

THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

THE DOCTRINE OF PERFECTION IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY AMERICA
AND THE HOLINESS SCHISM IN AMERICAN METHODISM

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
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THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

BY
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WINNIPEG, MANITOBA
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TIMOTHY ROY TRIVETT

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of
the University of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree of

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PREFACE

When embarking on a subject in which one has a considerable personal investment, one risks being charged with the loss of objectivity. Such is the risk that I have taken here. Thus, I have felt it necessary to make the following statement concerning the circumstances out of which came this thesis.

On Friday, November 7, 1977, Dr. Donald Wiebe, Professor of Philosophy and Religion, was summarily dismissed from my *alma mater*, Canadian Nazarene College (Church of the Nazarene), an Approved Teaching Centre of the University of Manitoba. It was an event which became an occasion for controversy both within and without the college and church community. The reasons behind it were distilled by the college board and administration into a charge of "divisiveness". A college student at the time, I became involved in the issue when I interviewed both Dr. Wiebe and the college president, Dr. Ronald Gray, intending to publish those interviews in the college newspaper. Provided the opportunity to preview his interview, as I had recorded it, Dr. Gray vetoed its publication. Believing that the content of that interview was too important to go without public attention, I took the interview to the *Manitoban*, the newspaper of the University of Manitoba Student Union.¹ For this action

I gained the mistaken notoriety in the minds of some Nazarenes as a bitter antagonist of their church.

My investigation into the reasons for Professor Wiebe's dismissal led me to conclude, as he himself had and as did the members of the *ad hoc* committee of the University Senate investigating the Approved Teaching Centers, that the fundamental issue behind the dismissal was academic freedom,² meaning that Dr. Wiebe was no longer welcome at Canadian Nazarene because he expected his students to study theological and philosophical issues from a number of view points, and because he spoke his mind on issues arising within and without the classroom. While it is true that during Dr. Wiebe's stay at Canadian Nazarene the brushing of his personality up against that of President Gray created a charge beyond the capacity of one small institution to retain for long, this conflict might be better understood as a footnote to the history of the Holiness tradition³ of which the Church of the Nazarene is a part.

The Manual of the Church of the Nazarene states that "No educational institution shall employ or retain permanently in its employment any faculty member who is not in full accord with the doctrine of, and in the experience of, entire sanctification, and who is not in full agreement and sympathy with the Bible doctrines and usages held

by the Church of the Nazarene."⁴ As can be inferred from this passage, an academic at a Nazarene college who is perceived to be out of sympathy with the prevailing theology of the institution may find his position awkward or even untenable. Such was Dr. Wiebe's position. The other inference this passage allows is that President Gray and the college board were of the opinion that the President met the doctrinal and spiritual requirements of his office. It is not unreasonable, then, to assume that the underlying issue in the conflict was doctrinal. Neither is it unreasonable to assume that President Gray's understanding of his holiness experience led him to the conclusion that he was dealing with a professor whose thoughts and actions were antithetical to the values of the higher Christian life.⁵ In effect, Dr. Wiebe's divisiveness, described here as the exercise of academic freedom, was interpreted as a symptom of theological dissent. And despite the doubtful propriety of the action taken against Dr. Wiebe, that action was carried out, presumably, in good conscience. Not only was the dismissal defensible because it was done for the sake of the doctrine, it was also defensible in that the people who carried it out were living within the experience of the doctrine.⁶

As I shall demonstrate, placing such a construction on Holiness doctrine is not historically sound nor can it be defended by appeal to the

works of John Wesley, which form the corner stone of Nazarene theology. But because of the troubles at Canadian Nazarene, I determined that there were some serious questions which ought to be asked of the doctrine and of the tradition in which it has been preserved. It is my purpose, then, in this exercise, to look into the prehistory of the Church of the Nazarene, a major denomination in the United States of America, whose roots lie in the nineteenth-century revivals of religion, in the Holiness movement which accompanied those revivals, and in the late nineteenth-century Holiness schism in American Methodism.

I will admit to two biases which will, perhaps, become more than evident later on. First, the reader will find me not in complete sympathy with the doctrine, but certainly in sympathy with its ends. As this is an exercise in history it is not the place to argue the ultimate validity of a theology--which I am not inclined to do anyway. Rather, the argument here will be concerned with the premises and the claims of the doctrine in light of the Christian tradition of which it is a part and with the manner in which the doctrine has been dealt with by those who have concerned themselves with its working out. Second, during the time I was preparing this thesis I became an Anglican--a move which has had a considerable

influence on my understanding of and approach to this subject.

I owe some acknowledgements to a number of people: to my advisor, Professor Richard Swanson, who believed in the worth of this project even though he knew I was using it to exorcise some personal demons; to the staff at the interlibrary loan desk in the Elizabeth Dafoe Library, who, in these days of fiscal restraint, gave me an indispensable service; to Ranall Ingalls and to Professors, John Luik, Vern Hannah, Kent Brower, John Wortley, Martin Gerwin and Donald Wiebe, with whom I have had some useful and illuminating chats; and to my wife, Linda, who has been patient.

END NOTES

- 1 Tim Trivett, "And on the Other Hand," *Manitoban*, February 9, 1978, p. 9
- 2 "Final Report of the *ad hoc* Committee of the Senate to Reconsider the Institution of Approved Teaching Centres," *University of Manitoba Senate Agenda*, November 6, 1979, p. 91ff.
- 3 The theological terms used in this discussion are explained in the Introduction and in Chapter 1.
- 4 Section 348.1, *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene*, (Kansas City, Mo.: Nazarene Publishing, 1976), p. 170.
- 5 Commenting on personnel difficulties during this period, the president wrote: "The time of all of us absorbed with these issues seems like a satanic deterrant (sic) to accomplishing other needed work to say nothing of the damage to the spirit of Christian community." Ronald Gray, *Report of the President*, unpublished document of Canadian Nazarene College, September, 1977, p. 6.
- 6 The issue of Dr. Wiebe's firing was resolved in the summer of 1979 when CNC published an apology in the *Winnipeg Free Press* and paid Dr. Wiebe for the remainder of his 1977-78 contract and reimbursed him for his legal fees.

INTRODUCTION

Known by many names--Holiness; entire sanctification; the second blessing; full salvation; the baptism of the Spirit, among others--the doctrine of Perfection was an abiding concern to nineteenth-century Americans of a Protestant and revivalist bent. In its modern form, the doctrine has its roots in Methodism, but it leapt denominational boundaries in an America where Calvinist theology was giving way to the Arminian view of God's grace and man's ability to claim it. The story of this particular doctrine in America is inseparable from the stories of revivalism and millennarianism. It was wrapped up in the hopes, dreams and efforts of Americans to make better men and to achieve the founding of the kingdom of God on earth--an event which many nineteenth-century Americans believed was as close as the next daybreak.

A source of much joy for many Americans, the doctrine was also a source of much sorrow. Its purpose--to show men the way to Holiness, and its method--a second crisis experience which follows a saving crisis, became the subjects for debate--often bitter debate. This debate led to the splintering away of parts of the Methodist Episcopal Church (M.E.C.) on a number of occasions, but most significantly during the 1890's with the removal of the primordial elements of the Church of the Nazarene, the largest of the present day American Holiness denominations.

This work will examine that schism and the larger subject of perfectionism in America by looking at the Holiness movement in the light of certain aspects whose importance have not been fully recognized. These are the Anglican roots of Methodist perfectionism; perfectionism in America as part of a larger national ideal; the Holiness movement as part of a larger religious tradition known as revivalism; and, growing out of revivalism, the attachment to the Holiness movement of the millstone of fanatical or antinomian perfectionism.

The doctrine of Christian Perfection was introduced to modern Protestantism chiefly through the work of John Wesley (1703-91),* Anglican clergyman and principal founder of Methodism. For those believers who number themselves among the twice blessed, especially those with Methodist roots, Wesley is generally considered the arbiter of Holiness tradition. But separated from Anglicanism, Wesleyans, as they call themselves, have largely overlooked Wesley's place in the Church of England. Thus, within the American Holiness and Perfectionist tradition there has been a lopping off of its Anglican roots--in particular the laying

* Discussing John Wesley without mention of his brother, Charles (1707-88), is like discussing Marx without mention of Engels. However, Charles's contribution to the doctrine of Perfection was chiefly as a writer of hymns, making a study of his work too awkward and exegetical for present purposes.

aside of the *Book of Common Prayer*. This has led to the loss of a significant side of the Wesleyan view of the effects of Sin in this world, in that the prayer book view of the believer's relationship to the divine as one of continual shortcoming has been trivialized or dismissed. The loss of this emphasis within the American Holiness tradition, it will be argued, has a correlation with the pervasive American myth of national righteousness, innocence and divine appointment.

The Holiness movement, as part of a broader revival tradition, was subject to the forms of revivalism; that is, as a second work of saving grace, the way to holiness was found in a ladling out again of the revival formula for salvation. Thus the "Holiness Revival" shared the logic, the methodology, the triumphs and the excesses of the larger Revival. It was the excesses--the fanaticisms--which sometimes came with the revival tradition which, often unfairly, made holiness people famous for more than just their piety and added to the spirit of disunity within Methodism.

The historical course of the Holiness Revival was the same as that of the larger Revival. In late nineteenth-century, urbanizing America, revival forms began to demonstrate a diminished effectiveness in the saving of souls and in the filling of pews. Thus, revivalism began to fall into disuse among the large evangelical churches at the same time as the pressures of

urbanization were making inroads on certain cultural forms which had been attached to traditional American piety and which had been championed within the revival tradition. Having attached revival forms and revival culture to Holiness, those Methodists who were particularly concerned with perpetuating the Holiness tradition showed the same concern for revival traditions. Consequently, the waning interest in revival forms among members of the M.E.C. was often interpreted by holiness-minded Methodists as a waning of interest in Holiness. Just as often, the clinging of the holiness-minded to revival forms was interpreted by their Methodist brethren as anachronistic or even fanatical. It was a conflict which many holiness-minded Methodists felt could not be resolved short of leaving the M.E.C. in order to preserve and properly keep the Holiness tradition. One, then, comes to understand and explain the Church of the Nazarene by bearing in mind that the spiritual ancestors of the Nazarenes were part of the revival tradition.

This study will be confined to the Methodist Episcopal Church, North--a designation resulting from the Methodist schism of 1844 over slavery. Although the force of the post-Civil War Holiness schism was greater in the South, the lack of ante-bellum concern for perfectionism on

the part of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in favour of the theological defense of slavery, and the post-Civil War Southern preoccupation with social conflicts differing from those of the industrialized North, make that church the candidate for a separate inquiry.*

* Vinson Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1971), chap. 2, *passim*.

CHAPTER 1

PERFECTION

Be ye perfect as your father in heaven is perfect.

Matthew 5: 48

As a word "Perfection" is possessed of numerous nuances and interpretations ranging from what is acceptable to what is absolute. As a theology it suffers from this same range of understandings. Since the doctrine is generally equated with Wesleyanism, the definitive works on Perfection are generally accorded to be Wesley's, with the good reason that those Perfectionists who have taken a dissimilar view of the doctrine have tended to remove themselves from traditional Christian society and practice. But calling oneself a Wesleyan Perfectionist has not always preserved one from the theological confusions which have befallen Perfectionists of other stripes. As Wesley knew, when one takes on the attributes of Biblical Perfection, it is extremely important that one have a proper understanding of what those attributes are.

The following account of Wesley's doctrine serves three purposes: to show the doctrinal foundation of the Holiness movement in America; to demonstrate the depth of the doctrine's roots in Anglicanism; and to facilitate later discussion of the doctrine as it was understood within the Holiness movement.

* * *

For Wesley, Perfection was the zenith of the Christian experience, the rightful and earthly achievable state of all believers and the command of scripture. Indeed, Wesley argued, the greatest commandment--to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind and strength--in order to be accomplished, would require of the believer a state of "perfect love".¹

How is a Christian perfect? In only this, taught Wesley: "*a Christian is so far perfect as not to commit sin,*" as in accordance with sundry statements in the New Testament. "*Herein is our love made perfect,*" he quoted Saint John, so that the one who is perfected "*loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and serves him with all his strength. He loves his neighbor...as himself...as Christ loves us.*" Such a one takes on the nature of Christ, being freed from "*evil thoughts*" and "evil tempers" and lives his life in "*kindness, meekness, [and] gentleness.*"²

The process by which Wesley said this state occurs is two fold. First, one is saved or justified, which in Wesleyan and Anglican theologies is solely a matter of faith in Jesus Christ. "Justification" is the means by which sins are forgiven and is the beginning of "sanctification", the process by which the Christian is freed from Sin itself and is therefore perfected. Justification and sanctification are both instantaneous and

gradual: justification, occurring in an instant, is the beginning of the justified state, the beginning of growth in the Christian life, and the beginning of sanctification which is "wholly" or "entirely" completed in the instant at which the Christian is freed from Sin and perfected in love. Thus, Saint Paul prayed for believers: "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly. And I pray God, your whole spirit, soul and body may be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Thess. 5:23)." Likewise, "whole" or "entire" sanctification is not a finished work either, but the beginning of a growth in perfection and holiness which has its completion in the resurrection of the body--the last and never ending stage of growth in perfection.³

If the Christian life, as Wesley thought of it, is never static, and "perfection", as Wesley employed the word, is not an absolute, the question arises: how is a Christian not perfect? Wesley answered that the Christian is "*not perfect in knowledge*" nor is he "free from *ignorance*; no, nor from *mistake*. We are no more to expect any living man to be *infallible* than to be omniscient." Christians "are not free from *infirmities* ... 'til their spirits return to God. Neither can we expect 'till then to be wholly freed from *temptation*." As we "know but in part (1 Cor. 13: 9a)," Wesley reminded the believer, imperfect thoughts

and acts are bound to be the portion of our feeble frames.⁴

*where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty . . . from the law of sin and death . . . The Son has made them free who are thus born of God, from that great root of sin . . . Pride. They feel that all their sufficiency is of God; that it is he alone who is in all their thought and works in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure. They are freed from self-will . . . from evil-thoughts . . . They have no fear or doubt, either as to their state in general, or as to any particular action. The unction from the Holy One teaches them every hour what they shall do and what they shall speak. Nor therefore have they any need to reason concerning it. They are in some sense freed from temptations, for tho' numberless temptations fly about them, yet they trouble them not . . . Their peace, flowing as a river, passes all understanding . . . For they are sealed by the Spirit unto the day of redemption.*⁵

Perhaps twenty or more years after writing these words, Wesley, when collecting his tracts on the subject to produce his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (c. 1765), admitted: "Here I cannot but remark . . . [t]hat this is the strongest account we ever gave of Christian Perfection; indeed, too strong in more than one particular."⁶ Of course, to such a doctrine, Wesley found it necessary to attach numerous qualifications.

The touchstone of Wesley's theology is this: that man is totally unable

to help himself, is utterly dependent upon God, and can trust completely in the efficacy of God's grace. That is, the work of salvation is God's work alone. Reflecting on this, Wesley wrote in his *Journal* "I think on justification . . . just as Mr. Calvin does. In *this* respect I do not differ from him an hair's breadth."⁷ However, in one major respect, Wesley did differ from Calvin; he had no use for a predestinarian theology. God's saving grace is free to all men, Wesley believed, and in order for men to take advantage of God's universal offer of salvation He has provided freedom of will through His prevenient grace. This prevenient grace is both preventing and enabling, providing man the opportunity to resist evil and to do good so that the world should not be wholly given over to wickedness. But just as evil itself is not irresistible--because God's grace will not allow it--neither is prevenient grace irresistible. One may still reject both the good and the offer of salvation. This proposition is fundamental to understanding Wesley's theology: justification, sanctification and the continuing work of salvation which proceeds throughout the Christian life are the work of God alone; man is utterly without saving merit and is utterly dependent upon God for salvation which comes through faith alone in Jesus Christ.⁸

Thus, even in the state of perfection, one is utterly dependent upon

the grace of God. Though without sin, one possesses no merit on one's own and is still in a position to transgress the law of God due to mistake and ignorance, for which there is no absolute cure in this world. Wesley held that these transgressions could not properly be called sins because they are performed unwittingly. Yet, such transgressions cannot possibly stand "the rigor of God's justice,"⁹ so that they too are subject to the atonement made for man through Christ. Also, revelations concerning these transgressions, which come to the Christian as he grows in perfection, must be accompanied by repentance or his rightful claim to that state ceases.¹⁰ When discussing transgressions of this type, Wesley concluded: "Therefore *sinless perfection* is a phrase I never use, lest I should *seem* to contradict myself." Tangled in his own logic, he later conceded: "Is it *sinless*? It is not worth to contend for a term. It is *salvation from sin*."¹¹

"Sinlessness" is also problematic as it may be interpreted as a guarantee of salvation in contradiction to the Wesleyan position that as long as the Christian inhabits his corruptible body, he may yet become Satan's captive.¹² Having been subject once to Sin--as is all mankind through the fall of the race in Adam--the Christian may grieve the Holy Spirit and return to that state from which he has come. Wesley's position

could be no other than this for extremely important reasons which will be discussed shortly. However, he did make a surprising concession. While warning that the scriptures said nothing about a holy state from which men could not fall, and therefore even the most holy "may . . . perish (Heb. 10: 29)," he conceded the possibility that God might give to some the inward assurance that they would hold on until the end.¹³ Here Wesley must have been in a dilemma. Having rejected the necessity of sin as a concept which makes light of the sovereignty of God and His grace and which implies that Sin is a part of God's "design and purpose,"¹⁴ he was compelled by scripture, tradition and temperament to draw the line again at necessity; Thus, he concluded not that the Christian will not sin, but that he need not sin. "[T]hey are to be condemned," says the sixteenth article of religion of the Church of England, "who say they can no more sin as long as they live here." For Wesley this was the final word on the matter.¹⁵

It was not only orthodoxy that kept Wesley to that position, but his fear of the evils that orthodoxy is meant to hold at bay: "enthusiasm", "antinomianism", and their fruit which is "schism"--"making a rent in the church of Christ." "Hereby", he wrote, "many are hindered from seeking faith and holiness by the false zeal of others, and some who at first began

to run well are turned out of the way."¹⁶

Enthusiasm, as the word applies to theology, means that one is guided by visions, voices, dreams, impressions, feelings and all sorts of impulsive revelations in the belief that these things have entered the mind through the action of the Holy Spirit. But Wesley reminded would-be enthusiasts that the Christian is required to test every spirit by the scriptures. Otherwise the enthusiast may be fooled by his own natural impulses, or worse still, by Satan himself. The other consequence of enthusiasm is the leaving behind of reason, wisdom, study and correction, for what use would these be to one to whom God given direction comes by more marvelous and ready means?¹⁷ One, in such a state of mind, may very easily act and speak without scruple believing that all one does or says is prompted by the Holy Spirit.

Antinomianism, warned Wesley, is the natural outcome of enthusiasm for it means "*making void the law... through faith.*" It is a belief which argues that the Christian, being freed by grace from the terrible consequences of the law of God, is no longer subject to that law. But the Wesleyan position--the orthodox position--is that a life of faith is also a life of obedience. And grace, far from freeing the Christian from obedience to the law, is what makes it possible for the Christian to give

obedience to the law.¹⁸ It is that possibility of obedience which is central to the doctrine of Christian Perfection; therefore Wesley was wont to "earnestly contend, that there is no perfection in this life which implies any dispensation from attending all the ordinances of God."¹⁹

As to the fruit of enthusiasm and antinomianism, Wesley, the Anglican minister, warned his people, the members of his Methodist Connexion, who at times chafed within the confines of the Church of England, against schism--against "[t]hat inward disunion, the members ceasing to have a reciprocal love *one for another* (1 Cor. 12: 25)."²⁰ The power of enthusiasm and antinomianism to produce schisms is the same as their power to produce competing authorities. Enthusiasm, as a source of new revelation, and antinomianism as a revelation in itself--that is, revealing that the law is no longer in effect--are generators of new authority which must, to a greater or lesser degree, come into conflict with the established authority of the church.

That some Perfectionists, even among Wesley's followers, had left the church, running off after various forms of enthusiasm and antinomianism, was for Wesley's critics proof enough that the doctrine was invalid. To this Wesley was always ready with the argument that a believer's departure from scripture cannot be the means by which doctrine is

disproved. "[T]he question is not to be decided by abstract reasonings," he wrote in his sermon on "Christian Perfection",

Neither is it to be determined by the experience of this or that particular person. Many may suppose they do not commit sin, when they do; but this proves nothing either way. To the law and to the testimony we appeal. 'Let God be true, and everyman a liar.' By His Word will we abide, and that alone.²¹

Elsewhere he expressed this concept more broadly: "The lives . . . of those who are *called* Christians is no just objection to Christianity."²²

The idea of Christian Perfection first took hold of Wesley while he was a young man at Oxford. Studying there for the priesthood, he encountered numerous literary works which profoundly convinced him of the need for utter seriousness in the pursuit of the Christian life. A short time after ordination, he returned to Oxford as a don and found himself leading the "Holy Club," which was comprised of other serious minded students of religion who had been organized by his younger brother, Charles. The contemporary atmosphere at Oxford being much less than pious, the members of the "Holy Club" were labelled "Methodists". This was supposedly a stinging rebuke which resurrected images of an earlier fanaticism. But the members of the Holy Club adopted the name for

themselves as it was meant to apply to those who were earnest in the practice or method of Christianity.

On his pilgrimage toward his vision of the ideal Christian life, Wesley was continually struggling with self-doubt and plagued by periods of spiritual darkness during which he despaired of ever being a Christian. While engaged in a disastrous missionary enterprise in Georgia, he made acquaintance with some Moravian missionaries--members of a pietist sect organized by Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf. The Moravians stressed what Wesley lacked in his spiritual life: "assurance"--the inner sense of being saved. It was the same experience to which his father, Reverend Samuel Wesley (1662-1735), had directed John from his death bed telling him: "'The inward witness, son . . . that is the strongest proof of Christianity.'"²³

Impressed by the faith of the Moravians, Wesley sought out others of their sect on his return to England. On 24 May 1738, while attending their society meeting in Aldersgate Street in London and hearing Luther's preface to the "Epistle to the Romans" read aloud, he felt his "heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ," he wrote in his *Journal*, "Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away *my* sins, even *mine*, and saved *me* from the law of sin and

death."²⁴ This was what Wesley had been hoping for all along; he had proved to his own satisfaction the eleventh article of his faith: justification was by faith alone.²⁵

Despite this spiritual debt to the Moravians, Wesley openly broke with them over the issue of their quietism. Some among them, Wesley found, had confused and misled many of the humbler members of their societies --those who were struggling in the faith and filled with doubts. These had been told to be still, to do nothing, until God should give them the assurance of their faith. Wesley could not abide this, for it not only belittled his own struggles of faith, but it also belittled the instructions of scripture: to study; to be at prayer; to take communion; and to do good works. He also found himself at odds with their leader. In conversation with Zinzendorf, he discovered that the Moravian view of the holy life was that it is a static life made whole and complete in the instant of justification. By such a view of the Christian life, Zinzendorf admitted room for growth neither in love nor in holiness.²⁶ In such a view, the Christian life would be left bereft of its spiritual imperatives, and Wesley could no more admit the possibility of such a life than admit the validity of the antinomianism it would likely produce.

In the same year that Wesley became assured of his own spiritual

footing, he made the acquaintance, in print, of Jonathan Edwards, and was profoundly moved by Edwards's accounts of the religious awakening taking place in New England. Coincidental with this was the return from America of his friend the revivalist George Whitefield who, on the eve of his second departure for the colonies, enlisted Wesley's help in the revivals begun in Bristol. Screwing up his courage and breaking with Anglican tradition, Wesley took to the open air to preach the gospel. The work of revival begun by Edwards and Whitefield in America was thus reproduced in Britain. To this revival Wesley added a structure: his connexion of Methodist societies designed to spread and deepen the revival throughout the United Kingdom and to encourage a more earnest Christianity within the Church of England.

Wesley never professed to being perfected. There is, however, no doubt that he thought he was living within the experience of perfection and that he marked the beginning of that life with his heart warming experience at the Aldersgate Street society meeting. In his journal account of what transpired that day, he wrote of his life before Aldersgate: "I was still 'under the law,' not 'under grace'... for I was only striving with, not freed from sin. Neither had I the witness of the Spirit with my spirit." But

afterwards: "herein I found the difference between this and my former state chiefly consisted. I was striving, yea, fighting with all my might under the law, as well as under grace. But then I was sometimes, if not often, conquered; now, I was always conqueror."²⁷ By his own definition, Wesley had been perfected.

To account for Wesley's silence about his belief in his own experience of perfection, we must look to his advice to "professors" of perfection "not to speak of it to them that know not God. 'Tis most likely it would only provoke them to contradict and blaspheme, nor to others, without some particular reason, without some good in view. And then . . . [with] especial care to avoid all appearance of boasting."²⁸ Thus, he advised his Methodists to speak of sanctification with the justified and speak of justification with the unjustified. With this in mind, it becomes even more obvious that Wesley's efforts to teach Christian Perfection emerged from his belief in his own entirely sanctified state.

For Wesley true religion was rational. Priest and scholar, he would accept the validity of no religious experience which went beyond the boundaries set by scripture; hence his abhorrence of enthusiasm which offered knowledge as an end without the means²⁹ and of antinomianism

which offered grace without the law. Moreover, these twin heresies give rise to new and rival authorities. As Ronald Knox has observed: "[Wesley] was logical enough (unlike George Fox) to see that if he began trusting to an inner light it would not be long before others followed him, and it would be his word against theirs." Yet, he was beset by followers who embraced perfection and ran full tilt with it into enthusiasm and antinomianism.³⁰

The roots of these troubles lay in a misunderstanding of Wesley's doctrine--in an interpretation which accepted the idea of perfection without qualification. Was it even possible that the bulk of Wesley's Methodists would or could understand the doctrine as their leader--child of the manse, Oxford scholar and voracious reader of Christian thought--understood it? As Albert Outler has noted: "It seemed so obvious to Wesley that no human state is absolute that he was constantly baffled by those who misconstrued his teachings to this effect."³¹ Yet, what was so obvious to Wesley was not so obvious to many others, so that in these cases the theological fences Wesley erected to keep his sheep from straying into fields of enthusiasm and antinomianism were put up in vain. Still, most Methodists, even those with a diminished understanding of the doctrine, were not given over to enthusiasm--at least, not a virulent

enthusiasm--which, perhaps, is a testament either to Wesley's authority or to the soundness of the instruction received in the meetings of the Methodist societies.

Although Wesley attempted to keep a close rein on those feelings, impressions and impulses which he feared might run away with his Methodists, his movement is considered to be one of those crucial elements which exalted sentiment and freed the emotions, thereby giving rise to Romanticism; and he himself is numbered among the pre-Romantics.³² Wesley's message of love of God and of man, of salvation to all, and of the personal assurance of that salvation was a powerful emotional engine, but one upon which he had placed a governor.

"Assurance", Wesley believed, is not "enthusiasm"; rather it is the Biblically defensible witness of God's Spirit to man's spirit, and may not be confused with the spirit of enthusiasm or of antinomianism. For Wesley, religious sentiment run riot was not a matter of degree, but a thing wholly other than true religion.

Finally, there are three essential qualities in Wesley's doctrine of Christian Perfection: love; reason; and introspection.³³ This last quality is the one which holds the whole doctrine together. Leave it out and any notion of Christian Perfection, because it is neither absolute nor

complete, unravels like the proverbial cheap suit. An understanding of Wesley's mind on this matter cannot be had apart from an understanding of the *Book of Common Prayer*, which takes the participant in the Anglican liturgy through continual cycles of confession, repentance and forgiveness. It was this liturgical tradition which Wesley passed on to the Methodists of the newly united and independent states in America in his abridged version of the *Book of Common Prayer* entitled the *Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America*. However, although Wesley was held in veneration by American Methodists, his authority as the leader of Methodism could not well span the distance between Great Britain and her former colonies. And Wesley must have known this, offering his *Sunday Service*, to a people that God had "so strangely made . . . free" with the words "I advise".³⁴ Thus, in a number of ways American Methodism did not follow his wishes, the short-lived use of the *Sunday Service*, which Wesley surely intended as the central document of Methodist piety, being but one example. Explaining this development, Jesse Lee, one of American Methodism's earliest circuit riders, wrote that it was the opinion of his fellow ministers that "they could pray better, and with more devotion while their eyes were shut, than they could with their eyes open."³⁵

To Wesley the logic of a Methodism separated from the British

episcopacy in a nation separated from the British crown was incapable,³⁶ especially in light of the neglect with which the Anglican hierarchy had treated Britain's former colonies. Thus, Methodism was transplanted into the new world--not by schism, but by historical necessity--as a new denomination, the Methodist Episcopal Church, and into a revolutionary situation with a message that urged Christian people and Christian society to seek perfection.

End Notes

- 1 John Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection", in Frank Whaling, ed., *John and Charles Wesley: Selected Writings and Hymns*, (N.Y.: Paulist Press, 1981), p. 322. (Further references to this work will be cited as "Whaling" or "Wesley in Whaling" depending on the case.)
- 2 John Wesley, "Sermon XXXV: Christian Perfection," *Forty-four Sermons or Sermons on Several Occasions*, (London: Epworth, 1958), pp. 463, 472. (Further references to this work will be cited as 'Wesley, "Christian Perfection."'); Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection" in Whaling, pp. 309, 316.
- 3 John Wesley, "Justification by Faith", in Albert Outler, ed., *John Wesley*, (N.Y.: Oxford, 1964), pp. 201, 207. (Further references to this work will be cited as "Outler" or "Wesley in Outler" depending on the case.) See also Wesley, "The Doctrine of Salvation, Faith and Good Works, Extracted from the Homilies of the Church of England", in Outler, p. 127; Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection" in Whaling, pp. 311, 320-21, 359; See also Paul's Epistle to the Philippians 3: 12-17--the basis of Wesley's sermon on "Christian Perfection"--in which the Apostle wrote of being perfected, but not in the same sense in which he will be perfected at the resurrection of the dead.
- 4 Wesley, "Christian Perfection," p. 459; Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection" in Whaling, pp 307, 327.
- 5 Ibid., p. 311.
- 6 Ibid., p. 313.
- 7 Outler, "Introduction", p. 30.
- 8 Wesley, "Justification by Faith", in Outler, p. 207; Wesley, "The Doctrine of Salvation", in Outler, p. 127.
- 9 Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection", in Whaling, p. 328.

- 10 Outler, "Introduction", p. 32.
- 11 Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection", in Whaling, pp. 329, 374.
- 12 Outler, "Introduction", p. 32.
- 13 Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection", pp. 354-55, 357, 359.
- 14 Outler, "Introduction", p. 32; Wesley, "Christian Perfection", pp. 462ff.
- 15 *Book of Common Prayer*, (GB: Cambridge, 1962), pp. 704; In 1784, Wesley published an abridged version of the *Book of Common Prayer* for the Methodists of the United States. Taking the opportunity to revise the prayer book according to his own lights, Wesley removed some of the thirty-nine articles and edited others. Article XVI entered Wesley's version of the prayer book just as it had appeared in the original. See Article XII in James F. White, ed., *John Wesley's Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America*, (USA: United Methodists, 1984, [1784]), p. 310; (Further references to this work will be cited "Wesley, *Sunday Service*.")
- 16 Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection", in Whaling, p. 360.
- 17 Ibid., p. 361.
- 18 Ibid., p. 362; Wesley, "The Law Established by Faith; Discourse II", in Outler, pp. 222-23.
- 19 Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection", in Whaling, p. 315.
- 20 Ibid., p. 365.
- 21 Wesley, "Christian Perfection", pp. 462-63.
- 22 Wesley, "An Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion", in Outler, p. 394; "The Witness of the Spirit; Discourse II", in Outler, p. 216.
- 23 Whaling, "Introduction," p. 5.

- 24 Nehemiah Curnock, ed. *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.*, I, (London: Epworth, 1960, [1909]), 476. (Further references to this work will be cited "Wesley, *Journal* I".)
- 25 *Book of Common Prayer*, pp. 702-03.
- 26 Wesley in Outler, *Journal* excerpts from 1 Nov. 1739-15 June 1741, 5 Sept. 1741, pp. 353-66, 370-71; Outler, "Introduction", p. 22.
- 27 Wesley, *Journal* I, pp. 470-71, 477.
- 28 Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection", in Whaling, p. 330.
- 29 Ibid., p. 361.
- 30 Ronald Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion*. (N.Y.: Oxford, 1950), p. 451, 540-47.
- 31 Outler, "Introduction", p. 31.
- 32 Frederick C. Gill, *The Romantic Movement and Methodism: A Study of English Romanticism and the Evangelical Revival*, (N.Y.: Haskell House, 1966), pp. 15, 28-33.
- 33 Wesley, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection", in Whaling, p. 363; Outler, "Introduction", p. 32.
- 34 Wesley, *Sunday Service*, pp. ii-iii.
- 35 *A Short History of the Methodists*, (Baltimore: Magill and Clime, 1810), p. 107, quoted in White's "Introduction" to *Wesley's Sunday Service*, pp. 12-13.
- 36 Wesley, *Sunday Service*, p. iii.

CHAPTER 2

REVIVAL

Repent . . . for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matthew 3: 2

Revivalism is essentially emotional and experiential. As an agent acting on the emotions, it has the ability to powerfully alter the state of mind of its participants, and, as a propagator of experiential religion, it is a potent force for theological reduction. Intending to transmit a saving and cathartic experience and to glorify a sovereign God, the results of revivalism have sometimes run counter to its design, as the emotionalism and the reductionism inherent in its method bore fruit as psychological, moral and theological aberrations which were antithetical to the scriptures and to the traditions of Christian thought and society.

By temperament and method, the members of the Holiness movement in nineteenth-century America were inextricably tangled up in the revival tradition of their day. As such they were subject to the same emotionalism and reductionism as the participants in the larger revival tradition in which they shared. Inheritors of the Wesleyan teaching that salvation was solely the work of the Holy Spirit, they had difficulty keeping to that position with consistency in the heat of a revival which gave unprecedented emphasis to the human element in conversion.

To the twentieth-century mind the word "Revival" conjures up images

of old fashioned tent meetings or special services held in football stadiums and, depending on the bias of the observer, images of the less sophisticated members of society engaged in various degrees of ecstatic behaviour. But in nineteenth-century America, the Revival had a much broader role, making it the dominant tradition in American religious life.

For nineteenth-century Protestant Americans, the Revival was not just a campmeeting or a church service; it could come to one alone as easily as it came to thousands gathered together. Neither was the Revival just an emotional, saving crisis; it was a frame of mind, an expectation, a way of looking at the Christian life and how one enters it and lives it. And neither was the Revival just a product of the primitive life of the frontier; it was a movement and a tradition which touched Americans of all classes and of all walks of life. Its ends were the traditional ends of Christianity: to convict men and women of their sins; to urge their repentance; and to affirm their salvation. Its means were novel and romantic, stressing the emotions and educating the feelings to the divine call. Born out of Calvinism in the great awakenings of the eighteenth and early nineteenth-centuries, it carried the seeds of Calvinism's destruction. The logic of salvation by revival and the democratic sentiments of the new American republic left little room for a theology which touted predestined election

and man's inability to accept God's offer of saving grace.

In the first quarter of the century, a pronounced trend showed itself among the Calvinist denominations. The further the Presbyterians and the Congregationalists moved from their centers of theological training in the East the further they went from a strict rendering of Calvinist theology until on the frontier, as the Methodist itinerant preacher Peter Cartwright observed, they began to espouse Methodist theology. And, like the Methodists, they granted preacher's licenses to the uneducated and to those who preached free grace for all who would accept it.¹ Out of this circumstance, midway between the colleges of the east and the frontier in the west, emerged America's most powerful revivalist of the period between the Revolution and the Civil War: Charles Grandison Finney.

In 1821, while articling in Adams, N.Y., for a career in the law, Charles Finney was dramatically converted at the age of twenty-nine as he sat in his office contemplating the state of his soul. Believing, as he stated, that he had received a retainer from the Lord Jesus Christ to plead His case, Finney quit his studies for the bar and sought instruction from his Presbyterian minister, George W. Gale. But Finney soon found himself at odds with what his Presbytery considered orthodox theology. He found he

could not accept Gale's teachings that the atonement was limited to a predestined elect and that the Holy Spirit acts upon a passive sinful nature which is unable to help itself. Rather, Finney accepted the Arminian position that God's saving grace was for all who would freely choose it.²

The ministers who sponsored his candidacy counselled Finney to study in the east as they had done. According to Finney's own account, he refused them, saying that they had been "wrongly educated" and that he wished to have none of the influences they had been subject to, though it seems more likely that Finney resorted to home study, as Gale recollected, because Gale was unable to get him a scholarship.³ Throughout that course of study Finney remained unrepentant in his choice of theologies. But his examiners, like their brethren on the frontier, suspended their beliefs and, in 1824, ordained Finney a minister in the Presbyterian Church. Finney had, of course, assented to the Westminster Confession, the Presbyterian articles of faith, though he obviously was not in agreement with it. When challenged later on this matter by a more traditional member of the denomination he offered the unlikely excuse that he had not been familiar enough with the Confession to know how thoroughly he was out of sympathy with it.⁴ For his Presbytery, however, Finney's ordination was chiefly a matter of practicality. He had already demonstrated an

impressive skill as a revivalist, and they meant to have the fruits of his labour.⁵

Indeed, Finney's powers as a revivalist would soon outstrip those of his fellows. His ways bordered on the uncanny. His eyes were said by his contemporaries to be transfixing. For some individuals, simply to have those orbs trained upon them was enough to apprise them of the horrors of damnation. His memoirs betray a self-satisfaction with his ability to break down the impenitent, and describe outbreaks of contagious weeping, shouting, groaning and fainting during his revival services. Asahel Nettleton, an older, more staid revivalist than Finney, accused him of encouraging such outbreaks by starting the groaning himself, varying his speaking tones, and using violent language and painful body movements. But other witnesses described Finney's preaching as much cooler. Journalist and politician Henry Brewster Stanton's likened his style to a lawyer addressing the court.⁶ Both observations were doubtless accurate, as Finney was able to vary his appeal to suit the tastes of his hearers. The quiet, thoughtful conversions which the wealthier and more educated of Finney's converts experienced under his direction stand in significant contrast to the more raucous revivals over which he presided.

Nettleton was not the only revivalist to scorn Finney and his methods.

Lyman Beecher, the renowned Congregationalist, opposed Finney's version of the revival on the grounds that its excitement was Satanic.⁷ In upstate New York was a wide area, known as the "burnt" or "burned-over district", famous for its religious excitements, excitements which Finney said had been "spurious".⁸ Hence, he set about to burn it over again. As Finney's work spread east across New York State, Beecher could see the smoke of revival drifting toward his own locale and warned Finney that he would not be allowed to set such fires in Boston.⁹

In revival Finney stressed excitement, excitement to get religion, and excitement to keep religion. Religion, Finney argued was in competition with the diverting influences of the world. Excitement and novelty, then, were the revivalist's proper means to divert people's attention from the world and to focus it on the question of religion. "[N]ew measures we *must have*," Finney thundered in his *Lectures on Revivals* in 1835. "And may God prevent the church from settling down in *any* set of forms."¹⁰ The kind of preaching that had harvested souls a generation ago had lost its force, wrote Finney, and was no longer suited to the times. New measures then, cried Finney. We must have them as required and, indeed, God raises them up when the old measures become stale,

formalized and without power to attract attention.¹¹ Oppose them at your own peril, he warned his Presbyterian brethren. Without them "the devil will have the people, except what the Methodists can save."¹² Taking issue with him, his critics observed, just as Finney himself had observed of revivals in the burnt district, when religious excitement is gone so often is religion. But this did not deter Finney, as his prescription for keeping religion was continued excitement.

Even more contentious was the premise on which Finney based his call for religious excitements. Just as God had made rules for producing a crop, Finney argued, He had made rules for producing a revival of religion. There is nothing miraculous about a revival, he continued; it is simply the result of applying the appropriate means, simply a matter of cause and effect.¹³ Critics of the revival spirit had come to the damning conclusion that its works were psychological manifestations, not the works of the Holy Spirit,¹⁴ an assertion with which Finney readily agreed. He was of the opinion that the progress being made toward the understanding of psychology was responsible for the increasing success of the Revival. He stated that formerly revivals had to be prayed down; in his day they could be worked up. What Finney seems to have been arguing was conversion by technique, not by the grace of God, leading his critics to accuse him of

preaching self-conversion.¹⁵

Though his views were puzzling and inconsistent, Finney certainly believed that God was involved in the Revival. God sets the stage, he wrote, plans the circumstances, and His Spirit moves to convict the sinner. He warned that revival would cease if the church were to grieve the Holy Spirit, particularly if church people ceased to "*feel their dependence on the Spirit*."¹⁶ It was not that Finney, in his more reflective moments, would have removed the Holy Spirit from the act of conversion; it was the logic of his methods and the assumptions about human nature behind those methods which did so.

In July of 1827, Beecher, Nettleton, and a number of other Presbyterian and Congregational ministers met in New Lebanon to turn Finney aside from his eastern course, or at least to temper his theology and his methods. But there Beecher, to Nettleton's disgust, began to see in Finney a man after his own heart, so much so that five years later Finney was preaching to Beecher's Boston congregation. Yet, it was with understandable puzzlement that Finney wrote in his memoirs that Beecher had said "he had never seen a man with whose theological views he so entirely accorded, as he did with mine." Their truce lasted for scarcely a decade. It was also with much inaccuracy that Finney recalled that

Beecher had never considered the action of the Holy Spirit to be moral as opposed to physical until Finney had put it to him.¹⁷ It seems extraordinary that Finney, even over the course of nearly half a century, should have forgotten what had been the chief issue in the debate raging among the Calvinists. It had been a century long debate that was, at the time of Finney's detente with Beecher, not far from its climax.

Within the Presbyterian and Congregational denominations was a party of revisionists identified by a number of names usually prefixed with "New": "New Lights"; "New School"; "New Divinity"; "New Measures"; "New Haven" even, after the seat of Yale. Their opponents were known as "Old Lights", or "Old School". The issue between them was the precise nature of human depravity and the role of the Holy Spirit in securing conversion. The Old School clung to the tradition that man's depravity was total and physical; therefore, he is totally unable of and by himself to obey the commandments of God. Thus, in his depraved state, man has no free will. He cannot choose the good. He cannot choose salvation. He is totally unable to help himself in this matter. If he is to be saved or to be damned it is the choice of the Holy Spirit who must act upon man's physical nature in order to bring him out of his state of depravity and secure his

conversion. Therein lies the logic of predestination.

The New School argued that the nature of depravity is moral rather than physical. That is, man is physically able to obey the commandments of God and would do so except that he is morally unable to do so apart from the intervention of the Holy Spirit. This introduction of a natural ability and a moral inability into Calvinist thought, explained Presbyterian minister Asa Mahan, was made to overcome the objection that none can be justly held responsible for not doing what one is incapable of doing, in this case, calling on the saving grace of God. Thus, the Arminian cry "ought implies can" was answered with what supposedly amounted to "can, but will not." It was a subterfuge which, as Mahan wrote, looking back over half a century on the troubles in American Calvinism, "passed at length into a deserved oblivion."¹⁸ Yet, through this distinction between natural ability and moral inability, many of Finney's contemporaries in the New School--most notably Lyman Beecher--tried to introduce a slight element of human moral agency without harming the notion that the work of salvation is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit and while continuing to exclude "all claims of human merit."¹⁹ It was the idea of moral agency that the Old School could not swallow. "Pelagianism!," they cried.

Pelagianism--called so after the fifth century monk, Pelagius--is a doctrine which denies the existence of original sin, or inherited depravity. But more importantly, it is deduced from that position that man is capable of being good on his own without help from God. The logic behind the revivalism of the New Measures men and behind the New School teaching of moral agency naturally leads to the conclusion that the New School was saying that man has the ability on his own to choose the good by choosing God's grace even though the letter of their doctrine denies human volition. Indeed, many of the New Lights were uncomfortable with the logic of a limited atonement which still dogged their theology, but was necessary to their claim to orthodoxy. So they teetered on the edge of Pelagianism.

Not only did the Old Lights see what their rivals were toying with, so did the Methodists who, though sympathetic to the ends of the New School, weighed its doctrine against their Arminian position that claims freedom of will for all men, but only through the enabling grace of God, and found it wanting.²⁰ As the New Lights twisted and squirmed within their theological strait jacket, the Methodists summed up the whole of Calvinism with the derisive chant: "You can but you can't./ You will but you won't./ You're damned if you do./ And damned if you don't."

While men like Beecher tried to promote this new Calvinism and yet

maintain an accord between the Old and New factions, men like Finney, who were unconcerned for the letter of the new doctrine but vehemently concerned with its intent, preached that there is no "inability," only "unwillingness."²¹ Thus, they leaned against the central columns of the temple of Calvinism and shoved them out of their place. Beecher had feared that would be the very result of such preaching, and had tried to keep Finney reined in.²² But Finney had no patience for the posturings of the Old and New Lights and placed their quarrelings high on his list of hindrances to Revival.²³ Hence his famous remark that there is a jubilee in Hell about the same time of year as the meeting of the General Assembly. When his *Lectures on Revivals* were published in 1832, Finney received numerous invitations from Presbyterian leaders to get out of their denomination. He did so the following year and sidestepped into Congregationalism. The year after that the fragile connection between the Old and New Lights shattered in a schism that split both the Calvinist denominations.

One of the subthemes in Protestant America's drive toward the Millennium--toward the imminent establishment of the kingdom of Heaven on earth--was the pivotal importance of the West in converting the nation

and the world. The Presbyterians and Congregationalists had entered a Plan of Union in 1801 so that they might cooperate in the West more effectively. The American Home Mission Society was formed so that the Church might keep up with the moving frontier. And various institutions of higher learning were established in the West so that Protestant America might more readily secure the region as its own. One of those newly formed colleges, Lane Seminary of Cincinnati, brought Lyman Beecher westward, in 1832, to take up duties there as professor of theology and pastor of the second Presbyterian church, and as Beecher saw it, to help secure the Ohio Valley from the designs of the Catholic powers of Europe.²⁴

The first choice of the Lane trustees for professor of theology had actually been Finney, but he had recently got comfortable in a New York City church and so declined the invitation. Still, the seminary had much about it that smacked of Finney, both in its New Measures stance and in the character of a young firebrand, abolitionist and Finney convert, Theodore Dwight Weld.

Weld's antislavery views were already well developed when he entered Lane in 1832, and his abolitionism and interest in the well being of the freed Negroes quickly became the pervasive concern among the Lane

students--so much so that Lane gained a notorious reputation among the citizens of Cincinnati as a hotbed of abolitionism. The trustees, fearful that their students' abolitionist activities would attract a violent backlash--such things were not unknown at the time--passed regulations in September, 1834, prohibiting the discussion of slavery among the students, thereby sparking a student rebellion of sorts.

Meanwhile, John Jay Shipherd, a Presbyterian minister located in northern Ohio, was trying to establish a college there on the popular manual labor school model which, as at Lane, provided students with employment and thereby the financial means to pursue their studies. Shipherd had already formed a colony, named Oberlin after the French evangelist, as his base of support. The troubles at Lane provided him the opportunity to take the next step. He secured the aid of the abolitionist philanthropists Arthur and Lewis Tappan, whose financial support was simultaneously being withdrawn from Lane. He recruited the minister of the sixth Presbyterian church of Cincinnati and dissenting Lane trustee, Asa Mahan, as president of Oberlin and, with him, the "Lane Rebels", upward of fifty of Lane's disaffected students. And Shipherd managed to do what the Lane trustees could not: he hired Finney for his professor of theology.²⁵

* * *

Though not founded with perfectionism in mind, Oberlin quickly became associated with the Perfectionist movement. In September, 1836, during a series of campus revival meetings, a student asked whether or not it was possible to cease from sinning in this life. Anyone who even minimally accepted the contents of the Westminster Confession would have had to answer that sinlessness in this life is not possible. But Mahan, who coincidentally believed he had entered into such a state just a few days earlier replied in the affirmative.²⁶ Convicted by the question and by their president's reply, the faculty began to search the scriptures and their hearts for the answer. Out of their searching came a new appellation to add to the many already attached to perfectionism: "Oberlin Theology".

Finney's memoirs convey the impression that his theology--his theology in final form except for his perfectionism--had emerged fullblown out of his conversion experience. It had, of course, not formed that way, but had evolved in a torturous route through the revivals of upstate New York and through the controversy between the Old and New Lights, finally to collide with the doctrine of Perfection at Oberlin. After teaching at Oberlin for eight years, Finney pulled his lectures together into a *Systematic Theology* in which he trimmed away his

Pelagian tendencies--though he never did think of them as such--and took the position that the work of salvation was entirely a work of grace.²⁷

Such was the strength of this new conviction that he began to teach a limited atonement, though this was a position he later abandoned for his original inclination.²⁸ The Finney who on the eve of his coming to Oberlin had chided Christians in his *Lectures on Revivals* for not having the Holy Spirit wrote in his *Systematic Theology* that none may be Christians without the Holy Spirit.²⁹ The reason for Finney's change in theology is found in his encounter with, and the rigorous working out of, Oberlin's Holy Spirit theology--the doctrine of Perfection. At the hands of Finney and his colleagues the doctrine became in all important aspects the same as Wesley's,³⁰ though Finney was inclined to add some odd bits of Calvinism which could not and did not long adhere to such a system. For, along with his acceptance of a limited atonement, Finney accepted the accompanying logic of the perseverance of the saints. Yet, this he attached to a Holiness theology that warned the believer that there is no holy state in this life from which one could not fall back into sin. As if this were not obvious enough Finney warned within the same work that backsliding into apostasy was a danger among even the truly converted.³¹

Despite this illogic in his system, the one illogic Finney could not

maintain in the face of his acceptance of the Doctrine of Perfection was his Pelagian view of conversion, that is, that man can choose the good--choose conversion--by his own power. That this was precisely the revision in Finney's thinking is made evident in Mahan's remembrances of the early days of Oberlin. Before Finney "learned the way of the Lord more perfectly," wrote Mahan, the Finney led revivals at Oberlin were a round of pledges to cease from sinning.³² It was, indeed, Finney's expressed view at the time that a "revival will decline and cease, unless *Christians are frequently re-converted*."³³ Keeping in mind Finney's rejection of "inability" in favour of "unwillingness"--his great dictum having been "your cannot is your will not"--Finney, though he denied it in his memoirs, surely did at one time think of conversion as an act of will.³⁴ And it was that Finneyite view of salvation that outside observers had expected would color Oberlin teaching. So it was with some relief that the reviewer, in the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, of Asa Mahan's *Scriptural Doctrine of Christian Perfection* wrote: "The point upon which we feared . . . we should find him to have failed, is the distinct and proper recognition of *divine influence* as the efficient cause of the work of sanctification. But his language upon this point seems sufficiently explicit."³⁵

At Oberlin Finney repented of his stresses on excitement, on natural ability and revival mechanics,³⁶ and later in life removed those excesses from his memory. But the approach to the Revival for which, in his early career, Finney was the chief spokesman could not be so easily removed from the revival tradition.

Reflecting on those heady, early days when Oberlin was finding itself, Finney wrote in his memoirs: "I had known somewhat of the view of sanctification entertained by our Methodist brethren. But as their idea of sanctification seemed to me to relate almost altogether to states of the sensibility, I could not receive their teaching."³⁷ He had in fact, at Oberlin, held up the Methodists as an example that demonstrated the practicality of the doctrine and its faithfulness to Christian tradition. Addressing the criticisms of Presbyterian and Congregational divines such as Lyman Beecher, who thought Oberlin a theological and educational horror, Finney asked, that if the doctrine were so prone to bringing about moral and spiritual error as its critics charged, then why have the Methodists not suffered from such error? It was those Perfectionists who had come out of denominations which denied the possibility of entire sanctification who had got themselves in trouble, he countered.³⁸ As will

become apparent, on the former point, Finney was most certainly misinformed, but on the latter, he cut close to the bone. And if his later memory of his debt to Methodist theology was not entirely accurate, certainly the accuracy of his complaint with the Methodist stress on "sensibility" made up for it.

"American revivals owe their peculiarities to sympathy," wrote Presbyterian, soon to be Episcopal, minister Calvin Colton, in 1832, to his British brethren. "The social principle is, doubtless, the grand *medium*, and that is all. But it can never account for the power, or the extent, or results of the work."³⁹ For Colton and other friends of the Revival the social aspect of revivalism meant one thing: the power of the Holy Spirit to move among men was quickened. The more cautious and the downright hostile warned that the social principle might be or was the only agent operating in the Revival.

At one of his campmeetings, not unlike numerous others conducted by him, Peter Cartwright reported that "three hundred fell like dead men in mighty battle; and there was no need of calling mourners, [of calling seekers forward to kneel at the 'mourners' bench' or the 'mercy seat']"⁴⁰ for they were strewn all over the camp-ground; loud wailings went up to

heaven from sinners for mercy, and a general shout from Christians, so that the noise was heard afar off."⁴¹ This, perhaps, represented the farthest extreme in the revival tradition, though it was not unusual. Whole congregations were often subject to such manifestations, some of their members, losing the strength to stand or sit upright, falling swooning, lying paralyzed or unconscious, while others found themselves groaning or shouting or shaking and twitching uncontrollably. Such was the hideousness of some of these exercises that one witness to a campmeeting in the Cincinnati vicinity was reminded of Dante's vision of the damned. The contagion of such excitements was often powerful enough to reach out to the edges of the campground, where the curious, the scoffers and the troublemakers collected to gawk at such goings on, and induced similar exercises there.⁴²

One of the more popular revival exercises that descended upon seekers and scoffers alike was called "the jerks". The jerks affected those seized by them just as the name suggests. They were highly contagious. Cartwright said he witnessed five hundred persons jerking at once. They were also impossible to resist. On such who tried, wrote Cartwright, "the jerks were generally very severe." He related a story, probably apocryphal, though Cartwright certainly believed it true, of a particularly vile sinner

who when seized by the jerks found he could not outrun them, or drown them in whiskey, or curse them away. Finally, a violent jerk broke his neck and took his life. Thus, concluded Cartwright, the jerks are "a judgment sent from God" to urge sinners to repentance, and to demonstrate to the converted and, presumably, especially to those who were horrified by such goings on, "that God could work with or without means, and that he could work over and above means, and do whatsoever seemeth him good, to the glory of his grace and the salvation of the world." Yet, Cartwright was canny enough to see the human element in such things, though, as evidenced by his separation of the "sympathetic" from the "involuntary", his understanding was imperfect. "There is no doubt in my mind," he wrote.

that, with weak-minded, ignorant, and superstitious persons, there was a great deal of sympathetic feeling with many that claimed to be under the influence of this jerking exercise; and yet, with many, it was perfectly involuntary. It was, on all occasions, my practice to recommend fervent prayer as a remedy, and it almost universally proved an effectual antidote.

He also noted that some people, "to obtain relief" from the jerks would "rise up and dance," in that way dispelling the nervous tension which had seized them.⁴³

More popular and long-lived as a revival exercise than the jerks was

the swoon or the faint. Often those effected would be struck down for hours. Some were unconscious for more than a day. Some woke up feeling gloriously converted.⁴⁴ Others returned to consciousness bringing heavenly messages that resulted in noteriety for some and infamy for others as, according to Cartwright, many of these cataleptics returned with messages and visions such as to propel them and any they could take with them into heresy.⁴⁵

Writing in the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, in 1859, Silas Comfort, then pastoring in the Oneida district of up state New York, sought to explain this phenomenon that he labelled "religious catalepsy" and to rebuke those who turned such things into an occasion for reproach. Comfort put forth a theory which stated that there is a continuing operation of the involuntary parts of the brain and the nervous system--in modern parlance 'the unconscious'--even though the voluntary part of the brain had been "overborne and eclipsed" by the excitement and sympathy experienced in revival. Arguing that the "link which connects the immaterial actuating spirit with the material organism, is too subtle to be a matter of intelligent speculation," he concluded that "[w]e cannot usually distinguish between the influence of the Spirit and the operations of our own mind; nor is it necessary that we should." Yet, despite this

assurance that the Spirit may act upon the material in this way, Comfort's concluding remarks indicate that catalepsy was causing the Methodists some internal difficulties in the form of an error which ascribed proof of conversion or a superior piety to those who had experienced or continued to enter cataleptic states. Some even had learned the art of self-inducing such states.⁴⁶ The importance that this phenomenon had gained is made evident by Francis Lieber's description of a revival aftermath. He and his physican companion, having entered a Methodist campground near Philadelphia, examined a few of the numerous young women who lay about the grounds in an unconscious state--young women generally succumbing more frequently than any other group--and by observing pulse, temperature and pupil response concluded that many of those experiencing "the power" were shamming.⁴⁷ Obviously, so great was the belief among some Methodists that fainting away was what was supposed to happen to revival participants, especially among that class that had already proven itself most susceptible, that those whose expectations could not be met by their own nervous makeup found themselves in an extremely awkward position. But by lying down with the rest one could share in the attentions paid to the other cataleptics and escape subsequent questioning as to the level of one's piety. Like Saint Paul, who could not dismiss the validity of

glossalia, yet ranked it among the lesser gifts of the Spirit, Comfort could not dismiss the validity of catalepsy--and by inference any revival exercise--but marked it as the "slenderest of all evidences . . . of grace" in the hope of heading off the fanaticisms which would surely grow up around it.⁴⁸

In his classic work of sixty years ago, *The Psychology of the Methodist Revival*, Sydney Dimond described the conversion experiences of the English followers of John Wesley--accounts which are remarkably similar to those of the American revivals of the following century.

Dimond argued that the role of the "crowd" in breaking down the "inhibitions" of individuals was central to revival psychology. Inhibitions gone, the would-be-converts, spurred on by a need to resolve internal conflicts--often of a sexual nature--threw their wills and imaginations into a conversion experience and their minds and bodies followed in train.⁴⁹ In *The Making of the English Working Class*, E.P. Thompson, less kindly disposed to such an emotionally cathartic experience, more recently called it "sanctified, emotional onanism."⁵⁰

The Revival was not always successful in relieving the sexual tensions of its participants. Rather, it heightened tensions in some who would seek relief by more direct means. The similarity between sexual passion and

some forms of religious passion was well known in some circles and suspected in others. Thus, the leaders of revival campmeetings often found it necessary to post watches to see that none of the camp members would have opportunity to slip away to an amorous rendezvous.⁵¹

Colton's "social principle" was, of course, what is commonly referred to in this century as "crowd psychology"--the emotional pressure which the crowd can exert on the behaviour of the individual. And orchestrating the emotions of the crowd was the revivalist who knowingly or not often wielded great powers of suggestion over his hearers. It is said of Finney, that when he described the sinner's course into hell, tracing it to the earth with his finger, "half his hearers . . . would rise unconsciously to their feet to see him [the sinner] descend into the pit below."⁵² In effect, as Frederick Davenport has argued in *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals*, the revival crowd was often virtually hypnotized.⁵³ Captured by the excitement and sympathy of the revival meeting--not a little of which was created by the music of revivalism⁵⁴--and open to the suggestions of the revivalist and the contagion of the actions of his pew-mates and engaged by his own expectations, the revival participant might well build up the requisite nervous tension and energy to carry him into the various physical and mental manifestations of the Revival.

Knowing the excesses to which revival enthusiasm could be taken, it was not without some truth, and certainly with some irony, that Cartwright claimed for himself and his Methodist brethren a moderating influence. Yet, he had to admit that there were Methodists who, being caught up in the fervour of the Revival, "ran wild, and indulged in some extravagancies that were hard to control." But even worse off, he believed, for their lack of experience in revival were the Presbyterians whose occasional descent into wildness did "great injury [to] the cause of God."⁵⁵ Colton, with Yankee aplomb, went further in claiming a decorous nature for the Revival insisting that in New England and in the northern states as far west as Ohio revival services were conducted with sobriety and restraint as the people there had been properly educated in revival decorum. He conceded difficulties in the West and the South, though implicit in his defense of the revival spirit, he knew that Yankeedom was just as prone to revival excesses. He excused these excesses explaining that the work of the Spirit can be distorted "by the vicious handling of unskilled, or unholy instruments . . . a lamentable device of the adversary to bring the work of the Spirit into discredit." Yet, excitement is bound to be the result when man encounters the reforming power of God and, Colton argued, "there can be no excitement without danger of the perversion of

excited powers." Considering the nature of the question that the Revival asks and the nature of the battle in people's minds when the question is being dealt with, Colton asked if it is not natural that the vices of human nature should "be up . . . and quick for mischief. And shall sinners, therefore, be permitted to sleep on and go down to hell in their sins, because if they are awakened, some will behave themselves badly?"⁵⁶

Thus, practicality became one of the chief defenses of the Revival, for the Revival had the power to awaken even the most stubborn sinner. The Revival was, as Perry Miller observed, in the process of making religion less a matter of metaphysics and more a matter of utility.⁵⁷ In other words, the Revival's effect on the minds of its participants undid both the logic of its Holy Spirit theology and the free will it had granted to the seeker. And the Holiness Revival, as a byproduct of the Revival--as a second work of grace within the Revival--could not escape this tendency, which muddled the theological waters until many revival participants could make no coherent distinction between the operations of grace, of will and of revival psychology. Unlike Finney, they did not have, or did not take, the opportunity to sort them out. Thus, in a practical sense--in the sense of revival practice--they accepted the Pelagian reduction of their Holy Spirit theology, and the reduction of their free will theology by the

psychological determinism of revival technique.

Was it possible that a human being--a member of Adam's race--could be made perfect in this life? For the converts of the Holiness Revival there was only one answer: God, in His word, has specifically demanded holiness from His people; the whole tenor of the scriptures concerns the making of a holy people fit for heaven. Just as the Calvinist position on salvation had been successfully attacked, so the doctrine of Perfection was defended: God cannot justly require what man is unable to perform. The justness of God's commands, therefore, makes perfection a spiritual reality.⁵⁸ Yet, did one not claim too much in claiming perfection? Certainly not, the Perfectionists answered, for "perfection" is the word the scriptures use, and its objectors ought rightly to be silenced once the word is assigned its proper, human definition. Reviewing Methodist Bishop Foster's works on Perfection, Rev. Lewis R. Dunn wrote in the *Methodist Quarterly Review* that the word "has given rise to much misapprehension and prejudice because of its ambiguity in our language. In its original use it signifies wholeness, completeness, adulthood. But in its ordinary use it signifies the possession of every excellence without frailty or fault."⁵⁹ Taking up this common theme, the Rev. Dr. Prindle wrote in the monthly

journal the *Guide to Holiness* : "this is not the perfection of angels in heaven, nor the perfection of human beings in their celestial state . . . but the perfection of *man as man*, where errors of judgment and mistakes, mingle in the actualities of life, where we know but in part."⁶⁰

The critics of Perfection, especially those of a Calvinist bent, who held as deliberate sin what the Methodists called sins of ignorance, complained that the Perfectionists achieved holiness only by lowering the standards of holiness. Not at all, the defenders answered. God can require no more in the way of holiness than man is capable of possessing in this vale of tears. Of course, we still possess our failings and infirmities and our ignorance and are still in the danger of committing errors and returning to our previous sinful state; yet we can be made as perfect as it is possible for us to be. Our perfection is not total, nor need it be. It is enough that we are perfected to the extent we can be and that we know, not that we *can* never sin again, but that, through God's grace, we *may* never sin again.⁶¹ Yet, accompanying those reassuring strictures on the holy life, were also fantastic claims for that life, often couched in bubbly, romantic hyperbole, as to the blessedness, the peace, the joy and the total consecration that come with it--claims to make one wonder if they would not override the caveats against the supposition of sinlessness on the part

of the sanctified. "[T]he heart . . . being changed," wrote an anonymous contributor to the *Guide to Holiness*, "the whole man is changed; it [the heart] being converted from the world to God, from sin to holiness, all the activities of which it is the seat will be turned contemporaneously and forever."⁶² Was this a state in which one might contemplate the weakness of the flesh, or even the unpretentious use of language?

The perfected also believed that the leading of the Spirit was one of the privileges of their state. Such leadings, wrote H. Queripel Jr. in the *Guide to Holiness*, are the "*infallible* evidences by which we may know we have received 'the divine anointing'; exist for the perfected "at all times and under all circumstances"; and those "led by the Spirit walk *blameless* and irrefragable---offending not in the least particular."⁶³

The idea that this exalted state might not be easily reconciled with the limited perfectionism expressed by the doctrine's apologists did not seem to have much credence among many of the Perfectionists, who would claim both much and little at the same time. B.F. Shepard, writing in the *MQR*, within the same paragraph said that the Perfected could not expect to be "exempt from mistakes...[e]rrors of judgment or of ignorance", but they could expect to be "led by the Spirit into all essential truth" and thereby avoid all "essential errors in practise." Shepard did, however, realize the

problem inherent in such a proposition counselling that "[t]here is no surer proof of the folly and impiety of the pretensions made by some among us to superior holiness and light, than the very conduct which they claim to be the result of these, but which is utterly at variance with the Spirit and principles of the word of God." Yet, in this Shepard employed the painful logic that a thing--in this case perfection--is what it is until it is not.⁶⁴

Another theme to be found in both the *Guide* and the *Review* is the "necessity of a distinct work after conversion." The statements are numerous: "no excuse of whatever kind will avail for neglect of the great salvation;" "Holiness is the grand ultimatum of all Christian ministrations . . . without it no man shall see the Lord;" "entire holiness is a necessary preparation for death;" "Let no man assert, by way of objection to this position that all truly converted persons, who do not backslide, are safe." The writers did not go so far as to say that the merely justified would not be admitted into heaven, but they surely implied it. The best face--the most Wesleyan face--that can be put upon their position is that the Christian life is one of growth toward holiness, and if that growth should cease then one is in spiritual trouble. Yet, at the height of the holiness controversy in the M.E.C., in the last quarter of the century, some holiness enthusiasts told their fellow Methodists that the choice was indeed

between holiness--by which they surely meant a second work of grace--and Hell.⁶⁵

According to Wesley, growth in sanctification is completed in an instant, an instant in which one is entirely sanctified. Thus the *Discipline* of the M.E.C. counselled "whoever would advance the gradual change in believers, should strongly insist on the instantaneous."⁶⁶ Out of this arose two interpretations, as explained in the *MQR*, "[t]he one class hold that it is a gradual work, going on from stage to stage until finally all sin is excluded . . . the other, that by a strong exercise of faith the soul may immediately enter into this state."⁶⁷ Most Perfectionists opted for the latter interpretation insisting that that there is no reason to wait for the second work. Simply believing that the work had been done was deemed sufficient to bring it about.⁶⁸

Methodist revivalist Phoebe Palmer, who with her homeopathic physican husband, Walter, preached Holiness in America, Canada and Europe, and published the *Guide to Holiness and Revival Miscellany*,⁶⁹ was the great champion of immediate "sanctification" (the "entire" was often left off in ordinary speech) by faith. To those who counselled the believer that God would perform His works in his own time,

Palmer replied that "God's time is now . . . God wants to save you *now*. God wants to sanctify you *now*." It was a theme that riddled the pages of the *Guide*. There was no need, the *Guide's* readers were told, for the long and painful struggles which believers had commonly accepted as the general course of conversion, nor for living without the blessing of the second work of grace. "[S]eek it now, and expect it NOW!" was the cry. The *Guide* even went so far as to treat its readers to this mind boggling advice: "Stop trying to consecrate yourselves and do it." Such advice becomes even more confusing when mixed with another Holiness theme that counsels: "let Jesus do it."⁷⁰

The ease with which one may enter the sanctified life, and the lack of any excuse for waiting for sanctification served the proposition that the believer's choice was holiness or Hell--which is precisely what Palmer's critics accused her of teaching. For what other excuse could there be for those Christians who did not have the second blessing other than that they loved sin too much to give it up? Those who accepted the doctrine of Holiness, but whose mental equipment was less able to take them into those realms of assurance, peace and happiness which others assured them were awaiting their arrival must have felt extremely distressed over what they could not fail to see as their own lack of faith.

As the last word on Methodist theology, Wesley's position on the "immediacy" of the second blessing is a puzzle. The very separation of justification from entire sanctification indicates a probationary period between the two works, and Wesley stated, in no uncompromising terms, that the holy life was one of growth in spirituality. Describing that process in his sermon on the "Scriptural Way of Salvation," Wesley cited repentance and good works as requisite to sanctification, but in keeping with the proposition that salvation is by faith alone, he cited faith as the only immediate "condition . . . necessary to sanctification." Therefore, taught Wesley, one may have the second blessing immediately by faith.⁷¹

Yet gradualism and growth in perfection remained part of the Methodist Holiness tradition. Thus when a preacher was newly received into a conference these questions were asked of him from the *Discipline*: "Have you faith in Christ? Are you going on to perfection? Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life? Are you groaning after it?" The holiness movement increasingly rejected this approach and, like Phoebe Palmer, embraced the "shorter way." In this they embraced another trend in the Revival tradition, the shortening of the amount of time taken in conversion --to shorten the struggle of the convert, that agonizing "to get in" as Lyman Beecher had described it. Even Finney had passed a number of days

agonizing until he felt the electricity of the Holy Spirit passing through him. But the unremitting logic of the Revival was to get the job done quickly--to bring those under conviction to an assurance of salvation in as brief a time as possible. For both works of grace, the moment of decision became equated with the moment at which the work of the Holy Spirit began.⁷²

Although followers of Wesley in most doctrinal matters, the American Perfectionists, nonetheless, became insistent on the propriety and necessity of testifying to having been sanctified. It is said of Wesley that he never testified to being perfected; rather, he taught Perfection, which was the approach taken by many Methodists including many of the Bishops of the M.E.C.⁷³ Perhaps it was his own advice to speak of Perfection only to the justified so as not to give the Godless the opportunity to "blaspheme" that led Wesley to such an approach. Or, perhaps like the Calvinists, who spoke of being "hopefully converted," he did not like to presume upon the grace of God. But the Holiness tradition in America developed otherwise. Testifying to sanctification was held to be no more unreasonable than testifying to being saved, and was, in fact, believed to be a holy and frequent duty that if unperformed would result in a forfeiture of the blessing.⁷⁴

* * *

At least as notable as the Palmers as a Holiness couple, if not more so, were the Smiths, Robert Pearsall and Hannah Whitall. Whitall, born to Philadelphia Quakers in 1832, married Robert Smith, five years her senior, when she was nineteen. Both were searchers after the things of God and travelled together from Quakerism to Methodism and on to investigate the claims of other sects. Along the way they became involved with William Boardman--Presbyterian minister, Holiness evangelist, and founder of the Higher Life Movement--and with the Holiness movement in general, becoming two of its most important apologists both behind the pulpit and between the covers of their books.

Their explanations of the holy life, according to Benjamin Warfield, were essentially identical, although Warfield has pointed out that Hannah stayed closer to her Quaker roots than did Robert--roots that were not far in their central idea from Wesleyan perfectionism. For the Smiths also "God's time is now."⁷⁵ And what was implied by immediacy in the pages of the *Guide* was made explicit in the Smith's theology: justification and sanctification were both acts of the will. Quoting Fenelon in her runaway best seller, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*, Hannah wrote: "pure religion resides in the will alone." By this he [Fenelon] means that,

as the will is the governing power in man's nature, if the will is set right, all the rest of the nature must come into harmony." According to the Smiths, it is the will, being the more powerful half of the human mind that Hannah divided between the will and the emotions, which delivers the convert into the hands of the Lord. Though the emotions might clamour against conversion, yet the will is the more powerful. Once the seeker realizes this nothing stands between him and conversion. To believe makes it so. But Hannah went on to write that God alone can change our emotions and control our being.⁷⁶ How is it, then, that this being over which we have power by our will can be governed only by God, that is, needs God to produce those changes which bring us into holiness? As Warfield observed the "will which is to control is the very will that is to be controlled." The believer, to the Smith's way of thinking has willed to submit his will. The issue becomes even more complicated with the introduction of Robert's concept of the believer's continued abiding in Christ that is a conscious, willful choice made each moment by a will that is given up yet retained. Their system was certainly Pelagian. Misquoting scripture (either Acts 15: 9, or 1 Peter 1: 22), Robert went so far as to write: "We purify ourselves . . . by faith." Like most Perfectionists he preached a limited perfection--that the perfected are still subject to

human failings and may yet return to their sins. It was also a subjective perfection which removed the perfected from condemnation, and from the sense of condemnation. They possess, in Robert's words, "'a *conscience* void of offense.'"⁷⁷ In this he paraphrased the writer of the letter to the Hebrews who wrote in the ninth and tenth chapters of the believer's conscience being purged of sin and "dead works". But in doing so, Smith made a subtle divergence from the intent of the scripture and from the intent of his own preaching. This divergence widened considerably until Smith, with clear conscience, found himself in bed with the ladies of his Bible study class.⁷⁸

The participants in the Revival, especially of the late ante-bellum period, thought themselves to be living on the eve of the Millennium, a few expecting a sudden return of Christ to initiate the reign of the saints, but most believing that it was the job of the Church, as God worked through it, to usher in the Millennium which would end with Christ's return to claim his inheritance.

Thus, the Revival and its offspring, the Holiness Revival, presented a predominantly postmillennial vision to a society possessed of great expectations. Those twin revivalisms were a significant part of an age of

numerous experiments, projects and reforms, both secular and religious, for perfecting mankind. They dwelt in an America schooled to a utopian self-view. The participants in the Revival shared this view with theorists of Transcendental, communist and Fourierist bents, and with abolitionists, prohibitionists, feminists and the proponents of other sundry and lesser reforms: irenic, sabbatarian, medical, psychological, dietary, and sexual.

The Revival also dwelt in a society that rejoiced in its strategic location achieved in the fullness of time as God worked out His saving plan for the world. The designation of America as the "New World" meant more to Americans than the point in time in which the Anglo-Saxon race had come to occupy it. Its meaning bordered on the mystical and prophetic as the past and future in Bible cosmology met on the Atlantic seaboard where Eden had been preserved and where the promise of the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth--when all things were to be renewed--seemed most likely to be fulfilled. There the idealization of nature by the students of the Enlightenment and the Romantics who followed after them was at its zenith. Many Americans were convinced of the goodness of nature and believed in her curative powers, which acted alike on the physical, moral and spiritual natures of men. Like Asa Mahan, they believed nature to be a teacher of truth and a book to be opened and read

--a book by the same God who had authored the Bible.⁷⁹ And like James Fenimore Cooper's illiterate woodsman hero, Hawk-eye, they read from that book and found no word from Nature's God that some were damned and others saved as determined from the beginning of time.⁸⁰ The natural good and natural religion could not admit such a doctrine. Nature was, then, not only good, but the imparter of good. And where was nature at her best--at the height of her powers--if not in this untouched land? If there were any place on earth where man could be perfected surely, Americans thought, it must be in America.

Thus, many nineteenth-century Americans saw themselves as new men, in a new world, on the eve of a new age. They pushed the Curse a little further to the background and brought the state of the Resurrection a little closer to the foreground. Indeed, some would drag the Resurrection onto this side of the Second Coming.⁸¹

END NOTES

- 1 Peter Cartwright, *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright*, (N.Y./Nashville: Abingdon, 1956, [1856]), pp. 43-44; William Warren Sweet, *Revivalism in America: Its Origin, Growth and Decline*, (N.Y.: Scibner's, 1945), p. 121.
- 2 Charles Grandison Finney, *Memoirs of Rev. Charles G. Finney*, (N.Y.: A.S. Barnes, 1876), pp. 42ff.
- 3 Finney, pp. 45-46; Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York*, (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1965, [1950]), p. 158.
- 4 William McLoughlin, "Introduction," Charles Grandison Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, (N.Y.: Leavitt, Lord & Co., 1835/Harvard, 1960), p. xxiii.
- 5 Cross, p. 159.
- 6 Robert S. Fletcher, *A History of Oberlin College From Its Foundation Through the Civil War*, 2 vols., (N.Y.: Arno, 1971 [1943]), pp. 15, 18.
- 7 Paxton Hibben, *Henry Ward Beecher: An American Portrait*, (N.Y.: Geo. H. Doran, 1927), p. 37.
- 8 Finney, *Memoirs*, p. 78.
- 9 Hibben, p. 37.
- 10 Finney, *Lectures on Revivals*, p. 273.
- 11 Ibid., pp. 269ff.
- 12 Ibid., p 263.
- 13 Ibid., pp. 13-15.

- 14 Perry Miller, *The Life of the Mind in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War*, (N.Y.: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965), pp. 14-20.
- 15 Finney, *Memoirs*, p. 158.
- 16 Finney, *Lectures on Revivals*, pp. 17-18, 282.
- 17 Finney, *Memoirs*, pp. 157-58, 317.
- 18 Asa Mahan, *Autobiography: Intellectual, Moral, And Spiritual*, (London, 1882/N.Y.: AMS, 1979), pp. 200-01.
- 19 Lyman Beecher, *The Autobiography of Lyman Beecher*, II, Barbara M. Cross, ed., (Harvard, 1961), 93-94.
- 20 Rev. F.P. Tracy, "Historical View of the Calvinistic Theology of New England," *Methodist Quarterly Review*, XVIII, (N.Y., October, 1836), 421. (During the period being covered, the *Methodist Quarterly Review* changed its name more than once, beginning as the *Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review* and ending as the *Methodist Review*. For the sake of consistency it will be referred to as the *Methodist Quarterly Review (MQR)*).
- 21 Finney, *Lectures on Revivals*, p. 108; Cross, p. 159.
- 22 McLoughlin, p. xvii.
- 23 Finney, *Lectures on Revival*, pp. 285, 290ff.
- 24 Beecher, p. 252.
- 25 For accounts of the troubles at Lane and the founding of Oberlin see Fletcher, pp. 150-166; Beecher II, 240-49; Finney *Memoirs*, pp. 332-35.
- 26 Finney, *Memoirs*, pp. 350-51.
- 27 Charles Grandison Finney, *Lectures on Systematic Theology*, (N.Y.: George H. Doran, 1878, [1846]), pp. 456, 459.

- 28 Ibid., pp. 544ff, 564; Finney, *Memoirs*, pp. 44-46.
- 29 Finney, *Lectures on Revivals*, p. 122; Finney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 580.
- 30 Finney, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 406-07, 439ff, 458; Asa Mahan, "Asa Mahan on Christian Perfection," Selton H. Smith, et al., *American Christianity: An Historical Interpretation with Representative Documents*, 2 vols., (N.Y.: Scribner's, 1963), pp. 43-48.
- 31 Finney, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 431, 441, 477-78, 544ff.
- 32 Mahan, pp. 248-51.
- 33 Finney, *Lectures on Revivals*, p. 287.
- 34 Finney, *Memoirs*, p. 158; T.L. Smith has written of this swing in Finney's theology, but was not inclined to see it as such a dramatic turn about. See Timothy L. Smith, "Holiness and Radicalism in Nineteenth-Century America," *Sanctification and Liberation: Liberation Theologies in Light of the Wesleyan Tradition*, Theodore Runyon, ed., (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), p. 138.
- 35 "Christian Perfection," *MQR*, XXIII, (April, 1841), 308. The reviewer was, presumably, the editor, George Peck.
- 36 McLoughlin, p. xlix.
- 37 Finney, *Memoirs*, p. 340.
- 38 Finney, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 455-56.
- 39 Calvin Colton, *History and Character of American Revivals of Religion*, (London: Frederick Westley and A.H. Davis, 1832/N.Y.: AMS, 1973), p. 16.
- 40 The mourners' bench was one of the new measures of the Revival tradition introduced early in the nineteenth-century probably by the

Methodists. Critics of this device complained that its use gave the seeker the impression that salvation lay in the act of going forward to the mourners' bench.

41 Cartwright, p. 72.

42 Cartwright, p. 46; Rev. Silas Comfort, "Religious Catalepsy," *MQR*, XLI, (April, 1859), 223; Frances Trollope, *Domestic Manners of the Americans*, (Oxford, 1984/5th ed. GB: Richard Bentley, 1839), p. 143; Frederick Morgan Davenport, *Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals: A Study in Mental and Social Evolution*, (N.Y.: MacMillan, 1905), pp. 225-26.

43 Cartwright, pp. 45-46; For similar stories as to the fate of the wicked who hung about campmeetings for no good purpose see: Donald E. Byrne, *No Foot of Land: Folklore of American Methodist Itinerants*, (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1975), pp. 91-92.

44 Cartwright, p. 104; Finney, *Memoirs*, p. 66.

45 William Hepworth Dixon, *Spiritual Wives*, (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1868), p. 316; Byrne, p. 58; Cartwright, pp. 46-47.

46 Silas Comfort, "Religious Catalepsy," *MQR*, XLI, (April, 1859), pp. 220ff.

47 Francis Lieber, *Letters to a Gentleman in Germany*, (London, 1835), pp. 315-17.

48 Comfort, pp. 220-25.

49 Sydney G. Dimond, *The Psychology of the Methodist Revival: An Empirical and Descriptive Study*, (Oxford, 1926), pp. 106-07.

From time to time the revival maelstrom swirled around John Wesley himself, though he did not consciously call it forth or make revival exercises an expectation. When such exercises did occur, he accepted them for what he believed them to be, not as evidences of piety, but as the struggle of some demon reluctant to give up a lost soul.

In the unsettled society of industrializing and urbanizing Britain, the physical manifestations of revival occurred among the dispossessed, the overworked, the underfed and underslept, the brutalized and the understimulated. That these exercises should find their parallel on the American frontier, where people suffered similar deprivations, seems natural. However, in nineteenth-century America such exercises were not confined to the frontier. As was Whitney Cross's thesis in *The Burned-Over District*, the ecstatic revivalism of up state New York was not the product of frontier religion, but the product of the religion of a settled, prosperous society.

50 E.P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, (GB: Penguin, 1972, [1963]), p.44.

51 Davenport, pp. 81-82.

52 Henry B. Stanton, *Random Recollections*, (N.Y., 1887), p. 42, as quoted in Cross, p. 155.

53 Davenport, p. 227.

54 Music is, of course, one of the most powerful operators on the emotions, and is probably the most effective tool at the disposal of the revivalist. But its place in this discussion will be limited for two reasons: one, because the concern here is with the theology of revivalism and two, because the use of music in revivalism is subject to the approach which proceeds from revival theology. There are numerous works describing the role of music in revivalism; see, for example, Gilbery Chase, *America's Music: From the Pilgrims to the Present*, (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1955), chapters 2, 3 and 11: "New England Reformers", "Singing Dissenters", and "Revivals and Camp Meetings"; and Donald P. Hustad, *Jubilate! Church Music in the Evangelical Tradition*, (Carol Stream: Hope Publishing, 1981).

55 Cartwright, p. 43.

56 Colton, pp. 24, 25, 131-32, 134.

57 Emory Wright, "Is the Modern Camp-Meeting a Failure?" *MQR*, XLIII,

(October, 1861), 592; Miller, p. 64.

58 Rev. Lewis R. Dunn, "Christian Purity," *MQR*, LV, (April, 1873), 212-13; Finney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 160; Rev. W.C. Hosmer, "Philosophy of Christian Perfection," *MQR*, XXXI, (July, 1849), 489.

59 Lewis R. Dunn, "Christian Purity," *MQR*, LV, (April, 1873), 209.

60 Rev. Dr. Prindle, "The Great Salvation," *The Guide to Holiness and Revival Miscellany*, LIII, (N.Y., June 1868), 170. (Further references to this periodical will be cited: "*Guide to Holiness*.")

61 Rev. J. Townley Crane, "Christian Perfection and the Higher Life," *MQR*, LX, (October, 1878), 710-11; George Peck, "Christian Perfection," *MQR*, XXIII, (April, 1841), 313; Rev. Lewis R. Dunn, "Christian Purity" *MQR*, LV, (April, 1873), 224; J.O.A. Clark, "Holiness," *MQR*, LIX, (July, 1877), 511-12, 515-17; Finney, *Systematic Theology*, p. 458; Asa Mahan, "Asa Mahan on Christian Perfection," in Selton H. Smith, et al., p. 44.

62 J.W.D.G. "What is Religion?" *Guide to Holiness*, LIII, (June, 1868), 180.

63 H. Queripel, Jr., "Led by the Spirit," *Guide to Holiness*, LIII, (June, 1868), 174.

64 B.F. Shepard, "An Essay on Christian Perfection," *MQR*, XVII, (July, 1835), p. 382.

65 William Wesley Totheroh, "Is There a Necessity of a Distinct Work in the Soul After Conversion," *Guide to Holiness*, LIII, (January, 1868), 25; Lewis R. Dunn, "Christian Purity," *MQR*, LV, (April, 1873), 210; "Editorial: Will You Invest," *Guide to Holiness*, LIV, (July, 1868), 25; Rev. W.C. Hosmer, "Philosophy of Christian Perfection," *MQR*, XXXI, (July, 1849), 491; "Holiness," *MQR*, XXXIII, (October, 1851), 515; J.O.A. Clark, "Holiness," *MQR*, LIX, (July, 1877), 514; "The Central Idea of Christianity," *MQR*, XXXIX, (January, 1857), 97-98; Carl Oblinger, *Religious Mimesis: Social Bases for the Holiness Schism in Late*

Nineteenth-Century Methodism, The Illinois Case, 1869-1885, Monograph Series no. 1, (Institute for the Study of American Religion: Evanston, Illinois, 1973), p. 5.

66 *The Doctrine and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America*, (Philadelphia: Henry Truckniss, 1798/Rutland: Academy, 1979), p. 185.

67 Rev. Lewis R. Dunn, "Christian Purity," *MQR*, LV, (April, 1873), 215.

68 Rev. W.C. Hosmer, "Philosophy of Christian Perfection," *MQR*, XXXI, (July, 1849), 491-92.

69 The *Guide to Holiness*, originally the publication of Rev. Timothy Merritt, was taken over by the Palmers in 1865.

70 Sister P. "The Tuesday Meeting: God's Time," *Guide to Holiness*, LIII, (March, 1868), 93; W.F.R. "Am I a Christian?," *Guide to Holiness*, LIV, (August, 1868), 45-47; J.R. Wilson, "He is Faithful that hath Promised," *Guide to Holiness*, LIV, (July, 1868), 10-11; William Wesley Totheroh, "Is There a Necessity of a Distinct Work in the Soul After Conversion?" *Guide to Holiness*, LIII, (January, 1868), 25; George W. Pouder, "Stop Trying," *Guide to Holiness*, LIII, (June, 1868), 181; "Tuesday Meeting," *Guide to Holiness*, LIII, (June, 1868), 190.

71 John Wesley, "The Scriptural Way of Salvation," *John Wesley*, Albert Outler, ed., (Oxford, 1964), pp. 277-82.

72 *The Discipline*, chap. i, sec. ix, question 4, cited by George Peck in "Christian Perfection," *MQR*, XXIII, (April, 1841), 139; Synan, p. 29; Hibben, p. 29; Barbara Cross, I, 28-30; Finney, *Memoirs*, pp. 12ff; Henry Ward Beecher, "Introduction," to William C. Conant, *Narratives of Remarkable Conversions and Revival Incidents*, (N.Y.: Derby & Jackson, 1858), pp. xix-xx; Cross, pp. 175, 181. In contrast to the ordination ritual of the M.E.C., the Church of the Nazarene has had no written service of ordination; however, from its earliest days, its General Superintendents have asked those who seek ordination if they are "presently in the enjoyment of entire sanctification," as befits the Nazarene belief that sanctification may be had, without delay, by faith.

(Conversation with Dr. W. Greathouse, General Superintendent, Church of the Nazarene, 13 June 1986, at the Canada West District Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene held in Regina.)

73 Benjamin Warfield, *Perfectionism*, (N.Y.: Oxford, 1931), pp. 216-17; Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War*, (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1965, [1957]), p. 128.

74 Rev. Lewis R. Dunn, "Christian Purity," *MQR*, LV, (April, 1873), 224-25; Finney, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 460-61; Peter Gardella, *Innocent Ecstasy: How Christianity Gave America an Ethic of Sexual Pleasure*, (Oxford, 1985), p. 155; Anson Abbott, "My Experience," *Guide to Holiness*, LIII, (May, 1868), 149; "Christian Experience, Extracts From Correspondence Furnished by a Pastor," *Guide to Holiness*, LIII, (March, 1868), 84; Rev. A.B. Smith, "How the Blessing was Lost, and How Regained," *Guide to Holiness*, LIII, (March, 1868), 69-70.

75 Hannah Whitall Smith, "How to be Holy" *Guide to Holiness*, LIII, (January, 1868), 16.

76 Hannah Whitall Smith, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*, (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1973), pp. 102-04.

77 See Warfield's discussion of the Higher Life Movement in *Perfectionism*, pp. 247-311.

78 See below, chapter 3, p. 117.

79 Mahan, p. ix.

80 J. Fenimore Cooper, *Last of the Mohicans*, (n.p.: T. Nelson & Sons, n.d., [1826]), pp. 156-59.

81 In the "Preface" of his work *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretation of American Destiny* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), Conrad Cherry has remarked: "Throughout their history Americans have been possessed by an acute sense of divine election. They

have fancied themselves a New Israel, a people chosen for the awesome responsibility of serving as a light to the nations, a city set upon a hill. This prepondering self-image, in its original form as well as in its myriad mutations, has served as both a stimulus of creative American energy and a source of American self-righteousness. It has long been, in other words, the essence of America's motivating mythology (p. vii)."

For discussions of the Millennium, Utopia and the role of Nature in America see: Joel Nydahl, "From Millennium to Utopia Americana," *America as Utopia*, Kenneth M. Roemer, ed., (N.Y.: Burt Franklin, 1981), pp. 237-41; Perry Miller, "Nature and the National Ego," *Errand into the Wilderness*, (Harvard, 1956), pp. 204-16; Russel B. Nye, "The American Sense of Mission" and "The American View of Nature," *This Almost Chosen People: Essays in The History of American Ideas*, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1966); and Ernest Lee Tuveson, *Redeemer Nation: The Idea of America's Millennial Role*, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1968), *passim*.

Americans, of course, were not unambiguous in their feelings for Nature and her role in America. They waged devastating war upon her for her resources; their view of the Redman fluctuated between child of nature and Godless savage, with tragic results on both counts; and nineteenth-century Americans, who could afford to do so, often travelled abroad for their health, particularly to the Old World.

CHAPTER 3

PERILS OF PERFECTIONISM:

SPIRITUAL WIFERY AND

RELATED EXPERIMENTS

For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

Matthew 22:30

Stressing the spiritual value of the emotions, removing inhibitions, inducing automatisms, trances and visions, the Revival offered its participants a new and broadening freedom of religious expression, and offered spiritual authority and revelation to the individual on an unprecedented scale. In the hands of most converts of the Revival, this new power was wielded within relatively safe limits. But in the hands of some it yielded revelations and new authority which neither ecclesiastical nor scriptural authority could counter, especially in those whose view of their perfectedness was total.

William Hepworth Dixon identified two burnt districts--the one in western and up state New York; the other in Massachusetts--as the original seats of spiritual wifery in America.¹ This doctrinal aberration was a product of the heady revivals which pervaded those areas in the late 1820's and early 1830's--the same revivals from which sprung Mormonism, Adventism and a renewed passion for achieving perfection in this world.

"In the winter months of 1834," wrote Dixon, "a general convention of the New York Perfectionists was called at Manlius . . . in Onandaga county,

six or seven miles from Oneida Lake." There the leading lights of New York Perfectionism, the Reverends Hiram Sheldon of Delphi; Erasmus Stone of Salina; and Jarvis Rider of De Ruyter held forth on the privilege of being perfected and the assembled "Saints"--as they began to call themselves--set to wondering if the old world were not about to pass away and the Millenium to break in upon them.²

If this were indeed the case, they argued, the Law to which the old world was subject would also be passing away and with it the social forms and obligations which governed the saints under the present dispensation. How, then, should the saints live? Would "the old marriage vows . . . be binding in the new heaven and the new earth"? If the "old rights" were passing away; if the "kingdom of heaven was at hand; and [if] in that kingdom . . . every man was to be happy in his choice [then] it was not only right, but prudent, to prepare betimes for that higher state of conjugal bliss." As the Mormons believed, so did the Perfectionists at Manlius: "that all arrangements for a life in heaven may be made on earth; that spiritual friendships may be formed, and spiritual bonds contracted, valid for eternity".³

The immediate result of this thinking was the institution of a new Shakerism championed by the lovely and well born Miss Lucina Umphreville

of Delphi. Umphreville, claiming special insight into matters concerning the sexes and the Kingdom, instructed the ladies of her community that love and marriage belonged to the "unregenerate world". Therefore, she concluded, single women were not to marry and married women were to behave towards their husbands as though they were not married. So effective was Umphreville's message that disconcerted and disbelieving husbands and suitors called her "Miss Anti-marriage".⁴

This appellation held true only in the physical sense. Umphreville did not counsel that men and women may not associate with one another. Quite the contrary; special relationships between men and women became the order of the day, but these were to be the relationships of brothers and sisters in the spirit--their affections kept chaste and pure and consummated by nothing more than the exchange of a "holy kiss". Those fortunate enough to be blessed with such a relationship began to think of themselves as "spiritual husbands" and "spiritual brides".⁵

Knowledge of the true worth of these spiritual pairings was granted to Erasmus Stone one night in a dream in which a "mighty host of men and women filled the sky" each distressfully in search of his or her heart's desire. Stone's interpretation of his vision was that the "mighty host" were the risen dead on the day of judgement and that their pain was

caused by a realization that they had not been truly paired in life. Thus they rushed to and fro seeking their true mates in the spirit.⁶

This was a revelation eagerly received and quickly acted upon. In Stone's congregation was one Eliza Porter, whom Dixon described as "a married woman of some beauty and much intelligence . . . an early convert to holiness, and a leading member of the Church." She was also, by the evidence of their affinities, one for the other, the spiritual wife of her minister. Hiram Sheldon also discovered his spiritual wife; she was not Mrs. Sheldon, but a Miss Sophia Cook. Jarvis Rider had similar luck. It seems Lucina Umphreville herself was his spiritual wife. She concurred and together they travelled and preached, explaining their chaste relationship and testifying to having "attained to the state of the resurrection of the dead." This marriage of souls ended when Rider found another who more truly fit his idea of a spiritual mate. Umphreville then entered into a union with Rev. Charles Lovett, who hailed from the burnt district in Massachusetts. That was in the summer of 1836. Less than three years later, Lovett was also professing his spiritual affinity for another.⁷

In central Massachusetts, in the county of Hampton, lies the township

of Brimfield in which, said Dixon, dwelt "a number of clever, beautiful and pious women . . . bright and peerless creatures who have power either to save or to wreck men's souls." Among these Dixon listed the Annesley sisters, who, coming from Albany, had brought the Umphreville doctrine to Brimfield; and four fast friends: the Brown sisters, Miss Maria and Miss Abby; Miss Flavilla Howard; and Miss Mary Lincoln, a young lady whose appearance, charm and persuasive abilities matched those of Lucina Umphreville.⁸

When the Annesley sisters brought their message to Brimfield, Mary Lincoln's heart was touched. She quit the respectability of Presbyterianism and went over to the Perfectionist camp where she quickly became the darling of the movement and of its local leaders, the Reverends Simon Lovett and Chauncey Dutton. Her enthusiasm was without reserve. Explained Dixon: "She felt happy in this new liberty of the spirit, under which she could say what came into her head, and do what came into her heart." Yet, she and her friends longed to perform some act of taking up the cross thus proving their zeal for the Lord by standing with Him against the world.⁹

In February 1835, Simon Lovett brought John Humphrey Noyes to Brimfield. At that time, Noyes was a rising star in Perfectionist circles

who had attracted notice for his strange views on the second coming and on the nature of the holy life. Noyes was well received by the Brimfield saints--so well as to disconcert the young itinerant. There was in practice among the Brimfield saints a display of affection between the sexes which unsettled Noyes's sensibilities. The tender looks, the pressing of hands, the exchange of the holy kiss, performed in innocence, seemed to Noyes to be done in such a way as to invite disaster. Most troubling was the displays of affection which the young ladies directed at their ministers and at their visiting revivalist. Fearing that he was about to be tried beyond his ability to endure, Noyes fled Brimfield without a word to the saints who had hosted him, heading out into a New England winter night, to walk overland some sixty miles to his father's home in Putney, Vermont, where he arrived the next evening in miserable condition.¹⁰

The wisdom of Noyes's departure, if not his method, was borne out by later events. Mary Lincoln and Maria Brown finally hit upon a means of taking up the cross. "Killing shame" was the phrase used to explain their intent, which was to become despised by the world for Jesus's sake. Late one night in March they entered the bedroom of Simon Lovett, having earlier arranged to have themselves discovered. According to Noyes, the only impropriety committed was the breaking in upon the minister, though

more than that may have taken place. "Bundling" was what New Englanders called the chaste presence of two engaged people in bed. "The bundling at Brimfield", as the incident came to be known, was probably a polite phrase for describing what people believed had really happened. Whatever the case, Lincoln and Brown had the scandal they had hoped for.¹¹

Feeling the sting of that scandal, Mary's physician father entrusted her to the home and care of Mrs. Alice Tarbell, a holiness-minded woman whose past warnings to Mary and her friends against enthusiasm had gone unheeded. But Mary was beyond reaching in her exalted state. She left the Tarbell home and began to prophesy the imminent destruction of Brimfield by fire. Mary was able to convince Maria Brown and Flavilla Howard that they should flee to the hills, in the manner of Lot and his family, but was accompanied only by Flavilla, as Maria was restrained by her sister. In a March rain, the two of them travelled through snow and field and brush, discarding part of their clothing to quicken the pace and praying that God would stay his hand against Brimfield. Their prayers were answered, but for a time, while they lay sick in bed, it was feared their efforts on behalf of Brimfield would cost them their own lives.¹²

As Noyes recorded in a letter to Dixon, Mary never did give up her

"delusions". She became spiritual wife to Chauncy Dutton, later married him, carried on a peripatetic ministry with him in New York and in 1843 the two of them fell in with the Adventists to await the end of the world.¹³

In their tours about New York State, Jarvis Rider, Lucina Umphreville and Charles Lovett became occasional guests at the Thomas Chapman residence in Bridgeport on Oneida Lake's south shore, the Chapmans being inclined to give aid and comfort to those labouring for the cause of Perfection. Sometime in the summer of 1836, these three were put up in the Chapman house along with Maria Brown, who had attached herself to Umphreville for spiritual guidance. Mr. Chapman was often away working on the construction of the Chenango Canal and on one of those occasions Jarvis Rider informed Mrs. Chapman that she was his spiritual wife. (She was not the first married woman of Bridgeport to whom Rider had made this confession.)¹⁴ Instructed and assured by her pious visitors as to the truth of their new doctrine and her status with respect to Rider, Mrs. Chapman saw the justness in Rider's claim and agreed to this spiritual union.

It is probable that Rider's relationship with Mrs. Chapman was not

strictly of that higher nature which he and his former spiritual wife had advocated. When Chapman came home and learned of his wife's new status, he beat up the spiritual husband and threw him out of the house. However, he soon repented of this action and for a while was reconciled to the idea that his wife was Rider's spiritual mate. It may have been--so the story goes--that Chapman's rage produced an hysterical blindness. Believing this to be a sign from God, he begged Rider's forgiveness and took him back into his home. But, on recovering his sight, Chapman left both Bridgeport and his wife as did Rider whose affinity for Mrs. Chapman seems not to have been eternal after all. According to Whitney Cross, it was this episode which convinced Hiram Sheldon and Erasmus Stone, among others, to take their spiritual marriages into the physical realm.¹⁵

John Humphrey Noyes was twenty years old, in 1831, when he was gathered up in the Revival and made his resolve "to live or die" for the Millennium.¹⁶ Fulfilling that resolve, he began seminary studies, in Andover first, and then at Yale. It was during this seminary career that he made two remarkable theological discoveries which were to propel him out of respectable, Christian society. First, he discovered the invisible return of Christ, as would the followers of William Miller and of Charles

Taze Russell after him. But Noyes's conclusion is remarkable in that the date he chose for that event was not based on failed chiliastic prophecy; rather, it was based on his interpretation of the events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem. Noyes believed that the second coming had occurred in AD 70.¹⁷ Second, he discovered that a Christian does not sin. Wrestling with this revelation, he preached one February evening in 1834 on the words of Saint John: "He that committeth sin is of the devil". Arguing that night that either one is "totally pure and perfect in Christ" or one is not in Christ at all, he found that he was both joyfully cleansed of all sin and made incapable of sinning.¹⁸ In Noyes's mind, these two points of his new theology were inseparable, for how was it possible for men to be made perfect except that Christ had already returned and established his Kingdom? Like his contemporary, Joseph Smith, Noyes's revelations led him to the conclusion that existing ecclesiastical structures had no relation to the church which Christ had established in the first-century.¹⁹

Of equal significance during this period was Noyes's adoption of the Apostle Paul as his archetype. This was the beginning of a veneration which would last a lifetime. Not only was Paul perfect in the sense that he did not sin, thought Noyes, but also perfect in the sense that he was "above human judgment". For Noyes Paul was not only without fault,²⁰

but had demonstrated that "*perfect certainty*" which Noyes sought.²¹

In his perfection Noyes emulated Paul; in his emulation of Paul he layed claim to his own Apostleship.²²

Steadier minds at Yale sought to deter Noyes from his perfectionism, but admonishments from Nathaniel Taylor and threats to revoke his license to preach were in vain. When his license was finally revoked he countered saying: "I took away their license to sin and they go on sinning; they have taken away my license to preach but I shall go on preaching."²³ Thus he engaged himself for two years in a troubled itinerancy.

A deep and disturbing insecurity was the antithesis of Noyes's Apostolic delusions. A shy, tortured adolescent, he entered into adulthood with an overwhelming need to be in control--in control of himself, his environment, his family, friends and associates. His experience of perfection and the self-exaltation which went with it could be fairly interpreted as Noyes's reaction to the inadequacies he so keenly felt.²⁴

His career as a travelling evangelist was marred by frequent and bitter quarrels with others, who like himself, wished to demonstrate the superiority of their particular revelation and the righteousness of their claim to command the armies of perfectionism. He fought with his friend James Boyle for control of Boyle's will and for control of *The*

Perfectionist, the paper they co-edited. He fought with Amos Smith, a preacher, and with T.R. Gates, editor of *The Battle Axe*--men with wills as strong as his own--for control of Boyle. He traded rebukes with James Latourette, the de facto leader of New York perfectionism. He locked wills with the demented Charles Weld, brother of Theodore, who had once abandoned him in New York City while they toured together. (On that occasion, Noyes's insecurities threatened his sanity.) He successfully bent the will of Simon Lovett to his own when Perfectionists more conservative than himself dispatched Lovett to rescue him from his heresies. Despite some limited success in his itinerancy, Noyes felt largely battered and rebuffed by the world.²⁵ His insecurities and his bouts with what William James would have called "morbid melancholy"²⁶ eventually drove him back home to Putney where he started to build a community of believers from whom he could expect the faithfulness to which he felt himself entitled--a community over which he would have undisputed control.²⁷

In establishing such a community Noyes took the position that salvation was to be found in conformity to his authority and beliefs. Much of his family readily submitted and entered into the experience of perfection. Those who resisted, particularly his mother, found themselves the

targets of brutal mental assaults until they should bend to Noyes's will.

According to Robert David Thomas, Noyes was absolutely desperate to have his mother's unwavering allegiance. Believing himself to be both a Christ and a father figure, he required affirmation of these beliefs by union with a symbolic figure of pure and innocent motherhood.²⁸

From this familial base and with the establishment of the Putney Bible Class, Noyes began to attract a trickle of converts and more, gaining the hand of the wealthy Harriet Holton as the end result of a subscription taken out on his new periodical, *The Witness*.

While developing his following of perfected people, Noyes was also developing ideas about the social forms which should govern that following. To his chagrin a letter he had written about that very thing in January 1837 to David Harrison of Connecticut fell into the hands of his old nemesis, Theophilus R. Gates of Philadelphia. Dixon later dubbed it "the Magna Charta of Pauline Socialism".²⁹ Published in Gates's periodical, it became infamous as "the Battle Axe Letter". In it Noyes asserted,

When the will of God is done on earth...there will be no marriage . . . In a holy community there is no reason why sexual intercourse should be restrained by law . . . God has placed a wall of partition between the male and female during the apostasy for good reasons, which will be broken down in the resurrection for equally good reasons;

but woe to him who abolishes the law of apostasy before he stands in the holiness of the resurrection . . . I call a certain woman my wife; she is yours; she is Christ's; and in Him she is the bride of all saints.³⁰

In this Noyes's perfectionism was revealed in all its antinomian daring.

Quoting Saint Paul: "*He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law,*"

Noyes taught that those who accepted Christ's gift of perfection were no longer bound by any law except the law of love into which Christ had concentrated the entire requirements of the Law.³¹ Slowly he coaxed his people to follow him into "the holiness of the resurrection" and into a knowledge of the implications which lay therein.

Noyes's views on this subject were not entirely theological. He believed he had hit upon a principle and a method which brought free love into the realm of the practical and also restored the practice of love-making to the form which God had intended. Wishing to spare his wife the pain and grief of child bearing and miscarriage, of which she had had ample experience, Noyes began to experiment with what he called "male continence"--refraining from ejaculation during sexual intercourse. Not only did this prove to be an excellent form of birth control, but also, Noyes found, produced certain social and spiritual benefits. He theorized that

sexual intercourse had two separate purposes, "amative" and "propogative," the separation of which could and should be maintained through the practice of male continence. Noyes instructed that it is unnecessary and unhealthy for every act of intercourse to proceed to the involuntary or procreative stage. It is unnecessary because any normal male possesses the requisite self control and can be taught to end intercourse while still in the amative or voluntary stage and also because the amative is the most enjoyable stage. It is unhealthy for the woman because it may lead to unwanted pregnancies and unhealthy for the man because "seminal waste" can lead to numerous "atrocious" diseases.³² Ejaculation during intercourse without procreative intent, Noyes argued, was no better than masturbation or interruptus; whereas continence avoids the exhaustion, coldness and self disgust which results from ejacualtion and promotes "self control" and the "retention of life". As to the amative aspect of intercourse, its existence apart from the procreative indicates a social function--social in the sense that it is not reserved for one person. Because sexual intercourse need not result in pregnancy except when planned and because sexual intercourse is the highest form of communion between the sexes it is natural and beneficial that men and women should freely engage in the amative.³³ For Noyes this meant an end to the

barriers which had hitherto prevented the complete expression of Christian love.

Armed with both doctrine and a practical theory, Noyes believed he could put to rout any objections to the establishment of that community of believers in which each would be married to all--a community for which he had been planning even before the discovery of "male continence". Proceeding cautiously with his teachings and designs, Noyes finally initiated the first step toward "Bible Communism" in May of 1846 when he and his wife entered into a complex marriage with two of his disciples: George and Mary Cragin.

George and Mary Cragin entered this world as New England Calvinists "of the strictest rite"--George in Massachusetts in 1808 and his wife, born Mary Johnson, in Maine in 1810. The necessity of striking out alone at an early age took George to New York City where he was converted at a Charles Finney revival. Mary migrated to New York City with her family where she was engaged in caring for the children of the poor in an infant school. A chance meeting led them to the discovery of mutual religious and social concerns, then to a relationship and then, with George's persistence, to marriage. According to Dixon, who heard it from George

Cragin, Mary's looks were striking and her personality delightful. Cragin's passion for his young wife was swiftly elevated to the level of idolatry, so much so that Cragin feared it would annul all other passions, including that for the Church. He could not help but feel there was a wrong spirit in him.³⁴

George was employed as "agent, lecturer and publisher" for a number of philanthropic organizations dedicated to the aid, comfort and reform of destitute women. In 1839 he was representing the interests of the Female Moral Reform Society, a prominent Magdalene society with ties so close to Oberlin College that their literary agent was also acting as a college fundraiser. George and Mary Cragin were believers in the doctrine of Perfection as it was taught and understood by Finney and his fellow divines at Oberlin.³⁵

However, the Cragins made contact that year with some disciples of Noyes, most notable among them the Reverends Abram C. Smith and John B. Lyvere, and were profoundly affected by reading a Noyes pamphlet "The Power of Faith". Becoming convinced that true, Biblical perfection meant that one *would* never sin again in this life--contrary to the Oberlin teaching that one *may* never sin again--they switched camps and joyfully took upon themselves "the odium . . . of [their new] Perfectionism".

Learning of George's defection, the good ladies of the Board of the Female Moral Reform Society waved their copy of the "Battle Axe letter" in his face and summarily dismissed him.³⁶

Finding themselves without means of support and with dwindling savings, the Cragins consulted their guide and mentor Abram Smith, who offered them a place in his farm home at Roundout Creek some seventy-five miles from New York. Finding no other ready solution to their plight, they accepted Smith's offer and in March, 1840, boarded the steamer for Roundout.³⁷

Whitney Cross has identified Abram Smith as being among those who left the Methodist Episcopal Church about same the time (1828) as James Latourette, who left to form a group of believers with a greater commitment to holiness than he had found in the M.E.C. Latourette's centres of influence were in New York City and in Albany, in the latter place being associated with the Lovetts, the Annesleys and Chauncey Dutton. Smith, a lesser light, established a small following at Roundout and later fell under the influence of Noyes, with whom he occasionally laboured for the Lord.³⁸

The Cragins found the Smith home not quite as they expected. Although used to frugal living, they found their new quarters absolutely spartan.

Accustomed to the meek and mild Mrs. Smith who visited in the city, they found their hostess to be a shrew at home. It became quickly apparent to them that the Smith's marriage was in a very sorry state.³⁹

Not long after the Cragin's arrival, as George recounted, "Mr. Smith succeeded in compelling his wife to leave his house and take refuge over the Creek among her relatives." At about the same time Smith began his efforts to cure George of his "marriage spirit," that overwhelming love for his wife, which so troubled his spiritual sensitivities, and of which Smith had no experience. Smith's methods proved quite distressing to Cragin. Smith, he related, instructed Mary "one evening to feign distress of mind . . . and to ask permission of me to repair to his room for spiritual advice. My wife was so completely magnetized by him and under his power, that she would do almost anything he bade her." Night after night this procedure was repeated while Cragin was left alone to wrestle with his "marriage spirit".⁴⁰

George was not entirely convinced of the wisdom or of the righteousness of Smith's doings. Neither was Noyes, who caught wind of the troubles in the Smith household while hobnobbing with fellow Perfectionists in New York City that May. The situation that awaited Noyes when he arrived at Roundout was acute. A warrant had been issued

against Smith "for a breach of the peace in turning his wife out-of-doors" and there was strong talk in the area about administering the miscreant with a dose of frontier justice, perhaps a good measure of tar and feathers. Noyes admonished Smith for his dealings with the Cragins, reminding him that Saint Paul had taught: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient". Cragin was admonished for a "claiming, legal spirit" which he denounced in himself before forgiving his wife and Smith. Then Noyes took Smith to the magistrate to answer the warrant giving assurances that the reverend gentleman would "keep the peace and support his wife". But, fearing the locals would not be placated, Noyes took the belligerent Smith, who was quite willing to stay and trade blows with his neighbours, away for a two week period of cooling off.⁴¹

Upon his return, Smith once again began a subtle campaign to control the mind, but not only the mind, of Mary Cragin, hinting that Noyes, whom she greatly admired, had secretly approved of their previous relationship. In late summer, some Pennsylvanian saints visiting Roundout invited Smith to go back with them on a preaching tour which would take them through New York City. Smith talked Mary into tagging along as far as the city to spend a week vacationing there--a vacation from which she returned greatly troubled. Her husband, shortly thereafter making his own

trip to New York, discovered the source of that trouble. While visiting the Lyveres he was informed by those good people that Smith had not gone on to Pennsylvania immediately as planned, but had stayed in New York with Mary; and worse still, Smith had named Mary as his spiritual wife and warned her that to reveal their "secret marriage" to George "would cause an everlasting separation between them."⁴²

On Cragin's return to Roundout, his wife made her confession, he forgave her and they both awaited the confrontation which was sure to come when Smith returned from Pennsylvania. Being told that Cragin knew all, Smith's response was to throw up a wall of pious self-deceit. "His manner of defense", wrote Cragin, "was peculiarly his own, being a compound of preaching, praying, and ejaculation, interpolated with singing, amens, and hallelujahs." He kept up this front until in audience with Noyes in Putney he confessed his sins.⁴³

According to George, who claimed to have been cured of his "marriage spirit", the Cragins left Roundout as brother and sister in the Lord.⁴⁴ At least, that is what he would have had Dixon believe. They would not see Abram Smith again until they were all reunited in Noyes's experiment in "Bible Communism".

During the years when Noyes was educating his sheep into that communism of all things that is reserved for the sanctified, he was scrupulously careful to keep them from straying prematurely--though some did--into the sexual freedoms which awaited them in the future. Their shepherd would open the gate when the time was right. Until then Noyes's little community in Putney was witnessing within itself a very satisfactory growth in brotherly and sisterly love especially between the Cragins, who had taken up residence in Putney, and the Noyeses.⁴⁵

Noyes was fascinated by Mary Cragin who was in turn in awe of him and in constant need of his counsel. Robert Thomas has described her as having "difficulty saying no," a trait which made it necessary for Noyes to intercede on her behalf on more than the one occasion already described and also to comfort her in the misery she felt afterwards. According to Thomas, there was in Noyes's mind an image growing of his "ideal mate"; the image was of Mary Cragin.⁴⁶ But she was not the first. As a shy seminarian and fledgling preacher, Noyes suffered an infatuation with one Abigail Merwin--an infatuation divinely sanctioned in a dream in which Noyes learned of Abigail's spiritual marriage to himself. She, however, received no such revelation and ignoring his profession of eternal love married another.⁴⁷ During his courtship with Harriet Holton he assured

her that Abigail no longer meant anything to him. Yet, there would be others, he knew, in the community of the sanctified that he was envisioning, who would mean a great deal to him. Thus, included in his marriage contract with Harriet was a provision for the sharing of spiritual mates.⁴⁸ It seems likely that the marriage to Harriet was one of convenience anyway, that is, of the kind of convenience that comes with money. An incensed Noyes rejected just such a suggestion by Dixon, but the evidence he presented in his defense seems only to blacken his case.⁴⁹ And though married to Harriet, Abigail was not far from his thoughts. In 1845, having heard that Abigail had been widowed, Noyes sent word asking her to join his group in Putney. Again she refused him.⁵⁰ After that, Mary Cragin filled the role which Abigail would not.

Complex marriage was initiated with a May evening stroll taken by Noyes and Mary during which Noyes took, as he said, "some personal liberties" which, however, did not go as far as love making. They felt duty bound to discuss their actions with Harriet and George as the four of them had always discussed the love that was growing up between them. George, although having been amply prepared by Noyes for the coming of such things, at first reacted bitterly, calling Noyes an "Abram Smith". However, a reconciliation followed and they agreed to grant one

another the liberties toward which Noyes had been guiding them. Having taken the first step, Noyes then gradually introduced the practice of those liberties to the rest of his Putney following. By June of the following year the practice of those liberties had advanced so well Noyes was moved to announce that the Kingdom of God had indeed arrived.⁵¹

Unfortunately for Noyes, the Putneyites outside his brave, little band of communists were blind to the presence of the Kingdom. In October 1847, Noyes was arrested and charged with "adultery and fornication". In November he "forfeited his bond" and took flight for the Oneida Lake district,⁵² where he found refuge with Jonathan Burt and Joseph Ackley, two perfected men of the soil who, inspired by Noyes's teachings, had united their farms and endeavored to live as the early Christians had lived holding all things in common. From this base on the banks of Oneida Creek, Noyes set about to reconstruct the Bible Communism which had just begun to flower in Putney before his neighbours set about to stamp it out.⁵³ Cannily, he had fled to the ideal location for its cultivation. As Whitney Cross has noted, three quarters of the New York burnt district's subscribers to *The Witness* lived within a thirty mile radius south of Oneida Lake.⁵⁴ Forty-five persons followed Noyes from Putney to link up with the families of Burt, Ackley and a few others. In 1849, the population

of the Oneida Community was eighty-seven; two years later, it was two hundred and five.⁵⁵

Unlike most of the other utopian communities which sprang up in the stony soil of nineteenth-century America and then quickly withered, the Oneida Community was an unqualified success, which Noyes was pleased to point out in his *History of American Socialism*. Oneida's happier fate was due to the realization early on in the community's history that a reliance solely on agriculture was leading to a rapid drain on the community's capital. Looking for some business to enter into, the saints turned first to the canning of fruits and vegetables and made a success of it. But they also had the good fortune to be joined by Sewall Newhouse, a fur trapper who forged his own traps. Going with the strengths they had, the community became a manufacturer of the Newhouse trap, which quickly set the standard for North America. To those triumphs were added the manufacture of silk (1865) and the manufacture of tableware (1877) which is marketed yet today under the name of "Oneida".⁵⁶

If it can be said that Oneida was a community in which love was expected in all things, it can also be said it was a community in which conformity was expected in most things. The most powerful tool for

maintaining conformity was the practice of "the Criticism", the holding of a forum in which members would submit, some voluntarily and others by request, to criticism by the community. This practice had its roots in Noyes's days at Andover where he had joined a sort of "holy club" whose members engaged in "mutual criticism" to purge themselves of the weakness of the flesh.⁵⁷ At Oneida the greatest evil to be purged was the sin of "exclusiveness" or "special love," a selfish affliction--of which George Cragin's "marriage spirit" was a sub-species--which causes the one afflicted to lavish affection on one or a few individuals to the exclusion of the rest. "The Criticism", among other measures, was used to maintain a communism of emotions.

Maintaining that communism of emotions had both comedic and tragic consequences. Pierrepont Noyes, the son of John Noyes by Harriet Worden, recalled times in his boyhood when he and his cousin Dick were admonished for their "stickiness". To cure them they were sentenced to periods of time when they were not to speak to one another. But being unpoliced, they simply chose to abide by the strictest interpretation they could place on their sentence. Continuing their boyhood adventures, they would take along a younger boy through whom they communicated.⁵⁸ However, there were more serious consequences to this communism of

emotions, which were not so easily overcome by childish guile. Both Pierrepont and his mother treasured the weekly visits which were customary between the community children and their parents; but both feared that privilege might be restricted if they demonstrated too much affection for each other. Pierrepont recalled overhearing his "Uncle Abram" saying to his mother: "Harriet, that is idolatry." "I knew", he wrote, "they had been talking about me."⁵⁹

If spending too much time with certain individuals contravened the communism of emotions then certainly the avoidance of certain individuals did also. Such a display would demonstrate a lack of "sympathy" on the part of the person involved--a lack of sympathy not only for another brother or sister, but for the philosophy of the community, as well. According to Noyes, one of the governing principles of the community was that no one need submit to the amorous attentions of another whom he or she found disagreeable. However, John B. Ellis, who viewed the Oneida system as an example of lascivious tyranny, was insistent that the rejection there of another's amorous overtures was considered an act of nonconformity. Noyes's teaching of the value of "ascending" and "descending fellowships"--the association between people of various levels of spiritual maturity--Ellis insisted was an excuse to

get young women into the beds of old men and young men into the beds of old women, and those who resisted such an unpleasant prospect were subjected to "the Criticism" and made to submit.⁶⁰ Pierrepont Noyes, however, had a more innocent explanation of these "fellowships" saying: "My father laid down the rule that for spiritual health everyone should maintain a substantial balance between his ascending and descending fellowships; meaning . . . that contacts with those of lesser spiritual attainment must be cantilevered . . . by a greater weight of association with one's superiors." On one occasion, the young Pierrepont found his father "sitting very still in his great haircloth chair with eyes closed and forehead wrinkling vigorously". It was explained to the boy that Noyes, in quasi-Spiritualist fashion, was "communing . . . with his ascending fellowship": Saint Paul.⁶¹ Presumably there was no one in *this* world who could serve as ascending fellow to Noyes.

Ellis also published the allegations that incest and adolescent sex were commonly practiced in the Oneida community.⁶² As to the former, it would not be inconsistent with Noyes's own opinion that the practice of "male continence" would serve to allow "amative intercourse between near relatives"⁶³ and with his contradictory opinion that the practice of "scientific propagation" makes breeding between near relatives

desirable.⁶⁴ As to the latter, it was Noyes's opinion that adolescent chastity is unnatural and leads to licentiousness.⁶⁵ Yet, it is unlikely that Noyes would be so uncircumspect as to allow such practices knowing, that his neighbours would tolerate only so much. What Noyes meant by "near relatives" is uncertain, though he does make reference to "Adam's family" when writing about this issue.⁶⁶ However, his practice of stiripculture at Oneida seems not to have gone beyond selecting which men were to be permitted to have more than one child and the women by whom they would have those children.⁶⁷ Breeding between "near relatives" was probably a future consideration for a time when inbreeding would certainly be the result if the Community should last beyond the first few generations. Noyes thought of Oneida as the womb of a better race, one which would be morally elevated through eugenics.

It took more than thirty years, but Noyes's neighbours in Oneida eventually created sufficient pressure to end the practice of complex marriage. Opposition from without and worry-bred dissent within convinced Noyes that the end had come. His old insecurities returned and he slipped away secretly to lie low in Strathroy, Ontario. From there he sent word that the community should give up complex marriage and its

members marry in conformity with the rest of the world. On August 28, 1879, the community voted on the matter, all but one agreeing to abandon complex marriage.⁶⁸ Those who had been married before joining the community reunited as husband and wife. Those who had entered unmarried began to look for partners. The return to monogamy spelled the end for the Oneida Community; its members found that "communism of property" was unworkable among separate family groups. On January 1, 1881, the Oneida Community officially ceased to be and the Oneida communists made themselves into shareholders of a joint stock company.⁶⁹

As Dixon has reminded us, Spiritual Wifery was not original in Yankee thought, but had a strong affinity with Swedenborgianism, which teaches the existence of spiritual pairs made up of two earthly, sexually opposite halves of a perfect and heavenly form awaiting us in the afterlife.⁷⁰ In America, Swedenborgianism devolved into Spiritualism at the hands of men like Reverend George Bush and Andrew Jackson Davis. Bush was a Presbyterian minister and scholar who attracted Perfectionists like James Boyle and Charles Weld with a fusion of Swedenborgianism, Mesmerism and the rapping phenomenon of the Fox sisters.⁷¹ Davis was a

failed cobbler's apprentice who, at seventeen, found a career as clairvoyant and faith healer under the mesmeric direction of William Levingston, a Poughkeepsie tailor and amateur magnetizer. When hypnotized Davis would communicate with the departed Emanuel Swedenborg, among others, and was able to dictate revelations from beyond. After seven years of practice, the revelations would come without the need of a hypnotist and Davis produced his most famous work and one of the founding documents of Spiritualism, *The Great Harmonia*,⁷² described by Dixon as a "mere parody" of Swedenborg.⁷³

This variation on the already familiar resurrection theme of the spiritual wifers descended on the burnt districts in the mid 1840's, sweeping up its most famous exponent, a young universalist minister and native of Utica: Thomas Lake Harris. But, unlike the spiritual wifers, who taught that a freer sexuality belonged to the perfected, Harris would teach that a freer sexuality was a means of achieving perfection. Following a brief association with Davis, which seems to have ended with the death of Harris's wife, Harris joined with assorted Adventists, Perfectionists and Spiritualists in a short lived communal project in Virginia called "the Garden of Eden".⁷⁴ Perhaps it was there that he began to have the trances upon which he founded a career of writing and lecturing on mystical

themes. In 1860 he established his communal sect "the Brotherhood of the New Life," which settled at Brocton, N.Y., in 1865.⁷⁵

The Brotherhood believed that God and the heavenly hosts possessed a dual sexual nature and that men and women in the afterlife would be united with their "counterpart" and made into one heavenly being. Harris taught that men and women may search out their counterpart on earth by seeking him or her in other people whom they find attractive, in this way not necessarily finding the counterpart, but achieving an "approximation".⁷⁶ Achieving this approximation was a matter of getting into bed and, as a couple of inquirers at Brocton discovered, getting into bed with "Father Harris" was supposed to be especially efficacious; for Father Harris was in touch with his heavenly counterpart whom he called the "Lily Queen," a being said to be capable of imparting great comfort.⁷⁷ Like Noyes, Harris may have suffered from a need to have his mother fulfill a symbolic role which confirmed his exaltedness. His heavenly counterpart was possibly the image of his departed mother on whom his boyhood imagination had dwelt at some length.⁷⁸

Not only a practitioner of free love, Harris, making literal use of the word "inspiration", practiced a form of afflatus by which he entered an "arch-natural" state in which he said he learned his mystical truths and

--modifying still further the resurrection theme of the spiritual wifers--through which he had halted the aging process and would eventually defeat death.⁷⁹ In this state he also said he experienced astral-projection and visited distant stars while his body lay "apparently lifeless".⁸⁰

Unlike the Oneida Community which supported itself through manufacturing, the Brotherhood at Brocton was funded by attracting the well-off.⁸¹ Laurence Oliphant was an Englishman born to wealth and privilege, an adventurer, world traveller, journalist and Member of Parliament. Along with his mother, Lady Oliphant, Laurence fell under the charismatic spell of Father Harris sometime during Harris's visit to Britain in 1860 and eventually followed him to Brocton. There, mother and son fell into the drudgery of the Brotherhood, which kept control of members' wills through overwork and sleep deprivation.⁸²

In 1869, Harris sent Oliphant to Europe where he began again to work as a journalist keeping a small allowance from what he earned and sending the rest back to Brocton. Three years later he met, converted and married Alice Lestrangle, whom Hannah Whitall Smith described as "a beautiful girl of wealth and position".⁸³ The following year the two of them were called to Brocton. Once there Alice became one of Harris's drudges and Laurence

was sent back to Europe. With Oliphant out of the way, it was revealed to Harris that Alice was not her husband's true counterpart and more significantly that she was Harris's counterpart--his Lily Queen in earthly form. This and the death of Laurence's mother, who in her arch-natural state ought not to have died, led the Oliphants to break with Harris.⁸⁴

But, although freed from Harris's control and reunited, the Oliphants persisted in Harris's peculiar beliefs, setting up a community in Palestine, evangelizing in Europe and Britain, and spreading the blessings of God by climbing into bed with would-be converts.⁸⁵

Whitall Smith met Oliphant once (1886?) while visiting with friends in Dorking, England. There Oliphant presented a paper one evening on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When one of the ladies present asked him how she ought to go about gaining this baptism, Oliphant replied: "'I could not tell you in this company'." Writing about that occasion Smith recalled:

The next morning Mr. Oliphant asked for a private interview . . . in which he told me that . . . my husband was called to enter into and propagate the views he held, and he urged me to beg him not to stop short of the full consummation. I asked what the full consummation was. He said, 'You noticed the question that was asked me last night? Do you know what I would have answered? . . . If I dared to I would have said, "Come and get into bed with me".

Learning that getting into bed with his converts was common practice for

Oliphant, Smith was quick to ask him if he were not afraid that some of his ladies might betray his actions and cause a great deal of trouble for him. Well she knew the trouble this sort of thing caused. Neither was Oliphant's identification of sexual intercourse with a greater work of the Holy Spirit new to Whittal Smith. It was an identification that she had already witnessed in the ecstasies of revivalism.⁸⁶

In the 1873 the Smith's were in England, along with Boardman and Mahan, preaching Holiness for the Higher Life Movement.⁸⁷ Robert's preaching was greatly celebrated and attracted the attention of the Europeans, who invited him across the Channel. He preached to thousands in Paris, Holland and Belgium then returned to England to hold forth at Oxford. After that the Germans insisted on having him, and returned him to England an even greater sensation. According to the Smith's son, Logan Pearsall, all this attention quite turned his father's head. Faced with yet another full house he is purported to have exclaimed: "All Europe is at my feet".⁸⁸

It was from that lofty point in his career that Robert Pearsall Smith took his fall. His engagements were cancelled and he slipped from public view. His friends and associates circulated the story that the reoccurrence of some old injuries sustained in falling from a horse

necessitated his complete rest. But later, when confronted with conflicting reports, they explained that Smith had been teaching a false doctrine privately and, they hastened to say, innocently. However, the situation still necessitated a rest from preaching.⁸⁹

Smith's problem, it turned out, was not caused by a horse, but by a "great beautiful cat" which his son tells us someone let out of the bag. Smith's private heresy was also an ancient heresy which has taken ecstatic believers since the first-century beyond the boundaries inscribing the love feast and the holy kiss. "Certainly in my father's time," wrote Logan Smith, "this exquisite, secret doctrine was extremely prevalent in America; and my father, in spite of my mother's almost desperate warnings, would expound it to select gatherings mostly composed of spinsters of a certain age." One of these ladies became jealous of her sisters and the secret came out.⁹⁰

In August of 1876, the Smith's were back in Philadelphia, happy to be done with revivals. But their associates in America were determined to get up a revival to revive Robert's reputation, which had been sullied by trans-Atlantic rumours. Reluctantly the Smiths set about the business of revival. To their surprise, however, their lack of inspiration mattered nothing. The meetings were as successful as any they had held overseas,

and they began to wonder if the revival spirit was not a sham. After that, Robert's faith, already badly shaken by the uncovering of his indiscretions, dwindled away.⁹¹

Perhaps it was her mental make up or her native common sense, but Hannah Whitall Smith possessed a fortunate immunity to the fanatical gifts of revivalism--fortunate because, as an avid seeker of religious truth, she was drawn to fanaticism where ever she could find it. And finding it wanting, she kept a record of her experiences in the hope that other seekers could be warned of its dangers.⁹² Those papers were published posthumously as *Religious Fanaticism* under the editorship of her grandson Ray Strachey.

Among the fanaticisms Whitall Smith described was enthusiasm--the habit of ascribing every impulse, impression, premonition and feeling to "Divine Guidance," or the leading of the Holy Spirit. The cultivation of such guidance had been part of her Quaker heritage--it being known among the Quakers as the "inner light"--but among that sect, according to Hannah, it "was so well regulated that it never took the form of any extreme Fanaticism." It exhibited itself in mudane matters: the wearing of which shoes or which dress; the reading of this book or that book;

whether or not to plant red geraniums, and hence to an endless association of the trivial with the divine will. Whitall Smith was eventually to conclude that there was no "divine reality" in such things and sought to reassure those who were plagued and confused by such impulses.⁹³ She was also to realize that these impulses would lead the unwitting into disaster.

One summer, shortly before the trip overseas, the Smith's were staying in a friend's house in Germantown, Pa., next door to the household of a Methodist minister Hannah called "Mr. L.". She was impressed by the piety displayed by these people and upon spending some time with them discovered that they were practitioners of divine guidance to the minutest detail, being constantly directed as to what they should wear or eat, whether they should sit or stand, and so on. Seeking to be holy herself, Whitall Smith experimented with her neighbours' brand of piety, but gave it up within a morning, finding that she had been so busy changing clothes and concerning herself with other inconsequential matters that she had got nothing accomplished.⁹⁴

Shortly after the end of that summer, Whitall Smith discovered that Mr. L.'s household was being guided beyond the mundane and into the sinister. She knew first hand that the Reverend L. possessed a female

following whose members often felt led to bestow a holy kiss upon their leader.⁹⁵ But he apparently had not been satisfied with just that. Being warned by a mutual acquaintance against falling under the spell of Mr. L., Whitall Smith learned that one of the young ladies among that following had borne his child. It seems that he had been teaching some of his female disciples "that it had been revealed to him that he was to be the father of a race of children that were to be born into the world as Christ was, and that the Lord had shown him that they . . . were to be the favoured mothers of these children." The Smiths heard this very excuse from his own lips when they confronted him with the story in a successful attempt to ward him off of a wealthy and widowed friend who had fallen under his sway. The young lady who had carried Mr. L's child was not so fortunate, but persisted in her delusion. Having invested so much into Mr. L's teaching, she dared not to admit that she had been wrongly guided. She and another young lady from Mr. L's following eventually went to live with him and his wife as his spiritual wives.⁹⁶

Not long before the summer the Smith's spent as neighbours to Mr. L., Robert was at a New York hydropathic sanatorium, being treated for a nervous breakdown. The head of the sanatorium was a man Whitall Smith called Doctor R., who claimed to have a secret revelation concerning the

Baptism of the Holy Spirit. He told her that "the Baptism . . . was a physical thing, felt by delightful thrills going through you from head to foot . . . no one could really know what the Baptism of the Spirit was who did not experience these thrills."⁹⁷

This, of course, was no secret to many people who had been touched by the revival spirit; and Whitall Smith was to find it to be a most powerful and pernicious teaching. She related that when telling a friend what Doctor R. had revealed to her, that friend immediately began to have the experience described. In this particular case it behaved like a narcotic and the unfortunate woman felt she had to have these thrills continuously and spent her time, Whitall Smith recounted, "lying on the sofa trying to induce them". With this experience came also the conviction that she ought to be bestowing the holy kiss on men of her acquaintance, including Mr. L.⁹⁸

About that same time, Whitall Smith was in attendance at a "Holiness Camp Meeting" where she made the intimate acquaintance of a Quaker lady who, like herself, was a seeker after holiness, but a woman as "full of self" as any she had ever met.⁹⁹ Late one evening after participating in a fervent prayer meeting, Whitall Smith returned to her tent to find her new friend in an ecstatic swoon exclaiming: "Oh, how wonderful! Oh, how

glorious! Oh, this is the Baptism! Oh, what a blessing; 'tis more than I can bear! Oh, Lord, stay Thy hand! Flesh and blood cannot bear this glory!"¹⁰⁰

It was customary at revival camp meetings that the receipt of the blessing be made known to the residents of the camp and that the recipient testify to having been blessed. But when Whitall Smith spread the news of her new friend's blessing and the leaders of the revival approached the woman to ask her to give her testimony, she was shocked and annoyed and refused saying "it would be like exposing one's dearest love-secrets to public gaze".¹⁰¹

True to Holiness theory as it had taken form in America, the woman's failure to testify to her blessing resulted in its loss. Feeling partly responsible for that loss, Whitall Smith told her friend about Doctor R. and his revelation concerning the baptism of the Holy Spirit, prompting the woman to go to the sanatorium in the hope of rekindling the blessing. There she became a disciple of Doctor R. and entered into the "wildest extravagances . . . Among other things", wrote Whitall Smith,

she felt it her duty to ask [Doctor R.] to stand naked before her, and also to do the same thing herself before him . . . She took the Song of Solomon to be the exposition of the relation between the soul and Christ as the Bride and Bridegroom, and . . . believed that Christ had often come to her at night . . . and had actually had a bridegroom's connexion with her.¹⁰²

Some two years after that summer spent next door to Mr. L., Whitall Smith had occasion to speak with one of that gentleman's female votaries who, it seems, had a special talent for recruiting young women to the cause. When confronted with the facts about Mr. L.'s relationship with some of his female followers, the woman responded saying, "that the Lord's leadings were often very mysterious . . . but . . . what God had pronounced clean no one might dare to call unclean". Resignedly Whitall Smith observed: "when people say they are 'led' it is of no earthly use to reason with them." This woman also knew something of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, telling Whitall Smith that she could bring her friends into a consciousness of the baptism by lying with them in bed back to back "without any nightgown between."¹⁰³

It was a wiser Whitall Smith to whom a distressed young lady came for advice. The young lady had been convicted under the revival preaching of the Methodist minister in her town and had been seeking after holiness. She and her minister had found a nearness to the Lord when in each other's company and had experienced "wonderful waves of divine thrills going through them, especially when there was any personal contact". These thrills, her minister had said, were evidence of the baptism she sought, but in pursuing that baptism she found herself in a "criminal connection

with the preacher who was already a married man." How, she pleaded, could such a thing have happen to her when she was so "earnestly striving after holiness"?¹⁰⁴

One might well guess that the significance of these events, coming so soon before the Smith's trip overseas, was not lost on Robert.

"[N]ature, in one of her grossest economies, has placed the seats of spiritual and amorous rapture so close to each other that one of them is very likely to arouse the other",¹⁰⁵ observed Logan Pearsall Smith in language that was antiquated even for his time. Peter Gardella, in his recent book *Innocent Ecstasy*, subtitled *How Christianity Gave America An Ethic of Sexual Pleasure*, expressed that observation in more modern terms. There is a correlation, he argued, especially among women, between achieving orgasm and having had an experience of religious ecstasy. Gardella's thesis is that there was in Protestant and Catholic America a revolution in sexual thinking during the last two centuries that has made sexual pleasure what it had not been for some time: an acceptable and holy Christian experience. In Protestant America, this revolution was achieved by disconnecting sex from the doctrine of original sin, a disconnection made largely possible by the popular belief in the doctrine of

Perfection--belief in the uprooting of Sin from the human heart--so that today's American evangelical takes the position that not only does salvation make sex within marriage better, but it makes sex what it was intended to be. Therefore, in the religious thought of America, sexual ecstasy has largely ceased to be the product of an act which has its roots in the sinful nature of mankind.¹⁰⁶ Gardella further argued that it was the revival tradition with its stress on the experience of religious ecstasy in conversion and sanctification which freed American women, who had been brought up to believe they were above the base sexual desires felt by men, to experience sexual ecstasy. The revival tradition not only taught women that God wants them to experience ecstasy, it also removed the inhibitions which kept them from the experience of ecstasy.¹⁰⁷

Parallel and connected to this revision in religious thought, Gardella demonstrated, was a revision in medical thought, a revision which would remove from sexual activity the odium placed upon it by Medical Science, which ranked it among the lower of human activities and counselled that it should be avoided as much as possible, and that its only appropriate function was procreative. Together medicine and religion began to teach, not that sex should be avoided, but that sin could be avoided. Together they gave America a marital "ethic of innocent ecstasy."¹⁰⁸

This was a powerful theme in nineteenth-century America. Americans believed that the Spirit of God and Medical Science were working together to improve and perfect the moral, spiritual and physical health of the nation. In light of such a tradition, the theories of John Noyes seem less disconnected from the rest of American society. His belief that strong sexual attractions and the expenditure of seed led to physical and emotional disorders was a reflection of contemporary medical theory; and his fusion of perfectionism and sex was a reflection of the Spiritual Wifery mania which surrounded him. Noyes objected to Dixon's inclusion of the Oneida communists under the title of *Spiritual Wives* on the ground that no one person in that community belonged to another.¹⁰⁹ Yet surely Noyes's Bible Communism was a Spiritual Wifery writ large; and both those practices represent an early marriage of Perfectionist doctrine and a freer sexuality. Noyes differed from the Spiritual Wifers in that he was more conservative and certainly more disciplined. In keeping with Thomas's ideas about the man, Noyes found in communal love a haven from his insecurities as it provided a means to fulfill his need to gain control of himself, of his emotions and of his environment. In Oneida, proper sex was both continent and nonexclusive--the former demonstrating control over the sexual function and the latter preventing loss of control to passion.

attraction while suspending the need to compete for female affection. That Noyes should champion sexual freedom and enjoyment within the experience of perfection and, at the same time, counsel control and conservation puts him with one foot in each of those competing sexual traditions.

However, in the eyes of Noyes's contemporaries his conservatism was unrecognizable. When John B. Ellis visited Oneida he found its residents to be suffering from sterility, emotional and nervous disorders, and physical degeneration, and Noyes himself to be "the victim of a chronic bronchial affection"¹¹⁰--all the ailments which nineteenth-century Medicine led him to expect would be there. These, Medicine said, were the price Nature exacted from those who engaged in unnatural, unwholesome and too frequent sex. To demonstrate that sex at Oneida was not unnatural, unwholesome or too frequent and that it was in fact of a superior nature, it became necessary for the Oneida communists to demonstrate that they were as healthy or even healthier than the rest of the American population. Thus the "Health Report of the Oneida Community" by Theodore R. Noyes, M.D., appended to John Noyes's essay on "Scientific Propagation", became by implication evidence of the purity and naturalness of the sexual practices at Oneida. And when one considers that Noyes's brand of perfectionism was a physical as well as a spiritual perfectionism the health of the community

takes on a double importance.

As was not unusual to his time, nor even to ours, Noyes believed that disease, infirmity and death are the result of evil.¹¹¹ Thus, the war of his Perfectionists against sin and spiritual death was no different from their war against sickness and physical death, all being the consequence of unbelief. It was not that he believed that he and his followers would avoid death as well as sickness, but death, he prophesied, would be avoided at some time in the future.¹¹² "Any repentance," he wrote, "which . . . stops short of . . . expelling the virus of Satan and admitting the life of God, is not Bible repentance."¹¹³ Faith, Noyes believed, not medical intervention or the discoveries of science, is the preserver of health and life.¹¹⁴ Yet Noyes, based on what he believed to be sound scientific reasoning, offered Christian civilization two techniques to advance the spiritual and physical health of the race: male continence and stiripculture.

Noyes's preoccupation with being in control was, as well, not a trait peculiar to himself, but a preoccupation with his fellow Americans. Noyes, however, pursued it with a greater compulsion. And like the rest of nineteenth-century America, argued Thomas, he also thought of health in terms of control, good health demonstrating the difference between drift or mastery in one's life.¹¹⁵ The inconsistent Noyes preached mastery

through perfection and technique while discounting the techniques of others because they were techniques.

In the first half of the nineteenth-century, the most famous exponent of technique as the means to spiritual and physical health, chiefly by taking steps to reduce sexual passion, was Reverend Sylvester Graham, the man who gave us the Graham cracker. For the achievement of spiritual and physical health, he advocated home made breads; whole grains; fresh fruits; fresh vegetables; fresh air; daily exercise; hard mattresses; cold showers; and chastity, even within marriage.¹¹⁶ It was no wonder, then, that the Oneida communists rejected his system and employed the term "Grahamism" as anathema.¹¹⁷ Even worse, Graham's name was associated with the rival perfectionism of Oberlin College, where Finney had tried imposing Graham's dietary laws on the student body.¹¹⁸ Graham, like Finney and much of Protestant America, had rejected the Calvinist notion of inherited depravity favouring instead a voluntary depravity--the position inherent in Finney's dictum: "Your cannot is your will not."¹¹⁹ If voluntary depravity was the accurate description of the human condition then it supposedly followed that steps could be taken to cure depravity, though Grahamism implies a rather deterministic view of the operation of the free will. Gardella summed up this approach by calling it "the medical

treatment of sin".¹²⁰ Doubtless, Finney would not have wanted to push the analogy that far; yet he fell into that sort of thinking, not only in adopting Grahamism, but also in attributing the success of the revivals of 1830's to a better understanding of human psychology. In effect both of these men implied that there were steps men could take on their own to counter the effects of original sin. The Oneida communists, by their lifestyle and teachings implied the same. Though these two perfectionisms had the same starting point and destination, their differing techniques for getting there led to the false conclusion that they were a world apart. It should be noted, however, that just as Finney repented of his early approach to revival, he also repented, though somewhat later, of his insistence on the keeping of the laws of Grahamism at Oberlin. Yet, even as late as the publication of his *Systematic Theology*, he was still making a connection between improper diet and sin.¹²¹

The Methodists and the Methodist Perfectionists were, by theological inheritance, of another mind concerning the supposed link between sex and original sin. Wesley had rejected the notion that the body is inherently wicked, and had purged the ninth of the thirty-nine Articles of Religion, the article on original sin, of its references to sex as inherently sinful, when he abridged the prayer book for his American Methodists. The Calvinists

argued that perfection was not possible until the soul had been separated from the body, but the logic of earthly perfection demanded that the corruptible body also be perfectable, so that the bodily state does not necessarily lend itself to sin. In this Wesley anticipated the resurrection --as did those Perfectionists who followed him and those who did not--when body and spirit would be reunited in a perfect whole. Thus, while Dr. John Harvey Kellogg, surgeon, Seventh Day Adventist, and Grahamite had yet to perfect the rolling process by which he would produce a breakfast food for the purpose of reducing sexual passion--thereby treating the source of sin--bishops and clergy of the M.E.C. were explaining to their charges that natural human passions were not rooted out with the rooting out of sin because they did not have their roots in sin. Yet, for all their insistence on the purity of the sanctified passions, they could not call the thing of which they were talking by its name.¹²²

Spiritual Wifery and allied experiments in sexuality were, of course, not strictly an outgrowth of radical perfectionism, but were to be found in kindred revival movements like Mormonism and Adventism and in their more distant relation, Spiritualism.¹²³ In a broader context these things were a part of Romanticism in both senses of the word: in the legitimate sense stressing what is intuitive and emotive in mankind; and in the vulgar

sense proposing, what Noyes rejected as selfish and unChristian, that there is for each of us a one and only.

Most Americans who were touched by the revivals of the nineteenth-century did not give up the Law, at least not in a conscious or deliberate fashion. Among an inhibited people, the revival served as an institutionalized means for becoming safely uninhibited, for exorcising those things which poison the emotions and for expressing the joy of being clean again. The Revival was conservative in its radicalism; its purpose was the reordering of America along the lines of traditional American thinking. Safe uninhibitedness was the most radical state of mind the revival was intended to produce. But things did not always work out that way. Ironically it was Noyes who realized earlier than most revivalists the dangers of the revival spirit, and of the sympathetic feelings it aroused between the sexes. Writing to Dixon, he observed, "Religious love . . . is very near to sexual love, and they always get mixed in the intimacies and social excitements of revivals. The next thing a man wants, after he has found the salvation of his soul, is to find his Eve and his Paradise."¹²⁵

As an agent to cleanse the emotions and to purify the sex act within marriage, the ecstasy of the Revival and of the Holiness Revival helped to accomplish the ends of the Revival, that is, to heal the sin sick soul and to

impart a sense of redemption and holiness to those entering the new life. But revival ecstasy also had the power to take some beyond the purposes for which the Revival was intended. Its ability to mimic sexual ecstasy --the building of nervous tension followed by sudden release--resulted in no small amount of confusion between the two. Various fusions of sexual and revival ecstasies followed, so that some expected sexual ecstasy to be the way to sanctification or the way to hang on to it, especially those who expected sanctification to be accompanied by continual ecstasy. Thus, they sought ecstasy wherever they could find it, and it was this view of sanctification that was generally meant when described as the "baptism of the Spirit." Those who followed their revival spirit beyond the sexual mores of traditional Christianity, or who wished to do so, readily developed a theology of sanctification which allowed them to do so. Thus, the Revival produced sexual reform without and within the monogamous tradition.

The other ecstatic route to regions beyond the boundaries of the Revival tradition lay in the catalepcies of the Revival visionaries which took those visionaries to heavenly heights and returned them with new and competing revelations. The relationship between this form of revivalism and Spiritualism is hardly tenuous. Both isms possessed a methodology and an expectation to take their adherents into other earthly realms in which the

inadequacies of the flesh were purged. Unable to reject those revival manifestations to which the scriptures lent some credence, but which sometimes overwhelmed the believer and propelled him out of traditional Christian society, steadier minds sought to and largely succeeded in minimizing their importance. "Ecstatic emotions and wondrous visions are good," advised an editorial in the *Guide to Holiness*, "but a sympathy with Jesus in the great work that brought Him from heaven to earth is better."¹²⁵

"My first introduction to fanaticism," wrote Hannah Whitall Smith, about that same fusion of ecstasy, Holiness, and the leadings of the Spirit,

if I leave out all that I got from the Quakers to start with, which was a good deal, came through the Methodist doctrine of entire sanctification. That doctrine has been one of the greatest blessings of my life, but it has also introduced me into an emotional region where common sense has no chance, and where everything goes by feelings and voices and impressions.

Whitall Smith's consistent theme, though she was most certainly being kind, was that all the fanaticisms she observed were the result of a fervent but misdirected devotion to God. Her fanatics, in their pursuit of godliness, tried to become more than human. They thought they could live

as the angels and followed their lights into "a region of which they knew nothing, and where they were certain to be deceived." True religion, she cautioned the reader, resides "not in the region of the emotions, but in the region of the will."¹²⁶ Perhaps it was because her head was harder than her theology that she could not see that the will too had been deficient in saving others from the very temptations of the flesh from which their sanctification was supposed to keep them safe.

END NOTES

- 1 William Hepworth Dixon, *Spiritual Wives*, (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1868), p. 232.
- 2 Dixon, p. 237.
- 3 Dixon, pp. 237-38.
- 4 Dixon, pp. 238-39.
- 5 Dixon, pp. 239-40.
- 6 Dixon, p. 241.
- 7 Dixon, pp. 241-43, 264, 288.
- 8 Dixon, pp. 244-45.
- 9 Dixon, pp. 245-47.
- 10 Dixon, pp. 250-51; Robert David Thomas, *The Man Who Would Be Perfect: John Humphrey Noyes and the Utopian Impulse*, (University of Pennsylvania, 1977), p. 73.
- 11 Dixon, pp. 251-52, 255; Thomas, p. 75.
- 12 Dixon, p. 246, 252-53, 257.
- 13 Dixon, pp. 258, 263.
- 14 Dixon, p. 243.
- 15 Dixon, pp. 87, 263-65; Whitney R. Cross, *The Burned-Over District: The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York*. (N.Y.: Harper & Row, 1965, [1950]), pp. 243-44. The folk lore surrounding physical afflictions which coincided with opposition to religion may well have aided Chapman in his conclusion that his blindness was a judgment from God. See Donald E. Bryne, Jr.,

"Remarkable Judgments," *No Foot of Land: Folklore of American Methodist Itinerants*, (N.J.: Scarecrow: Metuchen, 1975), pp. 83-104, especially p. 93, of husbands' opposition to the religious proclivities of their wives.

16 Ray Strachey, ed., *Religious Fanaticism: Extracts from the Papers of Hannah Whitall Smith*, (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1928/N.Y.: AMS, 1976), pp. 100-01.

17 Strachey, p. 101; Thomas, pp. 38-39.

18 Thomas, p. 47;

19 Thomas, pp. 38-40; John H. Noyes, "The Second Coming of Christ," *The Berean: A Manual for the Help of Those Who Seek the Faith of the Primitive Church*, (Putney, Vt.: Office of the Spiritual Magazine, 1847/N.Y.: Arno, 1969), pp. 296-97. (Further references to *The Berean* will be cited: "Noyes, *The Berean*.")

20 John H. Noyes, "Salvation from Sin, The End of Christian Faith", *Male Continence Together with Essay on Scientific Propagation, Dixon and His Copyists, Salvation from Sin*, (N.Y.: AMS, 1974), pp. 20-31. (Further references to this work will be cited: "Noyes, "Salvation from Sin".)

21 as quoted in Thomas, p. 35.

22 An objection might be made to these theorizings of Noyes on the grounds that his hero of perfection was executed in Rome in A.D. 67, three years before the stage had been set for perfection. Noyes, however, realizing the problem developed a dispensation to cover the interum between the ascension and the second coming, calling that period the "second advent to the soul"--a phrase to describe the earthly presence of the Holy Spirit. (See Noyes, *The Berean*, pp. 385-87.)

23 Pierrepont Noyes, *My Father's House: An Oneida Boyhood*, (Toronto: Farrar & Rinehart, 1937), p. 35.

24 Thomas, pp. 68ff.

- 25 Thomas, pp. 68ff.
- 26 William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature*, (N.Y.: Collier, 1977, [1901]), pp. 136-37.
- 27 Thomas, pp. 68ff.
- 28 Thomas, pp. 112-117.
- 29 Dixon, p. 265.
- 30 Dixon, pp. 267-68.
- 31 Noyes, "Salvation from Sin", pp. 35ff.
- 32 John H. Noyes, "Male Continence", *Male Continence Together with Essay on Scientific Propagation, Dixon and His Copyists, Salvation from Sin*. (N.Y.: AMS, 1974), p. 20. (Further references to this work will be cited: 'Noyes, "Male Continence".)
- 33 Noyes, "Male Continence", p. 16-17, 20.
- 34 Dixon, pp. 289-302.
- 35 Dixon, pp. 301-02; Robert S. Fletcher, *A History of Oberlin College From Its Foundation Through the Civil War*, (N.Y.: Arno, 1971, [1943]), p. 313.
- 36 Dixon, pp. 302-09.
- 37 Dixon, pp. 310, 314-17.
- 38 Cross, p. 240; Thomas, pp. 72, 83-84. Dixon's identification of Smith as a "Wesleyan Methodist" (Dixon, p. 233) can be discounted as an attempt by Dixon to express the subject's theological inclinations by creating a church title as he was wont to do. Otherwise it can be discounted on chronological grounds. In 1840, the real Wesleyan Methodists were on the verge of removing themselves from the M.E.C., taking a stronger stand against slavery than the bulk of the M.E.C. was prepared to do.

- 39 Dixon, p. 314, 319-22.
- 40 Dixon, pp. 325-26.
- 41 Dixon, pp. 328-29.
- 42 Dixon, pp. 332-35.
- 43 Dixon, pp. 340-42.
- 44 Dixon, pp. 336, 346.
- 45 Thomas, p. 106.
- 46 Thomas, pp. 105-06, 116.
- 47 Thomas, pp. 85-87.
- 48 Thomas, pp. 94, 105.
- 49 John H. Noyes, "Dixon and His Copyists: A Criticism of the Accounts of the Oneida Community in "New America", "Spiritual Wives", and Kindred Publications", *Male Continence Together with Essay on Scientific Propagation, Dixon and His Copyists, Salvation from Sin*, (N.Y.: AMS, 1974), pp. 7ff. (Further references to this work will be cited: 'Noyes, "Dixon and His Copyists".)
- 50 Thomas, p. 105.
- 51 Thomas, pp. 106-07, 109-10.
- 52 Cross, p. 334.
- 53 Pierrepont Noyes, pp. 7-8.
- 54 Cross, p. 248.
- 55 Pierrepont Noyes, p. 8.

56 Pierrepont Noyes, pp. 14-15.

57 Pierrepont Noyes, p. 12.

58 Pierrepont Noyes, pp. 49-50.

59 Pierrepont Noyes, p. 72.

60 Dr. John B. Ellis, *Free Love and Its Votaries or American Socialism Unmasked*, (N.Y.: United States Publishing, 1870), pp. 176-78, 186-87.

61 Pierrepont Noyes, pp. 132-33.

As this story implies, Noyes had a deep interest in Spiritualism--a word which he claimed as his own invention to express his belief in the immanence of the departed saints and in the ability of the earthly saints to communicate with them. He was quite unhappy with the Spiritualist movement, which he said had misappropriated its appellation and which had shut itself out of the kingdom of Heaven.

There are a number of articles in *The Berean* in which Noyes outlined his own theories of Spiritualism: "Objections of the Anti-Spiritualists;" "The Faith Once Delivered to the Saints;" "Age of Spiritualism;" "Animal Magnetism;" "Our Relations to the Primitive Church."

62 Ellis, pp. 183-88.

63 Noyes, "Male Continence", p. 16.

64 John H. Noyes, "Essay on Scientific Propagation, with an appendix containing A Health Report of the Oneida Community by Theodore R. Noyes, M.D.", *Male Continence Together with Essay on Scientific Propagation, Dixon and His Copyists, Salvation from Sin*, (N.Y.: AMS, 1974), p. 1ff.

65 John H. Noyes, *Strange Cults and Utopias of 19th-Century America, or History of American Socialisms*, (N.Y.: Dover, 1966/Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1870), pp. 628-29.

66 Ibid., pp. 628-29; Noyes, "Male Continence", p. 16.

67 Pierrepont Noyes, pp. 9-10.

68 Pierrepont Noyes, pp. 147-64.

69 Pierrepont Noyes, pp. 170-71, 176.

70 Dixon, pp. 353-60.

71 Dixon, pp. 391-95.

72 Herbert W. Schneider and Ruth Redfield, "Davis, Andrew Jackson", *Dictionary of American Biography*, V, (N.Y.: Scribner's, 1933), 105. (Further references to this work will be cited: "*DAB*".)

73 Dixon, p. 389.

74 Cross, p. 352; Strachey, p. 118-19; Herbert W. Schneider, "Harris, Thomas Lake", *DAB*, VIII, 322.

75 Schneider, "Harris, Thomas Lake", pp. 322-23.

76 Strachey, pp. 122-23.

77 Strachey, pp. 216, 234.

78 Schneider, "Harris, Thomas Lake", p. 322. Harris's belief in the dual sexual nature of the divine has an earlier American parallel in the thinking of Mother Ann Lee, who believed she was the female counterpart of Christ. In contrast to Harris's proclivities, Ann Lee's communal impulse resulted in the celebrate communities of the Shakers.

79 Strachey, p. 123-25.

80 Strachey, p. 217. According to Whitall Smith, Harris's most frequent destination on the astral-plane was Mars, where he said many changes were taking place and his help was greatly needed. One cannot help but wonder if Harris's astral wanderings inspired the literary career of Edgar Rice Burroughs. See Burrough's first novel: *A Princess of Mars*, 1912.

81 Strachey, pp. 216, 234.

82 Strachey, pp. 128-32.

83 Strachey, p. 219.

84 Strachey, pp. 132-37.

85 Strachey, pp. 138-39; 220-24.

86 Strachey, pp. 224-26.

87 This invasion of Britain, in the early 1870's, by American revivalists, including Dwight Moody, marked the beginning of the Keswick movement--a sort of British Holiness chautauqua.

88 Logan Pearsall Smith, *Unforgotten Years*, (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1939 [1937]), pp. 56-60. (Further references to this work will be cited: "L.P. Smith".) In contrast to Robert Smith's statement is one made by Dwight Moody on the occasion of his celebrated return from Britain in 1875. He confessed to a friend: "I am the most over estimated man in this country." (Quoted in Sweet, *Revivalism in America*, p. 169.)

89 L.P. Smith, pp. 60-61.

90 L.P. Smith, pp. 62-64.

91 L.P. Smith, pp. 66-69, 72-73. In a letter to a friend, dated March, 1883, Hannah said of her husband: "I believe . . . that the springs of his life were sapped in 1874, and that existence can never be anything but weariness and suffering to him again in this world." (Quoted in Warfield, p. 261.)

92 Strachey, pp. 11, 16-19, 166, 170, 194-95.

93 Strachey, pp. 194, 240-44.

94 Strachey, pp. 185-89, 246.

- 95 Strachey, p. 247.
- 96 Strachey, pp. 189-93.
- 97 Strachey, pp. 166-67.
- 98 Strachey, p. 199.
- 99 Strachey, p. 180.
- 100 Strachey, p. 175.
- 101 Strachey, p. 176.
- 102 Strachey, pp. 176-78.
- 103 Strachey, pp. 197-98.
- 104 Strachey, p. 196.
- 105 L.P. Smith, p. 62.
- 106 Peter Gardella, *Innocent Ecstasy: How Christianity Gave America an Ethic of Sexual Pleasure*, (N.Y.: Oxford, 1985), p. 155. Gardella considered Phoebe Palmer to be an important figure behind this revolution in sexual thought (pp. 86-94).
- 107 Gardella, pp. 76, 80-94. The nineteenth-century differentiation between the sexual responses of male and female is illustrated in Noyes's observation that Spiritual Wifery resulted in a chaste union of men and women where women had taken the lead, but, in the hands of men, Spiritual Wifery became polygamy (Dixon. p. 177).
- 108 Gardella, pp. 68-79.
- 109 Noyes, "Dixon and His Copyists", pp. 30-31.
- 110 Ellis, pp. 193-211, 259.

- 111 John H. Noyes, "The Cause and the Cure", *The Berean*, pp. 115-20.
- 112 John H. Noyes, "Abolition of Death", *The Berean*, pp. 476-86.
- 113 John H. Noyes, "The Cause and the Cure", *The Berean*, p. 120.
- 114 John H. Noyes, "Love of Life", *The Berean*, pp. 472-76.
- 115 Thomas, pp. 58-67, 104.
- 116 Margret Wadsworth Genzmer, "Graham, Sylvester," *DAB*, VII, 479-80.
- 117 Dixon, p. 309; Ellis, pp. 145-48.
- 118 The roots of Grahamism and numerous kindred and contemporary dietary theories are found in the temperance movement. To abstinence from alcohol was added abstinence from other stimulents thought harmful like coffee and tea--cold water was the favoured beverage of Grahamites--and abstinence from other substances which were thought to adversely affect the body and mind like meat and condiments. Under the latter category, pepper was considered to be a particularly vile substance. The use of medicine was also advised against, and considering the number of alcoholic and narcotic mixtures which passed for medicine in the nineteenth-century, and the inclination of the homeopaths to administer various poisons, such advice was probably well taken. For a fuller account of Grahamism at Oberlin, see Fletcher, "Physiological Reform," *A History of Oberlin College*, pp. 316-40.
- 119 Gardella, pp. 46-47; Charles Grandison Finney, *Memoirs of Rev. Charles G. Finney*, (N.Y.: A.S. Barnes, 1876), pp. 157-58.
- 120 Gardella, p. 48.
- 121 Finney, *Systematic Theology*, p 473; Fletcher, p. 330.
- 122 Gardella, pp. 44-46, 85-94; Dimond, p. 243; Peters, p. 88; Wesley's *Sunday Service*, p. 309; Richard W. Schwarz, "Kellogg, John Harvey,"

DAB, supplement 3, pp. 409-11, (One might well imagine what Dr. Kellogg would have to say about the current television campaign to convince the American public that Kellogg's cornflakes are the choice of people with sex appeal.); Lewis R. Dunn, "Christian Purity," *MQR*, LV, (April, 1873), 212; J. Townley Crane, "Christian Perfection and the Higher Life," *MQR*, LX, (October, 1878), 695-96; C.W. Riskell, "The Sanctification of the Passions," *MQR*, LXXV, (May, 1893), 382; Bishop E.R. Hendrix, "The Human Body in the Light of Christianity," *MQR*, LXXIX, (May, 1897), 389-401.

The progressiveness, the saneness even, of this attitude toward sexuality to which the twentieth-century American Church subscribes is not without irony. Though the Church accepts the proposition that sex within the bonds of matrimony is not sinful, there is such a taboo in that community associated with sexuality that the raising of sexual subjects is largely evocative of horror and dismay. For example, there is the unwillingness on the part of many present day evangelicals to have their children discussing sex in the school classroom. This is patently not, as they argue, because they believe it should be taught in the home; rather, it is the other side of their unwillingness to teach it in the home. American religious society, though having theologically severed marital sex from sin, still marches to the crunch of "cornflakes and graham crackers (Kathleen Stein, "Interview: John Money," *OMNI*, VIII, no. 7, (N.Y., April, 1986), 80)." (John Money is Professor of Medical Psychology at John Hopkins University.)

123 Cross, pp. 84, 314-15; Dixon, pp. 61-63, 350.

124 Dixon, p. 177. Frances Trollope's observation of the goings on at a mourner's bench packed with women illustrates this principle of sympathy between the sexes: "The preachers moved about among them, at once exciting and soothing their agonies. I heard the muttered "Sister! dear Sister!" I saw the insidious lips approach the cheeks of the unhappy girls; I heard the murmured confessions of the poor victims, and I watched their tormentors breathing into their ears consolations that tinged the pale cheek with red (Trollope, p. 143).

125 "What is Holiness?" *Guide to Holiness*, LIII, (March, 1868), 86; Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, p. 158.

126 Strachey, pp. 165, 257-58, 270.

CHAPTER 4

SCHISM

*... some have advised, wholly to lay aside the use of those expressions, 'because they have given so great offense.' But are they not found in the oracles of God? If so, by what authority can any messenger of God lay them aside, even though all men should be offended?*¹

John Wesley on the doctrine of Perfection

In the 1890's small groups of holiness-minded Methodists splintered away from the M.E.C., having concluded that their church had grown uninterested in Wesleyanism's central doctrine, and that the doctrine's safe keeping required their independence from Methodist polity. Why they came to that conclusion is what this chapter is intended to answer.

Before proceeding it is necessary to make a few observations about methodology and nomenclature. First, this chapter does not contain any new spade work on the Holiness schism. It is, therefore, a synthesis of work that has gone before. That is not to say that no new light will be shed upon the schism. The emphasis here will be upon its social and cultural aspects--particularly the importance of the revival tradition and second blessing methodology--which, though previously not ignored, have tended to be overshadowed by the attention paid to the doctrinal debate. There will also be some discussion of the holiness tradition as it has been transmitted to the largest of the Holiness denominations to emerge from the schism: the Church of the Nazarene. Second, finding appropriate labels

to differentiate those who left the M.E.C. for the sake of their Holiness beliefs from those who remained is difficult because many of those who stayed were no less committed to the doctrine. Nor is it clear that the M.E.C. was actually in the process of giving up the doctrine. It was certainly not being given up in any official sense. Accordingly, the Holiness nomenclature which the schismatics applied to themselves will be used with the understanding that that does not necessarily imply, as the schismatics implied, a lack of interest in Holiness on the part of other Methodists.

The Holiness Revival, was, if anything, even more popular after the Civil War than before. Prompted by a belief that interest in Holiness was waning within Methodism, the forces of Holiness banded together in 1867 to form The National Camp Meeting Association for the Promotion of Christian Holiness--mercifully shortened to the National Holiness Association not long afterwards--and placed a respected Methodist minister, John Inskip, at the head. The first national campmeeting held in Vineland, N.J. that same year was an unqualified success. Between then and the days of the schism, the National Association sponsored well over fifty campmeetings and became a powerful ecumenical force for revival.

It also served as a model for numerous other unofficial Holiness associations among Methodists.

Despite the friendship of Bishops like Randolph Foster, Jesse Peck and Matthew Simpson, the National Holiness Association and kindred organizations grew suspect in the eyes of Methodists who were haunted by the spectre of "come-outism," or the schisms of former times. Questions were, therefore, raised as to the validity of the National Association's place as an independent group within Methodism and exception was taken to the implication that the M.E.C. was doing less than its duty by Wesleyan doctrine. Lewis Dunn protested the loyalty of such organizations in the pages of the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, disassociating them from the difficulties of the past. In defense of "'special meetings' for the promotion of . . . holiness", Dunn quoted Bishop Foster to the effect that such extra-ecclesiastical affairs may well have been forced on the participants due to the "indifference" of both their lay and ordained brethren, and reminded the reader that holiness is a unifying force; it is sin that is disruptive. But elsewhere in the *Review* there were veiled statements--aimed, perhaps, at the National Association--as to the "unity of polity" of the M.E.C. being dependent upon the submission and sacrifice of each part to the whole. One of the editors, D.D. Whedon, stated flatly,

"The holiness association, the holiness periodical, the holiness prayer meeting, the holiness preacher, are all modern novelties. They are not Wesleyan."²

The issue of special associations within Methodism boiled down to a matter of church doctrine versus church discipline. One side insisted that since the church continued to value the doctrine of Perfection, there was no reason for the Perfectionists not to adhere to church discipline; the other side charged that the church had given up the doctrine, and thus had given up the right to administer discipline in this matter. A similar scenario that had been played out earlier in the Genesee Conference in up state New York with bitter results. That conflict had led to the formation of the Free Methodist Church in 1860. Unsympathetic Methodists continued to refer to Free Methodists as "Nazarites"--as the Free Methodists had called themselves during their struggles within the M.E.C.--connecting that name to all manner of fanaticism, perfidy and insubordination.³

Subjected to similar charges, the members of the National Holiness Association could comfort themselves with the thought that the British Methodists of earlier days had suffered similarly within a lazy and neglectful Church of England from which they removed themselves after Wesley's death. If need be, the holiness Methodists told themselves, they

would pick up the banner of Methodism from whence it had fallen and continue alone.⁴

One of the constant themes of the holiness-minded was the worldliness into which the other members of the M.E.C. had allegedly fallen--a theme that had become popular among introspective Methodists at least half a century before the Holiness schism.

In his late ante-bellum autobiography, Peter Cartwright presented a litany of complaints against contemporary Methodism, which to his mind no longer took an adequate stand against fancy dress, the wearing of jewelry, "dram-drinking", attendance at balls and theatres, and many other trespasses against the rules and practices of Methodism. In the early days of Methodism, Cartwright recalled, Methodists dressed plainly, had no need of choirs or organs, observed the Sabbath, and knelt when they prayed. A decade after Cartwright had made these charges, Lewis Dunn, flushed with the nascent success of the National Holiness Association, complained in the pages of the *MQR* of the lax morals and the latitudinarian and compromising attitude of those church people who were not "yearning after a higher life." The pages of the *Guide to Holiness* also rang with complaints about the lack of holy zeal exhibited by fellow Methodists.

They heaped charges upon Methodists who had built themselves "costly churches", who loved the fair, the theatre and the dance hall, and who were found at billiards and cards instead of at prayer and at the classmeeting. "Should we earnestly insist on *every particular* of inward and outward holiness, in meekness and love," wrote Rev. C.M. Damon in the *Guide*, "how long would it be before these diversion loving, jewelry adorned, tobacco chewing and smoking members would be converted or reclaimed?" In an article entitled "Apparel" appeared the complaint of another Methodist clergyman who had confessed to a friend: "I often tremble when I take women into the Church and see the great temptation to vanity which surrounds them."⁵

Fashionable dress was not the only worldly invader of the worship service. Not only was there a battle to get the Methodist out of the theatre and the music hall, but also to get the theatre and the music hall out of the Methodist service. During his editorship of the *MQR*, Daniel Curry attacked the ostentation which had crept into the service, especially into the music, complaining of "[p]opular songs, set to light and fantastic airs, and 'rendered' by a company of poorly trained opera-singers." Bishop Foster complained similarly of the "cold, artistic, or operatic performances" of "[e]laborately dressed and ornamented choirs, who, in

many cases, make no profession of religion and are often sneering sceptics." These complaints came decades after Cartwright had raised objections to Methodist worship as he had found it in Boston. The use of choirs and of professional musicians--to whose "moral character" he took exception--seemed to Cartwright calculated to destroy congregational singing, to engender a pride in fashionableness among Methodists, and to "block...the way of the poor." He had accurately predicted that the already established popularity of such practices would make it "exceedingly hard to overcome the prejudice in favor of them".⁶

On the long list of unholy diversions that had captured the interest of the Methodists was novel reading. It was a diversion which the editors of the *Guide to Holiness* found particularly nasty, though, judging by the praises heaped upon that literary form in the *MQR*, the Palmers' fight against the novel swayed few among the leaders of Methodism. The wrath of the *Guide* was directed appropriately enough at the novelist who had changed Yankee Christendom's mind about the worth of the novel. The novelist was Harriet Beecher Stowe--the novel: *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. More offensive to the *Guide* than the proposition that reading a "pious novel" had become an appropriate pass time was the proposition that going to see that pious novel acted out on stage was equally acceptable. For not

only had *Uncle Tom's Cabin* started church folk to novel reading, it had also packed them in at the theatre. The fact that Mrs. Stowe had once used her literary talent to aid the Palmers in their cause only made matters worse, by further giving those ignorant of the dangers of the novel and the theatre the impression that what they were reading and seeing was wholesome. Compounding the problem was Reverend Henry Ward Beecher's attempt to emulate his sister's success in print and on the stage with his first novel, *Norwood*. That the novel leads to other improprieties the *Guide* demonstrated by reporting on Beecher's address to the Young Men's Christian Association in Brooklyn, during which he recommend the incorporation of bowling alleys and billiard tables into the YMCA's new building. Beecher had argued the "*times* are changed"; yet the *Guide* remembered when, not long before, Beecher had warned another group of young men that "'Hell is populated with the victims of *harmless amusements*.'" The *Guide* concluded that the sentiment was certainly not that of Henry Ward Beecher the novelist. Broadening its attack on the novel, the *Guide* asked its readers: "If we possess the 'peace which passeth all understanding,' and joy in the Holy Ghost, do we need any modification of the card-table, the whirling dance, or the voluptuous theatre, as tributaries to our happiness?" That such indulgences actually

lead to unhappiness was testified to by one of the *Guide's* readers who wrote in to proclaim victory over his addiction to "light reading" and to warn that such reading "leads thousands upon thousands into hopeless despair, and binds with . . . chains of unbelief." It is, perhaps, a sign of a more literarily innocent time that that correspondence should have been entitled "Saved from a Ruinous Habit."⁷

"O, how things have changed for the worse in this educational age," wrote Cartwright, lamenting the drift of Methodists away from their roots, and laying the blame on the steps of the M.E.C.'s institutions of higher learning. Cartwright argued that it was the informally educated itinerant ministers--learning from the Bible and the *Discipline* as they rode between calls and from their fellow ministers when they could--who had been responsible for the great successes of the Methodists. Had Wesley or Bishop Asbury waited about for an educated ministry, as the church seemed to be doing in Cartwright's day, Methodism would have got nowhere. Yet, Cartwright warned, despite the success of the old system, the M.E.C. was running after Congregational models--models that had demonstrated utter failure--and was embarked on a course of educational requirement which would "end in a settled ministry" and destroy the

itinerancy, the backbone of Methodism. "[V]ery few of those young men," wrote Cartwright in harsh appraisal,

who believe they are called of God to preach the Gospel, and are persuaded to go to college . . . ever go into the regular traveling ministry . . . having quieted their consciences with the flattering unction of obtaining a sanctified education, while they have neglected the duty of regularly preaching Jesus to dying sinners, their moral sensibilities are blunted, and they see an opening prospect of getting better pay as teachers . . . and . . . are easily persuaded that they can meet their moral obligations in disseminating sanctified learning.⁸

Cartwright spoke the concerns of many Methodists who feared that an educated clergy was leading the M.E.C. into a cold formalism and that an interest in culture and intellectual refinement was supplanting the old concern for the poor and for lost souls. Others shared his apprehension that the seminary was taking the minister into a region beyond his ability to communicate with his congregation, spoiling him for work among the poor and the lowly, pinching the flow of preachers who were desperately needed in the field, and replacing reliance on the Holy Spirit with reliance on a theological education. It was not that Cartwright was anti-intellectual; rather, he was a man of action, who thought that learning could not be properly separated from the business of saving souls.

Impatient with the process of college education, he was suspicious of it as well, as it created and sustained a class of men who removed themselves from the "harvest-field of souls"--"downy D.D.'s," he called them--who sought "presidencies . . . professorships . . . editorships . . . and good livings." Yet, those downy D.D.'s, aware of the importance of Methodist tradition and of their own inability to be all things to all people, lined up in the pages of the *MQR* to defend the efficacy and the propriety of maintaining the tradition of training clergy in the field.⁹

But more disturbing to the holiness-minded than the socialization of the educated minister were the things that their ministers had been learning at college--things, like Higher Criticism and Darwinism, which appeared to question the validity and accuracy of the scriptures. Doubtless, elements of modernism were creeping into scholarly Methodist thought. During Daniel Curry's editorship of the *MQR*, the *Review* appeared friendly to the findings of the higher critics and its readers were treated to theories of Biblical authorship which some would certainly not appreciate. But the death of Curry in August of 1888 was followed by a change in editorial policy that brought a deluge of articles which sought to refute many of the more troubling conclusions of the higher critics. During that crucial period, when many holiness-minded Methodists were

wondering if the M.E.C. was the church for them, they would have discovered the odd article with Modernist leanings in the official organ of the church; but the overwhelming weight of Methodist thinking, as it emerged in the pages of the *MQR*, took the opposite tack.¹⁰

The tradition of the itinerancy could not, of course, be sustained. The pressure of church growth dictated a settled ministry and may well have, as Cartwright feared, irrevocably altered American Methodism. For with the waning of the itinerancy came the waning of the classmeeting.

The classmeeting had been the foundation of Methodism--the cell group of the Methodist Connexion as it existed within Anglicanism. The classmeeting was a time of study, self-examination, correction, and prayer. It was required of every member of the Methodist Connexion that he be in attendance at the weekly classmeeting or to show just cause to his class leader for his absence. In the United States, where Methodism had been first established as a separate denomination, the function of the classmeeting had been somewhat altered. For American Methodists it was the tie that bound the congregation together between calls by the itinerant minister. With the trend toward a settled ministry the classmeeting fell out of use, though weekly attendance at the classmeeting, as was stated in the *Discipline*, remained a requirement for M.E.C. membership. As early

as 1862, three quarters of the M.E.C. membership were no longer in the habit of attending the classmeeting and church authorities were not inclined to meet out discipline on that account. The holiness-minded in the M.E.C. were particularly concerned about this trend as they believed that the purpose of the classmeeting was to keep Holiness forefront in the minds and hearts of Methodists. Thus, lack of interest in the classmeeting provided further proof that the M.E.C. was becoming lackadaisical about the central doctrine of Wesleyanism.¹¹

As the offspring of the Revival, it is apparent that the force of the Holiness movement waxed and waned with the forces of its parent. The understanding on the part of the framers of the National Holiness Association of the importance of the campmeeting for keeping Holiness central in the minds of Methodists and non-Methodists alike illustrates the point. As is evident by contemporary descriptions, the campmeetings of the Holiness Association were certainly within the revival tradition, though mostly, but not completely, expunged of the grosser exercises and of the fanatical outbreaks for which the Revival had become infamous.¹²

The Revival in post-Civil War America began to wear a much different face than it had in ante-bellum days. As Alexander Tuttle proudly put it in

the *MOR*: "There are revivals still, but they are associated with the most elaborate organization." The size and length of the campmeeting in the country and the tentmeeting in the city and the utmost importance placed on their numerical as well as spiritual success created logistical problems which were dealt with amid the grinding and clanking of immense pieces of revival machinery. But as that machinery rolled on toward an evangelized America, it began to demonstrate the law of diminishing returns. Holiness revivalism had, by definition, been the revivalism of the already convinced--a revivalism of the saved. Now revivalism itself was reaching that stage. What market there was for it had been nearly tapped. Indications of that trend had been noted even before the formation of the National Holiness Association, but by the last decade of the century the trend was clear; the Revival could no longer touch the hearts and minds of Americans as it once did. Its once awesome ability to save souls and to swell the numbers of the Church had come to an end, seemingly at the same time as rural America had become overshadowed by the city. Finney's dictum that God raises up new measures when old ones become formalized and stale and cease to attract attention became prophecy as the American Church fell back on less emotional measures--measures some thought neglected within the revival

tradition, like education and liturgy--measures which stressed spiritual growth and nurture. Much of Protestant America was leaving the revival tradition behind.¹³

Just as there had been a certain logic of practice and theology inherent in the waxing Revival--as the Calvinists had discovered--so the Methodist Perfectionists discovered a certain logic in the waning Revival. The end of revivalism meant an end to the religious excitements which had brought the revival participant to a climactic, emotional and saving crisis. In the absence of a revival methodology, the logic of immediacy--the logic of a second saving work received immediately by faith--melted away. Stress on the crisis experience was giving way to gradualism, and this was indeed a sore point among holiness people as their Methodist brethren began to question their emphasis on the instantaneous nature of the second blessing. Even worse, some were so unWesleyan as to question the very existence of a second blessing.¹⁴

Revivalism was the methodology on which American Methodism was built. It was the borrowed form at which Methodism had excelled. It was also the foundation of the Holiness movement. There were many Methodists on both sides of the Holiness issue who were reluctant to give revivalism up, but the holiness-minded, who believed that the

sophisticates of Methodism were setting about to quash the holy revival zeal of the plainfolk, were especially reluctant.

A contributor to the *Guide to Holiness* writing on the "Fruits of Holiness" described them this way: "'Their fruits' are known by the love of plain dealing in the pulpit and class, the willingness to bear reproof if need be; to receive correction and instruction in the things that belong to our everlasting peace." Yet, it was recognized by both the lovers and the critics of Holiness alike that all too often those were not the traits of professors of holiness. Words like "ensorious"; "puffed up"; and "fanatical" were frequently used to describe the personalities of holiness people. "Perfection", it was well known, could be an extremely heady word, not only for those simple folk whose understanding of the doctrine went little beyond its ambiguous label, but also for those whose understanding of the doctrine was intellectually complete. Perhaps the most famous example of the latter case was Asa Mahan, whose belligerent and autocratic personality was hardly compatible with his teaching on Perfection.¹⁵

Because of the broad social standards which they set for the holy life, and because of the ease with which they said it could be entered, the

Methodist Perfectionists, if they were not careful in their conclusions, were prone to ascribe fondness of sin as the motivation of all those who were not of their opinion, some even to the point of insisting on holiness or Hell. And their opponents were no less likely to tar them all with the brush of pride and fanaticism. The stress that the holiness people placed on immediacy and on testimony certainly made their Methodist brethren suspicious on a number of counts: the methodology was narrower than Wesley had allowed and showed Pelagian tendencies at the hands of some of its apologists; testimony was not what Wesley had required--even the humblest of testimonies to being perfected would raise egalitarian suspicions against those who seemed to be claiming a spiritual superiority; and an awakening distrust of the revival methods by which immediacy was achieved meant that the Revival and Perfectionist fanaticisms of the past were becoming associated with the National Holiness Association. It was the latter fear that led one contributor to the *MQR* to warn that "no thought or theme tends more to fanaticism, unless carefully guarded, [than the] doctrine of holiness . . . the glory of Methodism." Among the fruits of fanaticism he listed the aberrations of the revival spirit: the following after "impressions, special revelations, faith healings, and other vagaries of mysticism." The converts to Holiness

need warning, he continued,

against growing wise above what is written,
condemning indiscriminately things indifferent
with things positively evil; fostering self-conceit
and obstinacy under the garb of spirituality;
assuming a holiness superior to the need of
ordinary pulpit instruction; mistaking narrowness,
sourness, and denunciation for perfect love;
rejecting counsel, however kindly given, as
emanating from blindness or malevolence. For the
want of proper caution at the proper time hosts of
well-meaning Methodists have become extremists,
exclusionists, and "come-outers." They are lost to
the Church and to themselves.

Taking up this same theme in his *Primitive Traits of the Revival*,

Frederick Davenport unconsciously slipped out of his role as a social

scientist investigating revival psychology and the words of a deeply stung

Methodist layman intruded onto the page. "'Holiness' experts and

professors of entire sanctification are notoriously hard to get along with,"

he wrote. "They are the real spiritual defectives and not their

fellow-members of the church at whom they often rail accusingly." One

Methodist Bishop went so far as to call the aspirations of the

Perfectionists "crankification". Certainly, the holiness schismatics had

both given and received offense, and it is no wonder that they thought they

were being made to feel ashamed for the cause of Holiness.¹⁶

While the holiness schismatics were clinging to the old Revival forms, they were at the same time beginning to leave behind the postmillennial vision of the Revival, exchanging it for a more pessimistic millenarianism. The experience of the holiness-schismatics within the M.E.C. left them doubtful that the modern church was a capable or a suitable instrument for bringing about the Millennium. Indeed, even those Methodists who did not share the view that their church was being given over to worldly corruption had become increasingly overwhelmed by the enormity of the task before them and the distance that lay between them and the Millennium. Their ante-bellum fathers had thought it just within their grasp. But they had watched it recede from them in a world which appeared to grow more complex and more resistant to reform with every year.

This trend among the holiness-schismatics was symptomatic of changes occurring among those other American Protestants who were also clinging to the revival tradition and rejecting the Modernist route which they believed the American Church was taking. The common denominator among these Protestants was the adoption of a premillennialist view of the Second Coming. They began to teach that only the physical return of Christ could possibly bring about the Millennium.

Revivalism and Premillennialism fit nicely together. Premillennialism allowed the believer to once again think in terms of an imminent millennium--an imminence which was especially clear to those who could read aright the signs of the times. Premillennialism was also an inspiration to revival conversion and to upright living as people learned that at any moment they might have to answer for their lives and conduct to the Lord of hosts.¹⁷

Within two decades of the Holiness schism, the Holiness movement was predominantly premillennialist. According to Timothy Smith, Premillennialism first gained acceptance among the holiness people of the South and the Midwest, but by the 1920's, when Premillennialism had completely infiltrated the antimodernist churches, the largest Holiness denomination to coalesce out of the schism, the Church of the Nazarene, was uniformly premillennialist across the country. Meanwhile the Methodists felt little of the impact of Premillennialism as, presumably, most of their antimodernists--by then commonly lumped under the label "Fundamentalist"--had left thirty years earlier.¹⁸

For two Americans as diverse in their lifestyles and their interpretations of the Revival as John Humphrey Noyes and Professor George Crooks of the

M.E.C.'s Drew Seminary, the Revival was yet for both of them the source of the reforms of the age. In his early work *Revivalism and Social Reform*, Holiness historian Timothy Smith has taken the same view of the Revival, drawing the line of evolution of American evangelical Christianity from democracy to Arminianism--the logical doctrine of a democratic society--to revivalism then to social passion, bringing perfectionism into the picture as a "double compulsion" for reform. The Revival and the quest for "perfect love", Smith argued were the precursors of the Social Gospel.¹⁹ Yet, the legacy of the Revival as a reform movement is mixed.

It is part of Smith's thesis that in exchanging Calvinism for Arminianism Americans began to change their view of poverty as being the fault of the poor and added an element of social responsibility to their thinking.²⁰ Presumably the Calvinist notion of grace and election which made wealth, health and happiness the gifts of God and the evidence of salvation (they may have talked cautiously of being "hopefully converted", but they loaded that phrase with more meaning than it was meant to carry) had blinded Americans to the social forces which impoverish peoples' lives. But a doctrine which presumes freedom of the will is easily accommodated to those who would believe the poor are poor because they have chosen poorly. And whether one conceives oneself to be among the

elect by birth or by being born-again, the same proofs of election are still applied. As Henry F. May has argued, in post-Civil War America--even in that era of obscenely large fortunes arrived at without scruple--"wealth was steadily being Christianized" and increasingly attributed to the grace of God. It was also a common belief among Americans at that time that poverty was a rare condition among their countrymen. If Protestant Americans were waking up to the plight of the poor it may not have been a result of a change of theology; rather it may have been the result of an encounter, as May has argued, with cold, hard social reality.²¹

That the Revival was a major inspiration to the reforms of the age is doubtless true in some sense, but it was the case as often as not that the Revival served the God of things as they are instead of the God of things as they ought to be. That the Revival should have served to bolster the thinking of slaveholders and abolitionists alike, reaffirming to each the truth of their antithetical convictions, is the most powerful example of the dual nature of a Revival that, as was stated earlier, was a radical reaffirmation of American ideals even though those ideals should contain massive, internal contradictions.²²

This ambiguity of purpose in evangelical thinking did not exist just with respect to slavery, but with respect to the whole realm of social and

economic issues. Finney believed that true Christians must also be reformers and finding revival an insufficient cure to the ills of society he came to understand the importance of the political and social aspects of reform. But many who came in his wake, the Palmers and Dwight Moody for example, though no less interested in reform, had difficulty seeing the structure behind the social problems which plagued America. They were inclined to place the entire burden of reform on the the state of the heart, and in this way gave in to the status quo by default.²³

In contrast to American Protestantism's acceptance of wealth as a blessing from God was the suspicion among the holiness Methodists that holiness and wealth did not mix, or at least, that wealth and its attending worldliness were distracting Methodists from what they believed to be the imperative of the faith.²⁴ This inclination, to other-worldliness on the part of the holiness-schismatics finds its correlation in certain sociological models which would place them among the poor and dispossessed of American society. The rich, as Richard Niebuhr has observed, can afford to make religion a matter of the "abstract" and the "formal". Thus, they render it "ethically harmless" so that it cannot interfere with their privileged position. The poor, however, are in a

position to take the material ethics of the Gospel at face value and therefore appropriate for themselves the attending moral and spiritual superiority that the Gospel attaches to their material position. It is such as they who are most receptive to the emotional fervor of the revival tradition which more readily meets their needs than the intellectualized and ritualized religion of the materially well off. It is within such a tradition that they gain a sense of status and in which they have their lack of status in the larger world explained in such a way as to provide a positive self-definition.²⁵

That this model fits some of the holiness come-outers of the M.E.C. is certainly the case. In his study of the Illinois members of the Western Holiness Association, a subsection of the National Holiness Association, Carl Oblinger found that both the clergy and the lay members of the Western Holiness Association showed a significant tendency to be less educated and less well off, and to be enjoying less prestige than their Methodist brethren. This was true both on the farm and in the town. Oblinger also found that sixty-one percent of the Holiness Association members had been born in or near Illinois, but that eighty percent of their Methodist brethren had moved into the area chiefly from the East. But within their own locale the Holiness Association members tended to be

less settled, frequently moving about in such a way as to suggest that "the holiness group was not going anywhere" in terms of occupation and property. Oblinger suggests that the status of these people left them feeling alienated not only from the society around them but from their own church as well, especially from such churches in town as were becoming status conscious congregations of the middle-class. For many Methodists of low station church membership ceased to relieve the feelings of inadequacy that they met with in their daily lives as the status they had in society increasingly became the status they had in their church. It was these who were the most likely to seek membership in the Holiness Association.²⁶

This pattern corresponds to Timothy Smith's findings that the holiness-minded Methodists in the East were more likely to have been recent immigrants from the country to the city. Although the members of the National Holiness Association did not uniformly fall within the category of the dispossessed, they did glory in the theme that their status came from other-worldly sources. As one of their campmeeting songs says: "Tho' these people may not learned be/ Nor boast of worldly fame,/ They have all received their Pentecost/ Thro' faith in Jesus' name."²⁷

As worldliness had crept into the city church service, so it crept into the revival service and the campmeeting. The North American tradition of attending services fashionably is of long standing, as is demonstrated by Frances Trollope's observation that religion provided Americans, especially American women, with the only opportunity to socialize, and so they dressed as for a social occasion. For the Rev. Emory Wright, writing in the *MQR* in 1861, this trend had got quite out of hand as Methodists brought not only fancy dress to the campmeeting, but had begun to arrive like Arabian princes with carpets, couches, chairs, chests, draperies, mirrors and so on to furnish their more than ample, private tents in which visitors were received and entertained even in the midst of the services. In train came book and news vendors, boot-blacks, photographers, barbers, dentists, doctors and all manner of itinerant businessmen who saw in the campmeeting the ideal opportunity to hawk their wares and services. By the time the next generation of Methodists was leaving home for campmeeting, they had to worry less about bringing along the amenities of home as they had already been included in campgrounds, whose design approximated a resort or conference centre more than the straw and canvas accommodations of ante-bellum days. The members of the National Holiness Association were not unaffected by this trend nor unwilling to

keep pace with it. Their numerous and successful Holiness campmeetings held on well equipped grounds were largely attended by urban dwellers who possessed both the leisure time and the where-with-all for such an outing and who arrived right on the campgrounds by railcar.²⁸

The Revival and the Holiness Revival, neither entirely spent forces, had, along with much of the American population, made the shift to the city and continued to capture the hearts of the successful and the unsuccessful alike with the twin themes of the old-time religion and the beauty of the country side, though it was the successful who could experience the latter more often. Ironically, it is this city revivalism that identifies the Holiness movement with the rural side of the clash between city and country cultures that accompanied the urban growth of industrialized America. But where else would one expect the first signs of dissatisfaction with the social course of urban culture than right at the source? That this was one of the motivating forces in the Holiness schism is evident in Timothy's Smith's observation that the oldest of the Nazarene congregations are right where one would expect them to be if they were in the vanguard of the reaction against the spiritual vagaries of an urban culture in which, it was feared, the moral checks and balances of the smaller community were circumvented by the anonymity of the crowd.²⁹

Membership in a Holiness association was, accordingly, motivated not solely by status consciousness but also by a love of the traditional small town and rural values which some Methodists believed their church and their society were losing.

The holiness-schismatics showed themselves true to their Wesleyan roots and to their stand against what they perceived were the values of the urban, middle-class church by establishing a significant work among the poor and the dispossessed, to the point of appearing to be a social reform movement. In this they shared in the bind felt by their pre-millennialist fellow travellers who, though believing that reform efforts could not change the historical course traced by Bible prophecy, were unable, by scriptural command and by reform inheritance, to dispense with works of Christian charity. However, within the first two decades of its split from Methodism, the Holiness movement began to evidence its own middle-class propensities, its members largely removing both themselves and their church buildings from the inner city, from the poor and from efforts at poor relief.³⁰

Moving in the same direction as the premillennialist-Fundamentalist camp, the holiness people, with their stress on personal redemption, tended to reject the notion of corporate salvation and to be suspicious of

both secular and religious movements for social reform. The revival tradition to which they clung may well have been at the root of the Social Gospel, as Timothy Smith has argued, but the Holiness movement was removing itself from the both the postmillennial tradition which made the ends of the Social Gospel believable and from the Modernist tradition out of which the Social Gospel had emerged. Like the social gospellers, the holiness people were troubled by the monopoly on wealth and power which had accompanied industrialization. But unlike the social gospellers they distrusted Socialism, organized labor and other such structural approaches to reform.³¹

The Holiness movement's adoption of middle-class values is most graphically demonstrated by the painful removal, in the second decade after the schism, of an internal movement whose members are far less ambiguously numbered among the dispossessed. That movement was Pentecostalism.

The Methodists had constantly striven to prevent any form of revivalism's ecstatic and charismatic expressions from becoming established as an ultimate form of religious expression--and thereby become the sum of revivalism--and had succeeded in the post Civil-War

period in nearly eliminating ecstatic practices. Therefore, among Methodist and holiness people, works of the spirit had largely ceased to be evidenced by the old-time revival exercises. It was the Pentecostals, with their teaching of a third work of grace--speaking in tongues--who turned back the clock on the revival tradition and eventually institutionalized their particular charismatic expression. As a movement within the Holiness movement, Pentecostalism was less controllable than was Holiness within Methodism. Pentecostalism tended to force the argument between claims to spiritual superiority on the one hand and accusations of fanaticism on the other to a level far beyond anything experienced in the Holiness schism. The Pentecostal schism made a wound in the Holiness movement which, after seventy years, has still not healed.³²

Richard Niebuhr has defined a sect as an alliance of the dispossessed. One is born into a denomination, but one joins a sect, the future of which is to become a denomination with the coming of the second generation. The beauty of the sect is that it imposes a discipline on its members by which they leave their economically impoverished status behind. But in doing so they become a church of the middle-class and give up their

concern for those who still suffer from the dispossession which they or their parents had once suffered. It is little wonder then that a middle-class church, as Niebuhr has defined it, should be characterized by a greater concern with personal rather than social salvation and is more likely to view sin as a personal failure than as part of the structure and the process of society.³³ In these two ways the holiness come-outers and the dominant denomination into which they were coalescing in the first two decades of the twentieth century fit the sociological model ambiguously, as a movement containing both those who were becoming middle-class and those who were already middle-class.

At the age of 84, Wesley looked at his Methodists and mused on their success. "The Methodists in every place," he wrote

grow diligent and frugal; consequently they increase in goods. Hence they proportionably increase in pride, in anger, in the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life. So, although the form of religion remains, the spirit is swiftly vanishing away.³⁴

A century later, this was the complaint of the holiness schismatics against American Methodism. And while one cannot hold that they were doomed to recapitulation, it appears that the holiness schismatics were themselves unsuccessful in avoiding the trap that they saw being sprung

on the church they were leaving.

Approximately one hundred thousand holiness people left the M.E.C., North and South, in the 1890's, a little more than two percent of American Methodism's nearly four-and-a-half million members.³⁵ They, however, carried a weight far greater than their numbers, it being certain that each come-outer was acting out of a sense of commitment to Wesleyan ideals, whereas a general inference of that sort cannot be applied to those who stayed behind. In blunter terms, none of those who left for the sake of Holiness were merely nominal members of the church. They left having confused the methodology of the Holiness Revival for the doctrine of Holiness, and their zeal for living the holy life, at times, had surpassed propriety and offended against the polity of their church, yet, on the basis of Methodist tradition and doctrine, they rightly called their church to an accounting and an examination of its role within the changing patterns of American society.

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POSTLOGUE

As the inheritor of an urban middle-class tradition with a distinct tendency to prize the old-time values of rural and small town America, the Church of the Nazarene, into its fourth decade, had demonstrated, according to William Warren Sweet, an ability to duplicate the Methodist trend of the nineteenth-century of doing equally well at proselytizing in the city and the country, though the importance of this statistic is blunted by the continued skewing of the population in favour of the city. Like their sister sects and denominations who had also formed in response to the waning of the Revival, the Nazarenes continued to attract the dispossessed and the status poor: rural folk, the less well educated, and the less well off. Yet, unlike the general trend among revival denominations the Nazarenes attracted a significant following in the cities, again indicating a strong middle-class constituency.¹ In this they prefigured a general trend. Standing twice as far away in time from the emergence of the revivalist and Fundamentalist sects as Sweet did when he observed that these sects were still largely composed of the dispossessed, we see a different picture. Certainly it is this tradition which the dispossessed will still turn to more readily. Yet, the economic, social, and political power exhibited at the present time in America by the Fundamentalist and evangelical right indicates a measure of sophistication and wealth which

believes any notion that this movement is any longer predominately a movement of the dispossessed.

No longer numbering themselves among the dispossessed, the inheritors of the revival tradition are inclined to that traditional American view that physical comfort and material well-being are evidences of true faith. But they have broadly taken that tradition beyond the boundaries of the old evangelical notion of material blessings. Fashion and luxuries which once would have been considered the vices of the impious are now the evidences of grace piled higher. And unable to remain aloof from America's preoccupation with wealth, evangelicals have been equally unable to remain aloof from America's preoccupation with stardom. The movement which once held up the missionary, the minister and the martyr as heroes of the faith now idolizes and emulates the actor, the athlete and the singer. These are now portrayed as the archetypes of the born again. Thus, and with almost unfathomable irony, Jimmy Carter, a man of deep religious conviction, has been helped out of the oval office by a coalition of evangelical and Fundamentalist voters who purposely replaced him with--and here is used a phrase once uttered by evangelicals as anathema--a Hollywood actor.

Acceptance of ostentation and glamour is not the only way in which

American evangelicals have diverged from the traditions of their forebears. Amusements and entertainments which once horrified evangelicals are now their pet pass times. All manner of parlour games, sports and reading materials have lost the taint of worldliness and are now offered, especially to evangelical youth, as antidotes to the harmful distractions of the world.

Yet, there are still amusements evangelicals will oppose. Often employing the logic of Meredith Willson's Professor Harold Hill, who praised billiards and damned pool, form and place can be more of an evangelical concern than substance. Denominational prohibitions against the theatre, the dancehall and the arcade are no longer considered binding by more than a few evangelicals, especially young evangelicals, but if partaking of such entertainments at their source should hurt the conscience of some, the record player, the radio, the television, the cable, and the VCR, against insignificant opposition, have, over the course of the twentieth century, quietly sneaked those entertainments and amusements into the home.²

In this the Nazarenes are much like their evangelical brethren. The issue of certain social practices which once separated the lovers of revival from American society and the lovers of holiness from Methodist

society--at least in the perception of the holiness minded--no longer matter overly much. The church picnic or bazaar which once affronted the holiness-minded Methodist moving into the city would no more raise the objections of today's Nazarenes than does the Wednesday night prayer meeting. Even the consumption of alcohol, especially among younger Nazarenes, is losing the force of ancient taboo, though it is partaken of cautiously away from prying eyes. In short, those social practices that members of the Holiness movement once considered evidences of impiety have ceased or are fast ceasing to be the concern of the inheritors of the holiness tradition.

The Nazarenes have continued in their fathers' footsteps, both loving the Revival and aspiring to middle-class respectability. Their inherited sense of propriety has meant keeping tight reins on revivalistic emotions. Early on in their history they were cautioned by their leadership against the raucous style of revivalism and against its manifestations--visions, faintings and automatisms--which were not to be taken by them as proofs of sanctification.³

It is not that the Nazarenes have taken emotionalism out of the revival tradition. Rather, like their Methodist forbearers who gave up the less

decorous aspects of revivalism, they have sentimentalized the Revival--especially within their musical forms--providing the participant with at most an ache or a warm, even weepy feeling akin to nostalgia instead of an overloaded nervous system. Their revival exercises, like those of most revivalist sects today, have been refined and made acceptable--the raised hand; the waved handkerchief; clapping to choruses; scattered exclamations of 'Halleluhah' and 'Amen'--and are little dependent on automatisms. Salvation and sanctification are still for them the result of an emotional, saving crisis, but it is an emotional crisis bounded by an inhibition which retains motor control and consciousness, yet is able to allow a state of suggestion.

The antithesis to this cautious approach to revivalism is a remaining tendency toward the charismatic--a trait which many Nazarenes recognize among themselves and so seek to control and contain. Chief among the charismatic exercises feared by the Nazarenes, who have not forgotten the Pentecostal schism, is glossalia. Appropriately enough, then, speaking in tongues is the most frequent expression of the charismatic among Nazarenes who are so inclined. On the one side of the issue there are Nazarenes who will go so far as to say that the outbreak of tongues in these latter days are Satanically inspired. On the other side are a small

minority of Nazarenes who have quietly, furtively even, nurtured the gift of tongues. Occasionally the latter will slip out of their prayer closets so that the Nazarenes are still fighting the odd and bitter skirmish with pentecostalism.

With roots on the anti-Modernist side of the Modernist-Fundamentalist split in American Protestantism, the Nazarenes share a common heritage with the Fundamentalists, though they cannot be definitively lumped with them. Of those beliefs which are commonly said to comprise Fundamentalism, the Nazarenes differ most significantly on the issue of the inerrancy of the scriptures. They have officially held that the scriptures contain all necessary truth for salvation, yet probe a Nazarene layman on the issue, or even his pastor, and one may often find a literalist view of the Bible.⁴

That, however, in the light of the difficulty Nazarenes are having currently in maintaining their distinctive emphasis on Holiness, is a minor issue in the question of Nazarene self-understanding. Officially the Church of the Nazarene remains a Holiness church, and its pulpits and its corridors of power are open only to those who express belief in a second work of grace. Yet, the state of the church as a whole, with respect to

Holiness doctrine, may be likened to that of the M.E.C. of a century ago. It is readily admitted by Nazarenes who are knowledgeable of their tradition and doctrine that the distinctiveness of Nazarene theology is slipping away through doctrinal confusion and inadequate instruction. There are even Nazarenes who have decided that it is best not to speak of the doctrine, and there are others who have decided that it would be best forgotten altogether. Thus, at this point in Nazarene history, it is not inappropriate to talk of Nazarenes and of holiness minded Nazarenes.⁵

End Notes

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2 Among those entertainments over which evangelicals find themselves divided most significantly is the twentieth-century ecstatic tradition known as Rock 'n' Roll. Like evangelicalism, Rock 'n' Roll's roots lie, in part, through its debt to Gospel music, in the revivals of the nineteenth-century. Yet, it is a Revival offspring that many evangelicals would rather not acknowledge, or which they outrightly condemn as overtly sexual, drug oriented and Satanic. While reserving opinion on the latter, it is readily evident that evangelicalism's instinctive belief that promiscuity and drug taking are part and parcel of Rock 'n' Roll is essentially correct in that, as an ecstatic tradition--as the model of revival ecstasy implies--it will lead some to seek ecstasy by other means. But not all evangelicals are inclined to reject the ecstasy of Rock 'n' Roll. Many, especially younger evangelicals, have embraced Rock 'n' Roll whole heartedly precisely because it is an ecstatic tradition and as such they find it spiritually compelling. Ironically then, the torch of nineteen-century revival ecstacism has been rekindled by the Christian rockers over the objections of many who are the inheritors of the revival tradition.

Much more acceptable to evangelicals than Rock 'n' Roll, yet just as prone to lead its fans and practitioners to seek sexual and drug related ecstasies, is Rock 'n' Roll's cousin known as country and Western. The closeness of those two tradition is often forgotten by the devotees of each because, even in its most highly commercialized form, Country and Western music and lyrics have a sound and a feel that are much closer to the Gospel and folk roots that it shares with Rock 'n' Roll. That comparative closeness of Country and Western to its roots has deceived many unwary evangelicals who could find plenty to criticize within the Country and Western tradition except that they are disinclined to see that the evils they have found in Rock 'n' Roll are also present in their favoured musical form.

The model of ecstatic revivalism answers certain questions that arise out of the ecstasies of Rock 'n' Roll and Country and Western music. In the

light of that model, the pelvic thrusting style of Rock 'n' Roll pioneer Elvis Presley ceases to stand in complete contradiction to his Pentecostal upbringing and to his reputation as a singer of Gospel and sacred music. Thus it is that the closer one gets to the Gospel end of the Country and Western spectrum the greater is the fusion of the spiritual and the sexual, often resulting in glaring inconsistencies as in the lascivious beat and lyrics of the Oak Ridge Boys' "Elvira", or in the bumping and grinding gyrations of Amy Grant.

3 Robert Mapes Anderson, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism*, (N.Y.: Oxford, 1979), p. 151; Timothy L. Smith, *Called Unto Holiness The Story of the Nazarenes: The Formative Years*, (Kansas City, Mo.: Nazarene Publishing, 1962), p. 316.

4 *Manual of the Church of the Nazarene*, (Kansas City, Mo.: Nazarene Publishing, 1985), p. 24.

5 These observations on the current state of affairs among American evangelicals and among Nazarenes in particular have been the musings of the author, and as such are not presented as definitive.

CONCLUSION

We have met the enemy and they are us.

Pogo

Talking with American historian Daniel Boorstin about the explosion of the space shuttle *Challenger*, journalist Anthony Liversidge remarked that the term "hubris" comes to mind in association with that disaster. Boorstin replied with the observation that movement onto a frontier and into the face of the unknown tends not to make men humble, rather it makes them arrogant. He then recounted Benjamin Franklin's famous experiment in virtue in which Franklin discovered that the cultivation of humility leads to pride. Celebrating these ironies, Boorstin concluded: "Such 'self-liquidating' ideals are . . . characteristic of the American experience. Our country seeks its objectives and opportunities in experience and thereby dissolves its ideals, paradoxically, in the process of accomplishing them. That's quite unlike a society that is based on dogma or apriorism."¹

In the revival tradition, having a correct theology, as the New Measures men argued, was exceedingly less important than getting saved. Essentially experiential, the Revival, as Boorstin's model of American idealism suggests, dissolved its theological underpinnings. Although the practitioners of revival preached the work of the Holy Spirit and the

freedom of the will, their methodology destroyed the logic of their preachments. Having fled the determinism of Calvin's eschatology, they unwittingly embraced a determinism grounded in the manipulative activities of men.

As Calvinist America took the Revival route into Arminianism and as Arminian America awaited them from within the Revival, the Holy Spirit theologies of both Calvin and Arminius suffered a Pelagian fate. Faced with the practical consideration of redeeming souls, revival minded Americans were not overly concerned with the nice distinctions of theologians. The proposition that man is free to chose good by the enabling grace of God, was readily reducable to man is free to chose good. Thus when the revivalists--between efforts to save souls--took leisure to reflect upon their theology they found themselves unblushingly advancing a religion of the will. They were, in effect, telling Americans, as were the celebrators of man in his natural state, that man could be good on his own. And, they thought, as Americans had been schooled to think, that there was surely no place where man could be more trusted when left to his own devices than in America.

The Holiness Revival suffered a similar reduction. The doctrine of Perfection was boiled down to a work, to a moment, to an emotional

experience, to a thing achieved. That some adherents of the doctrine should end up in antinomianism, either dispensing with the law or blinded to their transgressions by belief in their own perfection, demonstrates that the ideal had been dissolved. But that is not what the Perfectionists had intended; they never expected that their means would carry them away from their ends. This is why Noyes and others like him turned theological handstands, not wanting to believe that their behaviour was anything other than in keeping with the scriptures and with Christian tradition. This is why Robert Smith, finding himself having been played the fool by his own conscience, spent the last quarter-century of his life in abject disbelief. This is why the young lady who found herself having an affair with her minister begged Hannah Whitall Smith to tell her how such a thing could have happened when she was only trying to follow the leadings of the Holy Spirit. And this is why Lyman Beecher's Perfectionist son, George, put a gun in his mouth and took his own life. Awakening to the evidence of his actions, he had concluded that it was a demon that possessed him and not the Spirit of God.²

Having its roots in an alienation from the greater trends in American society and religion, the revival tradition, as preserved by the

anti-Modernists, not only served its humbler adherents by granting them the status which larger society would not, but also granted them superiority over the society that devalued them by offering them swift, sure and imminent premillennial vindication of their faith and rescue from their earthly state. The fulfilment of the promise to exalt "the humble and meek" and to "set down the mighty from their seat" is more often looked for from humbler quarters. But the assumption that Premillennialism was strictly a belief of the status poor and the powerless was never true. Neither the wealthy nor the educated are immune to status anxiety or to the longing to quit this world, and the premillennialist movement would have been bereft of much of its force if it were not for the middle-class component that was with it from the beginning.

In today's America, Premillennialism is no longer a theology predominantly associated with the dispossessed who long for something better; rather it is a theology of the comfortable and the powerful who long for something better. Their grandparents saw themselves as "captive Israel/that mourns in lonely exile here," but they have become a major political force in the most powerful nation on earth. Just as premillennialist Americans' social pessimism ends at their own door step

and becomes the optimism of the born again, so their pessimistic world view ends at the borders of an America which is the divinely appointed rearguard in a holding action against the communistic minions of Satan "until the Son of God appear." Living in a squashed, Biblical cosmology which, in the narrowest of literal interpretations, places the beginning little more than six thousand years from the end, they anticipate the imminent fiery destruction of the world.

It is hard for anyone reared in the atomic age to comprehend how those who lived in times considered much simpler and less threatening should adopt a theology of global destruction. But disaffection from one's own time is not a privilege belonging to any one time or place. Those people--as many do today--read the signs of their times and came to the conclusion that the world could not last much longer in the way it was going. Thus, the eschatological pendulum swung so that in the very century in which mankind has developed weapons of global destruction, Premillennialism had already strongly coloured the social mood in which many American evangelicals would receive those weapons.³

Premillennialism was in effect a theology waiting for a mechanism. Thus there is a powerful inclination amongst American evangelicals and Fundamentalists to dress up the act of madness which is nuclear war as an

act of God. Becoming more and more a part of the political process in which nuclear policy is hammered out, they have little fear of nuclear war comforted with both the knowledge that they are acting out the will of God and the expectation that they will be rescued, in the rapture of the born-again, from the fate of the rest of the world.⁴

Perfectionism as a theological doctrine no longer has the broad interest of Americans. Yet, Perfectionism is the articulation of Americans' most cherished illusion about their society. Their Puritan forefathers nurtured a myth of national righteousness and innocence, believing themselves, racially and geographically, to be God's chosen instruments for establishing His kingdom on earth. It is a myth still firmly embedded in the American mind, though most Americans would no longer equate America's mission strictly with Anglo-Saxonness. The deferred Millennium of the Modernists and the violently imminent Millennium of the anti-Modernists have somewhat altered for each the nature and the agenda of America's mission, but not the premise on which it was mounted or the means by which it is advanced. "America is the world's evangelist," crowed Senator Cushman Kellogg Davis of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee--a phrase particularly telling as its context was the peace

negotiations by which America took over the governing of a sizable chunk of the far flung Spanish empire. Such was the height and breadth of America's holy mandate.⁵

In his work *The Burden of Southern History*, Comer Vann Woodward took up Reinhold Niebuhr's theme of America's presumption of innocence--a presumption, Woodward argued, that holds horrific consequences since America possesses the power to do terrible evil.⁶ These sentiments written on the eve of America's debacle in Vietnam seem even more appropriate in a post-Vietnam America which is fiercely unwilling to accept any blame for the conflict fought in that country, but possesses a sublimated guilt and shame of such proportions that for more than a decade she has treated the men and women she sent to Vietnam like lepers. Not until recently have there been any significant signs of the beginning of a long overdue national catharsis.⁷ America's involvement in Vietnam and her inability to come to terms with what transpired there result in part from her presumption of righteousness and innocence--a presumption upon which America readily acts, but which has blinded her to her ability to do evil.

The power of American culture, industry and arms has often meant that she has had her own way in the world. Overwhelming might has allowed

America to act upon her presumption of righteousness--a presumption with has at times taken an antinomian turn. She has not been above breaking domestic law and international treaty law when it suits her purposes, for example, in her relationship with Vietnam and, more recently, with Nicaragua and Libya. Certainly, to some Americans such things are an abomination; others intellectualize them as pragmatic actions for a greater good; but many, if they know of these things at all, would grant them dispensation under America's righteous mandate. More vulgarly, there is a good guy mentality in America that finds it difficult to broach the possibility that it has strayed in its intents or that its means are inappropriate to its ends. Thus, there is a ghost which haunts America's acts--a doppelganger kept invisible from her by her presumption of righteousness. America, as Boorstin has noted, in pursuit of her ideals dissolves them. What he has not noted is that Americans achieve this effect through self-deceit. The ideal dissolved is yet the ideal fervently held. In such a way, Boorstin's vaunted society, without "dogma or apriorism" readily loses the restraint of law or force of custom, readily descends into that unthinking bastardization of freedom that says, 'I can do as I please.' Somewhere within the linkage between America's national self-image, her evangelicals' premillennial expectations, and her nuclear

arsenal may very well lie the ultimate in dissolution.⁸

The irony of Wesley's perfectionism is that it stresses the imperfectness of even the most holy. The problem with Wesley's perfectionism is that this irony was and is often lost on its practitioners. Weighed in the balance, Wesley believed, man is always found wanting. Far from having the unreflectiveness of Robert Smith's "conscience void of offense," Wesley remained keenly aware of his human frailties and shortcomings until his last breath with which he confessed, in the words of Saint Paul, to be chief among sinners. It is this reflectiveness on the human condition that is the key to Wesley's perfectionism. In Wesleyan terms we are, paradoxically, never more healthy than when we confess --as Wesley would have led his congregation in confessing--that "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, And we have done those things which we ought not to have done; And there is no health in us."⁹

Currently the Nazarenes are considering some additions to their doctrinal statement on Sin, additions which--by traditional Wesleyan thinking--would break the effects of the Fall into three parts: original sin or depravity, voluntary sin and, involuntary transgressions--the later being

nowhere called sin. In the Wesleyan scheme, justification and entire sanctification are the means by which original and voluntary sin are removed from the lives of the believer. But the involuntary aspect of the Fall is always with us as a consequence of our fallible human natures.

Wesley's position on the involuntary suffers from some ambiguity. Holding that involuntary transgressions cannot be properly call sins, he yet held that because of the human inevitability of such transgressions there is no state which can be properly called sinless. It is an ambiguity, however, that disappears in the light of Wesley's temperament and his place within Anglican tradition. In Wesley's mind, all facets of the human condition were potentially evil and, therefore, were subject to the atoning work of Christ. But among the changes proposed for the Nazarene doctrine on Sin is one that would describe involuntary transgressions as "*innocent effects* " of the Fall, that is, effects of which we are innocent.⁹ The General Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene has adopted this change. It will become official, by American constitutional model, with the ratification of two-thirds of the District Assemblies. Should they ratify such a doctrinal statement, which seems likely, the Nazarenes will have made a serious concession, not only to the folk theology of the Holiness movement, but also, to the folk theology of American nationhood.¹⁰

End Notes

1 Anthony Liversidge, "Interview: Daniel J. Boorstin," *OMNI*, VIII, no. 8, (N.Y., May, 1986), 106.

2 Barbara Cross, ed., *The Autobiography of Lyman Beecher* I, (Harvard, 1961), xiii.

3 As Perry Miller observed in his musings on the atomic bomb and the apocalypse: "Catastrophe, by and for itself, is not enough (Perry Miller, "The End of the World," *Errand into the Wilderness*, [Harvard, 1956], pp. 238-39)."

4 The apocalyptic vision of American Fundamentalists and evangelicals comes in numerous variations though the principal players--the United States and the Soviet Union--and the twin themes of nuclear war and the safety of the believer are almost invariably the same.

In *Listen America* (N.Y.: Bantam, 1981 [1980]), Jerry Falwell stated: "Evil forces would seek to destroy America because she is a bastion for Christian missions and a base for world evangelization . . .

The Bible says that where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. We cannot expect to long be a free nation when we turn our backs on God . . . But there is hope. God will again bless us if we will turn back to Him as individuals and as a nation. There is power in the name of Jesus Christ, and it is the only power that can turn back godless communism. If God is on our side, no matter how militarily superior the Soviet Union is, they could never touch us. God would miraculously protect America (pp. 91-92)." The prevalence of similar views among American religious and political personalities has been noted in L.R. Keylock's review of current apocalyptic literature entitled "Reagan, Revelation and Armageddon" (*Publisher's Weekly*, 227:10 [March 8, 1985], 44-47).

The most popular work on the subject for over a decade now has been Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1976 [1970]). Though he assigns a less important role for the United States in his interpretation of Bible prophecy, Lindsey too employs the themes of nuclear armageddon and a pre-holocaust rapture of the born-again (pp. 135-168).

This view of the end times and America's role in them is, of course, not

without its detractors. See, for example, Donald W. Shriver, Jr., "The Global Calling of American Christians," *The Christian Century*, 101:15 (Chicago, May 2, 1984), 458-61; or John C. Bennett, "Divine Persuasion and Divine Judgment," *The Christian Century*, 102:19 (May 29, 1985), 554-57.

5 J.D. Brushingham, "American Protestantism and Expansion," *Methodist Quarterly Review*, LXXXI, (N.Y., July, 1899), 585.

These were the very sentiments Samuel Clemens and Charles Dudley Warner attributed to their fictional character, Senator Dilworthy, in *The Gilded Age* a quarter-century earlier, when the Senator had occasion to remark on his nation's relationship to the islands of the Caribbean (vol. II, N.Y.: Collier & Son, 1915 [1873], p. 64). A more frequently quoted exponent of the view of America's mission--this fusion of evangelicalism with imperialism--is real life Senator Albert J. Beveridge, who, in his "The Star of *Empire*" speech in 1900 (italics mine), told Americans exactly what it was they were getting into by the appropriation of not only Spanish colonies but Mexican and Indian territory, as well. See Beveridge in Conrad Cherry, ed., *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny*, (Englewood Cliffs: N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1971), pp. 140-153.

6 Comer Vann Woodward, *The Burden of Southern History*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1960), pp. 170-71.

7 The difficulties encountered by Vietnam veterans in readjusting to American society and the beginnings of a national reconciliation with them have, of late, been the subjects of numerous documentaries, dramas and reports in the American media. A small sampling of two major American periodicals has turned up the following: Kurt Anderson and Jay Branegan, "Homecoming at Last: Viet Nam Veterans converge on Washington in quest of catharsis and respect," *Time*, 120:21 (November 22, 1982), 44-46--a report on the unveiling of the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial; Neal Karlen and Anne Underwood, "Welcome Home," *Newsweek*, 105:20 (May 20, 1985), 34 and "The Late Hurrah," *Time*, 125:20 (May 20, 1985), 23 --reports on a Vietnam veterans' parade in Manhattan; Dennis Williams, et al., "The Classroom Vietnam War: Teachers revive an era the country wanted to forget," *Newsweek*, 105:10 (March 11, 1985), 75-76.

8 Returning to his *alma mater* in Indiana with the expectation of being treated to some old-fashion Gospel music, clergyman John Robert McFarland came away with the following observations: "According to this final group, Christ had chosen America, especially its white immigrants, as a special rod of iron to scourge his wayward world and return it to the pristine purity of capitalist Eden. The same spirit of religion that had made the U.S.A. the greatest military nation the world had ever known would surface once again to save the world from the twin terrors of communism and divorce. . . .

"Suddenly the place was up for grabs. . . . People stamped their feet in unison. They clapped. They shouted. They cheered. They stood. . . .

"These *were* their songs . . . of salvation through military might, of the resurrection of 'the frontier spirit that made this country great,' of the church that is a nation. . . . for them the gospel story had been completely absorbed into the national story. Jesus walked the hills of southern Indiana, not of Galilee. The temptations he warded off in the wilderness had to do with smoking and drinking and dirty movies, not with power and its political manifestations ("Looking for the Gospel at a Gospel Concert," *The Christian Century*, 103:20, [Chicago, June 18-25, 1986], 550)."

For discussions about this aspect of America's self-image see, for example, J. William Fulbright, "The Arrogance of Power," Conrad Cherry, ed., *God's New Israel: Religious Interpretations of American Destiny*, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1971), pp. 332-46, reprinted from J. William Fulbright, *The Arrogance of Power*, (Random House, 1966); and Robert Jewett, *The Captain America Complex: The Dilemma of Zealous Nationalism*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1973), *passim*.

9 *The Book of Common Prayer*, (Toronto: MacMillan, 1962), pp. 4-5. See also James F. White, ed., *John Wesley's Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America*, (USA: United Methodists. 1984 [1784]), p. 8. (Further references to this work will be cited: "*Wesley's Sunday Service* .")

10 *Manual Church of the Nazarene*, (Kansas City, Mo.: Nazarene Publishing, 1985), p. 25.

11 This theological change has been advanced expressly to counter the theology which says that we sin each day "in thought word and deed (Dr. W. Greathouse, General Superintendent, Church of the Nazarene, address to the delegates of the Canada West District Assembly of the Church of the Nazarene, Regina, 13 June 1986, and remarks to the Sunday morning adult class of Parkdale Church of the Nazarene, Regina, 15 June 1986).'" As the gentleman cited was well aware, these are the very words used in the general confession in the Anglican communion service (*Book of Common Prayer*, [GB: Cambridge, 1962], p. 77, see also *Wesley's Sunday Service*, p. 132). In fact, this theological change emerges from the belief that the entirely sanctified are excused from the duty of making confession--confession being held unnecessary in matters of error and ignorance.

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