

# TEN NIGHTS IN A BAR-ROOM



"Father! dear father! They have killed me!"

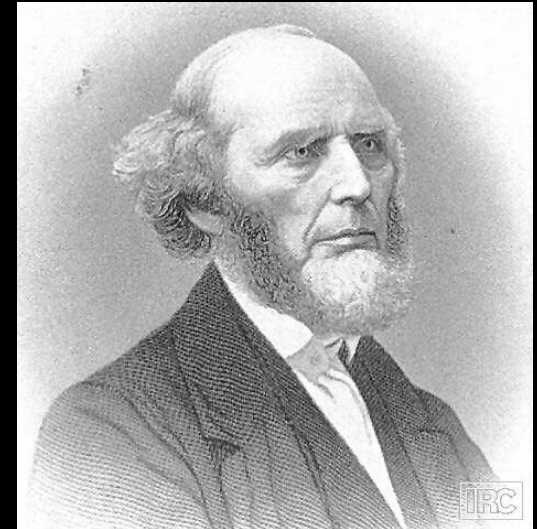
*A.S. Sears*  
LITHO. PUNCH

**A BENEVOLENT EMPIRE?  
MORAL REFORM AND THE  
"FEMINIZATION" OF NORTHERN  
SOCIETY**

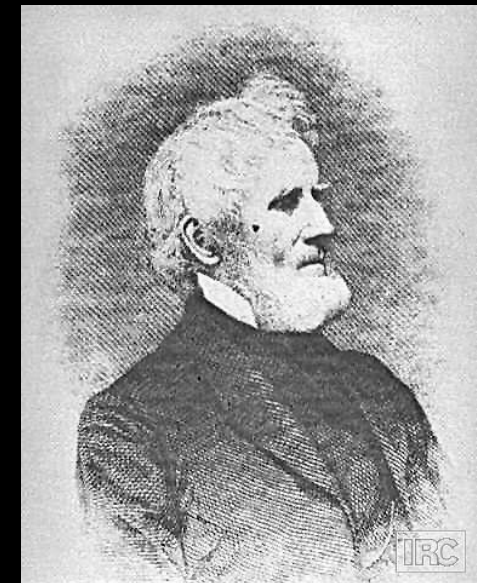
HISTORY 1100.3, DEC. 6, 2007

# I. RELIGIOUS REVIVAL & THE ORIGINS OF SOCIAL REFORM

- ◆ “Feminization” of American society: Appropriate social behavior for both genders increasingly defined by moral values associated with new cult of domesticity & “woman’s sphere”: sentimental love, virtue, self-control, piety.
- ◆ Problem was that new capitalist society had not yet changed to suit the new middle-class family values.
  - Examples: national drinking binge, toleration of prostitution, disrespect for religion/Sabbath.
- ◆ In response, emotional religious revivals swept “Greater New England,” trying to restore & update Puritan faith & morality.
  - Most successful revivalist was Charles Grandison Finney of NY, beginning in 1825.
    - Used commercial methods, well-funded by capitalists like the Tappan bros.: aggressive marketing, hard-sell tactics. More staid than southern revivals.
    - Very popular with middle-class women.
  - Dropped harsher aspects of Puritanism like original sin & predestination, made conversion simple decision to reject sin.
    - Doctrines of “free moral agency” & perfectionism held out the possibility of a perfectly moral society brought about by changing individual hearts.
    - Sought to reshape men’s behavior to the specs of wives, mothers, & future employers.
    - Male personality promoted by cult of domesticity and evangelical reformers: plain-living, self-controlling, future-oriented, self-reliant, hard-working, inner-directed (motivated by shame, not honor), law-bound (seeking impersonal & peaceful means for solving conflicts).
      - Southern men, & working-class men, followed quite different models of manhood & even some middle-class northerner resisted.



Charles Grandison Finney



Arthur Tappan





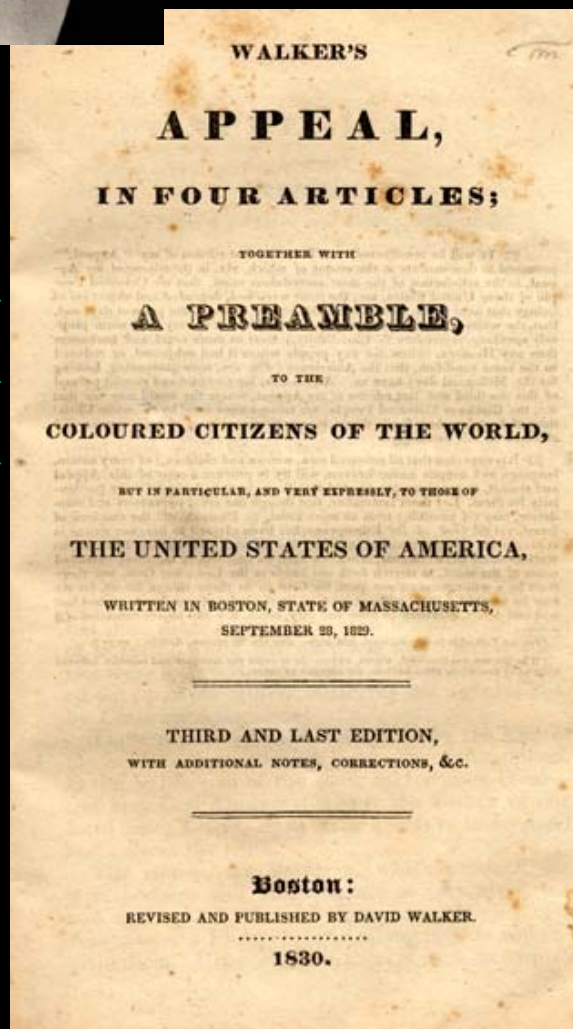
## II. MORAL REFORM & THE DOMESTICATION OF THE NORTH

### ◆ Rise of the “Benevolent Empire”

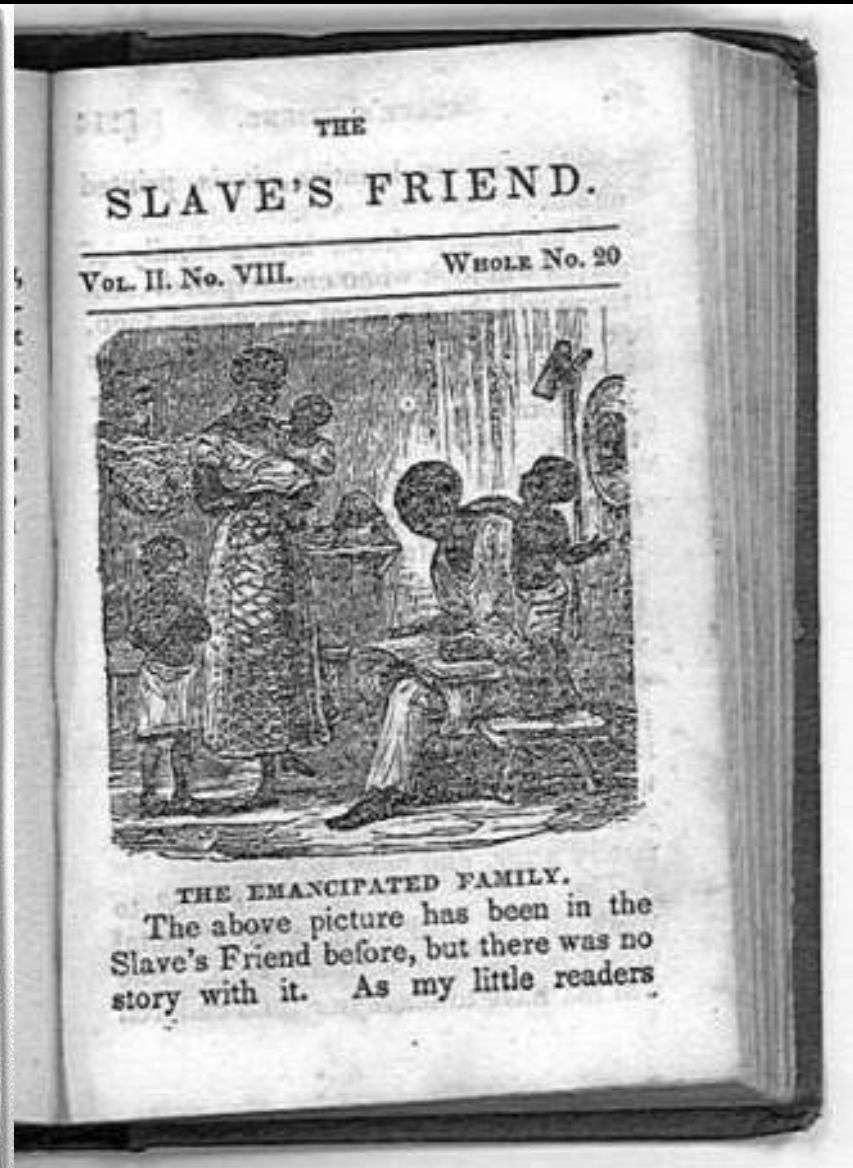
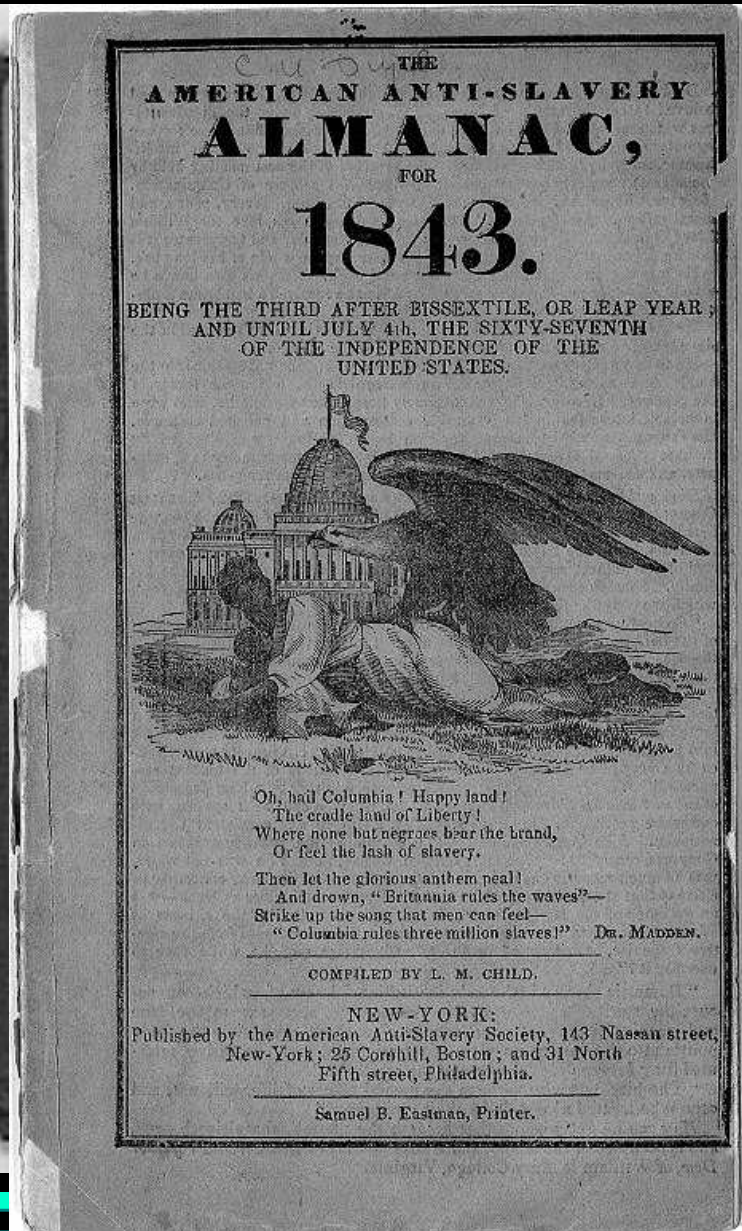
- New evangelical religion inspired wave of well-funded movements, often female-dominated & led, to reform society according to values of Christianity, middle-class morality, & cult of domesticity.
  - Examples: Sabbatarianism, Sunday Schools, temperance, criminalization of prostitution (& other forms of disorderly conduct), missionary work, Antimasonry, anti-Catholicism and **the new abolitionism**.
    - Antislavery movement taken over by African Americans (David Walker, Frederick Douglass), New Englanders (William Lloyd Garrison) & women (Grimke sisters) shifted demands from gradual, compensated emancipation & colonization of free blacks to immediate, unconditional abolition as moral duty.
  - Played up threats to the family and domesticity, relying on the allegedly non-political stance of wives, mothers, & their ministers to excuse heavy political activity.
  - Hostile to immigrants, Catholicism, Democrats, sinning workers.
- Methods: “moral suasion” by national organizations w/local chapters, networks of newspapers, direct mail, touring speakers, popular culture (prints/songs, sentimental novels & plays).
  - Despite its criticisms of traditional patriarchal society, “Benevolent Empire” increasingly reached for the coercive authority of government to impose middle-class Protestant values on those who resisted.

### The Benevolent Empire and Westward Expansion

- Another popular cause was sending missionaries to Christianize and reform Indians, foreigners, the urban poor, western settlers, trying to get them all under middle-class moral restraints
  - Christian reform organizations (ABCFM & American Home Missionary Association) in effect mounted a campaign to culturally colonize the West, on behalf of New England.
  - Sent out ministers, started churches, schools, colleges all over West, creating a Yankee belt across northern tier from Massachusetts to NY, Ohio, & all the way over to Minnesota.
    - Also opened a competition for cultural/sectional loyalties of the West.




# ABOLITIONIST POPULAR CULTURE



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7. Work is good	8. Villagers of the Alps
9. No more Slavery and Trade	10. We're a coming
	11. The Farmers' Trade

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Published by F. W. DILL, 57 1/2 PARK ST.  
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*From A. V.*

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**NATHAN ROGERS,**  
As a mark of esteem for his interposition in the cause of Human Rights - By the Author -  
**JESSE HUTCHINSON JUNR.**

BOSTON  
Published by the Author