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Editor
Paul Merritt Bassett

JOHN WESLEY, THE METHODISTS, AND SOCIAL REFORM IN ENGLAND

by
Luke L. Keefer

In a conference devoted to the theme of Methodist's impact upon the American social conscience, it might be well to look at the record of English Methodism in the same area. This means primarily a look at John Wesley's movement in the eighteenth century. Secondly, this also involves some attention to subsequent Methodist developments in the century and a half after Wesley's death.

In pursuing this objective I have had to impose certain restrictions upon the subject. First, only the most cursory attention can be devoted to the detailed record of Wesley and Methodism's acts and attitudes. Those with interest in such detailed studies can pursue them in the writings of Maldwyn Edwards, Robert Wearmouth, Wellman J. Warner, John W. Bready, J. H. Whiteley,¹ and other recent studies.²

Secondly, I am pursuing the subject with the specific purpose of analyzing various interpretations that have been offered to assess the social impact of John Wesley and his people upon English social history. A major portion of this paper is lifted from the concluding section of an extensive study undertaken for a course in eighteenth century English history during my doctoral studies at Temple University.³ While the various theories can be analyzed apart from the concrete data upon which they are based, one might be at a loss to assess my critical review of them apart from that data. I can only direct the curious to that larger study.

Since that study was conducted nearly fifteen years ago, I have attempted to update it somewhat by giving attention to four of the papers presented at Emory University during the bicentennial celebrations of American Methodism⁴ and to the edited papers of the Sixth Oxford Institute on Methodist Theological Studies held at Lincoln College in the summer of 1977.⁵ Of particular interest to that conference was the attempt to assess Wesley from the perspective of liberation theology.

Thirdly, and most regrettably, I will not be able to trace out lines of influence between English Methodism and its American counterpart in regard

to social ethics. I am not aware of any studies in depth on this topic analogous to those which Robert Chiles did on Methodism's theology in general and John Peters did on its doctrine of Christian perfection.⁶ What would emerge if one were to try to connect the studies of the British situation done by Edwards, Wearmouth, Warner, and others with that of Timothy Smith's significant analysis of the American scene⁷ is an intriguing question.

I. An Overview of the Record of Wesley and Methodism's Social Activity

Wesley's personal record of philanthropy is outstanding judged against any measure, especially when compared to a comparable person in any given age. One would be hard put to find many examples of people who gave away more of their adult resources of time and money than Wesley did. His charity and his concern were directed toward the poor, the unemployed, the debtors, the sick, the imprisoned, the uneducated, the widows and the orphans. From his student days at Oxford until his last illness nearly seventy years he sustained a constant attention to the needy.

His aid was intentional, taking definite structures that involved others in its execution and providing for its continuance beyond the scope of his life. His life was a model for all Methodists; he wanted them to see how they might apply themselves to similar projects within their sphere of ministry. Thus his concern for doing good was multiplied many times over in the lives of those influenced by his work.

Wesley did address issues that went beyond individual cases of need. He decried miscarriages of justice in the court systems, corrupt election practices, and government policies that adversely affected the nation, especially the poor. He wrote vigorously in behalf of better prison conditions. He boldly called for the elimination of slavery and the slave trade. Generally, he gets good marks in these areas. Many social analysts fault him, however, for some of his written stances regarding the civil liberties of Roman Catholics, the status of the American revolutionaries, and republican forms of government in general.

His pluses and minuses stand together in his record and call for comprehensive analysis. He is best understood as an informed preacher who acts not so much from fixed political strategy and social theory as from an ethical vision shaped by Scripture and Christian history. It is hard to be severe with him at this point, when one realizes that Locke's treatises at the threshold of his century and Adam Smith's writing in the last quarter of the same had really only broken ground in such disciplines as political science and economics. Nor can Wesley be discredited by a Tory label, because the label itself is too imprecise as an eighteenth century social judgment, and Wesley often was at variance with the Tory caricature assigned to his time.

The Methodists after Wesley are a variegated study of comparisons and contrasts. Their record for personal philanthropy and corporate charities is a noble one. This is most clearly reflected in diaries and journals and the biographies of Methodist people, the sources from which Leslie Church drew his material about the early Methodist.⁸ Each tradition has its notable people whose lives of social service stand out precisely because they are so far above the norm. What is fascinating about these early Methodist people, however, is how typical their journals are. Charity was a fixed pattern in the society. It was something to which all were committed. To read Methodist diaries

is to uncover behavior that was quite common and not singular instances of a socially concerned individual.

Some general patterns of Methodist theory and practice can be traced across large blocks of time. With the exceptions of laudable records in regard to slavery and education, the Methodists in the first fifty years after Wesley were socially more conservative than he was. As a body, they do not respond well to the social causes, especially in regard to organized labor. The next century finds them more involved at the political level of social change. They are more attuned to the social theories and programs of the time. At the same time, they are less conscious of a distinctively Wesleyan theology to inform the social change. They have become part of the larger social consciousness of the English nation. The pluses and minuses have shifted around a bit, but the record remains mixed.

II. An Assessment of the Wesleyan Social Influence on England

Needless to say there are various interpretations of the impact John Wesley had on England socially. I have reduced the assessments to broad groupings: (1) those who say that Methodism had very little influence on the social development of England, (2) those who say that Methodism had a profound influence on the social development of England, and (3) those who take a position between these two evaluations.

One would be hard put to find traditional Methodist authorities who would take the position that Wesley's moment was of little social consequence. There are writers outside Methodism, however, who hold such a position. Leslie Stephen's assessment of Wesley could hardly be called flattering.⁹ He sees British Methodism as a movement that had no profound social impact upon England because it diverted discontent into religious exercises rather than into political action,¹⁰ and because it made no important intellectual contribution to England as earlier Reformation movements had.¹¹ Max Weber sees the Methodists as primarily concerned about the salvation of the soul. Thus he maintains that any social consequences were purely incidental to this main purpose.¹² In his view, the Methodists were in the general stream of the "Protestant ethic,"¹³ which means that their movement was generally inimical to social reform, particularly in industrialized England.

H. Richard Niebuhr also believes that Wesleyanism failed to create permanent social change because it was a religious revolution of the disinherited which failed to become a popular movement.¹⁴ He maintains that it was too individualistic in its approach and failed to grasp the ideal of the Kingdom of God which had fired the revolutionaries of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹⁵ Thus, when real social change came to England in the last half of the nineteenth century, it was secular in character rather than religious. He implies that the English people by that time had come to doubt that religion was a positive force for social betterment.

One could argue specifically with each of these writers. However, they all seem to share several general weaknesses. They do not give sufficient credit to Methodist accomplishments. For Weber any social consequences of Methodism were simply incidental to its religious ideology, while Stephen considers the Wesleyan record on slavery (the one point at which he must admit that it made a difference on purpose) as a mere exception to its overall record. Weber and Stephen make no attempt to discover to what extent Meth-

odist philanthropy not only improved the lot of thousands but also provided a new social climate in which care of the unfortunate became a political ideal. Instead of seeing Methodism as a developmental stage between the Puritan Revolt of the seventeenth century and the Socialist Revolution of the later nineteenth century, they see it at its best as an interlude and at its worst as an actual interruption of positive social change.

They, like most radical historians, overlook the fact that the Puritan revolt was a political failure (as was also the French Revolution) and contained some elements that were reactionary in nature. It could be argued that though Methodism slowed the rate of social change, it ultimately assured its success by providing a method for peaceful change which was in keeping with the British mind.¹⁶ These authors give little recognition to the development within Methodism itself, a development which found it decidedly liberal in outlook by the time that dramatic social change occurred in the later half of the nineteenth century.¹⁷ Most seriously of all, they are not sufficiently immersed in the primary data of Methodism. One can hardly be thoroughly acquainted with the Wesleyan sources and be unimpressed with Methodist social achievements. If one compares the Methodist record from 1725-1850 (which some see as its preliberal days) to that of any other organized group of the period, sacred or secular, one cannot help but conclude that no other group can match it at the point of social service. Until a writer can empirically demonstrate Methodist ineffectiveness in creating social change, he has little or no case for minimizing the social influence of Wesley and his people.

On the other hand, those who say that Methodism had a profound social influence upon England tend to exaggerate the magnitude of that influence. Curiously there are two rival camps which argue from this basic premise and they come to opposite conclusions. One group says the influence was largely a positive one, while the other says the influence was a negative factor in England's social development.

Many of the Methodist historians, especially those who wrote in the nineteenth century, belong to the camp that considers Methodism's influence to have been profoundly beneficial. In the closing years of the eighteenth century and the early years of the nineteenth century, Methodists had to defend themselves from government suspicions that they harbored revolutionary sympathies. To do so they magnified their Tory principles, especially their support of the Constitutional Monarchy. They emphasized their intolerance for any and all groups that threatened the stability of the government through agitation for radical reform. They particularly stood in total opposition to the French Revolution and made every effort to assure that their members were not associated with any group that supported the ideals of the French Revolution or advocated violence resembling its reign of terror. As a result, Methodist apologists could tell the government that they had helped to prevent a revolution in England like that which occurred across the Channel. Later Methodists read these apologetic evaluations as statements of fact.

Thus the myth that Methodism saved England from revolution came to be widely accepted among Methodist writers. This idea also gained some credence outside of Methodist circles, for even William E. H. Lecky, who sought to be rigorously empirical, sees the Methodists as playing a prominent role in preventing the French Revolution from spreading to England.¹⁸

To say the least, this is a naive assessment. It fails to recognize that the English people were not ripe for revolution as the French were, primarily because of the Glorious Revolution in England in the previous century. Many continental political writers saw England's Constitutional Monarchy as the ideal form of government. British subjects enjoyed rights that no other European citizens enjoyed.

This assessment also fails to reckon with a British temperament which magnified the way of compromise in settling conflicts. Thus, many English who at first supported the French Revolution were to change their minds when the horror of its methods was revealed. English reformists were more inclined to use the existing political process to achieve their ends.

This naive view errs substantially in its estimate of the possible effect the Methodists could have had upon the English populace of the day. They were a very small minority in the whole nation and were particularly without power in Ireland and Scotland. If the British people as a whole had favored revolution, the Methodists could have done very little to frustrate their purpose.

These Methodist writers also overestimate the social impact of Methodism in other areas. They tend to assume that the democratic practices of the Society as well as its philanthropy were automatically translated into the larger public sphere. Thus they point to specific cases of Methodist concern as the equivalent of social reform in England. They interpret certain Methodist activities as indicative of a liberal orientation in politics and economics. Obviously, for them, Wesley is a hero. They find it difficult to give full recognition to his blind spots. There is a lack of objectivity and sophistication in the reading of the events of the first half of the nineteenth century. They undoubtedly know the Methodist sources well, but they are not as well informed about the larger English social history of the period. They are often religious authors who are unversed in the political and economic sciences. Hence, a better record is claimed for Wesley's people than the facts allow.

At the opposite end of the spectrum are writers like Mr. and Mrs. Hammond (*The Town Laborer*) and E. P. Thompson (*The Making of the English Working Class*). They blame the Methodists for keeping England from experiencing a revolution like that which occurred in France.¹⁹ The Wesleyan influence is blamed for some of the bad effects of industrialization in England. Wesleyan teaching, they believe, changed the psyche of the rebellious laborers into a servile docility which played into the hands of the factory owners.²⁰ For these authors Methodism was truly the "opiate of the masses," because it used religion to inhibit the workers' impulses toward social betterment. If this be true, one wants to ask, "Why did Methodism grow so rapidly between 1792 and 1830 and attract so many working people into its ranks?" Thompson explains this growth as a "Chiliasm of despair."²¹ By that he means that the working class turned to religion for the comforting thought of heaven when its efforts to improve its social lot were frustrated by the establishment. Thus, Thompson argues that Methodist growth was not steady but came in spurts that correlated positively with the years in which radical activity failed.

Both Thompson and the Hammonds work under severe disabilities. Both try their hands at the dubious task of writing psychohistory. Now psychoanalysis is imprecise enough when one has a living subject before him who

can be observed and interrogated. When one tries to analyze the psychology of a group, the problem is even more complex. But to try to apply such a method to a movement removed by a century and a half is a task involving gigantic complexities. It is understandable that most historians refuse to give the same credence to psychohistory that they do to empirical historical evidence.

These authors also operate from a commitment to a Marxist philosophy of history. One could give greater weight to their criticisms if they were not attempting to reconstruct history to fit into Marxist presuppositions. Thompson himself admits that the stark outlines of his “intellectualized picture” were not that harsh in the actual situation.²² There is the tendency to search

the sources for the bits of evidence that support their views while ignoring the evidence which militates against their philosophy. To those who know the sources well, it is obvious that they have constructed some generalizations from what are exceptional incidents. This is particularly true when they try to depict the psychological effect of Methodist religious experience. It is a tendency apparent already in Leslie Stephen and William E. H. Lecky.

More important than the issue of methodology, however, is the fact that their interpretation fails at several crucial points. It is a long step from the demonstration that a religion like Methodism could have produced docile workers to the proof that it actually did. When one tests their hypothesis at this point it fails to make its case. Sidney Pollard’s “Factory Discipline in the Industrial Revolution”²³ makes it evident that factory owners had a whole battery of tactics at their disposal to fashion a working population during the industrial revolution. Almost every institution of the day was at their disposal. Why then single out religion as the prime culprit in subduing the workers? And the Methodists, of all people, since their record in this regard is far superior to that of the Anglican Church? As Mr. Pollard notes, factory owners did not care which form of worship the workers followed; all they cared for was that it should make them good workers.²⁴ John S. Kent says, “Any respectable variety of religion would do; there is little evidence that manufacturers had the enthusiasm for Methodism which one would expect on Mr.

Thompson’s argument.²⁵ Besides, what is Mr. Thompson to do with all those Methodists who were involved with the labor unions if the Methodists are the supreme example of a religion aptly suited to form passive workers? He is constrained to make the concession that at least the Methodist sects that broke from the parent body made a contribution to the later development of trade unionism and political radicalism.²⁶

It would seem that Mr. Thompson singles out the Methodism for his censure because he believes that it was the most influential religion of the day. Now in some respects that may have been true, but it certainly will not bear the burden of argument he imposes upon it. Gertrude Himmelfarb notes that Thompson speaks of England’s being on the verge of revolution from 1790 to 1832, and then asks: “If Methodism prevailed so widely among the masses and penetrated so deeply into their individual and collective psyche, where did the impulse and perennial threat of revolution come from?”²⁷

E. J. Hobsbawm questions the whole thesis of the extent of Methodism’s influence in retarding revolution.²⁸ After comparing Methodist statistics to the population census, he concludes: “It does not seem likely that a body of, say, 150,000 out of 10 million English and Welsh 1811 could have exer-

cised decisive importance.”²⁹ The Methodist population was concentrated in certain areas, “mainly in the North, Midlands, East Anglia, and the extreme Southwest.”³⁰ When Hobsbawm examined the areas of Methodist strength, he found they had little or no moderating effect on radicalism. Instead he found that both Methodism and radicalism were strong in some cities and both were weak in some cities.³¹ He noted, too, that Methodism and radicalism advanced at the same time and declined at the same time.³² The boom years for Wesleyanism were 1793⁹⁴, 1813¹⁶, 1831³⁴, 1837⁴¹, and 1848⁵⁰, the very years that radical activity was at its peak.³³ In addition, the great “revival years” normally did not occur when economic conditions were coming to their worst.³⁴

It seems that these facts refute Mr. Thompson in two very important respects. First, they are convincing evidence that Methodism did not retard reform even in the few places that it would have had sufficient influence to do so. Secondly, the facts refute Thompson’s theory that Methodist religion was a “Chiliasm of despair.” Methodist growth took place at the height of reform agitation, not in the years immediately following the defeat of reform attempts. Hobsbawm believes that the conservatism of official Methodism has often been exaggerated because “it is too easily assumed” that workers turned to religion “*as an alternative* to revolutionary or radical politics.”³⁵ He admits that such may have been the case sometimes, but he believes that a better interpretation of the evidence is that people “become Methodists and Radicals for the same reasons.”³⁶

Having refuted the argument that Methodism kept England from having a revolution, Hobsbawm offers an alternative explanation to account for the lateness of England’s major social reforms. He appeals to Lenin, who had said that a deterioration of the conditions of the masses and an increase

in their political activity was not enough to bring about a revolution. What was also necessary was a “crisis in the affairs of the ruling order” and a “body of revolutionaries capable of directing and leading the movement.”³⁷ Hobsbawm argues that from 1790 to 1849 England had neither of these. The Government kept control of the political situation by making intelligent compromises when pressured by reforming parties. “As for the revolutionaries,” he maintains, “they were throughout the entire period inexperienced, unclear in their minds, badly organized, and divided.”³⁸ Thus, to charge Methodism with retarding social reform is not only to err in exaggerating the influence of the Methodists, but it is also to misunderstand the social and political situation of the nation at the time.

If one rejects both of the positions which underestimate the social influence of Methodism and those which overestimate its social impact, there is only one alternative left that is a position that mediates between the extremes. Essentially this is where many authors come out on the question.

In one form or another this reflects the evaluation of Asa Briggs, J. H. Plumb, Elie Halevy, E. J. Hobsbawm, Bernard Semmel, Gertrude Himmelfarb, Anthony Armstrong, Robert F. Wearmouth, Maldwyn Edwards, and Wellman J. Warner. Each of these tries to give due credit to the strengths and the weaknesses of the Wesleyan phenomenon.

This means, in the first place, the recognition of the “two-souled” nature of Methodism. These authors recognize the extensive influence that Wesley’s religious revolution played in English history. It effectively committed the

English churches to an Arminian egalitarianism rather than a Calvinistic particularism. Coupled with the Wesleyan ideal of the perfectibility of man, this theology would seem to underlie, or at least to encourage, the development of effective democratic government and the gradual improvement of the country's social conditions. Methodism's achievements in philanthropy, in the extension of education, and in the abolition of slavery are seen to be in line with this positive thrust.

These authors also recognize that Methodism's influence had indirect results beyond the boundaries of the Methodist societies.³⁹ Methodism roused Dissent from the sleepy decline which had befallen it in the early part of the eighteenth century. By means of the Evangelical Party it had somewhat the same effect upon the Established Church. Thus Methodism had fostered a new religious climate in England that made people more aware of fellow citizens and more responsive to their needs. Many see this influence as the creative force behind the Victorian soul, and point out the unconscious way in which this spirit aided the establishment of liberal reforms which seem otherwise to be secular in origin.⁴⁰ They argue that Methodism infused a new philanthropic impulse into English society which made humanitarian concern resulting in social action a unifying value for the whole nation.

On the other hand, these authors remind us that Methodism had its darker side. One needs only to consider its obstructing actions regarding relief for the Roman Catholics, its negative attitude toward the American Revolution, and its resistance to reform agitation to know that Methodism also resisted social change in England. As Methodism became more middle class in composition and more Tory in outlook it lost its chance to fulfill its mission as the "Church of the poor." From the standpoint of social history it seems that Methodism failed to live up to its potential mainly because it did not translate its social ethic into concrete political action.

These authors suggest several ways to account for this curious paradox within Methodism. Warner and Semmel suggest that Wesley and his people were part of the larger movement from the traditional England to the modern England.⁴¹ England itself was a curious blend of the old and the new, the reactionary and the liberal. This affected all groups and classes, so that Tories sometimes acted like Whigs, and Whigs sometimes acted like Tories. Conservatives were found at times to champion legislation for social change while radicals were known on occasion to be liable to reactionary views. It was the time of the embryonic development of economic theory. The nation as a whole was moving philosophically from individualism to collectivism.⁴² Methodist social action followed this trend. Beginning with an outlook best characterized as personal philanthropy, it developed a position that fostered collective political activity in the last half of the nineteenth century. The intervening years of its history are replete with events that demonstrate that the transition from the one to the other was not always smooth. Politically the nation moved from a conservative Toryism to a consistent democracy in the same period. Methodism also made the journey, demonstrating at times the same paradoxical stances that showed up in public life. Thus Warner and Semmel remind us that Methodism grew up on English soil during more than a century of confusing social change. Its soul mirrors that of the country and it can be understood on no other basis.

Yet, at the same time, Methodism worked dynamically within this situation and certainly had a part in the nineteenth-century English social development. In many ways its approach was inadequate. But we must remember Hobsbawm's point that not until the last half of the nineteenth century was there a group of people capable of bringing about profound revolutionary changes in England.⁴³ Methodism could not wait until better methods were available. It attacked social problems as it best knew how, that is, by religious methods. Looking back one might adjudge those methods simplistic, but that does not mean they were without effect.⁴⁴ To criticize Wesley and his generation for not treating social ills by our contemporary methods is akin to charging the physicians of his time with negligence because they did not treat polio with Salk vaccine!

One must still ask what would have happened if Methodism had not been on the scene? Would there have been a revolution like France had? It is not likely. But even if there were a violent revolution at that time, would it have solved the social ills of the day? The failure of the Puritan Revolt and of the Revolution in France suggests that a violent revolution would not have ushered in a social utopia. Semmel offers an alternative thesis that the Methodist revival prepared persons for a gradual change from the traditional to the modern nation, and thus provided resolve for the forces making for liberty and for order. As the only nation in Europe which successfully carried out a social revolution in the period 1763-1914 without widespread violence, England was admired by foreign observers for its unique blending of personal freedom and social stability.⁴⁵ Thus, Methodism, with its "two-souled" existence (i.e., liberal impulses in tension with conservative ones), may have been uniquely suited to the needs of nineteenth-century England. Had Wesleyanism been caught up in an advocacy of a violent revolution, it would likely have jeopardized its own existence as the other radical groups of the time did.⁴⁶ But its humanitarian concern, balanced with its passion for order, ensured its continuance. It was thus to make both its religious and its social contribution to the English people.

In the end, one is brought around to appreciate some aspects of Halevy's thesis concerning Wesley's place in English social history.⁴⁷ He does not overestimate Wesley's place in the events of the time, for two thirds of his book is devoted to the study of the political and economic factors in Britain which made for gradual, orderly change. Neither does he underestimate Methodist influence, for he assigns great importance to the weight of religious ideas. As Halevy sees it, it was a matter of Methodism's acting in concert with other factors in the complex British scene which produced the England of the nineteenth century.⁴⁸ Wesley is assigned a constructive position in that overall development. This interpretation may not sit well with Marxist philosophy, but it fits very well with the historical data. We would do well to consider carefully Gertrude Himmelfarb's question: "Will Halevy defeat Marx as the interpreter of this crucial period in English history."⁴⁹

III. Some Contemporary Footnotes

The assessment of Methodism's social influence has been shifted to new grounds in our generation. The ensuing debate has raised more questions and found fewer answers that have widespread agreement. For one thing, the Wesleyan movement as a whole has become profoundly self-critical. Tradi-

tional assessments of Wesley and his people are immediately suspect as unsophisticated, outdated, and too romantic.

Research continues to generate new data to be considered. But the current situation is not so much due to additional historical material as it is to new historical methods. The impact of the social sciences has affected the entire historical enterprise. Sociological studies have yielded new interpretations of old facts. Contemporary theories of social, economic, and political institutions are increasingly the lenses through which historical matters are viewed.

Methodologies have their strengths and their weaknesses. They also change, so we ought not to absolutize them. Certain factors of contemporary methodologies have inherent dangers. For example, there is too much dependence upon the criteria of political effectiveness. Too frequently evaluations are made on the basis of how much good results for how many people in terms of concrete political advantages. In terms of Methodism's influence, the question becomes a matter of how many Parliamentary acts for the good of so many millions of people can be traced to direct Methodist influence. The hidden assumption is that anything less than this does not count or cannot be assessed quantitatively.

What ought to trouble us as Christians is the secular bias that underlies some contemporary methodologies. For it leaves us with a very uncomfortable dilemma. On the one hand the church is urged to become a political force capable of affecting certain social changes. But this inevitably means that the church must take on some type of Constantinian arrangement with the State. For even in a democratic society, the Church must become a powerful block capable of changing the status quo with a majority vote. Thus, even in that diluted sense, the Church has directed the State in its task.

Now, on most issues of public policy that is precisely what our modern societies do not want the church to achieve, unless of course the church is putting its weight of blessing behind the reigning values of the culture in question. In other words, the Church's agenda, according to this line of thinking, must be a secularly defined one. Otherwise its influence is going to be interpreted as unwelcomed meddling in the affairs of the age in terms of metaphysical commitments rejected by the larger culture.

The dilemma for the Church then is either to engage in Church-State arrangements of power and influence on secularly defined issues of common good or be charged with being socially irrelevant. Many of the severe contemporary assessments of earlier Methodist social influence reflect this state of mind. Methodism is to be condemned because its methods and its agendas did not correspond to the proper liberalizing issues of the respective periods. Any Christian movement, and not just Methodism, which bases its ethics upon historical-grammatical exegesis of the received canon of Scripture and traditional orthodox theology will get negative reviews from practitioners of this world view, at least on certain social issues. This sounds more defensive than I intend to be. But I believe more is at stake than merely a historical assessment of the Wesleyan social influence. The real question is how we can act responsibly as Christians with respect to the ethical problems of our age. We cannot allow a secular mindset, however well intentioned and informed it may be, to define the issues and dictate the methods by which we exercise a Christian conscience on the social issues of the day.

The issue boils down to serving one's generation well by the grace of God. We don't know how well Wesley would have served in situations since his time. But then one might ask his critics how well they would have fared with the issues of Wesley's day. One does not have to defend Wesley's failures nor the Methodist people after him. Rather one looks to their models of faithfulness to a God-given task. We are not bound to imitate them step for step. We are free to take different sides on some of the questions than they did at times or to utilize different methods than they sometimes employed. We are called, however, to the example of their conscience formed by Scripture inflamed by experienced grace, and channeled through group fellowship, mission, and discipline to reach out to our world in the name of Christ.

Our age abounds in information and technology, but it lacks godly conscience, Christ-like compassion, and Spirit-enabled commitment. These were the things in which Wesley and his people excelled. And I think they were the key to their social influence. If we are to be faithful to our age, then we must bring the riches of our heritage to our social responsibility, using what ever tools our age affords us that have moral integrity. The in-groups of our culture will not always approve of our agendas nor our choice of methods. And for that we will suffer their censure, as did Jesus in His day and Wesley in his. Yet both served many well by serving God most of all. That is what faithfulness to one's age meant then, and it is what it means now. And by the eternal standard, that is the ultimate assessment of social influence.

Notes

1 One can locate the specific sources in a helpful bibliography in Theodore Runyon, Ed., *Sanctification and Liberation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), pp.245-251.

2 Runyon cites the recent works of Schneeberger and Marquardt. *Ibid*, pp.19,249,250.

3 Luke L. Keefer, Jr., "An Assessment of John Wesley's Social Impact on England." Unpublished paper. Temple University, Spring 1975.

4 Theodore Runyon, ed., *Wesleyan Theology Today: A Bicentennial Theological Consultation* (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 1985~. Most pertinent to this essay are the following chapters: Walter George Muelder, "The Methodist Social Creed and Ecumenical Ethics"; James C. Logan, "Toward a Wesleyan Social Ethic"; Leon O. Hynson, "Implications of Wesley's Biblical Method and Political Thought"; and J. Philip Wogaman, "The Wesleyan Tradition and the Social Challenges of the Next Century." Especially significant in regard to social ethics is the contention that the theological roots of Wesley's ethics and the trajectories we can derive from them for our own praxis are more instructive than the specific record of Wesley and the Methodists who immediately followed him. (Cf. specifically Logan, pp. 361-62, and Wogaman, p. 389.

5 Cf. n1 *supra*.

6 Leon O. Hynson, *To Reform the Nation: Theological Foundations of Wesley's Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press of Zondervan, 1984), is excellent in grasping fundamental concerns in Wesley's ethics. It is a theological analysis, however, rather than a historical one. And it seldom attempts to bridge the Atlantic. Also cf Robert Chiles, *Theological Transition in American Methodism: 1790-1935* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1965) and John L. Peters, *Christian Perfection and American Methodism* (Reprint: Grand Rapids: Francis Asbury Press of Zondervan, 1985; Nashville: Pierce and Washabaugh; New York: Abingdon Press, 1956).

7 Cf. Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform* (Reprint: Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Brown, 1976; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957).

8 Leslie F. Church, *The Early Methodist People* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1949); and *More about the early Methodist People* (London: Epworth press, 1949).

9 Leslie Stephen, *A History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Smith and Elder, 1902), II, pp.409-435.

10 *Ibid*, p. 432.

11 *Ibid*, p. 433.

12 Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), pp.89-90.

13 *Ibid*, pp. 142-43. Thomas Madron, "John Wesley on Economics," in Runyon, ed., *Sanctification and Liberation*, p. 109, offers this critique of Weber's association of Wesley with the Protestant work ethic: "Any interpretation of Wesley to the effect that the 'presence of success indicates a state of moral soundness' is impossible to maintain, in the context of the totality of his writings. In this sense Wesley represents an exception to the general Protestant ethic of Calvinism, which influenced the eighteenth century so greatly." Earlier in the same article (p. 104), Madron asserted: "In a very real sense, Wesley recovered the reform tradition of England. His was the approach of Wycliff, rather than that of the continental Reformation, and he brought it to some measure of fulfillment in the disinherited classes of England." More generally, Madron makes several noteworthy points: (1) Wesley did not follow Locke's assumptions regarding property as an inalienable right (p. 107); (2) Wesley saw, as most of his time did not, the social reasons behind poverty (pp. 110-113); and (3) Wesley opposed unbridled competition and advocated governmental intervention in economic crises; he did not follow Adam Smith's economic philosophy of *laissez-faire*. Leon Hynson, "Implications of Wesley's Ethical Method and Political Thought," in Runyon, ed. *Wesleyan Theology Today*, pp.37-67, in analyzing Wesley's view regarding property agrees with Madron: "If the Protestant ethic flows in any sense from Wesley's sermon ["The Use of Money"], as Max Weber believes, it represents a misuse of his intention."

14 H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1929), p.72.

15 Ibid, pp. 5976.

16 This is the line of argument followed by Bernard Semmel, *The Methodist Revolution* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

17 Ibid, p. 182.

18 William E. H. Lecky, *A History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1921), III, p. 146.

19 “Methodism: The French Revolution: The Industrial Revolution,” *The Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* XV (192526),218; E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Pantheon Books 1964), pp. 38182.

20 Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Victorian Minds* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1969), pp. 29395; Semmel, *ibid.*, p. 3; Thompson, *ibid.*, pp. 354!68, 375.

21 Thompson, *ibid.*, pp. 38182, 388.

22 *ibid.*, p. 380.

23 Sidney Pollard, “Factory Discipline in the Industrial Revolution,” *The Economic History Review* XVI (Second series), Number 2 (December 1963) 254271.

24 *ibid.*, p. 270

25 John H. S. Kent, “Book Notices,” *The Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* XXXIV (December 1964), 189.

26 Thompson, *ibid.*, p 397.

27 Himmelfarb, *ibid.*, pp. 29495.

28 E. J. Hobsbawm, “Methodism and the Threat of Revolution in Britain,” *History Today* VII:2 (February 1957), 115124.

29 *Ibid.*, p. 120.

30 *ibid.*, p. 119.

31 *ibid.*, pp. 12023.

32 *ibid.*, p. 124

33 *ibid.*

34 *ibid.*

35 *ibid.*, p. 123

36 *ibid.*, p. 124

37 *ibid.*, p. 116

38 *ibid.*

39 Elie Halevy, *A History of the English People in 1815* (trs. E. I. Watkin and D. A. Barker; New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1924), pp. 352-

55, 365-77, 381-82; Maldwyn Edwards, *After Wesley: A Study of the Social and Political Influence of Methodism in the Aqiddle Period 19711849* (London: Epworth Press, 1935), p. 123; Robert F. Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Common People of the Eighteenth Century* (London: Epworth Press, 1945), pp. 168-268; Anthony Armstrong, *The Church of England the Methodists and Society, 1700-1850* (Totowa, NJ: Roman and Littlefield, 1973), p. 131; Asa Briggs, *The Making of Modern England 17831867* (New York: Harper and Row, 1951), pp. 69-74.

40 Wearmouth, *ibid*, pp. 166, 216, 231, 26267; Wellman J. Warner, *The Wesleyan Movement in the Industrial Revolution* (New York Russell and Russell, 1930), pp.279281; Maldwyn Edwards, *John Wesley and the Eighteenth Century: A Study of His Social and Political Influence* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1983), pp. 146-47, 157-58, 168, 191, 195-96, 201-02; Himmelfarb, *ibid.*, 27885, 29192; Semmel, *ibid*, 121, 171; Onva K. Boshears, Jr., *John Wesley, The Boohman. A Study of His Reading Interests in the Eighteenth Century* (unpubl. dissertation, University of Michigan,1972), p.191; Frederick C. Gill, *Charles Wesley: The First Methodist* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), p. 84.

41 Warner, *ibid.*, pp. 27477; Semmel, *ibid*, p. 171.

42 Maldwyn Edwards, *Methodism and England A Study of Methodism in Its Social and Political Aspects During the Period 1850-1932* (London: Epworth Press, 1943).

43 Hobsbawm, *ibid*, p. 116.

44 Church, *More About the Early Methodist People*, p. 187. Also see J. Philip Wogaman, *ibid*, pp. 3931, 396, who describes Wesley's approach as "pragmatic reformism," noting that it was one of reaction to perceived needs rather than one operating from a systematic program of theological ethics. Yet, says Wogaman, this approach often had great potency when faced with certain practical issues.

45 Semmel, *ibid*, vii and pp. 49, 80, 8793, 12526, 136, 171, 192, 19495.

46 Robert Wearmouth, *Methodism and the WorkingClass Movement of England* (London: Epworth Press, 1937), pp. 19294.

47 Halevy, *ibid*, pp. 341401. Note, however, the critical evaluation of Halevy's thesis by Theodore Runyon, "Introduction: Wesley and the Theologies of Liberation," *Sanctification and Liberation*, pp. 1519.

48 Himmelfarb, *ibid*, pp. 282, 29899. Warner, *ibid*, p. 12, concurs with this evaluation.

49 Himmelfarb, *ibid.*, p. 299.

**“THE APPLICATION OF PERFECTIONISM
TO POLITICS”:
POLITICAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL
ABOLITIONISM IN THE BURNED-OVER DISTRICT ¹**

by
Douglas M. Strong

In 1839, a conservative political commentator and former Presbyterian clergyman named Calvin Colton² wrote a scathing attack on the antislavery movement.³ He warned his readers that the abolitionists were attempting to “remodel political society” according to fanatical perfectionist religious notions. Colton was not averse to individuals preaching Christian perfection in the confines of their own churches (although he did not believe in the doctrine himself). But he felt it was reckless for moral reformers, particularly abolitionists, to try “to introduce perfectionism into the social system.” Colton’s anxiety was not without foundation, for at this time many abolitionists confidently believed that their antislavery endeavors were helping to fulfill God’s design for “a perfect state of society.”⁴

In their efforts to bring about the consummation of a perfected post millennial society,⁵ some abolitionists broadened their familiar tactic of non-coercive “moral suasion” to include a more activist political strategy.⁶ Specifically the abolitionists considered forming a third political party, since their traditional Whig and Democratic parties were unwilling to take a firm stand against slavery. The proposed new party was designed to be a self-consciously perfectionist political organization. Its expressed purpose was the abolition of slavery and other social evils as a preliminary step to the establishment of the government of God on earth.⁷ Colton was fearful of this intrusion of a religious agenda into the realm of civil affairs, believing that it was the insidious result of “the application of perfectionism to politics.”⁸

Four years later, Colton wrote another tract against political abolitionism.⁹ This second attack was even more contemptuous than the first, because the dreaded abolitionist political organization about which he forewarned in 1839 was, in 1843, an established third party, the Liberty party.¹⁰ Colton was

alarmed because the vote totals of the Liberty party were expanding by geometric proportions every year.¹¹ Many “Liberty men” (as the members of this party were called) were hopeful that they would be the majority party in the North by 1848.¹² Since Liberty votes were drawn away from the traditional parties,¹³ Whig and Democratic political pundits were concerned.¹⁴ But more ominous than the electoral strength of political abolitionism according to Colton, was the threat caused by the combination of political abolitionism with ecclesiastical abolitionism.

“Ecclesiastical abolitionism”¹⁵ was an effort among antislavery advocates to withdraw from their denominations (which they deemed to be “pro-slavery”) and to reorganize themselves into pure, independent “Abolition Churches.”¹⁶ Colton accused these antislavery congregations of being “chiefly devoted” to the advancement of the Liberty party. It was they he charged, who “have taken lead, and are at the head of the [political abolitionist] movement.” Such ecclesiastical partisanship, Colton believed, was a dangerous “junction of religion and political power.” Consequently, he felt that the Liberty party deserved to be publicly stigmatized as an “Abolition Church” rather than treated as a traditional political party.¹⁷

Colton’s accusation was designed as a criticism, but the “Liberty men” were not bothered by it. They would have been proud of his identification of the Liberty party with the abolition churches. William Goodell, for example, a prominent Liberty party leader, stated that “the ‘political abolitionists,’ especially in Central and Western New York, where that movement originated, are the very men who have . . . tak[en] measures for seceding and organization new churches.”¹⁸ According to these abolitionists, a holy life and a holy society could only be realized after Christians separated from impure institutions. They believed that they needed to “come out”¹⁹ of the unholy structures that existed both in the church and in the state. Ecclesiastical abolitionism, as expressed in “come-outer” antislavery congregations, and political abolitionism, as expressed in the “come-outer” Liberty party, were two manifestations of the same movement. And the underlying theological impetus for this religious/political movement was the doctrine of Christian perfection.

The geographic focus for this unusual alliance was upstate New York an area that had already gained a reputation for being “burnedover” by the recurrent revival fires kindled by the preaching of Charles Finney and others.²⁰ In the early 1830’s, a number of itinerating ministers openly began to preach perfectionism in the Presbyterian churches²¹ of this burnedover district. The best known of these peripatetic perfectionist preachers was Luther Myrick.²² By 1834, rumors of Myrick’s deviation from Reformed orthodoxy had circulated sufficiently to have him brought up on formal charges before the Oneida Presbytery. Fellow clergymen accused Myrick of denying “every doctrine which distinguishes the Presbyterian church from the Methodist.” Consequently, at the trial the Presbytery demanded that Myrick preach a sermon to them to prove his soundness in matters of theology. Never one to shrink from a challenge, Myrick chose to preach to his ministerial colleagues on their need for “Bible perfection.” The account of the trial records that “the presbytery members were very uneasy and restless” during the message. We are not surprised to learn that Myrick was summarily suspended from the Presbyterian ministry following this sermon.²³

Myrick's unpleasant experience with the Presbytery led him to believe that denominational creeds and regional judicatories were evil. Such institutional trappings perpetuated sinful sectarian divisions and forced compliance to outdated doctrines. The major sects were "almost universally the stout defenders of the doctrine that saints cannot live without sin in the present life. Upon this principle they attempt to justify their party divisions."²⁴ Denominational structures interposed an artificial, human-made authority between individuals and God, a barrier which inhibited the free investigation of religious truth. As Myrick stated: "ecclesiastical judicatories and sectarian churches deny to the people of God the right of private judgment in matters of religion."²⁵ When a person's conscience was restricted by adherence to such hierarchical authorities, that person was not free to lead a sanctified life. Obeying the rulings of one's denomination (forbidding abolitionism, for example) would hinder one from fully obeying God's law.²⁶

For Myrick and other abolitionist come-outers, the institution of slavery became a paradigm for tyrannical institutions that existed throughout the society.²⁷ In particular, the legal despotism that was enslaving African Americans was compared to the "spiritual despotism" that was enslaving evangelical Americans. "The chains of sectarianism bind the souls of God's children as the chains of Southern tyrants bind the bodies of men."²⁸ The fact that the major denominations refused to condemn slaveholders was simply an illustration of the fetters that they imposed upon the human conscience.

This ecclesiastical tyranny, according to the seceders, was most vividly illustrated by the prescribed doctrines and authoritative judicatories of the denominations. Consequently, sectarian institutions were considered inherently sinful, especially large, connectional denominations such as Presbyterianism and Methodism.²⁹ God's government could not be established through the instrumentality of these human constructs. And since traditional ecclesiastical institutions were deemed sinful, the only recourse for Christians seeking to live a holy life was to "come out" and be separated from the impurity.³⁰

Ecclesiastical abolitionists were determined to replace the "spiritual despotism" of their old, impure denominations with the "spiritual democracy" of reorganized and purified congregations."³¹ Myrick established the first of these democratic, independent, antislavery congregations in 1836.³² Following Myrick's example, further secessions from Presbyterian churches resulted in scores of abolitionist congregations.³³ Since Myrick's desire was to break down sectarian distinctions and to unify all sanctified Christians, his followers became known as "Unionists," and Unionist congregations were known as "Union churches."³⁴ Critics, however, claimed that Myrick's ideas led to "disunion" far more than union, and that this group was simply another denomination composed of those who allegedly did not believe in any denominations.³⁵

The new Union churches were dedicated to holiness and to individual freedom of conscience. Personal holiness was to be demonstrated by one's commitment to social reforms such as antislavery³⁶ and "spiritual democracy."³⁷ Liberty of conscience would occur when each congregation renounced its allegiance to external authorities such as a creed or a denomination. Every church was completely independent, and polity decisions were to be strictly congregational.³⁸ Although Unionists attended regional conventions of like-minded abolitionists, they declared that these meetings had no "binding authority"

over individual congregations. The Unionists believed that the power exercised by ecclesiastical bodies above the local level would inevitably become corrupt. They considered any union of sectarian judicatories as a sinful, human-made creation. A union of individual churches, however, would occur naturally if believers would only live out sanctified lives.³⁹ Thus the Unionist dictum: “perfect holiness and unity of the saints.”⁴⁰

In the early 1840’s, Myrick’s influence over the Union churches was overshadowed by that of William Goodell, a leading political and ecclesiastical abolitionist.⁴¹ Goodell was the one who spearheaded the Unionists into an active role in support of the Liberty party. With his encouragement the Abolition Churches became, as Calvin Colton declared, “chiefly devoted” to the advancement of political abolitionism.⁴² The perfectionist reasoning that led abolitionists to ecclesiastical secession now led them further to political secession.

Both Myrick and Goodell intended that Unionism would embrace and unify come-outer abolitionists from every sect. In practice, though, Union churches were composed predominantly of ex-Presbyterians.⁴³ Instead of joining the Union churches, abolitionists from the other major evangelical denominations seceded and formed their own come-outer groups. These other groups, similar to the Unionists, were committed to supporting the Liberty party and to preaching the doctrine of Christian perfection. They also accepted the principle of “spiritual democracy” concurring with Myrick and Goodell, that sectarian hierarchies were divisive and despotic.

The other ecclesiastical come-outers, however, were not as anti-institutional as the Unionists. While they agreed with the Unionists that the power wielded by translocal organizations needed to be carefully circumscribed, they were not willing to dismantle all regional and national ecclesiastical structures.⁴⁴ One non-Unionist come-outer, for example, believed that a limited ecclesiastical organization beyond the local congregation could be helpful in promoting “greater uniformity and efficiency” in the work of perfecting the society. At the same time, though, he reminded churches not to “allow their personal identity and rights to be swallowed up in the power” of any denominational organization.⁴⁵

These other (non-Unionist) ecclesiastical abolitionist groups hailed from a broad spectrum of evangelical denominations in the burnedover district.⁴⁶ Abolitionist Baptists, for instance, withdrew from their regional associations and formed independent “Anti-Slavery Baptist” churches.⁴⁷ Other antislavery Baptists became affiliated with the Free Baptist Connection,⁴⁸ a group which (in New York state at least) became a strong advocate for both the Liberty party⁴⁹ and entire sanctification.⁵⁰ Abolitionist Quakers in New York withdrew from their denomination, too. They formed a new group which was dedicated to perfectionist theology, antislavery politics, and a democratic church polity.⁵¹

A separate Lutheran abolitionist group was organized also, called the Franckean Evangelic Lutheran Synod.⁵² Like the other ecclesiastical abolitionists, the members of this new Lutheran synod adhered to the concept of “spiritual democracy”; thus they insisted that the Synod’s resolutions were to be regarded as “merely advisory” for its member congregations.⁵³ The abolitionist Franckean Lutherans also maintained that a person’s commitment to “holiness” would include the “carrying out [of] political principles.”⁵⁴ The

particular political affiliation that they encouraged, and that was motivated by their advocacy of Christian perfection, was the Liberty party.⁵⁵

The largest ecclesiastical abolitionist group in New York was the Wesleyan Methodist Connection.⁵⁶ Methodists⁵⁷ from various regions had, for several years, been seeking both civil democracy (the abolition of slavery) and spiritual democracy (the abolition of denominational authoritarianism). Toward this end, Methodist abolitionists in central New York held several “Seceding Methodist Conventions” in 1841.⁵⁸

One of the guiding personalities behind these secessionist meetings was Wesley Bailey, an antislavery associate of Luther Myrick.⁵⁹ Bailey established a weekly newspaper for the Liberty party in 1842. At the same time, he also became a leader of a congregation of come-outer Methodists in Utica, New York.⁶⁰ The congregation was founded to counteract the “pro-slavery character” and the despotic “government of the [Methodist Episcopal] church.”⁶¹ A year later, in 1843, this influential Utica congregation offered to host yet another convention for seceding abolitionist Methodists, the convention which formally established the Wesleyan Methodist Connection. Indicating their desire for broad abolitionist unity, the organizers of the Utica convention invited Methodists and “all other Christian believers” who were “in favor of forming a Church free from Episcopacy and Slavery.”⁶² By stating their opposition to “despotism” in both civil and religious institutions, the Wesleyan Methodists went on record as ecclesiastical abolitionists. In order to establish a sanctified society, the Wesleyans believed, both the church and the state needed to cease their oppression of the human spirit.

The Wesleyan Methodists’ commitment to ecclesiastical abolitionism was based on their understanding of Christian perfection. “Holiness,” they declared at the Utica convention, was to be their “motto.”⁶³ In order to emphasize their reliance on the doctrine of perfection, the first General Conference of the new Connection, in 1844, proposed to add an article on “Sanctification” to their Discipline. The article affirmed that sanctified believers would be delivered from the “pollution and reigning power of sin,”⁶⁴ thus enabling persons to be consistently dedicated to personal and social reform.

This disciplinary article of the Wesleyans was similar to the perfectionist statements of the other antislavery come-outers. The abolitionist Franckean Lutherans declared that the Holy Ghost could “sanctify the soul, and perfect our holiness.”⁶⁵ The Free Baptists stated that “entire sanctification in this life, is both the privilege and the duty of every Christian, . . . a work of God’s grace, by which the soul is cleansed from all the pollutions of sin.”⁶⁶

The leading Unionists also affirmed entire sanctification. Myrick constantly linked unionism with perfectionism; “holiness is the bond of Christian Union,” he believed.⁶⁷ Goodell similarly preached that “to be wholly sanctified is to be wholly free from sin.”⁶⁸

The common thread in all of these early holiness statements by the various ecclesiastical abolitionists was their stress on ethical earnestness as the visible fruit of entire sanctification. For the Wesleyan Methodists, holiness of heart and life provided believers with the “moral power to oppose the evils and corruption in the world.” Such sanctified moral power equipped each person to be a “zealous advocate of every branch of moral reform.”⁶⁹ Thus the earliest Wesleyans were particular about the purpose of sanctification (specifically regarding political and ecclesiastical abolition⁷⁰) while remain-

ing relatively vague about the process by which this sanctification was attained. In a similar vein, Myrick wrote that holiness made Unionists “efficient laborers in the kingdom of Christ.”⁷¹ Likewise, Goodell and other Unionists insisted that entire sanctification would result in the fulfillment of one’s “political duties.”⁷²

Ecclesiastical abolitionists spoke about Christian perfection in terms of its practical effect on their efforts for political and ecclesiastical reform. Beyond this commonly perceived goal for entire sanctification, however, there was a certain lack of precision regarding the formulation of holiness doctrine.⁷³ The 1844 Wesleyan disciplinary article, for example, was not as particular as later Wesleyan Methodist definitions of entire sanctification. In 1848, the Wesleyans changed the 1844 General Conference article to a more definitive wording, but even that wording was not as precise a statement as those that developed later in the Holiness movement, statements that insisted on the necessity of a crisis, second work of grace. The earliest Wesleyans stressed specific reform activities as normative for one’s entire sanctification, while later Wesleyans stressed the normativeness of a prescribed mode for one’s reception of entire sanctification.⁷⁴

Although all of the ecclesiastical abolitionists affirmed that perfection in love was attainable in this life, and that total obedience was an obligation for Christians to pursue, they did not dwell on the details of the sanctification experience itself. Goodell criticized those who tried to describe entire sanctification as “consist[ing] mainly . . . in sensations or emotions” without “being perfect in obedience.”⁷⁵ Among ecclesiastical abolitionists, the doctrine of holiness was advocated without insisting on a uniform manner in which it was to be acquired. “It is our duty to labor and pray for entire sanctification of all believers,” Goodell said, “without demanding to know precisely when and how” it occurs. The controversies on the subject, he concluded, were “less profitable than curious.”⁷⁶ In the 1840’s, this relative indefiniteness allowed ecclesiastical abolitionists from various denominational backgrounds to work together toward common ethical goals with little doctrinal squabbling.⁷⁷ Only later would the development of more definitive perfectionist formulations cause division among ecclesiastical/political abolitionists.⁷⁸

During the most visible years for ecclesiastical abolitionism, from 1840 to 1845, there was a significant coherence in the theological views and in the reformatory endeavors of the various come-outer groups. Ecclesiastical abolitionists articulated a common perfectionist rationale for their denominational withdrawals. They were committed to the unity of all abolitionist come-outers, as evidenced by their shared pastoral leadership and their joint use of each other’s church facilities.⁷⁹ They developed an elaborate network of cooperative abolitionist schools, periodicals, conventions, and itinerating lecturers.⁸⁰ There was, in short, a flurry of ecclesiastical abolitionist activity in the early 1840’s which culminated in their collaborative efforts on behalf of the Liberty party.

It was common sense, ecclesiastical abolitionists reasoned, for those who seceded from their churches to secede from their political parties. Goodell noted that the “Anti-Slavery secession and reorganization of churches” was “the fundamental principle upon which the Liberty party [was] founded.”⁸¹ Since ecclesiastical abolitionists considered their traditional “pro-slavery” religi-

ous institutions to be despotic, it was logical for them to view their traditional “pro-slavery” political institutions in the same light.⁸² Until sanctified Christians refused to sustain the morally corrupt Whig and Democratic parties, slavery could not be abolished and God’s perfected state of society could not be established. Wesleyan Methodists were admonished to “see the inconsistency of leaving a pro-slavery church, [while] still holding on to political parties who are sold to slavery.”⁸³ Instead of acting inconsistently, perfectionist abolitionists were urged to “come out” from political impurity and support the Liberty party.

This perfectionist justification for political abolitionism can be better understood by using an interpretation provided for us by Donald Scott.⁸⁴ Scott has demonstrated how the earliest reformers who argued for the immediate abolition of slavery in the 1830’s appropriated the theological discourse of revivalistic evangelicalism. These reformers drew a parallel between their conversion experience and their acceptance of antislavery; as reborn abolitionists, they repented of past pro-slavery behavior and vowed to lead a renewed life of antislavery agitation. We can extend Scott’s thesis to demonstrate that, similarly, those who argued for the more specific tactic of political abolition in the 1840’s appropriated the more specific theological discourse of perfectionism. “Liberty men” drew a parallel between their entire sanctification and their antislavery voting. The abolition vote was a recording of one’s spiritual choice against sin and for holiness.

A Liberty ballot became a practical and definitive way for abolitionists to exhibit their sanctified resolve.⁸⁵ Goodell, for example, criticized holiness preachers who thought that entire sanctification was “too spiritually minded to plead the cause of the oppressed” those who “consider it quite too profane and secular, to discharge the duties of political life.” To the contrary, Goodell believed that to be entirely sanctified was to be actively obedient, including direct political involvement.⁸⁶ He agreed with Luther Lee, who was the most prominent early Wesleyan Methodist leader in New York. Lee urged the Wesleyans “to vote the Liberty ticket as a religious duty.”⁸⁷ For ecclesiastical abolitionists who were going on to perfection, their religious duty required a specific political act. A vote in favor of a Liberty party candidate was a vote against sin.

The Liberty party was frank about its perfectionist stance. The party’s ultimate intent, for instance, was stated as keeping “all men from all sin.” Liberty candidates were expected to have a more “righteous moral character” than those endorsed by other parties. Liberty party conventions assumed that those who ran for office under their label would “perfect their walk” before God, and at least some Liberty voters were convinced “that their favorite candidates [were] absolutely *sinless*.”⁸⁸

Since most of the “Liberty men” in the burned-over district were ecclesiastical abolitionists, it is not surprising that so many leaders of the party espoused the doctrine of entire sanctification. Many influential “Liberty men” were Unionists, and some of them were pastors of the perfectionist Union churches in their communities.⁸⁹ Liberty party leaders also belonged to the other ecclesiastical abolitionist groups such as the Franckean Lutherans, the Free Baptists, and the Wesleyan Methodists, each of which promoted Christian holiness. The Free Baptists estimated that “a large majority” of their number voted for antislavery candidates.⁹⁰ The newspa-

per of the Wesleyan Methodists likewise asserted that “in most cases” their membership voted for the Liberty slate.⁹¹ Wesley Bailey served as the Chairman of the Wesleyans’ Utica district while concurrently editing *The Liberty Press*, the mouthpiece of the Liberty party in central New York.⁹² Luther Lee was engaged in Liberty campaigning while ministering to New York State Wesleyans.⁹³ By their increased Liberty party involvement and interaction, the networking that was already present among the various ecclesiastical abolitionists during the early 1840’s became even more extensive by the middle of the decade.

In the space of only a few years, both ecclesiastical and political abolitionism grew remarkably in the burnedover district. Secessionist antislavery churches were formed from out of every evangelical denomination. The abolitionist Franckean Lutherans announced that “revival has succeeded revival” a phenomenon which was connected, they were convinced, with the greater efforts being extended for holiness and moral reform.⁹⁴

These ecclesiastical abolitionist increases were in addition to the tremendous growth in Liberty vote support. In just one quadrennium as an organized political party, the Liberty party’s electoral strength reached a plurality in some New York communities.⁹⁵ Certainly, as the Franckean Lutherans reported, the “antislavery enterprise has advanced beyond the expectations . . . of its most sanguine friends.”⁹⁶

The heady excitement and anticipation within the ecclesiastical/political abolitionist movement reached its zenith in 1843.⁹⁷ The various secessions, civil and religious, indicated to many “a signal crisis in the history of the church.”⁹⁷ Surely, Goodell surmised, “another era has dawned.”⁹⁸

The climax of these events occurred in December 1843 at a General Convention for ecclesiastical abolitionists held in Syracuse.⁹⁹ The purpose of the gathering was to lay the groundwork for a grand, inclusive “General Evangelical Secession” of all perfectionistic, politically-abolitionist come-outers. It was hoped that the convention would unify the many antislavery congregations which had separated from the various evangelical denominations. On the roll of those who organized and attended this convention were the names of all of the major Liberty party leaders in New York State, as well as leading representatives from each of the largest ecclesiastical abolitionist groups the Unionists, the Free Baptists, and the Wesleyan Methodists.¹⁰⁰ They were drawn together by their common commitment to holiness and by their shared interpretation of entire sanctification as a theological justification for innovative antislavery activities such as church reform and outright political campaigning.

It is significant that Wesleyan Methodist leader Luther Lee was an active participant and speaker at the convention.¹⁰¹ Lee had long been attracted to the ideals of spiritual democracy and abolitionist unity.¹⁰² Consequently, he was displeased with some of the ecclesiastical structures and regulations which the new Wesleyan Connection carried over from Episcopal Methodism. Lee opposed these regulations at the Wesleyans’ organizational convention in Utica earlier that year, feeling that such rules were inconsistent with God’s design for a democratic, congregational polity.¹⁰³ Burnedover district Wesleyan Methodists, like Lee, hoped that their Connection would merge into the larger ecclesiastical abolitionist organization now being proposed. In fact, Goodell was informed by some Wesleyans that if his Unionists would only

give up their remaining vestiges of sectarianism, the Wesleyan Methodists in New York state would “try to do the same, and join us.”¹⁰⁴

Such religious cooperation was unprecedented. It was based on a common perfectionist dedication to ecclesiastical reorganization and Liberty party support, an agreement on ethical commitments rather than on sectarian doctrines. Contemporary observers were struck by the potential power of a movement which unified the religious and political reform efforts of abolitionists.¹⁰⁵ One wrote:

This is a remarkable juncture in the affairs of the church and civil society. There seems to be a “turning and overturning,” preparatory to some great events. The curtain of the future is rising, and new scenes in the moral government of God in this world are developing themselves.¹⁰⁶

Seemingly, a “political millennium”¹⁰⁷ (as Goodell termed it) was at hand. In retrospect, these events did represent the high-water mark of postmillennial optimism and perfectionist social reform in the antebellum burnedover district.

After the mid-1840’s, however, ecclesiastical and political abolitionism encountered troubled times. The influence of the Liberty party and the secessionist churches declined precipitously after their few halcyon days. The Syracuse convention, for example, did not succeed in uniting abolitionist come-outers into one “General Evangelical Secession,” since the Wesleyan Methodists were not convinced that the Unionists would give up their Presbyterian practices.¹⁰⁸ In any case, most Union churches disbanded within five to ten years.¹⁰⁹ Along with the other ecclesiastical abolitionist groups, they had difficulty maintaining their earlier fervor and uncompromising ethical agenda.¹¹⁰ The disillusioned remnant of these groups continued to espouse the doctrine of entire sanctification, but without its earlier political overtones.

Likewise, the Liberty organization declined in the late 1840’s as non-perfectionist professional politicians began to exert power within the party.¹¹¹ Regardless of its short duration, however, Calvin Colton’s analysis of political abolitionism was correct: the Liberty party was “the application of perfectionism to politics.”

As a result of this exploration into the “remarkable juncture”¹¹² of political and ecclesiastical abolitionism, it is appropriate to reexamine the character of antebellum evangelism. The 1840’s were a time of religious transition and upheaval, during which the traditional Puritan/Presbyterian hegemony of American religion was being challenged. the formerly predominant Calvinist perspective was giving way to new religious configurations. Among the various competitors to this old orthodoxy was the perfectionism of political and ecclesiastical abolitionism.¹¹³

It is therefore important for historians of American religion to analyze the close antebellum connection that existed between those religious folk who were from traditionally Reformed backgrounds and those who were not. This blurring of longstanding theological lines, as represented by the joint Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian elements at the Syracuse ecclesiastical abolitionist convention, was indicative of shifting allegiances within American evangelicalism. All of the persons at that convention, whatever their theological heritage, shared a similar understanding of Christian perfection. They

attested to a view of entire sanctification that was somewhat vague regarding precise doctrinal details but was unambiguous regarding the doctrine's ethical purpose. That is, they all believed that entire sanctification had direct implications for social and political reform.

This praxis-oriented vision of holiness brought together abolitionists of various denominational backgrounds, and caused come-outer Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Lutherans to assimilate one another's theological and ecclesiological concepts. For example, both the Franckean Lutherans and the Unionists (who were formerly Presbyterians) were accused of being "Methodists" because of their advocacy of holiness.¹¹⁴ And in another instance, the Wesleyan Methodists in New York borrowed their ecclesiological and ethical ideas from the Unionists.¹¹⁵ Luther Lee continued for years to press his agenda of merging the Wesleyans into a broader union of "spiritually democratic" Christians, an idea that was first proposed (among abolitionists) by Myrick, Goodell, and the Unionists. This crusade of Lee's for a larger denominational union was to have serious consequences for, and nearly caused the dissolution of, the Wesleyan Methodist Connection.¹¹⁶

The assimilating of ideas among perfectionist abolitionists suggests that a new evangelical consensus was emerging based on a mutual commitment to sanctified living.¹¹⁷ This new consensus was changing the alignments within the revivalistic tradition, and these changes had momentous implications for subsequent generations of evangelicals.

Notes

¹This essay was made possible by a grant from the Wesleyan-Holiness Study Project, funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts.

² On Colton's life and career, see Alfred A. Cave, *An American Conservative in the Age of Jackson: The Political and Social Thought of Calvin Colton* (Ft. Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1969), especially vviii, 3437, 4243. Although ordained as a Presbyterian, Colton became disillusioned with the revivalistic trends within that denomination and converted to Episcopalianism. He was also a spokesperson for conservative Whig politics.

³ Calvin Colton ["by a northern man," pseud.], *Abolition a Seditzon* (Philadelphia: G. W. Donahue, 1839), 114-120.

⁴ Jonathan Blanchard, *A Perfect State of Society* (Oberlin, OH: James Steele, 1839). Within antebellum culture, there was both a general current of perfectionism in the society (see Ronald G. Walters *American Reformers, 1815-1860* [New York: Hill and Wang, 1978], 1819, 28-39ff., 7275, 115) and a more specific propagation of the doctrine of Christian perfection among evangelicals (see Melvin Easterday Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, 1980), 1832; John L. Peters, *Christian Perfection and American Methodism* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), 97-127; *Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 103-23).

5 Donald W. Dayton, "Millennial Views and Social Reform in Nineteenth Century America," in *The Coming Kingdom: Essays in American Millennialism and Eschatology*, ed. M. Darrol Bryant and Donald W. Dayton (Barrytown, NY: International Religious Foundation, 1983), 13147.

6 On the transition from "moral suasion" to political abolitionism, see Aileen S. Kraditor, *Means and Ends in American Abolitionism: Garrison and His Critics on Strategy and Tactics, 1834-1850* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1967), and Lewis Perry, *Radical Abolitionism: Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), 15887.

7 The "moral government of God" was a theological concept which had a wide currency in the early republic. It stressed the free choice of each believer to accept or reject sin, and this correlated nicely with democratic ideas of American government. Abolitionists appropriated this concept for their own uses, God's intended moral government became identified with a perfected American government that was free from the sin of slavery. See Donald H. Meyer, *The Instructed Conscience: The Shaping of the American National Ethic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972), 89107.

8 Colton, *Abolition a Sedition*, 114.

9 Calvin Colton ["Junius," pseud.], "Political Abolition," *The Junius Tracts* (New York: Greely & McElrath, 1844), 6580.

10 The history of the Liberty party is treated in Theodore Clarke Smith, *The Liberty and Free Soil Parties in the Northwest* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1897), 27104; Richard H. Sewell, *Ballots For Freedom: Antislavery Politics in the United States, 1837-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 43138; John L. Hammond, *The Politics of Benevolence: Revival Religion and American Voting Behavior* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing, 1979), 68105; Alan M. Kraut, "The Forgotten Reformers: A Profile of Third Party Abolitionists in Antebellum New York," in *Antislavery Reconsidered: New Essays on the Abolitionists*, ed. Lewis Perry and Michael Fellman (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 11945; idem, "Partisanship and Principles: The Liberty Party in Antebellum Political Culture," chap. in *Crusaders and Compromisers: Essays on the Relationship of the Antislavery Struggle to the Antebellum Party System* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), 7199; and John R. McKivigan, "Vote As You Pray and Pray As You Vote: Church-Oriented Abolitionism and Antislavery Politics" in *ibid.*, 18191.

11 For the growth in the Liberty vote in the early 1840's, see Theodore Clarke Smith, *op. cit.*, 46, 71; Sewell *op. cit.*, 7479, 110; Lee Benson, *The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 13335, and John R. Hendricks, "The Liberty Party in New York State, 1836-1848" (unpublished Ph.D. diss., Fordham University, 1959), 194ff.

12 "The Right Sort of Politics," *Emancipator Extra* (14 September 1843): 1.

13 In New York State, the Liberty party drew its strength mostly from the Whigs. See Benson, *op. cit.*, 133-36.

14 Colton was only one of many Whig politicians who were apprehensive about the ever-increasing Liberty drain on their electoral strength. Whigs in Wyoming County, New York, for example, were “badly scared,” because the Liberty men had “made sad havoc in our party.” *Western New Yorker* (8 November 1843).

15 The term “ecclesiastical abolitionist” was coined by William Goodell in the *Christian Investigator* (5 [July 1847]: 426), a paper which he edited. Goodell was the pastor of an independent antislavery church in Honeoye, NY, and an active political abolitionist.

16 Some of these antislavery congregations were explicitly called “Abolition churches” (see *Organization and Membership of the Free Church of Sherburne*, 1847/1856 [n.p.: n.d., TMs in New York State Library, Albany, NY], 1) while others were known by this designation informally.

17 Colton used the term “Abolition Church” as a derogatory epithet for the Liberty party. See his “Political Abolition,” *The Junius Tracts*, 7779.

18 *Christian Investigator* 5 (July 1847): 426.

19 This phrase was derived from II Corinthians 6:17, “Come out from among them, and be ye separate.” See also Revelation 18:4.

20 See Whitney R. Cross, *The Burnedover District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950). Political and ecclesiastical abolitionism existed beyond the burnedover district of upstate New York, but nowhere else with such intensity.

21 More precisely, these churches were “Presbygational”; that is, they had a mixed Presbyterian/Congregationalist polity, due to their formation as a result of combined home mission efforts under various Accommodation Plans and Plans of Union. See Philemon H. Fowler, *Historical Sketch of Presbyterianism within the Bounds of the Synod of Central New York* (Utica Curtiss and Childs, 1877), 5468.

22 On Myrick’s career, see Cross, op. cit., 19193, 23840. Some perfectionist preachers were led into doctrinal and behavioral extremes (of an antinomian variety) through the influence of John Humphrey Noyes and others. Myrick, however, insisted on an ethically strict brand of perfectionism which was quite similar to that preached by his Methodist neighbors. See George Wallingford Noyes, *Religious Experience of John Humphrey Noyes* (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1923), 190.

23 *An Account of the Trial of Luther Myrick, Before the Oneida Presbytery* (Syracuse: J. P. Patterson, 1834), iii, 46, 69. This manuscript is at the Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

24 This statement was made by John Truair, one of Luther Myrick’s associates “Was Paul A Sectarian?”, *The Union Herald*, cited in *The Christian Union* 1 (May 1841): 11. Myrick was the editor of *The Union Herald*

25 *The Union Herald* 6 (17 June 1841): 29. It was pointed out that even the Methodist Episcopal Church, which affirmed perfectionist doctrine, nonetheless maintained a hierarchical denominational structure.

26 *Ibid.* 6 (20 May 1841): 9.

27 See Perry, 58.

28 George Storrs to Luther Myrick, in *The Union Herald* 6 (23 September 1841): 82. In a typically similar analogy, adherence to denominational hierarchies was referred to as “ecclesiastical slavery.” *The Christian Union* 1 (August 1841): 61.

29 *The Union Herald* 6 (20 May 1841): 9; Orange Scott, *The Methodist E. Church and Slavery* (Boston: O. Scott, for The Wesleyan Methodist Connection. 1844). 90.

30 *Ibid.*, 7298.

31 *Christian Investigator* 1 (May 1843): 31; *ibid.* 1 (July 1843): 42. The ideal of a “spiritual democracy” was not new. The “Christian Connection” and other groups had been encouraging greater democratization within American Christianity for several decades (see Nathan O. Hatch, “The Christian Movement and the Demand for a Theology of the People,” *The Journal of American History* 67 [December 1980]: 545-67). However, Myrick and the Unionists were the first to connect the ideas of “spiritual democracy” with abolitionism, in an effort to bring democracy to all persons, both to individual Christians and to enslaved African-Americans.

32 Cross, *op. cit.*, 19192.

33 During the next decade, approximately eighty antislavery congregations were organized as a result of secessions from the “Presbygational” churches in New York State. See Douglas M. Strong, “Organized Liberty: Evangelical Perfectionism, Political Abolitionism, and Ecclesiastical Reform in the BurnedOver District” (unpublished Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1990), 18485, 336.

34 *The Christian Union* 1 (May 1841): 10; *Christian Palladium* 8 (2 September 1839): 138; *ibid* 8 (1 October 1839): 169.

35 *Ibid.* 8 (1 October 1839): 170.

36 *The Union Herald* 6 (6 May 1841): 5; *ibid* 6 (17 June 1841): 26.

37 Persons were expected to show their commitment to “spiritual democracy” by their activity in breaking down ecclesiastical hierarchies. *Ibid* 6 (26 August 1841): 70; *The Christian Union* 1 (May 1841): 11. Myrick could not understand how anyone could affirm a belief in entire sanctification without working for abolition and “spiritual democracy”. “Holiness without Christian Union is like Christianity connected with slaveholding.... Slavery is sin, sectarianism is sin, and those who indulge in either sin against God.” *The Union Herald* 6 (29 July 1841): 53.

38 *Ibid.* 6 (5 May 1841): 3; *ibid* 6 (29 July 1841): 51; *Christian Investigator* 1 (May 1843): 31; *ibid* 2 (July 1844): 146.

39 *The Union Herald* 6 (20 May 1841): 14; *ibid* 6 (1 July 1841): 38; *The Christian Union* 1 (July 1841): 4647. Free investigation would “produce a perfect unanimity in all points of evangelical truth, . . . a perfect visible communion!” *Christian Palladium* 7 (1 November 1838): 200.

40 *The Christian Union* 1 (May 1841): 11.

41 Myrick had a strident and vitriolic personality which alienated many Unionists (see *The Union Herald* 6 [20 May 1841]: 12. Also, Myrick’s desire for broad Christian unity led him to fraternize with Unitarians and other persons considered unorthodox by the majority of come-outers (see *ibid* 6 [3 June 1841]: 21; *ibid* [1 July 1841]: 39; *Christian Palladium* 7 [15 September 1838]: 154; *The Christian Union* 1 [August 1841]: 60). Under Goodell’s leadership, however, the Unionists became more explicitly “evangelical” (trinitarian) in their theology (see *Christian Palladium* 8 [15 October 1839]: 8687; *ibid* 8 [1 February 1840]: 297; *Christian Investigator* 2 [January 1844]: 100; *ibid* 2 [May 1844]: 13334. This debate over what constituted orthodoxy was indicative of what Ruth Alden Doan has called a “boundary crisis” at the edges of antebellum evangelicalism (see *The Miller Heresy, Millennialism, and American Culture* [Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987], 2426).

42 Colton, “Political Abolition,” *The Junius Tracts*, 7779.

43 *Christian Palladium* 7 (1 October 1838): 161; *ibid* 7 (1 November 1838): 202; *The Christian Union* 1 (July 1841): 47.

44 The other come-outer groups also desired to maintain certain limited “denominational distinctions,” such as their familiar, traditional names (“Methodist,” “Lutheran,” or “Baptist,” for example). See *The Union Herald* 6 (26 August 1841): 68.

45 Luther Lee, “Church Government,” *True Wesleyan* (5 August 1848), cited in *Christian Investigator* 6 (August 1848): 528. Lee and other upstate New York Wesleyan Methodists were critical of the polity of the new Wesleyan Methodist Connection because of some hierarchical trappings which were carried over from the polity of the Methodist Episcopal Church (see below).

46 John R. McKivigan, *The War Against Proslavery Religion. Abolitionism and the Northern Churches*, 18301865 (Ithaca Cornell University Press, 1984) describes these groups (93110) and mentions their support of the Liberty party (14748), but he does not explore the intimate connections between political abolitionism and “ecclesiastical abolitionism,” nor does he understand the theological basis (i.e. the doctrine of Christian perfection) for this religio-political alliance.

47 *The Liberty Press* 3 (8 March 1845): 69; *ibid* 4 (13 December 1845): 23; Elliot G. Storke, *History of Cayuga County, New York* (Syracuse: D. Mason and Co., 1879), 294.

48 The Free Baptists in New York State were a merger of the Free Will Baptists and the Free (or Open) Communion Baptists (see J. M. Brewster,

et.al., *The Centennial Record of Freewill Baptists, 1780-1880* [Dover, NH: The Printing Establishment, 1881], 3132). The members of the merged group were comfortable calling themselves either “Free Baptists” or “Free Will Baptists.”

49 *The Liberty Press* 3 (16 November 1844): 5; *ibid* 3 (15 November 1845): 59; *Morning Star* 18 (8 November 1843): 114; *ibid* 18 (18 October 1843): 103; G. A. Burgess and J. T. Ward, *Free Baptist Cyclopaedia. Historical and Biographical* (Chicago: The Women’s Temperance Publication Association), 162, 601.

50 Free-Will Baptist General Conference, *A Treatise on the Faith of the Free-Will Baptists: With an Appendix, Containing a Summary of Their Usages in Church Government*, 4th Ed. (Dover, NH: Freewill Baptist Printing Establishment, 1848), 6872; J. J. Butler, *Thoughts on the Benevolent Enterprises, Embracing the Subjects of Missions, Sabbath Schools, Temperance, Abolition of Slavery, and Peace* (Dover, NH: The Trustees of the Freewill Baptist Connection, 1840), 78; 172; *Morning Star* 16 (23 June 1841): 33; *ibid.* (1 December 1841): 127; *ibid.* 18 (23 August 1843): 69; Brewster, *op. cit.*, 123.

51 Allen C. Thomas, “Congregational or Progressive Friends,” *Bulletin of Friends’ Historical Society of Philadelphia* 10 (November 1920): 2132; Congregational Friends, Waterloo Yearly Meeting, *Earnest and Affectionate Address to all people, and especially religious professors of every name, and an address to reformers; from the Yearly meeting of Congregational Friends, held at Waterloo N.Y.* (Auburn: Oliphant’s Press, 1849), 13, 16; Liberty Party Paper 2 (21 May 1851).

52 On the Franckean Synod, see Douglas C. Stange, *Radicalism for Humanity: A Study of Lutheran Abolitionism* (St. Louis: Oliver Slave, Ltd., 1970) and Harry J. Krieder, *History of the United Lutheran Synod of New York and New England* (Philadelphia Muhlenberg Press, 1954). There were thirty-seven Franckean Lutheran churches in 1844, all in New York State (see Strong, “Organized Liberty,” 336ff.).

53 *Journal of the Second Annual Session of the Franckean Evangelic Lutheran Synod, Convened at Fordsbora Montgomery Ca, June 6, 1839* (Fort Plain, NY: Wm. L. Fish, 1839), 4, 21; *Journal of the Third Annual Session of the Franckean Evangelic Lutheran Synod, Convened at Stone Mills, Jefferson Ca, June 4, 1840* (Fort Plain, NY: David Smith, 1840), 4, 9, 2122, 23; *Journal of the Fourth Annual Session of the Evangelic Lutheran Synod, Convened at Seward, Schoharie County, N. Y., June 3d 1841* (Fort Plain, NY: Lutheran Press Association, 1841), 16.

54 *Journal of the Third Annual Session*, 23.

55 *Lutheran Herald* n.s. 1 (1844), cited in Stange, 25.

56 On the history of the Wesleyan Methodists, see Ira Ford McLeister and Roy Stephen Nicholson, *Conscience and Commitment: The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Church of America*, 4th ed. (Marion, IN: The Wesley Press, 1976), 1452; Lee M. Haines and Paul William Thomas, *An Outline History of the Wesleyan Church* (Marion, IN: The Wesley Press, 1985); and

Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 73-84. The membership of the 123 Wesleyan Methodist churches in New York State in the 1840's (see Strong, "Organized Liberty," 336) was approximately one-third of the denomination's total (see Lucius C. Matlack, *The History of American Slavery and Methodism, from 1780 to 1849: An History of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America, In Two Parts, With an Appendix* [New York: Lucius C. Matlack, 1849], 349).

57 These reformers included not only Methodist Episcopalians but also Methodist Protestants and Reformed Methodists.

58 These conventions were held in Utica (Oneida County) and High Bridge (Town of Manlius, Onondaga County). High Bridge was the home of Wesley Bailey. *The Union Herald* 6 (15 July 1841): 47; Matlack, *op. cit.*, 303.

59 With Myrick, Bailey published *The Liberty Press* and another antislavery paper called the *Madison and Onondaga Abolitionist*. Bailey was a leading Reformed Methodist (his father, Elijah Bailey, was one of the founders of that small denomination). Similar to Myrick, Wesley Bailey had strong convictions regarding "spiritual democracy" and the unity of abolitionist come-outers. He therefore sought to unite all anti-episcopal Methodists into one spiritually democratic group. See Wesley Bailey, "Reformed Methodist Church," in I. Daniel Rupp, ed., *He Pasa Ekklesia. An Original History of the Religious Denominations at Present Existing in the United States* (Philadelphia: J. Y. Humphreys, 1844), 466-77.

60 George Peglar is listed as the pastor, but Bailey must have had some pastoral role, as well (see McLeister and Nicholson, *op. cit.*, 27, 29, 538; Matlack, *op. cit.*, 334, 348; William Richards, compiler, *The Utica City Directory, For 1844-45* [Utica: H. H. Curtiss, 1844], 10, 139). Bailey was persuaded to come to Utica by James DeLong, an active "Liberty man" and a Methodist come-outer (see *The Utica Sunday Times* 14 [1 March 1891]: 2. Cf. *The Friend of Man* 1 [28 July 1836]: 23; *Christian Investigator* 1 [December 1843]: 88).

61 Matlack, *op. cit.*, 303.

62 *Ibid.*, 332, 338-45

63 *Ibid.*, 343.

64 "Record of the Minutes of the Proceedings of the First General Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection" (1844), 62, cited in McLeister and Nicholson, *op. cit.*, 41.

65 Franckean Evangelic Lutheran Synod, *Constitution and Standing Ordinances of the Franckean Evangelic Lutheran Synod Together With A Discipline, Recommended as a Guide for the Government of Churches* (Cooperstown, NY: H. & E. Phinney, 1839), 1819. See also *Journal of the Third Annual Session*, 23.

66 Free Baptist General Conference, *A Treatise on the Faith of the Free-Will Baptists: with an Appendix, Containing A Summary of Their Usages in Church Government*, 4th ed. (Dover, NH: Freewill Baptist Printing Establishment, 1848), 68-72.

67 *The Union Herald* 6 (12 October 1841): 101; *ibid.* (9 September 1841): 76; *ibid.* (12 August 1841): 59.

68 William Goodell, "Entire Sanctification"[1850] (manuscript sermon in Goodell Papers, Berea College Archives, Berea, KY), 11. See also "Discussions on Perfection" [1844] (Goodell Papers).

69 Matlack, *op. cit.*, 343.

70 A concern for ethical issues such as temperance and opposition to secret societies was also deemed essential for a sanctified life (see William H. Brackney, "The Fruits of a Crusade: Wesleyan Opposition to Secret Societies," *Methodist History* 17 [July 1979]: 23952).

71 *The Union Herald* 6 (26 August 1841): 70. Promulgation of the doctrine of entire sanctification without an insistence on demonstrable evidence of civil and ecclesiastical reform work was inconceivable to Myrick (see *ibid.* 6 [29 July 1841]: 53).

72 Goodell, "Discussions on Perfection" (Goodell Papers), 14. See also *A Treatise on the Faith of the Free-Will Baptists*, 7072, for the Free Baptists' declaration of the reformatory goal of sanctification.

73 Compared to his insistence on applied sanctified living, Myrick was rather indifferent regarding particular holiness doctrines: "We make holiness of heart and life the test of fellowship.... We judge of men by their *fruits*, and not by what they believe" (*Christian Palladium* 8 [15 October 1839]: 186).

74 Peters, *op. cit.*, 127; Haines and Thomas, *op. cit.*, 34, 60; McLeister and Nicholson, *op. cit.*, 50.

75 Goodell, "Entire Sanctification," 8.

76 *Ibid.*, 23, 25.

77 Other types of abolitionists (William Lloyd Garrison and John Humphrey Noyes, for example) differed greatly on the details of perfectionist doctrine, but among ecclesiastical abolitionists there was relative unconcern regarding the specific mode of the sanctification experience (see Perry, *op. cit.*, 6370; Noyes, *op. cit.*, 17885, 195210).

78 Free Baptists, for example, were closely associated with Wesleyan Methodists and other ecclesiastical abolitionists in the early 1840's (see McLeister and Nicholson, *op. cit.*, 27; *Morning Star* 18 [6 September 1843]: 80; *ibid.* 18 [21 November 1843]: 122). Later, however, the Wesleyans contended that sanctification always involved a crisis event while the Free Baptists viewed entire sanctification as a gradual progression in holiness. These more defined doctrines distanced the two groups.

79 Unionist, Wesleyan Methodist, Free Baptist, and Franckean Lutheran congregations regularly interchanged ministers, churches, and even denominational names with one another. Nicholas Van Alstine, *Historical Review of the Franckean Evangelic Lutheran Synod of New York* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1893), 12; *Journal of the Third Annual Session*, 7; *Journal of the Fourth Annual Session*, 10, 12; *Journal of the Sixth*

Annual Meeting of the Franckean Evangelic Lutheran Synod, Convened at West Sand Lake, Rensselaer Co, N.Y, June 1, 1843 (Albany: Albany Weekly Patriot Office, 1843),4; *History of Oswego County, New York* (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts and Co, 1877), 217, 432; *Morning Star* 15 (7 October 1840): 94; *The Liberty Press* 4 (29 November 1845): 15.

80 Young abolitionists from each of these ecclesiastical abolitionist groups were educated at Finney's Oberlin and at Beriah Green's Oneida Institute in Whitestown (near Utica). come-outer periodicals (*The Union Herald*, the *Christian Investigator*, the *True Wesleyan*, and the *Lutheran Herald*) supported both political and ecclesiastical abolitionism. And ecclesiastical abolitionist conventions brought these folks together regularly (see, for example, *The Liberty Press* 4 [15 November 1845]: 7; *Christian Investigator* 1 [December 1843]: 88ffl.

81 *Christian Investigator* 3 (June 1845): 23738.

82 Orange Scott, op. cit., 72, 90.

83 *True Wesleyan* 2, (5 February 1844): 19.

84 Donald M. Scott, "Abolition as a Sacred Vocation," in Perry and Fellman, op. cit., 5174.

85 Thus, although political-ecclesiastical abolitionists were vague regarding the means of obtaining entire sanctification, they were extremely specific regarding the goal of entire sanctification (that is, Liberty party support and denominational come-outerism).

86 Goodell, "Entire Sanctification," 1011; *idem*, "Discussions on Perfection," 14. Such direct involvement in moral reform was clearly declared by the Wesleyans: "we desire that every member of the Wesleyan Connection should not only be a zealous advocate of every branch of moral reform, but coworkers, even in the front rank, battling side by side with those who contend with the Lord's enemies." Luther Lee, "Pastoral Address of the Convention assembled at Utica," cited in Matlack, op. cit., 343.

87 Luther Lee, *Autobiography of the Rev Luther Lee*, (reprint; New York: Garland Publishing, 1984), 227.

88 Liberty Party, *Proceedings of the Great Convention of the Friends of Freedom in the Eastern and Middle States. Held in Boston, Oct. 1, 2, & 3, 1845* (Lowell: Pillsbury and Knapp, 1845), 15; William Goodell, *Address of the Macedon Convention By William Goodell, And Letters of Gerrit Smith* (Albany: S.W. Green, Patriot Office, 1847), 15; *Christian Investigator* 2 (October 1844): 171. See also Gerrit Smith and Cassius M. Clay, *Cassius M. Clay, of Lexington, KY, to the Mayor of Dayton, O., with a Review of it by Gerrit Smith, of Peterboro, N.Y* (Utica: Jackson & Chaplin, 1844),7; and Liberty party, *Proceedings of the National Liberty Convention, Held At Buffalo, N.Y, June 14th and 15th, 1848; Including the Resolutions and Addresses Adopted By That Body, and Speeches of Beriah Green and Gerrit Smith on That Occasion* (Utica: S.W. Green, 1848), 31.

89 Liberty party leaders Gerrit Smith, Beriah Green, William Goodell, and David Plumb were Unionist pastors. Many other prominent "Liberty men"

were members of Union churches, such as Alvan Stewart, James C. Jackson, J. N. T. Tucker, and James G. Birney.

90 Free-Will Baptist Anti-Slavery Society, *Fifth Annual Report of the Free-Will Baptist Anti-Slavery Society, Read at Lebanon, Maine, October 9, 1851* (Dover, NH: Wm. Burr, 1851), 24, 28.

91 *True Wesleyan* 1 (8 April 1843): 155; *ibid.* 1 (23 December 1843): 203. See also Douglas M. Strong, "Partners in Political Abolitionism: The Liberty Party and the Wesleyan Methodist Connection," *Methodist History* 23 (January 1985): 10911. The pressure was so strong to be a political abolitionist that one Wesleyan who had not voted in the 1844 election felt obliged to print a public apology for his laxity in not supporting the Liberty ticket (see *The Liberty Press* 3 [23 November 1844]: 9).

92 McLeister and Nicholson, *op. cit.*, 538. In the pages of *The Liberty Press*, Bailey promoted both the Liberty party and ecclesiastical abolitionism (especially the Wesleyan Methodist Connection). See *The Liberty Press* 3 (16 November 1844): 3, 6; *ibid.* 3 (23 November 1844): 9; *ibid.* 3 (11 January 1845): 37; *ibid.* 4 (29 November 1845): 15; *ibid.* 5 (17 January 1846): 41.

93 Lee, *Autobiography*, 217.

94 *Journal of the Fourth Annual Session*, 5. See also *Journal of the Seventh Annual Session of the Franckean Evangelic Lutheran Synod. Convened at Parishville, Oswego Co., N.Y.; June 6, 1844* (West Sandlake, NY: The Herald Office, 1844), 24.

95 In 1845, the citizens of China (later called Arcade), Wyoming County, elected the entire local Liberty party ticket (see *Historical Wyoming* 26 [October 1980]: 48). Several towns in Madison County also gave a plurality to the Liberty slate.

96 *Journal of the Fifth Annual Session of the Franckean Evangelic Lutheran Synod, convened at Newville, Herkimer Co, N.Y. June 2, 1842* (Milford, NY: Lutheran Herald Office, 1842). 8.

97 *Christian Investigator* 2 (January 1844): 97.

98 *Ibid* 2 (March 1844): 114.

99 There had been many similar conventions, but the intent of this one in Syracuse was to bring together the widest diversity of political and ecclesiastical abolitionists ever assembled in the burnedover district. The convention was called in order to ascertain the "appropriate form and mode of church organization" in accordance "with the great principles of human equality." *Ibid* 2 (December 1843): 88.

100 Unionists (ex-Presbygationalists): Gerrit Smith, Beriah Green, Alvan Stewart, William Goodell, Washington Stickney, Marcus Stickney, Joseph Plumb, John Truair. Ex-Baptist: J. N. T. Tucker. Wesleyan Methodists (ex-Methodist Episcopalians): James C. DeLong, Luther Lee. Free Baptist: Hiram Whitcher. Other Liberty leaders: Charles T. Torrey, G. W. Clark, William L. Chaplin.

101 Goodell discussed the important role that Lee played at this ecclesiastical abolitionist convention in his notes on the “Syracuse Convention” (Goodell Papers, Berea College Archives) and in the *Christian Investigator* (2 [30 December 1843]: 8990).

102 Part of Lee’s attraction to antislavery unity came from his long experience with other ecclesiastical abolitionists. He preached for Unionist and Franckean Lutheran congregations (*The Friend of Man* 3 [5 June 1839]: 196), traveled with leading Unionists when he was an antislavery agent (*ibid* [5 June 1839]: 197), and subscribed to William Goodell’s ecclesiastical abolitionist paper (*Christian Investigator* 1 [August 1843]: 56).

103 *Christian Investigator* 6 (August 1848): 528. See also, *ibid.* 2 (August 1844): 152. Cf. Matlack, *op. cit.*, 337; McLeister and Nicholson, *op. cit.*, 38,77.

104 *Christian Investigator* 2 (December 1843): 88. See also Goodell, “Syracuse Convention.” Goodell did not believe that the Unionists had any vestiges of Presbyterianism left, but evidently the Wesleyans did.

105 It is easy to see why Colton feared the power of a politically oriented “Abolition Church.”

106 *Christian Investigator* 2 (January 1844): 97.

107 *Ibid.* 1 (September 1843): 60.

108 *Ibid* 2 (December 1843): 88; *ibid.* 6 (August 1848): 528. Lee was also displeased with the lack of any regularly constituted coordinating structure in the Unionists’ polity.

109 In Madison County, for instance (which had the largest percentage of Union churches of any county in the State), every single Union church languished and then died within a few years. See Silas E. Persons, *A Historical Sketch of the Religious Denominations of Madison County, New York* (Cazenovia: Madison County Historical Society, 1906), 16, 18. Many ecclesiastical abolitionist churches folded after their initial burst of enthusiasm. See *Organization and Membership of the Free Church of Sherburne*, 5; William Adams, ed., *Historical Gazeteer and Biographical Memorial of Cattaraugus County, New York* (Syracuse: Lyman, Horton, & Co. Ltd., 1893), 45152,75051,953; *History of Oswego County*, 432; and Gates Curtis, *Our County and Its People: A Memorial Record of St. Lawrence County, New York* (Syracuse D. Mason and Co., 1894), 58283.

110 “Seasons of declensions” were reported from the AntiSlavery Baptist Church of Cato (see Storke, *op. cit.*, 294). Membership declined in Free Baptist churches after 1844 (see Brewster, *op. cit.*, 239). After its establishment in 1845, the Wesleyan Methodist congregation in Canadice, similar to so many others, “flourished for a time and then ceased to exist” (see George S. Conover, ed., *History of Ontario County, New York* [Syracuse: D. Mason and Co., 1893], 462). The Franckean Lutherans also reported declension in the late 1840’s (see *Journal of the Ninth Annual Session of the Franckean Evangelic Lutheran Synod, Convened at Fordsbora Montgomery CQ, N.Y., June 4th, 1846* [Albany: J. Munsell, 1846], 19).

111 Theodore Clarke Smith, *op. cit.*, 89104; Sewell, *op. cit.*, 111, 13138, 15269. As these political professionals took control of the Liberty party, the party's focus of power and leadership moved from the burnedover district to New York City and Ohio.

112 *Christian Investigator* 2 (January 1844): 197.

113 The apocalypticism of William Miller and the Adventists was another one of these challenges (see Doan, *op. cit.*, 2627, 224).

114 Henry L. Dox, *Memoir of Rev Philip Wieting, A Pastor Forty Years in The Same Field* (Philadelphia: Lutheran Publication Society, 1870), 135; *An Account of the Trial of Luther Myrick*, 69.

115 Thus, the Wesleyans' ideas were not the result of "Mrs. Palmer's doctrines reach[ing] Methodist abolitionists in New England and upper New York" combined with Finney's "tradition of social responsibility." Timothy L. Smith, *op. cit.*, 212.

116 Lee was a leading proponent of the merger discussions between the Wesleyan Methodists and Methodist Protestants which culminated in 1866. Given Lee's penchant for Goodellstyle "Unionism," it is not surprising that the impetus behind these discussions was termed the "Union Movement." When the merger talks failed, Lee and many other Wesleyans left the Connection. See *Minutes of the NonEpiscopal Methodist Convention, Held in Cincinnati, Ohio May 9-16, 1866* (Springfield, OH: Western Methodist Protestant Office, 1866), 7, 37, 38, 41; McLeister and Nicholson, *op. cit.*, 7179; and Haines and Thomas, *op. cit.*, 6566.

117 Donald W. Dayton has developed a similar interpretation of the evangelical consensus in "Yet Another Layer of the Onion, Or Opening the Ecumenical Door To Let the Riffraff In," *Ecumenical Review* 40 (1988): 87110. Dayton views this consensus as deriving primarily from "Methodist" rather than "Calvinist" sources.

THE CHURCH AS A UNIVERSAL REFORM SOCIETY: THE SOCIAL VISION OF ASA MAHAN

by
James E. Hamilton

This 25th annual meeting of the Wesleyan Theological society is an occasion of not just one but several celebrations. Our very meeting on the Asbury College campus this year is a part of the College's centennial celebration. On Saturday morning we shall celebrate the centennial of William Booth's *In Darkest England and the Way Out*. This morning we celebrate the thought of a man who is also involved in these other celebrations. Asa Mahan died just 100 years ago this year. The name of Asa Mahan immediately suggests vital concerns at the heart of the holiness heritage in America and England. Through his preaching and his expository, polemical and devotional writings Mahan contributed to the interdenominational impact of holiness theology and experience and helped to lay the foundations for the kind of interests that led to the establishing of the Wesleyan Theological Society. Oberlin College, over which Mahan presided during its first fifteen years, was the model for many Christian schools, Asbury College among them. Don Dayton has reminded us in *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* that these schools were often founded to be little Oberlins.¹

There are other connections as well. John Wesley Hughes, Asbury's first president, taught Scottish Common Sense Philosophy, the same tradition which Mahan so energetically propagated at Oberlin and throughout his life. Mahan took great interest in the Salvation Army, beginning with his move to England in 1874. He frequently included notices of Army activities in the pages of *Divine Life* and often remarked that if he were a younger man he would be a Salvationist. Robert Sandall writes in *The History of the Salvation Army* that "the importance attached . . . to the teaching of holiness was emphasized by the holding of a conference in the Fieldgate Hall (White Chapel) in December, 1876, at which the Rev. Asa Mahan, D.D. holiness teacher and author of *Out of Darkness Into Light* had been the principal

speaker.”² Mahan in fact received a Salvation Army burial with a personal representative of General Booth in attendance.

The holiness movement, indeed American Christianity, has produced few people like Asa Mahan. In the course of writing our collaborative biography on Mahan, Edward Madden remarked to me that doing the biography of Asa Mahan was like writing the history of the nineteenth century. Consider: Perry Miller argues that revivalism was the most universal and influential factor in American experience between 1800 and the Civil War³ and Mahan was a lifelong, ardent and effective revivalist as well as president of the most dynamic institutional center of revival during that period, Oberlin College. Again, Sydney Ahlstrom calls Scottish Common Sense Philosophy the official metaphysic of America during these years,⁴ and Mahan was one of the clearest, most original thinkers and one of the most widely published of American philosophers in this tradition. This was the heyday of the Christian liberal arts college and the old time college president, and Mahan presided over Oberlin and over Adrian during their formative years. In 1840, Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote in his journal that never in the history of the world had the doctrine of reform had such scope as at that hour,⁵ and Asa Mahan was at that very time the chief advocate for reform at the most powerful reform institution in the young republic. It was a time of political experimentation, and Mahan lent his influence to the founding of the Liberty, Free Soil and Republican parties and then ran for United States House of Representatives in 1872 on the Liberal Republican-Democratic ticket of Greely and Brown.

Much of 19th century history may be interpreted in terms of its relation to the Civil War. As an abolitionist Mahan was a part of the principal movement that precipitated the war; he was a prominent amateur military strategist during the war, on occasion discussing strategy in Washington with political and military authorities, including President Lincoln. After the war, he ran for public office on a ticket and platform designed to restore harmony and good will between the North and the South.

In terms of Christianity, the century brought unprecedented worldwide missionary outreach as well as intense concern with deepening the inner life. Mahan was a lifelong promoter of foreign missions, spent his latter years actively preaching and writing in Great Britain and regularly sent *Divine Life* to missionaries throughout the world free of charge. His inspirational and formative influence in the American Holiness and British Higher Life movements is well known to members of this society.

This review exhausts neither the significant movements of nineteenth century America nor Asa Mahan’s many involvements. It does remind us, however, that Mahan was one whose mind and heart brought Biblical Christianity into creative interplay with the dominant conceptual and motivational influences of his era Samuel Dresner writes of Abraham Joshua Heschel that in him two worlds came together: “the eternal and the mundane present, heaven and earth.”⁶ So with Mahan, reason and faith, spirit and matter, faith and works, love for God and love for humankind, the eternal and the mundane present, came together. His life affirmed the reality of the Incarnation, salvation at work in history. In some respects a unique and solitary figure, Asa Mahan yet represents those unsung heroes who for nearly a century held back the tide of secularism sweeping the West, who put the Enlightenment at the service of the Cross and who stirred the Church to such fruitful endeav-

ors in obedience to Christ that not a few were persuaded that the millennium was at hand.

Mahan himself firmly believed that we celebrate the lives of great people appropriately only when we attend to their spirit and principles in order to receive help in finding truth and in living holy lives. We should never attempt merely to copy their thoughts or actions. In Mahan's writings on reform he reveals the reasons behind *his* involvement in the great issues of his day. We find there also his vision of society, of reform and, most importantly, of the church as a universal reform society, a vision that he sought to impart to his students, to the Church and to the world. Our purpose in this paper is to celebrate the life of Asa Mahan by giving attention, first, to his view of reform and, second, to his view of the church as a universal reform society.

REFORM

Mahan's discussion of reform is divided into three components. There is the *object* of reform, the *spirit* of reform and the *form* by which various reforms are accomplished. The object of reform is quite simply to correct and to perfect the existing social order. A fleshing out of Mahan's position will reveal him to be in differing senses conservative, progressive and radical.

First he is *conservative* in the straightforward non-ideological sense of accepting certain metaphysical principles as basic and unalterable and as thus constituting the foundation of moral obligation and of natural rights. Among these is our social nature. "From the immutable laws of our nature we are social beings,"⁷ writes Mahan. It follows that some types or forms of relationship are natural, such as family or *polis*. Mahan thus locates himself in the tradition of Aristotle, who held that basic human associations are rooted in nature, rather than in those traditions which look upon all human associations as conventional and therefore as subject to dissolution. The true reformer, Mahan says, believes that "nature under the pressure of its own wants, and the guidance of inspiration, has generated the institutions that ought to exist."⁸ Here we see the metaphysical underpinnings of a natural law ethic applied to social institutions. Mahan's principle is that if a given form of relationship is genuinely natural for human beings, then it is not to be tampered with but must be respected. This is the sense in which Mahan may be called conservative.

It does not follow from Mahan's view that *every* institution or usage that arises in society has a legitimate claim to be grounded in human nature. He argues that only institutions which "have their basis in the permanent elements of universal humanity," and not those which are grounded in merely accidental circumstances or local traditions, have a valid claim to perpetuity. Slavery, for example, is based upon accidental circumstances such as skin color, parentage and place of birth, while at the same time it violates "the eternal and immutable distinction between a *person* and a *thing*." Slavery has not been generated by nature and providence but has been created by the arbitrary and illegitimate imposition of power by some men over others. Hence, slavery has no right to exist and deserves to be totally exterminated.⁹

We must take care at this point or we shall miss the full significance of the sense in which Mahan is conservative. The object of the reformer is to correct *abuses*. The reformer, he writes, must then distinguish between

“the legitimate *uses* and *abuses* of the legitimate institutions of society” and must condemn “no institution or usage on account of its abuse” nor seek “the destruction of what ought to be.”¹⁰ The master-slave relation, for example, is an abuse of the legitimate relation between a ruler and subject. “I will lay this down as a proposition, that, in all cases of appropriate authority, the relation of ruler and subject, when appropriately exercised, dignifies and exalts both, and that is a universal law which knows no exceptions.”¹¹ Slavery is an institutionalized abuse, in Mahan’s view, of the legitimate ruler-subject relation, in this case that of a master and servant. Similarly, domestic tyranny is reprehensible abuse of the marriage relationship. Neither slavery nor domestic tyranny are to be tolerated for a moment, but the master-servant and husband-wife relationships are to be retained.

Underlying Mahan’s position here is his conviction that neither hierarchy nor authority is intrinsically hostile to human dignity, equality or freedom. On the contrary, hierarchy freely respected and submission freely given actually enhance human relationships. He writes, “Whenever lawful authority exists, and, for the very end for which it ought to be exercised, it exalts and tends to the highest conceivable freedom.”¹²

Clearly, Mahan’s careful distinguishing between intolerable abuses and legitimate uses of legitimate institutions which ought not to be destroyed is evidence of a conservative principle at work.

Second, if Mahan is conservative in the sense of accepting the general contours of the existing order, he is *progressive* in the sense of being forward, rather than backward, looking. His most harsh words seem always directed toward those who wish to reform backwards, who always see the golden age in the past and who believe that the fathers were wise and wisdom died with them. The great conflict as he sees it is between reactionaries, whom he calls “stand-stillers” and progressives, whom he dubs “the advancers.” Stand-stillers support institutions and usages simply because they exist. Advancers are concerned with seeing to it that such institutions “conform to and find their basis in the permanent laws, rights and interests of humanity.” The hallmark of stand-stillers is appeal to authority, to what has already been said or done. The hallmark of advancers is free independent thought. Independent thought is always essentially forward looking even when it is drawing upon the past for enlightenment. In the nature of the case it must be so because the human mind is finite. We never at one point have all knowledge. Our minds grow in thinking through the problems and issues and needs of changing conditions. Mahan is decidedly an advancer, progressive in this sense. He aligns himself with Dr. Thomas Arnold of England who held that conservatism of the stand-stiller variety is far worse than a fondness for despotism and is in fact the enemy of all good. Mahan is ready to move forward with the advancers “urging on the corrections of existing abuses . . . whether newborn, or hoary with the frosts of sixty centuries . . . leaving the stand-stillers ‘standing still with all their might.’”¹³

Third, Mahan is *radical* in his view that the reformer’s duty is not only to reform and correct, but also to *perfect* the order of things¹⁴ which nature and divine providence together have generated. A true reformer aims at “the correction of existing abuses and the conformity of all institutions, domestic, civil and ecclesiastical....”¹⁵ But what is the ideal or goal of this correction process? Mahan has several answers, which he casts in terms of

conformity. “To the fundamental ideas of universal reason.”¹⁶ “To the pattern shown on the mount.”¹⁷ “To the real laws of our existence and relations.”¹⁸ “To the laws of our being, physical and mental, as seen by the eye of God himself.”¹⁹ “To the laws of our being as far as they are known to the mind.”²⁰

It is Mahan’s use of the word “perfect” in connection with these phrases that revealed his radicalness. Notice, then, the *nature* of the perfection he espouses. First, it is perfect conformity “to the real laws of our existence and relations.”²¹ Mahan holds, as we have seen, that human beings share “a common nature, and a common destiny, and consequently common interests, rights and responsibilities.”²² Human rights are not properly vindicated on the basis of accidents but “upon the permanent and changeless laws of human nature itself, upon the elements common to all individuals of the race,”²³ such as, for example, rationality and choice. These fundamental elements of moral agency are inherent in human nature. Rationality requires independent thought. Choice requires freedom to live in accord with one’s conscience. We are also social beings requiring relationships with others like ourselves. These requirements of our natures (i.e., independence of thought, freedom of conscience and social relationships) are not conflicting but are complementary. Society is the best context for the development of rational free people, while rationality and freedom are indispensable for social relationship. Consequently, the perfect situation envisaged by Mahan is a social context in which scope for freedom of thought and action is maximized for all.

Again, this perfection calls for conformity to the “pattern shown on the Mount,”²⁴ a reference to the moral principles revealed on Mount Sinai. This pattern is not something alien to our natures, as free, rational, social beings. It is not a formal scheme to be imposed on human beings like a straight jacket. It is a pattern largely of principles to be rationally identified and responsibly applied in all of the varying relationships and circumstances of life. In this case also, perfection must be seen not in terms of an ideal social form but in terms of human beings in the varied relations of the existing social order living together freely and in righteousness and love. Mahan’s conception is not naively utopian, although his standard is high.

Mahan has a clear view of human moral depravity. However, the only way to lower his sights would be to argue that we are not free, that we are not obligated to live together in love and justice, or that the grace of Christ is not equal to these things. None of these would he accept.

Mahan speaks of conformity to the laws of our being “as seen by the eye of God himself”²⁵ This later phrase emphasizes the need to respect human nature as it really is. One is reminded of Thomas Aquinas’ view that the truth of things consists in their correspondence to God’s ideas of them. In Mahan’s wording, God knows things as they are not as they are not. Again, he speaks of conformity “to the ideas of universal reason.”²⁶ This phrase speaks of our capacity to understand things as they are through rational insights. The word “universal” indicates Mahan’s belief that objective insight into fundamental principles is available to all beings with reason, so that we are not encased in subjectivity. Moral principles are universal in the sense that they are recognizable as obligatory by rational creatures as such.

Finally, Mahan asserts that we must conform “to the laws of our being as far as they are known to mind.”²⁷ This indicates Mahan’s awareness that we are finite, that our perceptions are limited and that the quest for further

knowledge goes on. "Perfect" in this case means conformity to the laws of our being according to the degree of insight that diligent pursuit of truth is able to attain.

An image of Mahan as something of a progressive radical conservative emerges here. Yet he is clearly not revolutionary. He applies the standard of perfection, but he applies it to the existing order. This does not mean that every institution is justified simply because it exists. Some standing institutions such as slavery need to be eliminated. The point is that needed corrections may be accomplished piecemeal. Mahan does not view society as such an organic system that the whole must be destroyed when some of the parts become corrupt. The *revolutionary* sees society as an interdependent system whose inherent evil generates the problems that need correction. The *reformer* sees society as an order of coordinated parts; radical change at one point need not destroy the whole.²⁸ Slavery, for example, may be abolished without destroying family, church, or civil government. Rather, radical change accomplished through reform often brings increased health and better functioning of the whole. Revolutionaries often oppose reform precisely because reform may better the existing system or order rather than destroying and replacing it.

We turn now from the object of reform to the closely related topic of the spirit of reform. This is unquestionably the area of supreme interest and concern for Mahan. We shall attend first to the meaning of this term and then to its importance. "The true spirit of reform," writes Mahan, "is this: steady conformity to the laws of our being as far as they are known to the mind, together with the most earnest inquiry after the truth on all subjects, for the purpose of rendering such conformity, when the truth has been discovered."²⁹ Again he says, it is the pursuit of knowledge "for the purpose of understanding, and living in sacred conformity to the hallowed principles of 'righteousness, and judgment, and equity: yea, every good path.'"³⁰ Once again, "It is a universal spirit, having an equal and sacred respect for duty, and for all the true interests of humanity, according to their intrinsic and relative importance."³¹

There are several things to be noticed about Mahan's definition. First, the spirit of reform is a matter of intention. It is the intention to discover truth in order to do what is right. This simple intention must be given a controlling influence in one's life or one is not a true reformer. The mark of a reformer is not to be found in the consequences produced but in the purpose or intention. Not even the intention to produce consequences as such distinguishes a reformer's supreme goal. Mahan is a deontologist rather than a teleologist in ethics. He strongly criticized his colleague at Oberlin, Charles Finney, for making the intention to produce happiness the supreme moral norm.³²

The crucial thing in morals, claims Mahan, is a right relation between intention and moral principle. It is not that results are irrelevant to the moral life or that human wellbeing and happiness are not to be valued. Results are relevant and wellbeing and happiness are important. But there are other considerations besides results in view of which human consciousness affirms moral obligation. For example, we ought to be grateful to benefactors and to respect human dignity and moral character no matter what consequences might come. However, when we do what is right because it is right there are

three reasons for expecting good consequences to follow, at least in terms of happiness. First, human reason requires it. Mahan follows Kant here in holding that moral uprightness is a condition of happiness and that the morally upright ought in fact to be made happy. These things are a requirement of practical reason. Second, we learn from experience that this usually happens. Third, the Bible teaches that God has connected holiness and happiness together. Reason, experience and revelation thus concur in supporting the expectation that obeying moral principle will lead to good consequences.

Throughout his discussion of reform Mahan consistently gives priority to right intention and speaks only secondarily of consequences such as happiness. He does not appeal to enlightened self-interest or to general social utility, or to material or spiritual benefit as the basis for reform. Nor does he appeal to the value of preserving the *status quo*. Human dignity is to be respected, human wellbeing valued, and human rights and interests secured because these things are right.

A second thing to be noticed about Mahan's definition of the spirit of reform is the order or relation between truth and right. First the truth and then the right. One must first understand human nature and then one will be able to recognize moral obligation, to respect human dignity and human rights and to value human wellbeing. We must remind ourselves that this orientation is possible to Mahan only because human beings have an identifiable nature, an essence so to speak, that does not change and that ought not to be tampered with or violated.

This position locates Mahan within that stream of philosophy beginning with Parmenides and including such figures as Plato, Aristotle, Augustine and Aquinas, figures who give primacy to being over becoming. It is consistent also with creation theology, the view that man is made in the image of God, thus with a specific nature. On the other hand, Mahan is to be distinguished at this point from the stream of philosophy represented by Heraclitus, Hume, Hegel, and Dewey, who hold that reality, including so-called human reality is always changing so that there is no identifiable permanent nature of anything. For these latter thinkers morality is a matter of directing change toward goals subjectively chosen. There can be no question of reform which aims at conformity to the nature of things.

It is difficult to do justice to Mahan's view of the importance of the spirit of reform. The notion of seeking the truth in order to do what is right is perhaps the chief integrating insight for understanding Mahan's life and thought. To give this intention sovereign sway in one's life is to fulfill human destiny in the only way compatible with human dignity. Scope for living out this intention is a central human need. Freedom from impediment in living it out is a basic human right. Caring for one another's needs and rights in this area is a fundamental obligation. The great concern of the reformer, then, must be to cultivate this spirit personally, to propagate it in others, and to perfect its social contexts by removing all hindrances to its free expression. The evils which the reformer will seek to correct are above all those which impede freedom of thought in pursuing truth and freedom of action in doing what one is genuinely convinced is right.

Two considerations especially highlight Mahan's view of the importance of the spirit of reform. First, for reform to occur, evil must be seen to be evil

and must be corrected because it is evil. But wrong or evil are always identified as violations or departures from what is right or good. What is right or good in turn is intimately related to the truth of things, things such as our inherent nature and relations. But to perceive truth and hence the right and the good depends in turn upon the state of mind or intention in which truth is sought, or upon what Mahan calls the “spirit of reform.” He writes as follows:

This is a spirit which ought to pervade all minds on all subjects. In this attitude only, is the mind prepared to receive the truth on any subject, or to be benefited by it when received. Truth itself, when received without evidence, or any other than the spirit of honest, earnest inquiry, is not truth to the mind which thus embraces it. It may have upon that mind all the baleful influence of the most pernicious error.³³

Mahan acknowledges that his view is paradoxical. Yet he holds his ground. Someone may *happen* to have a correct opinion or belief and yet never see wherein its real truth lies. When truth is thus obscured, right and wrong are perceived only with difficulty. The object of reform is thus undercut because removal of evil depends upon the conviction that the evil in question is in fact an evil which demands correction. In addition, the moral character of the reformer is undermined. Mahan writes,

It is by no means certain, that he is the best man, whose intellect, perchance, embraces the most truth and the least error. The foundation of moral character, lies deeper down, in the spirit with which truth is sought and embraced, and error rejected. I had much rather err with an honest inquirer, than to be in the right with the bigot, who neither embraces truth nor rejects error, out of respect to what is intrinsic in the nature of either the one or the other.³⁴

This, of course, does not imply that Mahan had a low regard for truth or that he esteemed the *pursuit* of truth more highly than the *attainment* of truth. Rather, he esteemed the pursuit crucial because he regarded the recognition of truth and of right as dependent upon it.

The second consideration that highlights the importance of the spirit of reform is Mahan’s insistence that this spirit must be generated in the public mind if human rights are to be respected, human interests valued and the work of reform to go forward. “The fundamental aim of reformers,” he says, “should be, to generate in the public mind the true spirit of reform, and then to give that spirit a right direction.”³⁵ The first concern of the reformer, then, is to bring the spirit of the age into alignment with the spirit of reform. This inculcation of the spirit of reform he calls “the most desirable of all reforms.”³⁶ The spirit of reform is far more crucial than the form which any given reform effort may assume. Thus, the true reformer will seek “to generate in the public mind the true spirit of reform, rather than any particular form.... The form which they judge to be best will not be undervalued. But the spirit . . . [they will value] far more highly.”³⁷ The spirit of reform is a beautiful spirit commending itself to the public conscience. Without it reform efforts generate a host of evils such as partiality, intolerance, denunciation, destruction and

anarchy. Under the influence of this spirit, however, “communities would in fact be resolved into societies of universal inquiry.”³⁸ Here we come the closest, perhaps, to Mahan’s vision of a perfect social order. Each institution within that order would be, in whatever ways were most appropriate to its specific nature and role, a society of inquiry. In other words, the spirit of reform would pervade all spheres of human relationships. Then, he says, “Truth would spring out of the earth, and righteousness would look down from heaven.”³⁹

We have examined Mahan’s view of the object and spirit of reform. We turn now to the question of form. Surprisingly, Mahan has little to say on this subject. He provides no precise definition and the larger part of his discussion is given to warning against the dangers of too much emphasis on form. There are, however, scattered remarks on this subject which will enable us to piece together a coherent notion of his thinking.

Form seems to pertain to the type of action called for when a moral principle is brought to bear on some evil that needs correction. Thus, for example, the temperance movement called for total abstinence from all that intoxicates, and the antislavery movement for immediate abolition of slavery. Neither of these reform movements assumed these particular forms at all times. Mahan points out that the temperance movement first proposed moderate use of intoxicants and then total abstinence from ardent spirits only. Similarly, Clarkson and Wilberforce in England at first urged gradual emancipation, later condemning this view. What we may learn from these examples, says Mahan, is that “the form which any reform generated by the spirit of reform will assume at any particular time will depend on the light possessed by the mind at different stages of its research after truth.”⁴⁰ It follows that the form may be in fact wrong when the spirit is right. This, argues Mahan, is of minor importance as long as a person is living in steady conformity to all light and earnestly searching for more. On the other hand, the form may be right and the spirit wrong. This is a disaster resulting from valuing the form more than the spirit of reform. Finally, a reformer must never think that because he opposes a genuine evil that he is therefore entirely right in the measures of correction he proposes. Mahan points out that “[the reformer’s] own system may need correction as much as the one he seeks to correct.”⁴¹

The crucial thing about form for Mahan is that it must involve the application of moral principle. There are three things of significance here. First, there are specific departments of reform, as Mahan calls them, each resting on its own peculiar and separate principle. For example, the antislavery reform has its basis, “on this one principle, the intrinsic wickedness and injustice, the horrid warfare upon the dearest rights, hopes, and interest of humanity of confounding a person with a thing.”⁴² The temperance movement rests on the principle that alcohol is a poison and its use as a beverage is of destructive tendency. Physiological reform is based on the principle “that strict conformity to the laws of life and health, in respect to food, drink, dress, etc., is necessary to the highest interest of humanity.”⁴³

Second, while branches of reform are based upon specific principles, all reforms, taken together, are based on a single principle. “Whatever is ascertained to be contrary to the rights, and destructive to the true interests of humanity, ought to be corrected.”⁴⁴ This one principle gives unity to all genuine reform movements. Mahan writes, “Reform is manifold, and yet it is

one. *E pluribus unum*. It is like many streams issuing from one common fountain, flowing on in different channels, yet ultimately running into one and terminating their course in the same ocean of universal good.”⁴⁵

It follows from this unity, thirdly, that selective support of favored reforms is not an option. “No man is a reformer from principle, in any one branch of reform, who is not, in spirit, and from principle, a universal reformer.”⁴⁶ In Mahan’s view, evangelism, benevolent societies for relief of the poor and needy, foreign missions and reform could and in fact must derive from the same basic principle. Mahan is unsparingly consistent in applying this principle, but seems particularly exercised over supporters of foreign missions who are willing to fight sin and evil abroad but refuse to take a stand against the massive oppression of slavery at home. The cause of reform, he says, suffers more from persons who are alive to one or two evils that need correction but are dead to all others. “than from all its enemies together.”⁴⁷

THE CHURCH AS A UNIVERSAL REFORM SOCIETY

Asa Mahan was in his 90th year when he died on April 4, 1889. After exclamations of gratitude and praise to his Savior, his final words were those of intercessory prayer for the Church of Christ. C. G. Moore reports in *Divine Life* that “he prayed that God would baptize it [i.e., the church] with power, and send forth tens of thousands to the uttermost parts of the earth with the message of salvation.”⁴⁸ Mahan thus died as he had lived. For three quarters of a century he had had a love-affair with the church. His first publication was about the church. His experience of sanctification culminated a decade-long search for the secret of leading the flock of God from infancy to maturity in Christ. In his preface to *The True Believer* (1857), using the third person, he writes these words about himself, and his devotion to the church: “Zion is the chosen dwelling place of his heart. He has no interests, nor plans, which are not fully identified with her purification, blessedness, and enlargement. Never may he be permitted to write a single line for the public eye, or ear, for any other end.”⁴⁹

Mahan’s commitment to reform is illuminated from this perspective. The church is God’s engine for reform in the world. The Bible, he says, divides the moral elements of this world into two separate and conflicting kingdoms, the Kingdom of Light, characterized by love, and the Kingdom of Darkness, characterized by selfishness. Each seeks total dominion, and destruction of the other. “The Church, which comprehends all the truly holy on earth, is the Kingdom of Light and Love.”⁵⁰ Scripture uses the term “world” to identify the Kingdom of Selfishness. The church is to oppose nothing in the world except on the ground that it is a manifestation of selfishness, “nor is she ever to make peace with unrighteousness, because it puts on some particular form.”⁵¹ She is an “irreconcilable, annihilating antagonist” to such, or else she is “guilty of treason to her sacred commission.”⁵² All of her activities, when true to the spirit of her sacred calling, have a single ultimate aim: “the destruction of selfishness in all its forms and modifications, the establishment of the reign of pure and perfect love in its stead, and the consequent correction of all the evils resulting from ‘man’s inhumanity to man.’”⁵³

The question arises as to Mahan’s basis for viewing the church in this manner. His answer concerns the relation of a Christian to God and consequently to truth and to right and wrong. Insofar as a person has understood

and embraced the true spirit of Christianity, to that degree the supreme object of desire and intention is to stand accepted, through grace, by a God who understands all things just as they are, whose character is the perfection of justice, goodness and truth, and who will be satisfied with nothing less than justice and uprightness in His creatures. The controlling aim of such a person is to conform all opinions and judgments to God's view of things and all activity with God's will. Nothing is more important to such a person than to know the truth in any area in order to do what is right. But this supreme, all-controlling aim or intention is nothing other than the spirit of reform. Mahan thus contends that no conceivable influence is more conducive than genuine Christianity to generating the spirit of reform and to freeing us from influences that would hinder its expression in our lives.⁵⁴

Mahan draws Biblical support for this argument from the nature of the two Covenants, the call to repentance and Christian fellowship. Under the Old Covenant, he says, moral obligations were inculcated not only as right and good in themselves, but as religious obligations. Moral rectitude was necessary for offering acceptable worship and maintaining the blessing of God. To walk humbly with God one must also do justice and love mercy. None of this has changed for those under the New Covenant, says Mahan. Jesus came not to destroy but to fulfill in the lives of believers the moral imperatives of the Old Covenant. Thus, believers are instructed in the New Testament that there is no sphere of lawful action, social, civil or religious, that should not be considered a sphere of sacred duty.⁵⁵ The call to repentance is a call to total abandonment of moral wrong and the embracing of all that is right, or, in Mahan's words, "all that is capable of bearing the name of sacred duty."⁵⁶

Christian fellowship is a matter of the basic intentions of the heart. When Christians find other Christians committed to finding truth in order to do what is right, then they have fellowship. But how is this internal commitment discovered, since we do not look upon another's heart? The Bible says, "By their fruits you shall know them." This is the key. Fellowship, argues Mahan, does not result from mutual consent to orthodox opinions nor from sitting next to one another in church every Sunday. It results from partnership together in evangelistic, benevolent and reform activities.⁵⁷ Christian fellowship, then, is intrinsically related to both the spirit and the activity of reform.

The logic of Mahan's argument is that the spirit of reform is identical with the spirit of Christianity so that the church in its very nature is a universal reform society. Mahan does not shy away from this outcome but boldly asserts it. "No person is, in the true sense of the term, a reformer, who is not in heart a real Christian."⁵⁸ Conversely, "Without the true spirit of reform, no man can possibly be a real Christian."⁵⁹ The fundamental aim of Christianity is "the correction of all abuses, a universal conformity to the laws of our existence as far as revealed to the mind, and a quenchless thirst for knowledge on all subjects pertaining to the duties and interests of humanity."⁶⁰ The church might in a sense be called "The Do-right Society." Mahan says he once heard of a society by this name. He refers to it to fill out his ideal of what the church is. He writes,

I will now suppose that that society embraced as its fundamental principle personal holiness, purity, of heart, through “repentance toward God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ,” that in the circle of its inquiries it comprehended all duties arising from our individual constitutions, physical, intellectual, and moral, and from our varied relations, domestic, social, ecclesiastical, and civil and that its fundamental design was to bring all mankind distinctly to practice all the duties arising from all the conditions and relations above referred to. That society, as every one will see, would have been a universal reform society.⁶¹

The basic purpose of the ministry is to assist believers in pursuing truth and influencing both the church and the world to do what is right. If a ministry does not embrace the spirit of reform as its fundamental ideal, it is not a ministry of Jesus Christ. If a church is not in its practice a universal reform society, it is not a church of Jesus Christ.⁶²

To conclude: We have given preeminence in this study to what Mahan calls the “spirit of reform.” We have treated it as the key to his view of reform, as the crucial element linking Christianity and reform and as fundamental to his vision of an ideal society. The question arises whether we have rightly treated Mahan in this whole matter. A brief passage in his *Autobiography* provides confirmation. As a new Christian and still in his teens, he wrestled with the question: “What shall be my life-principle of judging and action?” He decided he would not follow any one system of doctrine or church or party line as such but would seek to learn from all sources and base his own opinions and choices on whatever he honestly concluded to be true and right. Why did he adopt such a radical principle? He says he believed it was the only way to have peace of conscience and walk closely with God. Was it an easy decision? He says he made it with inward agony hardly less excruciating, he felt, than crucifixion. What sort of life did he expect to lead? Sixty five years after making this decision, he writes that he expected never to be at home anywhere and to lead just such a life as he had led. Would he do it again? Here is his answer: “If I were standing where I did sixty-five years ago, and had before me all I have endured and suffered, I would, with all my heart, and with all my soul readopt this sacred principle. To one who judges and acts in absolute conformity with this principle, truth received has always an immortal freshness, and ever reflects upon the soul the face of the Sun of Righteousness.”⁶³

Notes

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2 Robert Sandall, *The History of the Salvation Army*, Vol. I (New York: The Salvation Army, 1947), p. 209.

3 See Perry Miller, *The Life of the Mind in America* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965), pp. 327.

4 See Sydney Ahlstrom, "The Scottish Philosophy and American Theology," *Church History*, 24 (1955), pp. 257-272.

5 A. W. Plumstead and Harrison Hayford, eds. *The Journals and Miscellaneous Notebooks of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Vol. 7 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), p. 403.

6 Samuel H. Dresner's "Introduction" to Abraham Joshua Heschel, *I Asked For Wonder* (New York: Crossroad, 1983), p. ix.

7 Asa Mahan, "The Absolute Adaptation of Theism, and of Christianity as the Only True Theism, to the Immutable Laws of Mind and Necessities of Universal Humanity," *Freewill Baptist Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 30 (1860), p. 124.

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9 Asa Mahan, "Certain Fundamental Principles Together With Their Application," *Oberlin Quarterly Review*, Article 35 (November, 1846), pp. 227-234.

10 Asa Mahan, "Destructionism, Anarchy of Reform, Come-Outism," *Oberlin Evangelist*, Vol. 6, No. 13 (June, 1844), p. 99.

11 Asa Mahan, *Proceedings of the National Women's Rights Convention* held at Cleveland, Ohio, Oct. 5-7, 1853, p. 186.

12 Ibid.

13 See Mahan, "Certain Fundamental Principles," *ibid.*

14 Mahan, "Reform," *ibid.*

15 Ibid

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid

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21 Ibid.

22 Mahan, "Certain Fundamental Principles," *ibid.*, p. 228.

23 Ibid

24 Mahan, "Reform," *ibid.*

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26 *Ibid*

27 *Ibid*

28 Aileen S. Kraditor, "On the History of American Reform Movements and Its Legacy Today," *Continuity*, No 1 (Fall, 1980), p. 39.

29 Mahan, "Reform," *ibid*

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31 *Ibid*

32 See James E. Hamiton and Edward H. Madden, "Edwards, Finney and Mahan on the Derivation of Duties," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Vol.. 13, No. 3 (July, 1975), pp. 347-360.

33 Asa Mahan, "True Liberality-Intolerance of Reform," *Oberlin Evangelist*, Vol.. 6, No. 9 (April, 1844), p. 67.

34 *Ibid*

35 Mahan. "Reform." *ibid*

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37 Asa Mahan, "Right Spirit in Testifying Against Existing Evils. Fanaticism of Reform," *Oberlin Evangelist*, Vol.. 6, No 7 (March, 1844), p. 52.

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39 *Ibid*

40 *Ibid*

41 Mahan, "True Liberality," *ibid*

42 Asa Mahan, "True Principles-Ultraism," *Oberlin Evangelist*, Vol.. 6, No. 6 (March 13, 1844), p. 45.

43 Asa Mahan, "Unity of Reform," *Oberlin Evangelist*, Vol. 6, No. 10 (May, 1844), p. 76.

44 *Ibid*

45 *Ibid*

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47 *Ibid*

48 C. G. Moore, "Fallen Asleep," *Divine Life*, Vol.. 12 (June, 1889), p. 311.

49 *The True Believer* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1857), p. iii.

50 Asa Mahan, "The Church a Universal Reform Society. Relation to the Benevolent Operation of Reform," *Oberlin Evangelist*, Vol.. 6, No. 17 (August, 1844), p. 131.

51 *Ibid*

52 *Ibid*

53 *Ibid*

54 See Asa Mahan, "The Revelation of Christianity to the Freedom of Human Thought and Action." I do not have the bibliographical data for this lecture, given to the Y.M.C.A. in London, England in 1850.

55 Asa Mahan, "The Church Universal Reform Society," *Oberlin Evangelist*, Vol. 6, No. 15 (July, 1844), p. 171.

56 *Ibid*

57 See Asa Mahan, "Brotherly Love," *Oberlin Quarterly Review*, Article 1 (January, 1849), pp. 317.

58 Mahan, "Destructionism," *ibid*

59 Mahan, "Reform," *ibid*

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REMINGTON RIFLES OR BOWS AND ARROWS? THE POST-BELLUM WESLEYAN QUEST FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIETY

by
Leon Orville Hynson

SCOPE

The scope of this analysis is generally that period from the Civil War to the end of the century. The primary focus is the intellectual insight and assessments of several Christian thinkers, Wesleyan in their historic perspectives, whose lives were influential during this period. With one exception, they were significant figures before, during, and after the Civil War. (Daniel Steele is the exception.) Jesse Truesdell Peck occupied a strategic position in these troubled years, from his dynamic anti-slavery oration at the General Conference of 1844, to his presidency at Dickinson College (1848-52), to his preaching and writing, to his share in the founding of Syracuse University in 1871, and finally in his service in the Methodist Episcopal episcopacy to which he was elected in 1872.

Daniel Steele, his contemporary, taught at Syracuse, then Boston University, becoming a colleague of Borden Parker Bowne, and a writer of significant essays on the Wesleyan theology of sanctification. He, as well as others, criticized the rising pre-millennialism and touted post-millennialism.

Peck and Steele would become two of the mentors of the nascent Holiness movement in America Through *The Central Idea of Christianity*, Peck would inform several generations of preachers and scholars concerning Christian perfection.¹ The common thread which joins these leaders is the confession of faith in God's unfailing promise to mark them with His holy image.

A third member of this company was Gilbert Haven, described by his colleague, Bishop Randolph Foster, as a "radical of the radicals."² As dedicated as thoroughly to the extirpation of slavery as William Lloyd Garrison, Haven attributed the inspiration for his social reform principles to his home

life, where his mother held devoutly perfectionist views, and to Wesley from whom he once grandly traced his approach to social reform. His *National Sermons* {1850's and 60's} were expressive of the lofty dream of freedom for the slave even at the cost of civil disobedience. Within the ethical framework of hierarchalism, he argued for the divine priority of freedom over the misguided political prudence of *Dred Scott* and the Missouri compromise. Haven became a bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1872 (with Peck and Randolph Foster). Appointed to Atlanta, an intruding Northern bishop in M. E. (South) territory, he continued his quest for justice even while other abolitionists, their great struggle ended, declined to continue the cause for justice which freedmen sought in Reconstruction. The northern Methodists were not the only ones to abandon the cause. As Lee Haines points out in *History of the Wesleyan Church*, after the war the Wesleyan Methodists turned their attention to other questions, especially toward a more inner-directed search for holiness of heart and life.³

William Arthur, an English clergyman, whose *Tongue of Fire* was particularly influential in the development of American pneumatological thought, proposed a concept of serial reformation grounded upon the work of the Holy Spirit. His work was evangelical, emphasizing the conversion of the world as the goal toward which the church should strive. The promise of world reconstruction was given in the purpose of Jesus and the power of the Spirit. Arthur would declare his confident hope for renewal "because I believe in the Holy Ghost."⁴

PURPOSE

The purpose of this essay is the search for understanding the sources and influence of Wesleyan/Holiness thought and action regarding serial reconstruction in America Working within the context of a post-Civil War Wesleyan/Methodist milieu, from 1865-1900, the study researches questions relating to the transformist principles of Wesleyanism which Halevy and H. Richard Niebuhr have indicated resulted in social change within England. In its reflections on the American scene, it draws upon Timothy L. Smith's scholarship which has set forth the patterns of American social reform in terms that clearly show a society energized by the Wesleyan/Holiness spirit and message.

A number of questions provide the structure and configurations of this paper. Was there a persuasion {whether submerged in the rhetoric, or a highly conscious enunciation} that the Methodist/Wesleyan message leads ineluctably to social reform? Did the exponents of Wesleyan/Holiness theology possess a guiding awareness of their reason for ministry? (E.g., "To reform the continent and to spread scriptural holiness over these lands," the reason for being which Methodists had declared at the Christmas Conference in 1784) Are there inherent dynamics in Wesleyan theology and revival which press toward the conversion of the social order?. Were exponents of Wesleyan/Holiness theology exponents of the correlation of Wesleyan/Holiness evangelism and ethics? How did they flesh out the connective tissues of preaching holiness and practicing social reconstruction?

Did the post-War cleavage over the Holiness message energize or diminish the interest of the "Holiness people" in social transformation? To what influences may we attribute the "Great reversal" in Wesleyan/Holiness sec-

tors, the shift from the correlation of holiness and ethics to a sectarian compartmentalization of internal and external religion? What caused the Holiness churches to take the course which concentrated the sanctified life in the narrowed walls of inner cleansing and perfectionist lifestyle, leaving social ethics largely to others? Was American Fundamentalism a primary or a secondary cause? Was belief in the imminent return of Christ a limiting influence in social reformation (as it had earlier been for Luther)?

The major figures studied here developed an evangelical ethics which offered the groundwork for an expanded perfectionist ethic of social reconstruction. They worked with the premise that the world is transformable. Their particular confidence for social change was grounded in hope. While their theology of the Spirit was less fully developed than that of later "Pentecostal" spokesmen and women, they were more conscious of and committed to espousing the moral force of the Spirit *in the world* than the later group was.

Others in the Wesleyan/Holiness heritage (Seth Rees, Martin Wells Knapp, Joseph Smith, and Charles Fowler, for example) may represent a more focused pneumatology, but seem to have made social change either a minor theme or even to have seen it as a threat to the theology of holiness. Hope was a powerful persuasive to holy living, but not to social transformation. This retreat or "reversal" from the social concern of earlier Wesleyan/Holiness leaders may have been explained as the subjectivism of faith and ethics. It may have developed as a reaction to the "Social Gospel," which was increasingly seized upon by religious liberalism to the neglect of personal regeneration. Certainly there is a growth in belief in the imminence of the Second Coming, but the ethical power of that "blessed hope" is driven inward to the heart, not outward to social change. Social disillusionment is evident.

The earlier Wesleyan/Holiness thinkers seem to have linked personal and social holiness, using the idea of progress as a conceptual bridge. On the other hand, for some Wesleyan/Holiness adherents, Peck among them, the dominance of a progress philosophy seems to result in an attenuated evangelical ethics. While Arthur, Peck, Steele and Haven clearly demonstrated the importance of the Gospel in the progressive improvement of humankind, they were probably in step with current progress themes more than they knew. These themes were subtly secularizing, moving toward a period in which the idea of progress is surgically snipped from its evangelical (and pneumatological) womb and its life becomes secularized and dehumanized (in the best sense of the Christian meaning of "human").

The heart of the essay centers upon several key concepts discovered in the writings of these figures. These principles respond, first, to the question of whether Christians ought to be involved in social conflict and change (they answer affirmatively); second, to the question of the larger strategy for social reconstruction, one which assesses the relationship between human agency in preaching, the confident expectation of movement toward salvation for humankind, and the "superhuman power" of the gracious Spirit who is the only efficient catalyst in effecting social regeneration. Thirdly, they respond to the question of the reversal from social to personal holiness in the Holiness movement.

I. BASIC THEOLOGICAL COMMITMENTS

A. Evangelical Perfectionism

H. Richard Niebuhr has proposed a definition of evangelical ethics which I take to be fundamental to our analysis. Writing in *The Heritage of the Reformation*, he argues:

“Evangelical ethics is God-centered, not sin-centered. When our fundamental orientation in life is that of persons who live vis-a-vis God, the spirit of evangelical ethics takes flight no less surely than when we live in the contemplation of our own righteousness.”⁵

Niebuhr’s focus expresses the framework within which the leaders we analyze built an *idea of personal and social regeneration*.

Fully aware of the selfishness which shapes human action and response, they were bold in their faith that God works in human society through the proclamation of the Gospel. Certain that the good news of God was more powerful than human intransigence, they believed that the world was being regenerated, and that evil would be overcome by good. Perhaps the Civil War was the great catalyst for this sense of the ultimate triumph of God and righteousness. Considered an atonement for the sins of the nation, it was also a clear illustration of the divine motion in regenerating not only individuals but society as well.

The hope for change and improvement in society seems to have been a pervasive human experience in post-bellum America. Social strategists, politicians, and preachers held some hope that society would experience some form of reconstruction. Even those who virtually yielded to despair retained a slender vein of hope. By a radical separation from the world, they sought, often in small communities of hope, for a safe haven in which to live out their pilgrimage.

In general, the world of post-bellum America was a world of optimism. The society of the American South found itself under serious financial and psychological constraints. While much study of this sector of post-bellum America is needed, it seems logical that here may have been a fertile field for planting the pre-millennialism of Darby, Moody, and others.

Peck, Haven, Steele *et al*, held to the view that society may be and would be transformed. Their vision of that transformed society was perfectionist.

Gerald Sorbin, author of *Abolitionism: A New Perspective*, has asserted that the doctrine of perfection offered a resource to ante-bellum revivalists such as Finney, and to others, such as the eight black abolitionists in the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society at its founding in 1840, by which they could assault slavery. (Each of the black clergy mentioned was educated in the context of American perfectionism.)

Their thinking [the abolitionists he describes] was rooted in the principles of evangelical perfectionist Christianity, a Christianity that was moving away from the concept of original sin . . . to the idea of sin as the . . . repressive temporal force blocking the path to the millennium.⁶

According to Sobrin, the idea of “immediatism” in abolitionism was the product of an emphasis on perfectibility rather than inability. Further, “By

emphasizing the possibility of human perfection through choice, while . . . focusing on the sin of slavery, evangelism engendered personal commitment to abolitionism and to an immediate approach to reform.” Richard Cameron has said that two doctrines “bore most closely on Methodism’s social outlook . . . free grace and . . . the possibility of Christian perfection.⁷

B. Sin As Moral and Social

Sorbin’s analysis of the movement of “perfectionist Christianity” away from the concept of original sin is generally not separated by the usual view of sin found in Wesleyan/Holiness sources. Robert Chiles has traced the transition from “sinful man to moral man” in stages from Wesley through Richard Watson to Miley and Knudson. Watson, following James Arminius, had enunciated a theory of deprivation rather than one of depravity, and was followed by Thomas Ralston, and several others.⁸ It is this stance which leads Chiles to lament some departure from Wesley’s Reformation theology of original sin. But it is a long way, theologically, from Watson to Knudson. Wesleyan/Holiness thought, which is thoroughly perfectionist, simply does not follow the entire route.

While there are indications of the “moral man” theology in Wesleyan/Holiness sources, standard evangelical definitions are prevalent. Sin is a state of being which evokes wrong attitudes, intentions and actions, leading to transgressions and guilt. Sin is also antagonism, the antithesis of love and holiness. “So long as sin is in the world love must make war against it.”⁹ the Gospel of Christ promises the “extirpation of all antagonism to Christ with the believing soul,” Steele affirmed. Peck defined sin primarily as selfishness and declared “Let now this unholy love of the Creature, self, and the world, be utterly eradicated.” Sin is weakness, “resulting in a diminished moral capacity.” But holiness is strength.¹⁰ When one becomes a believer in Christ, a “new and dominant motive, antagonistic to sin, [has been admitted] to take up its permanent abode behind his will....”¹¹

William Arthur expressed sin in moral terms, as corruption rooted in human nature and extended to social evil.

Human nature is said by many to be good; if so where have social evils come from? For human nature is the only moral nature in that corrupting thing called “society.” Every evil example set before the child of today is the fruit of human nature. It has ... without once failing, brought forth a crop of sins.... This is . . . proof that human nature, in the aggregate, is a seed which produces sins and troubles.¹²

C. From Individual to Institutional Sin

As clearly as our sources conceived sin to be a matter of the moral choices of the individual, they also said that it is more. Human nature is not construed by Arthur to be simply unitary. Human nature whether individual or social is moral nature Arthur still assumes that the individual is the fundamental center of moral power, but he recognizes that social or institutional sins are the channeling of a “society” or “world” of sins, “sin against God, sin against their neighbor, sin against themselves, sins of self-interest and

sins against self-interest, sins for happiness and sins that wreck happiness....”¹³

And sin which flows from the misuse of the moral power in individual life compounds itself in the autonomous will of societies or institutions. Social sin is more than the sum of personal sins. Arthur says:

On the other hand, have not those who see and feel the importance of first seeking the regeneration of individuals, too often insufficiently studied the application of Christianity to social evils? When the result of Christian teaching long addressed to a people has raised the tone of conscience, when a large number of persons embodying true Christianity in their own lives are diffused among all ranks, a foundation is laid for social advancement; but it does not follow that, by spontaneous development, the principles implanted in the minds of the people make to themselves the most fitting and Christian embodiment. Fearful social evils may co-exist with a state of society wherein many are holy, and all have a large amount of Christian light. The most disgusting slave-system, basest usages fostering intemperance, alienation of class from class in feeling and interests, systematic frauds in commerce, neglect of workmen by masters, neglect of children by their own parents, whole classes living by sin, usages checking marriage and encouraging licentiousness, human dwellings which make the idea of home odious, and the existence of modesty impossible, are but specimens of the evils which may be left age after age, cursing a people among whom Christianity is the recognized standard of society. To be indifferent to these things is as unfaithful to Christian morals on the one hand, as hoping to remedy them without spreading practical holiness among individuals is astray from truth on the other.

The most dangerous perversion of the Gospel, viewed as affecting individuals, is, when it is looked upon as a salvation for the soul after it leaves the body, but no salvation from sin while here. The most dangerous perversion of it, viewed as affecting the community, is, when it is looked upon as a means of forming a holy community in the world to come, but never in this. Nothing short of the general renewal of society ought to satisfy any soldier of Christ; and all who aim at that triumph should draw much inspiration from the King’s own words: “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth.” Much as Satan glories in his power over an individual, how much greater must be his glorying over a nation embodying, in its laws and usages disobedience to God, wrong to man, and contamination to morals! To destroy all national holds of evil, to root sin out of institutions, to hold up to view the Gospel ideal of a righteous nation, to confront all unwholesome public usages with mild, genial, and ardent advocacy of what is purer, is one of the first duties of those whose position or mode of thought gives them an influence on general questions. In so doing they are at once glorifying the Redeemer by displaying the benignity of His influence over human society- and removing hindrances to individual conversion, some of which

act by direct incentive to vice, others by upholding a state of things the acknowledged basis of which is, "Forget God."

Satan might be content to let Christianity turn over the subsoil, if he is in perpetuity to sow the surface with thorns and briars; but the Gospel is come to renew the face of the earth. Among the wheat, the tares, barely distinguishable from it, may be permitted to grow to the last: but the field is to be wheat, not tares; wheat, not briars; a fair fenced, plowed, sowed, and fruitful field, albeit weeds, resembling the crop, be interspersed.¹⁴

Social and institutional sins are not simply cancelled and societies reborn when many Christians are part of society: "Fearful social evils may co-exist with a state of society wherein many are holy, and all have a large amount of Christian light." If that is the case, how is social reconstruction to proceed?

Arthur envisions "the general renewal of society" and the conversion of the world. He appeals to Jesus' own words: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." Sure of the might of the Gospel, preached in the

Spirit's power, he rejects pessimism: "Are we to conclude, that the power of the animating Spirit is spent, and that an age of feebleness must succeed to one of power? To do so is fearfully to disbelieve at once the goodness and the faithfulness of our God."¹⁵

Haven believed that society, including family and government, is inherent in God's creative acts. Still, society may become perverse. The moral nature of persons in society must be refined to the need for righteousness.

If society can become corrupt it can also return to righteousness. "Society," as well as the individual, "is wicked inwardly before it is formally." When its laws are evil it must repeal them and "make them conformable to the law of God."¹⁶ Peck construed the Civil War as an atonement in blood for the sin of slavery.¹⁷ Haven prayed that "Church, State and Society in all their life [may], speedily reveal the perfect cleansing of the American heart from the unbrotherly distinction of man from man."¹⁸

II. THE CHURCH AND THE REFORMATION OF SOCIETY: DRAGGING HOLY VESTMENTS INTO SOCIAL STRIFE

"The hour is propitious. The great deeps of social pride are breaking up. The Church can take the lead in these divine movements if she will. She can drive this spirit of caste from the Temple of Christ."¹⁹

"Some may yet complain that we drag the holy vestments of the altar in this mire of social strife. If Christ showed that the zeal of the house of the Lord had eaten him up, by scourging from the temple, the seat of civil as well as religious authority, those that sold doves, what of those that sell MEN? The temple of our national life has become defiled."²⁰

So wrote Gilbert Haven in the decade of the Civil War. His "Dragging holy vestments in this mire of civil strife" is a statement concerning the church's participation in social reform. The answer of Haven, Peck, Steele, Arthur, *et al.*, to the question whether the church should participate in such reform was a resounding affirmation. Society needs to be reformed; it is capable of being reformed. However long and vexed may be the struggle,²¹ the

nation will be regenerated, cleansed of social sins. The progress of the Gospel is sure and the world's conversion envisioned.

The power of the Spirit is fundamental to the preaching of the Gospel and to human reconstruction. Steele commented:

“The minister of Jesus Christ divests himself of a large element of influence when he lays aside philanthropy in its common acceptation; and he puts a powerful weapon into the hand of his adversary, when through his neglect, he allows the enemy of the cross of Christ to assume the championship of any humane enterprise.”²²

A. The Sin of Caste: Uprooting Prejudice

The great Cause in which the Church was obligated to employ its empowered arm to conquer was the anti-slavery crusade. At the root of the slave system was a spirit of prejudice, a “spirit of caste . . . more mean and sinful than that which He [Christ] scourged from His Father's house.” In 1854 and in 1858, Haven preached the sermon: “Caste, the Corner-Stone of American Slavery.” In it he declared that using Scripture to condone slavery, “is a new argument for an old sin...” “Scripture is stolen to deck a false idol.”²³

At the age of ten, Haven had defended a black girl against the severity of a white schoolmaster, insisting that the schoolmaster's attitude was a matter of color. In college he wrote home intimating that he might marry a black girl.²⁴ “My mother and the Bible made me an abolitionist.”²⁵ He saw the day coming when the Church of Christ would overcome the shame of prejudice, when “in its walls, without distinction of color or condition, without negro pews, or negro galleries, or negro corners, all souls shall bow in the loving unity of ‘one Lord, one faith, one baptism....’”²⁶

When the War ended, Haven rejoiced that “chattel slavery” was dead, but, he observed, “Social slavery still prevails....”

Slavery was an institutional sin. “The Southern mind felt this as keenly as the Northern, that slavery was a sin.” But economic interests prevented the attack on slavery. The South “resisted the Spirit of God. They trampled under feet the national life principle. They counted the revolutionary [War] blood shed for them an unholy thing....”

But the conscience of the North began to be moved and the “constitutional and moral power” of the people was expressed. And the cause of all this, the empowerment, was “the Spirit of God moving on the hearts of the children of men....” The horse and his rider, the Northern political slave and his Southern political master, “hath He cast into the sea!”

Haven perceived a direct link between the reform of society and the Wesleyan message: “All the agencies for the renewal of society have been touched to their issues by this man. Not a slave has been liberated, not a prisoner relieved, not a barbarian in warfare abolished, . . . but that it can be traced to John Wesley as the rays in the sky can be traced to the sun.”²⁷

To overcome the severest problems that would be created by immediate abolition, Haven proposed the economic relief of slave owners “out of the abundant wealth of the North,” and the support of freed men in securing homes on free soil. “We must bring our money to bear upon this sin, if we would see it die. 28

Peck's greatest oration concerning the end of slavery, written retrospectively in 1868, described the "victories of blood and of truth."

Great was our anguish, and great had been our crime; but God's *purposes* in regard to the United States were now becoming more evident, and men were awed before the majesty of His power. We began to realize "the mission of great suffering." Our victories were not merely over the embattled hosts of rebellion, but over the prejudices of ages. We had conquered ourselves. See what opinions had gone down in this struggle, and what truths had taken their place! We thought slavery was chiefly a misfortune: we had learned that it was an enormous individual and national crime. We thought it could be met by concessions, but learned that it must be destroyed. We thought it could be eradicated by truth, but learned that it could go out only in blood. We thought the war must be one of white men, but learned that the slaves were to have place and rank in the battle for freedom. We thought we could save the Union, and concede "the right" of property in man; but we learned that liberty and Union must stand or fall together. We thought we were fighting for the sovereignty of the government, but learned that we were fighting to emancipate the negroes and the nation. We thought, when the war was over, we must then deal with slavery as we might be able, but learned that the war could not be ended until we had "proclaimed liberty throughout the land to all the inhabitants thereof" We thought the manhood of slaves must be the result of long and almost impossible culture; but we learned that it was in their very being, and must have recognition and justice before the era of education could begin. Finally, we had learned that God had determined to extend to the nation the regeneration which had long been recognized as the privilege of the individual only.²⁹

B. Other Social Concerns

These reformers were not content to deal only with slavery, although most of the other problems pale alongside that gigantic effort. The victory over slavery gave tremendous impetus and hope for ultimate victory over all evil.

C. Education

If, in some sectors of Wesleyan heritage, anti-intellectualism reared its eccentric head, this was not true of these Wesleyan/Holiness teachers. Haven's great sermon anticipated the integration of blacks and whites in schools small or great, "unconscious of difference or prejudice." Jesse Peck devoted part of his life to Dickinson College and Syracuse University, and stressed the servant role of education in the life of faith and work. At Syracuse, as one of the founders and a member of the original corporation, he devoted himself to the Board of Trustees as president (1870-73) and subscribed \$25,000 towards the school's needs. At Dickinson, he lamented the annual \$2,500 cost of one and a half professorships.

His special concern was in character formation as the basis of all human activity. "Purity is a fundamental principle of a correct character," he affirmed in his final baccalaureate to Dickinson graduates in 1852. Education has

“waited for its young men to come forth with sagacity to see, and power to remedy the evils of the social state; but alas! how frequently have they emerged from the halls of learning only charged with the terrible energy of invigorated and concentrated selfishness....”³⁰

The educational qualifications of Haven and his colleagues were impressive. Haven and Steele graduated from Wesleyan Academy (Willbraham, Mass.), and Wesleyan University. Haven ranked near the top of his class and for five years taught at Amenia (N.Y.) Seminary, an academy. Steele taught at Genesee (Syracuse) then Boston. Foster attended Augusta College in Kentucky, leaving upon advice at age seventeen to enter the ministry. While he regretted this step later, he became thoroughly trained, was president of North-Western (1857-60), labored at Drew as professor of theology, then as president (1868-72), and was elected bishop in 1872. Late in life, he published a six volume Christian theology, which was to be his unfinished final effort. He died in 1903.

Peck believed that the regenerative influence of the churches would lead to the “re-organizing of civil society,” with the consequence of universal education and impartial suffrage.³¹ The “true manhood” of the nation was being advanced, under the beneficent influence of Christianity, and the religion of love. Asylums for the deaf and blind, hospitals for the insane and treatment for alcoholics were concomitants of a nation rising in character and moral power.³² “The nations are to be gathered to the redeemer by the church’s instrumentality . . . hence her missions to foreign lands, her Bible and tract and educational efforts.”³³

Daniel Steele was probably the most distinguished classical scholar among his peers. Described by George Steele (no relation) as a hard-working, plodding student, “never brilliant and seldom witty,” Daniel shared with Haven and George Steele, and another, in a Bible reading group, which worked from Greek and Hebrew texts. This “Triangle” (begun 1854, joined by Daniel in 1856 as fourth member) engaged in “animated discussion or hot debate, . . . sarcasm, brilliant repartee, sharp rejoinder . . . where the most savage criticism of one’s favorite views was likely to be exercised....”³⁴

Daniel became a teacher of exceptional merit, particularly in the Greek classics. Frederick T. Persons claims that Steele possessed a broad outlook and “was in full sympathy with the liberal scientific and theological opinion of his time.”³⁵ In the Holiness movement of the present century, Steele’s interpretations of the punctiliar character of sanctification, expressed in the Greek aorist tense, would assume almost conciliar status.³⁶

D. Economic Interpretations

Daniel Steele was persuaded that money poses both a danger and an opportunity to the church. Echoing Wesley’s fear that Methodism, “God’s mission to the poor,” might stray from her historic purpose through the accumulation of wealth, Steele addressed the Christ culture issue which would be so eloquently presented by H. Richard Niebuhr sixty years later. Assuming that the Gospel is the “only true source of culture” he asked how the Gospel could proscribe what it had created, “starve its own offspring” The answer was in self-discipline, not denial or radical separation. “The consecration of property is . . . the abandonment of its use as an instrument of self-aggrandizement,”³⁸ he wrote in “Property and Purity” (1889).

Under the editorial banner of Haven, in *Zion's Herald*, James Redpath wrote a series of articles on "Christian Social Reconstruction." The antagonism of labor and capital must be overcome. Their interests are one.

Christianity must not be excluded from politics or economics. Christian ethics criticizes unfair practices. Redpath attacked the disproportionate income of the distributor, and urged citizens to fight governmental extravagance.³⁹

In 1867, Phoebe Palmer praised Daniel Drew as the example of "rich men, [who] when true to their responsibility as stewards, do much for humanity; and perhaps there are not many such more disposed to live for public good by honoring God with their substance than [Drew].... May the Lord preserve him amid all the perils that wealth imposes, and enable him to abound yet more and more in every good work."⁴⁰

Editor Haven's paper, *Zion Herald*, recorded the adoption of the eight hour work day without comment in 1867.⁴¹ Steele felt that union membership was appropriate if the union could conduct its affairs along the lines of the Golden Rule. He resisted the "closed shop" on the ground that it created a labor monopoly.

III. THE REGENERATION OF SOCIETY

With differing nuances of analysis, each of these Methodist leaders expressed faith in the transforming possibilities of the Gospel, proclaimed by the Church. Peck spoke glowingly concerning the "regeneration of the nation" and the "regeneration of society." In "The Triumph of Liberty" in his *History*, Peck proclaimed that the war had been highly educative: "Finally we had learned that God had determined to extend to the nation the regeneration which had long been recognized as the privilege of the individual. So grandly rose truth in its new incarnation to enter upon its *broader*, mightier mission to the world."⁴³

Consider the key concepts in Peck's assessment: regeneration of individuals, the extension of regeneration to nations, the "broader, mightier mission" of "truth in its new incarnation" to change the world. As in so much of Peck's Christian philosophy of history, the notion of social progress is evident. For Peck, the church is the medium of social change in the nation. The "free spirit of true Christianity" is the driving force.

"Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free...." If these orders are heard and obeyed, the new American Church will be a living, united, free, evangelical Church, the *vital force* and grand *working power of the new nation*.

The church would possess unity, not by dictate from above but by development. "True Christianity works out the problem of soul-liberty, and tends to universal emancipation. The great fact of the mission of progress is that it is the mission of peace, and not of war, of love and not of blood." Peck concludes his *History* in supreme optimism, affirming that Christianity will become "the grandest missionary of progress ever known among men."⁴⁴

Like Peck, Gilbert Haven affirmed the place of the church and the Gospel in producing social reconstruction. In "The Mission of America," a sermon from 1863, Haven set the ministry in the center of all human affairs. He scorned the challenge to ministers to stay away from

politics. To shut ministers away in the house of God while giving politicians the open fields

of human endeavor was contrary to Christ's lordship. The kingdoms of this world belong to Him "who demands that they and all their subjects conform in all things to the kingdom of heaven."⁴⁵

The Gospel is not confined to a repentance and faith that have no connection with social or civil duties.... The Cross is the center of the spiritual and material universe.

It is the work of this full Gospel to produce the renewal which makes this a better world.

Will a wicked system of government imperil the spiritual welfare of its subjects? Will social vices tend to their corruption? They must be ... overthrown.... Would not a holy society, a correct system of government, correctly administered, a pure and lofty literature, in fine, a virtuous civil and social organization, tend to the salvation of more souls than corrupted morals, despotic government. . . ?

Christ crucified is the grand banner of the Church.... But to come and hug that flag-staff with apparent fondness, while the enemy is plowing the outer lines with his diabolic artillery, is not affection, it is cowardice."⁴⁶

Haven's commitment is precise. The world may and must be changed. Transformation is achieved through a Gospel that addresses the full range of human sin. When the social order is renewed the prospect of personal restoration is enhanced. To preach Christ in a community pervaded with gross evil was nearly as unfruitful as preaching in Hell.

After the War, Haven's faith was raised to its zenith. On the occasion of Grant's election to the presidency, Haven, now editor of *Zion's Herald* (1868), expressed the belief that great strides were being made toward the "millennial year." Christians should labor "to bring the laws of society into his control." The "Grand Sabbatic Year" was coming when "the regeneration of the lands would be perfected."⁴⁷ Observe the progress motif at work.

William Arthur's *Tongue of Fire* argues that the church empowered by the Holy Spirit is the source of conversion and renewal of this world. "It is an agency raised up to carry out the great work of conversion which the Lord has begun within . . . Christendom, and then bear outward the banner until every nation under heaven bows under it."

Arthur echoes the theme of progress through evangelical means. "What an advance has Christianity made; as to the impress upon our national manners, within the last century! On . . . those who love God and those who love

Him not, she has imposed many restraints.... How different the spiritual condition of many of our rural and manufacturing districts from what they were a century ago" (An evident allusion to the reforming work of Wesley and Methodism).⁴⁸

Arthur was convinced that this converting word of the Gospel would, by the power of the Spirit, reach the ends of the earth. Like Peck and Haven, he was a thoroughgoing transformist. How could he hold this position? Arthur understood that Christ the Lord intended "to renew the earth, as a whole, in righteousness."

We do not mean to hold any controversy with those who have . . . the view, that the Christian dispensation is a kind of interlude between the Lord's lifetime upon earth, and a future earthly reign, meanwhile bearing witness to His name; a witness for the conversion of a few, and the condemnation of the many. We leave them with the praise of being perfectly consistent, in expecting small results from the preaching of the Gospel; and . . . looking on that Gospel in a light which warrants little faith.⁴⁹

Without the Holy Spirit, the church was merely a "natural agency for social improvement," blessed with superhuman doctrines, but destitute of a superhuman power." Believing in the power of the Holy Ghost, Arthur expected world transformation:

In this age of faith in the natural, and disinclination to the supernatural, we want especially to meet the whole world with this credo, "I believe in the Holy Ghost." I expect to see saints as lovely as any that are written of in the Scriptures-because I believe in the Holy Ghost. I expect to see preachers as powerful to set forth Christ, evidently crucified before the eyes of men, as powerful to pierce the conscience, to persuade, to convince, to convert, as any that ever shook the multitudes of Jerusalem, or Corinth, or Rome-because I believe in the Holy Ghost. I expect to see Churches, the members of which shall be severally endued with spiritual gifts, and every one moving in spiritual activity, animating and edifying one another, commending themselves to the conscience of the world by their good works, commending their Savior to it by a heart-engaging testimony-because I believe all in the Holy Ghost. I expect to see villages where the respectable people are now opposed to religion, the proprietor ungodly, the nominal pastor worldly, all that take a lead set against living Christianity-to see such villages summoned, disturbed, divided, and then re-united, by the subduing of the whole population to Christ-because I believe in the Holy Ghost. I expect to see cities swept from end to end, their manners elevated, their commerce purified, their politics Christianized, their criminal population reformed, their poor made to feel that they dwell among brethren-righteousness in the streets, peace in the homes, an altar at every fireside-because I believe in the Holy Ghost. I expect the world to be overflowed with the knowledge of God; the day to come when no man shall need to say to his neighbor, "Know thou the Lord"; but when all shall know Him, "from the least unto the greatest"; east and west, north and south, uniting to praise the name of the one God, and the one Mediator-because I believe in the Holy Ghost.⁵⁰

Beautiful, but utterly naive? So it might seem, except . . . the power of God's Spirit is beyond imagining.

Randolph Foster was one of Methodism's great orators. In *his Christian Purity* he argued that the "physical man" had enjoyed his day, the "intellectual" his. So must the "spiritual" man. The moral energy of God is "stirring and heaving." If the observer of the world carefully considers, "he must perceive in the Gospel the elements of the world's regeneration; and in surround-

ing phenomena, predictive foreshadowings of the oncoming . . . glories of a reign of righteousness and peace. “51

A. Social Transformation: By What Means?

While there is among these men a body of common opinion regarding the place of the Word of God in social change, there are certain nuances or accents in which they differ. Since points of emphasis shape theology so profoundly, it will be helpful to analyze separately the perspectives of Peck, Haven, Arthur, and particularly, Daniel Steele.

Peck expresses a social philosophy in which progress toward the “new manhood” in a regenerated society is certain. In my 1978 paper in *Methodist History*, “Reformation and Perfection: The Social Gospel of Bishop Peck,” I have claimed that Peck’s doctrine of progress and a view of manifest destiny strongly shaped his position on social reconstruction. The mood of his writings seems less “evangelical” than that of Arthur or Steele. His progress thesis appears to be more philosophical, more secular than the others. Haven seems closer to the *evangelion* than Peck. But I must qualify this argument by insisting that Peck’s “evangelicalism” is muted only relatively and minimally when compared with later liberalism, whether “evangelical” or “modernistic” liberalism, to use Kenneth Cauthen’s typologies.

B. Pre-Millennialism and Social Reconstruction: Daniel Steele’s Vision of Renewal

As we review the question of means effecting social conversion in the Wesleyan/Holiness tradition, the interpretations of Daniel Steele become especially helpful. Two streams of Biblical and theological analysis provided the foil for his criticism and constructive insights. The first was the pre-millennialist and prophetic views which were powerfully influencing late nineteenth-century American Protestants. A view of the human, social prospect was central to the reflections of Darby, the Plymouth Brethren, Moody and others. William Arthur had satirized those of little faith who expected “small results from the preaching of the Gospel.”⁵² This argument was expanded in Steele’s critique of the Darbyist viewpoint, especially in *A Substitute for Holiness: or Antinomianism Revived*. The millennium would not arrive in the radical rupture of history by the second Coming of Christ, but by the sure power of the Word of God preached. The Brethren had substituted the personal reign of Christ on earth for the “present agency of the Spirit and of preaching.” Their view did not offer adequate means for the “successful evangelization of the whole world and the reconstruction of society on a Christian basis.” Steele satirized the pre-millennial position: “From the Cross to the Second Advent there is nothing but a parenthesis.” If the pre-millennialists were correct the Great Commission was “designed only to keep alive a testimony for Christ, not to inaugurate a victory.” When the Methodists were criticized for their intentional absence from the Prophetic Conference in New York in 1878, Steele rejoined that the Methodist Church was “by no means so discouraged with the progress of the Gospel as to pronounce the dispensation of the Holy Spirit as inadequate to the conquest of the world to Christ.”⁵³

The world might be won to Christ, Steele taught: “The kingdom is to be established by preaching, and it is to develop gradually till its ultimate

triumph.” In the parables of mustard seed and leaven, Jesus was teaching “the development of [his] kingdom from small beginnings through long ages.” The leaven of the Gospel has “assimilative power . . . to penetrate the whole mass of humanity and transform the *whole being of individuals*.”⁵⁴

The theme of a coming millennium was present in varying degrees in each of the Methodists surveyed. Haven saw the millennial year, the “Grand Sabbath year,” when “the regeneration of the lands would be perfected.”⁵⁵

The millennium would follow a gradual but sure line of progress. “God does not make abrupt and arbitrary changes in the social state,” Peck insisted, but movement toward the goal of history may be made. The nation should seek to perfect its laws. “Personal regeneration must extend until political corruption shall become improbable, unpopular, impossible....”⁵⁶

C. Remington Rifles or Bows and Arrows? Evangelical or Liberal Social Reform

The dialogue concerning individual conversion as the avenue to social reform, or reform as critical to the conversion of individuals as a second area considered by Steele and the others of like mind. Peck pointed up the extension of renewal from the individual to society, and pictured the “new manhood” of a transformed society.⁵⁷ Haven affirmed that a “holy society,” “a virtuous civil and social organization” would tend toward the salvation of souls more surely than would an immoral order of life.⁵⁸

Arthur contended for the necessary extension of the principles of Christianity to social evils. Should holy individuals fail to exercise their influence, terrible social evils would go unchecked. “To be indifferent to these things is as unfaithful to Christian morals on the one hand, as hoping to remedy them without spreading practical holiness among individuals, is astray from truth on the other.”⁵⁹

If sin is corporate as well as personal, as these men believed it to be it is to be expected that they would address the problem of social holiness as well as individual. In 1877, on the seventh milestone of his experience of sanctification, Steele expressed concern over “rocking chair” holiness. The professor of perfection cannot blindly assume that all things, “even gigantic social and political evils are working out to the highest good.”

I find myself, by tongue and pen and vote, antagonizing every movement of Satan in society, in politics, and in literature. I have forebodings when selfish and wicked men are lifted into power.⁶⁰

In a series of essays, published posthumously in 1917, Steele sought to establish the priority of personal conversion. Philanthropy cannot be adequate apart from Christianity. The failure of most social remedies rested upon their premise that change begins “with the mass and not the individual.” If outward reforms produced paradise in this world, the citizens of that society would be “heavenly in behavior, but satanic in principle.”⁶¹

Nevertheless, in another essay, he affirmed divine efforts toward reconstruction:

While we believe that society can be most effectively regenerated by regenerating the individual, we should . . . express a lively sympathy with all who . . . are trying to cast out devils in the

name of Jesus regarded as a . . . reformer. They are, so far as the moral well-being of our society is concerned, our allies. . . , though they are fighting with bows and arrows when they might be firing Remington rifles.⁶²

However, we should express the relationship between individual regeneration and social reconstruction in terms of movement from one to the other, rather than as different tracks, as in Steele's comment. We are then consistent with the normal position found in our sources, i.e., that there is a way from personal re-birth to the new birth of society (as in Peck's "new manhood").

D. The Theoretical Bridge From Personal to Social Regeneration and Sanctification

Earlier Peck made the assertion that "personal regeneration must extend until political corruption shall become ... impossible...." But how does such an extension take place? How do Peck, *et al.*, move from the personal to the social or national context in reformation?

The answer begins with the judgment of these men that the Gospel extends to all of life, beginning with individual members of society and proceeding to the social order. Their "post-millennialism" led them to the persuasion that ultimate reconstruction was sure, triumph certain. The way to that reconstruction was through the Spirit and preaching. Faith in the power of Christ's Gospel coupled with the belief that the outcome was assured, brought them to a syllogism of renewal: Truth and holiness are stronger than evil; the Gospel is the divine dynamic of victory, preached in the Spirit; the millennium is coming. Then be assured of progress to the eschaton.

In my essay on Peck in *Methodist History* (1978) I hypothesized that the progress motif becomes the theoretical bridge from the one to the many.⁶³

In this present analysis, it is important to recognize the progress thesis throughout the vision of Haven, Peck, Foster, Arthur, and Steele. Their larger sense was that retrogression and moral decay are rooted in sin, viewed in its full range of meaning (individual to institutional). But when they connected faith in the Gospel preached, the transforming power of the Spirit, and the promise of millennial glory, the progress theme was natural, logical, inevitable. Peck's vision of progress, joined to a "manifest destiny" assessment of national development, was perhaps derived more from the philosophic dialogue of the times than the evangelical matrix.⁶⁴ Yet he cannot be understood apart from the latter. And it is my opinion that Arthur and Steele drew their view of progress more exclusively from their faith in Spirit and Word, and their hope of Christ's exalted victory over evil.

IV. THE HOLINESS MOVEMENT AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

About two decades ago, Timothy Smith proposed for scholarly discussion the issue he called "The Great Reversal."⁶⁵ Why did evangelicalism, which had devoted so much of its moral energy to reforming society, reverse its field late in the last century and on into this century? The purpose of this present effort is intended to be preliminary and is better described as inquiry than as response.

The Holiness Movement seems to be well described by this reversal. In his forthcoming chapter 66 on the post-bellum attitudes of the Wesleyan Methodists, Lee Haines assesses the reasons these reformers experienced a diminished social vision. He posits a number of arguments for the changes, some of which are:

1. A change of membership-the original Wesleyan Methodist reformers (like Matlack) returned to the Methodist Episcopal Church.
2. The breakup of the reform coalition after the War. No issue could fill the huge place slavery had held.
3. Convinced that the power of the lodge perpetuated slavery, Wesleyans turned to that issue.
4. Personal reforms-alcoholism, secretism-were the issues of concern.
5. There was a natural revulsion to war.
6. So much focus in church services on political and social issues led to loss of warmth in worship.
7. There was an increasing identification of liberal causes with the new learning flowing from evolutionism, etc.
8. The new immigration and industrialization changed the vision of the people.

Considering whether or not this description of Wesleyan Methodism may be extended to the larger Holiness movement seems pertinent to the present discussion.

The Ethics of Separation

The relationships between the writers considered here and the emerging holiness people offer interesting comparisons and contrasts. They provided important sources for the teaching of perfection among the Holiness people, works such as Peck's *Central Idea of Christianity*; Foster's *Christian Purity*; several of Steele's writings, *Milestone Papers*, *Love Enthroned*, *Half Hours with Paul*, *The Gospel of the Comforter*; and Arthur's *Tongue of Fire*. But the social reform component of their writings was quietly ignored, or rejected.⁶⁷

In a forthcoming chapter, "They Confessed Themselves Pilgrims,"⁶⁸ I have reviewed some of the literature of the Pilgrim Holiness Church from 1897-1930. On the basis of that study, it seems that the Pilgrims were representatives of the type of Christian response which Niebuhr labels "Christ Against Culture." No significant appeals for social reconstruction are to be found. That is not to say there were no efforts to change the lives of persons, especially those who were truly "down and out." Homes for unwed mothers, rescue missions for the downtrodden, and a variety of programs for bearing the gospel to the nations were critical parts of that effort. The gospel was not only good news of salvation, but it offered the people of these lands reconstructive support in education, health, agriculture, food, water, clothing, and more.

The Pilgrims and other Holiness people offered an early interpretation of the place of women in ministry. Whereas Jesse Peck's *True Woman* has insisted on the place of the woman in domestic life, the Pilgrims amplified

the “Pentecostal privilege” given to women. And they preached! In 1901, the Pilgrims ordained Charles and Lettie Cowman to the ministry of the gospel. By 1930, in a number of districts, as many as 30% of the ordained were women.

Finally, peace became a matter of special interest after World War I. *The Manual*, the official discipline of the Church, carried this statement from 1922-42:

Military warfare and the spirit of it are contrary to the teachings of the New Testament and the Spirit of Jesus Christ; therefore we are opposed to military training and strongly urge our members to refrain from bearing arms in war.⁶⁹

In 1942, the horror of Nazi aggression impacted the Pilgrims along with the rest of the nation. Radical separation from society would not be maintained in this instance, and the *Manual* statement was modified: “Inasmuch as many of our people believe that military warfare is contrary . . . others believe that their obligation to the State [may] . . . require them to take their place in the armed forces.... We ... lend our support to ... members that their conscience be not violated.”⁷⁰

As a second generation Pilgrim, I am gratified with their concern to be truly Christian in all spheres of life. Nevertheless, it may be contended that theirs was a separationist ethics which was opposite to the transformist position of Peck, Arthur, Steele, *et al*. Historical factors pressed the earlier writers to take a stand against slavery. For the Holiness people, that issue was history, although they lacked particular concern for the needs of the blacks, and often shared in contemporary prejudices. The forces of history pressed the Pilgrims first into pacifism, then into a more open view of the ends of warfare. Their view of women in ministry set them athwart history, for very few Christians envisioned that prospect.

When we seek an explanation for the difference between earlier and later Wesleyan/Holiness thinkers, the answer seems to be their differing visions of salvation history.

Peck and his contemporaries possessed a lofty vision concerning the transformation of society, the conversion of people from sins individual and institutional. They dreamed of a world ordered by Christian values, a world won to Christ.

The later Holiness movement generally lacked that vision. Their vision was increasingly shaped in pre-millennialist terms, a view congenial to their separationist concerns, and to the conversion of individuals to Christ. They expressed little formal interest in social reconstruction. Martin Wells Knapp, a founder of the Pilgrim Holiness Church became a pre-millennialist in the later years of his life. In the *Revivalist*, February 1897, he announced the aim of the paper to be the enhancement of holy living through the teaching of the Second Coming, and that “every fully-developed Pentecostal experience includes this Pentecostal expecting of the coming of the King.” Knapp identified the influence of L. L. Pickett in his sources of pre-millennial teaching, an identification confirmed by A. M. Hills. Hills also suggests the friendship of Dr. W. B. Godbey as contributive to Knapp’s position.⁷¹

In the *Revivalist*, Knapp stated his purposes. He intended “To oppose the formality, worldliness, and ecclesiastical usurpation which threatens the very life of the believer.”⁷²

The problem of worldliness was a pervasive fear among these men and women, a theme less evident in the men holding the transformist vision toward society. The latter were so convinced of the prospect of the victory of the Church of Jesus that they seem to be relatively unworried by worldliness. In Knapp, Rees, Godbey, Pickett, and E. E. Shelhamer, as well as Joseph H. Smith and Charles J. Fowler,⁷³ the motif of withdrawal is strong. Free Methodist Shelhamer signed the title of his book, “Yours for a *clean*, rather than a big work.”⁷⁴ Pickett included a classic statement of the fear of worldliness in his *The Book and Its Themes*:

The Church and the World walked far apart
On the changing shore of time;
The World was singing a giddy song,
And the Church a hymn sublime.
“Come, give me your hand,” said the merry World,
“And then walk with me in this way.”

.....

Half shyly the Church approached the World,
And gave him her hand of snow;
And the false World grasped it, and walked along,
And whispered in accents low:
“Your dress is too simple to please my taste;
I have gold and pearls to wear;
Rich velvets and silks for your graceful form,
And diamonds to deck your hair.
“Your house is too plain,” said the proud old World;
“Let us build you one like mine,
With kitchen for feasting, and parlor for play,
And furniture never so fine.”
So he built her a costly and beautiful house;
Splendid it was to behold;
Her sons and her daughters met frequently there,
Shining in purple and gold.
And fair and festival-frolics untold-
Were held in the place of prayer;
And maidens, bewitching as sirens of old,
With world-winning graces rare,
Bedecked with fair jewels, and hair all curled,
Untrammelled by gospel or laws,
To beguile and amuse and win from the World
Some help for the righteous cause.
The Angel of mercy rebuked the Church,
And whispered: “I know thy sin.”
Then the Church looked sad, and anxiously longed
To gather the children in.
But some were away at the midnight ball,
And others busy at the play;
And some were drinking in gay saloons,
And the angel went away.

And then said the World, in soothing tones:
 "Your much loved ones mean no harm-
 Merely indulging in innocent sports."
 So she leaned still on his proffered arm.
 And they of the Church and they of the World
 Journeyed closely hand and heart,
 And none but the Master, who knoweth all,
 Could discern the two apart.
 Then the Church sat down at her ease, and said:
 "I'm rich and in goods increased;
 I have need of nothing, and naught to do,
 But to laugh and dance and feast."
 The sly World heard her, and laughed within,
 And mockingly said, aside:
 "The Church has fallen-the beautiful Church;
 Her shame is her boast and pride."⁷⁵

It seems that the direction of Holiness thinking turned toward a reversal of the vision of the earlier Wesleyan/Holiness thinkers. "From transformation to separation" is too simple, yet it may be a fair generalization. What catalyst prompted that gradual change? For the transformists, holy living by the power of the Spirit, preaching the Gospel, linked with the sure confidence in Christ's final victory, gave them the faith that they would see progress toward the millennium. For the separationists, sanctification, linked with pre-millennial emphases, led to more focus on inner holiness or personal godliness and avoidance of much of the world order, its fashions, philosophies, or customs,⁷⁶ and toward getting as many others as possible ready for heaven.

The vision of the transformists, so grand and hopeful, was increasingly narrowed. That the Holiness people constricted the hope for social improvement in a time when many prominent thinkers (the dialectical theologians, and many more) were becoming deeply pessimistic about the world, is an issue deserving assessment. In this developing negation, the Holiness people may be anticipatory. Their retreat from the world was a combination of several issues, not least of which was the gathering gloom of the imminent day of Christ's coming to judge the world. For them that presaged hope; for the world, destruction. Social reformation receives almost none of the attention it found in their Wesleyan fathers. Personal salvation receives maximum attention.

Notes

1 See Paul Bassett's paper on manifest destiny from the Wesleyan-Holiness Conference at Asbury Theological Seminary June 1988; and my "Reformation and Perfection: The Social Gospel of Bishop Peck," *Methodist History* (January 1978).

2 Haven was "an agitator, a disturber, an irrepressible radical, until the Wrong which was the agony of his heart . . . was destroyed from the face

of the earth.” Bishop Foster’s funeral oration for Haven, seen in George Prentice, *The Life of Gilbert Haven* (New York: Phillips and Hunt, 1883), 516ff.

3 Lee M. Haines, *An Outline History of the Wesleyan Church* (Marion: Wesley Press, 1981).

4 William Arthur, *Tongue of Fire* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1880), 306-08.

5 Cited by Paul Ramsey, *Nine Modern Moralists* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1962), 149.

6 Sorbin (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1972), 44-47, 101. Timothy L. Smith adds that the doctrine of perfection was “the contribution Methodists made to the romantic idealism which underlay so much of the movement for social reform in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.” Emory S. Buck, ed., *The History of American Methodism II* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1964), 618, 610.

7 Cameron, *Methodism and Society in Historical Perspective* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1961), 262f.

8 See my “Original Sin as Deprivation” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* Vol. 22, No. 2 (Fall, 1987), 65-83. Chiles *Theological Transition in American Methodism* (New York: Abingdon, 1965).

9 Daniel Steele, *Love Enthroned* (New York: Nelson and Phillips, 1875), 22.

10 Jesse T. Peck, *The Central Idea of Christianity* (New York: Hunt and Eaton, 1889), 334.

11 Daniel Steele, *Milestone Papers* (New York: Nelson and Phillips, 1876), 13, 19.

12 Arthur, *Tongue of Fire*, 113.

13 *Ibid*, 283.

14 *Ibid*, 129-133. “Statesmen and philanthropists, occupied with the idea of forming happy nations, frequently look to good institutions as the means of doing so; but . . . as a means of regeneration, political instruments are impotent Good institutions given to a depraved and unprincipled people, end in bringing that which is good into disrepute. In fact, . . . institutions which are good for a people of good principles, are bad for a people destitute of principle. The only way to the effective regeneration of society is the regeneration of individuals....”

15 *Ibid*, 331.

16 Haven, *National Sermons* (Boston: Lee and Shepherd, 1869), 6-8, 12- 15, 25, 32.

17 Jesse T. Peck, *The History of the Great Republic* (New York: Broughton and Wyman, 1869), 679-80. Slavery was an “enormous individual and national crime” [Peck terms it criminal, not sinful here] which could “go out only in blood.”

18 Haven, *National Sermons*, XII I .

19 Haven, "The Church and the Negro" (Sermon, 1863). *Ibid*, 368,371-72.

20 Haven, "Te Deum Laudamus" (Sermon, 11-11-1860) on the day of Lincoln's election. Cited from my essay analysis of Haven's sermon in *A.M.E. Zion Quarterly Review* (Fall, 1975), 202-21.

21 Haven knew it would be arduous, but predicted that by July 4, 1876, the centennial of liberty, the cause of liberty would prevail. "This must be the work of time. Yet the change is rapid from daybreak to dawn.... And when the sun rises, darkness flees to its caves, though a few shadows may linger." "What a day that day of deliverance will be, the great and acceptable day of the Lord, a day sure to come; a day, I believe. soon to come." *Ibid*

22 Steele, *Half Hours with St. Paul* (Chicago and Boston: The Christian Witness Co.. 1909). 283.

23 Haven, *National Sermons*, 123-25.

24 Prentice, *op. cit.*, 21ff

25 *Ibid*, Daniel Steele argued that racial intermarriage should depend on the love of two people and ought not be prevented by social ostracism or by "Unwise and unrighteous legislation." It was a strange Christianity which could be "contemptuous to a black saint and complimentary to a white sinner." The sin of racial prejudice violated the law of progress because it prevented many persons from achieving a better life. "Politics and the Pulpit" *Methodist Quarterly Review* (April 1870), 189-204. Alfred E. Cookman, a leader in the promotion of Holiness in Methodism and in the Camp Meeting Association addressed the condition of slaves after the war. To those touting colonization he wrote: "Let us live for the present, faithfully discharging the duty of the passing hour, which is to educate and elevate a people whose unrequited labors, multiplied wrongs . . . give them a special claim upon us. Give them the spelling book, the Bible, equal rights before the law, and the elective franchise as their weapon of defense...." A letter to his sister, Mary B. Cookman, June 6, 1866 in Henry B. Ridgeway, *The Life of the Rev. Alfred Cookman* (New York: Nelson and Phillips, 1873), 299-300.

26 Haven "Te Deum Laudamus" in *A.M.E. Zion Quarterly Review* (Fall, 1975), 202-21.

27 Haven, "John Wesley and Modern Philosophy," *Methodist Quarterly Review* (January, 1879), 6-7.

28 "Te Deum Laudamus," *A.M.E. Zion Quarterly Review* (Fall, 1975), 202-21.

29 Peck, *History*, 679-80. My emphasis.

30 J. T. Peck, "God in Education," Baccalaureate Address ~Washington, D.C., Robert A. Waters, printer, 1852), 4, 15.

31 Peck's focus is surely on men, particularly black men, but not women. In his book, *The True Woman*, he delineated a traditional woman's role, envisioning no such liberation for women in the nation's renewal as he did for men.

32 Peck, *History*, 480-82, 680ff.

33 Peck, *Central Idea*, 130.

34 Prentice, *op. cit.*, 173-75.

35 "Daniel Steele" *Dictionary of American Biography IX* (New York: Charles Scribner's. 1964), 555.

36 Robert W. Lyon's "Baptism and Spirit-Baptism in the New Testament," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 14 (Spring, 1979), 14-26, debates this assumption of the definitive authority of the aorist for instantaneous sanctification.

37 *Zion's Herald* (August 22, 1867), 133ff.

38 "Property and Purity," *Divine Life* 13 (December, 1889), 145-47.

39 *Zion's Herald* (June 5, 1867), 89ff.

40 *Guide to Holiness* 52 (September, 1867), 85.

41 (May 8, 1816), 75.

42 *Steele's Answers* (Chicago: Christian Witness Co., 1912), 204-05, 269.

43 Peck, *History*, 510, 551, 680.

44 *Ibid*, 693-94, 709-10. Church unity will be achieved by development, not despotic authority. This is a key to Peck's understanding of social change. It was the church which would be "re-organizing civil society.

45 Haven, *National Sermons*, 334-38.

46 *Ibid*, 341-42.

47 *Ibid.*, 629-30, 601-02.

48 Arthur, *op. cit.*, 327.

49 *Ibid*, 338.

50 Arthur, *op. cit.*, 306-08.

51 Randolph S. Foster, *Christian Purity* (New York: Carlton and Lanahan, 1869), 23-24, 320-21.

52 Arthur's *Tongue of Fire*, revised edition, was published in 1879, when pre-millennialist views were prevalent.

53 Steele, *A Substitute for Holiness: or, Anti-nomianism Revised*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: The Christian Witness Co., 1887).

54 *Ibid*, 246-49. Steele's emphasis.

55 Haven, *National Sermons*, 629-30, 601-02.

56 Peck, *History*, 205, 208, 480-82, 707-09.

57 Peck, *History*, 680.

58 Haven, *National Sermons*, 341-42.

59 Arthur, *op. cit.*, 130-31. See Asbury Lowry's justification of the need for holiness revival as a corrective of political evil in *Divine Life* 13 (December, 1889). See Steele's "Politics and the Pulpit," *MQR* (April, 1870), 189-204.

60 Steele, *Milestone Papers*, 291-92.

61 Steele, "The Spirit and Preaching," *The Gospel of the Comforter* (Chicago: Christian Witness Co., 1917), 246-48.

62 *Ibid*, 175.

63 Hynson, "Reformation and Perfection: The Social Gospel of Bishop Peck," *Methodist History* (January, 1978), 82-91.

64 Compare the language of Peck's great social vision (*in History*) with that of William Gilpin (*The Central Gold Region, The Grain, Pastoral, and Gold Regions of North America* (1860); revised and published *The Mission of the North American People* (1873). Gilpin was born 1813, a friend of Andrew Jackson, a military man, appointed as first governor of Colorado Territory in 1861 by Lincoln. Gilpin described the destiny of the nation:

"The *untransacted* destiny of the American people is to subdue the continent . . . to animate the many hundred millions of its people, and to cheer them upward . . . to establish a new order in human affairs . . . to regenerate superannuated nations . . . to stir up the sleep of a hundred centuries . . . to confirm the destiny of the human race . . . to carry the career of mankind to its culminating point . . . to cause a stagnant people to be reborn . . . to unite the world in one social family . . . and to shed blessings around the world."

This was in *Mission* (1873), in which he quotes a letter of 1846. See Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), 37, 266 (from Chapter III footnotes, #4). Peck's vision seems to be the Christian philosophical mirror to Gilpin's secular dream of manifest destiny.

65 Smith is quoted by David O. Moberg, *The Great Reversal: Evangelism versus Social Concern* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1972), 11.

66 In forthcoming volume *Reformers and Revivalists*, a history of the Wesleyan church. My source was a conversation with Haines on August 28, 1989, and is used here by permission. See also his "Radical Reform and Living Piety: Creative Tension or Inevitable Exclusion?" *Historical Bulletin: World Methodist Historical Society*, Vol. 18 (1st and 2nd quarters, 1989), 4-7, 3-12.

67 Joseph H. Smith notes some perils in Christian work: "neglecting personal piety for public work" and "becoming absorbed in lines of work which

are not spiritual in their nature.... The material interests of the Church, sociological problems of the world. . . , and a variety of other things which are Christian only in a secondary, proximate, or remote sense may easily be allowed to consume the energies without resulting in a single star for one's crown." *From Glory to Glory: or, Degrees in Spiritual Life* /Philadelphia Christian Standard Col, 1898), 162-63. George B. Kulp preached: "The churches today are preaching the gospel of DO, DO, DO, running to social service, and neglecting the salvation of souls. Everything today is along the lines of humanitarian effort and social lines. The world will never be won for God that way...." *Truths that Transfigure* (Cincinnati: God's Revivalist Press, 1927), 71.

68 In *Reformers and Revivalists*, forthcoming volume.

69 *The Manual*, 1930, p. 45.

70 *Manual* (1942), 51-52-

71 A. M. Hills, *A Hero of Faith and Prayer: or Life of Rev Martin Wells Knapp* (Cincinnati: Mrs. M. W. Knapp, 1902), 154-56.

72 See advertisement in Hills, end pages.

73 Smith and Fowler both held leading roles in the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness. See Smith's *From Glory to Glory*, Fowler, *Back to Pentecost* (Philadelphia: Christian Standard Co., 1900).

74 E. E. Shelhamer, *Heart Searching Sermons and Sayings* (Atlanta: Repairer Publishing Co., 1917), frontispiece.

75 L. L. Pickett, *The Book and Its Theme* (Louisville: Pickett Publishing Co., 1890), 238-39. The *Advocate* carried some typical "Squibs":

"I met a so-called holiness preacher who said he had to wear a diamond ring to keep his job. He may keep his job but lose his soul.

"Worldliness is bringing an awful pressure to bear upon the saints everywhere. Beware of intimacy or too close contact with this old world.

"I heard a lady whose hat was filled with plumes sing a solo, 'I never can forget how the fire fell.' I will not soon forget how it did not fall. The fire of Pentecost not only purifies the heart but will melt your jewelry, singe your feathers, crack your paint and scorch your powder.

"Feathers, rag flowers or dead birds will find no place in the market of holy women."

The Pilgrim Holiness Advocate, editors, C. G. Taylor and Seth C. Rees (January 22, 1925), 5.

76 This may be perceived earlier in a sermon by C. F. Turner, Presiding Elder, who affirmed "the propriety of making a specialty of holiness in this dispensation of the Spirit. These last times so near the approach of millennial glory.

“Hasten, Lord, the perfect day;
Now thy every servant say,
I have now obtained the power,
Born of God to sin no more.”

In Wallace, *A Modern Pentecost*, 187.

Turner may not have been a pre-millennialist, but his assessment is illustrative of the point made.

THEOLOGICAL ROOTS OF *IN DARKEST ENGLAND AND THE WAY OUT*

by
Roger Joseph Green

Introduction

William Booth (1829-1912) was a nineteenth century British Methodist evangelist who, with his wife Catherine, founded what became known as The Christian Mission in 1865. This evolved into The Salvation Army in 1878, with William Booth as the first General.¹

There were many forces which shaped the life, ministry, and thinking of Booth, and three are worth noting by way of introduction. First, he was Evangelical. His loyalties were, nevertheless, not only to that broad evangelical tradition of Victorian England which had crossed denominational lines, but more specifically to the Wesleyan distinctives of that tradition. Beginning with his early associations with the Wesleyans in Nottingham, under whose ministry he was converted in 1844, and continuing throughout his life, he would have a great appreciation for John Wesley. In a letter to his son, Bramwell Booth, on August 27, 1876, he wrote:

I have been reading Tyreman's *Wesley* in my illness and have, by comparing his (Wesley's) experience with my own, I think, derived some *important lessons*. One is that, under God, Wesley made Methodists not [only] by converting sinners, but by making well instructed *saints*. We must follow in his track, or we are a rope of sand. He laid as much stress on visiting the members privately, and in classes, as on preaching. Let us profit by the experience of those who have trod similar paths before us.²

Booth claimed that by the age of twenty he had become an admirer of John Wesley. He said this of himself:

I worshiped everything that bore the name of Methodist. To me there was one God, and John Wesley was his prophet. I had devoured the story of his life. No human compositions seemed to me to be comparable to his writings, as to the hymns of his

brother Charles, and all that was wanted, in my estimation, for the salvation of the world was the faithful carrying into practice of the letter and the spirit of his instructions.³

William Booth understood his inheritance from John Wesley to be twofold: first, he considered himself the theological heir of John Wesley, especially in his understanding of sanctification by grace. He was correct in this self-assessment, he articulated the doctrine very much as Wesley had a century before. Second, he considered himself a disciple of John Wesley in principles of organization. W. T. Stead noted this in his biography when comparing Booth and Wesley, and claimed that Booth's admonition to "Remember Wesley's success" was a reference to Wesley's organizational and leadership abilities.⁴

A second influence was that of the culture in which Booth was reared and in which he developed his theology. He was a product of urban England, and, having experienced poverty himself in his boyhood knew of the insufferable poverty, misery, and deprivation which was the dark side of the industrial revolution. The cities of Nottingham and London were the cities which he knew best. Nottingham was the place of his birth and his rearing until the age of twenty. He moved to London in 1849, and, while he preached often in other parts of England up to 1865, his theology took shape as he attempted to understand how he could reach the urban masses with the gospel. A pressing religious question in Victorian England was this: could the Christian churches "adjust themselves to industrial revolution, speedy growth of population, and empire overseas?"⁵ In 1865, William and Catherine Booth focused their ministry in London, and in that year they founded The East London Christian Revival Union.⁶

Third, Booth's theology reflected his shifting ministry. As an Evangelical revivalistic preacher from 1849 to 1861 with both the Wesleyans and with New Connection Methodism, and from 1861 to 1865 in an independent ministry after leaving New Connection Methodism, Booth couched his theology in individualistic terms, personal conversion and personal sanctification.

However, there were notable changes in his theology, especially after the founding of The Salvation Army in 1878. His theology demonstrated growing institutional loyalty, visionary direction for the institution, and organizational legitimation.

Within this context, therefore, the theology of William Booth was shaped. He was not a systematic theologian, and it is necessary to impose an order upon his theology from his voluminous writings. Nevertheless, the central theological motif was clearly that of redemption. He explained redemption in many ways, but three categories emerge which best illuminate his redemptive theology. Those three are sanctification, salvation, and the kingdom of God. I will demonstrate in this paper that Booth developed a theology which evolved from the use of individual categories, such as personal conversion and sanctification, to the use of both personal and institutional categories, such as corporate sanctification and the establishment of a physical kingdom of God on earth. The most dramatic change, however, was in Booth's comprehension of salvation as *both* personal *and* social, as demonstrated, for example, in his 1890 book entitled *In Darkest England and the Way Out*. And while it is true that certain factors—social, organizational, and

personal—contributed to his writing of *In Darkest England*, one will not understand the book fully without considering its theological roots.

It will also be demonstrated that the categories central to Booth's theology of redemption were interrelated. Therefore, corporate sanctification was necessary for a fully developed view of that doctrine because only a holy people could do a holy work usher in the millennium. Likewise, Booth's kingdom imagery, postmillennial in its framework, provided the ultimate goal, the perfect vision, and the final hope toward which a sanctified people were moving.

However, preparatory to that final goal, and functioning as a living and continuing sign of its ultimate fulfillment, there had to be the work of social redemption which would complement Booth's continued emphasis upon personal redemption. The work by which a holy people finally brought about the kingdom included not only the conversion of sinners and the raising up of saints, but the establishment of a rightly ordered society. *In Darkest England and the Way Out* was, among other things, the vision of such a society. Social as well as personal salvation became the means, not only of ushering in the future millennium, but of preparing the way of the Lord. The road to the New Heaven and the New Earth for Booth's sanctified Army led right through darkest England.

I. Redemption: Sanctification

William Booth, the evangelist, preached a message of salvation. For him, redemption begins with justification by faith in Christ. Those who believe by faith are pardoned of their sins and are at one with God. Juridical language was less evident in his preaching than the language of salvation and rescue. Although not consistent in his analogies, basically his revivalistic preaching consisted of three steps: pointing out people's personal sin and rebellion against God, calling people to repentance, and inviting them to believe by faith in Christ, or to be rescued from the waters in which they were perishing. They would then be reconciled with God, be at one with God, or be saved and safely on the shore of God's new kingdom, and likewise be ready to work for that kingdom. Atonement, reconciliation, redemption, and salvation were used synonymously by Booth, and the images which controlled these concepts were used interchangeably.

However, from the inception of his revivalistic ministry personal salvation was not the only focal point in Booth's doctrine of redemption. He was Wesleyan, and as such he believed with growing intensity throughout his ministry that the doctrine of sanctification by faith was also central to redemption. Along with Catherine's growing awareness of and commitment to this doctrine came William's preaching of sanctification, so that by 1860, during William's ministry at Gateshead with New Connexion Methodism, the Booths "decided that it was incumbent on them to set forth the doctrine definitely and regularly."⁷ The first official publication of The Christian Mission was *The East London Evangelist*, and in the first number of that publication, in 1868, it was stated that "The importance of this theme nor tongue nor pen can possibly overrate."⁸ *The Christian Mission Magazine*, the successor to *The East London Evangelist*, recording a message of William Booth at the January, 1877, Conference of The Christian Mission, stated:

Holiness to the Lord is to us a fundamental truth; it stands to the forefront of our doctrines. We write it on our banners. It is in no shape or form an open debatable question as to whether God can sanctify wholly, whether Jesus does save His people from their sins. In the estimation of The Christian Mission that is settled forever, and any evangelist who did not hold and proclaim the ability of Jesus Christ to save His people to the uttermost from sin and sinning I should consider out of place among us.⁹

The doctrine of entire sanctification was central to the teaching and preaching of John Wesley, and in the nineteenth century even people outside of Methodism, such as Charles Grandison Finney, who was so influential upon the Booths, were preaching and teaching some form of it. Likewise, American Methodists, such as James Caughey and Phoebe Palmer, were in England in the 1840's and 1850's proclaiming holiness. Both William and Catherine Booth would also be influenced by the style and the theology of these evangelists.¹⁰

With his understanding of sanctification, Booth embraced Wesley fully: along with justification comes initial sanctification people grow in God's grace until, by faith, they receive perfect love, after which they continue in their Christian growth. Thus Christians are both purified and empowered for the work of the kingdom. This was distinct from both the monastic notion of perfection by separation from the world and good works and the Reformed understanding of sanctification as that which is continual after justification and made complete at death. Booth wanted to raise saints as well as to convert sinners.

Called by whatever name, holiness, perfect love, the pure heart, the clean heart, baptism of the Holy Spirit, full salvation, this was a second, definite work of grace. Booth taught that purity of heart was the first "great need" of believers,¹¹ and held that, just as justification was appropriated by faith, so it was with holiness. He asked, "If you think with me, will you not *tarry for it*? Offer yourselves to God for the *fullness*."¹² Aware that some may oppose the doctrine, he warned his readers, "Don't doubt, or fear, or reason; but steadily believe, though the fearful flesh, a lying devil, an infidel world, and coldhearted professors all suggest that it is impossible that God should, according to His unfailing promise, cleanse you from *all* unrighteousness and preserve you blameless, and fill you with all the divine fullness."¹³

Analogous to Booth's commitment to unlimited atonement, was his teaching that the possibility of perfect love is open to all; however, only those who believe by faith enjoy the reality of it. Once received, one would have the assurance of such an experience by the witness of the Holy Spirit. As with justification, one must be sure not to backslide from the experience either by continual rebellion against God or by growing lack of trust that God will persist in His good work. The best way to maintain the assurance of full salvation is to confess it openly and often in public.

As an ultimate solution to the gnawing problem of "the roots of bitterness" and guilt in the believer, such a view of full salvation was critical to Booth's redemptive theology, and this would continue to be the case until his death in 1912. In fact, his best work on this subject, *Purity of Heart*, was written in 1902. However, with time he increasingly understood sanc-

tification in corporate categories and images as well as personal ones. There were many compelling reasons for this: first, sanctification was a final answer not only to sin in the believer, but to corporate evil as well. By allying sanctification with the ultimate conquest of the world and of evil, as Booth would do, he eliminated any idea of the finality of evil.

Secondly, his expanded view of holiness gave legitimacy to his growing movement. He became convinced that God sanctifies not only individuals, He also sanctifies the group in the sense that it is purified and empowered for the ultimate redemptive work of God. Holiness took on this new dimension especially with the growth of The Salvation Army, and to the optimistic Booth such corporate sanctification served as an important sign that The Salvation Army was of divine, and not merely human, origin. This continued to characterize his later theology. For example, in a *War Cry* article in 1892, the Founder exhorted his readers in this way: “Cast yourselves upon God. Keep on watching and praying and believing and expecting for me, for yourselves, for the whole Army at home and abroad, for the mighty baptism of burning fire!”¹⁴ He reiterated this theme throughout his term of leadership of the Army. In 1909 he wrote:

The Salvation Army has known a great deal of this Divine inspiration It is itself the creation of the Holy Spirit. All it knows of life and vitality, and all the power it possesses to bless the world, come from the Holy Spirit; and to this day waves of Divine influence, in a greater or lesser measure, are sweeping over it which proceed from Him alone.¹⁵

Thirdly, Booth’s wider understanding of sanctification became fundamental because this work of the Holy Spirit was preparation for the final redemptive purpose of God, the establishment of the kingdom. This aspect of sanctification prevented holiness from being monastic. Sanctification was not a doctrine which called for personal and institutional separation from the evil world until the work of redemption was completed by God Himself alone.

Booth began to see the relationships between the various aspects of his theology and found that there was a natural transition from sanctification as a means of preparation for ultimate redemption and the kingdom of God as the chief result of the work of redemption by God’s holy people. In short, the doctrines of sanctification and the kingdom of God became so inextricably linked to one another that it became impossible to consider one doctrine without giving allegiance to the other. They could no longer be treated separately. “*If you are a Holy Man or Woman you will help forward the War, and spread the glory of Christ’s Name far more effectively than you will if you are not fully saved,*” Booth wrote in 1902¹⁶ “Holy people are the great need of the world. I am sure they are one of the great wants of the Army.”¹⁷ Not surprisingly, those who shared the organizational and institutional power with Booth espoused institutional holiness which dealt with evil, legitimated the organization as created by the Holy Spirit, and envisioned the ultimate redemptive purpose of such holiness, the conquest of the world.¹⁸

II. Redemption: The Kingdom of God

Booth’s redemptive theology included also a developing understanding of the kingdom of God. This eschatological strain, especially prominent in

Booth's writing after he founded the Army, served several purposes. The establishment of the kingdom of God on earth was part of the answer to the problem of evil and was envisioned as the final triumph over evil. The ushering in of the kingdom also legitimated the very existence of The Salvation Army, which Booth was increasingly certain had been chosen by God as the chief instrument to bring about such a kingdom. And finally his theology of the kingdom provided a vision, a hope, a direction for the work of social reformation which was inaugurated in an organized fashion with the publication of *In Darkest England and the Way Out* in October of 1890. Likewise, such a vision for a perfected world was part of what drew Booth into social reform on a wide scale.

As has already been noted, from 1849 to 1865 the primary emphasis of Booth's redemptive theology was upon justification by faith for the sinner and sanctification by faith for the believer. In his later ministry, with the launching of The Christian Mission and The Salvation Army, he expanded both his vision of redemption and his language, which took into account this enlarged vision. He believed in the redemption of the world by the overthrow of the forces which were in rebellion against God, by universal submission to God and His laws, and by the setting up of the kingdom of God on earth. Such redemption would be accomplished as a cooperative venture between God and His people, and especially by those people known as Salvationists.

He used the language common to his day when he spoke of the kingdom of God. He envisioned the establishment of the millennium. Millennial themes had been the subject of countless books, articles, discussions, and movements from the period of the New Testament to the nineteenth century. However, new emphasis was placed upon millennialism in the nineteenth century both in America and in Europe, largely in relationship to other subjects dealing with Jesus Christ which the Church felt increasingly pressured to defend e.g., the deity of Christ, His vicarious atoning work, His resurrection and ascension, and His literal second coming. Neither Booth's millennial concepts nor his practical application of those concepts was new, but he did make distinctive contributions to the thinking of his era in relating justification and sanctification to his vision of the kingdom and in insisting that his unique organization would play a distinctive role in ushering in the millennium.

Many, if not most, nineteenth-century scripturalistic Protestants gave much thought to the matter of the millennium, most of them finally coming to accept one or the other of two views. One of these was pre-millennialism which began to capture the evangelical imagination in the 1870's, and had by 1900, become predominant among all but the Wesleyans. It is

. . . the belief that the gospel was not intended nor was it going to accomplish the salvation of the world, but that, instead, the world was growing increasingly corrupt and rushing toward imminent judgment; the belief that Christ would literally return to this earth and the Jews [be] restored to Palestine before the commencement of that millennial age; and the belief that this whole panorama of coming glory and judgment was explicitly foretold in the prophecies where one could, if taught by the Spirit, discover the truth and be ready for the coming of the bridegroom.¹⁹

Postmillennialism, the other dominant view, "holds that the millennium will come first, . . . 'as the fruit of the [the labors of] present Christian agen-

cies now at work in the world,' and that the second coming or the delivering agency will occur at the end of the process."20 Or, as Donald Dayton more succinctly puts it, postmillennialism expects "Christ to return in judgment after a millennial reign of one thousand years."21 Dayton adds, "reform activity was in part [intended] to prepare the way for the millennium, which was in turn a reflection of the vision of the 'state of the perfect society' that drew Evangelicals into reform."22

Wesleyans in significant ratio came to accept pre-millennialism only after about 1900. William Booth, like most Wesleyans of his time, British or American, was a post-millennialist.

Booth's millennial thinking became part of the fabric of the theology of The Salvation Army in his day, although no official millennial position ever found its way into the formally stated eleven doctrines of the Army. In this regard, his millennialism, in the context of his redemptive theology, and in the context of The Salvation Army and its ministry and increasing social concern was not odd, strange, or insignificantly visionary. Rather, it provided his answer to the problem of evil and justification for the existence of the Army, as well as ultimate hope for the work of the Army.

However, as desirous as Booth was for the full inauguration of the kingdom, he held that such a kingdom was primarily spiritual, and could not be created and sustained by human effort apart from God. He knew that many people who made no claims to a saving relationship with God or to Christianity hoped for some sort of millennium, and even sought occasionally to fulfill such longing. But such social, educational or political endeavors, apart from the work of God, seemed to Booth to be quite useless. And nowhere was it more important for him to articulate his theological presuppositions concerning the kingdom, and the concomitant belief that human endeavors alone could not bring about the kingdom of God on earth, than in his Darkest England Scheme. He stated clearly that he was under no delusion "as to the possibility of inaugurating the Millennium by any social specific."23

He was, nevertheless, a practical man. He was not opposed to aid and assistance from secular sources for his program of physical and spiritual redemption. Those sources had to meet two criteria. First, they had to be in conformity with his theology. That is, they could not in any way be in direct opposition to God and orthodox Christianity. Secondly, they had to be practical. He would have no part of some visionary, mystical existence which had no relationship to people's present life here on earth. He set forth those two criteria in *In Darkest England and the Way Out*:

Of the schemes of those who propose to bring in a new heaven and a new earth by a more scientific distribution of the pieces of gold and silver in the trouser pockets of mankind, I need not say anything here. They may be good or they may not. I say nothing against any short cut to the Millennium that is compatible with the ten commandments. I intensely sympathize with the aspirations that lie behind all these Socialist dreams. But whether it is Henry George's Single Tax on Land Values, or Edward Bellamy's Nationalism, or the more elaborate schemes of the Collectivists, my attitude toward them all is the same. What these good people do, I also want to do. But I am a practical man, dealing with the actualities of today. I have no preconceived theories,

and I flatter myself I am singularly free from prejudices. I am ready to sit at the feet of any who will show me any good. I keep my mind open on all these subjects: and I am quite prepared to hail with open arms any Utopia that is offered to me. But it must be within range of my fingertips. It is of no use to me if it is in the clouds. Checks on the Bank of Futurity I accept gladly enough as a free gift, but I can hardly be expected to take them as if they were current coin, or to try to cash them at the Bank of England.²⁴

Equally at fault were religious people who offered little hope because of their theological presuppositions. They were as deserving of criticism as those who wished to bring about the millennium in some way apart from Christianity. He wrote:

What are we to do with John Jones? That is the question. And to the solution of that question none of the Utopias give me much help. For practical purposes these dreamers fall under the condemnation they lavish so freely upon the conventional religious people who relieve themselves of all anxiety for the welfare of the poor by saying that in the next world all will be put right. This religious cant, which rids itself of all the importunity of suffering humanity by drawing unnegotiable bills payable on the other side of the grave, is not more impractical than the Socialist claptrap which postpones all redress of human suffering until after the general overturn. Both take refuge in the Future to escape a solution of a problem of the present, and it matters little to the sufferers whether the Future is on this side of the grave or the other. Both are, for them, equally out of reach.²⁵

Booth was concerned to steer his theological course between two dangers. On the one hand he wished to stay clear of perceiving the kingdom of God in strictly spiritual, mystical, or utopian dimensions which had no relation to the actual lives of people in their daily struggle for existence. On the other hand, he believed that the kingdom of God could be established only by religious means, and he was aware of one of the potential pitfalls of his own theology if improperly understood by others, that of setting the social work of The Salvation Army loose from its theological moorings and eventually trusting in plans and programs which have no Christian foundation to accomplish the task of establishing the kingdom of God.

Booth made references to the kingdom of God and the millennium prior to 1890. However, his millennial thinking came into focus in that year, and the clearest and most extensive treatment of the millennium was set forth in an article entitled "The Millennium; or, the Ultimate Triumph of Salvation Army Principles." Two months after the writing of that article, Booth published *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, making that year one of the most significant in the development of his theology. The dual mission of The Salvation Army and an appropriate understanding of redemption were preparatory to the establishment of the millennial kingdom on earth. Moreover the increased emphasis on the possibility of a millennium provided the eschatological vision necessary to move people in the direction of the work of universal social redemption.

While Booth did not expend his energies trying to localize the millennium precisely either temporally or spatially, in either scientific or theological terms, he did concern himself with identifying certain millennial distinctives so that people would know the ultimate goal of their warfare. “I am not over particular where I find the new heavens and the new earth,” he wrote, “[just] so that I do find them.”²⁶ He did expect that “the good time coming”²⁷ would have certain characteristics, and that no lasting human blessedness would be possible without the presence of those characteristics.

The first characteristic would be the presence of God among the people, and that people in return would gratefully acknowledge that presence.²⁸ The second would be personal righteousness practiced in every aspect of life. “My comrades,” Booth wrote, “we must be ready for the New Heavens and the New Earth, new, indeed, to you and me because therein will dwell righteousness.”²⁹ He envisioned that “the new earth will be for the special occupation and enjoyment of man. For, although he has cursed one world, oh, wonderful munificence! God is to make him a present of another, for is it not to be a world wherein dwelleth righteousness, that is, righteous men and women?”³⁰ The natural result of personal righteousness would be corporate righteousness: a righteous government administering just laws; a righteous business world conducting fair business practices; and righteous family relationships. There would be satisfactory institutional arrangements on the basis of mutual interest and concern. This would be the case, for example, between employer and employee, or between capital and labor. “Goodness, and truth, and integrity will control every action of life.”³¹

The third characteristic of the millennium would be the prevailing of self-sacrificing love, people would love God, love their neighbors, and love themselves.³² Fourthly, human happiness would be experienced in the millennium. The present miseries of people would be abolished, and “*the inhabitants of that New World will be happy.*”³³ Booth’s theology required a resolution to the problem of evil, but it called especially for an end to human misery and suffering caused by such forces as the wickedness of parents, crime, vices, evil passions, drunkenness, poverty, hunger, disease, and the afflictions caused by selfishness, greed, hatred, jealousies, envyings, and revenge. “God shall rend the heavens and come down, and this mountain shall flow down at His presence, and the place whereon it stands shall know it no more, and instead of its misery there shall be happiness, instead of its groans and gnashing of teeth, there shall be songs of gladness.”³⁴

Fifth, the millennium would mean the literal, physical transformation of the world. Booth preached that “we are going to have a **NEW WORLD.**”³⁵ His eschatology reflected not only institutional loyalties, but national ones as well, and he envisioned the heart of the millennial kingdom to be in London: “Oh London, that ought to be the New Jerusalem in this lower world.”³⁶ This is what London might be like after the millennial transformation:

First, we should have Hyde Park roofed in, with towers climbing toward the stars, as the **WORLD’S GREAT GRAND CENTRAL TEMPLE.** Only think what this would mean. And then, what demonstrations, what processions, what mighty assemblies, what grand reviews, what crowded streets, impassable with the joyful multitude marching to and fro.

The bells of Saint Paul's and Westminster Abbey and every other sanctuary, together with the trumpet calls from the roof of every Salvation Army barracks, would announce to the people the hours of prayer and praise. Methinks that at the summons for the 12:30 Daily Service the whole city would be prostrate, business and traffic, buying and selling, discussions and conversations, would all Cease and for a season the Five Million hearts, whether in home or factory, shop or exchange, warehouse or street, would turn to God with the voice of thanksgiving and with shouts of praise.³⁷

Finally, the complete conquest of godliness over evil would be ushered in by the personal reign of Christ, the millennium which precedes that final event being characterized "by further and mightier outpourings of the Holy Ghost than any yet known."³⁸ Concluding the millennium, then, "will be a wonderful moment when He comes in the clouds of Heaven, and when, on the judgement seat, He summons the world before Him."³⁹

In conclusion, it needs to be reiterated, Booth was increasingly convinced that his sanctified Salvation Army was the special agent ordained by God to usher in such a millennium. He concluded that if people everywhere would follow the principles laid down by him and share his hope for the future, this would go "a long way towards bringing in the millennium."⁴⁰ Both his institutional and theological loyalties were shared by many of those who were members of the hierarchy of The Salvation Army, and who therefore also needed to legitimate the work of the Army and even the structure of the Army, while at the same time holding out the promise of the new kingdom as motivation for the increasing ministry of the Army. Booth's millennial dreams were shared dreams.⁴¹

III. Redemption: Salvation for Both Worlds

The key to a full comprehension of Booth's theology lies in his developed understanding of salvation. He was consistent throughout his long life and ministry in affirming salvation by faith for the individual. Nothing in his developed theology of salvation diminished this basic concept of salvation. He constantly insisted that it came from the Bible and that it was confirmed by his own experience through the witness of the Holy Spirit.

However, the most important change in Booth's theology came when his doctrine of salvation took on social dimensions. In his later theology of redemption, finally articulated in 1889, salvation was not only individual, personal, and spiritual, it was also corporate, social, and physical. Booth adjusted his theological language to embrace such thinking "As Christ came to call not saints but sinners to repentance, so the New Message of Temporal Salvation, of salvation from pinching poverty, from rags and misery, must be offered to all."⁴²

Booth was not a trained theologian, so he used language broadly to accommodate his insights. The subtle nuances implied in his stated theology of salvation escaped him, though he did try to remain consistent in his analogies between personal and corporate salvation.

Just as there was the possibility of universal spiritual redemption (i.e. salvation was not limited to the elect), so there was the possibility of universal social redemption, and Booth's postmillennialism constantly kept that

hope alive. Likewise, just as individuals were responsible for either accepting or rejecting personal salvation, so theirs was also the responsibility for accepting or rejecting social salvation. “But we who call ourselves by the name of Christ are not worthy to profess to be his disciples until we have set an open door before the least and the worst of these who are now apparently imprisoned for life in a horrible dungeon of misery and despair. The responsibility for its rejection must be theirs, not ours.”⁴³

The timing of this broadened vision of salvation is critical. It occurred from 1889 to 1890 and remained consistent until Booth’s death in 1912. This later view of salvation was first articulated in one of his most important articles, “Salvation for Both Worlds,” published in an Army missionary publication entitled *All the World* in January of 1889. The article was designed not only to explain his new understanding of salvation to his Salvationists, but to prepare them also for both personal and institutional allegiance to the double mission of The Salvation Army. Ten months later Booth commenced work on *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, written for the general public but with the same purposes in mind, to articulate a developed theology, and to seek support for the social and spiritual mission of the Army.

“Salvation for Both Worlds” provides the most important theological prelude to *In Darkest England*, and, indeed, to understand Booth fully on this issue one should not study one without studying the other. The article is illuminating for many reasons, four of which are enumerated here. First, this article is subtitled “A Retrospect,” and in it Booth reflected upon his forty-four years of serving God. He spoke of his growing awareness of the miseries of people to whom he was preaching, and mentioned many such miseries. “I saw poor women and children compelled to live in hovels of the most wretched squalor and filth, from which light and air were all but excluded. I saw the people dying prematurely of disease from the want of food and attention. I knew that thousands of young women were being sacrificed to the gratification of the lusts of men who bought and sold them, body and soul, for the most paltry prices.”⁴⁴ He was likewise critical of those who had the means to help the poor and yet were indifferent, and of what he perceived to be unjust laws “that seemed to favor the perpetuation of the calamitous circumstances that pressed so heavily on the wretched multitudes.”⁴⁵

However, Booth’s past experiences among the poor explain in part why he eventually comprehended the gospel which included salvation for both worlds. Expressed in this article is the culmination of one man’s thinking, the full illumination, as it were, of his comprehension of the many dimensions of the gospel:

Now I shouted, “I have found the remedy indeed!” Now I saw that this was the work that Jesus Christ came to accomplish - that he was manifested to dispossess all these fiends of evil for the souls of men, to destroy the work of the devil in the present time, and to set up in the soul the kingdom of heaven instead.

And I said to myself, and I have been saying to others ever since, “Christ is the deliverer for time as truly as for eternity.” He is the Joshua who leads men in our own day out of the wilderness into the promised land, as his forerunner did the children of Israel thousands of years ago. He is the Messiah who brings

glad tidings! He is come to open the prison doors. He is come to set men free from their bonds. He is indeed the Savior of the world! Men can have liberty, gladness here and now through Him, and I will consecrate my life to persuade them to apply to Him for the deliverance that He came to bring.⁴⁶

Secondly, there was an admission in this article that, although Booth had always been aware of the physical impoverishment of the people to whom he had preached, having also experienced poverty himself, he nevertheless, at the outset of his ministry, saw no remedy for that, “and I said to myself, ‘If we cannot save them for time, we will save them for eternity!’ The very thought that there was no lightening of their lot in time, quickened and stimulated me in seeking to brighten their condition in eternity.”⁴⁷ He would, by his own admission, learn otherwise as time went on.

Thirdly, his own experiences with the poor, in the context of the increasing social ministry of Salvationists, had provided him with an education. He became aware of the physical and the institutional dimensions of evil, and gradually learned “that the miseries from which I sought to save man in the next world were substantially the same as those from which I everywhere found him suffering in this.”⁴⁸ With his enhanced doctrinal understanding, both as cause and effect, came a broadened and more subtle language which would take into account his own developing theological perspective.

Lastly, concomitant with this heightened awareness of evil was a belief that there were now two gospels to preach, a gospel of redemption from personal sin, and a gospel of redemption from social evil. Again, the language was shaped in ways which would accommodate and articulate this belief. He added new dimension and new meaning to the words which he had been using for years. Salvation was now social as well as personal. He wrote:

But with this discovery, there also came another, which has been growing and growing in clearness and intensity from that hour to this, which was that I had two gospels of deliverance to preach one for each world, or rather, one gospel which applied alike to both. I saw that when the Bible said, “He that believeth shall be saved,” it meant not only saved from the miseries of the future world, but from the miseries of this also. That it came with the promise of salvation here and now; from hell and sin and vice and crime and idleness and extravagance, and consequently very largely from poverty and disease, and the majority of kindred foes.⁴⁹

Once again, some of the nuances of technical theology escaped the notice of Booth, and beyond all doubt his exegesis of certain Biblical passages is open to dispute. Likewise, his selective memory of events of the past must be questioned. But in any case, the argument used in this article was an attempt to explain a critical theological shift, and to persuade fellow Salvationists of the validity of such a move for the dual mission to which the Army was increasingly committed. The dual mission would be launched in an organized fashion by October of 1890.

By the time of the publication of *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, The Salvation Army had already demonstrated both the willingness and the capability to enter into social ministries, and by 1890 a Social Reform Wing

had been established under the brief leadership of Commissioner Frank Smith to give oversight to such ministries.⁵⁰ Moreover, Booth became convinced of the theological justification of both personal and social salvation, and with the writing of this book he was now ready to commit his Salvation Army to an organized war on two fronts. His hitherto unrelated expressions of social salvation “took shape and coherence”⁵¹ with this publication.

Booth wrote *In Darkest England and the Way Out* to explain his developed theology to the public, and thereby to clarify the evolution which had taken place in his own thinking and in the mission of the Army, which was increasingly placing itself in the public eye. He also sought public financial support for the social mission of the Army. The date of the publication of the book is important because it clearly represents not only the broadening of his redemptive theology and his theological vision of salvation to include social as well as personal categories, but it also demonstrates his desire and his willingness to act in a way which was consistent with that theology.⁵²

While it is true that *In Darkest England* provided statistical data and institutional goals which would help to alleviate the miseries of the poor, those who read and interpret the book only in that light will miss an important intention of the work, and will thereby misinterpret William Booth. The book is also and at times primarily, an expression of Booth’s expanded vision of redemption. Booth’s theological intentions in the book were clear, he wanted to maintain the delicate balance between personal and social salvation. This was necessary for at least two reasons. First, he feared that social salvation would break loose from its ties to spiritual salvation, thus rendering The Salvation Army merely an ineffectual social agency. And, he wished to respond to his critics on the one hand who denied the validity of his social work and to those on the other hand who denied the validity of his religious work.

He was not equally precise, however, in spelling out those intentions. There were times when his whole redemptive picture included social and personal redemption side by side, and times when they were presented as two sides of the same coin. Both were necessary in helping God to redeem this world and in establishing a physical kingdom of God on earth. Another image of redemption is more dominant in the book however, as Booth goes to great length to explain that social salvation is not an end in itself. Physical redemption was preparatory, necessarily he said, to the work of spiritual redemption, especially the redemption of the poor. He claimed to have learned by experience that “these multitudes will not be saved in their present circumstances.”⁵³ There was, he held, a natural order of redemption for the poor, and “if these people are to believe in Jesus Christ, become the servants of God, and escape the miseries of the wrath to come, they must be helped out of their present social miseries.”⁵⁴ In *In Darkest England* he wrote:

To change the nature of the individual, to get at the heart, to save his soul is the only real, lasting method of doing him any good. In many modern schemes of social regeneration it is forgotten that “it takes a soul to move a body, e’en to a cleaner sty,” and at the risk of being misunderstood and misrepresented, I must assert in the most unqualified way that it is primarily and mainly for the sake of saving the soul that I seek the salvation of the body.⁵⁵

Booth struggled with this relationship between social and spiritual salvation long after 1890, and in 1909, in a letter to his officers on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, he admonished his officers in dealing with people to seek “the salvation of their souls and their deliverance from the wrath to come. It will be a very small reward for all your toils if, after bringing them into condition of wellbeing here, they perish hereafter.”⁵⁶

There was good reason for Booth’s continued attempt at clarification. There had been nearly universal sympathy in the Army with Booth’s understanding of sanctification and with his postmillennialism. This was true not only of the soldiers, but of the faithful followers within the Army’s hierarchy. Universal approbation was not forthcoming, however, in this later aspect of his theology, and at the very least there were some reservations about the direction of the Army with this broadened theological expression. Up to 1890, two of the most significant persons in Booth’s life were his wife, Catherine, and the first Commissioner of The Salvation Army, and confidant of William Booth, George Scott Railton. Both were adamant that the primary work of the ministry was the conversion of sinners and the raising up of saints.

Catherine Booth had been ill for quite some time previous to 1890, and her influence in the Army was chiefly in the realm of encouraging the officers and soldiers in the battle, preaching and teaching such doctrines as holiness, and affirming women in ministry. This is not to say that she did not have sympathy with this second mission. William Booth consulted her on the writing of *In Darkest England* and dedicated the book to her. However, it remains a moot question precisely how critical Catherine, who was never one to fear expressing her convictions, would have been of the new understanding of redemption once she saw it fully inaugurated in practice. George Scott Railton is another story. His reservations concerning the growing social emphasis of The Salvation Army climaxed in 1894, with the launching in protest of The Salvation Army Assurance Society.⁵⁷

Other leaders in the Army obviously agreed with Booth. Bramwell Booth, the eldest son of the Booths, the chief of the staff under William Booth, and the successor to William as General, had long been convinced of the necessity of social ministries. So had Frank Smith, the Commissioner in charge of the Social Reform Wing of The Salvation Army before the Darkest England Scheme was proposed to the public. Encouraging William Booth, Bramwell Booth, Frank Smith and others was W. T. Stead, a journalist and friend of the Booths whose personal sympathies were for the betterment of society by any means, not the least of which was the work of The Salvation Army. He helped Booth with the writing of *In Darkest England*.⁵⁸

In the meantime, whatever the protests, Booth’s theology of the millennial kingdom was in place, drawing people into spiritual and social reclamation with its vision of hope for the future, as well as with its promise that whatever the physical plight of people in this world, there was a better world ahead. That ultimate work of God could be understood to involve spiritual and social redemption in this world, providing both the sign and the promise of the coming kingdom. Such work was the challenge to Christians in general, and to Salvationists in particular. This sanctified group, convinced that the various aspects of this redemptive theology were rooted “in the very heart of God Himself,”⁵⁹ participated in spiritual and social salvation with a steady eye fixed upon the new kingdom.

Conclusion

It has been argued here that William Booth, in the context of his life and ministry as an Evangelical in nineteenth-century England, and in the context of the expansion of The Christian Mission and The Salvation Army, developed a redemptive theology which treated both personal and social salvation. The three basic aspects of that theology, sanctification, salvation, and kingdom, were transformed from being solely personal categories, such as personal sin and personal sanctification, to include institutional dimensions. Thus, for Booth, redemptive theology came to include consideration of both personal and corporate sanctification. A holy people were called and equipped and empowered to do a holy work, establish the millennium of Jesus Christ.

With his concept of the fully manifested kingdom of God as the final vision, the worthy goal, and the ultimate hope, Booth eventually understood even salvation as both personal and social. Thus, with the publication of *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, he articulated his conviction that salvation is for both worlds. It was a definitive expression of his developed understanding of redemption in both personal and physical terms. Such redemption, carried out by a holy people, would ultimately prepare the way for the millennium.

Likewise, Booth's vision of the millennial kingdom became part of the motivation that drew this holy group into social reform. With the publication of *In Darkest England*, Booth and his Army were engaged in a systematic way in a war on two fronts, the war for souls, and the war for a rightly ordered society.

Notes

¹There are many biographies of William Booth. Among the most helpful are Harold Begbie, *The Life of General William Booth* (2 vols.; New York: Macmillan Company, 1920); St. John Ervine, *God 's Soldier: General William Booth* (2 vols.; New York: Macmillan Company, 1935); and W. T. Stead, *General Booth* (London: Isbister and Company, 1891). Also useful are Charles T. Bateman, *Life of General Booth* (New York: Association Press, 1912); Frederick de Latour Booth-Tucker, William Booth, *The General of The Salvation Army* (New York: The Salvation Army Printing and Publishing House, 1898); Thomas F. Coates, *The Prophet of the Poor* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1905) Alex M. Nichol *General Booth and The Salvation Army* (London: Herbert and Daniel, ;911); G. S. Railton, *The Authoritative Life of General William Booth* (New York: Reliance Trading Company, 1912); J. Evan Smith, *Booth the Beloved* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949); and Harold S. Steele, *I Was a Stranger* (New York: Exposition Press, 1954).

For Catherine Booth, the most helpful biographies are Frederick de Latour BoothTucker, *The Life of Catherine Booth, The Mother of The Salvation Army* (2 vols.; New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1892); Catherine BramwellBooth, *Catherine Booth: The Story of Her Loves* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970); W. T. Stead, *Mrs. Booth of The Salvation Army*

(London: John Nisbet and Company, Ltd.,1900). Also useful is Charles Ludwig, *Mother of an Army* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1987).

The best complete history of The Salvation Army is Robert Sandall, Arch Wiggins, and Frederick Coutts, *The History of The Salvation Army* (7 vols.; London; Thomas Nelson and Sons, 194786). Sandall wrote vols. 13; Wiggins, 45; and Coutts, 67. Two shorter but helpful volumes are Frederick Coutts, *No Discharge in This War* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974); and also by Coutts, *Bread for My Neighbor* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978).

2Quoted in Begbie, *op. cit.*, 1:36768.

3BoothTucker, *The Life of Catherine Booth, The Mother of The Salvation Army*, 1:74.

4Stead, *op. cit.*, pp. 8788. See also Begbie, *op. cit.*, 1:367368; 2:74, 141, 170, 305; Booth-Tucker, *op. cit.*, 2:138, 16468; Irvine, *op. cit.*, 1:165; Norman H. Murdoch, "Wesleyan Influence on William and Catherine Booth," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 20 (Fall, 1985), pp. 97103; G. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History* (New York: David McKay Company, 1965), p. 569; Sandall, Wiggins, and Coutts, *op. cit.*, 4:219. Stead, *op. cit.*, p. 13, writes, "The Salvation Army represents, in the General's theory, what Wesleyanism would have come to if it had not ceased to develop when its founder died."

5Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, (2 vols.; London: Adam and Charles Black, 1966), 1:6.

6This was the original name of the Booths' organization, appearing in print on a ticket of membership and a temperance pledge card. Many name changes ensued: The East London Christian Revival Society, The East London Christian Mission, The Christian Mission, and finally, in 1878, The Salvation Army. Sandall, in Sandall, Wiggins, and Coutts, *op. cit.*, 1:85, notes,

"At this time there were in various parts of London organizations known as Christian Missions, with prefixes denoting the districts in which they worked, or the church with which they were connected."

7Sandall, Wiggins, and Coutts, *op. cit.*, 2:128.

8William Booth, "Our Purpose," *The East London Evangelist* (October, 1868), p. 2.

9William Booth, "Holiness. An Address at the Conference," *The Christian Mission Magazine* (August, 1877), p. 193.

10 In the 1840's, James Caughey preached in England and William Booth heard him. Philip Needham, "Redemption and Social Reformation; A Theological Study of William Booth and His Movement" (unpublished M.Th. thesis, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1967), p. 59, says, writing of Caughey's influence on Booth, "[Booth] learned much from this man that was to be of both theological and practical value in his future work among the poor and simple people." See also pp. 10609; Begbie *op. cit.*, 1:9, 6162, 163, 284; and Irvine, *op. cit.*, 1:37, 74.

Caughey's Wesleyan understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer and of the doctrine of holiness were primary influences on William Booth's thought and life. This is clearly seen in "Dr. Adam Clarke and The General's Spiritual Father," *The Conqueror* 5 (July, 1896), p. 306, though the article itself is mistaken in saying that Booth was converted under Caughey's ministry. (The article begins thus: "In view of the fact that the General was converted under the preaching of the late Rev. James Caughey, the following passage from the pen of this renowned evangelist becomes of almost historical interest.") Begbie, *op. cit.*, 1:51, says that Booth was converted in 1844, two years before first hearing Caughey. Also see Chadwick, *op. cit.*, 1:379; and "Holiness, Extracts from James Caughey," *The War Cry* (March 6, 1880), pp. 12.

Catherine Booth's appreciation of Charles Finney is often noted in Booth Tucker. Cf. *op. cit.*, 1:86; 2:133, 136, 14951; cf. esp. pp. 2:149150, where Booth Tucker writes, "Finney was to Mrs. Booth what Wesley had been to the General." The best, most comprehensive treatment of the influence of these Americans upon the Booths is Norman H. Murdoch, "The Salvation Army:

An Anglo-American Revivalist Social Mission" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cincinnati, 1985), Part I, Chapter 1.

"William Booth, "Letter from William Booth to the Brethren and Sisters Labouring for Jesus in Connection with the Dunedin Hall Christian Mission, Edinburgh," *The East London Evangelist* (April, 1869), p. 105.

12Ibid.

13Ibid.

14William Booth, "Christianity on Fire, No. IV," *The War Cry* (May 21, 1892), pp. 910. See also William Booth, *The General's Letters, 1885* (London: International Headquarters, 1890), p. 35; William Booth, *Orders and Regulations for Field Officers of The Salvation Army* (London: Salvation Army, 1888).

15William Booth, *To My Officers: A Letter from the General on His Eightieth Birthday* (St. Albans: Salvation Army Printing Works, 1909), p. 33.

16William Booth, *Purity of Heart* (London: Salvation Army Book Room, 1902), pp. 7171.

17Ibid., p. 72.

18There are many examples of this, but the following will suffice: See Catherine Booth, "Do Something," *The Salvation News* (July, 1880), p. 1; Catherine Booth, "The Holy Ghost," *All the World* 21 (June, 1900), p. 341; Arthur Booth-Clibborn, "The Pentecostal Programme," *All the World* 15 (June, 1895), p. 402 [Booth-Clibborn was one of the older Booths' sons-in-law]. See also "The Conquest of the World," *All the World* 22 (February, 1901), p. 60; and "As It Was in the Beginning!" *All the World* 22 (July, 1901), pp. 340, 342.

19Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1970), p. 39.

20James Black, *New Forms of Old Faith* (London: n.p., 1948), p. 232, quoted in George Shepperson, "The Comparative Study of Millenarian Movements," *Millennial Dreams in Action*, Sylvia Thrupp, ed. (The Hague: Mouton, 1962), p. 44.

21Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), p. 125.

22Ibid., p. 126.

23William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (London: Funk and Wagnalls, 1890), pp. 4445. Also see William Booth, "The Imitation of Jesus Christ, No. III," *The War Cry* (October 7, 1893), p. 1; William Booth, "Salvation for Both Worlds," *All the World* 5 (January, 1889), p. 3.

24William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, p. 79.

25Ibid, p. 80.

26William Booth, "The Millennium; or, The Ultimate Triumph of Salvation Army Principles," *All the World* 6 (August, 1890), p. 342. The front cover of *The War Cry* for March 18, 1911, showed Salvationists journeying on a road, and the signpost of the road reads, "Straight on to the New Heaven and the New Earth."

27This was a synonym for the millennium. See William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, p. 80; and various references to "the good time coming" in William Booth, "The Millennium; or, The Ultimate Triumph of Salvation Army Principles," *All the World* 6 (August, 1890).

28See *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, p. 338. Also see William Booth, "Forward," *The War Cry* (January 29, 1887), p. 9.

29William Booth, *The General's Letters*, 1885, pp. 3233.

30William Booth, "All Things New," *All the World* 15 (January, 1895), p. 4.

31William Booth, "The Millennium; or, The Ultimate Triumph of Salvation Army Principles," *All the World* 6 (August, 1890), p. 338.

32See William Booth, "The Christ-Man," *Full Salvation* 9 (December, 1892), p. 378; William Booth, *The General's Letters*, 1885, p. 61; William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, p. 217; William Booth, "The Millennium; or, The Ultimate Triumph of Salvation Army Principles," *All the World* 6 (August, 1890), pp. 338, 339, 342; William Booth, "A Passion for Souls," *The Conqueror* 1 (October, 1892), p. 275; William Booth, *Religion for Every Day* (London; Salvationist Publishing and Supplies, n.d.), pp. 6061.

33William Booth, "All Things New," *All the World* 15 (January, 1895), p. 4.

34William Booth, "The Millennium; or, The Ultimate Triumph of Salvation Army Principles," *All the World* 6 (August, 1890), p. 339. See also William Booth, *The General's Letters*, 1885, p. 123.

35William Booth, "All Things New," *All the World* 15 (January, 1895), p. 3. See also "The Millennium; or, The Ultimate Triumph of Salvation Army

Principles,” *All the World* 6 (August, 1890), pp. 340-341. Booth is unclear as to the degree of perfectibility attainable on earth during the millennium. He appears to hold that some imperfections will not be done away with until the Second Advent.

36 William Booth, “Christianity on Fire, No. I,” *The War Cry*, (April 30, 1892), p. 9. Booth had good reason for such national loyalty. Eventually both he and The Salvation Army received recognition in England. By 1897, Queen Victoria was referring to Booth as General. Booth had sent a message to the Queen in connection with her Diamond Jubilee, and the Queen’s reply, from

Windsor Castle, was addressed to *General* Booth. In Sandall, Wiggins, and Coutts, *op. cit.*, 4:240, Wiggins writes, “It was noted with considerable satisfaction that Her Majesty had graciously and specifically acknowledged the General’s well-won right to his title, so bringing to an end the small-minded prejudice which from time to time had denied this to him.” Four subsequent events in Booth’s later years confirmed such acceptance: in 1904, King Edward VII received William Booth in Buckingham Palace; in 1905, Booth was granted the freedom of the City of London and the freedom of the City of Nottingham; and, in 1907, Oxford University granted him the degree Doctor of Civil Law. See William Booth, “An Interview with His Late Majesty King Edward VII,” *The War Cry* (May 21, 1910), pp. 910; William Booth, “Rise and Fall,” *The Christian Mission Magazine* (January, 1878), p. 3.

37 William Booth, “The Millennium; or, The Ultimate Triumph of Salvation Army Principles,” *All the World* 6 (August, 1890), p. 341.

38 *Ibid.*, p. 337.

39 William Booth, “Will You Let Me In?” *The War Cry* (May 18, 1912), p. 2.

40 William Booth, *The General’s Letters, 1885*, p. 145.

41 The evidence is overwhelming that those who shared the hierarchical power with William Booth also shared much of his theology, especially his understanding of the kingdom of God. Examples abound, but see the following: Catherine Booth, “The Holy Ghost,” *All the World* 21 (June, 1900), pp. 339-42, Catherine Booth, “The Kingdom of Christ,” *All the World* 1 (August, 1885), pp. 183-84, and 1 (September, 1885), 207-09; Catherine Booth, *Popular Christianity* (London: Salvation Army Book Depot, 1887), p. 197. For Bramwell Booth, a son and immediate successor to William Booth as General of the Salvation Army, see his article, “Salvation Army,” *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, James Hastings, ed. (12 vols.; New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1921), 11:151. For Evangeline Booth, a daughter of William and Catherine and fourth General, see her *Toward a Better World* (Garden City: Doubleday, Doran and Co, 1928), p. 241. Evangeline Booth later wrote a song entitled “The World for God.” For Arthur Booth-Clibborn, who, like all of William and Catherine’s sons-in-law, took the Booth name, see his “The Pentecostal Programme,” *All the World* 15 (June, 1895), pp. 401-05. For John Lawley, one of William Booth’s earliest evangelists and eventually a Commissioner in the Army, see John Lawley, “Down With the Gates!” *The War Cry* (November 4, 1893), p. 6. For Elijah Cadman, another evangelist and Commissioner, see his “The New Kingdom,” *All the World* 16 (July, 1895), pp. 3-4. Roland Rober-

son, "The Salvation Army: The Persistence of Sectarianism," in Brian R. Wilson, ed., *Patterns of Sectarianism* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1967), p. 71, rightly observes that during William Booth's lifetime, millennial teachings were important in The Salvation Army, and "from time to time the question of the millennium was viewed with some degree of urgency."

However, nowhere are Booth's doctrine of redemption, his doctrine of the kingdom of God, and his postmillennial sympathies better expressed in practical ways than in the songs which were written by Salvationists. Many songs which were composed and sung by Salvationists around the world during Booth's lifetime expressed his theology of redemption, a redemption which would usher in the kingdom of God and the millennium. When Booth compiled collections of songs, he incorporated those relating to these themes into a section of the song book appropriately called "War Songs." Such songs, which were numerous, were not designed to give definitive expression to the theology from which they arose. They were written to give practical expression to the vital theology of William Booth and his Army. They made it clear that Booth's declarations concerning the kingdom of God and the millennium were not theological abstractions, remote from the hue and cry of Salvationists. Rather, these songs were for the faithful, and they served to stimulate men and women to faith in God and to encourage them to engage in, and continue in, the holy war to which God had called them, with a promise of ultimate victory. See William Booth, compiler, *Salvation Army Songs* (London: Salvationist Publishing and Supplies, n.d.); William Booth, compiler, *The Salvation Soldiers' Song Book* (Toronto: Salvation Army Publishing House, n.d.); "For the Lord We Go to War," *The Conqueror* 4 (June, 1895), p. 247 (a song characteristic of the genre); Howard Chesham and Sallie Chesham, *Combat Songs of the Salvation Army* (New York: Salvationist Publishing and Supplies, 1976); Gordon Avery, *Companion to the Song Book of The Salvation Army* (London: Salvationist Publishing and Supplies, 1961).

42 William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, p. 36.

43 *Ibid.* Booth had resolved issues revolving around what he called the "Calvinistic Controversy" early in his ministry and had come down on the side of unlimited atonement and human responsibility. See "Fifty Years' Salvation Service: Some of Its Lessons and Results. Interview with the general" *All the World* 14 (July, 1894), p. 5. See also Begbie, *op. cit.*, 1:367; William

Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, p. 36; William Booth, *The General's Letters*, 1885, p. 147. For Catherine Booth's theological views, which are very similar, see her *Life and Death* (London: International Headquarters, 1890), p. 203. See also Booth-Tucker, *op. cit.*, 2:14952.

44 William Booth, "Salvation for Both Worlds," *All the World* 5 (January, 1889), p. 2.

45 *Ibid.*

46 *Ibid.*, pp. 23.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 2.

48 *Ibid.*

49Ibid. A second form of activity may be seen to have entered into the programs of the preaching stations of the Christian Mission in its first official Report, written in September, 1867. It indicates that the Missioners were conducting house to house visitation, running Sabbath and day schools, establishing maternal societies, and supplying clothes for the needy. The "Programme of the East London Christian Mission," a part of that first official Report, reveals that the weekly schedule included classes in writing, reading, and arithmetic, a Drunkards' Rescue Society, and the opening of a savings bank. See Sandall, Wiggins, and Coutts, *op. cit.*, 1:266 and Appendix H (pp. 265-266) for the entire program.

Perhaps the most popular expression of the desire to bless people in body as well as in soul was the establishment of soup-kitchens. Under the slogan, "Food for the Millions," the Mission operated at one time as many as five food shops, set up to feed the poor. The meals were not gratuitous, but were inexpensive and nourishing. They were placed under the control of Bramwell Booth, who was ably assisted by James Flawn. However, these soup-kitchens had to be closed for lack of funds, the last of them shutting its doors in 1874. In fact, by 1877, the general relief work of the Mission could no longer be undertaken by the Mission itself. "General relief work seems later to have been abandoned by The Christian Mission, for writing to the Rev. Arthur Wedgewood (Hon. Secretary of the Whitechapel Union Division of the Charity Organization Society) in June, 1877, William Booth stated that the Mission had ceased almost entirely to administer relief to strangers, but instead referred them to the Charity Organization Society" (cf Sandall, Wiggins, and Coutts, *op. cit.*, 1:196). This sentiment was expressed again in *ibid.*, 3:63:

"When [Booth] found that giving relief to the poor, to the extent and in the manner which were within the means of The Christian Mission, was doing more harm than good he ended it forthwith." The first and primary involvement of The Christian Mission continued to be the preaching of the gospel to sinners, and Booth's writings at this time reflect that priority. Booth's theology was still in an early stage of its development and there is no sign as yet of this application of theological terms such as salvation or redemption to the physical realities around him. Salvation was still primarily salvation of the soul. It was not yet the social salvation which would be envisioned and articulated later.

Coutts attributes Booth's change during Christian Mission days not to Booth's theological priorities but to his need to attend to the organizational problems of the Mission. So Coutt's, *Bread for My Neighbor*, p. 37, writes: "It might seem to a superficial observer that over this period William Booth was losing interest in social welfare but it should be remembered that he was grappling with the orderly organization of a Movement which, unless adequately structured, could outgrow its strength." See Murdoch's assessment of this statement in "The Salvation Army: An Anglo-American Revivalist Social Mission," pp. 43-74.

50See Norman H. Murdoch, "Frank Smith, M. P., Father of Salvation Army Social Work," (unpublished paper presented at The Salvation Army Historical Commission Conference New York, New York, September 16, 1978).

51Coutts, *No Discharge in This War*, p. 113.

52The details of Booth's "Darkest England Scheme" and the outline and direction of *In Darkest England and the Way Out* do not need to be rehearsed in this paper. For that information, see Begbie, *op. cit.*, 2:7895; 10919; 263 65; Coutts, *Bread for My Neighbor*, pp. 7392; Coutts, *No Discharge in This War*, pp.10222; Ervine, *op. cit.*, 1:376; 2:67679, 690, 698734; Roger J. Green, "The Theology of William Booth" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Boston College, 1985), pp. 14249; Murdoch, "The Salvation Army: An Anglo-American Revivalist Social Mission," pp. 468506; Needham, *op. cit.*, pp. 72 91; John R. Rhemick, "The Theology of a Movement: The Salvation Army in Its Formative Years" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Northwestern University, 1984), pp. 6869; Sandall, Wiggins, and Coutts, *op. cit.*, 3:7596.

For further information see William Booth, "Darkest England and Other Affairs," *The War Cry* (January 24, 1891), p. 9; and Dean Farrar, "Social Amelioration," *The War Cry* (May 13,1911), p. 2. For both positive and negative critical reviews by Booth's contemporaries, see "An American Review of Darkest England," *Review of Reviews* 4 (July-December, 1891), p. 390; Thomas H. Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics* (9 vols.; New York: Appleton and Company, 1884); "In Darkest England-Progress Along the Way Out," *Review of Reviews* 3 (January-June, 1891), pp. 16061; C. S. Loch, Bernard Bosanquet, and Philip Dwyer, *Criticisms of "General " Booth's Social Scheme* (London: Swan Sonnenschein and Son,1891); Francis Peek, "In Darkest England and the Way Out," *The Contemporary Review* 58 (December, 1890), pp. 796807; W. T. Stead, "In Darkest England and the Way Out," *Review of Reviews* 2 (July-December, 1890), 492507; W. T. Stead, "The Book of the Year In Darkest England," *Review of Reviews* 2 (July-December, 1890), pp. 65156; W. T. Stead, "The Darkest England Scheme," *Review of Reviews* 3 (January-June, 1891), pp. 1417. For a more contemporary criticism see Herman Ausubel, "General Booth's Scheme of Social Salvation," *American Historical Review* 56 (April, 1951), pp. 51925. Two other works which treat Booth's scheme in depth are K. S. Inglis, *Churches and the Working Classes in Victorian England* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), and Norris

Magnuson, *Salvation in the Slums: Evangelical Social Work, 1865-1920*, American Theological Library Association Monograph Series, No. 10, Metuchen, New Jersey: Scarecrow Press, 1977).

53William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, p. 257.

54*Ibid*

55*Ibid*, p. 45.

56William Booth, *To My Officers: A Letter from the General on His Eightieth Birthday*, p. 44. See also pp. 1920. Begbie, *op. cit.*, 2:113,329, 331; Needham, *op. cit.*, pp. 7476, 80, 8384. Begbie sensed this struggle in Booth and wrote, "To the end of his life [Booth] never perhaps perfectly apprehended the entirely spiritual and religious character of his own social service" (cf. 2:79). See also John Coutts, *The Salvationists* (London: A. R. Mowbray and Company,1978), p.142; Chadwick, *op. cit.*, 2:297: "The most revivalist of sects was now willing to allow that a Christian had other duties to his neighbor apart from his duty to convert him. Yet in Booth's lonely old age . . . he some-

times wondered whether he had been right to allow the Army to divert its energies from conversion.”

57See Bernard Watson, *Soldier Saint* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970), chapter 17.

58See Begbie, op. cit., 2:8788; Ervine, op. cit., 2:690; William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, Preface.

59Ibid., p. 270.

WILLIAM BOOTH'S
IN DARKEST ENGLAND AND THE WAY OUT:
A REAPPRAISAL*

by
Norman H. Murdoch

There are several reasons why a reappraisal of William Booth's *Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890) is needed. The book which "aroused more public interest than any other book since Henry George's *Progress and Poverty*," according to Victor Bailey, set out to end unemployment in Britain by progressively moving the unemployed from city workshops to farm colonies, then to overseas colonies.¹

Let me propose two reasons for why a reassessment is needed. First, historians have neglected this 1890 scheme that provides the foundation of Salvation Army social services and an example of late 19th century Wesleyan interest in social reform.² There are reasons for this neglect. Social historians are not inclined to credit religious revivalists as social reformers. Historians' natural distaste for sectarian movements had not been dissipated by the fact that Salvationist historians have wrongly presented Booth as the scheme's sole author and have ignored the fact that its ideas did not come to him by some form of divine inspiration. While such a claim may appeal to evangelical supporters who tend to see great "men of God" stepping into the breach in troubled times as a matter of course, scholars rightfully scorn such claims, particularly since Booth was not a social reformer before the mid-1880's when he began to develop his social vision.

Salvationists, who have seen Booth's motives as primarily evangelistic, even in millennial terms, locate the ideological base for the Darkest England Scheme in Booth's Wesleyan and postmillennial theology and his personal encounter with urban culture.³ This interpretation scans Booth's heart, but ignores his intellect, and is at best partially justified. To tie his scheme exclusively to practical-minded Wesleyanism, his urban experience, and his 1880's post-millennialism, does not point us to the real ideological origins of his 1890

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Darkest England Scheme. While Booth's theology was Wesleyan, his experience urban, and his hope postmillennial, Darkest England's ideas did not rise from such sources.

Rather, the scheme's roots are in nineteenth century communalist and socialist ideology. The more interesting question, one we will attempt to answer here, is: Why would Booth adopt such secular ideas when he was admittedly no devotee of world redemption by human effort? In fact, since the mid1870's he had viewed social services as a diversion from revivalist endeavors and had argued as late as 1883 against social salvation programs proposed by Andrew Mearns' *Bitter Cry of Outcast London*. Booth argued that salvation will "clothe the naked" and "change their miserable hearts and make them happy."⁴

The answer to the question of why Booth changed his mind is that certain Salvationists pushed him in new directions. These Salvationists have not gained credit for their role, both because Booth's authoritarian rule required that he be the sole originator of Army programs, and because the crediting of their own ideas to these Salvationists might well have split the Army into separate spiritual and a social organizations. Divisions between Salvationist revivalists and those involved in social reform activities were only tenuously patched over by Booth's charisma.

But Salvation Army historians have consciously altered the record of the influence of "social" Salvationists like Frank Smith, a Henry George disciple who brought the scheme's social reform ideas to William Booth. Unquestionably Smith abetted his own debunking by leaving "the work" (Salvationists' phrase for their vocation) nine months after he put the Darkest England scheme into operation in April 1890, and by his silence on the matter of the schemes authorship. In 1891, Smith embraced socialist politics as a better way to bring about society's reform by starting a Labor Army and publishing a *Worker's Cry*. Again in 1929, he aided Army historians' efforts to brand him a traitor by denouncing Army leaders who deposed Bramwell Booth as General. Suzie Swift, another social-wing Salvationist who claimed to have assisted Booth in writing *Darkest England*, committed as great a sin by leaving the Army to join a Catholic order in the United States in 1896.

Nevertheless, only William Booth could hold a two-winged Salvation Army together. If spiritual-side Salvationists were displeased with socialist ideas Frank Smith and Suzie Swift espoused, American Salvationists had reason to dislike the scheme's British imperialist content, fed to Booth by W. T. Stead, Cecil Rhodes, and Arnold White. To create a "Greater Britain" in Britain's overseas territories, Booth would direct emigration of England's unemployed "submerged tenth" to Canada and Australasia, and specifically bypass the United States. Only Booth's overwhelming personal attraction could bring these diverse forces together under the banner of social reform.

* * * *

To understand how William Booth became a social reformer we must look at his background. Although he was a Wesleyan evangelist in career terms, Booth was in secular jargon, an opportunist. A brief look at his vocation as a revivalist will show that he regularly turned roadblocks into highways to opportunity. In 1844, as a poor fourteen-year-old Nottingham lad, he expe-

rienced spiritual conversion through the kind interest of a Wesleyan lay couple who invited him to attend chapel.⁵ After a period of adolescent lay evangelism among Nottingham's Meadow Platts' poor, when the clergy's faint devotion to revivalism frustrated him, his pastor proposed that he prepare for the ordained ministry. William accepted this recognition by official Wesleyanism only to be scorned by his chapel's lack of concern for his welfare when he became ill. In 1850, when, due to a misunderstanding, Wesleyan Methodists labeled him a "reformer" and took away his class ticket (membership), he was pastor to the Reform Methodists in Spaulding even though their disorganized ways repelled him. In 1854, he sought ordination in the Methodist New Connexion. When he found that "settled ministry" did not suit him, he resigned, in 1861, to become an itinerant evangelist in Cornwall, Wales, and the midlands, Britain's "burned-over" district.

Booth had seen no career for himself in urban evangelism in 1861 when he left the New Connexion, but an invitation to his wife Catherine to preach in London in 1865 led him to accept support from layrun East London evangelical missions as a temporary solution to his vocational quandary. He soon organized his own Christian Mission which, by 1870, resembled a Methodist society. When his mission failed to attract the "heathen masses" in the mid 1870's, he reenergized it by giving it a military cast, in 1878, under the name "salvation army," an idea he borrowed from the successful Volunteer movement in which thousands of working class men found that civilian soldiering during their leisure hours gave them new status.

When, in 1886-88, Booth's Salvation Army again failed to win converts in London's East End and other urban areas where Irish "mobs" attacked alien Wesleyan intruders, Booth once again found a popular idea which might solve his problems.⁶ Social reform ideas were "in the air" due to journalists' exposes, strikes by organized labor, reform laws which expanded the franchise, and mass immigration. Booth's female officers, working in the slums, convinced him in 1883 that reform activities would save sinners from a heathen urban environment and, just as important, bring new life to his failing mission. Booth, always an opportunist, although in this case a reluctant one, agreed.

Each time Booth made a new beginning it came as a result of a block to advancement, seldom admitted, but always apparent to an astute observer. Progress for him was never a straight line. In his march to glory, glory was often less his goal than personal or organizational survival. In his desperate search for a career in the 1850's, he had gone so far as to entertain notions of becoming a Congregationalist, although Calvinism repelled him. He even considered migrating to America where his style of revivalism was more in vogue. He was constantly on the prowl for new directions that would lead him out of a career "wilderness" (a term his son Bramwell used to explain William's dilemma in 1863-65, when he needed to find a home for his family that would suit the needs of his popular preaching wife). Catherine, no less an opportunist than her husband, supported his many schemes for survival and, they hoped, for success.

* * * *

The Salvation Army's bleak situation was becoming apparent to a public audience by 1888. January's *British Weekly* survey indicated that Lon-

don corps (the name for local Salvation Army mission halls) attracted only 7% of London's population to religious services. By comparison, an 1881 survey had shown that the Army had attracted 11.1% in provincial Scarborough, 7.4% in Hull, 6.8% in Barnsley, and 5.3% in Bristol. While the Army grew in working-class neighborhoods of the West End, the provinces, and overseas, it declined in East London. By late 1888, Church of England clergy were announcing in the secular press Booth's failure to win the "heathen masses" to the gospel. The phenomenal early growth of his newly-reorganized and renamed Salvation Army slowed dramatically and, after 1878, growth in cities stopped.

The decline was particularly noticeable in London, headquarters of Booth's worldwide Christian imperium. In the Whitechapel and Bethnal Green districts of the East End, *British Weekly* surveyors could scarcely find a Salvationist. They found that the Army's main hall at Clapton was situated "among artisans and clerks," a class other Nonconformist groups were already reaching.⁷ Decline in East London, in spite of Booth's public denials, could be documented from his own *War Cry*, even though he stopped publishing statistics after 1886. On April 13, 1889, District Officer Adjutant Morgan disclosed that the average East London corps' membership was 71.6, with a total number of about 1,000 in all East End corps. This was the same as the number at the East End Stations of Whitechapel, Limehouse, Poplar, and Shoreditch, fifteen years earlier when the Christian Mission reached its peak.⁸ The obvious conclusion was that the Army was not converting the "heathen masses" to the gospel.

* * * *

It was at least partially due to these difficulties with the Salvation Army's evangelistic work in the mid-1880's that William Booth was prepared to adopt social reform ideas from Frank Smith and others.⁹ Booth embraced these new ideas as a millennial vision for the redemption of England's urban slum population, a "submerged tenth," in agricultural havens in England and in British overseas dominions. As a side-effect, these social ideas would also remove attention from his Army's noticeable failure in East London.

Today, as social historians rediscover nineteenth century communal ideas, it is time to retrace the roots of Booth's social reform ideas to their nineteenth century intellectual soil.¹⁰ Booth published *Darkest England* and the *Way Out* in October 1890, as Catherine, his most devoted critic, was dying of cancer. Preaching, administering, and sitting by his dying wife's bed absorbed William's energy. Therefore, he relied on several minds to invent his social reform scheme. Frank Smith, just returned to London from the American Salvation Army command in New York, funneled socialist ideas to Booth from Henry George, the single tax advocate, and others. Booth's part in authorship may have been little more than that of proof reader of Smith's proposals. Smith had made trips to Holland, Denmark, and Sweden to find information on farm collectives and immigration schemes. Material which Smith found led to the threefold pattern of *Darkest England's* solution to urban unemployment: 1) urban workshops (city colonies), the first step from poverty to self-reliance; 2) farm colonies in England, a step "back to the land" which was intended to rehabilitate the city-wrecked poor; 3) overseas colonies. farms which the Army would prepare for acquisition by Brit-

ain's surplus population. Suzie Swift, one of many Salvationist women involved in social programs, claimed to have done editorial work on the text. Booth turned to W. T. Stead to whip the unwieldy pile of paper into a book. Stead later claimed to have incorporated several of his own ideas into the text.¹¹

* * * *

How did Frank Smith, Suzie Swift, and other "social" Salvationists come to absorb reform ideas from nineteenth-century populists and socialists, and why did William Booth adopt these ideas? Social reform was "in the air" when Salvationist slum sisters, living in London, established refuges for unfortunate women in the Soho and Picadilly areas, just as Toynbee Hall was founded in 1883.¹² When they discovered that slum dwellers, mostly Irish and southern and eastern European immigrants, opposed their Wesleyan/holiness salvation message as foreign to their culture, Salvationist women opened homes for "fallen women" and orphaned "waifs and strays," and hunted down drunkards and met released prisoners in "Red Mariahs" at prison gates. Frustration over failure with populations they felt called by God to save led these women to attempt to solve the problem of the Army's decline in East London and other slums in new and different ways.

These activities did not require a sharp break with earlier revivalist urban home mission practices of temporary handout charity. (The formation of the Darkest England Scheme's attempt to change the very nature of the urban environment later in the decade would represent such a break.) But the example of these women did lead the Booths to embrace W. T. Stead's "Maiden Tribute" crusade in 1885, which brought to world attention the need for legislation to save girls under sixteen from white slavery in London and Paris brothels.¹³ Such experiences had begun to change the mind of William Booth.

* * * *

We know the actual content of only some of the materials Frank Smith fed to William Booth between 1887 and 1890. We know from citations in *Dark est England* and from Booth's speeches that he acknowledged the presence of secular ideas in his reform scheme. He pointed to three British social thinkers as most notable, but he also acknowledged the influence of American reformers Edward Bellamy and Henry George, even though he did not adopt their ideas directly. Of the three British reformers he mentioned, Count Rumford, E. T. Craig, and the Earl of Meath, none represented his Wesleyan evangelical religious persuasion. Wesleyans and other evangelicals with whom Booth was familiar were engaged in reform activities in 1890, and Booth could have quoted them, but he did not choose to do so.¹⁴ Perhaps it was because of his need to gain broader public support that he claimed convergence of his ideas with those of popular secular reformers. Whatever his reason, he chose to acknowledge three such sources in *Darkest England and the Way Out*.

Count Rumford was an eighteenth century reformer in Bavaria whose ideas had again become popular in the 1880's. The Earl of Meath was President of a rival social reform-evangelical organization, the Church Army. Prebendary Wilson Carlisle had founded the Church of England's Church Army in 1882, as a Salvation Army clone, at a time when the Church was negotiating with Booth to merge his Army with the established church as its evan-

gelistic arm¹⁵ E. T. Craig was an aged Robert Owen disciple, whose Ralahine, Ireland, social reform experiment had failed in 1833. Ralahine was seen as the most successful Owenite farm colony experiment.¹⁶

In *Darkest England's* Appendix, Booth introduced Count Rumford as the abolisher of beggary in Bavaria. Rumford had served in the British Army as an American officer “with considerable distinction in the Revolutionary War,” according to Booth. After England failed to put down the rebellion, he settled in England and then moved to Bavaria to reform its army. He also took on social reform activities. He set up Houses of Industry (city work shops) where, beginning on New Year's Eve 1790, he compelled beggars to work. He discovered that when he treated them with justice and kindness, offered clean and orderly surroundings, and provided inexpensive provisions, they responded with hard work. Best of all for Booth and cost-conscious Victorians, Rumford's program was self-sufficient. Rumford's military approach to unemployment, vice, and poverty impressed Booth, who was no democrat. Booth agreed with Rumford, the poor needed direction from a strong hand. Like the Count, he would provide despotic social reform leadership. Just as he had militarized his mission's spiritual work in 1878, he would also be obeyed in social reform ventures. There would be no voting, no coddling. With Thomas Carlyle, Booth lauded the military system's effectiveness. He would organize workers, “not as a bewildered bewildering mob, but as a firm regimented mass, with real captains over them. Despotism is essential in most enterprises.” Booth's city colony workshops reflected Rumford's houses of industry in Munich, and, like Rumford's, his despotism was thoroughly military.¹⁷

Next, Booth adopted ideas from E. T. Craig's 1831-1833 Cooperative Experiment at Ralahine, Ireland, an agricultural cooperative patterned after Robert Owen's earlier socialist experiments. With support from John Scott Vandeleur, a wealthy Irish landowner, Craig had induced unruly Irish peasants to join an experiment to increase production and improve living standards. Profits, after rent, belonged to the peasants. Craig, as would Booth, permitted no intoxicating drink or tobacco. Booth would propose a Workingmen's Agricultural University to train those he would move “back to the land.” Unfortunately, gambling by estate owner Vandeleur led to the 1833 closing of the Ralahine cooperative. When Booth established his farm colonies, he followed the Ralahine format even though he was in no sense an ideological descendant of secularist Robert Owen. Booth was willing to accept good ideas from whatever source and, in fact, enjoyed reaching outside his Wesleyan tradition to embrace ideas which expanded his list of financial subscribers.¹⁸

In early 1889, over a year before he published *Darkest England*, Booth acknowledged his debt to the Earl of Meath in a speech published by the *Times*. Booth said that Meath's pamphlet on poverty expressed his own notions on individual responsibility exactly. Booth had just opened a second “elevator,” a self-supporting Men's Shelter, in Clerkenwell. Men paid three pence for supper, a “homely talk on salvation,” and bed and breakfast. Unlike common lodging houses, Salvation Army shelters were free from “vile, demoralizing associations.” Yet, Booth claimed, the Army did not encourage “soupers.” He would do nothing for a man “on condition that he did some thing religious in return.”¹⁹

Meath contributed more to Booth's ideas for the second and third phases of the *Darkest England* scheme, English and overseas farm colonies. Meath's

book, *Social Arrows* (1886), pressed for state-directed colonization of the unemployed in “Greater Britain.” In 1890, Booth offered to become the state’s agent in selecting, preparing, and transporting poor but willing settlers to relocation in Britain’s overseas empire. Booth echoed Meath’s concern that the dominions would not accept London’s vicious paupers, and he agreed that prior training on an English farm colony could improve their work habits and character and make them acceptable for emigration. He followed Meath’s prescription for successful emigrants: 1) character was more important than agricultural training; the government’s program had failed because it had not followed this plan; and 2) children could be trained on model farms in England to be apprenticed to colonial farmers.²⁰

Meath resented Booth’s theft of his plan. His Church Army accused Booth of stealing social reform ideas from a pamphlet, “Our Tramps,” which it had published in March, 1890. The pamphlet proposed a threefold scheme of city, farm, and overseas colonies. Booth could well have charged this alleged theft as repayment for the Church Army’s theft of his ideas for militant evangelism as well as hymns from his *Song Book*. As the Church Army’s President, Meath led an organization with a social reform plan which directly competed with Booth’s.²¹ As President of the Social Service Union and the British Institute of Social Service, inspired by Booth’s Congregationalist friend J. B. Paton, Meath already had a reputation as a reformer. He found it difficult to tolerate a competing reformer with grace.²² Through Meath’s efforts, the government set up two state-assisted emigrant colonies in Canada.

But Meath wanted Booth to acknowledge his sources for *Darkest Eng land*. Meath wrote in 1904 that a “great religious Nonconformist leader,” almost certainly Booth, had not mentioned twenty-two German labor colonies in existence in 1890, when he was recommending English labor colonies. Meath claimed to be puzzled: had this been done out of ignorance or out of a desire to “claim credit for an idea which was not novel?”²³ Meath’s barb is an example of high-minded jealousy over ideas Booth adopted without giving due credit. Booth often found that professional clergymen, labor union leaders, social workers and philanthropists were his most ardent foes in their vested fields of religion and social reform. They resented his instinct for conscripting ideas from any source that might save his Army from extinction and aid the poor.²⁴

* * * *

These three men: Count Rumford; E. T. Craig, and the Earl of Meath; were ideologists whom William Booth acknowledged in *Darkest England and the Way Out* as sources for the Salvation Army’s social service program. Booth took these ideas from the hands of “social” Salvationists, who had found them in secular sources, without acknowledging any debts. After returning to England from New York in 1887, Frank Smith had gathered social reform information from British and European sources. In October 1890, with the aid of Smith, Suzie Swift, and W. T. Stead, Booth published the ideas in a scheme that drew praise from social leaders in labor, government, religion, and professional social services.

There were also critics. T. H. Huxley did not approve of state-supported social reform by a practitioner of “corybantic Christianity,” and the Charity Organization Society’s Charles Loch did not welcome “unscientific”

approaches to social service.²⁵ Undaunted by critics, in 1890 Booth and Smith put the plan into effect. While the scheme's last two elements, the farm and overseas colonies, lasted only until 1906 in their designed form, urban workshops continue to be a major element of Salvation Army social services in the late twentieth century. More important, turning the Army from a singular emphasis on evangelism to an equal or greater emphasis on social services is the result of these reform ideas and the Salvationists and others who became their conduit from Count Rumford, E. T. Craig, the Earl of Meath, and others, to the mind of Wesleyan revivalist William Booth.

NOTES

1Victor Bailey, *"In Darkest England and the Way Out: The Salvation Army, Social Reform and the Labour Movement, 1885-1910," International Review of Social History*, 29, 1984, p. 155.

2Frederick Coutts, *Bread for My Neighbour: An Appreciation of the Social Action and Influence of William Booth* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978), pp. 1118, a Salvation Army general, struck out at secular historians who neglected *Darkest England* because, he argued, William Booth: 1) was "unashamedly religious"; 2) had "academic limitations"; and 3) they claim, "was trying to shore up his failing evangelical efforts." Neglect has not been as great since Coutt's chiding. See Victor Bailey's sympathetic study *"In Darkest England and the Way Out: The Salvation Army, Social Reform and the Labour Movement, 1885-1910," International Review of Social History*, 1984, pp. 133-171. Bailey argues that Booth was in "synch" with labor movement ideas of social welfare, and on the issue of social control, acted as "an expression of independent workingclass cultural development, and not as an agency of middleclass domination." p. 134 However, Bailey agrees with this writer that "The stable centers of Salvationism were thus to be found in the solid working-class communities of London, not in the poorer quarters of Bethnal Green or Whitechapel, where the Army was not conspicuously successful," and quotes Bramwell Booth to support this conclusion. p. 141

3Coutts, pp. 2229; Roger J. Green, "O Boundless Salvation: William Booth's Theology of Redemption," forthcoming in *Christian History*, 1990 provides an excellent study of Booth's urban, Wesleyan, and post-millennial perspectives. Green defines the Booths' postmillennialism as their belief that "the Army would usher in a thousand-year reign of Christianity in this world a perfect society, after which Christ would return." William Booth, "The Millennium; or, The Ultimate Triumph of Salvation Army Principles," *All the World*, 6, August 1890, p. 342. William Booth had expressed the view that his Army would bring in the millennium as early as 13 December 1884. See "The General's Letter," *War Cry* (London), 13 December 1884, p.2. George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 44, 104, 178, supports the notion that Methodists leaned toward practical and postmillennialist emphases.

4Andrew Mearns, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London* (London: J. Clarke, 1883). William Booth's response was quoted in the *War Cry* from the Winsford and Middlewich Guardian, 16 February 1884. See similar Salvationist responses: "London Division," *War Cry*, 29 September 1883, p. 2; "Our All Night," *War Cry*, 7 November 1883, p. 2; "Funeral of Sister Mrs. Billups at Cardiff," *South Wales Daily News* quoted in the *War Cry*, 1 December 1883, p. 1; Staff Captain Ewens, "The Salvation Army's Reply to the Bitter Cry of Outcast London," *War Cry*, 25 December 1883; and Catherine Booth, "Brighton," *War Cry*, 2 February 1884, p. 2.

5This "conversion" is not clearly placed in time or locale by his biographers. Neither is his experience of "sanctification," the second work of grace which Wesleyans point to in their spiritual testimonies.

6Norman H. Murdoch and Howard F. McMains, "The Salvation Army Disturbances," *Queen City Heritage*, 45, Summer 1987, pp. 3139. Such attacks occurred in numerous cities. Victor Bailey, "Salvation Army Riots, the 'Skeleton Army' and Legal Authority in the Provincial Town," in A. P. Donajrodzki, ed., *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain*, 1977, p. 236, deals with this phenomenon of riots from a legal aspect.

7*War Cry*, 12 January 1889, p. 9; and 19 January 1889, p. 5. The Rev. Llewellyn Davies' attack in *The Times*, Christmas 1888, noted the Army's lack of success among the poor. Ellen Pash, "A Unique Failure," *All the World*, January-May 1890, defended the Army. Hugh McLeod, *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1974), pp.60, 89; Paul Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour, the Struggle for London, 1885-1914* (London: Routledge, 1967), p. 18.

8*War Cry*, 26 January and 13 April 1889.

9Norman H. Murdoch, "Salvationist-Socialist Frank Smith: Father of Salvation Army Social Work," Salvation Army Historical Society, September 1978; E. I. Champness, Frank Smith, *M. P.: Pioneer and Modern Mystic* (London: Whitefriars, 1942); Keir Hardie, "Frank Smith, L.C.C.," *The Labour Prophet*, September 1894, 113; "The London Major Frank Smith's Account of Himself," *War Cry*, 21 September 1882, 1; Frank Smith, "Sociology," *War Cry*, 30 August, 13, 27 September, 1, and 29 November 1890. For an excellent recent study of the Army's relationship with contemporary social reform ideas and movements of the 1885-1910 period, see Victor Bailey's article cited above.

10J. F. C. Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969); Dennis Hardy, *Alternative Communities in Nineteenth Century England* (London: Longman, 1979); W. H. G. Armytage, *Heavens Below* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961), discuss communal interests of the nineteenth century.

11Suzie Forest Swift, a Vassar graduate and a Salvation Army brigadier by 1896, left the Army to become a Dominican nun. On Stead's contribution see Frederick Whyte, *The Life of W. T. Stead* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1925), vol. 2, p. 13.

12See the discussion of the Salvation Army's 1880's decline in endnote #4, and in Norman H. Murdoch, *The Salvation Army: An Anglo-American Revivalist Social Mission* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1985), chapters 5 and 8.

13For studies of the Maiden Tribute crusade and the Armstrong Case that followed it see: Ann Stafford, *The Age of Consent* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1964); Madge Unsworth, *Maiden Tribute* (London: Salvationist Publishing, 1949); Frederick Coutts, *No Discharge in This War* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1974), 10212. Rebecca Jarrett, unpublished autobiography; "Babylon: the *Pall Mall Gazette* and Salvation Army on Corruption, Cruelties, and Crime of London," July 1885, probably by George Scott Rail ton, Salvation Army Archives, London; *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *War Cry*, July 1885.

14Methodist Hugh Price Hughes and Congregationalist J. B. Paton were two evangelical social reformers with whom Booth was thoroughly acquainted.

15Norman H. Murdoch, "The Salvation Army and the Church of England, 1882-1883," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, 55, March 1986, pp. 3155.

16George E. Ellis, *Memoir of Sir Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford*, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1876); W. J. Sparrow, *Count Rumford of Woburn, Mass.* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1964); Sanborn C. Brown, *Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1979). Earl of Meath, *Social Arrows* (London: Longmans, Green, 1886); *Prosperity or Pauperism* (London: Longmans, Green, 1888). E. T. Craig, *History of Ralahine and Cooperative Farming* (London: Trubner, 1882); *Competitive Society Illustrated* (London: W. Reeves, 1880).

17William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (London: Charles Knight, 1970: 1890 orig.), xviii-xxii. Rumford was an American who was a British loyalist. See "Carlyle on the Social Obligations of the Nation Forty Five Years Ago," *Darkest England* Appendix, xxviii.

18"Ralahine," in *Darkest England*, Appendix, xxiii-xxiv. For recent work on Craig see Vincent Geoghegan, *Ralahine: Ireland's Lost Utopia*, New Lanark, Scotland: New Lanark Conservation Trust, 1988; Gillian Darley, *Villages of Vision* (London: Architectural Press, 1975), 84f, 105.

19*The Times*, 17 January 1889. *War Cry*, 26 January 1888, p. 3; 16 February 1888, p. 6; 25 February 1888, p. 8.

20Reginald Brabazon (Meath), *Social Arrows*, 1886, pp. 112, 120f, 133, 153, 157, 185, 189, 220f, 233ff, indicates concern for careful planning and for British imperial interests later reflected in Booth's scheme.

21Earl of Meath, *Brabazon Potpourri* (London: Hutchinson, 1928). In 1884 Meath did not include the Salvation Army on a list of charitable organizations that deserved support of "men of leisure." See Murdoch, "The Salvation Army and the Church of England," pp. 3155, for a discussion of this Church Army-Salvation Army rivalry. Also see: Edgar Rowan, *Wilson Carlisle*

and the Church Army (3rd edn.; London: Church Army Bookroom, 1928), pp. 126-132; Robert Sandall, *History of the Salvation Army, 1878-1896* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1947), pp. 105ff; Sidney Dark, *Seven Archbishops* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1944), p. 31.

22 Meath also served as Chairman of the County Council Parks Committee of the London County Council. Frank Smith was also a L.C.C. member at the time *23 Brabazon Potpourri*, p. 269.

24 This complaint from Meath may lend credence to Victor Bailey's contention that the Salvation Army represented, in this period, an attempt by the working-class to organize themselves for their own improvement. If so, the Church Army represented a middle-class attempt to control the working class masses. Bailey, "*In Darkest England*," pp. 133-34.

25 T. H. Huxley, *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays* (New York: D. Appleton, 1898). On Charles Loch, see Paul Thompson, *Socialists, Liberals and Labour, The Struggle for London, 1865-1914* (London: Routledge, 1967), pp. 91-99. See Murdoch, *The Salvation Army*, chapter 9, on "Darkest England." In 1901, the Army began an emigration program which, by 1938, had transferred 250,000 English emigrants to overseas dominions. This replaced the overseas colony idea. E. H. McKinley, *Somebody's Brother: A History of The Salvation Army Men's Social Service Department, 1891-1985* (Lewiston, ME: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), is an excellent study of the Army's urban workshop program in the United States.

THE EMBOURGEISEMENT OF THE FREE METHODIST ETHOS¹

by
Robert Walter Wall

I

From its first publication in 1860, the *Discipline (D) of the Free Methodist Church(FM)* has documented a codified history of the denomination. Each subsequent edition of the D, generally published immediately following a quadrennial General Conference, includes a variety of theological and ethical, constitutional and denominational changes effected by vote at that particular General Conference. In this way, the D performs a critical governing role in the church by transmitting its constitutive creeds and by providing its constituents with a normative and current self-definition.

The purpose of this study is to provide a diachronic analysis of a specific element within the D: the code of rules which guides the church's internal and external conduct, that which is reflective, if not formative of the church's ethos. Although such a study could well benefit from a comparison with other denominational disciplines, especially those from sister traditions and with longer histories than the FM D, our study will deal only with that D and its particular rules for Christian conduct. On that basis we will attempt to provide a modest commentary on FM's *social history*. Our assumption is that such codes establish symbolic boundaries, between covenanters and between church and society, which distinguish the ethos of a FM society within the larger social order. In this sense, then, our diachronic study will attempt at the very least to document how those boundaries have been redrawn. Of course, the more difficult task is to construct sociological typologies which explain why a particular community's moral boundaries are redrawn in a particular manner at a particular moment of its history.

Before introducing a sociological construct appropriate to this study, we want to insist on the metaethical importance of the D *as a theological document*. It was Ernst Troeltsch who first traced the formative importance of theological concepts on the ways in which a religious group related to a larger society. Because moral codes are framed by a particular theo-logic, the moral

boundaries which they establish around and within a religious community are rendered coherent by the theological convictions of that community. (Troeltsch, 1931) The function of the D is to “wrap” its various codes in a way which gives them ecclesial *and* societal meaning.

The importance of this point was made clear again to me at our most recent General Conference, held on the Seattle Pacific University campus this summer. Not a few delegations expressed concern about the church’s reputation for and experience with legalism. No one will deny that legalism is “bad news” for a people of “good news.” However, the focus of their concern was the code: perhaps the church should delete the code in order to end its legalism. Beyond its superficial analysis of the problem, the proposed solution actually betrays the theological consensus which founded FM. Sharply put, those who advance such a solution fail to understand the D’s code of Christian conduct in its normative theological context.

In this regard, let me make two brief observations to establish a theological context to make meaning of the D’s code of Christian conduct. First, a *macroscopic* observation. All of the sections which make up the D, whether theological and ethical or practical and political, are prefaced by a historical summary of FM roots. The summary has expanded and its rhetoric softened over the years, itself, an intriguing topic for analysis. Yet, from its first edition, in 1860, to the current one, the D has contained an apologetic argot.² The critical memory of the point of origin, transmitted in the introduction to the D, narrates the expulsion of several ministers and members from the Methodist Episcopal Church Genesee Annual Conference, for seeking to reform a denomination which failed to adhere to the “basic principles of Methodism, especially to the doctrine and experience of entire sanctification.” From its beginning, then, FM has been defined by a prophetic impulse, a reactionary and deviant tendency which views itself as tradition-bearer and reformer of the larger group gone astray.

Moral and theological codes are very important to such movements for a constitutive reason: they provide religious boundaries which distinguish the remnant from the rest of Israel. They help define and reorder the “true” tradition so that those who are true to the faith will be kept within the prescribed borders. In this way, the code performs a conservative role: the identity of the community is properly formed so as to inform the next generation.

Now, to a more *microscopic* observation about the moral code which confirms the larger point. The D is structured in an intentioned way. Reform is given form in order to perpetuate the movement’s *raison d’être*. Discrete parts are intentionally fitted together into a coherent whole so that D reflects in its very *Gattung* the movement’s theologic and moral calculus. To understand the intent of the code of Christian conduct, then, requires us to understand the significance of its location in a specific place within a specific part of the whole D.³

Accordingly, it is critical to locate the roles for Christian conduct in their normative context. Consistently with the past, this code is currently found in the second section, sandwiched between two other codes, which together constitute the normative definition of the “Christian Life.” On the one hand stands a code of theological convictions which describes “Christian experience” while on the other hand stands a code which stipulates the practices

of a “Christian community.” These three ingredients of the “Christian Life” are logically and deliberately related to each other by this sequence. In this light, we may understand the “Christian Life” to consist of a particular religious experience of God’s salvation, which is evidenced by a particular moral vision; this, in turn, leads to the formation of a particular religious community of those who bear the behavioral marks of a common religious experience. This particular structure indicates the importance of the moral code as that which bears testimony to a religious experience, which experience itself provides evidence of saving faith; it is also a particular morality which functions as the test of community.

More importantly, the D’s formulas for Christian living are centered by the very doctrine which gives the tradition its theological distinctiveness: entire sanctification. What FM sought to protect at its beginning is a particular teaching of God’s salvation by which good works are the testimony of present salvation and the condition of final salvation. In sum, justifying grace, conditioned by faith, brings one into covenant with God; and sanctifying grace, conditioned by faithfulness, keeps one in covenant with God. The fruit of true repentance, which the code describes (not prescribes), documents the experience of sanctifying grace. In this way, the D’s codification of good works keeps the idea of sanctification from abstraction; the code retains the doctrine as a concrete experience, decisive to the community’s unique identity within and contribution to the church catholic. In this sense, the code provides explanatory power for the holiness tradition, not to bring it to collapse under the awful weight of judgmentalism and legalism, but to impel it to assert that God’s grace which justifies the believing community also sanctifies it to bear witness to God’s transforming love in the world.

A caveat: At least at an informal, oral level, the discussion about rules now taking place within FM threatens to shift its formative theological paradigm from one which is centered by sanctification to one which is centered by justification. From the perspective of justification, codes of Christian conduct may be viewed as preventing people from getting into a right relationship with God. Yet, FM belongs to a theological trajectory which has always been more concerned about staying in a loving relationship with God and with neighbor than with getting in. An ethics of sanctification is vitally concerned about how the believer continues to respond to God’s grace in the world.

While we would certainly recognize the dangers inherent in the latter theological orientation, we also recognize its vital importance within the church catholic. Thus, to change the place of the code within the D, as some FM would do, or to alter it without proper attention to the description of Christian experience which precedes it and the description of Christian community which follows it, is to erode or even erase the religious heritage which the founding fathers and mothers of FM sought to preserve. (Wall 1987a, 57-60).

II

Our next task is to construct a sociological typology in fundamental continuity with the D’s theological calculus.⁴ Only then do we possess an intellectual construct with the explanatory power to analyze the D’s code of Christian conduct. In doing so, we are less concerned with organizational patterns than

with the religious orientation of the organization's relationship to the surrounding social order. In this regard, our work will proceed from two assumptions. First, the orthodoxy of sanctification will necessarily result in a particular kind of orthopraxy. It will be our second assumption that the D's rules establish those symbolic boundaries which measure the community's adherence to its stipulated orthodoxy.

The notions of consecration and sanctification are closely related in the D's definition of Christian experience, thereby forging the foundation of a sectarian orientation toward self as well as toward society. In fact, according to the D, it is of the very essence of the Christian Life that God's sanctifying grace will be evidenced by self-denial and by social dissent, the two basic types of sectarian orientation. Self-denial provides *personal* evidence of sanctification, whereas social dissent provides *public* evidence of the same redemptive reality. We are not surprised, therefore, that the D codifies boundaries which tend to separate the Christian community as a uniquely moral society from the worldiness of the surrounding social order.

At least in terms of the moral boundaries drawn to guide personal conduct, members of the FM community share the same spirit of renunciation which belongs to those communions whose piety is organized by the orthodoxy of sanctification (e.g., Anabaptists, Quakers, Pentecostals). There is considerable intolerance among these groups for those vices and amusements which are thought to challenge the principle of self-denial and its corollary, self-control. Thus, for Wesleyans, the central moral issue is not the idolatry of "good works," as it is within Reformed circles who follow a theology organized by the teaching of justification by faith alone. Logically, as these circles see it, to elevate the imperative of good works contradicts the primacy of faith in God's justifying grace. Within Wesleyan communions, however, the orthodoxy of sanctification demands *faithfulness* alone, and rejection of the idolatry of self-Selfishness is the contradiction of obedience which effects God's sanctifying grace.

In sum, the typology of self renunciation characterizes at least the personal dimension of a sectarian sociological construct in the FM D. The D's rules document the believer's consecration and measure the extent to which God's sanctifying grace has empowered the believer for witness and service. Whatever is worldly threatens to contaminate the self. From a sociological perspective these codified lines are inherently critical to the identity of those who belong to a Christian community which exists in contrast to the mores of the social order. Only in contraposition can the individual believer find unique legitimacy as a witness to God.

A sectarian orientation toward society constitutes an expression of social dissent as well. Historically, sectarian movements have emerged among those who champion the classes which are marginalized by society's power structures and privileged elites. Such socio-religious movements can be subdivided into two, seemingly opposite, kinds of hostile responses toward the society's institutions and their power structures: disengagement from or disinterest in them (e.g., the "passive" hostility of Amish, Mennonites), or engagement against them (e.g., Sojourners Community, liberation theology). FM, a community founded out of class protest and formed by a spirit of abolition, clearly belongs to the second group. Because of its early history, the definition of the Christian community's relationship with the surrounding society was

actively negative and confrontive. Especially at the point of origin, the D envisions this type of sectarian orientation. Thus, while the spirit of personal renunciation forms the community's moral boundaries of personal existence *another spirit, one of abolition, forms its moral boundaries of public existence.*

The typologies of renunciation and abolition, in that they reflect a common theological program, are mutually coherent. A concern for self-denial in the personal sphere is roughly equivalent to a concern for those who are denied their selfhood in the public sphere. In fact, the freedom to make a choice of self-denial, the essential evidence of sanctifying grace, requires that a person be free to do so. Thus, abolition becomes the necessary condition of renunciation, which in turn is the necessary condition of final justification.

Social constructions must also include developmental typologies as well. Moral boundaries change because the orientations of religious groups to society change. Such changes are bound to occur since no religious group can resist the basic tension between the morality of the group, which is formed by religious authorities, and the morality of the culture, which is formed by secular authorities. Typically, the dialectic between a sectarian religious orientation and a secular world, especially during the twentieth century, will produce a movement toward a denominational orientation, i.e., an orientation less at odds with societal norms and values.

Several possible variables may modify this type of development. For instance, the extent of the social engagement of a particular group will determine the extent of its social accommodation. In matters of the personal morality formed by the spirit of renunciation, the D reflects a greater resistance to the accommodation of popular definitions of right and wrong. In the case of the community's public witness, however, where its abolitionist spirit once excited a vital engagement against society that changed it, the D suggests greater accommodation with society as the spirit of abolition has become less intense and urgent over the years. Indeed, public dissent in any case is difficult to maintain in the face of conflict with other social entities, religious and secular, who dislike and distrust sectarian intolerance and claims of unique legitimacy.

To the extent that such changes are found in the D's definition of Christian conduct, we are able to discern the extent to which FM has compromised its sectarian moral vision for a denominational one. Our sense is that its current definition of the personal morality is considerably more sectarian than its social witness, whose vision of class protest has been eroded by *embour geoisement*.

III

We are now prepared to describe the changes in the D's code of Christian conduct with this question in mind: has FM maintained moral boundaries consistent with the orthodoxy of entire (esp. inner) sanctification and the sectarian vision it shapes? For the purposes of this discussion, we have divided the rules according to the two typologies introduced above: renunciation, which sets the internal boundaries, and abolition, which establishes the external boundaries. (While we would suggest a third typology to define the terms of the community's relationship with God, we will not treat it as a discrete category in this study but as integrated with the other two.)

The Spirit of Renunciation

The two characteristics of the spirit of renunciation, which are consistently stipulated by the D, are simplicity and temperance. We will treat only these two although we may assume that other specified expectations regarding ethical behavior were shaped by the OT Decalogue and the NT vice lists, or by the familiar prohibitions of the conservative Protestant subculture, which promoted a kind of “moral asceticism” consistent with the D’s codified “spirit of renunciation.” In this regard, we note in passing that in 1979 the D added a rule regarding *homosexuality* (D 1979, par. 330) and another regarding *pornography* in 1985 (D 1985, par. 335). Certainly, neither is at odds with a conservative ethos. Especially the statement about *pornography*, which describes its corrosive, inward effects, follows the D’s deeper “theologic”: that Christian conduct results from inward transformation. Accordingly, pornography’s threat is to the inner self. However, neither rule reflects the historic interest of FM in self-denial, which is drawn along socioeconomic lines rather than from an interest in drafting codes of sexual vice. Our own hunch is that these recent additions reflect FM rapprochement with the evangelical mainstream, which has always been more inclined to codify sexual mores than FM has been. (Hunter 1987, 60)

An earlier and more complex illustration of this same point is the rule on *public schools*. It was added in 1960 to prohibit certain worldly amusements, specifically dancing, even though it was already waning as one of fundamentalism’s most important symbolic moral boundaries. (D 1960, par.85.1) Curiously, this category has since become the dumping grounds for other fundamentalist interests, such as the teaching of evolution, added in 1979 (D 1979, par. 337), and the polemics of parental responsibility over public schools, which was added in 1974. (D 1974, par. 336) It was in 1974, that participation in school dances was demoted and absorbed into the general classification of assignments and activities which conflicted with the mores of denomination. While it could be argued that these prohibitions are consistent with the D’s historic concern for personal modesty, which is an evidence of inner sanctification, clearly the moral boundaries have been redrawn to conform to moral interests of the wider conservative constituency.

There are other indicators, however, which suggest that FM is struggling to maintain its historic commitment to simplicity. For example, in 1985 a rule prohibiting *gambling* was added. (D 1985, par. 336.1) This prohibition is no doubt a response to the growing popularity of lotteries and betting in the general society; but the lines are drawn in ways appropriate to the D definition of Christian conduct. Accordingly, the evil of gambling is its exploitation of the poor. Even more critically, gambling indicates the greed of the materialistic social order and contradicts faith in the regnant God. The result is an idolatry of self which ruins honest work and leads to tragic addiction evidence of the lack of self-denial and so of sanctifying grace.

This same concern for the idolatry of self is reflected in the new statement on *false worship*, also added in 1985. (D 1985, par.320) To worship God is to abstain from the worship of “things, pleasures, and self.” That is, the spirit of renunciation forms the attitude which in turn promotes worship of God, which is the very prerequisite of sanctification.

A slight change in the rule regarding *stewardship of possessions* is significant. On the one hand, the rule reflects the transformation, if not the erosion, of the historic FM view on simplicity. The original statement concerning private property prohibits “the laying up of treasure on earth.” (D 1860, sec. 2.[4]) This Biblical formula, understood within the code, could imply that the middle class value of private ownership should be opposed. Of course, some FM of earlier generations applied it in this way. Especially important, however, is the rhetoric of personal rights used in the 1974 and 1979 editions: “The Scriptures teach the right and responsibility of private ownership.” (D 1974, par.33)~ This statement in effect repudiates the spirit of renunciation: a code cannot transmit a definition of conduct centered by the imperative of self denial and speak of personal rights at the same time. While in our view, this rule qualifies the historic commitment to economic simplicity, the 1985 substitution of “privilege” for “right” represents an important attempt to recover the original moral vision of the FM (D 1985, par. 336)

The close relationship between self denial and self control in the D’s definition of simplicity is indicated from the beginning by its call for “diligence and frugality.” (D 1860, sec. 2.[5]) In a sense, the addition in 1985 of the rule governing *discipline of the body* attempts to clarify these two as interdependent. What is striking about the rule is that it draws borders around the body not in terms of the classic spiritual disciplines, but in terms of “the pleasures of this world.” (D 1985, par.335.3) Self-denial is not defined in theocentric ways, but by an inner-world asceticism in line with the fundamentalism of an earlier generation. Yet, it makes more sense here than in the orthopraxy of Reformed fundamentalism. Here, self-control gives witness to the Spirit’s presence, who empowers a disciplined life of simple service to others.

Our sense is, then, that in most matters related to a simplified lifestyle, the D’s imperative of self-denial has been retained and clarified. Although certain moral boundaries have been redrawn in accord with FM’s growing alliance with conservative Protestantism, they are resignified in ways different from Reformed Protestantism and consistent with the Wesleyan orthodoxy of entire sanctification. Having said this, it would also seem that other symbols from an earlier period, especially when adapted to the middle class values of private ownership, have been redrawn under pressure of *embourgeoisement*.

The most important traditional symbol of the spirit of renunciation is temperance. The first FM expansion of the Wesleyan rule prohibiting “spirituous liquors” was instituted in 1882. What is striking about its formulation are the two statements which bracket it in the code. On the one hand, the prologue reads as follows: “A spirit of self-denial is indispensable to the Christian character.” (D 1882, sec 7.53) That is, to abstain from “spirituous liquors” is to provide the necessary evidence of selflessness, the byproduct of inner sanctification. And yet, on the other hand, the conclusion reads as follows: “We are bound to do all we can to prohibit by law this nefarious traffic” (D 1882, sec 7.5)~ That is, “temperance” is not only a yardstick by which the believer’s spiritual maturity is measured; it has become the rule by which the society’s moral boundaries are legislated as well. The concluding social mandate, reflecting the influence of the Temperance Movement within the church, is earlier justified by this claim: “A large proportion of the crime and

pauperism of the country is caused by strong drink.” (D 1882, sec 7.53) There is a sense in which this socioeconomic justification stems from the church’s identification with the poorer classes, whose wellbeing is most ravaged by alcohol abuse. Renunciation of “strong drink” constitutes proper evidence of personal and public fitness. Indeed, temperance (really, total abstinence) has come to symbolize within FM the interplay between spiritual and social forms of holiness.

The rule on temperance remains unchanged until 1974 (D 1974, par. 331), when its symbolic power is significantly weakened in three ways. (1) Appeal to specific Biblical teaching replaces appeal to self-denial, the fruit of inner sanctification, as the grounds of the rule’s legitimacy. Here is yet more evidence of FM’s rapprochement with mainstream North American evangelicalism, with its paradigm merging pre-millennialist piety and Princetonian (i.e., Reformed) theology (Dayton 1976, 121141; Wall 1987b). (2) The rule draws moral boundaries only for the individual, even speaking of alcoholic beverages as “self-destructive.” The historic concern for society’s poor has been largely abandoned, except as drug abuse intrudes upon middle class values in causing “crime, accidental death, broken homes, and job loss” as studies from “experts” have shown itself a middle class evidence. (3) Finally, the traditional concern for “strong drink” has been collapsed into more recent concerns regarding drugs and tobacco, again, moral boundaries which separate Christian from worldly conduct for most conservative Protestants. Yet, as FM joins the mainstream, the distinctive symbol, temperance, is weakened as a particular feature of its orthopraxy.

There is a sense in which the 1985 revision of the rule attempts to recover, if also to reinterpret, FM’s historic stance. This it does through a prophetic midrash on Mark 12:3031 (D 1985, par.335.2): to love our neighbor now means to abstain from alcoholic beverages. In that “alcohol . . . is damaging to individual, families, and society . . . to abstain from alcoholic beverages is “to make a united social witness to the freedom Christ gives.” Upon closer reading, the “social witness” is to a rather middle class neighborhood. The class awareness of the first FM statement on Temperance has been softened.

Moreover, the effort seems all the more meager when compared to the expansion of the motif of individualism, already introduced in the 1974 D. Now, the statement is introduced not by an appeal to self-denial but to “personal development” which includes psychological, physical, and financial as well as spiritual values, according to the revised rule.⁶ While these modifications seem to suggest that there is little shift in attitudes about drinking alcohol, they also suggest that the historic symbolic significance of the rule for FM has been substantially undermined.

The Spirit of Abolition

Nowhere is the abolitionist *Tendenz* more faithfully fixed and preserved than in the statement on *human rights*, added to the code in 1964. (D 1964 par.85.5) When conservative Christianity had distanced itself from the civil rights movement of the early 60’s as being politically liberal, FM took the remarkable action of affirming the equal worth of all persons and pledged “a determined effort to eliminate the unchristian practice of racial discrimination and injustice.” Even though its further expansion in 1974 shifted the source of authority from tradition (i.e., “The Free Methodist Church pledges

a determined effort”) to Scripture (D 1974, par. 326), it did nothing to soften the rule’s abolitionist spirit. At last here the critical social feature of FM’s founding vision is maintained.

In other spheres, however, the nature of social dissent is modified under the pressures of encroaching *embourgeoisement*. For example, at the point of origin, dress codes established the symbolic boundaries between the Christian community and the socioeconomic mainstream. The community’s identification with the underclass is made clear by discouraging “superfluity of apparel” (D 1860, sec. 1) style of apparel being a symbol even in the ancient world of power (or lack of it) and social status. The erosion of the symbolic purpose of this rule began in 1947 with the deletion of the reading from Wesley’s sermon on dress (D 1947, par.73)no doubt because it had since become a perfunctory ritual if even performed. However, without the Wesley sermon the tradition had lost its proper context for understanding the rule, justifying the legalistic use of the rule while emptying it of its symbolic power.

This peril is realized by 1964, when the code adds the footnote which reinterprets dress as a cultural custom, which can “change from age to age.” (D 1964, par.82) Dress has now completely lost its power as a symbol of dissent against the middle class value of “superfluity,” functioning only as an evidence of one’s social “propriety.” Not surprisingly, then, the rule is eliminated from the code in 1974, and replaced by the statement on *simplicity of life* (D 1974, par.332)a veritable paean to American middle class virtue, which assumes that a “purchased and furnished home” is selected in accord with the principle of simplicity. It is intriguing that the Biblical citations used to justify the stipulated principle are taken from a NT paraenesis of “good Christian citizenship” which bids believers to avoid conflict with the ruling elites of the social order in order to participate more fully in the securities and comforts of the middle class.⁷

The tensions within the sociopolitical realm are different. The rules governing *citizenship* and *militarism* stem from the original prohibition against “fighting . . . and returning evil for evil, or railing for railing.” (D 1860, sec 2.[4]) A sectarian, even pacifistic, sentiment is envisioned by this rule. In 1935, when fascism in Europe was beginning to rekindle American fears of another world war, the code expanded its rule against fighting by relating it specifically to *militarism and war*. The statement lays down a boundary remarkably similar to that of the Peace Churches: militarism and war are “contrary to the spirit of the NT and the teaching of Jesus Christ”; they are “utterly indefensible . . . from humanitarian principles” and it is the “profound conviction that none of our people should be required to enter military training or bear arms”except in the case of “national peril.”

In 1947, following the very war that the 1935 code feared, the code is expanded again to define the exception clause, “national peril,” in this way: It is the church and not the state which defines national perilin that it is the conference secretary who both receives and records the names of conscientious objectors. (D 1947, par.73a.2) In this way, the believer could claim “conscientious objector” status under the aegis of the church in agreement with national law. At the very least, this particular commentary continues the spirit of the founding prohibition against serving as a military combatant.

In 1974, the statement is transformed in such a confusing way that we must conclude that the tradition itself is in jeopardy. (D 1974, par. 335) Per-

haps it is most intelligible only as a conservative response to the “liberal” protest of the Vietnam period. The moral borders of the Christian community are now redefined by the orthodoxy of “the sovereign authority of government” and the orthopraxy of “good citizenship” and national “duty.” (D 1974, par. 335.1) Thus, the person’s conscience no longer functions as the community’s symbol of public dissent; it is now defined as an internal element of the moral apparatus of a good citizen.

The traditional teaching against militarism is retained but severely modified by this new teaching about civil religion. The resultant revision rejects “military aggression” “as an instrument of national policy and strategy,” and instructs the church to call for its abolition “as a means to the settlement of international disputes.” (D 1974, par.335.2) The security of the sovereign nation now centers the church’s response to war and peace; the church is now understood as an institution of the political order and custodian of its myth of national security.

The movement of the sociopolitical boundaries toward the cultural main stream is also indicated by the statement on *Christian citizenship*, first added in 1969 (D 1969, par. 84~ and expanded to its present form in 1974 (D 1974, par. 327). The 1974 revision is important for two reasons: (1) the rhetoric employed is individualistic rather than communal; and (2) the definition of society is positive and participatory rather than adversarial. Now the believer is admonished in a church’s moral code to exercise “his right to vote.” Again, Biblical citations are taken from the institutional paraenesis of the NT, which envisions a sociology of consolidation rather than conflict with the social context. In this sense, the code stipulates behaviors for those interested in joining the sociopolitical mainstream rather than for those engaging in protest from the margins.

Finally, we turn to the borders defining FM’s relationship to other “philanthropic” groups, or *secret societies*. The socio-religious tension in the founding vision was typical of sectarian movements: FM conceived itself to be uniquely legitimate as the carrier if not also caretaker of a uniquely important orthodoxy in a pluralistic world. Institutionalized secrecy symbolized evil and guile; whereas the evidence of sanctification is institutionalized grace. Moreover, disclosure of the religious intentions of a philanthropic association is necessary to knowing whether an alliance is even possible. In this sense, sectarian intolerance defines the limits of a pluralizing tolerance.

Three revisions in the development of this tradition are important to consider. The first, in 1915, expands the code to include teaching on labor unions (D 1915, par. 73) at the time a revolutionary entity in American life. Any association with unionism, understood here as a philanthropic rather than an anti-Christian movement, had to meet two conditions: (1) the abolitionist spirit inclined the church to stand on the side of the working classes; only those unions which sought their betterment without discrimination or coercion were therefore acceptable. (2) The abolitionist spirit was also sectarian and inclined the church to oppose any union which used secret oaths to give itself unique legitimacy over the church. The statement is sociologically significant because it sought to define the church in the workplace in a way which reflected its tensions and the church’s accommodations to it. The labor union was viewed as legitimate to the extent that it shared the church’s spirit of abolition. Unions were simply not uniquely legitimate *in se*.

The second revision, made in 1951 (D 1951, par. 83.3), added an interesting endnote to its rule on secret societies and eliminated the clause on labor unions. Since unions were given national legitimacy by the Taft-Hartley bill in 1947, the church thought it appropriate to give clear expression to their status in the 1951 D, only to have the egalitarian core of its rule stripped away in the 1974 revision. In any case, the “endnote” added in 1951 allowed insurance policies to be retained from competing societies if they were contracted before one had joined the Christian community. Here practical tolerance won out over sectarian intolerance. In fact, the 1099 of invested dollars or of the security of insurance, which this expansion now contradicted, was once the very sort of evidence demanded for entrance into the Christian community.

The final revision, made in 1974 (D 1974, par. 334), is again characterized by a shift away from the corporate character of the community toward a code for personal morality. Accordingly, the principle of “individual rights” (par. 334.1) and the hierarchy of “employer-employee” (par. 334.3) now interpret the workplace. Ironically, such a commentary is justified by appeal to the slave-master legislation of NT code (par. 334.3, 5). The abolitionist *Tendenz* against such hierarchies has now been turned upside down!

More importantly in my view, there is a shift in the definition of secrecy. The concern is now about institutional loyalty and allegiance. Secrecy has come to symbolize a false religion with the potential of confusing an immature believer. In a sense, this revision suggests a retreat back to parochialism and away from the founding understanding that institutionalized secrecy made cooperation difficult.

IV

In concluding this study, let me make two brief and pointed observations, framed by the acute observations made by Max Weber two generations ago. (Weber, 1922) The D reflects the growing bifurcation of private and public worlds within FM. Especially during the last generation, the symbolic boundaries which order private lives are reified while those symbols of public protest against socioeconomic injustice are redrawn in ways which undermine the abolitionist vision of the founding fathers and mothers. Such a bifurcation is evidence of *embourgeoisement*, i.e., the movement of a prophetic community, which stood on society’s margins with its poor and powerless, toward society’s mainstream. This movement demands at least public conformity to the political and economic agendas of its middle class. In this sense, FM has become the very kind of denomination against which it once reacted and which it sought to revive.

Across Wesleyanism, however, there are prophetic voices, empowered by the charisma of revival, trying to be heard: Timothy Smith and Donald Dayton, Paul Bassett and Randy Maddox, and the roll call continues to include newer voices within this Society. These are those who contend that the vision which founded FM is profoundly redemptive and Biblical; its erosion, whether because of social pressure or religious alliance, is bad news and not good news for God’s people.

Weber reminded us that religious movements like FM are dynamic processes, like life itself. Wesleyan movements typically are energized by class protest and are therefore threatened by the forms and forces of *embourgeoisement*.

ment, only to be reformed again by the renewal of an abolitionist spirit. Wesleyan movements are centered as well by notions of personal holiness, typically codified and threatened by legalism and individualism. Because Christian ethics is really theological ethics and behavior follows from and is made coherent by beliefs, my own hunch is that any reform of the tradition will take us back to the orthodoxy of God's sanctifying grace, which we must continue to teach with even greater clarity and conviction. Then, within these theological boundaries, we might be better able to transmit to our children the vision of self-denial and abolition as the hard but requisite responses of Christian community to its various private and public worlds.

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NOTES

1On this topic, I have benefited enormously from the insight and suggestions of my colleagues and friends, Martin Abbott of Seattle Pacific University and Donald W. Dayton of Northern Baptist Theological Seminary. I hope that this paper reflects in some measure their kind benefactions toward me.

2For this point see Paul Livermore's critical rhetorical study, "The Formative Document of a Denomination Aborning The Discipline of the Free Methodist Church (1860)," in *Religious Writings and religious Systems*, vol. 2 (BSR2; J. Neusner, E. Previchs and A. Levine, eds.; Atlanta Scholars Press, 1989), 17779. I am profoundly grateful to Professor Livermore, not only for this splendid essay but for several conversations we had while I was preparing this paper.

3By way of analogy, Peter Zaas has challenged the consensus which holds that the Pauline vice catalogues are preformed constructions and incidental to Paul's epistolary purposes; "Catalogues and Context: I Corinthians 5 and 6," NTS 34 (1988), pp. 62229. Zaas shows that Paul and not "tradition" constructs lists of vices and virtues to make theological points which address his audiences' needs.

4Sociological typologies are intellectual constructs; we do not expect to find in society what we find in the mind. Therefore, the proper role of a "sociological typology" in a study such as this one is to explain rather than to describe a social movement or institution.

5This *Tendenz* is best reflected in the massive 1974 revision of the Codea revision prompted as much by political exigencies surrounding the Free Methodist Church's then-proposed merger with the Wesleyan Church as with its growing infatuation with mainstream evangelicalism.

6The language of "therapy" which enters the Code in 1974 betrays a middle class understanding of authority, with its emphasis on "individual wholeness." Cf. C. Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism* (New York: Norton, 1978), pp. 18286

7Cf Martin Dibelius and Hans Conzelmann, *The Pastoral Epistles* ("Hermeneia"; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), pp. 3941.

JOHN WESLEY AND JONATHAN EDWARDS ON RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

by
Robert Doyle Smith

Introduction

The tone of the eighteenth-century debate between Arminians and Calvinists finds apt description in John Wesley's observation that to say, "This man is an Arminian," was, to some, much the same thing as saying, "This man is a mad dog."¹

While Wesley himself sometimes descended to acrimony, it is noteworthy that he, a leading Arminian of the eighteenth century, believed that there was good reason to edit and publish the works of his contemporary, Jonathan Edwards, Sr., a leading American Calvinist.² He apparently felt constrained to refer to Edwards' *Treatise on Religious Affections* as "a dangerous heap, wherein much wholesome food is mixed with much deadly poison. . .," but he chose to edit it and to make it generally available because it contained "many remarks and admonitions which may be of great use to the children of God."³

In general, he abstracted the materials of Edwards and other Calvinists in an irenic spirit, reflecting his well-known conviction that on the issues of original sin and justification by faith, there is not a "hair's breadth" difference between Wesleyans and Calvinists. More specifically, Wesley displayed his catholic spirit in his ready acknowledgment of Edwards as a brother in Christ and a colleague in the Christian ministry.⁴

The present study analyzes the theology and personal religious experiences of Edwards and Wesley with an underlying concern to answer the question: "What is the relationship between their religious experience and their theological formulations?" We shall proceed by way of examining the responses of each man to two subquestions, as it were: first, "What is the religious experience of the sinner prior to conversion?"; second, "What happens during conversion?" The results of these researches will be followed by

a conclusion in which I will attempt to analyze some of the more striking differences and similarities between the respective responses of the two. The primary documentary basis for the comparison will be the sermons of both.⁵

I. PREPARATION FOR SALVATION

A. Acknowledging Human Sinfulness

Jonathan Edwards argued that we are born naturally blind to the things of God. So, the “natural man” is neither aware of his condition nor able to move toward God.⁶ “Natural man,” he says, “cannot see anything of God’s loveliness, his amiable and glorious grace, or anything which should attract their love; but they may see his terrible greatness to excite their terror.”⁷ So it was that he preached “terror sermons,” sermons designed to awaken sinners to their plight and to move them to flee from the wrath to come.⁸ The most famous of these, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” in which Edwards depicted sinners as spiders hung over the gaping mouth of hell, shaped his popular image.⁹

Edwards himself explains the necessity of the approach through terror. Conversion may occur only as the sinner experiences his or her condemnation. The sinner’s experience of condemnation awakens him or her to the awareness of the need of salvation and to the awareness that salvation comes only through Christ.¹⁰ This, in turn, moves that individual to seek earnestly to “close the call” with God, the phrase being a commonly used metaphor which Edwards and Wesley employed to signify the necessity of seeking for conversion.¹¹ Edwards’ recourse to “terror” is consonant with the pattern of conversion outlined by the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Puritan divines, who believed that an early step in preparation for conversion was humiliation. “Terror” was a means of inducing humiliation!¹²

As a first step in the process, Edwards emphasizes the sinner’s absolute dependence upon the will of a sovereign God. He tells his listeners that God would be quite justified in condemning all to hell because of their sin. It is *only* because of the *grace* of the divinely sovereign will that there is any hope at all.¹³

This emphasis grows out of Edwards’ own conversion experience, which he understood to have taken place only when he turned from his rejection of the idea and reality of God’s absolute sovereignty and election and submitted to it.¹⁴ Oddly enough, however, Edwards’ own conversion experience did not include the step of terror and humiliation.¹⁵

Edwards’ sermon, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” finds a rather striking parallel in Wesley’s sermon, “The Way to the Kingdom” (1746), in which Wesley raises a series of penetrating questions and asserts the divine prerogative.

Art thou thoroughly convinced that thou deservest God’s wrath and everlasting condemnation? Would God do thee any wrong if he now commanded the earth to open and swallow thee up? If thou wert now to go down quick into the pit, into the fire that never shall be quenched? If God hath given thee truly to repent, thou hast a deep sense that these things are so; and that it is of his mere mercy that thou art not consumed, swept away, from the face of the earth.¹⁶

Wesley, as Edwards, believes that we must acknowledge that we are dependent upon God alone for salvation. Wesley's hard words, as those of Edwards, are intended to drive the sinner to just such a saving reliance.¹⁷ As does Edwards, Wesley describes the sinner as one who lives in a spiritual stupor, unaware of true spirituality. Worse, one in this stupor may substitute knowledge about religion, good works, or ritual for repentance and belief in the gospel; and one may believe that one is acting with liberty when, in fact, one is in bondage to sin.¹⁸ So it is that Wesley warns against trusting in our own righteousness. And, with Edwards, he tries to awaken all who will hear to the nature of true religion.

B. Predestination/Election

The doctrine of predestination/election is Edwards' pivotal concept in emphasizing the helplessness of the individual before God.¹⁹ Because God is sovereign; we cannot decide for ourselves whether or when we will be saved.²⁰ Acceptance of God's sovereign freedom to elect leads one to abandon efforts to save oneself.²¹

Edwards challenges the Arminian assertion of human free will as an attack upon the freedom of a sovereign God to accomplish the divine will in a human life.²² He rejects the Arminian understanding that when the Bible speaks of predestination it is speaking of a way or method of salvation and of the order which the various aspects of the process of salvation follow, not of the essence of salvation itself. And he also rejects the Arminian understanding that the atonement secures an opportunity to respond to the grace of God, and that its efficacy, therefore, is not limited solely to the redemption of the elect.²³

Of course, Edwards' own view of the work of God in salvation raises serious questions. Is his doctrine of predestination/election intended to be a *description* of how things are (and have been and will be) or is it intended to be an *explanation* of how God has worked, works and shall work? That is to say, is it a description of effect or an explanation of cause? Edwards admits that God has provided varying levels of accessibility to the gospel. So, for instance, those born in New England are more likely to be saved than those born in Africa. While the African and the New Englander are the same in nature, they differ in opportunity. Still, Edwards recognizes that some in the homes of good Christian New Englanders are unconverted and some in the homes of evil New Englanders are converted,²⁴ and it is precisely that kind of fact, says he, which demonstrates that it is God alone who (which) determines anyone's eternal destiny.²⁵ The Arminian, examining the same phenomenon, would explain it in terms of human freedom to reject or accept the divine call.

Wesley, as most classical Arminians, does understand the problem here, however: that we must not affirm human moral freedom in terms that deny the sovereignty of God and the understanding that salvation is by grace alone. To resolve the issue, Wesley draws upon the Arminian understanding of prevenient grace and the venerable notion of the divine foreknowledge as foils to the idea that, except for the enigma of "common grace," unless grace be soteriologically efficacious it is not gracean idea basic to the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination/election.

Edwards views the understanding of foreknowledge held by Wesley and others as unacceptable because it is, in his opinion, finally dependent upon human merit, i.e., God would elect those whom He foreknows would do good works.²⁶ On this point, Wesley maintains a measure of agreement: he too would reject any understanding of salvation which would base it upon human merit. And, he tempers his insistence that we understand an absolute distinction between foreknowledge and foreordination by appealing to an Augustinian understanding of time as it applies to God. God, standing outside of time, as it were, views history as an eternal present. From that perspective, no event actually precedes another.²⁷ In soteriological terms, no human act precipitates the divine proffering of grace; there is no human merit to incline God to grant saving grace. But Wesley would still insist on human moral freedom at the point of the divine offer of saving grace.

Questions may be raised concerning both Edwards' and Wesley's points of view. Edwards insists that God's sovereignty is absolutely unqualified and unconditional; Wesley would agree, and would insist that human moral freedom is a gift of that sovereignty.²⁸ For Edwards, human moral freedom, since the Fall, has been exercised in absolute contradiction of divine sovereignty and cannot now be exercised in any soteriologically efficacious way. But, the Fall in no way curtailed God's freedom. God is absolutely free, and in soteriological terms this freedom applies especially, and negatively, to any such notions as foreknowledge (as distinct from foreordination) and human merit. Positively, it lies at the heart of Edwards' doctrine of predestination/election.²⁹

Wesley rejects such an understanding of divine freedom, and its expression in the doctrine of predestination/election, for three reasons: logically, it makes God the author of evil; ethically, it makes meaningless the commands and demands of the Scripture; and theologically, it nullifies the Biblical concept of human moral freedom. And here begin the questions: 1. While it may fairly be said that Edwards' acceptance of a Calvinistic doctrine of predestination/election logically predetermines his understanding of religious experience, was that acceptance in fact propaedeutic to his own conversion? In other words: Did Edwards come from Calvinism to conversion, and Wesley from Arminianism to conversion? 2. Or, is the order of things precisely the reverse of that just stated? That is to say: Did Edwards come from conversion to Calvinism; and Wesley from conversion to Arminianism?

Of course, the question whether theology prompts experience or experience prompts theology is, in some sense, a question-begging question. Will the hermeneutical circle be unbroken?

C. Free Grace

We may begin to respond to our question by reflecting on the differing understandings of free grace held by Edwards and Wesley. Edwards used the term to refer to God's provision of saving grace to the elect.³⁰ Wesley, in his sermon, *On Working Out Our Own Salvation* (1785), contended that because of prevenient grace, there was no such person as one in the state of mere nature, a person totally devoid of any divine grace.³¹ On the other hand, Wesley is careful to make it clear that prevenient (or preventing) grace is not a natural faculty but is a gracious and free gift from God.³² This, then, put the concept of human moral freedom in a category of which Edwards' theology knew nothing,—a category foreclosed by Edwards' presuppositions regarding the

nature and definition of divine sovereignty. For Edwards, the term “voluntary,” when applied to human moral activity, means “without restraint,” though one may have been predestined to act in the given way from before the creation of the world.³³ Wesley objects to such a definition by insisting that an individual’s actions cannot be both predetermined and voluntary.³⁴

Wesley was no less committed to a doctrine of absolute divine sovereignty than was Edwards, but unlike Edwards, he insisted that the justice of God would not allow Him to exercise His sovereignty in such a way as would violate human moral freedom, for that freedom is itself a divine gift.³⁵ Nor would the justice of God allow Him to exercise sovereignty in such a way as to temper His call to all to repent and believe the Gospel (e.g., by some sort of election which would leave some without the grace necessary to respond one way or the other), for that call is itself issued from His sovereignty.³⁶ “The sovereignty of God is then never to be brought to supercede his justice.”³⁷

It is certainly important to note here that while Wesley did indeed argue for human moral freedom or “free will,” his primary theological category was free grace. It is finally free, prevenient grace which allows all to have free access to God. We do not, and cannot, come to God by nature.³⁸

In affirming that salvation is solely the work of God in us, Edwards did not intend for his congregations simply to sit passively, awaiting God’s acting. In fact, he believed that one’s response to the call for repentance made a difference in one’s destiny. In this sense, people are responsible for their decisions,³⁹ and salvation depends upon human activity.⁴⁰ Moreover, one’s predestination/election was hereby linked to an experience of conversion.

On the other hand, Edwards rejected any view which seemed to limit the freedom of God to save whomever and whenever He would. So he disapproved the idea that God must save a given person whenever that person is disposed to ask for conversion.⁴¹ He exhorted his congregations to seek conversion, but at the same time he warned them that the search could be a lifelong quest in which one might come to no assurance of salvation.⁴²

In 1738, in two sermons, Edwards had given conflicting responses to the question of whether God must respond to repentance.⁴³ However, by 1746, the issue had shifted from the theological question of the divine response to repentance to the epistemological question of how one may know whether God has favorably received one’s repentance.⁴⁴

In reflecting on the sinner’s condition prior to conversion, Edwards and Wesley show points of both convergence and divergence. They converge in their belief that conversion will occur only as one realizes one’s utter dependence upon God for salvation and responds to the divine offer of saving grace. From this basis, they draw similar conclusions concerning the nature of religious experience at the point of conversion and in consequence of it. The points of divergence are where we would expect them to be: in the discussions of the issues of predestination/election, foreknowledge, and grace.

II. CONVERSION

Given the divergences and convergences, then, what is the relationship between the conversion experiences of Edwards and Wesley and what is the relationship between their respective theologies of conversion? How does the conversion experience of each relate to the Protestant doctrine of justification by faith alone, a doctrine which they hold in common? And, in the case

of each, what is the relationship between his conversion experience, his doctrine of conversion/justification, and his personal religious experience more broadly considered? For example, how does Wesley generalize from his Aldersgate experience? Or, how does Edwards generalize from his conversion experience?

A. Justification

Wesley grounds conversion in the atonement provided by Christ. Justification itself, he defines as pardon or forgiveness of sins.⁴⁵ The believer is freed from the guilt of sin and Christ's righteousness is imputed as the believer "close(s) with Christ." But this "closing" is not solely a human act and is certainly more than intellectual assent to the data of the life of Christ or to soteriological doctrine. It is an act of faith through which one trusts in Christ as Savior. And faith, thus the instrument of conversion, is a gift of God, a free gift of free grace. It is not a creation of the believer.⁴⁶

Wesley sketches his personal pilgrimage in his account of his Aldersgate experience of May 24, 1738.⁴⁷ His record of the event reports that his heart was warmed and that he realized that he did trust in Christ for his salvation. In addition he had an assurance that he had been saved. And, he seems to reflect this experience in his sermons from that period, especially in his understanding of faith.⁴⁸

Yet, we must take into account other reports of his spiritual condition written within a year of Aldersgate. So, for instance, we read in his *Journal* for October 14, 1738, of his considerable spiritual uneasiness and of his belief that he lacked the witness of the Spirit;⁴⁹ and in the entry for January 10, 1739 (assuming that Wesley is quoting himself), we read that he is still "not a Christian."⁵⁰

In fact, Wesley's sermons do not accurately reflect his times of personal spiritual turmoil, especially that of 1738-39. It is noteworthy that in the published sermons neither he nor Edwards uses his own experiences as normative.⁵¹ And yet, it may be quite fair to ask whether Wesley does not reduce his personal experiences to standardized theological expression in his sermons.

Edwards, like Wesley, understands justification as pardon and freedom from the guilt of sin. But in developing his position on the role of faith in justification, he sharply criticizes Arminianism, and, by indirect implication, Wesley. Edwards denies that there is any saving connection between one's obedience to the will of God and one's personal conversion, nor is there any saving connection between the believer's obedience and the perseverance of the saint.⁵² Faith is the instrument of our union with Christ, it even brings us to Christ, but it is not the direct instrument of justification. Rather, it is Christ's perfect obedience, imputed to us, and not our inevitably imperfect obedience, which secures our conversion. Christ's atonement frees us from the penalty of sin, and the perfect obedience of Christ to the will of the Father (especially his submission to the authority of the Father), imputed now to us, secures our reward in heaven. Our own righteousness, ever imperfect, Edwards argues, could never obtain eternal reward.⁵³

Wesley was no less sure than Edwards that no one may attain salvation on the basis of his/her own righteousness. Like Edwards, he recognizes both the fundamental role played in our salvation by Christ's own perfect obedience to the will of the Father and (it goes without saying) the absolutely

critical character of the atonement through Christ's death and resurrection.

Unlike Edwards, however, Wesley does not see the significance of Christ's perfect obedience to the will of the Father to lie in its securing our reward in heaven. Rather, Wesley emphasizes its imputation to the believing sinner in the conversion event.⁵⁴ So it is that Wesley and Edwards agree that the sinner is dependent upon Christ's righteousness for salvation, but their theological expressions of that fact differ considerably.

Edwards, in a personal narrative written in the 1740's, describes several spiritual experiences across the years from his early childhood until his thirty-sixth year (1739). An awakening experienced as a boy, in his own father's congregation, affected him for months. He prayed five times a day in secret and also joined some other boys in prayer in a special booth which they had built in a swamp. Yet, says he, this was not his conversion.⁵⁶ Rather, using a metaphor which he will continue to use to describe experiences of the divine presence which especially affect him, he seems to believe his conversion to have begun with several encounters which caused a "sweet burning" in his heart. And the critical moment of conversion appears to have come during a period of contemplation in which his mind was overtaken by a ". . . sweet. . . sense of the glorious *majesty* and *grace* of God."

Edwards often describes the experiencing of God's presence in terms of "sense" or "sensing,"⁵⁶ but not always. In describing the renewal of his baptismal covenant (January 12, 1723), he emphasizes the role of his will and of his having made a decision rather than speaking of a sense of the divine presence.⁵⁷

I have been to God this morning, and told him that I gave myself wholly to him.... That I did receive the blessed Spirit as my teacher, sanctifier, and only comforter; and cherish all his motions to enlighten, purify, confirm, comfort and assist me. This I have done. And I pray God, for the sake of Christ, to look upon it as a self-dedication and to receive me now as entirely his own, and deal with me in all respects as such.⁵⁸

Wesley, like Edwards, wrote a personal narrative of his spiritual pilgrimage, including its salient points in his account of Aldersgate.⁵⁹ But in writing of significant spiritual events prior to Aldersgate, Wesley described a set of religious experiences quite different from that of Edwards. Edwards grew up under revivalist preaching, that of his father, Timothy, and his maternal grandfather, Solomon Stoddard; Wesley grew up under the spiritual guidance and nurture of an Anglican mother.⁶⁰ Wesley did not think in terms of conversion nor seek a conversion experience until he was in his mid-thirties.

B. Sanctification

Wesley believed that the great privilege of the converted is that they need not sin. Justification is more than simple pardon. It brings with it the new birth, and new birth involves the initial phase of sanctification. Technically speaking, justification has to do with freedom from the guilt of sin, sanctification with freedom from the dominion of sin.⁶¹ But this difference does not allow the implication that the justified believer sins while the sanctified believer does not. Wesley understands the demand upon the believer and the

privilege of the believer to be the same at any point in the Christian pilgrimage: the believer is empowered not to sin.⁶²

Wesley exhorts the believer to exercise this gracious gift of freedom from the necessity of sinning in holy living. Full devotion and total obedience to God should mark the Christian life. In fact, says Wesley, while faith is always the condition for persevering, the believer's works provide an index of the status of one's faith.⁶³

"Let us fear sin more than death and hell," Wesley admonishes.⁶⁴ And in that godly fear, the believer clings to Christ.

Edwards speaks of the effect of the new birth in terms both similar to and quite different from those of Wesley:

Though the heart is not perfectly free from all sin, yet a freedom is begun . . . now the power of sin is broken, the strong bands by which it was tied and fastened to the heart are in a great measure loosed, so that corruption has no longer the possession and government of the heart as before.⁶⁶

Edwards believed that conversion comes only when sin is destroyed or "mortified." That is to say, conversion comes when sin loses its control over the life of believer.⁶⁷ Still, "the heart is not perfectly free from all sin." Not in this life. To put Edwards' understanding in Wesleyan terms, the normal Christian life is one in which sin remains but does not reign.⁶⁸

Edwards and Wesley agree that, in the life of the believer, sinning must end and there should be devotion to God. But, unlike Wesley, Edwards disconnects the ideas of righteous living and perseverance, which is to say, perseverance is not dependent upon the believer's not sinning. Perseverance is dependent upon the grace of God alone, through the atonement, and the atonement covers the past, present, and future sins of the elect. So it is that, according to Edwards, believers have no need to pray for forgiveness, as in the Lord's Prayer, for such debts, or trespasses, or sins, as the elect may commit are already covered by the atonement. Obedience, for Edwards, is in no way a condition for either entering into or continuing in the Christian life.⁶⁹

In contrast, Wesley insists that unless one lives a life of holy obedience, one's status as a believer is in peril and one's salvation is at risk. He insists as forcefully as Edwards does that obedience is not the *condition* for acceptance or continuance as a Christian, but he also insists that it is an essential consequence of the uninterrupted working of divine grace in believers. We cannot save ourselves, but we may choose to forfeit our salvation.⁷⁰ Thus, while obedience is not salvific, disobedience is damning.

Edwards qualifies this position somewhat. In *Religious Affections*, Edwards clearly rejects any notion of works as the cost of conversion, but he accepts the idea that works are a necessary *sign* of conversion.⁷¹

The personal religious experiences of Wesley and Edwards seem to reflect better than do their formal theological statements their respective understandings of the role of devotion or obedience in the life of the believer. For example, Wesley points to the increased attention to religious duties that arose out of the spiritual change in his life on May 24, 1738.⁷² And it may be observed that this concern for piety continued throughout his life. As late as 1787, in his sermon, "The More Excellent Way," he speaks of the concern of one on the more excellent path of Christianity to be faithful in private

devotion, moderate and disciplined in eating and conversation, amenable to proper diversions, and careful and charitable in the use of money.⁷³ Edwards expresses himself somewhat differently, turning more to serious, perhaps even excessive, introspection in the development of a long list of roles for living. In Rule 41, he resolves to “ask myself at the end of every day, week, month, and year, wherein I could possibly in any respect have done better.” In Rule 56, he pledges himself “never [to] give over, nor in the least to slacken my fight with my corruption however unsuccessful I may be.”⁷⁴ However, a more mature Edwards, writing the *Religious Affections*, suggests both the level of devotion which he expects of the converted and his frustration that it is not attained with sufficient frequency:

Passing affections easily produce words; and words are cheap; and godliness is more easily feigned in words than in actions Christian practice is a costly laborious thing. The self-denial that is required of Christians, and the narrowness of the way that leads to life, don't consist in words, but in practice. Hypocrites may much more easily be brought to talk like saints, than to act like saints.⁷⁵

Still, in the same context, Edwards cautions that there is no particular sign which absolutely verifies that one is a Christian, for we cannot see into the heart.⁷⁶

No particular sign is the sure evidence that one is a Christian, says Edwards, but he still insists that there is a connection between conversion and good works, and here he breaks with his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, and with the majority within the Puritan tradition. Discontent with the dissonance he observed between the professions of faith made in times of revival and the low level of piety that accompanied them led him to contend that one should expect a devoted walk to attend conversion.⁷⁷

So it is that both Wesley and Edwards insist that the authentically Christian life is marked by “total devotion to God” or “Christian piety.” Genuine believers practice spiritual disciplines; they are religious.

Conclusion

The comparison of the theological formulations and religious experiences of Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley concerning the relationship between conversion and discipline produces two basic observations

First: while the technical theologies of the two men differ greatly, they share very similar understandings of religious experience, and each wants to lead his respective audience into that experience. So it is that Edwards advocates a Calvinistic form of predestination, believes that free grace is limited to the elect, and teaches that growth in grace is the heart of holiness while Wesley affirms only foreknowledge, not foreordination, believes that free grace is offered to all, and that perfection in love is the heart of holiness and yet, the two agree that good works do not save, that the inner must take action to close God's call to him or her, that God saves or converts, that conversion is an experience to be “sensed” or “felt,” and that holy living is an essential evidence or sign of conversion.

Second: both Edwards and Wesley evidence strong interaction between their personal religious experience and their technical theology in ways that

move them toward each other's understanding of the relationship. Edwards was influenced by conversionist preaching throughout his life. His experience of the necessity for holy living as attendant upon conversion was rather traumatic for both him and his congregation, and it led him to adjust his conversionist theology. In contrast, Wesley came to a conversionist theology after being brought up in an environment that thought and functioned in terms of spiritual nurture and growth in grace. His change in theological conviction led him to seek a conversion experience. And it may well be that his apparent spiritual confusion following Aldersgate has its roots in a trauma created by an attempt to reconcile the theological underpinnings of thirty plus years of believing that he had simply grown up Christian with his lately found conversionist theology. Be that as it may, Edwards adjusted his conversionist theology to his newly arrived-at conviction that the converted nurture holy lives, thereby qualifying the significance of the conversionist experience; Wesley refounded his "growth in holiness" theology in a conversion experience, thereby qualifying the significance of nurture or growth in grace.

NOTES

ABBREVIATIONS

- BE *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley*. Frank Baker, editor-in-chief. Nashville: Abingdon, 1984ff (volumes 7, 11, 16, and 25 originally appeared under the general title, *Oxford Edition of the Works of John Wesley*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 197585).
- Jackson *The Works of John Wesley*. Thomas Jackson, ed. (14 vols.; 3d ed.). London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1872; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 195859; Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press of Kansas City, 1979.
- Telford *The Letters of the Rev John Wesley*, A. M. John Telford, ed. 8 vols.; London: Epworth, 1931.
- Bohn *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*. Henry G. Bohn, ed. 10th ed.; 2 vols.; London: Henry G. Bohn, 1845.
- Williams *The Works of President Edwards*. E. Williams and E. Parsons, eds.; 10 vols.; Reprint ed. New York: Burt Franklin, 1968. Original ed.; 8 vols.; Leeds: for James Black, 1806 11; vols. 9 and 10, Edinburgh, n.p., 1847. New ed.; 8 vols.; London: for James Black, 1817.
- Miller *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*. Perry Miller, et al. eds. 9 vols.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957ff.

¹John Wesley, "The Question, 'What is an Arminian?' Answered by a Lover of Free Grace," Jackson 10:358.

2Cf. *op. cit.* 35960, where Wesley contends that the names “Calvinist” and “Arminian” should not be used as derogatory code words. But also see Wesley’s “List of Works Revised and Abridged from Various Authors . . . with the Prefaces by Which They are Accompanied; LXXXVII: A Treatise on Religious Affections; in Three Parts, by the Rev. Jonathan Edwards, A.M. ‘To the Reader,’” 13 (1773), Jackson 14:26970 for Wesley’s opinion of Edwards’ theological logic. See John Wesley, ed., *Christian Library* (30 vols.; London: J. Kershaw, 1827), 30:91376 for Wesley’s abridgments of Edwards’ *Narratiue of the Late Work of God in New England* (30:911403; *Thoughts Concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England* (30:141260); *Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* (30:261307); and *A Treatise on Religious Affections* (30:308376). Also see Charles Rogers, “John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards,” *Duke Divinity Review* 31:1 (Winter, 1966), pp. 2038. For discussions of Wesley’s practice of abstracting the works of Puritan and Calvinist writers, see Gregory S. Clapper, “‘True Religion’ and the Affections: A Study of John Wesley’s Abridgment of Jonathan Edwards’ *Treatise on Religious Affections*,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 19:2 (Fall, 1984), pp. 7789; Gregory Scott Clapper, “John Wesley on Religious Affections: His Views on Experience and Emotion and Their Role in the Christian Life and Theology” (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Emory University, 1985), pp.183204; Robert C. Monk, *John Wesley: His Puritan Heritage* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1966), 3167; and David Lowes Watson, “Justification by Faith and Wesley’s Evangelistic Message,” *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 21:1 and 2 (Spring-Fall, 1986), pp. 723.

3See John Wesley, “The Question, ‘What is an Arminian?’ Answered by a Lover of Free Grace,” Jackson 10:359; and Howe Octavius Thomas, Jr., “John Wesley’s Awareness and Application of the Method of Distinguishing Between Theological Essentials and Theological Opinions,” *Methodist History* 26:2 (January, 1988). DD. 8497.

4In 1745, Wesley, referring to Edwards as a brother in Christ, recommended that he be invited to participate in an ecumenical program of prayer and praise. Cf. Telford 2:3334. For Edwards’ response, cf. Bohn 2:278312. Also see Rogers, *op. cit.*, p. 22. Albert Outler opined that “Edwards, always minus his Calvinism, was a major source of Wesley’s evangelical theology.” Cf. Albert Outler, ed., *John Wesley* in “A Library of Protestant Thought” (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 16.

5See Steven Harper, “Wesley’s Sermons on Spiritual Formation,” *Methodist History* 26:3 (April, 1988), pp. 13138; and John H. Gerstner, *Steps to Salvation: The Evangelistic Message of Jonathan Edwards* (Philadelphia: Westminster, n.d.), pp.9295. Gerstner focuses on Edwards’ sermons and compares his message with that of Wesley.

6Jonathan Edwards, “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” Williams 6:450~4.

7Jonathan Edwards, “Some Thoughts Concerning the Revival,” Miller 4 :390)

8Jonathan Edwards, "Man's Natural Blindness in the Things of Religion," *Sermons on Various Important Subjects* (Northampton: Andrew Wright, 1804), pp. 176178.

9Jonathan Edwards, "God Makes Men Sensible of their Misery before he Reveals his Mercy and Love," Williams 10:157.

10*Ibid* 158159; also, "Hope and Comfort Usually Follow Genuine Humiliation and Repentance," *ibid* 17276.

11 See Jonathan Edwards, "Safety, Fullness, and Sweet Refreshment, to be Found in Christ," *ibid* 427, 431; and John Wesley, "Salvation by Faith," BE 1:121n37. The latter reference notes that such Puritan writers as George Whitefield (1724), Matthew Mead (1661), William Allen (1658), Richard Alleine (1676), William Guthrie (1766), and Thomas Ridgeley (1733) used the phrase.

12See Norman Pettit, *The Heart Prepared: Grace and Conversion in Puritan Life* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), pp. 1821, 86124, 200 205; Frederick Dreyer, "Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley," *American Historical Review* 88:1 (February, 1983), p.20; Bill J. Leonard, "Getting Saved in America: Conversion Event in a Pluralistic Culture," *Review and Expositor* 82 (Winter,1985), pp.113118; David Laurence, "Jonathan Edwards, Solomon Stoddard, and the Preparationist Model of Conversion," *Harvard Theological Review* 72:34 (July-October, 1979), pp. 26674; and David L. Weddle, "The Image of the Self in Jonathan Edwards: A Study of Autobiography and Theology," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 43:1 (March, 1975), p. 73.

13See Jonathan Edwards, "The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners," Williams 6:36670,394; and "The Sole Consideration, that God is God, Sufficient to Still All Objections to His Sovereignty," 6:48587. "When God seems to turn a deaf ear to your cries; when he seems to frown upon you,when he shows mercy to others, your equals, or those who are worse, and who have been seeking a less time than you, be still" (*ibid*, p. 487).

14Jonathan Edwards, "Personal Narrative," in Samuel Hopkins, *The Life and Character of Jonathan Edwards* (Northampton: Andrew Wright, 1804), p. 26. Customarily, the personal reflections collected from Edwards' papers and gathered on pp. 2329 of Hopkins' biography are referred to as Edwards' "Personal Narrative."

15See "Personal Narrative," in Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 25, where Edwards comments, "But yet it never seemed to be proper to express my concern that I had, by the name of Terror...."; also see Bohn 1:1xxiii, where Edwards writes, "The chief thing, that now makes me in any measure to question my good estate, is my not having experienced conversion in those particular steps, wherein the people of New England, and anciently the dissenters of Old England, used to experience. Wherefole, [I am] now resolved, never to leave searching, till I have satisfying found out the very bottom and foundation, the real reason, why they used to be converted in those steps." See Stephen Post, "Disinterested Benevolence: An American Debate Over the Nature of Christian Love," *The Journal of Religious Ethics* 14 (Fall, 1986), p. 353. Post con-

tends that Edwards was critical of the notion of “a willingness to be damned.” Also cf. Laurence, *op. cit.*, pp. 26869, 27477; and Weddle, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

16John Wesley, “The Way to the Kingdom,” BE 1:228.

17See BE 1 :228229; also see John Wesley, “The Lord Our Righteousness,” BE 1:458, and “The Marks of the New Birth,” BE 1:419.

18John Wesley, “The Spirit of Bondage and Adoption,” BE 1:25066.

19Jonathan Edwards, “Therefore Hath He Mercy On Whom He Will Have Mercy, And Whom He Will He Hardeneth,” Williams 10:213.

20”The Justice of God in The Damnation of Sinners,” Williams 6:397.

21Williams 6:378.

22See Williams 6:369 and “God Glorified in the Work of Redemption, By the Greatness of Man’s Dependence upon Him in the Whole of it,” Williams 6:44748. There is a question as to the identity of Edwards’ Arminian enemies. Was he attacking Arminius, Wesley’s Arminianism, or Arminianism in some broad sense? Cú John F. Jamieson, “Jonathan Edwards’ Change of Position on Stoddardeanism,” *Harvard Theological Review* 74:1 (January, 19~1), pp.8182; and J. Steven O’Malley, “Recovering the Vision of Holiness: Wesley’s Epistemic Basis,” *Asbury Theological Journal* 41:1 (Spring, 1986), p. 11.

23See Jonathan Edwards, “Justification by Faith Alone,” Williams 6:255, 264, 311; and “Christians a Chosen Generation, a Royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation, a Peculiar People,” Williams 10:450.

24”Therefore Hath He Mercy On Whom He Will Have Mercy, And Whom He Will He Hardeneth”

25David R. Williams, “Horses, Pigeons and the Therapy of Conversion: A Psychological Reading of Jonathan Edwards’ Theology,” *Harvard Theological Review* 74:4 (October,1981), pp. 33752. Williams sees Edwards’ views of predestination as products of cultural conditioning, which is to say, then, that Edwards is really simply stating that conversion is a form of acculturation.

26”Christians a Chosen Generation, A Royal Priesthood, a Holy Nation, a Peculiar People,” Williams 10:448.

27See John Wesley, “Predestination Calmly Considered,” Jackson 10:210; and”On Predestination,” BE 2:417.

28See Clapper, *ibid*, p. 189, who concludes: “One might say that while Wesley and Edwards agreed about the sovereignty of God, Edwards expressed this sovereignty through his Calvinist doctrines of predestination and the bondage of the will, and Wesley expressed the same thing by emphasizing prevenient grace and the perfecting possibilities of the Spirit.” On the other hand, I see Wesley expressing sovereignty somewhat differently. Wesley links free grace (which would, of course, include prevenient grace~ and sovereignty as equal partners. The sovereign God. therefore. will not choose for the human

being; rather, the sovereign God grants the gift of free will. That is to say, for Wesley, free will is a gift of sovereign grace, not a natural faculty.

29Cf., for instance, Jonathan Edwards, “God Glorified in Man’s Dependence,” Williams 7:149fú

30Jonathan Edwards, “Justification by Faith,” *The Works of President Edwards* (4 vols.; New York: Leavitt and Allen, n.d.) 4:8991.

31John Wesley, “On Working Out Our Own Salvation,” BE 3:207. Also see Rogers, *op. cit.*, p. 35, where he notes that Wesley understood free grace to refer to a sinner’s having a knowledge of good and evil which, in turn, provides that sinner knowledge of his/her own spiritual condition.

32John Wesley, “Predestination Calmly Considered,” Jackson 10:230.

33Jonathan Edwards, *Freedom of the Will* (reprint of Paul Ramsay, ed., New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957; New York: Irvington Publishers, 1982), pp. 1536.

34See John Wesley, “Thoughts Upon Necessity,” Jackson 10:46369; and “A Thought on Necessity,” Jackson 10:479.

35”Predestination Calmly Considered,” Jackson 10:21720. Also see the discussion in Gerstner, *op. cit.*, pp. 9394.

36See the carefully documented discussion of prevenient grace, especially the paragraphs regarding the sovereignty of grace, in Robert S. Chiles, *Theological Transition in American Methodism, 179~1935* (New York, Nashville: Abingdon, 1965), pp. 14853.

37See “Predestination Calmly Considered,” Jackson 10:221.

38See “Predestination Calmly Considered,” Jackson 10:230; “On Working Out Our Own Salvation,” BE 3:207; and “Thoughts Upon God’s Sovereignty,” Jackson 10:362, from whence comes the following quotation: “This implies . . . that he [God] gives them various degrees of understanding, and of knowledge, diversified by numberless circumstances. It is hard to say how far this extends; what an amazing difference there is, as to the means of improvement, between one born and brought up in a pious English family, and one born and bred among the Hottentots. Only we are sure the difference cannot be so great, as to necessitate one to be good, or the other to be evil; to force one into everlasting glory, or the other into everlasting burnings. This cannot be, because it would suppose the character of God as a Creator to interfere with God as a Governor; wherein he does not, cannot possibly, act according to his own mere sovereign will; but, as he has expressly told us, according to the invariable rules both of justice and mercy.”

39See Jonathan Edwards, “The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners,” Williams 6:386.

40See Jonathan Edwards, “Pressing into the Kingdom of God,” Williams 6:334; “Hope and Comfort Usually Follow Genuine Humiliation and Repentance,” Williams 10:198200; “When the Wicked Shall Have Filled up the Meas-

ure of Their Sin, Wrath Will Come Upon Them to the Uttermost,” Williams 6:534; “Great Guilt No Obstacle to the Pardon of the Returning Sinner,” Williams 6:494; and “The Portion of the Righteous,” Williams 10:35355.

41See Jonathan Edwards, “God Makes Men Sensible of Their Misery Before He Reveals His Mercy and Love,” Williams 10:167; “The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners,” Williams 6:378; “The Sole Consideration, that God is God, Sufficient to Still All Objections to His Sovereignty,” Dwight 6:48587; and “Therefore Hath He Mercy on Whom He Will Have Mercy, And Whom He Will He Hardeneth,” Williams 10:213.

42See Jonathan Edwards, “Pressing into the Kingdom of God,” Dwight 6:319, 33132; and “The True Christian’s Life, a Journey towards Heaven,” *Sermons on Various Important Subjects*, p. 367. In the latter, Edwards says, “All those that are converted, are not sure of it, do not know that they shall be always so; and [yet they are] still seeking and serving God with the utmost diligence, in the way to have assurance, and to have it maintained.” See Gerstner, *op. cit.*, p. 95, who concludes that Edwards urged his congregation “to seek to be enabled to believe.” while Wesley preached for decisions.

43See Jonathan Edwards, “Pressing into the Kingdom of God,” Dwight 6:332; “The Justice of God in the Damnation of Sinners,” Dwight 6:386. Also see Robert W. Jenson, *America’s Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 5859.

44Jonathan Edwards, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, edited by John E. Smith (2 vols.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 2:11927. Also see Charles Rogers, *op. cit.*, p. 30, who argues that Edwards focuses on distinguishing true from false religion rather than on reconciling the doctrine of election with the phenomenon of (apparent) backsliding.

45See John Wesley, “Justification by Faith,” BE 1:189; and David Lowes Watson, *op. cit.*, pp. 723.

46John Wesley, “Salvation by Faith,” BE 1:120124. On faith as a gift of grace, cf “An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion,” Jackson 8:56,4849. Cp. Jonathan Edwards, “Justification by Faith Alone,” Dwight 6:218

47John Wesley, *Journal*, BE 25:24250 (24 May 1738).

48See esp. *Journal*, BE 25:24041,24950. Also see “Salvation by Faith,” BE 1:12021.

49See John Wesley, *Journal*, Jackson 1:160163 (14 October 1738); and Telford 1:26265 ~30 October 1738).

50John Wesley, *Journal*, Jackson 1:17072 (4 January 1739).

51See Outler, *op. cit.*, pp. 5051; and Weddle, *op. cit.*, p. 73.

52Jonathan Edwards, “Justification by Faith,” Williams 6:255, 273. For an expanded treatment of Edwards’ understanding of justification by faith, cf. Jenson, *op. cit.*, pp.5364; and Samuel T. Logan, “The Doctrine of Justifi-

cation in the Theology of Jonathan Edwards,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 46 (1984), pp. 2652.

53Jonathan Edwards, “Justification by Faith,” Williams 6:25964; and *ibid.* in *The Works of President Edwards* (4 vols.; New York: Leavitt and Allen, n.d.), 4:90105.

54John Wesley, “The Lord Our Righteousness,” BE 1:459.

55See “Personal Narrative,” in Hopkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 2425; Paul David Johnson, “Jonathan Edwards’ ‘Sweet Conjunction,’” *Early American Literature* 16:3 (Winter, 1981/82), pp. 27177; and Weddle, *op. cit.*, pp. 7377.

56”Personal Narrative,” in Hopkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 26, 28. Both Wesley and Edwards speak of spiritual experience in terms of sensing or of having a sense of something. See James Hooper, “Jonathan Edwards’ Religious Psychology,” *Journal of American History* 69:4 (March, 1983), p. 862; and Dreyer, *op. cit.*, pp. 1518.

57See Jonathan Edwards, “A Divine and Supernatural Light,” in *The Works of President Edwards* (4 vols.; Leavitt and Allen, n.d.) 4:443, where, in a sermon, Edwards treats conversion theologically in the light of his own encounters with God.

58Cf. Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

59John Wesley, *Journal*, BE 25:24250 ~24 May 1738).

60See Leonard, *op. cit.*, p. 123 for a discussion of the impact of nurture and conversion emphasized within the Southern Baptist tradition.

61John Wesley, “The Great Privilege of Those That are Born of God,” BE 1:432.

62See John Wesley, “The Great Privilege of Those That are Born of God,” BE 1:43143; and “On Sin in Believers,” BE 1:320.

63 John Wesley, “The Lord Our Righteousness,” BE 1:46263.

64John Wesley, “The Great Privilege of Those That are Born of God,” BE 1:442.

65John Wesley, “On Working Out Our Own Salvation,” BE 3:20911.

66Jonathan Edwards, “The Pure in Heart Blessed,” Williams 10:374.

67Jonathan Edwards, “The Pure in Heart Blessed,” Williams 10:374; “Ruth’s Resolution,” Dwight 6:35253; and “Hope and Comfort Usually Follow Genuine Humiliation and Repentance,” Williams 10:185.

68John Wesley, “The Repentance of Believers,” BE 1:337.

69Jonathan Edwards, “Justification by Faith,” Williams 6:255, 273.

70John Wesley, *Journal*, BE 25:243 ~24 May 1738); “The New Birth,” BE 2:20001; and “The Lord Our Righteousness,” BE 1:26263.

71See Jonathan Edwards, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*. ed cit., 2:45661. Also see Hooper, op. cit., p. 862; Jamieson, op. cit., pp. 98 100; and Logan, *op. cit.*, pp. 41, 47, who contend that Edwards walks between Arminianism and Antinomianism. Does Wesley walk between Calvinism and Antinomianism?

72John Wesley, *Journal*, BE 25:24247 (24 May 1738).

73John Wesley, "The More Excellent Way," BE 3:26377.

74Cf. Hopkins, op. cit., pp. 7, 9.

75Jonathan Edwards, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, ed cit., 2411

76Jonathan Edwards, op. cit., 2:420.

77Jonathan Edwards, op. cit., 2:45661; and Pettit, op. cit., pp. 20712.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Weapons of Goodwill: The History of the Salvation Army, 1946-1977 by Frederick Coutts. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986, 347 pp. Reviewed by Norman H. Murdoch, Ph.D., Assoc. Professor, History, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Altogether too typical of the genre of “official history,” this seventh volume of the Salvation Army’s in-house annals does little to help historians comprehend the evolution of the Army’s evangelicalism or social services since World War II. Authored by the Army’s eighth General, and covering the administrations of his two predecessors and two successors, this book bears the stifling imprimatur of the Army and the approval of its living generals. The title could have been “the travels and travails of Salvation Army Generals, 1946-1977.” This family digest follows generals as they circumnavigate the globe on visits to Army installations. Possibly the Army family will enjoy the vignettes of Salvationist service at disasters on five continents without the intrusion of analysis. Chronological to a fault, the book condenses accounts from the *War Cry* (the official voice) and Salvationist memoirs, including those of generals Albert Orsborn (1946-54), *The House of My Pilgrimage*; Wilfred Kitching (1954-63), *A Goodly Heritage*; Bernard Watson’s *The 9th General, A Profile of Erik Wickberg* (1969-74); Clarence D. Wiseman (1974-77), *A Burning in My Bones*; and Arnold Brown (1974-81), *The Gate and the Light*; but only hints at an occasional controversy.

Historians will be as dissatisfied with this tome as they have been with earlier efforts in this series, begun in 1946, which represents the only international history of this important movement. When Prof. Howard R. Murphy reviewed volume 4 in this series he accused its author of trying to “vindicate the Army’s leaders rather than explain them,” of being “more interested in being inspirational than in being penetrating,” with “no evidence of either historical perspective or historical curiosity.” (*Victorian Studies*, December 1964, p.185)

In the present case this fault is most obvious in chapters which deal with the 1960’s, a “decade of fermentation” when, as Alec R. Vidler put it, ecclesiastical “havens of stability” encountered “universal restlessness and passion for change and innovation.” (Alec R. Vidler, *The Church in an Age of Revolution*, 1971, p. 296). Although the author, Frederick Coutts, was General in the 1960’s and confronted hot issues in his memoirs: *No Continu-*

ing City (1976) and *In Good Company* (1980), he did not choose to treat them here. Many will ask: where are the controversies over the sacraments (the Army, like the Society of Friends, does not observe them) and the Army's standing as a church; where is the equality of women issue (the Army has always had women clergy, but women challenged the hierarchy over their lack of leadership posts in the 1960's and 1970's); where is the attack on autocratic authority (the Army is as hierarchical as the Roman Catholic Church whose structure Vatican II challenged in 1962-65); where is the uprising of Third World and racial minorities? And where is the Army's frustration over its lack of growth in cities where it began in 1865?

Coutts does take up the problem of the Army's detachment from the working class. He quotes Denis Hunter, who asserted that the Army had "parted company from John Fellow and his family." The Salvationist sought to atone for this "most damaging of all his failures" by celebrating a Year of Industrial Evangelism in 1961 (p. 139). But statistical proof of the Army's failure to reach either the working-poor or the "down-and-out" with its gospel is not produced in this book. Was the Army's prime mode of evangelism, open-air meetings, successful in reaching sinners, or had street meetings become mere rituals? Was the Army's membership and clergy growing? This official treatise does not respond to these essential questions. Could it be that official histories avoid obvious questions when the answers would embarrass the organization?

Coutts personally favored the Army's membership in the World Council of Churches, one of the hottest issues in this period, but he does not discuss why fundamentalist Salvationists opposed that membership and General Arnold Brown terminated the association. Thus for good official reasons, but poor historical reasons, Coutts chose not to expose a basic rift in Army ranks. Still the best work on this and other issues in recent Salvation Army history is Prof. John Coutts' *The Salvationists* (1977). For now John Coutts' work will stand beside his father's official history to provide an understanding of the Army's recent history. A complete critical study of the Salvation Army is yet to be penned.

Truly Ourselves, Truly the Spirit's: Reflections on Life in the Spirit by Laurence W. Wood. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Francis Asbury Press/Zondervan Publishing Co, 1989. 238 pp. Reviewed by Richard S. Taylor, ThD., Professor Emeritus of Theology and Missions, Nazarene Theological Seminary, Kansas City, Missouri.

Eight of these twelve chapters are devoted to specific aspects of the Spirit's ministry in and to the believer, under the headings of Love, Hope, Power, Miracles and Gifts, Truth, Peace, and Assurance. The opening three chapters lay the foundations and erect the structural framework, while the last chapter focuses on "Receiving the Holy Spirit."

This volume could perhaps be called a sequel to Wood's earlier book, *Pentecostal Grace*, in the sense that the basic premises are reaffirmed, and from there greatly elaborated in terms of practical Christian experience. Further-

more, this volume is written on a much more popular level, with numerous illustrations and an obvious effort to make the material understandable to the reader who is not a technically trained theologian.

Yet the book is thoroughly scholarly, sufficiently so to command the intellectual respect of professionals. This scholarly buttressing is seen not only in the text itself but in the very extensive notes. The result is a work midway between the ABC's of simplicity and the XYZ's of difficulty; which means that the readership is still limited. Readers with a college education, and who already have some exposure to the thinkers and ideas introduced, will grasp the discussion more readily. Others should perhaps be gathered into classes for group study under a competent guide. In fact, in proper hands the book could be very useful as a discipling class textbook. It would serve to provide new but thoughtful Christians with a solid grounding in the basic doctrines relating to the soteriological ministry of the Spirit.

The theological premise of the book is that God's design in calling Abraham, Israel, the Prophets, and giving His Son, is that Pentecost might be possible, as in essence the restoration of the Spirit to the full indwelling of the believer's heart, in sanctification, friendship, and fulfillment. The hermeneutical key is that Old Testament history, gathered around the Exodus and the Conquest, provides not only the rib cage for Old Testament theology but even more significantly for New Testament theology as well. The history of Israel prefigured redemption in Christ, to the extent that Exodus and Conquest could almost be seen as the interface of Easter and Pentecost.

The missing link in Old Testament history was the indwelling Spirit; the contrasting fulfillment in the New is the sanctifying Spirit, seen as the fulfillment of "the Promise," promised in the Old and reaffirmed by John the Baptist and Jesus. Thus sanctification becomes the special effect of Pentecost; only indirectly the effect of Calvary. The Atonement provides expiation for sins, thus clearing the way for Pentecost and making the cleansing work of the Spirit possible. The implication is that while forgiveness flows directly from Calvary, holiness flows indirectly. The blood of Christ sanctifies the people (Heb. 13:12) medially rather than immediately. Such are the implications of Wood's discussion; they are not stated explicitly by Wood.

It could be argued that a pivotal passage for Wood's entire development is Galatians 4:4, 6. He comments: "Notice the two sendings. He sent his Son into the world to make us children also; and because we became his children, he sent his Spirit to dwell within us so we would feel true affection for God" (p. 25).

This means that history is very important to Wood. God took time to prepare Israel for Christ, and He takes time, and a sequence of events, to lead us from our personal Exodus to our Jordan crossing into the holiness promised.

This book is reminiscent of Joseph's coat of many colors. However, it is not patchwork, but an intricately woven fabric, including hues and shades from psychology, sociology, history, and philosophy, as well as from Biblical history and Biblical theology. In each chapter the author courageously plunges into the startling ramifications of the immediate subject. Hope, for instance, becomes the occasion for exploring two paths, immortality, and the impact of parents in creating(or stifling) in children the capacity to hope.

Interwoven into the fabric along with the Biblical theology motifs are three psychological strands: our personhood is dependent on relationships; our healthy personhood is dependent on healthy relationships; and healthy relationships become normatively possible only in a fulfilling and primary relationship with the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Human relationships began to go awry when Adam and Eve forfeited their relationship with God the Spirit, their communing Friend. All aberrations since have stemmed from this radical 1099. As has already been noted, Wood believes that God's dealings with the human race through Abraham, the nation Israel, the Prophets, and finally His Son, have had the recovery of this lost relationship as their undeviating objective. In every way God has sought to recover His place in human life not only as Lord and Savior, but as personal Friend.

The primacy of the Spirit's fullness in the believer's heart is shown in this book convincingly and very helpfully by bringing under tribute virtually all the disciplines which bear on the nature and welfare of humanity. Wood shows skillfully how even the detractors of Christianity really support his case, Freud, Fromm, Nietzsche, Bultmann, Maslow, Jung, and Tillich; and draws on the positive insights of Ferre, Kierkegaard and others. With all of these influential thinkers Wood manifests a competent familiarity. Especially telling is his expose of the devastating reductionism of Paul Tillich, who robbed Christian theology of its normative supranatural base and psychologized what was left.

However, while all these thinkers are interacted with, this is done incidentally to the main enterprise, which is the presentation of the completing ministry of the Spirit.

In the chapter "The Spirit of Power" the emphasis is on power *to be*. Wood contrasts the adequacy of the Spirit's power with contemporary illusions of power, including Friedrich Nietzsche's "will to power" (p. 112); and the pervasive reliance today on therapeutic self-help mechanisms. Wood shows how Maslow tries to develop fulfillment ("self-actualizers") but cuts away the Biblical foundations by which his goal becomes possible. He says, "Maslow's description of self-fulfillment is a psychological substitute and secular restatement of the Christian meaning of spiritual formation and sanctification" (p. 116).

In the chapter on "The Spirit of Peace" Wood traces modern process theology, as exemplified by Tillich as well as Whitehead, to ancient Stoicism, which is an attempt to find peace by an absorption into a world-spirit which is void of personality. Stoicism, says Wood, "had no personal God and no history of salvation. Consequently it lacked the one intellectually compelling and emotionally satisfying component in Life, the personal dimension"(p. 160). After showing the emptiness of modern theology in its gropings for peace Wood moves deftly to the Scriptures and points out that the "sabbath rest for the people of God" (Heb. 4:9, RSV) is the rest of heart holiness made possible by the gift of a personal Holy Spirit (p. 169).

A recurrent theme advanced again and again in different contexts, is Wood's conviction that satisfactory parent-child relationships are indispensable to the development of normal personhood, including the child's likelihood of being able to sustain happy relationships with others in adult life, including God. At this point the problem is twofold: the problem of

arrested spiritual development which inhibits the desire to know God as Father; and the converse problem of prevenient grace in overcoming this psychological roadblock.

A question not out of line is whether the theme of early environment is perhaps overworked. Wood almost lets such persons as Tillich (who had an adversarial relationship with his father), off the hook of personal responsibility for the way they turned out and for the directions of their theologies.

The errata were found by this reviewer to be disconcerting. Also some apparent inconsistencies and contradictions could be pointed out here and there. It can be debated, for instance, whether “trust” and “truth” are synonyms, as Wood seems to be implying (pp. 142ff).

In view of Wood’s consistent emphasis on history this reviewer cannot avoid astonishment at his statement (twice, pp. 54, 215) that there is no reason why the two works of grace cannot be received simultaneously. Yet virtually the entire book, in its fundamental arguments and theses, constitutes plenty of “reason.” Wood says: “Baptism accompanied with genuine repentance (Easter) precedes the reception of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost)” (p. 51). Again: “We too must make our journey through the history of salvation” (p. 22; see also pp. 18, 45, 150, 151, *et al*).

Such declarations are far more consistent with the book as a whole than is Wood’s apparent hedging by softening the inherent necessity of two works of grace, experienced distinctly. If growth and maturity require a spiritual history, the components of that history can hardly be skipped. If there is an analogical relationship between personal salvation history and Biblical salvation history, then the element of time is as essential for one as the other. Arriving in Canaan cannot be simultaneous with the Exodus, circumcision must be subsequent to birth, the baptism with the Spirit cannot be telescoped into the birth of the Spirit, Pentecost cannot coalesce into Easter. To concede that Spirit baptism and Spirit birth can be compressed into one is to surrender the concept that stages and crises, involving preparation and appropriation, and hence *time*, are essential to our personal holy history.

In spite of such points of possible debate, this book is a treasure house and is sure to have a useful ministry. It is to be hoped that when reprinted someone will take the trouble to prepare a subject and person index.

Mysticism in the Wesleyan Tradition, by Robert G. Tuttle, Jr., Francis Asbury Press Zondervan Publishing Co. 1989, 204 pages. Reviewed by Wesley D. Tracy, D. Min., S. T. D., Editor, *Herald of Holiness*, Kansas City, Missouri.

One should not consider himself or herself informed on the matter of Wesley and mysticism until he or she has read Tuttle’s careful work *Mysticism in the Wesleyan Tradition*. The work grows out of his Ph.D. studies but has a maturity and timeliness that Professor Tuttle probably could not have given us in 1970 when he did his dissertation at the University of Bristol.

The book is especially helpful to those who have formed their ideas on this matter from the several essays of D. Dunn Wilson. Tuttle insightfully

corrects many of Wilson's assumptions and assertions. He also profitably critiques the work of Wakefield, Workman, Inge, and others who have not lingered long enough over the evidence.

Even the cursory student of Wesley hears a warning tocsin when reading Wesley's invectives against mysticism "set on fire of hell," "wisdom from beneath," "specious snare of the devil," "Satan's fairest device" and then notices that he exalts certain mystics as models for Methodist spirituality. What Tuttle has done for all of us who have groaned over this tension in Wesley, is to sort out for us just what it was that Wesley so despised in mysticism and what it was that became a permanent part of his devotion.

What Wesley damned in mysticism was the reversed *ordo salutis* (sanctification before justification), salvation by works, frequently expressed in the "dark night of the soul" notion, the neglect of the means of grace, the subjectivism of the inner light that led each mystic to create his own "way" with suprascriptural guidance direct from God, the refinement of religion which required a desert solitude rather than active service. These become for Tuttle the dross which Wesley rejected.

Perhaps Tuttle does not adequately deal with another "dross" item in the mystics which Wesley was always having to disclaim. I refer to the idea of self-annihilation so strongly presented even in the edited works of Fenelon, Bourignon, Molinos, and a Kempis. Wesley found himself explaining again and again that this teaching was to be rejected. It was part of the "poison" of which Wesley warned in his various prefaces to mystical works. The modern Holiness Movement has suffered to no small degree by lack of precise guidance on this matter. Wesley's insights on this subject are indeed helpful. Tuttle refers to one or two of Wesley's disclaimers on this subject, but treats them briefly as part of another argument.

Some readers may get nervous at the way Tuttle constructs his argument for affirming the strong influence which the mystics had on Wesley. He appears to demonstrate a behaviorist methodology. He constructs a strong cause and effect structure which assumes that exposure equals influence almost to point of loss of freedom for the subject, Mr. Wesley. It sometimes appears that Wesley's escape from the bewitchment of the mystics had nothing to do with generative activity on his part, but entirely depended upon the "environment." We hear repeatedly of Wesley being "drawn" or "driven" to certain conclusions; Aldersgate, for example, was "inevitable." Wesley's spiritual development and the creation of his spiritual theology seem to be poured like water into prefabricated sluices which empty into a predetermined pool. Sometimes the logical connections are tenuous, held together lightly in the manner of an orator who employs enthymemes rather than complete syllogisms. On first reading, I thought this was the case. However, upon reflection, I believe that it is more helpful to say that Tuttle was actually trying to get "inside" Wesley and describe the processes as Wesley must have experienced them. Therefore, on this point I offer only a caution, not an objection.

As to Tuttle's hypothesis, which is declared after 126 pages of inductive setup, I think he goes too far. He says that Wesley's spiritual theology is a more or less minor revision of the five rungs in the mystical ladder of ascent (awakening, purgation, illumination, dark night of the soul perfection). Wesley kept the tools of the first three stages and preserved the fifth, perfection, as the end of religion, according to Tuttle. For the fourth stage Wesley made

a revolutionary substitution. His new rung was the Reformed doctrine of justification by faith, which replaced the notion that the dark night of the soul produced justification. Tuttle attempts to show that all four are kept in place with a mere substitution being made for stage four. But this is problematic.

I have no quarrel with Tuttle concerning the first three stages, although, as Tuttle admits, it is sometimes hard to tell whether one is comparing Wesley's theory of devotion to the mystics or to Christianity in general. I agree that Wesley's main break with mysticism came at the point of atonement theory, grace, faith, Christocentricity, rather than works-oriented theocentricity. But since it is a matter of atonement, then perfection or sanctification is not treated significantly enough by Tuttle's hypothesis. Wesley's new idea of Christian perfection was as contradictory to mystic belief as was his Reformed doctrine of justification, in my judgment.

On this point Tuttle pertinaciously pursues his hypothesis, drawing parallels and enhancing affinities between Wesley's doctrine of perfection and that of the mystics. And there are a number of affinities to correlate. Nevertheless, in assiduously supporting his need to show that Wesley kept the mystic idea of perfection, Tuttle repeatedly minimizes some of Wesley's distinctives, particularly the idea of instantaneous sanctification. Here Tuttle makes such statements as "Wesley sometimes spoke of instantaneous sanctification" (p. 146), and "he still apparently holds to the idea that sanctification . . . is (or at least can be) instantaneous." Such statements are curious in the light of the straightforward declarations of instantaneous sanctification in all the editions of the *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*.

If one reads on in this chapter, however, it is discovered that Tuttle does concede the differences between Wesley and the mystics, admitting that the similarities are in general rather than in specifics. Both Wesley and the mystics believed in perfection, he concedes, and that is "about as far as one can go" (p. 152). The differences go beyond method and means and include the differences between Wesley and the mystics on the matter of "human depravity and the futility of the mystic 'way of purgation' as an ascent to God by . . . self-purification and personal growth in inward holiness (p. 152)." in the end, Tuttle's disposition of the matter is satisfactory.

Tuttle's closing chapter, "Issues Relevant to the Contemporary Scene," is important to the book and to Tuttle's idea that true Wesleyan mysticism is a "mysticism of service." Here he deals briefly, too briefly, with current mystic dross in the teachings of Sun Myung Moon, the New Age Movement and "pop" mysticism.

In sum, this book is, to use a well-worn Wesleyan phrase, a work "long to be remembered."

Religion and the Radical Republican *Movement*, 1860-1870 by Victor B. Howard. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1990. x, 297 pps. Reviewed by David Bundy, Assoc. Prof. of Christian Origin, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky.

This volume examines the interaction between church and state during the decade of the American Civil War, focusing on the influence of the church upon the developments which led up to the war, the course of the war and the structures of Reconstruction. The emphasis is on the practitioners of “radical religion,” that group of persons who believed that slavery was morally wrong, that society had a responsibility to eradicate slavery, and that African-Americans who had been held in servitude should be totally enfranchised. This included Wesleyan Methodists, Presbyterians, Evangelical Lutherans (Franckean Pietists), Progressive Friends, Seventh Day Baptists, certain members of the Methodist Episcopal Church and, especially, the Congregationalists. Free Methodist conference decisions are occasionally mentioned, but since the primary Free Methodist organizational motivation was anti-Masonic, their entrance to the slavery discussion was quite late. Howard argues that “the radical Christians significantly affected the course of the Civil War and Reconstruction and greatly influenced the men of principle (p. 6).”

Howard picks up the story of the interaction between “radical religion” or “revivalism” where the work of Timothy Smith [*Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (New York: Abingdon, 1957)], which astonishingly he does not mention, leaves off. The narrative introduces dozens of ordinary folk from various churches, social classes and backgrounds, albeit heavily northern and lower middle class (small landowners), who were united by their belief that slavery was a sin against God, and that apocalyptic means were required to bring the awful institution to an end and purify the nation to avoid punishment by God as experienced by the Biblical Israel. The political structure with which they cast their lot was the Republican Party of the period. They also gained control of their denominations and the communication structures (primarily periodicals). Howard suggests that the Methodist Episcopal Church (North) publications were the most effective in the effort. By the end of the war, all denominations except the Episcopalian and Roman Catholic Churches had, under the influence of the “Radicals,” taken a stand against slavery.

The “Radicals” supported Lincoln, but after the election of 1860 grew increasingly frustrated at his compromises with the conservatives, especially after Lincoln announced acceptance of the repatriation idea and refused to endorse Emancipation. The political, military and ethical advantages of Emancipation were argued forcefully by evangelical clergymen. When Lincoln undermined the emancipation decree promulgated by General John Fremont in Missouri, “Radicals” mobilized support for antislavery candidates. Their victories in the 1862 election made the Emancipation Proclamation politically expedient and inevitable.

The next stage was to work for the complete abolition of slavery, in the North as well as in the South. Once again Lincoln’s commitment was less than firm, and so “Radicals” lent early support to the 1864 presidential candidacy of Salmon P. Chase, who withdrew after Lincoln made concessions to the “Radicals.” The 1864 election was, Howard argues, a referendum on the war and emancipation, and it was the “Radicals” who kept the issues alive and central in the public mind. It was due to “Radical” pressure that the 14th Amendment to the constitution was rapidly ratified.

As the military victory became but a matter of time, attention was turned to the nature of postwar reconstruction. The “Radicals” were afraid that the southern governments would institutionalize discrimination as had some northern states. They argued for nothing less than a complete restructuring of southern political and social life. The radical American Missionary Association worked to overturn “Black Laws” in Illinois and Ohio and prepared to send missionaries to the south to work with African-Americans after the war. The focus of dissension became Black Suffrage, the conferring of which the “Radicals” viewed as a moral duty. A “Freedman’s Bureau,” designed to aid newly freed slaves, was conceptualized, accepted by Congress and vetoed by President Andrew Johnson. Congress overrode the veto and once again the “Radicals” mobilized, this time for the 1866 elections, in which “Presidential Reconstruction” was repudiated and after which Johnson narrowly avoided impeachment.

Out of this election came the call for the 15th Amendment to the Constitution calling for total enfranchisement of African Americans. At the point of arguing for civil rights, the “Radicals” came into difficulty with their own denominations and the Republicans lost popular support and elections in the North. The Northern populace both church adherents and non-churched, were quite happy that the slaves should be freed, but were generally opposed to giving them full civil rights, primarily for fear of possible economic and social consequences. The issues became clearly defined in the struggles over the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution. The “Radicals” wanted a strongly worded guarantee of the rights of all persons, irrespective of race. Interestingly, fearing that this issue would become linked with the then politically deadly issue of the enfranchisement of women, some “Radicals” actually worked against the former cause. However, it was primarily the development of increasingly overt racism in the Northeast and Old Northwest (the territory north of the Ohio River) and losses in several key elections which caused the Republicans to adopt an ambiguously worded statement, which was ratified with difficulty. The fears of the “Radicals” that the amendment allowed bases for denying civil rights to African Americans proved well-founded.

Howard’s analysis is helpful at several points. It clarifies, in detail, the positions taken by evangelical Christians and their allies during the decade. It does so by examining for the first time a wide range of primary sources (archival, periodicals, report literature) and interpreting them in the context of American political and social history. He is the first to have thus used, for example, Wesleyan/Holiness sources as primary to understanding a crucial period of American history. The work also has implications beyond its own scope. Their secular political failure was but the first step in the disorganization of the “Radicals.” Those who argued for combining radical social reform and radical piety would lose power even in their own denominations. This was most acute during the decade of the 1880’s. The shift was most pronounced in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The phenomenon, often called embourgeoisment, saw a significant shift in power from the “Radicals” to the nouveau riche of the urban North who had made their fortunes on the war. This would eventually lead to the Methodist disenfranchisement of both the WCTU and Holiness constituencies. It is against this backdrop that the development of the National Association for the Promotion of Holiness

(National Campmeeting Association) and the experience of Missionary Bishop William Taylor must be understood. However, the Radicals within the Methodist Episcopal Church were not the only group to lose influence. The same also happened within the Free Methodist Church where for instance, B. T. Roberts was prematurely elevated to a figurehead position and his paper, *The Earnest Christian*, considered too radical, was pushed to the periphery by a decision to publish an “official” denominational paper. The Pietist Lutherans also were removed from power and the “Franckean” tradition died in American Lutheranism.

There are a number of issues which still need to be addressed. How, for example, did the coordination (networking) of political and ideological efforts occur? Who was leading and shaping the “Radical” consensus? How did the “Radicals” relate to and cooperate with non-religious reformers? Why, if as Howard asserts (p. 213) the influence of the churches on politics was more powerful after the war than before, did the “Radicals” cease to argue (or be heard?) for Civil Rights, especially when it was widely agreed that the 15th Amendment was inadequate? Finally, it is indeed unfortunate that Howard does not discuss the significance of his work for American political and religious historiography. The volume deserved a conclusion rather than an “Epilogue.”

To suggest these questions are still to be answered is not intended to detract from Howard’s achievement. The extensively documented volume will be a benchmark study of American religion and social structures.