converts had been admitted to church membership was warranted in light of the experience in Rochester, New York, a few years earlier during a revival there. Marsh's perception had validity, for the meaning of Congregationalism and the role it would play in Vermont society underwent a serious test in 1835-6, just as Presbyterian churches in Rochester had been tested earlier in the decade. The Great Revival led by Charles Grandison Finney at Rochester, a city of 10,000 in the late 1820's, produced, according to reports, converts in the range of two to three thousand souls, thus enlarging the rolls of the city's Presbyterian churches three-fold. But within five years, the enthusiasm of conversion had dissipated and the holy communities had fallen into disarray. Marsh knew of the experience of the church in Rochester from friends on the faculty of Auburn Theological Seminary and from a colleague on the faculty of the University of Vermont, Farrand Benedict, whose father, Abner

JOHN WHEELER
The sixth President of the University of Vermont, John Wheeler piloted the struggling institution through the hard times of the late 1830's and expanded both the campus and the curriculum. Courtesy of University of Vermont Archives, University of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont.



Benedict, had been pastor of a church in Rochester. So he feared the same results in Vermont from Burchard's revivals.

Marsh's fears were well-founded, for the social energies of Vermont were ultimately not absorbed or organized and directed through the Congregational church after the mid-1830's, but instead through other means such as the growth of the anti-slavery movement, the development of an embryonic labor movement in the Connecticut River Valley, and migration to the West.⁴² What Marsh could not anticipate, however, was the way the reaction to the *Patriote* rebellions in Lower Canada would pick up the slack in Vermont when the revivalistic enthusiasm of 1836 began to wane in 1837 after Jedidiah Burchard led his revival troupe back to New York State and up the southwestern shore of Lake Champlain. When he came to recognize how the activities of the loud *Patriote* supporters in Vermont paralleled the behavior of Burchard's disciples and converts, Marsh, as well as other prominent figures in Burlington, quickly mounted a campaign against American support of the *Patriotes* and entered into a vigorous debate with their Vermont supporters during the winter of 1837-38.

Implicit in their antagonistic response to eager adoption of the *Patriote* cause by many Vermonters was a continued recognition of what Marsh described to Nathan Lord as the Jacobinical message of Burchard's revival. For Marsh and other like-minded Vermonters, both the revivals and the philo-*Patriote* movement would lead to a radical destruction of the state's and the nation's social fabric. Bishop

John Henry Hopkins, a High Churchman with well-developed elitist principles and affinities for John Henry Newman and the Oxford Tractarians, had been a harsh critic of revivals for reasons similar to Marsh's. In late 1837 he left Vermont for London on a campaign to raise money for his Vermont Episcopal Seminary. Soon after his arrival in England, however, Hopkins encountered the radical reformer Robert Owens, whose socialistic principles Hopkins found just as irreligious and "destructive of the existing order of society" as Burchard's revivals had been a few years earlier in Vermont. Having been first appalled by the "leveling" tendencies of Owens' plans for redistributing power and wealth, Hopkins was then equally embarrassed by reports of Vermont's enthusiasm for the *Patriotes* during a debate in Parliament on the recent uprising in Canada. He noted in his diary that the philo-*Patriotes* were doubtless drawn from the lowest levels of society (an erroneous assumption) and their behavior only a temporary social aberration. He was far more comfortable later in May, 1838, during a dinner at the Archbishop of Canterbury's residence when Lord Gosford, recently returned from his troubled governorship in Canada, greeted him warmly, praised him for the sermon delivered at Quebec a few years earlier, and "was exceedingly kind and sociable."⁴³

But for those Americans drawn to Burchard's and other revivals throughout the country, the message delivered from the pulpit during protracted meetings promised salvation from the social and personal dilemmas of disunity intensely felt during the 1830's. The Great Revival, including Burchard's "New Measures" version, swept through the country offering a cohesive focus in an apparently diffusive moment of time. Men and women were drawn to the anxious benches, and the union with other new converts that followed, in pursuit of a purpose they equated with their own national and communal ideal of liberty. The Burchard revival was symptomatic of the unrest of the 1830's and of a people eagerly seeking answers and new solutions to the problems which vexed them.

NOTES

¹Zadock Thompson, *History of Vermont, Natural, Civil, and Statistical* (Burlington, Vt., 1842), part II, 93.

²N. Haskins, *A History of the State of Vermont* (Vergennes, Vt., 1831), pp. 18-19.

³See T.D.S. Bassett, "Irish Immigration to Vermont Before the Famine," *Chittenden County Historical Society Bulletin*, no. 4, (March 1966). Travelling through Burlington in 1835, Nathaniel Hawthorne spoke for many nativists when he observed at Burlington's harbor a "swarm" of Irish, a third part of whom could not earn "a daily glass of whiskey . . . doubtless their first necessity of life."

⁴Samuel Swift, *History of the Town of Middlebury* (Middlebury, Vt., 1859), p. 98.

⁵See John J. Duffy and H.N. Muller, III, "The Great Wolf Hunt: The Popular Response in Vermont to the *Patriote* Uprising of 1837," *Journal of American Studies*, VIII, (August, 1974), 153-169.

⁶Jedidiah Burchard remains an elusive figure in the history of the Great Revival of the 1830's in northern New York and western New England. The little published information about him that survives can be found in Whitney R. Cross, *The Burnt-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York 1825-50* (Ithaca, 1950), p. 188-89; Frank G. Beardsley, *A History of American Revivals* (New York, 1904), pp. 161-2; William F. Noble, *God's Doings in Our Vineyard* (Philadelphia, 1882), pp. 401-6; H. Pomeroy Brewster, "The Magic of a Voice," *Rochester Historical Society Publications Fund Series*, 4, (1925), 273-90; and David Ludlum, *Social Ferment in Vermont, 1791-1850* (Montpelier, 1937), pp. 56-57.

⁷Nell Jane Barnett Sullivan and David Kendall Martin, *A History of The Town of Chazy, Clinton County, New York* (Burlington, Vermont, 1970), p. 226.

⁸Comings MSS, University of Vermont Archives, Burlington, Vermont (hereafter UVM), Elam J. Comings to (Fanny?), April 25, 1835; and Torrey MSS, UVM, Mrs. Torrey to Reverend Joseph Torrey, Burlington, January 19 and 20, 1836.

⁹*Records of the First Congregational Church in Burlington* (Burlington, Vermont), II, 71.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 70. The church called the protracted meeting and invited Burchard to conduct it on August 22, 1835. The meeting actually commenced on December 8.

¹¹Sullivan and Martin, *History of Chazy*, p. 226.

¹²*Records of the First Congregational Church in Burlington*, II, 71.

¹³Comings MSS, Elam J. Comings to Capt. A. Comings, Burlington, December 23, 1835.

¹⁴*Records of the First Congregational Church in Burlington*, II, 71.

¹⁵Torrey MSS, Mrs. Torrey to Rev. Joseph Torrey, Burlington, Vermont, January 19 and 20, 1836.

¹⁶Comings MSS, Elam J. Comings to Capt. A. Comings, Burlington, December 23, 1835.

¹⁷Russell Streeter, *Mirror of Calvinistic, Fanatical Revivals, or Jedidiah Burchard & Co. During a Protracted Meeting of Twenty-Six Days, in Woodstock, Vt. to which is added the "Preamble and Resolution" of the Town Declaring Said Burchard a Nuisance to Society* (Woodstock, 1835).

¹⁸George Perkins Marsh MSS, Dartmouth College Library, Hanover, New Hampshire, George Perkins Marsh to father (Charles Marsh), Burlington, December 29, 1835.

¹⁹Ms. 285.8743 R936 as, Rutland County Association (Congregational Churches), house of Rev. William Mitchell, East Rutland, Vermont, February 2, 1836. Vermont Historical Society Collections, Vermont Historical Society, Montpelier, Vermont (hereafter VHS Collections).

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹For Charles G. Eastman's report of how the minister and the congregation in Williston sympathetically received Burchard see Charles G. Eastman (ed.), *Sermons, Addresses and Exhortations of Jedidiah Burchard*, (Burlington: Chauncey Goodrich, 1836), Appendix, pp 108-110.

²²George Perkins Marsh MSS, George Perkins Marsh to father, Burlington, December 29, 1835. Marsh noted that "Professors Hough, Turner of Middlebury, agree in opinion with Mr. [James] Marsh and Mr. Wheeler." He also suggested sarcastically that Burchard's support from "the friends of Middlebury College" came "for the laudable purpose, no doubt, of building up the one institution at the cost of the other."

²³Comings MSS, Elam J. Comings to Capt. A. Comings, Burlington, December 23, 1835.

²⁴George Perkins Marsh MSS, George Perkins Marsh to father, Burlington, December 29, 1835.

²⁵*Ibid.*; Capt. Frederick Marryat, *Diary in America*, ed. Jules Zwanger (Bloomington, 1960), p. 140.

²⁶Ms. 285.8743 R936 as, Brainerd [?] Kent, Joseph Hurlburt, and Henry P. Hickok to Chittenden County Association, March, 1836. VHS Collections.

²⁷Torrey MSS, Mrs. Torrey to Rev. Joseph Torrey, Burlington, January 19 and 20, 1836.

²⁸Benedict MSS, UVM, G.W. Benedict to E.C. Benedict, Burlington, January 23, 1836.

²⁹Comings MSS, Elam J. Comings to Capt. A. Comings, Burlington, December 23, 1835.

³⁰Streeter, *Mirror of Calvinistic, Fanatical Revivals*.

³¹The episode of trying to thwart Burchard by publishing accounts of his sermons and the meetings has been derived from Eastman, *Sermons, Addresses and Exhortations of Jedidiah Burchard*, Appendix; Benedict MSS, G.W. Benedict to E.C. Benedict, Burlington, January 23, 1836; and Torrey MSS, Mrs. Torrey to Rev. Joseph Torrey, Burlington, January 19 and 20, 1836 and Rev. Joseph Torrey to Mrs. M.N. Torrey (wife), Bonn, Germany, January 6, 1836 and Paris, France, March 1, 1836.

³²Marsh MSS, UVM; James Marsh to Nathan Lord, December 1835 (photocopy).

³³In response to his critics in Burlington, probably members of the University of Vermont's faculty, Burchard retorted in a sermon: "The Church has been deceived by the devil, and talks about giving people time to *think*. That's all nonsense. Men won't think. . . . Let any good minister, even Br. Smithgate of this church, preach the doctrines of the gospel ever so plainly, from Sabbath to Sabbath, and then tell sinners to *think* upon the subject of salvation, and make up their minds coolly; and how many would be saved by their *thinking*? Why, common sense teaches that he

wouldn't save one in a month. I tell you, *people won't think. They are too dull and lazy to think!* They want *excitement*. I have found by several years experience that sinners are converted by being excited. That's what we have the *anxious seats* and *general prayers* for. It's to call down the Holy Ghost right into their souls, and excite them to inquire, — Master, Jesus Christ — the Almighty God, what shall I do to be saved from endless hell." Eastman, *Sermons, Addresses and Exhortations of Jedidiah Burchard*, p. 33.

³⁴VHS Collections, Rutland County Association.

³⁵The wife of John Wheeler, President of the University of Vermont, reported to Marsh that Mrs. Burchard led a revival of Burlington children in the same manner as Burchard did with the adults. Marsh told Nathan Lord that she "induced a collection of nearly a hundred to say . . . that they had given their hearts to God . . . there was but one face among them that showed any peculiar solemnity." Marsh MSS, James Marsh to Nathan Lord, December, 1835.

³⁶Torrey, MSS, Rev. Joseph Torrey to Mrs. M.N. Torrey, Bonn, Germany, January 6, 1836 and Paris, France, March 1, 1836.

³⁷*Memorial Manual of the Fourth Congregational Church*, Hartford Connecticut (Hartford, 1882), pp. 1-21. The Free Church Movement grew out of Charles Grandison Finney's revival activities and resulted in Free Churches being established in many of the major eastern cities such as Boston, New Haven, and New York. They were formed, as members of the Free Church of Hartford professed, "with the view of providing the means of grace for the neglected and the increasing population of the city" (8). Antinomian controversy and "many erratic and extreme characters" were eventually seen as threats to the Church which could only be averted by charging pew rent (14).

³⁸Abby Hemenway, ed., *Vermont Historical Gazetteer* (Burlington, 1871), II, 210. See also, David Ludlum, *Social Ferment*, p. 249.

³⁹James Marsh MSS, James Marsh to Nathan Lord, December 1835.

⁴⁰VHS Collections, Rutland County Association.

⁴¹*Ibid.* "Does not [the 'New Measures' system of revivals] directly tend to depreciate the regular, and patient, and humble use of the ordinary means of grace, and the ordinary duties and charities of the Christian life?"

⁴²David Ludlum, *Social Ferment*, pp. 155-66, points out that after 1837 the abolition question severely distressed Congregational, Methodist, and Episcopal churches in Vermont. Not until the late 1840's would the General Convention of Congregational Ministers in Vermont declare mildly that slavery was "utterly sinful before God." *Extracts from the Minutes of the General Convention* . . . (1836). E.C. and Joseph Tracy, editors of the *Vermont Chronicle* (William Lloyd Garrison called their newspaper "the most egotistical, the most querulous, and the most dangerous publication in New England," *Liberator*, January 4, 1831), led with James Marsh, until his death in 1842, the opposition to the Convention's formally denouncing slavery. Methodist and Baptist churches in Vermont experienced similar internal controversies and in the mid-1840's underwent basic organizational ruptures over the question of abolition.

An early, but still important, study of population trends in northern New England is Harold F. Wilson, "Population Trends in North-Western New England, 1790-1930," *New England Quarterly*, VII (1934), 276-77.

Ludlum also has a brief discussion of the social reform movements of the 1840's (205-37) and their relations to the forces that compelled migration after the Panic of 1837 (260-73). See also Louis D. Stilwell, *Migration from Vermont* (Montpelier, Vt., 1948). Stewart Holbrook's *The Yankee Exodus* (Seattle, 1950), still provides the best overview of New England migration.

⁴³Bishop Hopkins' record of his journey to England in 1837-38 is contained in a diary deposited in the Library of the Vermont Historical Society, Montpelier.