THE THEOLOGICAL EDIFICE OF MODERN EXPERIENTIAL PROTESTANTISM:  
SCHLEIERMACHER, KIERKEGAARD, AND PALMER’S  
RECONSTRUCTION OF NINETEENTH CENTURY PIETISM  

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THE THEOLOGICAL EDIFICE OF MODERN EXPERIENTIAL PROTESTANTISM:
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ABSTRACT

The aim of this work is to address the development of experiential Protestantism in the nineteenth century, commonly called Pietism, through the theological contributions of Friedrich Schleiermacher, Søren Kierkegaard, and Phoebe Palmer. While an emphasis on experiencing God exists in all forms of Christianity, including Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and the various forms of Protestantism, the expression and development of experiential Protestantism faces interesting historical challenges. The first challenge is grounded in the community’s conception of itself, primarily the desire to remain an outsider movement. Unlike the other expressions of Protestantism, such as Scholasticism and Rationalism, Pietism’s early history in the development of Protestantism began as a counterweight to these intellectual movements. As a result, the necessity to remain outside of the established power structures became rooted in the habitus of Pietism. Pietism seeks to remain a countercultural movement that fashions itself as the authentic expression of Protestant Christianity. Pietists within Lutheranism, Reform, and Anglicanism view themselves as the preserved remnant of God’s people.
within those denominations and the primary objects of God’s covenant, as well as the true church.

Opposing the need to remain outsiders, the covenantal relationship with God is coupled with eschatological hopes for success. In many ways this success occurred with the institutionalization and denominational formation of Pietism that emerged in the eighteenth century. This success produces a new challenge for Pietism in the nineteenth century, namely how to remain outsiders after relative success. Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer all produce distinct theologies that seek to answer this dilemma and they each reinterpret and reconstruct experiential Protestantism. Their theologies also demonstrate the radicalizing tendency of experiential Protestantism that must constantly reimagine the world and prioritize new experiences of the divine, serving to reinforce both their status as outsiders and reinforce their covenant with God. The emphasis on experience within Protestantism differs from its Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox counterparts since an established ecclesial hierarchy and value of tradition is absent or can be eliminated. New radical sect formation becomes expected rather than hindered by the established churches.
APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, have examined a dissertation titled “The Theological Edifice of Modern Experiential Protestantism: Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer’s Reconstruction of nineteenth Century Pietism,” presented by Justin Allen Davis, candidate for the Doctor of Philosophy degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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PREFACE

Pietism is best understood as a great roughhewn stone wall. When one looks at the wall they will immediately notice that the stones used in its construction are varied and diverse. Some stones are significantly larger than others, while others appear out of place when closely examined, and some are clearly borrowed from older projects and have the markings of different construction. The stones are also not all of the same quality and it may appear that others have eroded, making small holes or discontinuities in the wall. Still, the wall stands, one stone built upon another, butting up against the one next to it. Often disjointed and occasionally dilapidated, this is the edifice of Pietism.

Pietism is not the only label of this wall though. It may not even be the best name to give this wall, Experiential Protestantism\(^1\) may be more fitting. When looking at specific sections, other labels seem to fit better. As one investigates the base layer of the wall, two different stones exist, one known as Lutheran Pietism, the other Puritanism. Lutheran Pietism is intertwined with Reform Pietism, often indistinguishable from one another. Built upon this layer are the conclaves of Halle and Moravians, or Herrnhutters. From the Herrnhutt stone Methodism protrudes, remaining a part of the wall but taking on a life of its own, and out of it, combining with other stones like a concrete patch, comes the Holiness movement. When the foundation is examined one immediately notices this wall sits upon a few stones borrowed from medieval mysticism, which belong to this newer construction but are not native to it.

\(^1\) Many older accounts of the movement use the term experimental rather than experiential but they understood the definition to be the same.
This study seeks to understand three stones which shape this wall, those belonging to Friedrich Schleiermacher, Søren Kierkegaard, and Phoebe Palmer. These three are too often examined apart from the larger structure that houses them. Only when understanding them within the context of Pietism can their shape and the shape of their contributions and legacies make sense. Also, understanding the contributions of these three nineteenth-century Pietists allows for Pietism in its myriad of forms to be viewed as one large strand within Protestantism that connects different and often antagonist groups together. To recognize these three nineteenth-century stones, the layers of stones they sit upon and those that lay upon them will be examined.

The guiding factor in the construction of this wall is the prominent position of experience. Experience is an important part of any religion. Yet the question always remains how the experience of the divine is understood. Should the experience itself be the judge? Or should reason interpret the experience? Should a reason based on scholastic understanding of dogmas first be articulated and then experience deduced from this point? Within Christianity as a whole, the debate about how to understand experience has taken all three positions. Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestants have each possessed key leaders and movements that stressed rationalism, scholasticism, or piety. This work will focus on the Protestants’ relationship to experience.

Protestantism is categorically different from the other two branches of Christianity, not in what it possesses but in what it lacks. As Protestantism developed, the authority of tradition and an ecclesial hierarchy that maintains authority evaporated. Orthodox and Catholics value tradition as one of the foundations of the Church. Creeds,
councils, and commentaries from saints and learned men and women all carry value as they fit within their tradition. Scripture itself is understood and interpreted through the lens of tradition. This does not mean that Protestants do not have a tradition. Lutherans point to practices as relevant because Luther followed them. The same applies to Reform with Calvin and Zwingli. The difference is that Protestants in the Reformation rejected the value of tradition. While a new tradition emerged, it is influential rather than authoritative. The same applies to an ecclesial hierarchy. Even in high church expressions of Protestantism the ecclesiastical hierarchy can be challenged or rejected by its constituent members, resulting in schism and new sect formation with greater ease than within Orthodoxy or Catholicism. The authority of Protestant bishops, when they exist, is nowhere near supreme, and nowhere is the notion of supreme pontiff present in the Protestant world.

The reason why the lack of authority in tradition and ecclesial hierarchy is important should become obvious when addressing experiences and how to interpret them. Protestants may argue that their experiences of God are interpreted through and corrected by the Bible. Still the matter of interpretation is left to the individual or at best a small community. Personal miracles and personal revelations may occur with relative frequency or not at all. Experiences of the divine are interpreted differently among different Protestants, and some interpretations actively exclude the validity of certain experiences, or experiences of outside groups. With notions of divine encounters varying and no real system set in place to determine which ones should be heralded and hated, the assortment of movements in the twentieth century that emerged from experiential Protestantism is astounding. From its Protestant roots, Pietism birthed Pentecostalism,
existentialism, modern liberal Protestantism, neo-liberalism, Fundamentalism, and a whole host of Christian ethics. Furthermore it provided the groundwork for neo-orthodoxy, hermeneutics, female ordination, and the Emergent Church. The diversity of these twentieth-century movements all share a single source in nineteenth-century Pietism. These movements grew from the theological edifice created by and the lives and works of Friedrich Schleiermacher, Søren Kierkegaard, and Phoebe Palmer, and their reconstruction of Pietism.
DEDICATION

To my dedicated wife and mother of my children,
without whom this work would be incomplete.
INTRODUCTION

“Humble before God, knowing what I do of what it really means truly to be a Christian, and knowing myself as I do, I dare not in any way maintain that I am a Christian in any outstanding way or permit any differentiating accent to fall on my being Christian; for example, I would not dare, particularly not in Christendom, to expose myself to becoming a martyr, to being persecuted, to losing my life because I am a Christian. Do not pass premature judgment on what I am saying but rather take time to understand it.... I hope before God that I am a Christian, and believe that out of grace he will accept me as a Christian.”¹ – Søren Kierkegaard

This is the cry of Søren Kierkegaard, a nineteenth-century Danish Pietist and theologian. Here Kierkegaard articulates two key issues in Pietistic thought in the nineteenth century. First, what does it mean to be a Christian? This question is especially potent when one examines the culture at large, what Kierkegaard calls Christendom. According to Kierkegaard, Christendom gives a definition of Christianity that sounds familiar but rings hollow. Kierkegaard follows this by asking not whether he can count himself as a Christian, but whether God will. These questions are not unique to Kierkegaard nor the nineteenth century; they are common questions found throughout Christian history, but what makes Kierkegaard’s question so unique is the context of this earnest query. Kierkegaard was a Pietist, and for Pietists these questions were central to how they viewed the world.

¹ Søren Kierkegaard, Armed Neutrality and An Open Letter Edited by Howard V. Hong, and Edna H. Hong (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1968).
The definition of Pietism is debated and is under further review and reflection by contemporary scholars such as Jonathan Strom, Peter C. Erb, Hartmut Lehman, and a whole host of others. For the purposes of this study I will define Pietism in two ways. The simplest definition of Pietism that I can offer is to identify it as the experiential strand of Protestantism, or more precisely, as those Protestants who prioritize experience over Scholasticism and Rationalism. In many ways this definition addresses the intellectual space in which Pietists of various confessions emerge and operate. As such, there is no single unified school of Pietism with lines that demarcate fidelity, or exclude others directly. Furthermore Pietism, understood as the prioritization of experience, also serves as a corrective to the other strands of Protestant thought. More extensively, Pietism should be understood as a quasi-mystical experiential revivalist movement, found within Lutheran, Reform and Anglican Protestantism of every age, which seeks to understand and rework their world, both inside and outside of themselves along lines of personally meaningful relationship between themselves as individuals and God, while maintaining a general antipathy or outright hostility to the greater Christian culture and religious formalism which dictates that culture’s norms and practices. Many of these characteristics are not unique to Protestantism, and indeed we can find many of these same traits within Catholic and Orthodox Christianity. Nor are these features unique to the modern and early modern world, rather we have elements of these ideas in the Middle Ages and indeed within all of Christian history.

2 The list of scholars intently working on a definition of Pietism and its scope in the last twenty years is extensive but include Dale W. Brown, Christian T. Collins Winn, Christopher Gehrz, G. William Carlson, Eric Holst, Martin Brecht, Johannes Wallmann, and Douglas H. Shantz.
While this conception of Pietism is fairly broad, the term itself also has historical weight, and not any one person or movement can, nor should be identified as Pietist. In addition to the experiential emphasis found within Lutheranism, Reform, and Anglicanism, a mode of interpretation of these experiences was developed by a series of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Pietist forefathers that include William Perkins in England, and Johann Arndt in Germany. From Arndt, Philip Jakob Spener is the culmination of foundational German Pietism and often accredited founder of the movement. While he did not found the movement, his place as a foundational figure in the history of Pietism should not be overlooked. For the broader label of Pietism to be applied, an intellectual and theological legacy should be established to one of these three figures or another figure of equal theological weight and roughly contemporary with them. By understanding an intellectual history, along with the experiential impulse, Pietism can begin to make sense as a movement. Once credence is given to the experiential program, an analysis of group dynamics can take shape, and Pietism can be addressed as something that helped to shape and challenge the modern world. It is also from here that twentieth and twenty-first-century ideologies that serve to spur on the transformation of society can properly be understood. What concerns this study is the influence that Pietism had within the nineteenth century outside of the ossifying institutionalized forms that grew to dominate eighteenth-century Pietism. The radical transformation and impact of the long nineteenth century serves primarily as a backdrop

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3 Others may include many theologians who Stoeffler identifies as in his work Rise of Evangelical Pietism, such as: Hooper, Bradford, Baxter, Bunyan, and Taylor in England. Taffin, Udemans, Tellinick, Amesius, Labadie, and Lodensteyn in the Reform churches. Grossgebaue, Lütkemann, Müller, and Scriver in Lutheranism.
to the intellectual history and as a context to understanding not only the wider cultures that Pietism found itself in, but also the challenges revivalist movements face when many of their formative ideas are adapted in a wider profane culture. In order to do this I will trace the life and theology of three Pietist theologians, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), and Phoebe Palmer (1807-1874), each a representative from the three major Protestant branches, Lutheran, Reform, and Anglican. Each of them remained within their respective denomination and sought to remake not only their confession but experiential Protestantism.

The selection of Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer demonstrates how wildly different Pietism can be and yet remain a single cohesive structure. By any account the theologies developed by these nineteenth-century luminaries are antagonistic, if not antithetical to one another, yet they each present their reconstruction of Pietism and remain within the experiential tradition handed down from Perkins, Arndt, and Spener. How each of them interpret and anticipate an experience of the divine differs as well. Schleiermacher identifies experience as the feeling of absolute dependence upon God, while Palmer was antithetical to conceiving of feeling as an essential aspect of the religious life, believing that faith should present itself outside of emotions. Kierkegaard believed that God called all Christians to a difficult life that consisted of Palmer’s rational yet experiential faith, and Schleiermacher’s feeling of dependence. All three used their conception of the experience of the divine to construct their larger theological systems.
The Aim of This Work

Before we can address the theology of the nineteenth century we first must understand Pietism as a historical phenomenon. To best do this, three chapters of this work are dedicated to understanding six prominent Pietists, William Perkins, Johann Arndt, Philip Jakob Spener, August Hermann Fracke, Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, and John Wesley. The first three laid the theological groundwork for Pietistic expression of Protestantism, while the last three created formalized systems and denominations in which Pietism operated. These systems shaped not only experiential Protestant Christianity, but also countries and the nineteenth century that Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer find themselves in. If we fail to understand the theology and systems created by these six men, we would fall short of understanding exactly what and why Palmer, Kierkegaard, and Schleiermacher were doing as public theologians.

Biography informs one’s theology. Theology does not emerge out of a vacuum, nor is it understood on the sole basis of reason and a careful reading of scriptures. One’s life, region, and background, including the experiences of one’s parents, each contribute to the development of theology. To this end, it is crucial to understand a brief biographical sketch of each of three nineteenth-century Pietists addressed in this work. These biographies will address their religious formation within a Pietistic tradition, often in relation to their fathers, as well as their conversion experiences. These profiles also will demonstrate how Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer were not only public theologians but also critics of society at large, in addition to the broader Christian culture they found themselves in.
Following the chapters on the biographies and social criticism of Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer, additional chapters focus explicitly on their theology. These chapters cover their primary theological contribution, as well as their view of God, sin, and redemption. The theological chapters also address the theologian’s views of ecclesiology, the laity, and any secondary contributions for which they are known. Each of these chapters then conclude with a discussion on how their theology is a Pietistic theology.

Collectively these three theologians contributed not only to the theological discourse of their day, but many of the developments into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The final two chapters of this work address these movements as the product of and synthesis of Kierkegaard, Schleiermacher, and Palmer’s theological reconstruction of Pietism in the nineteenth century.

Pietistic theology in the nineteenth century was a theology of negation, defining itself by defining the wider profane culture, thus understanding common theological questions along with the cultural milieu of these theologians found themselves in is essential in understanding this and all revivalist and theological movements. Since Pietism lacks the ecclesial restraint of Catholic and Orthodox, and since the necessity to always place themselves as an outsider is inherent in the Pietist conception of self, Pietism tends towards producing extremes. The process is fairly gradual and contradictory with new ideas posited by leading theologians. The best way to understand the developments of pietism is by looking at the theology developed by Pietist luminaries and leaders such as Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer. These three each serve as a representative of Reform, Lutheran, and Anglican branches of Protestantism. While
any number of other Pietists could be used to demonstrate the intricacies of nineteenth-century Pietism, these three serve a very practical purpose, as each of them are the direct leaders of movements which carry with them the Pietist ethos into the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Few others have such a lasting impact on Experiential Protestantism and the modern world as these three do. They are also rather distinct from one another in their social and political outlooks and try to apply experiential Protestantism within their own contexts. Furthermore, Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer are agents who founded religious movements which would go on to shape not only Pietism but the modern world itself. These movements, as well as their theology, are often at odds with each other, yet come from the same source in experiential Protestantism, and the theological traditions of Arndt, Spener, and Perkins.

**Pietism Historiography**

Just as there is no single definition of Pietism, the treatment of Pietism is undergoing a serious transformation. The traditional understanding, as supported by nineteenth-century theologian Albrecht Ritschl and twentieth-century theologian Karl Barth, maintains a more negative and formulaic view of Pietism. For these influential theologians, Pietism was too mystical, subjective, emotional, and individualistic. Furthermore, for these scholars there is a clear beginning of Pietism. Pietism emerged in Frankfurt during the late seventeenth century. Central to this older view of Pietism is Philipp Jakop Spener. In 1675, Spener published his central religious text, *Pia Desideria.* Spener, a young pastor, born and raised during the Thirty Years War, called for a reform of the Lutheran Church. In *Pia Desideria,* Spener displays the defects among the clergy,
as well as the laity, and calls for extensive use of scriptures and religious practice in order to reform the church once again. Spener’s work resonated with those who sought new avenues of intellectual and emotional piety. The traditional view is echoed by early modern German historian Rudolf Vierhaus, who contends that the Pietists were a product of their time.

The traditional view maintains that Pietism developed due to lack of confidence, with orthodox Lutherans stressing theological gnosis rather than lived piety. Pietism would materialize during this period of great social change following the Thirty Years War, just as there were changes in politics, philosophy, and science. Many older scholars connect the religious changes in Europe to the political fluctuations taking place at the same time. Religion in general and Pietism specifically was simply reactionary rather than self-actuating individuals and communities who attempted to live a pious life. The scope of Pietism is further limited by focusing on its connection and opposition to Orthodox Lutheranism and not examining Pietism within the Reform and Anglican machinations. For these scholars Pietism was an opposition force to the growing power of monarchs, specifically German Lutheran monarchs. This new epoch is referred to as the Age of Absolutism, named so because of the power that monarchs possessed. While historians have challenged the doctrinaire construction of an absolutist state, very few have decoupled Pietism’s growth from this narrative.

The history of Pietism changed when F. Ernest Stoeffler published his work, The Rise of Evangelical Pietism, in 1971. According to Stoeffler, Pietism was not simply a reaction to a growing state, rather Protestant Pietism came into existence with the Reformation. Instead of beginning his work with Spener, Stoeffler concludes his work
with him. Spener stands in line with a tradition rather than breaking with it. Extreme piety, lay religious movements, and associations of those seeking to live a holy life are nothing new within the history of Christianity. The forms these take naturally look different depending on the regional, historical, and sociological events within Reform, Lutheran, Anglican, and even Catholic and Orthodox areas. Sometimes these forms work in concert with an existing power structure and sometimes they do not. Stoeffler, like other historians of Pietism, finds a simple definition of Pietism difficult, maintaining that “by its very nature the essence of Pietism cannot be completely identified with socially perceptible forms... It had no one system of theology, no one integrating doctrine, no particular type of polity, no one liturgy, no geographic homogeneity. Yet as has already been mentioned, it presented a discernible historical unity.” In this unity Stoeffler identifies characteristics of Pietism. First it is experiential. Religion is experienced through a personally meaningful relationship of the individual with God. Second it possesses religious idealism. Notions of sanctification, or religious perfection, created a great distaste for religious complacency and held morality as a necessary virtue. Third, Stoeffler maintains the Pietists’ emphasis on the Bible. The Bible reigns supreme over tradition, councils, and even the church. This of course places greater religious authority in the hands of theologians, preachers, and charismatic devotees. Finally Pietism, like other revitalization movements, maintains an opposition to a larger society. Here Stoeffler’s definition of Pietism may appear in line with the traditional view, namely that Pietism is a reactionary movement. Yet how Stoeffler constructs his definition of Pietism differs even in this explanation. Pietism is self-actuating while simultaneously being a reactionary or a revivalist movement. The desire is to be holy, to be other, to be different
from the society and as such it must confront the larger culture, even if that culture is seemingly religious. Assuming that the reaction was against a greater culture, not simply the culture of the seventeenth century, forces us to reshape our understanding of Pietism. Stoeffler’s work illustrates that while Pietism is opposed to forces of society, it did not emerge as a counterforce to an absolutist state, rather to a complacent society. Pietism always pushes for reform. Stoeffler’s tome outlines the theological peculiarities of Pietism through the seventeenth century in its Anglican, Reform, and Lutheran forms.

Stoeffler’s work was the first to address Pietism outside of the view put forth by Ritschl. Ritschl saw Spener as a bulwark against a period of great social change and failed to recognize the complexity and depth behind his writings. While Ritschl was right to include Pietism in his history of ideas, he failed to understand the movement itself. Following Stoeffler, other historians of Pietism have continued to investigate the depth and complexity of Pietism, its causes and effects over the centuries.

One additional note should be given when addressing the historiography of Pietism. Since Pietism is an ethos, an idea, a movement, some difficulty lies in how one should approach the development of Pietism. Traditionally Johannes Wallmann points out “the history of Pietism is essentially the history of individual leaders and tradition-building figures.” As such, some of the struggles and internal conflicts are lost. The character of the movement is also misrepresented by focusing on leaders, since much of the movement was lay driven. Even more noticeable is the lack of women who get elevated to this upper echelon, and often their contributions are lost, or ignored. While this work in large part remains within the traditional approach to the treatment of Pietism by looking at tradition building figures, a conscious effort is made to include the
contributions and critiques of not only women but also the laity when appropriate. Often subordinated women contributed greatly to the formation and continuation of Pietism, from the medieval Catholic mystic Angela da Foligno, to Phoebe Palmer; Pietism afforded women to become “agents of their own spirituality, meeting in non-church settings to pray, read and discuss the Bible, and to encourage one another in their faith” in ways that traditional Protestantism did not. It is largely a failing of the traditional research on Pietism that mischaracterizes it by only focusing on the contributions of men.

Pietism in the Nineteenth Century

Only recently has Pietism emerged as a source of study, and its impact in the nineteenth century is still in its infancy. When nineteenth-century Pietism is addressed, the discussion surrounding Pietism generally fails to illustrate how Pietism differs within itself. This is especially true when comparing Reform, Lutheran, and Anglican variants. There is no single Pietistic theology. In equating the discussions throughout the Protestant world to a single voice, we lose out on understanding an important religious movement that helped to shape the modern world. The Pietists found homes throughout all Protestant areas of Europe and America, where they would gather in small communities and dedicate themselves to Bible reading and self-reform. Pietists were inter-confessional, found within Lutheran, Reform, and Anglican denominations. As per their ideology, they never existed as a single unified block; rather there have been many ‘Pietisms’ that took the shape and flavor of the larger communities in which they lived. Some found refuge and even gained control in Brandenburg-Prussia, or the isolation of the New World. In areas where Pietists were the minority, they often faced forms of
economic and political persecution by the dominant culture. This maltreatment served as confirmation of their theological presuppositions.

As Doug Shantz and Richard Vierhaus point out much of the political persecution faced by Pietists abated with the beginning of the nineteenth century, with the greatest political freedom found in Germany and America. Pietists found the most freedom in areas where they had a large degree of influence in the educational systems and where there was little control over the religious lives of congregants. In areas where their influence in education was minor, such as Scandinavia, they would continue to face forms of persecution.

The nineteenth century experienced dramatic social change in Europe and the Americas, yet the relationship of Pietism within the long century has not been adequately addressed. Given dramatic social change, revivalist movements are forced to adapt their message or fade away. Oddly enough the key challenge of Pietists in this century was not open persecution or a refusal of ideas, rather the challenge of Pietists, like all revivalist movements, was to maintain an outsider status within the larger society. Elements of Pietism became normative in society, specifically the subjective and individualistic focus for which Pietists were criticized in the previous centuries. Largely this was due to the success of secular movements like Romanticism, the Enlightenment, and Nationalism. Hartmut Lehmann, a historian of Pietism and Nationalism, argues that one of the greatest effects of Pietism was felt in fostering early nationalist sentiments. These sentiments evoked Romantic ideals of patriotism. Lehmann suggests that much like the Roman Empire, the religion that was once persecuted by the state would be used to shape it. Secular success was the largest hurdle to spiritual success. The outward form
of a Pietistic culture was completed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but the
spirit was animated by theologians in the nineteenth. The nineteenth century evidences
dramatic and dynamic Pietistic theologians and a resurgence of religion in the public
sphere.

In this work, I discuss the development of Pietist theologies in the long nineteenth
century. In doing so, I include a representative from each of the three major Protestant
branches in the nineteenth century. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), Sören
Kierkegaard (1813-1855), and Phoebe Palmer (1807-1874), will represent Reform,
Lutheran, and Anglican religiosity in the century. Schleiermacher wrote in Berlin, the
capital of Brandenburg-Prussia, Kierkegaard in Copenhagen, the intellectual capital of
These three theologians had different cultures and attitudes which their Pietism was
reacting to, yet each produced a unique theology that was Pietistic. Their theologies
maintained an oppositionary force against the secular cultures they lived and worked in,
each with their own personal, historical, political, and sociological events. These three
each added to the theological edifice of Pietism, but not always in ways that was
complementary to one another. Furthermore these nineteenth-century Pietists dismantled
part of the edifice, removing what they perceived to be wrought in order to remake
Pietism in such a way that it addressed the specific intellectual and spiritual challenges of
their day.

Looking at key theologians as opposed to religious congregations will give us a
better perspective on the history of ideas in the nineteenth century and how Pietism
influenced and was influenced by them. Protestant historian Fred Van Leiburg has called
Pietists a Church within a Church, as they did not establish new congregations but found homes in existing churches. Thus to look at existing churches we would miss out on both the scope of Pietism throughout the world and the depth of theological discussions had by those who formed key schools of thought within Pietism specifically and Protestantism as a whole.

The Pietistic theologies produced by Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer emerged to define Protestant piety over and against the culture at large. For these theologians, their immediate cultures were in a period of great change during their lifetime. Schleiermacher’s Brandenburg-Prussia had emerged stronger after the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806 and French occupation (1806-1815). Brandenburg-Prussia also had a long history where the Hohenzollerns, the ruling family of Brandenburg-Prussia, supported Pietism. In Kierkegaard’s Denmark, following the Revolution of 1848, the Lutheran Church of Denmark became absolute. The newly proclaimed People’s Church of Denmark became the official Christianity of the realm. As such, the church and its pastors became a functionary of the state and religious freedom waned. The Pietistic church that Kierkegaard attended was opposed to the state. Palmer’s ministry existed before and after the American Civil War. The dramatic social change in America encouraged different religious attitudes fluctuating between holiness, unity, inter-denominational discourse, teetotalism, women’s rights, and of course slavery. While all three theologians lived in a time of dramatic change, their lives followed similar patterns. All three share a remarkably similar biographical outline. Their parents were rather devout, though each had a family guilt or shame which shaped the upbringing of the children. There were great social changes in their formative years, they lacked faith
in their adolescent years, they had a conversion experience and by modern and contemporary standards had atypical gender roles or relations. Each produced a theological message consistent within the Pietist framework outlined by Stoeffler and myself, yet each theology is distinct, separate, and uniquely Reform, Lutheran, or Anglican Methodist.

Sociological Models

There are sociological models that can illuminate a need for defining theology. I plan on drawing from sociologists Randal Styers, Zakiya Hanafi, and Pierre Bourdieu. Styers and Hanafi examined the nineteenth century and how modern people define the self by defining the other. These sociologists address how modern people in the West chose foils to define themselves over and against. They argue that this manner of definition was used because self-reflection was inadequate to deal with the constant variations of the modern world. Hanafi shows how the definition of monsters defined what modern people were not and Styers does the same with the use of magic. Their model can be used with theology as a substitute. Theology has long been used to define orthodoxy as well as heresy, that is what is acceptable and what is unacceptable. The Council of Nicaea can in many respects be a declaration that Arians, those followers of Arius, a third century theologian, were not true Christians, more so than a definition of what the Council believed Christianity was. St. Irenaeus, one of the earliest Christian theologians, wrote Against Heresies, (c.180) focused on a heretical duelist theology found amongst the Manicheans and in so doing explained orthodox belief. While Protestants have not ventured to define heresy as much as their Catholic and Orthodox
counter parts, Protestant theological definitions have a similar objective of defining acceptable beliefs, and what makes these beliefs superior to others. With the influence of Romanticism permeating European society during the nineteenth century, it became all the more important for the Pietists to seek out a way in which to differentiate themselves from the society at large, in order to not lose their identity and for a revivialist movement not to disappear. Many of the tenets of Pietism that were central in the seventeenth century, namely a general opposition to constructing a systematic theology, needed to be abandoned in the nineteenth century, otherwise what made Pietism unique would disappear.

Following the theory of Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist and anthropologist, one can see how the Pietists formed a habitus that placed them as cultural outsiders, specifically outsiders that relied upon religious experience. With their outsider status challenged, the Pietists would need to reinforce their separateness from their larger culture. For these reasons, a group that emerged in opposition to dogma and scholasticism would eventually need to formulate its own. The lack of doctrine became insufficient as the larger culture began accepting its notions. Of course I will also draw on Anthony Wallace and his discussions on revitalizations and modernity to illustrate how these movements normally operate.4

Significance of Linking Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer

The primary significance of my study will be to further understand Pietism throughout the world. Combining the works of Palmer, Kierkegaard, and Schleiermacher can provide a breadth of understanding, which works concerning individual theologians or communities are not able to do. Extra emphasis will show how these theologians, while founders of their own movements, continued a process of pious living that did not begin in the nineteenth century, yet was a product of it. Their theological systems emerged from a Pietistic background and from the tensions of the modern world, thus illuminating discussions on nineteenth century history and theology. Though many historians and theologians connect Pietism to the fathers of Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard, only recently have works connected Pietism to their theology. Understanding how Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard viewed Pietism will provide key insights that are otherwise overlooked. While the names of Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard are commonplace in discussions of nineteenth-century theology, the treatment of Palmer’s impact is largely overlooked. Not only does Palmer expand our understanding of Pietism beyond continental Europe and acknowledge the impact women played in the construction of modern theology, she is deserving of her place with these two men as the mother of the holiness movement. Her works achieved unprecedented success; *The Way of Holiness* went through fifty-two editions, and her preaching career brought her all over the United States and England. Understanding Palmer is essential to
understanding Anglican Methodism\textsuperscript{5} in the nineteenth century, and thus Pietism in the nineteenth century as well.

This study will contextualize the works of Schleiermacher, Palmer, and Kierkegaard as an expression of dogmatizing Pietism. While Palmer, Schleiermacher, and Kierkegaard were prominent members of their society, they created a theology that reaffirmed their outsider status. These theologians were responsible for much of the theological and philosophical framework that dominated the twentieth century. Schleiermacher is often credited as the father of modern liberal Protestantism, a theological movement that reaffirmed an individual’s relationship with the divine, as well as asserting that scripture is valid as it relates to the individual. Kierkegaard is the father of existentialism, a philosophical belief system that focuses on choices and decisions made by individuals in order to define the self. Palmer is the mother of the holiness movement, which spread through America and England in the nineteenth century. Liberal Protestantism and existentialism are formative ideologies for the preeminent theologian of the twentieth century, Karl Barth, as well as others. Barth’s Neo-Orthodoxy, a reaction to liberal Protestantism, which focuses on the transcendence of God, can be seen as a continuation of the negatively defining self. Barth created his systematic theology in reaction to the works of Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard. Understanding Barth’s work in this way illuminates the thinking of contemporary historians of theology, Paul Chung and Bruce McCormack. As a history of ideas, this

\textsuperscript{5} More often identified as Methodist Episcopalian in America
study will help to show the impact that Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard had upon their country’s historical development. Palmer’s Holiness Movement is often credited with fostering interdenominational discourse in America and laying the foundation for the Pentecostal movement, as well as female ordination in American and English churches.

Beyond its philosophical and theological impact, this study will provide insight into why groups form a theology. While Christianity has a long tradition of defining a theology, many religions emphasize orthopraxy, right action, rather than orthodoxy, right belief. Understanding why the Pietists, who were so purposeful in not producing a systematic theology prior to the nineteenth century, eventually chose to do so may provide a common ground for interfaith dialogue with orthopraxic religions, as well as a way to understand how religious minorities operate within their larger culture.

Traditionally, theologians and historians have treated Palmer, Schleiermacher, and Kierkegaard separately, their histories rarely, if ever combined. This is due in part to the bias of mid-twentieth century theology against non-German Protestant theologians, or a singular focus on English or American religious life. This bias can even be found in Barth’s Protestant Theology, as he failed to mention Kierkegaard, with whom he was intimately familiar, and Palmer, who was influential on both sides of the Atlantic. In the 1970s, the late Claude Welch, a historian of nineteenth-century theology, notes this discrepancy in the treatment of nineteenth-century theological thought.6 Welch was among the first to treat Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard’s views along a continuum

rather than disregarding one, or being so German centric. Welch combined the works of these Europeans, but failed to identify the contribution of Palmer and many Americans.

Schleiermacherian, Kierkegaardian, and Palmerian studies have gained in popularity within the last decade or so. This new interest in Schleiermacher, and even more so in Kierkegaard, has emerged as a new generation of scholars attempt to come to terms with their ideology. Palmer, while immediately viewed as influential, lost her prominent role in theological and historical discourse until very recently and is only now recognized again as the formative theologian and innovator she was. Barth’s influence on Schleiermacher has loomed large throughout the decades, yet Barth’s word is no longer the final one on Schleiermacher. While Barth is still regarded as the greatest theologian of the twentieth century, there are other voices. Many more historians and theologians are approaching Schleiermacher outside of the lens of Neo-Orthodoxy that Barth created. Interest in Schleiermacher may have waned following Barth, but of late a renewed interest is growing in Schleiermacher and his impact upon the Protestant world.\(^7\) Kierkegaard and his ideas are also enjoying a popularity that they have never seen before. Much of this new interest in Kierkegaard is due to his approachability in a cross cultural and interfaith dialogue. The rejection of a Hegelian system and an application of existentialism upon notions of post-modernity also have aided in a Kierkegaardian renaissance. Palmer was widely popular during her life time and immediately afterwards but within a generation this strong feminine voice was widely forgotten. Only recently

\(^7\) The recent Monograph series put out by Princeton and edited by Wilcox, Tice and Kelsey, as well as several new publications demonstrate a resurgence in interest in Schleiermacher.
have scholars rediscovered her foundational importance and impact upon American
Methodism, Pentecostalism, and the early role of women preachers in America and
Britain. As such, many of the ideas and theology of Palmer, Schleiermacher, and
Kierkegaard are being analyzed in an alternative fashion. My study will continue what
Welch did in his *Protestant Thought in the Nineteenth Century* and additionally address
the Pietistic roots of Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher, while rightly adding Palmer to this
discussion.

Pietism is a growing field for historians of religion. Recent scholarship from
Strom, Lehmann, Shantz and others on Pietism focuses primarily upon the fields of ethics
and politics. Pietism’s role in politics largely relates to its role in nationalism, as well as
a possible reason for the rise of the Hohenzollern state. The ethic of Pietism may be a
connection to the militarism of Brandenburg-Prussia. Using the current studies on
Pietism and Nationalism, I will show how Schleiermacher, Palmer, and Kierkegaard had
key roles in building their respective states. While my work will primarily treat Pietism
as a system of beliefs and not a political movement, existing scholarship may aid in
understanding how these beliefs were received in their states, as well as illustrate why
Palmer’s views were so popular in America and less so in England. With this new
outpouring of Pietistic scholarship, very few have looked at Pietism, codifying its belief
system into distinctive theologies.

To best explain the theological impact of Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and
Palmer, the groundwork for Pietism must be understood. This is the aim of the first
chapter, which briefly addresses medieval Western mysticism and the early formation of
Pietism at the dawn of the Reformation including its Lutheran, Reform, and Anglican
forms, each of which responded to a different challenge posed by the confession at large. Following this, chapter two will address foundational Pietism through three dominant figures, William Perkins, Johann Arndt, and Philip Jakob Spener. These three best typify the Pietist response and it is their synthesis of medieval mysticism and Protestant modernity that is passed down from the sixteenth and seventeenth century to the institutional and denominational forms which are created in the eighteenth century. The institutional forms of Pietism that survive into the nineteenth century are Halle Pietism and the Moravians. The emergence of these institutional forms as created by August Hermann Francke and Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf are the focus of chapter three. In chapter four a denominational form of Pietism exists when John Wesley merges his ancestral Puritanism and Zinzendorf’s Moravians in England, resulting in Methodism. In chapters five and six Friedrich Schleiermacher is addressed. The first of these chapters focuses on his life, and the second his theology. The same applies to chapters seven and eight on Kierkegaard and ten and eleven for Palmer. Chapter nine is a brief interlude which addresses the religious context of America before and during Palmer’s life. Chapters twelve and thirteen address the consequences of Palmer, Kierkegaard, and Schleiermacher’s theology in its liberal and then conservative forms. Finally the work concludes by reexamining the concept of Pietism in general, and how it should be understood as a single religious movement with conflicting and antagonistic parts.
CHAPTER 1

ANCESTRY OF PIETISM: MYSTICISM AND EARLY MODERNITY

"The very reason you are given a body as well as a soul is to help you to gain the favour of this outward and visible world; though at the same time you must also pray for insight into the invisible world as well, so that you may come short of nothing and the whole treasury of the Spirit may be yours." – St. Ignatius of Antioch

No clear and universally agreed upon definition of Pietism exists. What appears universal is the myriad of Pietism definitions that proliferate in any work on the subject, as argued by Jonathan Strom. In this respect I shall not differ from the established literature. It is always best to clarify terms, especially terms that are still in flux. Following Stoeffler’s example I define Pietism as a quasi-mystical experiential revivalist movement, found within Lutheran, Reform and Anglican Protestantism of every age, which seeks to understand and rework their world, both inside and outside of themselves along lines of personally meaningful relationships between themselves as individuals and God, while maintaining a general antipathy or outright hostility to the greater Christian culture and religious formalism which dictates that culture’s norms and practices.

Key to this definition of Pietism is the belief that Pietism is not limited to German Lutheran expressions that only emerged after 1675. As such, two things stand out. First, this definition includes both Reform traditions and Anglicanism in addition to the

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universally agreed upon Lutheranism. Second, the emergence of Pietism is not limited to the publication of any work or the position of any particular theologian. Pietism, rather, is the generic Protestant expression of experiential Christianity. Notions of mysticism, revivalism, and antipathy towards the world and established religious culture become the standard modes in which this experiential religion is expressed. Individualism is often identified as a central tenet of both Protestantism and modernity, and as such it is also key to understanding Pietism.

Pietism is therefore shorthand for the prioritization of experience for Protestants following the traditions of Arndt or Perkins. Other terms are used but following this intellectual history the term Pietism is an expression of experiential Protestantism in general. The specific Lutheran form that Pietism is often associated with is only one strand of the interconnected tapestry. As this study will demonstrate other terms, such as Puritanism, Moravian, Herrnhuter, Methodist, and holiness are all expressions of this same drive toward prioritizing experience over scholastic reasoning and rationalism. These alternative terms are expressions of the same impulse that derived out of a continued history. This study will utilize each of these terms when they are most appropriate to the context of discussion but regardless of the label Puritan, Pietists, Moravian, etc. the underlying argument is the same. Each of these groups are connected and share the same drive in Protestantism.

Experiential Christianity is not limited to modern Protestants. The drive to experience God is a trait common to all forms of Christianity, and some would argue to all religion, yet Pietism is still its own undertaking. To best understand this experiential inclination, it is good to briefly look at a few pre-Protestant examples. Earlier Christian
mystics set a precedent that the modern Pietists followed. From this I will address the theological and cultural debates that explicitly produced ideological camps within the Protestant world, of which Pietism is just one.

**The Tradition of Mysticism in Christianity**

“For the Lord is my helper, and I shall look down on mine enemies.”\(^\text{10}\)

– St. Anthony of Egypt

Pietism may be a relatively new phenomena, but its antecedents are anything but new. Key to our understanding of Pietism is the notion of experiential Christianity. Prior to the Protestant Reformation those Christians who sought after a more experiential religion are identified as mystics. Mysticism is central to historic Christianity and often the easiest place to see mystics were in monastic communities and confraternities.

There exists an interesting trend within Christianity anytime its message is accepted by a wider culture. Those Christians who want a more mystical life voluntarily remove themselves from the larger community and become monks or nuns. This is true from the days preceding Constantine promoting Christianity to the favored religion of Rome, and well before 381 when it became the official religion of the Roman Empire under Emperor Theodosius. Monastics and monastic communities begin as early as the second century in the deserts of Egypt. Early monastics retreated from the comforts of life, or set up a life where they functioned as a living martyr, whenever the potential for martyrdom was decreased. The purpose for any monk is an intimate personal and

fundamentally mystical experience with the divine. Vladimir Lossky, the great twentieth-century Eastern Orthodox theologian states, “the mystical experience is a personal working out of the content of the common faith.”11 This is the entire life of the monastic. Monks and nuns serve as both individuals and as the examples for the communities of faith that surround them. The monastic ideal is the same as the mystical ideal, and monasticism should never be too distanced from the mystic.

Arguably the greatest of the early monks or “Desert Fathers” was Saint Anthony.12 The life of Saint Anthony illustrates a life of self-denial as well as mysticism. There are many accounts of Anthony being tempted by the devil and demons while alone in his monastic cell and while alone in the desert. Throughout these encounters Anthony becomes the example of piety, which only served to gather crowds around him. In addition to renouncing his demons, Anthony had a vision of God when he was thirty five. In the vision, God told Anthony not to fear and that he could always count on divine aid. Eventually Anthony founded a monastery. The monks that joined the monastery rarely if ever included any ordained clergy, yet they shaped the theological doctrines and practices of the wider church. Even today the higher clergy from the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches are viewed as monastics. It is largely for this reason that marriage and other prohibitions are not permitted for the ordained Priests and Bishops.13


12 St. Anthony lived from 251-356

13 Not every priest is viewed as a monastic under the Eastern Orthodox Church but the Bishops are. Many parish priests may be married which excludes them as monastics.
Some of the greatest theologians of the church emerged from monastic communities. The degree to which monastics are mystics varies. Again Lossky maintains that “There is, therefore, no Christian mysticism without theology; but, above all, there is no theology without mysticism.”\(^{14}\) It is partly from this that Saint Basil the Great,\(^{15}\) the fourth century monastic, is also one of the three Holy Hierarchs in the Eastern Church, and whose liturgy is still celebrated today in Eastern Rite Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches.\(^{16}\) Mysticism, monasticism, and theology are made one in the life and work of Basil, and Basil is a very clear early example of how mysticism promotes and shapes the Christian church. This is as much the case for the Western Church as it is the Eastern.

The many monastic reforms, such as those from the Cluny Monastery, are examples of monks seeking to reform not only the lives of the monks but also the life of the church as a whole. The most influential theologian for the Catholic Church following Saint Augustine is Saint Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas developed his *Summa Theologica* and is the preeminent scholastic theologian. Even still, this Dominican put down his quill before finishing this work. At the feast of Saint Nicholas Mass in 1273 Aquinas experienced a mystical encounter with Christ. All the theology which preceded this moment was likened to mere straw and he would write no more.


\(^{15}\) 330-397

\(^{16}\) Basil’s liturgy is only celebrated on special occasions, the normal liturgy for these churches are those written by St. John Chrysostom.
The mystical encounters of the monastics and their theological formations produced the distinctive forms of Christianity that existed prior to the Reformation. Both Saints Thomas Aquinas and Gregory Palamas were monastics who expounded the theological expressions for their respective churches. The historical and theological developments of Christianity, both in its Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox forms, are shaped far more by monastic communities than the dictates of a Pope or Patriarch.

Following the Reformation, the monastic ideal is nearly lost to Protestants. With the exception of Konrade Beissel’s Ephrata Society, and a few converted abbeys that survived, Protestantism lost the monastic communities which produced many of their theological foundations and mystical examples. It is to Protestantism’s detriment that the Ephrata Society or others were not successful as the cache of testimony connected to experiential Christianity becomes marginalized largely to a lay movement with the noted exceptions of some church leaders and theologians. The examples of Christianity that the mystic monastics serve in shaping Christianity in general cannot be quantified. Examples to which Pietism specifically is deeply indebted.

Throughout the life and work of the foundational Pietists that are to follow in chapter two there are references to many earlier mystical monks and nuns. Three examples of medieval mystics stand out for providing the theological underpinning of experiential Christianity for the foundational Pietists. These three are Angela da Foligno, Johann Tauler, and Thomas à Kempis. As of today only Angela da Foligno is regarded as a Saint in the Roman Catholic Church.¹⁷ Both Tauler and à Kempis have devotees

¹⁷ Named a saint by Pope Francis in 2013.
who wish to see them beatified as well. Lutherans, Reform, Anglicans, and other
Protestants, as well as Catholics, regard these three as exemplars of faith.

**Angela da Foligno 1248-1309.**

“*True and pure love, that comes from God, is in the soul and ensures that one recognizes one’s own shortcomings and the divine goodness.*”

– Angela da Foligno

The exact details of Angela’s birth are unknown, but she was likely born in 1248 in the Italian region of Umbria, and the town of Foligno. Her father died when she was young. According to Angela her mother loved the pleasures the city had to offer. The small town had many pleasures for the thirteenth century. A center of trade and a fertile valley, continually watered by the tributaries of the Tiber, the city was wealthy and relatively safe. The city’s wealth echoes the accounts of Angela’s early life. Angela’s mother encouraged her to indulge in the hedonistic fruit the city offered. Honoring her mother’s request, Angela fell into sin and led a disorderly life. At twenty she married a wealthy man and bore him at least two sons. As a wife and mother Angela did not stop loving the disorderly life she was accustomed to. Some local accounts go as far as claiming she was unfaithful to her husband. We have no clear evidence of this, but Angela’s own discussion of her pre-conversion sin suggests that it was sexual. Still, no real confirmation exists, and she never explicitly states that she was disloyal to her husband.

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18 Benedict XVI, *Holy Women* (Our Sunday Visitor, 2011), 44
In Angela’s thirties the city of Foligno underwent some devastating changes that resulted in her doing the same. The peace and stability of the region ended. A violent earthquake tore the valley in 1279, a hurricane then followed. As if this were not enough, war broke out against Perugia with the end to hostilities nowhere to be seen. The external chaos only served to highlight Angela’s own internal chaos. The weight of her own emptiness crushed her. The comforts of the world failed to fill her void. Little by little Angela became aware of her own sins, leading to her conversion in 1285. While aware of her sins for some time, she could bear the weight of them no longer. Angela called out to Saint Francis of Assisi to find her a confessor. That night she had a vision of Francis who told her, “Sister, if you would have asked me sooner, I would have complied with your request sooner. Nonetheless, your request is granted.”

She then went to confession and laid out her sins, with a profound fear of hell and the consequences of her sinful life. According to Pope Benedict XVI this was the real beginning of her mystical journey, “the long journey that led from her starting point, the ‘great fear of hell’, to her goal, total union with the Trinity.” Angela continued to go to confession and longed for a monastic life, but the obligations she had as a wife and mother precluded that opportunity for three years.

In 1288, within the space of a few months, Angela was freed from these obligations, as her mother’s death was followed by the death of her husband and those of all her children. With nary a moment to waste she sold her possessions and made


20 Benedict XVI, Holy Women, 41
preparations to join the Franciscans, which she did in 1291. In rather dramatic fashion, echoing the conversion of St. Francis, Angela went to church and stood before the crucifix, stripping herself naked, and pledging herself to Christ. Following this sold nearly all her property and clothing and gave them to the poor.

Angela de Foligno produced one major work, often simply known as her Book. There are two parts; the first is known as the Memorial and the second the Instructions. The Memorial began as Angela’s confession to her confessor. Angela’s confessor brought a few sheets in which to record her confession following her conversion. Angela promptly responded that he needed to bring a notebook for her sins. What followed was her spiritual journey from 1285 until 1297.

The Memorial, was dictated to a friar, likely a monk known as Arnaldo. He was a relative of Angela, her confessor and counselor. His task was to take the confessions from Angela and translate them into Latin. Of course a degree of misrepresentation could occur, as the Memorial is less a direct dictation than a retelling of the life of Angela, beginning when she became a monastic. At the conclusion of the work in 1297, they both agreed that it was a faithful rendering of her story. Indeed, Angela went so far as to say that “God answered me that everything which has been written is in conformity with my will and comes from me.”21 From most accounts it is clear that Arnaldo was suspicious of the mystical encounters that Angela described at the outset of this endeavor, but that dissipated as time went on.

The *Memorial* consists of thirty steps or stages along her spiritual transformation. Many of these steps repeat an early step but simply to a greater degree. For instance, of the first twenty steps awareness of sins as the main focus occurs in step one, six, and eight. Similarly, penance is the focus of steps three and eleven, and a desire to be poor is the focus of step nine, where she stripped her clothes and renounced her possessions, as well as steps twelve, and twenty. This is also a spiritual auto-biography so the repetition of steps is understandable given the greater intimacy she proclaims throughout these steps. Later Pietists will also produce spiritual autobiographies and for Perkins, Francke, and Wesley a conversion experience is central to their message.

What is striking is not the common themes we should expect such as sin, confession, guilt, absolution, and awareness of God, but the depth that occurs in these steps and the fluidity between the spiritual world and the material world. On many accounts Angela depicts herself standing in front of a crucifix. She then is no longer in front of a crucifix, rather standing before a living crucified Christ who points out his wounds. This focus on the wounds of Christ is later adopted by Zinzendorf and becomes one of his central theological messages. In step fourteen of Angela’s *Book*, Christ even tells her to place her mouth on the blood from his side wound. In another place Angela recounts her discussions with St. John and the Virgin Mary. Angela echoes the pain they felt at Christ’s passion. She also tells of her further insight into her sins, and the redemption found in Christ due to the intercession of Mary.

Angela seeks to identify herself with Mary and Jesus. Angela maintains that experiencing Jesus includes undergoing what he experienced. Most important are Christ’s life of “poverty, contempt and sorrow, because, as she declared, ‘through
temporal poverty the soul will find eternal riches; through contempt and shame it will obtain supreme honor and very great glory; through a little penance, made with pain and sorrow, it will possess with infinite sweetness and consolation the Supreme Good, Eternal God.”

Following the completion of the first half of her Book, Angela’s confessor died. Someone new received her instructions, which become the second half of the work. Likely this section was recorded by several different people and it probably underwent greater revision after her death in 1309. The point of the second half of the work was to lay out instructions for those sisters who gathered around Angela and joined themselves to her and the Franciscans in Foligno. Little is actually known about these sisters, but Angela described them as “her crown and joy in the Lord.”

In large measure the Instructions continue the rest of her biography while focusing on the same themes found in the Memorial. Interestingly there are very few references to specific Bible verses in Angela’s Book, including no quotations from Psalms or the Song of Songs. These two books are common points of departure for mystics and especially medieval women mystics. Angela’s mysticism, while sharing many themes with others, is her own and not simply a reproduction of what would be expected. Central to her mysticism is the love affair that Angela has with “the suffering God-man.” There is an example of the “passion mysticism” that is popular with

22 Benedict XVI, Holy Women, 47
24 Angela Foligno, Classics of Western Spirituality: Angela of Foligno Complete Works, 85.
Bonaventure and Suso. The idea behind passion mysticism is to see Christ’s blood in his passion. This promotes deep feelings of repentance. Angela links this passion mysticism with “bridal mysticism.” Not only does she focus on the blood of Christ and his passion, but this passion leads beyond repentance to a union. In this union Angela is the bride and Christ the bridegroom. The blood of Christ provides the medium for the matrimony. As one would assume, the Eucharist even more than the crucifix, becomes the central point of Angela’s mysticism. Here she not only sees the blood of Christ, but takes it in herself, cementing the union.

Angela’s mysticism is also an affirmation of her femininity. By connecting the body of Christ and Angela’s own body through the Eucharist, Angela is remade. The product of this mystical union is a marriage and the model for women who often felt shame over their bodies, which was characterized as defiled or impure. Angela’s body was united to Christ just as her heart was. Writing to one of her followers, Angela states, “My son, if you were to see my heart you would be absolutely obliged to do everything God wants, because my heart is God’s heart and God’s heart is mine.”

It is also here in the Instructions that Angela goes into some detail on the role of temptation. Most of the work focuses on the connection of sin with penance and ultimately redemption. Angela briefly diverts from the normal focus of the work, that is, the love of Christ for her and for Christians. The diversion focuses on the continued wrath of God, connected with the persistence of temptations. A “Temptation is an

instrument of God’s justice, and its salutary effect is to punish us for our past sins.”

There is a mystical connection but also a cost that is continually paid in this life by the penitent. Eventually Angela da Foligno was released from this penance when she died on January 4, 1309. Witnesses at the time of her death claim she died in peace and joy.

One may expect that upon her death her following would have grown; instead the attention for Angela’s life and her book dwindled. She was little known outside of her village for a century. There existed a few miracles performed at her tomb, but the number was far less than one would expect from such a mystic. A century or so after her repose, it was in Belgium rather than Italy that took the most interest in her work. Angela’s following was localized to groups of Franciscans. Interest in Angela’s mysticism grew during the fourteenth century and by the fifteenth century her book was translated into Spanish, French and German. The likely reason for the slow following of Angela was due to a general fear of mystics, especially women, which existed among the elites. There was also some confusion with other women mystics who shared the theme of passion with Christ. These female mystics, like Clare of Montefalco, were viewed as either heterodox or heretical. The safer play was to ignore them until they were explicitly approved or condemned by the Church.

By the outbreak of the Protestant Reformation, Angela and her book were well known and translated into the major languages of Europe, with the exception of English.


Due to the impact of Bernadino de Laredo, Angela’s *Memorial* and *Instructions* greatly influenced the piety of St. Teresa of Avila and St. Ignatius of Loyola. St. Francis de Sales references Angela as one of a few ‘superior women’ who are “easier to admire than to imitate.” For our study, the impact of Angela de Foligno is clearly seen in Arndt’s *True Christianity, Book Two*. Her influence is evident for both Catholics and Protestants after the Reformations. Only recently did Pope Francis declare her a saint by “equivalent canonization.”

**Johann Tauler 1300-1361.**

“A perfect will is an abandonment of all that is not God. If a man hath not done this in works, he must do it in will if he will be perfect.”

— Johann Tauler

Likely the greatest of the medieval German mystics was Johann Tauler. Tauler was largely immune to the claims of heresy that his teacher, Master Eckhart (d. 1328), dealt with, and his impact is greater than his fellow pupil, Henry Suso (d. 1366). Unlike Angela da Foligno, there was never a period where Tauler was unknown. During his own lifetime Tauler’s works were read and widely disseminated. Tauler’s success was beyond his ambitions and grew beyond the actual man. Controversies surround his legacy. Luther was enamored with Tauler, and the works attributed to Tauler.

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28 1482-1540.


30 In equivalent canonization a local liturgical cult is extended to the universal Church.

Jesuits likewise edited and republished Tauler’s sermons. Schlegel and the Romantics were also drawn to the mystical German language of Tauler.

Tauler’s father Nikolaus was a well-to-do burgher. Unlike Angela’s mother, Nikolaus Tauler was far more concerned for his own spiritual health than the temporal security his wealth might bring. Large portions of his wealth were donated to the church. Furthermore, not only would Johann become a Dominican, but Nikolaus’ daughter would become a Dominican nun as well.

Around the age of fourteen, Johann became a Dominican novice; the ascetic life of the order attracted him. His studies began at Strasbourg but moved onto the University of Cologne where he met Eckhart and Suso. Continuing his Dominican education, Tauler returned to Strasbourg only to be forced into exile in 1339, along with his fellow Dominicans. A conflict erupted between Pope John XXII and the Emperor Louis of Bavaria. The Dominicans sided with the pope, and as such the emperor temporarily exiled the order.

Tauler made his way to Brussels where he was a part of forming a spiritual movement known as the “Friends of God.” The Friends of God grew throughout Western Germany, Switzerland, and the Low Countries. Its purpose was to cultivate a life of inner devotion and intense prayer. The society was universally popular with adherents from all socio-economic backgrounds, stations in life, and genders, with large numbers of Dominican nuns in the rank and file.

32 Jesuit Petrus Canius edited Tauler’s sermons.
Eventually the ban ended and the Dominicans began to return home in 1343. Three years later Tauler joined them. There was a feeling of doom in the air. Not only was the plague once again making its way through central Europe but the tension between the papacy and the empire still loomed. Adding to this, Tauler believed there was a significant breakdown of morals, so he filled his sermons with calls to repentance and condemnation when in public. Most of his sermons however were not directed to the public but to several Dominican convents that surrounded the city. Tauler was primarily a preacher, and primarily to nuns.

Tauler died surrounded by nuns and admirers, including his sister, whose room he was in when he passed away on June 16, 1361. Following his death a friend stated that Tauler “was detained six years in purgatory for sundry faults, one of these being that on his death-bed he allowed himself to receive too much attention from his sister.”33 All things considered this is a fairly minor fault for the mystic.

Likely even before his death legends of Tauler spread. A common telling of Tauler is found in nearly every biography of him until the nineteenth century, describing a legendary character in *The Life of Tauler*. The story consists largely of two main characters, a priest and a layman. The priest is depicted as a true master of spirituality who spends most of his life in seclusion. This is until he is sought out by a righteous layman who travels a great distance to seek spiritual truth. Eventually the master gives these truths to the layman. Much to the priest’s surprise the layman points out that the master was not living up to this ideal. The master then corrects himself, going into

seclusion once again. When returning from seclusion he performs a Mass and gives communion to people. Immediately a dozen communicants fall into a trance. This happens once again before the master’s death. The second time forty people fall into a trance. The legend concludes, that the Master is Tauler. This is likely a work of inspired fiction, and not events from Tauler’s life. First Tauler was not a hermit. Second it is an example of anti-clericalism as the layman corrects the priest, and is likely a common narrative used against the established church. There are even some versions of this story that are cited about Eckhart rather than Tauler, it is likely not accurate for either. It is only in the middle of the nineteenth century that this narrative was reexamined and largely viewed as false.

Tauler’s legacy grew beyond a fictitious narrative about his life to include many works that are falsely attributed to him. Tauler, or more accurately, Pseudo-Tauler produced many works, including *The Following of the Poor Life of Christ, Exercises on the Life and Passion of Our Savior Jesus Christ*, and *Divine Institutions*, also known as *The Marrow of the Soul*. While scholars are examining Tauler’s works in order to separate Tauler from Pseudo-Tauler, the distinction does not really matter for this work, since the legend and works were accepted by Protestants and Catholics, as well as the Pietists in this study. Tauler’s impact was greater than Tauler himself.

Tauler was also keenly aware of the pitfalls of becoming too mystical or too impactful, having witnessed the condemnation of Eckhart. Throughout his life Tauler’s desire was twofold, first to grow closer to Christ, and second to remain a good Catholic. To maintain his second objective Tauler was never as speculative as Eckhart, and he always framed his mystical expressions in scholastic language. He also refrained from
speaking about his own mystical encounters with God, referring to the theological principles rather than experience as his source of authority.

Unfortunately for Tauler his cautious approach to mystical theology did not protect his legacy from scrutiny. Due to the popularity of Tauler amongst the Lutherans there was a Catholic backlash against him in the sixteenth century, beginning with the Jesuits who banned his writings in 1518. The Capuchins did the same in 1590, and his works were also condemned in Spain. Even Pope Sixtus V temporarily placed Tauler’s works on the Index of Prohibited Books. Eventually Tauler was reabsorbed by the Catholic Church and the bans lifted.

Two key theological messages are present in Tauler’s mysticism. First is the notion of poverty and the second is concerned with the inner man. Central to his understanding of his own life is the notion that “Poverty is a likeness with God.” Poverty grants freedom, as the material things of this world cause attachments, which serve to isolate man from God. The key to gaining freedom is to abandon all things that are not God. It is only in this abandonment that man can find freedom and perfection in Christ. True poverty consists of abandonment of all things in this world, not only wealth.

This naturally brings us to Tauler’s notion of the twofold nature of man. This notion is connected to Aquinas’ doctrine of the visio essentiae Dei, or the contemplation of the divine nature. Tauler goes further than his Dominican counterpart by holding that divine knowledge is attainable in this world, due to the indwelling of God in each man.

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The key to this is a nearly Manichean duality between the inner-man and the outer-man. Tauler explains that “Man is created for time and for eternity for time in his body, for eternity according to his spirit.” The body made of earth seeks the things of this world, and the spirit made of God seeks God. Ultimately the spirit will prevail when man is touched by God, revealing himself as a light unlike any other. This is actually the closest that we see Tauler revealing his own experience of mysticism in his works stating that “when God revealeth himself to the soul, this is without all doubt, and man cannot doubt it.”

After this point the inner man is the entirety of man, and the body is made subject to the soul, as it was intended on being. To do this one must look inside themselves at the divine spirit common to all, claiming “Oh! Dear children, turn your eyes inwardly, where this birth must really be born, which will cause great joy throughout Christendom.”

This process is also likened to the consecration of a church, the episcopacy, and the Virgin Mary. “The consecration of a church means much the same as a renewal; and this renewal ought always to be taking place in the inner man.” The church takes on a new spirit, which dwells in the sanctuary. This is just like the high priest carrying the vessels which hold the body and blood of Christ. The true spiritual reality is carried by

the priest, just as the inner man holds God. The clearest example of this is found with the Virgin Mary who gave of herself fully and “she became one spirit with God, and she was taught by Him; for she resigned herself as a fitting instrument to His dear Will, in fervent love for His glory. She was poor in spirit.”

Throughout Tauler’s sermons and other works the theme of giving all away to God is the attempt to strengthen the inner-man. It is this language, common since Paul used it in his letter to the Romans, and used by Thomas Aquinas, that Tauler promotes. The language of the inner-man is central to the Pietist conception of self. Tauler always couched this within terms of the church, and the authority of the church. While some Pietists follow this example, many will use the language of Tauler, specifically the notions connected to the inner man without the ecclesial restraint of the church, as such the conclusions are not ones that Tauler would be likely to support.

**Thomas à Kempis 1380-1471.**

*Every man naturally desires knowledge; but what good is knowledge without fear of God?* — Thomas à Kempis

While Tauler is likely the greatest of the German mystics, Thomas à Kempis and his work *The Imitation of Christ*, is likely the most used when discussing not only our Pietist authors but also for Pietists in general. The *Imitation* is one of the most widely read books in the world and next to the Bible it is also the most widely translated book in


Christian literature. With such a popular work it is surprising that à Kempis’ life has not been thoroughly treated. Like many, the exact year of his birth is unknown, he was either born in 1379 or 1380. Even his death has conflicting dates, he reposed either on July 25, or two weeks later on August 8, 1471. For a man whose impact is felt in all areas of Western Christianity, his ninety-one years of sanctity were spent largely in rote isolation and personal contemplation of the ineffable God.

Thomas was the second born son to artisan parents, John and Gertrude Haemerken in Kempen, near Düsseldorf. Thomas’s brother John was fourteen years older and the two spent very little time together. Thomas was sent to school in Deventer, in Holland, when he was around thirteen, just like his older brother. While Thomas expected to see his brother at the school, John had just started a new congregation following the example of Gerhard Groote (d. 1384). Groote began a modern devotional movement in 1374. The movement, known as The Brethren and Sisters of the Common Life, was the driving force behind the Northern Renaissance. It was a mixture of lay and ordained piety which sought education as one means to grow in faith. Because of the mixture of people, the Brethren appeared to be a monastic order but lacked papal authority. According to the Council of Vienna in 1311 this was forbidden. The Brethren found a loophole and connected themselves to a monastery in Windesheim. Next to Thomas à Kempis, the best known graduate from these schools is Desiderius Erasmus (d. 1536).

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Most descriptions of Thomas view him as a pious but otherwise fairly unremarkable fellow. Physically he was of average height, dark complexion, with a broad forehead, and piercing eyes. Those eyes were likely the most expressive part of him, since he was otherwise silent and shy. Some describe him “as the most placid and uneventful of all men who ever wrote a book or scribbled letters.”\footnote{Chris Ackerley, "Samuel Beckett and Thomas a Kempis: The Roots of Quietism" \textit{Samuel Beckett Today} (Brill) 9, no. Beckett and Religion (2000). 81} Unsurprisingly most of his time was spent in books and prayer. The only time he was full of life was in his cell or when conversations turned to God. The natural place for him was with the Brethren.

Thomas à Kempis lived the rest of his life in one of the communities operated by the Brethren. These schools and monasteries received Thomas in 1399, and he made his Augustinian vows in 1407. Some accounts maintain Thomas became an Augustinian after he had a dream. The dream convicted him of his sin and revealed God’s grace. Either way his priestly orders were delivered to him in 1413. He later became the sub-prior in 1425. True to form, à Kempis spent most of his time eschewing promotions and nearly every other task, choosing instead to spend his time in his monastic cell deep in thought. It was from this cell that \textit{the Imitation of Christ} was written.

When he died, Maximilian Hendrik and others believed that Thomas à Kempis was destined for sainthood. Hendrik took great measure to preserve his relics, and began all the paperwork for beatification. Since the close of the seventeenth century no real progress has taken place to recognize Thomas à Kempis as a saint in the Catholic Church.
While we may expect that such a pious individual who wrote such an impactful work is destined for canonization, à Kempis’ subdued nature and lack of self-aggrandizement resulted in controversy over the authorship of the *Imitation of Christ*.

Unlike Tauler, who had many works posthumously and inaccurately added to his resume, for centuries people have doubted that à Kempis is the author of the *Imitation of Christ*. There was some measure for speculation as the book was first issued anonymously in 1418. Today there is nearly universal agreement that he is the author of the work. Many of the earlier concerns over his theological and intellectual pedigree led people to wonder if it was not his older brother John, Gerhard Groote, or a whole host of other people who authored the brief tome. The most farfetched was the theory that it was a lost work of St. Bonaventure.

In the *Imitation*, à Kempis lays out a few meditative issues for the Christian. At the very outset is a critique of learning over piety, “Indeed it is what good is knowledge without fear holy and just, but a virtuous life makes him pleasing to God.” 43 This is an obvious connection for all Pietists. Other invectives, such as “A man is raised up from the earth by two wings—simplicity and purity. There must be simplicity in his intention and purity in his desires. Simplicity leads to God, purity embraces and enjoys Him,” 44 place him in line with Tauler and Angela da Foligno, who emphasized poverty, a notion found within à Kempis but nowhere near the same degree as the others.

43 Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, 1, Book 1 Chapter 1.

Far more of the work is focused on other practices in piety, urging men to overcome their sinful life when he tells them to “Fight like a man. Habit is overcome by habit.”\textsuperscript{45} The new habit that should take the place of vice is the cross of Christ. He states, “Behold, in the cross is everything, and upon your dying on the cross everything depends. There is no other way to life and to true inward peace than the way of the holy cross and daily mortification.”\textsuperscript{46} à Kempis does not really view the cross as a choice though, maintaining that “No matter where you may go, you cannot escape it.”\textsuperscript{47} The choice is to carry the cross willingly, for otherwise it becomes even more burdensome.

Choosing the cross rather than fighting against it reveals God’s love, which is the predominant theme of the first half of Book Three. À Kempis constantly speaks of God as the “Fountain of unceasing love,”\textsuperscript{48} his “most beloved Spouse”\textsuperscript{49} and his “holy Lover.”\textsuperscript{50} This lovefest is an example of bridal mysticism for male mystics as well as female mystics. Following this the second major theme in Book Three concerns the lowliness of man. Throughout this book à Kempis calls himself “nothing,”\textsuperscript{51} and “dust.”\textsuperscript{52} The low status of man is used to emancipate him from pride and his desires.

\textsuperscript{45} Thomas à Kempis, \textit{The Imitation of Christ}, 18, Book 1 Chapter 21.
\textsuperscript{46} Thomas à Kempis, \textit{The Imitation of Christ}, 41, Book 2 Chapter 12.
\textsuperscript{47} Thomas à Kempis, \textit{The Imitation of Christ}, 41, Book 2 Chapter 12.
\textsuperscript{48} Thomas à Kempis, \textit{The Imitation of Christ}, 55, Book 3 Chapter 10.
\textsuperscript{49} Thomas à Kempis, \textit{The Imitation of Christ}, 68, Book 3 Chapter 21.
\textsuperscript{50} Thomas à Kempis, \textit{The Imitation of Christ}, 49, Book 3 Chapter 5.
\textsuperscript{51} Thomas à Kempis, \textit{The Imitation of Christ}, 47, Book 3 Chapter 3.
\textsuperscript{52} Thomas à Kempis, \textit{The Imitation of Christ}, 59, Book 3 Chapter 13.
Like Tauler we hear “the giving up of exterior things brings interior peace, so the forsaking of self unites you to God.”\textsuperscript{53}

Unlike Tauler, à Kempis rarely uses the phrase new man. The dichotomy between the new creation and the old creation is largely absent in this work, with one noted exception, when he proclaims that the reader must “put on the new man. You must be changed into another man.”\textsuperscript{54} While this notion was central for Tauler, à Kempis’ focus is on a different set of diametrically opposed tendencies, that of nature and grace. Later à Kempis adds a second dichotomy, the man who thinks highly of himself, as opposed to the saint.

The final book focuses on the sacrament of communion. Throughout this concluding section à Kempis marvels at the power and presence of God and the neglect found by so many Christians. The mystery of the presence of God has a real potential of becoming routine for Christians, including priests, who may forget they are communing with God. The disconnected piety is demonstrated with the difference between people traveling to honor relics of saints, “marveling at their wonderful deeds and at the building of magnificent shrines” while not noticing that “in the Sacrament of the altar You are wholly present, my God, the man Christ Jesus, whence is obtained the full realization of eternal salvation, as often as You are worthily and devoutly received.”\textsuperscript{55}

\textsuperscript{53} Thomas à Kempis, \textit{The Imitation of Christ}, 108, Book 3 Chapter 56.

\textsuperscript{54} Thomas à Kempis, \textit{The Imitation of Christ}, 98, Book 3 Chapter 49.

\textsuperscript{55} Thomas à Kempis, \textit{The Imitation of Christ}, 117, Book 4 Chapter 1.
For à Kempis, communion is extremely powerful. First communion fulfills the spiritual desire for unity with God, a union that is nothing short of life itself. “Without You I cannot exist, without Your visitation I cannot live.” Communion is also transformative. “Holy Communion removes him from evil and confirms him in good.” The whole theme of the *Imitation of Christ*, is found within the Eucharistic practice, that constant communion with God reveals all that Christians are to be. He echoes this in a prayer “Let Thy will be mine, and my will ever follow Thine, and agree perfectly with it. Grant to me, above all things that can be desired, to rest in Thee, and in Thee to have my heart at peace.”

**Modernity and the Emergence of Pietism**

> “Christianity created Western Civilization... The Modern World arose only in Christian societies.” – Rodney Stark

Following Martin Luther and his nailing of the 95 Theses on the door of the Wittenberg Church in 1517, the medieval period begins to fade. While a convenient moment to mark the break in the epochs of history, more than the Protestant Reformation was taking place to separate the Medieval from the Modern. The early modern period

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56 Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, 120, Book 4 Chapter 3.

57 Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, 121, Book 4 Chapter 3.


60 This is the date often used for Germany others include 1400 in Italy and 1485 in England.
was one of great fluctuations. Luther and his confrontation with the sale of indulgences was just one change. The sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries saw economic changes, mass urbanization, changing roles of government, new definitions of appropriate violence, shifting views towards the emancipation of women, and Jews throughout Europe.

The discussions about religion in general and Christianity specifically in the modern period are one of two extremes. Either Christianity is at a great loss, unable to cope with the changing nature of the world, or Christianity is the great catalyst spurring on the behemoth that is the modern project. Truth can be found in each of these extreme positions. Christianity in the early modern period, just like religion in all periods of history, effected great changes and social advancements. Religions also found themselves at a loss as to how to react to a shifting world. Change is constant and religions are forced to change within this larger world. This is true even if the change is to resist the world.

The early modern period of history shifts how we are to view Christianity and its relation to Europe. This shift affords us an opportunity to see the manner in which people construct meaning in this epoch. With the fracturing of Western Christianity following the Reformations, different people offer different polemics against the modern world and their confessional rivals. One can never speak of Protestantism as a single entity, like one could at least in part do of the Roman Catholic Church and Eastern
Orthodoxy. Because of the multitude of Protestantisms, each must display why they are true. They must also provide evidence why the others, be they a different sort of Protestant, Catholic, or even to a lesser degree Orthodox are in error on some level. Of course polemics against opposing theological points of view are not unique to modernity, nor to Protestants. Many of these exact critiques existed long before Luther and Zwingli. We have plenty of examples of criticisms and condemnations upon Waldesians and Cathars, let alone many soliloquies expounding the veracity of one particular scholastic claim or the other. What Protestantism coupled with modernity does is provide us a fast paced, even reactionary response to theological claims of truth and the ways that practical theological concerns are to be lived out in those who believed they are selected by God.

This brings us to another crucial point. Protestantism, like other expressions of Christianity, and indeed like all the Abrahamic faiths share a common world view vis-à-vis man’s relation to God. In addition to common stories of creation and sin, Abrahamic faiths also maintain a necessary dualism. This dualism is the byproduct of covenantal relationships; there are those who are in and those who are out. While the treatment of those in the covenant and those outside of the covenant varies from religion to religion, as well as within each religion, this basic framework exists. It is essential that the covenant

61 Regrettably many terms for Christian branches, denominations and movements share the same labels. Specifically here the term Orthodoxy and Orthodox can mean two spate groups who share little in what they believe the term “Orthodoxy” is to imply. Keeping in mind that the central focus of this paper is Pietism and its relation primarily to the Protestant world; in effort to minimize potential confusion as to what group I am identifying as “Orthodox” or “Orthodoxy” unless otherwise prefaced with specific labels like “Eastern,” “Greek,” “Russian,” etc. references to Orthodoxy are specifically addressing what has become known as Protestant Orthodoxy, Protestant Scholasticism, Rational Protestantism, etc. and not to the Eastern Orthodox Christians. On a separate note it may be interesting and ultimately beneficial to see the overlapping beliefs between Eastern Orthodoxy on the one side and Pietism and Protestant Orthodoxy on the other, however that lies beyond the scope of the present work.
excludes, even while it may be inclusive, for this defines the adherents and dictates how
they are to live with others, both with those who share the covenant and those to whom it
does not apply. To borrow and modify a term from Pierre Bourdieu, covenantal
relationships establish a habitus, in this case a habitus of exclusion. Bourdieu defines a
habitus as “Systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures
predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and
organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes
without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations
necessary in order to attain them. Objectively ‘regulated’ and ‘regular’ without being in
any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without
being the product of the organizing action of a conductor.”62

The habitus of exclusion is codified with creeds. The nature of a creed is defining
those to whom the creed applies. In doing so, creeds only partially illustrate the
characteristics and beliefs the group possesses, but more importantly they define what the
group is not. As J.Z. Smith put it “the most basic sense of the ‘other’ is generated by the
opposition in/out.”63 In many ways creeds function in a greater sense to illustrate what a
community does not believe than what they in fact believe. It traces the border of belief
and practice, rather than illustrating the life of a member of the community. The
expected practices occur as normal and unexpected, or at least not worth mentioning,


until a rival group believes that things should be done otherwise. Definition is through subtraction, thus a habitus of exclusion is established with creeds.

A habitus of exclusion and definition through subtraction are not unique to creeds or religions but are found in all facets of society. William Scott Green states, “In creating its others, a society confuses some part of its neighbor with its neighbor and a piece of itself with itself, and construes each in terms of the other.”

Randal Styers, in his work *Making Magic: Religion, Magic, and Science in the Modern World*, argues that moderns identify themselves in negative terms, namely, arguing that they are not what non-moderns or pre-moderns are. Modernity, unlike religions, is an empty signifier to be filled only in opposition, having nothing intrinsic. This defining self in negative terms through others is borrowed from Gustavo Benavides, who argued that the “condition of modernity presupposes an act of self-conscious distancing from a past or a situation regarded as naïve.”

Styers takes what Benavides is arguing about modernity and applies it in his discussion of magic.

Closely related to Styers is the work of Zakiya Hanafi. Hanafi argues in her work *The Monster in the Machine: Magic, Medicine, and the Marvelous in the Time of the Scientific Revolution*, that modernity has defined itself in opposition not to magic but to the monstrous. Hanafi defines a monster not as any singular object, rather “it is a category that becomes constituted in different ways according to different cultural and

historical contexts.”\textsuperscript{66} As such the monster is defined by the larger society and it can be applied to individuals, groups and institutions. The term monster is not a category that is defined in itself but from the outside. “For in each case, a theory of difference, when applied to the proximate ‘other,’ is but another way of phrasing a theory of ‘self.’”\textsuperscript{67} Both Hanafi and Styers address the demonization of others to suit the social, religious, and political aims of the larger group. In this way modernity mimics the normative practice of religion. Modernity in many ways is itself a new religion, with new civil creeds, councils, and clerics.

With the actions and expressions of Christianity being co-opted by the modern project, Christian groups must reinforce their identities with new statements of beliefs. For most groups this is not a difficult task, as a synod or council can be called wherein modernity can be condemned or extoled. The new creeds and statements of faith will now include or exclude modernity, in part or in whole, but the definition by subtraction is still the normative exercise. With the established habitus of exclusion, modernity can be faced from a top down level and those adherents will be expected to fall in line with the new dogma.

Scholars such as Dale T. Irvin contend that traditions always remake themselves, they are never stagnant. Even liturgical and creedal religions still remake themselves in how they view themselves, their tradition and the surrounding culture. Irvin states “I would go so far as to assert that the recreation of Christian tradition is not an option, but

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an imperative of Christian faith.”  

Furthermore he contends that this is not just a byproduct of the pace of change over the last few hundred years, rather “there are reasons internal to Christian traditions of faith that drive them toward rejuvenation and recreation.”  

Irvin believes that the message of personal renewal that is central to the Christian message encourages various Christian traditions to renew themselves whenever stagnation begins to be set in. Combining this with Styers and Hanafi, the primary modes that various Christian denominations and movements, explicitly those during the era of modernity, define themselves through are negation and exclusionary practices.

Modes of exclusion are necessary for any group to maintain a sense of identity. Even radically tolerant groups exclude some ideas or persons, usually on the basis of their rejection of the new dogmas. Group identity is not simply about acceptance of one idea but the acceptance of that one idea to the exclusion of another. In most cases the group will believe that the abrogated notions lack some of the coherence, charm, utility or ease of the supported ideas. How individuals and groups choose ideologies, statements, and beliefs varies depending on the relation that group has to the whole, its members, and the challenges it currently faces.

Anthony Wallace calls this act mazeway reformulation. The mazeway is rather similar to Bourdieu’s notion of the habitus, in that it is something taken for granted. According to Wallace, the process of reformulation takes place when the current society fails to satisfy its members. While this causes stress, the desire is that a new system will


replace it and will better address the needs of the community. The standard way this is
done is through a revitalization movement. “A revitalization movement is defined as a
deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more
satisfying culture.”

The easiest way that most organizations and religious confessions define official
dogma is through declarative statements from the groups clearly identified authorities.
Business and political organizations usually have spelled out delineating titles which
carry with them clearly understood authority and responsibilities. Many, if not most
religious organizations, have distinct titles and an understood ordination process that also
gives these men and women hierarchical roles. Wallace would identify these authorities
as either the prophet, or in more cases as the priest. The trouble emerges when groups
lack clear hierarchies or if the hierarchies’ declarations lack authority amongst their
constituents. Often the elites are elite only in title or status and their decrees are defied,
rejected, or simply ignored by those to whom they direct or represent. In these cases
while the CEO, president, or priest has authority, they do not really hold authority and the
hierarchy may only exist as some sort of Frazierian survival, waiting for its time to
disappear or be reformed into something new. In either instance if the hierarchy is absent
or simply lacks authority, clearly identifying the tenets of the group becomes rather
difficult, and often is only understood from an etic or historical perspective.

70 Anthony Wallace, Revitalizations and Mazeways: Essays on Culture Change Vol. 1 (Lincoln: University
of Nebraska Press, 2003), 28.
This is the case when addressing Pietism. While Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and most Protestant confessions can choose to promote an authoritative statement from on high, Pietism does not have the ability to do this. Pietism is distinct from other forms of Protestantism because it is by its very nature “experiential.” While excluding others from the elect, it does so not with creeds, confessions, and synods, but with experiences. These experiences naturally exclude the acceptable experiences of previous generations and are replaced with newer experiences and modes of practices that are contrary to the established order. This is not to say that an emphasis on experience is lacking in Orthodox or Catholic circles, but the emphasis is not to the exclusion of the episcopacy.

This extreme emphasis on experiences leads those like Mark Noll to a false conclusion when he says, “At its extreme, the Pietist emphasis on religious life gave very little attention to self-conscious Christian thought. To be consumed by feeling was to have no time for thinking through the relationship between God and His creation.”71 Clearly this description fails to take into account the existence of prominent Pietistic theologians, not only in the nineteenth century, but from the beginning of the Reformation. Paul Tillich is a bit kinder than Noll in his treatment of Pietism when he states that “Pietism was dependent on the Orthodoxy which it wanted to transform into subjectivism.”72 Tillich, like Noll, still maintains that the core of the Pietistic impulse


was towards the subjective rather than the established doxa, but illustrates the interconnectedness of Pietism and the classical systems of Orthodoxy. While subjective, Pietism is not a rejection of the rational world, only a rejection of the system that focuses on self-evident objective truth in light of what many Protestant leaders view as mysteries inherent in the created world. Tillich points out that even Martin Luther fought against the notion that the “categories of reason should transform the substance of faith. Reason is not able to save but must be saved itself.”73 The instinct of the Pietist is to answer the world of reason with an experience steeped in experiential faith.

What those critics of Pietism like Noll can emphasize is the question of authority, which remains in Pietist circles. Namely if experiences not synods define the right Christian life, what experiences are valid? And which ones are not? These must be defined through individuals. It is here that theology plays a central role for Pietists. Many early Pietists found themselves within the same Lutheran, Reform, and Anglican communities. While rejecting the synod’s statements as too cold and impersonal, they had to rely upon reason to justify their experiences. As such, a new literature arises specifically for the edification and justification of the Pietistic position. Instead of synods, what become authoritative are journals, sermons, and books promulgated amongst their fellow Pietists. Scholars like Peter C. Erb state “Pietism must be counted among the two or three most important developments in Protestant spirituality.”74


many cases the rejection of the establishment spurs on a support of lay religion, giving a voice to the unconventional and underrepresented within a community.

These writings of Pietists are an example of European Christian ecstatic religion. To borrow from I.M. Lewis, “Possession is a culturally normative experience.”75 As classic possession is not permitted, experiential religion fills this void. Pietism affords individuals and minority groups the ability to air grievances against the larger group. The new shamans of Pietism are those authors and theologians. In order to better understand Pietism as a whole, we need to understand who these key leaders are and what ideas they advance.

With that said, Pietism is never a single thing, rather in the smallest definition Pietism is simply experiential Protestant Christianity. Many of these leaders would not agree with one another, and the manner in which devotees may experience God varies. With this overly broad definition we must always remember that Pietism at no time is monolithic. Again it will serve us best to revisit my definition of Pietism as a quasi-mystical experiential revivalist movement, found within Lutheran, Reform and Anglican Protestantism of every age, in which the faithful Christian seeks to understand and rework their world, both inside and outside of themselves along lines of personally meaningful relationship between themselves as individuals and God, while maintaining a general antipathy or outright hostility to the greater Christian culture and religious formalism which dictates that culture’s norms and practices. This definition applies to a

greater or lesser degree depending on the community, person, location, and era that we hope to address.

**Pietism’s conflict with Protestant Orthodoxy and the Modern World.**

"The dominance of religion was taken for granted. Gradually every dominant relationship was pronounced a religious relationship."  

– *Karl Marx*

Following the Reformation, Christian thought in Western Europe moved in three different and often contrary directions, one of which is the subject of this work. The three directions were Protestant Orthodoxy or Protestant Scholasticism, Rationalism, and Pietism. Until fairly recently Pietism was the often neglected of these three strains of modernity, and the neglect is the reason for this work.

Protestant Orthodoxy or Protestant Scholasticism has its own origins following the Reformation. Different forms of Orthodoxy exist among the different Protestant branches. Lutheranism develops differently than Anglicanism, which develops different than Calvinism and other Reform. Briefly, Protestant Orthodoxy emerged when Protestants sought to place supremacy of the Bible over the value of tradition found within the Catholic Church. Protestantism became a religion, or rather several religions, of a book, rather than the Bible being the book of a tradition. With this shift in authority a new system was created to make sense of the religious world. It was in these

discussions where Protestant Orthodoxy was created. Possibly the first and clearest division of Protestant Orthodoxy was developed within the Lutheran circles.

The Pietists were also not alone in their challenge to the Protestant Orthodoxy. The orthodox establishment encountered challenges on two different fronts, from both the Pietists and the Enlightenment. Pietism was just one mechanism of dealing with the challenges of modernity. The supreme faith in science and reason would also challenge the status of Protestant Orthodoxy. Eventually Rationalism proclaims that it won the day for modernity. There is reason to challenge this proclamation, but the normative view is to accept this as a truism.

Rationalism was a byproduct of the Reformation process as much as the other two strands. Following the Reformation, Rationalism was as diffuse as any of the other movements. Many times it worked within the Christian context, such as cases of Christian deists, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Tilloston (1630-1694), who posited religion was simply the system of rational propositions that were tested by human reason. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) and the philosophical framework he created can also be found within this strand. Hegel maintained simultaneous faith in Christianity and reason and created a system that held both in concert, a system that often lay outside the frame work of Protestant Orthodoxy and any Pietistic impulses. In other cases Rationalism was strictly opposed to religion in general and Christianity specifically. Some key examples are found in the anti-Christian Deists. Many of the Enlightenment authors, such as Voltaire (1694-1778), typify this wing of Rationalism.

It may be interesting to note that as often as not, the Pietists and Enlightenment philosophers would side together against the same Orthodox system. In many cases, such
as Immanuel Kant and Johann Christoph Woellner, a single individual occupied both camps. Nearly just as often these two would also oppose each other. Too often have scholars approached the early modern period from the perspective of the Enlightenment or from the confessionalization process and not enough attention has been focused on the interplay between these three major strands in the history of ideas.

A simpler definition of a Pietist may help to best understand the interplay between Pietism, Rationalism, and Scholasticism. A Pietist would be a Protestant who emphasized experience of the divine over Rationalism and Orthodoxy. The central focus of a Pietist is this experience. The emphasis on experience produced theological or rational errors that otherwise could be tempered by a strong emphasis on church tradition. The Reformation eliminated the power of church tradition for the Protestant world, and with this new wave of iconoclasm a distinct form of religious expression emerged. Pietism differs from the early mystical expressions of Christianity in Western Europe not because of its priority of experiential religion, but because the Pietist does not have their experience tempered or shaped by a strong tradition that seeks to curtail aberrant theological or ecclesial forms.

Confessionalization is still an important discussion as how Pietism differs widely between the three main Magisterial Denominations. Lutheran Pietism emerged as an opponent to Lutheran Orthodoxy. Reform Pietism emerged because of the theology developed by a Calvinist Orthodoxy. Anglican Pietism emerged due to a lack of Anglican Orthodoxy and an overly powerful Rationalism that infiltrated England following the theological spasms that was the Tudor Reformations.
Lutheran Conflict Pietism vs. Orthodoxy.

“Orthodoxy, Straight, or rather straightened, opinion, which aims, without ever entirely succeeding, at restoring the primal state of innocence of doxa, exists only in the objective relationship which opposes it to heterodoxy.” — Pierre Bourdieu

To best understand Lutheran Pietism, it would benefit us to highlight some of the key differences between Lutheran Orthodoxy and Pietism. There appears to be an obvious tension between the two groups. The tension is created by both theological and practical points of conflict. For Lutheran Orthodoxy, the discussion of acceptable Lutheran beliefs emerged even before Martin Luther’s death in 1546. The tension of Lutheran Orthodoxy produced and continued through many documents. The first of these was formulated in 1530, the Augsburg Confession, and later that same year the Apology for the Augsburg Confession would follow. These documents, as well as the Smalcald Articles (1539), were the source of controversy and a development of different strands of interpretation.

Lutheran Orthodoxy developed to answer five early questions. The first question was more practical than theological. It asked if certain Catholic practices could be accepted as adiaphora.78 The second controversy, known as the Majoristic Controversy79 centered on the idea that good works were required for salvation. The third controversy asked whether or not man cooperates in his conversion; this is known as the Synergistic

78 Things neither commanded nor forbidden by God.
79 Named after George Major.
Controversy. The fourth, known as the Antinomian Controversy, stressed God’s grace over the Law. Taken to an extreme, antinomians maintain that there is no law, therefore no sin for the true Christian. The final controversial issue proposed that a union could be found connecting Luther’s theology with the theology of John Calvin, specifically dealing with Christ’s nature and his presence in the Eucharist.

While there are many different schools of thought on these issues, the two dominant interpretations were those following Philip Melanchthon, often known as Philipists, and the Gnesio-Lutherans. With the exception of the Antinomian position, Melanchthon supported these ideas, while the Gnesio-Lutherans opposed them. Antinomianism was rejected by both the Philipists and the Gnesio-Lutherans, and only upheld, denounced, and upheld again by Johann Agricola. These controversies served to create a specific dialogue. This dialogue resulted in two interconnected developments.

As a byproduct of the theological discussions, a new theological methodology resulted, along with an insistence of legalist doctrinal statements. This methodology is also known as Protestant Scholasticism. These statements bring us to their highest form within Lutheranism, the construction and adoption of the Formula of Concord in 1580. Both the methodology and the Formula of Concord defined Lutheran Orthodoxy.

The Formula of Concord and Lutheran Orthodoxy sided with Melanchthon’s views on Adiaphora, and most of his views on Synergism and Calvin’s theology.

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\textsuperscript{80} The Solid Declaration of the Formula of Concord Section X Ecclesiastic Practices states “8 as regards genuine adiaphora, or matters of indifference, we believe, teach, and confess that such ceremonies, in and of themselves, are no worship of God, nor any part of it, but must be properly distinguished from such as are. … 9 Therefore we believe, teach, and confess that the congregation of God of every place and every time has, according to its circumstances, the good right, power, and authority [in matters truly adiaphora] to change, to diminish, and to increase them, without
Similarly the Gnesio-Lutherans had success in their limits on some Calvinist inroads while also rejecting the Majorist position. Antinomianism was flatly rejected. Calvinism underwent similar challenges with similar results at the beginning of the seventeenth century, resulting in Calvinist Orthodoxy and the Synod of Dort (1618-19).

Early in the seventeenth century, Lutheran Orthodoxy had possibly its greatest champion, Johan Gerhard.\textsuperscript{81} While not the earliest Lutheran systematic theologian, Gerhard is certainly one of the most thorough Lutheran Scholastics. His \textit{Loci}, written in 1622, is over four thousand pages, and examines the place of scripture and eternal life and nearly every point in between. Under Gerhard, Lutheran theology developed not only against Roman Catholics, but against the Rationalists, Reform, and other strands of Protestant thought. This included the Pietists. Like nearly all Protestant Scholastics, the focus of the work places the Bible as the supreme authority, with God as the principle cause. Following Gerhard, the Bible, and not the Church, is the sole authority for Lutherans. The Bible is also the only efficacious medium for salvation. The Bible is true, perfect, and sufficient for Christians. Gerhard does admit that scripture is clear to all, but really only to mature Christians who undergo a degree of training and are open to scripture. These claims are maintained, modified and echoed in the twentieth century by neo-orthodox and fundamentalists, while both view the reasons for this from a different perspective.

\begin{quote}thoughtlessness and offense, in an orderly and becoming way, as at any time it may be regarded most profitable, most beneficial, and best for [preserving] good order, [maintaining] Christian discipline, and the edification of the Church.” \textit{Book of Concord}, 637.\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{81} 1583-1637
Gerhard contended that “God determined that revelation should be committed to writing in order to preserve it in a pure state through all future time, establish concord in the church, provide a summary of the faith for secular authorities, and distinguish heretics from true believers.” There is a similar claim about the role of the Church by Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox. The Bible replaces tradition and apostolic succession as the legitimate means of authority.

Gerhard and other Lutheran Scholastics’ conclusions are so cemented by the close of the seventeenth century that Protestant tradition accompanies the Bible as the source of authority. Pietists and the Orthodox began to engage in greater controversies at this same time surrounding the idea of how a Christian society is to operate. The majority of these controversies were practical rather than theological. Essentially Pietism was a reform movement that sought not to reform the structure of society but its members. The piety of individuals challenged the status quo, the clash concerned of visions more than specific theological or practical differences. It is a clash between doxa and heterdoxa.

The Lutheran Pietists rarely rejected the theological outcomes of their Orthodox counterparts. The thrust of the Pietist challenge to Lutheran Orthodoxy was against the system rather than the conclusions. The emphasis of the Lutheran Scholastics on dogma dictating divine intervention contrasted the Pietist fidelity to experiencing God. The synods conclusions were still upheld. The Pietists which deviated furthest from this Lutheran Orthodoxy were the ones who were only in part connected to the Lutheran

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church to begin with. Predictably the Moravians and Methodists drifted much further away from the conclusions of the Orthodox Lutherans than the Pietists from the Halle School. Pietists emphasized the practice of piety over the systematic interpretation of abstract theological concerns, but those from Halle especially do not flatly reject the developed Lutheran systematic theology.

**Reform/Calvinist Pietism – Because of Scholasticism.**

“In all history, we do not find a single religion without a Church.””83

– Emile Durkheim

While the Lutheran Pietistic tradition emerged in response to the development of Lutheran Orthodoxy, it may be said that Calvinist Orthodoxy created their version of Pietism. Calvinist/Reform piety develops not in opposition to the Scholastic tradition but in response to it, and the theological necessity created by Calvinist doxa.

The Calvinists, like the Lutherans before them, establish their Orthodoxy through Synods. Calvinist theology took longer to develop than Lutheran theology, and Reform theology differs considerably from the Lutheran theology. The highpoint of Reform debate occurs at the Synod of Dort in 1618. The theological settlement focused on five key theological propositions. Underlying the five points of Calvinism are two central theological propositions, the first is concerned with God, the second with mankind. For the Calvinist, God is primarily the sovereign of the universe. Man is completely

dependent upon the will of God and is currently in a fallen state. Issues of salvation and damnation are related to these two starting points for the Calvinist.

Man’s fallen state is understood through the doctrine of Total Depravity. Total Depravity has its roots in an extreme Augustinian understanding that due to Original Sin man is completely and totally depraved. Man in his fallen state is at enmity with God. The condition of man is not just that he lacks a connection with God but willfully chooses to go against God’s wishes for man. As such man deserves eternal separation from God. This separation is known as Hell. From the Calvinist perspective hell is always justified because of man’s sin, and without God’s grace all would rightfully end up in hell.

Luckily for the Calvinist, Christ died to save some from their fate. This group is commonly known as the Elect. The rest of humanity is commonly called the Reprobate. The Elect are a chosen remnant taken out of the whole. Not all Christians are elect, and Calvin himself believed that most of Geneva during his leadership consisted of the reprobate. While Catholic, Lutherans, and Eastern Orthodox may point to verses like John 3:16\textsuperscript{84} as an example of Christ’s sacrificial atonement for all, Calvinists reject this idea. For Calvinists, one theological doctrine must be held without exception, the idea that God is sovereign. For God’s sovereignty to be actual, God must know all and be able to control all. This directly applies to the notion of the limited atonement. The reason is simple, if God truly knows all, why would Christ die and atone for the sins of the Reprobate, who by their very nature will reject Christ’s sacrifice. For the Calvinist,

\textsuperscript{84} For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life
God in all his sovereignty cannot do that. The logical outcome is that Christ’s atonement on the cross does not extend to the Reprobate, only the Elect.

The doctrine of predestination is a logical consequence of the doctrine of limited atonement. For God to know who the Elect are and Reprobate are, God simply decides ahead of time. Christ died solely for the Elect, and God predestined the Elect. An in-house Calvinist debate occurs over the doctrine of “Double Predestination.” According to double predestination, God also predestined the Reprobate to Hell, just as God predestined the elect for heaven. In either case the doctrine of predestination continues to grow and change throughout the centuries for those of the Reformed Calvinist traditions.

The difficulty for the Calvinist is their inability to know if they are the Elect or the Reprobate. This uncertainty leads some, like Max Weber, to propose his interpretation of Calvinism. Calvinism is the first example of worldly asceticism that Weber gives in his Protestant Ethic, as Weber contends that Calvinism emerged in the most developed countries and had the most rational treatment of theology. Weber likewise proposes that a central tenet to Calvinism is the sole interest in God. Weber maintains that for the Calvinist “God does not exist for men, but men for the sake of God. All creation, including of course the fact, as it undoubtedly was for Calvin, that only a small proportion of men are chosen for eternal grace, can have any meaning only as means to the glory and majesty of God.”

As a result Weber points out a dilemma for the Calvinist. Man must remain simultaneously humble before God, yet preserve the notion that they are chosen. Of

course the lack of certainty of one’s own status before the Almighty creates an uneasy feeling. This lack of certainly for one’s own salvation is only amplified in the salvation of their neighbor, spouse, or children. Central to Weber’s critique of Calvinism is that it produces an intense sense of inner loneliness, as devotional life is reduced to the individual rather than the corporate body known as a church.

While often criticized, Weber’s view of dread found at the heart of devout Calvinists has merit. The numerous Calvinist tracts written on the same subject can attest to that. Equally revealing is Weber’s view of Pietism. Pietism increased “the need of the Reformed ‘saints’ to prove themselves with a view to the life hereafter, the directing of religious need to an inward emotional feeling in the present.”

Reform Pietists develop the supremacy of the emotional component of religion as a balm for the pain and isolation inherent in the Calvinist notions of predestination. Assurance is found, not in theological tests, but in a personal accounting of God’s grace in the lives of the seemingly redeemed individuals.

Paul Tillich supports this idea as well. For Tillich it is not a wholesale rejection of the Protestant Orthodox theological system that should identify one as a Pietist. Specifically Tillich points out the divergent beliefs on the theology of the unregenerate or “theologict irregenetorium.” This dogma concerns the notion of being born again. The prevailing orthodoxy maintains a belief that theology is a rational science, therefore all issues pertaining to theology can be understood. As such, it would be rational to write a theology addressing whether one was reborn or not. According to Tillich, Pietism’s

86 Max Weber, The Protestant Ethic and the “Spirit” of Capitalism, 94.
response to this dogma is to say “No, that's impossible; you must be reborn with respect to everything in which you participate, in all that you talk about; you can be a theologian only if you have the experience of regeneration.” 87 Yet for the Orthodoxy there is no assurance of regeneration, as an emotional experience may not be real rebirth. Rather the process of regeneration is one of accepting guidance from the Holy Spirit, the “moment” of rebirth is not a single moment rather a long conscious acceptance of the will of God. The tales of conversion and rebirth are central to Pietists. Many of the Pietist theologians we are addressing in the work have this conversion experience which assures them of their regeneration, but others do not. For Tillich a key difference between the Orthodox and the Pietist is how theology is interpreted and shaped by experience.

Interestingly, due to the strict devotion of Calvinists and their working for salvation, as understood by Weber and Tillich, some Lutheran critics of Pietism believed that Pietism is “nothing more than an attempted ‘Calvinizing’ of the Lutheran Church by the introduction of a spirit of monkish piety.” 88 Then again many of these same Lutherans believed that Melanchthon was doing the same thing. Furthermore this particular Lutheran critique fails to see the extension of Pietism into Calvinist churches as well. Many examples could be given, such as Jean de Taffin, 89 William Tellinck and his


88 Arthur Wilford Nagler, Pietism and Methodism: or the Significance of German Pietism in the Origin and Early Development of Methodism (Nashville: M.E. Church, South, 1918), 13.

89 1529-1602 Reform advocate of piety in Antwerp, Metz, Heidelberg, and Amsterdam. He maintained that man’s true end is a state of bliss found in the resurrection. To have this one must know they are a child of God by looking at the outward and inward signs.
brothers,\textsuperscript{90} and of course Jadocus von Lodensteyn,\textsuperscript{91} but due to the scope of this work and the limited impact these Reformed Pietists had upon our three nineteenth-century scholars, it is best to limit our discussion of them.

We also have an extensive autobiographical tradition from the Reform Dutch Pietists as well as other Reformed Pietists. Fred Van Lieburg, in his work \textit{Living for God, Eighteenth-century Dutch Pietist Autobiography}, illustrates the role conversion experience had upon the Pietists in the Low Countries. Van Lieburg demonstrates the interconnection of Pietistic thought as the use of autobiographies was taken from English Puritans and demonstrated how experience in general, and experience of conversion specifically, separated the Dutch Pietist from their Calvinist neighbors. The key difference became the mode in which the “Precisionists” live out their experiential theology. Often this resulted in isolation from the larger community.

Unlike the Lutheran Pietists, who often rejected the notion of theological formation of Protestant scholasticism, many Reform Pietists were Pietists as an attempt to provide certainty of their status as the Elect. As we read in the autobiographies of these Pietists, the notion of a conversion experience was central to their claim of being chosen. This assertion is further supported by the pious lives they live now that they are elect. Appeasing the existential angst becomes the catalyst for Reform Pietism. Reform Pietists

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{90} The Dutch brothers were Amesius, and Eewout. William (1579-1629) maintained that faith was not simply assent but must also include reform of one’s own personal life. He contributed to the doctrine of the two states, natural man and spiritual man. Self-Denial is central to overcoming the natural man. Tellinck was also one of the first Protestants to emphasis mission work

\textsuperscript{91} van Lodensteyn (1620-1677), a Dutch hymnographer and preacher. He held conventicles for mature Christian students. Most of his work revolves around the idea of repentance, and like Tellinck he too emphasized missions, and the doctrine of two states.
\end{flushright}
are not opposed to the formation of doctrine to the same extent as their Lutheran counterpart; they simply view it as a waste of time, given the urgency necessitated by the doctrine of Predestination.

**Anglican Pietism, Despite Orthodoxy and in Opposition to Rationalism.**

"We should not forget that Puritanism embraced a world of opposites."\(^{92}\)

— Max Weber

The formation of Anglican Pietism differs from the Lutheran and Reform. The key difference between the English model and what is found on the continent is the central place of theological formation. While the Lutheran and Reform Pietists spent little time emphasizing doctrine, this appears to be one of the key contributions of Pietists in England. There are two major strands of English Pietists. The first are commonly known as Puritans, and the second emerges from Wesley’s synthesis of Puritanism with Zinzendorf’s brand of Pietism. We will address Wesley in greater detail in chapter two. English Pietists of both types are products of the time and historical machinations in England.

Before we can proceed further with English Pietism, an issue must be addressed. A debate among scholars exists as to the place of English Pietists. Much of the debate is a byproduct of the ambiguous and contentious definitions of Pietism in general. Like so many ideological and practical movements, the lines of who should be included and excluded are difficult to discern. As such, there is a contingent who protest the inclusion of Puritans as a subsect of the Pietist movement happening on the continent.

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Historically there are two main objections to including Puritans as the English version of Pietism. The first is an outgrowth of the older understanding of Pietism, the view put forth by nineteenth-century theologian Albrecht Ritschl. Ritschl maintains a more negative and formulaic view of Pietism. For these influential theologians, Pietism was too mystical, subjective, emotional, and individualistic. Furthermore, for Ritschl, there is a clear beginning of Pietism. Pietism emerged in Frankfurt during the late seventeenth century. Central to this older view of Pietism is Philipp Jakob Spener. The narrowest definitions of Pietism exclude any movements that were not products of Spener’s collegia pietatis. Since Puritanism existed well before Spener, Puritanism is a separate movement.

The second objection to Pietism including Puritans is confessional or theological, and is a consequence of the first objection. If the definition of Pietism is extremely narrow and only includes the inheritors of Spener, then Pietism should be a specifically Lutheran concern. As will be evidenced later in this chapter and throughout the next chapter, the notion that Pietism is restricted to Lutheranism is not only outdated but lacks historical evidence. Zinzendorf was Lutheran, but infused Pietism with Protestant Refugees becoming the Moravian church, which at best is nominally Lutheran and in actuality is a separate denomination. Furthermore Wesley’s formative theological training came under a Moravian in Georgia and London, and Methodists are clearly inheritors of Spener but are also in no way Lutheran. Wesley borrowed much of his theological outlook from Puritans such as William Perkins. We also have the plethora of Reformed Dutch Pietists, which very few scholars are willing to exclude from Pietism.
As such the objection to including Puritanism from Pietism simply because it is not Lutheran is nonsensical.

Essential to this project, and reason, is the understanding that Pietism is a larger Protestant wide phenomena. Nearly every claim used in the definitions of Pietism are the same claims we see in definitions of Puritanism. J. I. Packer claims, “spiritual revival was central to what the Puritans professed to be seeking.”93 This spiritual renewal is best characterized as an emphasis on experiential Christianity, as maintained by historians Richard F. Lovelace, Leland Ryken, and Charles Hambrick-Stowe.

Lovelace maintains “that throughout most of its history English Puritanism can best be understood by examining its predominating stress on Christian experience.”94 Ryken claims “The practical bent of the Puritans led them to emphasize the experiential nature of the Christian faith.”95 Hambrick-Stowe defines the Puritans as “a devotional movement, rooted in religious experience.”96 For these scholars and Geoffrey Nuttall, Puritanism is “a movement towards immediacy in relation to God.”97 This is identical to the definitions of experiential medieval mystics and Pietists in general. Stoeffler tells us

95 Leland Ryken, Worldly Saints: The Puritans as They Really Were (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986), 120.
“the fact is that essential differences between continental Pietism and what we have called Pietistic Puritanism cannot be established because they are non-existent.”

John Spurr maintains that the essence of Puritanism is found in the individual’s conviction of their own salvation. For Spurr this includes not only notions of election but also the formation of a new church, one based upon how Puritans envision the church of the New Testament, and the formation of a new society around that church. Kelly M. Kapic and Randall C. Gleason also point out that there is not one thing that we can call Puritans. The Puritans encompassed many theological differences including extreme and moderate Calvinists, as well as Armenians. Also numbered among the Puritans were those devoted to the Church of England as well as Separatists, Baptists, Presbyterians, and Independents. Rather than organizational or even theological, Puritanism, like Pietism, is identified as a piety movement that emphasizes individual salvation through experience rather than scholastic understanding or rationalism.

Since we have significant justification to count the Puritans as the Pietists, their origin and confrontation with the Anglican Church should be addressed. The Puritans emerged from the multiple reformations that England underwent following their break with Rome under Henry VIII. Henry’s Reformation was not theological but practical. Following the scholarship of Eamon Duffy, it is a challenge to hold that the English Reformation under Henry was one that the people inherently wanted. Duffy points out


that “the Henrician religious revolution had been preceded by a vigorous campaign against heresy, in both its familiar Lollard and its newer Lutheran forms.”

Duffy contends that “In the liturgy and in the sacramental celebrations which were its central moments, medieval people found the key to the meaning and purpose of their lives.”

Unlike the disconnect that existed in Germany between the people and their priests, the status quo of the sacred was something the English supported. As a result Henry did very little to change the way church was experienced for the masses of people.

Only under Edward did England really become Protestant and not simply schismatic. Following Mary and Elizabeth’s reign, England vacillated once again from Catholic to nominal Protestant, especially considering the radical shift that occurred under Edward’s reign. During and following Elizabeth’s reform of the Church, theological debate was largely minimized, especially when considering what was taking place on the Continent. England failed to provide state support for a coherent theological leader like a Luther, Zwingli, Bucer, or Calvin. The Puritans believed that England failed to truly reform itself, and called for yet another reformation to complete the process begun with Henry. English Christianity was Protestant, but emphasized commonality and conformity.

This is where the Puritans found their point of departure. For those English experiential Protestants, England was lukewarm, neither hot nor cold. England did not

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102 John Knox may provide some of the theological foundations for England, but was primarily in Scotland.
devoutly follow Rome and all it took from Canterbury was a tepid and confused
Christianity. Puritans needed not only to express their piety in experiential terms but also
in theological terms that separated them from what they perceived to be nominal
Protestant Christians that surrounded them in England. The central critique of the
Puritans was against the overly rational and subdued attempts of the established church.
The Church of England was ruled by Christian Rationalists and not the scholastic
theologians that dominated Germany, the Low Countries and Scandinavia. The void in
both piety and systematic theology were taken up by the Puritans as the most efficient
way to combat the rationalist establishment clergy.

Two tenets are found within Puritan theology. First is the supremacy of the Bible
as the source of authority. Unlike the Lutheran counterpart, England still maintained a
modified hierarchy borrowed from Rome; therefore tradition still held a place of value
for the Anglican Church. The Puritans echo the rejection of this hierarchical system and
chose to adopt the theological language necessary for the Lutheran and Reform churches.
Puritans also borrow heavily upon the Calvinist doctrines connected to predestination.
For the Anglican, predestination gives purpose to life and structures it accordingly. What
separates the Puritan is how predestination is understood, not merely as a theological
truth, but also an experiential truth. The centrality of experience shapes the theology to a
point where a difference of degree may indeed be a difference in kind.

What may be an interesting commonality for all three of our forms of early
Pietism is the common foe they faced with their literature. In reading Perkins, Arndt,
Spener and other foundational Pietists, we find two simultaneous critiques. The first as
we may expect is directed against their fellow Protestants who they view as lacking faith,
piety, and an experience of God. The second is a critique of Rome. For these early Pietists, the break with Rome was still fresh and there was a fear that the bridges that they burned to separate from Rome may be rebuilt. There was a fear that the waters of Tiber can still be crossed. In many cases their critiques against Rome were simultaneously a veiled critique of their perceptions of non-Pietist Protestant communities. Often Roman practices were exaggerated and mischaracterized, not only because of a lack of familiarity but also because of a desire to spur on greater Reformation.

**Non-Confessional differences in Pietism.**

“Institutionalization is not, however, an irreversible process, despite the fact that institutions, once formed, have a tendency to persist.”

— Peter L. Berger & Thomas Luckmann

With such different causes for the rise of Pietism, there are also many different types of Pietists irrespective of confessional ties. It is clear that not every Pietist would hold the same theological or practical differences. Andrew Landale Drummond defined four types of Pietists, each with a point of conflict with their orthodox counterparts. What is central to all of these types of Pietists was their belief that the church needed further reform. The first group believed that the righteous minority would maintain the church and try to grow their numbers within the larger church. The second group believed that the established church was too far gone, but remained due to social pressures, often meeting for additional studies and pietistic confraternities. The third

group separated themselves from the official churches altogether. The final group were the extremes, whom Drummond defines as mystics and heretics.

Other scholars like Dale Brown maintain that regardless of which extremity we find within Pietist camps, there exists a central theological tenet that cuts through the social and ideological tensions. Brown identifies the Pietist theology as a “love theology.”\textsuperscript{104} While not rejecting the notion of the wrath of God, the Pietists stress the love of God and their response. In doing so, theologically the Pietists lean more towards universal Restoration, Spiritualism, emphasizing a mystical inner world, rejection of creeds, communalism, celibacy, and an emphasis on the millennial kingdom. In each of these cases the subjective experience of the individual trumps the rationalism of the whole or established orthodoxy.

John Dillenberger and Claude Welch view the conflict between the Pietists and their orthodox counterparts as combining practical and theological differences. Central to both types of concerns is the role of experiences. The role of experiences, along with the supremacy of the Bible, is the key conflict between orthodox Calvinists and the Puritans in England. Most Calvinists and Anglicans would agree that God is sovereign and contained in the sovereignty of God is the role of the Bible as authoritative and that salvation is for the Elect. What separates the Puritans is how they interpret these theological notions. The Puritan, far more than the Calvinist, rejects the notion of multiple sources of authority, including ecclesial hierarchy and tradition. Oddly enough, Dillenberger and Welch illustrate that this Biblicism lends itself to an insistence that they

“were returning to the church in its original state.”

This claim simultaneously embraces the value of tradition while rejecting all tradition that has followed from the point where they believe something went wrong. Potentially it is this conflict that would lead Wesley in England and the Pietists on the continent to maintain a conservative status quo while greatly influencing the social order.

With such a wide swath of types of Pietists, one may wonder at this point ‘What excludes mystically inclined Catholics or Orthodox from being included into this definition of Pietism?’ After all, we see a similar movement in Catholic France with Jansenism. This is a fair question, and it would be too broad to simply maintain that Pietism is a Protestant phenomenon, since we see many similarities with Catholic mystics and Hesychaism in the Eastern Orthodox. There remains a clear difference between what is found within the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Churches and what is found within Protestantism. The difference is the ecclesia and the role of the church in interpreting and fostering this movement.

In many ways the difference is directional and confrontational. For the Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics, the Church is the authority and can sanction, verify, and promote certain forms of piety, people, and practices. This authority is largely lost within Protestantism. While Lutheran, Reform, and Anglican traditions have an ecclesial hierarchy, the emphasis on Sola Scriptura eradicated the claims of authority for these


ecclesial bodies. As such, Pietism, including Puritanism, emphasizes the Bible as the authority rather than the Church as the authority. There exists within all three strands of Christianity the impulse toward experience. Protestantism diverges from the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox because the Protestants abandoned the church as a check on this experience. While sharing a history, due to theological concerns, the history is appealed to only as inspiration rather than supremacy.

The movement is confrontational as well because of this same shift in the fount of authority. While both the Bible and tradition can be interpreted in a number of ways, tradition for the Orthodox and Catholics is interpreted by the churches hierarchies. Inherent to this mode of interpretation, change in theology or practice is generally slow and often reactionary. The Bible, while largely static, is used to support the ecclesia. For Protestants, the Bible is used to challenge the ecclesia. Tradition is subjected to interpretation of the Bible, and the source for interpretation is found in the individual rather than the Church as a corporate body. While new traditional understandings of the Bible are formed and formulated, many of these new modes of interpretation are only in their infancy at the times of the synods of Westminster and Dort and the Augsburg confession.

In many ways the essential difference between Protestant piety and Catholic and Orthodox piety is the place of the church in the individual’s salvation. Catholics have maintained for centuries that “there is no salvation outside of the church.”107 a phrase

107 William Oddie, Pope Francis is under attack for saying that outside the Church there is no salvation: it’s a “poke in the eye” says one Presbyterian. Here is why he’s wrong June 3, 2013.
likely first used by Cyprian of Carthage in the third century. The Orthodox have a similar phrase, that “we are saved together but damned alone.”¹⁰⁸ Both phrases have at their heart the same thing, that salvation is a corporate process including the church as a whole and its member therein. Individually and outside of the church there is no salvation because you are alone and outside of the body of Christ. For many Protestants, especially Calvinists, salvation becomes an individual affair. Personal piety, as well as being elect, is the means of salvation. One may never be sure of their own salvation and they are equally unsure of the salvation of anyone else. While Orthodox and Catholic piety are similar in many respects to Protestant Pietism, this fundamental idea of salvation as it relates to the Church and the individual creates a movement that is fundamentally different.

With so many types of Pietism, a representative sample seems necessary. Context and examples of the development of Pietism from its relative inception to the nineteenth century will comprise chapters two, three, and four. This brief look at the theological and institutional foundations of Pietism is not only pertinent but indispensable. Six key representatives are addressed in these chapters, William Perkins, Johann Arndt, Philip Jakob Spener, August Hermann Francke, Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, and John Wesley. Each of the six representative men, for in this case we are looking at men,

developed or advanced their own notions of piety and Protestant devotion that even a cursory look at Pietism would be remiss to omit.

These six men contribute to my definition of Pietism with the traits of experiential revivalism, antipathy towards Christian culture, reworking the world, mysticism, and a commitment to personal relationship with God as the expression of the Christian life. While all of these traits are common to one degree or another with all Pietists, these individuals express some of these singular traits to a greater degree than others. Over the next three chapters the foundational, institutional, and denominational expressions of Pietism develop through the life and work of William Perkins, Johann Arndt, Philip Jakob Spener, August Hermann Francke, Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, and John Wesley. Each of these men bequeathed some element of the Pietisms that Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer would live in and react to in the nineteenth century.
CHAPTER 2

FOUNDATIONAL PIETISM: PERKINS, ARNDT, AND SPENER

"The reformer is not usually welcome to the representatives of the status quo, and the early Pietists meant to be reformers." – F. Ernst Stoeffler

Early Pietists viewed themselves as a necessary corrective. Protestantism in all its mainline confessional forms was eager to prove itself the valid expression of Christianity. The result was an explosion in theology with little room left for mysticism. Any appeal to mystical encounters with Christ as the source of authority smacked of the Radical Reformation. Still many who remained within the newly formed magisterial confessions sought to temper reason and scholasticism with practical experiences of the divine, building upon the Medieval Catholic mystics rather than debating the finer points of theology. Among the choir of voices three Pietist theologians emerged from the pack in the sixteenth and seventeenth century, William Perkins, Johann Arndt, and Philip Jakob Spener. Their expressions of Protestantism lay the foundations for later expressions of Pietism in its institutional forms.

“Faith is that alone instrument created in the heart by the holy ghost, whereby a sinner lays hold of Christ his righteousness, and applied the same unto himself.”

William Perkins

The life and work of William Perkins is inexorably tied to Puritanism during the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Perkins was born the first year of her reign and died a year before Elizabeth. Scholars have described him as “the principal architect of Elizabethan Puritanism,” “the Puritan theologian of Tudor times,” “the most important Puritan writer,” “the prince of Puritan theologians,” and “the father of Puritanism.” In a very short forty-four years Perkins shaped English piety in ways that no one else could.

Perkins was born in 1558 in Marston Jabbett in the parish of Bulkington, Warwickshire. His parents Thomas and Hanna had some financial resources available to them, enough that William enrolled as a pensioner of Christ’s College, Cambridge at the age of nineteen in 1577. Pensioners paid for common expenses of the college which required considerable financial contributions by the Perkins family. Little else is known of Perkin’s family background or his youth. We can assume through the choice of school that William Perkins grew up in a family that was pious and Protestant, but this is just supposition.

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2 William Perkins, A Reformed Catholic: or, A declaration shewing how near we may come to the present Church of Rome in sundry points of religion: and wherein we must forever depart from them with an advertisement to all favorers of the Roman religion, shewing that the said religion is against the Catholic principles and grounds of the catechism http://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A09453.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext, 62.
Four years after beginning his studies Perkins received his BA, and his master’s degree three years after that in 1584. A promising student, it was said of him that, “Mr. Perkins had a surprising talent for reading books. He pursued them so speedily, that he appeared to read nothing; yet so accurately, that he seemed to read all.”

Perkin’s time at Cambridge was not without its difficulties. Early biographies point out that he wrote all his works with his left hand, being lame of the right. In addition to this physical deformity Perkins also took advantage of his freedom from parental oversight to indulge in immorality. Very early Perkins supplemented his studies with a desire to understand “natural magic,” astrology, and witchcraft. He also took to strong drink, public drunkenness, and profane speech. Additionally there is the possibility that Perkins fathered a child out of wedlock during this period. There is some reason to challenge these claims. First it is rather common for Pietist biographies to exaggerate the depravity of the pre-converted, in order to illustrate the power of the conversion experience. It is likely that some of these claims are simply exaggerations, but have some basis in fact. Furthermore Perkins had many detractors in England during and after his life and some of these claims could be made by critics to deter his followers.

Whether or not the story is true, it is clear that Perkins had a religious awakening sometime between 1581 and 1584. The turning point occurred when he heard a woman say to her child, “hold your tongue, or I will give you to drunken Perkins yonder.” This idle threat made to a child served as a wakeup call, and the impetus for Perkin’s

conversion. Upon receiving his master’s degree in 1584, Perkins was ordained and immediately began preaching.

The first stop in his career was the local jail. It was here at the Cambridge jail that reports of his eloquence and power as a preacher emerged. It was said that Perkins could pronounce the word damn with such an emphasis as it left a doleful echo in the ears of those present for a good while after. His preaching must have impressed as the next year in 1585 Perkins became the rector of St. Andrew’s Church in Cambridge, a post he would hold until his death.

The church was located right across from Christ’s College where Perkins retained one of a dozen fellowships upon completion of his Masters. Perkins was certainly the college’s most distinguished fellow. For the next decade Perkins split his responsibilities teaching at the University and preaching at the Church. These two tasks were interrelated and Perkins was a draw to both institutions. Perkins prized pupil, William Ames, evaluated his preaching and teaching stating, “he instructed them soundly in the truth, stirred them up effectually to seek after godliness, made them fit for the kingdom of God.” It is really in his preaching where Perkins had his greatest impact. Perkins elevated the role of the preacher in England during this time. For many parishes in England preaching was neglected. Perkins recognized this failing and took it upon himself both as a preacher and a teacher to prioritize preaching in England.

\[\text{References:}\]

It was also as a preacher that Perkins found himself under suspicion. Perkins preached a sermon on January 13, 1587 where he denounced many common practices found in the Church of England such as kneeling to receive communion, and facing the cross during this time. Most of these critiques allied Perkins with the more extreme elements of the Church and this necessitated an immediate response. He along with others was apprehended, and carried before the star-chamber. Once before the tribunal Perkins backtracked many of his statements, Perkins always viewed himself as a loyal son of the Church. To prove this point Perkins offered some “clarifications” on his previous statements. In these Perkins pointed out that he was not opposed to kneeling as he implied in the sermon. Perkins added that he was opposed to many other practices of the church at this time, including the practice where priests self-administered communion. Perkins was ultimately released since he was not a separatist, though he opposed Elizabeth’s desire for a uniform church.

Perkins lost his fellowship at Christ’s College eight years later. Not due to any controversy, rather because he chose to marry. The rigors of a fellow excluded the possibility of marriage. The widow Timothye Cradocke of Grantchester was of more value for Perkins than his position at the school. The two wed on July 2, 1595. Over the next seven years Timothye bore William seven children. Three did not survive infancy.

William Perkins was never a healthy man. In addition to his malformed right hand he also suffered from kidney stones. This developed into renal colic by 1602. This form of colic is generally described as rather painful, and often persistent. While upon his death bed Perkins was accompanied by a friend who was praying for the mitigation of his pains, Perkins then cried out “hold, hold! Do not pray so; but pray the Lord to give me
faith and patience, and then let him lay on me what he pleases.”\

Perkins died on October 22, 1602, at the age of 44. His funeral was widely attended, and the expenses paid for by St. Andrews. John Montague preached a sermon titled “Moses my servant is dead.”

In addition to his four surviving children and his wife, Perkins left behind a large production of books. Nearly fifty works are attributed to Perkins, many of which are commentaries on books of the Bible. Three works stand out above the rest, each pointing to one of his primary concerns. The first work is entitled *A Reformed Catholic*, not surprisingly this work is directed against Catholics. The second work is *A Golden Chain*. In this work Perkins clarifies his Calvinist theology against other forms of Protestantism and Catholicism. Finally in the *Art of Prophesying*, Perkins expounds on the role of the preacher and the topics of sermons.

Shortly before his fortieth birthday, Perkins penned a critique against the Catholic Church. This critique, published in 1597, is titled *A Reformed Catholic or, A declaration shewing how near we may come to the present Church of Rome in sundry points of religion: and wherein we must forever depart from them with an advertisement to all favorers of the Roman religion, shewing that the said religion is against the Catholic principles and grounds of the catechism*. Having already developed most of his theology Perkins was confronted by what he believed as too much influence that Roman Catholic beliefs still held in England. Duffy sees within Perkins the challenges of the Reformations in England.

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6 Benjamin Brook, *Lives of the Puritans volume 2*, 133.
“William Perkins thought that most of the common people were papist at heart, given to saying that ‘it was a good world, when the old religion was, because all things were cheap,’ that ‘a man eats his maker in the Sacrament’, that they might sear by Our Lad ‘because she is gone out of the country,’ that they believed in Christ ‘ever since they could remember.’ Yet he also reported the common view that ‘it is saver to doe in religion as most doe.’ In that paradox lies the key to understanding the Reformation in the English parishes.”

Perkins desired to point out the areas where the Calvinist differs from Rome, believing that Rome is corrupted and Perkins and those who follow the Reformation are the true Catholics. Perkins hoped that by illustrating these differences Rome will correct itself. In actuality this is more a polemic than a pastoral letter. This is made clear when he says of Rome “they are the ministers of Christ, but THEY SERVE ANTICHRIST. Again, the beast spoken of in the Apocalypse, to which a mouth is given to speak blasphemies, and to make war with the Saints of God, is now gotten into Peter’s chair, as a lion prepared to his prey.” In addition to calling Rome the antichrist, unification is as impossible as the union of light and darkness.

Specifically Perkins addressed a dozen or so issues where he maintains Rome erred, including free will, original sin, issues concerning salvation, traditions, sacraments, and the place of the saints. In each of these Perkins illustrates places of agreement, as


well as disagreement. Concerning the doctrine of Original Sin, Perkins upholds the
doctrine but opposes the efficacy of the sacrament of baptism in removing many of the
consequences of original sin. As such Perkins believes that “The Roman Catholic
Church had developed an exaggerated concept of the role of man's will in salvation.”\(^9\) In
the issues concerning salvation, we see the difficulty Perkins has in reconciling his beliefs
with Rome.

The issue of faith and its relation to salvation causes great difficulty for Perkins.
He concedes that “both Papists and Protestants agree, that a sinner is justified by faith.”\(^10\)
But Perkins does not want to concede that the Papist has a saving faith. Holding that the
faith for the Roman only provides a notion of hope in salvation, and not a real faith in
their own salvation.\(^11\) Perkins maintains that the Protestant has saving faith, with the
caveat that no one can truly know if they are the Elect. As a result, it appears that the
Calvinist has an equal degree of hope in their faith, as does the Papist. Yet Perkins is not
willing to concede this point, essentially arguing that the Catholic is justified by their
document, but this doctrine is wrong, primarily because it is Catholic. The Protestant,
assuming they are the right kind of Protestant, is justified by their doctrine being correct,
namely because it is not Catholic. It is here that the polemic falls apart.

Moving onto traditions, Perkins defines these as doctrines derived from things
other than the Bible. Surprisingly he concedes that the Bible is a product of tradition, at

least in its early forms. The difference is that scriptural tradition is directly delivered by God unlike other traditions, which must be subordinated. Largely Perkins disdains apostolic and ecclesiastical traditions, believing they are not profitable for salvation. Perkins singles two traditions out for his disapproval, the intercession of saints and sacraments as means of salvation. Perkins simply renounces the efficacy of saint’s intercession, little reason is given, save the fact it is held to by Catholics. Perkins then challenges the physical nature of sacraments. Perkins contends that the sacraments are voluntary instruments, just as the minister who dispenses them. Ultimately the sacraments cannot be signs of God’s grace because salvation is unknown, if someone is not the Elect then the sacrament merits them nothing.

Reflexively Perkins believes that Rome is simply wrong, not through any profound reasoning other than they are not Calvinists. The different theological system held by Rome, while sharing many things in common, is negated because of its origin, because that origin is tainted with traditions rejected by Protestants in general.

In 1591 Perkins wrote what many, including Stoeffler, believe was his major work, *A Golden Chain*. In this work Perkins outlines the basic Calvinist beliefs concerning salvation. Indeed the chain is the theological assumptions of Puritan Calvinists at the time. The chain consists of four or five links, depending on how one counts them. First is either predestination or man’s calling, the two are in fact one and the same. From here the three remaining steps are justification, sanctification, and glorification. Essential to this entire discussion is the doctrine of double predestination. The work begins with Perkins’ definition of theology being the principle science. In addition to being the principle science, theology is defined as “the science of living
blessedly forever.”12 The source of this theology is found only within the Calvinist interpretation of scripture and not in any traditions that predate the Reformation.

Only the tradition of Calvin’s theology is upheld, including the supreme theological notion of God’s sovereignty. Echoing Calvin, Perkins clearly states “God controls all things for the good of His people. God is sovereign, therefore, His control is absolute. God is immutable; therefore, His will is certain. God is mighty; therefore, His power is limitless. God is most wise; therefore, His plan is perfect. God is incomprehensible; therefore, His providence is inscrutable.”13

Before man can be called, Perkins lays out what man is being called out of. While initially man was created in a state of innocence, this was lost. Innocence has two parts, first is wisdom and second is will. Both were perfect until the fall, where sin robs man of the perfect knowledge of God and corrupts the will, making man an enemy of God. Fallen man must be called by God. This calling is the doctrine of Predestination. But what and who is predestined is not universally agreed upon. Perkins posits there are four categories of belief concerning predestination. The first of the options are held by Pelagians. According to Perkins, the Pelagian, both old and new, believe that man chooses to be with God or not. It is the individual man or woman who chooses to be predestined or rejects God. Free will, and a completely free will, is the essential belief of the Pelagians, and God only foresees the choices of men.


The Lutheran view is the second option. Perkins likens the Lutheran belief to the Pelagian, both are dependent on free will and God’s foreknowledge determining who will be saved and who is not. The difference is for the Lutheran view man’s will is not as free as it is for the Pelagian, and sin has a greater weight in preventing man. As such God chooses some as sinful man would reject God’s grace. An omniscient God knows who would accept grace if sin was not total and choose those to be saved.

The third category Perkins identifies are Catholics. Perkins refers to all Catholics as semi-Pelagian Papists. Perkins maintains that Catholics believe that some men can see God’s grace and choose to act meritoriously. Sin is not as encompassing as for the Lutheran but restricts more than the Pelagian. Obviously Perkins reject these three views. It may be of note that some Lutherans and Catholics would also reject Perkin’s depiction of their respective views as well.

Perkins holds a fourth view which he bases on a sovereign God wholly predetermining who is saved. Unlike the other three views which emphasize free will, Perkins, like Calvin, minimizes man’s involvement, instead supporting a belief that God simply chooses. Since man is in a state of sin, the logical conclusion for Perkins and Calvin is that man deserves nothing but damnation. God in his mercy choose some to save. God is free to choose who is saved and who is damned, and man has no choice in the matter and no reason to object.

Perkins, like the Calvinists at the Synod of Dort years later, maintains a doctrine known as double predestination. This notion is that God not only chooses who is saved but also who is damned, who is the reprobate. “Predestination hath two parts: Election and Reprobation … Election, is Gods decree, whereby of his own free-will, he hath
ordained certain men to salvation, to the praise of the glory of his grace.”14 The Reprobate equally serve the same function, giving glory to God but the manner in which they glorify God is by being justifiably eternally damned. This is also the justification for not only creation and the atonement, but also for the fall. The fall provides the justification and rationale for condemning the mass of humanity to hell. God is free to then do whatever God wants to do, which is provide the means of bringing God’s self the most glory.

Opposed to this doctrine at the time is the Dutch Calvinist Jacobus Arminius. Arminius, in response to Perkins’ work, maintained a notion of single predestination. God chose only the Elect but did not will the Reprobate. Arminius labeled Perkins as one of those who did “not fear to add to the Scriptures whatever they think proper, and are accustomed to attribute as much as possible to their own conceptions which they style natural ideas.”15 As far as who will win this debate, it really depends on where one looks. By the eighteenth-century England will largely hold Arminius’ position, and the Reformed Dutch will hold Perkins’.

It is unquestioned for both Perkins and Arminius that man begins as sinful and in need of regeneration. This is the purpose of the law. The law exposes sin, then the law expounds upon the flesh the effects of sin. Finally the law explains the concept of justice by announcing “eternal damnation for the least disobedience, without offering any hope


of pardon.” Of course not all men remain unregenerate, some are chosen and for those
the law is appeased by grace. “The covenant of grace, is that whereby God freely
promising Christ, his benefits, exacts again of man, that he would by faith receive Christ,
and repent of his sins.” Neither the Elect nor the Reprobate have any choice in the
matter but the law and gospel are the same, one to illustrate damnation and the other to
provide the means of salvation.

This brings us to the next link of the golden chain, namely justification. For those
lucky enough to be the Elect, they are made elect through the obedience of Christ and,
Christ’s obedience to suffer death on the cross. The law and the gospel provide the
avenue for faith and the accompanying repentance. Repentance is a work of grace,
arising of a godly sorrow, whereby a man turns from all his sins to God. One must
remember for Perkins this is not a work that merits salvation. Rather faith is simply the
means of justification, and justification consists of both the remission of sins and the
imputation of Christ’s righteousness. The sins are no longer counted, as Christ’s death
appeases God’s wrath. The regenerate are also counted as righteous, but not of their own
righteousness, rather they “are accounted just in the sight of God through Christ’s
righteousness.” Once again justification and faith have no meaning apart from Christ.

16 William Perkins, A Golden Chain or The Description of Theology, 148.
17 William Perkins, A Golden Chain or The Description of Theology, 149.
18 William Perkins, A Golden Chain or The Description of Theology, 179.
Faith is “a principal grace of God whereby man is engrafted into Christ and thereby becomes one with Christ and Christ one with him.”

Once man is justified, the process of sanctification begins. Sanctification has two parts, the first is mortification, where the power of sin is abated, and the second is vivification, where holiness in the elect is augmented and enlarged. Both of these parts result with the elect choosing and desiring what is holy rather than what is sinful.

Becoming holy is the process of sanctification. In addition to the work of the spirit within man, Perkins believed the answer was found in the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes become instructions for holy life.

One may expect to find the sacraments as the means of sanctification, but Perkins rejects this notion. The two remaining sacraments of baptism and Eucharist, for Perkins, are not the avenues for communing with God as the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox believe. Rather sacraments differ depending on the pre-determined status of an individual. Essentially the sacrament is only a sacrament for the Elect and it is not for the Reprobate. For the Elect “A Sacrament is that, whereby Christ and his saving graces, are by certain external rites, signified, exhibited, and sealed to a Christian man.” For the Reprobate receive only the sign, but not what the sign signifies, therefore they do not really receive a sacrament.

Perkins treatment of sign and signifier differs in many ways from conventional thinking. For example Susanne Langer contends that “to each sign there corresponds one

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definite item which is its object, the thing signified." \(^{21}\) Perkins holds that the sign signifies something different than what the individual may believe it actually signifies. This is not simply the case of a sign being interpreted, rather signs become symbols instead. Following Langer “the fundamental difference between signs and symbols is the difference of association, and consequently of their use by the third party to the meaning function, the subject; signs announce their object to him, whereas symbols lead him to conceive their objects.” \(^{22}\) While a sign is acted upon, the symbol is an instrument in thought. A sacrament is a sign for the Elect as it directly corresponds to the signifier, but for the Reprobate the same sacrament is only a symbol, a conception, and an incorrect one at that.

More important for Perkins is the added distinction of sacrament and sacrifice. Accordingly a sacrament is an act wherein God bestows grace, and a sacrifice is the faith and obedience of the Elect. The Reprobate may choose to sacrifice for God but they may never truly receive a sacrament.

This brings us to the fourth and final link in the golden chain of salvation, specifically, glorification. Upon this step the Elect is glorified, and spend eternity with God. “Those whom God hath predestinated by his absolute predestination, which cannot be lost, shall infallibly die in grace: but they which are predestinate, by that predestination which being according to present justice, may be lost by some mortal sin which follows, are not infallibly saved, but oftentimes such are condemned, and lose their


\(^{22}\) Langer, Susanne K. "The Logic of Signs and Symbols," 36.
The Elect, upon death and final judgement are proved to be elect and will share in this glory. They will live forever in a state of blessedness. Blessedness is defined as the condition whereby the elect enjoy fellowship with God. It is here that saints, that is the Elect, will fully be transformed into “the image of the Son of God.”

Perkins theology concerning salvation is in line with the theological developments of Calvinism. In fact many of his arguments are used to condemn Arminius at the Synod of Dort. Perkins theology keenly illustrates the difference between the Lutheran Pietists and the Anglican Pietists, specifically in their use of theology in the early days. The Lutherans Pietists rejected the theological system that was set up by the Lutheran Scholastics, and the Anglican Pietists, not having an adequately pious theological system in place were foundational in creating one, which not only emphasizes the Scholastic tendencies in the Reform tradition, but also promoted a mechanism for pious living.

The pious living emerges largely not out of the theological advancements but from the use of the pulpit. From here we should address Perkins’ writing concerning prophesying, that is preaching. “Prophesying was the Elizabethan term for penetrating preaching, preaching that expressed correct doctrine but also convicted of sin and gloried in Gods sovereign grace.” It is this revival of dynamic preaching that Stoeffler identifies as one of the hallmarks of Pietism. Preaching was also the thrust of Perkins’ mission. Following Perkins death in 1602, many of his works were collected and


published. In 1607 Perkins’ treatment of preaching was published under the title *The Art of Prophesying*. The work is described as a Puritan classic by many. With the Bible as the supreme authority, how one is to interpret it and preach is essential to the Puritan way of life.

Perkins proposes that prophesy consists of two parts. The first is obviously preaching itself. The second is public prayer. In many ways the second is assumed under the first, and the majority of the work concerns not prayer but preaching. Preaching itself consists of two parts as well. The first is the subject of the preaching the second is the style. Surprisingly for a work entitled *The Art of Prophesying*, the majority of the work treats the subject rather than the style of preaching. Preparation comes before preaching and takes precedence in the work.

Obviously the subject of preaching is the Bible. In many ways Perkins echoes Calvin’s concept of the Bible as a sacrament, in that scripture is an effective grace. The “sacramental Word” holds a stronger connection to the Catholic notion of sacrament than do the two remaining actual Protestant sacraments. As earlier discussed, Perkins believes that the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist, may actually not be sacraments if the recipient is the Reprobate. Scripture on the other hand is described as “its perfection, or purity, or its eternity.”

It remains so for all who hear it.

This naturally leads the reader to question which books count as scripture. The authority to determine what books are counted in the Christian canon is not the Church, since the Church is diminished. Perkins hold that “The church can bear witness to the

canon of Scripture, but it cannot inwardly persuade us of its authority.”27 Rather the Bible itself is the source of the authority for revealing which books are included and which are excluded. An odd imperative since the Bible is not a single work with a provided table of contents.

Regardless of the formation of the Biblical canon, Perkins maintains “The Scripture itself testifies to itself with the kind of testimony which is more certain than all human oaths.”28 The thrust of this argument is to provide two functional truths for Perkins. First, Puritans do not need the judgement of Rome to prescribe the canon. Second if one is the Elect, they, through hearing the Bible will intrinsically know which books should comprise the Biblical canon, since “The elect, having the Spirit of God, first of all discern the voice of Christ speaking in the Scriptures. Furthermore, they approve the voice which they discern.”29

This is important for Perkins as he needs a way to modify the existing Roman canon and bring it closer to the canon supported by Luther and Calvin. Accordingly Perkins discounts the Deutero-canon on the basis of four assumptions, many of which are false or simply ill informed. Perkins believes that the Apocrypha was not written by prophets, not written in Hebrew, the New Testament fails to appeal to these books, and they are contrary to the rest of the Bible. While these critiques are not historically or


29 William Perkins, The Art of Prophesying and the Calling of the Ministry, 18.
exegetically accurate they do echo the sentiments of Luther, Calvin, and many of the other Reformers.

Perkins actively excludes over a dozen books from the Bible, but surprisingly he does not automatically exclude all appeals to Church tradition and the Church Fathers in the use of interpretation. In sermon preparation, Perkins encouraged his readers to draw upon the Church Fathers as well as the Reformers if they could assist with their task. The fathers and tradition serve to safeguard against some heresies. When facing a resurgence of previously condemned beliefs, Perkins finds it acceptable and even effective to utilize Patristic writings and the Councils, stating “We do not need to look for any novel way of rejecting and refuting these heresies; the ancient ones found in the Councils and the Fathers are well-tested and still reliable.”

Still Perkins discards any appeal to these as authority if he believes they contradict his interpretation of the Bible.

Perkins rejects the Catholic mode of interpretation. According to Perkins “the Church of Rome believes that passages of Scripture have four senses: the literal, the allegorical, the topological and the anagogical.”

This is viewed as faulty and overly complex. Rather Perkins creates a new system of interpretation based upon the reading of a text. Verses are either plain or analogies. Similar statements are still found within modern Evangelicals who claim a “Strict Biblical literalism” similar to John Nelson


Darby’s appeal in the late nineteenth century. Darby, Dwight L. Moody, and others claim to “literally” interpret the Bible, inheriting the language from Perkins.

The question still remains, what is one to do with a passage that is cryptic? How should you read an analogy? Perkins spends quite a bit of time on this process since the natural sense of the statement is hidden. Rather than appealing to historical knowledge, the Church, or tradition to answer these questions, it is left to logic and reason. The problem is that logic and reason can be, and often are, skewed by one’s previous ideological conceptions. For example Perkins goes out of his way to promote Calvin’s notion of the Spiritual Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and discount the Lutheran, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox beliefs in the Real Presence.

In this example we see the failing of this sort of system of thought. Perkins uses his “logic” to disregard a clear statement like “This is my Body.” Rather than clear, this statement becomes a philosophical puzzle to be solved. In order to solve this puzzle Perkins takes other statements that are more obscure and prioritizes them. While he may appeal to tradition earlier, this is only as a sort of proof texting, rather than viewing anything else as an authority. The authority is Calvin and Perkins’ own interpretation rather than the Bible itself. As Perkins himself admits, the text provides room for interpretation. The rest of the first half of the work is really setting out a new tradition in interpretation. New doctrines are introduced with a new set of supporting evidence, in many ways echoing the Lutheran Scholastics and what the Calvinists produce at Dort shortly after Perkin’s death.

33 Moody will be treated in Chapter 13
The last third of the work focuses on the style one should preach with rather than the source of the sermon. Perkins’ style of preaching was rather simple by comparison to Calvin’s legal treatment of the Bible and the Protestant Scholastics on the continent. Thomas Fuller said of Perkins, “His sermons were not so plain but that the piously learned did admire them, nor so learned that the plain did understand them.”\(^{34}\) Style is important. In addition to being knowledgeable yet approachable, Perkins tells his readers they must be humble yet powerful.

Humility is the first step to delivering a good sermon. For Perkins this humility largely consists of letting the text speak rather than overly complicating what he believes should be clear to the audience. Also unlike the scholastics on the continent, the sermon is not the opportunity to expound on the preacher’s theological knowledge. The preacher should not speak in Greek, Latin, or specialized jargon that is over the head of the average hearer of the words delivered. For Perkins, “The Preaching of the Word is the testimony of God and the profession of the knowledge of Christ, not human skill.”\(^ {35}\)

Second, the sermon must deliver the power that Perkins believes scripture is. The preacher is encouraged to gesture with both the voice and the body to drive home the point. The voice must be loud enough for all to hear and vehement in tone.\(^ {36}\)


\(^{36}\) The voice ought to be loud enough for all to hear (Isa. 58:1; John 7:37; Acts 2:14). In the exposition of the doctrine in a sermon we ought to be more moderate, but in the exhortation more fervent and vehement. There should be a gravity about the gestures of the body which will in their own way grace the messenger of God. It is appropriate therefore, that the preacher keep the trunk of his body erect and still, while the other parts like the arm, the hand, the face and eyes may express and (as it were) speak the spiritual affections of his heart. Also speaks of the personal holiness of
to the gestures and tone, the minister must also not reveal their own infirmities. For Perkins, the minister still represents the whole church, therefore if they are sick or weak, it implies weakness for congregation. Ordinary people, according to Perkins, “do not distinguish between the ministry and the minister.”

Throughout the sermon the preacher is to remember the distinction between the law and the gospel and apply it appropriately. In order to do this, the minister must know their audience. Audiences consist of six types of people, not only believers and nonbelievers, but those who are simply ignorant and those who need to be humbled. As Perkins explained in the *Golden Chain*, humility is an essential step, the sinner’s will must be broken. Once the will is broken, God then causes faith little by little to spring and grow in the heart. The means of this is through the sermon. It is with the effective hearing of the Bible that faith is introduced and the knowledgeable come to saving knowledge. In addition to providing saving knowledge to the Elect, the minister must also provide an application from the sermon. The application can either be mental or practical. A practical application is always preferred.

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the minister, and grace they should possess. *The Art of Prophesying and the calling of the Ministry*, 72.


1 Those who are unbelievers and are both ignorant and unreachable
2 Those who are teachable, but ignorant
3 There are those who have knowledge, but have never been humbled
4 Those who have already been humbled
5 Those who already believe.
6 Those who have fallen back. Some may have partly departed from the state of grace, either in faith or in life-style.
Perkins offers one final point to the preacher. Knowing that the sermons are large and have many parts, it may tax the memory to remember all the points they wish to deliver. Many may choose the use of common memory aids, but Perkins urges the preachers to refrain from doing so. First he believes that the use of aids are likely to make the mind dull. In addition to this Perkins believes that the use of these aids may also allow for demonic influence, both in the mechanism and also in the reliance upon the aid rather than the Holy Spirit. Perkins concludes with the use of public prayer, as this is the second use of prophesying.

The Christian requires additional education. If the sermon is the only means of cultivating the Elect, they may fall short of a proper understanding of the Christian life and God. To this end Perkins produced a brief catechism in 1591, called *The Foundation of Christian Religion Gathered into Six Principles*. The purpose of the work is to instruct the ignorant on the basics of Christianity. The beginning of the catechism looks similar to Lutheran or Catholic Catechisms, including rehearsing of the Ten Commandments, the Lord’s Prayer and the Creed. The first three and last principles are wholly in line with others, including a belief in only one God, upholding Original Sin, believing that Christ’s death on the Cross provided a substitutionary atonement granting salvation, and confirming the resurrection of the death.

The intervening two principles are unique to a Calvinist perspective. They focus on the mechanism of salvation. Having a contrite heart is the first step, but this can only occur if one is elect. Hearing the gospel is also essential, but the sacraments aid in salvation as well. Unlike the other churches which hold the sacraments as the sole or primary mechanism of salvation, hearing the Bible is prioritized above the sacraments.
Furthermore there are only two sacraments, and as mentioned earlier they are only of benefit if one is elect.³⁹

One may naturally assume that Perkins, as The Puritan theologian of Tudor times, promoted an ascetic lifestyle, but this is not the case. Perkins believed that sound doctrine and a pious life were essential for salvation, but a pious life did not require asceticism. Food, drink, sleep, dress, and even music were acceptable, as long as they were in appropriate moderation. Sports were also acceptable, but only if they were not played on the Sabbath.

The issue of sports and the Sabbath became a central issue under James I. So much so, that in 1618, James issued a Declaration on Sports, permitting many types of sports, in direct contradiction to many Puritans who opposed all game play. Perkins impact upon Puritanism extended to how the Sabbath is viewed. Perkins’s treatment of the Sabbath obviously was in line with Calvin’s, and became known as Sabbatarianism.

According to Sabbatarianism, strict observance of the Sabbath is required. No ordinary work may occur. Perkins believed the Sabbath was established not at Sinai but in Eden. As God rested on the seventh day, so too man is to rest. This rest is a holy rest which would exclude all labor, and be spent worshiping God.⁴⁰ What is not an acceptable use of the day is idle leisure or playing games.

Aside from the Sabbath, work was to be done. All work was not for the individual, but for the collective good of the nation and community of saints. Like


⁴⁰ Beeke and Yuille, William Perkins, 96.
Luther’s notion of the Beruf, all labor is tied to a calling. Man is not only called to serve God, but also called to work. Weber famously treated this issue in the *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. “The only way of living acceptably to God was not to surpass worldly morality in monastic asceticism, but solely through the fulfilment of the obligations imposed upon the individual by his position in the world. That was his calling.”41 When one does their labor well, they are laboring not for a wage, but for God.

The final issue often connected to Puritan morality is the issue of sex. It is taken as a truism in the modern usage of the term Puritan to believe that sex is something inherently evil. This is not the case from a historical perspective and very much not the case for Perkins. William Perkins was married and had children. He even gave up his post as a fellow in order to enter into marriage, illustrating just how highly he held the estate of marriage. “As for the marital bed, Perkins demonstrated little antipathy toward the body.” He viewed sex between husbands and wives as “due benevolence.”42 While encouraging couples to not burn with passion, they were encouraged to enjoy the sexual company of one another. There was further stratification of the married life. Perkins viewed his wife, and wives in general, as homemakers and advisors to their husbands, contrary than the modern notions of feminism. Still the view is not terribly retrograde for the sixteenth century from the “prince of Puritan theologians.”43

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Perkins impact during his life is rather great. Often identified as the Father of the Puritans, his life and work focused on the individual’s experience of piety. Stoeffler believes that for Perkins “Piety was applied theology, theology was the intellectual foundation of piety. The basic concern was piety.” Still this piety was not reduced to feeling, rather it remained an issue of faith. Perkin’s own faith produced waves throughout England. At the height of his fame, his works outsold Calvin’s. In order to promote distribution after his death, John Legate gathered Perkins’s works into three volumes in 1608-9. These three volumes were subsequently translated into Latin, French, Dutch Italian, German, Irish, Welsh and Spanish. The works became an essential mainstay for England. In 1611, the East India Company required that all English agents who worked for them receive three collective works, first Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations of the English Nation*, then John Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*, and finally William Perkins's *Works*.

In addition to his works, Perkins greatest effect upon Puritanism was in his disciple William Ames. Ames first encountered Puritanism in England’s Suffolk County. Suffolk County was indebted to Perkins Puritanism more than any other. Ames attributes his own conversion to hearing the “rousing preaching of Master William Perkins, father of experimental Puritan theology.” As time went on, Ames became a

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45 William Ames or Amesius (1576-1633).


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student of Perkins and the two became close friends. Ames echoed Perkins message with an even louder voice in America, where he is “Quoted more often in the New World than either Luther or Calvin, Ames was read in Latin by undergraduates at Harvard and Yale as part of their basic instruction in divinity.”

The impact in America was essential as the fate of Puritanism in England was a powder keg. The keg exploded during the English Civil War of the 1640s. Oliver Cromwell set up a new haven for the Puritans but this haven could not last beyond his death. Once Cromwell died the English grew tired of Puritans and what they brought. The Civil war was a worse conflict than any in England since the Norman Conquest six hundred years earlier. With the explosion of the powder keg, all that was left was ruin in England. The blame for the Civil War was attributed to the Puritans, and with good reason. The solution was to restore the king to the throne, but following his decapitation Charles I was not able to reassume the throne. This honor was passed to his son Charles II. With the Restoration, the fires of religious enthusiasm quickly died down. The rampant “religious individualism” that characterized the earlier period as well as any form of religious enthusiasm became suspect. Perkins and his works lost favor and became obscured to the point that few of his works were reprinted in either of the Puritan reprint revivals of the nineteenth or twentieth centuries. Few Puritans remained in England, but the language and theology remained influential.

Puritanism as interpreted and perpetuated by Perkins survived but largely only outside of England. Puritans take their theological vision of the world and move it to the

colonies England is establishing in North America. Central to the Puritan regime is the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Ever since the early waves of Puritan persecution at the hands of William Laud in the 1630s, Puritans sought a new home. Some chose to immigrate to the Netherlands, but many more chose the New World, with the desire to rid themselves of the apostasy of Anglicanism and set up a true Calvinist society. This new Calvinist society began in Plymouth as a new Geneva on a larger scale.

The Plymouth colony survived, but by 1692 the colony was changed from a theocracy to a secular form of government, and the Puritans ceased to be a major political force. Ames and Perkins’ works remained an important feature of any library. The typical Plymouth Colony library had a Bible, Henry Ainsworth's translation of the Psalms, and the works of William Perkins. Ames’ works were read at Harvard and Yale, ensuring some degree of theological fealty to early Puritan ideals.

Puritanism in America and England continued its descent in the eighteenth century, but Perkins impact upon Anglican and Calvinist theology remained. His *Golden Chain*, and the crucial links of predestination, justification, sanctification, and glorification remain the basic framework for Protestant doctrines of the atonement. Wesley and Palmer later will hold the Armenian position concerning Predestination, and Schleiermacher interpreted the doctrine as the Predestination of humanity rather than individuals, but still the chain remains. Perkins emphasis on preaching also has lasting repercussions for both Schleiermacher and Palmer, who adapt not only Perkins theology of preaching, but elements of his style as well. Furthermore, Perkins illustrates beyond a shadow of a doubt that Pietism is not simply a Lutheran phenomenon, as he was a
Calvinist Anglican who dismissed many notions of Lutheran Orthodoxy and tried to make room for genuine experience of the Divine in England following the Reformation.

**Johann Arndt 1555-1621 – Experientialist Revivalist**

> "What Profit is it to be honored by all the world, if we are despised by God?" – Johann Arndt

Johann Arndt’s role in Pietism is crucial and simultaneously points out the difficulty with most definitions of Pietism. Depending on when scholars date the beginning of Pietism, Arndt is either the father of Pietism, the Grand-Father of Pietism, or evidence that Pietism is an expression of experiential Christianity as a thread that has always existed in Christianity in general and in Protestantism specifically. R. Friedman contends, “Arndt can be regarded as the real ‘father of Pietism’, who transformed the doctrine of the Word, as Luther understood it, into an ethical doctrine, and thereby changed the experience of justification into one of sanctification.” Stoeffler contends that “The father of Lutheran Pietism is not Spener but John Arndt.” In the same work though, Stoeffler provides a list of other church leaders in Germany, England and elsewhere whose life either predates Arndt’s or coincides with it. In actuality, this supports Stoeffler’s position that Pietism is an impulse in Protestantism more than a movement started by a single individual.

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48 Johann Arndt, *Garden of Paradise: or, holy prayers and exercises: whereby the Christian graces and virtues may be planted and improved in man, Pursing the design of the famous treatise of True Christianity by John Arndt* Translated by Anton Wilhelm Bohm (London: J. Downing, 1716), 215.

Arndt may not be the founder of Pietism, but he undoubtedly gave shape to the Lutheran expression. This shift to an ethical doctrine for Lutheranism led Albert Schweitzer to call Arndt the “prophet of interior Protestantism.” The popularity of Arndt merits his discussion of Pietism, his devotional works were the basis for Spener and many Pietists who followed. However one defines Pietism, Arndt must be included as foundational. As a model, prophet, forerunner, or father of a movement, Arndt’s work demonstrates the Pietistic ethos that lasted for centuries. Spener, Francke, and others base their understanding of Christianity on Arndt’s *True Christianity*, and the experience of Christ therein.

Johann Arndt was born on December 17, 1555 the son of a village pastor in Edderitz bei Köthen. 1555 is an auspicious year; the Peace of Augsburg was signed granting legal status to the Lutheran confession held by the Arndt family. Johann grew up with an established legal though contentious Lutheranism. Lutheranism was still in the throes of establishing its Orthodoxy during his formative years. This tension is evidenced in in Arndt’s life and works.

At twenty-one years of age, in 1576, Arndt studied medicine in Helmstedt. However, the aspiring doctor could not overcome his own illness. That same year Arndt’s pursuit of medicine ended and he shifted his attention toward theology. Arndt studied theology at Wittenberg the following year. Wittenberg was at this time, and remained for centuries, the center of Lutheran scholasticism. While at Wittenberg, Arndt was engulfed in the crypto-Calvinist controversies of the day. Melanchthon and the

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crypto-Calvinists swayed Arndt until he left Wittenberg to study in Strasburg, where Johannes Papus suppressed Calvinist theology in favor of a more “orthodox” Lutheran perspective.

In 1583 Arndt’s life began to take shape in two complementary and contrasting directions. Johann wed Anna Wagner and had a marriage most described as happy, even though they remained childless. That same year Johann was ordained to the deaconate. Over the next two years Arndt’s ministerial life grew both in its scope, becoming a pastor in Badeborn in 1583, and in controversies.

The next twenty years were contentious. Arndt’s chief adversary was his Duke. Duke Johann Georg of Anhalt (d. 1618) was a Calvinist. The Calvinist Duke possessed an unrealistic goal. He desired the Lutheran Churches to conform to Calvinist prescriptions. The two key areas of contention were the use of images in worship and the practice of exorcism before baptism. Most Lutheran ministers were not going to become Calvinist for political expediency. Arndt refused both orders, as a result Arndt was deposed in 1590.

Not to be outdone, Arndt founded an asylum in Quedlinburg that same year. The townspeople of Quedlinburg opposed Arndt. The antagonism was not due to confessional allegiances, but to his forceful preaching. It was style not substance that repulsed the townspeople. No doubt Arndt’s sermons were taxing the laity. Arndt desired true piety from his congregation rather than simple attendance. A common belief for the laity was that church attendance aided or even assured salvation. Arndt denounced this belief. He even opposed compulsory church attendance, and wanted lived
Christianity. Key to this controversy was Arndt’s opposition to legalism and his equating this with compulsory attendance.

In 1599, Arndt was transferred to St. Martin’s Church at Brunswick. The same year he was involved in another political storm, once again opposed to Duke Johann Georg. More controversy arose in 1605, but this time from his fellow Lutheran clergy. The source of the dispute was the first book *Wahres Christentum, or True Christianity.* The publication of *True Christianity* signaled the final confrontation Arndt faced. By 1605 *the Book of Concord* was twenty-five years old and Lutheran Orthodoxy was established. The problem with *True Christianity* was that it no longer fit within the mold of Lutheranism. The work was not Calvinist, Catholic, or Anabaptist, it was mystical and not purely theological. The focus was the practice of Christian life, not the established theological debates that Lutheran Scholastics wanted to address. This challenge to the traditional Lutheran Orthodoxy served to relax the rigid Lutheran orthodoxy, and to introduce a devotional element that was sorely missing.

The question among scholars though is how to define the nature of *True Christianity* and Arndt for the last fifteen years of his life. Was he a mystic or experientialist? Some believe that the purpose behind the fifth book was to promote the idea of mystical union with Christ, and as such Arndt should be numbered with Jakob Boehme and Valentin Weigel as Lutheran mystics. The connection between Arndt and mysticism following his death is unmistakable. Many of his followers, including Friedrich Dame (d. 1635), and Paulus Egardus (d. 1643), wrote mystical tracts of *the Old and the New Man,* and *Exposition of the Book of Job,* mirroring the themes of Arndt’s *True Christianity.* Indeed it is clear to see the influence that Thomas à Kempis, Johannes
Tauler, Angela da Foligno, and Valentine Weigel have in the work, but was this the aim of Arndt, or just the source material he was borrowing from remains unanswered.

Against the clear mystical language Stoeffler contends that “The central theme of Arndt was not that of union. For that reason he ought not to be referred to as a mystic. It was that of a new life, an emphasis which is of the very essence of Pietism.”

Arndt urges an individual revival, a transformation to a new life in Christ. The old life is abandoned and surrendered to Christ and the individual Christian is made new in Christ. This language is directly from Tauler, a mystic. Instead of the mystics call for a mystical union with Christ, Arndt wants a practical reform. The difference is not great except for the accessibility for the average Christian. Arndt does not want to argue that only the mystics are true Christians. If this was the case, then Protestantism in general and Lutheranism specifically is doomed to fail. Most of the Catholic mystics were monastics and without a monastic community the promotion of mysticism within the Lutheran Church as the only real form of Christianity serves only to point out the deficiencies of the Reformation. The slight difference of language separates the experience of God found in the pre-Reformation mystics from the monastic community. Arndt still calls for a new life with Christ, but not union with Christ as modeled by the communities of monks and nuns. This distinction is important for Arndt in the sixteenth century and is increasingly less important for later Pietists.

Arndt defines the true Christian as the one who experiences God, not one who merges themselves with God. The first step in this experience of God is not the notion of

election as Perkins advocated rather it is found in Christ’s atonement. The focus of True Christianity is on the atonement and its impact on the heart of the believer. Arndt believes that true Christianity involves a non-monastic union with Christ that reaches a true transformation and can only take place after the heart is open to God. It is easy to conflate transformation with mystical union as they do share many traits in common. In many ways the work promotes a monasticism for the individual. There exist all the spiritual benefits of the monastic cell without the cell, monastic community, or monastic rules. This is why we see the proliferation of True Christianity to such a wide audience. Arndt saw twenty editions of the work before his death and a total of six books expanding the concepts laid out in the first book. The appeal to a light mysticism brought Arndt under heavy criticism. Books five and six were specifically written in order to defend himself in front of his fellow Lutheran clergy. In none of these works does he simply abandon himself to the idea that his experiences are those of a mystic, rather they reflect a newness of life that is far more open and common to every Christian.

With the success of True Christianity, Arndt published a prayer book to help the believer experience divine grace, called Paradiesgartlein aller christlichen Tugenden, The Garden Paradise: Or, Holy Prayers And Exercise: Whereby The Christian Graces And Virtues May Be Planted And Improved In Man, Pursuing The Design Of The Famous Treaties Of True Christianity. In The Garden Paradise, Arndt offers prayers on dozens of issues such as thanksgiving, Christian Graces, the suffering of Christ, self-denial, friendship, and contempt of the world. These all serve as meditative guides, not to enter into a mystical union with God, but as an expression of a new creature of God.
Arndt died in 1621, just three years into the Thirty Years War, his impact upon Lutheranism grew following his death as Lutherans sought further devotional works to encourage them through that time, his works *Wahres Christentum, True Christianity* and *Paradiesgartlein aller christlichen Tugenden, The Garden Paradise*, fit the needs of the time. These two works, far more than his career as a Lutheran pastor, tell us what Arndt and later Pietists believe “True Christianity” is and what practices it follows. To best understand the theological legacy of Arndt, I will address the central themes and characteristics in his transformational work.

Arndt’s series of six books of *True Christianity* began with book one, *Liber Scripturae*, the book of Scripture. This book opens with a seemingly simple question to his Lutheran audience in the seventeenth century. Following the settlement of Lutheran Scholasticism Lutherans should be able to answer the question “what is the image of God in man?” More precisely Arndt is asking, “What is man and his relation to God?” Arndt quickly answers the question, stating that the image of God in man “is in the conformity of the human soul, understanding, spirit, mind, will and all internal and external bodily and spiritual powers with God and the Holy Trinity and with all divine qualities, virtues, wills, and characteristics.”

An answer that faced little opposition. Throughout the rest of the work, Arndt unpacks notions of conformity of the human soul and he does so within an established Lutheran theological paradigm, law and gospel. Like Martin Luther, Arndt’s beginning assumption is that man is in need of a savior and this is the point of the work. While the opening question is answered within the scholastic

52 Johann Arndt, *True Christianity*, 29, Book 1, Chapter 1.
framework, the remainder of the work goes far beyond the typical Lutheran Scholastic’s interpretation of God and Man.

In Martin Luther’s *Heidelberg Disputation*, the basic framework for his theology is constructed. The very first thesis Luther makes is the law of God. Throughout the work, Luther’s theology focuses on a dialectic between the Law, which is futile to save, and the Gospel of Christ, which is full of grace. Lutheran scholars such as Timothy Lull contend that the law and the gospel are the two key poles of understanding Luther’s conception of the Christian Life.\(^53\) Arndt’s theology follows a similar pattern when he contends that “If Christ and his holy blood are to be our medicine we must first be ill.”\(^54\) A sickness is present in man, that sickness is sin.

For Arndt this sin is the starting point of all. “Indeed, the man who lives in such sins lives in Adam, and in the old-birth, indeed, in the Devil himself.”\(^55\) Man begins in sin, which is enmity toward Christ. The entire Christian life is therefore defined as “a spiritual battle against original sin and the rooting out of this by the Holy Spirit.”\(^56\) It is for this reason that Christ died, and it is here like Luther that the gospel is preached.

For Luther and most Protestant Reformers, the Law is futile to save on its own; its only real purpose is to illustrate the need for God’s grace as found in the preaching and hearing of the gospel. As such, the gospel is the key to the Christian life. The heart of

\(^{53}\) Dr. Timothy Lull was president of the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (ELCA) in Berkeley, and gave countless lectures on this topic while I was his student, before his death in 2003.

\(^{54}\) Johann Arndt, *True Christianity, Book 1*, 55, Chapter 8.

\(^{55}\) Johann Arndt, *True Christianity, Book 1*, 68, Chapter 11.

\(^{56}\) Johann Arndt, *True Christianity, Book 1*, 188, Chapter 41.
the gospel is not only Christ’s sacrifice but also what this sacrifice does. First, and most straightforward, is the process of Justification. Man, who is inherently sinful, finds himself justified before God. Justification is based upon Christ’s death on the cross; this is the atonement for humanities sins. Unlike the Calvinist view held by Perkins, Arndt remains firmly Lutheran and believes that the atonement is a general atonement. Salvation may not be universal, but the atonement is not limited, as Perkins and Calvin maintain. The Christian’s justification is based solely upon Christ’s atonement and not due to the Christians actions. Man’s only possible reaction to Christ’s sacrifice is to worship Christ. “True worship must proceed from the ground of the heart out of faith, love, and humility.”57 This worship does not justify man, nor does it save, but it does make one holy.

For Arndt, as with many Lutheran Christo-Calvinists, Calvinists, Reform theologians, and possibly Luther, the key to the gospel is the surrender of self towards the process of sanctification. As Arndt put it, “man does not act according to his self-will, but his will is God’s will; man has no self-love, but God is his love; no self-honor, but God is to be his honor; no wealth but God is his wealth and possession without any love of creature and the world.”58 The process of sanctification is an ongoing personal revival wherein everything is based upon “the rebirth and renewal of man.”59

57 Johann Arndt, True Christianity, 132, Book 1, Chapter 26.
58 Johann Arndt, True Christianity, 31, Book 1, Chapter 1.
59 Johann Arndt, True Christianity, 49, Book 1, Chapter 6.
This renewal results in man being different than before, not only in their standing with God, but also the Christian is a fundamentally new creature. This new creature is one who is justified and undergoing sanctification, where the old sinful self is forcibly evicted from one’s life and replaced with a creature capable of worshiping God. Arndt describes the struggle by saying “In each true Christian are two men, an inner man and an outer man. These two live together but they oppose one another. The life of the one is the death of the other. If the external man lives and rules, the internal man dies. If the internal man lives the external man must die.” This language is clearly a reference to Tauler. Central to Tauler’s mysticism was the conflict between the old and new man. Tauler “Points to a renewal of the outer and inner man, and shows how man must deny himself and die to all to which he cleaves and is attached by nature; and how God will then make His dwelling-place in him.” Arndt echoes this tenet. The old man must die in order for the new man to live.

The true Christian, as described in True Christianity, is one whose life is made new through faith. For Arndt, as for most Pietists, theology and doctrine are worth very little in themselves and their only value is in service to the new life of faith. Arndt sets up an ecclesiological tension between what the Protestant Scholastics were fighting for and his vision of Christianity. The tension is between a theological understanding of justification and sanctification and the experientialist model wherein faith is found in “a

60 “Note that Christ is thus in you the way to life; in him you are a new creature.”

61 Johann Arndt, True Christianity, 87, Book 1, Chapter 16.

62 John Tauler, The Inner Way, 199.
joyous, happy, and living trust, by which I discover in myself, in a strong and consoling way, God’s power, how he holds me and bears me, and how I live, move and have my being in him.”

Faith is about living rather than knowing. Here Arndt agrees with à Kempis, who argues “True peace of heart, then, is found in resisting passions, not in satisfying them.” Faith which creates the new man is an ongoing battle against the old through constant attention to the life of faith.

This life finds its joy in Christ, not in this world and not in the things of this world. As man is made new his pleasures are only found in personal renewal and growing closer to God and farther from his old sick and sinful nature. Arndt maintains that “this repentance and conversion is the denial of oneself.” This denial includes the mortification of the flesh in addition to the rejection of the world. In the emphasis towards personal renewal, Arndt draws heavily upon Thomas à Kempis. This renewal is a constant choosing of the cross over all the benefits of this world. With à Kempis primarily on his mind in Book One, Arndt borrows from other mystics as well. One can easily read Angela da Foligno and Johannes Tauler’s views of poverty and renouncing the world as the source of joy in this chapter as well.

In Book Two of True Christianity, Arndt continues his focus on the transformation that accompanies sanctification. Many chapters of the second book of

64 Thomas à Kempis, The Imitation of Christ. 6, Book 1 Chapter 6.
65 Johann Arndt, True Christianity, 42, Book 1, Chapter 4.
66 Johann Arndt, True Christianity, 41, Book 1, Chapter 4.
True Christianity, are adapted from Angela da Foligno. It is easy to see the notion of penance borrowed from Foligno, when Arndt preserves the idea that the true Christian must constantly judge themselves “according to the heart, be certain that it is internal and not a mere external appearance.” 67 The Christian life is too easy to put on without any real changes to either the heart or life of the Christian. Like Foligno, Arndt witnesses a constant procession of piety. Steps are repeated and greater intimacy with God is the benefit.

Within Book Two, Tauler’s influence is still manifest. The death of the old man and life of the new is found not only in renouncing this world, as is key for Foligno, but also with the growing new life of the Christian. As such, Arndt emphasizes the fruits of the spirit that must then accompany the Christian life, in so doing he synthesizes the mysticism of both Foligno and Tauler.

The answer to how to best judge yourself is found in Book Three. Once again Arndt bases this chapter upon Tauler. In this book, Arndt explains that the true Christian must find the kingdom of God within themselves rather than from the outside world, including the theological proofs that are championed by the various Protestant Orthodoxy. Very clearly Arndt contends that “Perfection is not, as some think, a high, great, spiritual, heavenly joy and meditation, but it is a denial of one’s own will, love, honor, a knowledge of one’s nothingness a continual completion of the will of God, a burning love for neighbor, a heart-held compassion, and, in a word, a love that desires, think's, and seeks nothing other than God alone insofar as this is possible in the weakness

67 Johann Arndt, True Christianity, 203, Book 2, Chapter 4.
of this life. In this is true Christian virtue, true freedom and peace in the conquering of the flesh and fleshly affections.”68

Arndt’ discussion of perfection draws heavily upon Tauler once again. When Tauler speaks of perfection, he states “A perfect will is an abandonment of all that is not God. If a man hath not done this in works, he must do it in will if he will be perfect.”69 In addition to drawing from Tauler, it is clear that Arndt leans heavily on à Kempis as well. à Kempis points out that “he who desires perfection must be very diligent … Our outward and inward lives alike must be closely watched and well ordered, for both are important to perfection.”70 All three would also agree that “Every perfection in this life has some imperfection mixed with it.”71 None of these men will go so far as to argue for Christian Perfectionism that we will find with Wesley or Palmer. For Tauler, à Kempis, and Arndt, perfection is a process that remains incomplete and momentary at best. Perfection is the act of repentance, not a permanent state of the Christian. Repentance is its own reward, for as à Kempis states, “neither fear nor sorrow shall come upon you at the hour of death.”72

In the remaining books Arndt seeks to strike a balance between himself and his fellow Lutheran clergy by illustrating the place of the Church in the Christian life. Likely many of Arndt’s critics noticed the liberal usage of medieval Catholics and were accusing

him of either being too mystical or too Catholic, and in no way a good Lutheran. Arndt primarily seeks to appease his critics by validating the sacraments, especially baptism. Baptism is the vow of the Christian to become a true Christian. This vow is then maintained and encouraged through the sacrament of the Eucharist. The Eucharist bears witness to the baptism. Arndt clearly values the efficacy of sacraments much more than Perkins and Calvinists do. Still, for Arndt the Christian life is found not only in the two remaining sacraments of the Church, but in the individual’s meditation, prayer, and contemplation.

In *The Garden of Paradise*, also known simply as Johann Arndt’s Book of Prayers, Arndt presents what the meditation and prayers of the Christian should be. There exists the same theological message as in *True Christianity*, but now directed towards God from the Christian, rather than from Arndt to his readers. Arndt models what he expects the Christian prayer life to be, with the common theme of repentance, a vehement rejection of the life in this world and a plea to God to renew himself. “Holy, heavenly, merciful Father, I lament and confess before thee, that by nature I am altogether carnal, unholy, ungodly, having suffered myself to be guided and governed by my Flesh and Blood, and by the impulse of the evil Spirit, rather than by thy holy, pure, and gracious Spirit.”

Arndt is consistent throughout both works in demonstrating his belief that Christianity is far more than a theological understanding, but is found in an experiential

73 Johann Arndt, *Garden of Paradise: or, holy prayers and exercises: whereby the Christian graces and virtues may be planted and improved in man, Pursing the design of the famous treatise of True Christianity by John Arndt* Translated by Anton Wilhelm Bohm (London: J. Downing, 1716), 33.
life of self-denial and renewal. While Arndt tries to remain within the ecclesial bounds of the Lutheran Church, his message often rejects not only the prevailing trends within Lutheranism, but the role of the church as the sanctifying body. While Lutheranism rejected the Roman Catholic claim that salvation was found within the church and the sacraments administered by her, Arndt and most Pietists following him continue the departure from the view that salvation is a corporate act. The critics of Pietism are correct when they assert that Pietism creates an individualized Christianity. As M. Schmidt and Christos Yannaras in his article "The Freedom of Morality" state, the result of Arndt’s theological message is an individual and individualistic piety. “It is individual piety and the subjective process of ‘appropriating salvation’ made absolute and autonomous, and it transfers the possibility of man's salvation to the realm of individual moral endeavor.”

While Arndt tries to maintain salvation as something found within the church, the sacraments become secondary to salvation, and the members of the church are decreasingly the body of Christ and increasingly individuals working on their own personal renewal, rather than a choir of voices worshiping the same God. As mentioned earlier, Arndt’s pseudo-rejection of mysticism while simultaneously maintaining the experience of the same mystics is an attempt to individualize the monastic experience of God for the Lutheran.

Arndt’s intensified individualist Christianity spread throughout the Protestant world as a constant counterbalance to the scholastic system. In most cases, readers of

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True Christianity remained within their Protestant confessions. Remaining Lutheran, Anglican, or Reform may have potentially served as a check against the individualist impulse that accompanies Pietism. Nevertheless, for the next century or so, the attention of Arndt’s followers on the Continent was exclusively focused on experiencing personal revivals rather than a revival of the Church or culture at large. This does not take away from Arndt’s legacy as the impetus for experiential Christianity transforming Protestant Christianity for subsequent generations.

Arndt begins the Pietistic practice of advocating for an experiential revival. Anthony Wallace points out that revivals tend towards three forms of identification, traditional, foreign, or utopian, or a combination thereof. In very clear ways Arndt advocates for a traditional and utopian revival. Knowing that advocating for a traditional revival lends itself towards Catholic monasticism, Arndt tempers this with notions of utopianism. In doing so he validates the pattern for future Pietists to seek medieval mystics as a source of authority while holding out hope for a mystical utopian revival. For Wesley and Palmer this is fundamental to their developing doctrines of Christian perfection. Furthermore, Arndt’s transformation of the doctrine of the Word into a lived ethical doctrine allows Palmer to intensify the doctrine of sanctification and Kierkegaard to apply an outsider ethic to his theology. Foligno, à Kempis, and to a great degree Tauler are also thoroughly incorporated within Pietism following Arndt. The return to a pure anti-Catholic Christian past does not need to extend much before the days of the Medici Popes for Arndt and other Pietists. Arndt’s True Christianity also serves as the theological playbook for Lutheran Pietism from his death through the middle of the eighteenth century.
Philip Spener 1635-1705 – Antipathy towards Christian Culture

“Theology is a practical discipline and does not consist only of knowledge, study alone is not enough.”—Philip Jakob Spener

The next stone laid upon the edifice of Pietism and the prime inheritor of Arndt’s revivalist message was Phillip Jakob Spener. Spener broadened the scope of Lutheran Pietism beyond the individual in his attempt to stand against the wave of modernity. As William Cardwell Prout argues, “The publication of Spener’s *Pia Desideria* in 1675 with its attack on the contemporary Lutheran Church and a reform platform, was the official launching of a new religious movement.”

Like Arndt, Spener, as well as the direct inheritors of his teachings and practice, Herman August Francke and Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf, are products of their time. Spener was born in the town of Rappolstein in the Upper Alsace, not far from Strasbourg, on January 13, 1635, in the middle of the Thirty Years War. The war was only in its infancy when Arndt died by Spener’s birth it had raged the German cities and countryside for seventeen years. While the war could have ended the year Spener was born, then Catholic France decided to join the Protestant side of the war against their coreligionists, the Hapsburgs. The French intervention moved the conflict from one between Protestant countries in Northern Europe, such as Denmark and Sweden, to one


77 At this time Alsace was a part of the Holy Roman Empire and not France. 

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where Catholics faced each other on both sides of the front. The net result was a devastated Holy Roman Empire, and a war that lasted another thirteen years. Eventually the war ended with the treaty of Westphalia in 1648. Anywhere between thirty and fifty percent of the population of the Holy Roman Empire died. The war weakened the Empire; not only was its population decimated, but there was also economic collapse and a fractured political system. The Thirty Years War became the lens through which Germans viewed their future. The existential dread that accompanied the modern period that Giddens addresses can clearly be found during the post war period. The primal fears of death and loss, economic and political changes, as well as increased secularism, contributed to this ontological insecurity.

With such great losses, there were many changes to the socio-economic structure of the Holy Roman Empire, and Europe as a whole. One unforeseen change was the decrease in price of grain throughout the seventeenth century as England and Prussia developed agrarian mercantilism. The basic cost of goods moved away from local farming communities, and increasingly became a global commodity. The war also reworked longstanding power structures. The old nobility made way to new absolutist rulers. The clergy was also affected by these changes. The Catholic clergy became increasingly remote. While they maintained a degree of wealth, as their estates ensured a livelihood, this varied by location. The Protestant clergy was more immediate to their parishioners, but faced similar economic challenges, as did their congregation. In either case, the clergy lost power as the princes sought to eliminate “the dead hand of the church” from everyday life. In many ways science, distinct from any form of theology, came into its own, leading to the Enlightenment. These changes echo the fragmentation
and dispersal of society that concerns Giddens’ treatment of modernity. Both in economics and secularization, the traditional society was evaporating.

This period was one of increasing secularization as faith in the scholastic preachers waned. While the religious reformers of the sixteenth century placed their trust in their princely authorities, this resulted in the Thirty Years War. With the war over, these governments became increasingly secular. Despite the fact that the princes desired religious uniformity in their realm and mandated that their subjects attend church, this was rarely done out of a notion of religious conviction.

Spener, like all Germans, was forced to react to this thrust of modernism. Spener was better equipped to deal with these challenges than most. His education illustrates his position in society as well as his passions. Spener’s early education was given to him by the court preacher at Rappolstein, Joachim Stall. Under Stall, Spener received a classic and pious education, learning Greek, Latin, history, and philosophical science. In 1651 Spener entered the University of Strasburg, where his uncle was a Professor of Jurisprudence. At this time Spener earned an income by tutoring two princes from the Palatinate. At eighteen he received his Master’s in Philosophy after a disputation with Thomas Hobbes. After two years of traveling in Basin, Bern, and Geneva, Spener returned to Strasbourg for his doctoral studies. By 1664 Spener received his Doctorate in Theology, on the same day as his marriage to Susanna Erhardt, a young widow. Throughout this time Spener was intimately familiar with the rationalistic secularizing tendencies of his day, yet he refrained from impious actions such as drinking, dancing, or fencing matches that his fellow students engaged in.
Spener’s early life may be representative of Richard Antoun’s notion of fundamentalism, namely, Antoun’s claim that all fundamentalists place “God and his sacred scriptures, as well as the struggle for good and evil, at the center of both individual and group concern.” While a part of the secularizing world in colleges, Spener refrained from the everyday social actions of his classmates. Even more so, he did not engage in theological studies on Sundays. Sundays were a day of devotion. Spener read the sacred scriptures as devotion and not an object of study. Spener also engaged in the secular world with prominent thinkers of the day, like Hobbes, Spener’s life was guided through a removal from the profane practices of everyday life.

The University of Strasbourg sought to keep Spener as a faculty member, but he refrained from this honor. Instead he became the chief pastor in Frankfurt in 1666. This move to Frankfurt placed Spener as the chief religious leader of the chief city of Protestant Germany. As the “spiritual counselor of all Germany,” he sought to enforce legislation that resulted in a more religious society. Unlike the purely inward focus of Arndt, Spener attempted to physically reform the society by such actions as eliminating trade on Sundays and curbing ostentatious attire. These actions were not unheard of, but they met with poor results. Following Marshall Sahlins, Spener had a difficult time reconciling his structure and this event. Spener’s society was structured in such a way that the religious leader enforced the dictates of everyday life. In his religious education, Spener saw how Martin Luther shaped the civil life of Wittenberg, along with the

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79 Philip Spener, *Philip Jacob Spener and His Work* (Nabu, 1897), 12.
religious life. The chief pastor dictating everyday life was reinforced by his travels to
Geneva following his Master’s degree. While society may be profane, it was the duty of
the pastor to bring the sacred. Spener was forced to shift from a leader of civic life to a
protest against the displacement of religion.

Over the next three years, Spener’s view of religion shifted from a top down
model to one that increasingly focused on the laity. This focus on the laity becomes
increasingly important for Pietism in general and the theologies of Kierkegaard and
Palmer specifically. Spener’s shift towards the laity began with a conflict with the city
governance. Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, the prominent philosopher of the day,
encouraged his friend Spener to rebuild his shattered structure, by confronting the city
and himself. Spener never lost his faith in God, but he did lose his faith in his fellow
Lutherans. The Lutheran culture that dominated Frankfurt was not the sort of pious
Christianity that Spener could support, and they did not support him. The University of
Wittenberg accused him of two hundred errors and heresies. These critiques did not
dissuade Spener from forming religious communities. In a sermon given in 1669, Spener
urges his congregation to speak to one another about divine mysteries, and to instruct
their weaker brethren. He continues,

It is certain, in any case, that we preachers cannot instruct the people from our
pulpits as much as is needful unless other persons in the congregation, by who
God’s grace have a superior knowledge of Christianity, take the pains, by virtue of
their universal Christian priesthood, to work with and under us to correct and
reform as much in their neighbors as they are able according to the measure of their gifts and their simplicity.  

The universal Christian priesthood addressed here is echoed in another work written in 1677, titled *The Spiritual Priesthood*. In this work it is “the right” of all believers to be priests, both men and women. Every believer is anointed by the Holy Spirit and the priesthood purchased by Christ. The sermon, delivered in 1669, created a new version of experiential Christianity, one indebted to Arndt and others, but something recognizable as new. While Gananath Obeyesekere focused on the erratic and ecstatic passions of new religious movements in Hinduism, Spener also utilized myth models that “are popular refractions of doctrinal myths.”

In Frankfurt, the sermon, rather than spirit possession is the medium for religious performance. Spener’s message echoes Luther’s notion of the priesthood of all believers. Additionally, this universal Christian priesthood is a socially acceptable medium for protest. The key takeaway from the sermon is the new institution Spener created, the *collegia pietatis*, a lay group that focused on holy living. Spener and this group lacked power to reform the whole of society, but they used the pulpit and the *collegia* as a means of demonstrating the failures of the larger Christian society. The *collegia* echoes I.M. Lewis’ view of *sar* possession, wherein possession serves “as a means both of airing their grievances obliquely, and of gaining some

80 Philip Spener, *Philip Jacob Spener and His Work* (Nabu, 1897), 13.


83 *Sar* possession is a spirit possession that largely impacts disaffected women in Eastern Africa.
Spener, who has now found himself reacting from a prominent position that lacks power in the increasingly secularized Empire, is able to use his sermon as a way of creating a movement that rivals the political power of the city.

Some recent scholarship places the creation of the collegia not on Spener, but as an outgrowth of his congregation. Specifically a young lawyer in Spener's parish, named Johann Jakob Schutz. Schutz’s dramatic conversion in Spener’s congregation produced the first Lutheran Pietist conventicle in Frankfurt in August 1670. If this is the case, then the relationship between Spener and the laity is even closer than previously thought. Spener likely encouraged and adopted a practice from Schutz as a model of piety. We also have other examples of smaller meetings taking place earlier than the collegia, which only serves as a reminder that this event should not mark the beginning of Pietism as a whole, but rather serve as an example of how Spener implemented his view of a pious life.

It is during this time in Frankfurt that Spener writes his monumental work *Pia Desideria*, or Pious Wishes. Written in 1675 as a preface to a new publication of John Arndt’s *True Christianity*, the work was soon published by itself. *Pia Desideria* emphasized the religious and moral duties over the dogmatic intellectualism of the day. The work was written in reaction to secularization of thought and Spener’s attempt to reform the corrupt conditions that Spener found in the church. The work is divided up into three sections. The first section deals with the corrupt conditions of the church, the


second addresses the possibility to better the church and the third gives proposals to correct these conditions.

In the first section of *Pia Desideria*, Spener concentrates on the corrupt nature of the church. In this attack on the church, Spener addresses the defects in each of the three estates, the civil authorities, the clergy, and the common people. Beginning with the political estates, Spener argues that they should “remember that God gave them their scepters and staffs in order that they use their power to advance the kingdom of God!”\(^86\) Rather than promoting the church, the civil authorities are hindering the work that is done. They are depicted as abusing the power God has given them, and “whenever some ministers of the church, moved by God, propose to do something that is good, they arbitrarily obstruct it.”\(^87\) This is no doubt a reference to Spener’s failed policies at reforming civil life in Frankfurt.

Following the defects in the civil estate, the clergy are themselves brought under attack. Spener freely admits, that “we preachers in the ecclesiastical estate cannot deny that our estate is also thoroughly corrupt.”\(^88\) The main defect is in the political nature of the ecclesiastical estate, namely the desire for promotions. Spener views himself as immune to this critique. To his credit, he did turn down some opportunities for advancement throughout his life. According to Spener, the clergy should be models for the laity, and they should avoid carnal pleasures. The clergy should follow what he

\(^{86}\) Philip Spener, *Philip Jacob Spener and His Work*, 43.

\(^{87}\) Philip Spener, *Philip Jacob Spener and His Work*, 44.

\(^{88}\) Philip Spener, *Philip Jacob Spener and His Work*, 44.
called the first practical principle of Christianity, specifically denial of self. Spener argues that the main problem is that they are stuck in the ‘old birth’ and do not live according to the ‘new birth.’ Spener clearly is a student of Arndt’s *True Christianity*, and echoing Tauler’s mysticism.

The third estate is naturally in a dire position, as their rulers failed to lead them in godliness. Spener insists that “it is evident on every hand that none of the precepts of Christ is openly observed.”89 The masses did not have a proper understanding as to what it meant to be Lutheran. They sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist were abused, or used to justify sinful behavior. Spener believes that vices were treated as virtues, and chief among these was drunkenness. The common people believe that this is no true sin, or at least not one worth mentioning. In addition to drunkenness, Spener turns his attention to the general practice of lawsuits. While the third estate should be allowed use of the civil government, lawsuits are used in order to oppress and impoverish their neighbors. Rather Spener urges that all things need to be viewed as owned by God. All property should be used for the service of God and neighbor. Looking toward the early church where all things were held in common, Spener urges his fellow Germans to do the same. While approaching a hallowed past, Spener is using this to condemn the entire society, not to set apart a select few. Spener uses this early church as a mythic example that is to be modeled on and pursued by the entire community.

The defects of the church include a subsection on offenses that result from these defects. In this section Spener argues that the church should not only reform itself for

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89 Philip Spener, *Philip Jacob Spener and His Work*, 57.
itself, but also for the sake of the Jews and all sorts of heretics, including Roman Catholics. Catholics were commonly referred to as papists. Spener urges people to model their lives on Christ, as those who are not a part of the Church will judge him on their actions. Additionally Spener sets up a distinction between the Catholics and the Lutheran church, in a very similar manner that Perkins did with the Anglican Church and Rome. While the Catholics are called papists, Lutherans are called Evangelicals. Even though there are many abuses by the Evangelicals, they are not to be likened to the papists; they are the true Babel. This is the only point in the work were Spener makes a distinction between true Christians and false ones. The work is strongly focused on the fraudulent Christian culture that needs massive reformation, and Spener’s antipathy towards that corrupted Christianity. Following the confessionalization that took place throughout the sixteenth century and the Thirty Years War, it is only natural that a degree of animosity persists between Protestants and Catholics. While not evaluating the distinctions between Protestants and Catholics, the Catholics are made into an evil other. This is a part of every structure of society for Spener at this time. Building on Bourdieu’s notion of habitus, Spener follows ‘regular’ assumption without being the product of obedience to rules. Since Frankfurt was Protestant, it was natural to view Rome as unchristian, possessing all the defects of Protestant society.

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Habitus is defined as “Systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. Objectively ‘regulated’ and ‘regular’ without being in any way the product of obedience to rules, they can be collectively orchestrated without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor.” Pierre Bourdieu, The Logic of Practice (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1990), 53.
In the second part, Spener continues by arguing that a better church is promised to them. Spener believes that this promise is found in scripture, and that this better church will see the Jews converted, weakened spiritual power of the papacy, and a general reform of the Church. Throughout this section of the work Spener also exhibits characteristics of the existential dread that Giddens describes is characteristic of modern society. For Giddens this existential angst arises because of a lack of religious authority that promotes notions of uncertainty. Yet Spener experiences this angst over a future he believes is certain, and he possesses a multiplicity of authorities. In addition to scripture, Spener borrows rather liberally from early church fathers such as Origen, Justin, and Tertullian. The dread he experiences is that in his age Christians are not examining themselves, and not living a life worthy of the calling to which they received. Spener must search daily for his faults and move away from the “hot-and-cold condition” of the Church.

In the final section of the work, Spener proposes ways in which to correct the conditions of the Church. The first is through more use of scripture. The lack of scripture causes the problems in society, thus “all scripture, without exception, should be known by the congregation if we are all to receive the necessary benefit.”91 It may be an interesting side note that when Spener asserts that “all scripture without exception” should be used, he is undoubtedly referring to a Protestant Canon held by Luther and other Reformers, excluding the English that eliminated the half dozen or so Deuterocanonical books as well as other chapters from Old Testament Prophets. This

shows the complicated nature of a simple statement that would be taken for granted by Spener’s audience.

Echoing his earlier claims that scripture holds the answers to the questions about the future, scripture also provides the path back to holiness. Scripture is to move beyond the church, but find itself in home life. The laity, who are knowledgeable of the scripture, are to “present their pious opinions on the proposed subject to the judgment of the rest.” 92 Here Spener urges a more active laity in the ecclesial life. The educated laity should hold additional assemblies or services and preach for the rest of the community. This call for an increased use of the laity echoes his previous works on the spiritual priesthood.

This spiritual priesthood is the second solution that Spener proposes to fix the ailment of the church. The clergy is not the only body that is anointed; rather every Christian has a duty to one another. It is a “presumptuous monopoly of the clergy,” 93 as well as the prohibition of Bible reading that has impoverished the church. The renewal of both of these will enrich the church, as well as limit the power and authority of the papacy.

Knowledge of scripture and the renewal of the spiritual priesthood will necessarily lead to the third solution the Spener puts forth for the Church. The people must realize and accustom themselves to live their beliefs out in the world. Christianity is more than an intellectual exercise for Spener, but a lived religious community. Related

92 Philip Spener, Philip Jacob Spener and His Work, 89.

93 Philip Spener, Philip Jacob Spener and His Work, 93.
to this is the fourth solution. Christians must be aware of how they conduct themselves in religious controversies with unbelievers and heretics. Christians are to pray for their unconverted neighbors and seek not to offend them, showing them rather that they are examples of Christ, while professing Christ’s teaching. Love is supposed to guide these encounters. Interestingly enough, at this point Spener also leaves open the door for a union with the variety of Christian confessions.

The final two means for reforming the Church lie in the role of the clergy. First, the clergy must be better educated. The role of schools and universities must be integral to the notion of religious calling. Second the role of preaching must grow more earnest. Sermons should not be dry theological addresses; rather they should focus on practical issues that will edify the congregation. In many ways Spener is taking what he learned from Arndt’s True Christianity and using the power of the pulpit and lectionary to instill an inner revival in his audience.

In addition to the emergence of the collegia pietatis and the publication of Pia Desideria, Spener’s publication of On Hindrances to Theological Studies, in 1680, marks the third break with the institutional Lutheran church. In this work Spener points out the fallacy of modern theological training. Pride is encouraged and more time is spent upon learning Latin than Greek or Hebrew. This assault against Latin was a not so veiled attack against scholasticism. As evidenced in Pia Desideria, Spener believed that the clergy should preach sermons that were immediately beneficial to his congregation and not speculative theological addresses. Hebrew and Greek should be learned, as they could provide a truer understanding of the scriptures; Latin was only good for reading scholastic works. Spener sets up a dichotomy between learning about God and learning
human disciplines. Under the academic system that Spener is challenging, “the goal of study largely remains a temporal goal.” While Spener was not opposed to study, scholastic and dogmatic theology was of little use. What concerned Spener was a revival of living, not fruitless learning.

While reforming the church in another fashion, this time away from dogmatic theology, Spener maintains that “I could not permit myself the folly of appearing as a reformer of the Church; I realize my own weakness and that I have not the wisdom or the power.” Spener maintains a habitus of Reformation. He believes that he is called to purify, not innovate the Church; in many ways he is echoing Luther. To this end Spener places himself along the lines of other pietistic theologians like Johann Arndt, Lewis Bayly, John Gerhard, John Dury, and Jean de Labadie.

Interestingly, while Spener attempts to echo Luther, many of his critics maintain that he was closer to Calvin and the Reform tradition. This is largely due to Spener’s view of justification. Spener maintains that the same God who justifies also sanctifies. Essentially maintaining the belief that God enables holiness for the believer, this led Spener to push for more emphasis on the need for sanctification, not solely the Lutheran dogma of “Justification by faith.” While not a radical divergent from Lutheran theology, this illustrated the impact that Reform teachers had upon Spener. For many Lutheran Scholastics, this looked too close to Calvin.


95 Richard Payne, Pietists Selected Writings, 39.
This assault on scholasticism and dogmatics should not lead one to believe that Spener was opposed to reason or practical science. On November 14, 1680, a different sort of phenomena grabbed the attention of Spener and the rest of Germany. A comet was discovered by Gottfried Kirch and remained visible for four months. This mystical, or at least unusual natural wonder, evoked many scientists and theologians to write about the meaning of this comet. Blake Lee Spahr analyzed these writings on the comet and found three general categories of thought. The majority of views were superstitious in nature. They believed the comet to be a warning about God’s punishment for evil behavior. There were others who wrote in a more scientific manner, believing that the comet operated by laws of nature, though the timing was a sign from God about disasters to come. Finally there was the smallest group of writers, who were skeptical as to supernatural implications of the comet.

Spener wrote a letter to poet-historian Sigmund von Birken on February 15, 1681 concerning this comet. While criticizing the universities for unfruitful study of Latin and scholasticism, Spener has a very scientific approach to viewing this comet. The comet was created along with the universe, and while it reflects God’s glory, it is not a dire prediction of things to come. The comet operates according to natural laws and is not a source of revelation.

While in Frankfurt, we should not overlook the value women played in Spener’s *collegia pietatis*. We can see the internalization and structural organization of Spener’s system in the lives of numerous women. Women, after all, made up the rank and file of the Pietist networks preceding and following Spener. While women held no official office and had no formal theological education, women still played prominent roles in the
foundational phase of Pietism. Three women stand out, as they pushed the boundaries of leadership and personal piety namely, Anna Elisabeth Kissner, Johanna Eleonora von Merlau, and Maria Juliana Baur von Eyseneck.

Anna Elisabeth Kissner was a pious and intelligent woman. Anna and her husband had a conventicle in their house for their servants. After Anna’s husband died, only six years into their marriage, Anna was left with two children, one boy and one girl. Remaining unmarried for the next 52 years, Anna continued to model piety as a leader of more than just her household. In 1677 Anna was accused of preaching at a women’s meeting. Spener defended her in a letter, stating she “was incapable of anything foolish or improper.”96 The church still pursued an investigation of Kissner and her family both in 1677 and 1686. Some of these investigations may be due to the connection Kissner had with Spener.

Kissner on multiple occasions passed funds from Spener to those refugees in need in both Frankfurt and the neighboring cities. She also contributed to Spener’s writings. In the appendix to Spener’s *Nature and Grace*, published in 1687, Anna assembled many of the relevant passages from Thomas à Kempis and Johannes Tauler.

Johanna Eleonora von Merlau and Maria Juliana Baur von Eyseneck worked together to implement Spener’s educational program for girls. They purchased the Saalhof Estate in 1675 and opened a school for girls. Originally the school was rather small, with only twelve girls attending, but two years later the school grew to include

academic discussions for theology students. While women were marginalized in Spener’s *colleiga*, at the girl’s school at the Saalhof Estate women were full participants.

This early version of the salon attracted many theological voices, including William Penn, who visited twice in the summer of 1677. From these meetings they convinced Penn to buy land and settle Pennsylvania for himself and other persecuted believers. Von Merlau and von Eyseneck were set to go with him until their plans fell apart. Their contribution to the founding of Pennsylvania and openness to theological divergence illustrates both the impact Pietist women had during the lifetime of Spener, and the way Pietism opened a door for women that were previously closed to them within the Lutheran system.

In 1686 Spener was called to serve in Dresden by the Elector of Saxony, John George III (d. 1691). While involved in controversy in Frankfurt, controversies only continued to grow around him when he moved to Dresden. In Dresden, he challenged the institutional church through his work entitled “The Freedom of Believers from the Views of Men in Matters of Faith.” Spener sought to ensure freedom from the Hamburg Ministerium, which sought religious uniformity, and directed their attentions toward Spener. Spener maintained his freedom to preach, but this only led to another misstep.

In February 1689, Spener modestly admonished the Elector concerning his lifestyle. While the Elector initially was shocked and touched by this appeal, this turned to offence. Spener’s opponents excited the Elector against Spener. After this the Elector never again attended any sermons delivered by Spener, and at communion was served by another preacher. This near disastrous interchange between Spener and John George III was only slightly pacified by the princess, Anna Sophie of Denmark, the wife of the
Elector, who cherished Spener’s teaching. The princess and her two young sons were
great admirers of Spener. She attempted to circumvent the growing problem between her
husband and Spener by providing a different position in Dresden, but Spener rejected
this. Additionally, during this time Berlin took an interest in Spener, but he discarded
this opportunity, believing that he was not called there, rather he was to remain in
Dresden. The rift between the Elector and Spener resulted in John George III dismissing
Spener in the summer of 1691, writing the dismissal letter in his own hand. This
dismissal included a provision that Spener would receive a pension for life, and it would
revert to his wife if he died before she did. Spener was dismissed from his approval and
that September the Elector died. Spener maintained contact with the princess and her two
children.

It was not long before Spener took up an appointment in Berlin under
Brandenburg-Prussia’s Elector Frederick III (d. 1713), where he became a preacher in the
Church of St. Nicholas. From this church Spener led the Pietists and confronted many
controversies that Pietism engendered. In addition to the continued controversies that
surrounded Pietism, it was during this final period in Spener’s life that four major events
occurred. The first three events were nothing new for Spener; they only emphasized and
furthered his teaching. The first dealt with the very nature of his appointment in Berlin.
The Elector Frederick III was a Reform Christian, and not Lutheran. Frederick III
permitted the Lutherans to worship freely, as long as they did not slander the Reform
Church. As a result of this atmosphere of love and tolerance, Spener attempted to unify
these two different denominations while in Berlin. Spener’s time in Switzerland, as well
as his longstanding friendship with Leibniz, gave him hope in the possibility of this
union. The final section of *Pia Desideria* even allowed room for this to occur. It was not until this last part of his life that Spener was truly willing to throw off the assaults that he was not Lutheran enough. Ultimately all those who hoped for union would have to wait for another hundred years before seeing even a modicum of success.

The second event was the publication of *The Necessary and Useful Reading of the Holy Scriptures*, in 1694. It was this work that reiterated Spener’s view of the Bible. Reading it was not intended to provide academic knowledge, rather it was a form of heartfelt prayer. According to Spener, the Bible is a book that makes others foolish, as it alone contains eternal life. The Bible contains the elements of eternal life but does not come forth without practicing what it contains.\(^97\)

1694 saw another key event in Spener’s life, the founding of the University at Halle. This was done in large part by his follower and theological heir, August Herman Francke. Spener met the other man who is often viewed as Spener’s heir during his time in Berlin. This was Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, and will be addressed in the next chapter. The fourth key event during this time period was the young Count’s baptism. Zinzendorf’s parents were involved with the Pietism that Spener was calling for. Spener was one of the godfathers of the young boy.

In June 1704, Spener preached his last sermon in St. Nicholas’ church. After this he went on to preach to his friend the Electress of Saxony. The subject of this sermon was on the difference between the death of the believer and the unbeliever. He then returned home to Berlin and made further preparations for his death. “As his weakness

\(^97\) In this respect Spener could be viewed as a forerunner of neo-orthodoxy.
increased he was filled with ecstatic joy that he knew to be the approach of his final release.” 98 On his seventieth birthday, January 13, 1705, he prayed for the forgiveness of his sins. Spener died February 5, 1705, but not until after he forbade his burial in black. He and his coffin were to be white. Spener exclaimed “I have sufficiently lamented the condition of the church; now that I am about to enter the church triumphant, I wish to be buried in a white coffin as a sign that I am dying in the hope of a better church on earth.” 99

Spener’s life and work demonstrate much of the angst that Giddens supplies to modernity. While beginning his theological journey with Arndt’s True Christianity, Spener would extend the antipathy that Arndt had for the “old man” to the broader Christian culture that existed in Germany. Spener would take the Pietist impulse and form the collegia, the practical means of replicating Pietism for the next century. Spener should be viewed as creating a modern revitalization movement that provided an alternative method to cope with the angst that modernity has brought forth.

Spener lays the foundation for institutional Pietism and the development of the University of Halle. From here Pietism begins to dominate the Prussian society that Schleiermacher grew up in. Spener’s lasting legacy, the introduction of the collegia, advances the cause of lay involvement in churches, taking Luther’s notion of the priesthood of all believers seriously. Pietism, following Spener, develops the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, eventually culminating in the life and theology of both

98 Richard Payne, Pietists Selected Writings, 89.

99 Philip Spener, Philip Jacob Spener and His Work, 24.
Kierkegaard and Palmer. Spener’s work in promoting women Pietists as well as men begins the process that eventually leads to Palmer’s holiness revivals. Often called the father of Pietism, Spener stood in an already existing line of Pietists and medieval mystics, but laid a secure foundation for institutional and nineteenth century expressions of experiential Protestantism. He also serves as an example for twentieth-century fundamentalists, which will be addressed in chapter thirteen.

**Why Pietism cannot stay just an ideological movement**

“The sorcerers were the first poisoners, the first surgeons.”

— Marcel Mauss

Scholars not only disagree as to the definition of Pietism, but also how long it lasts. For many, such as Johannes Wallmann, Pietism lasts little past the era of Perkins, Arndt, and Spener. With Francke, who we will address in the next chapter, Pietism becomes entrenched and intertwined with the larger cultures of Protestant nations, forever changing its character from a purely ideological movement to one that seeks to replicate itself through institutionalized forms. A movement changing, however, does not equal its conclusion. Since Pietism is primarily an intellectual spiritual movement, we should expect to see the introduction of the idea, adaptation with entrenchment, and adaptation because of the entrenchment. That is the point of this work. So far we have addressed the initial introduction of the Pietist impulse. In the next chapter we will address how it adapts into the institutional forms of Halle Pietism, Moravianism, and in chapter four,

Methodism. The remaining chapters will address how this ideological movement adapts once again, this time in light of the institutionalized forms, and the success that brings. As of the death of Spener in 1705, the institutionalization of Pietism is well under way.

England at this point already had its experiment with nationalizing Pietism during the Civil war and rejected it with the Restoration and even further with the Glorious Revolution. Perkins laid a foundation of Pietism that survives, but the foundation eroded. Unlike the legacies of Arndt and Spener, his survives, but in a marginalized capacity, primarily surviving in the modes of preaching used at the pulpit rather than the experienced life of the churchmen in the pew.

The greater success for Pietism is in Germany, the Netherlands, and North America. In Germany, the Prussian Monarchy founds the University of Halle with the help of Spener and Francke. This begins the process of formally training Pietist theologians that will transform Prussia. With the University at Halle, Pietism begins striking back against about the Lutheran Orthodox. Paul Tillich sees the heart of the earlier Pietists within any conflict between biblical theology and systematic theology, although we will see Pietists use of systematic theology in the nineteenth century.

Helmut Walser Smith views the growth of Pietism as inexorably linked with the construction of the modern world. “This sense of freedom, as Leonard Krieger famously argued, was not based on an invisible hand bringing together the actions of men pursuing their own interests; rather, it was based on self-reflection – on the notion, Pietist in origin,
that when men look into themselves they discover not self-love but the moral law, and that this moral law is a fact of reason and condition of freedom.\textsuperscript{101}

Outside of Halle, Pietism continued to exert influence of the lives of Reformed Pietists in the Netherlands and in North America. A common practice among the Dutch Pietists focused on personal conversion experiences and sharing those experiences through autobiographical stories of personal conversion and lived piety. In America, Pietism is found within English, German, and Dutch settlements, many of which began as Pietist colonies, but through interaction with other settlements lost much of their initial character.

As Wallace points out, the prophet’s message is accepted and then institutionalized. From here the priests must minister the message, and create a system around the prophet’s message. The same occurs for the Pietist. The only way to succeed is to grow and be willing to change, even if the change is the very thing that the revitalization movement is opposed to. Pietism is more than just a nativist revitalization movement; it is also a utopian one. For the utopia to arrive, success must be guaranteed. The challenge is how a movement predicated on being outsiders accepts success.

The reason why Pietists institutionalize in the eighteenth century is eschatological. Throughout all three strains of Pietism and the messages found within \textit{The Golden Chain}, \textit{True Christianity}, and \textit{Pious Wishes}, there exists a constant cosmic battle between God and the devil, between the spirit and the flesh, the Elect and the

\textsuperscript{101} Helmut Walser Smith, \textit{Continuities of German History} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 61.
Reprobate, the real Christians from the false ones. These themes are not wholly unique to these Pietists, but neither is their need for success. Most Pietists not only prioritize the experiential over the rational or scholastic approaches to God, but hold those other views in contempt. If the Rationalist or Scholastic succeeds as the expression of Christianity, then not only does Pietism fail, but God does as well. The only way to ensure God’s success is to remove these forces from authority and create a new Pietist authority over the others. While many Pietists may not wish to become the new authority and may even oppose these institutions, the eschatological need to do so is a siren song sung too loud. Pietism of the sixteenth and seventeenth century will crash upon the rocks of the establishment in the eighteenth century.
CHAPTER 3

INSTITUTIONAL PIETISM – FRANCKE AND ZINZENDORF

“The most basic sense of the ‘other’ is generated by the opposition in/out.”1 – J.Z. Smith

Following the foundation laid by Perkins, Arndt, and Spener, the edifice of Pietism grew into institutionalized forms through August Hermann Francke, Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, and John Wesley. The institutionalization of Pietism creates opportunities for experiential Protestantism, but also confronts the need of Pietists to remain outsiders. While the previous chapter largely focused on the theological ideas inherent to Perkins, Arndt, and Spener, with limited time focused on their lives, this chapter pays closer attention to not only the lives and theology of Francke and Zinzendorf, but also the institutions created by them. Wesley will be addressed in the next chapter. Each of these three men directly contributed to the brands of Pietism expressed by Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer. Because of the direct ties to the theological assumptions of our nineteenth-century authors, extra attention is focused on these men and their theological legacies.

No Longer Just a Church Within a Church

“*That whatever it may be on its FARTHER side, the ‘more’ with which in religious experience we feel ourselves connected is on its HITHER side the subconscious continuation of our conscious life.*”
— William James

The description of Pietism as a “Church within a Church,” is true, but it becomes less and less true as the movement develops. This is especially the case where Pietists become the ruling majority. Following the success of Spener, Pietism now has a foothold in the institutional life of Brandenburg-Prussia. Pietism moves from a church within a church to a church in and of itself. More accurately, Pietism becomes several churches independent of each other and the larger confessions they sprouted from by the end of the eighteenth century. There are historical, sociological, and theological reasons why this occurred.

First, and possibly the clearest reason, was theological. The foundational Pietists held that Christians must work out their salvation. Greater intimacy with God required greater work. This work is transformative. For the Christian it is the process of sanctification, becoming more holy. For a church this is largely the same thing; the churches needed to become more holy. Congregations split. The scholastically minded members of the church and the Pietists’ values were divergent. The orthodox esteemed fidelity to the confessional tradition and orthodox teachings. The Pietists cherished experiential and emotional Christianity. Each side maintained the others’ pursuit was folly. One side must submit or separate.

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This separation, while theologically driven, is also rather practical. From the Pietist perspective, remaining within the established churches limited their expression and further marginalized their ideology. The only way to transform society is by transforming the self first. If scholastic sin is entangling you, fleeing is the appropriate response.

This also makes sense from a sociological perspective. If we look at Wallace’s notion of revitalization movements, we expect the prophet to give way to the priest, who then orders followers. Pietism is largely a network of different prophets and priests at different times, but in order for the message to be successful, Wallace and logic tell us that there are two main challenges to these movements. The first challenge is believability, and the second is overcoming resistance. The key for Wallace is not in the believability of the message, rather in the amount of resistance. The Pietistic message faced serious institutional resistance. Left unchecked, these institutions would exert their strength and further marginalize and eliminate the Pietist message, leaving only Protestant Orthodoxy, and rationalism. Therefore, it is only reasonable to find a way to overcome the resistance to survive. Creating new churches, movement, and denominations is an outgrowth of the challenges inherent in the established Protestant Church structures.

The question may be why did this not happen before? After all, Pietism existed in one form or another since Luther. The answer is twofold. First, despite the followings of Perkins, Arndt, and other Pietists, until the Prussian monarch commissioned Spener to start a school the opportunity was severely lacking. Second, the seventeenth century is the point where these lines are clearly drawn and institutions could truly separate and
form new institutions. The events of the seventeenth century, the increase in secularization following the Thirty Years War, and the mixture of theology with Protestant philosophy, allowed for a demystification that dominated earlier forms of Protestantism. As of the eighteenth-century Protestant scholasticism and rationalism asserted their voices once again claiming they could talk clearly about God. Once this happened, Pietists, Rationalists, and Scholastics could clearly label the different theological traits within a surviving Protestant world. The first Pietist to truly understand the new opportunity available to the Pietists was August Hermann Francke.

August Hermann Francke 1663-1727 – Reworking the World

"Let self-denial then be earnestly recommended."

– August Hermann Francke

Augustus Hermann Francke⁴ is the clear inheritor of Spener’s Pietist movement. Yet to reduce Francke to simply the leader of the movement after Spener’s passing is both troublesome and misleading. The view that Francke simply took what Spener started and continued it promotes the idea that Pietism began with Spener as opposed to a movement of experiential Protestantism that existed before and outside of Spener. As much as Francke is an heir of Spener, he is also an innovator and participant in his own right. To understand Lutheran Pietism, Francke must be addressed for the work he did to

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⁴ Sometimes his name is recorded as Augustus and other times as August.
advance not only notions of an experiential Christianity, but also his development of the modern Prussian state.

Augustus Herman Francke was born in Lübeck in Northern Germany on March 23, 1660. His childhood was filled with piety and loss. The loss included the death of his father when he was only seven years old. To make sense of the loss, Francke grew close to his mother and sisters. The strongest connection he formed was with the younger of his older sisters. She was still three years older than Augustus, but the bond the two had was strong. According to his memoirs, much of his early childhood was spent in prayer with his sister and reading Johann Arndt’s *True Christianity*. Francke describes his love he held for his sister until she died while he was still at an early age, presumably several years before he began his time at the gymnasium at thirteen.

Following his sister’s passing, the young Francke’s devotion to God seemingly died as well. From what he recorded in his autobiography and his memoirs, he was a very conflicted young man. Francke lost much of his love of God. Replacing this lost love of God was a new love of learning. This learning was still learning about God. The majority of his studies were foreign languages, specifically the languages of the Bible. Francke’s education led to his eventual ordination. Though Francke’s educational pursuits focused on God, he was not pious. Franke recollected that “Theology was to me a mere science, in which only my memory and judgement were concerned. I did not make it practical.”

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Throughout his teens and early twenties, Francke procured scholarships and fellowships to several universities throughout Germany. This began with a stay at the University of Erfurt at the age of sixteen, then a move to Kiel at the direction of his uncle. Following Kiel, he moved onto Hamburg and Leipzig. During his educational treks through Germany, he supplemented his income by tutoring other students in Hebrew and Oriental languages. Francke’s skilled tutoring did not go unnoticed. By 1684 his mastery of languages secured him a job as a professor in Wittenberg.

While in Wittenberg, Francke and another private teacher formed a “Society for the Study of the Bible.” There are two interesting things about the society. First is the similarity this has to the collegia that Spener set up following his sermon in 1669. The mirroring of what many contend as the key feature of early Pietism, illustrates how prolific the idea became in such a short time, and how Spener tapped into a much larger impulse in Christianity. Within fifteen years the idea of practical Bible studies took root. The second striking thing about Francke’s society for the Study of the Bible is also connected to the timing of its emergence, not as an illustration of Spener but of Francke. According to Francke’s own testimony, the formation of the Bible society took place before Francke’s spiritual formation.

Francke’s spiritual formation occurred two years later, in Luneburg in 1687. While preparing to deliver a sermon, Francke’s own sermon made him reflect upon his life. This resulted in a feeling of emptiness. At this point Francke realized he was not a Christian, and questioned if he even believed in God. Francke earnestly prayed. Following his prayer he records “When I knelt down I did not believe that there was a God but when I stood up I believed it to the point of giving up my blood without fear or
doubt… It was as if I had spent my whole life in a deep sleep, and everything to this point had only been a dream and I had just woken up.” The result was clear, for Francke later proclaimed, “All my doubts disappeared at once, and I was assured of his favor. I could not only call him God but my father.”

His spiritual birth connected the skills that Francke developed since his youth, along with a passion that dedicated his work and life to God. Beyond the outward labors that Francke is famous for, from the fall of 1687 onward, Francke believed that his chief work was simply “to become a justified Christian.” With this as his primary focus, his outward work took on a new character and shaped not only his life, but the face of Prussia and by extension Germany and modernity.

Just like Saul on the Road to Damascus would only regain his sight after meeting with Ananias, the scales fell from Francke’s eyes only when he meet with his spiritual father, Spener. In 1688 Francke spent two months with Spener in Dresden. Interestingly enough the experiences that brought these men together at this point were not similar. Contrary to the standard formula of a conversion experience similar to Francke’s, Spener had no experience. Francke’s conversion experience was not yet an expectation among the Pietists, his conversion in October 1687 is one of the earliest examples of the “born again” conversion experiences within Lutheranism. This born again experience is played out in the lives of Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer to one degree or another.


7 August Hermann Francke, Memoirs of Augustus Hermann Francke, 32.

What Spener and Francke shared was not their experience of being born again, but the formation of the *collegia pietatis*, and Bible communities. By spending time in Spener’s house, Francke gained practical training, and other spiritual benefits, such as council and encouragement. At the same time, such a close association with Spener at this time carried with it certain dangers as well. When Francke’s time with Spener was done, he moved to Leipzig to work as a private teacher, and set up more Bible Societies. While he may have faced opposition before this time, Francke’s name was now coupled with that of Spener and the two of them were unpopular with the authorities. Francke, like Perkins and Spener, faced a ban and was forced to defend himself on more than one occasion. His prime opponents were the Theology faculty at the university. “They declared that private teachers had no right to deliver theological lectures. Francke replied that he had not touched upon any of the theological controversies, but had confined himself to the explanation of the Scriptures, and the practical application of them, and that this was a right of every Christian. But notwithstanding this, his lectures were forbidden.”

This defense and those who supported Francke did not count for much. All works deemed “Pietist” were forbidden and this included any public lectures by Francke.

To get around the ban, Francke, as well as a few others, held meetings in his house daily. The edict forbidding Pietist books, including Arndt’s *True Christianity*, was simply ignored. With full knowledge that Francke flouted the law, every one of his packages of mail were confiscated. In order to prove that he disseminated banned books,

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the package was opened in court. Lucky for him this time it only held New Testaments. This served to benefit Francke, as all charges were dismissed.

The controversy resulted in Francke leaving Leipzig, and for the next fifteen months he resided in Erfurt. While in Erfut, the practice of Bible Societies continued, as did the persecution from the established Lutheran Orthodoxy. The Orthodox clergy called a council, which ordered him to leave the city. It was only the petitions of many citizens (including Roman Catholics) and the Duke of Gotha that prevented his forced removal.

At some point throughout these trials Francke met and married Anna Magdalena von Wurmb, who he describes as “an amiable and pious lady.” By all accounts they had a happy marriage. They had three children, with only two surviving infancy. Their son also became a professor and resided at Halle. Their daughter married a pious man, Johann Anastasius Freylinghausen. The Francke household was noted for their piety and also their silence. August Hermann Francke had a daily ritual of beginning with an hour of quiet Bible study every morning. The rest of the day remained just as quiet and orderly. Amongst the rules for good order Francke states “All laughter is forbidden” and this extended to his house. Everything must have a purpose and laughter, as well as all forms of leisure, either served no purpose at all or fed the impulse towards impropriety. Francke’s opposition to leisure was so intense that he refused to permit any


form of exercise that did not advance some pedagogical end. Oddly Francke resembles the modern notion of a Puritan far more than Perkins.

While it may be difficult to believe, the household was always described as a happy one, happy, but without laughter. Francke’s home was very busy in accomplishing the multitude of tasks he believed must get done. In addition to no horseplay and no laughter, there were very few spontaneous conversations with outsiders. If Francke met with someone, it was to accomplish some task. There was no banter, no idle dialogue or futile conversations. Saying of himself “I have not time to converse long with each of my visitors. I can truly say, that when I devote an hour of my life to any one, I feel that I have made him a large present, for an hour is worth more to me, than much money.”

It is easy to paint Francke as an angry recluse, but this is far from the case. First it may be interesting to note that this sentiment comes partly from à Kempis who advises “DO NOT open your heart to every man, but discuss your affairs with one who is wise and who fears God. Do not keep company with young people and strangers.” Later à Kempis advises, “SHUN the gossip of men as much as possible, for discussion of worldly affairs, even though sincere, is a great distraction inasmuch as we are quickly ensnared and captivated by vanity.” Largely Francke isolated himself as a way to purify himself.


Furthermore Francke reminds us in his *Rules for the protection of conscience and for good order in conversation or in society*, to “Honor each person in society,”\(^{15}\) and never to be “sad and melancholy among people, but joyous and loving for joy and love enliven everyone.”\(^{16}\) While frivolous activities and laughter did not have a place, joy should accompany every interaction. Francke was free to associate with people if there was a spiritual purpose, but small talk was a vice to be avoided. So was the convention of the household built by Francke.

Until his marriage in 1691, Francke spent the first half of his life as a journeyman throughout nearly every major Protestant territory in Germany. Shortly after his nuptials the journeyman found a home for the rest of his life in Halle. Halle, from its conception, was built for an innovator like Francke. Frederick III(I)\(^ {17}\) of Brandenburg Prussia sought a new university to offset the overly Lutheran bias in his territory. King Frederick I, like his father the Great Elector Frederic Wilhelm (d. 1688), was a Calvinist, yet the vast majority of their territory was Lutheran. This confessional battle strengthened the Junkers and all those who opposed the Elector and King.

Beginning in the 1660s, the Great Elector opened the borders of his territory to other Calvinists and Huguenots. While this did bolster the economy of his capital, it did

\(^{15}\) August Hermann Francke, "Rules for the protection of conscience and for good order in conversation or in society 1689." In *Pietists Selected Writings*, (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 112, Rule #27.

\(^{16}\) August Hermann Francke, "Rules for the protection of conscience and for good order in conversation or in society 1689." In *Pietists Selected Writings*. 112 Rule #28.

\(^{17}\) Elector Frederick III, through some political maneuvers promotes himself to become the first Prussian King in 1701. As such he is identified both as Frederick III and Frederick I, one corresponding to the Electoral Title and the other of his monarchy. As he ends with the title king, and to avoid confusion with his father, I will make reference to him as King Frederick I, even though the events occurring here take place nearly a decade before the coronation of Frederick.
little to solve the theological divide over the rest of his territory. As the Lutherans were too united against the Reform, Frederic Wilhelm took measures to restrict their rights to interfere with the practices of his co-confessionalists. With the opposition continuing, the Great Elector extended his immigration policy to include Pietists as well. He hoped that they would be less hostile to the Reformed church than the Orthodox Lutherans. This attempt was not that successful, as the training for all pastors came from the hotbed of Lutheran Orthodoxy in neighboring Saxony.

Since the divide was a theological one, the solution must be theological as well. The main problem was that until 1692 there was no university in Brandenburg-Prussia that produced Lutheran clergy for their cities, let alone clergy that could show leniency towards Calvinism and the Reform practices of the Hohenzollern dynasty. To remedy this situation, Frederick I sought out theological minds he believed would promote union and serve as a counterbalance to his theological foes, the Lutheran Orthodoxy.

As Spener was the chief foe of the Orthodox Lutheran, he was chosen to found the university. In actuality, Spener did little compared to others. His greatest accomplishment was bringing Francke in as professor of Greek and Oriental Languages. This professorship was a great fit for Francke who quickly outgrew that position and headed up the department of Theology in 1698. Halle was known for Pietistic Theology and Enlightenment Philosophy. Both departments were filled with professors that opposed the Lutheran Orthodoxy, and often each other as well. In actuality, the founding of the university was simultaneously a success and failure. Little more than a decade after its founding, the University of Halle became the largest university in Germany with a student body of fifteen hundred during the 1710s. The theological program followed
Francke’s pietistic and pedagogical leanings and trained up a new crop of pastors that soon would displace the old guard in Brandenburg Prussia. Unfortunately neither the Philosophy department nor the Theology department supported the theological union that the Hohenzollern’s sought.

In addition to the professorship, Francke was given a post as the Pastor of St. Georges Church in Glaucha, the slums outside of Halle. Glaucha was described as a “sin resort,” and for good reason. Unlike other areas of Germany, the citizens of Glaucha could all manufacture and sell spirits. While involved in the supply side, the small town was also used to strong drink. Glaucha had two hundred dwellings, of which thirty seven were taverns, often with an accompanying brothel. Infidelity was so rampant that the previous pastor was dismissed for committing adultery in the confessional. One would not think that a pursuit of piety could take root in this town, but Francke’s persistence paid off.

The first thing that Francke did as pastor was to set up Biblical Societies just as he had done in Leipzig and elsewhere. Surprisingly Francke had similar results. The societies grew just as in Leipzig, but without the same degree of opposition. In his Guide to the Reading and Study of the Holy Scripture, Francke instructs his readers that the scripture may be the same for all, but not everyone approaches it the same. Just like Perkins, Francke categorizes his audience, and the readers of scripture. In the same work Francke outlines different modes and motivations for reading the Bible. As such, not
everyone will “derive not from their labors the same advantages.” To fully understand the scriptures, one must come to them not only with the requisite skills of knowledge, but also appreciation for the scriptures and a drive to be close to God.

The first focus for Francke was his personal pursuit of holiness and the expectation that all men and women truly want the same thing. Francke rejected any form of predestination, as advocated by Perkins, and “maintained that God had issued a ‘general call to grace,’ granting salvation to whoever experienced rebirth and served his or her neighbor.” While grace was offered to all, there was still a problem. The problem was clear, it was sin, and the denial that sin produces.

In a letter to a friend on preaching, Francke writes that self-deceit is common. The key is to instruct hearers of their duty of self-examination. It is only after this reflection that anyone can be “awakened from their natural sleep in sin.” Because of the fraud perpetuated by our will the key according to Francke was in breaking the will. Just as is the case for Tauler and Arndt, Francke asserts that the will belongs to the ‘old man’ and it is the fountain of sin and disobedience.

Similar to à Kempis and Arndt, Francke maintained that we can be perfect in our endeavors. “Perfection, however, was not interpreted as sinlessness; it meant definite progress in the Christian life. Such progress would be evidence of an undeviating


allegiance to spiritual reality in contrast to the worldliness of the time, including that of the church and its clergy.\textsuperscript{21} In his letter \textit{On Christian Perfection}, Francke outlines fifteen theses concerning Christian Perfection. Throughout the work Francke conveys perfection, not only through the guise of justification and sanctification, but on the doctrine of transmuted righteousness.\textsuperscript{22} “Perfection is nothing other than faith in the Lord Jesus and is not in us or ours but in Christ or of Christ for whose sake we are considered perfect before God and thus his perfection is ours by ascription.”\textsuperscript{23} This perfection is not a license to sin, as Francke maintains that Christians are only perfect from the perspective of God. The Christian is also not perfect, as there is always room to grow and set aside every evil.\textsuperscript{24} Perfection applies to righteousness, and ongoing sanctification is required. Following the process of justification before God, the Christian is made perfect, though still has sin, but as long as they endeavor towards sanctification, the sin is not counted against them.\textsuperscript{25}

This is both freeing, as sin does not condemn the true Christian, but is also frightening, as how can one know if they are saved. The question that is central to Perkins and Calvinism remains a question for Franke’s Lutheran audience. Francke attempts to clarify this in his work, \textit{If And How One May Be Certain That One Is A Child


\textsuperscript{22} Rule #2


\textsuperscript{24} Rule #10.

\textsuperscript{25} Rule #12.
Francke maintains that “you ought not to say: ‘I am baptized, I go to church, I am a Christian.’ The hypocrites do the same. There is many a person baptized who yet went back on his oath and was faithless and fell out of his baptismal covenant. Many people go to the Lord's Supper and misuse it and receive it to their judgment and death. You must make no decisions because you follow externals.” Francke takes away the external signs of grace. Taking Arndt’s position even farther, the sacraments hold little value for Francke, at least when determining ones status before God. Rather what is needed is a new heart and a life that is directed toward serving God and neighbor. Francke undoubtedly was comforted by his own conversion experience, something that Spener and others lacked.

To work out ones salvation, one must also rework their life and their surroundings. Francke is best identified as a constant worker, never ceasing in his labors, believing they all come from God. Within Francke there exists very little notion that Christians are to find rest in God, as Angela da Foligno did upon her death. Likely Francke took the reports of saints dying in peace and joy to an absurd level, possibly holding that only at death can one enter into peace and joy. This life was not designed to rest but to perform one’s Christian duties. Francke maintained that the duty of the Christian is to toil for God. This notion surprisingly comes from Thomas à Kempis, who in Book Two of *The Imitation of Christ*, states “Why do you look for rest when you were born to work? Resign yourself to patience rather than to comfort, to carrying your cross

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rather than to enjoyment.”

While à Kempis used this phrase to highlight the value of the Cross for the Christian, the industrious Francke saw first toil, obligation and fulfilling his commission as a cleric.

It was in this manner that Francke saw his pastoral duties in Glaucha. Glaucha required a transformation from the sin resort it was known as into a city of God. As pastor Francke focused not only on the spiritual needs of his people, but also on their obvious physical needs, “a matter that he regarded as inseparable from conversion and revival.”

While diligent and covetous of his time, Francke appears rather flexible when it comes to his parish’s needs. When he perceived a need, Francke quickly and methodically sought out a solution. These solutions to the practical problems of the day are Francke’s legacy, as much if not more than his theological contributions.

The most practical concern that Francke addressed was the orphans of Glaucha. The creation of an Orphan House like the endeavors that followed was simply a practical solution to a real problem. For Francke it began with the custom of the poor to arrive at stated times at the houses of their benefactors to receive alms. Quickly Franke grew tired of simply distributing alms and wanted to understand the conditions of the poor. Francke promptly divided the poor into three different categories. In the first category were those he believed were simply to be poor regardless of assistance, often because of love of vices more than a desire to escape from poverty. On the other end of the spectrum France


knew there were many who needed assistance even though they refused to request it. This left the remainder to be his focus; those who were poor, but through education may find a way to escape poverty.

It may be interesting to note here that Francke did not share the medieval Catholic belief that there were any spiritual blessings associated with poverty, neither was wealth demonized. Wealth should never be an end in itself, which was clearly a sin, but if the “Children of God” who were financially blessed used their money for the good of their neighbors, their wealth could be sanctified. This does not mean that Francke believed that anyone should receive a high wage though, as higher wages may distract from the constant prayer that is required of the Christian and provide for “sinful, costly diversions.” In what became typical Puritan fashion elsewhere, wealth had a value to be accumulated but not spent. It should be given away in service to those in need and not spent on luxury items.

With the masses who could escape poverty if only given an opportunity, Francke had to figure out a means of assisting them. Francke believed the best use of his effort was to direct his energies to children rather than the adults. It began with the poor requesting alms. Francke invited them into his home and asked the children, in front of their parents, questions about their shared Lutheran Catechism. Too often the children were ignorant of this. This served to differentiate those who failed to understand the tenets of their faith from those who were not open to receiving aid. Of course for

Francke true aid included hearing the gospel. To this end, Francke instructed them in the catechism and read scripture. Only after this was money distributed.

Shortly after beginning this new educational regime, Francke received a substantial gift. This generous gift was put into solving a practical problem. Francke decided to purchase books for the needy. This turned out to be mistake as most of the books were quickly lost or sold elsewhere. To fix this practical problem Francke purchased more books, but retained them in his house for the children. This quickly created a school for the poor children. Children gathered regularly at Francke’s house for instruction. So many gathered that Francke’s house was no longer a house but a school. This was all the more true for the orphans. The orphans were brought in but quickly they outgrew Francke’s house. The orphans and the school worked together and grew together, each growing into larger buildings, and becoming greater undertakings. In 1730 Francke had 500 people belonging to his school. Beyond the students, a city grew up around the Orphan House and school houses where 3,000 people were connected in one way or the other to Francke’s educational system outside of the university. Francke actually set up multiple schools, one for the sons and daughters of the Burghers and another for the poor, in addition to those specifically for the orphans. Some of the classes were directed towards practical concerns while other were focused more on spiritual education. In all Francke oversaw twenty-seven different classes intended on educating the youth of every socio-economic background.

The true purpose of the Orphan House and the schoolhouse was to produce ascetic Christians who not only received charity but would give charity to their neighbors in need. The education for both houses was intensive on a level far more ambitious than
anything else in the sixteenth century. Education began with what Francke believed was the first step in becoming a Christian, namely “breaking the will.” Unsurprisingly, not every student wanted his or her will broken. Often students were removed from their old enjoinment and even physically isolated from other children until their wills were broken. While the indoctrination was thorough and coercive, it was also to be done with the greatest degree of kindness possible. Francke’s pedagogical theory began with, breaking the child’s “natural will” as quickly as possible. This would prevent them from falling into the snares of the world and urge them toward the goal of subordination to the divine will, and internalize the Pietist’s values.

At the beginning Francke was completely dependent upon gifts from various benefactors to pay for the increasing scope of his projects. While philanthropic gifts continued, much of the need for them dissipated after Francke was given the formula and rights to a specific medicine in 1698. The orphans supplied the labor and an apothecary quickly became the chief business of the Orphan House. In short order Halle became a center for medical knowledge in Germany. By 1705 the first widely disseminated manual of practical medicine, the *Kurger und deutlicher Unterricht von dem Leibe un
natürlichen Leben des Menschen*, was written by Christian Friedrich Richter.⁴⁰ People came from all around for medical treatments and a barn was converted to a hospital. The barn clinic grew into the third best clinic in Europe and saw one hundred patients per month.
Francke landed on another small business at this time, a printing press. Calling it the “Poor People’s Press,” the orphans at Halle set up press initially to produce printed sermons and commentaries authored by Francke. With the combination of cheap labor and a determined work ethic produced from the educational system, which comprised of a broken will and determination, the orphans quickly became a means of profitability for Halle instead of a burden. Not everything Francke touched turned into gold; many of his other entrepreneurial aims fell flat or even cost much more than they brought in. Still the apothecary and press stood as shining examples for the world.

The world quickly took note of the activities at Halle. Largely to expand the reach of helping his neighbor, Francke sent out missionaries to three continents. Sending out missionaries at the beginning of the eighteenth century was a novel idea. Very few Protestants sent out missionaries and most were opposed to this idea at the time. Francke maintained that the entire world needed reforming. Success also begat more success. As Francke sent out missionaries into new markets, the people there purchased his medicine. Those who converted also purchased works published at Francke’ printing press. This grew Halle and made it more important, which only encouraged more countries to take note of the success of Halle. Peter the Great of Russia even tried to reform some of Russia on the model of Halle, including setting up Pietists in influential positions in the Russian court.

The greatest synthesis of missionary success came with Denmark. King Frederick IV of Denmark (d. 1730) was the only Lutheran ruler whose kingdom had multiple
nationalities. This created a great need for Denmark to spread the Lutheran message to places outside of Europe. Halle sent 162 missionaries to the King of Denmark who served to convert his subjects in India. The relationship between the Danish empire and Halle was renowned for their success. Very quickly the “Danish-Halle” system of missionaries became the model for the rest of Protestant Europe. Throughout the eighteenth century, the main missionary publication was the *Hallesche Berichte* (Halle Reports), a product of this symbiotic relationship. What was also new was the expectation placed on the prospective convert. True to Francke’s view of the sacraments, Halle mission theory held that a convert should be baptized only after undergoing a lengthy period of instruction in Christian doctrine. While he expected a born again experience conversion was still a process, and not a spontaneous act. To best spread the message of Christianity to foreign cultures, they first needed to be understood and the natives who converted became the leaders of the new catechumens.

Francke remained in Halle until the death of Spener in 1705. Following Spener’s death, Francke suffered his own health crisis, likely due to depression. Francke was advised to travel as a means of medicine. After a quick trip throughout Germany, he returned to Halle and spent the next twenty years, give or take with more doctor prescribed travel, with fluctuating health, before his eventual death in 1727.

We find within Francke all the hallmarks of modernity, both its good and ails. Francke is rather universalistic and caring in ways that most in the late seventeenth

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31 Danes, Germans, Norwegians, Africans Greenlanders, West Indian Virgin Islanders, Bengalis, and Tamils.
century were not. At the same time Francke’s notion of discipline was clearly oppressive, even if the oppression was covered in love and patriarchal concern. Far more emotional in his understanding of the relationship Christians are to have with God than Spener or Arndt, Francke was also far more structured in his own life. Richard Gawthrop sums it up best when he says “Francke’s was a truly Promethean spirituality, an obsession with power, action, and domination fueled by the vision of an infinite challenge to be faced.”

The struggle to help ones neighbor while not wasting any time with the minutia of life quickly transfers from Francke to Halle and from Halle to Prussia. Following Francke, the preachers produced at Halle transformed Prussia. The church officials were the means of the bureaucratic system that renovated Prussia from tough farm land into the driving force in Europe over the next few centuries.

Francke’s institutionalized Pietism has lasting repercussions throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth century. It was his school that Zinzendorf would attend, and Halle transformed the Prussian ethos from the sleeping Michael to the industrious stoic Prussia that consumes popular conceptions of Germany in the twentieth century. This Prussian industrialism is the culture that Schleiermacher and his notions of romanticism reacted against. More importantly, Francke elevated experience. The conversion experience became an expectation for Pietists following Francke, to the point that anyone who failed to give evidence of this experience was held suspect. This conversion experience trumps understanding and even the sacraments. This experience took many forms and often occurred more than once, as was the case with Schleiermacher and

Kierkegaard. Francke also contributed to Tauler, à Kempis, and Arndt’s notion of Christian perfection. By bringing this idea to the forefront, Franke provides further Pietistic justifications for the doctrine advanced by Wesley and the theology that becomes central to Palmer.

**Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf 1700-1760– quasi-mystic**

“*Faith is the Christian’s obligation; to be holy is the Christian’s nature.*”

— Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf

It would be apt to say that Spener has two legitimate heirs to his Pietism, Francke and his godson and student of Francke, Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf. These two heirs are two poles of the Lutheran pietistic experience. Francke’s Pietism is described as a promethean spirituality filled with work, power, struggle, and strife against the established order. Zinzendorf’s spirituality, on the other hand, has a far more casual and personal feel to it. While both theologians express intimacy with God in their life and letters, Zinzendorf’s piety appears more natural and less forced. Zinzendorf has his own challenges with the established Lutheran church in Saxony, still this contest appears less of a constant struggle than what Francke faced in a friendly Prussia. Due to this ease of Zinzendorf’s piety, he is often described as a mystic rather than a theologian. Francke and Francke’s Pietism established the Prussian ethos for the next century, while Zinzendorf transformed the Pietist ethos and made it universal. To understand the man, the quasi-mystic, we need to understand his life.

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Before we can speak of Count Nicholas Ludwig it is beneficial to briefly address the experiential spirituality of his grandfather and the ancestral journey leading to Nicholas Ludwig. The Zinzendorf’s were a prominent family in the Holy Roman Empire, earning the title of Reichsgafenstand. During the early days of the Reformation, Maximilian Sinsendorf sided with Luther. This necessitated a migration not only of confessions but also territory out of Catholic Austria and into Lutheran Saxony. The name changed at this point from Sinsendorf to Zinzendorf. Maximillian married Anna Amalia von Dietrichstein and they had two sons and three daughters. Both of Maximillian’s sons George and Otto took positions in the Saxon government and both were Lutherans, but only one of them became a Pietist. That one was Nicholas’s father, George Ludwig.

George was married once before he married the twenty-five year old, Charlotte Justine. He also had two daughters with his first wife before her death, but Charlotte gave the Count something the 37 year old always wanted, a son. The son arrived in Dresden on May 26, 1700 and they named him Nicholas Ludwig. Both George and Charlotte shared a pietistic outlook and were determined to raise their son a Pietist. George shared news of this blessing with his friend, the Pietists leader, Philip Jakob Spener who he also named the child’s godfather. Within six weeks of the birth George died from tuberculosis. Charlotte outlived both her husband George and her son Nicholas, the latter only by three years.

34 It is due to his family’s nobility that we have many records of his Grandfather and Father, records that are sorely lacking for most of our other Pietists.

35 This is where we get the title Count for Nicholas.
Following the death of George, Charlotte took her son and lived with her mother. Nicholas’ older sisters lived with his uncle Otto. Four years later, in 1704, Charlotte married Dubinslaw Gneomer von Natzmer, a Prussian Field Marshal and moved with him to Berlin, leaving Nicholas in the care of her mother in Saxony. The two saw each other only rarely from this point forward. Nicholas was in the care of his very religious grandmother, Henriette Katherina von Gersdorf (d. 1726). Henriette cared deeply for Lutz, her nickname for him, and raised him with the same pietistic zeal that she possessed. The home was a center of activity that focused on personal devotion to God in prayer, Bible reading and most important for Nicholas, hymns. The young Count’s relationship with his grandmother and God had to suffice as the large estate had no other children for him to play with.

His personal devotion to God can clearly be seen in two events in 1706. The first took place when the gardener complained about repeatedly finding paper outside of Lutz’s window. Upon further inspection, this was not trash, but letters composed by the young Count to Jesus. His grandmother “gently told him that the love letters to Jesus were a wonderful idea but throwing them out the window was not the way to deliver them to Jesus.”

They were no more papers strewn out his window again.

The second event took place when the Swedish armies overran Saxony. Eager for supplies, a military unit ransacked the estate. That is until they entered Zinzendorf’s room. The six year old paid no mind to the invasion of his home and continued his

regular prayers and devotions. The Lutheran Swedish soldiers then paused in their assignment and listened to him speak about Jesus, they even joined in in prayer. Zinzendorf spent the next four years living with his grandmother and growing in his Pietism.

At age ten, Zinzendorf was sent off to study under Francke at Halle. It is here that Zinzendorf encountered other children his age as well as some personal struggles. Zinzendorf was already rather bright and like Francke he knew several languages. One language he did not speak, was the language of his peers. While he expressed the same pietistic beliefs as his classmates, he had a difficult time connecting with any of them. There are multiple accounts of his poor interactions with not only his students but some of the teachers at Halle. One reason for this difficulty is accredited to a letter his mother sent to Francke. In this letter she urged Francke to “break his spirit and keep him down in order that pride not take root in his heart.”37 The other reason was his social standing. As a count there were those at the school who envied his birth status, including a tutor who tried to destroy his reputation and have him removed from Halle.

All attempts at destroying Nicholas’ reputation failed. All they did was focus his piety even more, and by the age of twelve he began writing hymns. Zinzendorf’s piety and intelligence were clearly seen by all, including Francke, and he became a regular guest at his table. Some of the creative organizational skills of Francke must have rubbed off on Zinzendorf over the next few years because at fifteen Zinzendorf created his own

student society within Halle. He called the society “The Order of the Grain of Mustard Seed.” Zinzendorf drew on Jesus’ parable in Matthew 17, of faith likened to a small mustard seed that grows into a great tree. The key to this faith can be found in the motto that they had inscribed onto rings, “No one liveth unto himself.”\(^{38}\) The piety required at Halle and Zinzendorf is a selfless piety. That same year Zinzendorf graduated from Halle, the valedictorian.

While Zinzendorf’s heart was focused on service and personal devotion to God, where he would go next did not line up with his desires. In 1716 he began his studies at University of Wittenberg.\(^ {39} \) With Zinzendorf’s background and family, it is odd he went to study at the main university of the Lutheran Orthodox, Wittenberg. This only becomes clear when we understand the three mains reasons why the count attended that school. First, as a Lutheran there was an appeal to studying at the same school where Luther was a professor of the Bible. Second, Wittenberg kept Zinzendorf close to the seat of power, where he would likely find a vocation after his education. Third, and most clearly the reason why the young Zinzendorf studied at Wittenberg, was because his uncle Otto sent him there. While Zinzendorf was under the care of his very Pietist grandmother, his father’s brother did have some sway over the young man’s future and his uncle cared little for Pietism. As such the Count once again had a tutor who did not like him. This time his tutor had little understanding of his religious inclinations and did not care to


foster them. This did not stop the young Zinzendorf from handing out pietistic literature in the streets surrounding the staunchly Lutheran orthodox university.

Although Zinzendorf hoped to study theology at Luther’s university in Wittenberg, his uncle directed his studies toward the practical concerns of law. Nicholas’s uncle Otto was determined that the young Count receive an education for all the requisite skills of a count, therefore the young man took classes in dancing, fencing, and horseback riding. In addition to this Nicholas was sent out on trips throughout the major cities of Western Europe. The young Count wrote of his frustrations, testifying “my uncle was obsessed to change my heart and put a different head on my body.”

While on this trek through Europe, he encountered a painting in the Dusseldorf museum. The painting was entitled Behold, the Man, by Domenico Feti. The painting was of Christ presented by Pilate, as described in John 19:5. The depiction of Christ in all his suffering struck the young count. Zinzendorf intensified his focus on Christ, maintaining that Christ must be glorified in all things since Christ suffered so much for his sake. Zinzendorf was often carried away by strong vehement feelings of sorrow and joy.

Following this encounter, Zinzendorf visited a hospital in Paris and began a lengthy conversation with a Catholic cardinal. The obvious confessional differences were overshadowed by their mutual focus on the cross. Surprisingly for some the two became friends and a mutual respect grew among them. The two only had a falling out


41 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man! (KJV).
when the cardinal recanted his opposition to a papal Bull that condemned Arndt’s *True Christianity*. Zinzendorf possessed none of the reflexive vitriol that Perkins, Arndt, and Spener had for Catholicism.

In 1721 Zinzendorf began a career as a lawyer in the court of King Frederick August (d. 1733) in Dresden. This was the same position held by his father before his death. Frederick August, known as August II and August “the Strong,” was the electoral prince of Saxony who took the Polish throne. As such, he earned the title King, a title that usually was forbidden to princes in Germany, although we have already mentioned the exceptions to this rule in Brandenburg-Prussia at this time. Unlike the kings of Prussia, August’s religion was secondary to his need for more money. In order to take the throne of Poland, August had to convert to Catholicism as well. This only served as a wedge for most of his Lutheran citizens in Saxony.

While officially a lawyer, Zinzendorf’s public life in Dresden included the publication of an anonymous weekly paper called “The Dresden Socrates.” The paper was a critique against the Christian population of the city who professed Christ but whose lives did not resemble their confession. It was not difficult to see this as an attack on his fellow nobility and even the King himself. Zinzendorf also criticized the clergy who were lukewarm at best and he believed to be negligent. For orthodox Lutherans that could be forgiven, if they were talented and bright, but Zinzendorf criticized their sermons, saying they were “repetitious, boring and wearisome.”

Zinzendorf gave similar critiques in his Berlin speeches, when he said, “Today it is worse, it costs more to love people who dare to say that Jesus is the Son of God and in spite of that live in the most extreme recklessness, and only take part in what belongs to external religion, but aside from [the externals] actually drift into doubt or betray unbelief in their mode of life.” Echoing Spener, Zinzendorf drew a clear differentiation between church attendance, even denominational confession, and what made someone a Christian. While this idea alleviated some of the critiques directed against August the Strong, it also brought new critiques against the King. Very few people found any comfort in these words and the words from the Dresden Socrates were clearly illegal.

There is little doubt that his illegal paper would be held up by the city censors. The third edition of the paper was confiscated in order to limit this critique. Reports are mixed as to what allowed the paper to continue, some mention that once the count revealed it was his work, the paper was again permitted. Others say that Zinzendorf’s identity was revealed but without a public declaration. In either account Zinzendorf acquired many enemies in Dresden.

Some of these enemies criticized his Pietism and his constant devotion. This devotion included having religious meetings in his apartment, meetings that were illegal. Others took a different tact, claiming that Zinzendorf was not a true Christian at all. Some, like Henry Rimius, criticized Zinzendorf’s “still greater intercourse with the See of

Rome, taking his affiliation with Catholic Bishops as a clear sign he was a Papist rather than a Lutheran. Other Pietistic leaning Lutherans challenged Zinzendorf on the grounds that he lacked a conversion experience. Following Francke, it was an expectation that all “true” Christians have a clear conversion experience. Keep in mind that neither Spener nor Arndt had these experiences. Zinzendorf could not recall a time when he lacked an intimate connection with God. In light of this there could be no conversion experience. For those Pietist Lutherans and even many Calvinists, this was a disqualification of Zinzendorf’s religious claims.

While Zinzendorf held all the qualifications and intelligence for the job, his focus was never on the King’s court. Most of his attention was drawn elsewhere. Nicholas’s uncle secured the training and the job at court, but his Grandmother also supported Zinzendorf having the public life of a count. This included serving at court. When Zinzendorf’s grandmother died in 1727, he was free from his obligations to her. Shortly after her death he resigned from his office in Dresden.

Some of the obligations that took Zinzendorf’s attention away from courtly life was his wife and family. In the spring of 1720, after a few voyages throughout Europe with friends, the young Count visited his father’s sister. He immediately fell in love with the Countesses Theodora von Castelle, his eighteen year old cousin. The courtship was brief and blessed by his grandmother. It appeared that the young Theodora was to be wed shortly. Unfortunately for Nicholas, Theodora had other suiters. The Count only

44 Henry Rimius, A Supplement to the Candid narrative of the rise and progress of the Herrnhutters, commonly called Moravians, or Unitas Fratrum. In which among other things, the political scheme and artful proceedings of their patriarch are disclosed (London: A. Linde, 1755), 8.
found this out by accident, when his coach broke down in front of his friend Count Heinrich’s castle. Zinzendorf and Heinrich spent the evening talking. The main topic of the evening was Heinrich’s undying love for Zinzendorf’s cousin, Theodora. They both resolved to talk to the Countess and find out which of the two she wanted to marry. Theodora chose Heinrich, they were married shortly thereafter and Zinzendorf was heartbroken but trusted that God would provide a wife for him.

At the wedding, Zinzendorf failed to notice Heinrich’s sister, the Countess Erdmuth Dorothea von Reuss. It took two more years before Zinzendorf discovered this Countess. They were quickly engaged and on September 7, 1722, Zinzendorf married the Countess Erdmuth. Both held similar pietistic leanings, and the marriage was a happy though troubled one. The problems the couple faced were twofold. One concerned the troubles of childhood mortality common in the eighteenth century. The Zinzendorfs faced joy and sorrow with the birth of their first child, a son named Christian Ernest Zinzendorf. Born in August 1724, Christian Ernst was a cause for celebration, but on his dedication to God three months later the Count lifted his son in the air to God and at that very moment, the child died. The Count and Countess grew accustomed to loss as only three of their twelve children outlived Erdmuth.

The second great challenge that the Zinzendorfs faced was the single minded focus that the Count possessed to his spiritual undertakings. While others may have been happy to simply participate in church life, Zinzendorf was so fully engaged that his attention to his wife suffered. By her death on June 19, 1756 the Count was filled with regret over the little time he spent with her, and repented of the times he had not been there for her. Count Zinzendorf was so focused on a mystical union with Christ that his
earthly union with his wife suffered. With this said, there are no surviving accounts from her complaining about his zeal; we simply do not know her side.

Zinzendorf married again one year later, in 1757. This time he was married to Anna Nitschmann, the head of the single sisters. As Anna was not nobility, the marriage required the Count to abdicate his noble house in favor of his nephew. This marriage lasted for only three years before they both passed away within two weeks of each other.

The Moravians.

“All the young people at Herrnhut who shall confess their faith in Christ are to be confirmed, after which these statutes are to be given them for their consideration.”\(^{45}\) – Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf

At the same time that Count Zinzendorf courted and married the Countess Erdmuth Dorothea von Reuss he also began a lifelong relationship with a group of religious refugees. In 1722 a group of ten persecuted Christians from Moravia sought aid. Zinzendorf believed they could be relocated to his father in law Count Reuss’ estate, since he already had several religious refugees on his lands. Zinzendorf had no inclination to have these refugees take up permanent residence on his lands, let alone house more than the initial ten who arrived. These refugees are commonly called Moravians. In actuality the group consisted of Moravians as well as Poles and Bohemians. They were followers of John Hus, the pre-reformer who was killed at the Council of Constance in 1417. The denomination that followed the Moravians was also

called the *Unitas Fratrum*, the United Brethren. Zinzendorf was moved to compassion for them and purchased some land from his grandmother in April of 1722. The land grant was only supposed to be temporary, but when Zinzendorf returned from his wedding in December and found several trees cut down and a community house built, the Count decided that the refugees should stay. They decided to name the settlement “Herrnhut” or “The Lord’s watch.” While Zinzendorf did not expect a permanent settlement, he had sympathies for the ecclesial structure of the Brethren, believing that their free association was far better than the dictates of a State Church. In this way, as well as several others, we see a similarity between Zinzendorf and some of the Radical Reformers, although he remained Lutheran.

From the ten men who arrived at Herrnhut in 1722, the community grew to three hundred within four years, and a decade later there were over six hundred. Originally Zinzendorf had no inclination to involve himself with the refugees from Moravia and elsewhere, and he likely expected that they would become Lutherans, just Pietist Lutherans like himself. The Moravians were not willing to abandon their historical Protestant claims, so instead Zinzendorf adopted many of theirs, creating a distinct community where Zinzendorf found himself both their patron and religious leader. The community that grew up at Herrnhut reflected both the traditions of the Hussites and Zinzendorf’s Pietistic Lutheranism.

By the following year it was clear that the community at Herrnhut was not simply passing through, rather they founded a new settlement. In order to best facilitate understanding of what both sides expected, Zinzendorf initiated what was known as the Covenant of the Four Brethren. The covenant guaranteed four actions that were to be
undertaken by both Zinzendorf and the Herrnhutters. They promised to preach the 
gospel, give testimonies, and provide for the poor primarily through schooling. This 
agreement stood as the basic relationship between Zinzendorf and the Brethren while he 
still maintained his residence in Dresden.

When Zinzendorf left Dresden in 1727, he and his wife settled in Herrnhut, 
building a new house, which they named Bethel. Following this, a new covenant was 
struck with the Moravians on May 12, 1727. The new constitution for the Herrnhutters 
was simply known as the “Brotherly Agreement.” This contract was rather similar to the 
Brethren’s constitution written in 1660 and covered not only religious duties but most 
aspects of civil life in Herrnhut as well. The agreement stressed that everyone should be 
theologically trained in their faith and able to defend it against theological challenges.46 
In addition to this, the agreement emphasized the conversion of souls,47 and that 
superstitions relating to omens and apparitions are both fooling and destructive.48 
Furthermore, practical concerns were agreed to as well, including the maintenance of 
good order through brotherly love,49 and even going so far as to require servicemen be

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46 Rule 8: Everyone should be careful to comprehend the true foundation of the saving doctrine on which 
we are all agreed, so that we may be able to give an answer to all our adversaries in meekness, yet with 
wisdom and power, and all may mutually defend and support one another.

47 Rule 12: As the conversion of souls is the chief object of most of the present inhabitants of Herrnhut, 
everyone must be permitted to choose those with whom he would, for the time being, be more intimately 
connected, than he could be with others; and to alter his choice according to circumstances without fearing 
to give offense.

48 Rule 22: All superstitious notions and practices are inconsistent with the character of true brethren; and 
idle tales of apparitions, omens, and so forth, must be looked upon as foolish and hurtful.

49 Rule 30: No one is to harbor anything in his mind against another.
punctual.\textsuperscript{50} These rules were to be distributed to all members of the community following their confirmation in the faith as a prerequisite to participation in the community life.\textsuperscript{51}

It was clear for all in Herrnhut that they were responsible for their own religious life, and that the Christian life required experience of the divine. To aid in this endeavor, Zinzendorf launched what he called the \textit{Losung}, or watchword. The watchword was a daily Bible verse or hymn that everyone at Herrnhut was to meditate on. Each morning Zinzendorf distributed this to an elder who then visited homes bringing the daily \textit{Losung}. The \textit{Losung} illustrates four key points about Zinzendorf and Herrnhut. First, as they all come from Zinzendorf, he is clearly the religious leader of the community. Second, the inspiration for the meditation was not from the perspective of maintaining power but an outgrowth from Zinzendorf’s private devotional life, and an extension of his mystical encounters with the divine. In many ways Zinzendorf is the prophet of the group, like Wallace explains when addressing mazeway reformulation among the Iroquois. The prophet distributes his message to a select few. Those few then bring it to the rest of the group, who are anticipating the message and then internalizing it. Third, the \textit{Losung} is simultaneously a word from the leader, a word from God, an individual message, and a corporate undertaking. The watchword reinforces Zinzendorf as the clear leader of the Brethren and its members one to another. Finally, we see that unlike the hyper-individualism that directly follows Calvinism and possibly Perkins, and Arndt’s emphasis

\textsuperscript{50} Rule 31: A mechanic or tradesman ought to be most punctual in fulfilling the promises he has made.

\textsuperscript{51} Rule 38: All the young people at Herrnhut who shall confess their faith in Christ are to be confirmed, after which these statutes are to be given them for their consideration.
on personal reform, the Herrnhut community corrected individualism by stressing the commonality of the faith and brotherhood. Francke’s notion of service for your neighbor extended to all who were in Herrnhut. The expectation that everyone was on the same page was also very clear. Everyone was anticipated to attend morning and evening prayers.

These prayers were not short services either, the typical Herrnhut liturgy was long. One meeting on August 10, 1727 started at noon and did not end until midnight. The conclusion of this service, as so many others, included weeping, deep repentance, and lying prostrate on the floor. Three days later the service was a “replication of Pentecost” with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It is even called the Moravian Pentecost. Many of these innovations can be seen today in Pentecostal services. Two weeks after that a group began “Hourly Intercession,” wherein one person was required to keep a prayer vigil for an hour then passing it onto another, thereby accomplishing constant 24 hour per day prayer. The Hourly Intercession lasted from 1727 until 1827. This too is something that modern Pentecostals replicate. In Kansas City, Missouri there is a mission organization called the International House of Prayer (IHOPKC) that beginning in 1999 doing the same thing.

Zinzendorf’s roll as the mystical leader of the Moravians cannot be underscored enough as very few of the Herrnhuters were educated, and even less were ordained. Most were artisans and craftsmen who were drawn into service of one another through a mutual belief in providence and the notion of the priesthood of all believers.

While knowledge of their faith was expected, this did not come about through systematic instruction. Rather the main catechism for those at Herrnhut was church
attendance and hearing directly from Zinzendorf. The church services were lengthy and varied. Still the basic theme of them was nearly always the same. First, everything was focused on Christ. All Biblical texts, regardless of their position in the canon were clearly speaking about Christ, the need for his crucifixion, and the resultant salvation of the members of the church. Unlike the emphasis of knowing your faith that was promoted at Francke’s Halle, Zinzendorf’s Herrnhut emphasized feeling and affection. This message was approachable and easy to replicate for this isolated community, even with the growth they experienced.

The greatest growth for the Moravians did not take place with people migrating to Herrnhut, but with the influence they had beyond their own borders. The practice of Pietist missionaries was not an innovation, as missionaries were already sent out from Halle. Still, under Zinzendorf and the Moravians, their missionary presence is quite extensive. Familiar with the missionary work coming from Halle and Denmark, Zinzendorf’s need to send out missionaries began surprisingly in Copenhagen. In 1731 the Count was attending the coronation for King Christian VI of Denmark (d. 1746). While there he met Anthony Ulrich, a freed African slave whose family in St. Thomas shared Christianity with him. When Anthony heard the gospel in St. Thomas, he converted to Christianity. Ulrich communicated his desire that his brothers and sisters hear the gospel like he had, but this was not permitted.

As Steven Hahn points out in his work, *A Nation Under Our Feet*, there existed a tension within the slave owners in the Americas on how to “properly” treat their slaves in

52 In the Danish West Indies.
regards to Christianity. For some early on, it was their Christian duty to convert their slaves and they even encouraged literacy in order to permit their slaves to read the Bible. But for many, especially following the early decades of the slave trade when enlightenment ideals grew, the idea of owning a fellow Christian felt repugnant. Oddly enough the solution was not to end the practice of slavery, but to end the practice of allowing your slaves to become Christian. This, along with the fear of having an educated slave class, resulted in a population that did not largely become Christianized until the Second Great Awakening.

This exclusion of African slaves from the Christian churches extended to the Indies as well. During that era, black people were not allowed to participate in church worship in any of the main churches operating on these islands. For Zinzendorf and the Moravians, the slave trade held many problems. While owning slaves was problematic, and we do find many accounts of Zinzendorf purchasing freedom for slaves, the greatest atrocity was the exclusion of the gospel.

For Zinzendorf and many of the Brethren, the lack of hearing the gospel was an outrage that needed to be fixed. The Moravians organized in August of 1732, and Moravian missionary work began in earnest to reach the whole world. Missionaries were sent out to Algeria, Amsterdam, Ceylon, Constantinople, Greenland, Georgia, Guinea Coast, Lapland, Romania, Surinam, South Africa, and the natives of North America. Overall the Moravian missions were rather successful, especially in the New World. Mission work in the West Indies alone saw over 4,000 slaves baptized.

The Moravians were some of the most successful missionaries in the eighteenth century. They possessed an evangelical energy second to none. In many ways it was
easy to stand out, since outside of their fellow Pietists at Halle, most of the Protestant world still did not send out missionaries. Most of the Orthodox Lutheran and Reform churches restrained themselves from moving outside their own territory. This energy was not accompanied with extensive knowledge. The reason for the great success was twofold. First, many of the Moravian missionaries were completely committed to the idea of the mission. Not only were they enthusiastic about the call to missions, but they were willing to pay any cost. Many of them believed that in order to preach to the slaves they may become slaves themselves, but they counted this a worthy cost.

The second reason for their success was the simple message they brought with them. Unlike other denominations that will later send out missionaries in the nineteenth century, who came with elaborate theological systems, the Moravians simply proclaimed what Zinzendorf said, that every person is “a lost, damned, but also already redeemed person.”\(^{53}\) This basic idea was easy to communicate and did not require extensive theological knowledge on the part of either the missionary or the convert. Zinzendorf emphasized that while we may be damned, this is not the end, for the salvation of everyone was already accomplished, “that we are already delivered.”\(^ {54}\) Obviously this message excluded the controversies of double predestination essential to Perkins and Calvin. This idea of a simple message easy to deliver was also a hallmark of Palmer’s preaching.


\(^{54}\) IBID.
The Moravians were first sent to the slaves of the Indies, but following the success they had there they moved to the continent. Here too the focus of mission work was not on the powerful but the downtrodden, the slaves and the Natives. The first wave of Moravian missionaries went to Georgia where there was moderate success. Following this many more missionaries were sent to Pennsylvania. Zinzendorf himself sailed to America in 1741, bringing with him his wife, daughter Benigna, and Anna Nitschmann, the lady who later became his second wife. The purpose of going himself on a mission trip was twofold. First, he wanted to meet the Indian tribes and second, he wanted to encourage the Moravians in Pennsylvania.

In many ways the trip was rather successful, and in other ways it showed the flaws of Zinzendorf’s theological agenda. On the positive end Zinzendorf founded another settlement, this one in Pennsylvania. The city was named Bethlehem and today is still the center of Moravian influence in America. While in America he met with many, as well as baptized many African slaves. Many of Zinzendorf’s hymns were compiled and distrusted in America. Benjamin Franklin, was selected as Zinzendorf’s printer, and he published a collection of Zinzendorf’s hymns under the title Hirtenlieder, Pastoral Hymns.

Zinzendorf also encountered many setbacks, including his failed attempt to create churches with no denominational titles. It would have been hard not to see the multitude of denominations in Pennsylvania at the time. Not only were there people from all over Europe, including the English, Swedish, Scotch, Dutch, and Germans, but each

55 The different Indian tribes included the Iroquois, and the Mohawks, and the Shawanoes.
nationality brought with them one or more confessions. Zinzendorf saw an opportunity in the midst of the religious confusion that existed among the evangelicals. Between January and June of 1741 he held seven conferences all focused on union. Instead of peace, however, the religious warfare increased.

In order to maintain the Moravians religious liberty in America it was necessary for the Count to make some agreements with the Archbishop of Canterbury and the English throne. In 1749 he set up headquarters in London, England. Eventually he secured the rights of Moravians to not serve in the military as well as liberty for the churches in America and England. While in England Zinzendorf also spread his message there with great success. His meetings in London grew large crowds; overall more than twenty thousand people attended his meetings.

The basic message from Zinzendorf and the Moravians was very simple. It is for this reason that they were so successful in their missionary endeavors, both in Europe and abroad. As mentioned earlier concerning the church services at Herrnhut, everything came down to Christ. Zinzendorf was radically christocentric. For him, no Scripture passage is rightly understood until it has been referred to Jesus Christ. All references in the Christian life begin by addressing Christ, later Schleiermacher will echo this sentiment. Zinzendorf’s theology was singularly focused as an extension of his intimacy with his subject matter. Unlike the scholars at Halle or Wittenberg, Zinzendorf did not

56 "All shades of sectarianism exist here down to open infidelity. Besides the English, Swedish and German Lutherans, and the Scotch, Dutch and German Reformed, there were Arminians, Baptists, Mennonites from Danzig, Arians, Socinians, Schwenkfelders, Old German Tunkers, New Tunkers, New Lights, Inspired, Sabbatarians or Seventh-Day Baptists, Hermits, Independents, and Free Thinkers." Milton C. Westphal, "Early Moravian Pietism." (Pennsylvania History 3, no. 3 July 1936), 174.
hesitate to address Jesus as human and personal, while also addressing Christ as an imminent, incarnate, and knowable God. The first step in Zinzendorf’s theology was not to understand the relation of man and sin as is the case for Perkins and Arndt, rather the first step is simply knowing “Jesus as one's own Savior.” For Zinzendorf all else will follow.

Everything about Zinzendorf’s theology is an extension of this first step. All of the Christian life concerns knowing Jesus and this knowledge is not a product of study but of faith, specifically experiential faith. In Concerning Saving Faith, Zinzendorf tells us there are two types of faith, fiducia implicita, and fiducia explicit, in other words faith directed inwards or of the heart, and faith as it is manifested to others. Accordingly, faith explicit to others is not genuine faith, and while it may possess great effects, by itself it is not genuine faith. For Zinzendorf the real focus of faith is on fiducia implicita. The essential character of faith of the heart surprisingly is not an expression of faith in love, rather faith in distress. While love surely is an outgrowth of faith, Zinzendorf maintains that genuine faith occurs in distress, when the Christian abandons all hope and, like the thief on the Cross in Luke,\(^{58}\) pleads with Jesus for salvation. This faith is instinctual and reflective; it acknowledges sin but also sin’s defeat at the cross of Jesus.

Zinzendorf expands on his notion of faith in Thoughts For The Learned And Yet Good-Willed Students Of Truth. In this work he expands on the notion of faith in distress by showing that all religious knowledge is based not on abstract concepts, rather on


\(^{58}\) Luke 23:42
experience.\textsuperscript{59} Just like it was the experience of the presence of Christ that led the thief to saving knowledge of Christ, our experience of Christ brings us to salvation. Unlike the thief though, we are not present with Christ except through revelation, i.e. scripture. Therefore revelation is the necessary experience for salvation.\textsuperscript{60} As not everyone chooses to accept scripture, one can choose to avoid this experience.\textsuperscript{61} Faith is something that must be approached willingly, but once embarked upon, must be all encompassing.

To this end Zinzendorf never concerned himself with the confessional divide he found all around him. Unlike our other Pietist leaders, Zinzendorf was not that concerned with denominational labels. A century before Palmer began her call for an ecumenical movement, Zinzendorf had his attempt. In many ways this was a practical concern. Herrnhut possessed not only Moravians but also Bohemians. Some of them were Hussites, while others were Lutherans or even Calvinists, and each had different customs they were not eager to abandon. To facilitate harmony Zinzendorf issued a tract called “Order and Discipline” for Herrnhut that stated “All brethren should seek harmony and love with other Christians, even if they have different or divergent views.”\textsuperscript{62} As we see

\textsuperscript{59} Rule #2: Religion must be a matter which is able to be grasped through experience alone without any concepts.
\textsuperscript{60} Rule #6: Revelation is indispensably necessary in human experience.
\textsuperscript{61} Nicolas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, "Thoughts For The Learned And Yet Good-Willed Students Of Truth, 1732." In \textit{Pietist Selected Writing}, (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 292, Rule #7.
7. All men can come to the necessary truths if only they wish to.
in his third speech in Berlin in 1738, what concerned Zinzendorf was that people were Christians and devout, rather than Lutheran, Moravian, Hussite, etc.

Zinzendorf allowed for freedom in the modes of worship in Herrnhut as well as all of his communities wherever they were found in the rest of the world. What was important for Zinzendorf was not the old system, but the heart of the churches. Wallace would point out that this is typical of a successful revitalization movement. Success is dependent upon overcoming resistance and here Zinzendorf allows people to keep what they are familiar with, therefore reducing resistance to his movement and securing clear navigation through the fourth stage. The umbrella of Herrnhut would allow for what Zinzendorf called “the Tropus” or individual historical and cultural variations. The Tropus principle allowed for “total freedom in regard to the mode of worship. They could keep their customs, style of worship, and all non-essentials.” Zinzendorf believed that the Tropus of Lutherans, Reformed, Pietists, or Moravian each added a unique contribution to Christianity.

Zinzendorf outlined this in his work On the Essential Character and Circumstances of the Life of a Christian. Accordingly, Zinzendorf states that Christians are neither Lutheran nor Calvinist nor any other denomination; he even goes so far as to

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We call all people [in all denominations] Christians and truly so, the name does not belong to us only; one should name “so-called Christians” people who support the religion and doctrine of Christ, declare their allegiance to him externally and announce they are for him; and I wish this name [so-called Christian] were not only more established than the religious title which we use daily, but had already been in common use for a long time.

64 The first three stages are conception, communication, and organization, the fourth is adaptation.

65 Paul Wemmer, Count Zinzendorf and the Spirit of the Moravians, 141.
say that they are not Christians. Properly speaking, or properly for Zinzendorf, Christians are not Christians as much as they are “in Christ.” The Tropus comes from the Tropo Paedias, or forms of doctrine, secondary to being “in Christ.” It is for this reason that Zinzendorf, unlike any other reformer, was so willing to embrace not only other Protestants but Catholics, Jews, and even heathens. Of course just because he was willing to embrace them does not mean that the embrace was reciprocated.

When King August the Strong died, his son inherited the throne. The new sovereign Augustus II\textsuperscript{66} was opposed to Zinzendorf. Zinzendorf had alienated many of the nobles by his aberrant behavior, or at least aberrant to the nobles. The Count’s life and care for common refugees and the spirit of egalitarianism he promoted was a challenged to the status quo. In addition to this, Herrnhut had grown and the theology that came from the community did not resemble Orthodox Lutheranism or Catholicism. Zinzendorf was called a religious innovator, and a founder of a new sect. While we may agree with these charges, Zinzendorf rejected them, maintaining that he was a Lutheran. It was shortly before this period, in 1734, when the Tubingen faculty ordained Zinzendorf a Lutheran Minister, but this counted for little now.

The result from August III and the nobility, and clergy of Saxony was clear, Zinzendorf must be exiled; he must be banned from Saxony. Officially Zinzendorf was banned for committing three great crimes. First, he introduced religious novelties, second, he founded conventicles, and finally that he taught false doctrine. Zinzendorf

\textsuperscript{66} Again, like his father, he held multiple names and titles, Augustus II Elector of Saxony and Augustus III King of Poland.
was in an odd position that he could attempt to disprove the first and the third charge, but without a greater degree of support from the Lutheran clergy in Saxony he found himself condemned a heretic. His banishment began in 1736. This was supposed to be a lifetime ban, but the banishment was lifted ten years later. The ban was not extended to Herrnhut though. With hundreds of refugees in Herrnhut, displacing them would become a burden upon Saxony, so they were permitted to stay as long as they adhered to Luther’s catechism and the Augsburg Confession. The belief was that they would simply disintegrate and slowly leave Herrnhut for other territories if Zinzendorf was removed. This did not happen. If anything the exile prompted Zinzendorf to add to his credentials in order to grow the community both in Saxony and elsewhere.

The Count traveled to Sweden, where following an examination from theology professors, he received a certificate stating that he agreed with prescribed Lutheran doctrine. Following this, Zinzendorf requested an audience with the King of Prussia, Friedrich Wilhelm I. His stepfather, the Field Marshal General Von Natzmer, assisted in his preparations to meet with the Prussian soldier King. When the Count arrived at court, he was greeted by a court jester. This was an insult the Count could not accept, and he refused the meeting until a proper servant accompanied him. Later the Count recorded in his journal “I knew the king considered me a simpleton, and the reception was so appalling that I don’t want to describe it to any person… his inquiries were cold, abrupt and thorough. But soon he must have noted that I was not what he expected.”67 The Prussian king then opened his land to Zinzendorf and his Brethren. Zinzendorf also

served as a spiritual guide for Friedrich Wilhelm. Friedrich Wilhelm wrote letters to Daniel Ernest Jablonsky, a bishop for the United Brethren. Jablonsky and Zinzendorf had an established relationship but under the King’s direction the two continued their rapport. This led to a request from Zinzendorf in 1737 that Jablonsky ordain him a bishop of the United Brethren, a task completed on May 20, 1737. This ordination strengthened Zinzendorf in a number of ways. First, it served to insulate him from many of challenges directed against his Protestant credentials. More importantly, being a bishop allowed Zinzendorf to ordain members of Herrnhut, granting the community stability and legal protection in the event that the Saxon King evicted them. The brethren were ordained as missionaries which aided in their proselytizing, as well as other tasks, such as baptizing converts.

It is during Zinzendorf’s exile that he traveled Europe and America to the greatest degree. Preceding and during his exile, Zinzendorf established many settlements and cell groups throughout Europe and America. Estimates place the total at over 500 large cells by 1748. Of these cell groups and settlements, three stand out. First, and most notable, is Herrnhut, second was Bethlehem in Pennsylvania. The third, Herrnhaag, was Germany’s second great community, founded in 1738. Since Zinzendorf was exiled from Saxony, Count Ernst Casimir von Ysenburg permitted Zinzendorf and a few Moravians to build on his land in Hesse. The intention was to mirror the growth, dynamism, and

68 Paul Wemmer, *Count Zinzendorf and the Spirit of the Moravians*, Places the number at 540 large cell groups.
spirit of Herrnhut. Even the name of this new community closely mirrored Zinzendorf’s original settlement. This settlement became known as Herrnhaag, or the Lord’s Grove.  

**Herrnhag and Sifting Time.**

> “Feeling itself is something questionable.”

– Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf

The composition of both groups, as well as what took place in the settlements, were radically different. The Moravians and other refugees who arrived at Herrnhut were determined, somber, hardworking, disciplined, working class, and generally poorly educated. In short, they were religious refugees who through generations of persecution were used to finding a way to survive while maintaining their fervent religious ideology. Those who arrived at Herrnhag were nearly the opposite in composition. Not only were their countries of origin different, as they came from Switzerland, Holland, England, and France, but their ethos was also rather different. The Herrnhagers were not somber and poorly educated refugees; many were well educated and came from a higher social strata.  

The refugees at Herrnhut were desperate and earnest, and while those at Herrnhag were pious, they had many options available to them, thus, if the community fell apart they would survive.

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69 Some sources record the city as Herrnhaag, rather than Herrnhag.


Not at all somber, the attitude of Herrnhag is best described as a town of frivolity. This should not detract that Herrnhag, like Herrnhut, was a town based on pietistic devotion, but Herrnhag stressed the sentimentality and sensuality inherent in the theological and mystical system supported by Zinzendorf. The extremes found within Herrnhag are consistent with the Moravian ethos, which maintains that failing to experience happiness in church suggests a spiritual disconnect. This disconnect can have several causes. The easiest cause for this separation is an insincere attempt at practicing Moravian piety. Other causes include lack of understanding for one’s own religious needs, failing to fully perform religious duties, and the pastor being ineffective. Assuming that these conditions are not present, the devotee should experience ecstasy and happiness in their Christian life. The difference is that this joy was not grounded in the selfless life that Herrnhut exemplified.

For a little over a decade the settlement of Herrnhag grew to a small city of roughly a thousand people. The chaos that became the hallmark of the city necessitated the cities demise. The beginning of the end for the community took place when the cities benefactor, Count Ernst Casimir von Ysenburg, died in 1749. The heir to Ernst Casimir was his son Gustav, who did not see Herrnhag as a model of piety, and began the process of closing the settlement down. Gustav gave them three years to vacate the property. Because many of the citizens of Herrnhag came from the higher ends of the social strata, finding a new settlement was more inconvenient than disastrous. Still some did not possess the means to relocate. Zinzendorf paid those to resettle and in 1753 Herrnhag’s demise was complete.
The significance of Herrnhag was not simply an example of frivolous living for the Moravians, it is also a time of frivolous theology from Zinzendorf. Just like the excitement that animated the city, Zinzendorf was animated by the possibility to create something new, and to experiment with a new attempt at approaching the divine. Moravian historians refer to this time as the *Sichtungzeit* or “Sifting Time.” The sifting time corresponds directly with the zenith of Herrnhag, beginning around 1743 and coming to an end when the settlement began to shut down in 1750.\(^72\) The period is known as a sifting time in reference to when John the Baptist states that Jesus will gather all together and then sift the wheat from the chaff.\(^73\) Most theologians, including Moravians, contend that Zinzendorf during this period produced far more chaff than wheat. Outside of Zinzendorf’s long standing appeal to an ecumenical Christianity, which also found a home at this time, we have two new theological innovations. The first is identified as the theology of Blood and Wounds, or the Side Wound theology. The second innovation identified the Holy Spirit as Mother.

Probably the most interesting theological innovation of Zinzendorf was the Side Wound theology. Before we can really get into the dogma connected to blood and wounds, we need to remember that theology, even innovated theology, does not emerge from nowhere, and much of this theology comes from two main sources. The first is the medieval mystical traditions that focus on Christ’s body and especially his blood. Medieval mystics like St. Bernard of Clairvaux and the hymns associated to him, like *O

\(^72\) Dates for the Sifting Time range from a high of 1736-52 to a low of 1746-49, but the most common dating is 1743-50.

\(^73\) Matthew 3:12
Haupt voll Blut und Wunden (O Sacred Head, Now Wounded) which invite the participants to gaze deeply at the blood streaming from Christ. This hymn as well as others were sung continually by Moravians until the middle of the nineteenth century, and the imagery was not something foreign to any mystical Christian tradition in the eighteenth century. We have similar discussions on the wounds of Christ from Angela da Foligno.

The notion of Christ’s wounds would also mirror Luther’s theology of the Cross. Where Luther called for Evangelicals to look toward Jesus on the cross as the focal point of redemptive history, for Zinzendorf the cross remains central but the focus intensifies. It is no longer just the cross that the Herrnhager should direct their meditative focus towards, but the wounds of Christ upon the cross. For Zinzendorf it is the wounds of Christ, rather than the cross alone that is the source of redemption.

Zinzendorf borrowed the traditional Western Christian image associated with the atonement as ransom for sin, and Christ as the substitute. For Roman Catholics, and by extension the Protestants who emerged from the Latin West, Christ’s death on the cross was a substitution for the death and wrath that is due all men. This theology has its roots in the West and is not common to Eastern Christians. For the West, Christ’s death on the cross was a substation for the death and wrath that is due all men. As the cross appeases God’s wrath, it is also the source of redemption and freedom for the Christian. From this it is natural that the cross is a constant source of devotion and study for

74 The prevailing view for Eastern Orthodox Christianity is that Christ’s death on the cross was to show his power and mastery over all affairs of human existence including death, the death is tied in with the Resurrection illustrating how Christ defeated death by death, as is sung in the Paschal Hymn “Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death and to those who are in the tombs he has granted life.”
Western Christians, Lutherans as well as Moravians. This imagery is very clearly seen in Zinzendorf’s sermons, including this one. “We are truly paid for, as a person purchases one item from another, as one can ransom a prisoner, so are we purchased from wrath, from judgment, from the curse, from the Fall and all ruin, from sin, death, the devil and hell through a true, alone in the treasury of God, legal and complete payment, namely, through the blood of the one who tasted death for us all through the grace of God.”

Specifically the doctrine of the Side Wounds reaches far beyond the doctrine of Substitutionary Atonement or Luther’s theology of the Cross. The doctrine maintains that Christ’s side wound is the dwelling chamber for sinners. Mentioned in one of Zinzendorf’s main hymns on the subject, “Rock of Ages cleft for me, let me hid myself in Thee; let the water and the blood, from the wounded side which flowed, be of sin the double cure, save from wrath and make me pure.” Zinzendorf proposes that the Church was birthed from Christ’s side wound in a similar manner as Eve was birthed from the side of Adam. The opening of the side becomes the mystical custom of birth when God creates something new, specifically a new bride, first Eve from the first Adam, and then the Church from the second Adam, namely Christ. Just like Eve belonged to Adam, following the side wound of Christ, “All true believers belong in the side of Christ.”


76 Paul Wemmer, *Count Zinzendorf and the Spirit of the Moravians*, 166.

Likewise the shedding of blood acted like the breaking of a dam, but instead of water washing over a valley, Christ’s blood unleashed the Holy Spirit. “When the dear Savior died and his blood poured out, when his side was opened up, then the Holy Spirit, like a dammed stream, broke out again. She burst through and made the entire earth a streambed. As a part of its surface is covered with water, so is the entire world, at least by and by, covered with the Holy Spirit.” Zinzendorf conflates Pentecost with Good Friday. Good Friday is the breaking of the dam and Pentecost is the arrival of the refreshing water.

In his “Litany of the Life, Suffering, and Death of Jesus Christ,” Zinzendorf constantly draws the participants back into Christ’s death and Christ’s blood.

So many drops of blood flowed out from you,
So many are the voices which pray for us and plead for us.
By your head crowned with thorns
By your nail-pierced hands
May your martyrdom and blood nourish us to eternal life! 79
Even the existence of this specific litany in the church service illustrates the profound impact that this doctrine has upon the Moravian communities. It is often said that Zinzendorf clarified his notion of penance and atonement as one that is different than the typical Pietist view. For the Pietist, his and her own sin are constantly in the foreground and they look towards the wounds of Christ. For Zinzendorf and his followers, the wounds are before them and they look towards the misery of their sin. As


a result, the Pietist, in his timidity is comforted by the wounds and the Moravian in his happiness is shamed by his sin.\(^8^0\)

Zinzendorf finds the wounds of Christ to be liberating and freeing. Instead of immense guilt, as one may expect, meditation on the wounds connects one personally and intimately with their savior. To this point, Zinzendorf exclaims "we have indeed the great blessing that we are bathed in and swim in Jesus' blood."\(^8^1\) In many ways Zinzendorf echoes St. Angela de Foligno’s fourteenth step, where God ordered Angela to place her mouth on the wound in his side. For Angela the blood brought reassurance of Christ’s forgiveness, which brings both joy and sadness. For Zinzendorf, the wound, rather than the blood, takes precedence as the means of birth of a repentant life. Still the shared imagery and focus on the blood and side wounds specifically as the fount of spiritual rebirth is striking, especially given the how rare identifying the wound of Christ is for the total redemptive act of the passion.

Such a departure from the established doxa of the Western Churches did face some resistance. Both George Whitefield and John Wesley break with the Moravians at this time. There are also challenges to Zinzendorf’s sanity. Many critics point to this doctrine as an example of a psychological break, possibly due to the burden of his exile. Others may wish to blame this on the death of his son and heir apparent, Christian

\(^8^0\) "The former [the Pietist] has his misery before his eyes and looks toward the wounds [of Christ]; the latter [the Herrnhuter] has the wounds before his eyes and looks at the misery. The wounds comfort the one in his timidity; the other is shamed of his misery in his blessedness." L. von Zinzendorf, Der öffentlichen Gemein Reden ... ZweyterTheil (n.p.: Zu finden in der Brüdergemeine, 1749), 349.

\(^8^1\) Craig D. Atwood, "Understanding Zinzendorf's Blood and Wounds Theology." Journal of Moravian History (Penn State University Press 1, no. Fall 2006), 37.
Renatus, but that would not occur until 1752, and the demonstrations of morbidity began well before this.

It is also false to conclude the Blood and Wounds Theology with the ending of Herrnhag and the Sifting Time as many Moravians attempt to do. There is evidence that the side wounds as a source of comfort existed for quite some time, including a reference to the Count “resting on the side wounds of Jesus”\(^{82}\) in one of the many eulogies dedicated to Zinzendorf delivered by Pastor Burkhard George Müller.

The second theological innovation of Zinzendorf’s that emerged during this Sifting Time is his defining the Holy Spirit as the Holy Mother. To be clear, Zinzendorf is not deifying and elevating the Virgin Mary to the positon of Holy Spirit, rather he is doing quite the opposite. While for many Catholics, as well as Protestants, up till this time the Virgin Mary stood as the Queen of heaven and the chief model of femininity, and of piety for women as well as men. Zinzendorf intentionally and unintentionally demotes Mary by raising a new exemplar of motherhood, namely the Holy Spirit.

Zinzendorf outlines his understanding of the Holy Spirit in 1746. Zinzendorf is not proclaiming a belief in a goddess or advocating goddess worship, rather he views the traditional Christian doctrine of the Trinity in terms of a holy household, with the Father, Son, and Mother, as the expression of the Holy Spirit. Specifically the doctrine of the motherhood of the Holy Spirit proclaims that she is a mother in three different ways. First, the Spirit and not Mary, is the true mother of Jesus, as it is the Holy Spirit who prepared him in the womb. Second, the Spirit is the mother of all living things as the

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Holy Spirit is the breath of God that animated the earth in Genesis. The Holy Spirit is also the mother that births the Church through the side wound of Jesus, the womb of the Church, as understood in the previously addressed doctrine of the side wound of Christ.

Since the Holy Spirit is the one responsible in the transformation of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist, it is now the Mother’s role. For the rest of the Christian churches that maintain a belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, it is by the Holy Spirit that the Father acts in the transformation of elements into Christ. As such, it is not only Christ who is present in the Eucharist, but the whole Trinity. A similar event occurs when water is blessed for Holy baptism; the Spirit proceeds from the Father. When Zinzendorf proclaims the Holy Spirit to be the Mother, the relationship in the Godhead changes. Following Zinzendorf, it is no longer the Father who processes the Spirit, but the Spirit as the Mother does these actions alone. Now it is a Mother, and not the Father who is the agent within the sacraments. This is all the more pertinent for Protestants who only have these two sacraments.

In none of this does Zinzendorf appeal to any established creeds of the Church, but only to his own interrelation of motherhood and what he assumed the Holy Spirit’s role to be in light of the missionary journeys undertaken by the Brethren. When trying to explain the Holy Spirit’s activities he found himself unable to speak about it stating “I simply believed that she is the third person of the Godhead, but I could not say how this was properly so. Instead I thought of her abstractly.... The Holy Spirit had known me

83 Zinzendorf, like Luther, maintained a belief in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist but would have rejected the doctrine of Transubstantiation.
well, but I did not know her before the year 1738. That is why I carefully avoided entering in the matter until the mother office of the Holy Spirit had been so clearly opened up for me.” The justification for this doctrine lies purely in Zinzendorf’s mysticism and not traditions.

Yet Zinzendorf knew full well that his proclamations as prophet in Herrnhag would not suffice. He did supply some theological justification for his view by combining two biblical verses together. He did this in a way that no one else conceived of before. The verses in question are Isaiah 66:13 and John 14:26. In John, Jesus tells his disciples that “the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name,” will come. This is combined with Isaiah who also uses the term comforter and says “As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem.” Since the word comforter is used in both verses, Zinzendorf feels free to equate them, stating that the Father will send the Comforter/Mother who comforts her child. Even in the same language, combining these verses is a stretch. To make matters more difficult, these verses were written in different languages, Hebrew and Greek. The term comforter in Greek is often translated as advocate instead. All of that would not matter if there was any indication that Jesus was alluding to Isaiah, as Zinzendorf maintains, but there is no indication of this. Once again we are left with Zinzendorf’s mystical union with God as the justification for a theological proclamation. This permits his followers to suspend their previous catechisms.

An interesting juxtaposition can be observed between Zinzendorf and Tauler. Tauler always sought to minimize himself as the source of authority, choosing instead the theological language of the established church. Zinzendorf is doing the opposite, choosing to modify and even abandon the theological language of the Church, utilizing his own reasoning and experience as the fount of authority instead. Both men are noted for their mysticism, but how they choose to communicate their experience is radically different.

Once Zinzendorf proclaimed this doctrine, his communities in Herrnhag, Herrnhut, and Bethlehem embraced it. The equating of the Holy Spirit with the Holy Mother was not the eccentric language of a theological renegade, rather the devotional language of a large community. In many ways this doctrine was easy to accept, as the doctrine of the trinity already used imagery of a family, namely Father and Son. Likewise Zinzendorf assumed that since everyone had a mother and was familiar with the ideal of motherhood, the language was an easy fit. For Zinzendorf a mother was a comforter and a giver of life who provided nourishment for their children. Presumably Zinzendorf acquired this understanding of motherhood from his wife, as his mother was absent for most of his life. It may even have been this absence that encouraged Zinzendorf to have the Holy Spirit as an ideal type.

Very quickly the Moravians adopted language of the Godhead as a family with Father, Son and Mother. The community was urged to “sit on the Mother’s lap.” Even
prayers were rewritten to include this imagery. The Trisagion (thrice holy) is
reinterpreted using the language of Father, Mother, and Bridegroom. In 1744, Zinzendorf
wrote separate litanies based on the Te Deum to the Mother.

The quest to relabel the Holy Spirit as Mother was successful. In the early 1750’s
“the church proclaimed that the Holy Spirit was to be officially enthroned as the Mother
of the Moravian Church, just as Jesus had been proclaimed the Chief Elder ten years
earlier.” The Moravians also held Mutterests, Mother feasts in honor and worship to
the Holy Spirit. Bethlehem celebrated their first one in 1756.

The proclamation of the Holy Spirit as Mother is a fairly short lived phenomena
for the Moravians. Once Zinzendorf died in 1760, attitudes on this doctrine began to
wane. By the first synod of the Moravians following the death of Zinzendorf, held in
Marenbom in 1764, the doctrine is dropped. This synod, often called the doctrinal synod,
is really the time of sifting where many of Zinzendorf’s doctrines are reexamined,
dropped, and even a few hidden. Officially the reason to drop the language of Holy Spirit
as Mother was to make it simpler for children and others to understand. Oddly enough
this was the same justification that Zinzendorf used to instigate the belief in the first
place.

Twenty years passed with the doctrine in place, but the experimentation of the
Sifting Time was coming to an end. The litanies and hymns written by Zinzendorf that

\[85\] This refrain “Holy, Holy, Holy” is found in Isaiah and Revelation, and is used in many hymns for the
Eastern and Western Church, sometimes incorporated into larger hymns and sometimes standing alone.

\[86\] Craig D. Atwood, Motherhood of Holy Spirit in 18th century. April 7, 2011.

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enshrined the Holy Spirit as Mother were rewritten, now simply stating Comforter instead of Mother. The older copies were either burned or permitted to go out of print. The Mutterfest was last celebrated in 1774, and with its conclusion, preserved some of Zinzendorf’s legacy for the next century.

While the Mutterfest was one extension of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as Mother, Zinzendorf promoted another innovation along these lines, namely the ordination of women. Zinzendorf noticed in his missionary journey to Pennsylvania the peculiar practices of the Quakers. Writing to a friend he stated “When you visit the Quakers you will soon notice that the women will talk and preach. Rightly so. If we put women in the corner we will lose a jewel. … I have always encouraged our sisters to teach and preach in our congregation, and I have put gifted women in key leading positions.”

The role of women in Zinzendorf’s communities was not one of a subject or second class citizen but as identical to men in nearly every account, including ordination. To be accurate, Zinzendorf, while ordained a priest and later a Bishop, did not hold ordination in the same regard as Lutherans or Catholics. It is common to receive a license to preach while not being ordained a priest. The purpose of ordination was not a license to preach, rather to administer the sacraments. Zinzendorf also did not regard ordination as anything that Luther’s doctrine of the priesthood of all believers did not include.

From the time of his ordination to bishop, Zinzendorf ordained over two hundred women deacons and fourteen Priesterinnen (female priests). These women had the same

87 Paul Wemmer, Count Zinzendorf and the Spirit of the Moravians, 179.
responsibility for spiritual care as any men. Likely their roles were focused on overseeing the spiritual care of women, but they also served on decision making bodies as any male elder or deacon would. Chief among the ordained women was Anna Nitschmann. While Zinzendorf was the father of the community, Anna was the Mutter. In 1730, at the age of fifteen, she was named an eldress in Herrnhut even before Zinzendorf became a Bishop. She also led the single women and would likely have been the next leader of the church after Zinzendorf’s death if she outlived him by more than a few weeks.

The elevation of the Holy Spirit as Mother elevated women within the community even to the point of women serving Holy Communion, the only Western Church\textsuperscript{88} to do so prior to the mid-nineteenth century. While the doctrine that lent its support for the practice was reversed shortly after Zinzendorf’s death, the practice of ordaining women was not.

\textsuperscript{88} It is permitted but not common for Eastern Orthodox women to be ordained to the deaconate, usually it is to serve to women in the congregation or nuns. These women can administer the sacrament but as mentioned this is rare.
Moravians Secured.

“Nothing comes between us and him—not man, no book, no knowledge, no
learning, not even the most necessary truths—but only the distress, the
sinner’s shame, and the faithfulness of the Shepherd.”

— Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf

In October 1747, Zinzendorf’s ban from Saxony was rescinded. Contrary to the
desires of the Saxon King and Saxon clergy, Zinzendorf did not fade from prominence
during his exile. Instead, the decade outside of Saxony only saw an expansion of
Moravian ideals throughout Germany and the world. August III also noticed how the
Pietists in Prussia aided their economy. We can posit that the rival to Herrnhut,
Herrnhag, also served as a constant reminder of the lost revenues to the cash strapped
Saxony. Once the exile was lifted, Zinzendorf left Herrnhag for Herrnhut and was there
within three days.

Zinzendorf also secured further rights for the Brethren in Saxony. “The United
Brethren have all the permanent rights of a normal Saxon citizen. They have been
granted permanent religious freedom and are free to conduct their own distinctive
services and determine their own spiritual leaders.” This secured the Moravians
position in Saxony and Zinzendorf’s legacy.

89 Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, “Nine Public Lectures 1746: Concerning Saving Faith.” In In Pietist

90 Paul Wemmer, Count Zinzendorf and the Spirit of the Moravians, 180.
Once back in Herrnhut, Zinzendorf continued to face challenges. In addition to the dismantling of Herrnhag in 1750-53, Zinzendorf endured the death of his son and heir, Christian Renatus, in 1752, and the death of his wife, the Countess Dorothea, in 1756. As mentioned earlier, he remarried, this time to Anna Nitschmann, but doing so required his abdication of his noble house and the loss of many of the lands associated with it.

Throughout this time, Zinzendorf continued to preach sermons, often as many as eight a day, but his robust leadership began its inevitable march to an end in 1758. Zinzendorf, his wife and his household, journeyed one more time to his beloved Holland. He stayed for a year. Despite many leisurely walks his once robust health was failing. He had frequent colds, his voice grew hoarse and he gained weight. Zinzendorf and Anna returned for the last time to Herrnhut on Christmas Eve in 1759. Both were sick and would die in May. Anna grew rather weak, as she was suffering from cancer, and visited her husband and the leader of the community shortly before his death on May 9. Early on that morning, around ten o’clock, Zinzendorf, the bishop of the Moravians, and leader to thousands around the world, but no longer the Count, lifted his head and took a few breaths before laying his head back on the pillow. In his death he was surrounded by his community leaders and missionaries, who stated that at the time of his death “His eyes were clear and discerning.”

Shortly after his death, Pastor Burkhard George Müller delivered a eulogy. In it he states that Zinzendorf lived in spiritual “awareness and his heart was burning. That is why he could not live without Him and he was drawn into an intimate union with Him. This union with his most Beloved was tender and childlike.” More than a Count, or a Bishop, Zinzendorf was the mystical leader of a movement which transformed Pietism and Protestantism. He was without question the most influential German theologian between Luther and Schleiermacher. The spiritual heirs of Zinzendorf include not only include Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard but also Johann Christoph Blumhardt, Jurgen Moltmann, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Karl Barth. Zinzendorf conveyed his spirituality as an intimate language of the heart, whereas Muller said in his eulogy “Christ was his other I.” His mysticism survives not only in the community he left, but also in the over 2,000 hymns he wrote during his life.

Zinzendorf’s radical Christo-centrism was likely his lasting impact for Protestant theologians following his passing. This prioritization of Christ became the theological mission of Schleiermacher, who like Zinzendorf began and ended every theological assumption by first looking to Christ at the center of it. For both Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard, the incarnation of Christ was the starting point in theology. Zinzendorf also impacted the Palmer’s theology. Zinzendorf was one of several Pietists who promoted one form or another of female ordination, as well as ecumenicalism. Denominations and gender were of little use in light of the mystical encounter with Christ that Zinzendorf urged for all Christians. To this end, Zinzendorf was also a theological innovator,

believing that theology was taken too seriously. His liberties in reconstructing basic theological assumptions, including the Godhead, gave license to Kierkegaard, Schleiermacher, and Palmer to re-contextualize, reexamine, and reconstruct all theology, making it new for themselves and for their audience.

Institutions to Denominations

“A revitalization movement is defined as a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture.”

— Anthony Wallace

Both Francke’s Halle and Zinzendorf’s Moravians are examples of Pietism asserting itself. Both the Halle Pietists and Moravians largely remained within German Lutheranism, though both began to branch outward and diminish their claims to Lutheranism for the claims of experiential Protestants and Christians. The missionary movement launched from both camps likely contributed to this forcing both groups to reexamine their adversaries, which increasingly was the established Lutheran Church. The Unitas Fratrum, the United Brethren, or Moravians, began long before Zinzendorf’s involvement, but became an alternative that operated both inside and outside the Lutheranism. Zinzendorf did not truly form a new denomination, as Wesley does in the next chapter, rather he synthesized elements of Lutheran Pietism and the Lollardry of Jan Hus. The Moravians will remain an interdenominational sect for some time, contributing to Lutheranism and Reform. It was from these Moravian communities that

Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard received their formal religious training and it is these communities that are used to remake Pietism in the nineteenth century, dismantling the institutions in order to once again reassert themselves as religious outsiders.
CHAPTER 4

DENOMINATIONAL PIETISM: WESLEY AND THE IMPACT OF INSTITUTIONALIZED PIETISM

“We know that myths transform themselves. These transformations bear sometimes on the framework, sometimes on the code, sometimes on the message of the myth, but without its ceasing to exist as such.”

– Claude Levi-Strauss

Following Francke and Zinzendorf, Pietism was undergoing a dramatic but expected change. This transformation was from persecuted outsiders to privileged insiders. With the growth and success of being insiders, Pietism, in its various forms, was also moving itself outside of the established denominations. The numbers of recruits to experiential Protestantism and the waning influence of Scholasticism manufactured the need for Pietist denominations. While Zinzendorf’s Moravians represent an early attempt at denominational formation, their success on the continent largely remained within Lutheranism and Reform Protestant Churches. England was a different matter altogether.

As mentioned in chapter two with the treatment of William Perkins, the history of English Pietism was radically altered due to the events of the Civil War and Restoration. Another blow took place following the Glorious Revolution of 1688, wherein the very nature of the English government changed. No longer was the state a pure monarchy run

by the dictates of a sovereign. The Long Parliament, the Cromwellian Period, the Restoration, and Glorious Revolution all ensured a place for Parliament and the subsequent bureaucratic system that grew to accommodate the diffusion of power.

The English state now lay in stark opposition to the religious enthusiasm of the Puritans and Cromwell following 1688. The single most important task of this bureaucracy was not religious, rather it sought to raise money. One of the greatest mechanisms to ensure fiscal solvency was to ensure political harmony, which necessitated pursuing a new tact in religion. Heresy was no longer defined as wavering from purity of doctrine, rather it was now chiefly characterized as opposition to the institution. The result of the earlier English attempt at institutionalized Pietism was a new religious climate marked by rationalism and agnosticism towards religious enthusiasm. While Zinzendorf’s Moravians excided Germans, the Dutch, and the Danes, the English served as the saucer to cool the boiling cup of Pietism. The earlier passion for Perkins’ predestination turned sour. Free will, rather than divine determinism, was the message for England in the eighteenth century.

With such a different climate for the English than Central Europe, it should come as no surprise that the surviving English variant of Pietism, while resulting in a similar expression, began from a different starting point. Since the time of Perkins, England continued to undergo changes. Unlike the German expressions of Pietism, which reacted against the rigid dogmatic neo-scholastic Protestant orthodoxy, English Pietism could not begin by rejecting the constraints of a dogmatic church, rather against the dogmatic rationalism of the state. The supreme faith in reason, not the faith in orthodoxy, was the impetus for the larger lasting impact of Pietism upon the Church of England. It is in the
late eighteenth century, not the early seventeenth century, that Pietism became its own church. Both the earlier and later attempt began in England, not in Germany. It is from England that the ashes of Puritanism are mixed with the waters of Moravians and Methodism forms following the life and teachings of John Wesley.

**John Wesley 1703-1791 – Personal Relationship with God**

> “God is holy; I am unholy. God is a consuming fire: I am altogether a sinner, suitable only to be consumed.”

– John Wesley

The demise of Puritanism came as a blow to the Wesleys. John’s parents, Samuel and Susanna, came from a long line of Puritan ministers. Susanna’s great grandfather was one of those responsible for Charles’ first minister’s execution by the revolutionary parliament. Her grandfather chaired the commissions into clerical abuses, publishing *The Century of Scandalous Priests*. Samuel’s Grandfather Bartholomew Wesley prevented Charles’ flight from England and abolished not only the Monarchy but the episcopacy and the House of Lords. His other grandfather, John White, was the architect of the Puritan Massachusetts settlement. Both Samuel and Susanna’s fathers served as ministers for Cromwell. In 1662, two years after Charles II was restored, most Puritan ministers were expelled. This included both fathers. The legacy of Puritanism weighed heavily upon the Wesley household.

Within the household library Wesley was familiar with not only his Puritan grandfathers but also Pietist writings from the Continent. Francke was highly esteemed

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by Samuel and Susanna Wesley. John’s journal later records him reading Francke’s *Pietas Hallensis*, specifically referencing the charitable and missionary endeavors of Halle. Wesley grew up reading Pietistic writings that likely included Arndt’s *True Christianity*, which made its way across the channel as early as 1648.

In 1703 John Wesley was born into a contentious England and a household that was much the same. Samuel Wesley, like his father, grandfather, and great grandfather before him, was a minister. Like his forefathers, he also had Puritan leanings. Not only did he need to defend his position to the state, but Puritanism grew so repugnant, that even the new muted version still resulted in outright hostility and aggression by the laity.

One notable example took place on a Thursday night in February 1709, when the wooden rectory in the Lincolnshire village of Epworth caught fire, and not by accident. In the process of burning to the ground, Samuel and Susanna gathered up their children before making a hasty escape. The escape was a bit too hasty as they overlooked their five year old son who was still sleeping in the attic. Luckily for the boy the flames woke him before they consumed him. Unfortunately Samuel could not make it up the collapsing stairs and resigned his son to the flames. Kneeling in prayer, Samuel petitioned the Lord to accept the boy’s soul. While his father was unable to save the boy, the neighbors were not. They came to the boy’s aid standing on each other’s shoulders. They grabbed his arms just as the roof collapsed. The five year old was John. This was a
formative experience, as one may no doubt imagine. John often spoke of himself as a “brand snatched from the burning;”\(^3\) this was not simply a reference to his eternal locale.

For the next five years John grew up in the Wesley household that was overwhelmingly female. John grew up with five older sisters.\(^4\) His older brother Samuel (Jr) was 12 years older than he was and was out of the house shortly after John was born. His brother Charles was only a baby when the rectory succumbed to the flames, but was often the only other male in the house. John’s father Samuel was absent nearly as often as he was present in the home. His duties required regular periods of absence. When he was present he was often at fierce odds with Susanna over politics. These arguments grew to the point that they did not share a bed.

At the age of ten, John Wesley was sent off to boarding school to continue his education. Over the next six years (1714-1720), John’s life at the Charterhouse in London took on a new character. While staying at the converted monastery, John enjoyed a free position at the school as one of the few poor scholars. His life was similarly regimented as with his mother, although he was not nearly as protected. Most of his food was taken from him by the older boys and Wesley’s devotional life also suffered. Wesley portrays this time as a fall from grace and his time of rebellion. Likely John is exaggerating his fall from grace, as he still maintained daily Bible reading, morning and evening prayers, and there appeared to be no behavior issues recorded by the school. We have no accounts similar to Perkins’ drunkenness or Francke’s lack of

\(^3\) Marshall D. Johnson, *The Evolution of Christianity, Twelve Crisis that Shaped the Church* (New York: Continuum, 2005), 149.

\(^4\) Emily, Susanna, Mary, Hetty (short for Mehetabel) and Anne.
faith. Rather the rebellion was one that only John was aware of. John claimed that he was separated from God. Wesley characterized this time of being a spiritual slacker where he was tempted by the other boys at the school and his sins grew from thoughts to words and deeds. Largely Wesley characterizes his sin as being negligent and weak rather than openly defiant, a terror, a drunk, or an unbeliever. Keep in mind Wesley’s personal notion of salvation centered on personal intimacy with his God. The lack of intimacy in his prayers and devotional life and the permissiveness to entertain other ideas mirrored his father’s absence from his mother, a relationship that needed mending.

While at the charter school, the Wesleys encountered a disturbance at their house. This disturbance grew from noises to unexplainable events, and eventually all but Samuel Wesley believed that a poltergeist took up residence in their house. They named the poltergeist “Old Jeffrey” after the former inhabitant of the house who died there. Many of the unexplainable events committed by Old Jeffrey include levitating a bed and disturbing Samuel’s prayers for the King. Most important was John’s lifelong belief in the supernatural, not only a belief in God but also in the constant interaction of this world with a world populated with angels, ghosts, witches, and demons. While England was in the middle of their own Enlightenment, John Wesley rejected the rationalistic system for one which still contained mystery and intimacy with the divine.

Following the charter school John went off to Oxford. The university was large and rather conservative. He quickly graduated but stayed on at Christ Church to study for his Master’s degree. During this time John denounced the rebellion against God that

5 The year is now 1724.
characterized his time at the charter school and began a new focused devotion. This devotion was partly derived from a doctor’s prescription that he moderate his diet, exercise and sleep. While the doctor prescribed moderation, John’s view of moderation was anything but moderate. He immediately set out a program of self-discipline that dictated how he spent his day and limited every action to his understanding of how Christ would respond to that proposition.

This new program of extreme moderation suited him well. It also prepared him for the events of 1729. After his graduation and ordination, John was recalled as a tutor at Oxford. His brother Charles, admitted to Oxford just two years earlier, underwent a similar personal revival. Charles took steps to ensure the fidelity of his new level of piety by gathering a few other men around him. When John returned he was invited to join this club. In its infancy the club was rather small, consisting of only four members. John and Charles were half of the membership; William Morgan and Bob Kirkham made up the other two. The chief aim of the club was to gather together in the evenings and study the Bible and devotional works, as well as review sermons they heard. They committed to one another that they would lead a holy and sober life. The chief practical change was the frequency they took communion. While most theology students took communion once a quarter, these four began receiving the Eucharist weekly. This practice alarmed much of the school as extreme, and as Puritan. Since no one could come up with a reason why they should not have weekly communion, the practice continued, but so did a new host of names. The two names that stuck were The Holy Club, and Methodists, both originally being terms of derision.
The club grew and before long it attracted a young George Whitefield (d. 1770). Whitefield had a leading role in the development of Methodism over the next few decades. The Holy Club consumed John, who quickly became the groups’ de facto leader. John was the only ordained member of the club and held a deep desire to be a pastor. The group provided this. It also provided John rivals in piety that spurred one another along to new extremes. One such extreme was the obsession with fasting. John’s older brother Samuel grew concerned that John was going too far. While applauding the move towards holiness, Samuel worried that John was “laying excessive burdens on himself that were liable to injure his health.”

It was not John’s health that was injured, rather it was a different founding member of the Holy Club that bore that burden. The rule for fasting resulted in the death of William Morgan. In a letter to William’s father, Wesley states “On Sunday last I was informed that my brother and I had killed your son: That the rigorous fasting which he had imposed upon himself by our advice had increased his illness and hastened his death.” Wesley clearly lacked the empathy that we would expect, and found no guilt in his part of Morgan’s death since it was done out of devotion to God. Clearly John was moving past the acceptable limits of piety that England imposed upon its citizens. It is also interesting to note that Wesley did not appeal to any mystical or personal claims to justify the death of Morgan. While a relationship with God is central to Wesley’s


religious outlook, he never claimed the mantle of mysticism that Zinzendorf wrapped himself in.

As Methodism has its early beginnings at Oxford, it may be prudent to look at Wesley’s conception of a Methodist. According to Wesley, “A Methodist is one in whom ‘the love of God has been poured out in (his) heart by the Holy Spirit who was given to (him)’ (Rom. 5:5); one who loves the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, and with all his strength (see Mark 12:30). God is the joy of his heart, and the desire of his soul, which is constantly crying out.”\(^8\) We can take a few points from this definition. First, unlike historical Christianity, Wesley does not define a Methodist along theological or even doctrinal lines, rather a Methodist is someone whose heart is filled with the love of God and who lives out this love with actions. We will get into Wesley’s theology later, but central to Wesley’s aim was not defining theology, but action and piety.

For most of John’s early life, this piety was extremely personal. Even during his time at Oxford, the chief focus of his life was himself. We see evidence of this when his father Samuel died in 1734. His family urged John to come home and become the new pastor at Epworth, taking his father’s post. John refused. When his mother appealed to the good he could do for the people, John replied, “The question is not whether I could do more good to others, but whether I could do more good to myself.”\(^9\) Wesley maintained

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9 Stephen Tomkins, John Wesley: A Biography, 40.
that wherever he was most holy, more people would gather around him to become holy themselves.

Two years later, in 1736, Wesley believed that the place to become a shining light for others to gather around was no longer Oxford, but Georgia. The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge urged Wesley to take his piety to the newly formed colony of Georgia. He was going to save the Indians and purify the colony. He did neither. From the very beginning John’s voyage to Georgia was a massive failure. John only succeeded in one thing, convincing his brother Charles and a few others from Oxford to join him on his doomed trek.

Once the ship set sail, it continually faced storms that terrified Wesley. He believed on more than one occasion that the ship was going to sink. Wesley was going to America to be the light surrounded by spiritual darkness, but on the boat his light was extinguished by the raging waters. Even his strict fasting\(^{10}\) did not preserve his faith. Instead he noticed a new light, not from his own piety but from the faith of German immigrants. Many of these Germans were not Germans at all, rather they were Moravians sent by Zinzendorf. John was immediately attracted to their calm serenity on the chaotic waters. The Moravians sang hymns and did not fear death. John on the other hand was terrified of his own death.

\(^{10}\) John and Charles ate only rice and biscuits on the voyage, choosing to fast from meat while on the water.
John recalls that he could not but say to himself, "'How is it that thou hast no faith?' being still unwilling to die." The Moravian leader Spangenburg confronted Wesley on just this when he later asked Wesley if he knew Christ and that Christ saved him. Wesley said he knew Christ, but believed this to be a lie. Wesley did not really understand the Lutheran theology surrounding justification by faith that was so engrained in the Moravian ethos.

The lie he told Spangenburg and himself did not stop Wesley from his mission. John believed that he could still save the people, even though he now believed he needed saving himself. Just like his time at Oxford, Wesley once again re-devoted his life to God, and like his time at Oxford, the key was found with asceticism and study. It almost goes without saying that neither the Georgian colonists nor the Natives appreciated his strict demands. Wesley’s mission to save anyone’s soul was over before it began. John and his message was extremely unpopular.

Wesley was confronted with another challenge in Georgia. This was the decision to marry or remain celibate. John’s vacillation on this issue resulted in an uproar in Savannah. In order to cover up his personal failings, John chose to defame William Williamson, one of the town’s leaders. This resulted in his arrest. Ten charges were brought against him, nine of which dealt with his religious regime. He was released without bail. Some came to his aid but not many. John did not make many friends over the year and a half he was in Georgia.

The trial was set for August but was moved back. Wesley took this as an opportunity to avoid it all together. He announced to the magistrate, a man named Causton, that “the Lord called him to return to England.”\textsuperscript{12} He told Causton he was to leave in November. In light of the debt Wesley owed and an upcoming trial, Causton forbade him from leaving and the court forbade anyone from helping him leave. In response, Wesley prayed and then shook the dust from his feet and escaped through the swamp to Charleston to gather his brother. On December 22, 1737 John and Charles Wesley fled America to head back to England. John’s efforts were wasted. His year and a half in America only resulted in disaster and becoming a fugitive. This time was influential in his subsequent conversion the following year in England.

Once back in England, John looked up the Moravians and encountered Peter Böhler, a Moravian missionary who was planning on going on to Georgia. Böhler remained in England long enough for Wesley to learn a new type of theology. Böhler told Wesley that he had no saving faith. This did not shock John. Still Böhler insisted that Wesley continue preaching. Böhler told John “to preach faith till you have it; and then, because you have it, you will preach faith.”\textsuperscript{13}

Like Francke, Welsey began his Pietist mission calling others to convert before he ever experienced his own conversion. While still growing into the faith that Böhler promised Wesley he could have, the two founded the Fetter Lane Society, on May 1, 1738. The society was a synthesis of both the Holy Club from Oxford and the

\textsuperscript{12} Stephen Tomkins, \textit{John Wesley: A Biography}, 55.

\textsuperscript{13} Stephen Tomkins, \textit{John Wesley: A Biography}, 58.
Moravians. This was the first real predecessor to the Methodist societies that John formed.

**Wesley’s Moravian Methodism.**

“May we this life improve, to mourn for errors past; and live this short, revolving day as if it were our last.”

— John Wesley

The Moravians held Bible studies all over London and it was to one of these studies that Wesley attributes his religious conversion. On May 24, 1738 Wesley attended a meeting on Aldersgate Street. Here he heard the reading of Luther’s Preface to the Epistles of the Romans, and at eight forty five that evening, Wesley said “I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation. An assurance was given to me, that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

Even though Wesley was an ordained Anglican Priest, missionary, and founder of multiple religious societies, he describes this moment on Aldersgate as the beginning of his life as a Christian. If nothing else Wesley now accepted the Moravian view of salvation and converted to this mode of piety. It is important to note that Wesley does not break with the Church of England at this time, nor any time. His remaining within the English system was both pragmatic and essential for his understanding of what a Christian was. Faith, rather than reason or orthodoxy, defined one as a Christian.


15 Paul Wemmer, Count Zinzendorf and the Spirit of the Moravians, 133.
Doctrine and dogma were and would remain secondary to the personal experience Wesley promotes.

While this conversion is notable, still some scholars believe that John Wesley had already converted prior to this point. It is likely that Wesley had a gradual conversion and did not have a single moment that he could use to call others to faith. Therefore he elevated the encounter at Aldersgate. Even before this encounter Wesley was displaying signs of a converted life such as the founding of Fetter Lane and his visits to prisons. It is interesting to note that both of our English Pietists, Wesley and Perkins, begin their converted life preaching to prisoners. There are no records of the resonance of Wesley’s pronouncing of the world damn in the prisons; one assumes it did not carry the same timbre as Perkins’ voice.

If we take John’s conversion narrative seriously, it immediately followed his brother’s conversion. Charles Wesley experienced a similar conversion just three days before John. It is possible that both brothers chose this time to declare their theological shift. It is just as likely as not that following their experience in Georgia and their tutelage under Böhler they accepted the preeminent position of experience of the divine that is a hallmark of Pietism.

Interestingly the next morning Wesley records in his journal that “I did grieve the Spirit of God, not only by not being watchful in prayer, but likewise by speaking with sharpness instead of tender love about one who was not sound in the faith. Immediately God hid His face, and I was troubled; and in this heaviness I continued till the next
morning.”¹⁶ This new experiential relationship with God contained both highs and lows, and seemingly for little reason.

Three weeks after his Aldersgate conversion, Wesley trekked to Herrnhut to visit Zinzendorf. For the next three months Wesley further internalized the Moravian ethos and observed their communal life. Wesley retained two things from his time with the Moravians. First, they served as an example for Wesley of a community that lived by faith. Second, Wesley was greatly influenced by the hymnody of the Moravians. The hymns that Wesley wrote are largely modeled after what he saw in Herrnhut. Early Methodist hymnals basic structure consisted of three different authors of hymns, those belonging to Charles Wesley, John Wesley, and Count Zinzendorf.

When John returned from his march through Moravian lands, Methodism changed once again. Unlike its early forms in the Holy Club and Fetter Lane, Wesley matured in his theology and his mission was clear. The only problem is that as soon as he proclaimed his understanding of the gospel, no pulpit was open to him. He was too Puritan, too Moravian, and not in any way a proper English preacher. It appeared that the new mission failed before it began. Unlike the failure that was his Georgia mission, Wesley was a bit more humble and willing to look outside himself. Wesley looked towards George Whitefield and the solution he was working on, since many pulpits were closed to him as well. The solution used by Whitefield was outdoor preaching. From the establishment perspective, this was ludicrous. It was far too Puritan and was roundly

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condemned, but this was just the move Wesley settled on. It was also successful. Successful enough that he raised enough money to buy land and began building “the New Room,” the first real Methodist meeting hall.

By 1739, Wesley’s message grew large enough that many societies formed, which required many preachers. The problem came when one member, John Cennick, began to preach. While a prominent school teacher and a fellow with Wesley from Oxford, Cennick was not ordained. Wesley rejected the requirement of all preachers to be ordained, and stated that “In cases of necessity when no ordained person was available, lay Methodists could preach.” While not technically a pastor or a priest, Cennick became a ‘lay assistant.’ Lay preaching grew far beyond Cennick as the need arose and it arose often. This use of lay preaching was consistent with previous Pietists theology but none of our previous examples were forming a demonization in the way the Wesley was in the early stages of doing.

The emphasis on preaching was only one of the Puritan survivals that Wesley inherited from Perkins. There was an important precedent in the works of Puritan authors. While England rejected the strict Calvinism of the Puritan era the relationship between election and fulfilling ones calling connected to justification, sanctification, and glorification remained. These stages are directly taken from Perkins’ *Golden Chain.* Though Wesley rejects the doctrine of double predestination, the framework is the same. Wesley inherited Perkins framework, though he may disagree as to the particular points within that framework. Additionally, both Perkins and Wesley view the mechanism of

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17 Stephen Tomkins, *John Wesley: A Biography,* 82.
election as coming from hearing the Bible and the efficacy of preaching, along with the style that Perkins initiated in *The Art of Prophesying.*

In addition to the preaching, and preachers being radically different from their Anglican counterparts, the audience was also rather different. England was growing and its demographics shifted as the Industrial Revolution began. The Anglican Church was not growing, and was not addressing the new industrial centers. Wesley saw this as an opportunity. The audience for his preaching was the lower strata of society. In many ways this echoes the great success that Francke and Zinzendorf had before him. The working class and poor were far too long neglected by the established churches who favored the educated, cultured elites.

The greatest example of the new audience was in Newcastle. Wesley identified the city as dire, filled with workers who knew little or nothing of religion, but knew a lot of drunkenness and cursing, even among the children. In their shared depravity, Wesley’s Newcastle resembles Francke’s Glaucha. Large crowds of industrial workers came out to hear Wesley preach. While most of the people Wesley gathered to himself were not already attached to a church, the episcopacy and other critics of Wesley claimed he was taking Christians away from other churches. His response was harsh, saying that “These were not Christians before they were thus joined. Most of them were barefaced heathens… If these are Christians at all, they are devil Christians.”

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Wesley and the Methodist preachers put on a show that was novel for anyone. While Wesley did not identify himself as a mystic, this did not preclude the movement from containing ecstatic outbursts. At the Baldwin Street meeting, one woman started crying out as if in the agonies of death. This scream subsided when the congregation prayed for her. Her horror turned to joy, she and others began laughing. In many ways this prefigures the holy laughter of the Pentecostals that will be addressed in chapter twelve. Wesley himself was putting on Pentecostal revivals. The parallels between his movement and those taking place in Pentecostal Churches in the twentieth century are rather clear, especially given their link of Phoebe Palmer, who we will address later. The parallels are also rather clear to spirit possession as described by IM Lewis, where the lower strata of society and other disenfranchised choose a socially acceptable way of expressing their concerns, thereby finding relief from their torments.

As Methodism grew larger, so did the organization. While originally the focus was on small class meetings that looked rather like Spener’s *Collogia* with a dozen or so in each class, these classes grew into societies. These societies each had a superintendent. Each superintendent was placed on a circuit. Pairs of preachers, including some lay assistants, were responsible for each circuit. The circuits all fell under Wesley’s rule, known as the Connection. Later this Connection became the annual conference where people were assigned a position for three years. While Wesley modeled his message after the Moravians, the bureaucratic structure of Methodism resembled the efficiency of Halle and Prussia and the organization of English companies. Throughout this structure, converts were supported and received constant evangelical teaching. Circuit preaching
grew and was rather successful. Initially there were seven circuits.\textsuperscript{19} Within two years there were two more with over 80 societies.

The operation of the circuit was very much like a franchise. As the circuits grew, preachers took John’s message, even if they were not formally under his leadership. Once a preacher chose to come under Wesley’s leadership, they received the benefits and costs associated with the franchise. This guaranteed them regular visits from Wesley and other preachers for support. They were expected to surrender all independence on issues of doctrine, organization, and lifestyle. As John grew in popularity, so too did the option of joining with him. Unfortunately for many preachers, the demands that Wesley placed on the Methodists were strict and many preachers wanted out after joining. Often the congregations remained with Wesley and not their initial preacher.

When questions arose in 1744, Wesley called for the first conference at the Foundry. The first conference was rather small; in addition to the Wesley brothers, there were four ministers and four lay preachers. They set up rules and address practical concerns. Many of these concerns were practical in nature. In 1746 Wesley began a fund to give loans to Methodists in need. He also established a free dispensary of medicine. Undoubtedly some of these practices were his attempt to replicate Halle. Unfortunately the medical dispensary only lasted a few years as the 300 or so regular patients grew too expensive for the Methodists.

Like Francke, Wesley opened schools. Francke is often criticized for the harshness and discipline of his schools. Wesley chose to imitate the intensity of Francke

\textsuperscript{19} London, Bristol, Cornwall, Evesham, York, Newcastle and Wales.
as well. At Kingswood, students were expected to arrive at four o’clock in the morning and stay until eight o’clock in the evening. During this time they were held to the highest discipline to maximize religious and physical development. Students would fast, but not play. “He that plays when he is a child,” Wesley explained, “shall play when he is a man.”

School life was rigid and difficult. In addition to not being allowed to play, many schools also forbade children from speaking to anyone other than their instructors, and any child who missed two days of school without permission were dropped from their rolls.

Wesley opened many schools, including ones modeled after the Orphan House at Halle, but most closed shortly after they opened. Wesley attempted to have different schools for different communities, including one set up for children of preachers and another for the poor. Most of these schools floundered because Wesley failed to understand the child mind, he expected every child to have the same level of discipline that his mother imposed on him, and he expected of himself. Despite this, Wesley and the Methodists had a tremendous impact on education, especially after his death.

Wesley’s pastoral legacy includes some theological innovations as well as practical ones. Many of these innovations are entirely his own, borrowing little or nothing from Continental Pietists. Wesley like Zinzendorf concerned himself fairly little with doctrinal orthodoxy, believing it “but a very slender part of religion.”

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Wesley is not borrowing from Tauler’s concern to remain within any established theological system, choosing instead to break from ecclesial and theological conventions.

Practically the only theological innovation that Wesley did borrow was his view of the church. Like Zinzendorf, Wesley maintained an ecumenical spirit, and held that there existed an invisible church which all true believers belonged to in all ages and among all nations. For both Zinzendorf and Wesley this ecumenical spirit extended to the point that denominational membership accounted for very little other than serving as a practical association. Like other Pietists, Wesley’s gathering of people out of their church, or making churches out of churches, was viewed as nothing but the most economical way of providing a means for individuals to work out their own salvation. In a surprising twist Wesley who cared little for denominations ended up forming his own.

Other views Wesley held concerning the church were his own.22 One example is his view of the “primitive church.” Wesley often appealed to his associations at Oxford and others as the examples of being “Bible Christians.” Wesley defines Bible Christians as “Christians taking the Bible, as interpreted by the primitive Church and our own, for their whole and sole rule.”23 The only problem with this is that Wesley knew little to nothing about the primitive or ancient church. To begin with, Wesley gives no time table as to what period we are covering. We know from other mentions that Wesley defined primitive as being before the time of Constantine, but his lack of mentioning any early

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22 Many were taken from other theological trends popular in England at the time, such as Baptists and other non-conformists, but were not common among Pietists.

church fathers, as Perkins did, may place the primitive church to only the time of the Apostles. Oddly enough, the Church Fathers and Councils that provide not only the creeds but also the Christian canon are excluded from being examples of the Church.

We know that Wesley denies any real value of apostolic succession. Methodists today likewise reject the value of the practice. Wesley also makes reference to the “Constantinian fall of the church.” This is the belief that sometime around Constantine (272-337), and the patronage of the Roman Empire, the Church was compromised and corrupted. With all the problems Wesley saw in the Church, it is odd to follow what he says in a 1783 Sermon called “The Mystery of Iniquity,” where he blames Constantine for inflicting “the greatest wound true Christianity ever received.”

This is peculiar as Wesley’s knowledge of the early Church largely came from supposition and imagination, and his claims about its operation came to him upon reflection. With this said, he tried to mimic some practices that he read about, including the Wednesday and Friday Fasts.

Central to Wesley’s view of Christianity is that it is divided. The divide is between real Christians and false Christians. These false Christians are sometimes referred to as “almost” Christians. The hallmark of an almost Christian is not any outward act. Indeed they may perform every rite and every practice of the “true”


26 These fasts are still held for the Eastern Orthodox Christians.
Christian, but they lack sincerity. “By sincerity I mean, a real, inward principle of religion, from which these outward actions flow.” They lack the type of faith that becomes so central for Wesley. Wesley would likely categorize himself as an almost Christian before his Aldersgate experience.

Along with the transformation of the Church and Christianity, Wesley also develops a new version of the Sacraments. Like many Reform Protestants, the sacraments lose their sacerdotal character. As with most Protestants in the eighteenth century, the number of sacraments is limited to the Eucharist and baptism. Wesley, following the model of Calvin and Perkins, will actually allude to a new sacrament while simultaneously demoting the only two surviving sacraments.

To begin with, Wesley, like Zwingli, did not hold the doctrine of the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Coming closer to Calvin, Wesley holds to a notion of a spiritual benefit, or spiritual presence, but like Calvin, did not go into too much detail on his beliefs. Wesley held that communion “was an outward means by which God conveyed to our souls spiritual grace purchased for us by Christ, and the mystical relation which the bread by consecration had to Christ's body was sufficient to give it the name of his body.” For this reason he urged regular communion, since his times at the Holy Club.


28 Arthur Wilford Nagler, Pietism and Methodism: or the Significance of German Pietism in the Origin and Early Development of Methodism (Nashville: M.E. Church, South, 1918), 83.
Baptism is also minimized for Wesley. Wesley denies any connection between baptism and justification or the New Birth. Stating rather clearly that “baptism is not the new birth”\(^{29}\) in his sermon called the New Birth, he attempts to prove this from the English catechism. His conclusion is contrary to his deduction, as the catechism states that the inward part is cleansed in baptism then states that it is not the new birth. Wesley, like many Calvinists, and Francke, demand a born again experience to prove salvation; baptism is rejected as this experience.

Interestingly enough Wesley promotes a different Christian practice, Bible reading, to the level of a sacrament. This is similar to Calvin and Perkins treatment of the Bible as a sacrament. Bible reading becomes the central rite and practice for the Methodist Church, and is the only action that truly gives a Christian a spiritual blessing. While not named a sacrament, practically this is the only one that Wesley truly maintains.

A new command is also given by Wesley. Wesley actually gives many commands dictating life and practice, but he explicitly states that a “true Christian” is one who is happy. Regardless of the other constraints, such as forbidding laughter, Christians are to be happy. They should have within themselves “a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life, and overflowing soul with peace and joy.”\(^{30}\)


Wesley’s Perfection.

“This is to be a perfect man, to be sanctified throughout, even to have a heart so all-flaming with the love of God.”31 – John Wesley

Central to Wesley’s theological innovations is his notion of Sinless Perfection, or Christian Perfection. This doctrine is often confused and distorted by both followers and opponents of Wesley. In many ways the doctrine is rather straight forward, but in other ways it is not. Confusion is understandable, as Wesley was confused also. To truly understand this central doctrine we need to understand Wesley’s theological starting point. This is a modified version of Luther’s salvation by faith, and parts of it resembles the Pietist interpretation of man held by Arndt and Spener. With this said, Wesley’s expression of this doctrine is wholly his own and Luther, Arndt and Spener would all take umbrage at parts of this doctrine, which at times resembles Pelagianism, Donatism, and Manicheism.32

The theological starting point for Wesley is threefold. First, that all men by nature are dead in sin, therefore children of wrath. Second, that justification is by faith alone, and finally, that faith produces inward and outward holiness. In the first case we see that Wesley maintains the Western notion of Original Sin. But unlike even Augustine, Wesley maintains that in man’s fallen state, “No one loves God.”33

31 John Wesley, A Plain Account of Christian Perfection (Vancouver: Ermitical Press, 2009), 75.

32 It may be fair to number quite a few other heresies that Wesley flirts with but these are the main ones.

Furthermore no one can have any knowledge of God, and man bears the image of the devil. This view is borrowed wholly from Perkins and Calvin. Man in this state is blind and deaf to the nature and reality of God; spiritually he is dead. Wesley in this case maintains an extreme Calvinist and Puritan position. Wesley is also borrowing from à Kempis, who in the *Imitation of Christ*, states that without God, “We have eyes and do not see.”

Unlike Perkins and Calvin, Wesley maintains that man can be saved by grace. Wesley maintains the notion of total depravity as held by Calvinists, but rejects the doctrine of election and predestination. Here he resembles Luther, but only in words. The meanings are rather different. Wesley interprets Luther’s doctrine of salvation by faith to two separate but related notions. First, justification, that is to say that God justifies man’s fallen nature. Second, Wesley holds the notion of the new birth. This resembles Arndt, but only superficially. Wesley’s notion of the New Birth/New Creation includes a notion of perfection that Arndt would not. For Wesley “the new birth is absolutely necessary in order to eternal salvation.”

Since Wesley’s beginning point is that man is spiritually dead, the new birth is in all aspects new. Man is made alive through Christ’s life. Faith is the agent of love, and “when a man is justified he is born of God.” This leads to conformity to the will of

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34 Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, 3, Book 1 Chapter 3.


God. This conformity is not partial, rather Wesley explicitly states that “being born of God, he does not sin.”37 This new birth is a metamorphosis, not simply a modification of the old life. Oddly, Wesley holds that this change occurs all at once at the moment of conversion, but the Christian may not even know of their justification until long after it has transpired.38

Maintaining a Pauline duality verging on Manicheanism between flesh and spirit, Wesley holds that upon justification the spirit is born. Still the degree to which the person is spirit verse flesh is not yet resolved.39 In this spirit man is sanctified, not only justified. This is necessary, for according to Wesley, Christ cannot reign where sin is present, nor dwell where sin is allowed. If the Christian is to maintain a relationship with Christ, they cannot have sin. Only to confuse this doctrine more, while Wesley often conflates the notions of justification and sanctification, stating that both happen at the same time in order to allow room for Christ, he also separates them, claiming that the New Birth is an instantaneous and gradual practice. In a few places Wesley places


I believe that conversion is an instantaneous work; and that the moment he is converted, or has living faith in Christ, he is justified: which faith a man cannot have, without knowing that he has it. “Yet I believe he may not know that he is justified (that is, that he has living faith) till a long time after.


Thus, although even babes in Christ are sanctified, yet it is only in part. In a degree, according to the measure of their faith, they are spiritual; yet, in a degree they are carnal.
sanctification as complete and whole, occurring at the same times as justification. They occur as one event that takes place immediately. In other places Wesley states that sanctification is a process only beginning at the moment of justification. Contrary to Luther, Wesley also views justification not as the moment when, trusting in the merits of Christ alone man is made just, rather it is a process of trusting in Christ until sanctification is complete. From a Lutheran perspective these terms are confused and distorted. While Arndt and other Pietists we have addressed used these terms, their meanings were different if not the complete opposite of how Wesley used them.

This is important because of what Wesley really means when he addresses sanctification and the new birth. Specifically Wesley addresses sanctification as “as entire sanctification or Christian perfection.”[^40] Christian perfection is often synonymous with sinlessness, or being one with Christ. Here we must also define Wesley’s notion of sin. For Wesley, sin is any “temper, passion, or affection; such as pride, self-will, love of the world in any kind or degree; such as lust, anger, peevishness; any disposition contrary to the mind that was in Christ.”[^41] Nearly always, Wesley links the term sin with either the adjective inward or outward. Wesley is far more concerned with addressing outward sin as real sin that separates man from God, implying that inward sin is the same as a temptation. Outward sin, as real sin, is dangerous since Wesley and all Methodists


“agree and earnestly maintain, “He who sins is of the devil.” Therefore those who sin are not Christians.

This is one issue that Wesley does not leave open to debate or interpretation, proclaiming that “Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.” Wesley does not permit the interpretation that the believer sins but not habitually as, the word habitually is absent from the text. “Habitually! Where is that? I do not read it. It is not written in the Book. God plainly ‘says, “He does not sin”; and you add, habitually! Who are you that mends the Word of God.”

Sin is a state where man is at enmity with God and a True Christian cannot be a Christian if he is at enmity with God.

If Christians cannot sin, then it logically follows that Christians are sinless, or as Wesley defines it, perfect. Wesley defines Christian Perfection as “loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. This implies that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul; and that all the thoughts, words, and actions are governed by pure love.” In other words, “Perfection is living in the presence of Christ and sin is

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Once again, we see how Wesley interprets Christianity through the lens of relationship rather than specific dogmas, or even rational declarations.

Wesley also states what he does not mean by perfection. Since he is addressing man in his current state, his definition of perfection excludes Adamic perfection, as well as the perfection of angels. Perfection excludes other common traits that are characteristic of humanity. Christian perfection is not perfection in knowledge, error or mistakes. Christians are also not free from bodily infirmities or temptation. Oddly enough, temptation is counted as an error in humanity. Wesley overlooks Christ’s temptations, leading one to believe that Wesley fell into the seventh century heresy of monothelitism, believing that Christ had only one will. Christians are perfect only as it relates to matters of salvation, as perfection is equated to love of God.

Wesley also holds that perfection does not include perfect knowledge. There is no certainty that one is saved from all sin unless God chooses to endow the believer with that as a blessing, a blessing that Wesley may not have received himself, as in 1767, in a letter to Lloyd's Evening Post, Wesley himself states, “I have told all the world I am not perfect.”

Finally, Wesley leaves us with one other question pertaining to Christian salvation. Is a Christian always perfect or can a Christian lose perfection? Wesley

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maintains that Christians can fall from grace, therefore losing salvation and losing perfection. They can also recover from the loss and become perfect once again. This striking notion likely emerges due to Wesley’s peculiar view of justification and sanctification, and his desire to leave room for free will.

This doctrine differs wildly from the notion of perfection held by earlier mystics and Pietists like à Kempis, Arndt, and Tauler. à Kempis viewed perfection as something that was never complete until death, but something worth striving for. Arndt maintained that perfection was a “denial of one’s own will.” When Tauler speaks of perfection, he states “A perfect will is an abandonment of all that is not God. If a man hath not done this in works, he must do it in will if his will be perfect.” à Kempis, Arndt, and Tauler define perfection as abandoning one’s own will, rather than a transformative state where one cannot sin. All four likely would agree that this state of perfection, whatever it looks like, would only be temporary, lasting as long as one has surrendered their will to God. Wesley, Arndt, and Tauler never believed that this state was a permanent one while in this life, and à Kempis went so far as to state “Every perfection in this life has some imperfection mixed with it.”

In summation, the problem with this central doctrine for Wesley is that while he made many attempts to clarify his position, he often equated the words “perfection,” “sanctification,” and “holiness” to mean essentially the same thing. He also put different

48 Johann Arndt, True Christianity (Paulist Press, 1979), 224, Book 3, Foreword.
50 Thomas à Kempis, The Imitation of Christ, 3, Book 1 Chapter 3.
emphasis on perfection when the mood struck him; sometimes it implied spiritual notions, while other times it largely resided with ethical considerations of love for one’s neighbor. The Christian also becomes incapable of sin, yet perfection can be lost, assumedly when love of God or neighbor wains and the Christian sins. Wesley here is a semi-Donatist. Here the notion of new birth is different than perfection, but otherwise it is one and the same. Still, in no way does Wesley apply either the New Birth or sanctification to any sacraments, but all are a result of man’s effort, resulting in a Pelagianism that somehow works with Wesley’s Calvinist view of total depravity. All of this is held together as both the hope of a Christian and also the first step for a Christian. All of it is the work of the individual with Christ, and not the Church, yet all salvation leads to works that presumably happens in the individual and the communities they find themselves in.

We should also note that while Francke addressed notions of perfection as well, Francke never equated perfection as sinlessness. Rather for Francke it was always progress in the Christian life, and was equated with faith. Again Wesley used much of the language of the Pietists concerning his doctrine of perfection, but not their meanings.

One clear example where Wesley was not perfect is in regards to women. It is seemingly odd, or perfectly appropriate, that a man who spent most of his life as a professed celibate preacher had so many difficulties with women. Then again, his father and mother were not the example of a high functioning marriage, and it would not be difficult for any Freudian psychoanalyst to diagnose Wesley with a strong Oedipal complex. When considering marriage in 1749, the first objection to marriage he had was
his long held belief that he should not ever find a wife “as such a woman as my father had.”

Wesley’s mother, Susanna was an exemplary woman by many respects. Not only did she possess the proper pedigree for any devoted Puritan living in England during the eighteenth century, but her intellect was as strong as anyone else’s. She was also determined and possessed the management skills that any Fortune 500 CEO would admire. Married at nineteen, she gave birth to somewhere between 17 and 19 children. Only nine survived to adulthood. She managed the house in all its affairs, including the first decade of each of her children’s education. Her methodical style in teaching and her strong discipline are likely the models of Christian living that John envisioned when creating schools, classes and the mechanisms of Methodism in general.

Wesley’s first real love other than his mother occurred on his dismal journey to Georgia. As mentioned earlier, he ran into difficulty when he wavered on the issue of marriage. Her name was Sophy Hopkey and at fifteen this devoted young woman tempted John away from the celibate life that he had envisioned for himself. Sophy attended the churches that Wesley was in charge of. Wesley also took special daily attention to her lessons and spiritual development. During that cursed year, John chose to throw off his vow of celibacy and proposed to Sophy. The problem was he did not do so clearly and Sophy was ignorant of John’s proposal. Reasonably Sophy and those responsible for her chilled to the notion of marriage. After all who would want to plan a


52 A larger number of children than we find without other Pietist leaders but not irregular for Susanna who was likely the 25th child of her father.
marriage with someone who was not certain they wanted to enter into marriage at all. Further problems arose when John chose to propose again, and again. These subsequent times John was far more clear and forceful with his proposals of marriage, but so was Sophy’s response. She issued a clear and direct no. The failed proposal was the origin of the charges against Wesley. Once rejected by Sophy, John was rejected by Georgia and fled back to England with the charges still pending.

A decade later John once again was tempted with giving up the celibate life. As the leaders of a charismatic movement, it should not surprise us that John and his brother Charles were constantly “dangerous snares to many young women,”

53 as a friend described. John was snared this time by Grace Murray. Grace was 32 years of age, attractive, senior in the faith, but lower in class, and a widow. Grace nursed John back to health after he fell ill in August of 1748. John’s love for this lowly woman destroyed all objections he held for the estate of marriage. Unfortunately John learned nothing from his proposals to Sophy Hopkey. When John proposed to Grace, it was equally opaque. Wesley’s vague proclamations that “if I were ever to marry you would be the one,”

54 were not a picturesque proposal. She responded kindly but failed to comprehend she had accepted his proposal.

In order to further distort the proposal, if one could even call it that, John immediately took off on a preaching circuit. Grace then took interest in a Methodist preacher named Bennett and the two of them were engaged. Grace was so far from


54 Stephen Tomkins, *John Wesley: A Biography*, 123.
understanding that Wesley believed they were betrothed, she told others she was not even aware that Wesley had any feelings for her. The botched proposal created a rift between Wesley and Bennett, as well as John and his brother Charles. Charles believed that John should remain celibate. Grace married Bennett shortly thereafter, and a larger rift occurred between the brothers. John was heartbroken and his trusted brother would not console him.

As luck had it John’s broken heart would not last long. Within eighteen months of Grace’s marriage to Bennet, Wesley was married as well. He likely learned how to be direct with his proposals and he chose a woman whose social standing could not be challenged. Molly Vazeille came from strong Protestant stock. Her family were Huguenots and she was wealthy. The 41 year old widow had four children, and she ensured that her wealth was set aside for their care and not for John. The courtship was brief. John tells us nothing of this in his copious journals. Equally surprising is the complete absence of the marriage from the journals as well.

At the time of the wedding Charles was also absent, in that he was not even invited to the wedding. It is doubtful that he would have attended if invited. While the proposals to Grace served as a rift between the brothers, the marriage served as a break between Charles and John. Charles believed that John should not get married, not to Grace, Molly or any woman. Charles believed that marriage would hinder John’s preaching. In actuality preaching hindered John’s marriage. John could only do one well and the marriage would suffer.

Molly was not prepared to become Mrs. Wesley. John expected Molly to travel the circuits with him, but his voyages were grueling. Molly attempted to keep up, but
found the ordeal to be a bit much. Molly complained about the weather, the road, the beds, and the food. John complained about his wife, muttering “to have persons at my ear fretting and murmuring at everything is like tearing the flesh off my bones.”\textsuperscript{55} Other times John simply left Molly behind. At least once when waiting for a coach Molly was running late, John counted the minutes on his watch. Once she was ten minutes past, he climbed aboard and left her behind.

The marriage was quickly falling apart. Molly complained that John paid too much attention to those under his instruction, especially the women. Molly seriously suspected John of adultery. These accusations were not simply the thoughts of an ill-treated and overly mistrustful wife. John wrote many letters to women with far more romantic claims than he used in his proposals to Sophy Hopkey and Grace Murray.

Molly first discovered these letters in 1755, only five years into their troubled marriage. The first letter was to Mrs. Lefevre. Unsure what she should do, Molly turned to John’s brother Charles. Charles refused to speak to her about the matter. Two years later Molly’s suspicions grew again. John developed another overly close relationship with a woman. This time it began when John appointed Sarah Ryan as the new housekeeper. Sarah was ill suited for the job; she lacked the education and organizational skills needed for the job. The only thing that her resume supplied was bigamy. Technically she was married to three men at this time. Molly believed that that John’s motives were not pure. Molly discovered a letter John wrote Sarah saying “I love your simplicity, conversing with you, either by speaking or writing, is an unspeakable blessing

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\textsuperscript{55} Stephen Tomkins, \textit{John Wesley: A Biography}, 147.
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to me. I cannot think of you without thinking of God.” These words are far kinder than anything John was saying to his wife at the time. The only thing he ever praised Molly about was “I still love you... for your uncommon neatness and cleanliness.” Wesley was the one who coined the phrase that cleanliness is next to godliness. Molly had enough of this and called John on his likely adultery during the 1757 annual conference at Bristol. John then barred Molly from communion for several years.

Molly wanted clearer proof of John’s involvement with Sarah Ryan or Mrs. Lefebvre, so she broke into his bureau and took letters that he wrote. She found only suggestive passages, but Sarah Ryan was not the only woman he was writing to at this time. John also wrote alluringly to Sarah Crosby, a class leader at the Foundry. Clearly this was too much even for John’s friends, who advised him to stop writing, as his letters were far too suggestive. John refused. Instead he declared “as long as I can hold a pen, I assert my right of conversing with whom I please. … If the unbeliever (Molly) will depart, let her depart.” In addition to declaring his wife an unbeliever John took steps to prevent her from finding his correspondence and commissioned a new bureau built, this one with secret compartments.

While Molly’s evidence of John’s promiscuity was largely limited to letters, she did record that in December of 1560, John left a meeting one night with Betty Disine,


only to be found in her company the next morning. Molly told her husband that he should “desist from running after strange women, for your character is at stake.”

The marriage was clearly doomed. While remaining married, they saw very little of each other. Every few years Molly suspected John’s indiscretion and proclaimed she was leaving him, but would then return. John continued his preaching and Molly remained at home with her children in London. When Molly grew sick, John went to visit her in 1768. Having heard of her recovery, he left for Bristol in the middle of the night, without seeing her. In 1771 Molly declared she was leaving John again. This time it likely stuck. John responded “I did not leave her: I did not send her away: I will not call her back.”

We have no record of the two even seeing each other after 1776. Molly lived the last five years of her life without her husband. She died on October 8, 1781. John did not attend her funeral. He also only received a ring from her vast estate as the rest went to her daughter.

Aside from his wife, it appears that John quite admired women. This extended to laying the groundwork for ordination by allowing women to preach. As Methodism was largely a lay religious movement and John already permitted lay preachers, the notion of women preaching was not much of a stretch. John decided to take that step in 1761, when Sarah Crosby went to encourage other women outside of her class in Derby. A crowd of 200 showed up and she decided to share her own story in front of the church. When this was brought to Wesley, he surmised that if it benefited the people, God could

59 Stephen Tomkins, John Wesley: A Biography, 159.

60 Stephen Tomkins, John Wesley: A Biography, 174.
not object. The advice for her was, “When you meet again, tell them simply, ‘You lay me under a great difficulty. The Methodists do not allow of women preachers; neither do I take upon me any such character. But I will just nakedly tell you what is on my heart.’... I do not see that you have broken any law. Go on calmly and steadily.”

The rule was not for Sarah alone, John then encouraged Grace Walton to give a short exhortation. Within a decade, John began to create new rules for women preachers, telling Sarah Crosby in 1769 to preach, but to avoid the form of preaching. The sermons were to be short and interlaced with prayers so she could call the services a prayer meeting. Two years later the façade of Crosby’s sermons began to crack and it was obvious to most that she was delivering sermons. Mary Bosanquet and other women were doing the same, leading many male preachers to complain. In response, Wesley refused to ordain the women but gave them license to operate as any lay male preacher. Sarah and Mary traveled the circuit just like Wesley and his other preachers.

**Wesley and Methodism on their own.**

“*By Methodists I mean, a people who profess to pursue holiness of heart and life, inward and outward conformity to all things to the revealed will of God.*”

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classes grew into their own churches, with their own government and rules. Methodism, like many forms of continental Pietism was, de facto, a church within the Church. With the growing success and ever increasing levels of hostility of the Church to it, it was only a matter of time before it became a church outside the Church. But the time for its break would not occur until after Wesley’s death. In the conference of 1755, many hoped to break with the Church of England, but John convinced them to remain. Even more striking was that Wesley permitted a lay preacher, Charles Perronet, to give communion in London. Charles Wesley was appalled, but John’s response was to further blur the lines that ordination imposed, stating that “We have in effect ordained already.”

John clearly saw little value in the Church of England, and in the boundaries of ordination. Yet he was not willing to allow for schism. John maintained that “When the Methodists leave the Church, God will leave them.” After his death, the meeting of 1795 put in place the Plan of Pacification, which allowed individual churches to break from the Church of England if they desired. It only took two years before churches in England began to break away.

Churches in America had already done so. This was as a result of the Revolutionary War. It became increasingly difficult for Americans to have an American ordained by the Episcopacy in England. The solution was to appoint a Bishop for the United States. John was in an odd position of ordaining men priests, while not a bishop himself, and remaining under the Archbishop of Canterbury. Wesley’s response was to

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64 Stephen Tomkins, *John Wesley: A Biography*, 188.
again blur the lines between Presbyter and Bishop, claiming that Priest and bishop were of the same order and that he was “as much a Christian bishop as the Archbishop of Canterbury,”

Wesley did decide to break with the Moravians though in 1749. Wesley was disenchanted by some of the Moravian revivals he witnessed in London. These Moravians grew too extreme, even for Wesley. Wesley urged all who had been fooled into joining the Brethren to desert them. The great error that the Moravians perpetuated was not that extreme. It came down to the totality of faith. Moravians contended that faith became an all or nothing proposition. Wesley maintained that while that was possible, often it came by degrees. Oddly enough, Wesley makes similar propositions as the Moravians as we already addressed with his doctrine of Christian Perfection. Wesley did take the missionary spirit with him from the Moravians and continued to send out missionaries, not only to the Americas but the whole world. The Moravians taught John Wesley to say “The world is my parish!”

Wesley had similar breaks with Whitfield, and his brother Charles. John Wesley owes quite a debt to Whitfield who was one of the early members at Oxford and provided Wesley with the means of his early preaching career in the field. But Whitfield’s fidelity to Calvin’s notion of predestination was not one that Wesley could accept. As we have seen in many instances, John believes in free will. Beyond the theological difference, there was also a practical one. Whitfield was content with being a preacher while Wesley was a preacher, a pastor, administrator, and creator of a new religious movement.

65 Stephen Tomkins, John Wesley: A Biography, 185.
Whitfield believed that delivering sermons would be the means that the Elect should accept Christ. Wesley, not believing that the Elect were predestined, needed to build an organization around them to facilitate salvation.

Two other issues separated the two preachers. First, Whitfield laughed. For Wesley laughter was needless and dangerous to one’s salvation. While Whitfield believed in freedom to laugh, Wesley believed in freedom from slavery. Whitfield spent far more time in America than Wesley and came to the conclusion that slavery was necessary for the economic life of the Southern colonies. He was even responsible for overthrowing Oglethorpe’s ban on slavery in Georgia and owned 25 slaves himself. Wesley came to the conclusion of many in the Enlightenment, that slavery restricted freedom and was an oppression that must be stopped.

The greatest champion and challenger to John’s career was not Whitfield, but John’s brother Charles Wesley. Charles began the Holiness Club that John then took over; he also produced the majority of the hymns that are used for the Methodists. Charles was also willing to challenge his brother when seemingly no one else could. Charles, while less theologically minded than his brother, believed that fidelity to doctrine was far more important. Sometimes this fidelity encouraged Methodism to remain within the bounds of the English Church, other times Charles supported breaking from the Church. Charles also wanted to have strong preachers when John permitted poor preaching from time to time. Charles was clearly the heir to his brothers movement, but he was always more comfortable correcting his brothers abuses than leading such a movement on his own. When John fell ill in 1753, Charles refused to succeed his brother as the leader.
John recovered and lived for nearly another forty years. Before his death in 1784, John drew up the Deed of Declaration. The Deed established the Conference as the leading body of the Methodists and outlined the requirement of annual meetings with election for members every three years. John died on March 2, 1791.

With membership based not on theological fidelity or rational proofs, Wesley created the Methodist church. By many respects, this is the single largest institutional result of Pietism. Wesley’s religion fit well within the dictates of Kantian philosophy that emerged during the same time, namely Kant’s belief that religion was primality about ethics. Wesley’s Pietism focused on reforming the ethical life, not just doctrines. Wesley’s greatest impact in the nineteenth century was within the Methodist church. Methodism grew to become a ledge protruding from the edifice of Pietism that other movements built off of, including the Holiness Movement, Pentecostalism, and fundamentalism. Wesley provided the mantle for Palmer. She remained a Methodist, while birthing the Holiness Movement, advancing Wesley’s doctrines of Christian Perfection and living the life of a Bible Christian. Wesley also impacted Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard, though nowhere to the extent of Palmer. Schleiermacher’s ecclesiology resembles Wesley’s to a striking degree, both calling out the invisible church from the visible by identifying proper worship and a pious heart rather than doctrinal tests or denominational affiliation. Kierkegaard’s emphasis on subjectivity echoes the personal intimacy with God advocated by Wesley.

Wesley and Zinzendorf also combine to pave the way for female ordination. Both called women to serve in the church in positions usually held only for men. Significantly, this came from Spener whose collegia promoted an egalitarian spirit,
allowing women prominent roles. Zinzendorf then advocated for greater notions of equality and Wesley eliminated all divisions of gender through eliminating the ecclesial division between bishop and presbyter, as well as priests and the laity. In the nineteenth century, the erasure of these divisions helps Palmer to grow her famous Tuesday Meetings for the Promotion of Holiness, and allows her further justification in her preaching career.

Success and Impact of Halle, Moravians & Methodists through the 18th Century

“A Monster is whatever we are not, so as monsters change form so do we, by implication.”66 – Zakiya Hanafi

While initially an oppressed minority, Pietism for most in the eighteenth century was empowering. The oppression proved fealty to God and only served to encourage the group. This encouragement took place in spiritual autobiographies as addressed by Van Leiburg, the collegias set up by Spener and Francke, Methodist meeting halls, and the Moravian enclaves in Herrnhut, Herrnhag, and the Americas. The Pietists were a group within the larger group. Through the eighteenth century those small groups began to dominate the whole.

By the conclusion of the eighteenth century, Pietism was clearly a force that was not going away, and it was not going to remain subordinate to the Orthodox elements within the confessions of Lutheranism, Reform, or Anglicanism. It is even argued that in Germany the Pietist attitude represents the default religious standpoint at the dawn of the

nineteenth century. Pietism, emerging from Halle, Herrnhut, and Holiness Clubs, grew to dominate the cultural landscape. The critiques from these communities grew into attacks against the Protestant establishments. No longer were the Pietists simply distressed outsiders, rather they fashioned themselves the liberators of Christendom. The Pietist offensive naturally produced polemics against them. Possibly the strongest anti-Pietist tract was written by Valentin Ernst Loscher, who penned *Malum Pietisticum*.67

Pietism's earliest success came at the University of Halle, with the Pietist network that it created. What many consider a fortuitous happenstance was anything but. Once Francke received the charge of creating a theology department, he immediately planned out the course advancement he foresaw for the institution in his work *Der Grosse Aufsatz*68 in 1704. Francke conceived of the university as the manufacturing plant for the spiritual needs of Prussia, Germany and the world. The Pietist leaders coming out of the school advanced Francke’s vision of a renewal for all areas of society. At Halle, catechism lessons taught the poor to read and write as well as how to be pious Christians, disciplined workers, and obedient subjects.

The University of Halle was also known as one of the centers for the German Enlightenment, the Aufklärer. As noted earlier, Pietism and Enlightenment Rationalism were not always antithetical to each other. From the lifelong friendship of Leibniz and Spener, to the shared drive to investigate individual experience, Halle shaped both impulses in the eighteenth century, often shaping one by the other. It should not be a

67 The Pietistic Evil.

68 The Great Project.
surprise that the university hosted rationalist Christian Wolff, or created the educational system that fashioned Immanuel Kant, as well as Friedrich Schleiermacher.

In addition to reforming the educational system of Pietist as well as Rationalist schools, Halle also became the model of eighteenth-century orphanages throughout all of Europe. Halle set the example first to Protestant Germans, with up to twenty-five percent of the orphanages founded between 1695 and 1806 modeled directly after Halle’s success. The orphanages succeeded because they were less burdensome than others. Not only did they remove the orphans from the street, but they were also manufacturing centers. Today many of us may find the idea of orphans as a source of labor objectionable. Yet in the eighteenth century, this relationship between care and work was viewed as symbiotic, not exploitative. Orphans came out of the Halle system and spread throughout Europe, internalizing the Pietist message, as well as the promethean ethic of Francke, applying it to other ventures as well.

Johann Henrich Schulze and Anna Hedwig Petersin illustrate success stories from the orphan system. Schulze began attending the orphan house after the death of one of his parents. Immediately he attended the Latin school and became an accomplished linguist, teaching at the Halle Padagogium and university, and becoming a professor of medicine and Greek in Altdorf. Anna Petersin was given an education excelling in arithmetic and writing. She even worked in Francke’s home, caring for the children. Halle’s orphans included both men and women, educating both. We have already seen the significant roles women played in early Pietism in Frankfurt with Anna Elisabeth Kissner, Johanna Eleonora von Merlau, and Maria Juliana Baur von Eyseneck.
Possibly the world’s most famous Halle orphan was Georg Friedrich Handel. Following his father’s death, Handel attended Halle before ultimately making his home in London in 1711. Handel still visited Halle from time to time. The message and model of the orphanage was internalized by Handel. When the London Foundling Hospital was established in 1749, Handel composed hymns for the occasion. Sitting on the board of governors, Handel shaped the hospital from what he saw during his youth at Halle. Also his music was used as a fundraising endeavor for the hospital. Every year the performance of *The Messiah* generated revenue for the hospital.

The Moravians were not quite as successful as the University at Halle early on. Unlike Halle, which sought to reform the pedagogy of Christendom, the Moravians sought to plant settlements which Zinzendorf and others hoped would impact the world around them. Herrnhut provided a great example; Herrnag less so. In the New World, the settlements were equally as mixed. Georgia, the Moravians first attempt at settlement outside of Germany, was largely a failure. It was short lived once the English and Spaniards began fighting over the territory between Spanish controlled Florida and English held Georgia. The foreseeable conflict was the reason why the Moravians were permitted to settle in Georgia by the English. By 1740 the settlement dwindled to a dozen people. Other efforts to evangelize to the Germans and slaves at Purysburg, South Carolina, were also unsuccessful.

Pennsylvania was somewhat more positive, but only slightly. Zinzendorf hoped to bring inter-denominational dialogue with the Moravians and the others, including Lutherans, Reformed, Quakers, Mennonites, Dunkers, Ephrata monks, the Inspired, and separatists who were all there. The ecumenical spirit inherent in Moravian piety fell to
the necessary theological contentions inherent in all but Pietist theology. Success for Pennsylvania came only with the settlement of Bethlehem and the mission work that grew out of it.

Further success for the Moravians in America came after the American Revolution, not in settlements, but in schooling. Early American education was still closely tied to church schools, which restricted attendance to those who shared denominational ties. The Moravians, being more ecumenically minded that others, opened their schools to outsiders, beginning with their reorganization in 1785. Moravian education impacted non-Moravians, undoubtedly shaping their theology and views of education.

Perhaps the greatest significance of the Moravians in America and Europe was their impact on John Wesley and the entire Methodist tradition. Wesley began an eighteenth-century English revival. The conventional understanding of the English Evangelical revivals starts with Wesley, and for good reason. Wesley synthesized Perkins and Zinzendorf into a renewed English Pietism which provided an answer to the needs of the industrializing centers of England.

Even after Wesley’s opposition to the Revolution, the Methodists found success in America as well. After plummeting attendance, on the eve of the Revolution by 1790, attendance shot up to over 60,000 Methodists in America, only slightly less than the over 70,000 in England.69 The Revolution untied the hands of the Methodists, allowing them to promote their own clergy, including their own bishops, apart from the wishes of

69 61,811 in America (six times than a decade earlier) and 71,463 members in England.
Canterbury, and even Wesley. The Methodist Episcopal Church and the American Methodists had their own bishops decades ahead of their English counterparts, who remained connected to the Anglican Church until after Wesley’s death.

The expansion of America and the increased need to provide preachers fueled further growth for Methodists in America. Lay preachers and circuit preachers adapted well to the frontier. These “extraordinary” ministers celebrated the sacraments apart from a higher ecclesial body. Many operated largely independent from one another, with local elders determining who was eligible to celebrate. The local decisions continued to promote local preachers as well as lay preachers, and even consecrated women as deaconesses. In America today there are four related major Methodist denominations that grew from the Methodist Episcopal.70

Outside of denominational formation, the success of these movements impacted Christian societies at large, primarily in three areas, Prussianism, Missionary Movements, and the Great Awakenings in the United States. These advancements grew out of Halle, Herrnhut, and the Holiness Clubs and came into their own in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Prussianism is often defined as the monomaniacal devotion to the interests of the state over all other concerns of life, the fulfillment of the needs of the state over the needs of any individual citizen. The mechanism of Prussianism is usually tied to the bureaucratic state as a function of the military apparatus, to the point that many observed

that “Prussia was not a country with an army, but an army with a country.”\textsuperscript{71} The
discipline of the army is the discipline of the state, which requires centralization and
control, and produces hegemony, homogeneity, and industrial harmony with the interests of
the state.

Prussianism is more than the process of German advancement. The advancement
led to the collision with England, producing the First and Second World Wars, as
described by Friedrich Meinecke in \textit{The German Catastrophe}. It was the slow shift from
Germany as the old Sleeping Michael to the industrious reputation Germans gained by
the end of the nineteenth century described by David Blackbourn. The German nation
took their character from Prussia, who took its character not only from the
Hohenzollerns, and the bureaucratic military structure, but from the Pietists at Halle.

Beginning with the accession of Fredrick Wilhelm I to the Prussian throne in
1713, ascetic Christianity found a dynastic champion. Fredrick Wilhelm and his
decedents demanded military discipline of themselves and their state. The church served
as the mechanism to inculcate the populace along the monarch’s disciplinary desires.
Fredrick Wilhelm’s sense of duty and obligation was only rivaled by one man, August
Hermann Francke. Both promoted an ambitious campaign to remake Brandenburg-
Prussia. The new ascetic attitude, once internalized, was no longer simply a monarchical
decree, but a divine command. Hartmut Lehman argues that Pietism, applied in service
to the state, created “an ‘inner fatherland,’” constituting in fantasy what was missing in the

reality of late eighteenth-century Germany.” The Hohenzollerns and Francke agreed that civic duty was synonymous with the Christians duty.

With these objectives aligned, all Lutheran pastors in Brandenburg-Prussia following 1729 were required to study at least two years at the University of Halle. Given the opportunity, Francke reordered the society to ensure the success of his brand of Pietism. Not only did the school educate Pietists rather than Scholastic Lutherans, but the rejection of idleness and self-discipline imposed was alluring and unescapable. Francke set up a patronage network that controlled all appointments to the Prussian army chaplaincy. This patronage system favored Halle graduates, not only in the military, but in all areas of the Prussian bureaucracy. Pietist control over patronage was not only about promoting their own people, but also about excluding outsiders. Pietism and Halle education became the litmus tests for promotion to political appointments. As a result of Halle’s influence, Pietist leaders such as Baron Carl Hildebrand von Canstein grew so powerful that they manipulated Frederick Wilhelm and even blocked his agenda.

Halle Pietists were not simply cooperating with Hohenzollern ironfisted discipline, they were going beyond their perceived function. The Prussian Pietists appeared to be cooperating or even allied with Frederick Wilhelm, when in reality they were really subverting the King’s religious agenda. Fredrick Wilhelm wanted his Calvinism to thrive against the Lutheran Scholasticism. This was the aim of promoting Pietism, not the consequence. Frederick Wilhelm wanted religious toleration. This

toleration produced a level of intellectual freedom and an openness in Brandenburg-Prussia not seen in most other German states. What the ideological power vacuum actually produced was a theocracy masquerading as a monarchy. By the end of the eighteenth century, Halle Pietists were the Prussian state. Even Johann Christoph Woellner (1732–1800), the confidant to Frederick Wilhelm II, was educated at Halle. Woellner was a confidant to the King and champion of the Aufklärung. According to Michael J. Sauter, the Edict on Religion of 1788 and the Enlightenment views that the edict supposedly represented, were in actuality politically and socially exclusive, rather than emancipatory.

The austere living required from Prussianism could not have succeeded in the relatively short time it did by the decrees or ambitions of the Hohenzollerns alone. It was the religious goals of the Pietists that broke down provincial isolation and fostered centralization. They also gave an internal motivation to the subjects of the Hohenzollerns that advanced the Brandenburg-Prussian ideology known as Prussianism.

The expansionist aim of the Pietists not only reformed the Prussian state, but sought to do so for the entire world through the formation of missionary movements. Eighteenth-century Pietism gave birth to the Protestant missions. These missions began as an inner mission to save the souls of Protestants, but this inner mission expanded to an outer mission, with a strong feeling of social responsibility for the disinherit people.

As already addressed, this began with the Halle-Danish missions. The Danish empire sought Halle trained missionaries Bartholomaus Ziegenbalg73 and Heinrich

73 1682—1719
Plutsckau. These two founded a mission school for Tamil boys and girls in Tranquebar, using the curriculum and educational methods found in Halle. This expanded through schools set up throughout the world, as well as the medical missions and print missions selling sermons and Biblical commentaries.

Halle and the Moravians shared in this task. Both were focused on linguistic training and analysis, which afforded them the flexibility and curiosity to approach the peoples around the world with eager inquisitiveness, along with evangelical zeal. The result, beyond their spiritual aims, was a remarkable production of scholarly treatises in linguistics and ethnography.

The Methodists joined the Moravians in their attempts to convert the natives of America. With the greater emphasis on lay preaching, the Methodists lacked the pedagogical resources of Halle and the Moravians. The Methodists found limited success missionizing the natives in the Americas, rather their greatest triumph was found in the industrial centers in England.

The Methodist message, as well as the surviving Puritan missive, resounded among the colonials in North America. The result was the First and Second Great Awakenings. The Puritans legacy to the First Great Awakening of the 1730s and 1740s is easily seen with the contributions of Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards. Both Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards were greatly influenced by Perkins and Ames. Mather set the stage as a pre-revivalist for the Great Awakening, and Edwards was the

74 1677—1747

75 Including England, Denmark, Hungary, Estonia, Siberia, and India.
main theologian of that revival. Though English and in America, Mather was still aware of the events in Europe and was known to have sent bags of gold to Francke for his work with orphans, Jewish-children and foreign missions. Mather also called for an “outpouring of the Holy Spirit” in a similar manner as Zinzendorf before the “Moravian Pentecost.”

Edwards is the main preacher of the American revival. Throughout his sermons, the impact of Perkins is clear, and the margins of his copy of Ames’ *Marrow of Theology* were filled with notes. The Pietist impulse is also abundantly clear in Edwards’ sermon “The Reality of a Divine and Supernatural Light.” In it, Edwards describes two modes of understanding. The first one is speculative. The other is “that which consists in the sense of the heart.” This creates a fundamental difference when one approaches God. Edwards holds that God is observed, not from the head as a rational judgment, but felt in the heart, sensing God’s beauty and living in appreciation of it.

Fifty years later, the Second Great Awakening began in North America. The remnant of American Puritians lit the flame, but the Methodists and Moravians fueled the fervor, and the Methodists gained more from it than anyone else. Generally viewed as a rural revival, Methodists took advantage of their relative flexibility to scoop up members and grow churches on the frontier. The view that the Awakening was primarily a rural and frontier revival has recently been challenged though. Recently greater attention is paid to the success the evangelical message had in major urban centers like New York.

While a debate exists about how one should characterize the greatest success of the Second Great Awakening, it is clear that it was widespread and impacted both the rural frontier and major urban centers. The impact is found in the reformation of American Protestantism along a more Pietist direction. This revival and the atmosphere of American religious life in the eighteenth century will be discussed in greater detail in chapter nine.

What we see through the Great Awakenings, as well as the early Missionary movements and Prussianism, is the expansion and growth of the Pietist impulse. While Protestant Scholasticism and Rationalism had their successful institutional forms at the beginning of the Reformation, Pietism developed these later in the eighteenth century. The development into institutions and the relative flexibility the experientially focused Pietists had allowed them a diverse impact on the world. Through both its own culture and expansion, Pietism, now in an institutional form, left its mark on nearly every establishment, tradition, and ideology it ran up against.

**What Success Brings**

> *There must exist an intimate connection between social organization and religious belief.*”77 – Bronislaw Malinowski

With the success of institutional Pietism through political participation and denominational formation, Pietism finds itself at odds with the very reason for its emergence at the dawn of the Reformation. Specifically, Pietism is now an institution,

like the various strains of Protestantism that it developed in reaction to. After three hundred years railing against the established church and the culture at large, Pietism created its own churches and formed schools, states, and other institutions. These shaped modernity at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

While the Pietists succeeded at least in part in shaping their own destiny and preserving the Protestant emphasis on experimental religion, they did so at a cost. Becoming the establishment was the very thing they were opposed to. The existing habitus for the Pietists came from the position of outsiders. Institutionalization emerged from the eschatological need for success. Pietists retained the belief in a calling, being elect, and somehow remaining set apart from the larger community. There still remained a theological and internal need for Pietists to remain outsiders. These two opposing forces worked together in the eighteenth century, largely because success was not final. By the conclusion of the century, Pietists need to reconcile these tendencies. For many Pietists, success and institutionalization was preferable, but the drive to remain outside, to be a critic not only of society but also Christendom remained a strong force. Again, J.Z. Smith put it “the most basic sense of the ‘other’ is generated by the opposition in/out.”

The theological notions attached to election and chosenness required being set apart from the larger community. If one is in the larger community, they are out of the community of God. It is those Pietists who retain their exclusionary habitus with the focus on outsiders that the rest of the work seeks to address through Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer.

Not surprisingly, we have the same discussions of Christianity in general, and Protestant Christianity specifically, in relation to the nineteenth century, as we have throughout our discussions of modernity. Namely that Christianity is simultaneously in a period of great decline, that its attempts at shaping the thoughts of Europeans and Americans are so miniscule as to not warrant mention. Others contend that this was the period of great advancement, remarking at the numerical and geographical expansion. It is after all the nineteenth century, which is the crest of European and American colonialism that now embraced a multitude of missionary movements, expanding the various Protestant worldviews throughout the globe. While church member roles are always a difficult way to explain piety, we do see a drastic jump in the American population, as church members “rose from less than 10 percent in 1800 to over 40 percent in 1910 (and to 58 percent in 1951).” Mission churches, Methodist circuit-riders, Christian student societies, Sunday Schools, the YMCA/YWCA, and the decay in denominational identity become the normative practices for both Protestant Christians and the nations that they find themselves in. Each of these practices have their rationale in both the culture of the nineteenth century, as well as the theological systems and thoughts of the Pietists.

We see a similar advancement in the realm of philosophy on the European Continent. Terry Pinkard, in his work *German Philosophy 1760-1860: The Legacy of Idealism*, argues that Pietism, with its emphasis on looking inward rather than at

established theological systems, laid the groundwork for German Philosophy. This self-reflection is much more in line with Leibniz and Christian Wolff than Voltaire. If we take this claim seriously, the groundwork for the philosophical revolutions that began in Germany at the conclusion of the eighteenth century is far more indebted to Pietism than rationalism, although the Aufklärung is a product of both. Kant, the philosophical behemoth that shaped the nineteenth century, has feet in both worlds. Pietism grew from a church within a church to a church in and of itself, but also to an ideology that shaped the European and American mind through Kant and his philosophical predecessors. In treatments of philosophy alone, Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard are inheritors of Kant and the shared background of Pietism. Only Palmer would be excluded from these discussions, and that is likely due to the limited engagement she had with the philosophical world. Undoubtedly the reimagined worldview of Kant shaped Palmer as much as it did the other two.

One variant of Pietism tended towards philosophy, other variants to continued theological speculation. Still, an institutionalized Pietism existed, but its impact was making way to the other two manifestations of the ethos of the Pietistic spirit. Success in theology, philosophy, state governance, and institutional reality predicated the requirement that Pietism must shift again or forever be condemned as the dead religion that Perkins, Arndt, Spener, Francke, Zinzendorf, and Wesley were so opposed to. The solution is rather counterintuitive, but nonetheless obvious. Experiential Protestantism must once again reimagine itself. This time the label Pietism may still apply, but it causes as much difficulty as it did centuries earlier.
In the Lutheran, Reform, and Anglican examples, we have new champions of the pietistic ideal. There emerged new theological, ecclesial, and social leaders who seek to understand and rework their world, both from the inside and outside of themselves. Their worlds, while already Protestant and already “Pietist,” still need to be reworked along the lines of personally meaningful relationships between themselves and God. While the culture around them came closer to their ideal than in previous centuries, these leaders, as well as many more, still held a general antipathy to the greater Christian culture and formulated Pietism with their new norms and practices. The mystical experiential revival must be revived once again. It is to this task that we now turn, with Friedrich Schleiermacher, Søren Kierkegaard, and Phoebe Palmer. All three were raised in Pietist households, were familiar with the now institutionalized forms of their father’s beliefs, and rework Christianity along the idealistic and pietistic lines, which now face an advanced modernity and entrenched Pietism, where despite centuries of success, the experience of piety is seemingly elusive.
“Every utterance presupposes a given language... Communication necessarily presupposes the shared nature of the language, thus also a certain acquaintance with the language.”

At the dawn of the nineteenth-century Pietism moved from an outsider’s movement to a corrective inside the main denominations of Protestantism and finally into institutional forms and even their own denominations. While most persecuted movements may be content in this trajectory, the utopia did not arrive with the new institutions. In order for Pietism to continue it needed to reinvent itself. The first notable theologian in the nineteenth century to reconstruct Pietism was Friedrich Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher’s contribution to the edifice was not only building another level upon the wall but also in grinding down and removing other Pietist stones. Schleiermacher, and to a degree Kierkegaard and Palmer, in adding their contributions to the construction, eliminated or reworked the offerings given by other Pietists, both those who came before the nineteenth century and those who lived in it. What they left behind was a stronger wall, but one with new points of departure.

Over the next seven chapters the theologies of Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer will all be preceded by a chapter addressing their nineteenth century context and

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1 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 8. Unless otherwise noted all section header quotes in chapters five through eleven are quotes from the works of the subject of that chapter.
their lives. Biography informs theology, and once the lives of these nineteenth-century Pietists are examined, their theology will come into view. Their experiences directed their theological concerns and provided the opportunities for them to express themselves as outsiders, both theological and culturally. Pietism’s antipathy towards Christian cultural and the culture at large is also best expressed in the biographical narratives of Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer. The specific theological issues concerning God, justification, sanctification, and ecclesiology, as well as their primarily theological contributions will be addressed in the chapter following their individual biographies. From the vantage point of their lives, their theologies are contextualized as a reconstruction of Pietism.

**Schleiermacher’s Germany**

“In no domain is there a complete knowledge, except together with the grasping of the living history of knowledge at all times and in all places which is taken as a whole in its complete extent by this critical procedure.”

The continual growth of Prussian Pietism following Francke created new challenges for experiential Protestantism. Francke’s success in institutionalizing the marginalized strand of Pietism continued under the reign of Frederick Wilhelm I (d. 1740), who imposed the value system of State Pietism on his country. The key to Francke and Frederick Wilhelm’s state Pietism was education. Halle continued to be the model for theological training and pedagogical instruction.

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2 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, 279.
As Halle went, so did Prussia. Since the university’s founding, the twin departments of Theology and Philosophy were combative, yet cutting edge. The philosophy department championed the German Enlightenment, the Aufklärung. While Francke shaped the theology department for subsequent generations, the philosophy department was shaped by Christian Wolff (d. 1754), a champion of the Aufklärung. Wolff, a follower of Leibniz, was particularly attracted to Leibniz’ *Theodicy*. In the *Theodicy*, Leibniz argued “it is sufficient to show that a world with evil might be better than a world without evil.”

Continuing this course of reasoning, Leibniz maintains that this world with evil present in it still contains more goodness than evil and this is the best of all possible worlds.

Wolff expands this in his essay “All is Right.” Wolff’s expansion of Leibniz’s conclusions takes the line of reasoning to a nearly absurdist level. Wolff’s contemporaries thought differently and the essay received an award at the 1755 Berlin Academy of Science. In “All is Right,” Wolff claims that perfection in the world means reflecting on God’s love for the world rather than the world’s imperfections. The relationship between rationalists and Pietists extended back to the days of Spener and Leibniz and continued through the life and work of Wolff. Wolff’s theologically pious Enlightenment bridges the gap that existed between the two departments of Halle. However, the Enlightenment was perceived as a threat to Frederick Wilhelm, who

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removed Wolff from his position. Later the Prussian king came under the influence of Wolff, and decided to reinstate him to his former post at the University of Halle.

The dual identity of the school gave it a reputation for internal strife and a production of extremists in either camp. The detractors of the university often claimed that those bound for Halle would return either as a Pietist or an Atheist. This apparent split personality of the school need not be seen as all that radical of a divide. The Pietists emphasis on individual experience is not antithetical to the self-discovering impulses of the Aufklärung. That Halle hosted the rationalist Christian Wolff and Francke illustrates the rise of individualism in the eighteenth century and not a contradiction in the university. Both movements opposed Lutheran scholasticism and empowered individuality in thought and feeling.

Furthermore, the German Aufklärung did not possess many of the same anti-clerical attributes that gripped French Enlightenment thought. Some of the Aufklärer taught theology and held positions in the Lutheran or Reformed Churches. Both departments at Halle emphasized individualism coupled with a strong social consciousness and commitment to reforming society. The German Enlightenment was far more concerned with intellectual reform than political or ecclesial reform. The belief held by Wolff and others was that society proceeded from its intellectuals, not the bureaucrats of the church or state. The unreasonable dictates from ecclesial and civil

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Atheism, a claim held against a perceived godless doctrine inherent in Enlightenment teachings, although there were many supporters of the Enlightenment that held firm religious views.
institutions would eventually follow the lead of the philosophers and thus transform the entire society.

Just as Wolff served as a rational bridge between the two modes of Christian thought, Fredrick Wilhelm’s heir, Frederick II (d. 1786), served as a bridge between his father and the complex Prussian state of the nineteenth century, both in its successes and failings. According to Gerhard Ritter, Frederick II despised his father and to an extent his father’s piety. Frederick preferred the Enlightenment of the French and Voltaire (d. 1778) rather than the cooperative religious German sort epitomized by Wolff. Voltaire’s most famous work, Candide, was a satire directed against Christian Wolff’s “All is Right.” Wolff’s idea that due to God’s sovereignty even the horrible events that befall humanity will turn out for the best was savagely lampooned. Candide was a shot across the Aufklärung bow. The uneasy friendship between rationalists and Pietists was coming to an end. Voltaire and his student Frederick II took charge of the Prussian state. Both preferred the French Enlightenment to the Pietist sympathizing Aufklärung that dominated the previous generations thought.

Frederick II was a secular soldier king who used his father’s militaristic and Pietistic bureaucratic system to expand Prussia. Cynically, Frederick the Great sought to overcome what he perceived to be the backwardness of traditional German princely rule by placing the bureaucracy in the service of an active foreign policy. While the ideology of Prussia’s monarch changed, the Prussian ethos changed very little during Frederick’s forty-six year reign.⁵ Throughout the eighteenth century, the ascetic self-denial and

⁵ Frederick’s reign was from 1740-1786.
promethean work ethic championed by Francke continued to hold and even expand, as did the Prussian borders. With the death of Frederick II in 1786, the monarchical challenge to Pietism abated. Frederick’s nephew, Frederick Wilhelm II (d. 1797) took the throne.

Fredrick Wilhelm II is best known for his Edict on Religion of 1788. The aim of the Edict was to minimize heterodox academic discussions about God, the church, and religious speculation. Speculation was allowed to take place in classrooms, but not in front of uneducated audiences. The pulpit and public sphere were no place to engage in questionable doctrine. The Prussian monarchs, throughout the eighteenth century, oversaw and intervened in church matters when they deemed it appropriate. We already addressed the symbiotic relationship between Fredrick Wilhelm I and Francke. Frederic II was no different. He promoted French Enlightenment ideals, but tempered full critique of the church, knowing that anti-clericalism tended toward antiestablishment ideas. The Edict in 1788 under Frederick Wilhelm II is simply an extension of this moderated tone. Part of the Edict stated “No one should despise, deride, or disparage the clerical order.”

Not surprisingly, the Edict was unpopular amongst the Enlightenment supporting elites who followed in Frederick II’s skepticism. To enforce the Edict on Religion, the Edict on Censorship was passed in December of the same year. The aim of the second Edict was to outlaw critiques on the first. Pietism’s engagement with the Edict was as ambiguous as its relationship with Protestant Orthodoxy and the Enlightenment itself.

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Surprisingly, a new synthesis emerged at this same time of Pietistic ideas and Enlightenment rationalism. This synthesis did not come from Halle, but from the life and work of Immanuel Kant.\textsuperscript{7} Kant is generally regarded as the apogee of Enlightenment thought. Kant’s philosophy was also saturated with Pietism. Both of Kant's parents were Pietists and his early education took place in the \textit{Collegium Fridericianum}, a school established by the Pietist pastor, F. A. Schultz. Kant’s synthesis of his childhood Pietism and mature Enlightenment thought was revolutionary and radical. Central to Kant’s philosophical message was his insistence that “the public use of one’s reason must always be free.”\textsuperscript{8} It was for this reason that historians such as Leonard Krieger and Terry Pinkard contend Immanuel Kant is the representative figure of German liberalism.

The Prussian government, under Friedrich Wilhelm II and Johann Christoph Woellner (d. 1800), feared Kant’s philosophical system, especially when it intersected with religion. In 1794 Kant was censured and prohibited to write on religious matters again or face prosecution under the Edict of Censorship. Freedom was the essential element in Kant’s philosophical system, but this freedom was dangerous to a well ordered Prussian state. The purpose behind this was not a fear of subversion, but rather a fear of religious anarchy.

By the end of the eighteenth century, Kant’s ideas were joined by another phenomena, Romanticism. Like Pietism and the Enlightenment, Romanticism is not a uniform category, it is a vague term. Originating in the latter half of eighteenth century,

\textsuperscript{7} 1724-1804.

the ideology grew during the French occupation of Germany. Within twenty years of Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason*, the major Romantic systems were devised, proclaimed, and began to fall apart again. In many respects the Romantics were a group who attempted to escape the dilemmas of the new mechanical philosophy by replacing its philosophical presuppositions with the opposites. To state that Romanticism is simply the opposite of Enlightened Philosophy is overreaching. Conceiving of these two movements as binary opposites is an easy way to engage in Romantic speculation.

Romantics themselves understood the universe not through dogmatic facts, but through imagination and revelation. Both were filled with symbols and allegories, referencing a mystical and more meaningful past. Zinzendorf’s call for experience as the bulwark of knowledge plays an invaluable role to the Romantic ethos. Here a secularized but mystified world of Romantic experiences can dictate a vision of a world not unlike the communion with the divine that the Pietists sought. Overall, Romanticism possessed a lack of concern for “the world” while seeking to reenchant it along Pietist lines. Romanticism accepted the notion of a constantly changing universe and sought to find the place for human nature in the universe. The conception of the individual had two conflicting drives. The first was to accept a changing self as found in the fluctuations of the individual’s experience and notions of self-determination. Opposing this was the belief that everything that is human is also universal, therefore human nature remained the same in the mystical past as it does in the mechanical present. The result was a secularized form of Pietism where the individual must work out their identity.

One of the most influential German Romantics was Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe (d. 1832). Goethe’s depiction of the beauty in German nature captivated
Germans and inspired them to national and ethnic pride. In his criticism on *Fine arts in their Origins* by J.G. Sulzer, Goethe depicts nature as power, a power that devours, “everything passing, a thousand seeds are crushed, a thousand born each moment, it is great and significant, infinitely diverse; beautiful and ugly, good and evil, all exists side by side with equal right. And art is precisely the opposite; it arises from the endeavors of the gingival to preserve itself from the destroying power of the whole.”

Nature is an unabated power that possesses everything, both beauty and horror, yet apart from this is art. Art is not raw power, nor is it a destructive force, rather art is depicted as a preserver of the world. For Goethe, what art produces is a world that can be navigated by man and gives rise to inward feelings of the absolute. Goethe is not arguing for a sense of belonging with nature, rather a sense of understanding one’s place within the larger scheme. To understand that the raw power of nature can be understood and incorporated in art, Goethe argues in *Goethe’s Pocketbook*, that “To be sure, if more people had the feeling for this inward form, which embraces all forms, there would be fewer monsters of the spirit to disgust us.”

Here a connection with art and nature civilizes people and creates a culture of unity.

Goethe continues his discussion of art and nature in *Simple Imitation of Nature*, *Manner Style*, and for Goethe, art is an imitation of nature that attempts to create a common language. This language, through imitation, gives the artist an experience not unlike Zinzendorf or Francke. Goethe argued that “An important piece of writing, like an


10 Timothy Chamberlain, *Eighteenth Century German Criticism*, 177, 180.
Art is the manifestation not only of nature but of man’s experience of nature. This experience gives certitude and understanding that reason alone cannot give.

By the close of the eighteenth century, the form of Prussia is the same as it was at the beginning of the century, but the substance behind the form has shifted. Pietism, Protestant Orthodoxy, and Francke’s promethean spirituality are clearly still the dominant forces in Prussia, but the success of institutionalization and the attitudes of the Hohenzollern monarchs supplemented the religious debate with a secular one. The new secular systems mimic the ecclesial debate of the character of Protestantism in Brandenberg-Prussia. Pietism remains, but Romanticism shares its concern for art and human experience, though in a secularized system. Protestant Orthodoxy remains, with its striving for doctrinal understating, but the doctrines concerning humanities place in the cosmos merge with rationalism to produce a largely secularized Enlightenment thought. Francke’s promethean spirituality became Prussianism under the service of Frederick II. Just as Max Weber insinuated with the transition between the Puritan work ethic and modern capitalism that a cloak became “a shell as hard as steel,” the calcification of Protestant Christianity into secularized forms was well underway.

It was from this calcified state that Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher emerged, as the unlikely and often maligned hero of German Protestantism. The preacher and professor is called both the Plato and Origen of Germany. The titles are apt,

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11 Timothy Chamberlain, *Eighteenth Century German Criticism*, 188.

as Schleiermacher’s contributions to German culture and learning mirror and possibly surpass Plato’s for ancient Greece. His theology is as pious and heterodox as Origen. Both can also be condemned on the same theological grounds. Still, even Karl Barth unequivocally states, “The first place in a history of the theology of the most recent times belongs and will always belong to Schleiermacher, and he has no rival.”¹³ Yet it was Barth’s critiques, which we will address in chapter thirteen, that muted the Berlin sage.

Training in Pietism, Enlightenment, and Romanticism

“A Christian child is welcomed with love and joy, and ever remains embraced by them, furnishes a guarantee that the Spirit of God will dwell in that child.”¹⁴

Schleiermacher was the unlikely hero for many reasons. The first and most obvious reason is his lineage. While in Prussia, the Schleiermacher’s were not Lutheran, but Reform. This confessional identity suited the Hohenzollerns, although the vast majority of Prussia, including the only major university, remained Lutheran. In many ways Friedrich was destined to become a pastor. He was the eldest son of an eldest son, and third in a line of Reformed preachers. His paternal grandfather, Daniel Schleiermacher¹⁵ was at odds with both the Lutheran majority of Prussia and the Reform minority. Daniel was charged with sorcery and witchcraft in 1749. The charge came about due to some unfortunate associations he made with some Rhenish sectarians, a

¹³ Karl Barth, Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman, 1972), 411.


¹⁵ Born 1695.
quasi-pietistic group. Daniel’s wife and son Gottlieb were forced to testify against him. To avoid incarceration, he fled to Holland, where he stayed with his sister Arnheim. Following the trial he never preached again. Daniel Schleiermacher died in exile.

Friedrich Schleiermacher’s father Gottlieb fared better than his father. By all accounts he was an exceptionally bright child, completing his theological training by nineteen. Following the Rhenish sectarians demise, Gottlieb chose to become a teacher in Magdeburg in 1758. It was at this time that he distanced himself from his father’s Pietism and grew increasingly attracted to the Enlightenment. It was good timing to shift ideological allegiances. The Hohenzollern dynasty was moving away from the piety of Frederick Wilhelm I, to the Enlightenment supporting Frederick II. A dozen years later in 1760, Gottlieb began serving as a Chaplain in the Prussian army. It was at this time that Frederick II was engaged in the middle of the Seven Years War. Shortly after the war Gottlieb married Katharina-Maria Stubenrauch.

Katharina-Maria Stubenrauch was the daughter of a Reformed pastor, Samuel Ernst Timotheus Stubenrauch, a professor of theology at Halle. Little is known about the life of Katharina-Maria. The brief mentions of her focus on two areas. The first concern her death. The remaining accounts concern her deep piety and her love for her three children. The first of Gottlieb and Katharina’s children was a daughter named Charlotte in 1765. Friedrich was the second child, born November 21, 1768, and often referred to his older sister as Lotte. The youngest of the three was Carl, born in 1772.

16 1765-1831.

17 1768-1834.
Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher was so named in honor of his grandfathers and the monarch. Daniel was given to honor his paternal grandfather. While Daniel Schleiermacher was discarded and in exile, Gottlieb still wanted to honor his father. Daniel was also the absentee godfather to Friedrich when he was baptized on the sixth day on November 27. Ernst was taken from Katharina-Maria’s father, surprisingly it was not his first name, Samuel. A possible connection exists with Daniel Ernest Jablonsky, the Moravian Bishop in Berlin in 1737 who met with Zinzendorf. While it is unlikely that Friedrich was named in honor of the Moravian bishop still a decade out from his father’s conversion, there may be an intentional connection heretofore unnoticed. The name Friedrich was derived from Gottlieb’s affinity for the Prussian monarch who he served under in the Seven Years War.

Gottlieb’s fondness for Frederick II likely waned in 1778. Gottlieb distanced himself from his father’s version of Pietism in his youth and embraced the Aufklärung. From April to June of 1778 the Prussian troops to which Gottlieb was the chaplain were quartered in Gnadenfrei. While in Gnadenfrei, Gottlieb encountered a Moravian community who transformed the pastor’s spiritual understanding. This experience was a change to a full belief in Christ as the Son of God and reconciler of human beings to God. Gottlieb’s spiritual journey moved from schismatic Pietist to Enlightenment theologian to a Moravian. Gottlieb never formally joined the group. This is likely due to his fear of being incriminated through associations. His forced testimony incriminating his father was not a lesson he would soon forget.

Friedrich was now ten years old, but his future was tied with his father’s new conversion. For the next five years Friedrich, his sister, and his brother internalized their
father’s conversion. Each did so in a different manner. Friedrich, like his father, was inquisitive and bright from a very early age. His mother recalled that “that he began to read at the age of four; and while other children played games, he busied himself with translating French and Latin.” His brother Carl was not as bookish as his older brother. According to their mother “Fritz is all spirit, and Carl all body.”¹⁸ The young Friedrich likely focused on the spirit rather than the body because his own body was not very strong. Friedrich had poor health. He was nearsighted and had a number of stomach disorders that bothered him most of his life. He was also noticeably short and overall a diminutive adult.

Katharina-Maria became ill in 1783. Unsure how to best care for the children, the decision was made to send them to a Moravian boarding school at Niesky. The three children packed up and arrived in Niesky on June 14. They never saw their mother again as she died on November 17 1783. Niesky was the logical place to send the children. The Moravian school sought to keep the students away from the evil world. The best way to do so was a strict program filled with pious activities. This Moravian school resembled the schools instituted by Francke in many respects. The one noticeable exception was the church services resembled the long and numerous liturgies of the Moravians. Every day there were four services and students were expected to go to confession once a month as well as take communion at least that often.

Though Friedrich’s time here was short, only two years, it was rather influential in shaping the life of the adolescent. It was at this school where he became a Moravian both outwardly and inwardly. It was here that the experience of experiential Christianity was finally grasped by Friedrich. He marks this time as the “birthdate of his higher life.” The letters that survive from this time are filled with the talk about the Savior’s love, his unworthiness, and how he longs for a deeper spiritual experience. Schleiermacher’s conversion took place along similar lines to Francke, addressed in chapter three. Both had a period of adolescent rebellion only to have a born again experience. While Francke records a specific prayer that launched his conversion we do not have a clear statement of a conversion experience from Schleiermacher. If Schleiermacher did not undergo a Francke style conversion experience, he likely deepened his faith at this time following the example of Wesley or Zinzendorf. The central change focused on his understanding of his connection to Jesus as his savior.

In 1785 he transferred to the Moravian theological seminary at Barby. Accompanied by ten other graduates, they began the rather long walk in September. After taking only five days to traverse the hundred and fifty miles, they arrived on September 22. Schleiermacher was now in the center of Moravian theology. The school had 225 students, and was filled with Moravian theologians and pastors. The purpose of Schleiermacher’s attendance at Barby was ordination. Barby was farther away from Niesky than the hundred and fifty miles, at least for Friedrich. While he was still enthused by his religious awakenings at Niesky and still held an affinity for the Moravians, outside influences crept in.
The two prevailing and destructive influences were Kant and Goethe. The school viewed these thinkers as damaging to the spiritual wellbeing of the students and attempted to silence these competing ideologies. The lure of the Aufklärung, which gripped his father, now gripped him. Friedrich found a group of fellow students who smuggled in these works and developed their own educational program. This new underground program did not focus on Zinzendorf, rather their attention was solely Kant and Goethe. Kant’s lure was his radical distinction between the knowledge of the world on the one hand and religion on the other. Kant’s positive conception of religion reordered theology for Schleiermacher. Kant appeared so full of life and hope that even the Moravian theology appeared an as an arid metaphysic to Friedrich.

Eventually the schools requested Friedrich and the others to leave in 1787. In many ways it was already too late. Schleiermacher penned his father several times throughout the two years he was in Barby. On one occasion he hinted to his father that “his teachers fail to deal with those widespread doubts that trouble so many young people of the present day.”

His father did not understand that the doubts belonged to Friedrich. The letter Friedrich composed in January of 1786 left little room concerning whose doubts the teachers overlooked. Friedrich wrote his father informing him of his radical turn of faith. Friedrich believed that reason must accompany faith and began to deny many Moravian doctrines. The most troublesome doctrine to Friedrich was the doctrine of substitutionary atonement. Gottlieb reacted in a passionate repudiation of his son,

calling Friedrich a denier of God. Eventually this paternal condemnation was rescinded. Father and son reunited as pastors and preachers but likely not in person before Gottlieb’s death on September 2, 1794.

Even with his father’s denunciation, Friedrich did not believe that he was a denier of God, only a denier of bad theology. He maintained that he was “a Herrnhuter, only of a higher order.”

This half denial is often overblown in biographical accounts of Schleiermacher. Unfortunately for Friedrich, the seminary at Barby and his father could not see the distinction either. Schleiermacher expressed honest concerns, but the school failed to understand how to address doctrinal division. With the success of the movement, Moravianism failed to understand criticism and questions which it had easily shaken off with Zinzendorf.

Friedrich considered himself a Moravian even though the Moravians did not consider him one any longer. Schleiermacher still echoed the words he wrote his sister years earlier, “Verily, dear Charlotte, there is not throughout Christendom, in our day, a form of public worship which expresses more worthily, and awakens more thoroughly the spirit of true Christian piety, than does that of the Herrnhut brotherhood!” As a young man Schleiermacher left the seminary at Barby, but remained a Pietist. Schleiermacher was in the process of remaking Pietism, rejecting only the newly formed theology in favor of a Kantian method in interpretation, and not the insistence upon experiencing Christianity.

If anything, Schleiermacher internalized the habitus of Pietism to a greater extent with his break from Barby. Pietism’s centuries long history emphasized experience over doctrine. Schleiermacher rejected the new orthodoxy of the Pietists schools in favor of a deeper experience of the divine. Zinzendorf argued that “Religion can be grasped without the conclusions of reason.” If reason was requisite for faith, then only scholars or intelligent people would be capable of religious knowledge. Schleiermacher echoes this same sentiment, but this time with an experience that the established followers of Zinzendorf disapproved of. This new experience included both Kant and Goethe, the cultured yet marginalized figures for the eighteen year old Friedrich Schleiermacher. Only recently are scholars understanding how his later development was dependent upon his Moravian heritage.

This early period of Schleiermacher’s life does more than lay the groundwork for his education and theological development. It also is the beginning of his life as a social critic. Schleiermacher spent most of his life critiquing the world around him. Even from these early accounts in the Moravian schools, he was actively engaged in any controversy that presented itself. During this time, Schleiermacher criticized the strict regime and inflexibility of the school. These early critiques prepared Schleiermacher to train his critical eye on institutions and people that he loved and admired. From here it was an easy step to become a critic of the world around him. Later in life he criticized his friends in Berlin and the Prussian monarch whom he served. The letters he wrote his

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father and expulsion from the school produced a period of isolation. It is this isolation that made Schleiermacher into a Moravian of a higher order.

Following his expulsion from Barby, Gottlieb concluded that Friedrich would be served best at the University of Halle. In 1787 Friedrich moved to Halle and stayed with his uncle Samuel Stubenrauch, a theology professor at the University. Friedrich was a theology student, but one could hardly tell by his course load. Friedrich spent far more time in the philosophy department than he did in the theology department. While engaged with the philosophy department, he continued to concentrate on Kant and Baruch Spinoza (d.1677), despite his father’s protestations. His father was not the only one to disapprove of Friedrich at the university. Many of the Lutheran students were opposed to a Reform student in their midst. During his two year stay, he was called an atheist, a crypto-catholic, and a Spinozist. Other labels, such as a Herrnhuter and Reformed heretic were a little more fitting. For the Lutherans all Reformed were heretics to one degree or another.

Oddly enough the comfort he found was not with his uncle; it is unlikely that Friedrich attended any of his classes. Rather Schleiermacher’s respite was in the philosophy department surrounding Johann August Eberhard.23 Writing on Aristotle in 1788, Schleiermacher infused his piety, Kantian philosophy, and excitement into philosophy, giving us the dictum that “we live deeper than we think.”24 Still, the time at

23 1739-1809.

Halle was just as short as his stays in Barby and Niesky. By late 1789 Schleiermacher’s uncle took a job in Drossen, and reluctantly Friedrich accompanied his uncle.

Even away from Eberhard and Halle philosophy, Schleiermacher continued to read Kant. It is probably best that Schleiermacher left Halle during this period, as his political leanings were thoroughly Kantian and the Enlightenment ideas were increasingly coming under suspicion at Halle. The Enlightenment became the enemy of the Prussians now that the French Revolution was underway. Censorship grew to the point that the minister of Silesia ordered the arrest of anyone who mentioned the French Revolution, and all Kantians at Halle were denounced as spiritual and temporal Jacobins.

While Schleiermacher avoided imprisonment, the year away from Halle was not much better. As the year progressed, Schleiermacher fell into a depression. To combat this depression, he decided to pursue ordination. Initially the shift to reading theology only served to further depress him. He abandoned his recent love for a pragmatic future. This uninspiring reasonable decision to pursue ordination bore unexpected fruit. By the time he took his ordination exams, a new love for theology had grown. In August of 1791 he wrote to his father the exciting news “My heart is properly cultivated…and is not left to wither under the burden of cold erudition, and my religious feelings are not deadened by theological inquiries.”25 Ordination and theology gave Schleiermacher a new life, much like his earlier experiences in Niesky.

Ordination also provided a degree of freedom from his father and his uncle, as he could now find his own employment. The family of Count Dohna in Schlobitten, East

Prussia were looking for a tutor and Schleiermacher took the job. The job as a tutor also afforded Schleiermacher some time to preach occasionally. The preaching opportunities help to cement Friedrich’s relationship with his father. He sent samples of his sermons to his father and uncle for criticism and sought to develop a distinctive Pietist preaching style. Like Perkins, Schleiermacher believed that his sermons should convey power and humility, though Schleiermacher never took the steps that Perkins did to identify six different types of audiences, he always assumed that those who attended his churches were Christians.

The Count was a fairly conservative monarchist. He served as an officer in the Prussian army during the Seven Years War and was responsible for finding qualified Reformed preachers for at least four pastorates. He opposed the French and the ideas that emerged from the Revolution, ideas that Friedrich was at least a little sympathetic to. It is surprising that it was in Count Dohna’s house that Friedrich came to a deeper understanding of Romanticism. While he read Goethe in his youth, under the conservative Count’s roof he saw the role piety played in both morality and romantic love.

The two great examples of romantic Christian piety were the family and the Count’s daughter. The family was warm and congenial. They maintained a conservative but loving and intelligent Christianity. Equally as impactful was their attractive, charming and sensitive daughter Friederike. Schleiermacher developed a strong and secret affection for her. Social convention and social standings prevented Schleiermacher from expressing his admiration. She was the first in a long line of women that Schleiermacher cherished from afar. Surprisingly Frederick’s admiration for Friederike
remained a secret from the Count. After three years of employment, a disagreement over
the best methods of educating the children resulted in a mutual agreement to terminate
their relationship. In keeping with their general tone and demeanor, the separation was a
friendly one.

For the next two years, beginning in April 1794, Schleiermacher served as an
assistant pastor in Landsberg an der Warthe. While he preached during his time in
Schlobitten, Landsberg was Schleiermacher’s first employment as an ordained minister.
Schleiermacher served as the assistant pastor under a distant relative by the name of
Schumann. Both Schumann and Gottlieb Schleiermacher’s health were failing. The elder
Schleiermacher died in September, and Schumann a few weeks later. At twenty seven,
Schleiermacher was still considered too young to become the head pastor when
Schumann died. Furthermore, Schleiermacher was Reform and not Lutheran. The middle
sized town of about six thousand people was large enough for a Lutheran pastor, but did
not have enough Reformed families to support their own fulltime pastor. The young
Schleiermacher had to supplement his pastoral duties by catechizing and tutoring more
than preaching. Still the brief two year stay afforded Schleiermacher more opportunities
to preach and develop the tools that he needed as a pastor of the larger towns he
shepherded, Berlin and Halle.
Berlin I: Romanticism and Fame

“For since the Spirit was poured out on all flesh, no age can be without its own originality in Christian thinking.”

It was in 1796 that Schleiermacher finally made it to Berlin as a pastor. Most of Schleiermacher’s career as a pastor was in Berlin, but it was divided over two different and rather distinct periods. The first stay lasted from 1796 until 1802. Berlin was the sixth largest city in Europe, having 172,122 residents in 1800. The population was also rather young, with more than a third of the population being children. The residents not very wealthy or modern, with a quarter of the population involved with the manufacturing and sale of textiles.

Schleiermacher’s pastorate was in the poor region of the Charité in Berlin, and was attached to a poor house and a hospital. Even in Berlin the population was still overwhelmingly Lutheran, so as in Landsberg, he shared his duties as a pastor with a Lutheran colleague. The joint duties were easily split between the two of them, as the church had two services every Sunday and on feast days. By 1799 Schleiermacher and his Lutheran cohort proposed creating a unified Reform/Lutheran service.

Schleiermacher inherited the ecumenical spirit from Zinzendorf. As addressed in chapter three, Zinzendorf, in his Berlin Speeches, found little value in externals including confessional identity. This idea brought immediate condemnation from the people, but proved a useful idea for Trinity Church where Schleiermacher served as pastor a decade later.

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The hospital ministered to the poorest of Berlin and the population lacked the degree of sophistication that Schleiermacher grew accustomed to working for the Count and at Landsberg. Matters only got worse for the Charité in 1798, when a fire destroyed the insane asylum. Following the fire, Charité hospital absorbed the residents of the asylum. Schleiermacher found himself the minister to both the uncultured poor and the insane. Much like his time in Landsberg, Schleiermacher’s time as the Reform pastor was far more than preaching.

While Schleiermacher’s vocation was ministering to the poor, his avocation was hobnobbing with the cultured elite. The elites gathered around the salons of Berlin and served as a prime example of Habermas’ notion of the bourgeois public sphere. According to Habermas, the bourgeois public sphere is best conceived of as the sphere of private people who come together as the public. Following Habermas, this collection of private people, once coalescing around a new collective identity, “debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publically relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor.”

In the salons of Berlin, culture became a commodity far more valuable than market goods. Social currency was transforming the German state. Salons as well as related organizations transformed Prussia and the rest of Europe. These associations became the soil from which modernity sprang. Just as the religious impulse behind Pietism and Protestant Scholasticism found secularized

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expressions, these intimate salons were secularized versions of Spener’s *collegia*, with similar transformative results.

Due to the salons secularized character, most devout Protestants viewed them with disdain. They were most certainly not places where you found many ordained clergy. Most parsons viewed the salons as pantheistic dens of romanticism, filled with pagans and not a fitting place for a real Christian. The stain of association with the salons remained upon Schleiermacher the rest of his life, often with refrains and accusations of being a Spinozist. Accusations of pantheism and associating with the wrong sort of people mattered very little to Schleiermacher, who wanted to be both modern and a Christian. In order to remake Pietism, the older divisions needed to be abandoned and new associations embraced. The salons afforded him this opportunity.

The salon that Schleiermacher found himself in was run by a Jewish woman named Henrietta Herz (d. 1847). Henrietta, and to a lesser extent her husband Marcus, hosted a large circle of poets, artists, and the cultured elites of Berlin. Typifying the Romanticism of the day, notable participants were Schlegel, Ludwig Tieck and Novalis. This salon was a perfect fit for the maturing Schleiermacher. Kant and his system of idealism excited Schleiermacher in his youth, but the excitement of Kant faded, at the house of Count Dohna, where Romanticism took its place. Schleiermacher used Romanticism to develop his theology of feeling, reinfusing Pietism with the feeling and awareness, and reintroducing Christianity to Romanticism.

As a Reformed Pastor, Schleiermacher never separated his pastoral duties from his current environment and the events and numerous curiosities of his life. While Romanticism occupied his secular attitudes in Prussia, this melded with Calvinism to
produces a new definition of religion. For Schleiermacher, religion is the unique heart and source for all that is worthy in humanity; religion becomes the essence of humanity.

With this new theological outlook, Schleiermacher was urged to write something by his friend Schlegel. In response he wrote *On Religion: Speeches to the Cultured Despisers*. Published in December of 1799, here the two trends of Pietism and Romanticism collide. Schleiermacher publishes the work as a corrective to the secularizing impulses of Romanticism and the cultured elites of Berlin. We must keep in mind the relatively small scope of this youthful yet impactful work of Schleiermacher. While Berlin was one of the larger cities in Europe, the ‘cultured’ consisted of a relatively insignificant percentage of the total population. Only about 1,000 Berliners earned their living as academics, writers, or artists. The ‘cultured’ disparaged religion, and the central aim of the work was to disarm this disdain. Still, for those thousand Berliners, *On Religion* landed its intended blow.

Schleiermacher wrote *On Religion* as a modern apologetic. To serve as a modern apologetic, religion must be personal and not doctrinal. For Schleiermacher, true religion was not submission to doctrines or creeds, rather he argued for an authentic religious experience. Schleiermacher attempted to reargue the Pietist case in nearly the same way it was done in the aftermath of the Reformation, but now Pietism must argue not only against Scholasticism but its demystified form of Enlightenment thought. Just like the earlier Pietists critique of Protestant Orthodoxy, the heart of religion is not found in theological knowledge. The apology was successful because it took into account Kant, who advocated in his *Critique of Pure Reason* that one had to “suspend knowledge, in
order to make room for belief,” 28 and the Romantics who wanted to deny knowledge to make room for mystery. Schleiermacher also denied that knowledge was antithetical to faith. Faith is not found in knowledge, it remains a mystery, and only encountered in experience. Schleiermacher explicitly states “I cannot hold religion the highest knowledge, or indeed knowledge at all.” 29 If not knowledge, religion is found in the realm of feelings. Schleiermacher’s approach to religion is an attempt to infuse Moravian piety into a secularized Romantic ethos. In many ways it is successful.

This early example of Schleiermacher’s theology was successful partly because it launched a two pronged attack criticizing both the static notions of religion and the dynamic cultured elites who despise the status quo and religion. Throughout the five speeches, Schleiermacher weaves one criticism into the other and back again. When he is finished, neither the criticisms of the elites, nor the intractable stale Prussian religious life remains unscathed. Both were forced to react to the new definition of genuine religion that Schleiermacher produces. Schleiermacher’s genuine religion resembles the enthusiastic experiential religion that Arndt called for in True Christianity, and the message that Zinzendorf echoed. Noticeably absent from Schleiermacher’s genuine religion is the brutal denial of humanity found in Perkins, Francke, and even Wesley.

Addressing the concerns about religion, Schleiermacher concedes that for too long the trappings of religion have dominated the discussion about religion. Now “the life of cultivated people is far from anything that might have even a resemblance to


Schleiermacher argued that the cultured rightfully despise religion because they do not know that what they abhor is not religion, they reject a constraining yet secondary system. Schleiermacher contends that religion should not be a form of coercion, rather a personally freeing endeavor. Schleiermacher exclaims “If you have only given attention to these dogmas and opinions, therefore, you do not yet know religion itself, and what you despise is not it.” With this perspective on religion, both the Kantian followers of the Aufklärer, and the Goethian Romantics have a place to engage religion, in freedom. Religion, just like Idealism and Romanticism, is an ideology that begins in freedom. Religion is a mode of thought that is expressed in faith, faith that Schleiermacher purports is “a peculiar way of contemplating the world, and of combining what meets us in the world at another, it is a way of acting, a peculiar desire and love, a special kind of conduct and character.”

By identifying religion as a competing ideology with Idealism and Romanticism, Schleiermacher simultaneously made religion acceptable, while undercutting the philosophical necessity for the Enlightenment. Schleiermacher lambasted the cultured despisers, contending that “Having made a universe for yourselves, you are above the need of thinking of the universe that made you.” Now Schleiermacher sought to replace their secular despair with a Pietist revival. Schleiermacher continued his critique of the cultured despisers by demonstrating that the anti-clericalism which dominated the French

Enlightenment was unfounded and logically inconsistent. Schleiermacher inquired, “How then does it come about that, in matters of religion alone, you hold everything the more dubious when it comes from those who are experts, not only according to their own profession, but by recognition from the state, and from the people?” The cultured despisers of religion lacked familiarity with true religion. As a result, Schleiermacher demanded they demonstrate the actual deficiencies of the clergy, rather than simply parroting the false critiques of the French.

Schleiermacher posited that the priests were despised because of a mistaken portrait. In this false image, the priests hold only knowledge of finite trivia, rather than infinite spiritual gnosis. Surprisingly, Schleiermacher partly conceded this point. He separated all clergy, who undoubtedly had members in their ranks lacking understanding, from the higher priesthood, that announces “the inner meaning of all spiritual secrets, and speaks from the kingdom of God.” Pure examples of this higher priesthood are indeed rare. They are not only mouth pieces of the kingdom of God, but they are also “the source of all visions and prophecies, of all the sacred works of art and inspired speeches that are scattered abroad, on the chance of finding some receptive heart where they may bring forth fruit.”

The higher priesthood, rare as they may be, are prematurely dismissed alongside their weaker counterparts. By discarding all clergy, the cultured despisers illustrate their own ignorance and lack of a special gnosis of the priesthood. “To the man who has not

34 Friedrich Schleiermacher, On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers, 8.

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himself experienced it, it would only be annoyance and folly.”35 This is the problem inherent with conflating dogmas with faith and the religious life. Real religion contains some notions of mystery. Religion, as Schleiermacher presents it, “in its own original, characteristic form, is not accustomed to appear openly, but is only seen in secret by those who love it.”36 Schleiermacher’s depiction of real religion illustrates his Pietistic conversion in Niesky, echoing Zinzendorf, who argued that “Religion must be a matter which is able to be grasped through experience alone without any concepts.”37 Religion must be experiential or it is not religion at all.

Since religion must be experiential, this experience must be something common to humanity. Schleiermacher concluded “Man is born with the religious capacity as with every other.”38 Since the religious capacity is common to all, “piety cannot be pride, for piety is always full of humility.”39 Religion is therefore also found, not in institutionalized forms, rather in individuals. This then raises the question what area of the individual possesses this religious capacity? Schleiermacher, true to his Pietistic roots, places the religious experience not in reason but in the realm of feelings, not just any feeling but “the essence of the religions emotions consists in the feeling of an

35 Friedrich Schleiermacher, On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers, 8, 9.
absolute dependence.” Not all feelings are religious feelings. When the divine encounters someone, the particular reaction is formulated through a pious feeling. The pious feeling renders one helpless and completely dependent upon the transcendent God. This is the heart of Pietism and Schleiermacher’s reconstruction of Pietism for the nineteenth century.

By defining religion as feeling, Schleiermacher’s criticism of doctrinal religion, Idealism and Romanticism is complete. All three are forced to adjust to the work. A new era in theology is birthed with this publication, liberal Protestant theology. This theological trend dominants the nineteenth century, and will be addressed in chapter twelve. Protestant theologians are forced to embrace it or consciously oppose it. It is not until Karl Barth’s second Epistle to the Romans that this definition of religion begins to wane.

One month after the publication of On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers, Schleiermacher was engaged in a different debate in Berlin. In response to an anonymous Jewish publication in March of 1799, and David Friedländer’s Open Letter a month later, Schleiermacher wrote Letters on the Occasion of the Political-Theological Task and the Open Letter of Jewish Householders. These letters were published in July to address the question of Jewish emancipation in Berlin. Berlin Jews were disenfranchised and unable to fully participate in Berlin social and political life. Many Berlin Jews converted to Christianity to gain voting privileges. These conversions were

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40 Friedrich Schleiermacher, On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers, 106.
rarely genuine, and the Christian life of these former Jews consisted primarily in their baptism and continued absence from the Church and its sacramental life.

Schleiermacher’s long connection and intimate friendship with Henrietta Herz provided him with an insight to the state of Berlin Jewry. Schleiermacher strongly argued for the emancipation of the Jews and called for an end to these quasi-conversions. According to Schleiermacher, “Reason demands that all should be citizens, but it does not require that all must be Christians, and thus it must be possible in many ways to be a citizen and a non-Christian.”41 Those who maintained a belief that Jewish involvement in civic life corrupted the people were misguided and their reasoning was lazy. Schleiermacher held that Berlin was stronger with devout Jews than it was with false Christians.

Schleiermacher believed that trading religion on the public market was dangerous, not only for society, but for Christianity. He rightfully feared that many, if not most, of the new members would be irreligious and even anti-Christian. Without a genuine religious experience, a growing hostility would overcome the baptized Jews. This hostility would likely be directed against the government of Berlin, and the Hohenzollern monarchy, who forced them to abandon their religious identity. He feared that this hostility would grow into a hostility against the Church as well. With the only experience of Christianity being a false one, the church would be weakened.

The civil rights of Jews were necessary not for their own sake, or even for the sake of Berlin, but for the sake of the Church. To have a large number of inauthentic and impious members of the church would be a cancer to the church rather than a healthy body on their own contributing to Berlin society. Schleiermacher also believed that Judaism needed its own reform. His knowledge of Judaism came from Henrietta Herz, who held that Judaism “is long since a dead religion, and those who at present still bear its colors are actually sitting and mourning beside the undecaying mummy and weeping over it demise and its sad legacy.”42 Herz called for reform of Judaism and abandoning Halakhic practices to remake and revive Judaism. Schleiermacher encouraged a Jewish reform, just like he desired a Protestant reappraisal.

Later that same year, Schleiermacher published *The Soliloquies*. His tone in this work was rather dismissive of the achievements of Berlin society. Schleiermacher identified the cultured as a “perverse generation (who) loves to talk of how it has improved the world, in order to plume itself and to be considered superior to its ancestors.”43 What made the generation so perverse was the focus on individuality and self-satisfaction. Central to this solipsistic talent is a complete disregard of anything save the material world. The Romantic pietistic pastor called for a reappraisal of the priorities of Berlin, just as he did for Judaism and the cultural despisers of religion. This examination needed to esteem not only the individual and material world, but embrace

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community and the spiritual world. Schleiermacher echoed Francke by calling for mutual sacrifice as the mechanism of attaining the highest joy. Communal life must be fostered, and the source for this needed to be the home. Once each home becomes a beautiful embodiment of the unique souls who live therein, all of Berlin and by extension Prussia, and Germany, would be truly free and alive.

If *On Religion* serves as Schleiermacher’s Pietist apology to the Romantics, *The Soliloquies* are his attempt to reconnect with the same circle he just decried. In many of *The Soliloquies* are Schleiermacher’s Confession. In *The Soliloquies*, Schleiermacher called his audience to accept the unique place humanity has in the cosmos and develop their individuality to the fullness. Schleiermacher cried out “Every home should be the beautiful embodiment, the fine creation of a unique soul; it should have its own stamp and unique characteristics, but with a dumb monotony they are all a desolate grave of freedom and true life.”

The notion of individuality which embodied the ethos of Romanticism and at least to Weber’s reading, Calvinism, is evidenced largely only in this work. Even still, Schleiermacher’s individualism that is present in *The Soliloquies* consisted of individuals as household families. These families form larger communities, which in turn form the Prussian state. In *On Religion* and Schleiermacher’s subsequent writings, the individual is always coupled with a household. These households consist of multiple people who work in concert with one another. Throughout his sermons, the household is an example for both the uncreated German nation and the Church.

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44 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Schleiermacher's Soliloquies*, 58.
Schleiermacher’s brief evaluation of his Berlin contemporaries in the *Soliloquies* fits well as a parallel critique to *On Religion*. Both pieces serve to promote a pious religious life that should be acceptable for the modern Berliner. *On Religion* redefined religion, showing how the priority of religion had drifted towards dogmatism and therefore was losing its grip on the divine. *The Soliloquies* elucidated the errors of modernity and the cold rationalism that strangled humanity in service of the Enlightenment.

One major reason for the fervent call of the Romantic towards individuality in *The Soliloquies* was Schleiermacher’s deep love towards Eleanor von Grunow. This illicit love came to a boiling point in 1800 and continued to simmer over the next two years. Eleanor was the wife of a fellow Berlin clergyman. The marriage was childless and by most accounts miserable. It was also an arranged marriage, so not even notions of earlier romantic love could be used to maintain the union. Instead, Friedrich and Eleanor fell in love, with constant discussion of the necessity to dissolve the unhappy Grunow union. While she was unhappy with her marriage, two years into the emotional affair, she chose to remain married. Shortly after her decision, Schleiermacher echoed her sentiment in the indissolubility of marriage. While their relationship cooled some at this point, elements of romantic attraction lasted for years to come. Even though the affair was never consummated, scandal surrounded the star crossed lovers. This scandal had lasting repercussions for Schleiermacher.

One immediate repercussion surrounded Schleiermacher’s relationship with Henriette Herz. Many other salons turned their attention to Schleiermacher and Herz. The gossip produced a query; was their relationship platonic or romantic? Marcus Herz
found little to be concerned about, believing that their relationship was intellectual rather than physical. The more devastating repercussion of Schleiermacher’s torrid yet restrained romance with Eleanor von Grunow came when Bishop Sack exiled Schleiermacher from Berlin.

Exile, Reconciliation, and Rebellion

“O how deeply I despise this generation, which plumes itself more shamelessly than any previous one ever did, which can scarcely endure the belief in a still better future and reviles everyone.”

The exile was to a small parish in Stolpe. Stolpe was on a distant northern coast of Prussia over one hundred miles away from Berlin. Schleiermacher for the last three years had continued to be a liability to the Reformed episcopacy. His association with the salons and Romanticism, as well as the publication of On Religion, did not sit easy with the more dogmatically conservative Reformed clergy. Worse still was his involvement with Schlegel who recently published Lucinde, the quintessential Romantic description of a ‘true marriage’ and free love. Schleiermacher refused to condemn his friends work and it too closely resembled the worst fears about Schleiermacher and Eleanor.

The Stolpe exile was relatively short, lasting only two years. During this time Schleiermacher served as a court chaplain in the very Lutheran city. Only about fifty Reformed families lived in the small city. His atypical pastoral career took an even more mystical turn during this period, telling his friend Georg Reimer in 1802 that he was only

45 Friedrich Schleiermacher, Schleiermacher's Soliloquies, 50,51.
able to survive this ordeal because of his Moravian piety. Throughout this exile Schleiermacher remained faithful to Prussia, even turning down a lucrative post in Bavaria.

In August of 1804 Friedrich Wilhelm gave an order concerning worship services at his flagship university at Halle. Every one of the clergy were Lutherans, and the Reform Hohenzollern desired a modicum of denominational diversity. That paved the way for Schleiermacher to return to Halle, this time as an extra ordinary professor of theology and the university preacher. Once again he delivered his sermons in front of a larger congregation. He also found himself the sole Reform professor surrounded by Lutherans both in the faculty and classrooms.

As a theology professor, Schleiermacher came into his own. The love Schleiermacher developed for theology while studying for his ordination exams continued while behind the podium. His lectures, like his sermons, and his personal life, were unconventional. Rather than giving prepared lectures, Schleiermacher used his extensive memory to treat the classroom like a larger salon. Schleiermacher used his lectures to process his own theological concepts, with his students serving as sounding boards. At Halle and away from the Berlin salons, Schleiermacher’s mature theology developed. In order to advance his theology, Schleiermacher also created a new discipline, hermeneutics. Schleiermacher’s conception of hermeneutics will be addressed in chapter six.

A year after his appointment, Schleiermacher wrote what is considered his first mature theological work, a play. Surprisingly the work is penned within a few months of Schleiermacher’s romance with Eleanor von Grunow finally ending. To soothe his
heartbreak, Schleiermacher sought a number of distractions. A Dillon flute concert served as one of these distractions. After hearing it, Schleiermacher raced home filled with inspiration. The music continued to play in his head for weeks, and while it rung, his heart mended, and he produced *The Christmas Eve Dialogue*. The emotion that a simple piece of music produced highlighted the themes of the incarnation more than his lectures and sermons. To capture the feeling and intimacy of the incarnation was the aim of the piece; words took the place of notes, but the objectives were the same.

The Christmas of 1805 was the opportunity Schleiermacher needed to focus Christianity along Moravian lines. Moving away from the cold notions of dogmatics and sin, he focused instead on Christ. Rather than addressing Christ as the transcendent God who became incarnate in flesh, Schleiermacher’s aim was to look at the humanity of Christ, not the fearful judgmental God, but the tender newborn babe. This novel approach is identified as a “Christology from below.” Schleiermacher’s emphasis on Christ’s humanity provided an understanding of religious experience that is common to all. In writing the *Dialogue*, Schleiermacher reintroduced Christology along with Pietism into the theology of the nineteenth century.

Further breaking from convention, Schleiermacher’s treatment of Christmas focuses not on the Christmas narratives found in the Gospels of Matthew or Luke. Rather Schleiermacher preferred the mystical description of Christ given in John’s Gospel as the source for the *Dialogue*. The *Dialogue* is set as an intimate household get together. The entire play only consists of ten people, six were couples, two were children, and two were single people. The ten people meet and converse on the meaning of Christmas. Three major themes are present in the work. Not surprisingly, the first is the power and
intimacy of music. Schleiermacher’s character Edward, who many scholars contend most closely resembles Schleiermacher himself in the piece, proclaims, “In fact, music is most closely related to the religious feeling.”

The second theme of the *Dialogue* is the simplicity of childhood. Childlike faith is what is expected. Once again recovering the Pietist priority of experience over doctrine, children become the models of piety. The third and final theme of the piece expands on this point, when Schleiermacher draws a clear contrast between the men and women at the gathering. Since Schleiermacher affirms the child as the model of piety, the contrast between men and women focuses on who can more aptly come to terms with childhood. In the *Dialogue*, men are unable to do so; instead they are too invested in theological disputes. These disputes over the meaning of the incarnation nearly bring the gathering to an end, creating more enemies than friends. Furthermore, none of the men grow closer to Christ through their deliberations. Women on the other hand, partly due to nature and partly because they care for children, have an advantage over the men. The women move from room to room, reminiscing over previous Christmases. Women, through experience, are growing closer to Christ and the meaning of the incarnation. The work also serves as a veiled political piece. The house that the entire *Dialogue* takes place in serves as a metaphor for Prussia. With the incarnation of Christ Schleiermacher expects that Prussia should adopt a new Christian perspective and each of the characters represent different potentials for the developing nation.

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Schleiermacher also came into his own as a pastor during this period. While during most of his pastoral career Schleiermacher preached in peculiar circumstances and nonconventional settings, this period afforded a degree of normal preaching opportunities. Early in his career Schleiermacher shared his sermons with his father and uncle, but since his father died ten years earlier Friedrich’s tendency to write out his sermons ahead of time slowly dwindled. Friedrich posited that a completely prepared sermon was a wasted effort. If he wrote out the whole sermon and read from it, the sermon lacked power, and the relatively small audiences were isolated and cut off from their pastor if the sermons were read. Whenever Schleiermacher chose to memorize the sermon, he inevitably left something out. Schleiermacher chose instead to only create a framework for the sermons, however within the next five years the frame vanished as well. Schleiermacher’s conclusion was to speak the sermons afresh from the power of the moment. While this might not work for every preacher, and likely broke many of Perkins’ rules for preaching, Schleiermacher’s sermons were powerful and informative.

Halle elevated Schleiermacher to a greater prominence than he possessed in Berlin. While he found himself outside of the Romantic salons, he did encounter Goethe. Following the chance meeting, Schleiermacher eagerly wrote Henrietta Herz in August of 1805. This brief encounter with one of Schleiermacher’s literary heroes was the calm before the coming storm. Exactly one year later, in August of 1806, the tranquil yet energetic mood of Halle came to an end when the alliance between France and Prussia concluded. Berlin learned that Napoleon offered Hanover back to the English. The move was designed to produce a response from Prussia and it did. Napoleon was waiting with his armies. Once the peace was broken, Napoleon quickly defeated Prussian forces at
Auerstadt and Jena. Friedrich Wilhelm III fled to the furthest eastern territory of Prussia, Konigsberg. The invasion took nobody by surprise and by October 17 Napoleon conquered Halle.

The conquest of Halle dealt a personal blow for Schleiermacher. Both his house and his church were put into service to the French. When the French troops entered the city, Schleiermacher’s house was plundered. Schleiermacher describes the plunder when he and two of his house guests were “obliged to give up our watches, and Gass his money; Steffens was already drained, and in my possession they only found a few dollars; but all my shirts, with the exception of five, and all the silver spoons, with the exception of two, they carried off.”47 After this Schleiermacher was forced to quarter French officers and his church was used to store grain. These typical wartime atrocities radicalized the thirty-eight year old Schleiermacher.

The French conquest of Halle served to further sever the bonds Schleiermacher once had with the Enlightenment. After all, Napoleon and the French Revolution were consequences of Enlightenment thought, and now French forces looted his house, slept in his beds, and desecrated his church. Worse still, Prussia grew weak because of the Enlightenment. Schleiermacher wanted to see resistance, but everywhere he looked there was not any, at least not from the elites. The Volk no longer cared for Prussia, and the Enlightenment leaders viewed the state as a necessary evil. Schleiermacher’s political views were at odds with these libertine tendencies. According to Schleiermacher, the

state was not a necessary evil, rather it is “the completion (Vollendung) of human life and the maximum of the good.”48 Immediately upon conquest Napoleon closed the university as well. This was a temporary move, intended on preventing the towns youth from mobilizing against him. By November Schleiermacher feared that the temporary closing of the university would become permanent. Schleiermacher could conceive of only two options for Francke’s university. The first was its complete ruin, being shut down permanently. The second option was not much better for Schleiermacher, the university, which was founded as a check against Saxony, would be given over to the Saxons. Schleiermacher wished to stay in Halle, but the future at the university was dim. Writing to George Reimer, Schleiermacher bemoans his future prospects, “Should it be handed over to Saxony, perhaps the university will be dissolved, or, at all events, there will be an end to my stay in it, as the Saxons are such very strict Lutherans.”49 The letter concludes with Schleiermacher’s view of the Little Corporal. “Napoleon must have a special hatred to Halle.”50

This reactionary turn from the Enlightenment and the closing of the university also effected Schleiermacher’s view of the church and state. Under normal circumstances he was opposed to politics entering into the pulpit. Living under an occupation was not a normal circumstance. If Schleiermacher heard no cries for


49 Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Life of Schleiermacher As Unfolded In His Autobiography And Letters (General Books, 2009), 54 Schleiermacher to George Reimer. [cclxxv.] Halle, 4th November, 1806.

liberation, he would start them. Since the outbreak of war, Schleiermacher hinted
towards Prussian patriotism. In August he delivered a sermon, “How Greatly the Dignity
of a Person is Enhanced When One Adheres with All One’s Soul to the Civil Union to
Which One Belongs.” The sermons grew more radical as the occupation grew longer.
Of course they were still subtle, as Schleiermacher drew on Biblical stories of oppression
and opposition, and on households symbolizing the Prussian house invaded by unruly
guests who needed to be put out. There was never any clear line the French censors
could hold onto, but the Germans understood the message. The sermons, far more than
any earlier writings or activities, made him a national figure almost overnight.

Schleiermacher resisted the French occupation in more ways than the pulpit. By
1808 he participated in many secret societies that attempted to undermine the hegemonic
forces. That same year Schleiermacher even went so far as to enter into a plot to
assassinate Napoleon, however nothing came of it. The next year Napoleon gave Halle
over to his brother Jerome and the Kingdom of Westphalia. Napoleon repartitioned the
German lands beginning in 1795 when the first treaty was signed with Prussia. By 1815,
112 states of the Holy Roman Empire disappeared, given away to larger neighboring
states.
Berlin II: Marriage, Pastorate, and Professor

“To attribute mercy to God is more appropriate to the language of preaching and poetry than to that of dogmatic theology.”51

With Napoleon giving away Halle, Schleiermacher chose to remain Prussian. Over the last year he split his time between Halle and Berlin. Following the transfer of Halle in 1809, Schleiermacher permanently settled in Berlin, where he stayed until his death in 1834. One major reason for remaining in Berlin was his marriage to Henriette von Willich. Schleiermacher had known Henriette from his earlier days in Berlin. He was close friends with her and her then husband Johann Ehrenfried Theodor von Willich. The marriage between Henriette and Johann was a happy one but short. Johann was an army chaplain who died of a typhoid epidemic during the siege of Stralsund in 1807.

Following Johann’s death, Schleiermacher wrote many times to comfort Henriette and aid her two children in any way he could. Schleiermacher’s concern turned to love and the two were married on May 18, 1809. The age difference was stark, as Friedrich was twenty years older than Henriette, who was only twenty-one.52 Little exists about the married life of Schleiermacher, but from what does exist, the marriage appeared to be joyous. Schleiermacher wrote to his sister Charlotte, “Except in domestic life, all that we enjoy and all that we attempt, is but vain illusion.”53


52 1788-1840.

Henriette had two surviving sons, Ehrenfried and Nathanael, from her first husband. Both were rather young at the time of the marriage and Friedrich cared for them as if they were his own. Unfortunately Nathanael died after contracting diphtheria at the age of nine. Ehrenfried survived and wrote in his autobiography that he greatly admired his stepfather “because he sincerely cherished and supported his wife even with her weaknesses and faults.”

In a sermon on marriage, Schleiermacher clarified Paul’s decree that husbands love their wives as Christ loved the church. He asserted that “we know that this is a love which not only permits but requires love in return,” … “We know also that it is from another point of view a love that is raised far above all reciprocal love, seeing that the Church cannot in any way repay Christ her Redeemer.”

Henriette’s weaknesses are largely unknown, but one of them may have been her criticism of Friedrich’s sermons. She was a Pietist from Huguenot descent, and she found Friedrich’s sermons too complicated and hard to follow. Instead she often went to a neighboring parish. It is unknown if she was present at any of the sermons he delivered about marriage or raising children. Yet in these sermons Schleiermacher’s pastoral concerns for both families and communities are evidenced. Affirming “Out of this sacred union are developed all other human relations; on it rests the Christian family, and of


55 Ephesians 5:25.


57 Clearly Schleiermacher was not too opposed to the French at this point in his life.
such Christian families Christian communities consist.” The family is the basic rubric of the Christian community. Furthermore, Schleiermacher pronounced in another sermon that the Christian community is such that the raising of children belongs not only to the family but also to the whole adult community. Now that Friedrich was married, his declarations in the *Christmas Eve Dialogue* about marriage and children were echoed in sermons whose message was extracted from experience of familial love and loss.

Regardless of his other interests and activities, his love of preaching was penultimate. “I consider the position of the preacher as the noblest. ... I would never of my own will exchange it for another.” Schleiermacher served the next twenty five years preaching at Holy Trinity Church, one of the largest churches in Berlin. The church dwarfed its preacher in size. The physically small Schleiermacher grew into the space. The church was noisy, and even overflowing, having a ground floor and three choirs. The doors to the busy street needed to be shut, otherwise no one could hear in any of the three services on Sunday. With such a large and noisy church, Schleiermacher attempted to keep his sermons simple, although his wife did not believe he succeeded in this venture.

The sermons could not focus on small details, rather large concepts were desirable. Sermons needed to engage the congregation from their shared experiences. Surprisingly, Schleiermacher rarely if ever shared personal experiences in his sermons, only experiences common to all who belonged to the community of faith. Preaching


became more than an instructive sermon or an expository lecture, as many of Calvin’s sermons are characterized. Rather Schleiermacher viewed the job of the preacher as the model of piety. From the pulpit a voice must ring out and grip the congregation, a voice that is amplified through the expression of personal experiential faith, the faith that Pietists expect of themselves and all Christians.

The majority of Schleiermacher’s sermons still resembled the Romantic and Pietistic morality sermons he delivered as the pastor of the Charité. Others are clearly expository, but with a heavy emphasis on application. Many of the sermons written during the French occupation were polemics. Schleiermacher’s polemical sermons fall into one of three categories, first a corrective against religious sectarianism, second against particular kinds of religious excitement and finally those stressing the importance of religious doctrine. It is this third category which places Schleiermacher firmly within the Pietist camp. Schleiermacher uses sermons to prioritize experiential Christianity over and against the other dogmatic forms. Just as the earlier Pietists had done, Schleiermacher chooses to define himself, and by extension true Christianity, as a community that relies on intimacy with God over dogmatic clarity, although Barth points out that Schleiermacher also criticizes the enthusiasts who abandon any church corrective for enthusiasm.

Just like Schleiermacher’s post at the University of Halle Church and the Charité, Holy Trinity was a union church, possessing both Lutheran and Reform clergy. Schleiermacher remained a proponent of a unified church. This attracted criticism from Lutherans, Reform and even several Unionists. The Unionists criticized Schleiermacher because he maintained that the liturgy should be worked out after union, and the
government of the church should be established first. Schleiermacher preferred a synodal-presbyterial form of church government. The thought was that once a church could govern itself, a liturgy could be formulated. As far back as 1804, Schleiermacher believed that most Lutherans and Reformed Prussians could not elucidate the dogmatic reasons that underpinned two separate Protestant churches.

Schleiermacher’s social criticism extended into one final realm, specifically the church. Throughout his pastorate, first at the Chartré, then at Halle, and finally at Holy Trinity in Berlin, Schleiermacher was the Reformed pastor surrounded by Lutherans. His congregations consisted of Lutherans and Reform and the expectation concerning union was present in all of these churches. This union was at times supported by Frederick Wilhelm III and at other times opposed. Frederick Wilhelm III opposed Schleiermacher when the union included ecclesial hierarchical politics that differed from those he desired. Increasingly Schleiermacher represented a bourgeois populace that failed to equate piety with confession. A growing number of Protestants failed to recognize the essential differences between the two dominant confessions. They demanded a personal reception coupled with interpretation of official Church doctrine and a critical attitude towards tradition. Schleiermacher’s attempt at unifying Lutheran and Reform confessions increased his popularity amongst a certain percentage of the bourgeois, but it placed him at odds with the monarchy.

By 1817 Schleiermacher received the opportunity to implement his Reform Lutheran union. Friedrich Wilhelm III imposed the union, known as the Union of Prussia. Cynically, many view the reason for this union as a desire of Frederick William III to receive communion with his Lutheran wife Louise. While this undoubtedly played
a role in the decree, the rise of Lutheran confessionalism in Prussia at the time necessitated a Hohenzollern response. The Hohenzollerns always remained a Reform minority surrounded by a Lutheran citizenry. It is also at this time that other state reforms were underway.

Schleiermacher found himself in the middle of a new series of debates concerning the issue. His earlier ambitions remained only ambitions. These were either lauded or dismissed depending on who heard them. The practical issues of union dictated an earnest response, as it addressed practical issues. Schleiermacher’s earlier 1804 recommendations for a bi-partisan union were not overly influential in Frederick Wilhelm III’s construction of a unified church. Still, Schleiermacher played a vital role in the events that led to that Union. His greater impact on the matter came in 1824 with the publication of his pamphlet Concerning the Liturgical Rights of a Protestant Prince. In the pamphlet, Schleiermacher accused “Frederick William of breaking the Allgemeines Landrecht (General Code) through the forced introduction of his new agenda.”

In the interim years, Schleiermacher’s promotion of union contributed to the confessional conversation.

The greatest opposition was from the Lutherans. Since before the first days of the first Hohenzollern monarch Frederick I (III), the Hohenzollerns sought some way of overcoming the confessional divide. Frederick Wilhelm III’s attempt was simply to declare the two confessions one in his own Garrison Church in Potsdam. The Lutherans

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opposed this monarchical ecclesial fiat for several reasons. First, many Lutheran parishes worried about the financial repercussions of this new union. More substantially, for many Lutherans identified as “Old Lutherans,” doctrine still mattered. The idea that their Lutheran identity did not matter concerned them. This led to a large scale departure from the Union Church in the 1830s. This departure resulted in extensive police measures.

Chief among these anti-Unionist Old Lutherans was Christoph Friedrich von Ammon. Ammon and Schleiermacher never met in person, but they corresponded on the issue of church union. Early in the discussion Ammon and Schleiermacher’s views coincided, but in 1818 Ammon publically ended his support for union. Another opponent of Schleiermacher’s was the Lutheran Karl Gottlieb Bretschneider. Bretschneider opposed Schleiermacher but supported union. Like Schleiermacher, Bretschneider believed that the Lutherans and Reform had overcome most of their theological differences. Bretschneider maintained that the remaining issues needed to be resolved before union could be attempted. Central among the concerns that needed to be addressed was predestination. Schleiermacher alleged that these issues would best be resolved from within the union church.

As the debate between Schleiermacher and Bretschneider and Ammon grew, Schleiermacher found himself increasingly at odds with the state. Friedrich Wilhelm III

61 1766-1850.

62 Ammon did so with the publication his book Ueber die Hofnung einerfreien Vereinigung beider protestantischer Kirchen: ein Glückwunschschreiben an den Herm Antistes3 Dr. Hess in Zurich (“On the Hope of a Free Unification of Both Protestant Churches: A Congratulatory Epistle to Antistes Dr Hess in Zurich”).

63 1776-1848.
enthusiastically oversaw the initial legislation and was the sole author of the new liturgy. The proposed union grew to a personal obsession for Friedrich Wilhelm III.

Schleiermacher sought to wrench control over the liturgy out of his hands and place it in a synodal-presbyterial form of church government. The monarchical liturgy on the other hand was a significant intervention by the state into the religious sphere.

This division between Schleiermacher and the crown forced a shift in Schleiermacher’s views concerning the relationship between the church and the state. Earlier Schleiermacher held that the church was to be in service to the state during the War of Liberation. Now that the state was trying to dictate the practices of the church, Schleiermacher held that the church should be independent. It should not come as a surprise that the Reform pastor who called for union between Reform and Lutherans chose to cite Luther as his source to oppose state involvement. Schleiermacher now took up Luther’s doctrine of the two kingdoms.

Luther, in addressing obedience to temporal rulers asserts, “we must divide the children of Adam and all mankind into two classes, the first belonging to the kingdom of God, the second to the kingdom of the world.”

For Luther these two kingdoms need each other. Luther asserts that true Christians will always remain a minority and need civil protection, but they should not be obliged to do acts which God forbids. The Christian owes allegiance to both kingdoms, though not in the same manner.

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64 Martin Luther, "Temporal Authority: To what Extent it Should be Obeyed." In *Martin Luther's Basic Theological Writings*, edited by Timothy F. Lull, 655-704 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 662.
Following this Lutheran doctrine, Schleiermacher insists that the church must be independent from the state’s involvement. If Prussia interfered with ecclesial politics, any notion of union would ultimately fail. Christianity calls for certain ideas that impact the politics of a state. Still Schleiermacher retorts, “Christianity is neither a political religion nor a religious state or a theocracy.”\textsuperscript{65} To advance his claim of independence, Schleiermacher even pointed out that civil governments are legal entities which exist everywhere, even where Christianity is not practiced. The creation of civil society emerges from “the corporate life of sinfulness, and everywhere presupposes this, it cannot have the slightest authority in the Kingdom of Christ.”\textsuperscript{66}

Since the beginning of civil governments are sinful, the leaders of these governments are not bishops, nor ecclesial officers. The best civil authorities can hope for is as guardian of the church. The guardian does not dictate policy, rather they have to guarantee the freedom of the church to have its own independent government. Schleiermacher firmly holds that the two kingdoms are separate, and supports the separation of the two kingdoms by opposing theocracies as well. Schleiermacher’s criticism of the state’s involvement with the church evolved due to what he perceived to be a princely overstep. His role as an arbiter of social issues extended through any arena that his life encountered.

Schleiermacher’s popularity among the elites of Prussia only served to frustrate the monarch. Schleiermacher was a useful tool or an intractable enemy. His patriotism


and popularity helped Prussia survive the French. His brand of patriotism eventually placed him at odds with the king, and his popularity only served to limit the monarch’s options. Frederick Wilhelm always had an uneasy relationship with Schleiermacher, but the divide over the church union was greater than any other issue.

Schleiermacher continued to advance his own view of what a unified Lutheran Reform church should look like. Even with different positions on the issues of church governance and liturgical dictates, Schleiermacher supported union. The new union was founded on doctrinal pluralism with a common liturgical and parish life. This echoes Schleiermacher’s own pastoral positions. While Luther and Zwingli vehemently fought over the issue of the Eucharist, since the time of Calvin, Reformed churches have expressed a greater degree of openness to this doctrinal matter. As this was the main dispute at the Marburg Colloquy, and the Reform position relaxed since Zwingli, this should permit a practical union. Schleiermacher was convinced that doctrinal discussions had little bearing on daily Christian life. The effect of this was that doctrine was relegated to scholars.

Schleiermacher’s impact during this second Berlin period was greater than his contributions at Holy Trinity and the efforts to unite the Lutheran and Reform confessions. Equally as impactful was the founding of the University of Berlin. In 1809-10 Wilhelm von Humboldt reorganized the public education system in Prussia and founded the University of Berlin. Louis Dumont calls the school “the prototype of the
Before the school was even open, Schleiermacher wrote letters and systems concerning education. While brief, his time at Halle gave Schleiermacher the desire to construct the Prussian identity from both the pulpit and the podium. The Prussian identity is wrapped up in the notion of Bildung. Bildung is the German term surrounding how people relate to their natural world and God. In a more specific case it concerns culture and the formation of culture through self-education and self-cultivation. Schleiermacher’s notion of Bildung closely resembles Peter Berger’s notions concerning the movements of externalization, objectification, and internalization. Both view society as “a product of collective human activity.” For Schleiermacher, this social construct resulted in the creation of the University of Berlin.

Since Halle was shut down and given away, Prussia lacked any major theological schools. While Spener and Fracke dictated the theological aims of Halle, Schleiermacher constructed the theology department for Berlin. In 1810 Schleiermacher became first Dean of the theological faculty, an honor he had four times. Schleiermacher also served as Rector of the university in 1815. The university was commissioned in part by Friedrich Wilhelm III to ensure that Prussia could make up for the physical loss of territory through intellectual gain.

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69 The University of Berlin is also known as the Humboldt University of Berlin.

70 1810-11, 1813-14, 1817-18, 1819-20.
Schleiermacher’s lecture style closely resembled his preaching. In neither case did he write out his speeches. His lectures were off the cuff, just as they were at Halle. In both cases they were written out only after they were given. The lectures were powerful enough to earn him the nickname the “Plato of Germany.” Just as with the pulpit, the temperament of the department was an ecumenical one. Both Lutheran and Reform students found a department they could engage in. Schleiermacher’s liberal theological and pedagogical aims of the university found several opponents among the faculty even before the university began. The first series of debates occurred between Schleiermacher and Johann Gottlieb Fichte (d.1814). Fichte advocated for an authoritarian university that did not need to address practical issues like theology, law, and medicine. Ultimately Wilhelm von Humboldt was the one who reorganized public education in Prussia and sided with Schleiermacher.

The disagreement with Fichte was fairly minor when compared to the outright hostility that grew between Schleiermacher and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (d. 1831). Hegel was the prime example of German Idealism following Kant, the same idealism that Schleiermacher rejected for a more experiential and historical philosophy. The theological divide is really the same divide that separated Pietists from the Rationalists, namely the debate between feelings and reason. Hegel criticized Schleiermacher’s emphasis on feeling and his definition of religion as the ‘feeling of absolute dependence,’ quipping “if that were true, ‘a dog would be the best Christian, for
It possesses this in the highest degree and lives mainly in this feeling.\textsuperscript{71} This divide was far more than philosophical difference, for Hegel it was personal.

Schleiermacher was one of the founding members of the university and Hegel came along a few years later, in 1818. Hegel believed that Schleiermacher opposed his admission to the university, even though Schleiermacher held no reservations. Before Hegel’s arrival, differences in politics resulted in the formation of student movements that coalesced around one of the two figures. By the time Hegel arrived, Schleiermacher excluded Hegel from the Berlin Academy of Sciences. This snub only fueled Hegel’s distaste for Schleiermacher. The antipathy and hostility between the two was exactly what the Ministry of Culture, Karl von Alenstein, wanted. Alenstein desired a strong philosophy department to work as a counterbalance to Schleiermacher’s theology department. In many ways this is similar to the workings of Halle before it was shut down by Napoleon.

Alenstein’s gamble paid off. Both Schleiermacher and Hegel produced great works underlining their theological and philosophical positions in light of the oppositions raised by the other. In addition to their philosophical divide, Schleiermacher and Hegel’s opinions diverged concerning the relationship between philosophy and religion. Hegel supposed that philosophy and religion were intimately interconnected while Schleiermacher saw the two as mutually exclusive. Schleiermacher understood that the two shared language but philosophy ultimately failed to understand the transcendence of God and religious experience. This conflict of visions strengthened both the philosophy

\textsuperscript{71} Richard Crouter, \textit{Friedrich Schleiermacher Between Enlightenment and Romanticism}, 11.

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and theology departments. Interestingly though neither Hegel nor Schleiermacher ever
directly named or publically debated the other. There are no texts where Schleiermacher
even mentions Hegel by name. Each used an exaggerated depiction as a foil in their
works throughout the 1820s.

In 1821 Schleiermacher also published his monumental work, *The Christian
Faith*. This work further defined Schleiermacher’s Pietistic theology, a theology that
synthesized Moravian piety with Kantian Idealism, and the Romanticism of the Salons.
This work lays the groundwork for modern liberal Protestantism against the doctrinal
orthodoxy of the day. It also delineates Schleiermacher’s theological position against
Hegel’s continued critiques. Through indirect engagement with Hegel and direct
engagement with others, the work underwent a revision a decade later. This is
Schleiermacher’s only complete systematic theology. While it is in no way as long as St.
Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa Theologica*, Calvin’s *Institutes*, or Karl Barth’s *Church
Dogmatics*, it represents the summation of Schleiermacher’s theological mind and it is as
important in the development of Western Christian Theology as the others are.

**Liberation**

> “*Everything natural is but a weak shadow of the spiritual.*”\(^{72}\)

Schleiermacher spent much of the 1810s fighting multiple battles. In addition to
those of the pulpit and the podium, he faced the French. By 1813, the behemoth that was
the Napoleonic horde began to show weakness. Napoleon’s humiliating defeat in Russia

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\(^{72}\) Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Fifteen Sermons of Friedrich Schleiermacher delivered to Celebrate the
Beginning of a New Year* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2003), 146.
sent waves through Europe. With over half a million French soldiers dead, Prussia joined the fight. Since the devastating losses of Prussian troops in 1807, Friedrich Wilhelm III dismissed his elderly generals and reorganized the Prussian army along the French style. Frederick Wilhelm called for the Wars of Liberation and the forty-five year old preacher and professor attempted to enlist. Schleiermacher’s request to become a field preacher was denied. Not discouraged, Schleiermacher continued to drill with the Berlin militia.

Ever since the French occupied Halle, Schleiermacher was a vocal opponent of the French. He was also a critic of Prussia, placing some of the blame for defeat on his homeland. Schleiermacher identified two causes of Prussian defeat. The first cause echoes his criticism found in The Soliloquies, that Prussia’s hubris grew to its detriment. The pomp and pride was vanity built upon technological advancements, but Prussia was too mechanical. The other cause of its demise grew from the first. Individuals found themselves separated from their families, from communities, from the state. Such isolation existed and this served to rot them from the insides. This decay affected leadership as well as the people’s willingness to follow, but there was still hope.

The hope came about in 1813 when the Prussians joined with Russia in defeating the French. The switching allegiance was palpable. Hällesches Tor, the region of Berlin where Holy Trinity was housed, saw French troops marching south and Russians moving in from the North on the same day. Schleiermacher’s sermons characterized the war as a holy war and as such Prussia must begin in humility and gratitude towards God. His characterization of the war was echoed by many Prussians, who called it a holy war of liberation. The notion of a crusade that was so popular during the Wars of Liberation tended towards Francophobia. This was not so with Schleiermacher, who still revered
many of the accomplishments of the French, even though he believed they moved to excess. The French excesses were not that different than the Prussians. Schleiermacher’s tone was always tempered by this acknowledgement. It was Napoleon and not the French people that was his enemy.

Since the solution for defeating Napoleon lie in a change of Prussian piety as well as practical transformations of society and its leadership, the church and the state had a symbiotic relationship. During the War of Liberation, the church was in service to the state. This relationship was natural according to Schleiermacher, as both the church and state originated from the same source, the family. Linguistic bonds, among others, contribute toward affinity. Whenever conflict emerges, it arises only from misunderstanding, and not from an essential conflict. Only later did Schleiermacher come closer to Luther’s notion of two kingdoms. During the War of Liberation, Luther’s two kingdoms were one. Schleiermacher conceived the church and state as two rooms in the same divine dwelling. His notion of nationalism originated from this conflict as well. He argued that while the people called out for a state, the state needed to remember the aspirations of the people and honor God in their actions. While always conscious of the community and collective aspects of humanity, Schleiermacher still maintained a degree of individuality. Those years reading Kant in Barby cemented in him notions of individual freedom.

Schleiermacher’s conception of nationalism was one of apparent contradiction, holding opposing poles together. Schleiermacher’s idea that people bind themselves together results in many forms. The smallest form is the family, the largest civil form is the nation. The nation must serve to develop the individual. The individual must serve to
develop that nation. The nation state should provide freedom for individuality, as long as this individuality does not overtake the collective. Schleiermacher’s concept of nationalism is a synthesis of both Kant and Francke. Individuals need to be free, but this freedom should be in service to the neighbor.

While the army had little use for him, Schleiermacher still wanted to serve his neighbor and nation. He found the best way to do this was as a spy for the Prussian monarch. He gathered what information he could for the King in Berlin and traveled to Königsberg to meet with the King and his advisors in 1813. After these meetings, Schleiermacher continued to send secret messages to Berlin. The messages were encrypted with a complicated system of codes, but these did not work very well. Following the failing code, invisible ink was also tried, but with similar results.

Neither his spying nor his drilling with the militia produced much effect in combating the French. Schleiermacher’s greatest impact during the War of Liberation was found in his preaching. Bishop Eilbert describes Schleiermacher’s sermon at the beginning of the war, proclaiming “then in this holy place and this solemn hour, stood the physically so small and insignificant man, his noble countenance beaming with intellect, and his clear sonorous, penetrating voice, ringing to the overflowing church.”

Schleiermacher urged his congregation to “remember how much happier it is to offer up life as a sacrifice in the noble struggle against this destructive power than in the impotent

struggle of medical art against the unknown powers of nature.”

The message was clear that Prussia was on the eve of a new era.

Schleiermacher’s sermons were filled with Christian patriotism that reunited the German state with Pietism along similar lines as Franke. Christian life needed to be placed in service to God and service to the neighbor. In a sermon delivered in March of 1813, entitled *A Nation's Duty in War for Freedom*, Schleiermacher linked the war as an act of Christian service. “Merciful God and Lord! Thou hast done great things for us in calling our fatherland to fight for a free and honorable existence, in which we may be able to advance Thy work. Grant us in addition, safety and grace. Victory comes from Thee, and we know well that we do not always know what we are doing in asking of Thee what seems good to us.”

In July of 1813 Schleiermacher took over *The Prussian Correspondent*, a political newspaper. Schleiermacher’s brief involvement with the paper quickly became a greater detriment than asset. The Prussian censors seized on his criticism of politicians. In his July 14 article, Schleiermacher argued that the Prussian politicians were not decisive enough. This minor and indirect criticism was characterized by Minister Hardenberg as a call for a violent overthrow of the government, and a clear act of treason. The cabinet responded that Schleiermacher needed to resign and leave Berlin and the country within forty-eight hours. In all likelihood Schleiermacher never received the order, and if he did

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75 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Selected Sermons Of Schleiermacher*, 82, III A Nation's Duty In A War For Freedom.
he ignored it. The only thing that emerged from the overblown affair was a reprimand.

By September, Schleiermacher abandoned the paper.

When the war concluded in 1815, Schleiermacher tried to use whatever remaining social capital he had to promote liberal ideas. In the last few years Schleiermacher fell out of favor with the monarch and his cabinet. Still the masses adored him.

Schleiermacher’s admiration consisted of two audiences, those who heard him from the pulpit and those who encountered him via the podium. Schleiermacher was considered a dangerous threat. His popularity, combined with his politics, required governmental supervision. Both his activities at the university and church were monitored by the police. Even Schleiermacher’s views of church unification that were supported by Friedrich Wilhelm III frightened the aristocratic powers. In January of 1823 he spent three days explaining to the police his sermons and portions of his private correspondence dating from 1813, 1818, 1819, and 1823. While under such strict supervision, it is surprising that Schleiermacher received the medal of the Red Eagle, third class from Friedrich Wilhelm III. What is not surprising is this was the only medal he ever received in his service to the King, while many lesser preachers and professors received greater and more numerous awards.

The censorship and lack of acclaim fell in part to the Prussian monarch’s shifting attitude now that the war was over. During the war, the Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm III encouraged discussions of nationalism. The Volk fighting a foreign enemy greatly helped his chances of success. When the war ended, the Volk were no longer useful. After all how are the Volk defined? Greater political freedom is requested since this freedom was used to motivate them to begin with. Other questions emerged that caused
fear for the monarch. Who shall rule Germany, in what way, and what should the borders be? Likely Prussia would dominate the German lands, but in 1815 this was in no way a guarantee.

Schleiermacher believed that the German states, in whatever form they existed before and after Napoleon, needed to unite. Politics, like religion, needed to be understood from its historical context. History defined a people and its politics. Politics needed to be understood as a hermeneutical field of inquiry, just like theology. With this basic understanding of politics, Schleiermacher expected the future of religion and the German people as unified. Schleiermacher argued that the spirit of German Protestantism was embodied in his notions of Pietism. Roman Catholics on the other hand have a different spirit to them. They possess a “rigidity which he found antithetical to individuated religious experience.”

The division between Catholic Germans and Protestant Germans was not unique to Schleiermacher. Rather this was the central debate surrounding the formulation of Germany through the first half of the nineteenth century. This spirit of authentic German-ness grew in stature because of the nations involved during the War of Liberation. Within twenty-five years the events of the war and character of the German nation were redefined. France was not simply a centuries old foe. In the collective memory of Protestant Germans, France became a Catholic foe. The Napoleonic invasion

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76 R. C. Raack, "Schleiermacher's Political Thought and Activity, 1806-1813." Church History (Cambridge University Press on behalf of the American Society of Church History 28, no. 4 December 1959), 378.
was equated with the Thirty Years War. Notions of Grosse-Deutch or Klein-Deutch\textsuperscript{77} were debated, largely concerning the inclusion or exclusion of Catholic Austria.

Other views of Nationalism emerged during this time as well. Fichte proposed his own view that in part was similar to Schleiermacher’s. Their opinions differed because they disagreed about what the driving force was behind the German spirit. In his \textit{Addresses to the German People}, Fichte argued “The real destiny of the human race on earth … is in freedom to make itself what it really is originally.”\textsuperscript{78} The German people were preserved through language and education according to Fichte, urging the German people onto the eternal. For Schleiermacher, the freedom exists from the German histories as well, but this is as a result of cooperation with the divine. Regardless of their conceptions of how the state ought to be, both conceived of the rulers as absolute.

Schleiermacher’s political involvement throughout the entire second Berlin period was closely tied to the reformer Karl Reichsfreiherr vom und zum Stein (d. 1831). Stein’s desire to reform Prussia focused on liberating the peasants and municipal reforms, including rationally planning out factories, roads, and canals. He desired self-help and a reworking of hierarchical structures, giving more autonomy to laborers, while transferring accountability of other duties to foremen, all with a hope to become more efficient. For a while Stein’s liberal policies were successful. In 1808 King Frederick Wilhelm III praised and encouraged Stein’s reform work and put some changes in effect, such as liberating the peasants in 1811. In 1813 Prussia received a new constitution, one

\textsuperscript{77} Large or small Germany.

\textsuperscript{78} Johann Gottlieb Fichte, \textit{Addresses to the German Nation} (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 1922), 79.
that included a parliament. This promise is credited to Stein. Still Stein’s successes were nearly always half measures. While he was praised by Friedrich Wilhelm III in 1808, he was briefly dismissed in 1807. The sweeping reforms and freedoms that Stein, and by extension Schleiermacher, desired were only partial measures.

Schleiermacher’s desire for reform eclipsed Stein. The liberal freedoms that Schleiermacher hoped for with the new Prussia only contributed to his role as a thorn in the King’s side. Schleiermacher called for a shorter work week for the lower classes, notions of economic equality and social services. These reforms were grounded in a sense of responsibility that the state has for its constituent members. With these concerns from Schleiermacher, it is of little surprise that he was constantly under government supervision.

Schleiermacher’s vision of the state was a liberal yet united German state. The German people were destined to emerge as a single country, a country in service to the state. The state should in turn grant them freedom and individual rights. The Catholic areas of Germany remained an open question. With this vision of a future German state, it is notable the impact Schleiermacher had on the subsequent generation of Berliners. The next generation of German leadership sat in his church on Sunday and many even attended his university. Even without regard to theology, Schleiermacher’s liberal nationalism promoted the concept that “We Germans fear God and nothing else in the world.”79 This message was delivered to his confirmands. The most notable of these was none other than Otto von Bismarck.

79 Martin Redeker, Schleiermacher: Life and Thought, 205.
In February 1824 Schleiermacher contracted pneumonia. Knowing the end was near, the preacher faithfully accepted his death with a firm hope for eternal communion with Christ. In a sermon delivered for Easter, Schleiermacher’s words seem fitting for his own death.

If we thus someday look back on the life we have spent, when we have reached its close, we shall thankfully and gladly acknowledge that it has been the eternally wise kindness and the compassionate love of the heavenly Father towards all who are called His children, which, through errors and weakness, through joys and sufferings, has bound us ever more closely and at last inseparably to Him, whom indeed we cannot let go if the Scripture is to be fulfilled in us, and in fellowship with whom, and comforted as He himself was, we shall be able to cry, "It is finished." Amen.  

News of his death spread through the university. His colleagues stopped their lectures to comment on his passing. One faculty member, August Neander remarked that Schleiermacher “is the man from whom a new epoch in theology will be dated.” The historian and devout Lutheran Leopold von Ranke commented “that Schleiermacher’s ‘whole being, his striving, deeds and life were aimed at reconciliation… his life was like his thought: the picture of the most beautiful equanimity. His name is grounded in eternity; no one is apt to be born who is equal to him.”

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80 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Selected Sermons Of Schleiermacher*, 249, XII The Last Look at Life.


His funeral was a city wide event. Ranke estimated twenty thousand people lined the streets of Berlin waiting for the casket to make its way through the city streets. Ten percent of the city, and the King Friedrich Wilhelm III came out in the winter cold to honor the preacher, professor, political activist, and public theologian. Witnesses said an uncommon sadness gripped the entire city.

Schleiermacher’s life and work left behind no direct school of thought, yet no area of nineteenth-century Protestant theology exists without his influence somehow touching it. Schleiermacher learned Pietism from his Father and his school years at Niesky and Barby. It was also at Barby that Schleiermacher learned Enlightenment thought and his lifelong journey to unite the two began. This journey reinvigorated and reinterpreted Pietism, bringing in elements of Romanticism, but always redirecting his attention towards experiential Christianity. He remained an outsider even while holding many positions of power. Like Spener, anytime he advocated for a new theological perspective he faced challenges from both the civil power and his church. Beyond his contributions to social construction, pedagogy, and nationalism, Schleiermacher’s legacy is his Pietistic theology, where he set the standard for all Protestant theology in the nineteenth century.
CHAPTER 6

REFORM THEOLOGY OF SCHLEIERMACHER

“Only through Jesus, and thus only in Christianity, has redemption become the central point of religion.”

Schleiermacher’s theology is a synthesis of his formation in Pietism, and his uneasy yet sympathetic relationship to modernity. The theological constructs of modernity posed a challenge to rational and experiential Christianity. The orthodox rationalist Christian Wolff was the first to reach a compromise. Many of the rationalists resisted the lure of compromise as unsatisfactory. Wolff’s system still possessed a theological rather than rational eschatology. In this rational eschatology, God, or humanity working with God, tended towards perfection.

A generation after Wolff, Voltaire shattered the uneasy compromise. Voltaire’s Enlightenment was French as opposed to the German Aufklärung. The rationalists who supported Voltaire were thoroughly entrenched in the anti-clericalism of the French Enlightenment. Voltaire went so far as to sign himself “Mocker of Christ.” Deism was the furthest the French Enlightenment thinkers could go.

Following Voltaire, the Wolffian position was rehabilitated by Kant. For Kant, religion was not simply theological knowledge as his sixteenth century progenitors believed, but theoretical knowledge. Reason and religion cooperate. In this new venture,

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religion and rationalism are not enemies as Voltaire supposed, nor is reason subordinate to religion as Wolff assumed. Under Kant, religion necessarily operates by the rules of logic and reason. This result is Kantian metaphysics. If this was a victory for the rationalists, it was empty as religion still existed. Religion survives Kant in two ways. First, reason has natural limits. The mind can only know phenomena rather than the *nomina*, or thing in itself. This denial of knowledge makes room for faith. Religion is also maintained by Kant since religion is equated with morality. This apparent demotion of religion did not sit easy with many Protestant scholastics, but it preserved religion and their dogmatic teachings from the assault launched by Montesquieu and Voltaire. Kant’s position, while not perfect, changed the direction of the relationship of modernity and the Protestant Churches to a greater extent than Wolff. This pivot provides a separate sphere for religion that is largely immune to French Enlightenment critiques.

Still the relationship between Christianity and modernity was not firmly established. Two strands of Kantian modernity emerged, the first belonging to Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher understood Kant, but rejected the compromise. The other followed Hegel, who upheld Kant. Hegel’s contributions supported a theological and metaphysical compromise. Religion is a part of a larger philosophical world. The Wolffian perfection was re-categorized as progress under Hegel. Underneath Hegelian philosophy, there remained the beating heart of a God who was involved in the world. Hegel declared in his lecture on the consummate religion, “The nature of spirit itself is to
manifest itself, make itself objective; this is its activity and vitality, its sole action, and its action is all that spirit is.”

**Gefühl and Christ**

“The Piety which forms the basis of all ecclesiastical communions is, considered purely in itself, neither a Knowing nor a Doing, but a modification of Feeling, or of immediate self-consciousness.”

This is the theological and metaphysical challenge that Schleiermacher faced. It was from this standpoint that even Schleiermacher’s early theology, found in *On Religion*, takes its stand. It is from this challenge that *The Christian Faith* ultimately supports and bolsters his earlier claims. In *On Religion* Schleiermacher asserts, “belief must be something different from a mixture of opinions about God and the world, and of precepts for one life or for two. Piety cannot be an instinct craving for a mess of metaphysical and ethical crumbs.”

It is from here that Schleiermacher creates a larger space for theology in the modern world. Religion does not exist in the corners and limits of reason, but is itself supra-rational, and natural. Religion is experiential. Proper religion belongs not to the rationalist, or the scholastic but to the Pietist.

To begin, Schleiermacher deconstructed the uneasy alliance that existed between rationalists and Protestant Scholastics. Both the younger Schleiermacher, as evidenced in

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On Religion, and his more mature theology with his work The Christian Faith, participated in this dismantling. The first step illustrates the flaws inherent in the alliance. The rationalists elevate science while the Protestant Scholastics elevate dogma. Schleiermacher asserts that “the process of defining a science cannot belong to the science itself” therefore none of these propositions “can themselves have a dogmatic character.”6 The dogmatic affirmations can exist only in the realm of theology and not from a science of theology.

Proceeding from this point, Schleiermacher proclaims “I cannot hold religion the highest knowledge, or indeed knowledge at all.”7 Religion not only does not belong to the realm of science; it exists in its own realm. To support his claim that religion cannot simply be a type of knowledge, Schleiermacher points out that “Quantity of knowledge is not quantity of piety. Piety can gloriously display itself, both with originality and individuality, in those to whom this kind of knowledge is not original.”8 Even the layman who lacks the doctrinal expertise of the theologian may be more religious.

To further divide these two camps, Schleiermacher addresses the existence of miracles. Brilliantly, Schleiermacher addresses an issue that the rationalist deists and doctrinal orthodox subordinated in their alliance. After all, if God is simply the divine clock maker and left the universe to continue on its own mechanical operations, then a miracle which grounds theological knowledge cannot occur. One may expect that

8 Friedrich Schleiermacher, On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers, 35.
Schleiermacher, the pastor and theologian, would side with the Protestant scholastics. Rather he seemingly sides with the rationalists by denying the existence of miracles in the conventional sense. In doing so Schleiermacher defines a miracle as the religions name for an event. The event remains within the mechanical world but is enchanted by the perceptions of the pious. By permitting the miraculous a space in the rational world, Schleiermacher also affirms the experience for the devout. Schleiermacher offers up a new synthesis of religion and reason but bases this not in doctrine or science, rather in the realm of Pietism, in experience.

**Feeling of Absolute Dependence.**

"Your feeling is piety in so far as it is the result of the operation of God in you by means of the operation of the world upon you."^9

The Kantian compromise was to place religion into the camp of ethics. Schleiermacher rejects this idea as well. Ethics, while a part of one larger system or another, ultimately resides in actions, in doing. If religion is not concerned with knowledge, nor in actions, Schleiermacher posits that religion can fall into only two possible areas. The first is *Anschauung* or intuition, the other is *Gefühl* or feeling. Both knowledge and ethics serve as objects of study, as rational facts that are easily partitioned and positioned far from the lives of people. While information may be powerful, its power is only when it draws someone into itself, and this internalization is done through *Anschauung*. Once the knowledge is drawn in it does not remain a sterile fact, rather it

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becomes Gefühl. Religion is not a fact, as earlier demonstrated, rather religion is only religion when it is internalized. Intuition helps this, but the real domain of religion must be in feeling.

What feeling is not is simple emotions. Schleiermacher is not advocating for universal emotional mysticism, but still emotions play a role. Max Weber argued that “Pietism from Francke and Spener to Zinzendorf moved in the direction of an increasing emphasis on the emotional.”¹⁰ Schleiermacher’s pietism and definition of religion places him one step beyond Zinzendorf in this emotional Pietist continuum. Schleiermacher supports emotions, but feeling is also something outside the self.

Schleiermacher characterizes feeling as both inside and outside the person. Feeling is based in reality and individuality. Two feelings emerge as aspects of the self. The first is a feeling of freedom. This first feeling of freedom dominates when the object of the feeling is wrapped up in the self. While Kant and Hegel assert that everything must be done in freedom, this freedom taken to its natural conclusion remains only within the individual and is isolating. In this isolation the consciousness is only individual consciousness. With its source only in the individual, feeling is free, but this is not religious feeling.

Religious feeling must then be a feeling from outside the self rather than inside. If the source of the feeling is outside the individual, the feeling is one of dependence rather than a feeling of freedom. Religious feelings must present itself to the other, as

such feeling is in association with society and the world and not just the individual. Durkheim echoes this when he defines religion as “a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church.”\textsuperscript{11} The moral community is the religious because it is outside and therefore greater than the individual. While Schleiermacher and Durkheim differ concerning the ultimate cause of the outside object which brings forth the religious, both maintain that religion while internalized must be greater than the self.

Schleiermacher unequivocally identifies the source of religious feelings as “our being and living is a being and living in and through God.”\textsuperscript{12} Since the source for religious feelings ultimately lies within God, Schleiermacher continues, not all feelings of dependence are religious, and religious feelings must be a particular type of dependence. For a feeling to be religious, it must be a pious feeling, that is, the object which intuition internalized to produce the feeling must have at its source God. As such, pious feelings cannot be equated with simple emotionalism. Emotions remain a part of feeling, but pious feelings are of a separate character.

The pious feeling must be primarily a source of dependence, and this dependence is not partial but complete. Simply stated, Schleiermacher declares “the essence of the religions emotions consists in the feeling of an absolute dependence.”\textsuperscript{13} Since the

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\textsuperscript{12}Friedrich Schleiermacher, \textit{On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers}, 49.
\textsuperscript{13}Friedrich Schleiermacher, \textit{On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers}, 106.
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dependence that is required for a religious feeling is absolute, the subject must possess a
degree of freedom in their dependence. While religion is not an operation of a feeling of
freedom, freedom must still remain for religious feeling, and otherwise it is not a feeling
of dependence but a feeling of servitude. Religious feelings consist in the feeling of
dependence, because there must be an other to which religion is directed towards. Yet
the feeling of dependence is not a feeling of coercion either. A degree of freedom must
be present to afford the feeling of dependence to be a religious feeling of dependence.
Schleiermacher also states “there is no will without freedom.”

Schleiermacher clarifies this later in his work On the Glaubenslehre, especially
when applied to Christianity. In the work he states “I deduce Christianity from the
feeling of the need for redemption, which is indeed a particular form of the feeling of
dependence.” Christianity exemplifies the feeling of absolute dependence because
humanity is in need of redemption. The pious feeling of absolute dependence reshapes
the individual as it is itself a mechanism for uniting with God. Schleiermacher describes
it as “The immediate feeling of absolute dependence is presupposed and actually
contained in every religious and Christian self-consciousness as the only way in which, in
general, our own being and the infinite being of God can be one in self-conciseness.”

The feeling of absolute dependence produces a consciousness of God. The first
thing this God consciousness shows is the need for redemption which in effect produces


greater dependence and fuels the growth in this God consciousness. This is the purpose of redemption and the Christian message. The Christian message is understood therefore not through knowledge and gaining insight, rather through experience. Rationalism and Protestant Orthodoxy, rather than piloting the ship of modernity, crash into the third strand of Protestantism. The Pietists, as embodied not in their recently formed schools and ideological movements, rather in Schleiermacher who embodied the experiential strain of Protestantism modeled this third strand.

Pietism provided Schleiermacher the victory over Enlightenment critics of religion. The victory of Schleiermacher did not come in denying the Enlightenment but in overcoming it. While Kant synthesized reason and doctrine, Schleiermacher combined reason with piety. Schleiermacher was educated in both Moravian schools and the Enlightenment circles. Throughout On Religion and The Christian Faith, Schleiermacher develops a dogmatic system that references classical Protestant orthodoxy, then Pietist and Enlightenment critiques, before synthesizing them under a new yet familiar experience.

In light of this move towards philosophy, it is not surprising that Schleiermacher prefigures the assertions of later American Pragmatists such as John Dewey and William James. When James states “In the religious life the control is felt as ‘higher’; but since on our hypothesis it is primarily the higher faculties of our own hidden mind which are controlling, the sense of union with the power beyond us is a sense of something, not
merely apparently, but literally true.” He incorporates psychology and theology. Elsewhere in *Pragmatism* Lecture II, James also tries to mediate between empiricism and religion, this time with his notions of pragmatic truth. Truth for James and the pragmatists “becomes a class-name for all sorts of definite working-values in experience.” These claims come even closer to Schleiermacher’s words that “in religion, error only exists by truth and not merely so, but it can be said that every man's religion is his highest truth. Error therein would not only be error, it would be hypocrisy. In religion then everything is immediately true, as nothing is expressed at any moment of it, except the state of mind of the religious person.” Both James the Pragmatist and Schleiermacher the Pietist hold notions of truth as psychological and relative to the experiences of the pious individual. Both create a space where religious experience confronts and overcomes the rational and dogmatic world.


Christology.

“The sole source of this life is Christ, and the former human being does not oneself actually live in that source but rather bears the living Christ in oneself.”

Schleiermacher’s second key theological development grows from the first. This is his treatment of Christology. Schleiermacher’s Christology progresses as his theology matures. His first mature work, The Christmas Eve Dialogue, was a reappraisal of the person of Christ and the impact that Christ has as the source of experience and the embodiment of complete God consciousness. From this point on Christ is the central figure in his mature theology.

Today this message appears almost comically unnecessary as Christ is essential to Christianity and one would expect a Christian preacher, especially one who emphasizes experiential theology, to ground their work in the Christ’s humanity as it relates to his divinity. Yet at the beginning of the nineteenth-century Christology was widely neglected and the doctrine of the incarnation was denied by new forms of Gnosticism. Schleiermacher’s emphasis on Christ was a departure from the trends in Protestant Christianity as dictated by the Protestant Scholastics. Instead Schleiermacher remained true to his Moravian teachings and the fervent Christology of Zinzendorf as addressed in chapter three.

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This message may also surprise some who have read *The Christian Faith*. A typical misreading of the texts exists due to the construction of the treatise, a fact that Schleiermacher even acknowledges. “I see quite clearly how the present outline has been misunderstood.”

*The Christian Faith* begins by addressing dogmatics and religious self-consciousness, rather than specific Christian doctrines and practices. While a brief reading of Schleiermacher’s only systematic text often leaves readers with the impression that the God-consciousness is more important than Schleiermacher’s Christology, those who are more familiar with the text see past this. Schleiermacher’s desire to re-engage Protestantism with Christ shaped both his theology and his pastoral life.

Schleiermacher’s Christological beginnings start with looking at the historical Jesus. This produced a minor uproar, but nothing compared to D.F. Strauss and his work *The Life of Jesus, Critically Examined*, or Ludwig Feuerbach and his work *The Essence of Christianity*, who both cast doubt on the existence or nature of the historical Jesus. Schleiermacher constructed his own understanding of who the historical Jesus was. In a series of lectures called “The Life of Jesus,” Schleiermacher elevates the Johannine Gospel over the synoptic Gospels. He believed that personal testimony of John related a historically accurate depiction of Christ. Schleiermacher also used the historical evidence that existed at the time in determining his preference for John. In the lectures, Schleiermacher still admits that complete knowledge of the historical Christ is unknowable given the limited number of primary sources.

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While determining facts and aspects of Jesus’s life as it truly existed in history was an essential first step, the value of the step comes from what it can tell us. The first and most important conclusion from John’s Gospel is understanding the humanity of Christ. John’s phrase “the Word become flesh” becomes the appropriate way to regard to Jesus, since following the incarnation the phrase takes on a double meaning when the word “word” becomes incarnate in the believer as well. Only from the perspective of the incarnation does the rest of the Christian life and theology take shape for Schleiermacher.

Since this is the fount of Schleiermacher’s mature theology, he is quick to point out that the historic Christian faith never assumes sin as an essential element in man’s essence. Rather sin, and the necessary grace that is created by sin, are secondary characteristics to the psychology and anthropology of man. Christ, being man, in no way needed to sin to be man. Rather since Christ became man, man can then be formed in the image of Christ. This image is the image of a perfect God-consciousness. Schleiermacher marvels at the ability of Christ the man to “take into itself such an absolute potency of the God-consciousness.”

This God-consciousness that Christ knows fully is only partially known by Christians. This fragmental knowledge is the limited God-consciousness that is experienced by sinful humanity. Christ’s redemption provides greater access and clarity in this God-consciousness, as it can now be shared from Christ to the inner life of the believer.

Christ the man possesses a perfect God-consciousness. It is only Christ who has this perfect consciousness, and as such he remakes humanity. Schleiermacher proclaims

22 Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, 368, § 89.3.

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“For, the entrance of Christ into humanity being its second creation, humanity thus becomes a new creature, and one may regard this entrance as also the regeneration of the human race, which to be sure only actually comes to pass in the form of the regeneration of individuals.” In this he is the second Adam, and the new creation, model and template that every other Christian, through the feeling of absolute dependence is able to resemble. Through Christ’s perfect God-consciousness, humanity can be born anew.

Christ possessing a perfect God-consciousness and becoming the first of the new creation through the incarnation is His redemptive act for Schleiermacher. Christ’s redemption of humanity is found not in a sacrificial atonement. This, after all, was the issue which caused a dramatic though brief break with his father and his expulsion from Barby. Rather it is the incarnation that redeems humanity. The incarnation re-makes men and women, now along the image of a person with a perfect God-consciousness who can truly have fellowship with God’s creation. Christ assumes humanity into fellowship with him, by first entering into fellowship with humanity in the incarnation.

Schleiermacher’s mature theology was shaped by his Christology, and no aspect of Schleiermacher’s later theological works can be understood without first taking up his understanding of Christ. Still for Barth, Schleiermacher’s Christology, “is the point where the system involuntarily breaks up.” Barth views Schleiermacher’s Christology not as the beginning of Schleiermacher’s larger system, but as the end of Schleiermacher’s engagement in rational theology. Not surprisingly, Barth links

23 Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, 477, §106.1
24 Karl Barth, The Theology of Schleiermacher (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmann, 1982), 107.
Schleiermacher’s Christological turn to Zinzendorf and his Moravian upbringing. “To his particular piety with its background of a gentle waft of Zinzendorf, I would rather ascribe the erroneous content of Schleiermacher's Christology... I believe that the intolerable humanizing of Christ that triumphed under the aegis of Schleiermacher in the nineteenth century was very closely related to pietism, especially in the form that it had been given by Zinzendorf.”

While Barth’s condemnation falls on Schleiermacher’s Christ, viewing him only as a mere exemplar of human nature, a similar criticism exists from others who believe that Schleiermacher did not go far enough. Schleiermacher began his Christology from below, where all aspects of theology must originate in the knowledge of the incarnation, but this theological system is left incomplete. The further discussion of a Christology from below is left to Schleiermacher’s followers and those engaged in a reexamination of Christology in the nineteenth century. The incomplete ideology still served to combat the public controversies of pantheism and atheism that grew in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Schleiermacher’s humanizing of God through the incarnation of Christ, within a rationalist system, grounded in the historical figure of Christ, silenced these two blaring trumpets, at least for a time.

God, Sin, and Redemption

“God, at the thought of whom all wishes become prayers, might all these wishes also refer to what is in accordance with your good pleasure, to what we are able gladly to consider jointly with our thought of you.”26

With Schleiermacher’s Christology as his theological lens, his notion of God begins to develop. God as the source of man’s dependence can only be apprehended as pure activity. God as pure activity is not knowable to humanity, as God is in God’s self, rather God is only known through his activity in the world, specifically the activity initiated by Christ. Humanity related to God through our passive nature, in utter dependence upon God and through this developed God consciousness.

The developed God consciousness is not dependent upon a knowledge of Trinitarian theology, nor a development of the God-head. While Schleiermacher develops his theology through the incarnation, the role that Pentecost has, or the Holy Spirit as a distinct person of God, is underdeveloped. Schleiermacher did not deny Trinitarian theology, but he did subordinate it to a secondary status. Schleiermacher’s discussion of the trinity is not found in the doctrines of God, rather in secondary theological issues that are delineated through church history and tradition.

In a similar fashion, much of the early part of The Christian Faith addresses religion apart from specific Christian claims. Unlike other scholars of religion, especially those coming from England in the eighteenth century, Schleiermacher opposes any notions of natural religion. For the eighteenth-century English scholars, the notion of

26 Friedrich Schleiermacher, Fifteen Sermons of Friedrich Schleiermacher delivered to Celebrate the Beginning of a New Year (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2003), 83.
noesis that could be discovered in nature grew to a point of an amorphous god who largely resided as a moral governor. Like Schleiermacher’s other critiques of limiting religion to morality, this notion of noesis falls flat. Schleiermacher appeals to history and historical developments, not only in his understanding of the person of Christ, but also in how religions grow and are differentiated.

While Schleiermacher discusses religion as a natural phenomenon, and relegates essential Christian doctrine to secondary status, he remains fervently a Christian theologian. Again this springs from his Christology. Christ as the incarnation of God is a historical event that Schleiermacher clings to, this construction above all others places Christianity at the apex of religious ideologies and provides the solution of how humanity is to encounter the transcendent God. It is from Christ that the God-consciousness is manifest in nature.

Sin is also a part of this theological construction. The God-consciousness that humanity inherits from Christ is often disrupted. This disruption is sin, both in its cause and in its effect. Sin creates a greater distance between man and God, therefore weakening the God-consciousness. The act of committing a sin and the impulses towards this result in a distancing from God. Sin is a disturbance of the religious God-consciousness.

For Schleiermacher, “the character of sin is the self-centered activity of the flesh.” The desire of sin is for its own sake. Just as when feelings of freedom continue to grow to the point of complete freedom, which is isolation, the character of sin

continues to grow as its focus is on the individual rather than the outsider. As sin is for its own self, it is not for the other. God is always active. The complete God-consciousness, as formed in the incarnation, is not found within God, but only humanity. Schleiermacher says it this way, “The ground for this assertion is best expressed in the formula that evil cannot be a creative thought of God. It follows that the term redemption is not so suitable to describe the divine decree as it is to describe the effect of the decree, for the Almighty cannot ordain one thing for the sake of another which He has not ordained.”\(^{28}\)

Just as Christ, the second Adam, initiates a new creation, sin is primarily a corporate rather than individual act. Sin can best be understood through its effects on the corporate consciousness rather than the individual. While sins affect humanity as a corporate body, Schleiermacher’s theology does not credit notions of Original sin or an Adamic fall from grace as the cause of sin’s character.

The source of sin is not a part of human nature, rather individuals themselves are the cause of their own sin and in the act of sinning evils are produced. These evils produce effects outside the self and produce a world with evil. Sin may have origins in the individual but its effects are on the collective. In *The Christian Faith*, Schleiermacher states “all evil is to be regarded as punishment of sin, but only social evil as directly, such, and natural evil as only indirectly.”\(^{29}\) Sins natural and otherwise beget more sins, and require some form of justice. Sin creates its own form of justice as it weakens the


God-consciousness, and distances man from God. Schleiermacher conceives of sin, like Augustine does, primarily as a disorder. Sin confuses our loves and our love is then in the self and this world rather than God and the eternal.

With the existence of sin present in the world, Schleiermacher, like all theologians, must develop doctrines concerning justification and sanctification. Christianity is the pinnacle of the world religions for Schleiermacher because it contains the clearest description of salvation. This salvation, like all other key theology, grows out of Schleiermacher’s Christology. Salvation for Schleiermacher is the persistence and growth of the God-consciousness in humanity. One may assume that other than his Christological spin, the remaining theology concerning the atonement and salvation would lie close to his fellow Calvinists. William Perkins outlined his Calvinist notions of the atonement and justification in *A Golden Chain*. This interpretation dominated Calvinist views at the Synod of Dort, and by the time of Schleiermacher these Calvinist views are reflexively accepted as convention.

Still Schleiermacher’s theology is anything but conventional. As we have already mentioned, Schleiermacher’s view of the atonement takes place not on Calvary but in Bethlehem. The incarnation becomes the atoning work of God. Schleiermacher states “Christ certainly made *satisfaction* for us by becoming.”\(^{30}\) Schleiermacher also rejects the Calvinist doctrine of the limited atonement. Just as sin is a corporate act, so too is redemption. “Election cannot be understood as a human credit because this would

undermine the clearest expression of the grace of God as evidenced in the incarnation.”\(^{31}\) Schleiermacher’s notion of election was not the selection of a few souls who are saved from a well-deserved damnation, rather the occasion for election was the human need.

Since the atonement took place at Christ’s birth, there is no need to address Christ’s death as a vicarious suffering. Plainly stated “this satisfaction is in no sense ‘vicarious;’ it could not have been expected of us that we should be able to begin this life for ourselves, nor does the act of Christ set us free from the necessity of pursuing this spiritual life by our own endeavor in fellowship with Him.”\(^{32}\) There can be no atonement through a vicarious suffering because the atonement preceded the suffering of Christ. Furthermore for God to then choose to punish a section of mankind and withhold the possibility of atonement would be antithetical to God’s nature. Schleiermacher clearly separates himself from the blood and wounds theology of Zinzendorf, but still focuses on the experiential relationship inherent to the incarnate God.

Still God’s nature does include a cosmic drama to be played out. This drama includes creation and redemption. This creation includes sin and a fall of humanity away from perfect God-consciousness. This failure to possess a clear God-consciousness creates a void wherein God may engage with creation through the redemptive act of becoming man. Humanity still needs to be converted following redemption but this conversion is defined as a “transformation, the right-about-turn to better things, makes


evident that it is the beginning of a new page, a new order in contrast to the old.” 33 The opportunity for sin helps to produce a greater humanity. Schleiermacher does not hold Wolff’s notion that ‘all is right,’ nor Leibniz’ conclusion from The Theodicy. Rather Schleiermacher upholds St. Irenaeus’ view that God created an immature humanity. This immaturity provides the development of a God-consciousness.

Schleiermacher contrasts his notion of election from both the Calvinist and Lutheran doctrines. Schleiermacher depicts the Calvinist interpretation as “the fact that not all persons will actually be restored through Christ but that some are pardoned and others lost.” 34 The Lutheran position is not much different, proclaiming “God has intended redemption for all but that those who did not accept it became lost on account of their resistance.” 35 The essential difference between the classical interpretations of these two doctrines is the size of the net cast by the fisherman. For the Calvinist viewpoint the net is small, and it intentionally only targets a few fish, but the skill of the fisherman is such that those selected fish are caught. The Lutheran fisherman has a must larger net, but the net has wide holes in it that many fish, even possibly those that the fisherman desires, escape. In both cases many are excluded, either by design or accident. Schleiermacher finds little satisfaction in either of these models.

These models rely on Christ’s atonement, costing either God or humanity something. Schleiermacher’s conception of the atonement costs God nothing.


34 Friedrich Schleiermacher, On the Doctrine of Election With Special Reference to the Aphorisms of Dr. Bretschneider, 43.

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Furthermore Schleiermacher’s treatment of humanity is that humanity must always be viewed as a collective rather than a collection of individuals. Schleiermacher reworks Perkins’ *Golden Chain*, as addressed in chapter two, by reinterpreting the first link as the predestination of humanity. From here Schleiermacher simply follows Perkins’ theological outcomes. With his view of humanity and the atonement, Schleiermacher posits that God predestined humanity and all its members. From this position Schleiermacher comes close to the view held by Origen of Alexandria. Origen argued that at some point a universal restoration of humanity will occur. He reasoned that “We think that the goodness of God, through the mediation of Christ, will bring all creatures to one and the same end.”36 This notion of universal salvation resulted in the discrediting of the bulk of Origen’s work, and a condemnation of this theology at the Fifth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in 553.37

Following Origen, the doctrines connected with universal salvation fell out of favor. These views were regarded as heresy or heterodox and dangerous. Still, notions of universalism persist within Christianity, though in different forms. Universalists argue that the doctrine of universal salvation is heterodox rather than heretical. Universalists generally hold two theological assumptions to validate their claim to heterodoxy. The first is the rejection of God as vengeful and desiring to punish sinners though eternal torment, generally identified as hell. The second is the assertion that death is not the


37 Some Origen scholars hold that he was not himself condemned at this council, rather only these teachings and many of his followers who applied these principles of Origen in a way beyond their original scope. If this is the case than it opens the door for reexamination of Origen and possibly the doctrine of universal salvation.
decisive line that separates the redeemed from the unredeemed. From this point it is possible that one may die unregenerate but then postmortem convert and accept God’s grace. Damnation may occur, but it would be self-imposed and only temporary. Ultimately all humanity will choose grace and salvation rather than self-imposed isolation.

Some Universalists also presuppose that no one can be in a state of blessedness if anyone is damned. This dictum becomes popular in the late nineteenth and twentieth century, such language is absent from any discussions Schleiermacher has on the subject. Schleiermacher is the first major Christian theologian since the time of the Patristics to seriously consider universalism. While this may appear to be a rejection of his Reform teachings and Calvin, Schleiermacher’s doctrine of universal salvation is developed from the Calvinist perspective. The notion of the elect remains. The difference is who the elect are. For Calvin, the elect are individual men and women. For Schleiermacher, the elect is humanity in the singular rather than singular humans. Schleiermacher does abandon Calvin’s notion of the reprobate. Calvin believed that the reprobate along with the elect were created for the same purpose, to bring glory to God.

For Schleiermacher, God becoming man through the incarnation changes the teleology of creation. Schleiermacher rejected Perkin’s golden chain, but could still uphold Francke’s view of redemption. Francke argued, in his work On Christian Perfection, that “Just as God looks upon the Lord, Christ as sin, so he sees the sinner as just and completely perfect because he gives to the sinner as the sinner’s own the
innocence and righteousness of Christ.”38 While Francke did not advocate universal salvation, Francke’s depiction of imputed righteousness is echoed and amplified with Schleiermacher.

Schleiermacher’s universalism grows from his new interpretation of predestination in the singular along with Francke’s and others view of imputed righteousness. God’s will remains ultimate as Calvin demands. Schleiermacher rejects Luther, who believes that people themselves determine their own fate. “Rather, only in this way is it to become clear how the election and rejection of individuals are simply the two contrasted yet in each instance correlated aspects of one and the same decree, whereby through divine power, yet in a natural way, the human race is to be transformed into the spiritual body of Christ.”39 This transformation becomes complete and universal.

The transformation of humanity and ultimate universal salvation of creation grows from these theological tenets as well as Schleiermacher’s belief that death is not final. Death is a transformation, but this transformation does not preclude the possibility for repentance and ultimate salvation. Death cannot be the determining factor because if it was then God would be limited. Schleiermacher is still close enough to Calvin that anything that limits God’s sovereignty results in a dismantling of the nature of God. Neither death nor any other thing can restrict the activity of God through Christ’s operation in humanities God-consciousness. Schleiermacher concludes that “Whichever road is taken, the difference at the point of death, then, between the person of faith and


39 Friedrich Schleiermacher, On the Doctrine of Election With Special Reference to the Aphorisms of Dr. Bretschneider, 75.
the person not of faith is simply the difference between being taken up into the reign of Christ earlier and later.”40 The reprobate, if we choose to use that term, are nothing other than the not yet redeemed.

If one can choose to remain reprobate, even with this modified definition, past the point of death, this naturally leads to the question of an individual’s salvation, or the conversion of an individual. Schleiermacher still holds to the notion of individual justification and conversion. While humanity is redeemed through the incarnation, individuals can convert to God and this new creation, which we are all destined for. Individual conversion therefore includes “forgiving of his sins, and the recognizing of him as a child of God.”41 Schleiermacher still refers to this point as regeneration and a new beginning.

For Schleiermacher, it is true for regeneration as well as the various synonyms for regeneration such as repentance, regret, change of heart, etc. that this occurs at a distinct point, but also throughout the course of the new life.42 Even though humanity has been redeemed by Christ, regeneration is still an appropriate term when addressing the individual. “Individuals, then, submit voluntarily to the lordship of Christ; but in so doing they at the same time enter a society to which they did not previously belong.”43

As far as the debate which existed among our earlier Pietists as to whether or not a

40 Friedrich Schleiermacher, On the Doctrine of Election With Special Reference to the Aphorisms of Dr. Bretschneider, 78.


conversion experience is needed, Schleiermacher affirms that multiple conversion experiences are needed. There is not a single conversion that does not then produce further conversions and a deepening of the God-consciousness.

Schleiermacher does hold that an initial moment of faith is still necessary. This initial faith creates a new and permanently enduring state of mind. This new state of mind becomes the basis of the new life in Christ. An individual’s conversion is therefore in no way superfluous. The initial conversion provides the basis for the entire Christian life that reaches into eternity. Justification, conversion, and the new creation become practically identical, the difference only lies in temporality and not in effect. One is justified through Christ’s incarnation. Christ therefore becomes the first of the new creation. Each individual will then at some point convert to Christ. Conversion is therefore the gift of repentance. This conversion marks the point where the individual becomes a part of this new creation partaking of an ever increasing level of God-consciousness.

Schleiermacher remains a bit vague as to the nature of the increasing level of God-consciousness. Two interpretations remain possible. The first is that the level of God-consciousness for the believer can increase *ad infinitum*, as God is infinite. Along this line of infinite God-consciousness there is a point where the believer crosses some threshold and is in a state of blessedness for the rest of eternity. The state of blessedness is produced by the directional attitude of the God-consciousness. The individual now only chooses to remain conscious of God, rather than sinning, or turning away from God. As God is infinite, the nature of man’s finitude precludes complete consciousness of God,
but God-consciousness is all that is eternally desired. This first view largely focuses on God’s nature and humanities ability to fully grasp the ungraspable.

The second interpretation of this growing God-consciousness is focused on the state of grace for the believer. For this view the Christian’s finite existence does not need to grasp eternity, rather only be consumed by it. Humanity is like a water vessel; it is full, empty, or somewhere in between. The discussion of a complete God-consciousness needs to only address how full the vessel is and not the quantity of the liquid. As the vessel is a fixed size, there is an upper limit where it is completely filled with God-consciousness. The opposite can also exist, the vessel can be emptied, as it is prior to regeneration. This is the state of God-forgetfulness.

Both views address an expanding and contracting God-consciousness, the exact state of which is still undefined. The default term for the ever increasing level of God-consciousness is faith. The increasing level of God-consciousness correlates with an increasing feeling of absolute dependence on God, therefore faith is essentially a level of dependence upon God. Schleiermacher states that “faith is nothing other than the consequence of something given.”

Though it is given, Schleiermacher still maintains the Protestant notion of salvation through faith. The doctrine of Sola Fida is interpreted as “man is justified as soon as faith has been wrought in him.” This faith is always a given faith, wherein the regenerate cooperate in their blessedness.

44 Friedrich Schleiermacher, On the Doctrine of Election With Special Reference to the Aphorisms of Dr. Bretschneider, 67.

This new life of faith is humanity's share of the new creation, first initiated in Christ. According to Schleiermacher, when one becomes redeemed they are quantifiably different. “Life thus becomes under a different formula, making it a life that is new; hence the phrases ‘a new man,’ ‘a new creature,’ which bear the same sense as our phrase ‘a new personality.’”\textsuperscript{46} This new creation is new not only because of the personality that it takes on, a personality that is marked by faith, but is new in its associations. “The result is, not only that there arises among them a new corporate life, in complete contrast to the old, but also that each of them becomes in himself a new person – that is to say, a citizen.”\textsuperscript{47} The citizenship and association is with God. Therefore the new creation is marked by faith and this faith produces real communion with God. As such, the purpose of creation and the new creation are made complete through this redemptive model. In many ways this echoes the mysticism of Tauler and his doctrine of the inner man. As addressed in chapter one, Schleiermacher’s theology of the new creation echoes Tauler’s claim that “Man is created for time and for eternity for time in his body, for eternity according to his spirit.”\textsuperscript{48}

Schleiermacher affirms that faith lends itself to greater faith, and a greater cooperation in blessedness. He is unwilling to follow Wesley down the road to ascribing perfection to anyone except for Christ. Any degree of faith for the Christian can never be anything but the act of Christ’s “sinlessness and perfection as conditioned by the being of

\textsuperscript{46} Friedrich Schleiermacher, \textit{The Christian Faith}, 476, § 106.1.

\textsuperscript{47} Friedrich Schleiermacher, \textit{The Christian Faith}, 429, § 100.3.

\textsuperscript{48} John Tauler, \textit{The Following of Christ}, 97.
God in Him.”49 To Christ alone belongs perfection. For only Christ began as God and therefore has a complete God-consciousness. The Christian, even one who has attained a state of blessedness, still only shares in this Christ’s blessedness. When the Christian becomes a new creation, they do not become perfect, rather the “New life can only, as it were be grafted on to the old.”50 The imperfections of the old natures still persist, though life continues from the new. Christ was born with a completed God-consciousness and this granted humanity the ability to share in divinity. Christ “bears within Himself the whole new creation which contains and develops the potency of the God-consciousness.”51

As stated earlier, once redeemed the Christian still can sin. What marks the Christian as different in their reconverted state is a knowledge that their sin is forgiven, even during the sin. With knowledge of sin, repentance and forgiveness are offered and ultimately received. This life of sin is the old nature which is not deadened, only overcome. “The actual sin of those who have been brought into permanent connection with the power of redemption is no longer ‘originating’ in themselves, or, through their ill-doing, in others. It has been vanquished by the energy of the God-consciousness implanted in them personally and spontaneously, so that where it still shows itself it is seen to be on the wane, and has no further contaminating power.”52

51 Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, 388, § 94.2.
52 Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, 313, § 74.4.
The sin is reckoned to the existence of the old nature that is still present in the life of the believer. “He still has something in him of the old common life of sin.”53 This old nature is the originator of the sin. The connection with God in the new creation is a permanent connection with God’s power of redemption. “In every case where sin appears to have entered we must say either that the sin is not really new, but belongs to a former period and has simply been revived; or else that regeneration has not been of a right and true kind, inasmuch as sinfulness has borne new fruit.”54

The Church and Its People

“Let us still note how our services of worship have also been blessed for the quickening and elevation of our religious feelings.”55

The power of sin is disrupting the God-consciousness not only of an individual but of the community. The community is therefore the agent who combats sin. Sin is combated through faith. The corporate body that engages in this life of faith is known as the church. For Schleiermacher the church is the communal form of faith. This is why Schleiermacher continues beyond a description of religion as it applies to an individual and addresses its corporate character. From Schleiermacher’s earliest works he attempted

53 Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, 515, § 111.3.


55 Friedrich Schleiermacher, Fifteen Sermons of Friedrich Schleiermacher delivered to Celebrate the Beginning of a New Year (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2003), 56.
to draw the cultured despisers of religion into accepting religion as a communal activity.

In *On Religion* he exclaims, “The essence of the church is fellowship.”

The church is the form of faith. Schleiermacher expands on this idea in his later lectures on religion. “The essence of the church lies in the organic unification of a mass of people of the same type for the purposes of subjective activity of the cognitive function under the opposition of clergy and laity.” The unification is the key element of the church. In Schleiermacher’s view, once there is religion, it must necessarily be social. For Schleiermacher, the social aspect of religion is something engrained in humanity. It “is the nature of man, and it is quite peculiarly the nature of religion.”

The church as the social expression of the God-consciousness is found not only in anthropology, but also in history. The origins of the church came about as events unfolded in history. This historic event began with the life and preaching of Jesus. The Christian experience is one of a historic community with its origins in a person who is also the model of faith. At this point it should not surprise anyone that Schleiermacher’s ecclesiology comes directly from his Christology. Since Schleiermacher’s Christology begins from addressing a historical Christ, the beginnings of the church must likewise come from this historic event. The new creation, which has its source in the incarnation, immediately manifests itself in a historic community. In *The Christian Faith*, Schleiermacher describes the transition from the incarnation to a community. This

community takes on the God-consciousness of the incarnate Christ, as a logical and natural progression. “The new corporate life is no miracle, but simply the supernatural becoming natural.”\textsuperscript{59}

Since the church is the social expression of faith, it is natural that the Holy Spirit would guide the church, increasing faith in those who hear the gospel message. Schleiermacher states “the Holy Spirit makes itself felt through the Christian Church as the ultimate world-shaping power.”\textsuperscript{60} The mechanism for this world shaping power is through preaching. Schleiermacher remains thoroughly Calvinist with this proclamation. Preaching conveys the image of Christ to the community and from the community to the world. The church becomes the agent of salvation. Contrary to the Catholic notion, the Church is not the agent of salvation because it administers the sacraments. Rather the church is the agent of salvation because it is the collective social unit that proclaims and expounds on scripture. Schleiermacher exalts the role of the church but from a Calvinist Pietist perspective. The influence of Christ, therefore, consists solely in the human communication of the Word, insofar as that communication embodies Christ’s word and continues the indwelling divine power of Christ Himself.

Schleiermacher continues within the Reform vein of Zwingli when he continues in his denial of the efficacy of sacraments in the process of regeneration. The specific claim Schleiermacher makes is removing the link between baptism and regeneration. In \textit{The Christian Faith}, he asserts “baptism of itself produces no inward result, but is only

\textsuperscript{59} Friedrich Schleiermacher, \textit{The Christian Faith}, 365, §88.4.

\textsuperscript{60} Friedrich Schleiermacher, \textit{The Christian Faith}, 737, §169.3.
an external sign of entrance into the Church.”

Schleiermacher, elsewhere in the *Glaubenslehre*, claims that “If, therefore, in spite of infant baptism, sin thus shows its power in them, they need conversion as much as anyone born outside the Church.” He precedes this statement by arguing that some are “baptized in heart alone.” The actual baptism performed by a priest becomes secondary. Schleiermacher is not becoming an Anabaptist, nor a Baptist with these claims. Rather he contends that if the act of baptism itself produced this change then Christianity would degenerate into the realm of magic.

The sacrament is not eliminated from his church and Schleiermacher still does find meaning in the practice of baptism, including baptism of infants. Baptism is still described as “the seal of regeneration,” it is just that this seal is only valid when actual regeneration occurs. Since Schleiermacher believes all will eventually be saved, the act of baptism becomes regeneration only when this is coupled by faith. Baptism does not save, apart from the connection of faith, which will eventually be common to all.

He is equally as skeptical of identifying regeneration with culture, even if this is a Christian culture. Simply because one is born within a culture that has to one degree or another accepted Christianity as a guiding principle, this does not somehow transmute righteousness. Schleiermacher asserts “Less obvious perhaps is this, that the state of grace cannot be inborn, but that even Christian children at birth essentially resemble all

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other sons of Adam.”  Everyone, regardless of their nationality or confession, still needs redemption, and to accept that redemption. Christian children possess an advantage because they should have greater ease in hearing the gospel preached than those who are outside the church.

Schleiermacher asserts that the state has a duty to the Church and vice versa. Of course the view of the state for Schleiermacher comes directly from his Christological presuppositions. Christ did not set up a kingdom, rather he established a network of preachers. The Church owes the state and its people this message. The state, in turn, owes the church the freedom to proclaim the gospel. Other than that no real union exists. Unfortunately a link exists where the church in service to the state becomes little more than bureaucracy. Baptism, instead of a consecration of children to God, becomes the occasion when the state receives them from the church’s hands into their own. Similarly confirmation is not an ecclesial training of Christian, but becomes a beacon to the state advancing the individual towards civil independence. The state co-opts the rites of the church and transforms them into civil obligations. In doing so, neither the church nor the state are properly served.

With this view of the church and sacraments, it may come as a bit of a surprise that Schleiermacher also affirms that salvation can only come in and through the church. “No one, therefore, can be surprised to find at this point the proposition that salvation or blessedness is in the Church alone, and that, since blessedness cannot enter from without, but can be found within the Church only by being brought into existence there, the

Church alone saves.”⁶⁵ The church saves because the church is the global expression of Christianity. The church is the community that is founded upon the uniquely formed God-consciousness. The church also maintains the message of Christ. Explicitly, Schleiermacher affirms that the church is “the fellowship though the influence of which his regeneration was conditioned, and out of which, by preaching in the widest sense of the word, this new life was transmitted to him.”⁶⁶

The church as it is currently constructed often fails to be the fellowship of the regenerate. To explain this failing, Schleiermacher develops the concept of a visible and invisible church. Elements of this idea exist to one extent or another before Schleiermacher. As addressed in chapter four, Wesley believed that there was an invisible church that all Christians belonged to. For Schleiermacher the division is more precise and spelled out. The visible church is the one that is institutionalized and recognizable on earth. The invisible church contains those who are redeemed but may or may not be a part of the earthly institution known as a church. “The invisible Church is everywhere essentially one, while the visible is always involved in separation and division.”⁶⁷ Schleiermacher defines the invisible church as the true church.

The visible church has numerous failings, including exclusion of the members of the true church from the visible church. The visible church also has many members who are not themselves pious, but desire to appear pious. The invisible church cannot be

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extracted from the visible church, for even if the pious leave and establish their own church, the impious may be attracted to them. With this obvious failing of established churches, Schleiermacher returns to the long standing treatment of Pietists as a church within a church. The true Christians cannot become institutionalized as they did in the eighteenth century, rather the true Christianity as expressed by Arndt and Spener must be lived as a part of this world.

There is a second benefit for the regenerate to remain within the established and corrupted visible church. Schleiermacher asserts that “as long as the unregenerate live here in company with the pious, they too experience gleams of blessedness though the God-consciousness latent in them; and these make their presence felt powerfully as preparatory workings of grace.”

The invisible church is the church that saves according to Schleiermacher. While the outward trappings of the visible church may help facilitate regeneration, true regeneration occurs from the community, and the true community is the invisible church. The invisible church remains the same, while always adding members, regardless of the epoch or location it is found in. The visible church exists and serves God, not because it is the source of redemption, but because it makes visible Christ’s reconciliation. The visible church is the historic body of Christ, even though this body does not always belong to Christ, as the members exist at the time they claim to represent Christ. The visible church for Schleiermacher serves a very similar function as Wesley’s “almost Christians” did for him. They perform the acts of Christianity but still need regeneration.

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The visible church contributes to the redemption of individuals in more ways than existing as a corporate body and through the use of sermons, but in the historic development that occurs within the visible church. As stated earlier, Schleiermacher’s ecclesiology is based on his Christology. This Christology is developed through the experiences of the apostles and from them and their teachings the church as it exists today. Doctrine and theology cannot be the starting point for regeneration. Still the use of doctrines, creeds, and dogmas have value within the church, as an expression of the story of redemption. The creeds, doctrines, and theology are developed from the experience of members in the visible church. Again Schleiermacher grounds his theology in Pietism as it is this experience, rather than secular reason or scholasticism that develops correct theology.

This experience, as codified in doctrines and creeds, is the language of piety as understood within the social matrix of the church and the confluence of historic events and challenges. Doctrines, dogmas, and creeds are useful for the invisible church as they relate the experiences of the visible church and the expressions of faith of its earlier members. Doctrines, dogmas, and creeds are even more useful because they are an expression not only of individual scholars, theologians and mystics, but they are collective representations of what the church shared as common.

The doxa that is always produced through any doctrine is exclusionary in its attempt to vocalize an experience. Those who do not possess this experience are excluded, often within the attempt at drawing them into this expression of Christianity. The critics of the church are serving the same function as the clerics who canonize dogmas, the difference is the expression of experience. The heretics experience may be a
genuine experience of the God-consciousness, but it cannot be a replicated experience by the rest of the visible church, therefore it is excluded. Redemption, while believed to be extant in the heretic, is perceived as absent. The heretics “regeneration has been only apparent.”69

Interestingly, some heterodox theology becomes mainstream and even preferential when the experiences of the surrounding culture change. The distinction between heretic and saint, heterodox and hero of the faith, illustrates the division that exists between the visible and invisible church. Schleiermacher maintains the “Visible and the invisible Church… the former is a divided church while the latter is an undivided unity… the latter is infallible.”70 The infallibility of the invisible church can accept the clarification and expression of all who will become and are in the process of becoming the redeemed. As Schleiermacher proclaims, “through the unfolding of Christ’s own God-consciousness, this one God, the creator and preserver of all things, is deemed to be actual among us in the church and thereby in each individual.”71

The division between the visible and invisible church is also the basis for Schleiermacher’s attempt at creating a Protestant Church Union. As mentioned in his biography in the previous chapter, Schleiermacher spent most of his pastoral life as the Reformed clergy to a mixed audience consisting of both Lutheran and Reform communicants. The congregation was divided and the practice of communion was still


divided; more often than not the services were divided. The only thing truly held in common was the church building. While at Chartré and Halle, he proposed an actual union of the Lutheran and Reform congregations into a single united confession. The desire was to overcome the doctrinal differences between Lutheran and Reform and create a single Protestantism. Schleiermacher believed that if these two confessions joined, Anglicanism would follow suit, and he generally did not regard the Radical Reformation as a strand of Protestantism to contend with. Undergirding this opinion held by Schleiermacher was his connection with Pietism. Andrew Stephen Damick expresses a common concern that “Pietism ultimately led to a general feeling that doctrine didn’t matter very much and that the concrete life of the church as a community is of only secondary importance.”

Schleiermacher still maintained that doctrine holds value, but nowhere near the same extent as Protestants did at the eve of the Reformation.

Schleiermacher endorsed any attempt at further reforming the visible church, hoping that these reforms could bring the visible church closer to the invisible church. Many of his reforms placed him at odds with Friedrich Wilhelm III. Schleiermacher’s disagreement with his monarch concerning ecclesial matters and political liberty persuaded the Calvinist to abandon any notions of a theocracy and magisterial involvement in the life of the ecclesia. For most of medieval Europe the three estates performed specific roles in the life of the church. Schleiermacher applied his liberal social politics to the relations that existed in the church. The clergy, the nobility and the

laity each represent different aspects of society, but all are equal within Christ. In his *On Religion* speeches, Schleiermacher admits that these divisions of society exist and even permeate the church, even though they should not. Schleiermacher contends that “When one stands out before the others he is neither justified by office nor by compact; nor is it pride or ignorance that inspires him with assurance. It is the free impulse of his spirit, the feeling of heart-felt unanimity and completest equality, the common abolition of all first and last, of all earthly order.”

Schleiermacher quickly dismantles the theological justification for the second estate’s involvement in the life of the Church. While he maintained a belief in a monarchy, the monarch of the church remains Christ. Since Christ is the true king, the earthly political monarch has no divine calling. Once again this Reform clergyman used Luther’s doctrine of the two kingdoms to further dismantle one of his chief ecclesial-political adversaries. The kingly office can be found in the history of the church, but there always remained a primacy of community, where Christ’s kingly power outweighed the prince. Schleiermacher, in affirming the kingly office of Christ, sets his majesty against earthly kings. As a result of the Christian’s rightful obedience belonging only to Christ, “among believers there is nowhere any lordship other than His alone.” All kings may require a degree of obedience by their subjects, but Christ’s lordship is supreme above all.


The notion of Christ’s lordship superseding the king’s authority does not mean that Schleiermacher believes that the priest supersedes the King. Schleiermacher turns his attention towards the first estate, showing it to be as problematic as the second. Schleiermacher believes the origins of the priesthood have an accidental beginning in history. Early in *The Christian Faith*, Schleiermacher supposes that in early societies a few individuals were marked off as more religious or pious than others. Their extraordinary involvement in spiritual affairs separated them from the larger community as they took on these religious duties for the rest of the community. While this began as an individual assuming these responsibilities, Schleiermacher surmises that the family of the pious became equally involved, thus creating a hereditary priestly class.

Once this class exists in any real form, Schleiermacher doubts that societies could function without a continued distinction between the priests and the laity as two different religious orders. In *On Religion*, Schleiermacher argues that any individual who discovered a talent for piety must “allow himself to be sent back by the true church to lead as a priest.” 75 In both cases societies and individuals create the priestly class and perceive it to be a necessary portion of society.

As an ordained clergyman, Schleiermacher is not entirely opposed to the view that the priests provide a service to the community. Even in his younger theology, as expressed in *On Religion*, Schleiermacher identifies the priestly art as a trade, which like other trades must be cultivated and shared from one craftsman to another. “Wherefore,

what the Christian layman has in less perfection than the theologian and which manifestly is a knowledge is not religion itself, but something appended to it.”

At the same time Schleiermacher transforms the priesthood from a hereditary position or a private calling by the Almighty into a skilled trade like any other, just like the carpenter does not have a special calling to his craft, but only a developed skill that they may train others in. In this way Schleiermacher works to dismantle the priesthood, or at least to bring it down from the pulpit and place it within the congregation. He professes, “According to the principles of the true church, the mission of a priest in the world is a private business, and the temple should also be a private chamber where he lifts up his voice to give utterance to religion. Let there be an assembly before him and not a congregation. Let him be a speaker for all who will hear, but not a shepherd for a definite flock.”

In this way the priest is necessary, but not the priesthood as it existed at the time. The divisions between the priest and the laity began to erode. The priest shared from his understanding of the gospel and his experiences of the divine. The content of Schleiermacher’s sermons only partly express this same perspective. While Schleiermacher’s sermons connected the congregation to experiences of God, rarely were they his private experiences. Rather they were nearly exclusively experiences common to the congregation. Schleiermacher valued the preacher more than the priest. Just like Calvin, the sermon remained the pinnacle of the Church service. It was in the sermon


that the congregation grew closer to God. It was from the sermon that Schleiermacher expected his congregation to experience God, and his Pietism was manifest.

Contrary to modern revival sermons, Schleiermacher never intended to spark a conversion. Rather he assumed that a conversion had already occurred. The job of the preacher is not to reduce the sermon to the level that is only of any benefit to the unbeliever, rather the sermon should edify and grow the Christians in the congregation, or at least to “approximate to the ideal.” The gospel must be clear, and if it is, then the believer is edified and the unbeliever will hear the sermon as a call to repentance, even though one is not explicitly given. In a New Year’s sermon, Schleiermacher affirms that “Belief comes through preaching; that is the natural way, and so it was natural that initial belief in Jesus came from John’s preaching.”

Schleiermacher’s notion of ecclesiology is also present in his sermons. Upholding the priesthood of all believers, the preacher is both a minister and ministered to by the congregation. “All Christians offer the Word of God to one another.” As such, even in a large overflowing church the congregation is intimate, members are “friends” and “beloved” and the relationship is personal rather than formal.

Schleiermacher believed that the sermon itself was the embodiment of a Christian art form. The sermon needed to be sufficiently long, but not too long. Schleiermacher believed that half an hour was too short, and an hour too long. With this in mind it is not

78 Friedrich Schleiermacher, Servant of the Word: Selected Sermons of Friedrich Schleiermacher, 6.

79 Friedrich Schleiermacher, Fifteen Sermons of Friedrich Schleiermacher Delivered to Celebrate the Beginning of a New Year, 144.

80 Friedrich Schleiermacher, Servant of the Word: Selected Sermons of Friedrich Schleiermacher, 7.
surprising to find that most of his sermons when read aloud take about forty to fifty minuets. Schleiermacher continued his practice of preaching without writing them out in advance. By the time he began preaching in Berlin, not even the introduction was penned. Schleiermacher’s extemporaneous preaching astonished his audience. Schleiermacher wrote out several sermons after he delivered them, and many others are reconstructed from the notes of his audience. Due to his popularity, the sermons were gathered and published, often without his knowledge or consent.

Following Schleiermacher’s developed ecclesiology, the priest is only a preacher. For Schleiermacher there is only one king and only one priest, Christ. He simply states, Christ “is also the end of all priesthood.”81 Schleiermacher couches this discussion of the priesthood in his reading of early church history. He argues that “Even the Apostles never claim for themselves anything that can properly be called priestly, so that the revival of the priesthood in the Church must be viewed as one of the greatest misapprehensions.”82

Schleiermacher eliminates any salvific power on the actions of the Apostles or any clergy. Christ’s appearance in the world signaled an end to the distinction between the holy and human. Humanity is saved, not through the intercession or acts of a priest as a special class of people, rather humanity is saved through “the priestly intercession of Christ.”83

83 Friedrich Schleiermacher, The Christian Faith, 491, §108.5.
Following Christ’s incarnation, no distinction can remain that separates the clergy from the laity. In this Schleiermacher echoes Zinzendorf and Wesley and promotes the laity within nineteenth-century Pietism. Schleiermacher proclaimed, “Every man is a priest, in so far as he draws others to himself in the field he has made his own and can show himself master in; every man is a layman, in so far as he follows the skill and direction of another in the religious matters with which he is less familiar.”\(^84\) Going back to his anthropology of the early priesthood, Schleiermacher identified the priest as a member of the laity whose vocation is piety. The pious experiences of the clergy serve as the reason for their position. Once these experiences are transformed from the individual to the collective, the distinction between priests and laity fades. To this extent Schleiermacher argued, “the distinction between priests and laity is only to serve the occasion and cannot be permanent.”\(^85\)

The key mechanism for increasing the piety of the laity to the level of piety found in the priest is to support the reading of scripture. Once society advanced to the point of universal literacy, the privileged God-consciousness as it exists among the ordained class evaporated, and it spread among the entire community like a refreshing rain. From this position, the laity are “simply those who by them have been formed to piety, and who therefore stand under continual spiritual guidance, while the highest triumph is for some to become capable of reception into that closer sphere of the religious life.”\(^86\) The

\(^{84}\) Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 153

\(^{85}\) Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 206

\(^{86}\) Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, 194
guidance of priests is not an authority, other than the authority a craftsman has over the tools of the trade.

Following Schleiermacher contribution to the Pietists tradition of Zinzendorf, the laity are equal in all respects to the clergy, except training. The laity share in the same essential responsibility as the clergy. This responsibility is in sharing their experience of the divine with the community that surrounds them. The communal sharing of personal experience of God is not only the duty of the priest, but of every Christian. It is also the essence of religion as the transformative power that brings people together.

No discussion of Schleiermacher’s view of the church and the laity would be complete without an examination of his views of women. While Zinzendorf and Wesley both initiated practices that promoted the possibility of female ordination, Schleiermacher does not take any real steps in that direction. Schleiermacher believed that Christian women needed to exercise their control in the public sphere through their husbands.

Yet the role of women and religion for Schleiermacher is not so clear cut as to assume that women possess no spiritual vocation. The spiritual vocation of women in Schleiermacher’s theology begins with his *Christmas Eve Dialogue*. In the *Dialogue*, he proclaims very few doctrines, nor does he speak on dogmatic issues in a direct fashion as he does in *The Christian Faith*. Instead the work serves as a discussion which provides for multiple interpretations, depending on which of the characters are held up by examples. One of the characters in the *Dialogue*, Edward, states essentially this, saying “Particular events are only the passing notes for music. Its true content is the great chords of our mind and heart, which marvelously and with the most varied voices ever resolve themselves into the same harmony, in which only the major and minor keys are to
be distinguished, only the masculine and the feminine.”⁸⁷ Schleiermacher further promotes the idea that women’s predominant religious personality is feeling rather than cognition. While this is often used to denigrate women, Schleiermacher intends no offense. Since his definition of religion is a feeling of absolute dependence, women’s natural inclination towards feeling only lends to a greater ease for women to experience the life of faith that Schleiermacher calls for.

The work also serves to illustrate the irony of typical gender roles. One of the few children included, Sophie, rejects the common female activities and is still characterized as angelic and good. Schleiermacher maintains a distinction between male and female vocations and temperaments, but the purpose behind the work is not to subordinate the male nor the female, rather to express different modes of experience. Still, Schleiermacher’s ecclesiology recognizes only men as priests, even in their diminished role. Women’s primary contribution in religion is to take place at home, once again characterizing men and women’s modes of religious expression as two distinct voices. Religion largely remains rooted in the family. Schleiermacher maintains that women’s expression of their religious feelings rightly belongs at home because of the methods of expression. The feminine voice is loudest when internalizing these feelings, and men need to express them externally to process and share before the experience can be properly internalized.

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Schleiermacher also valued women’s contribution to the religious life at home. As exemplified by his own marriage and family life, Schleiermacher assumes that “The feeling of being the housewife, who takes care of the whole household, and who may arrange everything according to her own will and pleasure, is, I think, always precious to a woman, and I also value it very much, and am proud of the dignity.” Schleiermacher found dignity and not denigration in the vocation he assigned to women. Reading his letters presents a Schleiermacher who is a great admirer of women. His admiration extended far beyond his wife. From his childhood, his sister Lotte was his confidant. Following this, Schleiermacher’s doomed romantic desires for Count Dohna’s daughter Frederike and Eleanor Grunow were both born out of admiration rather than lust. Schleiermacher also retained a lifelong friendship with Henriette Herz, whose salon he was engaged with during his earlier stay in Berlin.

This fondness toward women extended to the point that in a letter to his sister Schleiermacher proclaimed, “Therefore if I ever find myself sportively indulging in an impossible wish, it is, that I were a woman.” He believed that women’s intuition was a religious intuition. In a separate letter to his sister he states “It lies very deep in my nature, dear Lottie, that I am always more closely attached to women than to men, for there is so much in my soul that men seldom understand.”


women is greatly influenced by the early Romantic circles he was a part of. It is rather easy to read Goethe’s influence when he elevates the feminine as the redeemer in *Faust.* “Virgin, beautifully pure, Venerable mother, our chosen queen through art, Peer of gods, no other! Clouds form a garland around her splendor Penitent women, People so tender, Her knees embrace, Drinking the ether, Asking her grace.”

**Schleiermacher’s Philosophical Contributions**

*“The communication of a single distinct science cannot have any proper starting-point.”*

In addition to Schleiermacher’s rather impressive life and theology, Schleiermacher engaged in philosophical matters of the day. From his time engaging with other students reading Kant at Barby, Schleiermacher believed that philosophy and religion were not as distinct of disciplines as they had become for others in the nineteenth century. After all, the history of philosophy is intimately tied with interpretations and extrapolations from prominent theologians. He engaged in and contributed to philosophical disciplines in three key areas, his interpretation of Plato, his development of hermeneutics, and his discussions on ethics.

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Plato.

“In all the mythical representations of the divine Plato and his followers, which you would acknowledge rather as religious than as scientific, we perceive how beautifully that mystical self-contemplation mounts to the highest pinnacle of divineness and humanness.”\(^9\)

Following Kant and beginning with his involvement in the Romantic circles of the Herz salon, Schleiermacher’s new philosophy was guided by his readings and translation of Plato. Schleiermacher had not intended on devoting a large portion of his life to translating Plato. Rather the idea came from Schlegel. Schlegel believed that a German translation of Plato would be a glorious feat and “no one could do it better than we two.”\(^9\) Schlegel’s enthusiasm was infectious, writing to Schleiermacher, “Plato will bind you much closer and much more lastingly than Homer.”\(^9\) The two planned together to translate the entire corpus of Plato.

Very quickly Schleiermacher discovered that Schlegel’s enthusiasm was fleeting, and the infectious enthusiasm resulted in an infectious burden for Schleiermacher. By December of 1801 Schleiermacher was reluctantly deciding that the joint project needed to proceed independently rather than collectively for a period of time. That following year, in a letter to Henrietta Herz, Schleiermacher begins to grumble about Schlegel’s contributions, or lack thereof. Schlegel began the venture by already having a publisher


\[^9\] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Life Of Schleiermacher, As Unfolded In His Autobiography And Letters*. Translated by Fredessica Rowan Vol. 1. 2 vols, 210, Potsdam, 20th April, 1799.

lined up, but this was falling apart. Sorrowfully Schleiermacher wrote, “for if Schlegel again plays him false, and he gives up Plato in consequence, then farewell to my delightful project of paying a part of my debt, at least this year, and I shall be badly off indeed. For though I will in that case stir heaven and earth to find for myself alone a publisher for Plato, even under the most favorable circumstances at least half a year will be lost. It would be unpardonable in Friedrich, but I almost expect it.”96 The once close friendship was tearing itself apart.

One year later Schleiermacher resolved to continue without Schlegel once and for all. This time in a letter to Eleanor Grunow, he stated “I have again taken a new obligation upon myself to continue alone the translation of Plato, Schlegel having left me in the lurch.”97 It was probably for the best that the union was dissolved, because Schleiermacher and Schlegel differed on how the work should proceed. While both believed that a degree of artistic license could be taken to express Plato’s thought, they differed as to how to best interpret Plato’s thoughts. Schlegel understood Plato to be ironic with his proclamations. Schleiermacher believed that “such an approach would produce only fragments and inconsistencies, not argument.”98 This would be inconsistent for the philosopher.


As the years went by, Schleiermacher remained true to his project, but it grew heavy on him sighing “Plato is not good morning reading.”\textsuperscript{99} Still he persevered, believing that this translation would be his notable contribution to society. It should come as no surprise that this is one of his least known works, well behind \textit{The Christian Faith}, \textit{On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured Despisers}, and \textit{The Christmas Eve Dialogue}, let alone his preaching and pedagogical contributions. By 1803, he believed that once the work was done he would be free to die. He expressed this in a letter to Henrietta Heiz “Can you not conceive that this has confirmed me very much in the idea which has taken strong possession of me, that I shall die as soon as Plato is completed? For this is a debt which I have taken upon myself, and which I must first pay.”\textsuperscript{100}

The first volume of \textit{Platons Werke} or \textit{Plato’s Works}, was to be published in 1804. The works consisted of six volumes. The first five were published before 1809. The sixth was not published until 1824, a decade before his death. Schleiermacher remained true to the original vision he had of the work, it is not simply a repetition or a word for word translation. Schleiermacher believed Plato was an artist as well as a philosopher, and to best interpret his works, he had to get in the mind of the artist. While not dripping with the snark and sarcasm that Schlegel thought was necessary in the piece, it was still a modern interpretation. Schleiermacher viewed Plato as a Romantic and the work illustrates both Schleiermacher’s Romantic world and this interpretation of Plato. The

\textsuperscript{99} Friedrich Schleiermacher, \textit{The Life of Schleiermacher As Unfolded In His Autobiography And Letters}, 11, Schleiermacher to E. and II. von Willich. [ccxxni.] 6th January, 1805.

\textsuperscript{100} Friedrich Schleiermacher, \textit{The Life Of Schleiermacher, As Unfolded In His Autobiography And Letters}. Translated by Fredessica Rowan. Vol. 1. 2 vols, 367, Schleiermacher to Henrietta Heiz. Stolpe, 7th December, 1803.
philologist August Bockh wrote that “no one has so fully understood Plato and has taught others to understand Plato as this man.”101 While modern and Romantic, the work remains authoritative and at least to a degree an accurate translation.

By the time of the works initial publication, Schleiermacher was already a national figure. On Religion and The Soliloquies were published four years earlier. The work gave Schleiermacher some acclaim, but it will not be his lasting contribution. The painstaking work of translation was not a waste of time though. Schleiermacher grew to a level of familiarity with Plato that few others could. Through the translating process, he also wrote “Plato is undeniably the writer whom of all others I know best, and with whom I have almost grown into one.”102

Plato shaped Schleiermacher’s view of man. Schleiermacher’s perceptions of man were wrapped up in the philosophy of Plato and the theology of Irenaeus. Schleiermacher’s views of God and ecclesiology were also consumed with Plato. Writing to Eleanor Grunow, Schleiermacher said, “As a general rule, I think Plato undoubtedly the best teacher of the art of catechization; in particular instances a woman would be so, for women are ever our best teachers in cases requiring presence of mind and quick judgment.”103


Hermeneutics.

"Hermeneutics and criticism, both philological disciplines, both theories belong together, because the practice of one presupposes the other."104

Plato also had another lasting influence on Schleiermacher’s legacy. Schleiermacher’s later development of hermeneutics grew out of his translation of Plato, with the same lessons he applied to any historical text. Before he could even venture to begin translating Plato, two things needed to be established. The first prerequisite for this endeavor was not directly tied to the material itself. In his introduction to Plato’s Works, Schleiermacher tells his readers that the translator needed knowledge not only of the Greek language, but also a knowledge of Greek history. Only after this knowledge was complete could the translation begin.

This brings us to the second prerequisite for translation, the works themselves. With such a large number of works accredited to Plato, many of which are likely other philosophers, Schleiermacher first attempts to determine which works truly belonged to Plato and which ones did not. He did so impiously. Knowing that other works of Plato were written that could help fill in the gaps of the Platonic corpus, he scolded others saying “to lament over some lost treasure or to search in desperation for some hidden truth. Plato’s extant writings are all we have and all we really need to have.”105 Once the


authentic works were gathered together, Schleiermacher arranged them. This basic understanding of Plato shaped the discipline and practice of hermeneutics.

Possibly Schleiermacher’s greatest contribution to philosophy was his creation of the discipline of hermeneutics. Like Plato, the task of constructing the discipline of hermeneutics was not a single task, but something that he worked on most of his life. The creation of this new discipline was a natural outgrowth of his work on Plato, but its applications are well beyond a philosophical or theological work. The project began with his professorship at the University of Halle in 1805. Schleiermacher, in his work *Hermeneutics and Criticism*, opens by describing hermeneutics as “the art of understanding,” continuing that this art form is still not fully formed.

Schleiermacher’s understanding of hermeneutics is connected with his interpretation of history. History is not primarily about bare events in space and time. History is about human decisions, motives and feelings within those events. Hermeneutics is the attempt at understanding history not as a series of events but the causes of events. Schleiermacher continues his definition of hermeneutics by connecting it with historical criticism. “The former is generally the art of understanding particularly the written discourse of another person correctly, the latter the art of judging correctly and establishing the authenticity of texts and parts of texts from adequate evidence and data.” In connecting hermeneutics to historical criticism, Schleiermacher has an ally in William Perkins, who was also willing


107 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, 3, §1.

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to place the Bible within a living tradition. Both Schleiermacher and Perkins sought to understand scripture by looking at the context of its formation, although Perkins had a greater faith that God guided the development of scripture.

Hermeneutics seeks to go beyond simply understanding what the author said, “to understand the utterance at first just as well and then better than its author.”\(^{108}\) To do this the scholar must first understand the language and history that existed for their subject. This was the same step Schleiermacher undertook with his translation of Plato. Once the scholar possesses adequate historical and linguistic knowledge of their subject, they must then place themselves inside the mind of their subject to the best of their ability. This is one reason why every scholar of Schleiermacher contends that his own biography is necessary to understand his theological and philosophical systems.

The aim of hermeneutics is knowledge. The surest way to understand history is through the use of language that was put in service to describe the events. Speech serves as the mediation of the individual and the communal life they are engaged in. Speech is also the mediation between the individual and their own thoughts. “Thought is prepared by inner discourse, and to this extent discourse is only the thought itself which has come into existence.”\(^{109}\) The task of hermeneutics is therefore the inversion of the speech act. The scholar’s duty is understanding not only what words mean, but also why those words were selected as opposed to others. Because language is infinite, the intuition of the individual who gives rise to language is equally infinite in their decision making.

\(^{108}\) Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, 23.

\(^{109}\) Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, 7.
Still limits exist. Language and the construction and use may be restricted, but
history and culture prescribe meanings to the linguistic utterances. As Schleiermacher
and Claude Levi-Strauss point out, for noises to become words, they must be received
and understood. Levi-Strauss, a century later, argues that the same process of
understanding for words applies to all noises, including the formulation of music. “In
both cases a certain type of structure external to the subject sets in motion a psycho-
physiological mechanism, the springs of which have been tensed in advance.”
Levi-Strauss places this on the structure which surrounds the utterance. Schleiermacher
conversely focuses on the choice of the individual in constructing a sentence, that will
either be received or not.

Schleiermacher argues that the corporate understanding of words fits within a
continuum. The choice of words must fall along some point within this continuum. At
one extreme lie the words that are most productive. These words are easily understood
and common to most of society. This pole is known as the classical. On the other side
are words that hold meaning to a select few, or possibly only the one who speaks them.
This other pole is known as the original. Between these two poles is the thought of the
individual. Language, and the choice of language becomes the production of thought for
Schleiermacher.

Because not all audiences are the same, the individual must choose between the
original and classical with their construction of an idea. Schleiermacher, like everyone,

110 Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Structuralism and Myth." The Kenyon Review (Kenyon College 3, no. 2 Spring
1981), 73.
exemplified a wide variety of linguistic styles. His private letters differed widely from his published works, and from his theological texts. Even when the subject was the same, the different audiences naturally resulted in a different choice of words.

Schleiermacher’s dual professions of pastor and professor both focused on the same subject, the knowledge of God. Still the language used in his classroom lectures was different than the language he used when addressing his congregations. This distinction is taken for granted, but it is also often overlooked by scholars when they present a historical text. The audience matters just as much as does the author. The use of original and classical language differs depending on who is hearing it.

As the audience is not always known, interpretations are likely to err. Schleiermacher uses the example of describing an animal. In his descriptions based upon a set background knowledge, he mistakenly sees a horse as a cow. The image itself is true but the interpretation of the image is false, or less than true. With this example, Schleiermacher concedes that the task of the hermeneuticist is often an incomplete one. One may present the facts, but they are still the facts as interrupted by another. Even the object of investigation may themselves be in error in what they are describing, only making the task more difficult.

This is why, as he stated in the beginning, Schleiermacher always links the discipline of hermeneutics with the task of criticism. Schleiermacher concludes “In no domain is there a complete knowledge, except together with the grasping of the living history of knowledge at all times and in all places which is taken as a whole in its
complete extent by this critical procedure. And there is no history of knowledge without its living construction.”\footnote{Friedrich Schleiermacher, \textit{Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings}, 279.}

**Ethics.**

\textit{“The object of the doctrine of virtue is not directly the totality of reason against the totality of nature, but reason in the human individual.”}\footnote{Friedrich Schleiermacher, \textit{Lectures on Philosophical Ethics} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 100.}

Schleiermacher’s final contribution to philosophy lies within his development of ethics. Schleiermacher’s ethics begin by rejecting the ethical system of Kant and other empiricists. This development grows from his initial rejection of Kant and Kant’s placement of religion solely in the ethical sphere. Schleiermacher opposed not only the Kantian limit of religion to ethics, but the character of Kant’s larger ethical system. Schleiermacher rejected the system of imperatives that Kant requires of all humanity. While Kant constructed his ethical system to best govern social interactions, Schleiermacher found the consequence of Kant to be focused on the individual rather than the individual’s relation to and operation in a larger society.

Schleiermacher’s construction of his ethical system is based not on morality itself, rather on social life. Ethics is connected with Aristotelian physics. For Aristotle, physics was the science of nature and the natural world. Individuals relate not only one to another, but also to their environment, both natural and constructed. In this way, Schleiermacher’s ethics is related to but distinct from his notions of hermeneutics.
Hermeneutics focuses on the history and development of ideas, and the translation of those into a current social milieu. Ethics is derived from the same history and attempts to relate the ideas of that history to the current society, just as hermeneutics does. The difference is that ethics is the product of this engagement and the current modes of grasping the world as it develops.

Schleiermacher, in his lectures on ethics, defines all ethical knowledge as “the expression of reason becoming nature, a process which has already always begun but is never complete”\(^{113}\) Humanity naturally produces a system of reasonableness. This level of reasonableness is then set against the nature they find themselves in. The construction of ethical systems is the product of expectation and reality colliding. “Ethics must therefore encompass and catalog all truly human action.”\(^{114}\)

Ethics are therefore based on the construction of community and social interactions. Individuals determine if an action is appropriate or not, as Kant demands. Schleiermacher’s ethical system goes one step farther than this. For Schleiermacher, ethics are not produced by the individual, rather ethics emerges as the individual with their determinations interacts with others. Once the other is engaged, a community is constructed. Things do not remain appropriate in only one particular way, rather it is about the appropriation becoming community. Therefore Schleiermacher concludes “All community must be appropriation. Not merely enjoyment.”\(^{115}\)


\(^{114}\) Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Lectures on Philosophical Ethics*, 4, §12.

\(^{115}\) Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Lectures on Philosophical Ethics*, 242, §55.5.
The first construction of community is the family unit. From here the state is constructed. Families produces folk traditions and larger social organizations and these result in the formation of a state. Alongside the development of the state is the development of the church. The church possesses an interesting dilemma for Schleiermacher. He argues “The church is a particularity of the state of excitation and of depiction because in fact the highest level of feeling is religious feeling and also the summit of all art is also religious art. It is hardest to determine in what way it is conditioned by nature.” Religion therefore is the universal expression of the individual. The community identified within religion is not identical with the state community nor the family structure, but is a product of individual experience as then interpreted and shaped by the family and state communities.

Schleiermacher’s definition of ethics up to this point is largely theoretical and grounded in community formation rather than application of any ethical ideals. Schleiermacher’s ethics move from the notion of community building into the application of the formed community. For Schleiermacher, this is the realm of theology. Karl Barth describes Schleiermacher’s ethics as “the concept of piety, and the pious fellowship, and in it theology finds the spectacles, as it were, to see and understand its theme.” Theology is simply applied ethics, since the largest and most impactful community is the church. Theology as applied ethics has elements of science, history, and practical applications.

116 Friedrich Schleiermacher, Lectures on Philosophical Ethics, 25, §69.
117 Karl Barth, The Theology of Schleiermacher, 172.
Theology is described as “a positive science,” the parts of which fit together into a single expression of a common faith, a shared God-consciousness. Schleiermacher links linguistic unity as the basis for shared experience, stating “Objective knowledge becomes external through speech.” This speech is the basis and function of doctrines and dogmas. As mentioned earlier, the purpose of dogmas and doctrines is to express the shared and sharable experiences of God-consciousness within a community. There theology, as all sciences, pursues an attempt at verifiable truth. The truth found within theology is the same as all other aspects of science, namely it consists of experience. This experience address controversies and places limits on what can be verified and encouraged by the larger community.

Theology is also historical. With this basic supposition, theology is just one example of the unfolding history. Schleiermacher applies his notion of history to societies in general and Christianity specifically. “The career of Christianity can also be treated in two ways: (a) as a single period within one branch of religious development, but also (b) as a particular historical whole, which arises as something new and which pursues its own separate course in a series of periods divided by epochs.” Schleiermacher identifies three epochs that each can be addressed in their own light. “The knowledge of primitive Christianity, the knowledge of the total career of


119 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Lectures on Philosophical Ethics*, 22, §44.

120 Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology*, 43 §79.
Christianity, and the knowledge of the state of Christianity at the present time.”

Therefore historical theology divides itself into periods of expansion, evolution, and adaptation to the external history which it encounters.

While Schleiermacher is inevitably linked to modern theology and its interaction with the state, he is personally interested in primitive Christianity. Schleiermacher’s interest in primitive Christianity is based on the connection between philosophical theology and practical theology. For him, primitive Christianity “ought always to be the first stage in one's study, and the knowledge of the present time, as constituting the direct transition to practical theology, ought to be the final stage.”

Modern theology is primarily concerned with practical rather than theoretical or historical concerns. All forms of ministry are the implementation of theology. The ministers concerns are in applying theology, which is the applied ethics. In doing so, the preacher communicates and mediates the scientific and historical aspects of Christianity. Theology is practical because it concerns people in their daily lives and mediates between a wider society and the individual. Learning theology only provides a basis of decision making; it is not itself making the right decision. Just as Schleiermacher expressed in On Religion, an increase in knowledge does not necessarily relate to an increase in piety. In the same way, a development of theology, as an application of ethics, does not make one inherently more ethical.

121 Friedrich Schleiermacher, Brief Outline on the Study of Theology, 45 §85.

122 Friedrich Schleiermacher, Brief Outline on the Study of Theology, 45 §85.
Within Schleiermacher’s system, it follows that the source of theology, God, is found in action and language, rather than in systems and rational speculation. As such, the concern of theology is not God’s internal nature, rather it is how God has been revealed through history. Once again Schleiermacher’s theological and philosophical systems are based upon his Christology. Christ’s incarnation created a historical community, known as the church. The experiences of the church, that is, of both the visible and invisible church, are based upon an understanding of the God-consciousness as imparted by Christ to this very community and the establishment of a new community, a new creation.

Schleiermacher as a Model of Nineteenth-Century Pietism

“The thought that nothing new happens under the sun is the most natural expression of how the world appears to the eye of one who is looking for the Lord everywhere in the world.”

Pietism, like any other movement, is one that is always in a state of flux. Throughout the eighteenth century, the institutionalized forms of Pietism robbed the movement of its true identity. Throughout the nineteenth century, there were many Pietist schools founded by Francke, Zinzendorf, Wesley and others, but each of these schools outgrew their initial purpose. That purpose was to emphasize experiential Christianity over rationalism and orthodoxy. These schools each created their own systems of orthodoxy and reacted to the different strands of rationalism, incorporating

123 Friedrich Schleiermacher, Fifteen Sermons of Friedrich Schleiermacher Delivered to Celebrate the Beginning of a New Year, 65.
some aspects and rejecting others. In their institutionalized forms, these schools increasingly sought to preserve their privileged system rather than the mission.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century Schleiermacher found himself competing with many other voices arguing for the future of Pietism. Most of these voices sought the preservation of their newly formed and codified systems of theology rather than the promotion of experiential Protestantism. This is why Schleiermacher called himself a Moravian of a higher order. The rank and file Moravians lost what it meant to be Pietists. Their systems promoted new schools in order to combat Frederick II and the Enlightenment on the terms of the Enlightenment without truly understanding their opponent.

Most of these schools and their graduates could not be defined as Pietists by my definition. They were no longer a quasi-mystical experiential revivalist movement, found within Lutheran, Reform, and Anglican Protestantism of every age, which seeks to understand and rework their world, both inside and outside of themselves along lines of personally meaningful relationship between themselves as individuals and God, while maintaining a general antipathy or outright hostility to the greater Christian culture and religious formalism which dictates that culture’s norms and practices. It is of little wonder why some believe that Pietism was dead by the conclusion of the eighteenth century.

It is from this ossified structure once called Pietism that Schleiermacher emerged. While Schleiermacher did not set out to mold Pietism in a new direction, this is what he did. It should come as no surprise that Schleiermacher did not concern himself with the standard Pietist critiques of the later eighteenth and early nineteenth-century Pietists.
Prussian Pietists, as well as English Puritans had long attacked the use of novels. Reading them was described as time “wasted and lost for eternity.” Schleiermacher took a rather different tact towards popular literature and even stood up for Schlegel’s *Lucinde*, a work that his contemporaries characterized as pornography.

Schleiermacher also spent no time protesting the theater. The theater was just as bad as novels, or worse in the eyes of many Pietists, including Phoebe Palmer. Like novels, they stirred the passions, and distracted the faithful from their task of salvation. In Halle, the anti-stage crowd was so successful that they suppressed performances in the city between 1700 and 1745. In no work does Schleiermacher condemn actors. Schleiermacher was rather libertine with his treatment of these “perverse” social practices. Likely his time at the Moravian schools of Niesky and Barby led to a softening of views rather than reinforcing the Pietist morality. Since he lacked the freedom to read Goethe and Kant, Schleiermacher undoubtedly viewed these other restrictions as equally capricious.

When Schleiermacher had his opportunity to directly found a university, he did not place the sort of restrictive demands on his students like he had at Niesky. Francke and Wesley likely would have disapproved of Schleiermacher, since their pedagogical programs reduced leisure time for students, including the elimination of playing and laughter. Schleiermacher’s contribution to the Pietist edifice required the removal of these ethical burs that appeared so very important to his predecessors.

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A greater divide between the institutional Pietists and Schleiermacher is evidenced with the events surrounding the Berlin Awakening of 1817. The Awakening was started by Pietists in Berlin and spread across northern Germany. These “awakened Christians” emphasized the emotional character of their faith and the transition from a nominal Christianity to a new awakened awareness akin to the born again experience of Francke and the revivals of Wesley and later Holiness Movement. The Berlin Awakening was the greatest success of the institutionalized Pietists in nineteenth-century Europe. Many social and political elites participated in the revival, but it is conspicuously absent from Schleiermacher’s letters. The only possible mention was in a letter to his sister that he and “an old fellow student from Barby… intended to go to a meeting”\(^1\) It is also quite possible and even likely that this meeting had nothing to do with the Awakening. Many of the figures connected to the Awakening were colleagues of Schleiermacher’s at the university, including Friedrich Karl von Savigny (d. 1861). Since his colleagues were involved to some degree or another with the Awakening, Schleiermacher was surely aware of it.

It is possible that Schleiermacher remained an outsider to the unfolding events in Berlin since his theological approach to piety was not the same as many of its participants. von Savigny, along with another figure in the Awakening, Moritz August von Bethmann-Hollweg (d. 1877), preferred other Pietist preachers synthesis of Pietism and Enlightenment rationalism. They both preferred Justus Gottfried Hermes. (d. 1818),

\(^1\) Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Life of Schleiermacher As Unfolded In His Autobiography And Letters* (General Books, 2009), 205, August 1817.
Bethmann-Hollweg described Hermes as “a more convincing man of prayer than Schleiermacher.” von Savigny also had Hermes baptize his children, instead of Schleiermacher.

Other depictions of the Awakening characterize the movement as more conservative, or at least a conservative Pietism. It’s possible the revival was simply reviving the Pietism that Schleiermacher rejected, therefore his liberal theology and their conservative theology were at odds, but not to the point that a direct confrontation was forthcoming. Schleiermacher also made no mention of the German Catholic revivals that took place during his later years. The absence of these revivals from Schleiermacher’s autobiography and letters has a few potential causes. It is possible that the reports of the widespread Awakening are exaggerated in later accounts. It is also possible that these events were a flash in the pan. They were important enough for some to notice, but the impact was not lasting enough for someone like Schleiermacher to generate a response. David Blackbourn points out that throughout the nineteenth century, “Pietism was socially as well as geographically limited in its appeal.”

It is likely that Schleiermacher chose not to engage in movements other than his own. Schleiermacher’s entire career, both as a pastor and as a theologian, was focused on separating himself from established Pietism. In separating himself from Pietism, Schleiermacher once again reinforces the habitus of Pietism. The habitus of Pietism was that as an experiential outsider. The only way to remain an outsider is to reject the


institution. Just as Hanafi and Styers point out, the nineteenth century witnessed the
creation of communal identity. Styers illustrated that “A condition of modernity
presupposes an act of self-conscious distancing.”\(^{128}\) To engage in modernity while
simultaneously reaffirming his religious identity, Schleiermacher creates a modern
Pietism. This is not simply an updated version of Pietism. Schleiermacher rejects much
of what is called Pietism during his day. He, like many others, characterizes the aim of
nineteenth-century Pietism to be on the state and society rather than the divine. Instead,
Schleiermacher created a new system, one that at its core is thoroughly Pietist, because it
emphasizes experience over rationalism and dogmatic orthodoxy.

In his rejection of institutional Pietism, Schleiermacher founded a new movement,
often called modern liberal Protestantism. Schleiermacher himself was never a part of
this movement. It is accurate to say, as many have, “Schleiermacher had no children only
grandchildren.” He didn’t pass a movement off to any direct set of followers. There is
not a recognizable school of theology that bears his name, but the impact Schleiermacher
had upon Protestant theology is unmistakable. In his attempt to remake Pietism,
Schleiermacher’s theology produced modern liberal Protestantism. While I will get more
into detail about modern liberal Protestantism in chapter twelve, a definition is still fitting
here. Modern liberal Protestantism grew out of Schleiermacher’s *The Christian Faith.*
There are two essential pillars to this ideological movement. The first addresses the

origins of Christianity. The second redefines what essential Christian doctrine is. It is a reevaluation of standard Christian theology.

_The Christian Faith_, and the system it created, drew heavy fire for its theological assumptions. So much so that Schleiermacher chose to write his own defense of the work. The defense was in two letters to a friend of his, Dr. Lücke. Today it is commonly known as _On The Glaubenslehre_. Very early on, in his first letter, Schleiermacher tells Dr. Lücke “If I had written my book with the intention of founding a sect or school, then I could have opponents. But I know that I had no such thing in mind.” Unfortunately for Schleiermacher the criticism from opponents of modern liberal Protestantism still came. They directed their criticism not at the movement, but at Schleiermacher, its unintentional founder. Throughout the work Schleiermacher characterizes their critiques as mischaracterizations. Schleiermacher was troubled by what he believed was falsehoods about his beliefs, just like the critics were troubled by Schleiermacher.

Throughout all of his theology, Schleiermacher could still be identified with the phrase he penned to his father. Schleiermacher remained “a Moravian of a higher order.” At the heart of Schleiermacher’s claim was his insistence that religion is essentially experiential. Furthermore this experience was found in the realm of feeling. By locating the experience of the Christian in the realm of feeling, Schleiermacher reinterpreted or contradicted many earlier Pietists. Earlier Pietists, while grounding religion in experience, did not agree as to the relationship of feelings to these divine experiences.

129 Friedrich D.E. Schleiermacher, _On The Glaubenslehre_, 34.
William Perkins warned “that feeling must not be made the touchstone of religious experience, for in the last analysis ‘religion doth not stand in feeling but in faith.’” While Perkins influence within English Pietism is unmistakable, Schleiermacher rejects his interpretation of faith and feeling. Following his engagement with the Enlightenment and Romanticism, Schleiermacher’s understanding of thought and feeling adjusted. While Perkins warned against feeling, Schleiermacher elevated it to the very heart of religion. Perkins understood feeling and faith as two separate impulses, Schleiermacher saw them as one and the same.

Contrary to Perkins belief that feeling and faith were two separate things entirely, Spener believed that one could have a feeling of faith. Still, Spener’s view of faith and feeling is a lot closer to Perkins than it is to Schleiermacher. Spener never wanted to “make faith itself dependent on the feeling of faith.” Franke prioritized assurances of salvation more than Spener. As a result, Franke prioritized feelings more than Spener. Feelings of intimacy with God assured the Christian of their salvation. Ultimately for Francke, the assurance of salvation came in part from experience and in part from the feelings that they imparted.

Zinzendorf, while engaged in the very feeling oriented Herrnhutters, still retained a degree of unease concerning feelings. In his 1738 speeches in Berlin, Zinzendorf characterized feeling as itself “something questionable, so that if one cannot deny it immediately the very same minute, and something even remains behind I suppose,


doubtless the actual influence of the truth is often over and done in less than half an hour, until something comes anew, which also strikes only a few minutes, and rushes away again in its turn.”132 Wesley called for conversion experiences, and was equally attracted to the experiences of Moravian piety, but was always unsure as to the role and scope of any feelings.

The Pietists that emphasized feelings the most were indeed the Moravians, both before they encountered Zinzendorf and afterwards. It is rather clear to see the impact of Niesky and Barby upon Schleiermacher. His exclamation was not a rejection of the feelings of piety, rather only the dogmatic additions. To eliminate what Schleiermacher perceived was bad doctrine, he created his own. This is why Schleiermacher is a Moravian of a higher order and Barth can state “Schleiermacher’s theology is the theology of feeling, or to put it more exactly, the theology of pious feeling.”133

If we look at Schleiermacher’s life and theology against my definition of Pietism we can see that Schleiermacher remains at his heart a Pietist, and he establishes a new Pietist theology. It is easy enough to equate a quasi-mystical experiential religion to Schleiermacher’s emphasis on personal religious experience and his definition of religion as a feeling. Schleiermacher also challenged the concept of religion in his work On Religion, in order to make the work of the mystic more palatable to the cultured elites. This new treatment of religion is grounded in experience rather than theological or philosophical systems. Any theology that develops is developed out of this experience.


133 Karl Barth, Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdman, 1972), 440.
While Schleiermacher did not participate in the revivals of Berlin later in his life, his earlier treatment of religion permitted the once cultured despisers of religion to embrace a revival, even if it is not the one that Schleiermacher had in mind. Historically Pietism is found within the three major mainline Protestant denominations. Schleiermacher’s message was grounded in the Reform, but through his pastoral life, the message he spread was equally applied to Lutheranism. Schleiermacher held out hopes that the Protestant Union would eventually include Anglicanism as well. Schleiermacher’s theology indeed sought to understand and rework the world he was a part of. Similarly, Schleiermacher’s theology was at its essence a theology of relationships. Schleiermacher’s construction of the God-consciousness was a measure of intimacy of the Christians relationship with God. In like manner the historical manifestation of this God-consciousness was not only on an indvivial level but was found within a community, known as the church.

The only area where Schleiermacher’s theological system is not clearly a pietistic theology is the maintenance of antipathy towards the greater Christian culture and religious formalism, which dictates that cultures norms and practices. Schleiermacher spent most of his life as a culture critic and less of it criticizing the churches around him. Schleiermacher did believe that Christianity in its current forms in Berlin was flawed, but his efforts to revive the Christian life were not founded in the same level of antipathy towards the larger Christian community as we see with Perkins, Arndt, Francke, and Wesley. Schleiermacher remained a Moravian at heart and his contempt for the established church was much closer to the attitude of Zinzendorf. Both Zinzendorf and Schleiermacher chose to promote a new church or way of doing church that was contrary
to the established churches. The churches/movements they initiated served as the
criticism and antipathy to the greater Christian culture. It can also be of no doubt that
both Zinzendorf and Schleiermacher opposed the religious formalism that dictated the
cultures norms and practices. Additionally, it is clearly seen that throughout his life and
theology, Schleiermacher always emphasized experience over Rationalism and
Orthodoxy.

In many ways Schleiermacher’s emphasis on experience incorporated elements of
rationalism and orthodoxy. As Barth argues, “All the so-to-speak official impulses and
movements of the centuries since the Reformation find a center of unity in him:
orthodoxy, pietism, the Enlightenment. All the official tendencies of the Christian present
emanate from him like rays: church life, experiential piety, historicism, psychologism,
and ethicism.”\(^{134}\) Within the first twenty years of his life Schleiermacher was thoroughly
immersed in all the major trends that produced modernity. His childhood was spent in a
Moravian household and later Moravian schools. In his late adolescence he was equally
submerged in Kant and the Enlightenment, only to later reject it when he began to tutor
for Count Dohna and then spend times in the Romantic salons of Berlin. Throughout all
of these periods, Schleiermacher faced challenges from the orthodox elements of both
Reform and Lutheran churches in Prussia.

The legacy of Schleiermacher has gone through various cycles following his
death. Not being the explicit teacher of a single movement, his theology was accepted
and rejected in whole and in parts by different people and different theologians within

\(^{134}\) Karl Barth, The Theology of Schleiermacher, xv.
decades of his death. Schleiermacherian systems were created and then destroyed, often with little involvement of Schleiermacher’s actual written corpus. Schleiermacher was a progenitor and prototype of the new liberal Protestantism with all of its successes and failures. F. Naumann wrote in 1910, “The collapse of Protestantism would not have been so great had it eaten more of the bread of Schleiermacher.”135 This is the legacy of a figure that was only tangentially connected with the developing theological systems that emerged in the nineteenth century. Schleiermacher’s theology directly impacted and contributed to the theology of some of the nineteenth and early twentieth century’s most influential theologians and theorists including Søren Kierkegaard, Albert Ritschl, Adolf von Harnack, Erast Troeltsch, Rudolf Bultmann, Rudolf Otto, Emil Brunner, and Karl Barth.

Whatever faults lie within the system that Schleiermacher initiated are credited to his life and work, rightly and wrongly. This is the fitting legacy of a Pioneer of Modern Theology, the father of modern Protestantism, and the most important Protestant theologian between John Calvin and Karl Barth. Schleiermacher receives the credit and blame because he was the turning point in Protestant theology, just as Kant was in the realm of philosophy. Following Schleiermacher, the impact of feelings as a religious expression, and not just something tangential to religion needed to be addressed, and either accepted or rejected. Schleiermacher made religion about experience even for the rationalist and the orthodox. Schleiermacher also forced Christ back into Christianity.

For too long, the gospel lacked an image of Christ as the God-man, focusing only on Christ the redeemer or substitute for sins of the elect. Schleiermacher not only added another layer to the edifice of Pietism, he reconstructed most of the theologians whom he came in contact with, re-contextualizing and reprioritizing their accomplishments in light of his own. He made experiential Christianity accessible, knowledgeable, rational, theological, and personal.
CHAPTER 7

SØREN KIERKEGAARD: 1813-1855

“It is really boring of this fellow to make so much ado about nothing; why can’t he be like the rest of us, who are all Christians.”

Friedrich Schleiermacher began the process of reconstructing Pietism in the nineteenth century. Schleiermacher synthesized the philosophical and religious trends of Prussian and Reform Pietism within both the Halle and Moravian strands. In doing so, Schleiermacher fashioned himself as a Moravian of a higher order. In this construction Schleiermacher held fast to the habitus of Pietism and returned experiential Protestantism to its pre-institutionalized state. Upon his death in 1834, the task to continue refashioning Pietism for the challenges of the nineteenth century passed onto Søren Kierkegaard. While Schleiermacher faced the challenges of the Enlightenment and dismantled that critique to preserve room for Christianity, Kierkegaard had to deal with the ramifications of Schleiermacher’s theological contribution and the dramatic changes that liberalism posed in Denmark. In positioning himself in the Pietist edifice, Kierkegaard accepted elements of Schleiermacher’s reforms and rejected others. As was the case with Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard’s biography, and the biography of his father, informs and shapes his theology. It is in Kierkegaard’s life that the antipathy towards broader culture is clearly seen, as well as the Pietist requirement to remain outsiders even when

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opportunities arise to incorporate Pietism into the broader philosophical, theological, confessional, and cultural ethos.

**Kierkegaard’s Denmark**

*“Of all forms of government, the monarchical is the best.”*²

Kierkegaard lived his entire life in nineteenth-century Lutheran Denmark. Luther’s Reformation took root in Denmark in October of 1536, when the Danish King Christian III³ (d. 1559) broke away from Rome and chose to embrace Luther’s vision of Christianity. Rather quickly the Lutheran church and the Danish King produced a new Lutheran state. Lutheran Denmark mirrored the more militant versions of Protestantism. Within two decades ecclesial uniformity pervaded Denmark. In addition to the undertaking of a Danish version of the Bible, which came out in 1550, the Oldenburg crown sponsored a new Protestant hymnal. The hymnal was completed somewhat speedily, with the first version emerging in 1544 and revised in 1569.

Lutheranism permeated Danish society to the point that a confessional cleansing took place in 1557. The Lutheran bishop, Peder Palladius, published a catalogue of heresy which prohibited non-Lutherans from entering the kingdom of Denmark. Catholics, as well as all non-Lutheran Protestants, were cut off from the state. Shortly after the publication of the catalogue, Catholics and all other non-Lutherans were forced

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³ The Danish throne was controlled by the House of Oldenburg from 1448 and continued today although under the Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Glücksburg title.
to leave the country as religious refugees. While it may appear that Lutheranism dominated Denmark, the church was always in service to the crown.

The servitude of the church grew in the following century with the adoption of *Lex Regia*, or Royal Law. Upon its implementation in 1665, the crown under Frederick III (d. 1670) assumed supreme authority, including authority over the church. Following 1665 the Danish king was above all human laws and was answerable only to God. According to *Lex Regina*, the Danish crown for the next thousand generations was absolute. The only conditions were that the king had to remain a faithful Lutheran, subscribing to the Augsburg Confession, and defend its people from heretics and blasphemers. Not even the Lutheran clergy could intervene on issues concerning the monarchy, morality, or ecclesiastical and ceremonial worship.

As was the case in Prussia, monarchical supremacy was challenged by Christianity. The formal institutionalized systems of the Lutheran Church persisted as a threat. A strong Lutheran Church was beneficial when it worked in service to the crown, but it always remained suspect, as the people’s allegiance could be swayed. The Hohenzollerns and Oldenburgs shared similar concerns. Both dynastic houses wanted uniformity of belief in their lands. Confessional identity served as a means to accomplish this. The Hohenzollerns wanted space for their Reformed beliefs while the Oldenburgs wanted to ensure Lutheran servitude to the crown.

Most of the ecclesial forms of Lutheranism were content with their privileged and unchallenged status in Denmark. For the first few centuries, the symbiotic relationship between Lutheran Orthodoxy and the Danish crown served both sides well. Pietism from Halle began to quickly spread to Denmark. In the first few years of the eighteenth
century, lay conventicles took hold in Copenhagen. These Pietist meetings were prohibited in 1706. Still, Halle Pietism continued to sway the monarchy which was the Danish state until 1848.

Under Frederik IV (d. 1730) and Christian VI (d. 1746), Lutheran Orthodoxy’s grip on the crown loosened. In the first year of Frederick IV’s reign he adopted a new hymnbook, known as the Kingo hymnbook after the Danish Lutheran bishop Thomas Kingo. Theologically Kingo was at home with the Lutheran Orthodox, but his hymns were far more at home within Pietism. Kingo broke from the dry, rigid, and formulaic choruses that so prevailed in the previous hymnbooks of Denmark. Kingo selected hymns that engaged with themes of both denial of life and affirming life. He also wrote about a third of the hymns found in the hymnal. Four years later, in 1703, Halle ambassador Heinrich Wilhelm Ludolf met with Frederik IV. At the conclusion of this meeting Frederick instituted new reforms and sponsored overseas missions work. Two years later Frederick established a partnership with Francke and the famed Halle-Danish missionary voyages began a century before most Protestants began their missionizing efforts. While Frederik IV began the process of remaking Denmark under a Halle Pietist model, this process remained incomplete.

Frederick IV’s son and successor Christian VI swiftly disestablished the Lutheran Orthodoxy. Two years into his reign, in 1732, Christian dealt the Lutheran Orthodox their biggest blow. That same year the University of Copenhagen, the primary school for Lutheran Priests, switched their emphasis towards Pietism. Following this, the previous disparate catechisms were replaced by a single standard textbook, *Truth for Piety*, authored by the Halle Pietist, Erik Ludvigsson Pontoppidan.
Halle Pietism in Denmark was soon joined by Moravian Pietism. Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf who was present at Christian VI’s coronation, was actually a not so distant relative of the new Danish king, he was the cousin of Christian’s wife’s mother. While not the closest of ties, this familial bond provided Zinzendorf greater access to the crown than both the Halle Pietists and the Lutheran Scholastics. Zinzendorf even held out hope of joining the Danish court in 1731, just a few years before he was banished from Saxony. During Zinzendorf’s Saxon exile the Moravians flourished in Copenhagen, creating “societies for upbuilding.” Christian, while sympathetic to the Moravian cause, still maintained a degree of fear of these societies and prohibited them from contact with their German colleagues and required they remained loyal to the Danish state church. The Moravians accepted these terms and constructed the Brodresocietet in Copenhagen in September 1739. It was the Brodresocietet that Kierkegaard attended in his youth nearly a century later, and the concept of upbuilding resounds through his corpus with numerous upbuilding discourses.

In addition to Copenhagen, the Moravians found great success in the Jutland, where the Kierkegaards originated. Both in East and West Jutland, the Moravian style of piety took hold. With the success of Moravians in the Jutland, a religious divide emerged from the privileged in Copenhagen and the rural Jutlanders. When the ecclesial elites in Copenhagen decided to introduce a new hymnal into the Lutheran Churches, it was rejected in the Jutland. Kingo resonated so well within the pietistic churches that any attempt to replace it was doomed to fail. A century after it was first brought to the Jutland, the powerful in Copenhagen attempted to replace Kingo with Balle’s Evangelical Christian hymnbook. The new Balle hymnbook appealed to the bourgeoisie of
Copenhagen in 1798, but the piety and passion that typified Kingo was lost. That same passion led the Jutlanders to revolt. The religious insurrection launched a series of song wars, resulting in the retention of Kingo in many East Jutland parishes.

The greatest challenge to Pietism did not come from a new hymnbook but from a new monarch. As with the Hohenzollerns, a few generations of piety made way to an enlightenment leaning Frederick. In Prussia it was Frederick II; in Denmark it is Frederick V (d. 1766). The austerity and devotion which both Frederick Wilhelm I and Christian VI possessed was lost upon their Fredericks. Frederick V eased the restrictions against amusements and grew indifferent to religion. Frederick V, just like Fredrick II, favored rationalism. By 1760, Halle Pietism lost all institutionalized support. Surprisingly, this only served to promote the Moravian strand of Pietism. Unlike their Halle counterparts, Zinzendorf’s version of Pietism in Denmark was more ideological than institutional. The Moravians success with the rural Jutlanders also provided a degree of insulation from the whims of the Copenhagen court. Moravian Piety was more emotional and joyous than the austere service found within the Halle version. While both groups promoted missions work, the Moravians also created religious settlements. Zinzendorf himself established Herrnhut, Herrnhag, and Bethlehem. These settlements provide a degree of protection against a vacillating or hostile civil government. When Christian VII (d. 1808) took the throne in 1749, the Moravians saw an opportunity to create their own version of Herrnhut in Denmark, construction of their new settlement in 1780. Christianfeld, the new settlement, was named in honor of their Danish king, which was the extent of involvement that Christian had with the Moravian brethren.
Michael Kierkegaard - the Father

"Father in Heaven, when spring is come, everything in nature returns in new freshness and beauty, the lilies and the birds have lost nothing of their charm—oh, that we also might return to the instruction of these teachers! Ah, but if in the time that has elapsed we have lost our health, would that we might regain it by learning again from the lilies of the field and the birds of the air!"4

It was from this environment that Michael Kierkegaard, Søren’s father, emerged. The religious machinations of Schleiermacher’s father were important in presenting him with a Pietist education, but the two shared fairly little of Schleiermacher’s formative life together. This was not the case with Søren Kierkegaard, whose whole world was intertwined with his father. It has become typical for nearly all biographies of Søren Kierkegaard to first address Michael Kierkegaard since so much of Søren’s understanding of Copenhagen culture and Pietism came directly from his father. Michael Kierkegaard’s struggles were internalized by his sons, who forever lived in the shadow of their father. The shadow cast by Michael was rather large as he was an impressive character in his own way. Unlike Schleiermacher, Zinzendorf, and Wesley, there is no prestigious pedigree that the Kierkegaards could rely upon. Neither his father nor his mother came from a long line of priests. Søren’s ancestors did not shape the course of events in Denmark, nor are there records of them involved in any significant revolutions. The Kierkegaards lacked all political and religious significance until the time of Søren’s father, Michael Kierkegaard. It appears as if the lineage saved its good fortunes for


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Michael and Søren. Any study of Søren Kierkegaard must begin with his father’s life; it is only from this that Søren’s life begins to make sense.

For generations the Kierkegaards worked the lands of a local priest in the village of Saedding in the middle of the Jutland heath, about a dozen miles southeast of Ringkobing. It was from their labor that the family eventually derived its name. Kierkegaard literally means churchyards. The family toiled for the church, but churchyard should not be confused for life within the church. The churchyards are best understood as a graveyard. The family was neither the life nor death of the parish, rather they were property. Often the significance of a name is over exaggerated. More often than not, a names translation bears little significance to the life of the person. For instance Calvin is best translated as bald, Wesley is West meadow, and Luther is famous in battle. In the case of these three their names hold no direct meaning, but in the case of Søren, his last name is rather fitting. In Michael and his sons the exuberance and life of the church is found, as well as the melancholy corrective that accompanies death and the grave.

While Søren’s lineage is not impressive, his father was. In a semi-autobiographical note, Søren Kierkegaard’s *Johannes Climacus* states that his “whole view of life was, so to speak, hidden in his father.” Søren Kierkegaard’s entire world view is shaped by his father in both his successes and failures. Half of Søren’s works were dedicated to his father, the other half to his one-time fiancée. It is nearly impossible


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to understand Søren without in some measure understanding Michael. Michael at some moments is represented as a powerful and stern patriarch and others as a creative and playful character. He was likely both.

Michael was the fourth child of a family of nine. Søren quipped “My father was born on the due date.”6 From the moment of his birth on December 12, 1756 Michael was punctual and exact. More often than not he was early, even buying bread for dinner parties’ weeks before they occurred. His early life was also rather poor. Michael grew up in abject poverty. The Jutland was not a wealthy region of Denmark and his family were exceptionally poor rural peasants. In his youth, while tending sheep, Michael even cursed God due to his poverty. Michael believed that God forsook him and his family. Surprisingly God and his priest released Michael from his poverty shortly after this cursing, and he was granted his freedom in 1777. The note reads ”I, the undersigned, Nicolai Satterup, priest for Bølling and Sæding, manorial owner of Annexgaard in Sæding, give Michael Pedersen Kierkegaard of said Annexgaard . . . free pass, to be and to live where he will without begging my permission in the future.”7 With his freedom granted, the young Michael made his way to Copenhagen.

Early life in Copenhagen was not any more glamorous than his youth in the Jutland heath. Michael was an errand boy for his uncle, a Jutland hosier. He then became a shop assistant. His fortunes turned for him on Christmas of 1780 when he gained his own business license and his citizenship. Following Christmas of 1780 the


twenty four year old Michael Kierkegaard could set up his own independent firm. Michael found greater financial success than he imagined.

Once Michael obtained a license to sell wool goods he sought to overcome the legal prohibitions connected with selling other goods, especially goods from the New World and China. The hosier and his business partner Mads Royen wanted to expand and sell all goods, including the lucrative business of selling dry goods, a vast wealth could be made in felt, cotton, linen, silk, sugar, cane syrup, and coffee. This expansion required a legal battle which he won in July 1787. Heretofore, wool dealers were prohibited from selling dry goods or silken goods in Denmark. The court battle was between the ascending Jutland wool dealers and the descending silken Copenhageners, and demonstrated a shift in economic power in Copenhagen.

Following his legal battle, the money continued to stack up. Michael continued to expand, purchasing multiple shops and homes. The money came easy, but it did not buy happiness. Michael realized that his monetary success came at a cost of isolation from his family. He made attempts to connect with his family over the next decade, even building his parents a new home in the Jutland. Still Michael felt distant from family. His wealth served no purpose but to isolate him. By 1794 Michael concluded that he needed his own family. To remedy this problem he married Kirstine Royen, the sister of his business partner Mads Royen, on May the second. Kirstine was a good choice, she had a large dowry and came from a respectable family. The marriage was blissful and brief.

8 One with a wooden roof rather than the traditional sod roofed homes of the Jutland poor.
Michael’s good fortune was always mixed with bad fortune for others. In 1795 a fire broke out in Copenhagen. The fire ravaged the city, burning nearly a thousand buildings over 55 streets. Somehow his buildings were spared from the flames. While the rest of the city rebuilt, Michael’s wealth grew. Michael’s tragedy took place the following year with Kirstine. The marriage may have been happy but it was short lived. Kirstine contracted pneumonia less than two years into the marriage and died on March 23 in 1796. That same year Michael’s wealthy uncle died. In 1796 Michael found himself one of the wealthiest men in Copenhagen, but all the more alone. In February of 1797 Michael Kierkegaard retired and left others to run his shops. His income, combined with the inheritance from his uncle, was large enough to last his life time and the lifetime of his seven children, although Søren would do his best to spend it all.

In his loneliness and despair Michael turned to Kirstine’s housekeeper and servant, a poor illiterate Jutlander, Anne Sørensdatter Lund. Anne and Michael shared a youth as poor Jutlanders. Other than this shared ancestry, the two ware rather different. Michael was stern, melancholic, and knowledgeable, while Anne was described as cheerful, equable, and simple. Kirstine had been a perfect fit for Michael’s future, his ambitions, and social standing. Had he remained in Jutland poverty, Anne would have been a fit for the man that Michael was. However, within a year of Kirstine’s death Anne was his new wife. By most accounts, Michael seduced his young servant.\(^9\) Michael’s lust rather than his reason or love brought the two together.

\(^9\) Anne was born June 18, 1768, twelve years younger than Michael.
Legally widows in Copenhagen had to wait a year until they could remarry, however, this law did not apply to widowers. This was good for Michael, who impregnated his wife’s housekeeper within months of her death. Anne’s fertility and Michael’s licentiousness resulted in a marriage contract. The contract was rather harsh by any standard. The wealthy Michael promised his new wife a low standard of living in the event of his death or the dissolution of the marriage. The city attorney refused to endorse the marriage contract. After she bore him seven children, Michael revised the contract to give Anne a third of his possessions if she outlived him, with the other two thirds going to the children. While Anne was legally his wife and the mother of his children, Michael continued to think of Kirstine as his true wife and Anne as the housekeeper. The children did as well, though they never knew Kristine. Anne is not directly mentioned at all in Søren Kierkegaard’s diary and none of his works are dedicated to his mother. She is also only mentioned a few times in her eldest son Peter’s writings.

With a new marriage and growing family, Michael, the retired family man, spent a good deal of his time involved in the social life of Denmark, and he was heavily involved in politics. Central to the political concerns of the day was King Frederick VI’s (d.1839) ill-conceived alliance with Napoleon against the English. Although Denmark possessed a large navy and fortified cities, both fell to the British. In September of 1807, most of Copenhagen suffered from the British bombardments of the city. With large portions of the city in ruins, the five homes that Michael owned remained undamaged.

10 100 rixdollars which is roughly $5,000 a year adjusted for inflation.
Michael continued to make money, and with the capture of the Danish fleet, the long history of Danish sea trade ended. Still Michael and his business partners and friends remained patriots and provided the King a gunboat in 1808. They christened the ship De Seks Venner, The Six Friends.

Michael was making money, but the state’s finances were crumbling. The Finance Minister Ernst Schimmelman (d. 1831) began printing banknotes with no backing in 1808. The hope was that Denmark would reap the benefits of an alliance with Napoleon, but the financial venture was too late and foolish. As the war continued on, the fiat currency grew worthless. By 1813, just a few months before Søren’s birth, the Danish state declared bankruptcy. The 1810s were disastrous for Denmark. A year after the state’s insolvency, in 1814, Norway gained its independence. By 1820, 248 firms collapsed due to their own financial woes, nearly one a week for six years. Surprisingly Michael’s investment in certain state bonds was paying dividends. Most of his competition was bankrupt, but his wealth grew.

Michael’s surroundings changed radically from his youth in the Jutland but internally little did. While he was surrounded by vast wealth in the major city of his country, he was now married to a poor woman from the Jutland. He still maintained the strains of Pietism that pervaded the religious life of the Jutlanders. Michael was a free man and a wealthy man, but he still belonged to the church, no longer as property, but as a dutiful steward. Michael supported the Moravian teachings that were opposed to the liberal-rationalist Lutheranism which dominated Copenhagen. The Moravians supported an inner rebirth and rejected the trappings of bourgeois life. Michael frequented the Moravian revival meetings in Copenhagen, and weekly attended the Brodresocietet, the
Congregation of Moravian Brothers on Stormgade. The Brodresocietet emphasized Zinzendorf’s blood and wounds theology, and the sorrowful dutiful Christ that was supported by Francke and his Halle compatriots. Michael’s Pastor until 1795 was Peter Saxtorp. Saxtorp’s sermons heavily relied upon the blood and wounds theology, proclaiming “They spat in Christ’s face, o, a frightful insult! We wretched earthworms view it as a great injury and as ill-treatment if someone merely spits at us.”

The Brodresocietet was the real church home of the Kierkegaards. As one of the wealthiest parishioners, Michael funded many of the churches building projects. Michael and Anne had seven children together, three girls and then four boys and they were all brought up in the church. J.E.G. Bull of Helliggeist, the main preacher at The Brodresocietet, baptized all seven children and confirmed the three daughters. The first of the children was Maren Kirstine, born less than five months into the marriage in September of 1797. Two more daughters followed, Nicoline Kristine and Petrea Severine, in 1799 and 1801 respectively. Then the four boys were born. After a brief lull, Anne gave birth to Peter Christian in 1805, then Søren Michael two years later, and Niels Andreas two years after that. In 1813 Søren Aabye Kierkegaard was born, the same year the state went bankrupt. The family lived comfortably at No. 2 Nytorv. The family home was large enough for all seven children. Later the home sold for 19,000 rigsdaler, equivalent to roughly $961,375 today. The nearly million dollar home was not overly impressive from the street, but its size and location to the Borgerdydskole and city hall increased its value. The children were all exceedingly bright, but the house was

troubled. In addition to the antipathy towards the Anne, the exceedingly capable children used their talents to create friction with one another.

Beyond the contentious sibling rivalry, the Kierkegaards grew accustomed to death and despair. Søren Michael died in September of 1819 after a collision with another boy at school resulted in a brain hemorrhage. Three years later, in 1822, the oldest daughter Maren Kirstine died of kidney inflammation. The other two sisters had very similar lives, they married brothers and each gave birth to four children before dying as a result of complications with the birth of their fourth child. The first of the two to die was Nicoline Kristine, after giving birth to a stillborn child. When it was clear that she was going to die, some of her family wanted to shield her from what was coming. Michael had none of it, proclaiming “my children are not brought up like that.” He then immediately went to her and told her the truth. Nicoline’s death impacted the family as a whole, but when his last sister Petrea died, Søren was heartbroken. Søren always felt closest to her and enjoyed teasing her husband. He often insulted his “stupid brother in law” at the family table, but he did so with “so much good nature and gentleness that the brother-in-law, at least, never even understood him.” Petrea died after giving birth to a healthy baby boy.

Søren’s older brother Niels Andreas wanted to make his own fortune and set out for the new world. He was the most attractive of the seven children and the most bothered by the family infighting in Copenhagen. He may have possessed his mother’s


intellect rather than his father’s, or he possessed his father’s knack for business that the other brothers lacked. In either case, Niels was different. Michael sent Peter and Søren off to universities, but Niels was forced to work the family shops. He desperately wanted to escape the clutches of his father and fled to Paterson, New Jersey. Unfortunately, in 1835, Niels died of a fever. With all of this death around him Michael began to believe that he was going to outlive his children, a thought that Peter and Søren internalized.

The Fork and the Sock

“Half childish games, Half God in my heart.”

As a child Søren was keenly aware of his family’s contentious banter. The youngest and least impressive physically, he soon learned that a quick wit could make up for his physical limitations. He earned the nickname “the fork” from his family. The story is reported by his sister, when Søren was asked what he would most like to be. He answered, “A fork.” “Why?” “Well, then I could ‘spear’ anything I wanted on the dinner table.” “But what if we come after you?” “Then I’ll spear you.” Other tellings state he wanted to use his sharp prongs to wound his siblings, or Michael gave it to him “because of his early developed penchant for satirical remarks.” These remarks left his cousins in tears when they visited. While he was an obedient child, his obedience came with a wit that only continued to grow to shake Denmark.


15 Bruce H. Kirmmse, Encounters With Kierkegaard: A Life as seen by His Contemporaries, 3.

16 Josiah Thompson, Kierkegaard, 17.
Søren also had to rely upon his imagination far more than many other children. Søren relays a personal experience of his father through his character Johannes Climacus. “When at times Johannes asked permission to go out, his request was usually refused; but occasionally his father, by way of compensation, offered to take his hand and go for a walk up and down the floor.”\(^{17}\) The walks up and down the floor became an unfolding imaginative drama where the two walked the streets of Copenhagen, while never leaving the house. How often this narrative actually occurred is unknown, but the use of imagination as “his father’s magic art”\(^{18}\) had a lasting impact on Søren and his literary development. Imagination was also needed to compensate for a distinct lack of toys in the Kierkegaard household. While Michael could easily afford any toys or luxury goods he wanted, Søren’s only toy growing up was his mother’s old yarn spindle. Michael echoed Francke’s and Wesley’s view of children, and their resistance to idle fun.

An active church life, and rigorous devotion to God, took the place of imaginative play. Following his baptism by J.E.G. Bull, Søren and the rest of the Kierkegaard children grew up attending two churches. On Sunday mornings the Kierkegaards attended the state Lutheran church, then at nights they frequented the Moravian church. The Moravian congregation’s unique ecclesiology separated them from the rest of Lutheran society and often placed them at odds with the state apparatus. Just like Gottlieb Schleiermacher, Michael Kierkegaard knew there were dangers connected with formally joining a church which was at odds with the state. Both men and their families


\(^{18}\)IBID.
were regular attenders of Pietist churches without ever formally joining their rolls. Like Perkins, Wesley, and other with Pietist leanings, the Kierkegaards also took communion more often than was customary. Most Danes only partook of the Eucharist three or four times a year. The Kierkegaards usually had communion on Fridays and especially around days that held significance to the family, such as birthdays. Lent also became a time of increased communion for most Danish Pietists.

At some point in Søren’s youth, Michael Kierkegaard began to attend the sermons of Jacob Peter Mynster (d.1854). Mynster was a Herrnhutter connected with the Broduresocietet, and he became Michael’s pastor. Unlike Michael’s daughters who were confirmed by Bull, Søren was confirmed by Mynster in 1828. Søren’s Christian life and his mission was intimately tied with his father’s pastor. Mynster chose to work within the established church in an attempt to bring it along Pietist lines. If nothing else, Mynster was successful in getting himself promoted, as he was elevated to the primate of the Danish state Church before his death. Until Michael’s death, Søren admired Mynster. It was against Mynster that Søren launched his famed attack upon Christendom.

Søren’s education, like his church life, was twofold. During the days he attended the Borgerdyd School, or The School of Civic Virtue. This education was demanding. The first day he was assigned the first ten lines of Balle’s catechism to learn by heart for the next day. Balle was the official catechism of the Lutheran church, and not as popular as the Kingo hymns in the Kierkegaard household. When his day was done at the Borgerdyd, Søren and his six older sibling were educated by their father. Later Søren bemoaned the rigid and staunch education from his father as “a crazy and cruel
upbringing.”¹⁹ Michael demanded perfection from everyone in his house. One of his servants tells us that “the old man was very exacting with respect to the polishing of shoes and boots: There were not to be any dull spots, not a single grain of sand.”²⁰ Still, as the youngest, Søren had greater freedom than his brothers and sisters had known. Michael desired that his children should be unassuming and unremarkable at school and remarkable at home. Their brilliance should be muted so as to place third in their class, Søren did not oblige his father in this request. Michael Kierkegaard further contributed to his children’s education by having intellectual and political elites over to his home from time to time. While the Kierkegaard home did not take on the same role as the salons of Berlin, Søren and the other children grew up actively engaged in the philosophical and political trends of the day.

Søren, ‘the fork,’ gained a new nickname when he went off to school where he was known as ‘the sock.’ The sock is as fitting as the fork, since Michael was a hosier, the rest of the students teased Søren for his father’s occupation, even though his father was wealthier than most of the children at the Borgerdyd School. While the wealth was known, it was not apparent to any outside observers. Michael was as stingy with his children’s clothing as he was with their toys. Frederik Welding, the baker’s son, told a friend that “S.K. was a stranger and an object of pity, especially because of his clothing, which was always the same, of rough dark tweed fabric with an odd cut, a jacket with short tails, and always with shoes and woolen stockings, never boots, as far as I can


remember.” The odd dress resembled the choir clothes, and the clothes of the poor at the charity schools. This earned him yet another nickname, ‘the choirboy.’ The choirboy was an object of charity from Welding, who often gave the skinny Søren baked goods.

Søren the Sock, the Choirboy, was still the sarcastic and biting fork that he was at home. He was an unrelenting tease who either verbally picked on his fellow students or tried to confuse them with a puzzling remark. As with his home life, the quick wit was used to compensate for his small frame. Welding characterizes the skinny Søren as always on the run, while frequently “teasing others with nicknames he had heard, with laughter, and with funny faces, even though it often earned him a beating. I do not recall that his language was ever genuinely witty or cutting, but it was annoying and provocative, and he was aware that it had this effect even though he was often the one who paid for it.” Søren’s wit was his only weapon and he wielded it more often than he probably should have. He received many bloody noses for his comments, but his stings may have lasted longer than bruises. While Welding did not think they were all that cutting, another schoolmate Peter Engel Lind viewed Søren as “dangerous to quarrel with, because he knew how to make his opponent appear ridiculous. They also viewed him as a fundamentally good boy, religious and moral, and they did not tease him about this.”

21 Bruce H. Kirmmse, Encounters With Kierkegaard: A Life as seen by His Contemporaries, 7 - Frederik Welding - [F. Welding to H. P. Barfod, September 3, 1869].

22 Bruce H. Kirmmse, Encounters With Kierkegaard: A Life as seen by His Contemporaries, 7 - Frederik Welding - [F. Welding to H. P. Barfod, September 3, 1869].

23 Bruce H. Kirmmse, Encounters With Kierkegaard: A Life as seen by His Contemporaries, 11 - Peter Engel Lind to H. P. Barfod, September 16, 1869.
Søren’s respect for authority did not always apply to his teachers. When L.C. Muller, his religion teacher, reprimanded him, he simply began to laugh at him. Muller then indignantly exclaimed, “Either you leave or I will.” After a moment’s consideration Søren replied, “Well, then, it’s best that I leave,” whereupon he left the classroom. Additionally Søren took notes from the book during his history and geography exams and often shared these with other students without the instructor’s knowledge.

Apart from his brilliance and wit, very few details are actually known about Søren as an adolescent. Michael and Søren in their later life are typified as being melancholy, but his youth may not have been. There are reports of Søren being rather cavalier about life as a youth and not taking anything too seriously. This conjures a picture of a fun loving child who is full of exuberance for life and courage for whatever may come. Still, Søren later reflects that his odd clothing made him look like an old man, and he also felt like an old man often and was prone to melancholy. Of the few accounts of his childhood by others, Lind records that “He seemed to be very conservative, to honor the King, love the Church, and respect the police.”

The only job other than a priest that Søren ever desired was to become a policeman. Søren’s actual temperament during this period remains ambivalent.

It is also debated if Søren suffered from a physical malady during his lifetime. An apparent common theme among many Pietist leaders, from Perkins to Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard are reports of some physical malformation. Søren was always skinny,

24 Bruce H. Kirmmse, *Encounters With Kierkegaard: A Life as seen by His Contemporaries*, 11 - Peter Engel Lind to H. P. Barfod, September 16, 1869.
but accounts later surfaced of him having a hunched back, uneven legs, and a spinal deformity. Some modern descriptions paint a picture of a young man who was spindly with a pronounced stoop, and hunched back, who walked leaning back with a crab-like gait, with one leg significantly longer than the other. His head was equally misshapen as the rest of his body, uncontrollable fair hair which protruded everywhere, a strong straight nose which held large glasses with piercing blue eyes and a large mouth with protruding teeth and a recessed chin. Where truth and fiction merge with these depictions of the Dane are difficult to tell. Søren may have suffered a fall from a tree when he was a child that made sitting up straight uncomfortable, but this also may not have actually happened. The Corsair later depicted him as having uneven legs, but this was a rather harsh satire against him. If he cut such an outlandish figure, one would expect to see some record of it from either himself, his friends or his enemies, but no such accounts exist. Søren is never described as a ‘hunchback’ by his contemporaries. One contemporary, Brochner, does record that Kierkegaard had a “crooked figure” and “you could never walk straight when he was with you.”

In 1830, having completed his time at the Borgerdyd, Søren joined the Royal Guards’ roll. If Søren did possess a deformity, it would likely be confirmed here. The seventeen year old was discharged as “unfit for duty” after three days. Exactly how he was unfit is unknown, though there is no direct mention of physical deformities. Likely

his families wealth, combined with his spindly figure and sarcastic wit posed a greater challenge than he was worth for the guards. It is quite possible he would have made a great strategist had he been allowed to remain.

**At the University**

> “Father in Heaven! Go Thou with us. Oh, let us not believe that we have outgrown Thine education, but let us grow in it, grow under it, as the good seed growth in patience.”

Søren’s father had high ambitions for his oldest and youngest sons. They were both to become parsons. The two children entered into the University of Copenhagen. Peter, being eight years older, completed his education at the University before Søren began. Intellectually, Peter and Søren were by far the two most similar of Michael’s children. Michael had parallel plans for these two, both Peter and Søren, upon the conclusion of their time at the University of Copenhagen, attended prominent philosophical lectures by the luminaries at the University of Berlin. For Peter, this was Hegel and Schleiermacher; for Søren it was Schelling. Both also had a reputation for their wit. Søren was the Fork at home and Peter was *Der Disputierteufel aus Norden*, the devilish debater from Scandinavia in Berlin. Both brothers were desperately trying to escape their father’s control. Michael kept a tight leash on Peter while he was in Berlin. The following year, the devilish debater went onto the University of Gottingen to earn his doctorate. When Peter returned home, he fulfilled his father’s wishes and was ordained.

Peter also served as a tutor at the University of Copenhagen, and was known as one of the best tutors, but not to Søren.

Peter would have been a logical choice, but Søren wanted to become his own man as well. Intellectually the two brothers were similar, but physically they were rather different. Peter was bigger and stronger than Søren. He took many walking tours through the Jutland and Sweden, and enjoyed the outdoors and balanced his intellect with some concern for his physical wellbeing. Rather similar to Carl and Friedrich Schleiermacher, and Esau and Jacob, one is the brawn and the other the brain. In the case of Peter, he possessed both to some degree, but compared to the legacy of Søren, he is found lacking. The rivalry likely existed only in the younger Kierkegaard, who claimed “Peter has never loved Father as I loved him.”\(^\text{27}\) This rivalry continued until Søren’s death, and it contributed to Peter’s.

Søren was briefly swept away with the romantic impulse of the day. Like Schleiermacher, Søren loved Goethe’s *Faust* and was intrigued by the connection between Romanticism and Idealism, especially when connected to apologetics. Kierkegaard was a relative late comer to Idealism and Romanticism as they were already on the wane in Berlin, being reappraised by Schleiermacher and Hegel. Germany, a generation before Kierkegaard, began its romantic project of re-creation; now others in Denmark attempted to do so themselves. Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig\(^\text{28}\) was a poet, pastor, and politician. Early in his life he was rather conservative and worked


\(^{28}\) 1783-1872.
tirelessly to undermine and eventually destroy the Moravian *Brodresocietet*. He was then gripped by romanticism and tried to synthesize Scandinavian nationalism with Lutheranism. Eventually Grundtvig facilitated a revolution in Denmark which produced the People’s Church. Earlier though Grundtvig was one of the intellectuals who frequented the Kierkegaard home and eventually swayed Peter to his side. While Søren was attracted to Goethe, he distrusted Grundtvig even from this early age, feeling the appeal of Romanticism would not last. Søren viewed the impulse of romanticism as self-indulgent escapism.

With the rejection of Romanticism and his hostility towards his brother, Søren chose Hans Lassen Martensen\(^{29}\) to become his tutor at the University in 1834. Martensen was only five years older than Søren, but was rather knowledgeable of the fashionable German philosophies surrounding Hegel and Schleiermacher. In the summer of 1834, Martensen traveled to Berlin for private tutorials on German philosophy. When he returned, Kierkegaard was fascinated in Schleiermacher as a possible solution to Romanticism, and eager to hear what Martensen learned. Martensen introduced Kierkegaard to Schleiermacher’s *The Christian Faith*. Immediately Kierkegaard fell in love with the wonder and humility found within the *Glaubenslehre*. Schleiermacher’s dogmatics teased out the interplay of the romantic individual and the Christian and national collective. Kierkegaard surmised that Schleiermacher produced a true work of art.

\(^{29}\) 1808-1884.
Kierkegaard’s fascination with Schleiermacher was fairly short lived. Martensen likely introduced this passion. Schleiermacher did visit Copenhagen once in September of 1833, less than a year before his death. As a student at the University, Kierkegaard undoubtedly was aware of his visit and possibly attended one of the lectures, but the twenty year old Søren records nothing about visit. It would be nice to picture the two of them talking and passing along the mission of reintroducing experiential Christianity to the modern world, debating techniques to reach the modern masses with the heart of Christianity. Any evidence for this meeting is absent, although the two were in the same small city and likely within a few blocks of each other. Kierkegaard was aware of Schleiermacher, but beyond this there lies only intrigue, supposition, and fantasies. It took Martensen the next year to ignite the passion on Schleiermacher, and this same passion began to wane within a few short years.

Kierkegaard felt uneasy about equating doctrine with philosophy. The critique is striking to a modern audience, who are more likely to find Kierkegaard’s works in the philosophy section of a modern library and Schleiermacher’s in theology. Still, Schleiermacher spoke of the Christian experience in the language of Kant. While this comprised his brilliance, Kierkegaard wanted to see the experience, not only the call for experience, in Schleiermacher’s writings. Schleiermacher’s tie with Kant and Romanticism began to resemble Gnosticism rather than Pietism, and Kierkegaard feared that Schleiermacher’s God could lose is ineffable nature to a finite creature. Suffice it to say Kierkegaard hoped that Schleiermacher could provide the answer to his own questions, but he found his system simultaneously overwrought and incomplete.
One could expect that with a rejection of Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard would turn to Hegel, the other dominant philo-theological force of the day. Hegel intrigued Kierkegaard from his first year in the University. In 1830, when Kierkegaard entered the University, Hegel was at the zenith of his popularity as well. While Kierkegaard feared that Schleiermacher’s God could be reduced to the knowledge of the finite creation, Hegel’s God was always above creation. Hegel was far more true to the Kantian distinction between the nomenea and phenomena. For Hegel, the distinction was found between the knower and the thing known. Hegel died the following year, without the chance meeting in Copenhagen that favored the longer lived Schleiermacher. Still, Kierkegaard encountered far more Danish Hegelians than he did Schleiermacherians. One such Hegalian was Heiberg, of whom the young Kierkegaard sought desperately to enter into his circle of aesthetics and criticism. One of Kierkegaard’s pseudonyms, Victor Eremita, even gave thanks to Heiberg, but Heiberg was too devoted to Hegel, and Hegel’s flaws began to creep into Søren’s consciousness.

While Schleiermacher objectively addressed the infinite in the individual through a collective, Hegel treated the entirety of human existence as an object of research. Schleiermacher called for passion and Hegel lacked all experiential knowledge. Kierkegaard the Pietist was closer to Schleiermacher and was unable to side with the objective detached Hegel. Hegel was nearly universally adored in Copenhagen. The Danish Hegelians only disagreed upon particulars of Hegel’s thought and not with the system as a whole. Kierkegaard found few allies to join in his criticism.

With the prevailing mode of thought connected to Hegel, it should come as no surprise that Kierkegaard’s Masters dissertation, published in 1841, was an evaluation of
Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In the work, titled *The Concept of Irony*, Kierkegaard tried to evaluate Romanticism from the Hegelian perspective, and in so doing dismantles not only Romanticism, but Hegelian thought. It is rather similar in technique to Schleiermacher, using Enlightenment philosophy to dismantle Enlightenment objections to Pietism. It is also within *The Concept of Irony* that Kierkegaard’s continual admiration of Socrates becomes known. Socrates, throughout Kierkegaard’s authorship, paradoxically resembles, reinforces, and contradicts Kierkegaard’s understanding of Christ. Kierkegaard likely inherits his love of Socrates from Zinzendorf, who called himself the Dresden Socrates, and from Schleiermacher’s work on Plato.

While *The Concept of Irony* was the culmination of Kierkegaard’s academic career, his decade at the university and his decade and a half after, produce a synthesis of Hegel with Schleiermacher, along with Socrates and Christ. Kierkegaard liked to play with opposites, illustrating their similarities while teasing out the significance of their differences. Kierkegaard made heroes out of anti-heroes and illustrated the deficiency of magnates and luminaries. In his education, he rejected the systems produced by both Schleiermacher and Hegel, while producing a third option in line with his vision for Danish Lutheran Pietism. This vision is grounded in Christian experience illuminated by but not dependent upon the rational systems of the day. Kierkegaard benefited from the intellectual shifts that occurred at the beginning of the century with Schleiermacher’s *On Religion* and Hegel’s concept of Absolute Spirit.
The Earthquake and the Sorrowful & Sinful Søren

“My God, my God, unhappy and tormented was my childhood, full of torments my youth. I have lamented, I have sighed, and I have wept. Yet I thank Thee, not as the wise Sovereign; no, no, I thank Thee, the one who art infinite love, for having acted thus!”

In late July 1834 Søren Kierkegaard lost his mother Anne. Mynster performed her funeral three days later. In a surprisingly loving act, Michael had ten carriages accompany her casket for her funeral. This was more than the law allowed, but Michael felt it necessary and no one contradicted him. Unfortunately for the Kierkegaards, death was becoming routine at this point, in the span of two years Petrea, Nicoline, Niels, and now Anne had died. The large household which once was the home of seven children, now only held two, Søren and Peter. They were left there alone with their increasingly melancholy father, the twice widower Michael. Søren wrote “then it was that ... I felt the silence of death gathering around me.” The house was now too large for them and it appeared to be a curse to Michael.

Increasingly Michael viewed his wealth and his life as a curse from God. Neither Søren nor Michael Kierkegaard believed that wealth could be sanctified by its use as Francke did. One of the most widely debated, yet pivotal events in Søren Kierkegaard’s life is known as the Earthquake. In all likelihood the Earthquake is not an event in Søren’s life at all, but in the life of his father, an event which dominated the household...


31 Josiah Thompson, Kierkegaard (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1973), 44.
and weighed heavily upon the family. There are three possible sources of the
Earthquake. The first is the curse that Michael uttered against God in his youth. The
Earthquake then becomes the radical point where Michael’s life changes for the better
after his impious utterance. Most would assume that increasing and unending wealth
would be a grace from the Almighty, but Michael’s wealth always showed him his
personal deficiencies. Wealth was a blight, not a blessing.

The second view of the Earthquake is a sexual sin. It is known that Michael was
unchaste Georg Brandes, an early biographer of Søren, asked Peter about this. Peter
admitted his father’s obvious impropriety with Anne after the death of Kristine. It is
clear that he impregnated Anne before their marriage, but it is unclear if this is the sin
that could be the Earthquake. Others postulate that Michael visited a brothel and
contracted a venereal disease, such as syphilis, that possibly was passed on to Anne and
his children at their births. Some even place the melancholy of the three surviving
Kierkegaards as side effects of the sexually transmitted disease. While outlandish sexual
escapades are intriguing, once again there is no evidence to their veracity.

It is also possible that the Earthquake was Michael’s recollection of his earlier
sins to his surviving sons. Rather than a single moment, it was the dissolution of Michael
in the eyes of Søren that becomes the Earthquake, that fractures his image of his father as
the model of a Pietist, and forces Søren to fashion his own Pietistic experiences rather
than relying upon his father. Therefore Michael’s death becomes the Earthquake.

Michael’s life certainly plays out like a satirical play. Michael is a reverse Job,
where the world collapses around him and he himself somehow escapes the calamities
and indeed benefits by them. Søren believed that he inherited not only his father’s wealth
but also his father’s guilt. His own brilliance and that of his siblings was a taunt to the old man who longed for two worlds to which he never belonged, both to the poor Jutland and the elite Copenhagen. His family were brilliant elites who illustrated the deficiencies of the decadent Danes. His wife was Leah and not Rachael, someone who shared his past, but could not understand his present, someone he lusted after then loathed, as she was a reminder of his sin and failures.

The dating of the Earthquake is difficult, as well as the dating of when the Earthquake became known to Søren and Peter. Søren’s journal entries only confuse the matter, he states, “I surmised that my father’s great age was not a divine blessing, but rather a curse; that the distinguished talents of our family existed only to create mutual friction; then I felt the silence of death increasing about me, when in my father I beheld an unfortunate who must outlive us all.”32 Clearly Michael does not outlive them all, but with the death of Anne and five of the seven children in 1834 this is not an outlandish thought.

Whether the Earthquake was his father’s blaspheming God, his father’s sexual impropriety, or something else connected with his father, Peter and Søren felt as if they were inheritors of a curse. It is also clear that Søren’s demeanor changed when his mother died. The Earthquake could be the expectation of Søren’s own mortality. With the death of his mother, all of his sisters and two of his brothers, Søren had grown accustomed to losing the objects of his love.

Søren Kierkegaard constantly assumed his own death was near, and that loving his life results in losing it as well. In his journal Søren wrote, “I probably have 30 years yet to live, or perhaps 40, or maybe only a day: therefore I have decided to use this day, or, I should say, these 30 years, or, I should say, this day that is perhaps mine to live I have decided to use it in such a way, that, even if not a single day in my life has been well used, this one, with God's help, will be.” Only two options exist for the twenty-one year old, to live a life of an aristocrat enjoying all the hedonistic pleasures of life or to create his own cloister through a rejection of his own life. Instead of loving his life, the only way to preserve it is through melancholy and despair. Søren tried both of these techniques, one and then the other and then both at the same time.

The first thing Søren did was to break away from his father, to try to expand his life outside of his father’s control. He still relied heavily upon his father’s money, but he pictured himself independent. In 1835 Søren tried to live the life of a young aristocrat, the theater and opera dominated his passions. He loved Mozart and the passionate abandon of Don Juan. He spent lavishly on food, clothing, books, cigars, and rented carriages. Søren spent money he himself did not have. This forced him time and time again to go to his father and ask for some more. Still he went to the fashionable coffeehouses, restaurants, ballets, and operas. At his lowest point Søren became a drunk and thought of suicide.

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In July he traveled to Gilleleje, where he was known as “the crazy student” by the locals. Some even argue that Søren repeated the sins of his father and went to a bordello during this time. Søren’s concupiscence was fueled by his friends P. S. Moller and Jorgen Jorgensen. While Søren, Moller and Jorgensen were wild students, no real scandal exists at this time, and there is no evidence of a sexual encounter. Walter Lowrie suggests that even with the absence of evidence, the hedonistic Søren needs a sexual fall. Lowrie believes that it is not only fitting that it would have occurred, but also it could be used to explain the melancholic Kierkegaard later.

Søren grew up attending two churches and communing with greater regularity than most of his fellow Danes. While he still attended church regularly during this period of rebellion, his frequency of communing stopped. Søren was rebelling against both his father and his heavenly Father following his mother’s death. He lost respect for most clerics, and not for any good reason. Pastor Kolthoff was the only one who he respected and the only one he received communion from in 1837. In July of that year he went to both confession and communion. The two years of wild living were beginning to wear thin. While Michael may have been a Job, Søren begins to resemble Solomon, who sees vanity in the hedonistic pleasures of this world. The season for rebellion was coming near an end, and it was all vanity. Another year would pass before he had his first of two conversion experiences, but the pleasures of this world were vanishing.

One pleasure remained. It was this same year that Søren first met eyes with the woman he loved for the rest of his life, Regina Olsen, who was eight years his junior. She was only fourteen and it would be another few years before they met again, but a chance encounter stirred an interest in her that he held to until his death.
Repentance and Reconciliation

“Humiliated and broken by the thought of our fault; strangers before
men through our sins with no word of consolation; yet our repentance
has found a way to Thy throne, Thou merciful God, and has found grace
in Thine ears.”

Like Wesley, Søren Kierkegaard had multiple conversion experiences.
Kierkegaard had two conversion experiences ten years apart. Just like Perkins, Francke, and Wesley, Kierkegaard experienced personal encounters with his God that called him to repentance and spurred on his life and theological development. Kierkegaard’s first experience occurred in May of 1838. Over the last year Kierkegaard was gripped by the banality of the aesthetic life. He had even gone to communion once, but still the lure of earthly gratification had its hold on him. This came to an end when his friend Moller died in the spring of 1838. Following Moller’s death, he began writing in his journal once again, and he sought to find meaning in both life and in death. The death of his mother and siblings four years earlier began a period of revolt, but Søren learned from Moller that rebellion too brings death.

On the nineteenth of May, Søren penned the words, “It is a question of understanding my destiny, of seeing what the Deity really wants me to do. It is a question of finding a truth that is truth for me, of finding the idea for which I am willing to live and die.” The life of a hedonistic aristocrat was not a life he was willing to die for.

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34 Søren Kierkegaard, The Prayers of Kierkegaard, 54.
Moller’s sacrifice would not be in vain. Kierkegaard now understood that only a life in service to God is worth both his life and his death. The question remained for Kierkegaard as to exactly what form this life in service was to take. He was uncertain if he should become a parson, get married, or live alone as an author and social critic? Søren tried all three, but only one ever worked.

After reconciling with his God, Søren reconciled with his father. For the last four years Søren only turned to his father when he needed money. Now he chose to reach out to his father once again. The two patched up their relationship months before Michael died. Michael expected to outlive Søren and Peter, but on the ninth of August 1838 he died. Søren and Peter approached Bishop Mynster, who had performed all of their family’s funerals and who was Michael’s priest. Surprisingly Mynster acted as if he could not recall who Michael was. This oversight infuriated Søren who was naturally in grief over his father’s death. His father was his whole world. Even his rebellion against God was wrapped up with his father. Michael’s death was also somewhat liberating. While both Peter and Søren loved their father, he was domineering and they both could now live the lives they wanted for themselves. They also had an inheritance that should easily last them the rest of their lives even if they chose not to work. The curse was also somewhat lifted. For the last four or so years the brothers both believed their own death would occur before their fathers. This caused Søren to rebel and Peter to excel in the church, but now Michael paid his own ransom.

With his father’s death, Søren gathered his inheritance. Michael left more than money and property, but also his Piety. Søren’s understanding of Christianity and what it expects from the individual Christian came largely from his father. While Søren rarely
mentions the Moravians, directly he never really abandoned them, or Pietism. Throughout his life the Brodresocietet remained central in his understanding of what the church should be, and what God ordained for humanity, a life that knows God through the experiences of God and the Christian life. Theology was not simply knowledge of facts about God but a life lived with God. Søren wrote “Of what use would it be for me to be able to formulate the meaning of Christianity, to be able to explain many specific points—if it had no deeper meaning for me and for my life?”36 This experience of God even included the Kierkegaards’ melancholy. Søren proclaimed, “Nonetheless, I am indebted to my father for everything, from the very beginning. Melancholy as he was, when he saw me melancholy, his plea to me was ‘Make sure that you really love Jesus Christ.’”37

Even when Søren Kierkegaard was absent from the Church, the Church was never really absent from Kierkegaard. The rich hymnology of the Moravians and Kingo and Hans Adolph Brorson38 molded and modeled the life in Christianity that Michael Kierkegaard wanted for his children. Brorson’s hymns stressed the inwardness of the Christian life. Unlike Grudtvig and others, whose hymns were used for political reasons, Brorson’s hymns were apolitical and personal instruments of Christian life. They were often sung at Syngetime or Moravian “song service.” They also remained entrenched in

37 Joakim Garff, Søren Kierkegaard A Biography, 566.
38 1694—1764.
Søren’s consciousness, as references to Brorson’s hymns are found in his works, including *Practice in Christianity*.

In addition to Søren finding comfort in hymnography of the church of his youth, Søren’s artistic style emerged out of the Moravian context. Søren was always far more brash and confrontational than placid. The Moravians, like Halle Pietism, shared in this confrontational style. While Halle chose to work within the systems, Zinzendorf’s Herrnhutters chose to create their own system that rivaled the state and local churches. The potential chaos was something that Søren was always comfortable with, even later when he launched his attack upon Christendom. Søren also appreciated how the Moravians always ventured to put their beliefs into practice. This was his main objection with the state church and with many theological systems. The state church appeared healthy outwardly, but inside they were dead, systems resigned to books on shelves, and not the lives of those who read them.

Following his conversion experience and the death of his father, Søren evaluated what it truly means to call God, the father. “My father died then I got another father in his place: God in heaven and then I discovered that my first father had really been my stepfather and only in an unreal sense my first father.”

With Michael’s death, Søren was free to truly become a child of God, not just the child of the rich hosier.

With this new freedom and independence, Søren ventured off to engage his own cultured despisers, Danish society. Berlin and Copenhagen are radically different and so were their cultured elites and the correctives to them. Just as Schleiermacher engaged in

literary critics, so too did Kierkegaard. Schleiermacher supported his friend Schlegel, and his romantic if not pornographic novel, Lucinde. Kierkegaard’s first published book *From the Papers of One Still Living*[^40] was a lengthy review of Hans Christian Andersen's 1837 novel, *Only a Fiddler*. The exchange between the two was recorded by Andersen, who said “When we met on the street he told me that he would write a review of it, and that I would surely be more satisfied with it than with earlier reviews, since, he granted, I had been misunderstood! A long time passed. He read the book again, and his initial good impression was obliterated.”[^41] Kierkegaard’s entrance into published society was as the fork. His intent to flatter faltered and instead he panned the most significant literary figure in Denmark. This criticism likely had little effect on Andersen at the time. Later when Kierkegaard’s reputation was well known, this only served to reinforce Andersen’s views of Kierkegaard.

Now that he was a published critic, Kierkegaard turned his attention to the press itself. He was a staunch conservative and royalist. The press’ involvement in the political life of Denmark was not. He wanted to know who the press was responsible to. Kierkegaard also questioned the motivation of the press, wondering if its mission was to discover truth or fabricate it. Kierkegaard was deeply troubled with the power that the press had, especially when it could sway so many and there was no accountability for its mistakes. While a conservative royalist, he was not opposed to the press entirely and he

[^40]: Published September 1838.

still wanted the people to be engaged in the public sphere. For Kierkegaard, the public should support the monarch and the given structure and not try to reinvent the wheel. A decade later with the revolutions that swept through Europe, Kierkegaard raised these same objections once again.

It was also at this time that the issue of women’s emancipation emerged in Denmark. Mathilde Fibiger published a novel about a young girl named Clara Raphael. Clara was every man’s equal. The work was a not so veiled argument for the emancipation of women. Søren wrote a review of the work. Surprisingly Kierkegaard’s review critiqued the story structure and completely glossed over the point of the work. The very idea of the emancipation of women was too incongruous a notion for Kierkegaard. The absurdity of women in the political sphere was echoed later when Kierkegaard criticized Heiberg for opening his philosophy lectures to the society of cultured women. Kierkegaard believed that women did not possess the requisite skills to follow philosophy. Undoubtedly this was a lesson he learned from his father. Michael did not send his daughters off to receive the same education as Peter and Søren. Furthermore, Anne’s education and intelligence was always treated as deficient when anyone ever bothered to mention it. Later, in *Either/Or*, Kierkegaard’s character Judge William argues that women are “more perfect than man,” but he also proclaims “I hate all that detestable rhetoric about the emancipation of women. God forbid that it may ever happen.”

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Michael’s desire for his two surviving sons was that they became priests. The parson maintained a respectable position in society and earned a comfortable living. Peter had already done this before Michael’s death. There was a question at this point if the younger brother would join him. Søren spent two semesters in the Royal Pastoral Seminary. At the conclusion of this time he received a certificate to preach, but he was never ordained. He gave a sermon in Holmens Church on the January 12, 1841. The sermon was based on Philippians 1:21 “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain.” Kierkegaard found the one thing for him to live for. Still he was not sure if he should apply his gifts to the pulpit or only with the pen. His tutors were impressed with his sermon and the subject matter, but wondered if it required too much from the congregation in the pew to understand.

**Regina Olsen**

“*Father in Heaven, grant that throughout our life we do not forget our promise, our engagement, that we do not forget to come to Thy wedding.*”

Since the chance encounter in 1837, Søren Kierkegaard had been in love with Regina Olsen. The Olsens were a respectable family and their now eighteen year old daughter was engaged to her tutor Friedrich Schlegel. Regina was a pious Herrnhutter.

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43 1840-41.


45 Some accounts of her name translate it Regine, rather than Regina.

46 This was not the same Schlegel associated with Schleiermacher, rather this one was Danish and a prominent member of Copenhagen society.
One of her friends recalled in a letter that Regina attended the gatherings of the holy, the Moravians, and she “found it satisfying to read *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis, and you sought your refuge in God.”\(^{47}\) Regina was the perfect fit, although unattainable.

Kierkegaard likely encountered Regina in church and the small city of Copenhagen, but he had little to offer a wife except for his inherited wealth and his eternal devotion. They were both equally devoted to God. Surprisingly Kierkegaard recalls that the two of them never had any “profound religious conversations.”\(^{48}\) Still he somehow perceived her heart. Kierkegaard worked on making himself a man worthy of her. There was still the matter of her engagement with Schlegel. Not only did Kierkegaard have to prove himself to God, himself, and Regina, but he needed to prove himself to her father as well. In the 1830s amid Kierkegaard’s rebellion this was not possible. Still Kierkegaard pushed forward with his courtship.

In January of 1840 he noticed that Regina went weekly to a singing lesson. Knowing who the singing teacher was, he found a coffeehouse close to the house so he could see her and hear her sing. Some of his friends noticed his weekly scheduled trips to a coffeehouse and asked him about it. He claimed it was the best coffee in town, and he even made them try it. “A few of them went there one day and tasted—naturally finding

\(^{47}\) Bruce H. Kimmse, *Encounters With Kierkegaard: A Life as seen by His Contemporaries*, 35 - Regine Schlegel as told to Hanne Mourier in 1896.

\(^{48}\) Bruce H. Kimmse, *Encounters With Kierkegaard: A Life as seen by His Contemporaries*, 35 - Regine Schlegel as told to Hanne Mourier in 1896.
it very poor, as indeed it was. I disputed that with them hotly."

Still he regularly sat drinking bad coffee and listening to the object of his infatuation, believing it to be the best coffee in the world, for that hour it was. Those years of attending the opera and learning from Don Juan were now being tested. Kierkegaard wondered if he too could become a seducer and attain for himself the object of his desires. Unlike Don Juan, Kierkegaard did not seek after lust but love. These stories are charming if reciprocated and dreadful if not. Although she was engaged she remembered Søren from their earlier visit and was interested in him as well.

It wasn’t until the summer when he took his official exams in theology that he could publically pursue Regina. Shortly he would possess his license to preach and her father may consider his petition. When the exams were completed, Søren directly went to her house. The two had for months been romantically entangled without ever stating it. When Søren arrived Regina was singing and sitting at her piano. After a few moments he took the book from her and discarded it, proclaiming that she was his heart’s desire, and that he longed after her for years. Unlike Wesley, Kierkegaard’s declaration of love left no room for ambiguity. She responded in kind. He tried to warn her about his melancholy but she did not care, and for a while his melancholy vanished. Søren also discounted Schlegel, considering their engagement a fraud compared to the love that he had for her. He proposed on September tenth.

Nearly immediately after the proposal was accepted, Kierkegaard felt that there was a “divine protest.” Søren had long ridiculed the talk of a woman’s power over men,

but he found in Regina a young, beautiful woman, who loved him fully and who
surrendered herself to him entirely. Kierkegaard discovered he could no longer return the
affections he had for Regina; he could not surrender himself to her. Kierkegaard believed
that he was already engaged and his previous engagement superseded his new one.
Kierkegaard believed that he was engaged to God, and while Regina could break off her
engagement to Schlegel, he could not break off his engagement with God. This seems
cruel, as indeed it was, but Hanne Mourier, a mutual friend, tells Regina that
“Kierkegaard never misused your love to torment you or to carry out spiritual
experiments on you, as has been commonly but incorrectly assumed. It was his serious
intention to marry you when he became engaged.”50 His intention could not come to
fruition. Kierkegaard shares much of the Pietist notions of intimacy with God that
Wesley does and unfortunately for both of them, their intimacy with God only served to
harm their relationships with the women in their lives.

The question now before him was how to break off the engagement. While he
was fairly coy in the courtship and he warned her of his melancholy, he hoped that he
could persuade her to break off the engagement. This thought was ridiculous as he had
convinced her that he loved her and she sacrificed her engagement to Schlegel for him.
Additionally women simply did not break off engagements in nineteenth-century
Denmark. Søren tried to distance himself and pretended that he no longer cared for her.
For two months he attempted this course as he wanted her to lose interest in him. Instead

50 Bruce H. Kirmmse, *Encounters With Kierkegaard: A Life as seen by His Contemporaries*, 33 - Regine
Schlegel as told to Hanne Mourier in 1896.
she pursued him with the same determination that he had for her months earlier. She was now bound to him forever. She even invoked his father, stating that Michael would want him to be married. Still Søren did not believe that he could marry her. Ultimately he acted badly in public, pretending to be crazy, and he became a public embarrassment for her. This preserved her honor and allowed her father to nullify the engagement. The problem was that everyone saw beyond the façade. Kierkegaard was not crazy, rather just a scoundrel; he seduced a woman and then broke her heart. Kierkegaard tried to explain himself in a letter to her father, but it was returned unopened. When he received the letter he wrote, “I passed the night weeping in my bed.” Peter even tried to intervene, but Søren exclaimed that if he did, “I will shoot a bullet through your head.”

Søren needed to live with the guilt of his actions. The engagement was his decision and the repercussions needed to be accepted. Søren wished he could marry her, but he feared that he would only be condemning her. Søren was convinced that one of the two of them would end up dead. She would either wear herself out trying to deal with him and his peculiarities, possibly growing despondent herself, or he would die and she would feel guilty for his death. Kierkegaard believed himself to be so miserable that he had to reject the woman he loved. Just as with the Earthquake he realized that he could live only if he rejected life. If he embraced his life and married Regina, he would die. For a while he believed that his father paid the ransom for his curse but now the curse was returning. Søren needed to pay for his own sins, those sins that he accrued in the years between his mother’s and father’s deaths. He escaped his own death by reconciling

51 Walter Lowrie, Kierkegaard Volume One, 223.
with God, and he now must accept the conditions of that reconciliation. Later he recognized that his own sin was “that I did not have faith, faith to believe that with God all things are possible.”

Only two options at this point lay before him, the aesthetic or ethical life. The aesthetic life held a marriage to a woman he loved but was doomed to failure. The ethical was a life of solitude and writing for God. Søren loved the aesthetic but was called to the ethical.

Though she loved Søren, Regina married Schlegel. Her old suiter still cared for her, and the two were married on November 3, 1847. Søren wanted to stay connected to Regina and wrote a letter to Schlegel to this affect. Not surprisingly, Schlegel replied with a polite but definite refusal. According to contemporary accounts, while Fritz Schlegel refused to welcome his now wife’s former fiancé into their home, “He harbored no petty distrust of her old memories, even though he had firsthand knowledge of how strained she had been by the first engagement.”

They were both content in their marriage, and according to Raphael Meyer, a friend of both Søren and Regina, “Schlegel did not pass judgment on Kierkegaard and bore no rival’s hatred toward him.” The Schlegels and Søren saw each other around town and at church, but few if any words were ever exchanged.

52 Walter Lowrie, Kierkegaard Volume One, 226.

53 Bruce H. Kirmmse, Encounters With Kierkegaard: A Life as seen by His Contemporaries, 41 - Regine Schlegel as told to Raphael Meyer in 1898-99.

54 Bruce H. Kirmmse, Encounters With Kierkegaard: A Life as seen by His Contemporaries, 41 - Regine Schlegel as told to Raphael Meyer in 1898-99.
Fritz and Regina were married for seven years before he was named the Governor General of the Danish West Indies. The two left in March of 1855. On Regina’s last day in Copenhagen before leaving she purposely crossed Sören’s path. She said quietly to him “God bless you—may all go well with you!” He nodded back. This was their last encounter as Sören died a few months later.

Sören had loved Regina from the first moment he saw her until the moment he died. While it tormented her, he broke off the engagement because of his love for her. His love is obvious if not inexplicable. Raphael Meyer, claimed that “Her love for Kierkegaard was, as it had been from the very beginning, a spiritual love. This love she sustained all her life.” He remained unmarried and relatively alone for the rest of his life, while she married the rival suitor. Although she published no books, she remained a central figure in Danish literature as the one time fiancée of Sören Kierkegaard. Regina lived until 1904, eight years longer than Fritz and nearly fifty years longer than Sören. She remained apprised of his works and reputation, and was excited when Kierkegaard was being read in German. She quipped that the French will never understand him.

It was only after the engagement was broken off that Kierkegaard returned to his mission. The mission was so important that he could not share it with Regina. He must write, but to do so he could not be around her, so he fled to Berlin. Though he was 270

55 The Danish West Indies consisted of the islands of St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix.


miles away, he remembered her in his prayers every day, if not twice a day, and he could not stop thinking about her. He was there only for a year and he wrote more in that year than anyone could expect. It should come as little surprise that the work he produced is a voluminous text concerning love and the necessity of choice between the aesthetical and ethical life.

**Kierkegaard the Author**

> “And if one says that earthly love makes one eloquent, how much greater reason, O Lord, for saying that the love one bears for Thee will make men eloquent, Thou who hast Thyself formed the mouth of man for the word.”

Prior to his flight to Berlin, Kierkegaard was already a public figure in Copenhagen. The son of one of the wealthiest citizens, his involvement in theater, his connection to the political and social elites, his intriguing romance with Regina Olsen, as well as his critique of Hans Christian Andersen all served to place Kierkegaard as one a few Danish notables. While not famous, he was well known. On February 20, 1843 this all changed. This was the day when *Either/Or: A Fragment of Life* was published. *Either/Or* was actually published with a pseudonym or actually several pseudonyms which only served to increase the intrigue of the work.

Kierkegaard’s sojourn to Berlin was twofold. The first was to flee from the woman he loved yet abandoned; the second was to write *Either/Or*. Kierkegaard recalls that “When I left her I begged God for one thing, that I might succeed in writing and

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The immense work partly serves as a fictionalized account of their relationship. Likely the fiction outweighs the non-fiction portion of the vast tome. In a letter to Hans Christian Andersen, Henriette Wulff described the work, “It is supposed to be quite strange, the first part foil of Don Juanism, skepticism, etc., and the second part toned down and conciliating, ending with a sermon that is said to be quite excellent. The whole book has attracted much attention. It has not yet been discussed publicly by anyone, but it surely will be. It is actually supposed to be by a Kierkegaard who has adopted a pseudonym: do you know him?”

As described, the work has three distinct parts. It opens with a fictionalized account of the editor Victor Eremita, the victorious hermit, finding several loose sheets of paper. He then organizes it into two distinct authorships. The first belongs to the pseudonym A, and the second B, who is later identified as Judge William. The first part contains a section that Copenhagen society found delightful yet scandalous. It is known as the *Diary of the Seducer*. Before the *Diary*, the first part contains additional stories of seduction. There are two womanizing seducers, Don Juan, and a second called Johannes the Seducer.

While tantalizing, the stories of seduction and seducers serves only to show the limits of the aesthetical life. The purpose of *Either/Or* is to address the differences between an aesthetic life and an ethical life. In the first part, which contains the *Diary* and the Don Juanism, the appeal and limits of the aesthetical life are laid out, and showed


60 Bruce H. Kirmmse, *Encounters With Kierkegaard: A Life as seen by His Contemporaries*, 57 - Henriette Wulff to Hans Christian Andersen, February 20, 1843.
to be appealing but ultimately fruitless. In the second, the values of the ethical life are championed. Only later will Kierkegaard add a third stage to this discussion, namely the religious. A greater description of these spheres will be addressed in chapter eight. The work was a huge success for the day. The initial run of 525 copies sold out quickly and a second edition followed in 1849.

The construction of this work was at least in part indebted to Schleiermacher and his letters about *Lucinde*. In Schleiermacher’s treatment of *Lucinde*, he invented varieties of letters with different and often conflicting arguments about the work. Schleiermacher only briefly toyed with this philosophical and literary device. Half of Kierkegaard’s authorship was dependent upon it. Most of Kierkegaard’s authorship requires the reader to assume responsibility for their own interpretative decisions. Kierkegaard sets up arguments as a dialogue with his readers where he expects them to wrestle with the ideas he provides, then ultimately decides for them that one option is superior to the others. This option is of course the position that he develops further. Unlike other authors who may use a similar style, Kierkegaard’s bias is fairly well hidden and depending on the pseudonym the conclusions are not always something consistent with Kierkegaard himself or with his other works. This creates an added level of complexity when interpreting Kierkegaard through his pseudonymous works. The opinions belong primarily to the pseudonym and only secondarily to Kierkegaard himself.

Not all of Kierkegaard’s works follow the pattern of *Either/Or*. About a third of his works are written with a pseudonym as the author or editor. Kierkegaard utilized a dozen or so different pseudonyms, either as authors, editors, or narrative characters within a work. The purpose of the pseudonyms was not to hide his identity, rather to
address different topics from different positions, just as Schleiermacher did with his letters on *Lucinde*. The use of pseudonyms and what they represent will be addressed in chapter eight.

The middle third of Kierkegaard’s writings consist of “upbuilding discourses.” Kierkegaard chooses to call these upbuilding discourses rather than sermons partly because they are never delivered as sermons, and partly in keeping with the Pietistic traditions of the Moravians and other Pietists who wrote upbuilding letters to one another for the purpose of encouragement, theological training, and correctives. The dating of the upbuilding discourses correspond rather closely with Kierkegaard’s pseudonymic authorship. In many ways he wrote things in pairs, one for philosophical and theological speculation and the other for edification of himself and his Christian audience. The last third of Kierkegaard’s authorship is found in his letters and journals. Both the letters and the journals were written sporadically, often in spurts and fits. Kierkegaard’s authorship was schizophrenic. He went back and forth between multiple works and types of works at the same time. Many of these works are signed with different authors and often at odds with each other.

While the authorship may be schizophrenic, Kierkegaard’s corpus taken as a whole is not. Throughout his entire body of literature, Kierkegaard’s mission is clear, namely to make the Christian’s life hard. Even before his assault on Christendom Kierkegaard believed that Christianity had become too easy. His works serve as a corrective against this. In doing so, Kierkegaard remains connected with the promethean Christianity of Francke as well as the rigors expected of the Christian life that Wesley, Spener, Perkins, and Arndt expected of their followers. Kierkegaard’s training in Pietism
at the Brodresocietet continued to play out in his authorship. Kierkegaard’s philosophy of faith was secondary to his mission of making Christianity a difficult and experiential reality for his readers.

Following the publication of Either/Or in February of 1843, Kierkegaard wrote Repetition and Fear and Trembling that same year, each with different pseudonyms. Over the next two years Kierkegaard wrote Philosophical Fragments, The Concept of Anxiety, Stages on Life’s Way, Two Ages, and Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments. Throughout these three years he also wrote several upbuilding discourses. Then in March of 1846, Kierkegaard ceased writing. In actuality he continued to write things, but they were no longer for the public consumption.

It is at this time that his journal proper really begins. He kept a journal only off and on for the first part of his life, but now his journal was a focus. The journaling is likely something else he learned from the Moravians, as the practice of writing journals was especially common among the marginalized Pietists throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth century. Kierkegaard, like his Pietist precursors, was keeping a spiritual autobiography of his life. The journals should be read in this same light. They are not only his thoughts on the occurrences of the day, but also his working out and expression of faith to himself and whoever reads them in the future. Kierkegaard did intend that his journals be read. Many of his comments in the journal are declarations and judgments on key figures in Denmark or the practice of Christianity.

His published works always caused a stir, which for the last three years he enjoyed. Now in his third year of authorship, Kierkegaard believed that he accomplished what God wanted him to and he entertained the idea of becoming a simple obscure
country parson. His melancholy was overcoming him and he already wrote more than anyone could expect of him. As much as he may have enjoyed Copenhagen, the countryside had its lure. Kierkegaard expected to pick up where he left off in 1841, when he received his license to preach. He desired now to finally become a priest. He wrote “The wish to be a priest out in the country has always attracted me and has remained in the background of my soul. It attracted me both as an idyllic wish in contrast with a strenuous existence, and also religiously, in order to find time and repose to sorrow rightly for the sins I personally may have committed.”61

The Corsair Affair

“But whatever care Thou dost inflict upon us, let us receive it from Thy hand with humility and give us the strength to bear it.” 62

Before his exit from Copenhagen society, Kierkegaard felt there were a few loose ends to be tied up. The local tabloid, The Corsair, published a review of one of Kierkegaard’s works shortly after its release from the press. Kierkegaard expected a review, but what he did not expect was the speed at which it came out. Kierkegaard believed that this eliminated the possibility that the work was read, with all earnestness or at all. The review was positive, still Kierkegaard loathed the possibility that his work could be reviewed that early, therefore he believed the positive review to be false and actually a negative one. The review was trivial and should have remained a trivial matter for Kierkegaard, whose reaction was a bit extreme. The extremity of what was to follow


is all together more curious for someone contemplating retirement away from the center of society.

For Kierkegaard, the Corsair was society itself, and before he left it he wanted to ensure that what he was leaving behind would be treated fairly. The Corsair was a tabloid that often lampooned prominent members of Danish society. The paper itself was rather remarkable, created by Goldschmidt, who is described as a young and unscrupulous Jew. Goldschmidt mixed scandalous gossip with intellectual events. In many ways the paper should have failed, since it was not respectable. Instead it was one of the most widely circulated papers in Copenhagen. The intrigue of the gossip outweighed the distaste the readers had for it.

To get back at the apparent slight Kierkegaard received from the Corsair, he unmasked and humiliated one of the pseudonymic authors of the paper. Unlike Kierkegaard, who used pseudonyms to entertain a different point of view, most pseudonyms were used to hide the author’s true identity. Kierkegaard just shamed one of Goldschmidt’s contributors. Goldschmidt returned with a brutal attack upon Kierkegaard. It began with a series of cartoons depicting Kierkegaard as an eccentric and deformed magister. The reading public loved the satirical take on the witty and brilliant son of the wealthy hosier. The fork lost its ability to bite back. The public, and indeed Kierkegaard’s legacy, grew in the cartoons. As stated earlier, scholars today still debate if Kierkegaard was deformed in any way and if so to what extent. The greatest source of this comes from the Corsair.

Kierkegaard always believed that he was a part of Copenhagen society, but that society was now laughing at him. He became an object of derision. Kierkegaard
imagined he was flying with a great flock of Danish geese, one of the crowd. Now under
the humiliation of the Corsair, Kierkegaard viewed his fellow Danes as a swarm of bees
each threatening to sting him in his humiliation, and a few choosing to do so.
Kierkegaard was not the corrective of society that he believed himself to be. Rather he
became its adversary, and he was losing. In some ways Kierkegaard took the entire affair
far too personal. Hans Christian Andersen was also pushed around by the satirists, but he
brushed off his criticism much better than Kierkegaard. It is also possible that the
severity of the attacks was far more accurate with Kierkegaard than Andersen. Likely
Kierkegaard’s sarcastic reputation contributed to the extremity of the attack upon him and
he reaped what he sowed, satirical humiliation.

The Corsair affair is a pivotal event in the life of Kierkegaard as well as the
publication itself, and its repercussions were felt throughout all of Scandinavia. Søren
Kierkegaard faced such humiliation that following the event the name Søren was nearly
abandoned by parents. The name went from one of the more popular throughout
Scandinavia to near obscurity throughout the lifetime of Kierkegaard, as parents did not
want to connect their children to the legacy of the melancholy Dane. The affair had
lasting impact on Goldschmidt as well. While characterized as a man without scruples,
he possessed at least one. The whole affair had gone too far for Goldschmidt’s taste.
Kierkegaard was truly humiliated rather than gently mocked. Goldschmidt closed the
magazine down and left Copenhagen in October for over a year. For Kierkegaard the
thought of retiring to the country and becoming a priest was gone. Kierkegaard realized
his work as an author could not end on this note.
1848 Revolution and Revulsion

“Lord Jesus Christ, let Thy Holy Spirit enlighten our minds and convince us thoroughly of our sin, so that, humbled and with downcast eyes, we may recognize that we stand far, far off and with a sigh, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner;’ but then let it befall us by Thy grace as it befell that publican who went up to the Temple to pray and went down to his house justified.”

It nearly goes without saying that 1848 was a pivotal year for Europe. The year witnessed most of the entrenched European powers conceding to the masses who sought to liberalize their countries politics. The essential conflict was between the old dynastic powers and the rising public sphere whose participants no longer viewed themselves as subjects to a monarch, rather they belonged to a nation. The rising tide of intellectual revolutionary fervor was flooding the shores of old Europe. Many of the revolutionaries throughout 1848 Europe sought liberty and wanted these rights enshrined in constitutions. Instead, when the tide waters rescinded, most of the revolutionaries hopes were swept out to sea. The liberal constitutions that were granted were quickly undone, the monarchs emerged mostly unscathed. The lasting ramification for most of Europe was the creation of the nation state. Eventually the monarch’s claim of dynastic authority fades, not into liberty for the citizens of Europe but xenophobic nationalism. This form of nationalism sought to redraw the borders of the state, excluding the other, and often resulting in a catastrophic loss of life. Pietism had a role in the creation of the nation state and this will be briefly addressed in chapter twelve.

Of the countless revolutions in Europe in 1848, they all reversed track with the sole exception of Denmark. In March of 1848 King Friedrich VII (d. 1863) appointed liberal government ministers to construct a Danish constitution. Denmark was transformed into a constitutional monarchy with near universal manhood suffrage, unparalleled in the world at the time. Friedrich also tried to incorporate the Duchy of Schleswig into the new Danish kingdom. Not surprisingly, this led to war with the German states. The whole of the nineteenth century was one disaster after another for the kingdom of Denmark. Denmark wanted to remain on the sidelines throughout most of the Napoleonic conflict, but then entered on the losing side shortly before Bonaparte’s defeat. This resulted in the loss of the Danish fleet and the bombardment of Copenhagen harbor at the beginning of the century. After this the state went bankrupt and lost Norway in 1814 at the Congress of Vienna. Throughout the 1820s most of Denmark suffered from inflation, crop failures, and food shortages. Then 1848 resulted in war with the German states and the loss of more territory and the loss of power for the monarchy. It is surprising that the first half of the nineteenth century is often referred to as the Golden Age for Denmark. Despite the military, geographic, and political reductions, this period saw literary figures, musicians, painters, architects, philosophers, scientists, and political theorists of such cultural value to Denmark, Scandinavia, and Europe that it is unparalleled in the countries long history. ⁶⁴

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⁶⁴ In addition to Kierkegaard this period Hans Christian Andersen, Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg, Adam Oehlenschlager, N.F.S. Grundtvig, Hans Christian Ørsted, B.S. Ingemann, Jens Baggesen, Steen Steensen Blicher, and Frederik Paludan-Müller, and others.
Most crucial to Kierkegaard was the changing shape of the Danish church. Since the Protestant Reformation, Denmark favored the Evangelical-Lutheran Church. This relationship only grew following 1848. The newly formed Danish constitution, article four states “The Evangelical-Lutheran Church is the Established Church of Denmark and that, as such, it shall be supported by the State.” While Kierkegaard was Lutheran, the connection between the Lutheran church and the bureaucratic Danish state was troubling. Kierkegaard, in light of his long standing relationship with marginalized Pietists, viewed the new constitution as something which hindered rather than promoted the church. Since his life’s mission was to make Christianity more difficult, this new constitution made Christianity too easy. Notably, in this same period, Kierkegaard would have found an uneasy ally in N.F.S. Grundtvig. Grundtvig argued for a freedom of religion called “Nordic Freedom.” “Nordic Freedom” opposed the states preference of one religion but still made Christianity too easy, as one of its central tenants was to permit the congregation a greater degree of freedom in choosing their own pastor. Both Grundtvig and Kierkegaard opposed the new constitution but for entirely contradictory reasons, for one it did not go far enough and for the other it went too far.

The Danes surmised that they preserved Christianity through the revolution. Kierkegaard believed that instead of preserving and supporting Christianity in and against the state, Christianity was becoming an instrument of the state. Christianity was being lost; it was in the process of becoming Christendom. Christendom resembled

Christianity, but was a vehicle for state control without pious obligations to God. In *Armed Neutrality*, he argued “more or less theatrical relationship has been introduced between thinking Christianity and being a Christian—and in this way has abolished being a Christian.” Kierkegaard feared that the masses equated the parish register with the book of life, that to be a Danish citizen was to be a citizen of heaven. The church combined with the state alleviated suffering, and Christianity required suffering and conviction.

Kierkegaard increasingly grew critical of Copenhagen as well. Copenhagen was the seat of power in Denmark and of Scandinavia, but it was still rather small by European standards. The city had less than 150,000 citizens. Denmark itself had less than one million. Paris, London, and Berlin each had populations in excess of one million at this time. Additionally Danish was and is still today a language that not many read. Kierkegaard always regretted not growing up in a major European city, feeling like he was on the fringe of civilization cut off from the major intellectual currents of the day. He was keenly aware of the fact that his publication in Danish restricted his readership.

Kierkegaard also cultivated a distaste for the city itself. Not only did he want to venture out to a rural parish and become its priest, he also saw the growing tarnish that accompanied modernity. The water grew warm in the summer and required filtration. The water was called “lukewarm eel soup” because of its poor quality. Dr. Homermann a resident at the time, also remarked at the filth of the city, commenting “everyone who

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enters the city gates from the countryside is immediately struck by the bad air.”\textsuperscript{67} In addition to the lack of clean air and water, Kierkegaard grew tired of the erratic culture of the capital. By far most of the citizens of Denmark were agricultural workers, and the capital reflected this with middle class values coupled with romantic aspirations and incomprehensible prejudices. Christianity was equated with niceness and civility, rather than piety and personal conviction.

The main culprit for the crumbling state of Copenhagen was modernity itself, coupled with the increasing involvement of the media. Kierkegaard lamented, “The present age is essentially a sensible, reflecting age, devoid of passion, flaring up in short-lived enthusiasm and prudentially relaxing into indolence.”\textsuperscript{68} Modernity numbed people to the rigors of the Christian life. Aiding in modernity’s mad march was the media. While Schleiermacher, Habermas, and others laud the public sphere, Kierkegaard condemned it. Kierkegaard did not oppose the public sphere because of all the vain pleasures it possessed as Perkins, Francke, and Wesley did. Rather the public sphere created the masses. People engage in the public while disengaging from communities. The public is something created and exists only in the minds of the intellectual power brokers, it possesses no intimacy and no struggle for communion with its members. Kierkegaard argues that “If the age is reflexive, devoid of passion, obliterating

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\textsuperscript{68} Lee C. Barrett, \textit{Abingdon Pillars of Theology: Kierkegaard} (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2010), 25.
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everything that is concrete, the public becomes the entity that is supposed to include everything.”

The media also control the masses of human beings. By 1848 Kierkegaard grew far beyond his affinity towards Romanticism. During the Corsair affair he believed that the majority of people simply held no opinions, and the journalists made their living by convincing the people that they have one. People are so easily swayed that “as soon as it is discovered that someone does not have black buttons on his coat as the others do, then all the other men laugh at him, and in Denmark this laughter is called irony.” This lack of fundamental thought is what lead Kierkegaard to define the crowd as untruth. Nietzsche later spoke of the herd; Kierkegaard speaks of similar terms of the crowd. The crowd swallows up the individual by granting them anonymity. Once anonymous, they continue the dictates of the press in an attempt to affirm their status within the public sphere, which only serves to isolate them from real community.

Being anonymous is not the same thing as being an individual. While anonymous, the individual only possesses a detached group consciousness. This consciousness is one that they do not control, nor truly contribute to. They are detached and only a social persona, and they cannot know despair. As we will address in the second half of this chapter, despair is necessary as it is the consciousness of sin and is the prerequisite for repentance. The anonymous person confuses the nature of sin. As


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Kierkegaard wrote in *Sickness Unto Death*, “If sin is ignorance, then sin really does not exist, for sin is indeed consciousness.”

The anonymity of the public sphere keeps the people ignorant of who they are and who they are to be in Christ.

The solution according to Kierkegaard is to be like Christ and Socrates, both of whom withdrew from the public and took to the streets. Both Socrates and Christ found a home not in the public sphere, but in communal life. Neither were a part of a crowd, although they were nearly always surrounded by the masses of people. The solution is the same for Christianity. Christianity cannot become simply another part of the state, as such it is only a part of a crowd. Rather what is necessary is that the Church is to be made up of individuals who live in communion and therefore share their real experiences with one another and not simply regurgitate manufactured opinions to one another. This is a difficult task, and once again Kierkegaard’s critique lies in his desire to make Christianity more difficult rather than easier.

Kierkegaard’s message is as political as it is religious, and his critique of the church can always be taken as a critique against politics and vice versa. With this said, at no point in Kierkegaard’s corpus does he directly attack politics itself. Kierkegaard remained for his entire life a conservative. He honored the King and was an ardent royalist. When the King lost power to the people Kierkegaard saw the individual losing out to the masses. The King was one of those people. He no longer stood to represent his kingdom, rather he shared power with the Prime Minister Ditlev Gothard Monrad (d. 1887). Monard was the Bishop of Lolland-Falster and the author of the Danish

It was Monrad who was responsible for the Second Schleswig War in which Denmark lost both Schleswig and Holstein. Worse still for Kierkegaard was Monrad’s reordering the Lutheran church in Denmark. This alone would have cemented Kierkegaard’s allegiance to a monarchy over a constitutional republic.

What Monrad created, with the help of NFS Grundtvig and his movement, was known as the Folkekirke or the People’s Church. Christianity became a political body, rather than a spiritual one. Kierkegaard’s critique of Monrad was that he was shrewd rather than wise. According to Kierkegaard, the Folkekirkge was a political body, and therefore forfeited its authority to speak on behalf of Christianity. Its members also lost their authority over spiritual matters. The chief victim of this demotion from the spiritual to the temporal was the Primate over Denmark, Bishop Mynster, and the man who replaced him, Martensen. More attention will be paid to these two in chapter eight. The only one who remained immune from Kierkegaard’s political critiques following 1848 is the King himself. At this point there would be and could be no return to an absolutist monarchy, and Kierkegaard did not hold out any hope for such an idea. He was a traditionalist, not a reactionary.

One reason for Kierkegaard’s relative silence in regards to criticism of the monarchy was his obviously privileged status within the older political system of Denmark. Kierkegaard was always aware of his peasant roots. His father was essentially a slave in service to a priest in the Jutland before getting his freedom. His mother was a servant to his father’s first wife and grew up in a peasant family as well. Anna’s family was actually a little better off than Michael’s, as they owned a cow and four sheep. Now Søren found himself an aristocrat. He even considered petitioning the King in 1848 to
receive a government pension as an aristocrat, but this went no further than drafting the letter. Although he was conservative, he enjoyed many of the technical advantages that modernity provided. He marveled at locomotives and hot-air balloons. He also enjoyed spending money.

Michael Kierkegaard left behind enough money that both Peter and Søren had no need to worry about money at any point in their lives. Still, Søren did his best to run through his inheritance. Søren Kierkegaard loved to smoke cigars and eat fine foods such as stuffed lamb, wine, and coffee. He lived in luxury apartments with exquisite furniture, and filled with books. Kierkegaard also had at least one male servant who was with him most of his life. The greatest luxury was spent on long carriage rides out of the city to get some fresh air and think. These weekly rides cost him around $250 each, adjusted for inflation. He called these rides “air-baths,” and he believed them to be absolutely necessary. He could have accomplished the same task by riding a horse but he never felt comfortable doing so preferring the carriage.

With all of his extravagant spending, it should come as little surprise that Kierkegaard in the 1850s grew rather concerned that he would run out of money. He often complained about the cost of publishing his works and bemoaned that as an author he paid out money and reaped no profit. This is not entirely true, Kierkegaard made roughly 5,000 rixdollars\(^{72}\) from his publications. He did suffer an economic hardship

\(^{72}\) Adjusted for inflation this is approximately a quarter of a million dollars.
when he lost seven hundred rixdollars on royal bonds connected with the Schleswig-Holstein war. Later he called it “the stupidest thing I have done.”

Kierkegaard’s spending was more than just the lifestyle of an extravagant aristocrat. Kierkegaard used his wealth in an attempt to create a cloister. In many ways Kierkegaard’s life resembles Thomas à Kempis, whose life was spent in his monastic cell. à Kempis’ Brethren of the Common Life was focused on lay religiosity and in a very similar way Kierkegaard followed this example of isolating himself as an unordained monastic, though without the benefit of the monastery or community of lay monks. Unlike à Kempis and other monastics, who take a vow of poverty to avoid the temptations of this world, Kierkegaard simply tried to ignore the value of money. His money was not sanctified by being put to good use as Francke argued. Similarly, Kierkegaard did not deny his wealth and live an aesthetic life as Francke advocated. His spending was not out of greed or gluttony, rather it was with a remarkable lack of concern. His once vast wealth was simply spent on his various whims, mammon was simply ignored. Kierkegaard could have tried to make more money on his publications or tried to get a pension from the state or any other way of making money to support a lavish lifestyle if he so desired. Instead, believing that his life was going to be short, he simply pursued worked towards obliging his God, by writing or otherwise serving as a corrective to the state run church. Kierkegaard sought to avoid distraction, which often included indulging rather than abstaining in many of the material things Copenhagen had to offer. Kierkegaard also lent his money to those in need and refused interest. Other

73 Joakim Garff, Søren Kierkegaard A Biography, 539.
times he simply gave away large sums of money to the poor. Additionally Søren often recalled the words of his father, who increasingly viewed his wealth as a curse “you will never become anything as long as you have money.” This was a call to abandon his wealth. These factors all contributed to the disappearance of his once vast fortune.

**Second Repentance and a Second Authorship**

“So in this time of repentance may Thou give the courage once again to will one thing.”

Almost exactly ten years after Kierkegaard’s first conversion experience he had a second. If nothing else, the repetition of conversions demonstrates Kierkegaard’s notion of repentance being not a single act but an ongoing act. This subsequent conversion is not unique to Kierkegaard, rather it is common among many Pietists, including Francke, Wesley, Schleiermacher, and to a degree Spener. The second conversion took place during Maundy Thursday in 1848. During the services of Holy Week, Kierkegaard reflected on the matter of his own salvation and who Christ was for him. Kierkegaard had long paired Christ with Socrates as exemplars of wisdom, but was Christ only a wise man, or was he much more than that? Kierkegaard wrestled with this question, later writing that he “could not possibly get it into my head or into my heart or across my lips to make answer to the blasphemous question, to which of these two I owe

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76 The first occurred on May 19, 1838.
most—the simple wise man or Him on whom I believe.” Ten years earlier he answered that Christ was the one thing that he would be willing to live and die for, but one should not willingly die for a wise man alone. Kierkegaard chose to whom he owed his life.

This second conversion transformed Kierkegaard’s theology. His Christology shifted from the enlightenment model supported by Schleiermacher, Hegel, and others into the suffering servant of Isaiah. Kierkegaard also revisited his earlier conversion, where he decided which one thing he was to live and die for and abandoned the notion that he was to live for anything. Following this second conversion, Kierkegaard believed that he was called to be a martyr. He was not called to live to Christ but to die for his faith. The task of becoming a martyr in Christian Denmark could not occur through traditional means. Since he was a Christian and not a heretic or criminal, the chances of his execution were rather low. The solution was to become an adversary of the people, the state, and the institution which called itself the church. Kierkegaard once again placed himself outside of the society he was criticizing, defining himself and Christianity as other. Other than nationality or establishment, it was only in this way that genuine Christianity could exist.

Kierkegaard’s conviction that he must become a martyr was not a result of his melancholy. Rather, at this point he declares “In my melancholy I loved the world. Now I am weaned.” The proclamation also had nothing to do with a belief that his sins, or the sins of his father required his own death. Søren now understands that God is love and

77 Walter Lowrie, Kierkegaard Volume Two, 396.

in this love “the forgiveness of sin also means to be helped temporarily … and in the forgiveness of sins is to believe that here in time the sin is forgotten by God.”\textsuperscript{79}

Kierkegaard also began to reinterpret his earlier authorship. While he believed that he wrote for God, he did not truly understand the religious character of his vocation as a writer. Only now did he see that all of his work wrestled with the question of what it truly meant to become a Christian. Two years later he also reflects on Pietism. In a journal entry he states “pietism (properly understood, not simply in the sense of abstaining from dancing and such externals, no, in the sense of witnessing for the truth and suffering for it, together with the understanding that suffering in this world belongs to being a Christian, and that a shrewd and secular conformity with this world is unchristian) - yes, indeed, pietism is the one and only consequence of Christianity.”\textsuperscript{80}

In 1849 Kierkegaard once again pondered becoming a priest. This time it was not to win the hand of Regina, nor was it to flee from the world of Copenhagen, or even as an attempt to escape his melancholy. Rather Kierkegaard’s belief that he must die a martyr required that he set an example for the church, and being a member of the clergy was the best way to do that. He did not seek this appointment right away, as once again he desired to complete his writing first, something he anticipated should take less than a year.

Kierkegaard did not spend much time quietly reflecting during 1848 and 1849. During this time period his second authorship came into its own and he wrote as

\textsuperscript{79} Walter Lowrie, \textit{Kierkegaard Volume Two}, 398.

\textsuperscript{80} Christopher B. Barnett, \textit{Kierkegaard, Pietism and Holiness} (Ashgate, 2011), 4 NB20:175, B20:175.a/JF3,3318.
extensively as he did during his first period. During this period he wrote Works of Love (September 1847), Christian Discourses The Crisis and a Crisis in the Life of an Actress, The Sickness Unto Death, Practice in Christianity, On My Work as An Author, For Self-Examination, The Moment, Judge For Yourself!, and The Book on Adler. The theme of this second period of authorship was indirect, inverse, and dialectical. He was far more reflexive during this period than the first. This dialectic can be found with his use of pseudonyms, clearly seen with Johannes Climacus in the first period, and Johannes Anti-Climacus in the second. Kierkegaard claimed that Anti-Climacus is higher on the ladder to heaven than he himself is, but he is now higher than Johannes Climacus. Anti-Climacus is the last pseudonym. Following this, Kierkegaard enters into another lull, where he does not publish anything until Bishop Mynster’s death.

The Attack upon Christendom & Søren’s Death

“How can you not be a Christian? You are Danish, aren’t you? Doesn’t the geography book say that the predominant religion in Denmark is Lutheran-Christian?”

Following Kierkegaard’s publication of For Self-Examination in September of 1851, he published nothing until December 1854. As was his pattern, he continued to write, but not with the intention of mass publication as with his first or second authorship. What wrenched Kierkegaard back into the public arena was a series of articles which later became known as the Attack Upon Christendom. Kierkegaard considered

Christendom something completely separate from Christianity. The two resembled one another but the substance behind them was entirely different. True Christianity required sacrifice and commitment. Christendom consisted of middle and upper middle class Copenhagen society, its lifestyle, values, and an easy Christianity. Christendom was staffed not by the pious clergy who abandoned all for the sake of the cross, rather they were bureaucratic civil servants who had comfortable lives and delivered sermons that omitted what Kierkegaard believed was the heart of Christian life, sacrifice. The parsons of Christendom wanted accessibility rather than conviction. The distinction that Kierkegaard makes between authentic Christianity and Christendom resembles Schleiermacher’s and Wesley’s notion of the invisible church. Kierkegaard said it this way “Christendom is not the Church of Christ, Not by any means. No, I say that ‘Christendom’ is twaddle which has clung to Christianity like a cobweb to a fruit, and now is so polite as to want to be mistaken for Christianity... The sort of existence which the millions of ‘Christendom’ give evidence of has absolutely no relation to the New Testament.”82 Christendom also does not relate to the Pietist vision of Christianity that Kierkegaard subscribed to, rather the experience of Christ is abandoned for political expediency, not even reason or scholasticism.

In addition to these concepts of what Christendom was, Kierkegaard identified four people as representatives of Christendom. Søren Kierkegaard’s four main opponents in the last few months of his life were Bishop Mynster, Martensen, Gruntvig, and his brother Peter. Only a brief description of their conflict is necessary here, since the Attack

represents one of Kierkegaard’s key theological contributions that will be addressed in chapter eight.

The head of Christendom was the head of the Danish church, Bishop Mynster. Søren Kierkegaard had a long lasting relationship with Mynster; he was after all his father’s priest and buried his father, his mother and his sisters. Mynster was the head of the Church of Denmark, the same church that Kierkegaard repeatedly sought to join as a priest. Still Mynster was a shrewd political appointee. Søren believed that at one point Mynster possessed genuine faith but abandoned that for political advantage and a secure life.

Kierkegaard would have been willing to let the matter rest in deference to his father and the once positive view he held of Mynster if it was not for the second man who represented Christendom’s interference, H.L. Martensen. Martensen was once Kierkegaard’s tutor but since his time as a student Kierkegaard and Martensen parted ways on more and more pertinent theological and practical issues of Christianity. Later Martensen, recalling his time as Søren’s tutor, said “at that time he was very much devoted to me,” but this was rather a misunderstanding. Martensen also betrayed Søren by calling Mynster a “witness to the truth.” Kierkegaard only viewed Mynster as an ambitious social climber who wanted praise from his king and country and lived a life of opulence rather than sacrifice. Furthermore his sermons did not call for genuine Christianity but the luxurious life of Christendom. Martensen praised Mynster and as a


result he faced the ire of Kierkegaard. He also received a promotion, becoming the new primate of the Danish Church. Now both Mynster and Martensen were not witnesses to the truth in either their lives or their sermons.

The next enemy of Kierkegaard and representative of Christendom was Grundtvig. Since the 1848 Revolution, Grundtvig organized a religious political movement, the People’s Church. This movement gathered around the notion of *vox populi vox dei*, the voice of the people is the voice of God. Nothing could be further from Kierkegaard’s notion of Christianity than a movement who mistook their own voice for the voice of the Almighty. Søren Kierkegaard’s final foe in Christendom was his own brother, Peter. Peter Kierkegaard was a close member of Grundtvig’s movement and a bishop in Mynster/Martensen’s church. Søren viewed his brother as emblematic of the faults of the Danish church and Denmark as a whole.

What is interesting to note about these four men is that each of them represents a conflict with Søren’s father Michael to some degree or another. Mynster was the long standing priest for Michael, but upon Michael’s death the bishop failed to remember him when he was approached by Søren and Peter. Martensen and Grundtvig are both responsible for the eventual disintegration of the *Brodresocietet*, Martensen through mismanagement and Grundtvig from his open hostility to the Moravians. Søren’s perceived slights against Peter are likely nothing other than an unhealthy sibling rivalry, and possibly Peter’s ability to be more honest with Michael’s faults than his younger brother Søren was able to be. In many ways the *Attack Upon Christendom* is Søren’s last apology and dedication to his beloved father.
After nearly two years of condemning Christendom, Søren Kierkegaard collapsed in the streets on October 2, 1855. While he was never a healthy person, the forty-two year old critic of the church was dying, and it was obvious to everyone. After he collapsed Søren was brought to his home only to then be moved to Frederick’s Hospital, where he spent the next week before he died. Initially Kierkegaard believed the cause of his illness had to do with enjoying cold seltzer water in the summer combined with exhausting work schedule and bad air.

Once at the hospital, Søren barred all clergy from visiting him, including his brother. The only exception was a longtime friend, Emil Boesen (d. 1881). The visitors who came to him were impressed by his composure and his calm, given the fact that he was paralyzed and death was imminent. In light of his impending death, Boesen asked him if he wanted to receive communion one last time. Kierkegaard replied that he would if he could receive it from a layman. Boesen pointed out the difficulty in this request wherein Kierkegaard replied that “That can’t be disputed. I’ve made my choice, I have chosen. The clergy are state functionaries, and functionaries have nothing to do with Christianity.”^85 Søren refused what he believed to be false communion, choosing rather to receive true and everlasting communion from God upon his death. Kierkegaard’s request for a layman to deliver the Eucharist was grounded in Spener’s argument that every believer is anointed by the Holy Spirit, as addressed in chapter two. Following Spener, Pietists of nearly all stripes relax the requirements of ordination. Kierkegaard, in his dying moments, was trying to draw the logical conclusion of Spener’s theology. On

^85 Josiah Thompson, *Kierkegaard*, 234.
October 11 at nine p.m. Søren Kierkegaard died. The cause of his death was either a staphylococcus infection of the lungs, or an infection of the spinal cord, or possibly tuberculosis of the spine marrow. No autopsy was done to determine the ultimate cause.

Upon Søren’s death, Peter was given the unenviable position to administer his will. Søren wrote “It is naturally my will that my former fiancée, Mrs. Regina Schlegel, should inherit unconditionally what little I leave behind. If she herself refuses to accept it, it is to be offered to her on the condition that she act as trustee for its distribution to the poor.”

Søren equated his engagement to Regina as the same as a marriage, stating what “I wish to express is that for me an engagement was and is just as binding as a marriage, and that therefore my estate is to revert to her in exactly the same manner as if I had been married to her.” Friedrich Schlegel, upon hearing of his wife’s inheritance, and given the fact that they were in the West Indies at the time, politely refused, telling Peter to act as if the will never existed.

Other than the rights to his published and unpublished works, Kierkegaard did not leave behind much to be given to Regina or to be distributed to the poor. His household goods were auctioned off and brought in approximately $50,000. Kierkegaard’s library brought in more than his household possessions. His 2,748 books, which included Tauler, à Kempis, Spener, Francke, Zinzendorf, and Schleiermacher, were worth $86,000.

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86 Bruce H. Kirmmse, *Encounters With Kierkegaard: A Life as seen by His Contemporaries*, 47 - Søren Kierkegaard’s Will and Correspondence Regarding It to Reverend Dr. [Peter Christian] Kierkegaard.

87 Bruce H. Kirmmse, *Encounters With Kierkegaard: A Life as seen by His Contemporaries*, 48 - Søren Kierkegaard’s Will and Correspondence Regarding It to Reverend Dr. [Peter Christian] Kierkegaard.

88 1,004 rixdollars, 2 marks, and 15 shillings.

89 1,730 rixdollars.
Kierkegaard’s estate was worth more than he had left to live off of. He possessed little more than enough to pay for his funeral. His long fear of poverty was well founded, as well as his father’s prediction that when he ran out of money he would be free. Freedom for Kierkegaard required his own death.

The funeral possessed as much controversy as Søren Kierkegaard’s life did. Martensen, though not in attendance, wrote about it saying “Today, after a service at the Church of Our Lady, Kierkegaard was buried; there was a large cortege of mourners (in grand style, how ironic!). We have scarcely seen the equal of the tactlessness shown by the family in having him buried on a Sunday, between two religious services, from the nation’s most important church.” 90 Only two clergy members were present in their vestments at the funeral, Peter, who delivered the eulogy and the dean of the Frue Kirke, Eggert C. Tryde. Peter prayed for his brother’s forgiveness and prayed that his bewildered and perplexed soul would find mercy.

While the clergy were absent, the church was full. Soon after the doors opened to the church, a group of university students made their way down to stand guard over Kierkegaard’s coffin. The remainder of the Church was filled with some of the most notable Danish citizens, but no state or church dignitaries. According to the account of Berlingske Tinende, as many people as the great church could hold, “thousands who filled every spot in the Church of Our Lady.” 91 Hans Christian Andersen described the church as chaotic, including inappropriately brightly colored dress, and at least one

90 Bruce H. Kirmmse, Encounters With Kierkegaard: A Life as seen by His Contemporaries, 135 - Hans Lassen Martensen to L. Gude, November 18, 1855.

91 Joakim Garff, Søren Kierkegaard A Biography, 796.
muzzled dog. While the crowd was unruly, the greatest disruption came from one of Søren’s nephews, Henrik Lund. Lund was shocked at the church service for his uncle, a man who had spent the last few years of his life publically condemning the church as hypocrites. To be buried by the “official church” represented the greatest hypocrisy.

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard was buried next to his father. He requested that a little upright column gravestone with a marble cross, mark his resting place. The column had the etched letters “In a little while, I shall have won, the entire battle will at once be done. Then I may rest in halls of roses and unceasingly, and unceasingly speak with my Jesus.”

Kierkegaard’s life exemplified his conflict with the established church and his desire to live an authentic Pietist Christian life. Above all else, his theological considerations had to be practical and experienced in his life. This required the abandonment of distractions from God, such as Regina, but not food and common frivolities. Following his two conversion experiences, he constructed his own Pietist conclave in his home and sought to labor for God. As a quasi-Moravian monastic, he sequestered his religious practices away from the broader Christian culture in an attempt to provide a model for nineteenth-century Pietists. His wealth, intellect, and social standing all afforded him the ability to engage in broader society, while never truly belonging to it. Like Francke, who argued that the purpose of life is one’s work for the benefit of God and one’s neighbor, Kierkegaard’s life work was his writing, which grew directly out of his experiences in life and the lessons he learned from his father and the

92 Joakim Garff, Søren Kierkegaard A Biography, 811.
Brodresocietet. Both of these examples for Kierkegaard were dismantled in his lifetime, so Kierkegaard developed his own Pietistic legacy in his writings, which have lasted for generations.
CHAPTER 8

THE LUTHERAN THEOLOGY OF KIERKEGAARD

“How he once again performs an act of love for these people, but at the same moment he knows what it means, knows that this act of love has a part in putting him on the cross.” ¹

Søren Kierkegaard’s life shaped his theological development, and throughout it all he attempted to position himself in a long line of Christians who prioritized experience of the divine over scholastic and rationalist understandings of God. The melancholy Dane developed his theology in anticipation of the next world and attempted to find the way he could prepare himself and his readers for eternity. Martyrdom became the surest way of achieving his desired end, a martyrdom that had to be lived out rather than a sudden death. Kierkegaard placed himself in the legacy of à Kempis, who argued “The cross, therefore, is always ready; it awaits you everywhere. No matter where you may go, you cannot escape it, for wherever you go you take yourself with you and shall always find yourself.” ² To experience the cross and its call to deny oneself is the religious mode of existence that Kierkegaard requires of himself and all Christians. The cross is far more than atonement for sins, or a doctrine preceding other theological concerns, such as sanctification, rather, it is love and the life of the Christian. The cross also makes Christianity harder. For Kierkegaard, in order for Christianity to be genuine, it must be personal, experiential, and difficult. Returning to the cross, not as the source of


² Thomas à Kempis, The Imitation of Christ, 41, Book 2 Chapter 12.
atonement, rather as spoken of by à Kempis, becomes the cornerstone to Kierkegaard’s reconstruction of Pietism and his contribution to its theological edifice.

**The Unsystematic Theologian**

“The difficulty is not to understand what Christianity is but to become and to be a Christian.”

Kierkegaard’s construction of a Pietistic theology becomes his lasting legacy, but what type of theologian Kierkegaard is remains difficult to immediately define. There are many types of theologians. Some, like Wesley, Francke, and Palmer, develop their theology organically, usually addressing the issues they encounter with their life or pastoral mission. It requires some degree of work to extrapolate their theological suppositions only because they are laid out in numerous texts. Theology is simply not treated as a systematic enterprise. For non-systematic/organic theologians theology develops gradually, and in fits and bursts. To find their view on a specific issue, one must venture to find a specific tome that addresses that topic, and more often than not it is isolated from other related theological issues that are housed in a separate tract. Many times these theologians are primarily concerned with other duties and their understanding of theology is secondary to their preaching, teaching, or other pastoral duties.

Other theologians, such as Schleiermacher, Perkins, Arndt, and Spener, are systematic. In addition to their numerous tracts and works on single topics, they produced larger coherent works that defined their theological aims. For Schleiermacher

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this was *The Christian Faith*, for Perkins it was *A Golden Chain*, for Arndt it was *True Christianity*, and for Spener it was his *Pia Desideria/Pious Wishes*. These works vary in length and specific theological subjects covered, but each lay out a larger system of faith and its effects. Each systematic theology attempts to relate one theological issue to another and show how they are interrelated. For Perkins his discussion of God made way for his view of the elect, from there his doctrine of the atonement was addressed, before addressing the Church and its sacraments. There is a thread, or chain, where one link is connected to the previous and in some ways understanding one informs their view of both the subsequent and preceding links.

Then there is a third category of theologians. This category can best be described as unsystematic theologians. Unlike the first two systems, unsystematic theologians are not unsystematic simply because they failed to produce a larger systematic work. Rather unsystematic theologians are so because they ventured to eliminate any and all systems throughout their corpus. Theological issues are addressed in a vacuum spontaneously and in their construction they deliberately try to undermine the links one would naturally try to make. Unlike the non-systematic theologians whose views may evolve and change over time, an unsystematic theologian deliberately undercuts their own message, not because they have fundamentally changed their view, but because they desire to understand the flaws fundamental to their own argument. To understand how they view a specific theological topic requires understanding of large amounts of their corpus, rather than simply finding one text that speaks on that particular issue. The most notable unsystematic theologian, and likely the first to do so, is Søren Kierkegaard.
The Dane chose to contradict and undermine himself in his different works. Kierkegaard, as an unsystematic theologian, not only produced a vast array of literature, but spoke in different voices who often criticized each other and whose understanding of Christianity differed as well. With this said, it is not an impossible task to extrapolate what Kierkegaard actually believed, nor is the use of any singular source unproductive. Rather, when reading Kierkegaard, it is essential to keep in mind his berserk, antagonistic, and ultimately schizophrenic style with an inverse dialectic. Rather than putting forth only one concept as valid and others as flawed, Kierkegaard may argue for one thing in a pseudonymic text and then argue the opposite in an upbuilding discourse or later pseudonym.

With such a distinctive theological style, every scholar of Kierkegaard identifies his key contributions and foundational understanding of Christianity as something different. My reading of Kierkegaard identifies three theological developments as essential to understanding Kierkegaard the Pietist. The first follows his *Attack Upon Christendom*, where Kierkegaard’s antipathy towards Christian culture and society at large is made manifest. Second, Kierkegaard’s emphasis on the subjective illustrates both the Pietist or experiential component of Christianity as well as the means of reworking both the Christian’s outside world and their relationship with God. Kierkegaard’s understanding of the subjective includes his notion of the paradox. Finally, Kierkegaard’s development of the three spheres of existence, the aesthetic,

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4 The term experiential and Moravian are more fitting for Kierkegaard, but as mentioned in the introduction these are synonyms for Pietism.
ethical, and religious, illustrates the mechanism of this development outside of the subjective. Kierkegaard’s contributions to existentialism and his use of pseudonyms are secondary and will be addressed at the conclusion of this section.

**Attack Upon Christendom.**

“God has no use for politicians, only worshippers can serve him.
Worshippers: and to worship means to scorn human cleverness, because it is a blessed thing to suffer for God.”

As mentioned in the biographical sketch, Kierkegaard’s *Attack Upon Christendom* was primarily an attack on what he viewed as an inept and fatalistic Danish culture who called themselves Christians. While the culture at large was bemoaned, the attack was intensified against four individuals, Mynster, Martensen, Grundtvig, and Peter Kierkegaard.

Bishop Jakob Peter Mynster represented the established Danish church more than any other man. Mynster and Søren’s relationship began as positive as any other he had. Mynster’s father died when he was rather young and he was then raised by a Pietist. Mynster’s stepfather’s Pietism closely resembled the Halle variety and was rather stern. Mynster adopted some of the outward appearances of Halle Pietism and developed his own melancholy following the book of Ecclesiastes. He was also loosely connected with communities of Herrnhuters. From here there would be little doubt why Michael Kierkegaard chose him as his priest and why Mynster would confirm both Søren and Peter. Mynster also opposed the emotionalism that swept through nineteenth-century

Romanticism and Christianity. With this opposition, Mynster straddled a line between the Pietism of his youth and the Orthodox Lutherans that represented the established church. By holding both Halle Pietism and Lutheran Orthodoxy, Mynster was well suited for the position of Bishop, and later to Primate of the Church. He was more conservative and anti-political than King Frederick VI, he launched attacks against the populist and anti-Pietist Grundtvig.

Søren also held out hope of becoming a priest on at least three different occasions in his life. During each of these times, the Bishop that he would have answered to would have been Mynster. As such Kierkegaard chose to remain relatively silent concerning his growing concerns about Mynster, or he believed that he could work with him. Søren was a fairly regular guest at Mynster’s home, and much of Kierkegaard’s discourses are modeled on the preaching style of Mynster.

Until Michael’s death Søren viewed Mynster in a favorable light. Then Mynster’s apparent forgetfulness of Michael soured Søren. From this point on Søren viewed Mynster as far more bourgeois and concerned with human accolades than divine approval. Mynster’s faith, while dressed in Lutheran clothes, was really a faith in modernity, and not in Christ. In 1848 Mynster’s political position changed, along with the political climate of Denmark. Instead of the staunch monarchist, he now supported the constitutional monarchy. According to Kierkegaard, Mynster was too involved in power politics and his political future was more important than his eternal accountability before God. Even before Mynster’s death, Kierkegaard launched a few barbs in his direction but most of these critiques were couched in language that was obscure enough to grant Kierkegaard plausible deniability. Mynster recognized some critiques however,
reviewing one of Kierkegaard’s works stating, “Half the book is an attack on Martensen and the other half on me.”

Mynster grew to represent everything that Søren despised about Christendom. Mynster lived in a palace and aside from a few political threats, Kierkegaard saw no suffering. Mynster lacked the essential traits of a genuine Christian. Kierkegaard admired Mynster’s oration but not his self-indulgent and shrewd life. Still the critiques of Mynster would have likely remained absent if it was not for his funeral and the obituary delivered by Martensen. The funeral was the size and style of only the Danish kings and princes. This was not Kierkegaard’s notion of a true witness to the Church. Eventually Søren came to the conclusion that Mynster was little more than a poisonous plant, who’s Christianity at best supported moderation rather than true sacrifice.

After Mynster’s death, the next weed in the Danish episcopal garden was H.L. Martensen. Martensen once served as Søren’s tutor, but the student outgrew his master. Martensen’s praise of Mynster only showed that he too was following along Mynster’s path, which privileged politics over penitence. Martensen always possessed a political theology that was at odds with Kierkegaard’s. First Martensen was a Hegelian, a philosophical system that Søren rejected. After this Martensen viewed the state as inseparable from the people. This nationalist ethos placed all other institutions under the people, including language, borders, laws, and the church. Martensen believed that the people only understand the church through the laws of the state, and all spiritual possessions are byproducts of the state. As such, all forms of piety are simply

expressions of one’s love for their country. In many ways Martensen’s conception of religion prefigures Durkheim’s definition of religion as “a unified system of belief and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.”

Martensen argued “Nationality is holy because it is a means through which that which is holy in and for itself—the eternal and the universal are to be taken up and appropriated.” Where Mynster was at least semi-Pietist, Martensen was intellectual and speculative. They shared a common enemy in the populism of Grundtvig as well as their recognition of power politics.

Kierkegaard’s attacks against Martensen were rather limited considering the immense gulf that existed between the two. Kierkegaard refrained from attacking Martensen too much, not only because he was the new Primate of the Danish church, but because he did not want his attack against Christendom to be reduced to a personal squabble between the two. Kierkegaard truly opposed the reduction of Christianity to a spiritual representation of a political structure. Under Martensen the church was reduced to a secular institution. Both Martensen and Mynster watered down the rigors of Christianity in order to support their own wealth and status.

With Kierkegaard’s attacks against Martensen and Mynster a likely ally should have been NFS Grundtvig. Grundtvig is possibly the most overall influential figure to emerge out of Golden Age Denmark, even surpassing Kierkegaard. Grundtvig was a


8 Bruce H. Kirmmse, Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 174.
poet, a politician, pastor, philologist, theologian, historian, and educator. Grundtvig shaped and molded Scandinavia after his own vision, a vision Kierkegaard loathed. Grundtvig’s notion of Christianity was tied to nationalism even more than Martensen’s. Where Martensen saw Christianity as an extension of politics, Grundtvig saw Scandinavian Christianity as an expression of a Norse nationalism, which included pagan elements as well. While a Dane, Grundtvig saw all the Scandinavian counties as one people and therefore as one body. When the Swedish prince died without an heir, he moved to convince the Swedish parliament to appoint the Danish King to succeed him, therefore uniting Scandinavia under one throne. This ultimately failed.

Grundtvig supported a populist vision of Christianity that made Christianity easy and a natural expression of daily life. According to Grundtvig, Denmark and all the Scandinavian countries were the home of the church, which took the place of the Bible as the living word of God. The people became the scripture. Grundtvig replaced the Lutheran doctrine of *Sola Scriptura* with *Sola Populai*. This was not a deference to the Church in a Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox fashion. Rather the will of the people now counted as scriptural authority, absent from the constraints of written scripture, apostolic succession, or an ecclesial hierarchy. As such, to be a good Dane was synonymous with becoming a good Christian and vice versa. Grundtvig held a notion of an intrinsic Christian nationalism which extended back to Scandinavia’s pre-Christian past. The Old Norse pagan gods were baptized and made no different than the prophets of the Old Testament. Grundtvig argued that the Viking heathen should be recognized as “the old, natural, pre-Christian self… the transformation of the old into the new human life [is] a progressive renewal and transfiguration of Christ's human nature in his
believers, and [is] carried out by the Spirit through love."9 This love finds its expression in a baptized Romanticism.

Grundtvig was also a strong opponent of Moravian piety. The self-denial that is intrinsic upon all forms of Pietism is contrary to his conception of the semi-divine Norse. Grundtvig harnessed the exuberance and social connection of the Moravians and used it to dismantle their presence in Copenhagen. Following the revolution of 1848, many of the former Moravians fell in line and became members of Grundtvig’s People’s Church. Established Pietism involvement in the political arena became its undoing.

Kierkegaard’s critique of Grundtvig could not be more obvious and direct. Kierkegaard viewed Grundtvig as a blowhard with all noise and no substance. Kierkegaard dismissed Grundtvig’s sermons as “weekly evacuations.”10 Personally he viewed Grundtvig as someone who never knew the sacrifice required by the Apostles, and was generally an unpleasant fellow. Grundtvig represented the antithesis of Christianity, a Christianity that was nothing more than a cultural phenomenon that required nothing of its members. At least Martensen wanted moral Danes who professed to be Christian. Grundtvig eliminated morality as a component of the Christian life.

Kierkegaard’s criticism applied to the Grundtvigians as well. In a journal entry he states “the whole conflict with the Grundtvigians is based on a misunderstanding. This is the issue the Grundtvigians tell themselves that they are the only true Xians, a little flock

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9 Bruce H. Kirmmse, *Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark*, 217.
that busies itself with all sorts of trivialities in order to remain occupied.”\textsuperscript{11} In Kierkegaard’s estimation, Grundtvig’s followers, like their leader, abandoned true Christianity for trivium. Furthermore Kierkegaard continues in that same entry, stating that the Grundtivigians claim tolerance but “their talk of tolerance is nonsense. Xnty has never been tolerant in such a way that it allows other ppl. to remain pagan, [to] be damned.”\textsuperscript{12} Following Grundtvig, Denmark not only obsesses about inconsequential matters, it abandons the high cost of Christianity which requires conflict with paganism even if this conflict requires the Christian become a martyr.

Søren’s critique of Grundtvig was equally applied to his brother Peter. Grundtvig was a semi-regular guest in Michael Kierkegaard’s home. As such both brothers had ample opportunity to learn from the populist and make an informed opinion of him and his theological schema. Søren viewed it as pure populist excrement. Peter, like his father, saw Grundtvig as potentially dangerous but intriguing. Michael refused to allow either of his sons to join with Grundtvig when they were school aged, out of fear that too close an association would likely hinder future job prospects. It is odd that Peter joined Grundtvig and became the first Grundtvigian to rise to the rank of bishop, while Søren disavowed Grundtvig and yet held no position whatsoever.

Peter was by most accounts a moderate follower of Grundtvig. Peter maintained a degree of orthodoxy that Grundtvig completely abandoned. Peter, like Martensen and Mynster, understood how to advance within the political body that was the Danish


\textsuperscript{12} Søren Kierkegaard, \textit{Kierkegaard's Journals and Notebooks}. Vols. 4 Journals NB-NB5, 337.
church. In 1856, a year after Søren’s death, Peter was appointed the bishop of the
diocese of Aalborg. Aalborg was the northern most diocese of Denmark and was as
much a promotion as it was a banishment. Peter Kierkegaard grew rather popular himself
and as a Gruntvigian he was a threat to Martensen. His elevation legitimized Grundtvig’s
teachings while simultaneously marginalizing them to the most remote part of the
kingdom. Peter himself recognized this, calling Aalborg the “Siberia of Northern
Jutland.”¹³

Peter was always Søren’s chief rival. The main difference between the two was
their stature, as Peter was stronger than Søren. After this the two were rather similar.
They were the only two sons of Michael who received a university education, and both
were trained theologians. Both were rather bright and eloquent. Søren was the fork, and
Peter was the devilish debater. Peter was the oldest son, and Søren was the youngest, and
both constantly competed for their father’s affections. They were the only two of
Michael’s children to outlive him, and both inherited not only their father’s wealth, but
his intellect and his melancholy. Søren’s refusal to see his brother at the end of his life
was due to sibling rivalry as much as it was due to his principles. Peter became the
symbol of both the established church and Grundtvig in Søren’s eyes, and these sins were
more than Søren could accept.

Peter had a hard time accepting his brother’s refusal. One year later, on the verge
of his elevation to bishop, he was haunted by a dream of his brother. Eventually in the

¹³ Thorkild C. Lyby, Peter Christian Kierkegaard: A Man with a Difficult Family Heritage. Kierkegaard
Research: Sources Reception and Resources Volume 7, in Kierkegaard and His Danish Contemporaries:
Tome II: Theology, edited by Jon Stewart, 189-211 (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Co, 2009), 204.
dream Mynster gave Peter permission to speak. For the next nineteen years Peter served as a bishop before giving up his post. Peter was also a member of the Danish parliament and a cabinet minister. However he viewed himself as a murderer because he believed that his inability to reconcile with Søren resulted in his death. In 1884, Peter who already renounced his bishopric in 1875, gave up his legal right to care for his own affairs and became a ward of the state, entering an asylum. According to his biographer, four years later he died, in the darkness of insanity. Peter was haunted by his criticism of Søren. Any criticism Søren could have laid upon his brother was not as harsh as the one he laid upon himself.

With such an extensive enemies list it is surprising that Søren Kierkegaard recorded in his journals “I have had no enemy. … the basic assurance that an individual loves people is and will be that God is as close as life to him, which is the case with me almost every moment.” Peter failed to understand that while the brothers were adversaries, Søren maintained that they were not enemies. There is nothing in Kierkegaard’s *Attack Upon Christendom* that cannot be found in his journals that existed in the five years preceding it. Kierkegaard’s *Attack Upon Christendom* was not an act of malice, but his attempt to be a corrective to the church. As he says in *Practice in Christianity*, it was his attempt to introduce Christianity into Christendom.

In his own estimation, Søren had no enemies, but the he maintained that “The day when Christianity and the world become friends yes, then Christianity is abolished.”

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this point Christianity is dethroned, and Christ no longer serves as its head. The purpose behind the *Attack* was to Christianize Denmark, a task made all the more difficult in light of the fact that the Danes believed themselves to already be Christians. Kierkegaard saw a Christian Kingdom as essentially invalid. Christ’s claim that his kingdom was not of this world in the Gospel of John was for Kierkegaard an eternally valid statement. For “As soon as Christ’s kingdom makes a compromise with this world and becomes a kingdom of this world, Christianity is abolished. But if Christianity is in the truth, it is certainly a kingdom in this world, but not of this world, that is, it is militant.”\(^{16}\)

A world that combines Christ and an earthly kingdom produces a cheap grace. This cheap grace preserves the body but kills the soul. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Cost of Discipleship*, echoes this, stating “cheap grace is the deadly enemy of our Church. We are fighting today for costly grace.”\(^{17}\) Kierkegaard argues that he is a corrective to the church just as Luther was. Kierkegaard held that before the time of Luther the Roman church had moved too far in the direction of work’s righteousness, therefore prompting Luther’s correction to the church. Following Luther, the epistle of James was moved aside in order to allow Christians to experience God’s grace, but in the centuries following Luther, the grace became far too cheap. Therefore his critique of Christendom serves as a corrective to the Dane’s who embraced Luther but forgot what he was correcting. Synthesizing Bonhoeffer and Kierkegaard under Christendom, “only the

\(^{16}\) Søren Kierkegaard, *Practice In Christianity*, 211.

believers obey, and only the obedient believe. It is really unfaithfulness to the Bible to have the first statement without the second.”

Kierkegaard likens the Danish church to a congregation of geese. He begins by supposing that one day the geese could talk. Eventually they meet together and abandon the use of their wings, spending too much time listening to one another squawk. They get fat and happy but they have lost what they were designed to do. The same is now the case for the Danes. As Christians they are designed to suffer, but instead they have traded away the glory of the cross for a happy but fatalistic life.

It is for this cause that Søren believed he must become a martyr. He needed to illustrate the cost of grace. This is why he asked “does a human being have the right to let himself be put to death for the truth?” Kierkegaard needed to suffer, and not simply talk about Christ’s suffering, as his professors and parsons do. Søren’s pseudonym H.H. addresses the value of suffering by focusing on Christ’s blood and wounds, the same focus Zinzendorf called his followers to. Unlike Zinzendorf’s Moravians, H.H. and Kierkegaard are not sending out missionaries to faraway lands but to lands that call themselves Christians. The Christian must abandon all, including their life, and showing their abandon makes them an enemy of those pretending to be Christians in Christendom.

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Subjectivity is Truth and Untruth.

“So, then, subjectivity, inwardness, is truth.”

Kierkegaard’s second contribution to Pietistic philosophy comes from his conception of the subjective. Unlike most Christian theologians and philosophers, Kierkegaard does not start with the conception that objective truth exists. In his work *Johannes Climacus*, Kierkegaard begins with Descartes’ starting point in his *Meditations*, namely that everything must be doubted. This universal doubt is coupled with *Philosophical Fragments*, which seeks to understand the nature of truth if one rejects the Socratic as the starting point. If a new system can be created, the Socratic suppositions must be reversed, therefore objective truth must be rejected.

Simply because there is no objective truth does not mean there is no truth whatsoever. Kierkegaard then places the source of truth not as something universal but personal. In doing so he reinforces the Pietist rejection of Protestant scholasticism in favor of an individualized truth, which should ultimately have its basis in experiences. Kierkegaard’s project takes as its beginning point the heart of Pietism. It is from this fount that subjectivity can first be addressed. Both the source and ultimate conclusion of subjectivity is the individual’s encounter with a living Christ who stands both outside and inside the individual Christian.

Subjectivity is true because it is something that has its basis in the individual. While everything must be doubted, just like Descartes, one quickly realizes that doubt

has its limits. Descartes’ doubt includes the self but not God. Kierkegaard’s doubt takes Descartes’ conclusion, that I am a thing which thinks, as its starting point. Since I am a thing which thinks, how I relate to the object of knowledge is an expression of truth. The encounter of the self with an outside object is a true encounter, and how this is processed is also essentially true for the individual. Just like Schleiermacher and William James, Kierkegaard lays the groundwork for a truth which needs not be essentially true, but only practically true. Just like James, truth may be individually true while objectively false, what others call performative truth, which depends on how the truth is held or the individual’s relation to it. In this same way emotions are true even when the cause for the emotion may be something that is misunderstood or fundamentally false.

The relationship between subjective truth and objective truth creates a paradox, a concept that is central to Kierkegaard’s philosophical system. Kierkegaard states “When subjectivity, inwardness, is the truth, the truth objectively defined becomes a paradox; and the fact that the truth is objectively a paradox shows in its turn that subjectivity is the truth.”

Truth may be objectively defined and subjectively understood. If the subjective truth may be understood as having its source in outward objectivity, then the starting point can no longer be that subjectivity is truth, since the truth is now something outside the individual. A paradox is created where the objective is rejected as truth only to then place truth in the subjective. When the subjective then objectively defines truth, it creates

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truth outside of the self. This paradox results in Kierkegaard’s next statement that subjectivity is not truth, rather subjectivity is untruth.

Kierkegaard states “Subjectivity, inwardness, has been posited as the truth; can any expression for the truth be found which has a still higher degree of inwardness? Aye, there is such an expression, provided the principle that subjectivity or inwardness is the, truth begins by positing the opposite principle: that subjectivity is untruth. Let us not be overhasty.”22 The individual, who was once the source of truth, discovers that they themselves are indeed not the source but only in relation to the truth. Since something may be subjectively true and objectively false, this demonstrates that the subject is untrue. In the same way, when both the subject and object are true, it demonstrates that the subject is not the source of the truth but only in relationship with it. Here the Pietist message is described in philosophical terms, the truth must always be something that is experienced and something that the believer experiences through a relationship, not simply understanding philosophically.

Kierkegaard the Christian theologian takes this one step further when he says that the subject is untruth. While the truth has its source in the subjective, it does not have its source in the subjectivity of the individual. Rather the source is found in God who is pure subjectivity. Kierkegaard argues that “God is pure subjectivity, entire and sheer subjectivity, without any trace of the objective in itself; for everything which has this land of objectivity enters thereby into relativities.”23 The truth is subjectivity, but only in

22 Søren Kierkegaard, A Kierkegaard Anthology, 217.

how the individual then relates to truth which is personified in God. This is why he can argue that “the eternal, essential truth is itself not at all a paradox, but it is a paradox by being related to an existing person.”24 Kierkegaard’s definition of truth necessitates the source of truth as an ultimate reality because it is something that can be encountered and known. In encountering the truth the individual is higher than the universal, which can only happen in time, and only though a relationship with God. Like Schleiermacher’s notion of a God-consciousness, Kierkegaard expresses truth as a relation with God who is the source of truth. As the objective and subjective truth that can only be understood by the individual in time, Kierkegaard views the incarnation as a philosophical necessity.

It is from the incarnation of God that the self can also be understood. Human beings must then possess a spirit which is therefore able to relate to the truth. Humans are a synthesis of body and spirit because there is no other way of relating to the truth without being body and spirit. Just as the relationship between objective and subjective truth creates a paradox, so too does the relationship between the self and the truth. The self is true only in its relationship to the truth that is at that very moment inside and outside the self. To understand the relation requires a degree of faith. Kierkegaard’s notion of faith has subjectivity as its source.

24 Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, 205.
Spheres of Existence.

“Choice here makes two dialectical movements simultaneously - that which is chosen does not exist and comes into existence through the choice - and that which is chosen exists; otherwise it was not a choice.”25

Kierkegaard develops the idea of subjectivity further with his discussion of the three spheres that one may find themselves in. One will either find themselves in the aesthetical, ethical, or religious sphere. The spheres are essentially the guiding impulse in the individual’s life. In creating this schema, Kierkegaard reworked the Hegelian dialectic and Kantian metaphysics to account for the different drives that consume people, while not rejecting their inclinations without first understanding the value that individuals place in them. As such, any action may have value for one sphere while it may simultaneously be viewed as repugnant in one of or both of the competing spheres. How actions are performed becomes far more important than what actions are performed. In creating this system, Kierkegaard creates a way in which the reasons why an action is performed are better understood and the value is then placed on the way in which it is performed.

The first of these spheres is known and the aesthetical. The aesthetic was first addressed in the first half of Either/Or. It was in this part of Kierkegaard’s greatest literary success that seduction was addressed. The aesthetic desires nothing more than the individuals own fulfillment of desire. Objects are beautiful or possess some other

value and must be acquired or consumed. Values are also only utilitarian, and once an objects utility is used, there is no longer any purpose in maintaining it. The aesthetic can simultaneously produce great works of art as well as release great horrors. Because people are relegated to objects, they either have immediate value to be used or are discarded for a lack of use. Kierkegaard also points out that when a person is intoxicated with infinite possibilities, despondency can creep in and the aesthetic person ends only in despair. In the attempt to fulfill their passions, they become a slave to them and are ultimately unfree and unstable. It was for this very reason that Kierkegaard’s pseudonymous author of the second part of Either/Or, Judge William, urges the aesthetic to look outside themselves. In looking outside themselves, they realize that they must give of themselves in order to find any form of fulfillment.

Just as with the aesthetic, freedom and choice plays a central role in the ethical. The difference is that the ethical is not choosing objects of desire, but makes a choice as to which of two options should exist, and which should not. Judge William states “it is, for if it were not I could not choose it; it is not, for it first comes into existence through my choosing it, and otherwise my choice would be an illusion.”

26 Every choice changes the individual in the act of choosing. The ethical places value not on hedonistic utility, but on ethical acts and good actions. While the individual’s choices are creative, they are also freeing. The aesthetic was condemned in their freedom of infinite possibilities and ultimately reduced to nothing. The ethical only faces two options; they must either do

one thing or the other. In this act they are built up by every choice. The ethical construct
themselves in their freedom rather than letting fleeting desires control and destroy them.

Only later does Kierkegaard revisit these two spheres and add a third. Kierkegaard is increas-
ingly troubled by actions that may be subjectively ethical while objectively repugnant. This is confronted in Fear and Trembling, when Kierkegaard addresses Abraham and his sacrifice of Isaac. By every ethical standard, this sacrifice is a repugnant act and should be condemned, yet it is held up as an exemplary thing by the religious traditions that share this story. At the same time the Binding of Isaac, which Kierkegaard retitles the Anguish of Abraham, is not an aesthetic act either. In his anguish this was not something that Abraham desired to do. Being neither ethical nor aesthetical, yet still valuable, requires a third measure of value to be considered. It was out of this need that the religious sphere was born.

To be clear, for Kierkegaard the religious is not a synthetic of the aesthetic and ethical, neither is it a psychosis used to justify a madman. Religion is also not the basis of morality for a secular society. In this, Kierkegaard rejects the Kantian understanding of religion. Rather religion is a relation between the finite and infinite. In his journals Kierkegaard points out that following Spener, Pietists conflicted over moral issues. “While it was precisely the pietistic development that allowed for a number of intellectual adiaphora.—But what Xt says surely applies not only in moral but also intellectual respects: Your word shall be yea, yea, and nay, nay, what is more than these
comes from evil.” Of course for Kierkegaard, just as with Schleiermacher, not all religious are the same. Therefore there are two forms of religiousness. Kierkegaard calls these religiousness A, and religiousness B. A is the religious form of Socrates and immanent religions. B is the form of Christianity and is transcendent religion.

Kierkegaard’s treatment of religiousness A, or what Climacus calls the religion of immanence in the *Postscript*, is the “relation to an eternal happiness that is not conditioned by a something but is the dialectical inward deepening of the relation, consequently conditioned by the inward deepening, which is dialectical.” As such, one is still capable of doubting God’s love, since they are free in the relation with the immanent God. The God is not fully known, only observed. Religiousness A is the necessary first step in every religious system. One must first begin with the understanding that God is knowable. It is only from this point that religiousness B can arise. Kierkegaard states “Religiousness A must first be present in the individual before there can be any consideration of becoming aware of the dialectical B.”

Religiousness B is the transcendent God. God is not only something which can be perceived, but grows beyond perception to be the ultimate source, or as Tillich later argues, the ground of being. Religiousness B adds depth to A. God is both here and not here. God exists within a culture and outside of it. Christianity, through the incarnation, posits conditions eternal to the individual and the individual to the eternal. Religiousness

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28 Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, 556.

29 Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, 1:556.
B takes advantage of Kierkegaard’s notions that subjectivity is truth and untruth, that the truth is outside the individual and enters the individual. As Kierkegaard/Climacus states “In Religiousness B, the upbuilding is something outside the individual; the individual does not find the upbuilding by finding the relationship with God within himself, but relates himself to something outside himself to find the upbuilding.”30 Kierkegaard’s vision of Religiousness B is directly borrowed from Francke and Zinzendorf’s notions of service to ones neighbor as the foundation of Pietism and Christianity.

**God, Sin, and Redemption**

*“There is an infinite, radical, qualitative difference between God and man.”*31

Kierkegaard’s starting point when addressing God is the same starting point of Perkins, namely that God’s first essential characteristic is that God is immutable. “God is unchangeable. In His omnipotence He created this visible world—and made Himself invisible. He clothed Himself in the visible world as in a garment; He changes it as one who shifts a garment—Himself unchanged.”32 Kierkegaard links God’s unchanging nature to other divine attributes such as omnipotence, omniscience, and omnipresence. Kierkegaard takes comfort in the immutability of God, because this prevents God’s love from changing as well. The unalterable God also is fundamentally different than

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30 Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, 561.


humanity. Humanity is ever changing. The very act of coming into existence illustrates the temporal and permutable nature of creation. Just as with his Pietist forefathers, Kierkegaard begins by addressing the uneven relationship that exists between God and humanity, although a relationship still exists.

Since humanity and God are so vastly different, a natural but unnecessary antagonism arises. This antagonism is known as sin. Kierkegaard views sin as a relational term rather than possessing notions of guilt, a burden, or a debt that must be repaid. As a relational term for the antagonism that exists between humanity and God, sin has a noticeable effect upon humanity. This effect is despair, dread, anxiety, and angst. Kierkegaard often associated his own melancholy with dread and therefore with a fractured relationship. In The Concept of Anxiety, Kierkegaard elaborates by defining anxiety as “entangled freedom.” The tension exists in the relationship with the divine only because humanity is free to break away from God in that relationship.

Because sin is a relational term, Kierkegaard also maintains that those who lack faith do not do so because of the presence of sin. In fact sin as a category in relation to the divine does not exist for those to whom faith is completely absent. Kierkegaard argues “Neither paganism nor the natural man knows what sin is.” There would be no reason why someone who has no relationship whatsoever with the Almighty should have friction with an absent relationship. They will still possess anxiety, angst, dread, and despair, but not because of being at enmity with God. Rather angst exists because they

are at enmity with one another. Sin and its effects apply only to those who are in relation to one another.

Furthermore, since people react to despair in diverse ways, one should expect the manifestation to vary. Kierkegaard argues in *Sickness Unto Death* that men and women have fundamentally different expressions of angst. Women’s despair is linked to their devotion. “In devotion she loses herself, and only then is she happy, only then is she herself; a woman who is happy without devotion, that is, without giving herself, no matter to what she gives it, is altogether unfeminine.” This manner of despair only exists in social relations and is not a unique characteristic of feminine despair when the broken relationship is with God. In this case Kierkegaard argues the distinction between men and women vanishes, as “it holds for men as well as for women that devotion is the self and that in the giving of oneself the self is gained.”35

Since Kierkegaard defines sin as a relational term, the purpose of its effects are to serve as a corrective to the broken relationship. The reason why sin causes despair, angst, anxiety, and dread is to urge resolution between the two aggrieved parties. The emotional and experiential component of sin is necessary in order to prevent future alienation and encourage recompense. With this view of sin, it should come as no shock that Kierkegaard, just like Schleiermacher, does not believe that sin is necessary for humanity. Neither hold that man must sin, rather that the world is fallen and relations are broken, but not that they must be so. Sin for both is a potentiality and not a necessary condition of human existence. Its presence fundamentally changes ones ontological

relation to God, but it is not something which exists necessarily. Furthermore, Kierkegaard argues that “If sin is ignorance, then sin really does not exist, for sin is indeed consciousness.” Kierkegaard, just like Schleiermacher and other Pietists, maintains that sin is experiential just like all other theological concerns; everything has its source in a relational positioning with God.

Sin produces consciousness and therefore leads to faith. Kierkegaard emphatically argues that Christians must understand “the opposite of sin is not virtue but faith.” The opposite of sin is not a harmonious act, rather it is a relational stance. Sin occurs when one encounters the other and chooses to reject it as other. This rejection can take place in one of two ways. The first is to simply not recognize the other as other, minimizing or ignoring the fundamental differences that exist in the other. In this case, they have not truly encountered the other but only themselves. The second is to reject the other precisely because it is other, once again placing the encounter within themselves and their conceptions and not in understanding. In both cases sin is essentially an offense. The offense is either in not being able to understand the other as other, or not wanting to engage the other as other. For Kierkegaard, the supreme other is God. When someone confronts the other/God, only two options are available. They can take offense, which produces sin, fundamentally a disconnect in relationship, or they can have faith and engage in relationship with the other. Offense and faith are both means of perceiving the same other, but from a different relational perspective.

36 Søren Kierkegaard, *Sickness Unto Death*, 89.

Kierkegaard’s notion of faith is primarily relational, just as sin is. Faith as a relationship with God reorients the individual. This God-centered orientation reinterprets the past, validates the present, and gives meaning to the future. Faith is the inward experience of truth as outside and objective, while subjectively being received through a personal, relational, and experiential dimension of self. Kierkegaard’s pseudonym Johannes Climacus argues, “If I am capable of grasping God objectively I do not believe, but precisely because I cannot do this I must believe.”

Faith is personal and as such can only be understood and interpreted through the subjective encounter with the objective reality. This reality Kierkegaard calls God.

Since faith is a relational term, Christianity must be understood as relational rather than doctrinal. First and foremost the self encounters God, and relates to God either in acceptance, which Kierkegaard calls faith, or in rejection, which is sin and the correlating sensations of angst, despair, dread, and anxiety. The matter is “very simple will you obey or will you not obey; will you in faith submit to divine authority or will you take offense.” While Kierkegaard contends that faith is primarily a relational term, and the Christian experience is an experience of faith, this does not mean that Kierkegaard is anti-doctrinal. Just like Schleiermacher, doctrines are used to give expression of the experience, but the essence of Christianity is experiential faith rather than doctrinal knowledge.

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38 Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, 182.

Kierkegaard takes his interpretation of faith one step further in the *Postscript*, when he argues that in Christendom one may go to the house of God and pray in a false spirit. Doctrinally, the observer is correct, they are addressing the true God, but their spirit is false. If this is the case, they are not encountering God, because they are not relating to this God. Conversely Climacus argues about those who live in idolatry, whose doctrines concerning God are false. If those prayers are filled with the passion of the infinite, although the objective object is false, is this genuine worship? Climacus concludes that “The one prays in truth to God though he worships an idol; the other prays falsely to the true God and hence worships in fact an idol.”

Faith is relational, as such the one in Christendom may understand doctrinally the correct God, but just like Schleiermacher’s understanding, this understanding does not equate to belief. Both Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard demand that true religion is relational, not simply informative. Both also value understanding, but only as it serves to deepen the relationship with their God. In doing so, both are reworking classical Pietisms prioritization of experience over doctrine and knowledge. Simultaneously both are developing doctrines and trying to relate their experience as a set of knowledgeable precepts.

Since knowledge is not the determining factor for salvation, but experimental relation with the divine is, Kierkegaard was troubled by the doctrine of predestination. Kierkegaard never held Schleiermacher’s distinction that humanity in the singular was predestined, although Schleiermacher’s conception of predestination did ultimately shape

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40 Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, 180.
Kierkegaard’s own conception of predestination. Kierkegaard could not hold that salvation belonged to all who simply died. He continually wrestled with his own salvation in light of Calvin’s and Perkin’s conceptions of predestination. Initially it should be understood that Kierkegaard was a Lutheran and not a Calvinist, and as such, notions of double predestination championed by Perkins were abandoned. Kierkegaard’s view of predestination is contained within the Lutheran response to the Augustinian and Pelagian debate. This same debate is played out again within English Pietism through the understandings of election held by Perkins and Wesley. Kierkegaard’s views are closer to Wesley’s than they are to Perkins, but they remain Lutheran rather than Reform or Calvinist in their conception.

The position Kierkegaard eventually adopts is the notion of synergism. Synergism holds that salvation is a cooperative effort of God and the individual, but unlike Pelagius, it is God who moves first. Salvation then comes to those who work alongside God and do not take offense, rather those who take a leap of faith with God. In accepting this view, Kierkegaard rejects both Perkins as well as the prevailing view that emerged out of Halle, which held that God moves the will, but only after the penitent sin-consciousness served as a precondition for God’s activity. In other words, Kierkegaard’s view of divine election combines the agency of God, as held by Schleiermacher, with Arndt’s Lutheran understanding that man still responds to God.

Central to Kierkegaard’s understanding is the notion of grace. In his journals Kierkegaard records, “Grace takes away this concern and says: Only believe—then eternal salvation is assured to you. But no more not the slightest abatement of the law’s demand; now you are to begin to realize precisely this. But there will be rest and peace
in your soul, for your eternal salvation is assured to you if only you believe.” Grace is the condition that permits the choice of faith. God first moves, and then humanity can choose to respond to God in faith.

This response in faith is also a gift from God. In For Self-Examination, he argues that faith “is the Spirit’s gift from God, it is your victory over the world in which you more than conquer.” This is echoed in an upbuilding discourse when he states that in repentance it is God who loves. It is God who acts “In repentance, you receive everything from God, even the thanksgiving that you bring to him, so that even this is what the child's gift is to the eyes of the parents, a jest, a receiving of something that one has oneself given.”

Since faith is a both a response to God and a gift from God, faith is itself a paradox. Kierkegaard’s theological system contains paradoxes within paradoxes explained by paradoxes. Faith is the subjective’s response to the objective God, who granted the recipient the condition to subjectively receive the objective and relate to the objective by subjectively encountering objective reality. The decision of faith lies in the subject, but the condition to receive God in faith was granted by God. As Climacus argued in the Postscript, “The thing of being a Christian is not determined by the what of Christianity but by the how of the Christian. This how can only correspond with one

thing, the absolute paradox.” Furthermore, “To believe is specifically different from all other appropriation and inwardness, Faith is the objective uncertainty due to the repulsion of the absurd held fast by the passion of inwardness, which in this instance is intensified to the utmost degree.”

Johannes de Silentio, another one of Kierkegaard’s pseudonyms, agrees, stating that faith is only possible “by virtue of the absurd.”

Since faith is paradoxical, it requires a leap. Reason can only bring one to the edge of faith. Faith is still something absurd. Silentio argues that “theology is willing to sell [faith] off at a low price.” Once again, just like Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard argues that knowledge cannot be equated with faith. In For Self-Examination Kierkegaard writes, “If it is true that you know how to describe faith, it only proves that you are a poet, and if you can describe it well, it proves that you are a good poet; but that is very far from proving that you are a believer. Perhaps you can also weep in describing faith, that would then prove that you are a good actor!”

Kierkegaard expands upon this concept by showing how doctrines and reason themselves cannot explain faith. One must take an experiential leap in accepting the paradox, rather than trying in vain to understand all of what faith is. Just as Kierkegaard’s doctrines of sin and grace were experiential, his approach to grace remains within the same Pietistic mold, explaining that it is the

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44 Søren Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments, 540.
46 Søren Kierkegaard, Fear and Trembling / Repetition, 48.
47 Søren Kierkegaard, For Self-Examination / Judge for Yourself, 42-43.
experience of God that delivers grace and the actions of the Christian rather than their knowledge that produce a genuine change in the Christian’s life.

Christianity is additionally paradoxical because its conception of faith is not only in the abstract but also in the historical. Christianity demands that faith is placed not only in an abstract idea, but in the historical person of Christ. As argued in the Postscript, “Christianity is the only historical phenomenon that despite the historical – indeed, precisely by means of the historical – has wanted to be the single individual’s point of departure for his eternal consciousness, has wanted to interest him otherwise than merely historically, has wanted to base his happiness on his relation to something historical.”

Christianity not only contains the paradox, but is itself yet another paradox, which possesses a dynamic interplay between eternity and history. Climacus argues that Christianity as historical points to the eternal, which in turn points once again to the historical.

Kierkegaard’s Christology develops out of his understanding of the historical paradox of Christianity. Contrary to Schleiermacher, whose conception of history was interpreted through his hermeneutical understanding, Kierkegaard accepts the Athanasian and Chalcedon formulations of Christ without reservation. Kierkegaard remains within the orthodox and traditional dogmatic understandings of the incarnation and hypostatic union. He was much more comfortable with employing the Church’s dogmas and doctrines than Schleiermacher was, and he saw little value in reworking underlying

48 Søren Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments, 15.
Christian doctrines. Kierkegaard preferred to examine the edifice and new constructions rather than the historic base and foundations of the church itself.

Possibly as a way to better understand the church’s creeds, Kierkegaard often conceived of Christ in combination and sometimes in opposition to Socrates. Kierkegaard admired both teachers and saw their message are remarkably similar, with profound differences between their points of departure, claims of authority, and conceptions related to their source of truth.

In many ways Socrates was Kierkegaard’s first hero next to his father. Socrates was the Greek anti-hero who stood up against the establishment and offered himself as a sacrifice for his message, and in so doing became the prime example of Greek learning. Kierkegaard turned to Socrates time and time again as inspiration. It was only in his second conversion experience in 1848 that Kierkegaard abandoned Socrates as his ideological hero and truly turned to Christ. Even still, Socrates’ own death at the hands of the Athenians undoubtedly resonated with him during Kierkegaard’s Attack. In the Postscript, Climacus argues that “The thesis that subjectivity, inwardness, is truth contains the Socratic wisdom, the undying merit of which is to have paid attention to the essential meaning of existing, of the knower’s being' an existing person. That is why, in his ignorance, Socrates was in the truth in the highest sense within paganism.”

The entire aim of the Philosophical Fragments, and to a similar degree the Postscript, is to understand the truth, both in its Socratic and un-Socratic dimensions. If the truth is not to be understood as Socratic, Climacus contends that the inverse presents

49 Søren Kierkegaard, *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments*, 204.
several characteristics that point rather explicitly to the Christian conception of truth. This philosophical un-Socratic notion of truth contains the truth as something paradoxically objective while relating to the individual through the subjective. Additionally, the manner in which this is to be done is in time, therefore the objective truth must take on a form that humans can encounter, and in order that the truth can be made known to all, it must present itself not in glory, but humility, including a humble death.

Obviously this message correlates with the historic Christian accounts of Christ and understanding of the incarnation and atonement. It is interesting that Kierkegaard, in line with Climacus’ extrapolation of an un-Socratic truth, does not hold that the death of Christ/the personified truth, is a vicarious suffering or an atonement for sins, rather it simply presents the condition whereby man, who is untruth, can relate to the divine who is truth. Climacus, Kierkegaard, and Schleiermacher all reject or overlook the notion that Christ’s suffering was a substitutionary atonement, which is the standard western conception of Christ’s death. None of them directly argue for the Eastern Orthodox conception that Christ’s death was to defeat death and bring life, a doctrine known as Christus Victor. In many ways Kierkegaard’s understanding comes close to this, as Christ’s death becomes a leveling process wherein humanity comes closer to God and is able to become truth itself. Still this doctrine is never explicitly debated by Kierkegaard or his pseudonyms.

For Kierkegaard, the historic Christ serves as a message and a paradox. Christ is a message because Christ as the personification of truth is fundamentally his teachings. It is through the teachings, or gospel message, that one first encounters Christ. Christ is
also a paradox, because the Christian must not only take the message, but become a
contemporary with this message. While the message is given to all, one can only
approach it as an object of faith. Anti-Climacus, Kierkegaard’s later pseudonym argues
“one cannot know anything at all about Christ; he is the paradox, the object of faith,
exists only for faith.”

Christ the eternal truth is confined to the inwardness of an
existing individual as an object of faith. Climacus argues “The supreme paradox of all
thought is the attempt to discover something that thought cannot think.”

Later Kierkegaard defines the thought which thought cannot itself think as the incarnation. In
*Practice in Christianity*, Anti-Climacus argues that “Offence has essentially to do with
the composite term God and man, or with the God-Man… The God-Man is the paradox,
absolutely the paradox. Therefore, it is altogether certain that the understanding must
come to a standstill on it.”

Christ as the incarnation is the ultimate paradox, beyond
understanding intellectually, yet knowable through the very act of becoming.

The incarnation for both Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard is the only miracle
which is absolutely necessary for Christian life. Both place such an importance on
Christ’s becoming man that even the atonement and resurrection are made secondary in
light of infinite taking on finitude. For both Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard, Christ
through the incarnation becomes the first of the new creation and the prototype for the
rest of humanity. Kierkegaard wrote in *Judge For Yourself*, that “Jesus Christ is not only

50 Søren Kierkegaard, *Practice In Christianity*, 25.

University Press, 1985), 46.

52 Søren Kierkegaard, *Practice In Christianity*, 81, 82.
the prototype but is also the Redeemer.”\textsuperscript{53} Through the incarnation the objective truth, which is God, brings a relation to the subjective, who is untruth, thereby redeeming and overcoming the infinite divide. By Christ becoming man, Christians are able to relate to his and experience God. It should not be surprising that both Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard, as nineteenth-century Pietists, point to the event that allows for the experience of God as the primary and only necessary miracle of Christianity.

With this redemption three things occur. First, as mentioned earlier, there is the opportunity for both faith and offense, which is sin. God enters into relationship with humanity, and with individuals who can choose to join with God in faith, or can take offense at the paradox and reject a God with whom they are now in relationship, even though this relation is strained. This offense is of course sin and causes anxiety, angst, dread, and despair. When the response is faith rather than offense, sin is not only forgiven, but forgotten as well. The only way to truly overcome a fractured relationship is for God to blot out the transgression entirely, to hold no account of it. The third consequence of redemption is the object of faith, as well as the individual who holds faith, becoming something new. Christ, the object of faith and the prototype of faith, is the first of the new creation. Following Christ, the Christian also becomes a new creation.

Becoming a new creation is the act of becoming a person of faith, who takes no offense at the paradox which is Christ and the truth. Rather as Kierkegaard writes in \textit{For Self-Examination}, “it is a new life, literally a new life – because, mark this well, death

\textsuperscript{53} Søren Kierkegaard, \textit{For Self-Examination / Judge for Yourself}, 159.
goes in between, dying to, and a life on the other side of death – yes, that is a new life.”

Like Schleiermacher and Kant before him, an essential characteristic of this new life is freedom. The new creation is free, in that they are not hindered by doubt or angst which accompanies offense. Still Kierkegaard points out that “Faith is a restless thing.” Faith is not stagnant, it must produce works.

In *Purity of Heart*, one of Kierkegaard’s best known upbuilding or edifying discourses, he argues that “Purity of Heart is the very wisdom that is acquired through prayer. A man of prayer does not pore over learned books for he is the wise man ‘whose eyes are opened’ - when he kneels down.” The action that faith produces is experiential. Kierkegaard once again points out that experiential value supersedes theological understanding, and true faith first results in experiential undertakings rather than dogmatic expressions. The primary response to faith is prayer. Following this, the primary act is love. In *Works of Love*, Kierkegaard argues “A person should begin with loving the unseen God because then he himself will learn what it is to love. But that he actually loves the unseen will be known by his loving the brother he sees; the more he loves the unseen the more he will love the people he sees.”

Kierkegaard describes those who are exemplars of faith as knights of faith. A knight of faith is someone who has completely given all and is firmly within the religious

54 Søren Kierkegaard, *For Self-Examination / Judge for Yourself*, 76.


sphere of existence. They are not simply willing to give things up for a greater good, Kierkegaard calls these people knights of infinite resignation or regression. Those who are simply resigned to sacrifice for the good are ethical but not religious people. Sacrifice may be the same, but what the sacrifice is for differs, as well as its ethical quality. Both may be willing to sacrifice themselves or even an object they love. The knight of faith does so because God requires or requested it of them, and not because it necessarily will produce any greater good for the self or humanity at large. Their sacrifice may in fact be considered a horror to both the aesthetical and ethical person. The knight of infinite regression sacrifices because of an ethical duty to humanity and those around them. Faith is not required, only a sense of duty.

For Kierkegaard, the ultimate knight of faith was Abraham. As mentioned earlier, his willingness to sacrifice Isaac can only hold value for the religious sphere. For both the ethical and aesthetic, such an act is reprehensible and inconceivable. Through this sacrifice Abraham is either an exemplar of faith or a madman. Kierkegaard argues that in his willingness to kill his son, he was not only sacrificing Isaac but himself. Who Abraham was before the request and who he became after the decision is a fundamentally different person. Abraham’s future identity, his hopes, and desire, were all offered to God in that act.

In like manner, Christians are to sacrifice themselves. To become a knight of faith they cannot desire sacrifice, nor believe that they are above the moral, nor can they appeal to a new principle that supersedes the dictates of the ethical. Rather the true knight of faith only responds in faith to God’s requests. The willingness to sacrifice the self is due to the fact that the Christian has a new self, fashioned for them by God.
Through faith, the Christian moved from non-being into being. This is the new birth and in light of the new birth “the disciple who is born anew owes nothing to any man, but everything to his divine Teacher.”58 Thankfully the Christian is not alone in their new life of faith; they are surrounded by a community known as the church.

**The Church and Its People**

“Christendom is not the Church of Christ, Not by any means. No, I say that ‘Christendom’ is twaddle which has clung to Christianity like a cobweb to a fruit, and now is so polite as to want to be mistaken for Christianity.”59

Kierkegaard’s conception of the church was largely shaped by his continuous conflict with the Danish Lutheran church and his lifelong affinity with the *Brodresocietet*, the Moravian congregation in Copenhagen. In *Practice in Christianity*, Kierkegaard undertakes the mission of dispelling the “illusion of a church triumphant.”60 In Christendom, the Danes believed the Church had emerged victorious, and the task of being a Christian was equated with being a good Dane. In large measure Kierkegaard addressed his opposition to this perspective within his *Attack Upon Christendom*, both in his specific assaults against Mynster, Martensen, Grundtvig, and his critique that the Church failed to prioritize what God desired from the Church. Living in Christendom, Kierkegaard opposed the view that the Church was primarily a sacramental agent or the


60 Søren Kierkegaard, *Practice In Christianity*, 209.
dispenser and mediator of grace. Kierkegaard’s conception of grace was not dependent upon the sacraments, nor ecclesial authority. Some of this conception was a direct result of inheriting Protestantism and Pietism. The value the established church maintained from these traditions was further diminished from his encounters with Christendom and what he perceived to be false Christians and a false Christianity. At best the church in Denmark is a poor caricature of Christ’s church, and at worst it was actively opposed to the sacrificial character of the true church.

It is interesting to note here that Kierkegaard dispenses with any notion of a visible and invisible church. Schleiermacher’s conception of an invisible church did not sway Kierkegaard to try to save a remnant from the established church. Rather Kierkegaard preferred to address real Christians as opposed to the established Christendom. In doing so Kierkegaard’s pietistic roots are shown. Arndt and Spener both spoke of the failings of the established church and encouraged individual Christians to overcome the ecclesiastical failings and seek Christ on their own or within small enclaves such as Spener’s collegia. Kierkegaard, who even while surrounded by Danish society and friends, spent most of his life in isolation, never called for small groups of Christians to gather inside or outside the church. Rather, Kierkegaard held a far more pessimistic view than Spener and even Francke. His mission was to call for individual repentance within a church and culture he believed was actively working against God.

Instead, Kierkegaard spent most of his time urging Christians to become contemporaries with Christ. Kierkegaard’s basic conception of the church was that it is a relational body rather than an institution. While Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and to an extent Lutherans, view the relational aspect of the church as both the congregation
to one another and individually to God, Kierkegaard’s primary focus of the Church was as a collection of individuals all seeking after the same God. The communal aspect of the Church as one member with another is conspicuously absent, with the sole exception that Christians are then called to love one another and the world. Nearly all of Kierkegaard’s critiques and commands connected with the Church focus upon the ecclesial hierarchy and God, rather than one to another. Kierkegaard focuses nearly entirely upon the vertical component of the Church and not upon the horizontal.

The basic task of the Church was to be contemporary with Christ. This is the central message in *Philosophical Fragments*. Climacus states “But if the one who comes later receives the condition from the god himself, then he is a contemporary, a genuine contemporary—which indeed only the believer is and which every believer is.” Every believer, every Christian is to become a genuine contemporary with Christ. Being a contemporary with Christ cannot be in time, because if it was then only the first generation of Christians could be true Christians. Rather one becomes a contemporary with Christ outside of time. Essentially Kierkegaard argues that to be a genuine contemporary with Christ, this cannot be done in χρόνος Chronos, or chronological time, rather it must be done only in καιρός Kairos, or opportune time. This distinction of time is often used within Eastern Orthodoxy as well in an explanation of eternity being present at the liturgy.

Since the Christian is to be a contemporary with Christ, the Christian must do so in two ways. First they must be a contemporary with Christ’s message. This is easy

enough since Kierkegaard connected his Christ with Christ’s message as recorded in the Gospels, and within prayer. The second way in which Christians are able to be contemporaries with Christ is through imitation. In *For Self-Examination*, Kierkegaard states “The demonstration of Christianity really lies in imitation.” In this call of *Imatatio Christi*, Kierkegaard connects with Tauler, à Kempis, Angela of Foligno, and other medieval mystics. Kierkegaard’s library included the works of Tauler and à Kempis and he drew from their understanding of a life which imitates Christ, including the suffering and poverty. In *Either/Or*, Judge William describes the mystic as “one who falls in love with God, desiring nothing less than a merger with God, an immersion in the infinite.”

It was from this mystical interpretation of what the Church ought to be that Kierkegaard launched his own version of anti-clericalism. Kierkegaard’s anti-clericalism was a conservative anti-clericalism. He did not desire to destroy the clergy to eliminate the church, nor did he believe that the role of the clergy was simply unnecessary. Rather Kierkegaard desired that the clergy conform to their ideal as found in the New Testament. Kierkegaard desired that the clergy would be known for their sacrificial lives and not the opulence and comfort which surrounds contemporary/chronos modern clergy.

Kierkegaard’s first critique of the clergy was their insistence upon status. Clergy are to live by example and be the servants of all. Instead the Danish clergy viewed themselves as superior to their congregations. “But take note merely of what the clergy


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say, concerning how rarely it is found in the community of believers. For this phrase, the community of believers, is used in about the same manner as being subjects of a sort.”

If the clergy view their congregations as their subjects, then they have lost their calling. Kierkegaard’s critique of the professor mirrors that of the priest. Both give the appearance of working for something high and noble, but both are concerned with the finite and with their material gains. Equally the priest and the professor are trades like the carpenter and the plumber. Their advantage lies not within a special nature of their own character, rather only in their training. Worse still, Kierkegaard views the priest as little more than a bureaucrat in service to the state.

As a bureaucrat and as a tradesman, the priest’s concerns are less and less focused on the eternal and rather focused on the temporal benefits of their position. In The Moment, Kierkegaard chastises the clergy who preach poverty and then spend all their time securing a “fat livelihood” and “soon advance to an even fatter one.” The priest renounces his poverty for profits. Furthermore, they water down the demands of Christianity out of fear that they might lose a single paying member. Not even the brothel keeper feels convicted. Kierkegaard argues that the Danish clergy sell Christianity as such a “bargain price that anyone and everyone who is born is a Christian.” Unfortunately what they are selling is not genuine Christianity.

66 Søren Kierkegaard, The Moment and Late Writings, 185.
67 Søren Kierkegaard, The Moment and Late Writings. 181.
Kierkegaard’s criticism extends to a Lutheran caricature of many medieval monastics as well. Too many monastics put their faith in their own asceticism and not in Christ. They championed themselves as making life as strenuous as possible, but fail to possess a humble heart. They left no room for grace. Furthermore, they were lifted up as champions of faith to the laity. Kierkegaard maintains that Luther served as a corrective against work’s righteousness, but now the Lutheran clergy have veered too far the other direction. He liked this to a “drunken peasant; if you help him up on one side of the horse, he falls off on the other side.”

As mentioned earlier, Kierkegaard is actually rather pro-mystic as well as pro-clergy. Both institutions have failed to live up to the standard that they themselves set. As such, mystics like Tauler and à Kempis can be heroes, while the pasquinadian monastics and clergy are convicted in the harshest of terms. The clergy of all stripes must be a person who stands over and against the secular world. Kierkegaard believes that “To preach is to have recourse to authority.” Since this is the case, the person who preaches must have a life which models their message. They should preach out of their own convictions and from their own experiences with God, rather than a desire for profit or status.

One surprising example of a model pastor for Kierkegaard was his old friend Adolph Peter Adler. Adler is the ideal pastor, because when asked about his sermons, his


response is simply “I proclaim Jesus.” In this conviction Adler is the ideal, however in many other respects Adler is far from the example. Adler and Kierkegaard knew each other from their time at school together. Adler moved on and became an earnest priest, as well as a prolific and talented author, writing four books at one time. In these respects Adler was everything that Kierkegaard wanted to be himself.

In 1843 Adler’s position in the church radically changed. He proclaimed that he received a special revelation from God that superseded all of his previous works. This new revelation required a complete renunciation of everything. It is for this reason that Adler became a tragic hero for Kierkegaard. He is the model of a priest and he is the model of a lunatic. Adler’s revelation did not claim anything new, nor was it directly contrary to scripture. Rather Adler’s error was in his exuberance and his complete surrender of his life for Christ. Kierkegaard does not validate Adler’s encounter, rather he views Adler as another example of someone who fully resides in the religious sphere. He is someone to whom Christ is his all and for this reason he is a hero and an example for the Danish clergy. Adler is a tragedy because he held the requisite skills and passion and squandered them.

Despite his views on Adler, and the clergy in general, Kierkegaard remained a good Lutheran. He proclaimed “Lutheran doctrine is excellent, [it] is the truth.” He also viewed Luther as a corrective to the Catholic Church. The exact relationship that Kierkegaard had with the Catholic Church will be addressed later in this chapter, but it


should be understood that Kierkegaard’s conception of Christianity was deeply seated in his Lutheran Pietist upbringing. The Lutheran solas remained central to Kierkegaard’s theological formulation. As already mentioned, salvation is through Christ and God’s grace and works themselves do not save, they are only byproducts of a sanctified life.

As a good Lutheran, Kierkegaard also prioritized scripture as the means of being a contemporary with Christ. It was his earnest desire to communicate “the old, well-known text, handed down by the fathers.” Contrary to Gruntvig, and in line with Lutheran doctrine, Kierkegaard saw the Bible as the source of authority for Christianity. Kierkegaard’s greatest and most direct treatment of Christian scripture takes place in For Self-Examination. Unlike Schleiermacher and other forms of historical criticism, Kierkegaard finds discussions questioning authorship and construction of scripture to be pointless. Whether a specific book was authored by Paul, or if Mark witnessed an event that he recorded in his Gospel or heard it from an apostle, is secondary and counterproductive. The Bible, in its current construction, as handed down since the time of Luther, is accepted as the word of God. Kierkegaard, like Arndt, Perkins, and Francke accepts the Protestant formation of the Bible as the inspired word of God and Kierkegaard finds little value debating the deuto-canonical texts and their place inside or outside his Bible. Other than appeals to knights of the faith recorded in the Old Testament, Kierkegaard’s emphasis in reading scripture is the New Testament.

In his journal, Kierkegaard reminds himself that the Reformers attempted to remove the ecclesiastical hierarchy and enthrone the Bible as the original source of

72 Søren Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments, 1:630.
authority for Christianity. Historically this resulted in an unbelievable degree of fragmentation, as the interpretations of scripture rival the number of interpreters. Kierkegaard argues that the Reformers forgot or did not understand that “they themselves brought with them an entire dogmatic system and that they thus move in a circle, faith is acquired through the Bible and the Bible is to be interpreted through faith, which is acquired through the Bible. Thus the door is opened to every interpretation and in this way the Reformation implies rationalism.”\textsuperscript{73} To avoid the rationalism implied by the Reformers, Kierkegaard, in \textit{For Self-Examination}, ignores scripture as the source of doctrine and dogma. Instead he interprets scripture from the experiential realm.

First, Kierkegaard views the Bible as a mirror. When one encounters scripture they are not looking at scripture itself, rather they are looking at themselves in the biblical accounts. The stories and teachings are directed towards the reader and not merely an abstract declaration. As such, reading of scripture is experiential and not doctrinal. “If God’s Word is for you merely a doctrine, something impersonal and objective, then it is no mirror – an objective doctrine cannot be called a mirror.”\textsuperscript{74}

Exactly because scripture is a mirror, it is something personal and should hold real intimacy to its reader. Kierkegaard switches metaphors from a mirror to a letter written by a lover. One never reads a letter from a lover in a scholarly way. They do not open a lexicon and dictionary when trying to parse a phrase from their beloved. Rather they open it and with exuberance and passion read it and reread it. When one encounters


\textsuperscript{74} Søren Kierkegaard, \textit{For Self-Examination / Judge for Yourself}, 43.
an obscure passage, which is likely to happen with the Bible, Kierkegaard urges the Christian to simply move past it and focus on the passages which are clear. Similar to a letter from one’s beloved, when a passage necessitates action, the reader must act immediately to fulfil their beloved’s wishes. “God’s Word is given in order that you shall act according to it, not that you shall practice interpreting obscure passages.”

It is from Kierkegaard’s Lutheran perspective that he elevates scripture over the ecclesia. Scripture also has a leveling process wherein there is no fundamental difference between the laity and the clergy. In his diary Kierkegaard sees in Luther the man who transformed the church. “For as I look closer I see more and more clearly that while you did overthrow the Pope, you enthroned ‘the Public’ in his stead.” In keeping with the elevated position of the laity, Kierkegaard himself was never ordained. While he desired ordination on at least three occasions in his life, he remained a member of the laity, and always spoke from that source of authority.

In addition to Kierkegaard never being ordained, he was never a professor, and he actually never held any job whatsoever. Kierkegaard used his self-imposed cloister to write and serve the church in that capacity. Just like Thomas à Kempis, Kierkegaard was isolated from his audience and wrote works that impacted the world far beyond his cell. The monastic life available for the medieval Catholic was absent for the Danish Lutheran. Kierkegaard used his father’s wealth to create one for himself. Like à Kempis,

75 Søren Kierkegaard, For Self-Examination / Judge for Yourself, 29.

Kierkegaard’s popularity grew after his death. His initial audience misunderstood him and lampooned his contributions.

While not ordained, Kierkegaard was granted the right to preach, though he rarely did. Instead Kierkegaard wrote sermons, calling them upbuilding discourses. These discourses served as a sermon to those who read them, but immunized Kierkegaard from ecclesial oversight, an important distinction. Each of these discourses also served as an opportunity for Kierkegaard to show his devotion to his father, who desired Søren to be ordained. Half of the discourses were dedicated to him. Most of his other works and many of the discourses were dedicated to Regina.

The discourses also allowed the very wealthy Kierkegaard to fashion himself a populist. As an outsider he could direct his proclamations to all Danes who may come across his work, and not only those limited to his socio-economic sphere or those who were in Copenhagen or the small rural parish he desired to pastor. Indeed Kierkegaard’s discourses and other writings spread outside of Copenhagen and through Norwegian immigrants like Linka Preus into nineteenth-century America as well.

Kierkegaard was also a populist in his own life. Despite his wealth, his family’s recent history in poverty must have made some lasting impression upon him. The poor always had access to his home, something most of the wealthy did not permit. Kierkegaard also believed that knowledge and cultivation served as a detriment when it came to living the Christian life. Kierkegaard championed the common man because he was one, just one with an uncommon intellect and wealth.

Kierkegaard may have championed the common man, but not always the common woman. His treatment of women has remained an issue of great debate. As mentioned in
his biography, one of Kierkegaard’s first publications was used to criticize Mathilde Fibiger and her call for emancipation of women. Kierkegaard also scoffed at Heiberg’s inclusion of women in one of his philosophical lectures. While it is easy for any modern critic to view Kierkegaard’s fairly obvious criticism of the ability of women with these two events, they are consistent with Kierkegaard’s overall political stance. Kierkegaard was a staunch monarchist and staunch conservative. Overall Kierkegaard liked the status quo, even in matters of the church. Anytime liberal steps resulted in change that Kierkegaard abhorred, including the formation of the People’s Church and the dismantling of the Moravian community in Copenhagen, served to cement his ties to conservative political ideology. Kierkegaard did his best to maintain traditional political and ecclesial structure out of fear of the crowd and alienation of the individual. The only issue in which Kierkegaard sided with the liberals was in the issue concerning freedom of the press. But even here Kierkegaard believed that the press needed to be answerable for false statements and false claims they made. Kierkegaard’s view of the press, even while he supported its freedom, was lower than his view of women.

Beyond a political objection to the emancipation of women, Kierkegaard was not always received favorably by women. Signe Laessoe, in a letter to Hans Christian Andersen on Either/Or, wrote “We women have to be especially angry with him like the Mohammedans, he assigns us to the realm of finitude, and he values us only because we give birth to, amuse, and save menfolk.” While Laessoe’s critique here is against the

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77 Bruce H. Kirmmse, Encounters With Kierkegaard: A Life as seen by His Contemporaries, 57 - Signe Laessoe to Hans Christian Andersen, April 7, 1843.
aesthetic sphere and the *Diary of the Seducer*, she does not find the ethical sphere and the words of Judge William any better. She continues “The second part only makes me the angrier with him it is there that he ties women to finitude. In fact I only understand a small fraction of the book; it is altogether too philosophical. For example, he says, ‘There is no bliss except in despair; hurry up and despair, you will find no happiness until you do.’”

Possibly Kierkegaard’s most inflammatory statements against women are not found in *Either/Or*, but in *For Self-Examination*. It is in this work that Kierkegaard, and not a pseudonym, urges women to keep silent. “But if you want to be a power, O woman, let me confide in you how to do it. Learn silence, and teach silence!” It is clear that Kierkegaard was not received much better by women in the nineteenth century than he would be today. Kierkegaard’s command that women keep silent and practice silence is caustic to modern sensibilities. The question then remains, in what manner did Søren Kierkegaard intend this appeal for silence to be taken?

There is some debate on this issue. The controversy arises when one examines Kierkegaard’s conception of silence. Kierkegaard understood that “every holy feeling which in its most profound depth is good, is silent.” When anyone, man or woman, is silent, they are open to hear and receive instruction from God and their heart to a greater

78 Bruce H. Kirmmse, *Encounters With Kierkegaard: A Life as seen by His Contemporaries*, 57 - Signe Laessoe to Hans Christian Andersen, April 7, 1843.


80 Bruce H. Kirmmse, *Encounters With Kierkegaard: A Life as seen by His Contemporaries*, 36 - Regine Schlegel as told to Hanne Mourier in 1896.
degree than when they are speaking. For Kierkegaard, silence is more than verbal silence, it is the absence of ideological construction. Silence is the first and most necessary step in obedience, and the condition which is necessary to truly hear Christ’s and the apostle’s teachings.

While women are called to be silent in *For Self-Examination*, a careful reader of Kierkegaard notices three other examples of silence in his life and work. The first is Abraham. Abraham, in *Fear and Trembling*, remains silent. Abraham as the true knight of faith remains silent when God requires him to sacrifice Isaac. Abraham’s silence in *Fear and Trembling* is noticeable to anyone who is familiar with the same account as recorded in Genesis. In the Genesis account, Abraham is not silent but speaks with Isaac while climbing the mountain. In Johannes de Silentio’s version, Abraham remains silent both as an offering to God, and to hear God.

The second example of silence in Kierkegaard’s life and works is himself. While Kierkegaard wrote profusely, with over two dozen published works and over 7000 pages in his journals, he had several periods of his own life when he remained silent. He continued to write, but his writings were not submitted to his publisher. In a very real example, Kierkegaard himself was attempting to be silent in order to hear from God. Even one of his pseudonyms was named John the Silent, to remind him to be silent and listen to God. How well Kierkegaard did at remaining silent is for one to accept or reject, but his lack of publishing required intentional effort on his part.

The third example of silence in Kierkegaard’s life and works is his mother. Anne Sørensdater Lund Kierkegaard was silent. She is also discernably absent from Kierkegaard’s works, including his journals. Due to the overwhelming lack of
commentary on Anne, it is impossible to attribute too much to her. But as Søren’s mother, it is likely that she was the model of womanhood and silence in the Kierkegaard home. It is probable that from her, Søren will write that silence is more than a lack of speaking. Silence is like “the subdued lighting in a pleasant room, like the friendliness in a modest living room; it is not something one talks about, but it is there and exercises its beneficent power. Silence is like the tone, the fundamental tone, which is not given prominence and is called the fundamental tone precisely because it lies at the base.”81

Kierkegaard’s conception of women is that they control the home. With such a domineering father and noticeably silent mother, this proclamation appears to be more supposition than something one could imagine was manifest in the Kierkegaard home. Still, this is how Kierkegaard evaluates women. Presumably Anne shaped this perception in one way or the other. Søren states “Take a simple, middle-class woman; if she truly can be said to have the ability to make a house a home, then all honor to her – I bow as deeply to her as to a queen! On the other hand, if the queen does not have the ability to make a house a home, she is nevertheless only a mediocre woman.”82 The means of making a house a home is silence. “But silence brought into a house that is eternity’s art of making a house a home!”83 The Virgin Mary also represents the ideal type of womanhood for Kierkegaard. She remains the prototype for women, both in how one suffers and how one listens to God in silence.

81 Søren Kierkegaard, For Self-Examination / Judge for Yourself, 49.
82 Ibid.
83 Søren Kierkegaard, For Self-Examination / Judge for Yourself, 50.
One must also remember Kierkegaard’s devotion to Regina. Although they were never married, he always loved her and he dedicated half of his works to her. She was also the sole beneficiary of his estate when he died. While Søren likely would not have wanted to leave anything to his brother, other than the unenviable task of being the executor of his will, there were other family members he could have left his estate to. Søren had many nephews who were dedicated to him, but instead Søren chose Regina. It is also in the discourses that more universally positive statements are given about women, often as a veiled compliment of Regina.

Kierkegaard’s view of women remains a difficult one. In many ways he is rather dismissive, yet in some places he views women as exemplars of faith and objects of his love. Kierkegaard also published *Crisis in the Life of an Actress*, where his pseudonym Inter et Inter extols the virtue of an actress who undergoes the metamorphosis of time and age. Through the metamorphisms, the actress proves herself to be more than a beauty or a talented actress, but also a tranquil triumphant victor in her own right. While time may take her youth from her, it “simply makes her genius the more essentially manifest. She has lost in the eyes of the gallery, she has won in the ideal sense.”

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Kierkegaard’s Philosophical Contributions

“Either you like my little works or you don’t like them. They are nonetheless sent without Fear and Trembling, and that is something at any rate.”

As a way of explaining the notion of subjectivity, the paradox, and the spheres of existence, Kierkegaard developed two related philosophical systems. The first was the creation of Christian existentialist philosophy. Kierkegaard’s specific form of existentialism is decidedly a Christian form of existentialism, where the problem of existence is answered through one’s relationship to Christ, who is both the truth and the source of existence. For Kierkegaard to address the issue of existence and other related philosophical and theological issues, Kierkegaard utilized pseudonyms. While Kierkegaard is not the first to use pseudonyms, his particular use of them, as well as the sheer number of pseudonyms, over a dozen, separates him from other usages and is a specific contribution to philosophy and literature.

**Christian Existentialism – an accidental contribution?**

“It may at times have occurred to you, dear reader, to doubt somewhat the accuracy of that familiar philosophical thesis that the outer is the inner and the inner is the outer.”

Kierkegaard’s development of existentialism may be both intentional and accidental. Since existentialism did not yet exist, its coming into being as an accident


may be most fitting. Following its emergence into the public world, its life as a philosophical system needs to and in fact did grow, change, and die after giving birth to multiple children. These children include neo-orthodoxy and post-modern thought. Kierkegaard’s Christian existentialism itself was unsure as to what it was, or what it would become. It took the forms within Protestant, Catholic, and atheist circles during the century after Kierkegaard’s death. If existentialism’s beginning was accidental, it fashioned itself. This is the message of atheist existentialists, chief among them Jean-Paul Sartre. But Kierkegaard was not an atheist, the entire scope of his life and work was to make Christianity more difficult, thereby elevating it to the position Kierkegaard believed it to be.

Since Kierkegaard was not an atheist existentialist and his works demonstrate intentionality in their formulation, it is likely that his existentialism was not accidental. Kierkegaard created a philosophical perspective rather intentionally. Existentialism as a system was created for a specific purpose, this being experiential Christianity. The fact that Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, and Camus all veered away from Kierkegaard’s vision does not change its intended purpose, any more than when someone plans out their day only to leave half of the things on their list undone. In fact Kierkegaard would expect his system to fail and cause despair, just as humanity has a fractured relationship with God, which results in despair.

Kierkegaard’s starting point is the starting point of all existentialists, the problem of existence. As already mentioned, Kierkegaard’s notion of sin is synonymous with its effects, chief among them is angst. Angst and answering the cause of angst becomes the preoccupation of twentieth-century existentialists following Sartre. Similarly,
Kierkegaard’s condemnation of the crowd and the loss of individuality due to participation in the crowd prefigures Nietzsche’s conception of the herd. Kierkegaard’s relationship with later existentialism will be addressed in chapter thirteen in greater detail. Still, it is important to understand that many of the key elements of classic existentialism have Kierkegaard to thank for his philosophical creation.

While later existentialists borrow much of their philosophical construction from Kierkegaard, Kierkegaard drew heavily from Hegel. More precisely, Kierkegaard’s existentialism was created in part to undermine Hegelian thought. Following Kant, modernity owes no greater philosophical debt than to Hegel. Kierkegaard took Kant’s philosophical conclusions concerning autonomy and freedom for granted, but challenged Hegel’s notion of the Geist and progress. Kierkegaard was able to see the flaws in Hegel’s constant march toward progress, as the creation overwhelmingly forgets that it is a product of what came before, as well as the God who created them. In his critique, Kierkegaard is indebted to Schleiermacher, the first to wage a direct assault against Hegel. Still, Kierkegaard did not launch the same attacks Schleiermacher did and often rejected Schleiermacher’s critiques as well.

Kierkegaard’s existentialism focuses on notions of the self and the choices that are made. For Kierkegaard all choices inherently dictate who the self is. As a Christian existentialist, Kierkegaard’s notion of choice is such that the individual must choose not only what is best for humanity but also what their God desires of them. Later, when Kierkegaard develops the religious sphere, priority is given to the religious. For early Kierkegaard, especially in his writing of Either/Or, the focus is rather Kantian. The individual must choose the ethical, and in doing so conform themselves to the image God
has of them. In other words, when the individual faces a problem, the problem dictates who the individual is and who the individual will become in their choosing.

With such a heavy consequence to every choice, it is of no surprise that later existentialists focus on the notion of angst and how it relates to decisions. This is the case for Kierkegaard as well. Kierkegaard focuses less on angst than its corollary, faith. Remember that for Kierkegaard, angst and faith are really two sides of the same coin. When facing a problem or a paradox, one can choose to take a leap and embrace the divine, or they can choose to reject God. Every decision merits the same possibilities, sin or faith. Here Kierkegaard’s debt to Schleiermacher and their shared Pietistic outlook is all the more evident. Schleiermacher addressed the same motion towards or away from God in his formulation of the God-consciousness. Kierkegaard utilizes the traditional Christian term for an increased God-consciousness faith, but expands the concept of sin, addressing its effects. By identifying the effects of actions rather than the dogmatic quality of sin and faith, Kierkegaard borrows from Schleiermacher, and both prioritize the experiential dimension of Christianity over dogmatic, rationalist, and scholastic concerns.

Kierkegaard’s notion of Christian existentialism is most clearly seen in two works. The first is Either/Or, the second is Philosophical Fragments. These two works are rather different in their character and are written by different pseudonyms. While they are rather different works, both focus on the same existential task. The first of these works prioritizes choice while the second concerns itself with the truth and the individual’s relationship to it. Specifically, Fragments seeks to answer the question posed by Either/Or, namely whether one can one even choose.
The very construction of *Either/Or* illustrates the concern with choice. It begins by the fictitious editor Victor Eremite encountering a large stack of papers. Upon reading them he surmises that there are two different authors, he gives them names A and B. B is later identified as the pseudonym Judge William, but A remains a mystery. In this very act, Victor Eremite creates two distinct people and gives purpose to their writings. Still he recounts that, “Organizing A's papers was not easy. Therefore I have let chance fix the order—that is, I have let them remain in the order in which I found them, without, of course, being able to decide whether this order has chronological value or ideal significance.”

A level of chance still exists in interpreting A. As the work continues to unfold, the aesthetical sphere is displayed both in its allure and its desolation.

In the second part, Judge William responds to A. Central to the response is his depiction of the ethical. “The ethical individual knows himself, but this knowing is not simply contemplation, for then the individual comes to be defined according to his necessity. It is a collecting of oneself, which itself is an action, and this is why I have with aforethought used the expression ‘to choose oneself’ instead of ‘to know oneself.’”

The ethical is directly connected with choices that make someone who they are. One cannot know who they are without first choosing what they are and in so understanding who they were and who they are to become. The problem is that no one can truly do this at every moment. There are choices that are made without understanding or forethought,

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and the wrong choices are also made. The ethical life is infinitely better than the aesthetical life, but it is impossible to live it.

Still, in every ethical decision the individual fashions themselves. Continuing, Judge William states “When the individual has known himself and has chosen himself, he is in the process of actualizing himself.”\(^8\) The impossibility of this task presupposes the religious sphere. For Kierkegaard, to be fully actualized requires faith, for only God truly knows the identity of each individual. It is for this reason that \textit{Either/Or} concludes with an upbuilding discourse. This discourse closely resembles one of Kierkegaard’s actual sermons. The final note is a call to repentance. In repentance the individual accepts their moral failings and cries out to God to fashion them.

Of course the solution of the religious contains its own set of problems. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the religious does not always work within the ethical, and actions that are religious may not necessarily be ethical. \textit{Either/Or} does not fully address the religious sphere, nor its value as a solution to the limits of the ethical and the tension that likely will exist between these two. Kierkegaard is content to leave this task to other pseudonyms, such as Johannes de Silentio, H.H., and Hilarius Bookbinder. The task of further explaining existentialism is left to Johannes Climacus.

In \textit{Philosophical Fragments}, Kierkegaard’s pseudonym Johannes Climacus opens by asking a rather provocative question “Can the truth be learned?”\(^9\) The source of this question lies in Socrates and his discussion of learning with \textit{Meno}. Throughout this

\(^8\) Søren Kierkegaard, \textit{Either/Or II}, 2:259.

discussion Socrates demonstrates that Meno, like everyone, does not learn but only
remembers. The truth can be recalled or it will never be known. For Socrates, this
conception of the truth was consistent with his ever repeating worldview. This is not the
world view of Climacus or Kierkegaard, therefore the question naturally arises, can the
truth be learned? The remainder of the work is about the truth if one assumes that
Socrates is incorrect.

This project undertaken by Climacus shapes not only his conception of the truth
but also antecedent conceptions, including the teacher, the condition, sin, free will, the
paradox, the self, and of course God. If Socrates is rejected, the truth is not found within
the individual by nature of themselves. It must be placed into the individual. This is the
role of the teacher. The teacher must evaluate the student, and as such, the teacher is a
judge as well. The student must therefore also possess the condition/ability to learn the
truth. “Inasmuch as he was in untruth and now along with the condition receives the
truth, a change takes place in him like the change from ‘not to be’ to ‘to be.’”91 This act
of becoming is the very act of becoming addressed within Either/Or. The difference
between the two is that in Either/Or, the individual, through choice, made themselves.
Now in Fragments, the act of becoming is dependent upon a teacher for this transition or
birth. Climacus argues that no one can actually fashion themselves, since the choice is a
transition from non-being into being. It is impossible for any human to create oneself out
of nothing. It is equally unreasonable to expect someone to do this. Therefore there must
be someone or something outside the self that can be a teacher.

91 Søren Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments/Johannes Climacus, 19.
The teacher for Climacus must possess the truth in themselves, otherwise they cannot teach. Possessing the truth, they are of a different substance than humanity, for if they learned the truth there would have been a moment when they themselves were indeed untruth. Therefore, following Aquinas there must be at least one who by their very nature is the truth. This is called God. The God also does not require a pupil, but chooses to teach and share the truth. This is evidenced by anyone’s learning. Since learning occurs one can interpret the teachers desire to teach to be an act of love, which therefore must be an inherent quality of the divine.

The divine, in order to share the truth, presents the learner with a paradox. “The ultimate paradox of thought: to want to discover something that thought itself cannot think.”92 It is in this paradox that Christianity, as well as the capacity to encounter the truth, is identified but only indirectly, as Climacus is himself not yet a Christian as we learn in the Postscript. The paradox also brings into prominence the absolute difference between truth and untruth, between the teacher and the pupil, between God and man. Essential to this fundamental difference is that God’s essence involves existence. This is not the case for anyone else. Since the task of existentialism is to answer the problem of existence, Climacus unequivocally answers that humanities existence is not inherent but dependent. This is true for the individual as well as the collective. Of course, encountering this results in offense for many, and as already mentioned, this offense is identified as sin.

92 Søren Kierkegaard, Philosophical Fragments/Johannes Climacus, 37.
Climacus’ answer to the existential question is to answer that choices can be made, the truth can be learned. In doing so, humanity is shown to be completely dependent, and the solution to this inherent problem does not exist within learning or dogmatics. The solution is found within an experiential relationship with the divine, wherein the individual moves from untruth to truth. This transition is the same transition from sin to faith. Climacus develops a philosophical explanation of Arndt’s *True Christianity*. The answer to the existential question lies in the new creation and the new birth offered by God to humanity. Unlike Schleiermacher, this is not humanity in the singular but singular humans. Climacus, while proclaiming he is not yet a Christian, is completely consistent with the Pietists and medieval mystics who prioritize experience over everything else.

**What’s in A Name?**

“I hope with my writings to have achieved this much: to have left behind me so exact a description of Christianity and its relation to the world that a young man with enthusiasm and nobility of mind will be able to find in it a map of the conditions.”

Throughout Kierkegaard’s writings, he does his best to fully examine what Christianity is. As an unsystematic theologian, Kierkegaard’s method of doing so is quite bizarre. Kierkegaard chooses to take on a dozen or more different personas or pseudonyms, each encountering one or more different aspects of Christianity or the demands that Christianity places on the Christian. In doing so, he has some authors who

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are clearly devout Christians and some who are not. He even creates characters who seem antithetical to the Christian life. In addition to the dozen or so pseudonyms, Kierkegaard wrote numerous books and articles where he signed his own name. The difference between the two was not a product of time; often a pseudonymic text and one with his own name were published within weeks of each other. The difference is the voice. In an anti-hermeneutical endeavor, Kierkegaard chose to diffuse his own voice. This could even lead some to the conclusion that there were multiple authors if the overwhelming evidence to the contrary was not present.

Still the question remains, why did Kierkegaard choose to write with pseudonyms, and why so many? This question does not have a simple answer, and different scholars present different answers to this question. Largely it is granted that Kierkegaard’s use of various pseudonyms was a device to put on different masks and approach the question of Christianity from different perspectives. In his personal life, Kierkegaard loved the theater and the lives of actors and actresses intrigued him, as much as any other. Kierkegaard’s treatment of his pseudonyms are very much like an author of fiction creating a character. One should not assume that Shakespeare is responsible for Hamlet’s actions, nor those of Claudius, even though he wrote them and could have written them otherwise. It would be preposterous to call Shakespeare a murderer, a scoundrel, a rogue, or a lover simply because his characters possessed these traits. Still this is how most of us read Kierkegaard. We attach his identity to his pseudonyms.

Kierkegaard is different than Shakespeare. While in one place he refuses to take credit for the opinion put forward by one of his pseudonyms, in another place he freely admits that some represent his own views. Many of the works contain semi-
autobiographic details, and Kierkegaard did not write all of his works with a particular pseudonym in mind. On more than one occasion Kierkegaard finished a work and changed who the “author” was before handing it over to the publisher. Many of his pseudonyms were complete afterthoughts. Reading the pseudonyms becomes akin to reading Shakespeare, if we knew that he poured poison in his rival’s ear and claimed to have been visited by ghosts. The line between the author and their character become too muddied.

Kierkegaard is and is not his pseudonyms. Fundamentally they represent who he is and who he aspires to be or not be. They represent an aspect of his own personality that he either champions or condemns within his making of himself in line with his conceptions of existentialism. By creating a new persona to analyze an idea, he affords himself the opportunity to truly make a choice. He will either become more like one of his pseudonyms or reject the very idea. One should only equate a pseudonym to Kierkegaard as a single frame represents a movie, or a single act represents a play. The characters and events are present but their relative value is not yet finished. To best understand if the character represented is Kierkegaard, or who he wishes to be, an introduction to these pseudonyms is appropriate.

Kierkegaard’s first major publication, Either/Or, contains three pseudonyms. They are A, Judge William and the editor Victor Eremite. A is the seducer, Judge William is the ethicist, and Victor is really the one who gets to decide between the two. His name is the victorious hermit or cloistered victory. Surely this is who Kierkegaard fashions himself to be, as the work explains his turn from the possibility of a happy life for what he believed to be the ethical life.
In 1843, Kierkegaard wrote two other works each signed by two different pseudonyms. Kierkegaard’s next pseudonymic work, *Repetition*, is written by Constantin Constantins. The author of a work about repetition, his name is itself a constant repetition. The aim of this is to remain faithful. Constantin desires consistency while experimenting in psychology. Later that same year Kierkegaard wrote *Fear and Trembling*. This work was accredited to Johannes de Silentio. Silentio remains silent as the expression of faith, as does Kierkegaard’s knight of faith, Abraham.

In 1844 Kierkegaard produced three more pseudonyms, each writing their own work. The first was Johannes Climacus, who wrote *Philosophical Fragments*. Climacus is credited with writing the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* in 1846 as well. Climacus gets his name from a sixth century Christian monk named St. John Climacus (the Ladder), who wrote *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*. In St. John’s work, the first rung of the ladder for Christians is renunciation of life. This must be done before moving on to detachment, exile, obedience, and penitence. These are the first five steps of thirty, the last steps are faith, hope, and love. Climacus reveals in the *Postscript* that he is not yet a Christian. The first rung of the ladder is too high for him; it remains too difficult to renounce life.

The *Concept of Anxiety* was written by Vigilius Haufniensis, or the vigilant observer of the Harbor. The harbor is Copenhagen. Kierkegaard notices the anxiety of Copenhagen and the cause, broken relationship with God. Also in 1844 was the *Prefaces*, authored by Nicolaus Notabene. The prefaces are subtitled *Light Reading for People in Various Estates According to Time and Opportunity*. In 1845 Kierkegaard wrote *The Stages on Life’s Way* under various pseudonyms that are then compiled and
published by a pseudonym, Hilarius Bookbinder. The hilarious publisher illustrates the three spheres of existence along with the promises and failings of each.

Following a period of relative silence from his pseudonyms, Kierkegaard unleashes his last handful of pseudonyms following his second conversion in 1848. The first was Inter et Inter, who wrote *The Crisis and Crisis in the Life of an Actress*. Then came *Two Ethical-Religious Essays* by H. H. Finally the last two works written by a pseudonym were *The Sickness unto Death*, and *Practice in Christianity*. These were both authored by Anti-Climacus. Anti-Climacus is the conclusion of pseudonyms and often Kierkegaard wished that these works were signed by his own name. Still, it is fitting that the conclusion of the pseudonyms is a later version of one of the earlier ones. Between Climacus and anti-Climacus four major works were written. Usually the preface ‘anti’ is read as antagonism or against when pairing these authors. Kierkegaard even said they were opposites. Yet I believe that ‘anti’ should be read as later or post. As such, anti-Climacus is simply later Climacus. Climacus was unable to climb the ladder for which he was named. Anti-Climacus is the model Christian and it appears that he has done so. Anti-Climacus is the opposite of Climacus, not as a separate pseudonym, but because he has changed from untruth to truth and as such is the same, but of a different character. Kierkegaard wrote, “I count myself higher than Johannes Climacus, lower than Anticlimacus.”94 Kierkegaard positioned himself between Climacus and anti-Climacus, illustrating that on the ladder of divine ascent there are many rungs and the Christian and existential ideal requires effort.


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There is one final possible pseudonym that is used by Kierkegaard and that is S. Kierkegaard. S. Kierkegaard is the editor of Anti-Climacus’ works. S. Kierkegaard represents a semi-fictionalized autobiography. In *Point of View*, he states “S. Kierkegaard? But this is my limitation— I am a pseudonym.”95 Kierkegaard, counting himself lower than Anti-Climacus, may use that pseudonym’s works as the final stage in Christian development. By assigning a final pseudonym who is rather close to himself, Søren Kierkegaard follows the line of many Pietists who wrote spiritual autobiographies to encourage the faith of fellow Pietists while facing persecution from the established church. S. Kierkegaard may very well be his attempt at remaining within this tradition and calling attention to the spiritual ideal that is Anti-Climacus, while living under Christendom.

**Kierkegaard as a Model of Nineteenth-Century Pietism**

“What is offered here is only a pamphlet.”96

Just as Schleiermacher was forced to shake the chains of Prussian Pietism off, Kierkegaard struggled to lift the yoke of the institutionalized church from the shoulders of Christians, having them instead take up their cross. Schleiermacher wanted Prussians to rediscover the mysteries inherent in life. Instead, nineteenth-century Prussia had desacralized Pietism, calling it Romanticism. Through a myriad of experiences, finding himself in the middle of pivotal historical events and his father’s convictions,

95 Søren Kierkegaard, *Point of View for my Work as an Author*, 210.

Schleiermacher produced a theological system that survived a demystified modernity. Schleiermacher reintroduced and remade Pietism for the modern world in order to save the modern world from itself, and to preserve Christianity. Schleiermacher believed the only way to do so was to focus on the experiential dimension of the Christian life. In light of the experience of God, all other concerns, including confessional identity, vanished.

A generation later, Schleiermacher’s bulwark against modernity stood. Modern liberal Protestantism and the other systems that followed Schleiermacher reinvigorated Protestantism, embracing the new experiential Pietist model that Schleiermacher introduced. He not only added his contribution to the edifice of Pietism but he also reinforced the standing structure by eliminating the bloat of seemingly unnecessary dogmas. By the time of Schleiermacher’s death, the dread that many Christians felt concerning modernity abated, but another challenge still faced them. Modernity was not the only enemy of Christianity; institutionalism and national-universalism threatened Protestant lands as much as modernity did a generation earlier. In both cases, Pietism contributed to the problem in the eighteenth century, and a reworking of Pietism was necessary to rescue not only Pietism but Protestantism from its own sarcophagus. The solution was the graveyard.

Kierkegaard, whose name is best translated as graveyard, urged death to bring about life. The solution for Protestant Christianity was not to firm up the institutionalized forms, rather it was to tear them down. Inspired by the Gospel accounts, Kierkegaard
urged Christendom to lose its life to save Christianity. Kierkegaard wanted to save Christianity, and to do so it needed to return to the cross. As such, his mission in life was to make Christianity harder. The institutionalized Christendom made life easier, to the point that being a Dane was equated with being a Christian and a national-universalism was created. True Christians were few and far between. In this critique, Kierkegaard draws heavily upon Arndt and Spener, the pre-institutionalized Lutheran Pietists. Denmark could not be a Christian state without transforming Christianity into something that it is not.

With Copenhagen the hub of Denmark, and Denmark the cultural hub of Scandinavia, Kierkegaard’s assault against the institutionalized Church was not well received. *Either/Or* was his only best seller, and his critique was lost to the seducer. In the decades before his death, Kierkegaard was more famous through hearsay than from people actually engaging his works. The Scandinavian reception was rather slow. A few of his religious ideas began to enter into Norway in the mid-1840s, but they were challenged by not only the institutionalized Church, but Gruntvigian ideas as well. Since Kierkegaard wrote his works in Danish, international reception of his ideas during his lifetime was nearly non-existent.

It took the philosopher Georg Brandes’ translation of Kierkegaard into German in the late nineteenth century to begin any real international reception of him. Brandes was also the one who introduced Kierkegaard’s works to Friedrich Nietzsche. Following this,

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97 Matt 16:25 and Luke 9:23-25 “23 And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. 24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. 25 For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?” KJV.
Kierkegaard and existentialism made their way into German philosophy, especially as an alternative to Hegelian idealism.

As the twentieth century moved on, Kierkegaard’s greatest impact was with the French following World War II. This would have shocked Regina Olsen, who argued “The French would never understand him.”

Equally surprising was his reception in Asia. By 1930 there were more Japanese translations of Kierkegaard than English. Kierkegaard was identified as the champion of the single individual by early twentieth-century Japanese philosophy. Eventually the Niebuhrs, along with Paul Tillich, and Walter Lowrie, introduced Kierkegaard to an American audience. Kierkegaard was used not only as an existentialist in the middle of the century, but as a post-modernist at the end of the twentieth century.

Kierkegaard’s relatively slow reception was in part due to his Danish authorship, and partly due to the difficulty of understanding his use of pseudonyms and how he should be understood as a person. Kierkegaard never truly fit into Danish society, let alone the nineteenth century. During the revolutions he was a staunch monarchist in the only country where the monarch was truly defeated. Kierkegaard is a man out of time, and the question of which time he belonged to still remains a valid one. Kierkegaard does not fit in any single cultural milieu, and it is partly because of this that he fits into so many. Before addressing his construction of Pietism, three common concerns of his life that impact his legacy should be addressed. The first concerns his mental health. The

second, his confessional identity and the third ponders if he was a post-modern, or simply a man out of time.

Even during his lifetime, Kierkegaard’s mental capacities were questioned. With Kierkegaard writing in so many voices, it is not much of a step to wonder if Kierkegaard possessed a multiple personality disorder. In addition to this, Eduard Geismar records that a Danish specialist in mental disorders diagnosed Kierkegaard as a manic-depressive.99 Kierkegaard’s oft mentioned melancholy is evidence enough for this theory.

In addition to diagnosing Søren Kierkegaard individually, there is a family history of mental illness. Both Michael and Peter were identified by their melancholy as well, and as mentioned earlier, Peter’s was so debilitating that he placed himself in an asylum for the last few years of his life. Peter’s son was also confined to an asylum, saying “My uncle was Either/Or, my father is Both-And, and I am Neither/Nor.”100 Another of Søren’s nephews had several attacks of insanity and committed suicide. Søren’s uncle, one of Michael’s brothers, made his way to Copenhagen as well, but he was known as the local madman who wore three overcoats in the summer.

The Kierkegaard clan clearly possessed some level of mental illness, and given their intellect, they likely would find a place on the autism spectrum today. Many of Kierkegaard’s defenders today like to accredit his family’s melancholy as a product of being Jutlanders. Two problems exist with this explanation. The first is that by most


100 Walter Lowrie, A Short Life of Kierkegaard, 27.
contemporary accounts, the Jutlanders were not melancholy, instead they were far more exuberant than the Danes in the capital. Second, Søren Kierkegaard was specifically identified as odd by his contemporaries. As mentioned earlier, the name Søren nearly vanished from the birth registers during his lifetime. Danes viewed the name with such derision that the phrase “don’t be a Søren” was used to warn children. Whatever Søren Kierkegaard’s mental health may have been, the line between genius and insanity is razor thin. Coming close to insanity, Søren Kierkegaard’s critiques are still equally as valid, even if his works are the writings of a madman.

Surprisingly, Kierkegaard’s initial reception faced another challenge from those who claimed he was not a Lutheran at all, but a Catholic. Kierkegaard’s relationship with Catholicism is intriguing. Kierkegaard did not reflexively share the anti-Catholic polemics of Spener or Perkins, as addressed in chapter two. Furthermore Kierkegaard’s critique of modernity included his honest critique of Lutheranism, and since he did not adopt a Reform position, and identified himself as a Christian, this has led many to the conclusion that Kierkegaard was himself Catholic. There is ample evidence to suggest that Kierkegaard held some sympathies toward the Catholic Church. His writings do not contain the sort of anti-Catholic rhetoric found in Arndt, Perkins, and Spener. While Kierkegaard was opposed to the pomp and power of the papacy, he did not view Lutheranism as a complete system that can or should stand on its own. Lutheranism was likened to the flying buttresses on a cathedral; they were essential and held up the cathedral, but were not themselves the sanctuary, and served no purpose if the sanctuary vanished. In this way Kierkegaard was rather close to Zinzendorf, who was open to
Catholicism, and even accused of being a Catholic by Henry Rimius, as addressed in chapter three.

According to Kierkegaard, Luther was a corrective. Several centuries after the correction was issued, the question arose in Kierkegaard’s mind whether the corrective was still correct. In Scandinavia, questioning Luther was absurd, and politically untenable. Luther’s critique of Catholicism was so accepted that many did not even bother to learn what Catholicism was or even read Luther. Early in his life Kierkegaard records that “Actually, I have never really read anything by Luther.”*101 Later, after having read Luther, he came to the conclusion that Protestantism rather than Catholicism was a “complete absurdity.”*102 For Kierkegaard, the absurdity lay in Luther’s half measure. Luther repudiated the pope, but not the princes. Kierkegaard does not support the Anabaptists theology, but he does support their criticism of a state controlled church. He argued that “If Protestantism is to be anything but a necessary corrective at a given moment, is it not really man’s revolt against Christianity?”*103

Many of Kierkegaard’s followers believed that Luther’s corrective had run its course and became Catholics. Kofoed-Hansen credited Kierkegaard with showing him what Christianity was all about, a personal relationship. Shortly after this proclamation, he became a Catholic. The transition was easy, since Kierkegaard admired many Catholics and Catholic teachings. One of Kierkegaard’s greatest influences, in addition


*102 Søren Kierkegaard, Last Years, the Journals 1853-55 (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 68 XI A 141.

*103 Søren Kierkegaard, Last Years, the Journals 1853-55, 49 XI A 76.
to the medieval mystics, was Blaise Pascal. Pascal’s wager and Catholic theological system contributed to Kierkegaard’s theology as much as any early modern thinker. Kierkegaard also admired Catholic priests who renounced marriage for their calling, as well as all monastics who took vows of poverty. Many Catholic theologians, such as the Jesuit theologian Erich Przywara, also took note of Kierkegaard. Przywara, along with Haxald Hoffding, believed that if he lived long enough, Kierkegaard would have become a Catholic. Przywara even went so far as to call Kierkegaard an anonymous Catholic.

It is possible that if he lived long enough, Kierkegaard may have become Catholic, but by 1855 there was little indication that he himself was planning on doing so. Kierkegaard was still a Dane and as such, still a Lutheran. Catholicism was not really a serious alternative, rather he worked to correct the correction. Kierkegaard desired to promote piety within Lutheranism rather than convert to Catholicism. Some of this was simply practical as Catholicism was not legal in Denmark since the crown converted, and with the exception of a few treks to Berlin, Kierkegaard remained in Denmark his entire life.

In many ways Kierkegaard would have found a better home for himself in the late twentieth or early eighteenth century than he did in the middle of the nineteenth century. Kierkegaard preferred a strong monarchy and would have championed Louis XIV of France. The Sun King understood how to project the importance of the monarch. His opinion of Louis had to have been better than his view of Napoleon, who Kierkegaard described as “first-rate at prostituting the human race.”

Still he admired the

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104 Søren Kierkegaard, Last Years, the Journals 1853-55, 162.
technological advancements of the rail system and the telegraph, technologies that were then used to further Napoleon’s cause rather than Kierkegaard’s.

In similar manner, Kierkegaard could have found a home in the twentieth century. Richard Niebuhr says that “he has been used by many current theologians as the nineteenth-century spokesman of a twentieth-century view.”105 While Niebuhr was addressing existentialism, the same applies to a greater extent with postmodern theory. Both postmodern theory and existentialism emphasize the subjective nature of truth, and attempt to understand the nature of choice. Kierkegaard would have also found common ground with Barth’s critiques of Schleiermacher and other neo-orthodox theologians approach to doctrine and Christianity. Chapter thirteen will go into greater detail concerning Kierkegaard’s relationship with existentialism, postmodernism, and neo-orthodoxy. For now it is sufficient to recognize Kierkegaard’s philosophy resonates far more a century after his death than it did during his lifetime.

Regardless of how one may want to otherwise identify Kierkegaard, he was primarily a Pietist who attempted to rework Pietism within a nineteenth-century Danish Lutheran framework. Tillich argues that despite Kierkegaard’s influence in twentieth-century theological and philosophical thought, “He made a new start based on a combination of an existentialist philosophy and a pietistic, revivalistic theological criticism of the great synthesis.”106 Throughout his works, Kierkegaard’s connection


with Pietism and medieval Catholic mysticism is unmistakable. His library was filled with Tauler, à Kempis, Arndt, Spener, Francke, and Zinzendorf’s writings. Their writings served as much as devotional aids as they did reference material. Similarly, Kierkegaard’s love of Pietist hymns, notably those written by Kingo and Hans Adolf Brorson, are sprinkled throughout his works, especially the final part of *Practice in Christianity*, where Kierkegaard weaves contrasting emotions together, extorting them both as is common with Zinzendorf and his followers.

What continued to attract Kierkegaard to these authors and hymnographers was their piety and their mystical encounters with God. Kierkegaard sought the same imitation of Christ that à Kempis had, including creating his own monastic cell. In keeping with my definition of Pietism, Kierkegaard called for an experiential revivalist movement. The fact that the movement never matured during his lifetime should not take away his emphasis on the transformational encounter that experiencing Christ creates. For Kierkegaard, this experience resulted in a transformation from untruth to truth, and this was the rebirth that reworked both the individual and the world around them.

Kierkegaard’s *Attack Upon Christendom* came from not only his enmity towards a greater Christian culture, but from the cultures lack of transformation that accompanies this mystical encounter with Christ. Kierkegaard was not seeking the destruction of Christianity; he only sought to provide a buttress to the structure. Just like Schleiermacher, who sought to eliminate the cancer of unnecessary dogma, and like Luther who sought to correct the errors of the Church, Kierkegaard’s theology not only built upon the Pietist edifice, but provided support to an increasingly top heavy structure that institutionalism brought. Kierkegaard remains a Pietist who wanted to work
alongside the roughhewn wall of Pietism, rather than only adding his contributions on top.

Kierkegaard’s reworked Pietism was based within a Danish Lutheran and Moravian conception of Christianity, but applied far beyond confessional and national boundaries. The only way that Kierkegaard can be understood is by understanding how he understood the world, and that is through relational terms. For Kierkegaard, this was primarily in the relationship with God. As a result of this relationship with God, the relationship with the self is also transformed and formed, giving meaning. This is fundamentally the same message of earlier Pietists, but applied to the challenges of the nineteenth century.
CHAPTER 9

AMERICA, A HOLY MESS

“It must be understood that the cosmicization of unknown territories is always a consecration; to organize a space is to repeat the paradigmatic work of the gods.”1 – Mircea Eliade

Just as understanding Michael Kierkegaard was crucial to understanding Søren’s Pietism and development, one must first understand the amassing chaos that was the American religious and political landscape in the nineteenth century to truly appreciate Palmer’s contributions and place them within experiential Protestantism’s history. Only by contextualizing the sectarian pandemonium of America can the rise of American Methodism begin to make sense, and Palmer can only be interpreted within the context of American Methodism. Since the majority of this study has mainly focused on the development of Protestantism in Europe, the doctrinal disturbances in America and the prolific numbers of religious movements that the new country possessed require a brief interlude to describe the vicissitudes of American religious life. Palmer is not the direct subject of this chapter, but without it her life and her theology would lack the appropriate context.

The majority of political conflict of early America was grounded in what Richard Hofstadter calls the agrarian myth of America, that the United States was the only country in the world that began with perfection and aspired to progress. Following a similar pattern, and alongside the military and political changes in the American

landscape, was a change in attitudes about religion. In 1835 Alexis de Tocqueville wrote, “There is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains greater influence over the souls of men than in America.” de Tocqueville’s observation about Christianity and America was a snapshot of an ever moving target. By 1835, America’s relationship with Christianity had already undergone significant changes and was in the midst of yet another shift. The days of the First Great Awakening and the Calvinist theology of Jonathan Edwards, William Ames, and William Perkins had succumbed to Enlightenment philosophy, Deism, and anti-clericalism along the lines of the French. American Puritans fled from England at the end of the seventeenth century, or abandoned it as unredeemable, and feared the oppressive hand of the state concerning religion. This trepidation resulted in the attitudes of many founding fathers, including three of the first four presidents, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison.

James Madison opposed state sponsorship of religion in the Virginia legislature. Madison surmised that this relationship resulted in tyranny from either the state or the church, if not both. Rather he argued that all laws pertaining to religion should be left to the Supreme Lawgiver of the Universe rather than legislators. Thomas Jefferson’s relationship with Christianity was always suspect. At best a nominal Christian with Deist sympathies, Jefferson feared a strong clergy, miracles, and unbridled religious enthusiasm. While Madison feared authoritarianism, Jefferson’s rhetoric was nakedly anti-clerical. The Congregationalist John Adams views of Christianity resembled Kant’s

and Jefferson’s. Adams valued Christianity as an agent of morality rather than its
doctrines and creeds. Adams, Jefferson, and Madison all sought to limit the insertion of
ecclesial matters in the operation of the state. Their opinion was not universally held by
other founders. It is of some debate as to what percentage of the newly created American
public shared such anxiety and hostility towards the intersection of ecclesial and civic
life.

There were very few attitudes about ecclesial polity shared at the beginning of the
newly independent colonies. There was only one widely shared religious attitude which
dominated America. This was the avowed anti-Catholic sentiment. While many state
legislatures were unsure if they should prioritize one denomination over another, they
agreed that only Protestants should be permitted in the halls of power. Five of the first
thirteen states even went so far as to enshrine in their new states constitutions
prohibitions against Catholics serving as elected officials. The long history of the
Catholic Church’s negotiations with civil powers as well as general Protestant biases only
served to prejudice the ideological leaders of America against the clergy in general.
What was notable about this period of irreligiousness was not its existence, rather the
openness in expressing anti-religious sentiment publically. It was not very long into the
nineteenth century when de Tocqueville opined about the religious nature of the
American. Furthermore, despite the outright hostility that late eighteenth-century
Americans had towards Rome, depicting it as the poster child of irresponsible religion,
the nineteenth century witnessed dramatic immigration from Catholic countries. By the

3 Georgia, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and South Carolina.
dawn of the twentieth century, Catholics represented a significant portion of the electorate.

When the Revolutionary War broke out, those churches who were dependent upon the ecclesial institutions of England were seriously hampered. Appointments were often delayed. Those who were appointed by English magistrates were viewed as suspect. Many patriots believed that their loyalties were to England rather than the colonies struggling for independence. English bishops in all denominations were assaulted, exiled, or worse. The Congregationalists, Episcopalians, and Presbyterians who dominated the ecclesial-political dialogues of colonial America found themselves on the defensive against a hostile irreligious public. The Anglicans had to completely rebrand as the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States a decade after the revolution to disassociate themselves from the stigma associated with their fealty to the crown. Presbyterians and Congregationalists supported independence and were in better shape. de Tocqueville’s characterization of America in 1835 as deeply religious does not agree with the statistics of the country just sixty years earlier. In 1776 only 17% of the population were affiliated with a church. In fact, the once Puritan strongholds like Massachusetts were worse off than the more secularized Pennsylvania and New Jersey. It is likely that the reduced level of affiliation had much to do with fears of siding with a particular church during an era of political uncertainty. After all, both Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard’s fathers were averse to formally joining their respective churches out of

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fear of political repercussions. It is dangerous to equate officially joining a churches’ membership rolls with religious sentiment, but a correlation certainly exists. Still, the only real religion that was favorable in the breakaway colonies was a civil religion of independence in all its forms political and ecclesial.

With the arrival of the Jacksonian Era in the 1830s, America’s independence was assured. Along with this political assurance, this period evidenced economic and geographical expansion on a level heretofore unseen. Northeastern manufacturing power increased even as their rural counterparts diminished. The new network of roads, canals, and rail lines opened up new opportunities. The West remained a sirens call, but now the political power was shifting along the westward expanse. As T.J. Jackson Lears points out, it was at this time that the American ideology of the Promethean self-made man grew into its mythic status. The myth gave meaning and purpose even to those who it proved false. The agricultural lands of the west were dominated by farmers who modeled their sensibilities after the northeastern middleclass and elites.

As the nation spread out, churches needed to adjust accordingly. The more radical Methodists and Baptists grew easier along the frontier than did their more centralized counterparts. For both, the Kantian equation of piety and morality dominated the pulpit. The fear of overstepping political lines reduced the role of the clergy to moralism as de Tocqueville points out. Another way the churches adjusted to the new economic and political conditions concerned women. Prior to the manufacturing boon, women often contributed as household manufacturers of many goods. This was especially important to the daughters. As an expression of northeastern middleclass sentiments, the mother’s primary role was in administrating the needs of the household.
The boys were educated or sought employment outside of the house. The daughters worked inside the home. Their labor focused on manufacturing they could do at home. When this market disappeared, the once vital income they produced at home vanished. Where their income was necessary, the daughters were forced outside the home for employment, creating new moral challenges. Adolescent girls were now in the public sphere.

A solution for many was increased involvement with church life. Since they were now in the public arena, they could calm fears concerning their morality by becoming more pious. The once invisible adolescents scandalized many by praying in public. Additionally they publically converted themselves and others to enthusiastic religious movements and newly formed religious sects. Many of these newly formed sects preyed upon vulnerable praying populations. The explosion of religious involvement by women sparked many revivals. The revivals served to release young women from the constraints of male domination, giving them a social space, and making them into public figures and leaders in communities.

Women, more so than men, found great attraction and contributed greatly to the Second Great Awakening. In 1832 the Reverend Ebenezer Porter estimated women converted at a ratio of at least three to two during the awakening. Another noticeable feature of the awakening was the success it had with youth. While their parents fought in the Revolutionary War and placed their faith in Deism, the adolescents coming of age in the young country were swept up with religious revivals.

The Second Great Awakening in America is far more difficult to define than the first. The message of Jonathan Edwards and a revival of Calvinist Puritan theology was
fairly uniform. The Second Great Awakening shares little in common with the First. The primary question concerning this awakening was its character. Was the awakening large or small, urban or rural, individual or corporate, Calvinist or Armenian, a resurgence of mainline traditions or the entry of Methodists and Baptists on a larger scale? Most of the confusion arises from the fact that many revivals occurred during this period and they did not always share theological or confessional assumptions. The best example of multiple revivals in the same place is Western New York, which gained the name the ‘Burned Over District’ because of the number of revivals following other revivals. The result of these competing revivals was a doubling of church affiliation to 34% in 1850.  

Furthermore the radical Deists lost all support from the masses in America. Thomas Pain, who was not ever well liked, died a lonely death spurned by the nation. The Enlightenment notions of progress were harnessed by the churches and placed into an eschatological framework. Following the initial launch of the awakening, the purpose became to save the country in addition to the salvation of individuals.

The smallest account of the Second Great Awakening came in its most institutionalized forms and resembled the First Great Awakening. It was launched by the grandson of Jonathan Edwards, Timothy Dwight, in the late 1790s. Dwight’s revival, like Edward’s, centered in New England. This time the frontier influenced the cities rather than the other way around. Dwight, like his grandfather, graduated from Yale and served as the awakening’s primary theologian, stressing what they both held to be the

“plain gospel truths.” These truths were interpreted through a Puritan lens and focused on God’s absolute and complete sovereignty, the total depravity of man, and the atonement as an act of God’s love. The strict moralism associated with Puritanism today was largely absent from both awakenings. The title Puritan only derived its pejorative definition in the 1850s and it applied far more to the upstart denominations than it did to Anglican, Presbyterian, and Congregationalist inheritors of Puritanism in New England. Largely this second Puritan Awakening stressed Calvin’s notions of depravity far more than moralism. Dwight died in 1817, but the revival continued through a few of his students. Chief among Dwight’s students was Nathaniel William Taylor who was the architect of New Haven Theology. Taylor argued in 1828 that man became depraved by his own act rather than as a consequence of human nature. “Sin is in the sinning” is universal because humans universally sin, but not necessarily. This controversial assertion begins a theological debate within New England and cools the Second Puritan Great Awakening. In many ways this claim echoes Schleiermacher’s conception of sin as addressed in chapter six. Sin needs to be avoided because it makes man depraved rather than serving as a list of prohibitions against recreations. Taylor and Dwight’s revival, while Puritan, was still a synthesis of liberal nineteenth-century America with a Calvinist bourgeois Protestantism. This small definition of the Second Great Awakening primarily served to fortify New England Anglicans, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians against their growing Protestant competitors, the Baptists and Methodists.

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The other interpretation of the Second Great Awakening includes the revivals outside of New England and away from the mainline Calvinist inheritors of the First Great Awakening. For this larger definition the striking feature is the shift away from Calvin and towards the Armenian position. Accordingly, the denominations which benefited from the awakening were the Methodists and Baptists. Theologically, Taylor’s interpretation of sin opened the door for Methodist and Baptist revivals in Western New York and the growing frontier. The chief theologian associated with this strand of the awakening is Charles Grandison Finney (d. 1875). Finney was a product of the revivals himself, converting in 1821 and deeply influenced by Taylor’s theology. Finney was later influenced and influential in the Holiness Movements at Oberlin College, as well as those connected with Phoebe Palmer.

Finney’s revivals coincide with Palmer’s and the two met on several occasions. It is really the combined efforts of both that advanced the Holiness Movement, although Finney is often mentioned more in contemporary scholarship. Palmer’s influence was forgotten within a generation of her death. Chapter twelve will give more attention to Finney and his theological legacy, but his sermons filled with perfectionist thought captivated frontier audiences, and his fame and legacy should not be diminished, only understood as one of many voices preaching the holiness message.

The end date of the Second Great Awakening is also a bit ambiguous if one extends it beyond the smaller New England version. Both Finney and Palmer continued their message with large amounts of fervor until their deaths in the 1870s. There was
also the Businessman Revival of 1858\(^7\) that can either be counted as another part of the awakening, or a separate movement entirely. The Businessman Revival began in Philadelphia on Friday, September 25, 1857 when the banks suspended payment due to manipulations in the price of gold as a result of French attempts to undermine the price of gold for the British at the close of the Crimean War. British holdings in the US were liquidated, shrinking the American credit market. Faith in American finances failed, leading to many businessmen turning to God in the moment of need. This revival resulted in individual conversion, as well as a shift in attitudes concerning liquor in the North.

One reason for the difficulty in identifying the scope of this awakening is the wide number of revivals that were interconnected, yet distinct from one another and often advocating a different theological message. One revival advocated Calvinism, while another supported Armenianism. The variety of denominations that advocated a preacher’s message from another denomination also further confuses the issue. The sheer number of denominations in the United States added to the atmosphere of religious competition. Rodney Stark and Roger Finke argue that to the greater degree pluralism is present in a society, the greater level of activity will be present. Increased competition forced religious minorities to commit more to their confessional identity, or else the movement fails and vanishes. The plurality of the American landscape in the nineteenth century resulted in numerous movements energizing their members and expanding.

\(^7\) The revival of 1858 actually began in 1857, but the revival grew the following year so most accounts record it at the revival of 1858. Still a few accounts may call it the revival of 1859 as the revival continued and spread in 1859, and it that year reached an even wider audience.
These revivals poached from other confessions and recruited from those who lacked a definite religious identity. It should be of little surprise then that the same period of countless revivals in America also saw the development of new religious movements, as well as a reinterpretation and fragmentation of older ideologies. A brief understanding of the plurality of religious revivals, innovations, and adaptations is necessary to understand the emergence of Methodism as the dominant religious ethos in nineteenth-century America, likewise the religious landscape that Palmer was involved.

As already mentioned, the Anglicans in America were forced to disassociate themselves from their English counterparts following the revolution and selected a new moniker, Episcopalian. The Congregationalists splintered into a more conservative branch, and the liberal Unitarians were heterodox at best. The Presbyterians fared better than their mainline counterparts. They were the first to hold camp meetings on the frontier. This innovation is credited to James McGready in 1796 Kentucky. The most important of these happened five years later and launched the Cane Ridge Revival which had between twenty and thirty thousand people in attendance. Cane Ridge gathered the attention of Protestants of all denominations. The camp meetings were quickly used by other denominations in an attempt to copy the Cane Ridge revival. Charles Finney later adapted the camp meeting feel to an urban audience. The meetings grew to such a level that even President James Buchanan supported the revival, attending meetings near his home in Bedford Springs, Pennsylvania.8

Revivalism, camp meetings, and heterodoxy continued with the emergence of sectarian movements. Many of these new groups believed that the end of the world was at hand and their message was a restoration of some long lost Christian identity. Broadly speaking, many groups fall under the title restorationists and their message was anything but uniform. Two such groups are the Shakers and the Oneida community. Mother Ann Lee founded the Shakers in England but moved to America in 1774. She taught that she was the second coming of Christ. The first messiah, Jesus, was a male. Lee reinterpreted the Genesis creation account as the creation not of humanity, but as a prophecy concerning the messiah, or in this case messiahs, Jesus being the male messiah, and she being the female. As the Parousia, she argued that procreation was unnecessary and it demonstrated a lack of faith. Men and women lived apart and remained celibate. Surprisingly the movement did not end with her death in 1784, but continued moving west from New York into Ohio and Indiana, growing to about 6,000 members by the middle of the nineteenth century. Not surprisingly the number of Shakers has dwindled throughout the twentieth century, and by 2017 there are only two members left.

The Shakers spawned another movement in New York. John Humphrey Noyes began what he called Bible Communists in Vermont in 1836. The movement then moved to Oneida, New York. Noyes believed that everything should be held in common, as was the case for the church in the Book of Acts. For Noyes this included sex. Noyes disapproved of the celibacy of the Shakers and advocated for ‘complex marriages.’ Under this new system the community orchestrated a series of temporary mating partners, pioneering a eugenic principle of ‘scientific propagation.’ The rejection of the traditional understanding of marriage brought derision upon the community and by 1880 the utopian
religious experiment made way to an economic one. Their silverware was far more popular and acceptable to outsiders than their blend of Biblicism, eschatology, and sexuality. Oneida flatware is still sold today.

Another failed restorationist movement followed Elijah Pierson and Robert Matthews. Pierson went crazy after the death of his wife and tried to find ways of bringing her back from the dead. Eventually this led him to the idea that Matthews was a prophet. Matthews then renamed himself Matthias. The two of them set up a kingdom in New York in the 1830s. The Kingdom of Matthias had elements of both the Shakers and Oneida, periodically advocating celibacy and wife swapping, when new spiritual matches were revealed to the prophet. Matthias and his current spiritual match Isabelle were later arrested under suspicion of poisoning Pierson. This launched the penny presses in the United States, the first real crime and scandal gossip tabloids. It is noteworthy that Isabelle becomes famous afterwards in American history, but under the name Sojourner Truth.

The Kingdom of Matthias was also intertwined with Joseph Smith Jr. Smith was the founder of the Latter Day Saints, also known as the Mormons. Smith’s innovation grew out of the Burned Over districts of New York like so many others. Smith witnessed numerous revivals and was unsure as to which denomination he should follow. His mother and siblings were inclined to Presbyterianism while Joseph favored Methodism. This led to a prayer in 1838, followed by a vision where Smith then understood himself to be a prophet. Smith’s prophecies reinterpreted the Christian cannon by adding several newly discovered (by himself) books, as well as translating Biblical themes into an American context. He borrowed from popular culture the view of America being a
promised land. America itself became the New Jerusalem. Independence, Missouri became the place of Christ’s eventual return, Jackson County, Missouri the Garden of Eden, and Native Americans the lost tribes of Israel. Smith also rejected the Trinity. Smith’s charisma aided his claims of divine intervention and a large following grew around him. Smith, like the Shakers, Oneida, and Matthias reinterpreted marriage and advocated polygamy, himself having 34 wives. But after he destroyed a rival printing press in 1844, he was arrested and when he was caught breaking out of prison he was hung. Most of his followers then moved westward, settling in the Utah Territory, eventually giving up the practice of polygamy to grant the territory statehood in 1896.

Another movement out of New York were the Millerites. The Millerites were followers of William Miller, a Baptist theologian who calculated that Christ would return sometime between March 21, 1843 and the same date in 1844. Miller’s calculations were based on a specific reading of the Book of Daniel, chapter eight. When March 21, 1844 came without the new Advent, Miller recalculated to April 18. With his two dates disappointing his followers, many became Baptists or Methodists. Still many others remained under the Millerite umbrella and simply followed a different leader, eventually producing a dozen different denominations. The most significant of these movements followed Ellen G. White, who launched the Seventh-day Adventists. They sought to return to the Old Testament rather than simply the book of Acts and instituted a number

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9 Daniel 8:15 two thousand and three hundred evenings and mornings really meant twenty-three hundred years.
of dietary restrictions. The followers and dietary restrictions eventually found a home in Battle Creek, Michigan and the creation of breakfast cereal by W.K. Kellogg.

These countless revivals only served to produce greater division on the American landscape as well as greater heterodoxical and heretical teachings. The result was a backlash against revivalism within some quarters. The first came from the restorationist Alexander Campbell in Western Pennsylvania. Campbell saw the fragmentation of Christianity and sought to erase the sectarian division. The result was the Campbellites or Disciples of Christ. Campbell hoped to eliminate division, urging people to simply be disciples of Christ. Predictably his call for union only served to further fragment the mosaic that is American Christianity.

Losing ground, many Calvinists advocated a directly anti-revival stance. Princeton Seminary was on the front lines of the anti-revivalism. The school sought to undermine Finney. Finney himself saw the failing of many revivals and the backsliding which followed so many converts. The push from both Princeton Calvinists and Finney was the promotion of moralism by the middle of the century. It was at this point that the term Puritan grew to its modern pejorative, after the Puritan involvement in both Great Awakenings, and only in an attempt to put the genie back in the bottle. The Calvinists had some success with their anti-revival along the seaboard, but it was not strong enough to match the fervor found in the rest of the country. The Atlantic was attempting to cool the fires of frontier fanaticism. The enthusiasm gap was too large. The only way to overcome this was to denounce Christian liberty with legalism. Since Christian reason could not overcome sectarian passion, this passion needed to be equated with animal passion rather than Christianity. The Calvinists argued for deep and steady piety rather
than the artificial fireworks of revivalism. The best example of this took place in the Presbyterian synod of 1837, which sided with the Congregationalists rather than the Finneyites. The result was that the Calvinist Presbyterians broke ties with 45% of their congregations.

By the middle of the century the mainline traditions suffered such great losses to sectarianism and division that they are barely worth mentioning. Opposed to revivals their moralist message was accepted without ending their opponent’s revivals. At the time of the Revolution 55% of those affiliated with a religious denomination belonged to one of three denominations, Congregationalists, Presbyterians and Episcopalians, in that order. The Congregationalists held the largest share of religious adherents with 20.4%; this number dropped to only four percent in 1850. Similarly the Episcopalians dropped from 15.7% to only three and a half percent. The Presbyterians survived better than the other two, but still dropped seven and a half percent. These three denominations simply failed to adapt to the shifting landscape. They failed in part because they did not grow and expand westward, nor could their message travel as easily as the countless rivals. Politically they controlled America at the time of the Revolution, but their revolution itself dismantled their apparatus, opening the door to their challengers.

The political machines in Jacksonian era America had to interact within this shifting religious landscape as well. The outsiders often found a home within Jackson’s Democratic Party, including those evangelicals who were disestablished by their mainline counterparts. Democrats also found success in the South, with the established southern

10 19% to 11.6%.
denominations who appealed to order and stability. The Whigs maintained the Congregationalists and New Presbyterians in the North. The Republicans appealed to the morality of Northerners and the frontier movements who refused the Whigs, but found no solace in the Democrat party. The Republican appeal to morality through a prohibition of the twin evils of slavery and polygamy resonated with Northern and Western Baptists and Methodists. They sought to differentiate themselves from sexually amorphous sects and those who maintained a belief in slavery. Republicanism provided a middle ground for the educated and religious who still wanted to accept the enlightenment and live a pious life. Furthermore, the Republicans still maintained an anti-Catholic stance that resonated with nativist tendencies who equated the Catholics and Irish immigrants as antichrist. Many Republicans equated the Roman Pontiff with a slave master and Catholics as the slaves hostile to reason and freedom.

Abraham Lincoln took advantage of this political religious climate. Lincoln was the last elected president who did not formally join a church. This ambiguity allowed him a great deal of flexibility navigating the sectarian waters of America. Lincoln muted his own religious views in order to shift the attention onto the moral mission of ending slavery. While the Republican party could not expect evangelical votes as a monolith, the fading power of the Whigs forced anti-slave denominations into Lincoln’s camp. Lincoln and his party utilized the fear of the Catholics and Freemasons as coconspirators against the nation, which sought to fashion its own salvation. Lincoln used the growing moralism to advance his candidacy rather than religious affiliation alone. His unorthodox approach to religion eventually promoted him to “father Abraham,” the prophet, and
agent of America. Voting for Lincoln for many, including most Northern Methodists, became their Christian duty.

**American Methodism**

> “Members of the ruling class never, to my knowledge, become practitioners. A noble would at once lose prestige by associating with commoners at their joint meals of medicine and public dances.”

— E.E. Evans-Pritchard

America in the nineteenth century belonged to the Methodists first, the Baptists second, and the Catholics third. Methodism’s early years in America did not look promising, beginning with Wesley’s ill-fated journey to America where he left as a fugitive. Further issues arose, including Wesley and Whitfield clashing over the issue of slavery. Wesley’s support of Armenianism over strict Calvinism was not shared by the remaining Puritans, and worse still, the complete mismanagement of ecclesial appointments should have spelled doom for the roughly fourteen thousand American Methodists who wished to follow Wesley’s experiential Protestantism. Oddly enough these failures actually benefited Methodism. Wesley’s early failures were dismissed as either irrelevant or the failings of an immature parson who had not truly converted. As the nineteenth century unfolded, Armenianism overtook Calvinism as the dominant Reform position in America.

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The failings and mismanagement of ecclesial posts was likely the most significant benefit to American Methodists. The absence of legitimate ecclesial oversight immunized Methodism from similar anticlerical treatment. While the Anglican clergy once sat upon a pillar of privileges, the colonnade was torn down by the colonists. The lowly Methodists found little rubble atop them. Even Wesley’s opposition to the war carried little weight, because very few Americans took him serious on the issue or advertised his dissent. Furthermore the small number of Methodists immunized them from public concern. The Presbyterian General Assembly of 1798 railed against the impiety of the once dominant denominations and the success of upstarts such as the Baptists and Methodists. By 1833 the fourteen thousand Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) grew to six hundred thousand, a number which continued to grow to over a million by 1845.\(^{12}\)

The disagreement between Wesley and Whitfield over the issue of slavery was the only issue that had lasting negative repercussions. While American Methodists in the North opposed slavery and sided with Wesley, those in the South were not opposed to the practice and sided with Whitfield. This eventually led to the split between Northern and Southern Methodists, a split echoed by Northern and Southern Baptists, as well as other denominations who straddled the Mason-Dixon Line.

The growth of Methodism in nineteenth-century America baffles the mind. Called the “Methodist miracle,” the percentage of Americans affiliated with a

denomination rose from only two and a half percent in 1776 to 34.2% in 1850. With over a third of affiliated Christians identifying themselves as Methodist, the question is how it happened. First, Methodism was intimately tied to revivalism. While Congregationalists and others were opposed to revivals, Methodists embraced them. Methodists did not seek to define theology or promote specific theologians, rather the mission was simply to save souls and gain converts.

The sermons of circuit preachers were also rather unsophisticated. Echoing the earlier conflict between Wesley and the Anglican Church, and German Pietists with their scholastic counterparts, American Methodists kept their message simple. The rationalists and scholastics chose the sermon as the medium to illustrate their theological acumen. While this played well among the educated and elites, it offered little hope to the average parishioner and the unchurched populations. Using Wesley’s circuit preaching as a guide, Methodist preachers in America repeated the basic call to repentance and urged a holy life in non-theological terms. Specific Bible references were few and the messages were extemporaneous and rarely if ever expositional. Rather the messages were basic, clear, and powerfully delivered.

The messages were also delivered at camp meetings when available. Even though these meetings were first instituted by Presbyterians, the Methodists and Baptists utilized them to a greater extent than nearly anyone else, especially after the Presbyterians ousted their more revivalistic members. The camp meetings were more than revival meetings. Many of the already converted attended these meetings for encouragement and an opportunity to listen to inspirational sermons. Still, for others these camp meetings served as a social opportunity more than a religious one. Many used these meetings to
show off the latest fashions. They even attracted prostitutes and liquor dispensers. One frequent attendee of these meetings, William Puddefoot, states, “Many were there, like myself, out of curiosity and for amusement; some for downright sin. Whisky in flasks and in hidden places in the woods was plentiful and cheap.”  

Other accounts show how many used these meetings as an opportunity to make romantic connections. One Alabama girl wrote that she made “many boyfriends” at these religious gatherings. Still the explicit focus of these meetings were a call to repentance rather than revelry, and they were successful in their stated goal. The future of American camp meetings will be addressed in chapter twelve.

Systematic theologians are also conspicuously absent from early nineteenth-century American Methodism. This does not mean there was not a theological voice for Methodists at this time. Palmer was clearly one along with a few others, but the key medium for theology was not in a systematic work, rather in devotional books. Methodism possessed the largest publishing houses in the country; all four Harper brothers were Methodists. Furthermore the Methodist Book Concern was itself one of the largest publishers in the United States. This is all accomplished without any systematic theological work published before the middle of the century by any American Methodists. With this absence, the preaching and publishing career of Palmer is all the more important to understand Methodism during this period. The vast amount of Methodist works urged the reader to be an original thinker, to study for themselves, and

to rely upon God’s grace in making theological conclusions. The mission was to use the books to save themselves and those who hear them. Many of the works echo eighteenth-century Pietist autobiographies found in Europe.

Methodists also lacked any way of adequately training their preachers aside from reading published accounts. There was no formal requirement for an education prior to the 1816 General Conference. Even after this conference, there were no Methodist schools until after 1850. Unfortunately there was not even a set list of books that preachers should read to prepare them. Methodist doctrine was not clearly identified. Still the lack of a formal education likely served the Methodist preacher. On average their audiences were far larger than those of an educated Presbyterian. The only real rival to the Methodist minister belonged to the Baptists, who shared many of the same educational and institutional limitations. By 1840 Methodists out numbered Baptists with a ratio of 5:3.

Methodism’s accessibility and ease at adapting to different needs expanded the movement beyond the wealthy and middleclass Methodist Episcopal Church found in New York. Just as Wesley’s message appealed to the poor in England, American Methodism found an audience with African Americans and German Pietist immigrants. While Wesley had a degree of success in England, the real success of his movement was in America decades after his death. In 1868 President Ulysses S. Grant jested that America had three parties, the Republicans, the Democrats, and the Methodist Church. Both Grant and his successor Rutherford B. Hayes were Methodists.

While Grant extoled the successes of Methodism, in 1868 it was already over a decade into its downfall. Methodism peaked at 11.7% percent of the total population of
the United States in 1850. By 1890 the percentage dropped to 11.4%, and then below 10% of the population in 1950, and less than 7.5% in 1980. The Methodist miracle was exactly that, but it was not long lasting. The reason for the downfall was intimately tied to its own success and the success of the nation. The decline took place in part due to immigration, in part because of internal conflict, and in part due to the growing expense that the denomination put upon itself.

Catholic immigration continued throughout the nineteenth century. While Catholics were berated by the nation at its founding, by 1890 they were the largest single religious body in the United States. Catholics grew along similar lines to the Methodists, from less than two percent of affiliated Christians in 1776 to nearly 14% in 1850. In 1890 Catholics had 7.3 million adherents, while Methodists only had 7.1, Baptists nearly 6 million and Presbyterians less than 2 million.14 Unlike the Methodists and Baptists who grew on the American frontier through converting the masses, Catholics came over en masse from Europe. Methodists were losing members and simply not growing anymore. This was not unique to Methodists; nearly all Protestants faced a similar decline. The rising Catholic population also aided in the death of the Whig party and the growth of the Republican Party, but not as direct members of the party.

Methodists began fighting among themselves as the century advanced. Three issues dominated the Methodist Episcopal Church. The first concerned slavery. Just as it existed between Wesley and Whitfield, and the growing tension between the North and

14 Catholic 7,343; Methodist 7,132; Baptist 5,914, and Presbyterian 1,912 (in thousands).
the South, the issue of American slaves was an ever present point of contention amongst Methodists. Most northern Methodists opposed the practice, while a significant number in the South supported the practice, or did not view it as an evil like their northern counterparts. In 1844 the church divided along these lines. The church suffered another split in 1859 dealing with the issue of pew rents. Benjamin Titus Roberts was opposed to slavery and charging rents for pews. As Methodists grew in wealthy urban centers new churches needed to be constructed. To best finance the construction of these churches they sold the pews to families. Roberts believed that this shut out the urban poor and undermined the evangelical spirit of the church. The result was the Free Methodist Church. Free held the notion of anti-slavery as well as free to sit. The third issue which split Methodists in the nineteenth century concerned the Holiness Movement. Most of the tension between Methodists and the Holiness Movement took place after Palmer’s death and will be addressed in chapter twelve and thirteen.

The third issue which spelled the decline for the Methodists in America was their expense. As already evidenced with the split between the MEC and the Free Methodists, Methodist success was literally costly. In many ways this is common when a sect becomes a church. The first expenditure of the Methodists following 1850 was land. In 1850 the Episcopalians, who were a tenth the size of the Methodists in America, had 7.2 times more property. The Methodists spent the next fifty years buying all the property they could and dropped that ratio to 3.5 times at the beginning of the twentieth century. The churches constructed over this period resembled the expensive Gothic style cathedrals of the Episcopalians and Catholics. Lutherans were settling in the plains, and Mormons were settling the desert, but the Methodists retreated from the frontier back into
established and respectable urban centers. Rather than the frontier camp, Methodism began its own process of calcification within just fifty years in America, just as Pietists in Europe had done over the whole of the eighteenth century. This new lucullan church needed a clergy to match.

The new clergy required a new education. While it is difficult to promote ignorance, the new education supported by the mid-century Methodists came at a huge cost. First, the new education weakened their enthusiasm. In many ways they were no longer loyal to the Pietism of Wesley. Experience became subordinate to reason and scholasticism. As such, the means of communicating the new Methodist message was rational and scholastic rather than relating experiences and encounters with the divine. Nathan Bangs advocated that a theological education was an indispensable prerequisite for ministers. The MEC agreed. Still they maintained that the first qualification for ministers was to receive a calling from God. This calling validated their study of theology. Roberts argued that this new theological training resulted in a liberal theology akin to the Unitarians, departing from the nonconformity to the world advocated by circuit preachers for the first half of the century.

The new clergy received their education at any number of new Methodist schools. The first seminary, Boston University School of Theology opened in 1847, taking over the Newbury Biblical institute. Following Boston University, the rush for formal Methodist higher education was on. By 1880 the MEC had 11 theological seminaries, 44

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15 The exact history and development of Boston University School of Theology is varied. Newbury began in 1839, but was chartered Boston Theological Seminary in 1867.
colleges, and 130 women’s seminaries/schools. Between the Civil War and 1900, Methodists founded more than one college or university per year. Early on most Methodist ministers were opposed to seminary education for ministers, but as ministers graduated the dissenting voices waned.

The newly educated preachers predictably brought with them a new style of preaching. The loud sermons of the first half of the century lost ground to the nuanced thematic discourses which resembled the mainline Protestant churches that Methodism displaced. Instead of extemporaneous sermons, reading from manuscripts became more popular. In 1866, George Brown lamented, “The Methodists ... have now, in many places, readers of sermons in their pulpits, instead of preachers.” Largely absent too were the lay circuit preachers. Instead of the untrained lay preacher, local congregations had seminary trained ministers. With the demotion of the laity, new ecclesial governments were formed to ensure the division between the laity and the clergy were maintained. Local congregations were accustomed to governing themselves at the beginning of the century but the new clergy worked to ensure doctrinal and practical concerns in a stronger network with the seminaries and national church. Ecclesial autonomy and dynamism succumbed to a crystalized church, visibly attractive, but serving little value and incapable of adjusting to the challenges facing its people.

The new Methodism did gain ground among some of the urban upper class. Few factions, such as the Holiness Movement, still sought to maintain contact with the

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masses. Those who subscribed to the enthusiasm and mobility of the Holiness Movement increasingly found themselves at odds with the MEC and other Methodist denominations. The new expensive churches attracted the affluent laity who were needed to pay for their construction. Furthermore the wealthy congregations wanted more than a beautiful church to adore, they desired educated clergy who could hold their own against Presbyterians and Congregationalists. The new laity were uncomfortable with the condemnations of the pleasures of this world and the clergy largely accommodated them. Their sermons also deemphasized conversion, damnation, and sin. With this the transformation from sect to church was well underway, the unrelenting cycle of stagnation was setting in. The transformation isolated Methodism from its energetic roots and immobilized its growth among the populations which once fed the denomination.

While the bourgeoisification of Methodism was underway, not everyone sat quietly and witnessed the slow unraveling of the strongest example of Pietism in early American history. Many, including Phoebe Palmer, witnessed the rise and fall of the denomination and did the best they could to encourage its growth and infuse the denomination with the lifeblood of its glory years. Palmer, along with several other lay preachers, continued their evangelical message. Palmer’s proselytization focused not only on the non-Methodist but the denominational leaders as well. In many ways the resistance to this process remained viable and grew into the fundamentalists and Pentecostals in the twentieth century.

This process of transformation from sect to stagnant church was not inevitable. The Baptists did not face a similar collapse. While Catholicism grew in America
throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century, the only Protestant denomination that shared equal gains over the two centuries were the Baptists. By 1906 Baptists outnumbered Methodists. This took place a decade earlier in the South, and as of 1980 Baptists nearly doubled the number of Methodists in America. Why were they so different? First the Baptists remained popular and important to the disenfranchised poor. While Methodist churches existed in the West and South, their strength was in the North and on the urban frontier. These audiences grew to expect higher levels of education among their clergy. Southern Baptists at the beginning of the twentieth century were still served by untutored, unpaid or underpaid preachers. In 1906 the average salary for all Baptists was $536, while Methodists earned $784, and Southern Baptists specifically only earned $367 annually. The messages of Baptists, especially in the South, remained simple and accessible. In the North, Baptists faced similar changes as the Methodists and faced similar results.

The Baptist Churches in the South also served to preserve culture and community life following the Civil War, for both Whites and Blacks. Local preachers remained local and a part of the community, often serving as a pastor for their secondary vocation. Since they were not paid, or not paid very highly, no one expected they possessed an expensive education. The Baptist Almanac estimated that in 1823 only 100 of the two thousand Baptist clergy were “liberally educated.” ¹⁷ Liberal education was suspect. The chief example of the errors of this education were the Baptist seminaries in the North, such as

the University of Chicago. The University of Chicago was believed to have morphed from a respectable Baptist school into a “satanic institution harboring infidelity, atheism, rationalism and materialism.”18 In the South the seminaries remained under control of the church rather than developing into independent educational institutions.

Besides the control over seminaries, the Southern Baptist Convention granted a large degree of autonomy to their member churches. Local churches controlled local matters. This independence applied to Black churches as well. W.E.B. DuBois wrote that “three things characterized the religion of the slave—the preacher, the music, and the frenzy.”19 Black Baptist Churches in the South offered an abundance of all three. Baptists serve as the only major Protestant example which avoided the siren call towards stagnation and centralized control. Coincidentally Palmer, while a Methodist theologian and leader, also attempted to advance an ecumenical movement. The promotion of ecumenicalism served to avoid centralizing denominational control, though this was not her stated goal.

The shifts in ecclesial politics mirrored the civil politics of the nation. The new political system sought to centralize control and increasingly favored the urban centers in the Northeast, rather than the Western frontier or the South. The urban centers also served as the place of religious growth in the antebellum period. With the disappearance of circuit preachers, the rural Americans lost access to preaching. More important than


this though was the variety of churches present in most urban centers. With an increasingly mobile population, when moving to a new town, it became easier to find their particular denomination represented. Denominational affiliation also lost ground to particular preachers, churches, and accommodations. Some attempts at ecumenicalism produced temporary alliances between denominations, but usually these were temporary and only emerged to combat a common opponent. For example Northern Methodists and Presbyterians might join forces to oppose Catholics or their southern counterparts. For this reason, the Holiness Movement and other interdenominational movements produced new theological ideologies. These ideologies in turn created new denominations, removing adherents from portions of the denominations they emerged out of. This is the religious climate that shaped and was shaped by Phoebe Palmer.
CHAPTER 10
PHOEBE PALMER: 1807-1874

“Everything in religion is exceedingly simple.”¹

Between Aldersgate and Azusa Street lies the parlor of Phoebe Palmer. Her Tuesday afternoon meetings for the promotion of holiness serve as the crucial link between Wesley’s conversion and the rise of Pentecostalism and fundamentalism at the dawn of the twentieth century. Palmer’s contribution to experiential Protestantism built upon the institutional forms of the nineteenth century rather than directly opposing it as Schleiermacher did, or attempting to buttress it as Kierkegaard did. While Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher opposed the rigid Pietism in Denmark and Prussia, Palmer reinterpreted Pietism in America. The political and cultural challenges in Prussia and Denmark were significant and should not be discounted. The resulting countries at the beginning of Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard’s lives still largely resembled the countries which outlasted them. This was not the case for Phoebe Palmer. She was born during the presidency of Thomas Jefferson and died during Ulysses S. Grant’s term. Palmer’s America was not a singular society undergoing one or even a few changes. She lived through foreign invasion with the War of 1812, Manifest Destiny, and the Mexican American War, as well as the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the Gilded Age of Antebellum America. One cannot even speak of America in the singular in the political sense, as during the Civil War there existed the United States and the Confederate States

of America. This was the chaos that Palmer’s Methodism thrived in. This is the context of Palmer declaring “Names and sects and parties fall, and Christ alone is All in All.”

Within nineteenth-century America, Palmer supported and ignored the Methodist institution which dominated her religious landscape. Methodism protruded out of the edifice of Pietism, providing its own ledge and divergent development, while firmly remaining a part of the Pietist structure. While Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard confronted the political and philosophical conclusions of the Enlightenment, Palmer’s Pietism disregarded philosophical discussions in favor of direct challenges to American culture. Palmer, and the resulting theological movements, are distinct from her nineteenth-century European counterparts in part due to the distinct history, culture, and religious climate of America. Palmer’s country shaped Palmer’s Pietism as much as her Pietism shaped America. What is remarkable is that Palmer’s message not only thrived in America, but was successfully imported into the United Kingdom as well, including her insistence that living a holy life included abstention from alcohol, an unfavorable opinion in nineteenth-century Europe, even among many of her fellow Pietists. Palmer’s brand of Pietism developed from the Methodist lineage and produced the Holiness Movement. For her, the terms Methodist and holiness are more fitting and appropriate, but they all convey the same appeal towards defining their Protestant Christianity as experience, rather than scholasticism or rationalism.

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Palmer’s Methodist Background

“Thou Great Eternal One in Three! With grateful hearts we come to
dedicate our all to Thee, Ourselves, our babes, our home.”

Just as was the case for Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard, Palmer’s preparation to become a Pietist leader began with the conversion story of her father. Phoebe’s father was Henry Worrall. In 1785, at the age of fourteen the adolescent Henry grew tired of his families Anglican Church. Hearing stories of a dynamic preacher, one morning he awoke earlier than his parents and sneaked out of his home before 5:00. His parents were devoted members of the Church of England and occasionally housed curates in their Yorkshire hoe; they would have disapproved of their adolescent son’s curiosity. Henry arrived at the grounds to hear John Wesley’s sermon on John 3:7 “Ye must be born again.” The sermon was common to Wesley. He delivered it or a version of this same sermon scores of times, but to the young Henry it was innovative and novel. While Wesley did not even record the day in his journal, it was a day that changed Henry’s life.

Henry was now on to road to becoming a Methodist. He attended other meetings with Wesley and even received his membership ticket into Methodism from the hands of Wesley himself. This personal contact with the founder of Methodism was always a point of pride for Henry. Having separated himself from the church of his parents within seven years, the now young man Henry Worrall broke from his parent’s country. Henry made his way to America. Once in America he settled in New York and joined the

Methodist Episcopal Church. He also met Dorothea Wade, another pious Methodist, and the two quickly married. Their union was a fruitful one. They produce sixteen children, ten boys and six girls. Phoebe was their fourth child. Only half of the children reached maturity.

The Worrall home was a prosperous and pious one. Henry was involved in manufacturing large industrial items, such as steam engines. He was also involved in other large construction projects. These endeavors afforded the Worrall home a degree of prosperity. Their financial wealth was rivaled by their personal devotion. Phoebe later wrote “My parents, prior to my being entrusted to them, were rather devotedly pious. I was therefore early instructed in experimental religion.” Phoebe received her parent’s Methodist education rather well. She was tortured by the idea of telling her parents a lie after once seeing the intense anguish on her parents faces after she was found in telling an untruth at three and a half years of age. Following this point, her fear of misspeaking grew. The family joked about her penitence towards precise prose, jesting “Phoebe knows nothing, she only thinks.” If the statement could not be verified, Phoebe never declared it to be so. Following her one major infraction at three, Phoebe maintained “I do not remember ever to have been willfully disobedient to any parental command.”

With such a personal emphasis on piety, Phoebe missed out on a rite of passage. She never had a conversion experience as a youth. Just like Zinzendorf, as addressed in chapter three, Phoebe never had an obvious break, or a period of youthful revelry in sin.


Moments of repentance undoubtedly occurred, but no decisive moment where she abandoned her previous life. Just as was the case for Zinzendorf, this isolated Phoebe from many of her Methodist contemporaries. For the Methodists, as with Puritans, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Calvinists, the conversion experience was an emotional experience that grounded the child or adolescent in the faith. It assured them of their salvation and it marked their entrance into the church, more than any sacrament. Phoebe, and many children who chose not to rebel against their pious parents, are stuck in a limbo, feeling connected to the church but lacking the decisive moment that assured them of their place inside.

These conversion experiences were also very emotional moments. Phoebe struggled with emotions. A rather stoic child, like Francke and Wesley, she found very little value in the role of emotions in religious life. For Phoebe a feeling was not something definitive. While Schleiermacher defined religion as the feeling of absolute dependence, Palmer wanted to arrive at religion through cold calculated reason and the eruption of divine intervention. Phoebe did have a few emotional religious moments as a child though. When she was fifteen, her Methodist class-leader gave her a gift of Wesley’s *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*. Upon receiving the work Phoebe had intense and powerful temptations, followed by a sweet feeling that Jesus was her refuge like a babe safe in its mother’s arms. Later that year she opened her Bible in the middle
of the night and after reading Hebrews 10:36\(^6\) she felt encouraged in her Christian struggle and resolved to live by faith.

**Married with Children**

“*Our love is still in youthful mood, As when, in manhood’s pride, You at the nuptial altar stood, And called me first your bride.*”\(^7\)

The young Phoebe Worrall was as dutiful with her suitors as she was with her speech. Many boys, even good Methodist boys, sought her hand in marriage, but she rebuffed them. Phoebe was not one to accept flattery and thus be moved to an impious or irrational decision. The Worralls were a wealthy and pious family. Anyone who sought their daughters needed to prove themselves not only by being good Methodists, but they likely needed to secure a level of financial potential as well. The financial barrier was never directly mentioned, but since most of Phoebe’s suitors likely came from the same church and her sisters married into equally wealthy families, it was likely an unspoken but understood threshold. Phoebe’s discouragement of her suitors was not based on an active opposition by her parents but they did not explicitly approve of them either. The message was loud enough for her to understand their desires. As such Phoebe avoided contact with them, personally resolving “not to favor attentions I could not return.”\(^8\)

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\(^6\) For you have need of patience, that, after you have done the will of God, you might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. We Are Not of Them Who Draw Back. Now the just shall live by faith.

\(^7\) Richard Wheatley, *The Life and Letters of Mrs. Phoebe Palmer* (New York: W.C. Palmer, Jr., Publisher, 1876), 141.

The favors she could return were those of Walter Clark Palmer. Both were members of the Allen Street Methodist Church, and Walter’s piety matched his promising pecunious prospects. Walter graduated from Rutgers Medical College at twenty two years of age. Walter was born in New Jersey on February 9, 1804, but his parents Miles and Deborah moved to New York shortly thereafter. As Methodists themselves, they likely were familiar with the Worralls for a while before Walter’s affections towards Phoebe blossomed. The Palmer’s piety was unrivaled. Walter even considered a career as a clergyman instead of in medicine. He eventually decided that being a pious physician afforded him greater ministry opportunities than being a clergyman. His assumptions proved correct, but he needed Phoebe to ensure that. It was only in July of 1826 after he graduated that his attentions could turn to romance.

Walter first began by pursuing a focused friendship with Phoebe. The two found success and the courtship grew beginning in September. One year later on September 28 the two were married. A month before her marriage Phoebe recorded. “The most eventful period of my life is approaching. During the past eleven months, friendship has been ripening into a mature affection between myself and a kindred spirit, who, I have reason to believe, is in every respect, worthy of my love. I have not approached this crisis, without careful circumspection and prayer. I have ever felt that it was a step too momentous to be hastily taken, fixing as it does, life's destiny.”

Phoebe concludes this segment of journal declaring that God would not permit her affections had it not been ordered by divine providence. Under divine providence the two wed. Apparently

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providence approved of Palmer-Worrall marriages as Walter’s brother Miles married Phoebe’s sister Hannah a little while later as well.

In September of 1827 Walter was more pious than Phoebe. It was either around this time or five years later when he experienced his second conversion. The concept of a second conversion, not a subsequent conversion, is a conversion to a higher level of holiness and one where the Christian would receive a second blessing. What this second blessing was varied depending on the particular group, but for Walter Palmer this was a further step in sanctification. In the early years of the Palmer marriage Phoebe mocked this idea. Walter also spoke of becoming a missionary and heading off to China. Phoebe did not want to become a missionary, but equally did not want to dissuade her new husband from following the Lord’s calling. It was quite fortuitous for Phoebe when Walter interpreted her lack of enthusiasm for the idea as a tacit rejection and chose not to pursue the venture further. Years later when Phoebe experienced her second conversion and proposed missional stirrings as well as ministerial salacity, Walter reinforced her drive towards holiness. Walter championed her without coercion or pride, often remaining silent, letting Phoebe preach, as both recognized her as the stronger orator. They even moved houses twice to accommodate her growing ministry on Tuesday evenings. Despite the travels and tragedies, their marriage was one of mutual support and undying love for one another and for their God.

By most measures the couple were content with one another, and the marriage could be identified as a happy one. Phoebe’s journals are filled with pronouncements about her love for Walter. The measure that diminished their joy was the death of three of their six children. Their first child was a boy named Alexander. He was born on
September 28, 1828 on their first wedding anniversary, but he would not live to see their second. Alexander became Phoebe’s whole world. She spent hours embroidering his baby clothes. Phoebe wondered if God approved of her spending so much time on mere decorations. Alexander was sickly, but Phoebe never considered the possibility of his death. She refused to have him baptized for most of his life, believing that baptizing Alexander was the same as giving him over to God. Alexander was her boy, not God’s. She was not willing to share her child with her God. When he died on 2 July, 1829 Phoebe believed that his death was due to her reluctance to share her affections. Phoebe’s God was a jealous God and if she was not willing to share than God had to take him. A while after Alexander’s death Phoebe surmised that “God takes our treasure to heaven that our hearts may be there also.”\(^{10}\) She saw the error of her ways and accepted that she must offer her children to God.

The next spring Phoebe gave birth to another boy. Samuel was born on April 29. Phoebe believed that God granted Samuel as a replacement for Alexander. Phoebe believed she needed to offer Samuel to God, since Alexander was taken without a free offering. Just like with Zinzendorf, whose first child was taken at the moment of his dedication to God, Phoebe’s God accepted the offer and Samuel lived for less than two months. He died on June 19, 1830. She recorded that Samuel “was lent but seven short weeks and was then recalled; giving us two angel children in heaven, and leaving us childless on earth. I will not attempt to describe the pressure of the last crashing trial.

\(^{10}\) Phoebe Palmer, *Sources of American Spirituality Phoebe Palmer: Selected Writings*, 239.
Surely I needed it, or it would not have been given."11 Now Phoebe needed to learn that she spent too much time on her children to the neglect of her religious activities.

Phoebe was about to be surrounded by religious activities. Less than a year after Samuel’s passing, Allen Street Methodist Church began a revival. The Allen Street Revival, as it soon became known, occupied most of Walter’s time. If he did not experience his second conversion before now, it most assuredly was underway within this revival. Walter attended so many services that Phoebe believed that he too would be taken from her, passing away due to overwork and exhaustion. This was the first of many revivals on Allen Street, most remained fairly small compared to this first one.

Walter survived the revival and shortly afterwards Phoebe became pregnant again. She gave birth to her first daughter, Sarah on April 11, 1833. The child was named after Phoebe’s older and favorite sister. Sarah Worrall was energetic and full of life and so was the child Sarah Palmer. Unlike her two sons, Phoebe’s daughter was healthy. Sarah was the first of Phoebe’s children to reach maturity and her life was a pious one. Sometime in 1847 Sarah Palmer professed conversion. She then graduated from Rutgers like her father and married a Reverend named Elron Foster. Sarah lived until 1918.

A month before Walter and Phoebe’s eighth anniversary, Phoebe gave birth to another daughter, Eliza. In the summer of 1835 Phoebe was rather ill and it was believed that she might die. This was not an opportune time to give birth. Many believed that both Phoebe and Eliza may die, but miraculously they both recovered. This brush with

her own mortality gave Phoebe a new perspective. While she was a devout child, she struggled to be a devote mother. Phoebe was also still uncertain about the idea of entire sanctification. Phoebe’s sister Sarah had recently professed her second conversion, being entirely sanctified on May 21 of that year. While Phoebe still dismissed the idea, her sister and her husband’s piety was attractive. Phoebe still believed the notion to be foolish, but sought out additional prayer meetings. This added level of prayer continued through the year. In February of 1836 Sarah and her husband Thomas Lankford moved in with Phoebe and Walter. The two couples encouraged one another with their spiritual lives. Phoebe continued to go to prayer meetings, many not in her own home, but refused the idea of entire sanctification.

After returning from one of these meetings on the evening of 29 July 1836 Phoebe checked in on her two daughters. She paid extra attention to Eliza. Though she was not ill Phoebe believed that Eliza was not long for this world. She looked at her all tucked into her bassinet which was draped with gauze, and exclaimed that she was an angel, holding her close before laying her to bed. Shortly thereafter a visitor came by and Phoebe left Eliza in the care of a nursemaid until after her visitor left. The lamp which lit the room began to flicker and the nurse decided to fill it with alcohol. Instead of blowing out the sputtering flame she began to refill the lamp while it was still lit. The foolish nurse spilled some of the fuel on her hands, which quickly ignited. Reflexively she threw the lamp away which caught Eliza’s crib on fire. After hearing a shriek from the room Phoebe ran into the room to see it ablaze. She grabbed Eliza out of her burning crib. Eliza was alive but she was so badly burned that she lived only a few hours, dying in her mother’s arms. Phoebe records that Eliza “darted one inexpressible look of amazement
and pity, on her agonized mother, and then closed her eyes forever on the scenes of earth.” This tragedy broke Phoebe. She isolated herself from her loved ones. Phoebe records that “turning away from human comforters, I coveted to be alone with God.” In reality she simply could not cope with the horror of the event.

Phoebe, who eschewed emotions for most of her life, now had too many to count. She was perplexed and bewildered concerning how easily and carelessly her children could be taken from her. Understandably she was filled with shock and grief. Phoebe was also filled with anger directed towards her foolish nurse. The only thing she could do was to walk the floor, wringing her hands and crying out ‘O Lord, Help! Help!’ She then opened her Bible to Romans 11:33. She found help in the scriptures and had a mystical experience. She felt the Holy Spirit whisper to her. The whisper told her to stop blaming herself, the stupid maid, the innocent visitor, and the freakish circumstances for her daughter’s death. Her mystical encounter also included a glimpse into heaven where she saw her departed child now in the presence of Jesus. What is surprising is that this mystical experience still predated her sanctification by nearly a year. Reflecting on her children’s death, Phoebe wrote the following February, “I have often felt as though God had called me peculiarly to a life of holiness. I have also felt that in order to be led in this way, the path of self-denial must be mine.”


13 O the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out.

Her next two children survived past infancy and both outlived her. On March 9, 1839 Phoebe gave birth to another daughter. She named her after herself. In 1855 Phoebe Palmer, the daughter, wed Joseph Fairchild Knapp. Knapp was one of the founders of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company of New York. The Knapp’s hosted three US presidents in their home, Grant, Cleveland, and Harrison. Beyond her husband’s fame Phoebe Palmer Knapp was well known for writing music and lyrics for many hymns. She died July 10, 1908.

On November 20, 1842 Phoebe gave birth to her sixth and last child, a boy they decided to name after Walter. Walter Clarke Palmer, Jr. was the only one of the Palmer children to accompany their parents on their missionary journey to England and spent most of his life continuing his parents work after their death, including running their publishing empire. He died in 1885.

Walter and Phoebe were also involved in foster care and once adopted a boy who needed their aid. Leopold Soloman was a poor Jewish lad who shortly before encountering Phoebe embraced Christianity. His conversion isolated him from his family who disowned him. Living on the streets he was jailed as a vagrant and forced to spend a short time in prison, aptly named the tombs. It was here that he encountered Phoebe. The Palmers took him in, first planning on fostering him. They chose to adopt him and even sent him to a boarding school. During the vacation from school, Leopold’s birth parents sought him out and he returned to live with them. He returned to Judaism and never contacted the Palmers again.

While the case of Leopold Soloman is an isolated case, it serves as an example of the generosity of the Palmers. Walter often gave his medical care free of charge for those
too poor to pay him. Like Francke, medicine was used to advance ministry goals, especially with the poor. Phoebe spent most of her efforts in benevolence inside and outside of her home. For most wealthy American women in the nineteenth century their sphere of influence was their home. Phoebe Palmer accepted the domestic sphere as well as expanded it. She believed that the home did not imprison women, rather it nurtured their spirit and granted freedom of activities fulfilling their divine office. Most of her control in the domestic sphere occurred after her sanctification on July 26, 1837, especially considering that Phoebe and Walter the youngers were not even born until 1839 and 1842 respectively.

The divine office was fulfilled in a number of ways. First she ensured family devotions. These devotions occurred twice daily, once in the morning and the second in the evening. This encompassed the entire household, including servants and houseguests. During the devotions they sang Methodist hymns, read the Bible, and prayed. Every meal also was preceded by a sung prayer. In addition to the communal devotions, Phoebe Palmer encouraged personal Bible reading. She recommended that everyone rise at five and read the Bible for an hour. Every day would also conclude with reading the Bible to ensure that it was the first book in the morning and last one at night. These were counted as ‘holy times,’ and to be unwilling to offering a sacrifice of time which was granted by God was foolish, after all it is a sacrifice which costs nothing. The afternoon also held sometime dedicated to the reading of scripture, but it was not as crucial as the morning and evening devotions. Phoebe herself woke and read the Old Testament, she then read the Gospels midday, and the Epistles before going to bed. Along with scripture reading, Palmer believed that Christians should keep a journal. To not keep a journal was
almost a sin. The practice of spiritual autobiographies moved from a word of encouragement in the eighteenth century to a requisite in the nineteenth. Palmer, Kierkegaard, and Schleiermacher all kept personal journals that relayed their spiritual progress.

**Entire Sanctification & Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness**

“I cannot wash my heart, but by believing Thee.”

Like Francke, Phoebe used her home as a vehicle to convert the masses. It was a place for those who sought financial aid in addition to spiritual aid. It was her home that gave Phoebe her first real ministry leadership role, one that was in front of both men and women. Palmer believed that her home should be a place to sanctify all those who sought refuge. It was the place to experience the blessedness of peace. Her salon was the foretaste of glory. It was also a place that she controlled. Unlike most church classes, her home was not under the preview of Allen Street or any other parish. Her home allowed her to preach to Methodists as well as anyone else who desired holiness. It was a home shared by her sister and the place of her personal entire sanctification and the Tuesday meetings for the promotion of holiness.

Phoebe Palmer’s conversion to entire sanctification was deeply dependent upon her older sister Sarah Lankford. Sarah was nineteen months older than Phoebe but the two of them spent most of their life together, even living together after they were both married. As adults people even joked that they were twins because their lives were so

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interconnected. In an odd twist of fate, after both Sarah and Walter were widowed the two of them married each other in March 1876. So as it turns out, Sarah and Phoebe also shared a husband, though not concurrently. Phoebe was younger, but she married Walter four years before Sarah married Thomas Lankford. Thomas A. Lankford was an architect from Virginia. He moved to New York and won the hand of Sarah Worrall. Thomas died in March 1871.

In May of 1835, four years after Sarah’s marriage to Thomas, she experienced her second conversion experience. Sarah, while closely identified with Phoebe, possessed many of the churchly qualities her sister did not. While Phoebe was never able to point to a conversion experience as an adolescent, Sarah could. Sarah’s first conversion took place as a thirteen year old. When she read Wesley’s *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, two years later in 1821 she tried to figure out how to attain this level of piety. Sarah proclaimed “Lord I will believe, help Thou my unbelief: . . . Yea, Lord from this hour, half-past two p.m., the 21st of May, 1835, I dare reckon myself dead, indeed unto sin.”¹⁶ Her second conversion was now underway, even though she experienced no feeling to that effect for an entire week. It took the Allen Street Revival in 1835 to show her the way. This was the same revival that Walter was so tirelessly involved in. Following the revival and the experiences of Walter and Sarah, Phoebe was constantly urged to experience it on her own.

Sarah was also the one who began the Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness, not Phoebe. Sarah was involved in women’s prayer meetings at Allen Street in August 1835. She also led the First Tuesday Meeting at 54 Rivington Street on February ninth the following year, over a year before Phoebe was sanctified. Both the earlier prayer meeting and the Tuesday meeting in Rivington were outgrowths of Sarah’s own piety. She was always interested in encouraging others to “perfect love.” Her sister was no exception.

On the July 26th, 1827 Sarah felt a special burden on her heart concerning her sister. That morning Sarah pled with Phoebe before breakfast to spend the day in fasting and prayer for her salvation and the second blessing. Sarah announced she was planning on doing the same. Phoebe replied that she must have her breakfast but would pray. The lighthearted response was intended to wound, and it succeeded. In Phoebe’s journal she voices her doubts concerning this Wesleyan doctrine. “Though I have ever been a firm believer in the doctrine of Christian holiness, embracing the entire sanctification of body, soul, and spirit, as taught from the Scriptures by the apostolic Wesleys, and their contemporaries; yet the terms made use of, in speaking of this attainment, were objectionable to my mind, in a manner which I cannot now take time to explain.”¹⁷ This Methodist doctrine which became so central to her teaching began as a foolish notion. She continued to argue that the blessing could only be comprehended by those who

experienced it. The notion of a second blessing will be fully addressed in the second half of this chapter.

With Sarah praying and fasting and Phoebe spending some time in prayer, Phoebe’s thoughts turned to her three departed children. This was just three days shy of the one year anniversary of Eliza’s horrible death. At nine in the evening Phoebe experienced her second conversion, still absent of the first conversion experience. Phoebe describes the experience in two different accounts. In the first she states that it was during her last prayer of the evening when she was overwhelmed by the power of God. “I felt an inexpressible change in the depths of my heart, and, from that hour, I have felt no anger, no pride, no wrong temper, of any kind; nothing contrary to the pure love of God which I feel continually. I desire nothing but Christ, and I have Christ always reigning in my heart. I want nothing; He is my sufficient portion in time and in eternity.”

In another account she styles her conversion as a faithful servant off in the kitchen to one who was taken by her father into the parlor. “But now it is my Father — my own dear Father!”

The vehicle for this conversion was an act of faith. For too long she believed that faith was a difficult task. After all, she was generally averse to emotional decisions and relying upon emotions to dictate her actions. Most of her fellow churchgoers linked faith with feeling. It was only when Phoebe separated the two that she could come to faith. Now she understood faith to be believing what she professed. Resolving “Whatever my


19 George Hughes, Fragrant Memories of the Tuesday Meeting and Guide to Holiness (New York: Palmer and Hughes, 1886), 28.
feelings may be, I will believe God’s immutable Word unwaveringly, irrespective of emotion.”20 With this new understanding of faith she heard God speak to her like she was Moses on Mount Sinai. She then resolved to follow Wesley’s example and become a Bible Christian.

Phoebe understood the concept of a Bible Christian to be a Christian who has unshakable faith in the Bible. The Bible is the sole source of authority in her life and it is the fountainhead of her doctrine and worldview. Of course the lens she interpreted scripture through was as an American Methodist, so just as Perkins, Arndt, Spener, and others, there was already a preexisting conception of what the scripture is, how certain verses are to be read, and what concepts should be prioritized. Like Wesley, Palmer had little knowledge of primitive Christianity and simply followed Wesley’s pronouncements as the starting point. For Palmer, Wesley’s commentaries dominated her understanding, but she also went beyond Wesley. Palmer read the Bible as the written word of a living God who spoke directly to her through the sacred texts. Faith is then interpreted as believing the Bible and believing that its claims were directed to her personally. Therefore when a moment of doubt entered her mind, saying “’How do you know that God will receive you?’ and… ‘How may I know that the Lord does receive me?’ To this, in gentle whispers, the Spirit replied, ‘It is written, I will receive you.’”21 Following this experience, Phoebe told her sister of her conversion and the two then shared in the ministry of the Tuesday Meeting.


The Lankford/Palmer Tuesday Meeting is the best example of a Methodist conclave. These small groups resembled Spener’s *collegias* at first, usually having a small number of members who shared accountable discipleship with one another. Wesley, following Spener and Francke, instituted the practice as well and the goal was to have their co-religionists pray for one another and exhort them in scripture readings. While the Tuesday meetings began with this small intimate setting, they quickly grew beyond this. The actual workings of the Tuesday meetings were not intimate like Spener’s groups, rather it was a symposium on holiness, much larger than most classrooms. It was not unheard of for smaller groups to break off of the larger gathering. Furthermore, visitors were always welcome, so the intimacy that Spener and Francke encouraged with their groups and even with the salons that Schleiermacher was a part of could not be attained.

Every Tuesday at 2:30 in the afternoon the session began. It began with the reading of sections from the Bible. From here the congregation sung and prayed. After this someone chose to speak on the scripture reading, but the speaker varied, and their exposition was rather short. Following this people gave testimonies about their conversion experience or their encounters with God since the last time they gathered. In many ways this resembled Methodist church services. Two noticeable distinctions were obvious. First, it took place at a home rather than a church. Second, while clergy were often present, they did not run the meeting. George Hughes wrote a contemporary account where he states that most meetings had six to ten ministers present, and often even more. Their rank and position was inconsequential and it was only mentioned if it served a larger purpose to the gathering or they served as an example to someone else.
While there was a general structure to the meeting, it was far more social than other religious gatherings and one person might pray, then another, without following a strict liturgical formula. In many ways it resembled a Quaker meeting more than a Methodist service. Freedom permeated the service, from who prayed to what songs were sung, to what topic would be addressed.

Not long after her total sanctification, Phoebe took the leadership reins from her older sister. Once involved, Phoebe ensured that the meetings included an evangelical climax usually following the testimonies. In this moment Phoebe gave those who attended an opportunity to repent, convert, or accept total sanctification. In this altar call there was no altar, and a large crowd present who pressed the uninitiated towards entire sanctification. Palmer or others also used this time to answer any questions from the doubting visitors and guests, sometimes taking the form of an inquiry meeting. They often concluded with one or more receiving sanctification and someone praying for them. Those who attended claimed that the meetings were opportunities to lay their burdens down, dispel doubts, and obtain pardon. They maintained that no controversy occurred, or very rarely for the over 2500 Tuesday Meetings. Each meeting averaged two hundred participants.

With two hundred or more guests showing up in the Palmer home, space became quite the concern. When the Tuesday Meeting began with Sarah Lankford she used Dr. Palmer’s back office on 54 Rivington St. Then they utilized the second floor parlors. Still the meetings grew and according to Hughes the meeting had three locations, the first on 54 Rivington, then St. Marks’ Place, then finally 316 East Fifteenth Street. This final location was much larger than the previous locations but the spacious parlor still grew
cramped with more and more visitors. The halls, staircase, and adjoining rooms began to
be filled. In order to accommodate without moving yet again, the Palmers decided to
expand the parlor in their home. This cost them two thousand dollars in 1857, and by
most estimations this is well over $50,000 today. Beyond the new locations and size, the
meetings had two other significant changes. The first was to allow men at the meetings
led by the two sisters. The second was the interdenominational atmosphere that was
created.

The first man to attend the meeting was Thomas Cogswell Upham. Upham’s wife
invited him to the meeting in 1839. Upham was a professor at Bowdoin College in
Maine, and he was a Congregationalist, but was rather interested in the concept of
holiness. He was permitted to attend the smaller meeting at the time and following him,
many more men began to seek instruction on holiness from Phoebe and Sarah. The next
man to attend the meeting was their longtime friend Timothy Merritt who edited the
*Christian Advocate* and later founded *The Guide to Christian Perfection*, later titled *the
Guide to Holiness*, a publication that the Palmers purchased after the Civil War. Other
prominent Methodists attended the meeting including Nathan Bangs and two MEC
Bishops, Janes and Hamline.

Since Upham was a Congregationalist, his arrival also opened the door to non-
Methodists as well. Palmer wrote that in addition to Methodists, her home was visited by
lay and clergy members that were Baptists, Congregationalists, Dutch Reformed, German
Reformed, Presbyterians, Protestant Episcopalians, Quakers, Minted Brethren, and Jews
in Christ. All met without splitting theological hairs or party distinctions. Since the
meeting took place in her home rather than at a church, this ecumenical meeting had a
greater chance of success than nearly any other in nineteenth-century America. She credited her success to the focus of the meetings. “Not Wesley, not Fletcher, not Finney, not Mahan, not Upham, but the Bible, the holy Bible, is the first and last, and in the midst always. The Bible is the standard, the groundwork, the platform, the creed. Here we stand on common ground, and nothing but the spirit of this blessed book will finally eradicate and extirpate a sectarian spirit.”

Additionally no favoritism was given to the testimony of anyone based upon their denominational affiliation. Just like with Zinzendorf, the appeal to denomination to validate experience seemed laughable and each denomination brought their own *tropus* to the Pietist meetings. Prayers were given and praises sung for any Protestant who arrived. We must say Protestant since she never records Catholics or Orthodox in her meetings and her attitudes towards them are anything but charitable.

Overall the Tuesday Meetings lasted weekly for over fifty years. They began without Phoebe, led by her sister, and they continued even when Phoebe was unavailable, including when she was out of the country, or on missionary journeys outside of New York. The structure of the meetings were such that someone else could lead them fairly easily. They even continued for thirty years after Phoebe’s death. Apart from Phoebe’s occasional absence until her death, the meetings suffered another loss when the Lankfords moved fifty miles away to Caldwell-on-the-Hudson in 1840. Sarah spent most of her life down the hall from her sister then she and her husband decided to aid Henry Worrall in a business venture. The company he was building a steam engine for went bankrupt and the Lankfords decided to take over the business, believing they could be

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22 George Hughes, *Fragrant Memories of the Tuesday Meeting and Guide to Holiness*, 38.
missionaries in Caldwell. The Lankfords began a new congregation, but Sarah regularly still took the long trek to New York in order to attend the Tuesday afternoon meetings.

In addition to the Tuesday Meetings, Phoebe was asked to lead a young convert’s class at Allen Street in 1839. She accepted this, becoming the first woman in New York appointed to permanently lead a mixed class meeting. This occurred a few months before Dr. Upham attended the Tuesday Evening, and likely provided justification for her accepting him at that meeting. Phoebe’s mixed class convert class met on Friday evenings in her home. Walter taught one on Thursday afternoons. As his practice grew, Phoebe instructed his class as well on numerous occasions. They each led these classes until 1848 when they were called to assist another Methodist Church.

**Beyond Tuesday Afternoons**

> "Labor is rest, and pain is sweet."^23

If all Phoebe Palmer managed to do in her life was to host and grow a parachurch meeting that lasted over half a century with men and women of various denominations, and be the first woman to be appointed to permanently lead mixed Methodist class in New York, her accomplishments would have been worthy of mention. In many ways these accomplishments are only the preamble to Palmer’s impact on nineteenth-century experiential Protestantism. Her calling was to reach the world beyond a few blocks in New York, both directly and indirectly. The first way she did this was to take her show on the road.

At the same time as she was teaching a mixed class of converts at Allen Street, Phoebe Palmer began to travel to other churches, spreading her message of entire sanctification. Both Phoebe and Walter Palmer became full-time Methodist evangelists. Walter continued his medical practice, often linking the two together. The Palmers were two of four noteworthy Methodist evangelists before the mid-1850s. The other two were ordained and foreign born John Newland Maffitt\(^24\) (d. 1850) and James Caughey (d. 1891). The Palmer’s message focused on entire sanctification as well as the idea that everyone, including college presidents, elders, bishops, pastors, and the laity were responsible for saving souls. Instead of relying upon ordination as the qualification one required to proselytize, their faith was the only qualification they needed.

Phoebe’s perfectionist message was simple, and simply done. She took what was happening on Tuesday afternoons and did the same thing elsewhere. This was a basic pattern of evangelism and it emphasized experience over creeds, so most Protestant denominations accepted her. Often her sermons consisted of stories of conversion experiences rather than much if any theological prose. This allowed for accessibility as well as relating local people to the idea of sanctification. Like Zinzendorf and the Moravians, Palmer’s message was simple and easy to deliver and receive. This message not only attracted Protestants of various denominations, but opened the pulpits of other denominations to Phoebe and Walter as well. Baptists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists all welcomed the preaching Palmers inside their churches. Everyone agreed that Phoebe was the better speaker and she was the headliner rather than Walter.

\(^24\) Not the famous privateer of the same name.
The holiness message existed outside of the Methodist church. At the same time Phoebe and Walter were delivering their message, Charles Finney was delivering his. Finney’s message found a larger home with the Presbyterians and he was eventually named the president of Oberlin College. The Palmer’s message of perfection lined up with those of Finney and Oberlin. Together they launched the holiness movement. Most reports say that while Finney began his emphasis on perfectionism before Phoebe, he eventually was influenced more by her than vice versa. For a brief period in 1842 Oberlin and Methodist holiness were inseparable. They held holiness conventions in New York City, Buffalo, Rochester, Newark, and other towns in and around New York State.

The holiness movement grew beyond the Palmers and Oberlin and before long other denominations began spreading the message of holiness. The most significant occurred in 1858 when a revival connected to the Businessman Revival broke out and was called a modern Pentecost. Like Zinzendorf’s Pentecost the previous century, this one included long prayer meetings and repentance. Unlike Zinzendorf’s Pentecost, this one focused on the ‘gift of power’ and the power was expected to be used to combat sins of this world.

With such success preaching, Phoebe desired to reach an even greater audience. The press was the perfect place for this. She began publishing accounts of her views of salvation in the Christian Advocate and Journal in 1842. Through the Journal she constructed her first published work, The Way of Holiness in 1843. This book quickly became a best seller among devotional works. The work underwent several editions and was translated into French, where it sold 1,600 copies. It was also translated into German, and versions existed in Liberia and Siam, but not with as much success. The
work’s greatest success was in English speaking countries, the United States, Canada, and England. Worldwide it sold more than a hundred thousand copies during her lifetime. More remarkable than its success was her choice to let her name appear on the title page. Many women used pseudonyms, especially when writing devotional or theological works. Her choice not to do this adds significant weight to the argument that she was an early feminist. It was also a good move for her evangelical career. The success of her work only made her more popular and opened new areas for her to speak and advocate entire sanctification.

_The Way of Holiness_ was followed by _Entire Devotion to God_ in 1845, and _Faith and Its Effects_ in 1848. These works make up the core of her theological notion of Altar Theology, which the second half of this chapter will address. These three works are also modeled after her sermons, they are filled with stories of conversion and accounts of her own life and her own struggles with faith. None of these works are a systematic theology of the Christian faith. They are primarily devotional aids that reveal her theology and are not overtly theological. Palmer’s most theological work, _Promise of the Father_, published in 1859, was also her most controversial. In this work Palmer sets out her justification as a woman to speak in church. This is the only work where Phoebe moves beyond personal testimonies and Bible quotes and uses arguments from history and biblical criticism. She published many more works than these four and throughout all of her works Palmer is rather comfortable with utilizing new technology to advance her message. She utilized cheap books and magazines, as well as the railroads and steamboats to reach audiences impossible for preachers just a generation before.
Throughout the 1830s, most of Phoebe’s preaching circuit was in New York State, with occasional journeys into New Jersey. As her name grew in prominence, so too did requests from other locals. The first real journey outside of the New York area came by a request from Miss Frederica Kohler. Frederica Kohler was the granddaughter of the Moravian Peter Bohler, who helped Wesley convert. Frederica told Phoebe that many in the Moravian community in Pennsylvania were backslidden. Phoebe left Walter to care for their children and went to preach amongst the Moravians. The trip was a success. Shortly after returning, other denominations made similar requests.

One of the more memorable events for Phoebe came when they were returning from a trip to Boston. The boiler on their steamship exploded. Smoke and steam filled the boat and everyone assumed the ship was going to sink, likely resulting in a massive death toll. Phoebe, who was accompanied by Walter and her sister Sarah, heard someone singing. They were singing two Methodist hymns “We’re Going Home to Die No More” and “How Do Thy Mercies Close Me Round.” They immediately joined in the chorus, excited that there were other Methodists on board, and those who found solace in their hymns more than they feared death. The boat did not sink and she records no deaths. Phoebe took this moment as a badge of pride that her husband, sister, and herself all gave clear testimony of their faith in the face of death. This is rather humorous considering John Wesley’s own encounter on a ship that appeared that it was going to sink. Wesley heard the hymns of the Moravians and he was gripped with fear of his own death. Now Wesley’s hymns brought comfort to those on a boat that did not sink.

As an odd twist of fate the Palmers considered becoming missionaries to China during this period as well. While the idea frightened Phoebe earlier in her marriage, the
idea now intrigued her. They were determined to go to China as missionaries, but then felt called by the spirit to remain in America a little longer. Instead they decided to pledge five hundred dollars towards the establishment of a mission in China if they could get twenty others to do so as well. They gathered others and structured the payment over ten years. Five missionaries were sent in 1847. Phoebe also decided that she would work just as hard in New York as she would have if sent to China herself.

1848 was a turning point for Palmer, just as it was for Kierkegaard and most of Europe. Kierkegaard took on the changing Danish state that year. In 1848 Palmer encountered her first real opposition to her holiness message. The first rumblings of trouble came from the success the Holiness Movement had. Too many young and less pious ministers saw the movement as an opportunity to court applause rather than urge them onto spiritual growth. As such, clergy both inside and outside of Methodism began to criticize the movement as a whole. As expected, the greatest opponents were those who never held Wesley’s notion of holiness to begin with. Protestants of every stripe began to question the notion of a second blessing. To combat this and defend her ministry, Phoebe Palmer wrote *Incidental Illustrations*, in 1855.

The greatest onslaught of attacks took place in the 1850s and played out in *The Christian Advocate and Journal*. Much like Kierkegaard at the time, disputes were played out in print for all to see. Amidst the critiques Palmer had a prophetic dream concerning the brewing controversy over holiness. During her dream she was chased by several terrifying wild beasts, bears, and lions. Some beasts attacked one another, but most were headed towards her. Then suddenly a fierce lion, much larger than the other beasts, attacked her in great fury. She lost focus on the other beasts who now seemed so
small and insignificant compared to this fierce lion. She then grabbed the lion’s mouth and managed through supernatural assistance to hold its jaws closed. Palmer was convinced that if the lion could open its mouth she would be lost. The lion turned out to be Hiram Mattison. The other beasts were a host of other contributors to the controversy played out in The Advocate. Most of these authors were clergy and some even sided with Palmer. In addition to Mattison, the list includes Spicer, Woodriff, Bangs, Perry, and a whole host of anonymous contributors.

Mattison was a Methodist elder and professor of astronomy and natural philosophy at Fahey Seminary in upstate New York. His first criticism of Palmer’s theology came out in December of 1851, with a work titled “Professing Holiness.” This was followed by other articles in The Advocate, in total at least a dozen spanning from December of 1851 to January 1856. Eventually the Advocate ended the argument by choosing to no longer publish works concerning the holiness controversy. Palmer responded in kind, not only with Incidental Illustrations, but also with five articles, with titles such as “False Statement Corrected,” and “A Voice from the Laity.” Only three of her articles were aimed directly at Mattison, and some others even came to her defense against him.

Mattison believed that Palmer’s teachings were divisive and filled with errors. He spelled out eight propositions which he believed illustrated the errors of Palmer’s theology. The first criticism was that sanctification was nothing more than consecration, that it was not a second blessing, but a mere dedication. The next few critiques centered on the relationship between faith and what it is to be sanctified according to Palmer.

Mattison also did not like how Palmer viewed this doctrine as something extra and
separate from church life, including meetings such as her Tuesday Afternoon Meeting. Mattison believed that Palmer was constructing a new and different church than the one that the Apostles or Wesley delivered them. While Palmer refused this notion, Mattison’s criticism has merits, especially in light of the divisions in the MEC at the turn of the twentieth century that resulted in holiness churches as separate denominations and the launch of both fundamentalism and Pentecostalism, which will be addressed in chapters twelve and thirteen.

Mattison’s judgement of holiness had some lasting repercussions, though Palmer and the doctrine survived the 1850s. Few were willing to criticize the wildly popular Palmer or the foundation of Oberlin theology. As the century continued, anti-holiness sentiment grew and eventually Methodist evangelists were subjected to ecclesiastical oversight if they held meetings without approval of a list of clergy, who often disapproved of holiness teachings. By the 1880s those who supported the doctrine of holiness created an independent National Holiness Association. This loosened the reins of those who advocated for Palmer’s position, but it also placed them outside of the Methodist fold. The greatest effect was in the South and West, the very places where Pentecostalism had its greatest success.

During the controversial years, Phoebe, along with Walter, took their first trips outside of the United States to spread the holiness message. From 1853-57 the Palmers went to Canada on several occasions and held camp meetings. In 1854 she engaged in eight meetings in Canada alone. At one meeting in Brighton, Ontario she witnessed two hundred conversions. Another convention lasted ten days in Quebec. This was an especially proud moment for the Palmers, since Quebec was filled with Catholics, and
Phoebe was not sure how they would receive the message. She was proud to report that 150 claimed salvation, followed by 100 more in Spencertown. After this, Phoebe encountered even greater success, recording “never before have we witnessed such effusions of the Spirit on believers. Hundreds on hundreds have received the tongue of fire, and have returned to the cities and villages round about, filled with faith and the Holy Ghost to spread the Pentecostal flame.”

The Palmers also spoke in the United States, mostly at camp meetings, over twenty in 1855 and 1856. It was in 1857 that she predicted that over 800,000 new converts would enter the Methodist churches the following year. This was a remarkable claim since the membership was only increasing by a little more than 20,000 a year. Phoebe stressed that the task of converting the masses was not on her shoulders, nor those of her husband, or even the ordained clergy, rather the task was laid upon every sanctified Christian. Since everyone should be sanctified, everyone should be evangelizing. With a new focus for the laity to win the lost to Christ, 800,327 new converts was the anticipated growth. In actuality the northern Methodists only gained by 136,036 members in 1858. More than two thousand of those converts came from the Palmer’s camp meetings. This was a far cry from the goal, but still a significant growth. The growth was enough for contemporaries to call it the *annis mirabilis*, the year of miracles.

During the 1850s Phoebe became involved in church planting and building new ministries outside of Allen Street in New York. Their foray into church planting actually came two years earlier in 1848. The Norfolk Street Methodist Episcopal Church was

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poorly run and decided they needed help. They sent a delegation to Allen Street to ask for help. Phoebe was not sure exactly how to help their feeble sister church until she had a dream. In this dream she found herself in a large glass house at noon. The brightly filled room was blinding and she was holding an oil lamp. She was asked if her lamp was shining. It was lit, but it was difficult to see it in the bright light from the sun. When she awoke she realized that she must change churches. Allen Street was thriving, it had multiple revivals and it did not need her light, while Norfolk Street did. The Palmers moved churches and the first Sunday they attended Norfolk a revival broke out there as well. They remained at Norfolk for eight years until Allen Street’s light began to fade and they returned.

In addition to reviving Norfolk, Phoebe recognized a need for the poor on Seventeenth Street. She decided that they needed a church. Phoebe used her wealth and the wealth of other affluent women to financially support this struggling church. She donated a hundred dollars in 1850 to this endeavor. She pledged to continue this support as long as it was needed. Other’s joined in the cause and within six months they began construction of the church and were holding meetings in the basement. Within five years the Redding, or Seventeenth Street Methodist Episcopal Church, was large enough that it was self-supporting.

After this Palmer believed that the Jews would be converted in the end times, and she believed that living in the second Pentecost, the end was nigh. To this end she set out to build a Jewish-Christian synagogue to call the Jews to faith in Jesus as their messiah. In 1855 the Palmers donated five hundred dollars to this end. At first she was
encouraged as several converted Jews attended. Their number did not increase though, and at the end of ten months the project failed.

In 1850 Phoebe also began the first inner city mission in the United States. While Finney and others intentionally planted churches in gritty inner city neighborhoods, these churches were used as a lamp to attract the denizens of the borough and did not actively proselytize as missionaries in the cities. Palmer’s inner city mission closely resembles Francke and his involvement in the slums of Halle in Glaucha. Most respectable Americans ignored the downtrodden in their cities, especially the gritty Five Points area of New York. It was filled with poor, violent, immigrants who drank alcohol and were largely Catholic from Germany and Ireland. The Five Points were also the flash point of a cholera epidemic. The gangs and violence could be overlooked, but cholera was something that the respectable New Yorkers could not ignore. Unsure as to what to do, a group of Methodist women began addressing the topic. The group was the Ladies’ Home Missionary Society, of which Phoebe was a founding member of their New York branch. One woman said she would be willing to give ten dollars towards a German mission, but not one dollar towards Five Points. There was no point in spending money on a lost cause. Phoebe surmised that their problem was not simply their intemperance or poverty, but their religion. If only they could be converted, they would overcome the power of alcohol and they would then become thrifty and nonviolent. She then burst out that she would give one hundred dollars towards a mission at Five Points. This silenced all objection. Thus the Five Points mission was born. Other women rallied to her cause and the matter carried. They hired a missionary to begin work that very year. The Five Point Mission was very successful and overshadowed any other projects to the point that the
Ladies’ Home Missionary Society and the Five Point Mission were nearly synonymous. Surprisingly, women were also deeply involved in the Five Point Mission, going down to the rough part of town, battling urban poverty, and spreading the gospel. Most women involved with the Five Point Mission believed that the best way to win others to Christ was to improve the lot of the poor, who when converting also aided their own lives and the neighborhood.

The following year, after her father’s death, Phoebe seriously began her involvement with the Tombs. The Tombs were one of the worst prisons in America and they were located in lower Manhattan. Palmer, like Perkins and Wesley, took Christ’s words “I was in prison, and you visited me”26 to be a directive. Just as with Five Points, she spent a good portion of her time distributing Bibles and working with alcoholics. In her journal entry on March 30, 1851 she mentions that she and others “Went out this morning at an early hour, to do something toward reclaiming an inebriate, Mr. B. Begged him, on my knees, to lay his hand on the Bible, and promise the God of the Bible that he would neither ‘Touch, taste, nor handle’ spirituous liquors. This afternoon, on his knees, he solemnly pledged himself. Thank the Lord!”27

26 Matt 25:37.
There and Back Again

"With me, no melancholy void, No moment lingers unemployed, Or unimproved below."28

While the Palmers did not go to China, by 1859 the Palmers felt called to England. Tensions were high in the States and the pending outbreak of the Civil War likely contributed to this decision. If nothing else, it likely extended their stay in England, as preaching at camp meetings in the war torn Union or Confederacy was a dangerous if not impossible task. The Palmers left for their voyage to England on June 4, 1859 onboard the Steamer City of Baltimore. The steamship made the twelve day journey far less treacherous than the voyage Wesley took to America. At the time of their departure Phoebe and Walter were not sure how long they would be gone for.

As things worked out, the Palmers spent four years in the British Isles from 1859 to 1863. While most of their time was spent in England itself, they did take a few trips to Ireland, Scotland, The Isle of Wight, and Wales. There was not a definitive plan to the trek, and their stay varied depending on the local need and how well their message was received. On numerous occasions they stayed longer than they initially planned and later in their trip they threatened to leave the city if certain conditions were not met. These conditions usually involved the elimination of alcohol from the church grounds or the refusal of a parishioner to give up their sale of liquor. The durations of each revival

28 Phoebe Palmer, Sources of American Spirituality Phoebe Palmer: Selected Writings 642
meeting naturally varied but over the four years they took part in nearly sixty recorded revival meetings.\textsuperscript{29}

By the time of their journey to England, both of their daughters were already married and gone from their home. Only their son Walter was still living with them. They decided it was best to take the sixteen year old Walter Jr with them. The trip to England came with mixed blessings. Naturally the wealthy Palmers traveled in first-class. Still these accommodations did not really suit them well. The amenities were nice, but the company they kept treated the voyage across the sea like a vacation. For the Palmers, this was a mission, not a sabbatical from their ordinary lives. Phoebe often made her way down to steerage and was overjoyed to find some “disciples of Jesus” there. She then decided that it was fitting to hold a worship service among the second class. Phoebe was shocked and horrified to find so many ministers on board who failed to live up to her own personal standards. None of them organized prayer meetings. That was left to her, and she even found some of them gambling, playing cards, chess, dice, or board games. Worst of all some were even drinking. One of her fellow travelers was a professor from Union Theological Seminary who she engaged in conversation about such vices. He granted that many were in error, but thought that some games were harmless, although cards were dangerous as they led to gambling. Phoebe wondered how anyone could possibly play a board game to the glory of God. Phoebe does not mention the name of the well-known professor, but was shocked that he too was playing dice and doing so in the presence of others. Palmer echoed the moralism that grew to dominate

\textsuperscript{29} 9 in 1859, 16 in 1860, 13 in 1861, 12 in 1862, and 9 in 1863.
Pietism with Francke and Wesley, the moralism that both Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard believed to be disruptive and dangerous to the future of Protestantism.

When the boat docked in Liverpool, the Palmers did not know exactly what their plan was to be. To their surprise a Reverend Thomelow met them. He had read of their journey across the sea in the paper. Having followed the Palmers and read Phoebe’s works, he thought it best to meet them and offer them a place to stay and a ride to wherever they planned on going. Phoebe’s first impressions along the drive toward their lodgings were “Surely this looks like the Old World! Everything appears so ancient and somber, as though grown hoary with age.”

Within a few months of their stay in England they decided to travel to Ireland, arriving there on July nineteenth. Once there, Phoebe and Walter put on a prayer meeting like they had done countless times in America and like they did over the previous weeks in England. There initial views of the Irish were not that high. She believed that so many of them were illiterate poor who had little opportunity to hear the gospel or gain any religious knowledge. Phoebe recorded that the Lord was good to remember those in this low estate, where thanks to her arrival “Thousands are yielding to be saved. Ireland, so long bowed down beneath the oppression of the Man of Sin, is now being rescued. The Deliverer is come out of Zion; and, by the brightness of his appearing, Popery is unmasked, and its very form seems destined to be consumed speedily.” Her mission in Ireland was similar to her mission with the Irish in Five Points, to save them from


poverty, popery, and potation. Her tools for this were the same as elsewhere. She confronted those in attendance, declaring that to touch strong drink was the work of Satan, and only through Christ could they hate swill and sin.

Palmer’s accounts in Ireland are often the same battles over and over. She calls for them to give up intoxicants, illicit acts, as well as indoctrinations they had accepted from Rome. One account of a newly converted man she felt especially excited about, saying that he was like a man pulled by four horses in different directions, now converted he needed to give up his lucrative business. Palmer proclaimed that “a Christian, and a distiller or whiskey-selling Christian, are not compatible terms.”32 That same passage she records that ‘the Man of Sin,’ by which she means both the devil and the Pope, was losing ground. “Those who are stricken are at once done with Romanism, whether the subject be young or old. A Roman-Catholic girl was stricken, and thoroughly converted. Among her first exclamations was, ‘No Virgin Mary for me!”33

The Bible was to replace their previous lives. She urged them to put aside all that hindered them. For some, this was family who she said laid threats against the new converts. For others, this was done by burning their Catholic manuals, rosary beads, or what she called amulets. She lauded the cries of “No priest but Jesus, no mediator but Jesus; no purgatory but the fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness.”34 She laughed

32 Phoebe Palmer, *Four Years in the Old World*, 40.
33 Phoebe Palmer, *Four Years in the Old World*, 40.
34 Phoebe Palmer, *Four Years in the Old World*, 47.
at the Catholic priests, who in her words were confounded after they first scoffed at her mission, then blustered and now have lost their tempers, at her revival.

Upon her return to England, she marveled at the relics she encountered of Wesley and other early Methodists. The irony of her veneration was lost on her, but Palmer was as enamored by encountering Mary Fletcher’s New Testament, or an “ancient” copy of Wesley’s hymns, as any Catholic was of their own saints and relics. A few passages later she mocks the church that was under repair, but the walls stood since the time of William the Conqueror, with the bell that rang monks into prayer for over 1200 years. Worse still was the treatment of a chair, owned by the papists, which was believed by many to benefit any who held a piece. Throughout the centuries, many cut away portions to wear around their necks or place under their pillow.

In February of 1860, the Palmers made their way to Glasgow. Her time in Scotland was a difficult one. She was warned ahead of time not to waste her time among the Scots. Too many were connected to the established Church of Scotland, and the prevailing belief was that many could be converted without knowing it. This notion caused Phoebe much angst, as it amounted to a rejection of the Spirit bringing power in the believer’s life. She put this up to a national character “The Scotch, as a people, are theologians; and are remarkable for religious technicalities, and the strength of their prejudices. They are, as a nation, greater adepts in hair-splitting, and making a man an offender for a word, than any people I ever saw. For this they are famed.”35 Phoebe loathed hair-splitting and impious lives masquerading as theology. Most people she said

35 Phoebe Palmer, *Four Years in the Old World*, 93.
only communed quarterly, and were members of churches simply because it was unpopular to not be a church member. People feared eternal repercussions for their children if they were not baptized. The churches would not baptize children if their parents were not members. As such, nearly everyone was a member of a church that they understood very little. The difficulty for Palmer was the real result that they were members of the church without understanding nor experiencing their own conversion. While the success was not as great as Phoebe hoped, there was some measure of accomplishment. One case included the baptism of the Holy Spirit poured out on a local preacher who traveled a great distance to see them.

As time went by, Phoebe’s attraction to the Old World grew. She even considered expanding their missionary journey into France, but was hindered because they did not know French. Phoebe appreciated the cultivated land and the numerous beautiful gardens and common hawthorn fences. She also marveled at the differences between the classes. Nowhere was this more obvious than on the Isle of Wight and Windsor. Both of course were residences of Queen Victoria (d. 1901). Phoebe first encountered the Queen in her marine residence on the Isle. The Queen rode in front of the home she was staying in at the time and the atmosphere was full of life when she was about. The Palmers stay was not the typical camp meeting, but they were there by invitation of Wesleyan societies who wanted to give the Palmers a special blessing.

While on the island, Phoebe took advantage of her proximity to the Queen to present her with a copy of her book Promise of the Father, her latest publication in which the Queen was mentioned. Palmer was unable to hand a copy to the sovereign personally but was told by a private secretary that she received it. Phoebe received a letter thanking
her for the book. A few weeks later Palmer purposed to write the monarch once again; this time it had to do with her own salvation. Phoebe Palmer believed the Queen to be an exemplary leader but feared the accounts of her piety to be overly stated. Palmer wanted to warn her majesty of the sins accompanied by her patronizing of the theater and race courses, not to mention her violation of the Sabbath by cruising on her yacht and having hired musicians to perform for her on the Lord’s Day. Queen Victoria sent no reply concerning the lesson in piety. This resulted in Palmer’s letters to friends back home, stating “As a Queen, she doubtless merits their admiration. But as an experimental Christian, she cannot be regarded, so long as she patronizes the theatre, and the horse race, etc.”

Palmer’s concern for the Queen was intensified when she went to Windsor. Here she held a revival where a number of soldiers and musicians belonging to the Queen’s band attended. At first Palmer was overjoyed at the outpouring of support she had from the Queen’s guards. One of the guards served under four sovereigns of England and professed to pray for the Queen in every room of the palace, including at the foot of the throne. The news was not so joyous from the sanctified musicians. The members of the band who converted to entire sanctification were now faced with a serious dilemma. What were they to do when the queen ordered them perform on the Sabbath? It was from this point that Palmer understood why some called Windsor, Wicked Windsor. Palmer now realized she was called to a valley of dry bones and not a place that favored revival. How could a Christian serve God and the sovereign? This was likened to Daniel

violating the decree and praying to God. The actual consequence of the upcoming performance were not as dour as to be thrown to lions. The Queen was sick on the day of the scheduled performance and it was canceled.

In December of 1860, the Palmers made their way to Oxford. This overjoyed them, as they had an opportunity to see the birthplace of Methodism. Rather quickly their joy turned to despair when they were unable to enter Wesley’s former room. The fellow who had until recently resided in the rooms died shortly before their arrival. As such, the room was closed off. Instead they peered through the window to the room exclaiming, “Wesley’s room, we thought of the mighty blaze now spreading over the earth through the power of that form of Christianity here first developed, and in derision called Methodism, and exclaimed, ‘What hath God wrought!’”37

At this same time Oxford was the birthplace of another movement. This one did not follow Wesley, rather Edward Bouverie Pusey.38 Dr. EB Pusey was one of three founding members of what became known as the Oxford Movement. John Henry Newman (d. 1890) credits the movement’s birth to John Keble’s sermon “National Apostasy,” which he heard on July 14, 1833. Together Pusey, Newman, and Keble (d. 1866) tried to move the Church of England back towards the Catholic Church. This took different forms among the three. Early on the view was to support a very High Church Anglicanism. Unlike Germany or France, England had jurisdictional authority on equal grounds to Rome and Greece. As such, Protestantism was not a necessary step taken by

38 1800-1882.
Henry VIII, rather England should have appealed to this for its autocephalous status. Rome and Canterbury were one with Episcopal tradition, just different in their history, similar to Rome and Constantinople. Newman broke from the other two and converted to Roman Catholicism in 1843. For decades to come, Newman and Pusey wrote works directed against each other, Newman supporting Catholic teachings while still maintaining limits placed on the Pope’s civil authority, and Pusey still uneasy with some issue of doctrine.

Palmer did not understand many of these distinctions and viewed High Church Anglicanism and Puseyism as nearly identical with papism. She called the Bishop of Oxford the pontiff of the Puseyite party, and saw the Church of England as joining hands with Rome. She was especially antagonistic towards Puseyism, as those churches under the sway warned the poor that if they left the Church of England for the Wesleyan camp, their benefactors could cut off aid. Furthermore, she believed that both Pusey and the Pope possessed the Bible, but did not read it or follow it. Largely this was an exaggerated and inaccurate polemic she used, but it was fairly effective. Palmer, far more than Schleiermacher or Kierkegaard, echoed the anti-Catholic fervor of Perkins, Spener, and much of America.

In 1861 the Civil War broke out and Palmer was caught in the middle of it. While safely away from the battle lines, in October a Union vessel intercepted a British ship. This was known as the Trent Affair, and caused quite a scandal for a time. The ship had two Confederate diplomats on it, but it was still a British ship. Hostilities erupted and Phoebe Palmer feared British involvement in the war, as she heard the newsboys cry out “War with America! War with America!” Palmer believed that if the British got involved
it was as a punishment for the sin of slavery. She told everyone she encountered that she
opposed the action that had occurred and could not understand why Lincoln would order
such a thing. Lincoln likely did not order it, and eventually Trent Affair dissipated and
the Palmers continued their mission.

Palmer’s greatest conflict while in England was not with controversy over the
Civil War, Puseyism, Irish Papists, Scottish theologians, or the Monarch, but with
alcohol. English ale, Scotch, and Irish whiskey more than anything else proved to be the
greatest barrier to her holiness message. The greatest conflict came at Poole on the
Dorset. That Sunday they began their services, but then heard rumors on Monday that
the basement of the church was used to store liquor. The man responsible was the
Sunday school superintendent, who just happened to be the owner of the largest liquor
establishment in town. Never before had such an affront faced the Palmers. Not only
was there someone present who drank, but someone who sold alcohol. Even more
appalling, it was stored at the church and they were a respected member of the
congregation. That night Phoebe and Walter prayed and decided to end their time in the
town if the liquor was not put out. The congregation met and the circuit superintendent
met with the Sunday school superintendent and told him to renounce his sin or leave the
church. He took his ales, liquors, and spirits and left the church.

On another occasion the Palmers heard rumors that many in the church drank
alcohol, and others brewed beer. Their suspicions grew when there was an altar call and
no one came forward. Phoebe believed that the only reason why there was not
repentance was because there were those who loved drink more the divinity. She
confronted the congregation, which had many prominent members who imbibed from
time to time and she demanded that they publically renounce all involvement with alcohol. Only a few took the temperance pledge. With such a poor showing, the Palmers left. She told those leaders of the congregation that the blood of those not saved there was on their hands.

At yet another location, Phoebe suspected that the church housed liquors in its cellar but they were not confirmed. Unsure what to do and with no evidence, Palmer attempted to continue her services, but they bore little fruit. Then her fears were confirmed when the church shook with a crash from the basement. They all went outside to see the cause and discovered a man unloading barrels of brew into the basement. Immediately the church repented and the spirits of sin were destroyed. Once this was done salvation poured upon the people.

On October 7, 1863 the Palmers boarded the Steamer City of New York to return to the city by that name. Unsure how long they were to stay, the Palmers now felt called to return home in the middle of the Civil War. Along the return voyage the boat was tossed by the sea and there was fear among some that the steamer would be swallowed up. One passenger fell overboard. As he drifted farther and farther away Palmer prayed that he be saved and if he was saved from the ocean she would labor to save his soul. A lifeboat recovered him, though he remained ill for some time, he lived. Both Walter and Phoebe spoke with him and were encouraged that his soul may be saved. Another passenger died midway from an asthma attack. He was buried at sea with an Anglican service performed by the captain. Palmer found the widow and tried to comfort her. The widow was heartbroken from grief as well as sea-sickness. The Palmers were comforted to hear that the dearly departed was a leader at his Methodist church. When the ship
approached America the sun emerged and the waves calmed. The Palmers disembarked and headed home on the nineteenth.

Overall the four year trek to Britain was a worthwhile endeavor. Palmer did not keep a total estimate of the number of those blessed by her trip, but often recorded how many were saved or sanctified at specific locations. Even with the struggle against the intemperate English, the Palmer’s time in the United Kingdom approached her efforts in America. Given the conditions in America, she was likely more fruitful in the UK than if she stayed home. Throughout the four years, the Palmers were always moving forward to the next camp meeting and often refused to return to places of their previous victories, finding it more beneficial to advance to the next town. After she left, the Methodists continued the work of revival and her holiness message undoubtedly contributed to the Keswick movement that sprung up a decade after the Palmers departed the English shores.

**Back at Home**

“*Surely, God takes our treasure to heaven that our hearts may be there also.*”

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No sooner did Phoebe and Walter cross the threshold of their New York home than a delegation from Allen Street arrived to welcome them. In addition to inquiring as to their trip, they requested that the Palmers hold revival services at Allen Street. Less than two hours passed since they were home and the next revival was scheduled. It was

obvious to both Phoebe and Walter that they were needed in America and their labors would not cease. To this end Walter retired his medical practice. He gave it up temporarily when he sojourned to England and had planned to resume it if and when he returned. It now appeared that he was a full time missionary and not a man of medicine, regardless of what continent he found himself on. The Palmers also did not require his income. The sales of Phoebe’s works supplied them with a constant and substantial living.

In the midst of the Civil War, many common Methodist practices were abandoned. There was no more mourner’s bench for the penitent, and class meetings for the perfection of the saints ceased. Camp meetings, which just began at the turn of the century and had succeeded in America, Canada, and England, became increasingly rare during the War Between the States. At the outbreak of war the American population who were church members was at 25%. The war reduced this and it would not be until 1890 that the numbers rose to that level again.

The Palmer’s Tuesday Meeting continued in her absence in Great Britain. Phoebe resumed her leadership role when she returned, even during the war. When the war eventually ended, Palmer and many of her likeminded Methodists were able to turn their attention to other matters. The evil of slavery, which ripped the country and the denomination apart, was settled. Now other evils could be addressed. For Palmer, this focused on women’s rights and temperance. Others focused on political reform including women’s suffrage, ending polygamy in the Mormon territories, and other pet issues. The number of available causes was seemingly endless.
One matter that gripped Palmer’s Tuesday Meetings attention was the assassination of President Lincoln. While he was not a Methodist, many Methodists placed great hope in him personally and in his presidency. After prayers were offered, and Walter read the 91st Psalm in honor of the departed president, Phoebe spoke on his death. She proclaimed that he was a noble and good man, but she feared that he was not abiding under the shadow of the Almighty, since he went to the theater that night. Phoebe placed the cause of his death on the theater rather than on John Wilkes Booth and his co-conspirators. God would not protect the president during this time of sin. The Almighty would have if he remained at the Whitehouse that night. The consensus at the meeting was “Would that our dear President had not received his death wound in the theater.”\footnote{Richard Wheatley, \textit{The Life and Letters of Mrs. Phoebe Palmer}, 60.} The location of his immortal soul was questioned. Shortly after Lincoln’s death, his body was brought around the country. When it made its way from Philadelphia to New York, the Palmers, along with tens of thousands of others, went to City Hall to look upon his remains and pay their respects. To avoid the crowds they went at midnight.

A year before Lincoln’s assassination, the Palmers decided to purchase \textit{The Guide to Holiness}. \textit{The Guide} was founded in 1839 by Timothy Merritt. Initially the magazine was known as \textit{The Guide to Christian Perfection}. Shortly after the Palmers purchased it, they renamed it. Merritt was the editor of the \textit{New York Christian Advocate and Journal} until the Palmers convinced him to start his own magazine. Merritt was also one of the first men to attend the Tuesday Meeting, and his relationship with the Palmers was a long and healthy one. The magazine suffered as most did during the Civil War. Two
problems existed. The first was with the country torn in two, the logistics of fulfilling circulations ranged from difficult to impossible. Second most people simply lacked the ability, funds, or desire to read a subscription. Walter and Phoebe saw beyond the current subscription to its former glory and its future potential when the war concluded. The Palmers paid $13,000 for the magazine. This was one dollar for every name on the subscription list. By most accounts, this was a generous price, since of the 13,000 on the list, less than 7,000 actually paid for their subscriptions and the price of paper was skyrocketing. Paper tripled in price over the next decade.

Phoebe took over as the managing editor. By 1870 it was the largest religious journal in America with 37,000 paying subscribers. This was done through wise business practices as much as a thirst for the publication. Around this same time the Palmers also purchased Beauty of Holiness and Sabbath Miscellany from Reverend and Mrs. French in Cincinnati. They merged the magazines. By doing so, they essentially purchased the major holiness magazines, eliminating all competition, and adding subscribers. They also kept the price of the publication down. When the price of paper rose, most magazines had no choice but to raise the price of their publications. The Palmers chose to raise the price of their magazine only a quarter compared to most people doubling it, making their publication cost two dollars a year. The Guide was also reduced in size, it went from 32 pages to only 24.

The business practices worked rather well. Most magazines in the United States only lasted four years. Under Phoebe’s leadership The Guide not only survived but more than doubled its circulation and sustained that growth through the rest of her life. Phoebe also redesigned the cover of the magazine and added some ornamentation instead of
The new name also served to prioritize a shift in her own message since the magazine founding in 1839. Christian perfection was now identified simply as holiness. The new name was also a marketing ploy, Christian perfection was a very Methodist idea. That reduced others who were interested in the interdenominational Holiness Movement. By calling it holiness, it appealed to more Protestants who were inclined toward perfection, rather than simply Methodists. Phoebe argued “Holiness is not sectarian but Christian.”

Acquiring The Guide was a perfect fit for Palmer. The magazine was essentially a short form version of most of her books, camp meetings, and Tuesday Meetings. Throughout all of these enterprises the common thread was personal testimonies. Palmer’s greatest skill was in advancing her notion of holiness by using other people as the example.

The very year after they returned from England, even during the last years of the Civil War, the Palmers went out on revival tours. Most of the camp meetings were closed, but this did not stop the Palmers from setting up their own throughout New York, Massachusetts, Iowa, and Canada. Two years after the Civil War concluded the holiness camps resumed in full capacity. In 1867 the National Camp Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness was founded. The National Camp Meeting was opposed to the bourgeois Methodism that dominated Methodist churches over the second half of the century. Eventually the camps fell under the same temptations as Methodism did, and succumbed to a similar gentrified state.

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41 George Hughes, *Fragrant Memories of the Tuesday Meeting and Guide to Holiness*, 174.
Palmer’s involvement with revival and camp meetings was always more dynamic than most. Her focus was always on holding a believing meeting rather than simply an inquiry meeting. Most camp speakers simply probed the visitors with an idea that a sanctified life existed and would be better than not. Phoebe was direct with people and pushed them towards a moment of decision. One example, not surprisingly, centered on an alcoholic. Following one meeting, a man who Palmer identifies as clearly inebriated, was observing her. She confronted the man and asked him if he would trust in God and give up his addiction to strong drink. At first he said nothing. Then Palmer forcibly challenged him, “Will you not resolve, in the strength of the Lord, that you will never taste another drop of liquor?” He still remained silent but staring at her. Undeterred she examined him again, the she told him she wanted to pray for his inebriated soul, that the Lord would strengthen him, but only if he relented. He did and finally spoke, and in a firm voice proclaimed “In the strength of the Lord, I will!” The drunk’s wife came from the shadows and they wept together. Palmer’s focus on the societal ills resembles Francke’s involvement in reforming Glaucha, as mentioned in chapter three. Both expected that a preacher’s persistence could overcome the staunchest sinner, if the Lord called them to the work.

Palmer was far more direct than most speakers. The style most adopted was that of the pilgrim. They borrowed as heavily from John Bunyan’s Pilgrim's Progress, as they did the Bible. Bunyan’s use of the pilgrim crossing into Beulah Land, was a common trope. Hymns were written with this phrase and Beulah was synonymous with

Eden, the Promised Land, paradise, and heaven. It worked well with the notion of holiness, and finally arriving at a place of total sanctification. The main problem with this was that the Beulah pilgrim metaphor was not one the uninitiated was always familiar with. While it played well with the converted, for the uninitiated it meant nothing. Palmer’s direct calling was understandable and touched people without relying upon a lost metaphor.

While Palmer continued her revivals and camp meetings, before the National Camp Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness was founded, 1867 was the first year that she traveled much outside of their familiar Northeast territories she was accustomed to. Beginning in 1867 she decided to head down the Mississippi and see if the Southern Methodists would receive her messages as well as those in the North. In all she attended 22 different meetings that year. At the very beginning of the journey she traveled to Leavenworth and Kansas City to see if the West may hold out promises for holiness. She was well received in Kansas. Palmer’s presence in Kansas will prove to bear lasting fruit with the birth of Pentecostalism in Topeka in 1900, as will be addressed in chapter twelve.

Palmer then headed East back to St. Louis and down the Mississippi to New Orleans. The trip South was largely a failure. During the era of Reconstruction, northern emigres were not looked fondly on, even if they brought with them a message they agreed with. They found that among the Southern Blacks they had greater success than with the Whites. Palmer was surprised at the level of giving that the black congregation offered to build a large sanctuary and a school. The congregation of mostly former slaves were more than willing to offer the little they had to the Lord. A large reason for the
willingness to give was the school that was attached to the church. The promise of an education excited them.

With the South mostly closed to her message, Palmer spent the next few years only attending meetings in the Northeast, occasionally going to Illinois or Iowa, and once in 1869 as far West as St Johns Nebraska, but she never traveled to the South again. In 1870 she decided to go west again. This year she stopped off at Leavenworth, Kansas again, partly because of the success she had there in 1867. From there she traveled to Sacramento then six other cities in Northern California. Her trip to California was accompanied by a dozen other National Association workers, who planned on settling in California. They brought a 4000 seat tent with them to Sacramento, and despite some protests they had a peaceful meeting where more than 200 professed entire sanctification. Beyond the numbers, Palmer describes her time in Sacramento as lasting two weeks where “All unite in saying that such a meeting was never before known in California. We are now holding afternoon and evening meetings in this city, which are largely attended, and the altar is nightly surrounded with penitents and seekers of the great salvation.”

From Sacramento they made a tour of the San Francisco bay area. Palmer styled San Francisco as an international city. On the way back from California, Palmer stopped in Utah. No meeting was held, but after gathering with some Mormon women, she roundly condemned Mormonism and the practice of polygamy. From here she went by Oberlin and stayed with Finney. Phoebe continued preaching at camp meetings until her death in 1874. In total she preached at over a hundred and forty different meetings and

43 Phoebe Palmer, Sources of American Spirituality Phoebe Palmer: Selected Writings, 302.
revivals after her return from England in 1863. Not only was Palmer’s preaching style more effective than others, so too was her generosity while traveling. She often did not receive any pay for her appearances and gave the money back when it was offered. The sales from her books and The Guide provided Phoebe and Walter a very nice living. She also did not use these meetings as an opportunity to sell her books or sign people up for subscriptions. Others did not always follow her example in these regards.

Death

“Only one thing more, and that is the last enemy, Death.”

Phoebe Palmer died at the age of 67, but she believed she was going to die much earlier. In 1846 when she fell ill, she was convinced that her life was over. It was partly due to her recovery that she was determined to labor so much until the time of her death. When death eventually came on November 2, 1874, she was well aware that it was finally at an end. That morning she had one last mystical vision while she slept. When she awoke, she told her sister and her husband that she saw a chariot come for her. She proclaimed “She said shortly, Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ. O death, where is thy sting; O grave, where is thy victory! ” and then repeated the doxology— Glory be to the Father, glory be to the Son, and glory be to the Holy Ghost. Amen.” Following a quick quiver at 2:30 in the afternoon she breathed her last and died in Walter’s arms.


After Phoebe’s death, Walter continued her work as editor of *The Guide*. The family helped as well. Sarah took much of the responsibility for the magazine. Sarah Lankford then married Walter Palmer sixteen months after Phoebe’s death, on March 18, 1776. Thomas Lankford died three years earlier. Walter and Sarah were married for seven years before Walter died on July 20, 1883. Sarah Lankford Palmer died on April 24, 1896. *The Guide* continued until 1901.

For those last twenty seven years *The Guide* was really a family magazine. Dr. Foster, the son-in-law who married Sarah Palmer, was the assistant editor under Walter and Sarah, and took over the magazine until his death in 1898. Phoebe Palmer Knapp, in addition to writing hymns, was rather involved in holiness camp meetings and after her husband died in 1891 she used some of her $50,000 annuity to keep *The Guide* afloat when its circulation dropped off. Walter Clarke Palmer, Jr. was involved in publishing, and it was his company that published many of his mother’s books. He likely would have taken over *The Guide* if he did not die in 1885 just two years after his father.

Phoebe Palmer’s life serves as a synthesis of Wesleyan Pietism and America. Palmer took advantage of her wealth and the technological advancements of the time to spread her message across of all America and the United Kingdom. The Promethean spirituality encouraged by Francke is best exemplified with the constant toil of Palmer. While she encountered different perspectives on life, she remained true to her Methodist upbringing and maintained her status as an outsider. While her gender could have limited her ability to spread her Pietist message, she built upon the egalitarian themes in Zinzendorf and Wesley to overcome this obstacle. She also used their theological systems and constructed her own theology which worked to clarify and expand Wesley’s
notion of Christian perfection. Palmer’s interpretation became the center point of her theology and the motivation for her Tuesday meetings, camp meetings, and extensive travels.
CHAPTER 11
THE ANGLICAN THEOLOGY OF PALMER

“I love my Jesus, yes, I do, O! glory, hallelujah!
I know my Jesus loves me too; O! glory,
hallelujah!”

Schleiermacher was a systematic theologian, Kierkegaard an unsystematic theologian, and Palmer’s theology emerged organically. Her theology can best be described as pastoral and devotional. Phoebe Palmer never sat down to create a cohesive overarching theological concept as Schleiermacher did. Kierkegaard wrestled with his conception of God and how he fit into God’s plan of salvation. Palmer did not wrestle. Following July 26, 1827, Phoebe Palmer never doubted anything concerning matters of faith. At least she never expressed doubt and condemned those who did.

**Palmer’s Devotional Theology**

“*Thus by Thy presence sanctify. This earthly sanctuary, Lord.*”

Palmer developed a theological system to eliminate doubt and to encourage an active, evangelical, and complete faith. Since her system was narrowly focused and intended to be received by the masses, her theology is nowhere near as complex as Schleiermacher’s, nor as difficult to understand as Kierkegaard’s. Palmer condemns the value of emotions in religion, still religion is experiential for Palmer. Palmer reduced the


2 Phoebe Palmer, *Sources of American Spirituality Phoebe Palmer*, 298
worth of feelings as they relate to religion, but her theological works were designed to produce an emotional and experiential connection to God. Palmer serves as an interesting juxtaposition against Schleiermacher and to a lesser degree Kierkegaard, who elevated the role of feelings as the basis of theology and then developed a theology around that experience, but did so without inducing that emotional theological experience. Palmer’s basic theological message, described as the shorter way or her Altar Theology, runs throughout nearly all of her works. Each work relays her theology of conversion and hope in the lives of different people. Palmer’s theology relates the value of a devotional and pastoral approach of the divine, and seeks to express the experience and entice others to share in that experience, more than explaining what the experience is in theological language, as do Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher.

**The Shorter Way - Altar Theology.**

"Lord, if on Thee I dare believe, The faith shall bring the power."  

Palmer’s basic theological message concerns holiness or Christian perfection. The notion of holiness was present throughout the history of Christianity. What holiness means varied greatly through the ages. As mentioned earlier in chapters one and two Thomas à Kempis, Johann Tauler, and Johann Arndt all possessed an idea of holiness that related to a state of perfection. Though for à Kempis this was never a state arrived at before death. For Tauler perfection is abandoning all things that are not of God, and for Arndt it was only a denial of will. Neither à Kempis, Tauler, nor Arndt applied the

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notion of holiness and perfection to be anything more than a moment where sin did not hinder the Christian’s devotion. It was a moment where worship was pure, and it was never complete.

John Wesley challenged this understanding of perfection and developed his own doctrine concerning the matter. Wesley wrote extensively on the subject, but always with enough ambiguity to leave the doctrine incomplete. As mentioned in chapter four, Wesley’s doctrine of Christian perfection grew from his belief that Christians simply could not sin, therefore they needed to be perfect or they were not Christians. The standard and the actuality in no way resembled one another, therefore Wesley wrestled with this idea, often confusing notions of justification and sanctification, equating them, or reversing their order as generally understood. Wesley’s notion of perfection did not include angelic, nor Adamic perfection. It also excluded perfection in wisdom and there was no notion of permanence. Perfection was a state of total and complete sinlessness, but one could lose perfection and thus salvation by sinning. The problem with his doctrine was that Wesley tried to elevate perfection beyond the ideas held by à Kempis, Tauler, and Arndt, while still wanting to accept notions of freedom of the will and the limitations of that will. Essentially Wesley’s theology of perfection needed to be taken on faith by his followers, as its development was confused and logically inconsistent because he wanted perfection to be complete, yet allow Christians the freedom to reject perfection once attained.

It was Wesley’s works on Christian perfection which first captivated a fifteen year old Phoebe Palmer. From this moment she equated her Methodist Episcopal identity with this at best, inconsistent and incomplete teaching. Palmer’s central theological
contribution was to develop and complete Wesley’s theology. She did so by removing the ecclesial and theological limitations that Wesley sought to maintain. Those limitations sprung from Wesley’s desire to remain within the Anglican Church and appealed to the theological and philosophical trends of the day. Since Palmer was born in America sixteen years after Wesley’s death, those limitations did not apply to her, and she had no desire to be united with the Anglican Church, or its teachings. Palmer remained within the Anglican tradition, as interpreted by Wesley, but not as a member of the denomination as it stood in nineteenth-century America.

Palmer also did not develop her interpretation of perfection in a vacuum. Phoebe was influenced by her sister Sarah and her husband Walter. They were influenced through the already emerging Holiness Movement with leaders like Timothy Merritt, Charles Finney, and the Oberlin faculty. Merritt published The Christian’s Manual; a Treatise on Christian Perfection, with Directions for Obtaining That State, in 1825. The book contains little more than a summary of Wesley’s view of perfection and a few examples of how to live in perfection. It was later that he came under the influence of Palmer and her Holiness Movement.

In a similar fashion, Finney and Palmer influenced one another. Finney is often called the Father of the Holiness Movement, and Palmer its Mother. It was really the combined effort of the two that produced the movement as a whole, especially due to the fact that Finney was not a Methodist, but a Presbyterian. This interdenominational emphasis on Wesley’s interpretation of perfection is what allowed for the movements success throughout the United States and the United Kingdom. Finney and Asa Mahan (d. 1889), the president of Oberlin College, began examining the doctrine of holiness a
few months before Palmer’s second conversion. Mahan was influenced by a student, who asked him what sort of sanctification the Christian should expect, partial or whole. Mahan turned to his theology professor Finney and the two then came up with their version of Christian perfection. Mahan published *The Scripture Doctrine of Christian Perfection* in 1839. Mahan defined Christian perfection as “the consecration of our whole being to Christ and perpetual employment of all our powers in that service.” It is the assimilation of the Christian’s character to Christ at all times and under all circumstances. Mahan describes this more as a goal than something easily attained, although he does believe that it is attainable and should be attained by every Christian. The focus of Mahan’s perfection was moral in character. He was influenced by Kant, and the concept of moral agency connected to free will.

Finney adapted Mahan’s notion of perfection and popularized the Oberlin position. Greater detail will be spent on Finney in the next chapter, but essentially Finney combined Mahan’s simplicity of moral action with a Presbyterian notion of freedom. Finney rejected the notion of indwelling sin as the basic disposition of the heart, therefore the Christian was free to choose not to sin. Part of Wesley’s complicated theology on perfection was due to Wesley holding the opposite position than Finney. Finney, believing in a unity of moral action, argued that the mind could only choose one ultimate end. If that ultimate end is Christ and perfection, then it cannot simultaneously hold sin as the ultimate end. All individual acts and proximate ends should line up with

the ultimate end. Therefore full obedience is possible, since sin is not a separate consciousness struggling with its own ultimate ends. The existence of sin is only an act that is in conflict with the ultimate end for a Christian, therefore it can be eliminated, resulting in perfection. Finney’s notion of perfection is a continued abiding and obedience to God in a very similar way to à Kempis, Tauler, and Arndt. Finney argues that this change can be instantaneous because the ultimate end can be determined in an instant and God’s grace permits it within a Calvinist system.

Palmer’s concept of Christian perfection was more Wesleyan than Oberlin. Palmer’s concept of perfection falls under her concept of the shorter way, which includes full consecration, or her Altar Theology. There are three essential steps to Palmer’s shorter way. The first is the altar, the second, faith that the act was done, and finally testimony. The entire shorter way is subsumed under the idea of the Christian altar. For Palmer this is not an altar were the Eucharistic sacrament is performed. There is no separate priest that ministers at the altar either. For Palmer the altar is Christ. Christ is not laid upon the altar, or transubstantiated over it, but he is the altar. The Christian is the gift. The Christian must figuratively lay themselves upon the altar of Christ. Palmer asserts, “We have an altar. This altar is Christ. His blood is the purifying medium.”5 With Christ as the altar, anything that touches Christ is automatically made holy. God made Christ the altar and commands the Christian to come to it by faith. The Christian is to be a living sacrifice, laying their entire being upon the altar. This is an act

of faith and an act of surrendering ones will to Christ. Under the old covenant the animal placed upon the altar is sacrificed. Therefore the Christian presenting themselves on the altar is sacrificing their will. In this act they receive Christ’s will and Christ’s holiness is swapped for theirs.

This act of faith is based upon Christ’s declaration in Matthew, where he asks “For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?” Palmer interprets this by saying that anything that touches the altar is automatically sanctified. She adds another link to Perkin’s *Golden Chain*, between sanctification and glorification lies entire sanctification. Palmer proclaims, “The moment you laid it upon the altar, it became God’s property, for it was sanctified by virtue of the altar upon which you laid it. No great venture of faith is called for here. God’s word declares it, and it were presumption to doubt. And, now that your offering is on the altar, sanctified and cleansed by the infinite virtue there is in Christ, upon whom you rest, and through whose all-cleansing blood you are presented faultless before the throne, expect the consuming process to begin.”

Once the self has been offered on the altar which is Christ, the Christian must now believe that they are sanctified. Faith in the completed act of sanctification is the second step. In the same moment as the offertory act, the Christian must believe that they are sanctified. Borrowing language from John Fletcher (d. 1785) and Hester Ann Rogers (d.

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6 Matthew 23:19.

1794), Palmer declares that this is a “naked faith in a naked promise.”8 One does not wait for the witness of the Holy Spirit or for a feeling, rather all is based upon trust in the sanctifying act of the altar sacrifice. It is from faith that this blessing is gained. Palmer’s conception of faith is similar to those of other experiential Protestants, with the exception that she connects it within her theological system.

Faith is an act of hope. As her starting point, Palmer quotes Hebrews, “Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.”9 In Sanctification Practical she tells a story of a man who is hungry and is invited to come to someone’s house to eat. The hungry man gets up and walks towards the house of the promised food. “You desire food, and, by virtue of your faith in the promise, you expect food; and hence, as hope is made up of desire and expectation, you now hope to obtain food. Now you comply with the condition. You go with the man; and, as you go, you just as much expect to find and eat the food, as you expect to reach the house.”10 Palmer also likens faith to a banknote. If someone offers a gift of hundred dollars and presents a banknote to that effect, the recipient does not deny its worth. Rather the note has value because of the promise that it contains. The note has value because of the bank, just as salvation has a value because of Christ proclaiming it so.

To this end Palmer argues that faith in complete salvation is reasonable. It is as reasonable as believing a banknote has value or that a generous man is offering food to

8 Phoebe Palmer, Sources of American Spirituality Phoebe Palmer: Selected Writings, 120.
9 Hebrews 11:1.
the hungry. Both can turn out to be false, the man may not have any food and the note
may belong to a bank that has no funds, but in the absence of contrary evidence it is not
unreasonable to believe the affirmative. Since Palmer believes that God is the one who
promises holiness, faith in holiness is reasonable. “Faith is taking God at his word,
relying unwaveringly upon his truth. The nature of the truth believed, whether joyous or
otherwise, will necessarily produce corresponding feeling. Yet, faith and feeling are two
distinct objects, though so nearly allied.”¹¹

During one of her Tuesday Meetings, Palmer was confronted by a man she calls
Brother C. Brother C doubted the reasonableness of the shorter way to entire
sanctification while still believing that God desires a holy life. Palmer responds by
asking Brother C a series of questions. The first, if he knew he was going to die in two
minutes what would he do. Brother C immediately responded that he would
himself on the infinite mercies of God. From here a few more questions led Brother C to
admit that he believed doing so would save him from all sin. Palmer concludes “What!
Without any more conviction exclaimed his friend. At this point, he manifested much
emotion, and, amid tears and smiles, exclaimed, sister, you have cornered me!”¹² Since
God would save with only two minutes’ worth of faith and repentance why should it
require more if he was to live longer? In a similar fashion Palmer, when confronted
about the possibility of living a sinless life, once asked if a man can go a minute without
sinning. When the answer was in the affirmative, she then asked about two minutes, or a


¹² Phoebe Palmer, *Incidental Illustrations of the Economy of Salvation, its Doctrines and Duties* (Toronto:
day. If both could happen, then what is to stop from continuing for a lifetime. Palmer often extrapolated from a small moment to a larger one to prove her notions of faith.

For Palmer, faith is reasonable, but faith is not a matter of the intellect. She explicitly states “Satan tempts you that your faith is a mere intellectual effort, and not that faith which is through the operation of the Spirit.” Faith still contains some mystery and not a sense of omnipotence on behalf of the Christian. It is an act of trust, not reason. Palmer’s conception of faith and her Altar Theology slightly resembles Tauler’s notion of the new man. A glaring difference lies in the fact that Tauler and the Pietists such as Arndt and Spener, who followed after him, advocated that the new man addressed a positional righteousness and the foundation of the relationship with Christ and did not possess any notion of a sinless perfection attached to it.

Palmer applies the same notions of trust to faith as she does feelings. Phoebe Palmer was always troubled by feelings. Unlike Schleiermacher, who saved religion from the Enlightenment by calling it feeling, Palmer saved her notion of faith by declaring that feelings are the likely effects of faith; they should not affect faith. Explicitly and plainly, she declares over and over again, “Remember faith is not feeling. You are not saved by feeling, but by faith.” Even her own act of conversion began with her concluding that, “Whatever my feelings may be, I will believe God’s immutable


Word unwaveringly, irrespective of emotion.”15 Still she maintains that “There is joy in faith.”16 This joy does not save but comes from the knowledge that one is saved. Even if no emotions come, or if emotions are contrary to those expected, faith requires acceptance of one’s salvation.

In addition to acceptance, one must understand the relation between faith and action. Another example Palmer gives to explain faith is a father telling a child to jump into his awaiting arms. The child must jump, just as the starving man needed to accept the invitation, and the recipient must go to the bank. Faith always requires an action and but is itself not the action. Palmer often criticized Catholics and other Protestants for what she believed was equating actions with faith. Palmer proclaimed “Fasting, prayers, and tears, are all good, and all helpful; but they will not take the place of saying faith. One act of faith can raise the dead to life, and can do more for us than twenty years of groans and tears without it. Without faith, it is impossible to please God.”17 Palmer also did regularly fast and perform similar acts of self-denial to build her faith, but she emphasized that these were not done in order to save, but because she was saved.

The necessity of actions as a result of faith is the third step in Palmers’ shorter way. The sanctified Christian must testify publicly about their salvation. If they do not then it can be lost. Proclaiming their own salvation gives honor to Christ. Therefore to not share in the good news of their sanctification withholds this honor. To remain silent


17 Phoebe Palmer, Incidental Illustrations of the Economy of Salvation, its Doctrines and Duties, 92.
is a sin and an act of rebellion from the very God who just saved you, illustrating that the faith was false and they were never truly placed upon the altar, or if so, that some part was withheld. God grants the blessing of sanctification not for the believer’s enjoyment alone, but for all who hear and accept this avenue of salvation.

Just like Wesley, Palmer believes that perfection can be lost. The primary way that sanctification is lost for Palmer is the rejection of this third step. Palmer points out that John Fletcher lost his entire sanctification five times, all due to his lack of giving testimony. But one can lose their sanctified status in other ways as well. If one abandons faith, then the blessing of sanctification can be lost. This faith is actively remaining on the altar. One must continually rely upon Christ for their salvation. Palmer calls this walking by faith, rather than sight. Doubt is not acceptable.

Doubt is a temptation that must be wrestled out of the Christians life. In her journals shortly before her death, Palmer proclaims, “It has been many years since I remember to have had a temptation to doubt. Well do I, as a daughter of the Lord Almighty, remember the baptism of fire that fell upon me.”18 Palmer asserts that “Unbelief is the great sin of the world, but who can tell how varied its forms.”19 Unbelief is a temptation that only faith can fight against. One must first trust in Christ and then look to the effects of faith. The effects of faith are primarily love and a pure heart. One must assume that looking towards the effects of faith is still walking by faith rather than sight.

Doubt has another danger. This danger exists for those who have not yet received entire sanctification. Palmer argues that once Christ has offered himself, the response must be immediate, just as it was with the disciples who Jesus called. Peter, James, and John dropped their nets and followed Jesus. Matthew left his tax collecting table. When Christ calls, it may be only once. Palmer posits one should not assume “that He will ever again call you.” This was also a technique Palmer used in her preaching. She presented the promise of salvation, but pointed out that it may not come again. Palmer’s preaching style was personal and always pushed towards action.

Palmer spoke at so many different revivals and camp meetings that she developed quite a routine. Generally she spoke for twenty minutes, but sometimes her messages lasted an hour. Most revivals were multiple day events, so the first day she usually addressed Pentecost and the events that unfolded on that day that birthed the church, and many were baptized with the Holy Spirit. Following this, the subsequent nights expanded on the concepts of full baptism. She argued that once Christians were baptized with the Holy Spirit, the world would be convinced. What was needed was for Christians to take that next step of entire consecration, faith, and testimony.

Palmer also wanted people to make a decision quickly. One reason why the shorter way is shorter is because it is accessible and easy to apply. There were no catechumen classes, but an immediate call to action. She had a few added techniques to encourage decisions. First she used group pressure whenever possible. She also understood some other notions of group psychology. She encouraged everyone to stand

\[\text{20 Phoebe Palmer, Incidental Illustrations of the Economy of Salvation, its Doctrines and Duties, 14-15.}\]
up to present themselves as candidates. She knew that once someone was standing they were more likely to come forward then if they remained sitting. Also if they alone were standing the pressure of those around made them feel obliged to make a decision.

Palmer’s preaching was effective. Another reason for her effectiveness was that unlike other revivals, she emphasized lay ministry. This created larger networks to keep the newly sanctified, sanctified. While most nineteenth-century Methodists were abandoning lay ministry and local pastors, Palmer utilized them to the same effectiveness that circuit riders had decades earlier. What is particularly interesting about Palmer’s place in American Methodist history was that she witnessed the boom and the decline, the institutionalization of Methodism and its failings. As such, she differentiated herself from the elites whose calcified version was growing. Palmer maintained Methodism through her holiness message and the lifeblood of Methodism, the laity, and plain speaking revivals. Finney recognized the same pitfalls and spoke of the value of the laity, but Palmer was really the first to organize the laity effectively during a revival.

Now that her evangelical revivalist message was delivered, Palmer needed to make sure that doubt had been wrestled away and the Christian had laid their entire lives upon Christ. The faith that Christ’s work to sanctify them has been accomplished. Following the various testimonies proclaimed, the newly holy were entirely sanctified. Palmer clarifies what holiness is, just as Wesley does. In its simplest form, holiness is heaven on earth. It is full salvation and living in the kingdom of God, where the believer has their heart and lives within Christ and becomes the image of Christ on earth. Holiness implies a duty to others and purity of their own soul. Knowledge of one’s own soul is never attainable, nor does the perfect Christian have perfect knowledge. Similarly
to Wesley, the Christian is also not in a state of Adamic or angelic perfection. Temptations still exist, but they are not victorious. Perfection is love of God, love of neighbor and deliverance from sin. Humanities nature is not destroyed in perfection, rather the depravity of man is. Holiness is freedom from sin, but not its infirmities.

It is from this last point that Palmer would disagree with the notions of faith healing which emerged at the conclusion of the nineteenth century. The Holiness Movement of which Palmer was a significant part was never a single thing. Portions of the movement advocated ‘faith cures’ in the same manner that Palmer presented the shorter way to salvation. Those who advocate faith cures rely upon faith to save through consecrating themselves to Christ. They are then to act as if they are healed without external proof to the contrary. Palmer would have opposed this practice, but not denied the possibility that God may choose to save some from their physical injuries. The notion of faith healing never entered Walter’s medical practice, and Phoebe Palmer never criticized her husband’s practice. Both Phoebe and Walter believed practicing medicine was an excellent way to serve God.

Palmer did not advocate for a healed body but a healed soul. This healed soul also became known as the second blessing. This second blessing was a blessing of the Holy Spirit and is sometimes called the baptism of the Holy Spirit, a second baptism, a baptism of fire, or full baptism. In this full baptism, the Christian receives power in their salvation. This power combats the spiritual struggles and presents a holy life as attainable. The second baptism is not simply a recommitment to Christ, it is a separate act. The imagery of Pentecost is used. The disciples were justified prior to the day of
Pentecost due to Christ’s atonement. On the day of Pentecost they received the Holy Spirit and were sanctified. They also possessed power to heal and to speak in tongues.

With the second blessing, the Christian is now perfect but this perfection does not signal completion. A tree may be described as perfect in every way; it is the perfect example of what it should be. Still, the following year it will be larger, it will have grown. Similarly Palmer points out that a child may learn how to read perfectly, but having learned how to read does not result in them no longer reading. Rather, once they have perfectly learned how to read, they only then truly begin to read. Perfection is the beginning point, not the conclusion.

This is far more than a subsequent conversion. When Phoebe Palmer experienced her second conversion, it was a leap of naked faith into a different type of Christian life. This was not the same thing as a simple recommitment of her life to Christ. It was also radically different than the second conversion experiences of Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Schleiermacher. Both Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher’s second conversion experiences were acts of repentance and dedication. Neither expected that it meant their own perfection or was a second spiritual baptism. Both rejected Wesley’s theology which Palmer’s understanding grew from. Since the understanding of the act differed, so too were the expected effects. Surprisingly, none of them believed the Calvinist notion of once saved always saved. Palmer, Kierkegaard, and Schleiermacher all believed that salvation was constant work, but only Palmer believed that it could be complete and affirmed through entire sanctification.

Palmer’s second blessing must always be understood as a separate act that takes place after conversion. Palmer points to her own experience to prove it. “My experience
continually attests the truth of the assertion, that the life of the believer is a heaven below. The divine tranquility; the deepened communion with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; and the accompanying increase of love, faith, light, and humility." Palmer affirms her beliefs through her own experiences. This is also something attainable for everyone.

Palmer’s conception of Christian perfection differs from Wesley’s primarily in its simplicity. Wesley was conflicted, at times Wesley appeared to suggest that he was perfect, and other times he clearly states the opposite. Wesley also confused the concepts of justification and sanctification, and gave no clear instruction as to how one remains perfect if indeed they attain perfection. Palmer’s shorter way and Altar Theology is simple. For Palmer, entire sanctification is a separate request, rather than simple assent to the notions that Jesus is the messiah and the source of salvation. It is faith and a desire to be holy, and wholly given over to Christ. While it can be lost, Palmer posits that one must simply return to the shorter way once again.

**Feminist Theology.**

“Not she with traitorous kiss her Savior stung; Not she denied him with unholy tongue: She, while apostles shrank, could danger brave, Last at his cross, and earliest at his grave.”

Palmer’s second significant theological contribution concerned the role of women and feminist theology. Palmer’s feminist theology was simultaneously countercultural and consistent within Pietism, especially among followers of Wesley. For most of

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nineteenth-century American life, women were relegated to a separate sphere. Gender relations were distinct and possessed a rigid gendered division of labor, especially in the antebellum North. This division of labor gave women primacy over the domestic sphere, while men controlled nearly everything else. Church life was an interesting area, where women were celebrated for superior virtue and piety, while isolated from many of the positions that virtue and piety were naturally inclined to adopt. In the South, the Northern feminine archetype was largely absent, with the notable exception of the power elites. Those women outside of the patriarchal circles of plantation life enjoyed a greater degree of freedom in domestic and other relations.

Palmer’s feminism focused on women’s participation in the church. As such, her inherited Pietist history was vitally important in her construction of a feminist theology. Pietism, from the time of Spener, privileged women to a greater extent than their scholastic counterparts. Women were included in the various collegia. Women’s admittance into these small groups, whose purpose was to grow in their Christian lives through pious living and understanding the scriptures, led to widespread fears of educated women in eighteenth-century Prussia. The fears were well founded, as the same women involved in Francke’s friend Johann Caspar Schade’s collegia, eventually were the first women to enter German universities. The Pietist collegia directly led to women’s involvement in the academic world. Earlier chapters have already mentioned the role women played within Spener’s early years, as well as in Zinzendorf’s Herrnhut and Herrnhaag.

Most important for Palmer was Wesley’s view of Christian women. As mentioned in chapter four, both John and Charles Wesley were personally very attractive
to women converts and followers. John Wesley’s connection with some of his acolytes even led his wife and others to conclude he had a series of affairs. While the affairs were never confirmed, Wesley’s extra time spent with Sarah Crosby unequivocally led to her prominent position within Wesley’s inner circle. In 1761, Crosby led classes in London and was sent to teach other classes as well. This included mixed classes, where she not only instructed men and women in the faith, but gave sermons as well, though Wesley advised her sermons not resemble the traditional sermon in construction. Wesley had long seen the necessity of lay preachers, so non-ordained women preaching was not much of a step. Lay preachers were necessary, and since the majority of Methodists in the UK and US were women, having women teach seemed reasonable, especially in the contexts of Sunday school classes, bandleaders, and those in the medical field, including nurses and visitors of the sick.

Early nineteenth-century America was filled with women preachers who spread Methodism and other forms of Protestantism. There were over 100 itinerant female preachers active during the first half of the century, and roughly a quarter of them were Methodists. Following Crosby’s example, women’s preaching styles differed from men. The feminine style was often more successful in generating converts. Women generally had a calm demeanor that carried over in their preaching. This demeanor presented an air of refinement and intellectualism, even if their message was the same as a man’s. The success of women preachers in the early nineteenth century is similar to IM Lewis’s treatment of women in East Africa and the sar possession. Lewis points out that women found a culturally acceptable medium to voice their grievances, arguing that “Women may thus resort to spirit possession as a means both of airing their grievances obliquely,
and of gaining some satisfaction.”23 While no Methodist women were ordained to speak at this point, their commission to speak was accepted and their concerns were heard, both those concerning salvation as well as temperance and increasingly suffrage. Palmer’s lay preaching, as well as her mystical dreams, follow a very similar pattern.

After a decade of preaching, Palmer wrote The Promise of the Father: A Neglected Specialty of the Last Days, in 1859. This work spells out her concerns for women in the nineteenth century. Palmer concerns herself with three distinct areas in this, her largest work. First Palmer seeks to elevate the position of women, which she believes was demeaned during the first half of the century. Second, she wants to address the prohibition against women preaching. This is the bulk of the work and she points to examples of prominent women in the Bible and Christian tradition. Special attention is paid to the role women played during Pentecost. Finally she tries to understand Paul’s command for women to keep silent in the church.24

The work opens with Palmer pointing out that she does not intend on addressing “‘Women’s Rights’ or of ‘Women’s Preaching,’ technically so called.”25 Rather she confirms that women have a legitimate sphere of action which differs from that of a man, a sphere she maintains that leads women to be both happy and useful. Palmer’s initial concession to different spheres and her desire to not directly address ordination are intended to halt immediate objections to her work. She goes on in the next four hundred

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24 I Corinthians 14:34.

or so pages to illustrate how the separate spheres, as well as the blanket ban on women’s ordination from all ecclesial positions, do not stand up against reason, history, or Biblical criticism. It is interesting that in this work Palmer utilizes these techniques which are absent from all of her other works. She continues to say that the facts show that women are occasionally charged by God to break their ordinary sphere and occupy a vital role in the church or state.

Palmer conceived that the work was necessary for a few reasons. First, in the opening decades of the nineteenth century, as Methodism grew, it became more institutionalized. With greater institutionalization, a greater antipathy towards women emerged, especially in the middleclass and upper-class neighborhoods. The stronghold women had within Methodist leadership was eroding, including informal leadership roles. Palmer was also concerned that women’s roles outside of Methodism were increasingly base and unequal. New York itself witnessed several restorationist and eschatological churches whose views on women and sexuality were concerning. Palmer, likely thinking of the Oneida community, Kingdom of Matthias, and Mormons, said “The idea that woman, with all her noble gifts and qualities, was formed mainly to minister to the sensuous nature of man, is wholly unworthy a place in the heart of a Christian.”

Christian wives are intended by God to be more than sex objects, used by their husbands to fulfill the lusts of the flesh. Palmer believed that women contributed intellectually and spiritually within a Christian marriage. Palmer alleged that God judges the sins of

countries. The US had a long list of sins that Palmer expected God to hold the nation accountable for, including slavery, the treatment of women, and the sins against the family. These and others serve only to bring condemnation.

Palmer next turns her attention to Paul’s prohibition against women speaking in church, arguing “The Christian churches of the present day, with but few exceptions, have imposed silence on Christian woman, so that her voice may but seldom be heard in Christian assemblies.” The reason for this silence is Paul, who decreed “Let your women keep silence in the churches.” The way Palmer treats this passage from Corinthians is noticeably different than Kierkegaard. As mentioned in chapter eight, Kierkegaard’s appeal to the same verse was a mix of possible misogyny and an object to show the value of silence. Palmer’s treatment of this verse is to illustrate how it is misapplied and misunderstood. Palmer’s convictions do not allow her the luxury of simply dismissing the verse or ignoring it. Therefore, she must dissect it and contextualize it in a way that supports her convictions. The notion of “plain gospel truths” that dominated Protestant theology in and out of both Great Awakenings, is made less plain. Palmer seeks to use reason and traditional Protestant practices to aid in interpretation.

The first avenue she takes is to demonstrate that it is inconsistent. If women were to remain silent, as the verse commands, women would not be able to participate in any public worship whatsoever, no church accepts this. She points out that even the Episcopalians fail to live up to this standard and they trespass against this prohibition every service “in calling out the responses of women in company with the men in their

27 Phoebe Palmer, The Promise of the Father, 5.
beautiful Church Liturgy, and when they repeat our Lord’s Prayer in concert with their brethren. And thus also do they trespass against this prohibition every time they break silence and unite in holy song in the church of God of any or every denomination.\textsuperscript{28}

Either the prohibition is universally ignored, or else it was not a universal decree but a local solution to a local and particular problem. Palmer argues that Paul told the Corinthians to keep silent, not all women. The church of Corinth had a number of unseemly practices that needed to be eradicated. In an interesting reversal of exegesis, Palmer shifts her view of the Bible as a work that is intended for all Christians in every age to a work that is bound and limited by historical development and historical circumstances.

To support this conclusion, Palmer looks to other places in the Bible to confirm her conclusion that there was no biblical warrant for denying women a vocal place in the church. Beginning in the Old Testament, Palmer points to the Judge Deborah, the Prophetess Huldah, and Moses’ sister Miriam. Deborah was called not because there were no men, rather Palmer argues “because God, in his wisdom, had so ordained; and it was also by the direction of Providence she was compelled to take the lead in the orderings of the battle.”\textsuperscript{29} Furthermore when Josiah found the Torah in the temple, they turned to the prophetess Huldah rather than Jerimiah. Miriam responded to Moses before Aaron or others.

\textsuperscript{28} Phoebe Palmer, \textit{The Promise of the Father}, 5-6.

\textsuperscript{29} Phoebe Palmer, \textit{The Promise of the Father}, 2.
In the New Testament, there are many more examples that Palmer uses. Surprisingly Palmer does not use the Virgin Mary as an example, in fact, she is never independently mentioned. Twice the phrase mother of Jesus is used, but both cases were scriptural quotations, and the attention was never on the Virgin Mother. Palmer also never uses the phrase Virgin Mary. Palmer’s anti-Catholic bias extended to demoting Mary the Mother of God to a footnote, and for some even an object of scorn, especially when connected to devotional practices of Catholics. Palmer hints towards these sympathies when she tells the stories of Catholics who convert, proclaiming “no Virgin Mary for me.”

Palmer does speak of a Mary with greater detail, but the Mary she references is Magdalene, who is listed as a disciple. Mary Magdalene is exalted because she spoke to the disciples and revealed the resurrected Christ to them. The Samaritan woman is also mentioned and called the first apostle for Christ in Samaria. This title obviously serves to validate women’s leadership and shows that women are often called while men are not. In the New Testament, Phoebe Palmer mentions her namesake as well, the deaconess Phoebe. Palmer reminds her readers that “Deaconesses were ordained to the office by the imposition of the hands of the bishop.”

In addition to scriptural references, Palmer argues that early Christian tradition also utilized women in speaking and leadership roles. In no other work does Palmer reference patristic writings, but here she uses the writings of St. John Chrysostom and

\[\text{30 Phoebe Palmer, } Four \text{ Years in the Old World, 40.} \]
\[\text{31 Phoebe Palmer, } Sources \text{ of American Spirituality Phoebe Palmer: Selected Writings, 36.} \]
Justin Martyr as sources. Palmer evokes Justin Martyr when addressing Pentecost. In Justin’s dialogue with Trypho, Justin argues that “both women and men were seen among them, who had the gifts of the Spirit of God.” Chrysostom is invoked a few times, first to show that women among the early Christians were free to worship. Palmer references Chrysostom’s mother first. Libanius proclaims that Chrysostom’s mother possessed a noble appearance, and was moved to declare, “What women these Christians have!” Later Chrysostom and Theophylact are used to illustrate that Junia, mentioned in Romans laboring for God, was in fact a woman rather than a man. “But Chrysostom and Theophylact were both Greeks; consequently, they knew their mother tongue better than our translators, and they say it was a woman.”

Palmer also tries her hand at hermeneutics, or a further attempt at biblical criticism, by dismissing Paul’s decree as a cultural command rather than a universal one. She argues, “It was also customary amongst the Greeks and Romans, but amongst the Jews it was an express law, that no woman should be seen abroad without a veil. This was and is a common custom through all the East.” These ventures into patristics and biblical criticism are rather short lived, but it illustrates Palmer’s attempt to engage the rationalists and scholastics on their level, rather than simply dismissing their critiques.

32 Phoebe Palmer, Sources of American Spirituality Phoebe Palmer: Selected Writings, 35.
33 Phoebe Palmer, Sources of American Spirituality Phoebe Palmer: Selected Writings, 36.
34 Phoebe Palmer, The Promise of the Father, 26.
35 Phoebe Palmer, The Promise of the Father, 44.
Palmer dismisses Paul’s command in light of further revelation. Palmer argues she is now living through the second Pentecost. It may be the third Pentecost if we want to include Zinzendorf’s or any others. Since Palmer believed that she was living through a second Pentecost, the dispensation to which she was not obliged was not the same as history nor the same as the early church. Therefore, the gift of power that was given on the first day of Pentecost needs to be re-appropriated and accepted in these later days. Palmer queries, “The question is this has not a gift of power, delegated to the church on the day of Pentecost, been neglected? Or, in other words, has not a marked specialty of the Christian dispensation been comparatively unrecognized and kept out of use?”36 Both men and women were present at the day of Pentecost, and both received power. In the interim women have either neglected their power or it has been denied them by others. Palmer interprets Acts Two by saying, “The Lord our God is one Lord. The same indwelling spirit of might which fell upon Mary and the other women on the glorious day that ushered in the present dispensation still falls upon God’s daughters. … The same impelling power which constrained Mary and the other women to speak as the Spirit gave utterance impels them to testify of Christ.”37 Acts 2:17 states “And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.” Therefore Palmer wants to recapture women’s gifts of prophecy. This call for women to preach echoes Spener’s 1677 *The Spiritual Priesthood,*

as addressed in chapter two. Both Spener and Palmer argue that the priesthood of all believers comes from the anointing of the Holy Spirit and purchased by Christ.

Since her aim is to allow women a space to prophesy, she must define prophesying. Palmer’s treatment of prophesy follows Perkins in *The Art of Prophesying and the Calling of the Ministry*. As mentioned in chapter two Perkins separated preaching a public prayer, Palmer attempts to reunite them. While Palmer opened the work saying she was not trying to justify women preachers, she has now concluded that since she is living in the end times, the promise of the Father is being fulfilled. Women will prophesy. Furthermore, Palmer contends “the scriptural idea of the terms preach and prophesy stands so inseparably connected as one and the same thing, that we should find it difficult to get aside from the fact that women did preach, or, in other words, prophesy, in the early ages of Christianity, and have continued to do so down to the present time, to just the degree that the spirit of the Christian dispensation has been recognized.”

Both preaching and prophesying is little more than edification, exhortation, and giving comfort. Men and women are called to do these things as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

Palmer then addresses another biblical prohibition against women speaking. This one is found in 1 Timothy 2:12. “But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.” For Palmer the question is about usurpation rather than teaching. The issue of silence she has already dispensed of. The solution is simple for Palmer; women do not speak on their own authority, rather the authority of the Holy Spirit. “Women who speak in assemblies for worship under the influence of the

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38 Phoebe Palmer, *The Promise of the Father*, 34.
Holy Spirit assume thereby no personal authority over others. They are instruments through which divine instruction is communicated to the people.”

Sometimes women preach in front of a congregation, other times a class room, and still others publish works. In all of these, the idea is that the Christian woman is simply speaking what God has given her and with God’s authority rather than her own. If indeed someone is called by the Holy Spirit to minister and oversee a congregation, Palmer cannot foresee the manner in which they would lord it over their flock. Echoing Zinzendorf, she maintains that male or female should make no difference.

To apply the issue of teaching authority consistently Palmer contends, leads to an unobtainable standard nowhere practiced. If women were not allowed to teach, Palmer maintains “No woman is to keep a school. No woman is to teach her children to sew, or cook, or read, or write, &c. No woman is to write books; for this is one excellent method of teaching. No woman is to pray in public; for praying is one method of conveying instruction upon doctrinal, experimental, and practical religion.” Just like the prohibition against women speaking, conclusions are not consistently drawn out. While Catholics or Orthodox may choose to respond that these verses are interpreted through ecclesial tradition, Protestants have no such authority, therefore her objections must be addressed on that level.

In *The Promise of the Father*, Palmer launches her attack against Puseyism and High Church practices. Shortly after this work was published, Palmer comes directly into

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contact with these practices in England while on her four year voyage to the Old World. It is in this work that she addresses civil issues as well. The issue of women’s authority of men is circumvented not only in the church, but also in civil governments. Against the Puseyites Palmer raises up an example of “Her Most Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, the reigning sovereign of the most mighty, intelligent people of this or any other age. Who questions her ability for her station, and talks of her as having transcended the bounds set by public opinion of the sphere of woman?”

The result of Palmer’s work was to open the floodgates ever so slightly. Palmer did not seek ordination, nor ecclesial office; neither would have changed her mission. Other Methodist women who came later benefited from Palmer’s work. In 1866, Helenor Davison was the first woman ordained within Methodism to the deaconate. Shortly thereafter Methodism employed deaconesses to carry out social ministries. In 1880, six years after Palmer’s death, Anna Howard Shaw was ordained to the diaconate. A few years later Ella Niswonger was the first woman to graduate from the denominations seminary and be ordained. In 1869, Isabella Thoburn and Dr. Clara Swain were the first single female missionaries. Women’s involvement as missionaries grew to the point that by 1910 more than half of Protestant missionaries were women.

Palmer’s feminist message reached many contemporary women as well who were crucial for the development of early feminism. Many nineteenth-century feminists were deeply rooted in evangelical revivalism as their primary focus, while other concerns were expressions of their piety. Martha Wheat, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Frances Willard,

Hannah Whitall Smith all serve as examples of women who were impacted by Palmer’s life and works.

Martha Wheat (d. 1874) was a southern evangelical who desired to be a missionary and was encouraged by *The Promise of the Father*, shortly after its publication. Martha sought numerous occasions to preach, believing that public prayer and oratory was consistent with true womanhood. Palmer’s book aided Wheat with her mission in the face of widespread criticism. “When I read of the Christian women, who obeyed God rather than man, and thereby saved souls,” Wheat wrote, “I am afresh encouraged to renew my efforts, with redoubled diligence.”

Harriet Beecher Stowe (d. 1896) was reared on Calvinism and revivalism. The Beecher family were well acquainted with the Palmers, and Phoebe publically criticized Harriet’s brother, the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher (d. 1887), for his inclusion of bowling alleys in the Brooklyn YMCA. Harriet sought to spread her religious message, especially concerning slavery. To this end she wrote one of the most influential books of the nineteenth century, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, but she did so by adopting an impersonal, third-person voice in the work. This denied her agency and made the work a devotional inspired by the Holy Spirit and belonging to the Christian community. At the time Palmer admired the work but condemned it because it was too easy to adapt into a play, which enticed people to sin. She even provides an example of a pious woman who attended the theater for the first time because of Stowe’s work.

Frances Willard (d. 1898), the leader of the Woman’s Christian Temperance Union (WTL) was also influenced by Palmer. The WTL was the largest American woman’s organization formed, having 176,000 members at the close of the century. Two years earlier, before the WTL was formed in 1879, Willard preached in Boston. She was encouraged by D.L. Moody, but was given the justification to do so from Palmer. Willard professed sanctification at one of Palmer’s meetings, and the similarity in speaking styles produced at least one study on the effects Palmer’s preaching had on the rhetoric of Willard.

Palmer’s holiness message also extended to Hannah Whitall Smith (1911), a significant leader in holiness revivals in the United States and United Kingdom. Her conversion took place during the Businessman revival, but continued to grow in holiness through the works of Palmer. Palmer’s works advanced women’s causes among the Quakers and Salvation Army as well. Her sales alone demonstrated the thirst for holiness and the acceptability of women in print.

God, Sin, and Redemption

“God is thine, disdain to fear the enemy within; 
God shall in thy flesh appear and make an end of sin”

Palmer’s view of God, sin, and redemption differs greatly from Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher, but remains consistent with Wesley’s position. Since it is essentially Wesleyan, there are many similarities concerning God and sin akin to Perkins and the Anglo-Calvinist understanding of God’s sovereignty, with an emphasis on the substitutionary atonement. Yet unlike Perkins and his Golden Chain, Wesley and Palmer reject the notion of a predestined election. Wesley supported the Armenian position that was defeated at the Synod of Dort. Dort prioritized Perkins teachings on Calvin, sin, and redemption over those of Jacobus Arminius, as addressed in chapter two.

Palmer’s view of God would not have been controversial during her life time as she affirmed the traditional doctrines of the Methodist church. God is eternal, “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever.”

Palmer professed the trinity and that God is holy. God’s holiness is understood to be grounded in love. Palmer maintains “God is infinitely holy, and whatever flows out from him on man tells enduringly in lessons of love and power.” This power and holiness are connected with God’s justice. This form of divine justice rewards those who are with God and condemns those who are not. God cannot be united with evil. While God is love, Palmer, along with Wesley,

45 Phoebe Palmer, Faith and Its Effects: Or Fragments from My Portfolio, 118.
46 Phoebe Palmer, Recollections and Gathered Fragments of Mrs. Lydia N. Cox of Williamsburg, L.I. (New York: Piercy and Reed, Printers, 1845), 49.
Perkins, and Calvin, declare that God hates sin. “Daughter, God hates sin now just as much as He hated it in the days of Adam. God is unchangeable in His nature. With Him 'there is neither variableness nor shadow of turning,' 'the same yesterday, today, and forever.' Think of the effect of one sin in the days of Adam—how it has been felt along down through time, even till the present hour! We are feeling it today, and its effect will be felt down to the end of time!”

While God hates sin, unlike Calvin and Perkins, Palmer maintains that free will trumps God’s sovereignty. This is a typical Methodist view, as Catherine Kelsey argues that for Wesleyan-Armenian Methodists, individual human responsibility is the chief concern. “While the sovereignty of God is also adamantly affirmed, no description of divine sovereignty is acceptable if it can suggest to individuals that salvation will work itself out regardless of the level of their active participation.”

Humanity has used this free will to sin. For Palmer there are only two logical and theological conclusions. First, that humanity and those who have sinned are rightly condemned to hell. She proclaimed “The sinner is condemned already.” The second is the necessity of the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement.

What is striking is not these beliefs from a nineteenth-century Methodist, but rather the divergence of views from the two other nineteenth-century Pietists addressed.


49 Phoebe Palmer, Recollections and Gathered Fragments of Mrs. Lydia N. Cox of Williamsburg, L.I., 14.
Both Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard, denied or demoted the concept of hell and the need for a substitutionary atonement. Both looked at the incarnation as the redeeming act of God rather than a penal substitution. Kierkegaard, and to a greater extent Schleiermacher, understood the incarnation as a world altering event where the earth was sanctified by God entering into it. When Kierkegaard addressed Christ’s death, it was not a vicarious suffering, but a consequence of the incarnation and God humbling himself in Christ to approach the lowliest of men and women. Schleiermacher went so far as to believe that Christ’s incarnation signaled the election of humanity as a whole. Palmer does not even consider these as viable Christian positions.

Palmer maintained the notion of hell as a justified punishment for all who are not believers. She argued “Thou art this moment prepared either for the abode of the believer or for the home of the unbeliever. No alternative presents. There is no middle state.”

Sin grieves God, and as such God turns away from a fallen humanity. While both Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard view the incarnation as a larger redemptive act, Palmer only views this as efficacious for those who accept the universal offer of redemption. For those who don’t, they are judged and rightly condemned to eternal damnation. Palmer addresses universalism specifically at one of her Tuesday Meetings. When a Universalist was fearing his own death, Palmer asked him why he was afraid to die, since he believed in universal salvation. They both concluded “when death stared me in the face, I found the doctrine of Universalism would not stand the test.”


For Palmer, like Perkins the only means of salvation is the substitutionary atonement. Christ must offer himself as a substitution for the sins of every individual. As such, the individual must accept the gift of the substitution. Palmer’s Christology is also contained within this doctrine. Christ must be understood as “Immaculate purity, ineffable beauty of holiness, who was once personified, and walked and talked with men.”52 This life ransomed humanity, not just the elect. Palmer’s Christianity is based upon this sacrifice. She argues “The foundation of the Christian religion is laid in sacrifice. The Father gave his Son, who, from all eternity, dwelt in his bosom. The Son left the throne of his glory, and came to earth in the form of a servant. As our Exemplar, he lived a life of toil and sacrifice, enduring the contradiction of sinners, despising the shame, and suffering the agonies, of the cross. In his vicarious death, we may not follow him.”53

Throughout her works Palmer points to the redeeming blood of Christ. While she does not emphasize the wounds themselves as the source of redemption like Zinzendorf, Palmer seizes upon the idea of sacrifice. Christ sacrificed himself on the cross, and now the Christian must sacrifice themselves upon the altar that is Christ. Palmer pronounces, “We are not unmindful of the fact, that Christ set Himself apart as a vicarious sacrifice and that there can be nothing vicarious in the sufferings of the Christian but there is a sense in which the Christian is left to fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of

52 Phoebe Palmer, Present to My Christian Friend on Entire Devotion to God, iv.
53 Phoebe Palmer, Four Years in the Old World, 84.
Christ.” Christ’s sacrifice was only the beginning. The Christian must then advance in His vicarious sacrifice.

Christians are redeemed in order to be sacrificed and ultimately sanctified. As Palmer argued with her shorter way, “Sanctification implies the whole heart and life devoted to God.” Christ’s vicarious death was the Christian’s justification, and sanctification moves from this. Sanctification also implies holiness and perfection. Palmer uses Abraham as the prime example of the perfect Christian. Both Palmer and Kierkegaard elevate Abraham as the example for contemporaries to live by. For Kierkegaard, Abraham was the model of faith, because he was willing to sacrifice his son Isaac, despite the anguish that this caused him. For Palmer, the anguish of Abraham is inconsequential. Abraham is the model because he obeyed. He did what God commanded. Palmer asserts “It was enough that God had made the demand, But it won the design of God, that Abraham should stand out before all succeeding generations, as the father of the faithful— the friend of God. ‘Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.’”

Abraham is rewarded for his obedience. He was strong in faith and gave God glory. The Christian is to follow Abraham’s example by laying what is most prized upon the altar. For Abraham, that was his son, for the Christian it is themselves. Palmer understood that the act of laying one’s self upon the altar varies depending on the

54 Phoebe Palmer, Present to My Christian Friend on Entire Devotion to God, 86.


individual and not everyone can have such a definitive moment of faith as did Abraham. She concedes, as did Wesley, that for some this is an instantaneous work, and for others salvation is gradual. While Kierkegaard spoke of the anguish of Abraham, Palmer insists that sanctification takes away fear. Death and its consequences of damnation or eternal reward should only cause the unredeemed trepidation. For those living in Christian perfection, there is no anguish, no fear, and no concerns that are matched to eternal blessedness.

The hope in eternal blessedness requires the Christian abandon this life and its concerns for Christ. Still, Palmer expresses that future blessedness does not require a renunciation of life itself. Christians must continue to live and not desire death. To continue to live demonstrates that the Christian has a purpose in this world. They can always spread the gospel a little further, and with every breath. There are also still earthly affections which the Christian maintains. These are not in themselves bad or to be avoided. Palmer holds that as long as the Christian is willing to follow Christ with these affections they are acceptable, and reason enough to desire to stay living.

The Christian must understand that their reward is not these earthly attachments, but is waiting for them in heaven. Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard addressed the concept of heaven and redemption as communion with Christ and as a mystery. While Palmer views heaven as communion with God, she also connects the idea of a reward waiting for her in heaven. Heaven is a personal reward that varies depending on the Christian’s level of obedience. Some Christians will receive eternity in heaven but the rewards given to them will be minor, while others will have an abundance. Palmer maintains a consist imagery concerning her heavenly reward. All those who are
redeemed and in heaven will receive a crown. Palmer extols her readers to, “Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Yes! thy crown is now awaiting thee! It is thy crown; for at an infinite expenditure it was purchased for thee. If earthly crowns are valuable in proportion to the expenditure of wealth, toil, and blood which they have cost, who will attempt to estimate the value of thy crown?”

Palmer also believes that not all crowns are equal. Upon the crown there are various numbers of jewels or stars which adorn them. The crown imagery is so important to Palmer that the ninth chapter of Entire Devotion, is simply titled “Thy Crown.” The jewels or stars upon the crown each represent a soul won for God. They represent the fruit that the Christian produced. This is rather similar to Angela da Foligno, calling those Franciscans who attached themselves to her, “her crown and joy in the Lord” in chapter one. Beyond Foligno’s love for the monastics surrounding her, Palmer viewed the redemption of souls as an eternal reward. Palmer queries “Who should be satisfied with a starless crown, when, after a little lingering on earth, it may be set with many brilliant stars?” Palmer posits that this is the reason why the Apostles themselves labored so mightily. “The ambition for a starry crown—an abundant entrance, is of the inspiration of the Holy. Spirit, and should be cherished. With such inspirations were the apostles and the holy martyrs fired.”

57 Phoebe Palmer, Present to My Christian Friend on Entire Devotion to God, 70.
60 Phoebe Palmer, Incidental Illustrations of the Economy of Salvation, its Doctrines and Duties, 221.
Palmer viewed God as very transactional. Debts need to be paid and rewards granted to those who earn them. This transactional relationship with God applies with Christ as well. Christ’s sacrifice was not merely a selfless act of love, but also a payment to redeem. Upon redemption those snatched from the flames belong to Christ. Every soul won is a soul delivered to Christ, to be placed in his crown. Palmer declares “If I die, I shall be a gem in my Savior’s crown.”

Christ, as well as the Christian, all have the same desire. Palmer relays a vision she had where Jesus showed her a gleaming crown and then instructed her to be faithful, saying “thou shalt have a crown glittering with as many stars as the one thou hast just beheld.”

The starless crowns likely belong to those whose Christian life was fruitless or to those who converted but never reached the place of entire sanctification. In *Sanctification Practical*, Palmer is asked what happens to someone who is converted but never reaches the place of sanctification. The question concerns if they will go to heaven at all. This is a practical concern, since justification and sanctification are separate events and one may grow into the sanctified life. Palmer concluded that “dying under these circumstances, we should be saved.” This does not open the door to universal salvation though as it does for Schleiermacher. Palmer does not accept the idea that one may accept the atonement after death.

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The Church and Its People

“Head of the Church! Oh wilt Thou still, Thy Church in this our house behold, With greater grace Thy people fill, Give power beyond the days of old.”

Palmer’s conception of the church first begins with the laity. Like Kierkegaard she was never ordained. Palmer believed that most of the church’s functions could be performed by the laity, including preaching. Lay preaching was long a hallmark of American Methodism and a good reason for its success in the early half of the nineteenth century. Beyond just the lay preacher, Palmer insisted that the task of converting the unbelievers belonged to every Christian, not just the itinerant preacher or ordained clergy. Palmer’s promotion of the laity redrew the lines of ecclesiology. Palmer simultaneously criticizes the church and redefines what it is through her understanding of the laity, promoting a new doxa of exclusion that removes the standing benefits and responsibilities of the church hierarchy and officials.

In her Pietist collegia, the Tuesday Meetings, Palmer models her vision of the church. Believers led other believers without regard to rank, position, or denominational affiliation. In these meetings Palmer seizes on the Protestant refrain of the priesthood of all believers, arguing that when a Christian is entirely sanctified they are a living sacrifice and are holy to God. At this point they are “made priests unto God.” The laity, who now serve in most functions as the clergy, also serve as confessors. The booth is replaced

64 Richard Wheatley, The Life and Letters of Mrs. Phoebe Palmer, 151.

65 Phoebe Palmer, Present to My Christian Friend on Entire Devotion to God, 7.
with public confession and though it has lost its sacramental character, it becomes a regular part of her meetings. Palmer put it this way, “in order to be continually washed, cleansed, and renewed after the image of God, the sacrifice must be ceaselessly presented. I believe it does us good not only to confess our faults before God, but before one another.”66 It is from this confession of faith that entire sanctification occurs and the Christian remains upon the altar, which is Christ.

Palmer specifically elevates the laity in her works as well as her Tuesday Meetings. In both The Guide to Holiness and her earlier published works, Palmer constantly lends her voice to the pious conversions and stories of the laity. This is why her theology is pastoral and devotional rather than systematic. Palmer seeks to demonstrate the intrinsic value in individual experiences of God and sanctification. Palmer’s greatest skill was in advancing her notion of holiness by using other people as the example. Three of her published works are entirely devotional stories, recounting the lives of pious women. In Recollections and Gathered Fragments of Mrs. Lydia N. Cox of Williamsburg, Sweet Mary, and, The Useful Disciple: Or, A Narrative of Mrs. Mary Gardner, Palmer elevates Mrs. Lydia Noyes Cox, Mary S. (called sweet Mary), and Mrs. Mary Gardner.

Mrs. Lydia Noyes Cox was a Presbyterian who embraced holiness. Palmer argues that “Holiness to the Lord was her continual watchword. Nothing less than the advancement of holiness in the membership would answer her ardent wishes.”67 Palmer

66 Phoebe Palmer, Incidental Illustrations of the Economy of Salvation, its Doctrines and Duties, 75.

67 Phoebe Palmer, Recollections and Gathered Fragments of Mrs. Lydia N. Cox of Williamsburg, L.I., 71.
presents Cox modeling holiness as an all pervading principle rather than a theological afterthought. Mary Gardner was also a Presbyterian who was initially unaware of Palmer’s doctrine of holiness. Palmer’s use of Gardner was to assert that her holiness doctrine was not her own, but was found in the Bible. Mary proclaims “I knew it was a Bible doctrine, that we should present our bodies a living sacrifice but I did not know it by the name of sanctification, perfect love, or Christian perfection.” Palmer strategically confirms her theology through the mouth of another to eliminate doubt or suspicion in the minds of her readers.

The same could be said of Palmer’s treatment of Mary S. Sweet Mary is eulogized by Palmer, who proclaims “Mary had her trials, But with her, every new trial was made the occasion of a new triumph.” Sweet Mary faced many temptations and Palmer uses her struggles and her victories to encourage others to follow her example. From Mary’s spiritual battles Palmer asserts “there is no sin in being tempted. The sin lies in yielding to the tempter. “The people that do know their God shall be strong and do exploits.” Mary is also used to address the notion of sanctification as both a gradual and singular act. Mary was pardoned before backsliding into a state of lukewarm Christianity. Each time she returned to the altar and surrendered herself more fully to Christ.


69 Phoebe Palmer, Sweet Mary, 4.

70 Phoebe Palmer, Sweet Mary, 6.
In these three cases Palmer gives voice to women who otherwise would not have one, while using them to advance her doctrinal understandings. Still, Palmer insists that her authority does not come from the laity or from ordination, rather from the Bible. As is the case with earlier Pietists, the Bible becomes the head of the Church for Palmer. The Bible is not the book of the church; the church are the people of the Bible. Palmer plainly decrees, “The Bible is the voice of God speaking to man. If holy men spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, the words thus uttered are in verity the words of God.”

Beyond simply being the book of the people, Palmer equates the Holy Scripture to Christ himself. Calling the Bible the word of God, Palmer then shows that Christ is called likewise. “His name is called The WORD OF GOD." Here the word is personified as Christ himself.”

Since the scriptures are one with Christ, and Christ is one in the trinity, Palmer proposes that “the voice of the Scriptures is the voice of the Holy Ghost.” For Palmer the Bible is divine, not only in origin, but also in its presence. Since the Bible is available to all, and it is the supreme authority over all, all are made equal under it. “The Bible being the only infallible standard, and no human authority being comparable with it, the latter being only right as far as it is found one in sentiment with it, let this book, above all others, be the Book of books with us.”

71 Phoebe Palmer, Faith and Its Effects: Or Fragments from My Portfolio, 60.
73 Phoebe Palmer, Full Salvation: Its Doctrine and Duties, 188.
The Bible gives the laity its power, while depriving power from the episcopacy. The Holy Spirit itself interpreted the Bible, since it, as the word of God, is personified in the second person of the trinity. The simplest believer who truly wishes to understand the Bible will learn unhindered from the text itself. While Schleiermacher attempted to understand the Bible through historical analysis, Palmer asserts that the Holy Spirit is sufficient. Furthermore Palmer does not believe that under the tutelage of the Holy Spirit one can come to error. “The Holy Spirit never takes us beyond the written Word, neither does it take us aside from it.”

Palmer believes the text is plain and simple to understand, especially when read by an obedient sanctified Christian. Complicated verses only require devotion and prayer.

Following this, Palmer believes that no evidence is necessary. The Bible is interpreted by God and was given to humanity by God, as a manifestation of God. Therefore Palmer proclaims, “God’s word is its own evidence.” Schleiermacher’s hermeneutical approach to scriptures demonstrates an inherent lack of faith from Palmer’s perspective. The task for all Christians is not to question the Bible, nor try to understand it from a position of human reasoning but to become Bible Christians.

The concept of a Bible Christian is central to Palmer’s ecclesiology and theology. Again the Church is the people of Bible, not the other way around. The concept of a Bible Christian, as Palmer calls it, is understood to be a Christian who trusts wholly in the Bible as the singular source of authority. As such, Palmer equates being a Bible


Christian with being a Perfect Christian, declaring, “If you are not a holy Christian, you are not a Bible Christian.” She also says “Holiness is the great leading doctrine in the Bible, rather than as a doctrine peculiar to any sect.” Palmer believes that Christian perfection is not only a Methodist or Presbyterian phenomenon, but one intrinsic to the scriptures.

To this end Palmer, while a Methodist, is also a leader of the ecumenical movement. Palmer views denominations as secondary to entire sanctification. Palmer’s treatment of ecumenicalism is similar to Zinzendorf’s *tropus* as addressed in chapter three. Zinzendorf tried to unite the magisterial Protestant denominations together under the umbrella of Herrnhut. Zinzendorf ultimately failed. Schleiermacher, as addressed in chapters eight and nine, tried to do the same thing in Berlin and had moderate success. The advantage that both Zinzendorf and Schleiermacher had was their attempt at uniting the Protestant Churches was fairly limited. Both focused their attentions on uniting Reform with Lutherans, believing that the other smaller denominations in Germany would follow suit. By the middle of the nineteenth century the sheer number of denominations, especially in America, made the top down approach of Schleiermacher and Zinzendorf impossible. Instead, Palmer chose to promote a single doctrine, holiness, and have that unite American Protestants. Those Protestants that objected to this doctrine Palmer counts as lost. They are outside of the truth as she understands it. As she


maintains, “The truly pious of all denominations, and of all classes, both of the ministry and laity, are seeking for the truth. There is a literal uprising of the people.”

After encountering Mormons, Palmer deduced that they were not of the same spirit as the holiness denominations. Since Joseph Smith’s early years were spent around Methodists, there is a level of similarity in their preaching styles and messages. Mormons often joined in with the holiness meetings, poaching members. Mormonism’s early success came directly from Methodists. Douglas Strong puts the number at least at 28%, at a time when Methodists were nowhere near that in the general population.

Palmer’s antipathy towards Mormons only grew when she was in Utah and witnessed polygamy first hand. Palmer was especially attuned to the emotional torture one wife had having to share her husband with fourteen other women.

According to Palmer the Catholics and Orthodox are equally lost to the truth. Palmer’s aggression towards Catholics was not well hidden. She called the Pope and members of the Catholic Church the “Man of Sin.” She also viewed the Catholic Church as a “kingdom of darkness,” while Protestants were the “kingdom of light,” in Full Salvation. This was the cause of joy for the Catholic girl’s conversion, rather than her acceptance of a doctrine, as was the case with her Protestant converts. She believed that the Pope was in need of repentance just as everyone else, and there was no holiness in either Pope Pious IX, or the office. Palmer declared “The Pope may enter paradise, like any other sinner. Yes, Pius IX., if he repent, No more his claim need borrow; For Christ

would to his claim consent if he’d show godly sorrow.”

Worse still was Palmer’s treatment of Orthodox, whom she did not even consider Christians, but heathens in her vague mention of those in the East.

While Palmer did not value the Roman Church nor the Eastern Churches, she did place some value on “the Church.” Properly understood, Palmer’s conception of “the Church” was Wesley’s church and those who subscribe to holiness, her reinterpretation of Pietism. Those who belonged to her denominations who accepted holiness were close enough to count as Christians. She believed that her duty was to save souls. This was also the mission of the church, “But if sinners are to be saved, it is to be through the agency of the Church. The Church must be clothed with the garments of salvation.”

Many individual churches failed to live up to this standard, primarily when they became too costly. Once a church becomes too opulent, worship fails to live up to the standard that Christ desires. Palmer calls this “proxy worship.” This occurred within the Methodist churches as well. Palmer describes proxy worship as worship where “Only the minister kneels to pray. He is paid to do so by the church members, who sit comfortably and listen.” The same applies to singing in these churches. The choir is paid and the congregation sits. These churches become performances rather than devotions.


81 Phoebe Palmer, *The Promise of the Father*, 45.


Noticeably minimized in Palmer’s ecclesiology is the clergy. Palmer’s emphasis on the laity reduces the ordained clergy to only a few roles, including weddings and funerals. The other duties of worship and prayer are performed by the laity. Palmer still valued those who were ordained, calling them “ambassadors of the King of Kings.”\textsuperscript{84} She would not have supported anyone criticizing the ministers in general, but they needed sanctification as must as anyone else. In fact, Palmer generally only speaks of ministers as those present in her meetings, those who are lost, and those who are experiencing sanctification. “Occasionally a clergyman is awakened and converted the same as any other poor sinner”\textsuperscript{85} is a common refrain.

Also missing from Palmer’s ecclesiology are the sacraments. Since preaching and conversion is the task of the laity, the sacraments are the remaining vestiges of the minister. Palmer’s Methodist inheritance of the sacraments minimizes their salvific efficacy, to the point that they are rarely if ever mentioned. Palmer does not see water baptism as all that necessary or beneficial, except as a dedication. At one point Palmer echoes the lament of one convert who was disappointed in her baptism. “She found that being immersed in the water had not the efficacy to wash away her sins. Her distress of mind increased after her baptism; and fearing that she had sealed her damnation by taking upon herself the profession of religion when she was yet in an unregenerated state.”\textsuperscript{86} For this poor lady, her baptism was not a symbol of joy nor a sacrament, but a testimony.


\textsuperscript{85} Phoebe Palmer, \textit{Four Years in the Old World}, 215.

\textsuperscript{86} Phoebe Palmer, \textit{Sources of American Spirituality Phoebe Palmer: Selected Writings}, 148-149.
of condemnation. Thankfully Palmer argues that she experienced the baptism of the Holy Spirit later.

This second baptism is the only sacrament that Palmer truly identifies. This sacrament is also not performed by a priest but by the individual, who by laying themselves on the altar, save themselves. Palmer’s ecclesiology promotes a church of one. Everyone eagerly works for their own salvation and saving others. Salvation is an individual act rather than a corporate one. The church exists only as a collection of individuals, not as the single body of Christ present on earth and in eternity.

Similarly, the Eucharist is absent from Palmer’s theology. She makes mention of taking it a few times in her life, but little value is given. Rather the absence of the rite serves as a lack of piety on behalf of a congregation for Palmer. Communion exists within a healthy Christian Church but it does not possess any power for those who take it. Unlike Kierkegaard, whose refusal to take communion from a priest at the end of his life spoke volumes about his theology concerning the laity and the church, Palmer’s general silence on the issue only illustrates the lack of value sacraments had for her.
Palmer’s Further Contributions (Mysticism & Christian Ethics)

“0 now I see the crimson wave, The fountain deep and wide; Jesus, my Lord, mighty to save, Points to his wounded side I see the new creation rise, I hear the speaking blood; It speaks! polluted nature dies— Sinks 'neath the crimson flood. Amazing grace! ’tis heav’n below, To feel the blood applied, And Jesus, only Jesus know, My Jesus crucified.”

Palmer was a different type of Pietist than Kierkegaard or Schleiermacher. She fit much more into the institutional mold that dominated German, Scandinavian, and Anglo Pietism that Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher were reacting to in many respects, especially when connected to her notion of Christian Ethics. Still, other aspects of Palmer’s life and theology are far more radical than both her European counterparts. For example, Palmer’s mysticism resembles a return to Zinzendorf’s mystical strand that was in its infancy in earlier generations and lost by subsequent generations of experiential Pietists, a mysticism that both Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard never appealed to as a source of authority. While far more mystical than her nineteenth-century counterparts, Palmer echoed their concerns that experiential Christianity must pay attention to ethical life as well. Palmer’s contributions in the areas of mysticism and ethics are as important as her proposal of a shorter way and feminist theology and represent her secondary contributions.

Mysticism.

“But are we to reject all manifestations from God, or answers to prayer, that may be given in dreams or visions of the night?”

It may come as a surprise that Pietism’s return to mysticism came from someone who passionately declared “I have no sympathy for mysticism in religion.” For Palmer, mystical was a dirty word that contained elements of superstition or inauthentic religion. Scholars who study Palmer are conflicted if she should be categorized as a mystic or if she just used the mystical language found in the Scriptures. While it may be a bit overzealous to place Palmer alongside Angela di Foligno, whose entire life was the unfolding of mystical encounters with Christ, Palmer certainly has several mystical encounters that she bases her theology on and certainty of her own salvation upon.

Palmer was an occasional mystic who tried to ground her mystical encounters within a biblical framework. Most of Palmer’s mystical encounters were dreams that she then interpreted as revelations from God. She did possess at least one waking vision as well. This was when her daughter Eliza tragically died. Palmer mentions that she heard from the Holy Spirit and felt that the veil which separated this world from the next was lifted ever so slightly. From her vantage point she saw Eliza and knew she was in the presence of Jesus.

89 Phoebe Palmer, Sources of American Spirituality Phoebe Palmer: Selected Writings, 278.
Several examples of Palmer’s mystical dreams were mentioned in her biography earlier in this chapter. A few more will be given here. Palmer had at least five distinct mystical dreams. As addressed earlier, Palmer had a dream in 1848 which prompted her to leave Allen Street, and in 1855 she had the dream concerning the wild beasts, that turned out to be Mattison. On the morning of her death in 1874, she had a dream or a vision of a chariot come to take her home to heaven. She also had two other connected dreams where she encountered demonic forces. In 1831, she had the dream of the Evil Scotsman, and around 1856 she records another dream where she was confronted by the devil. She also had several other dreams that she makes passing reference to as being prophetic. One example is referenced in The Way of Holiness, where she says “I had such a singular dream, four or five years since, which was precisely prophetical of what has since been my experience.” Palmer accepted these dreams as genuine mystical encounters because she saw examples of prophetic dreams in the Bible. Having a scriptural precedent, Palmer believed her visions were legitimate.

Palmer’s two mystical dreams where she encountered demonic forces are crucial to our understanding of her mysticism more than her biography. The first occurred in 1831. In this dream her spirit left her body and went to another world. Here a demon dressed like an evil Scotsman with a white cloak and black kilt tormented her. In this dream the demon told her that she needed to think of one Bible passage, else she would be damned. Palmer unfortunately could not think of any and only creeds from various denominations came to mind. When she woke up she believed that she was going to die

soon and she needed to ensure she could pass this test. Palmer forgot the dream for a few months until someone mentioned the test of scripture to her. That night in her dreams the Scotsman returned. Phoebe screamed and woke herself up. After this she turned to Walter and was tempted to question her sanctification. After she went back to bed she was visited by another spiritual force. This time it was an angel who told her to “walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.”\(^{91}\) Palmer was unsure if this was really an angel or a demon in disguise, but then recognized the angel’s exhortation was a reference to Ephesians 4:1.\(^{92}\) She was assured by her own sanctification and told Walter of her encounters.

Twenty-five years later Palmer records another dream where she was tempted by Satan. “Yes, Satan himself, transformed into an angel of light, was permitted to assault me. But the wrath of our enemy may be made to praise the Lord.”\(^{93}\) This encounter is rather similar to the previous one. In both visions Palmer encounters a Scottish demon, and in both places she is extoled by an Angel to walk her in vocation. In the first vision, the Scotsman challenges her immediately, while in the second she proclaims it was not a demon but Satan, and Satan does not challenge her knowledge of scripture. It is possible that Palmer experienced this same basic vision several times, each slightly different, and each used to reaffirm her sanctification. It is also possible that she recalled the vision

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\(^{92}\) I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.

\(^{93}\) Phoebe Palmer, *Faith and Its Effects: Or Fragments from My Portfolio*, 41.
twenty-five years later slightly different than her first telling, when she thought it was prudent to record it in *Faith and Its Effects*. The second vision also begins with Satan asking if her husband is in their house and then chasing Phoebe. This one concludes with Phoebe proclaiming “The blood of Jesus cleanseth,” and “It is a living sacrifice that is required.” Phoebe’s mysticism is linked to her Altar Theology and her belief that scripture is the best weapon against demonic forces and guiding the Christian’s life in holiness.

**Ethics.**

> “There’s a spirit below and, a spirit above, The spirit of hate, and the spirit of love, The spirit above is the spirit divine, The spirit below is the spirit of wine.”

Slavery was the central ethical issue debated in the first half of nineteenth-century America. Both Methodists and Baptists split along the lines of slavery. William Lloyd Garrison, a Baptist, founded the American Anti-Slavery Society in 1833. Peter Cartwright maintained that “Methodist preachers in those days made it a matter of conscience not to hold their fellow-creatures in bondage, if it was practicable to emancipate them.” Other Methodists, such as Denmark Vesey (d. 1822) in Charleston, South Carolina, planned slave revolts. The list can go on and on. With such action

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directed against the evils of slavery, Palmer’s voice appears absent. It is true that she did view the Civil War as God’s judgement against the South for slavery, and she believed that the North could only obtain victory if it fought to emancipate the slaves. Palmer was also active in abolitionist movements and the Society for Colonizing the Free People of Color of the United States, an early back to Africa movement. Still Palmer’s otherwise powerful voice was a bit muted concerning slavery.

It may be convenient to say that slavery took a back seat to holiness, but Palmer’s involvement in other areas of Christian ethics resonates much louder, especially her involvement in the temperance movement. For Palmer, temperance and holiness were nearly the same thing. On multiple occasions she calls out the evils of alcohol, and when booze is abandoned, salvation is declared. Palmer excelled at denouncing drink and applauded Dr. Welches “unfermented wine” for use in communion. Palmer’s convictions over alcohol even dominated her desire to preach holiness while she was in England. On numerous occasions she proclaimed the end of a revival, until liquor distributors either repented or were put out of the congregation.

While no issue could rival the prohibition of alcohol within Palmer’s Christian ethics, her prohibition against useless and worldly pleasures took up quite a bit of her time. The list of worldly pleasures that Palmer disapproved of was exhaustive. In addition to any alcohol, Christians were forbidden to involve themselves with smoking, gambling, card playing, reading novels, attending the theater, membership in secret societies, and baseball. As mentioned earlier, she condemned Henry Ward Beecher’s inclusion of billiard tables and bowling alleys in the new YMCA building in Brooklyn, declaring that he was “prostituting” his influence. A similar condemnation was laid
against his sister for *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, being a novel and a work that made its way into the theater. Palmer’s view of the theater was that it was a waste of time and enticed men and women to sin. She also argued that it robbed girls of their purity, and debased men. The theater was the cause for Lincoln’s death. There is no room for agreement on the issue between Kierkegaard who loved the theater and Palmer who condemns it. Palmer was also inclined to support the Free Methodists, who forbade musical instruments, choirs in the church, and ostentation in dress and behavior. At the heart of these condemnations was Palmer’s belief that Christ and sanctification are sufficient. “If Christians really do find all they need in Jesus, why do they turn to these watered-down versions of the world's pleasures.”

Even as she condemned billiards, baseball, the theater, and cards, Palmer expected Christians to use their talents and treasures to aid the poor. Her Five Points mission was the first of its kind in the United States, and it reformed the slums of New York, just as Francke reformed the slums of Halle. Five Points was also remarkable, as Palmer and the other women she brought along with her went personally to the slums rather than only paying a missionary to do so for them. Urban evangelization was central to the Christian’s duty in society. For Palmer this was especially true if they were wealthy. Palmer, like Angela di Foligno and other medieval mystics, viewed wealth as a temptation and a danger to one’s own salvation. Palmer believed that the rich could only be saved by coming to the foot of the cross and surrendering all. Palmer supposed that

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the wealthy placed their trust in their worldly possessions rather than in eternity.

“Worldly minded Christians! Does not the expression imply an agreement between Christ and Belial? An agreement which the Scriptures most strongly deny. Yet, alas! In what a variety of ways is the friendship of this world courted, by some who profess union with Christ.”98 This was why Palmer never received a fee for her speaking services and often gave back the little she received for travel expenses. This was also why Palmer constantly gave to any venture she believed extended the kingdom of heaven. For Palmer this was the Christian’s duty, all the more so if they had the means to do so.

**Palmer as a Model of Nineteenth-Century Pietism**

> “When from this altar shall arise, Joint supplication to Thy name,
> Accept, O, Lord, our sacrifice, Thyself our answering God proclaim.
> When here Thy ministers shall stand, O, give them hearts and tongues of flame,
> Hold them as stars in Thy right hand, And seal the truth in Thine own name.”99

Phoebe Palmer was the first woman widely known as a religious leader in America. A few other women may have predated her, but not amongst mainstream Protestantism. Palmer’s life was constant toil by her own choosing. She spanned the continental United States, preaching in New York, Louisiana, Kansas, and California. She spread her message to Canada and Great Britain as well. Charles White estimates that over 1.5 million people converted to holiness while she was in England and more


than that in the United States. Palmer’s 18 books sold more copies than Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard did in their lifetimes. She was widely accepted as the mother of the Holiness Movement at the time of her death in 1874. Yet within a generation of her passing, she was all but lost to history and scholars. Her holiness theology continued and her experiential Protestantism survived in the twentieth century, becoming the basis for both fundamentalism and Pentecostalism.

Palmer’s example of experiential Protestantism best fits my definition of Pietism. She was a mystic who pushed for experiential revivalism. Her entire life was dedicated to advancing revivals, believing that she was witnessing the second Pentecost. During the second Pentecost, Palmer alleged that the rules which governed the previous Christian dispensation no longer applied. Rather at this point, the new Christian receives power from a second blessing, a baptism of the Holy Spirit that was poured out equally to men and women. Her world was remade through her experiencing the divine.

It is also this new perspective of baptism of the Holy Ghost that made relationships valuable. Palmer gained rewards in heaven for her sacrifices on earth and condemned the frivolity of this world. It did not matter if it came from a Christian source or a secular one, every action that was not based in her understanding of being a Bible Christian was anathema. Institutionalized forms of Christianity did not matter, only sanctification did.

It is amazing that Palmer vanished from the public record so quickly. Just like Angela da Foligno, Palmer’s life and work vanished within a generation after her passing. George Hughes, Richard Wheatley and a few others wrote about her shortly after her death, but then she was lost until Timothy L. Smith rediscovered her in 1957. After this, another few decades passed before Charles White and Harold Raser both wrote new biographies about her in 1986 and 1987 respectively. Elaine Heath was the next to seriously look at Palmer, but this was not until 2009, over thirty years since the last serious work on Palmer. It appears that every thirty years Palmer is mentioned briefly, often times in connection to understanding the Holiness Movement or the effects of it. Palmer’s place within Protestant history for most is only a footnote, yet without this footnote, twentieth-century Protestantism is unmoored.

Palmer’s life appears destined to be lost to history, but not her legacy. She cobbled together an ecumenical movement consisting of Baptists, Presbyterians, and Episcopalians, in addition to Methodists, and produced the Holiness Movement. In doing so, she expanded the reach of experiential Protestantism beyond the institutional and denominational forms that existed at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Her contribution to the Pietist edifice was not simply to remove portions like Schleiermacher, or to buttress the structure as Kierkegaard did, rather Palmer built upon the Wesleyan protrusion and cobbled together a concrete patch with its own individual nuances at the dawn of the twentieth century.

The Holiness Movement, which will be addressed in greater detail in chapters twelve and thirteen, touched nearly every aspect of American and English life in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, from camp meetings that became permanent
vacation destinations like Martha’s Vineyard and Ocean Grove, to the founding of schools, and the involvement of women in American politics through temperance and the suffrage movements. The nineteenth century was the Methodist century in America, but Methodism dwindled in the latter half, fragmenting and morphing into two different types of churches. One remained institutionalized, resembling Wesley’s Anglicanism, with the other becoming the Nazarene’s and the charismatic Assemblies of God. The division centered on the holiness controversy. Palmer’s advocacy of holiness and the antipathy it possesses towards religious formalism presents itself as a modern expression of experiential Protestantism, which has its origins at the dawn of the Reformation, but whose journey to fundamentalism and Pentecostalism could only have occurred through Zinzendorf, Wesley, and Palmer.
“I began to realize that the Reformation had implicit emotional dimensions.” – Susan Karant-Nunn

Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer each reconstructed their Pietist inheritances. Pietism moved from innovative and dynamic into an ossified lifeless series of institutions which spanned Europe and America. The challenges of institutionalization and the growing ascendency of modernity over the daily lives of Protestants in Prussia, Denmark, and America forced Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer to abandon the establishments conceived of by Perkins, Arndt, and Spener and return to the experiential roots of Christianity. In doing so, Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer remained within their denominations and fashioned their own version of Pietism, a new version that each believed was better equipped to address the challenges of modernity. Modernity remained connected to the experiential medieval Christian mysticism of Angela di Foligno, Thomas à Kempis, and Johannes Tauler.

The contributions of Palmer, Kierkegaard, and Schleiermacher produced distinct and pervasive Protestant movements that shaped the course of the next century. These movements include Pentecostalism, Protestant liberalism, neo-liberalism, Protestant

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fundamentalism, neo-orthodoxy, and Existentialism. After briefly addressing other strands of nineteenth-century Pietism, this chapter will address the more liberal consequences of nineteenth-century Pietism, including Pentecostalism, liberal Protestantism and neo-liberalism. The subsequent chapter will address the more conservative repercussions of nineteenth-century Pietism. It must also be noted that each of the trends and consequences of nineteenth-century Pietism are not entirely liberal or conservative. There are many Pentecostals who are rather conservative in their worldview, but lack theological restraint and are therefore categorized as liberal for the sake of this chapter. In like manner, existentialism, which is categorized as conservative in the subsequent chapter, primarily because of its impact and prioritization of ethics, certainly possesses numerous political and ethical liberal luminaries.

**Neo-Pietists and National Pietists**

> “Jesus is Victor.”

– Johann Christoph Blumhardt

Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer represent the three most influential and impactful Pietists of the nineteenth century, but they were hardly the only ones attempting to preserve or maintain Pietism. While Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer rejected the institutionalized forms of Pietism, there were many whose religious worldview and Christian orientation were dependent upon the very establishments they sought to remake, undermine, and circumvent. In Prussia, the Halle Pietists spread throughout the emerging German state to wield power through religious and secular

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forms such as Prussianism. In Denmark, Mynster, Martensen, and Grundtvig all represent inheritors of Pietism to one degree or another. Each sought to transform Denmark to their idealized forms. As a result, all three represented the Christendom which Kierkegaard so vehemently fought against. In America, the Puritan legacy of Perkins and Edwards gave way to dead doctrine and deism. Methodism grew and crumbled within the century, in part due to the holiness movement, both providing the life for the denomination as well as its biggest foe, which the institution expelled at the end of the century.

Just as Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer’s visions of experiential Protestantism varied, the character of institutionalized Pietists differed as well. Grundtvig and Mynster fought over power in Copenhagen, while the Methodist Episcopal Church and Free Methodists split over pew rents and slavery. In Prussia, Pietism produced both Kant, whose philosophy made way for revolutions, and conservative landed elites who sought the status quo. These conflicts existed alongside the growing antagonism between a laity who viewed their salvation as their personal responsibility and championed Luther’s notion of the priesthood of all believers and the clergy. The clergy reinforced this antagonism by preaching the same message, which undermined their necessity in the eyes of their more pious followers. The differences within nineteenth-century Pietists grew to the point that Young Hegelians such as Feuerbach assaulted what he called the new Pietists, or neo-Pietists.

These new Pietists, in as much as they existed, differed from their older counterparts only by a matter of degree. The Hegelians believed that these Pietists dominated Prussia and Protestant Europe. No specific theological difference exists to
separate the neo-Pietists from their counter parts, and theologically they are not that distinct from Francke. Faith remains an experience of God and grace is the power in the experience. Personal conversion is still the new birth as advocated by Arndt. Karl Barth’s father Fritz was numbered among these new Pietists and he understood his conversion as a new life and a transformation based upon his “personal contact with Jesus;” this contact personally became “the most wonderful and glorious of all God’s works.”

If anything separated the neo-Pietists from the older Pietists, it was their insistence that right doctrine should be maintained along with a right life. Perkins, Arndt, and Spener, along with Francke, Zinzendorf, and Wesley all believed that doctrine mattered but doctrine was necessarily subservient to experience. This experience prompted new doctrines to be formed and old doctrines to be reinterpreted, but doctrines still mattered. For the neo-Pietist, the doctrines that were invented and reinterpreted by their predecessors now stood as moral structures that needed to be followed as any other essential theological proclamation. As a result of their emphasis on doctrine and morality, the neo-Pietists eschewed revolution and rationalism. Both revolution and rationalism were the underlying causes of social and moral degradation, and were evils that needed to be combated. For many neo-Pietists, the sinful nature of man needed to be subordinated to a strong state. This subordination included not only individuals but also the church; the state would become the mechanism for divine victory.

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Johann Christoph Blumhardt (d. 1880) and George Muller (d. 1898) both represent the morality central to neo-Pietists. Blumhardt saw the world as an unfolding eschatological struggle between the forces of Christ and the forces of sin. This prompted his battle cry of “Jesus is Victor.” Blumhardt believed that understanding Christ’s victory was essential to overcoming all personal struggles. He argued “Change the night into day by keeping your sights set on the Savior, who is the final victor – the first and the last. With Jesus, daylight always returns.” Blumhardt’s eschatological proclamation resembles modern day devotional literature. George Muller also tapped into the devotional impulse found in neo-Pietism. Muller’s greatest impact was combining orphanage work pioneered by Francké with the dispensationalist Plymouth Brethren in England. Muller’s orphanages typified the promethean spirituality of Francké by equating faith and works along the lines of Johannes Evangelista Gossner (d. 1858), a leader in the German Evangelical Reform devotional movement.

As many neo-Pietists sought a stronger state, the connection between Pietists and nationalism grew. The discussion surrounding the role of religion and the rise of nationalism is not a single sided debate. Rather the relationship between nationalism and religion resembles a continuum. On this continuum there are points which argue that religion has no role in the development of nationalism, that religion is a tool of social and political elites in the formation of the modern nation state, and that religion is the driving

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4 Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 120-121.

force behind nationalism. Each argument has evidence supporting its thesis. Depending upon the country and the strength of various churches and states the relationship differs.

Elie Kedourie and Gerhard Ritter argue that the religious impact of the development of the German nation state was minimal. For Kedourie and Ritter the linguistic and political ties dominated religious forces. While language and politics were central to the formation of the nationalism in the nineteenth century, religion was another instrument used to accomplish this political end. Michael Sauter and Hans Ulrich Wehler argue that religion was a useful tool in the construction of the state. The 1788 Edict of Religion and the Kulturkampf serve as examples of the state wielding religion and the fear generated by religion to promote a stronger Prussia. The church did not oppose the state, but supported the state, since the state launched attacks against a mutual enemy. The same basic argument was put forward by Kevin Cramer when defining the composition of the German State. Austria, the seat of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation, was actively excluded because of their confessional identity. The emerging German state, with the exception of Bavaria, was to be a Protestant State. Since Austrians remained Catholic following the Reformation, their German identity could not be confirmed.

Even more convincing than religions service to the state was the use of religious language and themes that the state adopted. Nationalism embraced the idea of a chosen people. This notion of chosenness made political leaders into religious leaders. The construction of a new state equated princes, kings, and revolutionaries with prophets such as Moses calling his people out of Egypt. The individualism inherent within Pietism
created an “inner fatherland” according to Hartmut Lehman. This inner fatherland made Pietists doubly chosen, first for being the elect of God and second for being elect as a member of the emerging nation.

**Holiness and Pentecostals**

>“Therefore are they next the throne, Serve their Maker day and night: God resides among his own, God doth in his saints delight.”

— Phoebe Palmer

In America, nationalism took on a new dimension in the nineteenth century, namely populism. Beginning with Andrew Jackson’s rise to the Presidency, the movement continued to grow throughout the nineteenth century as dissatisfaction with industrialization and modern capitalism took root. American populism was far more than the failures of William Jennings Bryan and the Populist Party. American populism sought to redeem the masses of Americans from a country that passed them by. Lawrence Goodwyn argues that “At bottom Populism was, quite simply, an expression of self-respect. It was not an individual trait, but a collective one, surfacing as the shared hope of millions organized by the Alliance into its cooperative crusade.” It should come as little surprise that the very territories of the West and South that saw the largest attraction to Populism were also the same regions where revivals continued to burn past

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the Civil War. The growing holiness movement grew from the same dissatisfaction with modernity that fueled populism, but added a religious dimension to the earthly struggles. Holiness promised not only the promise of a better future, but also gave meaning to current sorrows and provided a mechanism to combat those struggles as well.

Just as populism was not one thing, holiness was not one thing either. While Phoebe Palmer’s contribution to the holiness movement cannot be and should not be diminished, she was not the only voice advocating holiness. Phoebe was converted to holiness from her sister Sarah, and many Methodists believed Christian Perfection was the essential theology of Wesley. In addition to these Methodist voices, Perfectionism was in the air in the 1830s. Charles Finney, the Oberlin School under Asa Mahan, and William E. Boardman (d. 1886) all advocated for entire sanctification from a non-Methodist perspective. The holiness movement continued to grow throughout the century in the United States and England with the Keswick movement. As the century came to a close, holiness was purged from Episcopal Methodism. The result was the formation of holiness denominations that themselves split into two camps. The radical camp became the Pentecostals at the beginning of the twentieth century, while the reactionary holiness camp became evangelicals and fundamentalists. These two Protestant phenomena were a byproduct of the holiness movement, its contributing members, and a wider Protestant world. Unlike Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard, who introduced a new perspective within Pietism and the Protestant world, Palmer’s voice was one in a chorus. Hers was likely the loudest voice, contributing the most to the holiness movement and its future growth. To understand the resultant denominations and ideologies, the other voices need to be heard as well. Only then will the explosion of
Pentecostals and fundamentalists at the dawn of the twentieth century make sense, and only then will Palmer’s legacy be understood.

Charles Grandison Finney.

“The millennium may come in this country in three years.”

— Charles G. Finney

Finney is arguably the most impactful ordained American preacher of the nineteenth century. Finney’s greatest preaching rivals, Phoebe Palmer and Dwight Moody, were both not ordained, and Billy Sunday was not ordained until the twentieth century. On August 29, 1792 Charles Grandison Finney was born in Connecticut, but spent most of his young life in the already burning over district of New York. When Charles was two his family moved to Oneida County. Charles called this area of New York a wilderness, and though the area was still largely unsettled, the real wilderness for Charles was the Finney home. Charles was the youngest of seven children to Sylvester and Rebecca Finney. While Sylvester and Rebecca attended church semi-regularly, they were not particularly devout and in his auto-biography, Charles argued that “Neither of my parents were professing Christians, and among our neighbors there were very few religious people. I seldom heard a sermon.” Likely Charles overstated his lack of religious upbringing in order to demonstrate a greater shift with his conversion


10 Billy Sunday was ordained in 1903.

experience, as many did in their spiritual autobiographies. It is known that one of Charles’ older brothers was also ordained, though he never engendered the level of notoriety that Charles developed.

As Charles grew in wisdom and in stature, his plans for the future focused on the law. In his autobiography Finney maintains that the first praying community he found himself a part of was during his high school years in New England. Still, he did not look very highly upon those New England Christians, believing them to be insincere with their praise of God. Any notion of grace was absent from the high schooler’s understanding of the world, but Finney understood the law. During this time Finney planned on attending Yale, but his teacher advised him against it. In order for Finney to get a law degree from Yale, Finney would need to spend four years of his life studying. His tutor told him that with private study Charles could be ready on his own in two years.

Absent a degree from Yale, Finney began to study law. In his studies Finney found that many older authors quoted Scripture and referenced portions of the Mosaic Law as the source for religious authority. This prompted Finney to purchase a Bible for the first time in his life. There were a number of factors that led Finney to become the world famous revivalist. The religious enthusiasm that constantly swept over New York was still taking place. He also had the testimonies from all of his class mates, and now Finney had a Bible. Finney read his Bible for legal issues but also for devotional ones.

Before too long, Finney found himself a part of the Second Great Awakening. Swept up in one of the revivals, Finney attempted to pray. He usually found the exercise fruitless. Worse than that, Finney believed that he was rejected by God. Later he surmised that God rejected his prayers because he did not truly pray in faith, nor did he
know what he was asking God to do. How could God give him something that he did not know he wanted?

After attending a revival meeting in the fall of 1821, Finney sought to understand what God required of him. Declaring “I would settle the question of my soul’s salvation at once, that if it were possible I would make my peace with God.” Finney headed out to the woods to pray alone. He assumed that as he marched alone into the woods his prayers were stopped. Instead of a God who reached out to him, Finney’s God refused him. In a moment of anguish he called out that God must hear him since God promised to do so in the Bible. With this heartfelt declaration the silence ended; at last he was not past hope. The God who refused him now embraced him and Finney broke down in tears. As he wept he was filled with joy and love and Finney recalls that the waves of joy continued to pass over him to the point that he believed he would die from them. He felt his heart had turned to all liquid. This was his first spiritual baptism.

He did not die, but his life did take on a new purpose that fall day. When he returned to his law office he found that the law did not satisfy him. Finney recalled that when he began his spiritual journey he surmised that if God ever accepted him he would abandon the law and become a preacher. Now back in his office looking over various lawsuit requests, he refused accept any of them. The legal controversies of others became odious and offensive. Finney’s desire to practice the law was over and from that moment on he was a preacher. He was always taller than his schoolmates and was an


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attractive young man. These traits, along with his intellect, made him a natural leader, and so he led. Finney began preaching two years before his ordination.

In the spring of 1822 Finney began his theological training with Presbyterians. Once ordained he officially began his preaching career with campaigns in the burned over district of New York. These campaigns officially lasted for a dozen years, ending in 1834. These years typify the final stage of the Second Great Awakening. Noticeably absent from these revivals was the notion of entire sanctification. Finney did not arrive at this doctrinal position until after his career on the circuit began to wane. These dozen years marked the zenith of his influence on American life. His sermons were spellbinding, as he instituted what became known as “new measures.”

Finney’s new measures began with him recounting his own conversion. From here he litigated the case for Christ. His training as a lawyer was used, not in a courtroom, but in churches, barns, fields, and tents. Intermixed with his salvation suit Finney interjected personal examples from those who attended, private prayers, personal conversations, and songs. All of this was done without a printed sermon. Finney, like Schleiermacher, believed that written sermons restricted the preachers’ ability to engage with his audience. Unlike Schleiermacher, who dwindled his written sermons down to an outline and then abandoned writing anything at all, Finney gradually added an outline to his sermons in order to provide himself with some needed structure. Finney needed some structure to his new measures, as the revival meetings usually lasted a few days and his sermons, intermixed with hymns and testimonials, lasted about two hours each day of the revival. Probably the most notable feature of this new style was Finney’s innovation of the anxious bench.
The anxious bench grew out of a revival in Rochester, New York, where Finney called for any in attendance who would give their hearts to God to come forward and take a seat in the first few rows. The seat was for those anxious for their souls and resembled an altar call, wherein those who sought salvation could receive a special prayer. They also received focused attention by Finney himself. Finney believed that quite individual attention was more fruitful than loud bolstering sermons preaching death and damnation. Like Palmer, Finney urged those who sought salvation to come to a decision quickly; no time could be lost, as no assurance of tomorrow could be given. Only the sinner could change the course of their life, and the anxious seat propelled the sinner to come forward and begin the change towards righteousness.

Finney’s anxious bench, like most of his sermons, focused on invoking action. One of his most famous and often cited sermons, “Niagara Falls,” did the same. In this sermon Finney presented a scenario where a man was lost in a deep ravine. The man continued his journey, unconscious of danger as he is about to take a fatal step which will surely end with his destruction. Of course the only responsible thing to do is to cry out to the man, “Stop!” Still the man must choose to heed the words. If he ignores you he will perish, but if he heeds your words, you are his savior. The word “stop” rung in the man’s ears and caused him to instantly turn away from the precipice. This sermon also expressed Finney’s basic theological presupposition. The total depravity of man is evidenced through the universal unconscious odyssey near perilous precipices. Original sin as such is not a transmuted pollution, rather the disregard of inherent dangers.

Finney’s theology was influenced by Jonathan Edwards, Nathaniel William Taylor, and New Haven Theology.
Finney’s notion of faith is also present in this sermon. The man could not simply assent to the notion of stopping; he actually needed to stop. Similarly, faith is more than a mental assent to particular principles. It requires trust that the words are true, and action along those lines. Unlike many of Finney’s more Calvinist cohorts, he believed that the call to stop was universal, and not limited only to the elect. The opportunity for faith was open to all, but God is not under any obligation to save any. Christ’s death was to remove the obstacle created by man that prevented God from the possibility of forgiving sinners. The atonement serves only to remove the necessary wrath that God should pour out on humanity; it does not save. God chooses to allow individuals to save themselves through exercising faith and turning toward God. Finney argued that “instead of Christ's having satisfied retributive justice, and borne just what sinners deserve, he had only satisfied public justice, by honoring the law both in his obedience and death; and therefore rendering it safe for God to pardon sin, and to pardon the sins of any man, and of all men, who would repent and believe in Christ.”¹³ In other words, Finney advocated that God helps those who help themselves.

This departure from Westminster Confession and Calvinist theology created a “new school” of theology. Finney advocated that the old school was damned since it paralyzed individuals who believed that God would simply convert those who God wills eventually. Agency is lost, and faith become moot. Since all are sinners, all need to hear the call to stop and to repent. Since repentance and a relationship with God is voluntary,

Finney believes that this old school dogmatic position forbids freedom and genuine repentance.

In addition to his preaching career, Finney was involved in numerous church plants. Finney’s connection to three New York Churches demonstrated his theological and confessional maturation. He was always less interested in denominational ties than his theological message. Finney’s participation with Union Church in New York was his first real involvement in church planting and he chose this to be the occasion to begin his separation from the Presbyterian Church. Union was the first of several churches to bill themselves as “Free Presbyterians.” Free, in this context, was the same as the division within the Methodist churches over the refusal to charge pew rents. From New York City, Finney moved to Rochester, the fastest growing city in the United States in the 1820s, in part due to the completion of the Erie Canal. It was here that Finney’s anxious bench was first used. The third church Finney was involved with was in New York’s Five Points. Twenty years before Palmer’s missions to the district, Finney sought to extend his revival message to what he believed to be the most irreligious population in the city. In 1832 Finney took over a theater. The Chatham Street Chapel or Broadway Tabernacle was a beacon to the debauched. Here Finney preached against the sins of alcohol, slavery, and the masons. He even refused communion to anyone who owned slaves. Finney also broke with the Presbyterians at this time. The tabernacle was a congregational church. The old school/new school controversy had grown and Finney, the most famous preacher in America was facing the prospect of a heresy trial if he remained a Presbyterian. Finney distanced himself from the Presbyterians in 1832, and he formally separated ties in March of 1836.
1832 was also the beginning of Oberlin College. The school, founded by Asa Mahan, the Tappan Brothers, and anti-slave rebels expelled from Lane Theological Seminary, was a school dedicated to teach manual labor skills. Finney, who never graduated from college, served as the head of the theology department. In addition to the innovation of uniting the head, hand, and heart in instruction, the school was revolutionary in its acceptance of blacks and women. Admittance to the school was based upon merit, regardless of color or sex.

The school really came into being in 1835 when they erected a large tent in the front of a few buildings. The tent could hold three thousand people and had a large ten foot blue flag from the center pole which read “Holiness to the Lord.” The school resembled a tent meeting, both in its construction and content. This was the same year that Finney and others flirted with the concept of retrenchment. The idea was to reject the materialism of the Jacksonian era and to live a minimalist lifestyle. This retrenchment away from things of this world eliminated fancy dress, furniture, and diet. The dietary restrictions eliminated all stimulants, including tea, coffee, spices, and tobacco, as well as most meats and grains. The Oberlin retrenchment diet was largely the work of Sylvester Graham (d. 1851), who inspired the Graham cracker, and nearly entirely consisted of fruits and vegetables. For the next two years fasting and the Graham diet dominated Oberlin, until rumors of mass starvation circulated. Finney and Graham were called “starvation monarchs” and styled champions of “evangelical anorexia.”

Amidst the experimental retrenchment and evangelical anorexia, Finney’s awakening to Christian Perfection occurred. This was prompted by Mahan in 1836, as mentioned in Chapter five. Finney, who is often called the father of holiness, converted
to the doctrine late in his career, alongside his diminishing popularity. Still, his name lent
credence to the doctrine of perfection and supported Palmer’s notion of holiness.
Palmer’s holiness conversion occurred only a few months after Finney’s but before
Finney really spoke of holiness outside of Oberlin. As mentioned in the previous chapter,
Palmer’s holiness theology impacted Finney far more than his theology impacted her.

Finney’s notion of holiness or entire sanctification, like his new theology, was
dependent upon the notion of a free will. Finney equates the will with the heart, and both
must be free and voluntarily consecrated to God. Finney argued that it was the privilege
of Christians to live without known sin, but sinlessness was not an impossibility along
antinomian lines, rather it was an ongoing voluntary act which the Christian chooses to
do. Finney believed that God was obliged to provide the ability for entire sanctification
since God desires holiness. Holiness is nothing but obedience to the law, unwavering and
perfect. His early lectures on the subject state “Sanctification is obedience, and, as a
progressive thing, consists in obeying God more and more perfectly.”\(^{14}\)

Finney, like Palmer, separated perfection from feelings, but Finney’s perfection
involved emotionalism to a degree not found with Palmer. Finney records a few
instances of conversions to holiness that include some people dropping down and others
groaning so loudly that they could be heard throughout the house after the Holy Spirit fell
upon them.

By the 1840s, when Palmer was expanding her holiness ministry, Finney’s
popularity dwindled. When he entered Boston in the 1820s, he was heralded as a popular


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preacher and invited to speak at countless congregations. Upon his return visit in 1843, he found a great difficulty “in the way of overcoming Unitarianism, and all the forms of error there, is the timidity of Christians and churches.” He still held five revivals there, but not to the audiences he once commanded. Those who welcomed Finney into their churches were people that he believed to be radicals.

With contracting influence in America, it should come as no surprise that Finney expanded his revival circuit to England. Finney’s works, published in England as well as the United States, remained a popular attraction overseas. Finney’s first wife, Lydia Andrews, died in 1848 and his second wife, Elizabeth Atkinson, urged him to travel to England. Following the advice of his wife, he traveled twice to England, once in 1849 and again in 1858. Just like Palmer his trips included Scotland, Wales, and Ireland as well. His journeys were equally successful there.

While in England in 1850, Mahan resigned as president of Oberlin and his position was shortly thereafter given to Finney, on assurance that he could continue his preaching tours. Even though Finney failed to gather crowds to him like his earlier life, he was able to attract a good deal of money and attention to the school. Until his death in 1875, Finney remained a lecturer and president of Oberlin. His last full day alive was a Sunday, where he attended church with his second wife before spending a quiet day together. That night he experienced a heart attack and died early Monday August 16, 1875, two weeks before his 83rd birthday.

Finney’s contribution to experiential Protestantism echoed Palmer’s. Both advocated for notions of holiness, and while the renown for Finney’s preaching did not abate as Palmer’s did, he was in more than one way an advocate for her interpretation of Wesley, especially concerning notions of Christian perfection. Finney’s mature theology was a synthesis of his earlier message, which resonated during the Second Great Awakening and Palmer’s Altar Theology. The subsequent liberal trends towards Pentecostalism and even the more conservative tendency of Fundamentalism run through Finney and his application of Palmer, especially as this message developed and dominated Oberlin.

**Oberlin and Boardman.**

“*May the presence of thy love Rest upon us from above; May thy glory and thy grace Shadow o'er this holy place; Shield us by thy power divine O thou God of Oberlin.*”

Oberlin holiness grew out of the experiences of Asa Mahan and Charles Finney. As mentioned in Chapter five, Mahan’s notion of entire sanctification was similar to Finney’s. Both maintained that a free will was necessary, and that perfection was a product of a free will. In addition to notions of freedom, Mahan’s greatest contribution was to identify Christian perfection as a product of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Mahan’s familiarity with Palmer, as well as his background in philosophy and theology, shaped his understanding of Wesley’s doctrine. It should also be noted that at the same time as Oberlin perfectionism grew, the doctrines of simplicity were also popular.

Perfection and simplicity went hand in hand. As such, notions of what constituted a sin or immoral action were also reduced to more basic volitional acts, rather than a Calvinist notion that all acts which do not directly glorify God constitute sin. Much like Wesley, eliminating the distractions of the world served as a means to achieve perfection. Morality was also equated with simplicity and moral actions were by their definition simple and therefore perfect.

Presbyterian William E. Boardman serves as an example of Palmer’s holiness extending beyond herself and Oberlin. Boardman’s popular work, *The Christian Higher Life*, published in 1858, defined holiness in non-Wesleyan terms. Boardman attended Palmer’s Tuesday Meetings and read Finney and Mahan. Through these encounters, he attempted to synthesize these teachings on the second conversion. This second conversion begins the Christian’s holy life as advocated by Palmer and Wesley. Boardman’s emphasis on the means of sanctification outweighed the notion of perfection.

Boardman interpreted the doctrine of justification as an instantaneous pardon. While the sinner is pardoned from past sins, this only served to provide a future where sins no longer dominated the Christian’s life. Sanctification therefore was the ongoing process of shedding sins while the Christian apprehends Christ and his ongoing work in the lives of Christians. All together Boardman’s notion of sanctification is not radically different than a tradition Christian understanding of the doctrine, except that he was willing to declare along with Palmer, Finney, and Mahan that the Christian is perfect, even though sanctification is not truly complete. Boardman differs largely in his language that the second conversion is when the Christian puts on Christ and therefore begins the process of gradually conforming their heart to Christ's. Boardman calls
sanctification complete in order to align himself with Palmer and other Perfectionists, even though he really argues that it is ongoing and as such is not complete.

**Keswick.**

“The Divine Order is Fact, Faith, Feeling.”

While Boardman attempted to synthesize the holiness message of Oberlin and Palmer, the true synthesis of ideas took place in Keswick, England. Beginning around 1873, the seeds sown by American evangelists in England began to bear a different fruit. While Finney and Palmer both sowed, these seeds were watered by R. Pearsall Smith and his wife, Hannah Whithall Smith. As was the case for the Palmers, Hannah’s fame was greater than her husbands and she was the more convincing preacher. As mentioned in Chapter five, Smith was greatly influenced by the writings of Palmer. Both women had unemotional conversion experiences and sought after the facts of salvation before anticipating feelings. Both were also urged towards conversion after the tragic death of their children. Smith’s occurred during the business man revival of the 1850s. Following Smith’s conversion, she began a series of campaigns to reform society, along with promoting entire sanctification along Palmer’s lines.

The Smith’s message of entire sanctification came at a crucial moment for the three thousand or so souls in the small village of Keswick on the south bank of the Greta. Small meetings were also held in London that connected the holiness message and victory over sin. Conventions were held in and around Keswick for nearly the next thirty

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years. The next thirty years also saw a dramatic change for Hanna Whithall Smith, who grew tired of the holiness message. By the mid-80s she considered her old holiness friends “dreadfully religious,”18 and was embarrassed by constant requests that she preach with them. Smith developed a new feminist theology that she called “The Unselfishness of God.” In her feminist theology, she argued that women could hold God responsible to meet the same standard of selflessness that good mothers require of themselves. Divine love is linked to selfless motherhood more than entire sanctification. Still, even without Smith’s continual support, Keswick grew. Ironically, as Smith grew more conservative, so too did Keswick.

Smith illustrates the next step in Palmer’s feminist theology. In Palmer’s Promise of the Father, she repeatedly argued that she was not advocating for female ordination, yet by appealing to notions of prophesy like Perkins she blurred the lines between deaconess and presbyter, lay and ordained. The cause for female ordination was also championed by Palmer’s very message and leadership role in the nineteenth century, an example that Smith and others grew on.

It was the perfectionist message which dominated early Keswick theology. Keswick took the Oberlin message of simplicity and reinterpreted it along more traditional Calvinist lines. Keswick’s notion of simplicity argued that all things that were not simply of God were sinful. Alcohol, tobacco, and luxuries were all evil indulgences and not matters of faith. This new hypersensitivity to sin resulted in a new power to

discern motives as either good or sinful, largely based upon the agent and effect. If the agent was a justified and sanctified Christian and the effect was one which brought glory to God, the actions were acceptable. If the result only brought vain pleasure, it was a sin. Actions deemed acceptable in Oberlin were condemned as sinful at Keswick, yet both based the decree upon notions of simplicity.

The Keswick movement began in 1873, but the following year it matured as the details of the Oxford convention were settled, and the call for the Oxford Union Meetings for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness began on August 8. Oxford provided a key development within the Keswick movement since the city possessed respected and ordained ministers, as well as theologically knowledgeable laymen. The atmosphere of the Oxford Union was harmonious. Scores of pastors from different denominations prayed together and studied scriptures along the Keswick model.

The Keswick convention continued to grow, now reinforced by Oxford. Like many of the revivals that Palmer and Finney heralded in the United States and United Kingdom, Keswick put up large tents to house the thousands assembled. At the beginning of the twentieth century it was estimated that nearly ten thousand people took part in the annual meetings, with forty to fifty different speakers. The messages of these speakers was perfection, along with Palmer’s, Finney’s, and Smith’s insistence that “Faith, is not to be confused with feeling.” As with the other holiness leaders, feeling is the final step rather than the initial cause. Keswick deemed the divine order to begin with the fact of John 3:16 that God loves them, and following this faith proceeds. This faith,

like Palmer’s notion of faith, is grounded in the belief that God loves and accepts them. The feeling comes last and is directed towards God, who loved them first.

The Keswick notion of fact, faith, and feeling all connected with divine love produces seven features of a perfect Christian life. The first is sinlessness. The Christian must first be sanctified not simply justified. Once the Christian is sanctified they now possess authority, to which obedience, communion, and consecration follow. From these, blessedness and eternal glory rightly follow. As with Palmer, the glory of the individual is stressed, along with the glory of God. Sanctification leads to faith and continual surrender and reliance upon Christ. It was this message from the Keswick movement that returned back to the United States and eventually produced Pentecostalism at the beginning of the twentieth century, partly from Moody in the 1890s, and in conjunction with other holiness transplants.

**Holiness Controversy.**

“We believe also that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is obtainable by a definite act of appropriating faith on the part of the fully cleansed believer.”

— Benjamin Harden Irwin

The conflicts and growing tension between the established denominations and the holiness movement also played a significant role in the construction of Pentecostalism. Throughout the 1880s the holiness movement grew to more radical extremes, pushing the limits of sinlessness and evidence of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, including snake-handling, speaking in tongues, and fainting spells, later identified as being “slain in the

20 Donald Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism*, 97.
spirit.” The majority of these extreme measures took place in the South and West, largely among rural Methodists, the same areas where Populists and Palmer found the greatest success in the later years of her life. Since a good portion of the holiness movement took place within Methodism itself, a rift grew between the New England Methodists and the rest of the MEC. George W. Wilson highlighted the tension that only continued to grow in the thirty years after Palmer’s death with his work *Methodist Theology vs. Methodist Theologians*, which came out in 1904. Wilson argued that much of New England Methodism was dying. His analysis mirrors the critiques of others, as addressed in chapter nine.

One example of the slow death of Methodism and the gradual disappearance of the holiness movement in New England was the evolution of the holiness camps. During the 1880s and 90s the more radical holiness camp associations of the South and West spun off of the National Camp Meeting Association. The National Camp Meeting Association became the camp association of New England rather than the country. It also became the canary in the coalmine for the MEC, which was doing the same thing with the holiness movement in general. Just like the dynamic growth of Methodism during the first half of the century, the camp meetings were always energetic and capable of great change. By the middle of the century, the change began to exclude mobility and certain sites that had regularly hosted revivals became permanent.

Instead of moving to where the revival was, the Camp Meeting Association dictated the location of a revival and even scheduled them. By 1856 the camps lost their tents and permanent cottages rose up in their stead. When the Civil War ended, these cottages resembled middle-class resort communities, including streets that radiated from
the outdoor auditorium. A decade after the Civil War concluded, camp sites such as Martha’s Vineyard and Ocean Grove began to lose their religious identity to tourism. The revival sites became vacation destinations for those who were in no way inclined to holiness but wanted to vacation at a seaside resort. The evangelical push towards physical vigor and exercise only added to the sites appeal as vacation hotspots.

Throughout the 1870s and 80s the holiness camp sites remained committed to holiness and forbade alcohol and transport on the Sabbath. Hundreds still came down to the altar in the auditorium to receive the second blessing, convert, or reclaim grace. The slide away from holiness was drastic, as the 1894 Ocean Grove reports read, “Several persons were at the altar and some were converted,”\(^{21}\) a far cry from the hundreds who experienced entire sanctification a decade earlier. The holiness camps founded to secure revivals were born again, but not into holiness, rather their new birth was as a camp site and vacation destination of the wealthy.

With the slow death of traditional Methodism, the more extreme holiness Methodists only continued to grow in power and in numbers. The two factions of Methodism shared a common ancestry back to Wesley, but most American Methodists were relatively new members of the church. Within a few generations, Methodists grew from obscurity to the largest denomination in the country, but loyalty to the denomination did not run deep. By the 1890s, the educated and established Methodists undertook a series of maneuvers to expel their holiness counterparts. These maneuvers included

denouncing prominent Methodist clergy who participated in the Holiness movement. The Holiness movement was always suspect to some degree. Since the movement and the corresponding National Holiness Association were independent of the MEC, and many of its members did not even identify as Methodists, the conclusion was to break ties with pastors and churches connected to holiness.

The result was the gradual development of new holiness denominations, the largest of which were The Church of God [Anderson, Indiana], The Church of the Nazarene, The Evangelical Church of North America, and the Salvation Army. Not all of these holiness churches became Pentecostal. Another division took place at the beginning of the twentieth century that divided Pentecostal holiness from conservative holiness, also known as evangelicalism or fundamentalism. By 1887 the Holiness Association had 206 evangelists who preached full time. Four years later that number grew to over 300. A common trait of holiness churches was a weekday meeting for the promotion of holiness, modeled after Palmer’s Tuesday Meetings. The meetings outnumbered full time holiness pastors by at least fifty.

In the later decades of the nineteenth century, the future divisions between the holiness movements were already taking place. Largely the division was regional rather than ideological. The southern holiness churches remained far more conservative than did their western counterparts. Even those deemed too radical to remain within the MEC did not always embrace the second blessing as much as they advocated for holiness. Georgia was the key holiness state in the South. Methodist Bishop and president of Emory University, Warren Akin Candler (d. 1941), the brother of Asa Griggs Candler (d. 1929), the founder of Coca-Cola, was the central figure in Atlanta Holiness. In 1884
Warren Candler hosted the annual convention of the North Georgia Holiness Association. Throughout the meeting, Candler denounced sin through fiery sermons. He railed against the temptations of this world and the need for sanctification. Still he never fully embraced the notion of the second blessing of the Holy Spirit.

In the West the more radical forms of holiness grew. Following the examples of Palmer and Finney, the Holy Spirit took a preeminent position in the burgeoning ecclesiology. Like Palmer, the idea that a second or subsequent Pentecost was upon the people only transformed the older theological expectations held by Methodists and other evangelical Protestants into a more evangelical and charismatic association. The notions of dispensationalism that grew from the Plymouth Brethren echoed and reinforced these holiness preachers. John Nelson Darby (d. 1882) founded the British Plymouth brethren earlier in the nineteenth century, and as dispensationalism spread, it influenced American revivalism. Following Darby, many holiness preachers spoke of different dispensations or covenants God had with humanity. The first covenant was with Adam, then Abraham, Moses, and the Old Testament Prophets. Following these Old Testament dispensations where God operated under a covenant of works, a covenant of grace emerged with the Christian dispensation. Much of the languages of differing covenants existed before Darby’s dispensations, and similar claims can be found with Wesley and even the Puritans. Darby’s innovation was the extent to which he took these claims of dispensations. Darby echoed the second century heresies of Montanism and Marcionism, where new prophesies coming from Montanus or Marcion superseded earlier claims. Both also pointed to themselves as the third age and the new covenant of the Holy Spirit.
Under the spreading view of dispensationalism, the new dispensation was upon the holiness preachers of the nineteenth century, and the era of the Holy Spirit was upon them. With the advent of the Holy Spirit, the previous era of Christ was over, along with its rules and expectations. The promise of the Father sending the Holy Spirit reworked the rules concerning prophesy for Palmer, but it also brought new blessings. The new blessings quickly became known as the threefold, or for some fourfold, blessing. The three blessings consisted of justification, sanctification, and now the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Neither Palmer nor Finney fully advocated for this third blessing to the extent that was expected at the dawn of the twentieth century. For both Palmer and Finney, the baptism of the Holy Ghost largely consisted of entire sanctification, an expansion of traditional Christian notions of sanctification. For them perfection was the blessing. For those who came later, the baptism of the Holy Ghost included tangible signs, most noticeably glossolalia, or “speaking in tongues.” Other blessings followed as well, including being slain in the spirit and holy laughter.

Those who advocated for a fourfold blessing rather than a threefold blessing abandoned the theme of sanctification and instead identified salvation, healing, baptism of the Spirit, and the second coming of Christ as the four blessings. Another name for fourfold blessing was the “full Gospel,” or “fourfold Gospel.” With the continual outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the belief that Christians were living in this final eschaton grew to supreme status for some. From here the miracles of tongues was not only possible, but expected as evidence of a Pentecostal baptism. Other blessings, such as divine healing of the body and regeneration were added to the more common themes of repentance, justification, and sanctification.
This early Pentecostalism was attractive for those who were already inclined towards holiness and Pietism. The individualism and subjective encounters of the divine inherent in these ideologies found a new life completing the Christian message in the lives of individuals themselves. The drama of creation, fall, and redemption became personal with their own accounts of creation and sin before turning to Christ. Christ’s birth was now a birth within, his death was echoed in conversion, and the coming of the Holy Spirit was also present with the triumphant glory of the third blessing of the Holy Spirit, glossolalia.

Speaking in tongues grew from an anticipated or rare practice to one that in the 1948 Pentecostal Fellowship of North America was codified. In article five of their statement of faith, the Pentecostals affirm, “We believe that the full gospel includes holiness of heart and life, healing for the body and baptism in the Holy Spirit with the initial evidence of speaking in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.”22 Other practices, like being slain in the spirit, and holy laughter, increasingly became common, especially in the latter half of the twentieth century. Both involve a form of Holy Spirit possession where the believer is rendered incapable of autonomous movement, either through involuntary jerks, including falling over, or uncontrollable laughter. Examples of holy laughter are found within Wesley’s Baldwin Street meetings as well as modern Pentecostalism.

Holiness is not and cannot be one thing, rather as a movement each leader has a different interpretation of what Christian perfection should entail. Palmer’s view of

holiness differed from Wesley’s, just as Wesley’s view differed from those of Tauler, Arndt, and Spener. Finney and the Oberlin faculty’s main contribution to the debate over holiness was bringing Wesley and Palmer’s conception of holiness to a non-Methodist audience. Once here other theological conceptions, especially those connected with Calvinism, reinterpreted the doctrines of holiness as espoused by Wesley and Palmer. In England, leaders such as Finney Hannah Whithall Smith laid the groundwork for the Keswick conventions and their interpretation of holiness that was mixed with charismatic exuberance and refined theology. In America the experiential enthusiasm of holiness melded with populism and American individualism, which only served to fuel the birth of Pentecostalism in the same areas that denominational affiliation was at its lowest and Palmer’s revivals had the greatest success.

**The Birth of Pentecostalism.**

“He had a special work for me to do.”23 – Charles F. Parham

The official birth of Pentecostalism was January 1, 1901 in Topeka, Kansas at Charles Fox Parham’s small Bethel Bible School. Parham (d. 1929) began a healing service on New Year’s Eve, and during the early hours of the New Year, Miss Agnes Ozman was heard speaking in other tongues. Parham expected the outpouring of the spirit. He received training from Methodist holiness teachers and the Baptist Benjamin Harden Irwin. Irwin was the most controversial holiness preacher of the late nineteenth century. Irwin expected his disciples to receive a baptism in fire. This figurative fire was

the influence of the Spirit beyond sanctification. In 1895 Irwin’s Fire-Baptized Holiness Church was born in Iowa.

Irwin spent the majority of his life moving from one place to the next. Born in Lincoln, Nebraska, and raised in Northern Missouri, he eventually made his way to Iowa. Like Finney, Irwin was a lawyer. Unfortunately for Irwin he was a rather poor lawyer. His failing law practice forced him into a church to plead with God. He entered a Baptist church, converted, and soon was on his way to becoming a Baptist minister. From the Baptists, Irwin learned holiness and how to preach. His sermons and doctrine of fire baptism soon spread through the entire holiness movement. Irwin echoed and advanced Palmer’s notion that the Holy Spirit brings power. While Palmer believed this was power to overcome sin and lead a life of entire sanctification, Irwin believed this power had other manifestations as well. This power or fire was the third experience of the Holy Spirit.

Irwin’s theology of fire was very much like fire itself. It was attractive and dangerous. There were very few holiness publications or preachers who did not have an opinion on Irwin and his fire baptism, and most were negative. Even the Iowa Holiness Association was split over Irwin’s teachings. Still, people not even connected to Irwin himself fell under the power and experienced the fire. Irwin took his message into the South and held a series of revivals from 1896-98. During these revivals, personal holiness and moralism grew as it did in Keswick and with Palmer. Assemblies condemned chewing gum, Coca Cola, rings, bracelets, earrings, and neckties as luxuries, unnecessary, and sinful. Most holiness associations condemned Irwin and many even
lampooned him and his followers. The fire grew beyond Irwin himself when it reached Charles Parham in 1900.

Parham learned from Irwin that the Holy Ghost brings a separate baptism to Christians following sanctification. Parham was the first to clearly identify this blessing as speaking in tongues, and that this activity of the Holy Ghost should be a normal part of Christian life and worship, and not simply a religious exuberance. Several years before Parham encountered Irwin he was already familiar with holiness teaching. His ministerial career began as a supply pastor for the Linwood Kansas Methodist Episcopal Church. Palmer’s teachings on entire sanctification were central to his understanding of the Christian life. Likely the two never met, since Parham was born in 1873, a little more than a year before Palmer’s death, but there were many surrounding him who had adequate opportunity to do so.

As the MEC pushed holiness preachers out of their denomination, Parham left in 1895, the same year Irwin’s Fire Baptism began. Like Finney, Parham adopted an anti-denominational view to the church. Within a few years, Parham met Irwin and brought a portion of his fire to Topeka. In 1898 Parham was convinced that divine healing could be expected and he began a “divine healing home” in Topeka. The thought was that faithful Christians would gather and use the power of the Holy Spirit to heal the sick and infirmed through prayer. This began the Bethel Healing Home, and a paper called *Apostolic Faith*. As the healing home grew, it became the Bethel Bible School in 1900.

It was in 1900 that Parham also first really encountered people speaking in tongues. Unsure as to the nature of tongues, he urged his students to seek the scriptures concerning the practice. Like Irwin, Parham believed there was something more than
entire sanctification, and that God was about to deliver a special blessing for the new
century, in addition to Christian Perfection and faith healing. His students returned and
unanimously affirmed that the Holy Spirit manifested itself through the speaking of
tongues. This report launched the all night prayer service on New Year’s Eve 1900.
Agnes N. Ozman was the first of many to receive the gift of tongues under Parham. They
all believed she was speaking Chinese as a “halo seemed to surround her head and
face.”24 Ozman was so taken by her experience that she could not speak English for three
days, and even wrote in Chinese characters rather than English. Years later the writings
of Ozman were evaluated and it was concluded that they were not Chinese, but the
movement began with her not quite Chinese tongues.

Parham experienced a similar divine encounter a little while later. Following
Ozman, speaking in tongues became a central tenet of Parham’s holiness theology, in
addition to sanctification and faith healing. The Topeka press heard of the experience at
Bethel and soon the message spread to Kansas City where the holiness messages was
primed by Palmer and more recently Moody. Parham took his message on the road with
him to Kansas City, and from there to Lawrence and south along the Missouri Kansas
state line. He eventually settled in Houston, Texas in 1905. In Houston Parham began
another Bible school.

Along the southern journey, Parham took his family and his household staff,
which largely consisted of one African American woman named Lucy Farrow. Farrow

was the children’s governess. She received the gift of tongues and also served as an altar worker who helped those who sought the blessing of the Holy Spirit. It was through Farrow that William J. Seymour (d. 1922) encountered Parham. Seymour was born in 1870, the Baptist son of former slaves in Louisiana. When he was fifteen years old he traveled to Indianapolis where he became a Methodist, joining the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AME). Shortly thereafter, he encountered the holiness movement and was taken with the doctrines of entire sanctification, after which he moved to Houston.

In Houston, Seymour could not legally attend Parham’s tiny school. The twenty five white students were legally enrolled, but Parham desired that all could attend his classes. The law was circumvented as Seymour was allowed to sit in the hallway and listen to the lectures through the open door. This went on for months and was the theological education that Seymour needed before he could become a pastor. Parham even allowed Seymour to pastor his Houston church when he was away on revival tours to add vocational training.

Theologically Seymour learned that the holiness movement was incomplete when it equated baptism of the Holy Spirit with sanctification, that there was indeed another experience, another blessing that God wished to bestow upon faithful Christians. Sanctification only cleansed the believer and prepared the way for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, where God would come in power. Seymour defined this power as “just more of God’s love. If it does not bring more love, it is simply a counterfeit.”

Seymour took this message and the blessing of Parham and accepted an invitation
to become the pastor of an African American Holiness Church in Los Angeles. The
previous pastor, Julia Hutchins, decided to become a foreign missionary. When Seymour
came to his new church he found that his message was not welcomed. The church was
not going to accept this brand of holiness. Seymour’s and Parham’s message was too
close to Irwin’s, and speaking in tongues was too foreign a concept. Seymour found
himself barred from the pulpit of the church he traveled two thousand miles to lead.
Undeterred, Seymour resolved to meet with those members of the congregation who
would have him in their homes instead. It was in April 1906 in one these homes that the
baptism of the Holy Spirit was first evidenced in tongues in LA. Seymour records “One
sister was baptized with the Holy Ghost on the front porch. She lay under the power of
God for something like two hours, praising God and speaking in an unknown
language.”  

This caused great attention and shortly thereafter Seymour moved these
crowds into an abandoned and dilapidated old AME church on 312 Azusa Street. The
Azusa Street Revival was born, and Pentecostalism came into its own during the three
year revival.

312 Azusa Street once housed the first black Methodist church in LA, but in 1906
it was a tenement house and livery stable and not suited well to either. The city would
have gladly condemned the building and threatened to do so several times before and
after the revival. Housed in the business district, everyone in LA made their way over to
the church to see what was taking place. Interracial crowds gathered around Blacks,

Whites, Chinese, and even Jews came to the revival to hear Seymour preach. He delivered his sermons on a makeshift pulpit on the porch of the building. As the crowds grew, they made their way onto the porch as well. The church began to fall down as the porch collapsed from the weight of the swelling congregation. No one was hurt, and many prophesied and spoke in tongues. The interracial congregation showed the power of the spirit to all in attendance. Race did not matter; the black pastor spoke to all races equally and for a brief time the majority of the congregation were white. One man exclaimed, “The color line was washed away in the blood.”

In addition to speaking in tongues, the Spirit was manifest in other ways including weeping, shouting, dancing, falling into trances, laughing, and singing, which Seymour called the heavenly choir. These additional spiritual exuberances attracted many, but they also scared off many who were interested in holiness. One person that rejected the Azusa Street Revival was Parham. In October of 1906, Parham was finally able to make his way to LA. Both Parham and Seymour expected to greet one another with admiration concerning the outpouring of the Spirit. Instead Parham quickly surmised that this was not the work of the Holy Spirit and what was taking place was “beyond the bounds of common sense and reason.” Parham sought to counter the revival by holding his own down the street. Parham’s revival failed to dissuade any from following his disciple. Parham was banned from Azusa and the two leaders of Pentecostalism never fully

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repaired their relationship. Parham always maintained that Azusa was nothing more than prostituted spiritual power, full of awful fits and spasms of “holy rollers and hypnotists.”

The revival ended in 1909. Seymour traveled the country spreading his message, leaving his church in Azusa to his wife to pastor until she died in 1931. Shortly thereafter the church was torn down as a fire hazard and the city confiscated the land for non-payment of taxes.

Growth of Pentecostalism.

“God was in His holy temple-The Shekinah glory rested there.”

– Frank Bartleman at Azusa

Pentecostalism grew beyond Azusa, in part to reliance upon the success of the holiness movement. Parham and Seymour’s messages resembled the teachings of Palmer and Finney. Palmer’s holiness theology was adapted by British Methodist William Cooke, who argued that God’s holiness was a specific type of glory. Cooke identified this as Shekinah. Shekinah is a loose transliteration of the Hebrew term שכניה, and the concept is applied to God’s spirit resting upon the mercy seat in the holy of holies of the temple. The term is used to address God settling in a place and sanctifying it. Cooke applied this idea to Palmer’s Altar Theology. From here it was used to describe nearly any powerful manifestation of God among the holiness movement during the latter half


30 Henry H. Knight III, Anticipating Heaven Below: Optimism of Grace from Wesley to the Pentecostals, 131.
of the nineteenth century. The Shekinah of the altar was the same as the Shekinah of Pentecost. John Inskip, during one of Palmer’s and his holiness meetings in Sacramento, described the tangible power of the Holy Spirit in those meetings along the same lines as God’s spirit descending upon the tabernacle altar, “a haze of golden glory encircled the heads of the bowed worshippers—a symbol of the Holy Spirit.” Similar claims are later used by Pentecostals and their meetings, including the Azusa Street Revival.

Pentecostalism also grew among the disenfranchised Americans. That God’s Shekinah glory would descend upon all regardless of race, gender, and economic status only served to accelerate the movement. The American frontier afforded many preachers the opportunity to move away from the established urban centers and into communities that needed ministers. The Holiness movement, and later Pentecostalism, gave the otherwise voiceless a voice, along with esteem they could only get from a supportive congregation. Since Protestantism does not require apostolic succession or theological training to claim authority to preach, one’s own abilities of persuasion, combined with a degree of charisma, prove effective in converting those who desire a spiritual answer to the problems of the material world. Pentecostals are often called charismatics because of the excitement that their services produce. The egalitarian message opposed in word or practice by many established Protestant churches also served to provide an opportunity for Pentecostals. The derisive connotations of Pentecostalism as illiterates, snake handlers, and holy rollers only served to disengage the weakening mainstream Protestants from understanding the surging inheritors of Palmer’s holiness and Wesley’s Pietism.

IBID.
Throughout the twentieth century, Pentecostalism grew from a few revivals in Topeka and Los Angeles into a worldwide movement. By 1908, Pentecostal revivals were found on six continents. Six years later the Assemblies of God was formed. The Assemblies of God is the largest Pentecostal denomination in the United States and is the engine of growth for many of the Pentecostal revivals throughout the world. In 1995, less than a century after its inception, there were over 200 million Pentecostals around the world attached to a Pentecostal denomination, and another 250 million who are associated with charismatic or holiness movements. The same dissatisfaction with modernism and racial, gender, and economic segregation found in America was present throughout the world. As industrialization grew, so too did dissatisfaction with modernity. Radical holiness, as advocated for by Palmer, as well as a missionary zeal from Pentecostals, provided both the opportunity and remedy for modernism. Success also begets success. As American and European Pentecostals were marginalized by their respective societies, news of missionary success fueled enthusiasm, which then produced more missionaries. The general antipathy towards Christian culture and secular culture inherent to Pietism is also found within Pentecostals. The mystical encounter with the divine becomes the answer.

Essential to the Pentecostal message is the notion of a second blessing and subsequent conversion experiences. Without Palmer’s Altar Theology which served as a valid interpretation of Wesley’s notion of Christian Perfectionism the Pentecostal

message could not have existed. Holiness especially as understood by Palmer provided the theological justification for glossolalia, faith healing, and fire baptism, even though Palmer would have rejected these ideas. The drive of Pietists to reconstruct the Christian message in every generation promotes extremist practices and makes the unusual typical. Without ecclesial control over these practices further revelations and marginal experiences are necessary in order to confirm the religious identity of individuals and groups.

**Liberalism**

“If I had written my book with the intention of founding a sect or school, then I could have opponents. But I know that I had no such thing in mind.”

– Friedrich Schleiermacher

Schleiermacher is the father of modern Liberal Protestantism, though he did not intend on founding any movement, nor creating a new ideology. In many ways Schleiermacher did not found a new movement, after all, it is said that he had no children, only grandchildren. Liberalism was adopted and to a great degree decimated by a series of backlashes from fundamentalists and neo-orthodox theologians by the middle of the twentieth century. The remaining tenets of Liberal Protestantism survive within some mainline traditions, but not as a movement, rather only as a trend in theology, or the prevailing position divorced from its theological foundations. Liberal Protestantism therefore is either largely absent or ubiquitous by the end of the twentieth century. The greatest strand of Liberalism that survives in the twentieth century is a new liberalism or


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neo-liberalism that emerges after World War One. This liberalism shares many traits in common with Schleiermacher, but less with the theologians that occupied the interim period. Neo-liberalism occupies an alternative to the weakened or the ubiquitous trend within mainline Protestantism. Two distinct discussions of liberalism then need to proceed. The first concerns Schleiermacher and nineteenth-century liberalism, the second follows Tillich and twentieth-century neo-liberalism. In part, both liberal movements guided mainline Protestantism and provoked criticism from fundamentalists and neo-orthodoxy, to which our attention will turn to a greater degree in the next chapter.

Schleiermacher intended on preserving what he believed to be essential to Christianity by stripping away what was unnecessary. The superfluous doctrines, dogmas, and practices were not merely supererogatory, but were dangerous appendages that weakened the Christian faith. Schleiermacher’s liberalism was a surgery to remove the gangrenous growth, which left untreated could kill the host. His diagnosis was likely overstated and much of what Schleiermacher removed, comforted rather than condemned. Schleiermacher saw the barrage of attacks coming from modernity and the cultured despisers of religion and reacted. The result was a systematic theology based in Pietisms call that experience trumps scholastic theology and rationalism. Modern liberal Protestantism saved Protestant Churches by challenging the origins of Christianity and redefining essential doctrine accordingly.

At the dawn of the nineteenth century, Schleiermacher produced a new Christian apology with his work *On Religion, Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*. This apology mirrors Schleiermacher’s conception of the origins of Christianity. Early Christians were
faced with a similar threat to the gospel message. As Schleiermacher saw it, the very survival of Christianity was at stake in both eras. Christianity grew by affirming what it believed was necessary to overcome its challenges. These obstacles were both legal and philosophical, and a theology was developed to answer these objections. In doing so, the early church developed an ecclesiology and theology that preserved it against a Greco-Roman and Jewish context. As the church triumphed against those challenges, new challenges emerged, but much of the older apologetics survived. Those tools were contextually valid and effective, but outside of that historical context the same polemics could harm.

This is why in both On Religion and The Christian Faith, Schleiermacher attempted to separate religion and dogma. In his earlier work he argued, “If you have only given attention to these dogmas and opinions, therefore, you do not yet know religion itself, and what you despise is not it.” The problem with dogmas is twofold. First they are held up as the expression of faith and second, they equate piety with knowledge of doctrine. For Schleiermacher and Liberalism following him, as well as Pietism preceding him, religion is not knowledge. One can be knowledgeable about religion without in any way being devout. Rudolf Otto, a twentieth-century disciple of Schleiermacher, argues that in the first centuries of Christianity the numinous idea of the holy was connected both to the notion of God as father and the disciples calling each other holy. Holy was not morally perfect, nor did it carry notions of entire sanctification,

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rather it referenced a positional difference. The holy disciples were holy because they focused not on this profane world but on the sacred world which was to come and coming.

It was from this context that Schleiermacher and Liberal Protestantism sought to redefine the origins of the Christian faith, not simply as something delivered from on high, but people who engaged with the incarnate God and a profane and hostile world. The dogmas and doctrines of the church and the scripture of the church comes from this era and from these conflicts, and only after this context is understood can Christianity be preserved. Theology derives from the apology, and when the apologetic concerns erode, the theology needs to adapt to the current conflict.

Christian theology must therefore line up with both reason and experience. The experience of God remained central to Schleiermacher’s theology. This God-consciousness is a given, but the language used to describe it was not. This is why theology must always be defined and redefined in light of experience. Heresies are those experiences that are outside of the community’s religious orbit and understanding. The affirmed doctrines are those experiences that resonate with others and are validated by a shared experience of the infinite, experiences that the community believes increase the God-consciousness rather than diminishing it. As Schleiermacher says in The Christian Faith, “The piety which forms the basis of all ecclesiastical communions is, considered in itself, neither a knowing or a doing, but a modification of feeling, or of immediate self-consciousness.”

Since theology is experiential, the church must constantly return to theology and ensure it lines up with the lived experiences of its members. This allows for doctrines to change, in addition to being abandoned when they are contextually no longer necessary. Schleiermacher’s liberalism answers the challenges of empiricism but runs a risk of too much subjectivity. This is also why for Schleiermacher ecclesiology and Christology is essential. These experiences of God, which liberalism elevates over doctrine, must remain centered first on Christ as the incarnation and first of the new creation, and second within the fellowship of the Church. The church, both visible and invisible, mediates these experiences and the church is the one who needs to reflect upon the value of doctrines rather than this belonging to the domain of the individual. For Schleiermacher the churches experiences remain of higher value than those of the individual.

The church must evaluate doctrines based upon historical and scientific challenges. Schleiermacher’s contribution of hermeneutics is key to the first evaluation. Some challenges remain similar, even though context changes, doctrines may only need to evolve slightly. Equally important is the relationship that must exist between the church and science. Schleiermacher argued that the church must endeavor “to establish an eternal covenant between the living Christian faith and completely free, independent scientific inquiry, so that faith does not hinder science and science does not exclude faith.”


This relationship allows for scientific discovery to inform faith rather than becoming a rival.
Schleiermacher’s conception of science and reason shifted his views of biblical authority as well as the miraculous. Early in his life he abandoned biblical literalism from both his understanding of historical criticism as well as a scientific one. Both views contributed to a shift in his theology. The scriptures themselves were only expressions of the incarnation and where they were not consistent with science, reason, or experience, Schleiermacher abandoned them or was silent. Schleiermacher maintained that religion was a combination between the supernatural God and the natural world. As the natural world works within its laws, science is necessary and miracles less so. Miracles are largely operations of nature, the greatest of these miracles is the incarnation. Therefore Schleiermacher surmises that there must be something within humanity that allows for the possibility of the divine.

Since humanity possesses the capacity for the incarnation of God, it follows that humanity also possesses the capacity to relate to that God. The first half of The Christian Faith concerns itself with notions of natural religion and this universal capacity. Neither liberalism nor Schleiermacher argue that all people share the same basic beliefs. What is shared is the natural capacity for belief. Some people have a greater capacity than others and are more pious, but this condition is present in all.

Schleiermacher’s liberal legacy shook the Protestant world, but how this eruption is understood and approached is not uniform. The different critics grow from the varied ways Schleiermacher and Liberalism were absorbed. To both his benefit and detriment, Schleiermacher did not found any theological school and he appointed no theological heirs. His works were taken up by Albert Ritschl (d. 1889) and his protégé Wilhelm Herrmann (d. 1922), who largely shaped his legacy and the trajectory of Liberalism.
Ritschl was also the one whose caricature and criticism of Pietism reduced its history to a footnote until recent years. Ritschl’s treatment of Schleiermacher did much the same, this one from a point of admiration. Ritschl embraced the Enlightenment to an extent unfitting for the dominant voice concerning Schleiermacher over the next century. Ritschl understood Schleiermacher from a Kantian perspective instead of vice versa. Kant’s appeal to reason became the ground from which Ritchl sprung. More than Hegel and any others, Ritschl believed that modern man desires to live a life according to reason. Ritschl’s notion of reason included his own interpretation of Christian perfection. Reason dictates that since man is justified, this justification must contain within its capacity the means of attaining the desired object. In addition to morality, Ritschl’s perfection takes place in faith in divine providence, humility, patience and in prayer. Perfection is a life work and perpetually includes insights concerning imperfection and is culminated in love of neighbor. To this end he opposed justification as interpreted as the forgiveness of sins, rather he argued justification is interpreted as placing the Christian in relation to one another and with God. From this perspective, Ritschl radically reinterpreted Schleiermacher and condemned Pietism, mysticism, and Roman Catholicism as traditions that view justification as something different than the impartation of the God-consciousness.

Herrmann took a slightly different tact than his teacher, but he still valued Schleiermacher as the harbinger of the new theology. Herrmann believed that On Religion was the most important Christian writing after the New Testament. Like Ritschl’s interpretation of Schleiermacher, the emphasis is on experience as the heart of theology. For Herrmann this is the only appropriate way faith can be understood.
Herrmann equated faith and historicity of culture, and argued that Schleiermacher’s conception of *Anschauung* (intuition) was the answer to how justification and election become fact for individual Christians. The feeling of absolute dependence is the presence of the God-consciousness and therefore the evidence of justification and the means of securing election. Herrmann was convinced that the Christ outside was the same as the Christ inside, that through the feeling, the God-consciousness was not only a consciousness of God, but actually God, that Christ incarnated himself in the believer throughout this relationship. Theoretical knowledge played only a very small role in confirming this belief.

Neither Herrmann nor Ritschl accepted Schleiermacher’s liberalism on its own grounds. Not surprisingly, the inevitable critiques of their theology were laid upon Schleiermacher, as the notion of absolute dependence and the God-consciousness superseded the rest of Schleiermacher’s theological contributions. Liberalism, following Ritschl, embraced the Enlightenment, though Schleiermacher believed it was incomplete without Pietistic heart. Such an accommodation only contributed to the widespread perception that Schleiermacher was a nominal cultural Christian who only measured Christian truth by its ability to adapt to modern culture. This perception was especially true in English speaking areas where Schleiermacher’s works were not as prevalent. Equally absent from the English depiction of Schleiermacher was his life and his conflicts with Napoleon and the Prussian aristocracy.

While Ritschl and Herrmann’s distortion of Schleiermacher’s legacy perverted his legacy, Schleiermacher’s liberalism engendered its own critiques during his life time. To answer these critiques, Schleiermacher wrote his own defense. Fittingly he declares
“Very many of their objections are based solely on the fact that statements have been imputed to me which I have never expressed and could never acknowledge as mine.”

In his defense Schleiermacher reasserts his orthodox theology by pointing towards his Christology and ecclesiology. While Schleiermacher may be called a Universalist, his universalism is one within the church. Never does he argue that regeneration can take place outside of the Christian church. Universal salvation occurs through the church and for many this occurs after death.

The term feeling is also a common source of confusion and attention. Hegel equated the feeling of dependence with his dog, while Schleiermacher believed that this feeling was a deep seated and all-encompassing inclination of humanity that went beyond mental formulations and simple assent to doctrinal matters. Schleiermacher insists that the feeling of absolute dependence and Piety is grounded in God and not arbitrary or accidental. He also defends his works as Christian works and concedes that the organization of The Christian Faith leads to misunderstanding. Beginning with universal and moving towards the particular tenets of Christianity, many opponents regard his claims about humanity to supersede all others. Schleiermacher asserts, “No one could have failed to recognize that the description of the consciousness distinctive to Christianity is in truth and in actuality the real aim of the book.”

Regardless of how his theology is interpreted, Schleiermacher’s modern liberal Protestantism has the same aim.


Neo-Liberalism and Paul Tillich.

“Many of those who reject the Word of God reject it because the way we say it is utterly meaningless to them.” — Paul Tillich

With the success of Neo-Orthodoxy, which we will address in the next chapter, the attack against Liberalism and Schleiermacher was near complete. Some forms remained, but theological liberalism needed to adapt in order to answer the challenges of the neo-orthodox and the fundamentalists. In many ways the new liberalism or neo-liberalism is simply liberalism after World War One. The name is used only to differentiate the concerns of liberals following the war from those of liberals in the nineteenth century. In large measure neo-liberalism is not nearly the ideological break from the past that existed akin to Pentecostalism, fundamentalism, or neo-orthodoxy and the vestiges of Protestant scholasticism. In many ways neo-liberalism is a renewal of Schleiermacher’s liberal legacy in the twentieth century. The chief architect of the new liberalism or neo-liberalism is Paul Tillich (d. 1965).

In many ways Paul Tillich was the Schleiermacher for a new generation. Paul was born August 20, 1886 to a Lutheran Pastor and moved to Berlin in 1900. Though their confessions were different, their city was the same and both were trained in the faith to some extent by their fathers who were pastors. In 1904 Tillich began his college training and attended the universities of Berlin, Tübingen, and Breslau. He received his doctorate in philosophy in 1911. During his studies, Tillich fell under the influence of Friedrich Schelling, Rudolf Otto, and Martin Heidegger.

In 1912 Tillich was ordained, and two years later he married Margarethe Wever. When the Great War began, he served as an army chaplain. The travesties of trench warfare loomed large for Tillich. The violence and utter disregard for life radicalized the young chaplain. When the war ended, Tillich accepted an appointment at the University of Berlin where he was a social and political activist. Most of his political activities were focused on what Tillich believed was the cause of the war, greed. As such, he was a Christian socialist and sternly criticized the evils of capitalism. The war also took a toll on Tillich’s marriage and he divorced in 1921.

Three years later Tillich married Hanna Gottschow and became a professor of theology at Marburg. Both Otto and Heidegger were at Marburg, so Tillich, who was drawn to their writings, was overjoyed to join them at the college, but remained there only a year before taking a position in Dresden, then two years later one at Leipzig, and finally moving to Frankfurt in 1929. The journeyman theologian ran into troubles in Frankfurt. Before long the Nazis seized power in Germany and Tillich’s oppositions to Hitler proved problematic to a career as a professor in Germany. Hanna recounts a story of Tillich in Berlin shortly before they fled Germany. Upon entering a church in Berlin, they both were taken by the Nazi altar. The altar was covered with red flags and swastikas, and Tillich had an appropriate reaction, if not a one that was a tactical error, when he cursed the sacrilegious altar. When a brown shirt heard him, Hanna threw Tillich’s arm up in a Nazi salute and the two ran, blaspheming the Nazis. Hanna Tillich records this event in her work *From Time to Time*, which paints a rather interesting picture of her husband. While his anti-Nazi views are clear, the work, published nearly a decade after Tillich’s death, reveals his hyperactive sexual disorder and constant stories
of Tillich’s affairs inside and outside the church. For those admirers of Tillich, his proclivities create a troublesome juxtaposition with his theology. To his credit Tillich, never publically condemned adultery.

The Nazi’s dismissed Tillich from his position in Frankfurt because of his public condemnation of Hitler and his association with Jewish intellectuals. With the support of Reinhold Niebuhr, he left Germany for a position at Union Theological Seminary in New York, where he stayed for 22 years. Following this he taught at Harvard until 1962, then the University of Chicago until his death in 1965. While a German, Tillich became a leading American theologian, and gained his citizenship in 1940. In 1959 Tillich adorned the cover of Time Magazine, featured as the foremost Protestant thinker. It was his theology more than his life which presented a new shape and new life to Liberal Protestantism.

Tillich was uneasy with the direction of Protestant theology. While liberalism, as the product of Pietism, sought to approach people where they were, rationalism and scholasticism were not. Rather than addressing practical concerns with their theology, Protestantism was possessed by a “demonic absolutism which throws the truth like stones at he heads of people, not caring whether they can accept it or not.” Tillich continues arguing, “It is what may be called the demonic offense of the churches often give while claiming that they give the necessary divine offense. Without adaptation to the categories of understanding in those toward whom the expanding functions of the church are directed, the church not only does not expand but even loses what it has, because its members also live within the given civilization and can receive the verity of the message
of the New Being only within the categories of that civilization.” Tillich was afraid that as Christianity expanded into new civilizations and civilization expanded within Christian domains, the truth of Christianity would be lost and only a struggle would remain. For this reason, his decision in theology is “thoroughly on the side of Schleiermacher.” Schleiermacher’s acceptance of culture allowed Christians to really experience God and understand God through that experience, rather than existing only as an impersonal and often adversarial abstraction.

Tillich accepted Schleiermacher’s premise that theology is based upon the person of Christ and the churches historical encounter with the God who became man. In his first volume of Systematic Theology Tillich argues, “Christian Theology is based on the unique event Jesus the Christ, and in spite of the infinite meaning of this event it remains this event and, as such, the criterion of every religious experience. This event is given to experience and not derived from it. Therefore, experience receives and does not produce.” Tillich clarifies Herrmann’s interpretation of Schleiermacher by once again separating Christ from residing solely in the God-consciousness. While Christ manifests himself in experience, the experience of Christ is a receptive one rather than a creative one. Humanities understanding of God can still reside in experience as the Pietists argue,


but Tillich rescues experience by removing God from the isolated sphere of the domain
of individual subjectivity.

As Schleiermacher argues the church then produces dogmas and doctrines based
upon these experiences which are bound by history and culture. Tillich echoes
Schleiermacher by arguing that theology is “a product of the collective experience of the
church.”43 Theology therefore is not only the church’s view of God as an object of
knowledge, but understanding that the church’s existence is contained in God. With this
understanding, Tillich melds Schleiermacher’s experiential theology with Kierkegaard’s
existential one. Tillich posits, “Dealing with the meaning of being as far as it concerns us
ultimately dealing with man and the world, with nature and history, as far as our ultimate
concern appears in them, we must know the meaning of being, we must know the
structures and powers controlling the different realms of existence.”44

Of course this existential understanding of humanity and one’s relation to God
must be taken on faith, and it is through faith that the self is constructed and remade.
“Faith means being grasped by a power that is greater than we are, a power that shakes
ups and turns us, and transforms us and heals us. Surrender to this power is faith.”45
Since surrender is faith, the individual remains responsible for some involvement with
their relationship with the divine, but the divine power remains the object and subject of
faith. In Dynamics of Faith, Tillich gives his famous definition of faith and God as

43 Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology. Vol. 1 Reason and Revelation Being and God, 52.
ultimate concern. “Faith as ultimate concern is an act of the total personality. It happens in the center of the personal life and includes all its elements. Faith is the most centered act of the human mind.”46 This notion of faith is remarkable similar to Schleiermacher’s feeling of absolute dependence. Both ultimate concern and absolute dependence consume the totality of the individual and mark the object as greater than the individual. Tillich continues that “Where there is faith there is an awareness of holiness,” therefore “What concerns one ultimately becomes holy.”47

Even when God is the ultimate concern, the potential for idolatry exists. After all, one can easily elevate any object of love to a status that consumes their entire being. In these cases the ultimate concern is only ultimate to a single individual and not truly ultimate but finite. When the ultimate is finite, the faith is genuine but the object of that faith is not. Tillich argues that “Even God can be made a finite concern, an object among other objects; in whose existence some people believe and some do not. Such a God, of course, cannot be our ultimate concern.”48 God as a concept or a doctrine cannot be the ultimate concern, but following Schleiermacher, God as the incarnation can. Not only the incarnate God, but what this God then does for and to humanity really becomes the ultimate concern.

In The New Being, Tillich defines what ultimate concern really is and what he believes the essential message of Christianity is. The answer to this question comes from

47 Paul Tillich, Dynamics of Faith, 12.
Paul’s letter to the Galatians.\textsuperscript{49} “It is the message of a ‘New Creation.’” Tillich advances this point by saying “The New Creation – this is our ultimate concern; this should be our infinite passion – the infinite passion of every human being. This matters; this alone matters ultimately.”\textsuperscript{50} Every other point concerning Christian theology follows from this central message. A careful reading of Schleiermacher’s \textit{Christian Faith} points out that the doctrine of the new creation propels the Christian message. While Schleiermacher does not commit a section to the doctrine individually, he argues that Christ was the first New Creation, and from this Christians join with Him and become new creations as well. When Tillich places the doctrine of the new creation as ultimate concern, he goes beyond Schleiermacher and incorporates Kierkegaard. While Schleiermacher’s theology of the New Creation is contained in his Christology, Tillich’s is based in subjectivity, but a divine subjectivity. This is the prevailing theme of Tillich and his often overlooked doctrine. It is only by engaging in this doctrine that neo-liberalism advances something new and engaging for the twentieth-century audience while remaining grounded in nineteenth-century Pietism of Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard.

\textsuperscript{49} Galatians 6:15 For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a \textbf{new creation}.

\textsuperscript{50} Paul Tillich, \textit{The New Being}, 15, 19.
Liberalization of Pietism

“Pietism represents the working out of a series of unresolved issues that the Reformation bequeathed to later generations of Protestants.”  

– Jonathan Strom

The liberal trends found in nineteenth-century Pietism produced the Pentecostals and Modern Liberal Protestantism, and contributed to the nationalist impulses which dominated the century. These three trends in no way voice a continuum, rather they are different consequences of the Pietist ideologies. The different outside contributors, such as Finney and Tillich, reinterpreted the life and work of Palmer, Schleiermacher, and Kierkegaard to continue the experiential and counter cultural drive of Pietism, even without direct training in the theology of institutionalized forms of the eighteenth-century Pietism, as represented in Francke, Zinzendorf, and Wesley.

CHAPTER 13

CONSERVATIVE TRENDS AND CONSEQUENCES OF NINETEENTH-CENTURY PIETISM

“When men look into themselves they discover not self-love but the moral law, and that this moral law is a fact of reason and condition of freedom.”1 — Helmut Walser Smith

The previous chapter addressed the liberal trends of nineteenth-century Pietism. Those trends have a lasting effect in producing religious and civil structures, which dominated the history of the twentieth century. Pietism in general, and the Pietism of Kierkegaard, Schleiermacher, and Palmer also produced a conservative legacy. This chapter will address the conservative response found in fundamentalism, neo-orthodoxy, and existentialism. These conservative alternatives interacted with and counterbalanced the liberal tendencies addressed in the previous chapter.

Holiness and Fundamentalism

“Let us expect that God is going to use us. Let us have courage, and go forward, looking to God to do great things.”2 — D. L. Moody

In a fairly surprising turn of events, the fundamentalists who emerged in the twentieth century did not come about through a resurgence of Protestant scholasticism or rationalism. The ancestry of fundamentalism was the Holiness Movement, a movement

1 Helmut Walser Smith, Continuities of German History (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 61.

whose origins were significantly based in Wesley’s expression of Pietism and Palmer’s understanding of holiness as prioritizing an experience of God over reason or orthodoxy. Before the rise of Protestant fundamentalism in America, the holiness churches in America split. Some tended toward Pentecostal, while others were more conservative. They appealed to morality and the Bible as the source of a holy life, rather than a third or fourth blessing from the Holy Spirit. Both strains shared the holiness associations of the nineteenth century.

Palmer and Finney, the mother and father of holiness, lent their voices and contributions to the spiritual and ideological ancestry of both movements. As the Methodists pushed the holiness camps out of their denomination in the 1880s, the differences between the two became more and more apparent. The Pentecostals were swept up in revivalism and the gifts of the spirit, as articulated by Irwin, Penham, and Seymour. Eventually the Assemblies of God was created as the largest home for Pentecostals. The conservative Holiness Movement soon dominated The Southern Baptist Convention, the largest Protestant denomination in the United States, as well created a number of new denominations that split off of the Holiness associations of the nineteenth century.

The largest of these is the Pentecostal Church of the Nazarene. In 1919 they dropped the term Pentecostal from their name to disassociate themselves with the Pentecostal movement growing at the same time. The Church of the Nazarene became the largest denomination formed out of the holiness movement and was a bastion of anti-Pentecostal thought. Phineas Bresee (d. 1915) founded the church in 1895 after he conducted mass holiness meetings in LA. The Church of the Nazarene’s articles of faith
proclaim they will seek “the simplicity and the Pentecostal power of the primitive New Testament Church” through “the conversion of sinners, the sanctification of believers.”

Most of the early holiness language is still clearly present.

Those members of the holiness churches within the Nazarenes and Southern Baptists produced the evangelicals and fundamentalists. It is the split within holiness that gives both Pentecostalism and fundamentalism their life in the twentieth century. Both still advocate for a Pietistic prioritization of experience, though one is more tempered and restrained in their expectations about religious feelings. The fundamentalists’ restraint was largely due to the third leader of nineteenth-century holiness, Dwight L. Moody (d. 1899) and his disciple Reuben A. Torrey (d. 1928). Moody was the chief conservative holiness preacher of the nineteenth century. It is to Moody that our attentions must now turn.

**Dwight Lyman Moody.**

“I never knew a lazy man to become a Christian. I have known gamblers and drunkards and saloon-keepers to be converted, but never a lazy man.”

— D. L. Moody

Dwight Lyman Moody was born in Northfield, Massachusetts on February 5, 1837. He was the sixth of nine children born to Edwin and Betsey. When he was four, his father died and his mother decided to join the local Unitarian Church. Most of his

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early life was spent working rather than studying. When he was younger than ten, he began tending cows and earned a penny a week. This penny was necessary for the family and was put into the common pot. Moody’s formal education ended when he was in the fifth grade. His lack of education was clear to most who encountered him. Years later when Moody was in England, C. H. Spurgeon (d. 1892) remarked that Moody was the only man he knew that could pronounce “Mesopotamia” in two syllables. Moody’s preaching and writing lacks all pretension found in others, largely because he lacked the skill to do otherwise.

Moody made up for a poor education with determination and perseverance. In 1854 he decided to make his way in the world and with the few dollars he had managed to save, he journeyed to Boson. Moody’s Uncle Samuel Holton owned a prosperous boot and shoe store and this was likely the employment that Dwight had in mind.

Unfortunately for Dwight, his older brother George Moody, warned his uncle against giving his brother a job, jesting that he would want to run the store within a year. Unannounced Dwight strode into the store and expected his uncle to offer him a job. He did not. After a brief conversation Dwight left the store too proud to ask for the job. Dejected he walked out. Thankfully his other uncle Lemuel came out of the store and told him that he could stay with him until he found something. As time went by and there were no employment opportunities for Dwight, Lemuel urged him to ask Samuel for a job. He initially refused out of pride, then conceded. When Dwight asked Samuel for the job, the answer was not immediate, but after a little while Samuel told him he would give him a job if he listened at work and attended church. Dwight immediately conceded these points and found himself employed.
Dwight worked hard and joined a church. He wrote to his mother that he was attending the “Mount Vernon Str. Orthedx.” Obviously his education needed to be supplemented, so he connected himself to the YMCA. There was a large library and lectures from Oliver Wendell Holmes, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and others. At Mount Vernon, the Princeton educated Dr. Edward Norris Kirk was the pastor of a wealthy and cultured congregation. Moody did not fit in. He often fell asleep and understood little from the pulpit. Still, he honored his uncle. While the sermons were over his head, the Sunday school program was taught by Edward Kimball, a kind man. Moody’s classmates were Harvard students and when Moody was instructed that the lesson was from the book of John, Moody began at the beginning of the Bible unsure what or where to find John. Kimball quietly gave Moody his Bible already opened to John and shot a gaze at the Harvard students, silently reproving them.

During these early months Moody was grateful for his uncles and Kimball, but was uninterested in Christianity, figuring he would convert after he died or on his deathbed, as he did not want to miss out on any of the pleasures of this world. There was no point in surrendering to God before he had to. The day of surrender came on April 21, 1855, 44 years earlier than his death bed. Kimball entered the shoe store and urged Moody to surrender his life to God. At the back of the store Moody did, and his outlook on life changed too. Over the next year he studied and served alongside Kimball. Then fairly suddenly he left Boston.

In 1856 Moody made his way to Chicago. The young Moody left Boston likely due to his uncle waiting to control his economic future. Moody wanted to make his own way. Chicago was a booming city and the potential was great. Unfortunately once Moody arrived in Chicago he only found potential for the first week. After that his letter of recommendation from Church and another family connection led him to employment at another shoe store and a church, Plymouth Congregational. Moody attended other churches as well, usually three different churches every Sunday. The normal pattern was to attend the Methodist Church in the mornings, afternoons belonged to the Presbyterians, and Baptists at night. It was at the first Baptist church that he met his wife, Emma Revell (d. 1903).

Moody wanted to make his fortune, but he also wanted to contribute to the kingdom of God, and he approached evangelism like a business. He urged children and the poor to attend his Sunday school classes. Moody was so enthusiastic about the message of salvation that he even bribed children with pony rides and candy, which he called “missionary sugar.” Moody was most interested in the rough and gritty children of the Chicago slums since they reminded him of himself. While innocent, these unconventional means of evangelism from an uneducated and non-ordained convert earned him the nickname “Crazy Moody.” Still he pressed on made up for his lack of preparation with added zeal. Moody continued his service and his Sunday school classes grew to over 1500 children.

The size of his classes and the composition of mostly urban poor produced national attention. On November 25, 1860 this attention invited the consideration of President-elect Lincoln. Moody spoke briefly while Lincoln looked on, then the
President-elect quietly headed out the door. Moody seized on the opportunity and asked Lincoln to share a few words before he left. Lincoln obliged and gave an appropriate Sunday school lesson about his humble origins and urged the children to pay attention to their Sunday school teachers and to work hard, that they too could end up president one day.

In January the two met again, this time on a train, where Moody spoke to Lincoln and his cabinet just before the war began. When the Civil War broke out Moody believed he was unable to fight and kill on moral grounds, but wanted to serve the Union. Moody, along with a few others, connected themselves to the army and navy committee of the YMCA\(^6\) and served as chaplains for Camp Douglas in Chicago. At Camp Douglas, Moody constructed a rather sturdy temporary chapel. This chapel served its function, as over fifteen hundred meetings were held there. Several were also held for confederate prisoners. Shortly after the war began, security at Camp Douglas was tight and Moody wanted to go and preach at his chapel. The security guard would not let him enter, as Moody lacked all paperwork and the confederate POWs were a real risk. Fortunately for Moody, a little while later a captain recognized Moody and let him in. Once past the guards, the chapel was prepared and filled with confederate prisoners.

Moody turned to his companion Hawley and told him to preach. Hawley, also not ordained, balked at the idea, and Moody retorted that Hawley at least had a ministerial pass. Hawley began giving an impromptu sermon, and then Moody took over and they had much success.

\(^6\) Young Men’s Christian Association.
In addition to his service at Camp Douglas, Moody took several trips to the frontlines. On one trip in January 1863 he encountered a mortally wounded soldier. The soldier cried to Moody to help him die. Moody responded that he could help prepare the soldier for heaven but nothing else. The soldier believing himself to be beyond redemption and told Moody that God could not save him, for his life was nothing but sin. The solution came to Moody and he read from the Gospel of John. “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”7 The soldier had never heard those words before and asked Moody if they were really in the Bible. Moody said yes and the soldier asked him to read it again and again. When Moody left, he noticed the soldier continued to mouth the words. In the morning the soldier was dead and the nurse told Moody that he died with a peaceful smile.

When the war ended, Moody continued and expanded his activities in Chicago. In 1865 Moody was named the vice-president of the Chicago Sunday School Union. A year later he was elected president of the Chicago YMCA. Both positions were full time appointments that required more fund raising and bureaucratic paperwork than preaching. Moody’s love of evangelism morphed into a desk job where he constantly asked people for money. He excelled at both, but was growing weary of the task. When Mrs. O’Leary’s cow kicked over the lantern in her barn and began the great Chicago fire in 1871, the city was ruined. Moody also lost everything he worked for over the last fifteen years. Moody’s ministries and his home burned to the ground, but from its ashes Moody

rose like a phoenix to even greater heights. The fire liberated him from his responsibilities in the city and he quickly became a leader of a worldwide movement. He described the shift in his life following the inferno as “I was all the time tugging and carrying water. But now I have a river that carries me.” 8 Now he was free to preach and begin his own movement. Beyond Chicago, Moody spoke throughout the United States. When he traveled to the South he condemned racial discrimination and employers who paid starvation wages. Two years later he preached in England, Ireland and Scotland, just as Finney and Palmer did. It was here that he became acquainted with the burgeoning Keswick movement. Moody was uncomfortable with the radical tone of the Keswick movement in its early years, but grew to accept the movement as it settled into a more rational holiness. Moody took trips to Italy and the Holy Land as well, where most who encountered him were surprised that he refrained from drink, not understanding the pervasive influence of American teetotalism.

Both in the United States and United Kingdom, Moody launched a series of lay run crusades modeled after those of Phoebe Palmer. Palmer’s emphasis on the laity prepared them to play a vital role in a variety of revivals. Unlike Finney, whose revivals remained largely controlled by his fellow ordained ministers, Palmer and Moody were never ordained and used that to advance their ministerial aims. Moody decried many of the professional preachers as sophists of the pulpit and “silver-tongued orators.” 9 Moody used his poor speech to his advantage at his crusades, since it had a tendency to disarm

8 Timothy George, "Introduction: Remembering Mr Moody." In Mr Moody and the Evangelical Tradition, 4.

many who were weary of smooth talking stories that held the audiences captive but did little the second they stopped. Eloquence was nice, but without conviction it amounted to little. It was estimated by Theodore Cuyler at Moody’s funeral that he spoke to 40,000-50,000 people a week after the fire, and A. T. Pierson estimated Moody converted at least 100 million people.\(^\text{10}\)

Moody is often credited as the inheritor of Finney, but this claim has little support other than identifying them both as profound holiness preachers. Not only did Moody utilize the laity like Palmer, he also avoided most of Finney’s new techniques. The emotionalism found within Finney was muted by Moody. Finney had the anxious bench and Moody had the inquiry room. Both may initially appear similar as they moved potential converts around the revival tent, but as Finney moved them closer to the front to make them feel anxious and proclaim a decision for Christ, Moody often moved the farther away from the front to more quiet areas to speak with counselors or pray in silence. Finney used his revivals to rack up converts. Moody borrowed from Palmer the idea that converts themselves are not what the minister should ask for, but disciples. Both Moody and Palmer pushed for decisions but they also wanted a level of follow through after the revival ended, Moody to a far greater extent than Palmer.

Like Finney and Palmer, Moody’s basic theology was interdenominational. All three valued the ecumenical spirit of the age, and the Holiness movement was anything but a single denominational movement. Moody’s preaching was based around what he

called the three R’s of the Bible: ruined by the fall, redeemed by the blood, and regenerated by the Spirit. After sin entering the world with the fall, Moody argues “unbelief is, the mother of all sin.” Moody argues “unbelief is, the mother of all sin.” Humanity is then redeemed by Christ. Like Palmer and Finney, Moody maintained the substitutionary atonement model of justification against the views of Schleiermacher and to a lesser extent Kierkegaard. Moody identified Christ’s redemption as a divine act of love; “Nothing speaks to us of the love of God like the cross of Christ.”

Moody believed that Christ’s death redeemed humanity, not just the elect. Rejecting the doctrine of the limited atonement, Moody declares, “God has put the offer of salvation in such a way that the whole world can lay hold of it. All men can believe.” Like Palmer, the next act is simply belief. Moody does not hold to universal salvation but universal offer to salvation. Faith is necessary and faith is trusting in God.

In his work *Sovereign Grace Its Source, Its Nature and Its Effects*, Moody presents a conversation where Mr. R answers the question, what is it to believe God, “To take Him at His word.” “When they take God at His word, and cast themselves upon Him, whether they feel it or not—when they confess Jesus Christ as their Lord—the Holy Ghost will come as a power to make them realize it.” This message of faith and redemption is identical to Palmer’s.


13 Dwight L. Moody, *Moody's Stories Incidents and Illustrations*.

The third R, regeneration, differs from Palmer though. This was Palmer’s notion of entire sanctification, but Moody was never comfortable with the notion of perfection. Moody attested that Christians sin, but Christ calls them back to repentance. Moody argues “the Shepherd will not turn His poor wandering sheep away; He will go after it, and bring it back. He has promised that He will save His people from their sins.”¹⁵ This constant act of God lends some at Keswick and later America to believe that Moody altered his views and supported the second blessing. If Moody did support entire sanctification it was not to the extent as Palmer or Finney and no definitive work articulates this position.

While Moody never stresses entire sanctification, he articulates in The Way to God that faith is composed of three essential steps, knowledge, assent, and appropriation. The Christian must first be knowledgeable about Christ and Christ’s offer of redemption. Upon hearing this, the message must be received and the individual must give assent to God to dictate the Christian’s future. Following this, they must appropriate the gospel and repent of their sins. Moody, like Palmer, emphasizes that repentance is not fear, and repentance is not feeling. Sanctification is the life’s work of repentance and this third step of faith. A life of repentant faith is the new birth. For Moody it is also the only way to heaven. “This doctrine of the new birth is therefore the foundation of all our hopes for the world to come. It is really the A B C of the Christian religion.”¹⁶

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Noticeably absent from Moody’s conception of salvation are the sacraments. The church is a community that makes disciples rather than a place where the sacraments are administered. Moody denied the efficacy of baptism, declaring “They believe that because they were baptized into the church, they were baptized into the kingdom of God. I tell you that it is utterly impossible. You may be baptized into the church, and yet not be baptized into the Son of God. Baptism is all right in its place. God forbid that I should say anything against it. But if you put that in the place of regeneration—in the place of the new birth—it is a terrible mistake.”\(^{17}\) He has similar views concerning the Eucharist. Partaking of the sacrament is distinct from regeneration.

Moody’s concise theology was intended to be put into practice. He noted that it was easier to make converts than disciples. Moody valued the laity in his revivals, but they still needed some degree of training before they could be truly effective. Moody believed that he needed “some men to stand between the laity and the ministers... gap men. We need men to stand in the gap.”\(^{18}\) These gap men, and gap women would be trained as lay workers in Christ at a new School. On October 1, 1889 Moody Opened the Bible Institute for Home and Foreign Missions, shortly thereafter known as the Chicago Bible Institute, and after Moody’s death, the Moody Bible Institute. The institute was open to men and women of all denominations. Moody also discovered the need for cheap evangelical print and established the Bible Institute Colportage Association (BICA).

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\(^{17}\) Dwight L. Moody, *The Way to God*, 32.

While Moody was the president of the Institute, he left most of the duties to R.A. Torrey, while Moody continued for the next ten years on the preaching circuit. In 1899 he began his final tour. Most of the tour was focused on the West, including California but the centerpiece of the tour began in November with a week of meetings in Kansas City. Moody had been preaching since January and by the time he entered Kansas City in November he was fatigued, but did not think to consult a doctor. The first services in Kansas City were remarkable, a chorus of five hundred voices gathered from different denominations was used to open and close the gatherings, and Moody’s wit filled the space in between. Over 15,000 people gathered to hear Moody. Already fatigued, after preaching to an enormous crowd without amplification, Moody concluded the night spent of all of his energy. He was unable to sleep though and only dozed a few times in his hotel’s armchair. He complained about pain in his chest and swollen limbs. Moody, for the first time he could remember, ended his preaching tour with more appointments on the books. Kansas City did not get the week long revival. Moody was pained by leaving as much as he was by his infirmity. Perceiving that the end was near, a rail car was secured and Moody was hurried home to Northfield, Massachusetts, the same town he was born in. It was here that he died on December 22, 1899. Though Moody would disagree with this statement. Years earlier he quipped “Someday you will read in the papers that D. L. Moody of East Northfield is dead. Don’t you believe a word of it! At that moment I shall be more alive than I am now. I shall have gone up higher, that is all
... I was born of the flesh in 1837. I was born of the Spirit in 1856. That which is born of the flesh may die. That which is born of the spirit will live forever.”

Moody’s contribution to experiential Protestantism serves as a prime example of the mixture of Palmer’s holiness message with Calvinist theology. While Finney, the faculty of Oberlin, and Parham all took the perfectionist message and explained it through a radical dispensational shift towards the Holy Spirit, eventually giving birth to modern Pentecostalism, Moody’s theology served to cool the growing emotional theology. While credited as fathering Fundamentalism, it is more appropriate to place Moody in the lines of Palmer, who advocated for increased lay involvement in the lives of Protestants. Like Palmer, Moody cared little for denominational affiliation and called for an increase in Bible reading and personal piety. The stern doctrinaire conception of Fundamentalism grew from this emotional foundation rather than a rationalist or scholastic source. Still, it took Moody’s successors to develop Fundamentalism beyond the Biblicism of Palmer and Moody.

**Fundamentalism.**

“Because there is a Devil. He is cunning, he is mighty, he never rests, he is ever plotting the downfall of the child of God; and if the child of God relaxes in prayer, the devil will succeed in ensnaring him.”

— RA Torrey

Moody was the founder of contemporary interdenominational evangelicalism, but he died before the split between conservative and radical holiness really occurred. His

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19 Timothy George, "Introduction: Remembering Mr Moody." In *Mr Moody and the Evangelical Tradition*, 1.

death allowed for another voice to dictate the conservative response to Pentecostalism. That voice was Reuben Archer Torrey. Torrey was Moody’s hand appointed successor, so while he was quite the opposite of Moody in many respects, it would be far more difficult to argue that Torrey did not reflect what Moody believed to a large extent. Torrey was likely selected because he was everything Moody wished were true of himself.

Torrey was born in 1856, the same year as Moody’s conversion. Moody’s early life was spent trying to eke out a living and never taking religion too seriously. Torrey’s wealthy father instructed Ruben to read his Bible and pray daily from a very young age. Though he had the image of a Christian, Torrey, like Finney, was afraid of being one. When as a lad he encountered a book that posed a simple question “Will you be a Christian now?” Torrey refused, believing that if he said yes he had no choice but to become a preacher. Both Moody and Torrey entered late adolescence seemingly irreligious, Moody ignorant, and Torrey fearful. Still Torrey entered Yale at fifteen, imbibing and reveling in the life of sin, all along attending church and prayer meetings. His junior year at Yale he saw the vanity inherent in his conflicted life and conceded to become a Christian and to be a minister if God would have him. Torrey met Moody his senior year at Yale. Eager to hear him, Torrey recounted “When Mr. Moody first came to New Haven we thought we would go out and hear this strange, uneducated man.” Later he concluded that Moody “may be uneducated, but he knows some things we don't.”

Torrey received his BA in 1875 and his divinity degree three years later. Around this

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21 George T. B Davis, "Dr. R. A. Torrey" (Wholesome Words Christian Biography Resources. 2016.) 3.
time, Torrey fell away from Moody’s influence and became skeptical of biblical inerrancy.

Even before completing his degree, Torrey was invited to become the pastor at a Congregational church at Garrettsville. After receiving ordination, Torrey moved to Ohio and was discouraged with the rampant quarrelling and infidelity that occurred in this country town. While Torrey encountered the conservative Moody at a young age, his theology was liberal along Schleiermacher’s lines. Torrey did not believe in an everlasting hell, and accepted the tenets of the higher biblical criticism. While in Garrettsville, he read the biography of Finney and therefore expected a revival. The revival did not come. While he prepared for its coming, he was discouraged by others in the town. Torrey heard a constant voice telling him to take his message to Horton & Thompson's saloon. Torrey never imagined that being a minister included interacting with people, he always saw the office consisting of preaching good sermons and little more. Still he listened to that voice and entered the saloon, asking those there to put down their cards because he had a prayer for them. Startled, those present complied. A few weeks later the rival saloon owner asked why Torrey did not enter his, so Torrey entered the saloon and preached there. Having imbibed a few times, Torrey was less strict concerning the prohibition of alcohol than Palmer and others. Remarkably, the real leader of fundamentalism was willing to enter a bar when others in the holiness movement were appalled by the very notion of their existence.

After four years as pastor in Garrettsville the revival never materialized. Torrey resigned his post and travelled to Leipzig and Erlangen to learn biblical criticism. Already believing many of Schleiermacher’s liberal views, he sat under Delitzsch,
Luthardt, Kahnis, and Frank. Under these German scholars, Torrey rejected their liberalism and moved gradually back towards a conservative camp. He also chose at this time to follow Palmer, Finney, and Moody and become a teetotaler. When he returned to America, Torrey accepted a position at a poor Minneapolis parish instead of a wealthier Boston one. As a result of this decision, Torrey grew ever closer to Moody and eventually became his successor. A revival occurred in Minneapolis and Torrey’s small congregation grew. He also took on additional philanthropic duties, but like Moody, he grew tired of his administrative tasks. He was called to be a preacher, not a paper-pusher.

Surprisingly it was this conviction that led Torrey to become the Superintendent at Moody’s new Bible school in 1889. Four years later, Moody’s Chicago Avenue Church was vacant and Torrey became its pastor, succeeding Moody both in his school and congregation. During Moody’s 1893 World’s Fair campaign Torrey served as Moody’s right hand man. When Moody reluctantly turned down preaching the rest of his proposed nights in Kansas City before his death, Torrey was telegraphed to continue in his stead. Later that same year when Moody died, Torrey took over as the president of the Moody Bible Institute. In 1912 Torrey left Chicago and founded the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (BIOLA). It was from LA that Fundamentalism officially began with the four volume publication of *The Fundamentals*, in 1917. Torrey died in Asheville, North Carolina on October 26, 1928.

Moody was fairly vague with his opinion concerning the “Baptism with the Holy Spirit” that was extremely popular in the Pentecostal West. Torrey was not. He declared that what was taking place in Topeka and Azusa Street was “emphatically not of God.” Not to be outdone, H.A. Ironside, an evangelical preacher, decried Pentecostalism as
“disgusting... delusions and insanities”

22 in 1912. The polarization occurring within the holiness movement was never more pronounced than when BIOLA was founded about 25 miles away from the Azusa street revival. Moody may not have needed to voice his opinion about Irwin, Parham, and Seymour, but Torrey had little choice. Fundamentalists following Torrey also had little choice in their condemnation of glossolalia. Speaking in tongues, if genuine, gives evidence to a miraculous change occurring in the church. These remarkable claims, left unchecked, characterize holiness as chaos. Glossolalia may be approved only in remarkable circumstances but cannot be expected for every believer or as an essential part of any church service. Conservative attacks against this blessing of the Holy Spirit identify the language as gibberish rather than a real gift of tongues and illegible when written and incomprehensible when spoken to all present. This critique maintains that the tongues used as evidence of a spiritual baptism do not conform to their biblical counterparts, since they are not orderly, nor are they properly interpreted as dictated by 1 Corinthians 14:27.

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Torrey’s rejection of biblical criticism resonated with the Holiness movement. Both the radical and conservative wings of the holiness movement looked to the Bible as the source of revelation and the authority for life. As the Pentecostals emerged, they began placing greater emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians, but the conservative holiness rejected any authority beyond the scriptures themselves. As the Bible was the last remnant of authority, any measures to contextualize or challenge


23 If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret.
scripture necessarily were rejected. Unlike Schleiermacher and those who followed his liberalization program of reading the Bible, the fundamentalists believed the Bible to be in its current construction since the first century. Basic questions concerning authorship of texts and even the formation of the canon were quickly dismissed as either irrelevant or delivered by the Holy Spirit to the early Church, despite the councils and Church Fathers, not because of them. The entire first volume of *The Fundamentals*, and half of the second volume, are dedicated to combating biblical criticism. It is only at the beginning of the second half of volume two, as well as volumes three and four, which actually address doctrines that the fundamentalists believed were crucial to the Christian life. It should be noted that the Protestant construction of the Bible without the Deuterocanonical texts was maintained. The fundamentalists, following Perkins, applied a whole set of techniques to dismiss any books found in the Catholic or Orthodox canon.

J. Gresham Machen (d. 1937) spelled out the difficulty of any type of liberalism in 1923. Machen argued that the battle between fundamentalism, which he equated with Christianity, and the modern world, was a conflict for the very souls of everyone. Machen believed that modernism was itself a competitive religion, a religion that used traditional Christian terminology and promised redemption in this world. This new religion of liberal modernism used Christian language but applied this to naturalism “that is, in the denial of any entrance of the creative power of God.”

Machen characterizes modernism as a false gospel that speaks like a Christian but has the heart of a deist, a

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Unitarian, or an atheist. According to Machen, the chief rival of Christianity for the soul of the modern world is liberalism. He argues that “An examination of the teachings of liberalism in comparison with those of Christianity will show that at every point the two movements are in direct opposition. That examination will now be undertaken, though merely in a summary and cursory way.”

In addition to the already acknowledged conflict concerning biblical criticism, there are primarily three areas that liberalism and fundamentalism collided in, science, economics, and the formation of doctrine. By the early twentieth century, liberalism grew beyond the confines of Schleiermacher, as his liberalism only briefly addressed science and did not touch upon economics. Machen maintains that liberalism is the anti-scientific movement. Rather than combating science, Machen and the fundamentalists combat the application of science and the conclusions that are against the Bible or the world view of the fundamentalist. When faith and science collide, this only points to the inherent flaws in a system of reason based in liberalism and an attempt to rationalize a sinful existence that does not take in mind the grandeur of God or God’s creation.

Twentieth-century fundamentalists attempt to strike a middle ground with science, along the lines of Spener, as addressed in chapter two. The natural phenomena of the universe are not inherently signs of prosperity or doom, but they are created to glorify God. When the signs fail to do so science is incomplete.

The discussion of economics and materialism is used as an example of the willful ignorance present within the liberal ideology. The great economic evil in the 1920s,

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25 J. Gresham Machen, Christianity and Liberalism, 53.
according to Machen is socialism. In an odd twist, the holiness movement that grew as a religious form of Populism now combats the prevailing economic concerns of Populism. Fundamentalism rejected any economic form that restricts choice. Freedom of choice and individual liberty are essential traits to the fundamentalist world view. The apparent contradiction addressing freedom concerning moral issues is glaring.

The fundamentalist has conflicting motivations when it comes to overall freedom. Freedom is necessary to allow people the ability to sin or reject sin and embrace Christ. This concern of freedom is found within Palmer and Wesley as well. Both argued for Christian perfection but wanted to maintain room for free will. In trying to square that circle their declarations did not always coincide with the definitions of their doctrines. While individuals must be free to make the decision on their own, obvious temptations should be removed in order to ease the sinner’s choice towards redemption in Christ. This, along with the shift towards moralism in the nineteenth century as addressed in chapter nine, provide the justification in legally prohibiting things like alcohol. In the sphere of economics, the sinful actions perpetuated by greedy corporations or business owners must be condemned, as Moody did, but not made illegal. In volume four of The Fundamentals, socialism is warned against, and Charles Erdman who wrote the section, was deeply concerned about the identification of Socialism with Christianity. His main concern was the reduction of Christianity to an economic system rather than a spiritual one. Erdman does allow freedom on the issue, urging churches to allow for its members
to choose which economic systems they believe are most beneficial. “The church leaves its members free to adopt or reject Socialism as they may deem wise.”

While Erdman allows churches freedom on economic theory, Machen does not. Socialism is a cure worse than the disease. Machen argues that limiting economic choice through “materialist paternalism… will rapidly make of America one huge ‘Main Street,’ where spiritual adventure will be discouraged and democracy, will be regarded as consisting in the reduction of all mankind to the proportions of the narrowest and least gifted of the citizens.” Machen believes that limited economic freedom will actually increase materialism in addition to reducing liberty. In many ways Machen agrees with Marx, that it is a great sin to reduce someone to a commodity, the difference is that Machen believes that socialism does this rather than capitalism.

Liberalism also conflicts with fundamentalism over the issues concerning the formation of doctrine. Here Machen directly addresses the proposals of Schleiermacher’s liberalism. Machen roundly rejects that Christian doctrine is an expression of Christian experience. Rather following Perkins interpretation of scripture, Machen maintains that Christian doctrine is simply a reflection on the unchanging word of God, the Bible. Doctrines concerning sin, the incarnation, atonement, grace, faith, regeneration, and others are all simply present in scripture for any to accept. *The Fundamentals* address each of these issues in detail, roundly rejecting any other view proposed as preposterous. While the authors of *The Fundamentals* and fundamentalists all believe doctrine is clear


from the Bible without need of any interpreting body except the Holy Spirit, arguments over doctrine are apparent and inevitable.

With the construction of *The Fundamentals*, conservative holiness launches a theological attack against Pentecostals, other Protestants, and Catholics in a way that was noticeably absent from the holiness luminaries which preceded them in the nineteenth century. It is worth noting that both Finney and Moody were not reflexively anti-Catholic like Palmer was. Both men recount different events when they encountered Catholics and even learned issues of the faith from them. Palmer was a radical exception and possessed the anti-Catholic vehemence that was so widely popular, but Moody and Finney were more open to the possibility that a Catholic could be numbered among the redeemed. In volume three of *The Fundamentals*, T.W. Medhurst answers the question “is Romanism Christianity?” The answer given by Medhurst is a resounding no. Medhurst takes the polemics of Perkins and Spener, as addressed in chapter two, and advances past their anti-Catholic rhetoric. Medhurst defined Christianity as consisting in “The Bible, the whole Bible, nothing but the Bible,” and “Romanism denies all this; and therefore Romanism is not Christianity.” Medhurst continues his polemic by asserting that Catholics acceptance of councils and creeds is a de facto rejection of the Bible, that “Romanism teaches men to hate,”28 furthermore the mass puts Christ to death every time it is offered, contrary to Scripture, which attests Christ died once and for all. Medhurst continues his condemnation of Catholics, contending that the Catholic Church is in error

on issues of justification, and the institution of the papacy and bishops is the work of Satan. Machen is a little more kind to Catholics than Medhurst, arguing “The Church of Rome may represent a perversion of the Christian religion; but naturalistic liberalism is not Christianity at all.”

The causes and definitions of fundamentalism remain a hot topic. Very few scholars are able to agree upon the best way to describe the movement. One common theme within the views of Richard Antoun, Martin Riesebrodt, and Malise Ruthven is that fundamentalism is a movement that emerged out of the crisis of modernity. Modernity is in such a crisis because the shift away from traditional social relations outpaced the conventional understanding about what should be expected in life. The dawn of the twentieth century is usually depicted as an era of radical transformation, and fundamentalism provides an answer to those dissatisfied with this metamorphosis. While many of these statements are true, the shifts in nineteenth-century American religious life, especially with the growth of the holiness movement are overlooked or minimized. Furthermore, many of the challenges in defining the origins of fundamentalism as a distinct movement are hampered when historical analysis is applied to earlier periods of Christian life. Seventeenth and eighteenth-century Pietism, as addressed in Chapters one and two of this work, easily fit many of the definitions of Pietism. This includes Antoun’s assertions that fundamentalists “see themselves as the true believers and the proponents of official religion as hypocrites who advance a superfluous brand of religion

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29 J. Gresham Machen, Christianity and Liberalism, 52.
and use it for their own purposes.”

Pietism also resembles fundamentalism with Riesebrodt’s conception that “society is in severe crisis, for which there is but one solution: a return to the principles of the divine order once practiced in the original community, whose laws have been handed down in writing.” Furthermore, a similarity can be found with Ruthven’s belief that fundamentalism is essentially “a religious way of being that manifests itself in a strategy by which beleaguered believers attempt to preserve their distinctive identity as people or group in the face of modernity and secularization.”

The difficulty with defining fundamentalism as a distinct movement rather than understanding that Protestant fundamentalism emerged out of a long and complicated history is the difficult relationship between the desires of a traditionalist as opposed to the fundamentalist. While there is certainly a large degree of overlap, a traditionalist is not the same thing as a fundamentalist. Many traditionalists in America and Europe, including Søren Kierkegaard, were opposed to the drastic changes occurring in their countries, but would not have lent their support to fundamentalists. Other traditionalists opposed the radical nature of the Holiness Movement and may have supported elements of Schleiermacher’s liberalism as lining up with a more traditional understanding of doctrine formation than Machen and other fundamentalists would. In fact, it is often the


fundamentalists that opposed the traditionalists, who were seen as becoming too liberal in
the beginning of the twentieth century.

A further complication arises when not all conservative holiness members
subscribe to The Fundamentals. Just as there were different types of Pentecostals, there
are also different types of conservative holiness churches, not all are fundamentalists.
Many of the conservatives preferred the term evangelical, since they opposed both the
extreme theological positions of fundamentalists and the charismatic elements of
Pentecostals. In 1978 this division was made all the more clear when the
fundamentalists affirmed the Chicago Statement on biblical Inerrancy against the
evangelicals. In a series of twenty-five articles, the fundamentalists affirmed and denied
specific doctrines concerning the Bible. This included Article one, which affirmed that
“the Holy Scriptures are to be received as the authoritative Word of God,” and denied
“that the Scriptures receive their authority from the Church, tradition, or any other human
source.”33 The further articles articulated that the entire Bible is literally true, including
Genesis creation accounts, and that creeds and councils have authority on a similar level
to the Bible.

Evangelicals and fundamentalists often share churches and literature though. One
common tract issued by evangelicals is Bill Bright’s Four Spiritual Laws. Bright posits
that just as there are laws of nature, there are spiritual laws as well. These laws begin
with “God loves you and offers a wonderful plan for your life,”34 then move to sin

University Press, 2008), 21.

causing separation, Christ’s death as the only provision for man’s sin, and everyone individually receiving Christ to experience God’s love and plan for their lives. Both the evangelicals and fundamentalists still focus within these laws on experiencing God rather than scholasticism and reason. Evangelicals even published a popular book with corresponding devotionals, under the title *Experiencing God*, illustrating the priority that experience still holds.\(^{35}\) While Fundamentalists often oppose their Pentecostal counterparts, both have their origins in Palmer’s conception of holiness. It was only the fragmentary growth of Protestantism that produced the disparate movements.

**Neo-Orthodoxy**

> “*Within the Bible there is a strange new world, the world of God.*”\(^{36}\)

> – Karl Barth

Fundamentalism was not the only resistance to Schleiermacher or modern liberalism. Neo-orthodoxy joined the chorus voicing their dissent. As the twentieth century began, the Protestant position was unclear. In America, the Holiness Movement had grown to the point that most Protestants were connected to or reacting against some strain of the movement. The churches that refused to accept holiness were wrapped up in liberalism or trying to find a way to survive in an untenable climate. In Europe things fared slightly better, but liberalism dominated most mainline denominations and any


appeal to traditionalism seemed lacking. The answer for many Protestants was to return to the basic themes of the Reformation. This was the attempt of neo-orthodoxy.

Schleiermacher had succeeded in redefining Christianity. This work preserved Protestantism through the nineteenth century by focusing the attention onto humanity and the human response to God. This allowed Christians to find God by looking within. When the First World War began, the optimism of looking within faded. Neo-orthodoxy answered by shifting the focus back onto God. God’s transcendence was now far more important than God’s imminence. As God is beyond human understanding, cultures become largely irrelevant, not to the person, but to Christianity. Human aspirations and constructions are only valuable to themselves. God, and therefore Christianity, remains above culture and above the individual. Schleiermacher’s answer that God is found in feeling was combated by once again looking at the fall and the pervasive power of sin in the world. Individuals and their feelings are corrupted, therefore relying upon a feeling, any feeling, including those of absolute dependence is suspect. Furthermore, since God is transcendent and utterly different from humanity, human feelings cannot be the fount for this encounter, it must be God.

Neo-orthodoxy also has an interesting response to religion in general. It is agreed that “Religion is never and nowhere true as such and in itself.” True religion contains both knowledge and worship of God and everywhere this is rejected. Due to the fall, humanity is incapable of fully approaching God, therefore any effort at approaching God is incomplete, only partially true, or false. God is the only truth and besides this, “No religion is true. A Religion can only become true.” This is the divine hope. God can justify sinful humanity and cleanse religion, but only from without. The essence of a
religion can be remade, and made into a religion that worships God. The same applies to individuals as to religions; it is only from outside that they can be cleansed and made into a right relationship with God. This is through God’s grace. Still it is maintained that “We must not hesitate to state that the Christian religion is the true religion.”

The answer proposed by the neo-orthodox was to look at the Christian scriptures to find God and God’s grace. It is only here that religion can be found true. Like the Reformation teachers proclaimed, it is the scriptures that give the answers to dilemmas of this world. The Bible itself though does not automatically give the answers like the fundamentalists assume. The neo-orthodox accept a degree of liberalism while struggling against it. The Bible left alone is simply a text like other texts. It becomes something wholly different when read by a Christian. When the Bible is encountered in faith it becomes the Word of God. The person reading it does not make the change but God does. God chooses to speak in scripture to God’s creation. Barth argues that “The Bible tells us now how we should talk with God but what he says to us; not how we find the way to him, but how he has sought and found the way to us; not the right relation in which we must place ourselves to him, but the covenant which he has made with all who are Abraham’s spiritual children and which he has sealed once and for all in Jesus Christ.” Reading scripture is always from God to the Christian.

This view is not terribly different than what Perkins said in The Art of Prophesy, or what Francke said in Guide to the Reading and Study of the Holy Scripture. Both


38 Karl Barth, The Word of God and the Word of Man, 43.
maintained that different hearts would receive the words of Scripture differently. For Perkins scripture only truly spoke if the one reading it was one of the elect. For Francke it was largely dependent upon the preparation of the heart. If the man or woman was impious then God would not speak. If they approached the word with an open heart God would hear their prayers and answer them accordingly.

It was primarily this view of the Bible that brought fundamentalist condemnation upon neo-orthodoxy. Charles Calwell Ryie argues, “It has been hailed as the new or neoorthodoxy; in reality it is nothing but a false or pseudoorthodoxy.”39 Ryie’s criticism sounds very familiar to Machen’s criticism of liberalism, namely that neo-orthodoxy takes on the form and language of Christianity but lacks the substance behind it. Since the Bible only becomes the word of God when approached in faith, it remains fallible and without inherent authority. For the fundamentalists this is not the Bible.

There are several voices that stand above all others in the neo-orthodox world. Without contradiction, the first and loudest voice is from Karl Barth, who deserves the title the father of neo-orthodoxy. Others contributed as well in America, the Niebuhrs, Reinhold and Richard were the loudest voices and in Europe, Emil Brunner and to a lesser extent Rudolf Bultmann. While their criticisms and contributions are valuable additions to an exhaustive study of neo-Orthodoxy, their engagement with the nineteenth-century Pietists Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard are not as exhaustive. Richard Niebuhr wrote one book on Schleiermacher, and Bultmann’s relationship with Kierkegaard was

largely through the influence of Heidegger. Still the best understanding of the Pietist influence upon neo-orthodoxy comes from examining Barth and his attitudes towards Pietism, Schleiermacher, and Kierkegaard.

Karl Barth.

“Man cannot first be neutral towards God.” 40 – Karl Barth

Karl Barth was born on May 10, 1886 in Basel, Switzerland. Like Schleiermacher and Wesley, Barth came from a line of ministers. His father Fritz was a Reformed Pastor and a professor of the New Testament and early church history in Bern. Fritz was deeply influenced by Pietism, proclaiming “Faith is an experience of God.”41 Karl’s mother, Anna Katharina, was the daughter of the pious Joanna Burckhardt, who inherited Pietism from her grandfather Johannes R. Burckhardt.42 The Reverend Burkhart was among the founders of the society of Christianity, a Herrnhut community in Switzerland. With such a pedigree, it was soon expected that Karl would become a Pietist. Instead he rebelled and as a youth he became a leader of a street gang, engaging in a number of feuds.

By 1904 Karl ended his scraps with the neighborhood kids and set out to brawl with other larger forces when he decided to become a pastor like his father. That year he began his studies in theology at the University of Bern and later Berlin, Tübingen, and

40 Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics The Doctrine of the Reconciliation Volume 4 Part 1 (London: T and T Clark, 2003), 42.

41 Eberhard Busch, Karl Barth and the Pietists, 13.

42 1738-1820
Marburg. It was during his studies that Barth fell under the influence of Herrmann and adopted his liberalism. He records that “I absorbed Herrmann through every pore.” For the rest of Karl’s life he sought to undo his training in liberalism and he believed that he must overcome Schleiermacher. A closer reading of Barth’s work points out that he rejected Herrmann far more than Schleiermacher, but it was Schleiermacher’s bust he had on his desk, and Schleiermacher’s legacy that haunted him.

By 1909 Karl Barth received ordination and served as a pastor in Geneva where he met his wife Nelly Hoffman. The two got married in 1913 when Karl was the pastor in Safenwil. They had five children together and the marriage was filled with difficulties. Safenwil was a small blue collar community and Karl became deeply involved in Christian socialism. Karl was touched for the first time by the plight of the poor and believed that revolution was necessary to fix it. In 1915 he joined the Swiss Social Democratic Party. Far from a casual member, Barth was a leader in the eyes of some and was urged twice to go into politics. Instead he gave forty-three lectures on socialism during his years in Safenwil. Barth participated in and organized strikes and unions, and was a delegate at socialist conferences. He believed that socialism and the gospel shared the same message, a fundamental movement from below to above. It was at this time that Barth argued that real socialism is real Christianity, and all true Christians must be socialists. Socialists needed to become Christians if they wanted to reform socialism and work with God to heal society. Barth resonated with Spener’s argument that all property

should be used for the service of God and neighbor, as addressed in chapter two. The position on socialism is a clear difference between the young Barth and the American Protestant fundamentalists. Following the revolution in Russia, the party was radicalized and they became committed to the violent overthrow of the system if necessary and to class warfare and the dictatorship of the proletariat. Barth was hesitant in pursuing some of these measures and he campaigned against joining the Third International, on the grounds that he opposed the use of violence.

Surprisingly, this period in Safenwil had room for two other developments in Barth’s life. Both contributed to his theological development and his legacy against liberalism. The first began at the outbreak of the Great War. Barth heard the Berlin court preacher Ernst von Dryander declare that the Germans were going to battle “for our culture against the uncultured, for German civilization against barbarism, for the free German personality bound to God against the instincts of the undisciplined masses.” Reflecting much later on this, Barth said that this shook him to his core and unmasked liberalism. Barth believed that liberalism was liberating, but with the War beginning, the idea that God desired war did not make sense. Barth saw Dryander’s message and the message of many other liberal Germans as making a God out of War, rather than serving God in War. Barth believed that his theological training made God’s will simply an extension of humanities, a nations, or individual’s will. God is to be greater and stand over and against the will of creation. Barth was not fully committed to this break yet, as

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he was still heavily involved in a militant struggle linking God and Socialism until after the war.

The second accomplishment Barth had during his time at Safenwil was the completion of his first edition of *The Epistle to the Romans*, which he completed in August 1918 and published the following year. This work served as Barth’s break with Pietism for many of the same reasons why he broke with liberalism. The critics are really one and the same, since Barth understood liberalism as the product of the higher order Moravian, Schleiermacher. Barth insisted that grace was not experience. Schleiermacher, and especially Schleiermacher as interpreted by Herrmann, argued that God’s grace is manifest by an increase in God-consciousness in the individual. Barth believed that this claim reduced God to a feeling within God’s created order. Once again the problem of God being an extension of human will is essentially flawed, and less than Barth’s view of the all-encompassing gospel message. Barth further criticized Pietism as reducing God to the level of the individual rather than the whole. At this time Barth argued that God cannot be honored only by a personal life, and truth is not for the individual. Later Barth’s relationship between the individual and God changed through a greater reading of Kierkegaard, and Schleiermacher’s constant refrain of these experiences of God belonging to the Church are absent in Barth’s criticism as they were likely absent from Herrmann’s lectures. Oddly enough, Barth echoes Schleiermacher as evidence against Pietism and liberalism when he proclaims that “The faith of the individual is nothing before God, insofar as she wants to be more than a momentary
expression of the movement. But the movement is not borne by the individual but by the Christian Community.”

This first edition brought him some international attention which gave him his first appointment as a professor at the University of Göttingen, even though he never possessed a PhD. Three years later, Karl met Charlotte von Kirschbaum who he called “Lollo.” Karl’s encounter with Lollo is filled with mystery and suspicion. She was Karl’s manuscript reader, pupil, researcher, confidant, and potentially much more. By most accounts the two fell in love and in 1929, Lollo moved into the Barth home. For 35 years Karl Barth shared a home with Lollo and Nelly. The three likely would have stayed together, except Lollo contracted Alzheimer’s and was moved to a nursing home in 1964. When she died she was buried alongside Karl and Nelly, per his request, despite the 35 year long strain she put on Karl and Nelly’s marriage.

In 1921 he completely rewrote *The Epistle to the Romans*. It was a separate edition, but in reality it was a completely new work. In this new edition, Barth attempts to describe the complete ineffable nature of God by leaving room for God as the unknown. Barth declares “God is known as the Unknown God.” This pointed shift in his theology away from Schleiermacher began years earlier but the reconstruction of the work that first brought him fame was intended to cause his earlier admirers discomfort. He began much of this shift even before moving to the University of Göttingen.

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45 Timothy J. Gorringe, *Karl Barth Against Hegemony: Christian Theology in Context*, 42.


In the spring of 1920, Barth continued his criticism of Pietism at the Aarau Student Conference. Here Barth argues against linking religion and experience. Barth maintains that religions falsify our experiences of the world by making God a part of this world rather than understanding God as wholly other. Barth believed that only the wholly other God would give life out of death. While Schleiermacher emphasized the incarnation, allowing for people to encounter a God who became man, Barth emphasizes the transcendence of God and the Easter message. For Barth, Christ did not come to change anything in this world or improve the flesh through morality. Rather Christ came to transform everything through the resurrection. Even when Barth speaks of the incarnation, he does not do so with the same leveling process that Schleiermacher does. Rather Barth’s reading of the incarnation only serves to prove that Christ is wholly other. “Because God is eternal and omnipotent, He is unique and once-for-all. To this, Jesus, the Christ, the eternal Christ, bears witness. At these cross-roads, then, God’s own Son stands, and He stands, nowhere else. God sends him – from the realm of the eternal, unfallen, unknown world of the Beginning and the End. Therefore – but let no orthodox person rejoice – He is ‘begotten not made’ – that is, He is contrasted with every creature familiar to us.” In the very coming of Christ, humanity is to shudder at the difference between itself and God. Later he continues “to proclaim the new man who recognizes himself in God, for he is made in His image, and in whom God recognizes Himself, for He is his pattern; to proclaim the new world where God requires no victory, for their He is already Victor, and where he is not a thing in the midst of the things, for there He is All in All; and to proclaim the new Creation, where Creator and creature are not two, but
Normally this radical difference would not liberate but condemn, yet in that very difference God frees humanity through this indescribable difference where God is and remains wholly other.

Barth taught at a few other German universities besides Göttingen, including Münster, and Bonn. During this period Barth’s legacy grew, when he undertook the challenge of producing a Church Dogmatics that he left unfinished, despite its considerable length of nearly 10,000 pages broken down into thirteen volumes. Throughout *The Church Dogmatics*, Barth carefully articulates the relationship between God and creation. This relationship is one where God must take the initiative, as God alone can do this. Barth argues “when Scripture speaks of this dying of the old life as the first step to the new, it never means a work which it is in our hands to fulfil.” Unlike those involved in the Holiness Movement, Barth eliminates the role of the individual in encountering God and places it solely with God. Barth remains true to his Calvinist Reform roots and remains much closer to Perkins than to Schleiermacher or Wesley. Throughout the entire Dogmatics it is always God who works and humanity who responds through God’s power. Barth’s Dogmatics brought a great deal of criticism. Bultmann suspected that Barth was reviving arid scholasticism. In many ways he was, but it was a new form of scholasticism, not the old arid type intended to define Protestantism against specific charges particular to an epoch, rather Barth’s orthodoxy

48 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 277.

was intended on defining the entirety of the Christian life. He left it incomplete because he was simply unable to completely define humanity.

It was also during these early years that Barth challenged the rise of the National Socialists in Germany. Specifically he played a major role in drafting the Barmen Theological Declaration in 1934 opposing the Nazis. A year later he lost his post at Bonn for defying the Nazis yet again. Barth, as a professor at Bonn, was required to take an oath of loyalty to Hitler. He refused to take an oath without adding “to the extent that I responsibly am able as a Protestant Christian.” Unreservedly the University of Basel offered him a position as a professor of theology. Barth accepted and remained there for the remainder of his teaching career. In addition to his teaching load, Barth continued to write his Dogmatics.

When the war concluded Barth found himself at odds with the Swiss political establishment. He spoke against the American and European anti-communism stance and the rearmament of Germany. He was fearful of the nuclear arms race and the ramifications of the iron-curtain. Barth believed evil was never the answer to evil and the treatment of those in the East was unjustified. Barth’s post-war involvement included delivering the keynote at the 1948 World Council of Churches. The theme was disorder of the world and God’s plan of salvation. Barth reversed the process by addressing salvation before entering into the chaos of the world. Like the rest of Barth’s theology, he always began by addressing God then the world.

In 1954 he spoke at the council again. This time he spoke about the witness of the church to a larger world. This witness is supposed to be a witness of love. As he says in *The Church Dogmatics* II.2 “God is love. But he is also perfect freedom. Even if there were no such relationship, even if there were no other outside of Him, He would still be love. But positively, in the free decision of His love, God is God in the very fact, and in such a way, that He does stand in this relation, in a definite relationship with the other.”

God’s love is always coupled with freedom. Without freedom love cannot truly be love, and without love there can be no freedom. This is one of the essential reasons for the fall and for God remaining wholly other. Since God is wholly other than creation, the creation cannot confuse its self-love for the love of God. This love must always be for the other with the exception of God’s perfect love which may love Godself through the trinity.

Before Barth’s death he had two more audiences to reach. The first took place in 1962. Barth set out to make a speaking tour of the United States. The seventy-five year old took a seven week tour and spoke at Princeton Theological Seminary, the University of Chicago, Union Theological Seminary, and San Francisco Theological Seminary. Along the way Barth spoke with Martin Luther King Jr, and was featured on the cover of *Time* magazine. The second notable event in Barth’s life was when he was invited to Rome to speak with Pope Paul VI in 1966. This meeting encouraged Barth to begin an ecumenical theology, but did not get very far in the endeavor due to his advanced age.

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Barth had engaged with important Catholic theologians before and after Vatican II, including once to the Tubingen theologian Joseph Ratzinger, later Pope Benedict XVI. During the encounter with the future pontiff, Ratzinger gave a lecture in one of Barth’s seminars. Barth replied, “You have presented the Roman Catholic Church to us as such a magnificent church that we poor Protestants now feel rather small compared to it.”

Barth remained unsure if the Catholic Church left room for the Holy Spirit’s guidance, but was open to dialogue.

Barth’s health began to deteriorate in 1964 but for the next four years he was in and out of nursing homes and continued to write and develop his theology. He died on December 10, 1968. Before he died, he spent considerable attention addressing the theology of Schleiermacher and Kierkegaard. In many ways Barth’s theology, and the theology of neo-orthodoxy in general, is an attempt at reconciling Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher from the vantage point of the twentieth century, instead of looking back to their common Moravian ancestry.

52 Eberhard Busch, Abingdon Pillars of Theology Barth (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008), 20.
Barth on Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher.

“God's direction is the directing of man into the freedom of His children.” – Karl Barth

When Barth was drinking up Herrmann’s lectures, his world view was wholly contained in Schleiermacher. In addition to the tale about Schleiermacher’s bust in Barth’s office, two other stories are often told that clearly illustrate Barth’s view of Schleiermacher. The first is told by Barth himself. Barth often told stories that when he reached the kingdom of heaven, the first person, after Mozart, that he wished to converse with was Schleiermacher. One should assume that since this is a heavenly encounter, he was not planning on chastising him. The second narrative is told by Richard Niebuhr, who described an encounter he had when he visited Barth after writing his book on Schleiermacher. Barth’s home contained a staircase that rose to the living quarters. Along the staircase there were pictures hung of great theologians, with Kant and Schleiermacher on one side and others following. Niebuhr dared to ask Barth if the pictures were in ascending or descending order. Barth’s response was in descending order, after Kant and Schleiermacher things got steadily worse. These two stories paint a picture of Barth as an admirer of Schleiermacher that is not always evidenced in his writings. Schleiermacher remained the starting point for Barth’s theology, often as the whipping boy and foil, but he always began with Schleiermacher. Barth is as much an inheritor of Schleiermacher as Tillich is, though he rejected his inheritance. Neo-

orthodoxy is as much a product of liberalism as neo-liberalism is. It is an ironic twist of fate that Barth became the last word on Schleiermacher for decades and it is only after Barth’s voice began to fade that Schleiermacher was approached again.

Barth’s critique of Schleiermacher begins with Schleiermacher’s stated aims. Schleiermacher wanted to be both a Christian and a modern man. These two ideas were antithetical to Barth, who lived in the modern world but was never at home in it. Barth maintains that the world must be freely and wholly rejected. If the world is valued, it changes the fundamental relationship between God and the world. The world must begin as fallen or at the very least other than God. Barth launches two very pointed critiques at Schleiermacher. The first, published in 1922, was entitled *The Word of God and the Word of Man*. The second is a more restrained criticism in his work *The Theology of Schleiermacher*, specifically the postscript.

In *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, Barth lists the teachers in his spiritual ancestral line. It contains Kierkegaard, Luther, Calvin, Paul, and Jeremiah. Barth considers adding Melanchthon to this list, but he pronounces, “[I] might explicitly point out that this ancestral line – which I commend to you – does not include Schleiermacher.” Not only does Barth leave Schleiermacher off his list to the surprise of his readers but he then points out why he is leaving Schleiermacher off. Schleiermacher is not considered a good teacher in theology because “he is disastrously dim-sighted in regard to the fact that man as man is not only in need but beyond all hope of saving himself; that the whole of so-called religion, and not least the Christian religion, shares in this need; and that one can not speak of God simply by speaking of man in a loud
The fundamental difference between Barth and Schleiermacher is the condition of man. Barth believes that Schleiermacher never fully possessed a clear and direct apprehension of the truth. This truth is that man is made to serve God and not God to serve man. Largely the difference is perspective but the perspective for Barth is everything.

In this same work Barth continues by arguing that Schleiermacher diminishes Jesus by failing to give adequate attention to the absolute miracle of the Bible, namely the resurrection. As stated earlier, Schleiermacher’s focus was on the incarnation. For him, once God became human nothing else mattered. If he lived an hour or a thousand years, rose from the dead or not, it did not matter to Schleiermacher. That God would condescend was a radical change in the relationship between the creator of the universe and the creation. Christ’s death and resurrection only illustrates that Christ was God rather than changing the new relationship that began at the Nativity or possibly the Annunciation.

In *The Theology of Schleiermacher*, Barth references Schleiermacher as “my old friend and enemy, Schleiermacher!” Barth’s later work is more reflexive on the adversarial relationship he had with Schleiermacher. He laments his abrasive tone in his first edition of *the Epistle to the Romans*. He also admits that “in my holy zeal at that time I did not really do justice to pietism.”

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56 Karl Barth, *The Theology of Schleiermacher*, 262.
condemned based on their worst traits in Barth’s eyes. Barth also reexamines the benefits of Schleiermacher’s approach. While still rejecting humanity as the starting point, he realizes that taking human nature in its totality has merit. Apparently he was not able to fully overcome Schleiermacher and remained a true admirer.

For Barth, Schleiermacher was always at the forefront of his mind. His name loomed like a specter throughout his works, sprinkled in as either the hero or the villain and usually the latter. His relationship with Kierkegaard is quite the opposite. Barth listed Kierkegaard as one of his spiritual teachers, yet he failed to mention him at all in his fairly large Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century. Twenty-five theologians are given a section and their theology is examined and contextualized, but only a few passing mentions of Kierkegaard. Even more surprising is that in Barth’s Church Dogmatics with its thousands of pages there are only six mentions of Kierkegaard. Still Barth remarked that Kierkegaard was a teacher “into whose school every theologian must go once. Woe to him who has missed!”57 This backhanded compliment anticipates that Kierkegaard is read, digested, and in part disregarded.

With such a disparity in the works of Barth, the moniker of grand-father of neo-orthodoxy, that is often applied to Kierkegaard may appear as an overzealous quip from those who admire Kierkegaard. Still there is good reason why Kierkegaard and his pseudonyms loom large in the development of Barth and neo-orthodoxy. Early and late Barth are both impacted by different avenues of Kierkegaard’s theology. From Barth’s

retort about nationalism after the First World War, “Our nation is a Christian nation! A wonderful illusion, but an illusion, a self-deception,” it is clear that Kierkegaard’s attack upon Christendom resonated with Barth, the idea that any nation is truly a Christian one was always anathema to Barth. Barth and Kierkegaard share an interesting trait that served to connect them, while at the same time Barth needed to reject at least part of Kierkegaard. That trait was that they were both anti. Both Barth and Kierkegaard’s theology was always set up over and against some other position. Barth fought for the poor workers early and later was constantly combating Schleiermacher, and as his chief opponent, he received top billing. For Kierkegaard it was Hegel and Christendom. A good reason why Barth’s theology is so massive and complicated is because it is a theology of negation. Barth adds to subtract. As is clearly the case for Kierkegaard, as well as Palmer and Schleiermacher, theology and the reconstruction of Pietism was used to separate rather than to bring together. Barth, living in Schleiermacher’s world and largely unaware of Palmer, took Kierkegaard’s anti stance and compiled system upon system, leaving his system incomplete so he could remain anti-Barth as well.

The most significant lesson Barth learned from Kierkegaard is the relationship between God and creation. This is the central theme to neo-orthodoxy and the largest point of contention Barth had with Schleiermacher. Barth records in the preface to his second edition of the *Epistle to the Romans* “If I have a system, it consists in having kept continually before my eyes what Kierkegaard calls the infinitely qualitative difference

between time and eternity, with its full positive and negative significance: ‘God is in heaven, and thou art on earth.’ The relation between such a God and such a man and the relation between such a man and such a God is for me the theme of the Bible and the essence of philosophy.’” 59 Kierkegaard presents the essence of the Bible and philosophy by redirecting attention heavenward instead of Schleiermacher and Herrmann’s understanding that Christ though the God-consciousness was housed primarily in the individual.

Barth hesitantly rejects Kierkegaard. The reason for this rejection was not theological nor methodological, but confessional. The Reform Barth did not reject Kierkegaard because he was a Lutheran, but because he perceived him to be a Catholic. Following his *Epistle to the Romans* and while he was combating Nazism in Germany, Barth’s relationship with the Catholic Church was ideologically uneasy. Barth believed that the Catholic Church, through their systems of dogmas and emphasis on tradition and authority of the church left no room for the Holy Spirit to guide them. It was only following his meeting with the Pope and Vatican II that Barth began to reverse some of his opinions concerning Catholics. It is difficult and likely misleading to attempt to understand Barth from his declarations in these last few years as his opinions vacillated with greater frequency than before. One example was his new opposition to infant baptism. While this may appear mundane, this reversal has larger theological repercussions vis-à-vis the relationship between God and the infant, as well as the

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59 Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 10.
possibility of greater agency applied to the individual in the relationship with God, a position that Barth opposed entirely throughout his theology.

Existentialism

"God is pure subjectivity, entire and sheer subjectivity, without any trace of the objective in itself; for everything which has this land of objectivity enters thereby into relativities."

– Søren Kierkegaard

Existentialism is one of those terms that is so amorphous it nearly loses all meaning. It is so easily slipped into casual conversation that neither party cares to evaluate its meaning. On its most basic level, existentialism is the philosophy where the relationship between essence and existence is evaluated. In other words, the existence of the individual is compared to the essence of that individual, usually determined by a construction of agency where choices determine either the essence or the existence. The basic division between existentialists is whether or not essence precedes existence or vice versa. Those who affirm essence arrives first are theistic existentialists, usually Christians, and those who do not are typically atheist existentialists. For both atheist and Christian existentialists the aim is the same, both seek to have ones existence and essence be identical, and decisions are the catalyst to make this happen.

The existentialist’s proposition if problematic, one that Tillich actually argues is in actuality impossible. Between essence and existence one exists universally and the other only subjectively. An ideal type is not the same as the thing based upon that type. The history of philosophy in one way or the other wrestles with this idea going back to

60 Søren Kierkegaard, Last Years, the Journals 1853-55 (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 213.
Platonic forms and their relation to things in the material world. Tillich’s objection is not new, nor is he alone. For him “a pure existentialism is impossible because to describe existence one must use language. Now language deals with universals. In using universals, language is by its very nature essentialist, and cannot escape it.” He continues “But man can and must express his encounter with the world in terms of universals. Therefore, there is an essentialist framework in has mind. Existentialism is possible only as an element in a larger whole, as an element in a vision of the structure of being in its created goodness, and then as a description of man’s existence within that framework.”

In chapter eight, Kierkegaard’s explanation of choices creating angst was addressed in *Either/Or*. This angst produced a self that is actualized, and understood from the divine perspective, primarily when the religious sphere is developed. Furthermore, the notion of truth as outside rather than inside was teased out in *Philosophical Fragments*. These two works provide the basis for Kierkegaard’s existentialism. One other work only briefly mentioned in conjunction to Kierkegaard’s existential framework is *Fear and Trembling*. In the story that Kierkegaard and Silentio identify as the Anguish of Abraham, the existential moment is played out four times. In each of the four scenarios the basic events are the same; Abraham ventures off to sacrifice his son Isaac, but Abraham’s choices are different. In the first account Abraham tells Isaac that it is he who desires to kill him, rather than God. Abraham’s anguish was tempered by his love of God and his desire to have his son, though he was placed on the altar, love God as well. In the second account, Abraham remained silent and abhorred

61 Paul Tillich, *Perspectives on 19th and 20th Century Protestant Theology*, 245.
God for making this request of him. In the third, Abraham is moved by his love for Isaac and pleads with God, eventually denying the request to sacrifice his son. In the fourth Isaac looks upon his father and sees that he plotted his death. No words are spoken and the event is never forgotten. Isaac is spared, but his relationship with his father is permanently destroyed. The basic story is the same, but with each variation Abraham, Isaac, and God become different characters. Choice and the motivations for choices make both the individual and their relationship with God different. This is why the same person can be a hero, a villain, or a coward with the same act, but a separate motivation. The aim of existentialism is to understand essence through these choices. By attempting to combine essence and existence, existentialism is essentially a system of morality. Those actions in which the existence conforms to essence are moral and those which do not are not. This is true for both atheist and theist existentialists. The disparity lies in whose mind conceives the essence of the individual, God or the person themselves.

**Atheist Existentialism.**

“In choosing myself I choose man.”62 – Jean-Paul Sartre

Atheist existentialism begins with the same point as Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher. That point is in the human experience and the human condition. Both of these Pietists begin with human experience. For them this experience is mediated through Christian tradition, scripture, and ultimately a meaningful experience with God. Atheistic existentialism begins here, but does not continue along the same path. The

Christian has an answer to the question “why am I here?” The atheist does not. The atheist must create an answer to this question, and existentialism provides the means of doing just this.

If Kierkegaard is the father of existentialism in general, he only beats out the father of atheist existentialism by a short time. Friedrich Nietzsche was born in 1844 in Germany. His father, grandfather, and uncles were all Lutheran ministers and he likely would have been a Lutheran pastor himself if his father did not die when he was only five years old. After his father’s death, his mother and surviving siblings moved. The young Friedrich Nietzsche was taken out of his pious paternal potential and slowly caught up with some of the more radical works of the day, such as David Strauss’s *Life of Jesus*, and later Arthur Schopenhauer’s *The World as Will and Representation*. From these works Nietzsche developed his own atheist existential ideology, until he suffered a mental breakdown on the morning of January 3, 1889. This breakdown left him an invalid for the rest of his life, which ended August 25, 1900.

Nietzsche is often known for his works and his confrontation with the herd more than events in his life. In *Beyond Good and Evil*, he spells out the imposition that traditional morality has. Traditionally moral systems are the ones used to decide the character of both the individual and the act performed. In his version of existentialism Nietzsche dismantles the traditional understanding of morality, identifying it as the commands of a herd rather than a true expression of what is good. Nietzsche’s existentialism begins by questioning the very idea that morality can be something given, that is, come from outside the self. Nietzsche contends that all moral systems are created by individuals who wish to justify their creators in front of other people and are used to
calm and satisfy the creator and opponents. Because this created morality serves its creator, it is soon forgotten that they created the system themselves. Morality becomes something personified, but never truly exists.

Appeals to morality are broken into two general categories, nature and reason. To those appeals to nature Nietzsche claims that nature possesses no such moral law, that no act is inherently good or bad, that nature is indifferent. Any appeal to reason for moral law also fails Nietzsche’s criticism. Reason dictates that an act is moral because of its utility, primarily the act tends to promote happiness or minimize the opposite of happiness. Morality therefore is the system used to make more people happy. Morality is therefore something imposed rather than universally true. Nietzsche contends that this is a tyranny against nature and reason. If the purpose is to promote happiness, moral systems survive by playing upon fears. “Here also fear is once again the mother of morality.”63 Morality does not exist because of a love of neighbor, but a fear of neighbor. Morality, using this fear, reduces the individual to a member of the herd, stripping the will to power inherent to the individual.

It is here that Nietzsche’s existential system is best understood. Morality must be opposed because it creates a false essence of humanity. Morality always points to a greater whole, and is often over seasoned with language of the other world. These claims make humanity lesser rather than greater. Morality is false and the essence of humanity is false as well. The individual’s existence is also hampered through this exchange. Actions are avoided because of a perceived limitation that becomes real. Essence

precedes existence but only a false type, as such, the will to play the master evaporates and all that is made is a herd animal. For Nietzsche, the truly moral individual is the übermensch, or overman. This person disregards the opinions and desires of others and has the will to power to take for themselves what they want. The true essence of humanity is self-centered. Only the übermensch acknowledges this and acts accordingly.

There are any number of other atheist existentialists, such as Albert Camus, Paul Ricoeur, Jacques Derrida, Jacques Lacan, and Franz Kafka, that can be addressed as inheritors of Kierkegaard’s philo-ethical system. The atheist existentialist who best serves as Kierkegaard’s counterpart is Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre is potentially the best known philosopher of the twentieth century. It is an ironic twist of fate that the man who typified existentialism in the minds of the twentieth-century world was a Frenchman. After all, Kierkegaard’s once fiancée, Regina Olsen, believed that the French would never understand Søren’s work. Kierkegaard’s entrance into the French intellectual circles largely came from his German reception. French existentialism was birthed out of a series of German ideological invasions in the early twentieth century. The twentieth-century authors and works which penetrated the ideological Maginot Line came from Karl Barth, Martin Buber, Karl Jaspers, and Martin Heidegger. In parts these authors were used to construct a French intellectual ideology that could rebuild France after World War II.

Sartre was born in 1905 in Paris, and he spent most of his life there. Like Nietzsche, his father died when he was young, Sartre’s father died in 1906. For the next five years he lived with his mother and grandparents outside of Paris. Upon returning to the city he moved every other year until his mother married Joseph Mancy in 1917.
Unfortunately for Jean-Paul, that preceded a move to La Rochelle, where the adolescent was unhappy at school. At some point in his childhood he lost the use of his right eye. At fifteen he moved back to Paris and began preparations to attend the École Normale Supérieure. In 1929 he met his long time love Simone de Beauvoir, and passed his exams. He failed the previous year but resigned to present a more traditional philosophy. After he resigned himself to conventional philosophy, his brilliance shown through and he received the highest honors. For the next few years he served in the military. In 1931 he received a post teaching philosophy at lycée in Le Havre. During his tenure he obtained a grant to study at the French Institute in Berlin.

While in Berlin, Sartre encountered phenomenology, Edmund Husserl, and Martin Heidegger. While it is unknown to what extent he read Heidegger at this time, the impact lasted for the rest of his life and likely grew after the Second World War. Upon returning to France he experimented with mescaline. The trip was a bad one and sent him into depression in addition to the anticipated hallucinations. When France and Germany went to war, he was conscripted. It was likely during this time as a soldier that he first read Kierkegaard, and the first time he truly read Hegel and Marx. As the German armies advanced, he was captured and became a prisoner of war before obtaining his freedom by posing as a civilian in 1941. When the war concluded, he made his living as an independent author. The decade after the war, Sartre developed his existentialism and added to it a Marxist lexicon in the 50s.

From 1950 until his death thirty years later, Sartre was a political activist as much if not more than he was a philosopher. He was a constant advocate for peace, beginning with his opposition to the Korean War. He also signed a manifesto against the Cold War.
before traveling to the Soviet Union and named the vice-President of the France-USSR association, only to leave it the following year when the USSR intervened in Hungary. Over the next decades he was involved in several peace protests and traveled extensively to communist lands, meeting such leaders as Khrushchev, Castro, and Che Guevara. As a long advocate of peace, he broke with the Soviet Union on numerous occasions coinciding with Soviet aggression. In 1964 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature but refused it. In 1973 he suffered two hemorrhages in his good eye which left him mostly blind. For the remainder of the decade he advocated for peace between Israel and Palestine. In March of 1980 he was hospitalized for edema of the lungs, dying on April 15.

Though his political activism was extensive, today his name is more associated with his philosophy. While he published works prior to World War II, his greatest impact occurred afterwards with his involvement with existentialism. On October 28, 1945 Sartre delivered a lecture entitled *Existentialism is a Humanism*. This lecture was published the following year with the same name. In it he outlines his vision of atheist existentialism as a single unified doctrine that all atheist existentialists could agree upon. While Kierkegaard begins *Philosophical Fragments* with the question, what is truth if it is not Socratic, Sartre begins with the question, what is existentialism. This question is made all the more difficult because there are two camps of existentialists, the Christian and the Atheist. Sartre declares he is a representative of the latter and chooses to clarify his question. It is not what existentialism is, but rather Sartre queries, what is existentialism if there is no God?
Since the atheist believes that God does not exist, Sartre affirms that there is one being whose existence comes before its essence. That being is every human, or more precisely the human reality. Sartre argues that the phrase existence comes before its essence means that “man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world – and defines himself afterwards.” Man begins as nothing at all. The topic of nothingness and negation dominates the first half of Being and Nothingness. Still there is nothing to define for man, there is no state of becoming, no human nature, no anything. Without God to conceive of human nature, there is no such thing that can be appealed to, yet people exist. Before any projection of the essence of humanity, people exist. “Man is nothing else but that which he makes of himself. That is the first principle of existentialism.”64

Following this first principle, the first effect follows, namely that everyone is in possession of themselves as they are. The entire responsibility for their existence is upon their own shoulders. Since there is no outside conception of self or humanity, the perception of self is more than an individual’s perception. The image that the individual chooses to make for themselves is an image they are making for all humanity. Therefore every choice is not only a choice for the individual but a choice for every individual. While Nietzsche viewed morality as the übermench condescending to the herd, Sartre takes the opposite approach. Everyone is the übermench, for every decision is for everyone. Every decision must be the better for all, not only for the self, because the

64 Jean-Paul Sartre, Existentialism is a Humanism, 22.
choice is not for the individual. It is here that he says “In choosing myself I choose man.”

While the absence of God may initially appear to bring freedom, it actually brings condemnation. Sartre echoes Fyodor Dostoevsky (d. 1881), who once said “If God did not exist, everything would be permitted.” Everything is indeed permitted, but every decision rests solely on the individual. There is no outside force or power to appeal to. Man is free, but this is a condemnation, not a liberation. Humanity is left alone and has no excuse. This condemnation is felt all the more real with real moral quandaries. Who deserves the greater loyalty, a nation or a single loved one? Sartre believes that Christianity instructs one to take the harder road, knowing that God is ultimately in charge. Kant argues that people must always be ends and never means, but what if the decision is only between two ends? Without any clear outside objective stance on which action to take, the freedom carries a responsibility that condemns rather than liberates.

Sartre’s question of about existentialism is answered, “Existentialism is nothing else but an attempt to draw the full conclusions from a consistently atheistic position.” The answer is freedom, but a freedom that condemns because it is a freedom that makes every individual answerable and accountable to all. Furthermore, Sartre maintains that even if there is a God, which should not change the ethical duty of the existentialist. He

67 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, 53.
proposes a doctrine of action. Being left alone in existence, man must make the essence of humanity.

**Christian Existentialism and Christian Existential Ethics.**

"When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die."\(^{68}\)

– Dietrich Bonhoeffer

It is precisely Sartre’s conclusion that Kierkegaard’s existentialism is opposed to. In Christian existentialism, essence predates existence. The essence of every individual and humanity as a whole is found and contained in the knowledge of God. The duty of everyone, and especially the Christian is to exist in such a way that their existence conforms to their essence known by God. The emphasis on the ethical remains. Every individual choice is still important, but not because it makes humanity, as it does not do that. It is because it is false, a sin, a violation of the created image of God. While Sartre and Nietzsche may not find this as terrifying, for Kierkegaard any act that does not conform to God’s vision is a sacrilegious act, both against God and the self.

It was from this ethical standpoint that Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s ethics proceed. It may be a stretch to call Bonhoeffer an existentialist, but he certainly applied Kierkegaard’s morality to his life on largely the same theological grounds that Kierkegaard proposed. As a follower of Kierkegaard, he represents the truest form of a twentieth-century Christian existentialist, following the theology rather than philosophical system created by the Dane. Bonhoeffer was born in Breslau on February

4, 1906. His father was a professor and a leading authority on neurology. His mother had some connections to German aristocrats. From Breslau the family moved to Berlin in 1912. As a fourteen year old, Dietrich was determined to study theology, later attending the University of Berlin and learning from Harnack. Bonhoeffer also read Barth’s *Epistle to the Romans* and was intrigued by the early years of neo-orthodoxy. In 1930 he became a lecturer of systematic theology in Berlin. Before he began he went briefly to Union Theological Seminary and likely could have stayed on in New York. Instead he returned to Berlin. As an academic theologian, Bonhoeffer was greatly influenced by Kierkegaard and his attempt to make Christianity more difficult. Bonhoeffer named Kierkegaard one of a few representatives of genuine Christian thinking.

In 1933, with the rise of Hitler, he abandoned his academic career, only occasionally lecturing over the next three years. He spent a portion of those years in London but returned back to Berlin for good in 1935. The following year he faced a very familiar consequence for professors who opposed Hitler. Like Barth and Tillich, Bonhoeffer was expelled from his university. Unlike Barth and Tillich, Bonhoeffer did not leave Germany at this time. He tried to bolster the Confessional Church and went to Pomerania to direct an illegal Church training college, a college that would not bow its head to the idolatry of the Fuhrer. The Gestapo closed the college in 1940. He was arrested on April 5, 1943. He spent the rest of his life in prison and concentration camps. Many of the guards admired him to the point that they smuggled his writings out of the prison and apologized for imprisoning him. He was executed on April 9, 1945, less than a month before VE day.
Bonhoeffer followed Kierkegaard in advocating a costly Christianity. There were numerous opportunities for Bonhoeffer to flee Germany even after the war began. Yet he believed he was called to Germany and to resist the Third Reich, thereby demonstrating Christianity. His lasting legacy is the cost of grace. Conforming one’s existence to the essence conceived by God is a costly thing. For Bonhoeffer it cost him his life.

Bonhoeffer points out that the cost is different for everyone, but there is always a cost to accepting grace. For the rich young man who asked Jesus what he must do to be saved, the cost was giving up his wealth. In the *Cost of Discipleship*, Bonhoeffer argues that when we read scripture, we make excuses that these statements don’t apply. The young man here “was not allowed to solace his regrets by saying ‘Never mind what Jesus says, I can still hold on to my riches, but in the spirit of inner detachment.”69 No, he went away sorrowful, because he had not escaped from the real cost laid before him.

The same applied to the disciples. They were sent out by Jesus, who directly told them what to do. “They are not left free to choose their own methods or adopt their own conception of their task. Their work is to be Christ-work, and therefore they are absolutely dependent on the will of Jesus.”70 Bonhoeffer acknowledges that this direct instruction is actually a benefit for Christians because the cost is known and the path is laid out. Following it is difficult, but this is the course for the Christian. Christianity is not to be easy, but cost everything.


Postmodern/Emergent Church.

“Faith is the objective uncertainty.” — Søren Kierkegaard

Kierkegaard’s legacy extends beyond Christians existentialism into postmodernism. The Postmodern turn effected the evangelical movement in America in a rather significant way. In addition to the continuation of conservative evangelicals, fundamentalists, and Pentecostals, recently another brand of holiness developed, identifying itself as the Emergent church. The Emergent church is dependent upon the Christian legacy of existentialism and postmodern thought, often identifying themselves as post-Protestant, post-evangelical, post-liberal, and post-conservative. Kierkegaard’s depiction of Christ as the absolute paradox is one of the pillars of post-modern emergent thought.

The Emergent church is filled with post-modern angst and desires something new to come out of the vaguely evangelical and nondenominational churches. Unlike fundamentalists or Pentecostals, who believe they are living the Christianity of the New Testament through strict interpretation of the Bible or a second Pentecost, the Emergent church is content to live in the twenty-first-century with the technological advances and morality of the modern world. While accepting modernity, there is some nostalgia for older forms of Christianity, usually pre-Protestant Christianity. Often borrowing practices form Eastern Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, the Emergent church lambasts the Protestant reformers iconoclasm and reinstates images and using candles

71 Søren Kierkegaard, Concluding Unscientific Postscript to Philosophical Fragments, 540.
and incense in church services. There is an attempt to synthesize the form of medieval piety with the function of the modern evangelical church. Multi-media displays and rock-concert worship are paired with tapers and medieval prayer books. By holding these two distinct eras together, Emergent churches believe there is a new authenticity to their worship.

Many notions of liberalism and neo-liberalism are also present, including biblical criticism and placing Christianity within a cultural framework instead of a confessional or doctrinal one. When creeds are used, they are not used as declarations of faith that differentiate the believer from the non-believer, but a communal recital akin to a repeated prayer. Not surprisingly, many of the emerging churches originate in the same areas that the holiness movement was strongest, and traditionalism outweighs denominational ties. Tim Keel, who pastors an emergent church in Kansas City, Jacob’s Well, argues “the emerging church phenomenon is but one small example of an alternative attempt to engage reality. The emerging church strives to re-fathom who God is, what the gospel is, how we access and read Scripture, what it means to be human, and how we generate a common life in the midst of creation in response to these realities.”72 To this end, many Emergent churches do not use the term church, rather they view themselves as spiritual formation centers, focusing less on proselytizing than on personal growth.

The Emergent church seeks to deconstruct and then reconstruct Christianity along similar lines to what Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer did with Pietism. Like the

challenges of the nineteenth century, the experiential strand of Protestantism has their history engrained. The Pietist habitus is to be the outsider and to define itself through negation. With the success of evangelicalism and Pentecostalism in America, the claims as outsider must be renewed again. The difference is the eclectic quality of a post-modern world, and the disintegration of denominations in America. A number of differences present themselves when analyzing nineteenth-century Pietists and twenty-first-century Emergent churches. The Emergent church is largely a bottom up movement, inspiring lay leadership rather than any ecclesial control. This may succeed, as it did with Palmer, and America is likely the best place for a lay led post-evangelical movement to thrive. The lack of distinct theological training that is shared and authoritative is one that will likely create further fragmentation or result in the emergent church returning to evangelical and liberal churches they are breaking from, having succeeded in introducing a few practices, rather than engendering any real transformative change like Palmer, Kierkegaard, and Schleiermacher did.

**Nineteenth-Century Pietism’s Vast Consequences**

> “Theology is the doctrine or teaching of living to God.”

—William Ames

In many ways these conservative trends are the mirror image of their more liberal counterparts addressed in the previous chapter. Schleiermacher’s liberalism produced Barth’s neo-orthodoxy in response, as well as Tillich’s neo-liberalism, in addition to the myriads of nineteenth-century liberal scholars, such as Ritschl and Herrmann, who

advanced Schleiermacher’s program further than he would have anticipated and likely in directions that needed a corrective, one that both Barth and Tillich offered. Palmer’s contribution to the Holiness movement, combined with Finney, produced the groundwork for Parham, Seymour, and Pentecostalism at the dawn of the twentieth century. When Palmer’s holiness is combined with Moody and Torrey, fundamentalism emerges. Both strands of the Holiness movement are direct inheritors of Palmer’s Altar Theology and her interpretation of Wesley’s Christian perfection. Kierkegaard’s existentialism, in both its Christian and atheist forms, serves as a counterweight in many respects to the nationalism of the nineteenth century. Nineteenth-century nationalism centered on the relationship of the individual as a component of the state. Existentialism on the other hand, redirected the focus on individuals and their construction of the self rather than the state. Once the individual is properly formed, either by conforming their existence to the essence presupposed by God, or by choosing their own existence devoid of divine aid, communities and humanity are able to emerge. Ethical systems are also recreated by existentialism against those imposed by national interests. The state, having failed to live up to their divine calling, proves that a new set of ethical criteria must be formulated. This becomes the task of the existentialist.

These movements were also in no way the sole product of these three Pietists. These ideas exist in constant relation to the outside world. They also interpreted and shaped one another. For example, Barth’s understanding of Pietism was a result of his family’s connection to Zinzendorf, and neo-Orthodoxy reflected this. Additionally Barth reacted against Schleiermacher largely by adopting Kierkegaard. Neo-orthodoxy is not the product of just one legacy, but multiple strands of Pietism coming back together. The
same can be said of fundamentalism, which related to Barth and Schleiermacher negatively while reinforcing moralism and reaffirming Pietism’s antipathy to a wider Christian culture. The theological and ecclesiological legacy of Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer is vast and nowhere near uniform. As they each reconstructed their Pietist inheritance, the Protestant denominations to which they were members reacted in both predictable and unpredictable ways. Experiential Protestantism produced radically different experiences throughout the twentieth century
CONCLUSION
SCHLEIERMACHER, KIERKEGAARD, AND PALMER PIETISM OR PIETISMS

“I propose, therefore, to take a new look at Protestant theology in the nineteenth century.”74 — Claude Welch

Long before Luther nailed his 95 Theses on the Wittenberg church door, the Roman Catholic Church had a multitude of dissenting and contesting voices. These voices piously debated the proper construction of Christianity, whether the head or the heart should be the foundation for theology, whether experience or reason should be the final arbiter. These questions did not abate when Luther, Zwingli, or Henry VIII added their list of concerns to Western Christianity. In the centuries that followed the three Mainline denominations of Protestantism struggled with many of the same questions that Rome faced. It was the experiential strand of Magisterial Protestantism that turned its attention to these concerns, in addition to the oft lauded contributions of Rationalism and Scholasticism. Those Protestants who challenged the prioritization of dogma and reason fell under the umbrella of Pietism following the teachings of Perkins, Arndt, Spener, Francke, Zinzendorf, and Wesley. These Pietists began as the dissenting voice, but slowly over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries grew to a place of security, and in some areas, dominance. This security created its own crisis, because the outsider cannot abide being the insider. This new conflicting role fundamentally challenged their identity, therefore Pietism needed to remake itself. Among others, three

dominant Protestants lent their voices to the task, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Søren Kierkegaard, and Phoebe Palmer, each sharing a common ancestry but producing radically different heirs.75

Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer not only share a common pietistic heritage, but similar family lives. All three grew up fairly wealthy, and inherited their faith from their father. Their fathers each had their own distinct conversion experience and moments of shame that scarred their relationship with God and spurred them to instill a sincere piety in their children. Schleiermacher’s and Palmer’s fathers both fell into enlightenment traps, while Kierkegaard’s father experienced the earthquake. All three lived at especially trying times in the countries’ histories and were followed by a gilded if not golden age. All three lacked faith during adolescence. Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher temporarily turned their back on the faith of their fathers and Palmer’s fear of her own salvation isolated her from her God. Each experienced a second conversion, though Palmer never had a first, and each of them viewed the idea of a second conversion as something fundamentally different. The basic construction of their lives were rather similar and not terribly atypical from religious leaders of any age. What bound them together was not the events of their lives or the lives of the fathers as much as it was the expectation that they could and would understand God first and foremost through experience. What this experience was and what the catalyst would be was unique, as every life is, but the expectation was key. Through this expectation they understood their place in the cosmos and planned on fulfilling God’s mission for them.

75 Sartre, Snake-handers, Moody, Finney, Barth, Tillich, Bonhoeffer, and many more.
Before we can turn to the question of whether Palmer, Kierkegaard, and Schleiermacher present a single Pietism or if there are multiple Pietisms, three questions first need to be asked. The first is whether Pietism was ever a single thing. In other words, would the seventeenth and eighteenth-century Pietists addressed in the first four chapters agree with each other enough to honestly identify themselves with one another. The second question that must be asked is whether the same could be said of our three nineteenth-century Pietists. Finally, we need to turn to the legacies of these three once more and see if the movements they spawned could be considered Pietistic or whether a difference of degree at this point results in a difference in kind. Only by evaluating these three questions can the question posed by this work be answered: namely what is Pietism?

It may be difficult to argue that Pietism was ever one single thing. The easiest way to define Pietism is simply to limit it to a short lived movement beginning with Spener and his introduction of the *collegia*. These small groups produced an intimate setting where pious Christians could spur one another on to greater holiness. Difficulties with this arise when we consider that Francke was doing a very similar thing even before he met Spener. The situation is made more difficult when we identify the piety of Spener outside of a single practice. Spener and Francke both sought to provide a space to experience God rather than simply understand God. Both learned much of this piety from Arndt who is then called the Grandfather of Pietism. Stoeffler barely addressed Spener in his discussion of Pietism and only did so as a conclusion rather than a starting point. For Stoeffler and others, Arndt is used as an example of Pietism predating Spener. Matters are further complicated when Pietism is then discussed outside of a Lutheran
context and even more so when applied to the events in England amongst the Puritans. Both the continental Protestants and those in England were essentially doing the same thing, prioritizing the experience of God over rationalism or orthodoxy. This was not a new approach to Protestantism and has existed as a strain within Christianity from the first centuries.

Protestantism creates its own set of difficulties since these experiences are not governed by an ecclesial hierarchy that can call councils and condemn practices. Saints, sinners, heroes, and heretics are made and unmade as an expression of smaller communities within the Protestant world and an idea or practice can move from one to another and back again with a pace unmatched in the Christian world. The prioritization of experience always pushed Pietists towards mystical revivalism and an antipathy towards the Protestants who did not share in these experiences and the broader culture. More often than not these experiences did not line up with other Pietists. If Pietism can be called one thing, it must be an ideology that includes contradictory and conflicting ideas and experiences.

A very clear example of the different theological assumptions within Pietism is Zinzendorf’s sifting time. During this period he radically departed from standard theological beliefs and used his status as a mystical prophet to justify a shift in the language of theology as well as some basic notions. Arndt and Perkins never saw eye to eye on the value of a systematic theology. Perkins created a brief but complete theological construction of the Christian holy life, while Arndt spoke only of the value of entering into relation with Christ, while theology was subservient. Zinzendorf completely disregarded any appeal to theology upon the lines of Lutheran orthodoxy.
This Lutheran orthodoxy was the focus of both Arndt and Spener, who sought to justify their experiences within Lutheranism. Spener and Franke largely agreed upon their theology, but differed radically when it came to addressing the importance of the conversion experience. Francke, along with Perkins and Wesley believed that any true Christian could point to a moment of surrender that signaled their entrance into the kingdom of heaven, while Spener and Zinzendorf had no such experience.

The value of preaching also varied among these early Pietists. Perkins and Wesley believed that the Pietist message was best expressed through strong preaching, while Francke and Spener focused the Pietist experience in small conclaves where preaching was largely irrelevant. Even the message between our English Pietists differed greatly. Perkins was foundational in the Reform critique of Arminius, and Wesley was an Armenian. Wesley’s Pietism was also directed primarily against English rationalism, yet rationalism was the ally of the German Pietists, especially Francke, who believed that the Scholastics posed a greater challenge to Protestant Christianity. Even the state of sanctification differed. While Arndt and Wesley both spoke of perfection for the Christian, the word had radically different meanings for both of them.

It is not terribly surprising that their lives were rather different as well. Francke was the only one from the third estate. Arndt and Wesley were children of Priests. Zinzendorf and Perkins held a degree of nobility, Zinzendorf being a count and Perkins was amongst the English gentry. Even Spener was well connected to the power structure, although his family’s wealth is a bit unknown. Biographers inform us that he was given an educational stipend from his uncle who was a professor. Any attempt at finding a common thread among these six Pietists outside of the prioritization of experience over
rationalism and scholasticism would be in vain, and hardly helpful in contributing to the
discussion of Pietism in these early years.

The same may be said when attempting to analyze our nineteenth-century Pietists.
The easiest point of differentiation between Palmer, Kierkegaard, and Schleiermacher is
their confessional identities. Palmer’s commitment to Wesley and Wesley’s Episcopal
Methodism is unmatched in nineteenth-century America. Schleiermacher came from a
long line of Reform preachers and continued within that tradition, and Kierkegaard was a
Lutheran whose battles with the church serve as a lasting legacy. Their confession and
commitment to confessional identity differed, but all three are Pietists who could trace
the source of their theology at least to Zinzendorf, Francke, Spener, and Arndt.

The nineteenth century was one of great political change and the partisan tensions
of the age were played out between Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer and their
respective countries. They all viewed the ideal political form of a nation to be radically
different as well. Schleiermacher supported a liberal politics, and Kierkegaard was a
staunch monarchist. Palmer viewed nearly all political involvement with disdain.
Stylistically they differed as well. Kierkegaard’s use of the pen is unequaled by nearly
anyone throughout history, and while Schleiermacher and Palmer wrote, the pulpit was
their primary vehicle for conveying their message. Kierkegaard also shepherded no
souls, Palmer only indirectly, but this was the primary vocation of Schleiermacher, the
only one ordained among them. Palmer discounted the notion of ordination as a
necessary instrument and Kierkegaard desired ordination, but was unwilling to fully
submit himself to ecclesial rule.
Theologically they would have disagreed with one another as well. Schleiermacher often spoke poorly about the “twice born.” He was not opposed to conversion experiences; rather he was opposed to the idea that a subsequent birth was a completed act of sanctification. This of course was the central point of Palmer’s Altar Theology. Palmer was equally dismissive with notions of universal salvation, which Schleiermacher’s theology implied. Schleiermacher lent his support for universal salvation when he interpreted humanity rather than individual men and women as the elect in Christ. Palmer would have also opposed Schleiermacher’s theology based upon feeling. She was always opposed to trusting feelings as the cause or justification for a religious experience. Schleiermacher’s feeling of absolute dependence was anathema to Palmer, who continually argued that feelings are a product of faith rather than faith themselves. In this debate, Kierkegaard would side with Palmer, believing that trusting feeling as the source of faith made Christianity too easy. For him, faith required work and constant vigilance.

The value of philosophy would also remain a point of contention. Palmer gives no credence to understanding classical Greek philosophy. Her life and her works focused on personal devotions rather than philosophical speculation. Kierkegaard’s legacy survives largely because of philosophical contributions, which were at least in part based upon Schleiermacher’s extensive work translating Plato. Kierkegaard still preferred to analyze Christianity from the perspective of Socrates, instead of Plato as Schleiermacher did. Both Europeans viewed Christianity in relation to secular philosophy rather than the testimonies of converts. The same division exists when addressing biblical criticism.
Schleiermacher’s contribution to the field is scandalous in Palmer’s eyes, who viewed scripture with unwavering devotion.

Their differences, while extensive, are rivaled only by the many points of continuity. The greatest area of agreement they had was on the position of the church. Though they each had a different denomination and a different church they called home, each believed that the church should be independent of the state. Schleiermacher opposed involvement of the crown, believing that it hampered the gospel. Kierkegaard believed that the involvement of the state with the church was the death of Danish Christendom. Palmer believed that political apparatus of America, and indeed all countries, was a pale shadow of God’s vision for the church. Within the church all valued the laity as well. Kierkegaard wanted to receive communion from a layman before he died, and Palmer’s entire vocation was a laity led revival movement. Schleiermacher believed the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and held that all Christians offer the word to one another.

All three were involved to one degree or another with the ecumenical movement as well. Palmer’s holiness was entirely ecumenical, consisting of Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians. Kierkegaard’s call for Christians to be contemporaries with Christ was a call not only to Lutherans but all who would call themselves true Christians. Schleiermacher advocated for a church union between Reform and Lutherans and developed the concept of the visible and invisible church. The members of the invisible church were not only Reform, but all Christians, and to an extent all people who have been redeemed. The ecumenical spirit of Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher potentially includes Catholics, a position from which Palmer balked. The actual form of the church
was also something held in common. All opposed opulence. While Schleiermacher never advocated for the four bare walls and a sermon motif that many Reform preachers did, he insisted that a physical church serve its people and this often included forgoing beautiful ornamentation. Kierkegaard and Palmer both criticized the extravagance of many churches, believing that it aided no one in their path towards salvation.

In many ways their signature theological contributions were also essentially the same, though expressed from a different vantage point. Phoebe’s Altar Theology and Schleiermacher’s feeling of utter dependence both appeared to be easy expressions of faith, but were in fact difficult tasks that they expected the Christian to undertake. Kierkegaard’s call to make Christianity more difficult existed within these calls as well. Palmer’s Altar Theology, while in part an instantaneous decision to live a perfect sanctified life, was something that could be lost. As much as a declaration of accomplishment coincided with this new birth, the newly sanctified Christian had the duty to remain upon the altar. Remaining on the altar of Christ requires constant vigilance. The same can be said of Schleiermacher’s feeling of utter dependence. This sentiment is not a whimsical fleeting emotion, rather a feeling that consumes the person entirely. It consumes the Christian so much, they are dependent upon the source of the feeling, namely God. Remaining in a state of complete dependency requires great attention and a promethean effort that would even make Francke proud.

The same could be said of Kierkegaard’s emphasis on subjectivity. Kierkegaard’s claim that the truth is subjective is followed by a theology where the truth is then personified outside the believer. The Christian’s relationship with truth as subjective is the same as Palmer’s altar call or Schleiermacher advocating for a deeper knowledge of
God, as found within his sermons. All three called their audience to engage with the truth, which is Christ. Subjectivity is a call to experience God, not to dismiss God’s presence by reducing it to the individual.

The final point of agreement between our nineteenth-century Pietists was their contribution to ethics. Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher wrote extensively about what a Christian ethic is to be. Palmer did the same thing, though without the philosophical construct surrounding her ethics. For Palmer the call to holiness was a call to holy living, so much so that it became nearly synonymous with the temperance movement. Kierkegaard and Schleiermacher’s consumption of alcohol would be scandalous to Palmer, but the belief that the Christian life was necessarily a pious ethical life is something they all shared.

Turning now to the third question about whether the legacies of Palmer, Schleiermacher, and Kierkegaard would agree with one another enough that we could call them Pietists? Obviously the atheist interpretations of existentialism and the non-religious impacts such as nationalism, liberalism, and political conservatism need to be excluded from this conversation. The question is not whether the movements that deny Christianity are a form of experiential Protestantism; they clearly are not. With those aside, can the religious expressions of Christian existentialism, liberalism, neo-liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, fundamentalism, and Pentecostalism be the same? Obviously there is a difference of degree by the end of the twentieth century, where many of these movements are ideologically opposed to one another and do not even recognize their common ancestry, partly because of the constant division of Protestant denominations and partly because it is inconvenient to make comparisons with a religious adversary. In many
ways the exclusion of the others only serves to confirm the antipathy towards the wider
culture, including religious culture inherent in the pietistic mindset.

It is also worth noting that these five resultant movements are not wholly the
product of these three nineteenth-century Pietists, nor Pietism in general. Neo-orthodoxy
is nearly entirely a response to liberalism and an appeal to scholasticism.
Fundamentalism in part is a rejection of liberalism and Pentecostalism with an appeal to
rationalism. Existentialism is applied to rationalist and scholastic questions as well. Part
of the difficulty with answering the question of these legacies agreeing with one another
is that they possess elements from Scholastics, Rationalists, and Pietism. These
movements are not in themselves essentially twentieth-century versions of Pietism. But
in so far as Pietism becomes shorthand for experiential Protestantism, these movements
contain elements that are Pietist or at least can be identified as in part Pietistic, and they
are the products of nineteenth-century Pietists.

It would be very easy to simply respond that these legacies do not agree with one
another, that the different degrees of Pietism are too small to count them as a part of the
experiential Protestant legacy, but in actuality these very different ideologies largely do
in principle agree with one another. Existentialists, neo-liberals, neo-orthodox,
Pentecostals, and fundamentalists all share a basic world view. All of them anticipate
their ultimate cause lies in a God who still encounters them on a fairly regular basis.
How this encounter takes place is different and they will argue that the others’
experiences of the divine are unjustified or incorrect, but they all appeal to the same
supernatural authority as was delivered to them. Still, this commonality faces extreme
prejudice that makes appeals to communion nearly impossible. Their fundamental
disagreement is more akin to the differences between Calvinists and Lutherans than not. Their differences are more based in their confessional and traditional arguments. These obvious differences between them is not based in their world views rather the differences are contained in confessional identity and national differences. Like Pietisms’ early history, these “isms” largely survive as a church within a church. Today the same Protestant congregation could have many members who hold these competing ideologies. While most of them are split between liberal or conservative, fundamentalist or Pentecostal, these strands may share a common space of worship and find inspiration from the same contemporary events. While it is unlikely to be harmonious, the incongruous relationship does not mean they cannot be the same and even share the same confessional identity today.

Since the resultant legacies of Kierkegaard, Schleiermacher, and Palmer remain close enough to allow the possibility of communion, it is possible to answer the question that began this project. Pietism is a single ideology, in as much as it was ever a single movement. Experiences are different, even experiences of the same event are different depending on the people involved or the expectations of the individual at the moment of the experience. Pietism, as a label for experiential Protestantism, is at its fundamental core, the same thing. Still Pietism from the times of Spener, Arndt, and Perkins, through the various movements of the twentieth century, can be defined as a quasi-mystical experiential revivalist movement. The people of this Protestant-wide movement continues to attempt to understand and rework their world, both inside and outside of themselves along lines of personally meaningful relationship between themselves as individuals and God, while maintaining a general antipathy or outright hostility to the
greater Christian culture and religious formalism which dictates that culture’s norms and practices. The obvious differences that exist between these resultant movements are in part due to the lack of ecclesial oversight. Different extreme positions were permitted and even encouraged to advance their interpretation of experience rather than being stifled or silenced, as would be the case within Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy. Radical, different expressions of experience that hold an antipathy towards the culture at large, and the wider Christian culture as well, may always remain connected to the last leader, but will not allow for uniformity of belief over the centuries. While Schleiermacher and Palmer could link their spiritual and intellectual ancestry to Zinzendorf, Wesley becomes a point of departure, and that half step separating the two produce radical changes. The plethora of current movements which inherit a Pietist legacy is proof of this.

Spener, Arndt, and Perkins likely would not agree with fundamentalism, Pentecostalism, liberalism, neo-orthodoxy, or existentialism. They likely would balk at Palmer, Kierkegaard, and Schleiermacher as well, but they also disagreed among themselves. Pietists all find and manufacture points of tension, largely to rework their world. The edifice of experiential Protestantism may be one structure, but it is not one piece. The value of religious experience over rationalism and scholasticism runs deep beneath the surface of the structure, including medieval Catholic mystics such as Johan Tauler, Thomas à Kempis, and Angela da Foligno. The rupture of the Reformation necessitated another foundation laid upon these borrowed stones and Perkins, Arndt, and Spener all served as a corrective to the developing Protestantism. This layer made way to institutionalized and denominational forms of Pietism through Francke, Zinzendorf, and
Wesley. While the edifice appeared strong, the nineteenth century contributions of Schleiermacher, Kierkegaard, and Palmer demonstrated its inherent weakness, and the structure that sought to correct Protestantism dominated it, as Kierkegaard said of Protestantism in general. The flying buttress grew larger than the church it sought to support. The nineteenth-century Pietists reconstructed Pietism in order to preserve its essential outsider character and once again reprioritize experience over other forms of Protestant religiosity. While their works produced competing and extreme Protestantism in the twentieth century, they each remain a part of the edifice of experiential Protestantism. The edifice will continue to grow unceasingly within Protestantism and will be remade again and again by those who seek to maintain outsider status and prioritize experience of the divine above all else.


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VITA

Justin A. Davis was born on August 8, 1979 in Sacramento, California. He spent most of his early life in Northern California, receiving his Bachelor’s degree in Religious Studies from the California State University, Chico. Following a year off to gain some teaching experience and get married, he began his Master’s degree at the Graduate Theological Union (GTU), where he was affiliated with the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology. At the GTU the bulk of Justin’s studies occurred with the Dominicans as well as Lutherans at the Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary. While attending the GTU, Justin had the privilege of studying under Michael Morris O.P., Timothy Lull, and Claude Welch, each of which brought a unique perspective to the study of theology, each demonstrating the adaptations of Christian theology during times of great cultural change. It was here that Justin’s interest in the intersection of theology with periods of great cultural change developed. Addressing the theological side of the equation, Justin wrote his Master’s thesis on the theological concept of the new creation, as found in the works of Friedrich Schleiermacher and Karl Barth. While neither produced a work like Paul Tillich’s *The New Being*, Justin illustrated how both theologians still utilized this concept as a foundational piece of their theological construction. Both used the framework of the new creation first found in Christ and then present in the individual Christian to develop their Christology and ecclesiology for their contemporary audiences.

Upon completing his Master’s degree in Systematic Theology and Philosophy in 2005, Justin once again directed his attentions to teaching, this time at the Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC) in Iowa. DMACC serves as the largest
undergraduate institution in the state, and provided him with the opportunity to form and develop courses in Philosophy, Ethics, and World Religions. Often teaching four or five classes in a semester, Justin constructed the course material and developed his teaching style, which varies depending on the pedagogical aims of the individual course.

In 2008 Justin began his Doctoral work at the University of Missouri, Kansas City (UMKC), in Religious Studies and History, with an emphasis on the intersection of religion within the early modern period. He completed his course work in 2011, the same year his first child was born. His comprehensive exams were completed in January of 2013, the same year that his second child was born. The exams addressed five areas, Methodological Approaches to the Study of Religion, Comparative Studies of Religions of the World, Religious Studies Special Topic: The Reformation, History Chronological Focus: Early Modern Europe, and History National Focus: Modern German History.

Following the completion of coursework at UMKC, Justin began teaching at several universities in the Kansas City area, including at UMKC as both a recipient of a Student Teaching Fellowship, and as a Graduate Instructor. Justin also served as adjunct faculty at Avila University and Rockhurst University. At these three institutions he instructed courses in World Religions, Christianity Medieval Ages to Present, Introduction to Religious Studies, Philosophy of Religion and others. These courses included adaptations of the World Religions course to an online format as well as the development of one active learning reenactment of the Conversion of the Rus, which occurred in the 980s. The exercise aids student involvement and understanding of large scale religious conversions, and the interaction between religion and the dynamics of culture change.