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**Spiritual Mothers and Propheying Daughters:
The Practice of Female Ministry among
North American Radical Evangelicals,
1875-1943**

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Research dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This study traces patterns of gender belief and practice among radical, ‘full gospel’ North American evangelicals between 1875 and 1943. It explores radical beliefs and practices, in particular, the practice of female ministry, as elements of a larger spirituality—that is, as integral expressions of religious belief and experience. Elements that influenced radical evangelical gender practices fell into three general categories: their interventionist forms of religious belief, related modes of religious experience, and the gender norms and beliefs common to the wider social and cultural context. Each chapter examines specific ways in which radical evangelicals navigated this interdependent nexus of theological ideas, experiences, and influences in order to ascertain the appropriate boundaries of female ministry. Throughout, radical evangelical support for female ministry proves to be paradoxical. While some aspects of radical spirituality compelled women to ‘prophesy’ and evangelise, other elements encouraged restraint. Radical religious beliefs, which presupposed both God’s ability to intervene in personal life, in nature, in the church, and in history, and an oppositional model of divine and personal agency, allowed for those forms of female ministry considered Spirit inspired and empowered, such as ‘prophesying’. Reliance upon nineteenth and turn-of-the-century middle-class North American conceptualisations of female ‘nature’ and roles also enabled women to undertake those ministry roles in keeping with their perceived piety and maternal capacities. Yet radical evangelical ministry practices remained highly gendered. Although this form of spirituality expanded opportunities for women, they remained under the control of male authorities, either because of their weaker nature, or

due to biblical command. Thus, whether drawing upon interventionist theology, biblical injunctions, patterns of spiritual experience, or conceptions of female nature and roles common to the wider culture, radical spirituality both supported female ministry, and limited its sphere.

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Chapter One

Introduction:

Female Ministry and Evangelical Spirituality

In 1995, reflecting upon recent books on women and early Christian fundamentalism, historian Douglas Frank mused: ‘We may find that Fundamentalism without misogyny is not Fundamentalism at all’.¹ Frank based his conclusion upon Margaret Lamberts Bendroth’s 1993 *Fundamentalism and Gender: 1875 to the Present*, as well as upon Betty A. DeBerg’s earlier work, *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism* (1990), both of which demonstrated how nineteenth- and early twentieth-century gender concerns contributed to twentieth-century American fundamentalist beliefs and practices.² While Bendroth might demur at the strength of Frank’s statement, she did consider fundamentalism ‘antifeminist’.³ By her account, fundamentalism developed historically ‘as a theological alternative to [nineteenth-century] evangelical feminism’.⁴

This study originally set out to trace the patterns of that ‘misogyny’ within a specific setting, the important western Canadian fundamentalist institution of Prairie Bible Institute, located in Three Hills, Alberta. ‘Prairie’, or ‘PBI’, as those who grew up

¹ Douglas Frank, review of *Fundamentalism and Gender: 1875 to the Present* by Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, in *Journal of Religion* 75/3 (July 1995): 430-432.

² Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender: 1875 to the Present* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1993); Betty DeBerg, *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990).

³ Compare Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender*, 32 and 47.

⁴ Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender*, 8; also Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, ‘Fundamentalism and Masculinity’, 1900-1950’ (American Society of Church History, 1992, 1993, microfiche), 2.

under its shadow referred to it, was known for its repressive gender codes, including the strict segregation of male and female students, and its austere and anachronistic dress regulations for women. It thus appeared the ideal location in which to excavate the roots of local anti-woman fundamentalist biases.

Yet what I encountered in my early research at Prairie was far less clear-cut than expected. That the fundamentalists of PBI were conflicted on the issue of women was clearly evident; but within the context of the beliefs, goals and larger spirituality of early members of PBI, the apparently misogynist rules and regulations took on new, more ambiguous meanings. Reading through the literature—journal articles, books, and, in particular, the writings of Leslie Earl Maxwell, a founding member of the school, and the diaries of Miss Dorothy Ruth Miller, who taught at Prairie from 1928 to 1943—I found a counter-tradition of confident and capable ministering women. Further, the early members of the PBI community considered their beliefs to *liberate* these women to minister in their midst.⁵ Finally, they did not consider their affirmation of female ministry to be unusual; rather, they understood it as a normal practice, shared with many evangelicals of the era. This positive (although as we shall see, still problematic) construal of women's roles complicates the so-called misogyny of early 'fundamentalist' believers; for how and why were these early 'fundamentalists' able to support gender practices dismissed by many later conservative evangelicals as 'unbiblical'?

My reading soon made it evident that the gender beliefs and practices of Dorothy Ruth Miller, and of Leslie Earl Maxwell, founder of Prairie Bible Institute, were not original; they were the practitioners, not the theorists of these ideas. Further, their gender

⁵ See L. E. Maxwell, editorial comments on D. R. Miller, 'On Women Speaking', *Prairie Pastor* 12/12 (Dec 1939): 8; also L. E. Maxwell with Ruth C. Dearing, *Women in Ministry* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1987), 138.

beliefs were rooted not in fundamentalism itself, but in an earlier ‘full-gospel’ or ‘radical’ tradition of evangelical spirituality in which both had been educated.

This study makes a detailed examination of the various theological, cultural and experiential factors that both encouraged and often inhibited the practice of female ministry within radical North American evangelicalism between 1875 and 1943. These were the years in which some conservative ‘Calvinistic’ evangelicals—the radical or full gospel evangelicals at the heart of this study—were most open to female ministry.⁶ The period chosen encompasses both the rise of radical full gospel beliefs among formerly traditional evangelicals, such as A. B. Simpson of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and the later transition of these beliefs and practices into both full-blown Pentecostalism and into the moderated holiness-fundamentalist form espoused by L. E. Maxwell.

At one level, this work is an exercise in religious and gender history. It delineates some of the ways in which religious ideas, values, and practices helped determine the boundaries of female ministry roles within radical evangelical circles between 1875 and 1943. However, this study also comprises a history of spirituality. A key tenet of what follows is that the practice of female ministry within radical evangelicalism was an integral aspect of that movement’s ‘spirituality’. That is, evangelical gender practices of the period were deeply rooted in religious experience, and were expressive of personal piety. Further, the religious beliefs, experiences, and practices of radical evangelicalism reflected important aspects of the larger social and cultural context, in particular the ways in which nineteenth and turn-of-the-century middle-class North Americans conceptualised female ‘nature’ and roles. The study thus traces the often-complicated

⁶ The study concludes in 1943, the year of Miss Miller’s death.

interrelationship between religious belief and experience, aspects of popular culture, and radical evangelical gender practices.

To cast radical evangelical gender practices as elements of a larger spirituality is also to acknowledge the important role that religious belief systems, or ‘theology’, played in their shaping. Gender practices were often closely linked to prior theological commitments that initially appear irrelevant to the ‘woman question’. Thus, although this is not primarily a theological work, the process of delineating the interdependent nature of belief and practice at times carries the argument into theological waters.

Following Philip Sheldrake (1998), spirituality here denotes the interrelated whole of the Christian life.⁷ That is, spirituality refers not only to the subjective and experiential elements of faith noted above, but also encompasses the complex network of beliefs, experiences, and practice that inform the structure of individual and corporate faith. Further, all spiritualities are ‘located’ within particular intellectual, cultural, historical, and political settings that influence those beliefs, experiences, and practices. Thus, understanding a strand of ‘spirituality’ again requires awareness of the internal connections between doctrinal claims, forms of piety, and practices, and the external contextual influences under which those patterns develop.

Following David Bebbington, the word evangelical here refers to those Christians of the last several centuries who have exhibited four common characteristics: conversionism, activism, biblicism, and crucicentrism. Evangelicals expect a response to the gospel message that entails repentance, justification by faith, and assurance of

⁷ Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology: Christian Living and the Doctrine of God* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998), 34-35.

salvation. This conversion leads to activism, both evangelistic and philanthropic.

Evangelicals are biblicist, in that their belief and devotion centre on the Bible. They also stress the centrality of the cross in the ‘atonement’, the reconciliation of humanity with God.⁸

Three further traits common to most evangelicals play an important role in this work. First, much evangelicalism exhibits a strong associational impulse. Evangelicals gather, whether in local churches, conferences, small groups, Bible schools or on the internet.⁹ Second, evangelicalism is highly adaptable. It readily crosses theological, denominational, cultural and national boundaries, while remaining characteristically ‘evangelical’.¹⁰ Third, evangelical faith is experiential. As Bruce Hindmarsh has noted, ‘to speak of evangelical spirituality is a tautology’.¹¹ Evangelical faith revolves upon a personal encounter with the divine: whether in the form of a dramatic experience like the ‘new birth’, as devotional encounters with God through scripture, or through the ‘still small voice’ of the Spirit.

Evangelical spirituality is likewise highly malleable. While evangelicals as a whole are conversionist, biblicist, activist, and crucicentric, the capacity of evangelicalism to adapt to varied contexts and theological systems means that evangelical spirituality takes many shapes.¹² Thus, for instance, despite marked differences in

⁸ D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 2-17.

⁹ See Stanley J. Grenz, *Revisioning Evangelical Theology: A Fresh Agenda for the 21st Century* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993), 51-54.

¹⁰ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 34-35; George A. Rawlyk and Mark A. Noll, eds., *Amazing Grace: Evangelicalism in Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993), 18.

¹¹ D. Bruce Hindmarsh, ‘I am a Sort of Middle Man’, in *Amazing Grace*, ed. Rawlyk and Noll, 40.

¹² For similar approaches to evangelical spirituality, see D. W. Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth Century England, The 1998 Didsbury Lectures* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2000); Ian M. Randall, *Evangelical Experiences: A Study in the Spirituality of English Evangelicalism 1918-1930*, foreword by David Bebbington (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1999); for a helpful study of spirituality that includes evangelical

doctrine and in practices of personal piety, confessional Presbyterians, Wesleyan Holiness believers, and fundamentalists may all be ‘evangelicals’. However, those differences in doctrine and piety help determine how each group addresses questions of gender roles, in this case, that of female ministry.

Throughout this work, I follow the North American practice, begun in the 1960s and 1970s, of distinguishing between ‘sex’ as biological, and ‘gender’ as the cultural meaning of sexual difference.¹³ ‘Gender’ thus refers both to the culturally mediated norms and behaviours accrued to ‘biological sexual difference’ within a particular setting, and to the subjective identity created (often unconsciously) by individual members of a group or society through the appropriation, adjustment, or rejection of those patterns.¹⁴ How an individual perceives, interprets and performs their ‘gendered’ identity derives from a complex interaction between the experienced givens of a particular biological sexed embodiment; larger external social, cultural and religious beliefs or ideologies about the meaning of that sex (often competing and conflicting); and the subjective

women see Virginia Lieson Brereton, *From Sin to Salvation: Stories of Women’s Conversions, 1800 to the Present* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991).

¹³ For a helpful history of this use, see Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 12. Joan Scott claims gender as a ‘useful’ category; a ‘primary way of signifying relationships of power’; ‘a primary field within which or by means of which power is articulated’ (Joan W. Scott, ‘Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis’, *The American Historical Review* 91/5 ([Dec 1986]): 1069). For challenges to the use of the gender / sex dichotomy, see Gisela Bock, ‘Challenging Dichotomies in Women’s History’, in *Major Problems in American Women’s History*, 8-14, edited by Mary Beth Norton and Ruth M. Alexander, 2nd ed. (Lexington/Toronto: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996), 11-12.

¹⁴ See Joan W. Scott, ‘Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis’, *The American Historical Review* 91/5 (Dec 1986): 1067-1069, for the role of human agency ‘as the attempt (at least partially rational) to construct an identity, a life, a set of relationships, a society with certain limits and with language’.

internalisation of those beliefs and experiences.¹⁵ In turn, that gender identity is expressed through behaviour, dress, roles, and other culturally mediated symbols.¹⁶

This model of ‘gender’ in many ways parallels the previously discussed category of spirituality. Spirituality and gender practices are interrelated and interdependent aspects of human consciousness and social experience. Both encompass the ‘whole’ person: one’s gender or spirituality encapsulates a matrix of beliefs, experience and practice that are integral to a person’s sense of identity. Like spirituality, gender encompasses the interaction between *beliefs* (about sexual difference), lived *experience* (as biologically sexed), and *practice* (how gender is lived out). Gender constructs are likewise contextual, and are the products of larger cultural factors, including religious beliefs. Thus, as noted above, turn-of-the-century evangelical gender beliefs and practices of female ministry must be considered within the context of the gender beliefs and practices common to nineteenth- and early twentieth-century middle-class North American culture. For instance, the ‘identity’ of Miss Miller, whether understood in terms of gender or spirituality, was formed at the intersection of a matrix of social, cultural, political, and religious beliefs; personal experience; and ‘practice’—that is, the concrete ways she expressed her identity as a ‘woman’, a ‘spiritual mother’, or a ‘consecrated’ Christian.

To enter the world of turn-of-the-century North American evangelicalism is to open the door on a vast array of sects, parties, movements, and ideas. This study takes as

¹⁵ For an attempt to view gender theologically, see Elaine Graham, *Making the Difference: Gender, Personhood and Theology* (London: Mowbray, 1995); for her model of gender see 25.

¹⁶ The nature vs. nurture debate over sexed characteristics is best resolved by viewing nature and nurture as interactive elements.

its starting point the interdenominational revivalists, educators, missionary leaders and laity who gathered around Dwight L. Moody. Between 1875 and 1905, these primarily ‘Calvinistic’ evangelicals adopted new revival theologies, shifted from postmillennial to premillennial eschatologies, and became advocates of holiness doctrines of sanctification.¹⁷ Underlying these modifications in belief was a change in theological worldview: a shift from a ‘providentialist’ understanding of the relationship between God and the world, to an ‘interventionist’ position. While providentialist evangelicals assumed that God’s normative pattern of working in the world was through natural, created processes, interventionists presupposed God’s ability to intervene in personal life, in nature, in the church, and in history.¹⁸

Some among these late-century evangelicals, for instance Baptist preacher A. J. Gordon, or A. B. Simpson, founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, took a ‘radical’ position on the matter of intervention. Radical evangelicals, as described by historian of Pentecostalism Grant Wacker, sought supernaturally endowed leaders, formed communities of like-minded believers, and craved direct experience of God in their individual lives.¹⁹ They also promoted the ‘full’ gospel. Like their fellow interventionists, they sought personal salvation and sanctification, and looked for the

¹⁷ Because of this less than doctrinaire approach to the Calvinist tradition in which many of these evangelicals were raised, I describe this group throughout as ‘Calvinistic’. This also distinguishes them from evangelicals whose theological ancestry derived from the more ‘arminian’ Wesleyan Holiness tradition.

¹⁸ See Boyd Hilton, *The Age of Atonement: The Influence of Evangelicalism on Social and Economic Thought, 1795-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 7-26; also Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 77, 91.

¹⁹ Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 1-4.

premillennial return of Christ, but they also expected divine healing.²⁰ Further, many radicals held a ‘pentecostal’ pneumatology; that is, they considered the experience of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost as paradigmatic for the present dispensation, or era, of the church.²¹ They often viewed the baptism of the Holy Spirit as a later, post-conversion event, and looked for the miraculous in the present, whether in the form of divine healing, tongues, or other supernatural signs. Finally, radicals such as A. J. Gordon or A. B. Simpson were among the more vocal supporters of female ministry among Calvinistic evangelicals.

The primary subjects of this study—Christian and Missionary Alliance founder Albert Benjamin Simpson, as well as Bible teachers William Coit Stevens (1853-1929) and Dorothy Ruth Miller (1873-1944)—fall into this radical trajectory. Simpson, originally a Presbyterian pastor, was a key formulator of ‘Calvinistic’ radical beliefs, summarised in his ‘fourfold gospel’ of salvation, sanctification, healing, and premillennialism.²² Stevens, likewise a Presbyterian, and a long time member of the Alliance, was principal of the Missionary Training Institute in Nyack, New York, from 1901 to 1914; taught at Boone Biblical College, Boone, Iowa, in 1917-1918; founded

²⁰ Wacker, who interprets the doctrine of ‘Spirit baptism’ within the doctrine of sanctification, lists the full gospel as ‘personal salvation, Holy Ghost baptism, divine healing, and the Lord’s soon return’ (Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 1).

²¹ By emphasising ‘radical’ evangelical belief in a pentecostal pneumatology, I differ from common British usage, where historians of evangelicalism describe interventionist evangelicals, usually premillennialists, as ‘extreme’ or ‘radical’ in contradistinction to those ‘moderate’ or ‘providentialist’ evangelicals who considered God to operate primarily through divinely appointed natural laws. See Hilton, *Age of Atonement*, 7-26; also Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, 77, 91. By my definition, premillennialist Edward Irving, who held a pentecostal view of the Spirit, qualifies as radical; while dispensationalist Brethren leader J. N. Darby does not. This also differs from the approach of Canadian historian George Rawlyk, who used ‘radical’ for those evangelicals who took an ‘emotional’ or ‘heart’ approach to faith, in distinction from those who took a more formal approach. See G. A. Rawlyk, ‘Introduction’, in *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, xiii-xxv, ed. George Rawlyk (McGill-Queen's Studies in the History of Religion (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), xiv-xvii.

²² See A. B. Simpson, *The Four-Fold Gospel*, intro. Frederic H. Senft (1887; Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1925).

Midland Bible School (1918-1924), Kansas City, Missouri; then taught at Simpson Bible Institute, Seattle, Washington, from 1924 until 1928. Among his written works are articles in various Alliance publications, tracts on healing, sanctification, and the second coming of Christ, Bible commentaries on Jonah, Daniel and the Book of Revelation, and several collections of sermons.²³ Miss Miller taught at Nyack and at Boone Biblical College before helping Stevens found Midland in 1918. She spent 1924 and 1925 in Omaha City, working as assistant director of Bible studies with Mr. Brown, the Alliance district superintendent, and then joined the staff at Simpson Bible Institute. In 1928, she took up a position at Prairie Bible Institute, in Three Hills, Alberta. Miller published only one book, the 1936 *Handbook of Ancient History in Bible Light*, and a few articles, yet she detailed the events of her life in her unpublished diaries, available for the years 1920 to 1936.²⁴

After 1905, many radical and full gospel evangelicals became part of the new Pentecostal movement.²⁵ Others, who rejected the new doctrine of speaking in tongues as a necessary sign of Spirit baptism, but maintained a pentecostal understanding of the Spirit's present work, attempted to remain in the revivalist and Calvinistic mainstream of 'conservative' evangelicalism.²⁶ Although Stevens and Miller rejected Pentecostal

²³ W. C. Stevens, *Triumphs of the Cross* (San Francisco: M. G. McClinton, c. 1903; 2nd ed. 1915); *Mysteries of the Kingdom* (San Francisco: M. G. McClinton, 1904; 2nd ed. 1915); *The Book of Daniel: A Composite Revelation of the Last Days of Israel's Subjugation to Gentile Powers*, intro. James M. Gray (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1915, rev. 1918); *The Unique Historical Value of the Book of Jonah*, foreword by Philip Mauro (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1924); *Revelation, The Crown Jewel of Biblical Prophecy*, 2 vol. (Harrisburg, PA: Alliance Publishing Co., 1928); see also W. C. Stevens, 'The Latter Rain' (New York: Alliance Press, c. 1907, tract); 'Sanctification' (Self-published tract, n.d).

²⁴ Dorothy Ruth Miller, *A Handbook of Ancient History in Bible Light*, intro. Robert Hall Glover (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1937). Dorothy Ruth Miller's diaries are in the Prairie Bible Institute archives.

²⁵ Although this study focuses specifically upon evangelicals within the 'Calvinistic' tradition, radical and pentecostal evangelicals were also found within the Wesleyan Holiness tradition.

²⁶ Within this work, this 'pentecostal' or interventionist view of the Holy Spirit (denoted by the lower case), is considered a primary marker for radical evangelicalism within North America; the later Pentecostal movement is designated throughout this work by the upper case 'P'.

dogma, they remained committed to the full gospel. This meant that they, like the larger Christian and Missionary Alliance, fitted uneasily within the new fundamentalist paradigm forming in the 1910s and 1920s (see chapter two). Yet by the 1940s and 1950s, Leslie Earl Maxwell, who studied under Miller and Stevens at Midland Bible School between 1919 and 1922, was a leading western Canadian fundamentalist.

During the 1940s and 1950s, Prairie Bible Institute, the school Maxwell helped found in the early 1920s, was the largest fundamentalist school in Canada.²⁷ Its size, recognised status as a missionary training centre, and Maxwell's reputation as a holiness teacher, ensured it a position of influence within the North American fundamentalist world well into the 1960s. From PBI, through his books, publications, radio programmes, and dynamic personality, Maxwell helped form the ethos of twentieth-century western Canadian fundamentalism and trans-denominational evangelicalism.²⁸

The term 'fundamentalist', first coined in 1920, has come to signify many things. In the 1920s, it served as a rallying cry for conservative Christians seeking to defend the

²⁷ William E. Mann, *Sect, Cult and Church in Alberta* (University of Toronto Press, 1955, reprint 1972), 83. John Stackhouse suggests PBI may have been second only to Moody in size. See John G. Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to its Character* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 244n53. The most extensive historical work on PBI to date is James Enns, 'Every Christian a Missionary: Fundamentalist Education at Prairie Bible Institute, 1922-1947' (MA Thesis, University of Calgary, 2000). See also James Gray, 'Miracle on the Prairies', *Macleans Magazine* 15 (Dec 1947): 16-56.

²⁸ For the influence of Maxwell and Prairie Bible Institute, see Mann, *Sect, Cult and Church*, 106; Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism*; Donald Aaron Goertz, 'The Development of a Bible Belt: The Socio-Religious Interaction in Alberta between 1925 and 1938' (MCS Thesis, Regent College, Vancouver, 1980, microfiche); also James William Opp, 'Culture of the Soul: Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism in Canada, 1921-1940' (MA Thesis, University of Calgary, 1994, microfiche). For another important source of fundamentalist thought in western Canada see Bruce Hindmarsh, 'The Winnipeg Fundamentalist Network, 1910-1940: The Roots of Transdenominational Evangelicalism in Manitoba and Saskatchewan', in *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, ed. George Rawlyk, McGill-Queen's Studies in the History of Religion (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 303-319. William Aberhart also provided fundamentalist leaven in the province of Alberta. See David R. Elliott and Iris Miller, *Bible Bill: A Biography of William Aberhart* (Edmonton: Reidmore Books, 1987).

‘fundamentals’ of the faith. It later became an epithet used to cast scorn on those foolish enough to disbelieve in evolution and modern progress.²⁹ More recently, it has come to mean a conservative and reactionary religious group, often with restrictive attitudes towards women.³⁰ Thus, a simple web search for ‘women’ and ‘fundamentalism’ is as likely to pull up discussions of Islamic fundamentalism and women, as sites on Christianity and women.

Within the context of this work, *fundamentalism* refers to the historical North American conservative Protestant movement which claimed the title in the 1920s, and to those who continued to understand themselves as ‘fundamental’ or fundamentalist through to the mid-twentieth century.³¹ The theological antecedents of the fundamentalist movement lay in concepts introduced above—revivalism, premillennialism, and holiness teachings—as well as an intensified commitment to the Bible as ‘factual’ and inerrant. The ‘progenitors’ of fundamentalism, whether radical evangelicals like Simpson or Gordon, or non-radicals like Moody, A. T. Pierson, or dispensationalists James Brooke

²⁹ For early treatments of fundamentalism with this tendency, see for instance Stewart G. Cole, *The History of Fundamentalism* (New York, Richard R. Smith, 1931; Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1971); Norman F. Furniss, *The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954); Louis Gasper, *The Fundamentalist Movement* (The Hague/Paris: Mouton and Co., 1963). Alvin Plantinga ably captures the flavour of much current (and derogatory) usage of the label ‘fundamentalist’: ‘the full meaning of the term ... can be given by something like “stupid sumbitch whose theological opinions are considerably to the right of mine”’ (Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* [Oxford University Press, 2000], 244).

³⁰ See for instance J. S. Hawley, ed., *Fundamentalism and Gender* (New York: Oxford, 1994).

³¹ The following account is drawn from George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); also Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). For a later history that also considers fundamentalist piety see Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997). Sandeen found fundamentalism’s source in a combination of Princeton theology and biblical inerrancy and pre-millennialism; Marsden added the important elements of revivalism and holiness teachings. I differ from Sandeen and from Marsden in placing less weight on the influence of Princeton and common sense reasoning. I also find the ‘Keswick’ forms of holiness less pervasive than Marsden’s analysis suggests; and place more importance on the subjective experiences central to holiness spirituality.

and William Blackstone, disseminated these teachings through networks of Bible schools, conferences, missionary societies and publications.³²

In the early twentieth century, their theological descendants joined forces with a wider coalition of conservative Calvinist Baptists and Presbyterians to defend the ‘fundamentals’ of the faith from the forces of liberal and modernist theology, historical critical methods of biblical study, and theories of evolution. Although these different factions could hold quite different beliefs, particularly in the areas of sanctification, eschatology, and pneumatology, their shared commitment to supernaturalism (closely related to the interventionist viewpoint outlined above) allowed them to unite in defence of the ‘fundamentals’.³³ These were traditional doctrines dependent upon God’s direct participation in the created world: the virgin birth, the resurrection, and the miracles of Jesus, the direct inspiration and consequent inerrancy of scripture, and the substitutionary atonement.³⁴ Between 1910 and 1915, this coalition raised the alarm in the shape of *The Fundamentals*, a series of privately funded booklets.³⁵ In 1917, coinciding with the beginning of American participation in the Great War, modernists at the University of Chicago Divinity School took fright over the growth of premillennialist beliefs, and publicly engaged Moody Bible Institute in theological battle.³⁶ The next summer, Baptist William B. Riley helped organise the World’s Christian Fundamentals Association,

³² According to Marsden, ‘Moody was a progenitor of fundamentalism—it could even be argued that he was its chief progenitor’ (Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 32).

³³ See J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (London: Victory Press, 1923).

³⁴ While lists varied, these were the most common points. See Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 117; also n.30, 262.

³⁵ Cf. George M. Marsden, ed., ‘Introduction,’ *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth* (New York/London: Garland Publishing, 1988). Doctrinally, the *Fundamentals* were quite moderate and irenic in tone. For the ‘symbolic’ significance of the *Fundamentals*, see Marsden, *Fundamentalism and Culture*, 118-123.

³⁶ Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 145-147. In this context, ‘modernism’ describes the attempt to recast Christian thought and practice in terms of modern culture.

which met in May 1919, while conservative Baptist Curtis Lee Laws coined the word ‘fundamentalist’ in 1920.³⁷ By the early twenties, fundamentalists of all sorts were confidently claiming their status as ‘fundamental’ believers, and stridently opposing the forces of modernism.

This beginning in the context of anti-modernist skirmishes has led historian George Marsden, in an oft-cited definition, to describe fundamentalism as ‘militantly anti-modernist Protestant Evangelicalism’.³⁸ Although true, particularly of early participants, an overemphasis on militancy can be misleading. Some, such as the ‘denominational’ fundamentalists (mostly Baptist and Presbyterian) who sought to purify their church organisations from the taint of liberal and modernist ideas, and ‘separatist’ or ‘come-outer’ fundamentalists who formed new denominations, were often fractious and militant. Others, the ‘independent’ fundamentalists of the non-denominational Bible Schools and faith missions, were usually less belligerent.³⁹ Many, like Maxwell, were ‘pietistic’: while concerned for the fundamentals, their dominant interests were holiness piety, evangelism, and missionary expansion.⁴⁰

Despite repudiating portions of his early training for more fundamentalist positions, Maxwell remained committed to two crucial aspects of radical spirituality.

³⁷ Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 158-159.

³⁸ Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 4.

³⁹ Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

⁴⁰ For ‘pietistic’ fundamentalism, see Bruce L. Shelley, ‘Sources of Pietistic Fundamentalism’, *Fides et Historia* 5/172 (1973): 68-78. James Enns concludes that Maxwell and PBI belonged within the ‘holiness-revivalist current of fundamentalism’ (Enns, ‘Every Christian’, 36). For Maxwell’s claims to be ‘fundamentalist’, see for example L. E. Maxwell, *Crowded to Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950), 127, 249; for ‘fundamental’, see *Prairie Pillars* (Three Hills, AB: Prairie Bible Institute, 1971), 7-8, 82; see also L. E. Maxwell, ‘The God of the Fundamentalist vs. The God of the Modernist’, *Prairie Overcomer* 21/8 (Aug 1948): 169-174; *Prairie Overcomer* 21/9 (Sept 1948): 201-206.

First, a desire for experience of God remained central. His holiness teachings combined features of radical spirituality with a ‘Keswick’ version of holiness usually associated with fundamentalism.⁴¹ Second, he maintained the importance of female ministry. His final book, co-written with Ruth C. Dearing, and published posthumously, was entitled *The Ministry of Women*.⁴² Notwithstanding his distance from earlier generations of radical evangelicals, his defence remained the same: God called and used women; therefore, female ministry was of God. At the same time, he maintained restrictions on that ministry, also found in radical treatises, based on the concept of male headship (see chapter nine).

Recovery of the tradition of nineteenth- and turn-of-the-century evangelical female ministry began in the 1970s and 1980s, with work by Donald and Lucy Sider Dayton, Nancy Hardesty,⁴³ Janette Hassey,⁴⁴ Della Olson,⁴⁵ Ruth Tucker and Walter Liefeld,⁴⁶ among others.⁴⁷ These writers demonstrated that women’s active participation

⁴¹ Maxwell’s books include L. E. Maxwell, *Born Crucified: The Cross in the Life of the Believer* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1945; London/Edinburgh: Oliphants); *Crowded to Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950); *Abandoned to Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955); *Prairie Pillars* (Three Hills, AB: Prairie Bible Institute, 1971); *World Missions Total War* (Three Hills, AB: Prairie Bible Institute, 1977); also L. E. Maxwell, *Devitalized Orthodoxy* (Henderson, NC: Ed. Jaramillo, n.d., tract).

⁴² L. E. Maxwell with Ruth C. Dearing, *Women in Ministry* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1987).

⁴³ Lucille Sider Dayton and Donald M. Dayton, ‘Women in the Holiness Movement’ (Seminar paper, Louisville, Kentucky, April 17-19, 1974; Reprint Christians for Biblical Equality, Photocopy); Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976); Nancy Hardesty, Lucille Sider Dayton and Donald Dayton, ‘Women in the Holiness Movement: Feminism in the Evangelical Tradition’, in *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 225-254; Nancy Hardesty, *Your Daughters Shall Prophecy: Revival and Feminism in the Age of Finney*, *Chicago Studies in the History of American Religion* 5 (Brooklyn, NY: Carlson Publishing, 1991).

⁴⁴ Janette Hassey, *No Time for Silence: Evangelical Women in Public Ministry around the Turn of the Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie Books, 1986).

⁴⁵ Della Olson, ‘A Woman of Her Times’, six parts, *The Evangelical Beacon* (May-Sept 1975). Olson’s work is helpful for the role it plays in recovering the egalitarian roots of the Evangelical Free Church.

⁴⁶ Ruth A. Tucker and Walter Liefeld, *Daughters of the Church: Women and Ministry from New Testament Times to the Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie/Zondervan, 1987).

in ministry was a diverse and widespread phenomenon in the nineteenth century. Hardesty and the Daytons were enthusiastic over their discovery of a tradition of ‘evangelical feminism’ among those influenced by Charles Finney and by the Wesleyan holiness movement.⁴⁸ Janette Hassey’s study of turn-of-the-century ‘Reformed’ evangelicals provided a similar impetus for women within the ‘Calvinistic’ evangelical world. The discovery that some denominational founders had supported women’s work came as welcome news to many evangelicals. While these early works were often overly optimistic about the place of women in these movements, their work did raise the perennial question: Why were the forerunners of fundamentalism and of trans-denominational evangelicalism able to support what their descendants cannot?

Frequently, the conclusion is that earlier support was born of pragmatism. Evangelicals supported women, it is argued, because they were successful workers in the turn-of-the-century project of world evangelisation.⁴⁹ Later restrictions came due to cultural pressures,⁵⁰ or to the logic of dispensationalism or scriptural literalism.⁵¹ Others locate the source of later gender conservatism in the neo-evangelical reintroduction of the conservative Reformed ‘Princeton’ theology in the late 1930s and 1940s.⁵² Another commonly fingered culprit, of course, is fundamentalism. Bendroth, as noted above, concluded that fundamentalism developed ‘as a theological alternative to [nineteenth-

⁴⁷ A superb recent addition is the work by Catherine A. Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740-1845* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998).

⁴⁸ Dayton and Hardesty found sources of this egalitarianism in revivalism and the experience of ‘calling’ by the Holy Spirit, and noted that newer movements were more open than their later institutionalised versions.

⁴⁹ See for instance Hassey, *No Time for Silence*.

⁵⁰ Gretchen Gabelein Hull, *Equal to Serve: Women and Men Working Together Revealing the Gospel* (Tarrytown, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1987); Rebecca Merrill Grothius, *Women Caught in the Conflict: The Culture War Between Traditionalism and Feminism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1994).

⁵¹ The question of the scriptural position on female ministry is often viewed as a ‘hermeneutical’ issue. See R. T. France, *Women in the Church’s Ministry: A Test-Case for Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans: 1997); also Mary Stewart Van Leeuwen, *Gender and Grace: Love, Work and Parenting in a Changing World* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1990), 235.

⁵² Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage*, 128-134; Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender*, 124.

century] evangelical feminism'.⁵³ DeBerg, who observed how populist fundamentalist rhetoric reflected changes in 'gender-role ideology' and 'social behaviour' between 1880 and 1930, concluded, 'It was not so much traditional theology they [fundamentalists of the 10s and 20s] were defending as it was traditional gender ideology'.⁵⁴ Thus, fundamentalists sought to impose order on an increasingly chaotic world by preserving an earlier 'separate spheres' model of gender roles.⁵⁵ Further, Bendroth and DeBerg suggest that fundamentalist theological positions, such as inerrancy, or the rejection of critical scholarship, reflected fears that looser views of biblical authority could lead to a loss of female morality.⁵⁶

What these evaluations do not consider are the roles of divergent spiritualities in determining female roles. I argue the foundations for these theological choices were set much earlier, in the 'interventionist' spirituality of the nineteenth-century progenitors of fundamentalism. Further, these theological positions—products of the same time and culture that produced separate spheres ideology, *and* that first allowed for widespread practice of female ministry—set the scene for debate in the first place. Fundamentalists did not adopt specific doctrines in order to control women; rather fundamentalist ambivalence towards women was an inherent part of the larger package of populist evangelical spirituality that gave rise to fundamentalism. Many of the ideas and issues playing in the background of contemporary discussions derive from older forms of belief, experience and practice. As that structure of spirituality has dissolved, so too have

⁵³ Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender*, 8; also Bendroth, 'Fundamentalism and Masculinity'.

⁵⁴ DeBerg, *Ungodly Women*, 1, 7, 141, 149.

⁵⁵ DeBerg, *Ungodly Women*, 74. See also Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 261.

⁵⁶ This agenda still operates with regard to scripture, as seen in the virulent response by the American conservative right to the proposed inclusive New International Version of the Bible. See the debates in *World Magazine* and *Christianity Today*, April through August 1997.

interventionist defences of female ministry. Yet vestiges remain, ensuring the continuance of evangelical indecision over gender roles.

The following chapters, which roughly follow Dorothy Ruth Miller's career and spiritual development, trace her journey within the larger patterns of evangelical belief and thought that set its course. This work is not a biography of Miller, the writing of which must wait its time. Rather, Dorothy Ruth Miller provides an important case study for the practice of female ministry within both radical and fundamentalist contexts; as well, she provides insight into how women themselves understood and experienced their ministry. Miss Miller was not 'every woman', yet her story is representative of many women located within her time, locale, and spiritual tradition; and gives insight into the heritage of later trans-denominational evangelical gender beliefs and practices in the present. Further, as a primary influence on the practice of L. E. Maxwell, Miller was an important precursor of evangelical gender beliefs and practices at PBI and its environs.

Miller's account of her ministry, as recorded in her diaries and other sources, when placed in the context of her theological worldview, her spiritual journey and her historical context, helps demonstrate the vital linkage between spirituality and gender practices. Although Miller considered her beliefs about female nature and roles as grounded in eternal biblical and spiritual principles, the categories and symbols within which she, and other radical evangelicals, cast those views reflected the widely held gender beliefs and assumptions of nineteenth-century North America. While losing their power within the wider culture by the 1920s and 1930s, they remained embedded within the holiness belief system that framed Miller's spirituality.

Chapter two introduces D. R. Miller and W. C. Stevens, placing them and their venture, Midland Bible School, within the voluntary and ‘associational’ world of populist evangelicalism as understood by Stevens, A. B. Simpson and other late-century evangelicals. It also traces the tensions that ensue as their older ‘radical’ full gospel evangelicalism comes into conflict with newer fundamentalist and Pentecostal factions. Chapter three looks at the experiential and interventionist worldview of radical evangelicalism, as found in the teachings and writings of Miller and Stevens, for insights into how reliance on experience informed questions of practice such as female ministry. Chapter four further explores the lay ecclesiology of populist evangelicalism, concluding that it is one outgrowth of pietistic understandings of the Church as organic ‘body’, rather than as an ‘institution’. Chapter five outlines the contours of radical ‘pentecostal’ pneumatology, and traces how expectations of a ‘latter rain’ outpouring of the Spirit, as well as a pentecostal paradigm for personal Christian experience, provided an important defence for ‘prophesying’ women. Chapter six examines the central holiness experience of consecration, in which divine intervention served as a catalyst for female ministry. Chapters seven through nine consider female ministry as ‘female’, both through Miller’s experience, and within the framework of nineteenth-century constructions of womanhood and motherhood. Chapter nine addresses the limits of female ministry as determined by the dual concepts of male headship and female subordination; and considers how supernaturalist and interventionist spirituality supported, and finally, limited, female ministry. Finally, the conclusion draws together the disparate strands of the argument, outlining how the paradoxical tensions inherent in radical evangelical teaching and spirituality determine the boundaries of female ministry.

Chapter Two

‘An association, of one mind and aim’:

Fraternity and Unity at Midland Bible School, 1918-1924.

The School holds itself in cordial fraternal relationship with all evangelical divisions of the Church.

No doubt the School would draw more patronage if it were out-and-out, or even half-way, sectarian or denominationally partial; but the School would lose its testimony and teaching of unbiased, unsectarian character.

‘The Midland Bible School: Its Unsectarian Basis Explained’ (c.1923).

With these words, William Coit Stevens, renowned Christian and Missionary Alliance scholar and Bible teacher, captured both the hopes and the realities of conservative evangelical cooperation in the nineteen-twenties.¹ In 1918, Stevens (and his long-suffering wife) had arrived in Kansas City, Missouri, ‘empty-handed and a total stranger’ to begin an independent Bible school ‘of distinctly providential creation’.² Soon, Miss Dorothy Ruth Miller, with whom Stevens had recently taught in Boone, Iowa, arrived to serve as Bible teacher, while Mrs. Althea A. Kirk, former Ladies’ Superintendent at the Alliance Missionary Training Institute in Nyack, New York, where Stevens had at one time been Principal, came to offer her support.³ Together, Stevens,

¹ A. E. Thompson, *The Life of A. B. Simpson: Official Authorised Edition* (Harrisburg, PA/New York, NY: Christian Alliance, 1920), 219, 254.

² *Manual of the Midland Bible School*, c.1921-1922, 3-4. PBI archives. Because of its independent status, and its short life span, Midland is missing from most literature on the Bible school movement. Available documents, including official papers, were brought to Prairie Bible Institute, Three Hills, Alberta, by Dorothy Ruth Miller, L.E. Maxwell, and Pearl (Plummer) Maxwell.

³ Stevens served as Principal or Dean of the Missionary Training Institute from autumn 1901 to spring 1914. For his arrival, see *The Fifth Annual Report of the Christian & Missionary Alliance* (1901-1902), 9.

Miller, and Kirk envisioned a school that operated upon ‘fraternal’ principles. Although undenominational, it would be in full fellowship with other outside evangelical bodies. Within, common study of the Bible would ensure unity. Miller also found comfort in another element of fraternalism; that is, the space it created for female members of staff to define their ministry roles based on gifting, calling, and the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

Belief in ‘fraternal association’ was one reason why women like Miller found Midland and the closely related Christian and Missionary Alliance so amenable. As at many similar institutions, the staff, students, and workers of Midland were predominantly female.⁴ Between 1920 and 1924, over half of all staff members and teachers were female. In 1921, Stevens and Miller taught the bulk of the curriculum, while male board members and pastors R. Fuller Jaudon and John P. Davis each taught one course. Mrs. Annie Bamford taught city missions, and Mrs. J. K. Henderson, former supervisor of religious work at the Kansas City YWCA, taught a weekly preparatory class for Sunday school teachers.⁵ In 1922-1923, Miller was registrar, taught Bible, ancient history, Bible geography, and missions, served as board member, and acted as school matron. Mrs. Bamford taught practical Christian service; Miss Prindle gave instruction in grammar and

For his departure see ‘Editorial notes’, *Alliance Weekly* (June 6, 1914): 162. For Mrs. Kirk’s role at the Missionary Training Institute, see Thompson, *A. B. Simpson*, 191, 211; also *Annual Report* (1897-1898): 9; (1900-1901): 121-123; (1901-1902): 9. All Christian and Missionary Alliance journals, including *The Word, Work and World* and *The Alliance Weekly* and its variants, are online at <<http://www.cmalliance.org/whoweare/archives/alifepdf.jsp>>. Annual reports for 1893-1912 are at <<http://www.cmalliance.org/whoweare/archives/reports.jsp>>.

⁴ This large female presence was common to the Bible schools, mission organisations, and other institutions that formed the backbone of the growing fundamentalist coalition. See Virginia Lieson Brereton, *Training God’s Army: The American Bible School, 1880-1940* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 69, 129-132; also Janette Hassey, in *No Time for Silence: Evangelical Women in Public Ministry Around the Turn of the Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/Academie Books, 1986, CBE reprint).

⁵ *Midland Manual*, 1921-1922.

general history; and Miss Broadbeck gave lessons in English and music.⁶ Other women, such as Mrs. Mead, and Miss Cartwright, acted as housekeepers or cooks. As well, the majority of Midland students were women. Of the thirty-four students listed on the 1922 commencement bulletin, twenty-seven were women. Leslie Earl Maxwell, who graduated from Midland Bible School that year, later claimed to be the only male to do so. He erred by one, for John William Hoy had received a diploma in 1920. Still, the school's eight remaining known graduates were all women.

Association was, for Stevens and Miller, a fundamental matter of principle. It was also a vital aspect of the populist ethos of nineteenth-century United States in which revivalist evangelicalism developed. As observer Alexis de Tocqueville had commented in the 1830s, 'Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all dispositions constantly form associations'.⁷ Such associations—whether fraternal orders such as the Masonic Lodge, professional organisations, social clubs, aid and self-help societies, or a myriad of other groupings—were based on voluntary membership. Much nineteenth-century religion followed a similar pattern.⁸ New sects and churches formed throughout the nineteenth century while innumerable lay-led voluntary societies sprang up for purposes of evangelism, missions and social reform.⁹ In the late century, entrepreneurial evangelicals like Dwight L. Moody, Baptist A. J. Gordon, and A. B. Simpson, founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance, continued this tradition by bringing laity and clergy from a

⁶ 'Prospectus', Midland Bible School, 1922-1923.

⁷ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1835-40), book 2, chapter 5.

⁸ For the populist and democratic nature of religion in this period, see Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (Yale University Press, 1989). For Hatch, this late eighteenth-century 'democratization of Christianity' has 'less to do with the specifics of polity and governance and more with the incarnation of the church into the popular culture' (9-11).

⁹ See Nathan Hatch, *Democratization*, 211-214.

wide spectrum of Protestant groups together in joint evangelistic and educational endeavours.¹⁰ Stevens, at the tail end of this generation of leaders, imbibed deeply of their cooperative mentality.

The present chapter explores how this ‘fraternal’ or ‘voluntary’ view of Christian organisation and Christian ministry, common among turn-of-the-century and early twentieth-century conservative evangelicals, affected the role of women in these circles, and delineates the crucial implications of the ideas and practices of associationalism as played out in the daily life of Miller and other women at Midland Bible School. While a connection between voluntary association and evangelical openness to female ministry is sometimes recognised, most studies read this link as pragmatic, rather than ideological.¹¹ The supposition is that evangelicals of the period could avoid issues around female ministry because workers were (only) lay volunteers, or that they tolerated inconsistency for the sake of a pragmatic concern for evangelism. Thus, Pentecostal scholar Edith Blumhofer, evaluating the positions of A. J. Gordon, A. B. Simpson and others between 1890 and 1920, suggests that ‘in an era when considerable momentum flowed through voluntary associations, it proved possible—and simpler—at the popular level to beg questions about ordination and authority and simply get on with the immense task at

¹⁰ See Mark Noll, ‘Cooperative Evangelism: A Historical Sketch’, also Timothy Weber, ‘A Response to Mark Noll’, Billy Graham Center Evangelism Roundtable ‘Toward Collaborative Evangelisation’, Oct 4-5, 2002 (accessed 2005-04-14) <<http://bgc.gospelcom.net/ise/RTpapers/RTpapers2002.html>>. Noll links growth in nineteenth-century evangelical cooperation to the creation of voluntary societies, and to the work of Moody. Weber argues for a theological connection, in that a larger evangelical group identity, based on conversionist theology and an evangelistic mandate, overshadowed denominational differences and allowed for cooperation. The theological grounds for nineteenth-century cooperation are discussed in chapter four below.

¹¹ See, for instance, Edith L. Blumhofer, ‘A Confused Legacy: Reflections of Evangelical Attitudes toward Ministering Women in the Last Century’, *Fides et Historia* 22 (Winter-Spring 1990): 49-61; Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 68; Hassey, *No Time for Silence*, 19. Grant Wacker, in contrast, points to pragmatism as a limiting factor. See Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 158-176; esp. 165ff. See chapter nine below for further discussion of the limits to female ministry.

hand'.¹² This is problematic on two counts. First, to read 'association' and its positive ramifications for female ministry as simply 'volunteerism' falls into the familiar trap built by earlier feminist scholars of separate spheres: the assumption that non-public roles are 'private', therefore lesser.¹³ Yet as historians of women have demonstrated, associationalism also provided the context for dramatic changes in female roles throughout that century. In an era when women were claiming the high moral ground, the voluntary association opened new opportunities for women. Nineteenth-century women formed associations, and through them, took part in civil society. Women set up missionary sending agencies, began schools, sent workers into slums, and created societies for the abolition of slavery, to promote temperance and to bring about suffrage.¹⁴ As Nancy Woloch puts it: 'Through association, women transformed moral superiority into a social calling'.¹⁵

Second, this treatment of the matter assumes that because of mitigating factors, evangelicals subordinated theology to outcome, and allowed a practice in which they did

¹² See for instance, Edith Blumhofer, 'A Confused Legacy', 50-51; Michael S. Hamilton, 'Women, Public Ministry, and American Fundamentalism, 1920-1950', *Religion and American Culture* 3 (Summer 1993): 188-189.

¹³ Barbara Welter helped set the terms of the discussion with 'The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860', in *Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Barbara Welter (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1976). For discussion of problems for women's history created by such categorises, see for example Linda K. Kerber, 'Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History', *The Journal of American History* 75/1 (June 1988): 9-30; Gisela Bock, 'Challenging Dichotomies in Women's History', 1991, reprinted in *Major Problems in American Women's History*, 8-14, edited by Mary Beth Norton and Ruth M. Alexander, 2nd ed. (Lexington/Toronto: D.C. Heath and Company, 1996); Elizabeth A. Clarke, 'The Lady Vanishes: Dilemmas of a Feminist Historian after the "Linguistic Turn"', *Church History* 67/1 (March 1998): 1-31.

¹⁴ For the religious beginnings of female voluntary societies in America, see Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience: A Concise History* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1996), 104-135; also Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 126-127.

¹⁵ Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 107.

not really believe.¹⁶ But were they really so inconsistent? That is, was the practice of female ministry truly disconnected from ‘ideology’?

The trajectory of beliefs and practice charted through the story of Stevens, Miller, and Midland complicates standard accounts of conservative evangelical views and attitudes towards women. Critical to the present work is the conviction that specific Christian practices—such as female ministry—are integral aspects of larger ‘spiritualities’.¹⁷ That is, normative practices or behaviours are shaped by beliefs (whether religious or cultural), *and* by the ways in which those beliefs are internalised or experienced. Thus, gauging the meaning of a practice accurately requires serious attention to ideology. For Stevens and Miller, one such foundational belief, deriving both from their context and from their theological convictions, was their commitment to ‘fraternal association’. In turn, that belief informed their expectations of inter-evangelical cooperation, internal unity, and their patterns of Christian ministry.

The new religious realities of the 1920s, however, tested the first two ideals. Midland Bible School, in many ways, was an anachronistic project, in which Stevens and Miller sought to embody the irenic and ecumenical values of a previous generation of evangelicals. Moody and his ‘coterie’ had been relatively comfortable with doctrinal differences. Within their late nineteenth-century context, evangelical unity and cooperation had derived from shared spirituality and a common evangelistic purpose. Their theological descendants, now in direct battle with the forces of modernism, were

¹⁶ Blumhofer, ‘A Confused Legacy’, 52; also Leslie Andrews, ‘Restricted Freedom: A. B. Simpson’s View of Women in Ministry’, in *The Birth of a Vision*, ed. by David F. Hartzfeld and Charles Nienkirchen, 219-240, *His Dominion*, Supplement 1 (Regina, SK: 1986).

¹⁷ See introduction, as well as chapter six below, for discussion of ‘spirituality’.

less tolerant.¹⁸ For the new fundamentalists, increasingly on the defensive, the true believer was defined by doctrinal purity and right practice. As they responded to the challenges of modernist theology, evolutionary theory, and rapid social change, and regrouped to defend these fundamentals of the faith, internal harmony also frayed. Consensus now rested upon a set of doctrines thought central to the faith, such as the virgin birth, the resurrection, and the miracles of Jesus, the substitutionary atonement, and the inspiration and inerrancy of scripture.

Doctrinally, Midland was also out of step with the times, for it represented an attempt to keep alive an earlier ‘full gospel’ form of Calvinistic evangelicalism. Stevens and Miller were conservative and fundamental, in that they rejected modernist and liberal theology, biblical criticism, and evolution, and held to the fundamentals.¹⁹ Yet, they remained outside of the conservative fundamentalist mainstream. Central to their ‘radical’ worldview was the expectation of the Spirit’s direct divine, supernatural intervention in all areas of life and faith.²⁰ This belief, reflected in the ‘full’ or ‘four-fold gospel’ of salvation, sanctification, the premillennial return of Christ, and in particular, the doctrine of divine healing divided them from many fundamentalists. As well, they held a ‘pentecostal’ pneumatology (doctrine of the Holy Spirit) and considered a present-day baptism of the Spirit as normative for each believer. This placed them within the ‘radical’ wing of evangelicalism. Thus, in some areas of theology and practice, Midland

¹⁸ In this context, ‘modernist’ describes the attempt to recast Christian thought and practice in terms of modern culture. Modernist theology sought to come to terms with evolutionary science, ideas of historical progress and relativity, the results of historical critical study of the Bible, and the social problems resulting from an industrialised, capitalist society. See William R. Hutchinson, *The Modernist Impulse in American Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976; Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion*, Vol. 1, *The Irony of It All, 1893-1919* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 25-43.

¹⁹ For Stevens on modernism, see ‘But whom say ye that I am?’, *Alliance Weekly* (Sept 13, 1924): 174-175.

²⁰ See Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Harvard University Press, 2003), 1-8, also Grant Wacker, ‘The Holy Spirit and the Spirit of the Age in American Protestantism, 1880-1910’, *The Journal of American History* 72/1 (June 1985): 45-62.

had more in common with Pentecostal evangelicals than with the new fundamentalists.²¹ Stevens and Miller could not follow many full-gospel believers into the Pentecostal movement, however, for they found their insistence on speaking in tongues untenable.

This indeterminate theological location endangered Stevens' vision of 'cordial fraternal relationship' from its inception. Initially, however, the 'great metropolis' of Kansas City must have seemed an ideal location for the 'distinctly providential' Midland School. The bustling city, a transportation artery for western goods, offered easy employment for students. With a reputation for nightlife, jazz, and sin that would earn it the title 'Paris of the Plains', it offered ample prospects for practical Christian work, while its extensive evangelical culture provided opportunities to attend revival meetings, conferences, conventions, and other inspirational delights. Further, Kansas City, with its combination of traditional denominations, such as Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist, and more radical sects, such as the Church of the Nazarene, a holiness denomination with headquarters down the street from Midland school, and its proximity to Topeka, Kansas, where early Pentecostalism had taken shape in 1903, was bursting with religious potential. This was, after all, the same intensely religious culture satirized by American writer Sinclair Lewis, who famously researched *Elmer Gantry*, his 1927 novel of mid-American religion, by immersing himself in the lives of Kansas City clergymen. Their composite portrait, represented in the persons of the quintessential charlatan Elmer Gantry, and female evangelist Sister Sharon Falconer, helped create the popular image of

²¹ Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 1-4. For further discussion of radical evangelicalism, see introduction. As noted there, 'pentecostal' or 'pentecostal pneumatology' refers to the belief that Pentecost serves as a pattern for a post-conversion and empowering experience of the divine, while 'Pentecostal/ism' refers to the movement.

fundamentalist evangelicals as narrow, mindless, greedy, and hypocritical.²² However, if Stevens had a failing, it was not hypocrisy, but naiveté. Nineteen-eighteen was not a good year to initiate an undenominational venture, even in Kansas City. Despite his dreams of fraternal unity, Midland school was soon in conflict—both within and without.

Over the next few years, as the conservative evangelical world took up new issues, and formed new alliances, Stevens, Miller, Kirk, and Midland School struggled to maintain both their Calvinistic ‘full-gospel’ beliefs, and a cooperative and ‘associational’ stance towards their fellow evangelicals.²³ Initially, the project received wide endorsement. A diverse collection of local clergy, city workers, evangelists, and lay people gathered to help staff and to finance the venture. That winter, local Bible teacher Mrs. J. K Henderson, evangelist A. G. Voight, businessman Walter Wilson, and three pastors, Donald Duncan Munro of Calvary Baptist Church, R. Fuller Jaudon of Tabernacle Baptist, and Arthur Fardon of Elmwood Congregational Church came alongside to teach classes.²⁴ With twelve students (all but one of whom had followed Miller and Stevens from elsewhere), the school was ready to serve. At graduation the next spring, hosted by Calvary Baptist, a board of eleven men and five women, including staff, pastors and locals, stood by the institution.

By 1920, the original Board was reduced to fourteen.²⁵ Notably missing were local businessman Walter L. Wilson, and prominent pastor Donald Duncan Munro.²⁶ Behind these changes lay conflict over the doctrine of healing, a key plank of the full

²² Sinclair Lewis, *Elmer Gantry* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1927).

²³ The tensions of the period are recorded both in Dorothy Ruth Miller’s diaries, and in the materials of Midland Bible School.

²⁴ R. Fuller Jaudon was a graduate of Moody Bible Institute. See L. E. Maxwell, interview by Don Richardson, 1982, typed transcript. PBI Archives, Box 111.

²⁵ ‘Announcement’, Midland Bible Institute, 1920.

²⁶ Wilson remained in contact with the school, and with Maxwell. In 1932, Wilson, Fuller Jaudon, and David B. Bulkley founded Kansas City Bible Institute, now Calvary Bible College.

gospel. The first board and financial supporters, as Stevens explained in the school's 1921 *Manual*, 'did not see their way to be identified with a School that represented the doctrine and ministry of healing through the name of Jesus Christ alone'.²⁷ Others who supported this 'feature of the School' had joined the board, yet, as he noted ruefully, the first board had included 'all the regular financial helpers.' The new roster included John P. Davis, a Presbyterian pastor, while Arthur Fardon was now pastor of an independent 'Bible Mission Church', rather than a Congregational church.²⁸ Six members, including Mrs. Stevens and student Christina Maxwell, were from within the school.²⁹ Further, the women on the board now outnumbered the men, seven to six. This higher ratio of women likely reflected the loss of male supporters rather than a choice for female members, for the women who joined the board were of noticeably lower status than the men who left.³⁰

In time, this loss of a wide support base would doom the school to financial failure.³¹ In the meantime, Stevens maintained the high moral ground, linking this lack of support with the 'unsectarian basis' of the school, noting that student numbers were up, and crowning the school's third year by hosting a grand 'Salvation and Healing Revival',

²⁷ *Midland Manual*, 1921-1922. For a similar fundamentalist response to Pentecostal preacher Aimee Semple McPherson's support of healing, see Edith L. Blumhofer, *Aimee Semple McPherson: Everybody's Sister* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 163. Many fundamentalists were 'dispensationalists', who held that miracles such as healing ceased with the end of the early church.

²⁸ Davis resigned from the Presbyterian Church that year. He also wished to marry Miller; a desire she did not share. See Miller Diaries, March through September 1921; July and August 1922; February 8, 1924.

²⁹ Christina Maxwell, aunt to Leslie Maxwell, was instrumental in his conversion; she later became a missionary.

³⁰ Michael Hamilton suggests women rarely served on fundamentalist boards (Hamilton, 'Women, Public Ministry, and American Fundamentalism', 171-196); however they did serve on earlier Alliance boards. For example the original board members for the Los Angeles Branch of the Christian Alliance, founded in 1892 under Stevens, included a Mrs. D. W. MacDonald as 2nd Vice President, and Mrs. M. E. A. Hollowell as corresponding secretary ('The Work in Los Angeles', *The Christian Alliance and Missionary Weekly* [July 1892]: 80).

³¹ The loss of support forced the school to move from its first premises, from 912 Tracy Avenue to 2731 Troost Ave. A further move out of Kansas City to Shenandoah, Iowa, was necessary in 1923.

conducted by early Pentecostal leader, P. C. Nelson of Detroit.³² In the summer of 1921, school promotional material continued to describe Midland as an ‘independent, undenominational and self-supporting institution for the training of a full-gospel Bible teaching ministry for home and foreign fields’.³³

Behind the doctrinal conflict lay the new reality for ‘conservative’ Calvinistic evangelicals: the fundamentalist debates. In May of 1919, at the end of Midland’s first operating year, Baptist William B. Riley called the troops to the first World’s Christian Fundamentals Association. A year later, Curtis Lee Laws coined the word ‘fundamentalist’ in preparation for the Northern Baptist Convention in 1920; during this period theological fires raged in Stevens’ own Presbyterian denomination.³⁴

Miller’s diaries help track these tensions. Throughout her time in Kansas City, Dorothy Ruth Miller regularly attended fundamentalist events. However, while she participated in these events, and often recorded agreement (and disagreement) with their teachings, she never described herself as a fundamentalist, nor did fundamentalist issues

³² *Midland Manual*, 1921-1922; also ‘Unsectarian Basis Explained’, Midland Bible School (pamphlet, n.d; c.1923).

³³ Midland Bible School, ‘Summer Season’, c.1921.

³⁴ See introduction for definition of fundamentalism. For background to the rise of fundamentalism, see Stewart G. Cole, *The History of Fundamentalism* (New York: Richard R. Smith, 1931; Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1971); also Norman F. Furniss, *The Fundamentalist Controversy, 1918-1931* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), which considered fundamentalism as a reaction to modernism and social change. For studies that also define it as a wider religious movement, see Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (University of Chicago, 1970); George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980); also Virginia Lieson Brereton’s insightful ‘Appendix: Defining Fundamentalism’, in *Training God’s Army*, 165-170. Joel A. Carpenter in *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) widens the argument for the religious character of fundamentalism by tracing the movement from the 1930s.

take up much space in her diaries.³⁵ Indeed, she remained far more concerned with healing and holy living than doctrinal purity.

In June of 1922, Miller attended the International Sunday School Convention, meeting that year in Kansas City.³⁶ Although the failure of early lecturers to recognise scripture adequately disturbed her, later convention speakers pleased her better. On June 27, Bishop Hughes was ‘orthodox’; Mr. Bryan ‘rang true’; and W. O. Thompson spoke on the important topics of the authority of scripture, the deity of Christ, and the necessity of Christ’s atoning work.³⁷ October 1922 saw fundamentalist R. A. Torrey conducting meetings in Kansas City.³⁸ Miss Miller, however, was unimpressed by his views on the Lord’s return.³⁹ In May 1923, she attended the founding conference for a new fundamentalist organisation, the Baptist Bible Union. At their meetings, held in the tent of former Midland board member Walter L. Wilson, she heard fundamentalist leaders William B. Riley, A. C. Dixon, J. Frank Norris, and Canadian T. T. Shields.⁴⁰ On May 13, Dixon spoke on ‘why I am an evangelical Christian and not a modernist’, a message Miller liked ‘very much’. She did not care for Frank Norris’s evening message, but awarded Shields, who spoke on ‘separation, quality, courage, reward’, the highest of compliments: ‘His address seemed to be the most spiritual one of the conference’.⁴¹

³⁵ Midland was involved with a ‘Victorious Life Conference’ from June 19-22, 1919, however because this event (and the crisis over healing) preceded her extant diaries her views on the event are unknown.

³⁶ Miller Diaries, June 2-27, 1922.

³⁷ William Jennings Bryan was a politician turned anti-evolution campaigner; Bishop Hughes was a Methodist leader.

³⁸ Reuben A. Torrey (1856-1928), a Congregationalist, edited the *Fundamentals* between 1913-1915. He also spent some time at Moody Bible Institute. According to Marsden, ‘Torrey was one of the principal architects of fundamentalist thought’ (*Fundamentalism*, 47).

³⁹ Miller Diaries, October 22, 1922.

⁴⁰ The speakers represented a who’s who of the Baptist fundamentalist world. William B. Riley (1861-1947) organised the World’s Christian Fundamentals Association in 1919. A. C. Dixon, a Baptist evangelist, edited early volumes of the *Fundamentals*. J. Frank Norris and Canadian T. T. Shields were both separatist Baptists.

⁴¹ Miller Diaries, May 15, 1923.

Miller had little to say later that year when ‘Miss Knaus of the Fundamentalist Conference’ visited Midland’s Shenandoah campus.⁴²

Nor did she align herself with the Pentecostals, with whom she also shared many values. In May 1922, she travelled to Wichita, Kansas, to hear famed Pentecostal evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson. Miller’s response was quite negative, for in her opinion, Mrs. McPherson ‘allegorised’ scripture. Miller showed greater enthusiasm for ‘The Great Revival of Salvation and Healing’, featuring P. C. Nelson, which Midland promoted from June 1-17 1921.⁴³ On this occasion, Miller carefully listed the results, healings from deafness and lameness, in her daily entries. ‘The power of God was manifested notably in both old-time salvation and early time miraculous healings’, the *Manual* told readers.

Not surprisingly, this continued commitment to the full gospel of healing, coupled with a rejection of full-blown Pentecostalism, pleased neither camp. On the one side, as outlined above, tension developed between Midland and local evangelicals who rejected divine healing. On the other side, intermittent internal tensions arose as members of the Midland community, influenced by P. C. Nelson, sought both Spirit baptism and the blessing of tongues. On June 18, 1921, two staff members, Miss Mead and Miss Cartwright, began talk of leaving Midland to seek ‘Pentecostal baptism’; they departed on June 29.⁴⁴ In the short term, these defections burdened Miss Miller with extra workload. However, in the longer term, they signified the ongoing contest for theological hearts. The Pentecostal issue was not new. There were strong similarities between the

⁴² Miller Diaries, September 20, 1923. In 1931, Elisabeth Knaus wrote on communism for Riley’s magazine *The Pilot*. See Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 282n60.

⁴³ ‘Midland Bible School Summer Season’; also *Midland Manual*, 5.

⁴⁴ See Diary entries for June 18 and 29, 1921.

full gospel of Pentecostalism, and that of Stevens. The difference was slight, but hugely divisive.⁴⁵ By retaining allegiance to the four-fold, or full, gospel and emphasising the baptism of the Spirit as the means of sanctification, but rejecting tongues as a sign, Stevens and Miller left themselves open to defections to the full gospel of Pentecostalism. Throughout Midland Bible School's short history, the Pentecostal issue merely took the form of minor skirmishes; in later years, it cut Stevens' career short, and helped force Miller's move to Canada.

When Stevens claimed, in 1923, that the school was 'unsectarian' and held itself 'in cordial fraternal relationship with all evangelical divisions of the church', the claim was built more on idealism than reality. To those in the evangelical know, his commitment to the full gospel, with its Pentecostal overtones, smacked of the very sectarianism he denied. The school remained full-gospel, but not Pentecostal, fundamental but not fundamentalist.

Recognising the liminal theological site of their radical theological viewpoint is essential, for it prevents a commonly made confusion between the various conservative evangelical arguments for and against female ministry, each of which began from differing theological presuppositions. For instance, studies of gender roles among conservative evangelicals usually assume a sharp theological division between Pentecostals and early fundamentalists.⁴⁶ Accordingly, Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, in

⁴⁵ For the tense relationship between the Alliance and early Pentecostalism, see Charles W. Nienkirchen, *A. B. Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement* (Peabody, MS: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992); and Robert L. Niklaus, John S. Sawin, and Samuel J. Stoesz, *All for Jesus: God at Work in The Christian and Missionary Alliance over One Hundred Years* (Camp Hill, PN: Christian Publications, 1986), 110-116.

⁴⁶ See for example, Hassey, *No Time for Silence*, xiv; Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender: 1875 to the Present* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1993), 4-5.

her influential *Fundamentalism and Gender* (1993), dismissed Pentecostal patterns of female ministry as irrelevant to practices within the developing fundamentalist movement. Having separated ‘fundamentalism’ from its close holiness and Pentecostal relatives, she claimed that fundamentalists objected to women preachers.⁴⁷ However, the boundaries between these various strands of evangelicalism were still hardening in the early 1920s. Midland, which operated only from 1918 to 1924, struggled for survival precisely because while the older full-gospel beliefs of W. C. Stevens did not fit the new paradigms set by *either* fundamentalism, *or* Pentecostalism, they closely approximated both.

Stevens’ struggles to maintain fraternal unity were not new. Previously, in 1914, he had parted ways with A. B. Simpson and the Christian and Missionary Alliance over the loss of this value in the larger organisation. Resigning his post of thirteen years as Principal of the Alliance Training School in Nyack, he withdrew from active Alliance membership, and returned to California. Although the cause of Stevens’ departure is debated, it is clear that by this time he was disillusioned with the Alliance on two fronts: its apparent departure from its ‘fraternal’ principles, and its failure to recognise the value of higher education.

The initial connection between Simpson and Stevens was quite natural, for their theological journeys and doctrinal positions were very similar.⁴⁸ Stevens, the son of a

⁴⁷ Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender*, 4-5. Timothy Larsen makes a similar objection to Bendroth’s move. See Larson, *Christabel Pankhurst: Fundamentalism and Feminism in Coalition, Studies in Modern British Religious History*, Vol. 4 (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2002), 123.

⁴⁸ For general histories of Simpson and the Alliance, see G. P. Pardington, *Twenty-Five Wonderful Years: 1889–1914, A Popular Sketch of the Christian and Missionary Alliance* (New York, NY: Christian Alliance Publications, 1914); Thompson, *A. B. Simpson* (1920); Niklaus et al, *All for Jesus*; Hartzfeld and

Presbyterian pastor, was born in Parma, Ohio, on August 24, 1853.⁴⁹ After completing college, he trained for the Presbyterian ministry at Union Seminary, followed by two years of graduate theological studies in Germany. He began his ministry as pastor of a frontier church in Bismarck, North Dakota. On October 15, 1879, he married Louise E. Upson; in the early 1880s, they moved to Los Angeles.

Stevens' official connections with the Alliance began in 1892. After a local convention where he met Simpson and other members of the Christian Alliance, he became president of the newly formed Los Angeles branch.⁵⁰ He later served as district superintendent for the Pacific Coast, helped found the Gospel Tabernacle of Los Angeles, and became an Alliance board member.⁵¹ In 1901, at Simpson's invitation, he moved to Nyack to serve as Principal of the Missionary Training Institute.⁵²

By this time, Stevens had moved far from his earlier Presbyterian beliefs and embraced the full gospel.⁵³ Although Stevens' beliefs were independently derived, and in many cases predated his contact with Simpson, he too upheld the 'Four-Fold Gospel' of Jesus Christ as Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer, and Coming King.⁵⁴ Through personal experience, biblical study, and 'revelation', he had come to accept that sanctification was

Nienkirchen, *The Birth of a Vision*. See chapter four for further discussion of Simpson's theological journey.

⁴⁹ See obituary for W. C. Stevens, 'Home with the Lord', *Alliance Weekly* (Nov 16, 1929): 740; see also Niklaus et al, *All for Jesus*, 273-274.

⁵⁰ 'The Work in Los Angeles', *Christian Alliance and Missionary Weekly* (July 22, 1892): 60.

⁵¹ 'Home with the Lord', *Alliance Weekly* (Nov 16, 1929): 740.

⁵² See note 3 above; also Niklaus et al, *All for Jesus*, 127-128, 273-274.

⁵³ His beliefs are outlined in W. C. Stevens, *Mysteries of the Kingdom* (San Francisco: M. G. McClinton, 1904; second ed. 1915); *Triumphs of the Cross* (San Francisco: M. G. McClinton, c. 1903; second ed. 1915); *Revelation, The Crown Jewel of Biblical Prophecy*, 2 vol. (Harrisburg, PA: Alliance Publishing, 1928); *The Book of Daniel: A Composite Revelation of the Last Days of Israel's Subjugation to Gentile Powers*, intro. James M. Gray (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1915, rev. 1918); and *The Unique Historical Value of the Book of Jonah*, foreword by Philip Mauro (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1924). As well, he published a number of tracts, including 'Latter Rain', and 'Sanctification', and numerous articles in Alliance journals.

⁵⁴ For the official outline of Alliance doctrine, see A. B. Simpson, *The Four-Fold Gospel*, intro. Frederic H. Senft (1887; Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, n.d.)

a second event, rather than a progressive development, that divine healing was a present benefit of the atonement, and that the Bible taught a premillennial account of end times, not the postmillennial position of his training. In the mid-1880s, he ‘came into a real experience with the Lord and was saved and sanctified wholly’, as his obituary later put it.⁵⁵ His belief in the premillennial return of Christ dated from about 1889, while his personal experience of divine healing occurred in 1894.⁵⁶

Thus he would have fully supported the doctrinal statement adhered to by Alliance workers in 1914. The first part of this simple statement reflected standard conservative evangelical doctrine:

I believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in the verbal inspiration of the Holy Scriptures as originally given, in the vicarious atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the eternal salvation of all who believe in Him and in the everlasting punishment of all who reject Him.

Onto this was tacked the Alliance’s Christological summary of the Gospel:

I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour, Sanctifier, Healer and Coming Lord. I am in full sympathy with the principles and objects of the Christian and Missionary Alliance...⁵⁷

Stevens’ concern was with the final clause, ‘the principles and objects’ of the Alliance, from which he considered the Alliance to be moving away.

Simpson had envisioned the original Christian Alliance, formed in 1887, as ‘a fraternal union of Christians of all evangelical denominations in cordial sympathy with all branches of the Church of Christ’.⁵⁸ In the early years of the twentieth century, W. C.

⁵⁵ ‘Home with the Lord’, *Alliance Weekly* (Nov 16, 1929): 740; ‘Stevens, William Coit’, in Sawin Files on *A. B. Simpson: Contemporary Persons*, 97-98. Archibald-Thomson Archives, Alliance University College, Calgary, Alberta.

⁵⁶ Stevens, ‘Preface’, *Mysteries of the Kingdom*; for his personal healing, see Miller Diaries, Aug. 17, 1924.

⁵⁷ Pardington, *Twenty-Five Wonderful Years*, 48.

⁵⁸ Pardington, *Twenty-Five Wonderful Years*, 70-71. Pardington here cites *The Word the Work and the World* (Aug-Sept 1887) as his source. In 1897, the Christian Alliance, which oversaw home work, and the

Stevens, who supported Simpson's original vision wholeheartedly, helped draft a 'Resolution on Ecclesial Relations in the Home Work of the C&MA' that reinforced this earlier position.⁵⁹ Because the Alliance was to be 'purely fraternal', without 'ecclesiastical aspects', the document explained, it would not operate as a denomination or set up local churches under its umbrella.⁶⁰ The Alliance was not meant to be a denomination, but an association of believers who were part of other local congregations. In 1906, Stevens explained 'fraternity' at a conference called to clarify Alliance beliefs.⁶¹ Stevens felt that God had revealed this principle to him, as the foundation for Alliance work. 'Alliance Principles are as definite and important as Alliance teaching', he told workers. 'We profess to be purely fraternal. But this must not mean that we are fraternal only toward those who come out unto us, but first and chiefly toward all other believers'. Because the Alliance was not simply for those within its fold, but primarily for those without, Alliance workers must be 'made all things to all men, that [they] might by all means save some'.⁶²

By 1912, the Alliance was evolving from its early associational stage into an institutionalised movement. This was both a natural consolidation process as leadership generations changed, and a response to Pentecostal threats to group stability. A new constitution adopted that year strengthened the central administration, and sought to unify

Missionary Alliance, which addressed overseas work, united as the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA).

⁵⁹ W. C. Stevens, 'Resolution on Ecclesial Relations in the Home Work of the C&MA', *Annual Report (1901-1902)*: 48.

⁶⁰ At least fifty 'full-gospel' churches were associated with the Alliance by 1914 (Pardington, *Twenty-Five Wonderful Years*, 93).

⁶¹ See Niklaus *et al*, *All for Jesus*, 111; also Sawin, 'The Four-Fold Gospel', in *Birth of a Vision*, 21-24 n32.

⁶² W. C. Stevens, 'The Alliance Workers Manual', *Christian and Missionary Alliance Weekly* (July 21, 1906): 34-35.

the educational system.⁶³ While never meant to be a denomination, the C&MA increasingly took on denominational characteristics, a shift that became more evident as the growing modernist controversies spread and as Alliance ‘Tabernacles’ were established in major cities.⁶⁴ In Stevens’ eyes, the Alliance was losing its fraternal character.

On another front, Alliance scholar Jacob P. Klassen and others suggest that General Council’s rejection of a long-held plan of developing Nyack into a Christian university precipitated Steven’s defection. Both Stevens and Dr. J. Hudson Ballard, principal of Wilson Academy, the Alliance high school, foresaw a group of institutions, including a seminary, which would provide a range of academic options.⁶⁵ Stevens desired a ‘graded system’ that accommodated a range of student abilities, while ensuring a high standard of education. (This may stem from his own educational background, or reflect the frustration he felt in working with under-educated students who could not follow his somewhat esoteric ideas). When plans were curtailed, at least in part for lack of funds, both Stevens and Ballard resigned.⁶⁶ This rejection of higher educational goals

⁶³ See Pardington, *Twenty-Five Wonderful Years*, 45; 75-77; Thompson, *A. B. Simpson*, 132; Niklaus *et al*, *All for Jesus*, 116-117. A property reversion clause was included in the 1912 constitution, which concerned those who understood the Alliance as a fraternal association (117).

⁶⁴ In 1914, a proposal was made that a position of ‘deaconess’ be set up in the Alliance, to provide proper guidelines and restrictions for women’s work (Niklaus *et al*, *All for Jesus*, 127). Although the proposal was not accepted, the desire to draw ecclesial boundaries rather than to take a more ‘associational’ approach is symptomatic of the institutionalisation process.

⁶⁵ Jacob P. Klassen, ‘A. B. Simpson and the Tensions in the Preparation of Missionaries’ in *Birth of a Vision*, 249-251. Stevens dreamt of a university as early as 1904; see *Annual Report (1903-1904)*, 70-71. The Alliance’s constitution still reflected this hope for higher education in 1912; see Pardington, *Twenty-Five Wonderful Years*, 45-46. Ballard and Stevens shared other aspects of their lives; Stevens married Ballard and his wife; after which the Ballards moved to California to take charge of the Gospel Tabernacle in Los Angeles (where Stevens had previously served). Ballard returned to Nyack in 1909 to become principal of the high school; and attained a PhD at Columbia University. After leaving Nyack, he became a Presbyterian minister, and finished his career teaching at San Francisco Theological Seminary (Niklaus *et al*, *All for Jesus*, 257-258).

⁶⁶ There was a \$10, 000 accumulated debt due to the failure of a bequest earmarked for a new building. See ‘Editorial Notes’, *Alliance Weekly* (June 06, 1914): 162; also Niklaus *et al*, *All for Jesus*, 128. Mr. and

may also have reflected growing conservative Christian concerns over the encroachment of modern or liberal theology into mainstream educational institutions.⁶⁷ Stevens' commitment to higher education is unusual among both radical and fundamentalist evangelicals. Although Stevens rejected the tenets of modernism, he believed in higher education, and continued to dream of establishing it within the Alliance.⁶⁸ He apparently felt that academia could encompass a supernaturalist worldview, rather than being an enemy to faith as many fundamentalists insisted.

While educational concerns triggered the final break, the loss of the previously shared fraternal values concerned Stevens more.⁶⁹ He cut formal ties with the Alliance in 1914, and moved to California to begin a new institute.⁷⁰ As he possibly realised after his experience at Nyack, the only way to maintain fraternity was to be separate! Evidently, it was not yet time for a West Coast school, for by 1917 Stevens and his wife had joined Dorothy Ruth Miller, now teaching high school at Boone Biblical College.⁷¹ After graduation the next spring, Stevens and Miller set out to recapture those lost principles at the new, independent Midland Bible School.

Mrs. J. D. Williams took responsibility for the Missionary Training Institute, Pardington became dean, and Walter Turnbull became principal of Wilson Academy.

⁶⁷ Along this line of interpretation, see Joseph F. Conley, *Drumbeats that Changed the World* (Pasadena: William Carey, 2000), cited in Harold W. Fuller, *Maxwell's Passion and Power* (Huttonville, ON: Maxwell Foundation, 2002), 213. Niklaus *et al* stop short of linking the plan's demise directly to building opposition to higher education (*All for Jesus*, 128). Brereton considers the desire for a full programme to reflect concern to provide a 'safe' educational environment, away from secular influence; the plan failed due to lack of funds. See Brereton, *Training God's Army*, 124.

⁶⁸ As late as 1924, Stevens could suggest that Simpson Bible Institute offer post-graduate courses for Nyack students (see Miller diaries, June 22, 1924).

⁶⁹ Nienkirchen also interprets Stevens' 1914 break with the Alliance in this light (*Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement*, 133, citing executive committee minutes, Alliance Board of Managers, Feb 9, 1912; May 23, 1914.)

⁷⁰ Sawin Files, 'Stevens,' 97-98. Many accounts omit this time in California altogether, as does his Alliance obituary (*Alliance Weekly* [Nov 16, 1929]: 740). However, the foreword to *The Book of Daniel* is marked 'Oakland, California, February 6, 1915'.

⁷¹ For the year at Boone, see press notices for Boone Biblical College graduation ceremonies, 1918, in Pearl Plummer's graduation book (PBI archives, Box 76). J. C. Crawford, a Congregationalist minister, founded Boone Biblical College in 1891. Crawford was an Alliance superintendent, and Boone was still a part of the Alliance educational system in 1914. See Pardington, *Twenty-Five Wonderful Years*, 98.

University educated, a schoolteacher by vocation, and a Bible school graduate, Miller was well prepared for a career as Bible teacher.⁷² Although little is known about her early life, beyond her birth in 1873, it is evident that she came from a privileged background, for she specialised in English at Columbia University and in History at New York University in the late nineteenth century, when women's higher education was still a rarity.⁷³ Like many university women of this period, she then entered the teaching profession (one of the few open to women); and remained single throughout her life.⁷⁴

The connection between Miller and Stevens was forged at the Christian and Missionary Alliance Missionary Training Institute at Nyack, New York. Miller enrolled at Nyack in 1908, several years after her pastor, 'a man strong tinged with Plymouth Brethren teaching', recommended she train as a Bible teacher.⁷⁵ Miller, who did well at Nyack, was among six students chosen as 'representatives of the graduating class' of 1910, and thus would have given a graduation address.⁷⁶ As she later explained, she began teaching classes while still a student:

I had not been in the school three months when I was asked to take a class. The second year I was asked to teach two classes. Before my graduation, I was asked to remain as a regular member of the teaching staff.⁷⁷

⁷² Information on Miller's early life is taken from her diaries, and from Prairie Bible Institute records. Her family connections may only be gleaned by occasional comments within her diaries: the death of a sister and brother, a debate over a parental tombstone, a nephew's arrival at Three Hills.

⁷³ Announcement, *Prairie Pastor* 1/9 (Sept 1928): 3.

⁷⁴ Between 10 and 11 percent of women born in America between 1860 and 1880 remained single, due both to fewer men than women in the general populace, and a lack of appropriate men for those women who were rising in social status. In contrast, the relative proportion of college-educated women who married was 'a bare majority' (See Woloch, *Women and the American Experience*, 172-173, 180).

⁷⁵ D. R. Miller, 'On Women Speaking', *The Prairie Pastor* 12/12 (Dec 1939): 7-8.

⁷⁶ See 'Gleanings from Nyack', *Christian and Missionary Alliance Weekly* (Feb 26, 1910): 350. 'Miller, Dorothy Ruth, Clifford, PA' is listed in the graduating class of 1910 (Brian Wiggins, C&MA National Archives, email, September 9, 2002).

⁷⁷ Miller, 'On Women Speaking', 7; 'Gleanings from Nyack', *Christian and Missionary Alliance Weekly* (June 4, 1910): 157.

In all likelihood, then Principal Stevens offered the invitation to stay. Miller's career here followed paths similar to those of earlier Alliance teachers Harriet Waterbury (d. 1891) and Louise Shepard, who left Nyack upon her marriage in 1900. Like Miller, both Waterbury and Shepard attended the Institute, and then remained to teach.⁷⁸

From the first, the Alliance had relied upon female labourers. When Simpson's New York converts formed the Gospel Tabernacle in 1882, there were not enough men to fill the various church offices. Consequently, 'some of our first trustees had to be "elect ladies"', Simpson later reminisced.⁷⁹ As late as 1907, he could still claim that at his church, 'We have given a place for the ministry of women'.⁸⁰ Female ministry was enshrined in the Evangelical Missionary Alliance constitution of 1887, which declared that 'the ministry of woman is another prominent token of our time, both in the home and foreign field, and we believe [God] desires to emphasise and utilise it still more'.⁸¹ This reliance upon women's active participation became part of the belief system of the Alliance Bible school world.

Women, both married and single, commonly taught at the Missionary Training Institute and other Alliance schools.⁸² Some C&MA women of the period founded Bible schools alongside their husbands. The Rev. and Mrs. J. D. Williams co-founded St. Paul Bible College (1916), where Mrs. Williams taught Greek and Bible; in 1906, Dr. and

⁷⁸ Pardington, *Twenty-Five Wonderful Years*, 206-207; Niklaus, *All for Jesus*, 59, 273, 275, 282-283.

⁷⁹ A. B. Simpson, 'A Story of Providence,' Paper read at the Quarter Centennial of the Gospel Tabernacle Church, New York, February 11, 1907. Unless otherwise stated, all official Alliance documents are located at <<http://online.auc-nuc.ca/alliancestudies>>.

⁸⁰ A. B. Simpson, 'A Story of Providence'.

⁸¹ 'Statement of the Reason for Proposing Such an Organisation', Constitution of the Evangelical Missionary Alliance (1887). <<http://online.auc-nuc.ca/alliancestudies>>.

⁸² See Janette Hassey, *No Time for Silence*, 16-19, for women at Alliance schools. Hassey overemphasises their importance at Nyack, where lists show a preponderance of male teachers; women usually held peripheral positions in music, evangelism, and 'blackboard illustration'. Notable exceptions are Harriet Waterbury, who taught Bible doctrine and church history (Niklaus *et al*, *All for Jesus*, 275), and Miss Allie Kanarr, who taught New Testament Greek during Steven's tenure.

Mrs. R. A. Forrest founded what became Toccoa Falls Bible Institute, where Mrs. Forrest also taught.⁸³ However, Nyack offered fewer opportunities for women than more remote locations due to the readily available pool of theologically educated men in the New York area, and to Simpson's connections with evangelical leaders such as A. T. Pierson, James Gray, and William Blackstone, who all taught courses, as did Alliance teachers such as George Pardington, Henry Wilson, Stephen Merritt and others.

Still, as the Training School grew under Stevens' leadership, so did opportunities for women teachers.⁸⁴ Miller, at least initially, taught in the preparatory department; a section created to upgrade student abilities to meet Stevens' standards.⁸⁵ By the spring of 1913, when Stevens and Miller gave a special summer school term, she was teaching Bible classes. As Stevens told *Alliance Weekly* readers, 'Miss Miller, who during her five years in the Institute as student and as teacher, has become specially versed in understanding and in ability to conduct class work in all the scriptures' would teach the gospels and a class in Hebrews, while Stevens took on several of the epistles and a class in prophecy.⁸⁶

It is not clear when or exactly why Miller left Nyack; but clearly, her alliances lay with Stevens, not with Simpson. Autumn 1917 found her in Boone, Iowa, teaching high school at the Biblical College; by 1918 she was in Kansas City, ready to serve as matron and Bible teacher at the newly formed Midland Bible School.

⁸³ See Niklaus, *All for Jesus*, 226; Hassey, *No Time for Silence*, 17-18.

⁸⁴ Brereton suggests that opportunities for women decreased as schools upgraded; this is not true at Nyack during this period (*Training God's Army*, 131-132).

⁸⁵ *Christian and Missionary Alliance Weekly* (June 4, 1910): 157.

⁸⁶ *Alliance Weekly* (March 1, 1913): 349. Prairie literature suggests she was at Nyack for seven years.

Along with expectations of external cooperation and their full-gospel beliefs, Miller and Stevens took this fraternal view of female ministry to Midland, as illustrated by the career of ‘Mrs. Annie Bamford’, who joined the community in summer 1920.⁸⁷ Mrs. Bamford, ‘a woman of long and varied experience’, and ‘of unusual gifts’, operated a Kansas City mission, where students could benefit from participating in her ‘very active and fruitful work of visitation and of full gospel ministry in word and deed, penetrating homes, churches, hospitals, jails and many other institutions’.⁸⁸ In honour of this expansion of Midland’s staff and programme, Stevens outlined the school’s philosophy of ministry. In a letter dated July 24, 1920 he wrote:

It has seemed that the Lord would form an association, of one mind and aim, ready to embrace and heartily support various enterprises of Christian service, but on a rather unique principle of administration rather different from that which is customary.⁸⁹

For Stevens, this unique principle meant that gifting, calling, and discernment determined roles within the Midland circle. Those ‘evidently suited to a work’, and called to it by the Holy Spirit, were to be given responsibility for that ministry by the Board.⁹⁰

Dorothy Ruth Miller considered the letter to capture the original conception of the school. ‘Leaders have divine guidance and initiative’, and are ‘left untrammelled in their work’, she told her diary.⁹¹ For Miller, the letter had personal value, for it vindicated her place as Matron against the regular interpositions of Mrs. Althea A. Kirk, who felt it her duty to instruct the younger woman. However, the letter meant more than that. Read as a response to Mrs. Bamford’s presence, it acknowledged that at Midland, ‘fraternal

⁸⁷ Miller Diary, July 20, 1920.

⁸⁸ ‘Announcement: Fourth Annual Session of the Midland Bible School’, 1921; *Midland Manual*, 1921-1922, 13-14.

⁸⁹ W. C. Stevens, letter, no addressee, July 24, 1920. PBI archives, Box 62.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Miller Diaries, July 23, 1920.

association' included the female members of staff, and allowed these women the space to define their roles through gifting, calling, and Holy Spirit empowering.

Mrs. Bamford was not entirely without her detractors. At a board meeting in October 1921, Mr. Fardon expressed concern over Mrs. Bamford having charge of a mission, because 'it is a church'. Miller did not feel this to be a problem. More troubling, at least to her mind, in August 1923, Mr. Stevens and Mr. Hanley *ordained* Mrs. Bamford, a betrayal from which Miller did not recover quickly.⁹² Thus, she was not sorry when the now 'Reverend Bamford' left for California in 1924, where she organised and pastored a full gospel church for two years. She then joined Pentecostal P. C. Nelson's evangelism team. Later, as 'Mother Bamford', she helped co-found Southwestern Bible School, an Assemblies of God institution in Enid, Oklahoma, in 1927.⁹³

In her important study of the early Bible school world, Virginia Lieson Brereton concluded that the large female presence within the Bible school world and the fundamentalist movement meant little. Rather, 'many of the advantages of Bible school education for women were unintended: they resulted as by-products from the nature and purposes of the institutions rather than from their ideology'.⁹⁴ Thus, although some Bible school leaders, such as A. J. Gordon, were intentional about female participation, 'we must stop short of assuming that Bible schools were cradles of liberation for women'. The very newness of these endeavours meant that there was 'no prior male culture into

⁹² See Miller Diaries, August 1-2, 1923. Issues surrounding Bamford's ordination and Miller's beliefs in 'headship' are addressed in chapter nine.

⁹³ For her history after leaving Midland, see 'Mother Bamford', Nelson Memorial Library (accessed 2005-04-16) <<http://www.sagu.edu/library/reserves/subs/mother.shtm>>.

⁹⁴ Brereton, *Training God's Army*, 129-130.

which women had to fit or from which they could be excluded', and thus women had more vocational room to manoeuvre. By her analysis, women's chief qualifications as employees were piety (where women excelled) rather than academics; cheap labour; and the traditionally female contents of the curriculum: 'foreign missions, teaching, music'.⁹⁵

Both Betty DeBerg and Margaret Lamberts Bendroth come to similar conclusions in their studies of women and fundamentalism.⁹⁶ For instance, Bendroth explains that 'the presence of women' in the Bible schools 'does not indicate a dramatic departure from a primary emphasis on the role of men'.⁹⁷ DeBerg dismisses the earlier work of Janette Hassey, which uncovered numerous ministering women at the turn of the century, because 'generally the women [Hassey] discovered in nineteenth-century evangelical periodicals were lay workers performing "auxiliary" work' rather than 'the "core" Protestant ministerial duties of shepherding a congregation'.⁹⁸ Although Hassey's attempt to read an early 'evangelical feminism' into the data is problematic (for most of these women were not feminists), so too is the tendency to devalue their ministry because of its voluntary nature.⁹⁹

Such dismissals of turn-of-the-century ministering women are disingenuous. As we saw above, critics of 'fundamentalist' treatment of women are able to take this stance by bracketing Pentecostal women like Mrs. Bamford out of the discussion. However,

⁹⁵ Brereton, *Training God's Army*, 129-131.

⁹⁶ DeBerg, *Ungodly Women*, 79-83; Bendroth, *Fundamentalism*, 77.

⁹⁷ Bendroth, *Fundamentalism*, 27.

⁹⁸ DeBerg, *Ungodly Women*, 83. See Hassey, *No Time for Silence*, for the ordination of women in the Evangelical Free Church (associated with Frederik Franson); also see the six-part series by Mrs. Arnold T. [Della] Olson, 'A Woman of Her Times', *The Evangelical Beacon* (May-Sept 1975).

⁹⁹ For a similar assessment, see Timothy Larsen: 'the argument that fundamentalism was exceptionally oppressive to women is usually structured by admissions followed by "but's"...' 'The effect of all this is to discount some really extraordinary opportunities for women by continually shifting the definition of 'real' ministry in an effort to bolster the assumption that fundamentalists were misogynist' (*Pankhurst*, 123; 121-127).

only a thin theological line—the issue of tongues—separated the full-gospel beliefs of Miller and Stevens, and Pentecostalism. Such arguments also fail to place fundamentalist practice within its context. For instance, the limitations placed upon evangelical and fundamentalist women between 1890 and the 1920s reflected patterns in other areas of society. As a whole, turn-of-the-century women gained entry only to low status or new professions. Many women university graduates, like Miller, became schoolteachers or librarians; those who reached higher levels of education migrated to new fields of study such as the social sciences, or taught at women’s colleges.¹⁰⁰ The Bible school world opened opportunities for radical evangelical and fundamentalist women in excess of those available in formal theological institutions, which demanded academic credentials unavailable to many women.¹⁰¹ Most female Bible-school teachers had little more education than their students; thus, the possibilities for satisfying work were possibly greater within this world than outside it. As Timothy Larsen concluded from his study of Christabel Pankhurst, British suffragette turned premillennial preacher, ‘far from being an exceptionally restrictive place, fundamentalism was perhaps the best place to be in the 1920s if you were a woman who felt a call to ministry’.¹⁰²

A further problem is that many studies judge turn-of-the-century evangelical women by late-twentieth-century feminist rules. That is, they consider ‘ordination’, or equal power and authority for women and men, to be the important issue. The

¹⁰⁰ For discussions of female roles in larger society, see Barbara J. Harris, *Beyond Her Sphere: Women and the Professions in American History* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1978); also Sheila M. Rothman, *Women’s Proper Place: A History of Changing Ideals and Practices, 1870 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1978).

¹⁰¹ One reason for this disparity is that during the 1920s and 1930s mainline churches began to require advanced education for increasingly professionalised non-ordained ministries, one outcome of which may have been a female exodus into fundamentalism (Hamilton, ‘Women, Public Ministry’, 184).

¹⁰² Larsen, *Christabel Pankhurst*, ix. Larsen argues that Pankhurst remained a feminist, even after her conversion to conservative and dispensationalist evangelicalism. See also Hamilton, ‘Women, Public Ministry’, 180-183.

assumption is that because women were rarely ordained or in positions of official leadership, their actual roles and accomplishments are of little importance.¹⁰³ (Of course, few ‘non-fundamentalist’ churches ordained women during this period either.) But did radical evangelicals and proto-fundamentalists consider ‘core’ ministerial duties more important than lay-led initiatives for missions and evangelism? What about laymen—such as D. L. Moody—who served within the Bible school, missions, and fundamentalist networks? And how did women within this world understand their work in relation to feminist values?

Certainly, Dorothy Ruth Miller was not a feminist. Although she took suffrage seriously, commented upon political events, and cast her vote, she objected to the use of ‘rights’ language in relation to women’s roles in the Church. Instead, she understood and experienced her ministry within an alternative, supernaturalist value system of ‘calling’ and obedience. She objected to female ordination, insisted on the necessity of ‘male headship’, and depended upon the sponsorship of men to get what she wanted. Still, she taught Bible for over 35 years, latterly at Prairie Bible Institute, an influential fundamentalist institution in Canada. In the process she helped train thousands of women and men as missionaries, church planters, evangelists and local pastors; she preached Sunday sermons, taught men’s Sunday School classes, co-edited Prairie’s journals, and wrote a history textbook used widely by Bible schools in the 1930s, 40s, and 50s. Arguably, few ordained ministers had a larger parish. Whether one likes her approach, or finds it deeply problematic, her work cannot be dismissed as a by-product of the system.

¹⁰³ For similar objections to this equation of ministry and ordination, see Larsen, *Pankhurst*, 125. Bendroth admits elsewhere that ‘the history of women and religion has often overplayed the importance of ordination’; see Bendroth, ‘Millennial Themes and Private Visions: The Problem of “Women’s Place” in Religious History’, *Fides et Historia* 20/2 (1988): 24-30.

There is truth to claims that the ‘lay’ focus of turn-of-the-century evangelicals opened doors for female ministry not available within the institutional church. However, because organisations such as the Alliance did not consider themselves to do the work of a local church, ordination was rarely an issue. The ordination of Mrs. Bamford remained an exception, rather than the rule. Paradoxically, because they rarely valued ordination or higher education, both traditional barriers to female work, more populist evangelical movements offered women as many or more opportunities than mainstream Christianity. However, to assume that evangelicals simply ‘begged the question’ of ordination and authority is not accurate. Female participation was not merely accidental, or a by-product, but an inherent part of radical evangelical thought and worldview—as were the restrictions placed upon women. The ‘ministry’ of evangelical women, whether that of Frances Willard, President of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union from 1879 to 1898, or of Christabel Pankhurst, popular speaker on the premillennialist lecture circuit from the early 1920s, Mother Bamford’s reign as a co-founder of a Pentecostal Bible School, or Miller’s career as teacher, must be read within this framework of voluntary female association.

Chapter Three

'In Bible Light': Radical Evangelical Knowledge

The Bible, therefore, should be made, at the first step and at every step into knowledge, the lamp to the feet and the light to the path. God's child especially cannot be satisfied and blessed in any subject of knowledge apart from the divine light which the Bible throws upon that subject.

W. C. Stevens, *The Unique Historical Value of the Book of Jonah*, 1924.

A prospective student reading the Midland Bible School *Manual* for 1921 and 1922 would have readily discerned this school was 'sound'.¹ Although the school represented no denominational creed, the *Manual* assured the public that it held to both 'old-time orthodoxy', and 'every whit of the present-day Fundamentals'. Still, in light of the new belligerent evangelical mood, it was considered 'appropriate' to give a 'frank and definite exhibit of the teachings of Scripture', as held by the school's teachers, Dorothy Ruth Miller and William Coit Stevens, and by the Board of Directors.² The thirteen-point doctrinal statement that followed covered such important tenets of orthodoxy as the Trinity and the divinity of Christ and the Spirit; described the human condition of 'entire spiritual death' that made new birth necessary; affirmed the substitutionary death and the

¹ In August 1924, the *Sunday School Times*, arbiter of fundamentalist orthodoxy, placed Midland on its list of acceptable Bible schools. See 'Bible Institutes that are Sound', *Sunday School Times* (August 2, 1924): 464, cited in Appendix One of Janette Hassey, *No Time for Silence: Evangelical Women in Public Ministry Around the Turn of the Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/Academie Books, 1986; CBE reprint), 151-152. Ironically, Midland closed that autumn due to financial failure. See Miller Diaries for July-August 1924.

² *Midland Manual*, 1921-1922, 6-8.

bodily resurrection of Christ; and addressed such fundamentalist concerns as the plenary inspiration of scripture and the premillennial return of Christ.³

The *Manual* also made it clear that while Midland stood for doctrinal ‘fundamentals’, it also promoted right experience: Midland continued to offer the ‘full gospel’.⁴ Thus, following the school’s position on the ‘distinctive gift of the Holy Spirit as Comforter’, the *Manual* listed the contentious doctrines of ‘complete sanctification’ and ‘divine healing’. Further, Midland Bible School taught that full gospel through a ‘rather different’ method than usual. At Midland, the *Manual* informed readers, ‘The Bible is taken wholly and exclusively in its own light as a readily intelligible book’, and ‘in its entirety as an organic body of revelation’.⁵ Students would not interpret the Bible through some pre-ordered plan such as ‘Doctrines of the Bible’ or ‘Systematic Theology’. Instead, they would learn through first-hand study of the Bible.

Such an approach, W. C. Stevens believed, would both overcome theological barriers between various evangelical factions, and ensure unity of heart and mind at Midland. Despite the difficulties of external evangelical cooperation, proper Bible study would ensure harmony within Midland School. As he wrote in 1923, by sitting down ‘together before the Bible,’ and ‘letting it speak for itself on all lines,’ students at Midland could determine ‘what is true and what is erroneous in one sect or another’.⁶ Bible study could bring about this end, because Scripture was an open book. Its contents were self-explanatory, and readily intelligible. Stevens and Miller shared this confidence

³ In contrast, the Christian and Missionary Alliance statement of faith signed by workers in 1914 was a single paragraph. See George Pardington, *Twenty-Five Wonderful Years: 1889–1914; A Popular Sketch of the Christian and Missionary Alliance* (New York: Christian Alliance Publications, 1914), 48.

⁴ *Midland Manual*, 7-8.

⁵ *Midland Manual*.

⁶ ‘The Midland Bible School: Its Unsectarian Basis Explained’ (c.1923).

in scripture with other conservative evangelicals of their era. The Bible school and missionary networks of the early twentieth century, of which they were a part, rested upon this belief. Because the average believer might read, understand, *and teach* the Bible, ordinary persons, trained to read the Bible in a straightforward, common sense way, could take the gospel to the ends of the world, and fulfil the great missionary commission, perhaps ‘in this generation’.

Further, Miller and Stevens had founded Midland Bible School upon the premise that ‘Bible light’ was the key to *all* knowledge. As they understood the matter, not only was God’s Word readily comprehensible, but only in its ‘light’ could God, life and the world be properly understood. Thus, the Bible was the best possible textbook for history, doctrine, and life.⁷ The importance of this belief in scripture as an accessible source of personal and experiential knowledge cannot be over-emphasised, for it underpinned the entire intellectual, practical, and spiritual project of Stevens and Miller. They built this confidence in the Bible, and in the ability of ordinary believers to understand it, into both their curriculum and their teaching methodology.

The following chapter explores the supernaturalist and experiential epistemology that under pinned this way of reading and applying scripture, and the ways in which this epistemology informed the development of radical evangelical beliefs and practices. That is, it considers this supernaturalist epistemology, traced out below *via* views on the Bible and knowledge, as a formative element of radical evangelical spirituality. Our final interest here is not so much the formal rationale for conservative evangelical beliefs

⁷ For similar teaching methods throughout the Bible school world, see Virginia Lieson Brereton, *Training God’s Army: The American Bible School, 1880-1940* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990).

about scripture, but the ‘supernaturalist’ mindset they represent—the view of knowledge as experiential, or ‘experimental’—and how this operated in practice for the more radical and interventionist portion of the fundamentalist coalition.

To view the Bible as the source of all knowledge was not simply to utilise it as an intellectual resource. Rather, the ‘experience’ of reading the Bible formed an essential element of evangelical spirituality. To read scripture in faith was to hear God speak; thus, insights encountered in scripture were personal messages for individual life as revealed by the Holy Spirit. The more ‘radical’ portion of popular evangelicalism (within which Miller and Stevens belonged) operated with an intensified view of the Spirit’s role in revealing the meaning of scripture. Radical evangelical spirituality centred upon the expectation of the direct involvement of God in every aspect of life, including the process of knowing. Further, in a pattern encountered throughout this study, radical evangelicals read and interpreted scripture, life, and history through the eyes of inner experience, not simply through the application of ‘reason’. That is, experience often provided the hermeneutical tools by which to interpret scripture. The language of ‘Bible light’, as used by Miller and Stevens, was shorthand for this supernaturalist and experiential worldview.

This experimental and supernaturalist epistemology helped determine radical doctrines of the church, of the end times, and of personal holiness explored in the following chapters. In turn, each of these doctrines had implications for their views and practices of female ministry, and for how they interpreted scriptures impinging upon those practices. Their views on, and practices of, female ministry were often an

outgrowth of this experiential approach to scripture.⁸ Thus, although this chapter only touches incidentally on questions of gender and female ministry, understanding the experiential aspect of radical faith clarifies how and why these evangelicals chose the doctrinal positions that informed their beliefs on gender and ministry.

A brief survey of evangelical views on scripture and experiential knowledge is in order at this point. Following upon their Reformation and pietistic roots, evangelicals as a whole have revered scripture, and relied upon its ‘perspicuity’, or clarity, for the individual believer.⁹ Further, evangelical spirituality, as it developed during the eighteenth century, drew upon the experiential conversion and new birth common to post-reformation Puritans and Pietists, but added an increased expectation of an inner ‘assurance’ of salvation.¹⁰ This assurance reflected the new enlightenment context; the evangelical revivals were, in the phrase of David Bebbington, ‘an adaptation of the Protestant tradition through contact with the enlightenment’.¹¹ The early architects of evangelical thought, Jonathan Edwards and John Wesley, provided the rationale for this new assurance by drawing upon Lockean accounts of the knowing self in their explanations of human experience of God in salvation.¹² Within this enlightenment

⁸ As well, as demonstrated in later chapters, this experiential approach allowed for a supernaturalist defence of female ‘prophecy’, or ministry.

⁹ This ‘biblicism’ is an essential marker of evangelicalism. See D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 2-17.

¹⁰ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 43; see also Grenz, 83-84.

¹¹ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 53. Harry Stout suggests that revivalism functioned as a ‘popular alternative to the Enlightenment rationalism of Locke and Newton’. See Harry S. Stout, *The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 113.

¹² This section on the noetic value of evangelical religious experience is indebted to Bebbington, who argues that enlightenment empiricism, when applied to Christian belief, allowed experimental religious knowledge to function as a true source of knowledge (42-60). See also the discussion of the ‘experimental self’ in Stanley J. Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Christian Theology of the Imago Dei* (Louisville / London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 82-84. The influence of Locke upon Edwards

framework, as Stanley Grenz put it, the ‘converted self of evangelical piety became the experimental self’, who could ‘prove the things of God’.¹³ This allowed for confidence in human reason, belief in the direct linkage of cause and (observed) effect, and this possibility of (experimental) knowledge of God. As is seen below, this dependence upon ‘experimental’ knowledge of God continued throughout radical evangelical literature.

Nineteenth-century evangelicals also relied upon an enlightenment tradition of ‘common sense’ reasoning. This democratic and practical view of human knowing served as the dominant school of philosophy in America for most of the nineteenth century.¹⁴ Drawing upon Scottish philosopher Thomas Reid (1710-1796), among others, common sense moral philosophers proposed, against Hume, that it was possible to gain direct and trustworthy knowledge of the real world. This tradition was especially strong at Princeton Seminary, the bastion of conservative Presbyterianism, where Charles Hodge, professor of theology at mid-century, used its principles to defend the possibility

and Wesley has been the subject of much debate. For the debate regarding Edwards, see for example, Perry Miller, ‘Edwards, Locke, and the Rhetoric of Sensation’, in *Critical Essays on Jonathan Edwards*, ed. William J. Scheik (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1988); also Norman Fiering, *Jonathan Edwards’ Moral Thought and its British Context* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1981). George Marsden, ‘Jonathan Edwards’, Lecture Notes, Spring 2003, suggests that Edwards used the language, but not the concepts, of the enlightenment. See also George Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (Yale University Press, 2003). On Wesley, see for instance Frederick Dreyer, ‘Faith and Experience in the Thought of John Wesley’, *American Historical Review* 88 (Fall 1983): 12-30.

¹³ See Grenz, *Social God*, 85; also Robert W. Jensen, *America’s Theologian: A Recommendation of Jonathan Edwards* (New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press), 65-78.

¹⁴ The impact of Scottish Common Sense Realism upon nineteenth-century American evangelical theology in general, and its role at Princeton Seminary in particular, is well documented. See for example George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 110-116; Harriet Harris, *Fundamentalism and Evangelicals* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 126-142; also Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff, eds., *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God* (Notre Dame/London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983), in particular the essays by Wolterstorff and Marsden. In its eighteenth-century philosophical context, ‘common’ sense referred to the capacity to unify or coordinate various sense perceptions (Peter Hicks, *The Philosophy of Charles Hodge: A 19th Century Evangelical Approach to Reason, Knowledge and Truth*, *Studies in American Religion* 65 [Lewiston / Queenston / Lampeter: Edwin Mellon Press, 1997]: 13).

of true and proper knowledge of the ‘extra-mundane’ God against those who denied it.¹⁵ As Hodge understood the concept, common sense meant that the ‘real’ had existence outside of human observation or experience, that there was continuity between that reality and human perception of it, and that the senses were trustworthy in the act of knowing.¹⁶ ‘Knowledge is the perception of Truth. Whatever the mind perceives, whether intuitively or discursively, that it knows’, he wrote in his *Systematic Theology* (1871-1873).¹⁷ This view of knowledge grounded his theological method. As Hodge explained it:

The true method of theology is ... the inductive, which assumes that the Bible contains all the facts or truths which form the contents of theology, just as the facts of nature are deduced from the contents of the natural sciences.¹⁸

Just as a scientist gathered facts, then deduced the laws of nature, the theologian mined the Bible—the meaning of which is readily available through common sense—for its facts. The theologian then ordered those facts; for, as Hodge put it, ‘Christian theology is simply the exhibition and illustration of the facts and truths of the Bible in their due relations and proportions’.¹⁹ Of course, if one was to draw scientifically sound conclusions from scripture, it must be accurate, or inerrant. Thus in 1881, Princetonians A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield famously affirmed that ‘the Scriptures not only contain, BUT ARE THE WORD OF GOD, and hence ... all their elements and all their affirmations are

¹⁵ According to historian Mark Noll, Hodge was ‘the best known confessional Calvinist and one of the most formidable polemical theologians in the United States during the middle third of the nineteenth century’. Mark Noll, ‘Charles Hodge’, in *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography: 1730-1860*, ed. Donald M. Lewis (Oxford / Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), 562, 563.

¹⁶ Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (London and Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1871-1873), *Systematic Theology*, 1:60; 1:192. For his outline of common sense principles see 1:361; on the inductive method see 1:9-17. Hodge’s use of common sense in his influential three-volume *Systematic Theology* ensured that this form of reasoning outlasted its philosophical shelf life, and remained an aspect of conservative evangelical thought well into the twentieth century.

¹⁷ Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1:360.

¹⁸ Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1:17; see also 1:153-168.

¹⁹ Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:453.

absolutely errorless, and binding the faith and obedience of men'.²⁰ This conception of the Bible as compendium of inerrant 'facts' helped set the scene for later conservative fundamentalist and evangelical views on scripture.

'Fundamentalist' insistence upon the inerrancy and infallibility of scripture, and their reliance upon literalist readings of the Bible, as well as their use of 'common sense' arguments and 'Baconian' science to support these positions have been the subject of much comment.²¹ It is important not to exaggerate the *direct* influence of Princetonian views of scripture over later conservative evangelicals, however.²² Stricter doctrines of inspiration and inerrancy also developed among British and European evangelicals during the early nineteenth century.²³ As well, as Harriet Harris notes, the effects of common sense philosophy upon fundamentalism and evangelicalism have been 'general rather than precise'.²⁴ Still, turn-of-the-century evangelicals commonly treated the Bible as if it were a source book of 'facts' to be organised and interpreted.

Following in this tradition, James Gray of Moody Bible Institute called upon his students to get hold of the great facts of the Bible, for 'if we get the facts the interpretation will take care of itself'.²⁵ Arthur Tappan Pierson, in his work on *Many*

²⁰ A. A. Hodge and B. B. Warfield, 'Inspiration', *The Presbyterian Review* 2 (April 1881), cited in George Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 113.

²¹ See, for instance, Ernest R. Sandeen, 'The Princeton Theology: One Source of Biblical Literalism in American Protestantism,' *Church History* 31 (Spring 1962): 307-321; Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970); also Harris, *Fundamentalism*, who looks at the 'fundamentalist mentality' towards scripture. For discussion of the 'inductive scientific method' of Francis Bacon, see Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 15; for use of 'Baconian' method among late-century dispensationalists see Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 55; also Brereton, *Training God's Army*, 14, 94.

²² Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 87-92. Marsden finds Princeton and the early fundamentalists working together by 1903 to some extent; see Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 118.

²³ The dispensational premillennialist system of J. N. Darby, for instance, required precise meanings for the details of scripture.

²⁴ Harris, *Fundamentalism*, 95.

²⁵ James M. Gray, *Synthetic Bible Studies*, new revised ed. (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1906-1923), 11.

Infallible Proofs, also advocated ‘scientific’ methods of dealing with ‘facts’.²⁶ These evangelicals believed that by properly arranging these facts according to the Bible’s own system, whether understood as a series of dispensations, or a system of theology, they could ascertain the meaning of scripture.²⁷ Of course, this treatment of scripture again necessitated the doctrine of inerrancy, for only if the details of the text were accurate, could its ‘facts’ be trusted.

Although many turn-of-the-century evangelicals and early fundamentalists look like (naïve) rationalists, this is not the whole story. As noted previously, evangelicals within this tradition assumed that any believer who came to the text with an open heart, and relied upon the Holy Spirit, could understand the Bible. This democratic view of spiritual knowledge—that the meaning of scripture was self-evident, and that the Spirit operated directly upon the inner person to reveal the meaning of scripture—was a form of ‘common sense’, but it was a naïve, or ‘folk’ version. While assuming the possibility of a neutral but (believing) reading of the Bible, they brought a motley collection of presuppositions to the task. More often than they admitted, their interpretations of scripture facts—whether regarding prophetic history, the nature of sanctification, or proper female roles—reflected larger social and cultural attitudes, the philosophical moods of the age, their unique theological premises, and personal experience. Not surprisingly, consensus on the plain meaning of texts was difficult, as demonstrated by continuous debate over those areas of doctrine and practice.

²⁶ Arthur Tappan Pierson, *Many Infallible Proofs: The Evidences of Christianity* (c.1890s; London: Morgan and Scott; n.d.), 20-26; also Pierson, *The Gordian Knot* (1902; New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1911).

²⁷ See for instance, C. I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, n.d.).

Still, nineteenth-century evangelicals were unusually confident about their capacity to interpret scripture, and happily rewrote doctrinal maps based on personal experience, and personal study of the Bible. Several aspects of the nineteenth-century political, philosophical, and social context aided this project (which occurred, to differing extents, on either side of the Atlantic). One important factor was the ‘voluntary’ and populist nature of nineteenth-century religion, particularly in the United States.²⁸ That is, as part of the popularising of American religion and culture that took place over the century, evangelicals increasingly democratised and individualised the notion of biblical perspicuity. As religious association became ‘voluntary’, popular biblical interpretation became detached from traditional institutional and clerical controls. Not only might the individual believer read the Bible for spiritual sustenance, they might also determine its meaning, or theology, for themselves. One outcome was a remarkable proliferation of new beliefs, new sects, and new denominations, some within the framework of orthodoxy, others decidedly heterodox.

Although many of these new ideas (including new forms of premillennial teachings, and new ways of understanding sanctification) were articulated in the 1820s and 1830s, they gained wider acceptance among Calvinistic revivalist evangelicals in the late century. The radical evangelicals at the heart of our study—for instance, Stevens and his mentor, A. B. Simpson—exemplify this late-century ‘voluntary’ construction of theology.²⁹ Both men qualified as clergymen within the Presbyterian tradition. Simpson studied from 1861 to 1865 at Knox College, a conservative ‘Free Church’ Presbyterian

²⁸ For this characterisation of ‘democratic’ and populist religion in the early nineteenth century, see Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven / London: Yale University Press, 1989), 9-11; 213.

²⁹ Miller, who is of the next generation of radical evangelicals, does not take the same pathway to her beliefs.

school in Toronto.³⁰ Stevens trained at Union Seminary in New York, which was an unofficial supporter of ‘New School’ Presbyterianism. Yet, between the mid-1870s and 1890, both men chose a new set of holiness, premillennial, and pneumatological doctrines foreign to their tradition and training, based upon three factors: their personal experience of God, the influence of their peers or parishioners, and their personal reading of scripture.³¹ Such voluntary patterns of faith were very different from their traditional Presbyterianism, in which confessional standards determined right belief.³²

Just why Stevens, Simpson, and numerous other evangelicals—D. L. Moody, A. J. Gordon and A. T. Pierson, to name a few of the better known—chose these new beliefs is not entirely clear, although there are some clues. Mobility may be one factor; it was easier to change beliefs while on the move, as the theological journey of A. B. Simpson demonstrates. Simpson served his first church in Hamilton, Ontario, as a confessional Presbyterian, became a revivalist and holiness convert while at his second, in Louisville, Kentucky; and left his third, in New York City, after receiving divine healing, and undergoing believer’s baptism.

The new intellectual climate was also a factor. For instance, George Marsden links the adoption of premillennialist beliefs by North American evangelicals to the influx of new forms of thought during the 1870s. Marsden makes a cogent argument that

³⁰ For an overview of Canadian evangelical Presbyterian history, see Duff Crerar, “‘Crackling Sounds from the Burning Bush’: The Evangelical Impulse in Canadian Presbyterianism before 1875”, in *Aspects of the Canadian Evangelical Experience*, ed. George Rawlyk (McGill-Queen's Studies in the History of Religion (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 123-136; also Barry Mack, ‘Of Canadian Presbyterians and Guardian Angels’, in *Amazing Grace: Evangelicalism in Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States*, ed. George A. Rawlyk and Mark A. Noll (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 269-274.

³¹ Obituary for W. C. Stevens, ‘Home with the Lord’, *Alliance Weekly* (Nov 16, 1929): 740; for Simpson’s journey, see Simpson, ‘Personal Testimony’, *Alliance Weekly* (Oct 2, 1915): 11-12; A. E. Thompson, *The Life of A. B. Simpson* (New York: Christian Alliance Publishing, 1920); also A. W. Tozer, *Wingspread; A. B. Simpson: A Study in Spiritual Altitude* (Harrisburg, PN: Christian Publications, 1943; 1953).

³² A similar but more dramatic pattern may be traced in evangelical acceptance of holiness teachings, often experienced as a personal crisis, or second conversion. (See chapter six).

the conjunction of Baconian science and common sense reasoning left conservative evangelicals unable to respond to the new naturalistic accounts of evolution, historical criticism of the biblical text, or visions of human ‘progress’ that they encountered from the 1870s. Some evangelicals took a liberal and romantic route out of this intellectual dilemma. Following upon the tradition of Kant, Schleiermacher, and others, they grounded theology upon experience, rejected science’s direct role in theology and opted for a ‘natural’ view of God’s work as immanent in nature. Others, like Charles Hodge, dismissed Darwinism as hypothetical; still others ‘shored up’ the eroding foundations of evangelical belief by turning to new forms of premillennial doctrine, such as dispensationalism.³³

The increased divergence of evangelical theological paths after the 1870s suggests some truth to Marsden’s analysis. However, Marsden’s concern for the intellectual failure of fundamentalism may lead him to overplay that angle at this point. The radical evangelical crisis of faith in the post-civil war era appears to have been one of experience, or ‘spirituality’, not simply of intellect. That is, because traditional beliefs did not correlate to felt, or desired, spiritual experience, radical evangelicals sought new forms of doctrine. For solutions, they turned to new forms of theology predicated upon an experiential spirituality. Thus Simpson, a victim of repeated nervous collapses, looked for the answer to his ‘intense nature, his strong self-will, his peculiar temptations, and his spiritual life’ in a new holiness form of sanctification experience.³⁴ Stevens’

³³ George M. Marsden, ‘The Collapse of American Evangelical Academia’, in *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, ed. by Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame / London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983); Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 17-21, 48-51; 215-221.

³⁴ This was in 1874. A. B. Simpson, ‘Personal Testimony’, *Alliance Weekly* (Oct 2, 1915): 11-12; see also Tozer, *Wingspread*, 48. For this desire for something that would make Christianity ‘work’, see Arthur T. Pierson, *Forward Movements of the Last Half Century* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1905; reprint New

theological journey towards a full-gospel view of sanctification began when, as a young and well-trained pastor, he found himself unable to communicate the gospel to his frontier church.³⁵ He later taught that sanctification was ‘experimental’, and divine healing was known ‘experimentally’.³⁶

A key aspect of the supernaturalist worldview was reliance upon personal experience, or ‘experimental’ knowledge of the things of God. For instance, Stevens understood his new premillennial beliefs to have been revealed to him by God. Sometime in about 1889, a friend asked about his views on the matter (in which Stevens had no previous interest). Only a few months later, however, he heard a distinct inward promise: ‘Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom’. A few days later he again heard ‘the voice of the Spirit’, telling him, ‘Jesus is coming and you are to look for Him’. Stevens continued, ‘The communication of God was believed without a shadow of uncertainty or question; it made no difference what anyone else believed or asserted, the mystery had been made known from God’. His reading of scripture then reinforced that knowledge. Over the coming years, as Stevens read the Bible, ‘from time to time and here and there’ its mysteries were revealed ‘by the Spirit’s illumination’.³⁷ A. B. Simpson described his discovery of premillennial teachings as ‘a new revelation and a new hope’.³⁸ In contrast, A. T. Pierson, who only verged on the radical side of evangelical thinking, converted to premillennialism in a more pragmatic manner. In 1878, on an American train, Pierson encountered British Brethren teacher George Müller.

York / London: Garland Publishing, 1984), 15; also Asa Mahan, *Out of Darkness into Light* (London: Wesleyan-Methodist Book Room, 1882), 106.

³⁵ W. C. Stevens, *Triumphs of the Cross* (San Francisco: M.G. McClinton, c. 1903; 2nd ed. 1915).

³⁶ W. C. Stevens, ‘Healing According to the Gospel’, *Christian and Missionary Weekly* (April 19, 1902): 163.

³⁷ W. C. Stevens, ‘Preface’, *Mysteries of the Kingdom* (San Francisco: M. G. McClinton, 1904; 2nd ed. 1915).

³⁸ Simpson, ‘Personal Testimony’, 11-12.

Müller told him, ‘You will never get at the truth upon any matter of divine revelation unless you lay aside your prejudices and like a little child simply ask what is the testimony of scripture’.³⁹ Based on his personal reading of scripture, Pierson soon became convinced that premillennialism fitted the biblical evidence better than postmillennialism.

While ‘conservative’, in that they considered themselves within the pale of orthodoxy, these evangelicals reinterpreted traditional doctrine through the lens of personal experience, and rewrote it in order to make sense of their new experience and personal study. Likewise, they reinterpreted scripture to make sense of their new experience and beliefs. Such evangelicals were not simply ‘restorationists’ who sought to return to the practice and beliefs of the early church, although they often used this argument. The choice before them, as in the later fundamentalist battles, was not simply between two versions of science and faith; or between liberalism and premillennialism. A central issue for these evangelicals was one that exercised many mid-century religious thinkers: what was the proper relationship between the natural and the supernatural?⁴⁰ Here the choice also lay between the orderly and ‘enlightenment’ perspective of moderate, providentialist evangelicalism, and a more romantic and interventionist position.⁴¹ Unlike the new liberals, who played down the supernatural elements of Christianity, radicals emphasised the supernatural and transcendence of God; unlike the

³⁹ Arthur T. Pierson, *George Müller of Bristol and His Witness to a Prayer Hearing God* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1899), 261.

⁴⁰ See for instance, Horace Bushnell, *Nature and the Supernatural as Together Constituting the One System of God* (Edinburgh: Alexander Strahan, 1861), who drew upon Coleridge in his argument; and James McCosh, *The Supernatural in Relation to the Natural* (Cambridge: McMillan and Co, 1862), who used Common Sense reasoning.

⁴¹ For this distinction, see Hilton, *Age of Atonement*, 13-14.

‘providentialist’ and postmillennial Princetonians, however, they expected God to act directly in the world and in their personal lives at any time.

Radical evangelicals were populist ‘romantics’, as were the new doctrines they espoused.⁴² Although it is not evident that these evangelicals consciously appropriated romantic ideals, they exhibited similar longings and characteristics.⁴³ Drawing upon different aspects of the romantic ethos than their liberal relatives, they embraced a crisis-oriented view of God, knowledge, the self, and the end of the world.⁴⁴ For instance, in 1890, Baptist minister and radical evangelical A. J. Gordon objected to the adoption of ideas of progress and evolution by the ‘nominal’ church.⁴⁵ Such Christians held, like Darwin, that ‘there is no need for miraculous intervention, no room for supernatural action’. His answer was the ‘millennium, through crisis’. Only the return of the ‘bodily and visible’ Christ could bring the Kingdom of God to earth.⁴⁶

Romantic elements are evident in the apocalyptic and supernaturalist British premillennialism born of the 1820s and 1830s; but also in the American holiness movement of the same era, in the rediscovery of Holy Spirit power that occurred in mid-century, in beliefs in divine healing, and in the later Pentecostal movement. In the 1880s, Simpson found it necessary both to defend the ‘gospel of healing’ against those who

⁴² ‘Romantic’ is not here used in a formal or intellectual sense; but of the cultural ethos inflected with qualities of romanticism. For the romantic ‘mood’ of nineteenth-century of British evangelicalism, for instance, see Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 75ff; also D. W. Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth Century England, The 1998 Didsbury Lectures* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2000), 5. For an evaluation of holiness teachings in the United States as ‘sentimental’ and feminized, see chapter seven below.

⁴³ Earlier exceptions may include British premillenarian Edward Irving, a friend of Thomas Carlyle and an admirer of Coleridge; and the respected American scholar Thomas Upham (1799-1872), chair of Mental and Moral Theology at Bowdoin College, who became a ‘perfectionist’ in 1839. For Upham, see Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Studies in Perfectionism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1931) 2: 343.

⁴⁴ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 80-81; Alistair Mason, ‘Romanticism’, in *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*, edited by Adrian Hastings, Alistair Mason and Hugh Pyper (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 627, 628.

⁴⁵ A. J. Gordon, *Ecce Venit* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1890).

⁴⁶ Gordon, *Ecce Venit*, 200-201.

denied miracles, and to distinguish it from ‘spiritualism, animal magnetism, clairvoyance’.⁴⁷ This reflected a paradox in wider nineteenth-century culture, in which rational scientific endeavour went hand in hand with a fascination with the supra-normal or paranormal occurrences. Pseudo-sciences like phrenology, popular in the first part of the century, the rise of spiritualism after 1848, mind-cure religions such as Christian Science, and many of the health treatments of the day competed with religion for credibility.

Among nineteenth-century radical evangelicals who expected to experience God directly, confidence in spiritual or experimental knowledge often intensified into forms of mysticism.⁴⁸ For instance, W. C. Stevens considered ‘the consciousness of the divine presence’ as the ‘core’ of religious experience.⁴⁹ As in his own experience, the ‘children of God can find out from direct sources every secret which it is right for them to have and every secret which they need to have’.⁵⁰ Dorothy Ruth Miller’s diary entries commonly recorded revelations received in the night. Even A. T. Pierson, noted for his rationalism, could argue that ‘the main office of “closet communion” is the *vivid sense of God*’.⁵¹

⁴⁷ A. B. Simpson, *The Gospel of Healing* (1886; Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, rev. ed. 1915), ch. 3. Compare B. B. Warfield’s vehement rejection of healing in *Counterfeit Miracles* (Glasgow: Banner of Truth, 1918). <<http://christianbeliefs.org/books/cm/cm-contents.html>>

⁴⁸ ‘The mystical element of Christianity’, as Bernard McGinn defines it, ‘is that part of its beliefs and practices that concern the preparation for, the consciousness of, and the reaction to what can be described as the immediate or direct presence of God’. Bernard McGinn, *The Flowering of Mysticism: Men and Women in the New Mysticism (1200-1350)*, Vol. 3, *The Presence of God: A History of Western Christian Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad, 1998), 321n3. According to Evelyn Underhill, mysticism is the ‘art of establishing ... conscious relation with the Absolute’ (Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism: A Study in Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness* (1911; Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), 81. <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/underhill/mysticism.html>>

⁴⁹ W. C. Stevens, *The Unique Historical Value of the Book of Jonah*, foreword by Philip Mauro (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1924), 36; also Miller Diaries, March 6, 1921.

⁵⁰ W. C. Stevens, *The Book of Daniel* (1915; New York: Revell, 1917), 56, 57.

⁵¹ Pierson, *Forward Movements*, 4.

Evangelicals in this stream were confident that this direct experience of God was a valid source of knowledge.

While traditional or ‘providentialist’ evangelicals expected to know God personally, or ‘sensibly’, they were suspicious of any unmediated or immediate experience of God detached from scripture or doctrine.⁵² Thus, Charles Hodge also relied upon religious experience, but guarded its use more carefully. ‘The true method in theology requires that the facts of religious experience should be accepted as facts, and when duly authenticated by scripture, be allowed to interpret the doctrinal statements of the word of God’, he explained.⁵³ For Hodge, however, such a method always reaffirmed the truths of the Westminster Catechism, the standard of Presbyterian faith. For Presbyterian J. Gresham Machen, theological heir to the Princeton mantle during the fundamentalist era of the 1920s, right doctrine ‘logically’ (not necessarily temporally) preceded right faith.⁵⁴ Properly understood, Christian experience confirmed the documentary evidence, and the truth of the Gospel message.⁵⁵

Like his predecessors, Machen found the premillennial and holiness beliefs of the more revivalist segments of the movement distasteful.⁵⁶ He thought premillennialism based on false scriptural interpretations, and argued for a process rather than crisis model

⁵² See for instance, Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1:16; also Charles Hodge, ‘Christianity without Christ’, *Princeton Review* 5/18 (April 1876): 352-362. (Accessed Jan 2001). <<http://www.markers.com/ink>> Harris notes that Hodge and the Princetonians sought the middle way between ‘rationalism and mysticism’, which both locate knowledge within the human subject. Although she notes that ‘inherent within the philosophy [common sense] was the potential to make human consciousness itself the arbiter of truth (Harris, *Fundamentalism*, 128), she suggests that Hodge ‘kept reason within its servant role, lest it assume to be the judge of truth’ (132, 133). My reading of Hodge suggests that he was not entirely successful. While Hodge considered the ‘facts’ of scripture to be the source for his theology, often his conclusions were based rather on ‘common sense’ as bolstered by scripture. See Marsden’s similar critique of Hodge’s ‘hidden assumptions’ (Marsden, ‘Collapse of American Evangelical Academia’, 241-245).

⁵³ Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1:16.

⁵⁴ J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (London: Victory Press, 1923), 28.

⁵⁵ Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, 70.

⁵⁶ Warfield vehemently objected to radical evangelical doctrines, in particular holiness or ‘perfectionist’ teachings, and belief in divine healing.

of sanctification. Still, he recognised that his affinity with his premillennialist allies lay in a common defence of the supernatural aspects of Christian faith:

They share to the full our reverence for the authority of the Bible; they share our ascription of deity to the Lord Jesus, and our supernaturalistic conception both of the entrance of Jesus into the world and of the consummation when He shall come again.⁵⁷

Thus, the ‘present issue in the church’ was not between two views of Christ’s return (the premillennial or the postmillennial), but between a rightly supernaturalist Christianity and liberalism’s ‘naturalistic negation of Christianity’. Modern liberalism was ‘UN-Christian’, for it denied ‘any entrance of the creative power of God (as distinguished from the ordinary course of nature) in connection with the origin of Christianity’.⁵⁸

Machen presupposed both a theistic, personal God, and a ‘real order of nature’. According to Machen, the distinction between the natural and the supernatural was that between ‘God’s works of providence’ and ‘God’s works of creation’, between God’s use of means to accomplish an end, and God’s direct use of creative power, between God’s use of second causes and God as first cause. Thus, ‘a supernatural event is one that takes place by the immediate, as distinguished from the mediate, power of God’.⁵⁹ This primary commitment to God’s direct and supernatural involvement in human history and the world lies behind the lists of doctrines considered ‘fundamental’. Supernaturalism was, again, an essential factor in the common defence of scripture. Scriptural inspiration is ‘supernatural’ in that it is due to immediate cause, not to the general providence of God, nor the ongoing illumination of the Spirit.⁶⁰ As Charles Hodge had pointed out, without ‘supernatural revelation’, there is no sure knowledge of God: ‘Without the Bible,

⁵⁷ Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, 49, 146.

⁵⁸ Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, 2-6.

⁵⁹ Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, 99, 100, 139, 141; see also Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1:36: ‘The Bible reveals a God who is constantly and everywhere present with his works, and who acts upon them, not only mediately, but immediately, when, where, and how he sees fit’.

⁶⁰ Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1:154.

we are without God and without hope'.⁶¹ By fighting for the supernatural, conservative evangelicals of all stripes sought to protect God's immanence, or capacity to act directly in the world, thus to defend the possibility of personal knowledge of, and interaction with, the sovereign and transcendent God. This worldview, not surprisingly, spilled over into views of scripture, and of science. 'Surely the Holy Spirit could have chosen words to convey his thoughts correctly', W. E. Blackstone argued at the turn-of-the-century, reflecting the belief that scripture itself was written by divine intervention.⁶²

In practical terms, however, radical evangelicals placed different expectations upon the supernatural involvement of God in the world. Machen, like Hodge and Warfield before him, held providentialist views of God's present operations in the world.⁶³ That is, in their opinion, God normally acted through mediate causes. Although not ruling out the possibility of the miraculous, they downplayed the probability of such events.⁶⁴ In contrast, radical evangelicals expected God's *present* creative activity, or intervention, in the world.

For W. C. Stevens, there was little gap between the supernatural and the natural, at least from God's side. Because the material world, created and upheld by God in Christ, existed for God's pleasure, the door was 'wide open for the miraculous at any time'. For those who saw through eyes of faith, 'life and its surroundings become a

⁶¹ Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1: 364; 1:172; revelation as supernatural: 1:35-39; 364.

⁶² William E. Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming: A Scriptural Survey of the Arguments for a Literal, Personal, and Pre-millennial Coming of the Lord and its Practical Character* (London / Glasgow: Pickering and Inglis, c.1907), 13.

⁶³ For these categories, see Hilton, *Age of Atonement*, 13-14.

⁶⁴ Within the category of the supernatural, in the limited sense of direct intervention, Hodge placed doctrines of creation, miracles, immediate revelation, and regeneration (*Systematic Theology*, 1:179).

ceaseless, ever-varying, charming illustration of miracle'.⁶⁵ This meant that true knowledge of creation *required* those eyes of faith; and was only possible 'in Bible light'. Stevens' short 1924 work, *The Unique Historical Value of the Book of Jonah*, served as an introduction to his views on this subject.⁶⁶ 'The law of all true knowledge in whatever sphere—physical, mental, moral, or spiritual—is this,' he told readers, 'That knowledge rightly so called must be obtained according to Scripture revelation and guidance'.

Apart from its pages as the key, all true knowledge remains locked to man's entrance; apart from the Bible as the light, no path of true knowledge is distinguishable to man; apart from the Bible as the guide, the spheres of universal knowledge are undiscoverable to mortal man; apart from the Bible as the interpreter, the mysteries of true knowledge remain concealed in insolvable parables.⁶⁷

This emphasis on 'Bible light' demonstrates a key difference between the Princetonian school of common sense thought, and Stevens' more spiritualised version.

Dependence upon common sense reasoning required optimism about human nature, and about human ability to know reality. Charles Hodge, for instance, considered human reason and intuition as trustworthy, because the soul was created in the image of God. God had so constituted the mind that sense perceptions, intellectual intuitions, and moral truths were accurate accounts of reality. He acknowledged that sin had distorted human capacity to know God, so that special revelation was needed. In other matters, however, he considered the 'senses, reason, and conscience, within their appropriate spheres, and in their normal exercise' as 'trustworthy guides'.⁶⁸ In Hodge's hands, this of course meant that true knowledge of the world was possible through observation.

Stevens was more pessimistic about human reason. True knowledge, as he revealed in an

⁶⁵ Stevens, *Jonah*, 14.

⁶⁶ Stevens, *Jonah*. Stevens also wrote an article for the *Sunday School Times* on the subject.

⁶⁷ Stevens, *Jonah*, 8-9.

⁶⁸ Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 1:363-364.

extended discussion of ‘some principles revealed by the Bible as necessary truths fundamental to the acquisition of true knowledge’, was only possible for the redeemed. As originally created ‘in Christ’, humanity possessed the capacity to communicate with God, and to understand the ‘truths of divine thought which are manifested in the physical and creaturely universe’. However, the fall brought ‘loss of membership in Christ’; without that original relation to Christ (Creator of all nature), true knowledge of the natural world was not possible.⁶⁹ ‘Nature is an inscrutable parable and creation a hopeless enigma to the spiritually unenlightened’, he claimed.⁷⁰ Redemption, which restored that relation to Christ, partly healed human capacity to understand the world.⁷¹

The Bible revealed that creation shared humanity’s suffering and need for restoration through Christ.⁷² Thus, the incarnation of the Son of God, and the cross, were essential to grasping scientific truth: ‘Nothing but the light of the cross discloses to man the truths of all nature, and the universe needs to be explored in the light of redeeming love or a science falsely so called must result’.⁷³ Knowledge gained on any other grounds was fallen and idolatrous, for it ‘issues from the false and polluting fountain of that wisdom which Satan offered our first parents in contempt of God’s gift and glory’.⁷⁴ Consequently, secular sources of information were to be approached with caution. ‘The Christian’s mind needs to be guarded against tainted literature’, he warned. ‘Any subject of knowledge is made life-giving to soul and mind only through God’s relation to that subject and through His thought in it; this the Bible alone reveals’.⁷⁵ This had practical

⁶⁹ Stevens, *Jonah*, 11-13.

⁷⁰ Stevens, *Jonah*, 17.

⁷¹ Stevens, *Jonah*, 11, 16.

⁷² Stevens, *Jonah*, 21.

⁷³ Stevens, *Jonah*, 17, see also 9, 13.

⁷⁴ Stevens, *Jonah*, 9.

⁷⁵ Stevens, *Jonah*, 19.

implications, for knowledge gained without the Spirit would ‘paralyse’ evangelism, while ‘knowledge under Scripture light will kindle missionary fire, impart missionary ability, and prompt missionary consecration’.⁷⁶ For Stevens, only knowledge that furthered spiritual ends had real value.⁷⁷

Clearly, this discussion of knowledge was meant as a refutation of modern theories of evolution and of historical development. Stevens’ response was not so much anti-intellectual, as spiritualised. This was not through lack of interest in academic endeavours (Midland’s failure may be due in part to an intellect that overwhelmed his students), but because for Stevens, the supernatural served as grounds of knowledge. Secular forms of thought failed because they started from a natural human perspective, rather than from revelation.

Stevens shared this mistrust of ‘natural’ knowledge—as opposed to supernaturally revealed knowledge—with other interventionist Calvinistic evangelicals. Many turn-of-the-century evangelicals with a commitment to Calvinistic doctrines maintained a pessimistic (sometimes hostile) view of the ‘natural’, whether the created world, natural processes, or human activity. That pessimism often led to forms of docetic theology, as in the case of the so-called ‘fundamentals’, which focused on the supernatural and divine aspects of Christology, but ignored the humanity of Christ.⁷⁸ It also played out in radical conceptions of the human self. Humans were fallen, often incorrigible; and not even the redeemed ‘self’ possessed value outside of a direct relationship to the divine.⁷⁹ God and

⁷⁶ Stevens, *Jonah*, 18.

⁷⁷ See Stevens, *Jonah*, 24.

⁷⁸ This docetic tendency has a paradoxical and complex impact upon questions of female ministry; it both devalues human agency, and allows women to serve as ‘vessels’ for divine agency. On the other hand, male authority is defended via ‘natural order’.

⁷⁹ See chapter six.

humanity stood, within their framework, as opposing categories. Within this dualism, it often appeared as if only the divine side was important. As Grant Wacker has noted, radical evangelicals sought to ‘eliminate the natural side of every equation’.⁸⁰ That included natural human knowledge when unenlightened by ‘Bible light’.

The curriculum at Midland Bible School was set up both to reinforce the fundamentals and to pass on this supernaturalist worldview by training students to see all knowledge ‘in Bible light’. This personal character of knowledge and understanding was important at Midland, where the goal was to train competent Bible readers and teachers. Stevens and Miller accomplished this through two means. First, they used a self-study method designed to lead students into their own insights. Years earlier, Stevens had rejected the ‘synthetic’ or ‘lecture method’ of Bible teaching, for what he considered a unique ‘Study Guide’ or ‘search question’ model.⁸¹ Stevens did not, for example, provide students with ‘proof-texts’ (collections of verses on a subject), or with charts to follow.⁸² In the search question method, students worked through a biblical book on their own, passage by passage, answering set questions designed to lead each to ‘his [sic] own revelation and his own message of the truth’.⁸³ The student was to avoid use of outside ‘helps’ or commentaries. Through this means, Stevens and Miller sought to prevent the

⁸⁰ Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 13.

⁸¹ See W. C. Stevens, ‘Summer Bible School at Nyack’, *Alliance Weekly* (March 1, 1913): 340. It is not clear if Stevens is targeting Gray’s *Synthetic Bible Studies* here.

⁸² Alliance founder A. B. Simpson used very similar questions (see Brereton, *Training God’s Army*, 89-90). For a discussion of teaching methods used at other Bible schools, see Brereton, 14-25; for dispensationalist use of “‘facts”, charts and outlines’ to inculcate their systems see 20.

⁸³ *Midland Manual*, 5-6. L. E. Maxwell later adopted this method, and many of the original questions, for use at Prairie Bible Institute. See *Search Questions: Four-Year Standard Course* (Three Hills, AB: Prairie Bible Institute, 1946, 1950, 1958).

imposition of preconceived theological ideas upon the text.⁸⁴ They did not discuss whether such a neutral reading was possible; Stevens and Miller believed that the scripture had one correct interpretation, and that if students came directly to the text, that meaning would be self-evident. (Of course, any misconceptions and false readings could be corrected when answers were read aloud in the next class).

Because the Bible was meant for the common person, they sought to understand the text on its own terms. James Gray, in his introduction to Stevens' commentary on Daniel, commended this 'natural method of study', in which Stevens 'to so great an extent permits the text to be its own interpreter'.⁸⁵ 'The Bible must be intended to be read like any other production in human language. It must be the divine author's intention that a normal reading of the Bible shall readily grasp its sense', Stevens explained.⁸⁶ This meant that the primary meaning of the text was available to the original writer and audience.⁸⁷ So, for example, to read the prophecies of Daniel correctly, they must be read from Daniel's point of view. Later readers have no revelatory advantage over Daniel; but must treat Daniel's records as 'complete and self explanatory'.⁸⁸ However, they can see how prophecies have been fulfilled; and may read them in light of later revelation. Such treatment allowed the text to speak for itself; it also allowed the reader, or student, to be the expert.

⁸⁴ See the introduction to *Search Questions*: 'We know of no other method of approach to the Bible which will yield a proper balance of the Bible doctrines in their relative degree of importance. Until we thus come to the Word we cannot avoid the chronic contagion of reading our Bible with our doctrinal preconceptions instead of subjecting our doctrines to an all-Bible revelation'.

⁸⁵ James M. Gray, 'Introduction', in Stevens, *Daniel*.

⁸⁶ *Midland Manual*, 12; compare Stevens, *Jonah*, also *Daniel*, 89- 90.

⁸⁷ Stevens, *Daniel*, 90. This was also an argument against the methodology of higher criticism, which he considered 'a traitor in the very company of the saints' (*Daniel*, 195).

⁸⁸ Stevens, *Daniel*, 89; 224; also second preface.

Second, through consecutive study of the books of the Bible, students learned to see scripture as an ‘organic’ whole.⁸⁹ This organic or holistic approach meant that students were not trained to see the Bible simply in terms of ‘facts’, but as the framework for theological meaning. As Stevens explained, true knowledge was ‘not merely the acquisition of facts and of the human philosophy of the same, but such understanding of facts as shall advance the learner in the knowledge of God, strengthen his faith in God, and deepen his reverence and love for God’.⁹⁰ For Stevens, the Bible did not simply provide all the facts of the matter; instead, it was the ‘key’, the light, the guide, which allowed facts to be properly understood.

Stevens also considered Bible light to reveal the key to history—the meaning and ordering of which was a prime concern for all varieties of premillennialists. As Stevens explained, ‘The Bible in literary respect is mostly historical... This indicates that God regards history as the noblest realm of human inquiry’.⁹¹ In his study of *Jonah*, Stevens traced the fundamental patterns of human history as revealed in Bible light.⁹² First, his analysis confirmed God’s personal presence, or *immanence*, in history, ‘always, everywhere, with everybody’.⁹³ Second, the book demonstrated God’s governance of history.⁹⁴ Finally, the events recorded in *Jonah* revealed God’s compassion for creation.⁹⁵ Therefore, the key to history, as provided by scripture, was quite simple:

The presence of God, the government of God, the compassion of God, is not the rare thing in the universe and history; His presence, His government, His compassion, each

⁸⁹ Stevens did not define ‘organic’, nor give background to his usage. However, the language again suggests a romantic influence; as seen below, not only did he insist upon the organic nature of scripture, but also of history.

⁹⁰ Stevens, *Jonah*, 9.

⁹¹ Stevens, *Jonah*, 22.

⁹² Stevens, *Jonah*, 24.

⁹³ Stevens, *Jonah*, 39; 22-23.

⁹⁴ Stevens, *Jonah*, 41-44.

⁹⁵ Stevens, *Jonah*, 46-48.

prevails always, everywhere, with everybody, as the very fundamental of universal history.⁹⁶

History was not guided by progress or by impersonal chance, as contemporary progressive or evolutionary theories had it. Rather, the present state of the world represented God's continuing sovereignty over, and guidance of, history.⁹⁷

In Stevens' hands, this organic approach also precluded many of the assumptions common to 'dispensationalist' readings of history.⁹⁸ A key tenet of dispensationalism, which became a dominant form of premillennial belief among fundamentalists, was the division of history into 'ages' or dispensations. In each dispensation, God dealt differently with humanity.⁹⁹ Stevens, *rejecting* this dispensationalist reading, argued that God worked in only one way throughout history: that is, through Jesus Christ, the 'architect' and 'arbiter' of all human history, and through the cross.¹⁰⁰ 'Calvary is in operation in history universally', he explained. 'God's dealing with all men, with all nations, and all empires, is always through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ'.¹⁰¹ Stevens supported his interpretation through a Christocentric reading of the divine name. For Stevens, the Hebrew word 'Elohim' referred simply to 'God', while *YHWH*, translated 'Lord, or Jehovah' 'designates distinctively the Son of God as Mediator

⁹⁶ Stevens, *Jonah*, 48-49.

⁹⁷ Stevens, *Jonah*, 40-41; 69, 73, 86; see also *Daniel*, 64-65.

⁹⁸ Distinctions between Stevens' form of premillennialism and dispensationalism are explored in the next chapter.

⁹⁹ See for example, Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*, 18-23, also Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming*, 160-164. For Stevens' negative opinion of Scofield, see W. C. Stevens, *Revelation, The Crown Jewel of Biblical Prophecy* (Harrisburg, PA: Alliance Publishing, 1928) 2:14; also L. E. Maxwell, Richardson interviews, April 12, 1982. PBI archives, Box 111.

¹⁰⁰ Stevens, *Jonah*, 22, 49, also *Revelation*, 2:4. Stevens may have gained his 'Christocentric' theology at Union Seminary in the early 1870s, where he would have studied under Henry Boynton Smith, also known for his Christocentric approach.

¹⁰¹ Stevens, *Jonah*, 81, 82.

between God and man, as God's Redeemer, Saviour and Judge to sinful man'.¹⁰² Thus the basis for salvation in the Old Covenant, as in the New, was Christ. This universal nature of redemption was possible because time is organic:

The ages are not mere successive periods of time, or stages of progress: they constitute a unity, an organism, a constructive whole. The ages are like a living, highly organised body. The dying Lamb is, as it were, the heart in the complex organism, pulsating with equal energy throughout the whole body of the ages...¹⁰³

All history must be read in this light, for without this Christocentric 'key', the study of history was mere delusion, and led to false knowledge. 'Yet where is the history in use to-day which is written as if there were such a person everywhere immanent and controlling in history as the Son of God to whom the Father has committed all things?' he lamented.¹⁰⁴

Dorothy Ruth Miller agreed heartily with Stevens' view of the Bible and knowledge, and his premillennial (but non-dispensational) interpretation of history. Accordingly, the two-part 'Biblico-Historical Course' that she taught at Midland presented history in just such a light. As the *Manual* explained, her course did not follow 'secular' approaches to history:

¹⁰² Stevens, *Jonah*, 55; 57-60. Stevens shared this Christocentric hermeneutic with A. B. Simpson. As Simpson made clear, this division between Yahweh and Elohim served as a defence against critical scholarship, which understood the different names to reflect different authorship (See Simpson, *Holy Spirit*, vol. 1, chap. 2). He explained that 'reverent and heaven-taught scholarship has found that there was a ... reason for the change in the divine name in the second chapter of Genesis'; the name change from Elohim to Jehovah Elohim reflected the change in the object of God's attention from inanimate matter to human. Consequently, Simpson's 'Christ in the Bible' series of commentaries covered both Old and New Testaments. James Gray, in contrast, read the Old Testament typologically.

¹⁰³ Stevens, *Jonah*, 86. Stevens' view of time, not of direct importance to this project, might provide a fascinating study. In contrast, William Blackstone, an early populariser of dispensationalism, used the linear imagery of a measuring stick to propose eternity as a 'limitless succession of aions measuring infinite duration' (Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming*, 162).

¹⁰⁴ Stevens, *Jonah*, 22-23. Note that this Christocentric structure and organic view of time and history does not require an interventionist view of history. Stevens' interventionism reflects a dualism of natural and supernatural; and of divine and human agency.

In this Course the whole span of humanity's history is traced, but not as the earthly historian portrays it—secular and scholastic at best, without certain meaning, mysterious in its course and so subject to fanciful, commonly heretical, even though boastfully called 'scientific' or 'philosophical', interpretations.¹⁰⁵

Instead, her course followed 'the track of mankind's career under the light of Scripture, the only true light'. Thus, when the early lectures at the International Sunday School Convention in June that year failed to recognise that 'the Bible was the light by which to study so called secular subjects—no mention of bringing back the King as the solution of social problems', she found it 'very sad indeed'.¹⁰⁶

Years later, in 1937, Miller turned her class notes into a textbook, the *Handbook of Ancient History*.¹⁰⁷ By now, she taught at the highly successful Prairie Bible Institute in Alberta, Canada, under L. E. Maxwell, a former Midland student, who encouraged her literary aspirations. 'So far as I know', she wrote in the preface, 'no Ancient History written from a Christian standpoint is now in print. On the contrary, all tend to undermine the Christian faith; since all are based upon the assumption that the evolutionary theory is true'.¹⁰⁸ Robert Hall Glover of the China Inland Mission concurred. In his introduction to *Ancient History*, he too deplored 'the baneful influence' of modern textbooks that disregarded all divine revelation, and hoped that Miller's volume would supply the 'long-felt need for a sound and reliable text'.¹⁰⁹ Evidently, the Bible itself was no longer an adequate text on its own. A curious letter in the Prairie archives, from J. Oliver Buswell of Wheaton College, also suggests the changed context. Writing to Maxwell, Buswell apologised for his unwillingness to read and recommend

¹⁰⁵ *Midland Manual*, 1921-1922, 11-12.

¹⁰⁶ Miller Diaries, June 21-22, 1922.

¹⁰⁷ Dorothy Ruth Miller, *A Handbook of Ancient History in Bible Light*, intro. Robert Hall Glover (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1937).

¹⁰⁸ Miller, *Ancient History*, 7.

¹⁰⁹ Robert Hall Glover, 'Introduction', in Miller, *Ancient History*, 5-6.

Miller's manuscript. 'My special field of study is New Testament Introduction', he wrote, 'and my recommendation of a work entitled, "Ancient History in Bible Light", would not be competent'.¹¹⁰ Such considerations of 'academic competency' were scarcely an issue within the earlier supernaturalist view of knowledge, held by Stevens and Miller, and still shared by Maxwell and Glover.

Stevens, in his earlier biblical commentaries, had sought to find universal divine principles that shed light upon history. Miller, in turn, traced those principles throughout human civilisation. While on one level Miller's *Ancient History* was meant to help students understand the Bible through familiarity with the wider historical context of its recorded events, its interpretative method flowed in the other direction; that is, it presented and interpreted history through the lens of scripture revelation. Miller wished not merely to teach historical 'facts', but to write 'a history not only true to the Scriptures, but stimulating to faith'.¹¹¹ She began by citing Stevens' account of 'true knowledge', then, building upon his thesis, applied biblical light to 'ancient' history.¹¹² Read in 'Bible light', history became a vehicle for revealing God at work in the world. As with Stevens, God's means were explicitly Christocentric. 'Historians leave out of history the Cross of Christ and the Christ of the Cross', Miller lamented. 'They overlook or refuse to recognise the Centre of all history; its Beginning and its End; that which alone gives it significance and value'.¹¹³

The first chapters of *Ancient History*, as necessitated by both Genesis and by contemporary fundamentalist concerns, dealt with creation versus 'evolutionary theory'.

¹¹⁰ J. Oliver Buswell to L. E. Maxwell, July 21, 1936. PBI archives, un-catalogued.

¹¹¹ Miller, *Ancient History*, 7.

¹¹² *Midland Manual*, 1921, 11-12.

¹¹³ Miller, *Ancient History*, 31, 40.

Miller stated her position immediately. ‘Man’s origin, his nature, the purpose of his existence, and his final destiny’ could be known only through divine revelation, not through the study of history (or of science).¹¹⁴ The ‘theory of evolution’ was ‘absolutely contradictory to the teaching of Scripture’. First, it diverged from the clear account of creation as given in the Bible. Second, ‘Darwinism’ denied God’s role and purpose in creation, as well as human responsibility and accountability to God (the very points made evident by Bible light).¹¹⁵ To prove that evolutionary theory was ‘contrary to science’, Miller turned to the opinions of experts, from Darwin himself to J. W. Dawson.¹¹⁶ However, although she turned to outside materials for information, or to corroborate her view, she prioritised Scriptural evidences over such secular sources. Miller, like earlier evangelicals, was not interested in understanding the theories she rebutted. Rather, her desire was to defend the supernatural acts of God against the encroachment of natural processes. While the Bible, according to her introduction, was ‘neither a systematic nor complete compendium of ancient history or of any science’, in any conflict, scripture was correct.¹¹⁷ By the same criteria, she discredited claims for the ‘antiquity’ of the human race, and for human progress. ‘There is no universal law of unbroken progress,’ she asserted.¹¹⁸

The bulk of her book dealt with the various nations and empires, from Babylonian to Roman, which impinged upon biblical history and the prophetic accounts important to

¹¹⁴ Miller, *Ancient History*, 13.

¹¹⁵ Miller, *Ancient History*, 14-15; that evolutionary theory undermines Christian faith, 7.

¹¹⁶ She cites J. B. Warren; Sir William Bateson, Sir Charles Bell, Luther Townsend, Robert Etheridge, Robert Watts, Huxley, Agassiz, and D. M. S. Watson, among others.

¹¹⁷ This ‘pietistic’ form of reasoning frustrated rationalist conservatives such as J. Gresham Machen: ‘What,’ they say, ‘is the need of argument in defence of the Bible? Is it not the Word of God, and does it not carry with it an immediate certitude of its truth which could only be obscured by defence? If science comes into contradiction with the Bible so much the worse for science!’ (*Christianity and Liberalism*, 9).

¹¹⁸ Miller, *Ancient History*, 18, 22.

premillennialist interpretations of the end times. Throughout, she sought to demonstrate the ‘role and responsibility’ of nations, ‘point out fulfilments of Scripture prophecy’, and reinforce the importance of missions and evangelism.¹¹⁹ Each chapter discussed an area of history relating to the biblical narrative, followed by set questions after the ‘search question’ model, designed to reinforce both facts and meaning. Thus of the ‘Egypt of the Patriarchs’, for instance, students were required to describe the architecture and art of the period, and to explain how the empire contributed ‘to the working out of God’s plan’.¹²⁰

One by one, the great civilisations and empires of history were tried and found wanting. Because these high civilisations did not serve God, although *used* by God, they remained debased.¹²¹ Along the way, Miller pointed out that human culture and learning did not necessarily lead to moral good: ‘Mere natural culture does not change the savage human heart’.¹²² For Miller, as for Stevens, ‘The Fall of Man is the key to much of his after history’. Having ‘received the word of Satan instead of the word of God’, ‘man’ lost fellowship with and knowledge of God, and became ‘impaired mentally and physically’. Consequently, although for limited periods humanity had advanced intellectually and materially, ‘on the whole, the history of mankind, unaided by divine revelation and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, has been one of degeneration’.¹²³

For Miller, understanding history required not only awareness of the fall, but also recognition of God’s sovereignty. This served as the grand theme running throughout her book. While only the return of Christ, the ‘King of kings’, rightful ruler of the world, would finally resolve world affairs, his ‘universal Personal government’ ensured that

¹¹⁹ Miller, *Ancient History*, 8, 11-12, 40.

¹²⁰ Miller, *Ancient History*, 85.

¹²¹ Miller, *Ancient History*, 40, 53-55; 274.

¹²² Miller, *Ancient History*, 106.

¹²³ Miller, *Ancient History*, 30; also 20-21.

God's purposes would be fulfilled in all ages.¹²⁴ God's capacity to intervene not only assured the future, but the present.

Running through the book, as a side argument, is the impact of human 'degeneration' on the status and treatment of women. Earlier women, Miller concluded, had often fared better than later women had. For instance, in the biblical book of Job, which was of early date, family life was 'pure and simple'; Job had only one wife and women inherited property.¹²⁵ In the Babylon of Bible times, women were educated and engaged in business, marriage was sacred and women honoured, while in Egypt, a woman was 'the equal of her Lord'.¹²⁶ On the other hand, Persian women were excluded from education.¹²⁷

An unexpressed subtext to her comments was the belief that Christianity, as represented by turn-of-the-century society, had raised the status of women. As observed by turn-of-the-century missionaries, many cultures held women in low esteem. The poor treatment of women throughout the world, now being righted through the gospel, both proved the failure of human progress, and the need for divine intervention. As Maxwell later enthused, 'The gospel has freed women wherever its transforming power has held sway'.¹²⁸

Such a perception of women's place was, of course, a two-edged sword. Throughout radical evangelical discussions of female ministry and of female roles, this conviction—that women held a privileged place within the Christian society of North

¹²⁴ Miller, *Ancient History*, 54-55, 123.

¹²⁵ Miller, *Ancient History*, 42. However, she comments that Job, as father, was 'priest' to his family.

¹²⁶ Miller, *Ancient History*, 66-67, 74.

¹²⁷ Miller, *Ancient History*, 131.

¹²⁸ Maxwell, Editorial comments, D. R. Miller, 'On Women Speaking', *Prairie Pastor* 12/12 (Dec 1939): 8.

America—stood side by side with a pessimistic view of female behaviours.¹²⁹ Female ministry could be celebrated as one sign of Christian freedom, but it also could be viewed, as by many dispensationalists, as a sign of the degenerate end times.

Despite a deep suspicion about natural or human forces bringing about an ideal society, these evangelicals were not always resistant to change. They could embrace new concepts and methods—so long as such change was directly attributable to God. Their changing positions reflected an often-conscious rejection of natural progress—whether social, historical, or biological—for a spiritualised account. Thus ‘the forward movements of the last half century’—whether premillennialism, holiness teachings, missions, or the ‘singular and steady forward march of Christian womanhood towards the front rank of consecrated service’—were seen as God’s own work.¹³⁰

Yet women’s exalted status under the gospel could also limit any expansion of female roles. Ironically, the generalised evolutionary theories and beliefs in ‘progress’ current in wider turn-of-the-century society buttressed very similar conservative positions on female roles. As Lorna Duffin puts it, ‘If Victorian society was the pinnacle of evolution, progress could not involve any radical changes in society’.¹³¹ Through a conflation of women’s ‘natural capacities’ and societal norms, social order became based upon biology, which led to arguments against changing roles. Likewise, when radical evangelicals considered the status of women as an outcome of the gospel, yet held that

¹²⁹ For a very similar bifurcation between progress for women, and the ‘degeneration’ of human nature, see Pierson, *Forward Movements*, v, vii, 205, 168.

¹³⁰ Pierson, *Forward Movements*. For a similar treatment of the ‘providential movements’ of the previous century that informed the distinctive elements of A. B. Simpson and the Christian and Missionary Alliance, see Pardington, *Twenty-Five Wonderful Years*, 13-17.

¹³¹ See Lorna Duffin, ‘Prisoners of Progress’, 57; also 74. See also Frances F. Hiebert, ‘Cultural and Ideological Influences on the Role of Women’, *Priscilla Papers* 12/3 (Summer 1998): 1-6, who concludes that while William Jennings Bryan, the conservative of the famous ‘Scopes Monkey Trial’, supported women’s equality and the suffrage movement, H. L. Mencken, his Social Darwinist opponent, was a misogynist.

positive changes in society came only through divine intervention, it became difficult to argue for any extension of female ministry. This problematic conflation of nineteenth-century societal assumptions and the ministry roles of evangelical women will be revisited repeatedly in later chapters (see chapters seven and eight); as will the power of interventionist beliefs, and personal reliance on experience of the divine as a source of knowledge, to *overturn* ‘natural’ boundaries placed upon female roles (chapter five).

The intensified ‘supernaturalist’ mindset, or better, ‘spirituality’, traced out above, supported the radical belief system and related spiritual practices of Stevens and Miller. Their confidence in ‘Bible light’ and in the capacity of the ordinary believer to interpret life by its rays, and their expectations of God’s direct intervention in the present, determined other aspects of their doctrine as well. One such set of beliefs revolved around what it meant to be part of the ‘body of Christ’, and how believers, male and female, functioned as members of Christ. The next chapter turns to the relationship between their interventionist premillennial beliefs, and their ‘ecclesiology’, or view of the church, which helped set the parameters for female ministry within much conservative Calvinistic evangelicalism.

Chapter Four

'Organic' Ecclesiology:

The Holy Spirit, Union with Christ and Believer's Ministry

'Last night', wrote Dorothy Ruth Miller in 1920, 'the Lord brought me into a place of great peace with regard to my future service. I shall trust Him to bestow on me such evident gifts along the line in which He would have me serve that I may simply be appointed to that to which He calls and for which He appoints me'.¹ When, a few months later, Stevens outlined Midland's philosophy of ministry, he placed similar reliance upon God's guidance in the matter of ministry roles. Those 'evidently suited to a work', and called to it by the Holy Spirit, were to be given responsibility for that ministry. Under the guidance of the Spirit, gifting and calling determined roles within the Midland circle.²

In the late nineteenth century, Arthur T. Pierson described the philosophy of Bethesda Chapel of Bristol, a Brethren community, in similar language. Bethesda's 'one supreme Leader', he explained, 'is the Holy Ghost, and under Him those whom He calls and qualifies'.³ Under the guidance of George Müller and Henry Craik, the chapel operated upon a firm set of principles:

[The] Spirit of God controls in the assemblies of the saints; ... He sets the members, every one of them, in the Body as it pleaseth Him, and divides unto them, severally as He will, gifts for service in the Body...

¹ Miller Diaries, March 9, 1920.

² W. C. Stevens, Letter, no addressee, July 24, 1920.

³ Arthur T. Pierson, *George Müller of Bristol and His Witness to a Prayer Hearing God* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1899), 317.

the only true ordination is His ordination, and ... the manifestation of His gifts is the sufficient basis for the recognition of brethren as qualified for the exercise of an office or function, the possession of spiritual gifts being sufficient authority for their exercise.⁴

That is, the true administrator of Bethesda Chapel, Bristol (and of Midland Bible School, Kansas City) was the Holy Spirit.

The scope and the boundaries of female participation within the evangelical world were not merely accidental, or the by-product of other practices, but an inherent part of coherent belief systems. One element of that belief, as discussed in chapter two, was a commitment to the culturally pervasive notion of ‘voluntary association’. This value, for instance, provided the backdrop for W. C. Stevens’ concept of evangelical and fraternal union. However, for the evangelicals of our study, this notion of association also depended upon a specific set of theological beliefs about the nature of Christian community. That is, while their practices—such as beliefs around female ministry—might reflect the populist or voluntary values of the period, they understood and defended these ways of doing things theologically.

Among the many doctrines adopted by W. C. Stevens, A. B. Simpson and other revivalist and Calvinistic evangelicals in the late nineteenth century was a organic, lay-oriented ‘ecclesiology’, or doctrine of the church, that fitted well with the ‘voluntary’ temperament of nineteenth-century American religion. In part inherited from evangelical

⁴ Pierson, *Müller*, 318, see also 312-313. According to Pierson, Müller acted as ‘leader among equals’ (313).

revivalism, this ecclesiology also reflected the influence of European pietist movements, as well as the imprint of ‘dispensational’ premillennialism.⁵

Although it may seem peculiar to look to eschatology, or beliefs about the ‘end times’, for ecclesiology, it is important to recognise that much premillennialism, dispensationalism in particular, represented an argument over the nature and function of the ‘Church’. Like its pietistic (and biblical) forerunners, ‘dispensational’ ecclesiology laid stress upon the Church as the ‘body’ of Christ—that is, upon its nature as *organism* rather than institution, and thus upon the proper functioning of all its members. At the same time, this ecclesiology ‘spiritualised’ that Body, by projecting its true meaning and sphere into an otherworldly realm. This lessened the power of the institutional Church and clergy among late-century evangelicals, changed the nature of ‘ministry’, and rewrote the qualifications required for Christian service. This was accomplished, however, through a problematic dichotomy between the spiritual and the material.

When joined to the interventionist dynamics of radical spirituality, this dichotomy between the spiritual and this worldly led to an ‘either / or’ understanding of the relationship between God and the world, and God and the self, that led almost inevitably to a devaluation of the present and material. On the one hand, this allowed radical support for female ministry as a ‘spiritual’ enterprise; on the other, as is seen throughout the chapters that follow, the ‘special’ nature of women, which continually reconnected them to this world and the material, prevented their full participation in the work of the

⁵ In general, pietist movements emphasised personal experience, the communion of the saints and the priesthood of all believers, and downplayed organisational structure. The journey of George Müller demonstrates this relationship between pietism and the Brethren. Müller came to faith in 1825 through a pietist community in Halle, and became part of the Brethren after moving to Britain (Pierson, *Müller*, 29-36; 54-77, see also Appendix B, 386-389, which includes his conversion to premillennial beliefs). For an overview of various definitions of ‘pietism’, see Jonathan Strom, ‘Problems and Promises of Pietism Research’, *Church History* (Sept 1, 2002).

Body. As is demonstrated below, both openness to female ministry, and corresponding restrictions upon female roles, were coherent outcomes of these beliefs.

At this point, it is essential to reiterate that the radical Calvinistic evangelicals of this study—A. B. Simpson, W. C. Stevens, or A. J. Gordon—were *not* doctrinaire dispensationalists.⁶ While this spiritualised interpretation of the church provided a key rationale for their views on ‘lay’ ministry, they rejected other key elements of the dispensational system in order to accommodate a ‘pneumatology’, or doctrine of the Spirit, based on the events of Pentecost as recorded in Acts chapter two. As demonstrated below and in the next chapter, this ‘pentecostal’ view of the Spirit provided radical or full-gospel evangelicals with a spiritual rationale for specifically female forms of ministry not available to dispensationalists. Both the similarities and the divergences between radical evangelical forms of premillennial teaching, and the closely related dispensationalist versions, are important for understanding their views on female ministry. Because dispensationalism became a predominant position among later fundamentalists, the premillennial beliefs of full-gospel and radical evangelicals like Simpson, Gordon, and Stevens are often misclassified as dispensationalist, a mistake which obscures aspects of their reasoning on gender issues.⁷

Because the contours of premillennial beliefs are anything but straightforward, a brief introduction to the topic is in order.⁸ ‘Millennialism’ is a form of eschatology, or

⁶ See previous chapter.

⁷ See for example Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender: 1875 to the Present* (New Haven / London: Yale University Press, 1993), 45-46; Janette Hassey, *No Time for Silence: Evangelical Women in Public Ministry Around the Turn of the Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/Academie Books, 1986), 110.

⁸ For premillennialism in the United States, see Timothy Weber, *Living in the Shadow of the Second Coming: American Premillennialism, 1875-1925* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); also Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970). For discussion of the various millennial views see Robert G. Clouse,

end times teaching, that looks for a thousand-year period of peace on the world. Two common forms of millennialism are ‘amillennialism’, in which the millennium *coincides* with the present church age, a position held by much of the established church since Augustine; and ‘postmillennialism’, in which the second advent of Christ follows the millennium, which is still future. Many evangelicals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries held this second view. ‘Premillennialist’ versions maintain that the second coming, or advent, of Christ must occur *before* the millennium, in order to usher in the period of peace.

While not entirely new (arguably, the early church held a form of premillennial belief), this third view took novel forms during the nineteenth century. These premillennial teachings differed from those of earlier medieval sects, for instance, who had attempted to bring the kingdom of God to earth, often through revolution.⁹ The newer version projected that kingdom into the future, and cast its initiation as entirely of divine origin. The ‘interventionism’ of the premillennial viewpoint also contrasted sharply with the providentialist perspective of mainstream evangelicals, whose confidence in the orderly progress of God’s purposes fit best with a postmillennial viewpoint. This new premillennialism was interventionist and supernaturalist, and expressed a more ‘romantic’ sensibility.¹⁰ Like the Romantic poets, who had interpreted the French revolution in apocalyptic images, the new premillennialists drew upon the

ed., ‘Introduction’, in *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 7-13; also Stanley J. Grenz, *The Millennial Maze: Sorting out Evangelical Options* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992). For a refutation of premillennialism from a Reformed and amillennial perspective, see Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1938, reprint 1981), 695-716.

⁹ Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (London/Toronto/Sydney/New York: Paladin /Granada, 1970, reprint 1978).

¹⁰ For romantic influences behind this resurgence, see D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989).

apocalyptic portions of scripture to portray the Second Advent of Christ as a ‘crisis’ in history, and heightened the ‘supernatural’ character of that event.

Although premillennial doctrines experienced resurgence in both Britain and North America in the 1820s and 1830s, the British formulations proved most influential among late-century North American evangelicals.¹¹ Two young clergymen—Edward Irving (1792-1834), a young and charismatic Scottish Presbyterian, and John Nelson Darby (1800-1882), an Anglo-Irish clergyman—were key figures in this resurgence.¹² Irving helped rekindle broader British evangelical interest in premillennial thought through his 1826 translation of *Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty* by ‘Ben Ezra’ (actually a Chilean Jesuit, Manuel Lacunza, 1731-1801).¹³ The fascinating topic of the interpretation of biblical prophecy was pursued at a series of private conferences, held at Albury Park, the Surrey residence of Henry Drummond, between 1826 and 1830; and at the Dublin home of Lady Powerscourt in the 1830s.¹⁴ Here Irving, Henry Drummond, premillennialist James Hatley Frere, Zionist Lewis Way, and Darby, among others, began to map out the basic contours of the new premillennialism.¹⁵

¹¹ For example, American William Miller placed the return of Christ in 1843; the failure of his dating helped discredit premillennialism for a generation of evangelicals. The Seventh Day Adventists are the best-known Millerite sect. As Sandeen points out, the rise of the premillenarian view on both sides of the Atlantic suggests that it cannot be pinned only on local causes; such as political concerns in Britain, or on American revivalism (Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism*, 55).

¹² For Irving, see Andrew Landale Drummond, *Edward Irving and His Circle: Including the ‘Tongues’ Movement in the Light of Modern Psychology* (James Clarke, 1939); Mrs. Oliphant, *The Life of Edward Irving, Minister of the National Scotch Church, London*, 2 vol. (London, 1862); Grayson Carter, ‘Irving, Edward’, in *The Blackwell Dictionary of Evangelical Biography: 1730-1860*, ed. Donald M. Lewis (Oxford Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), 595-596. For Darby, see Napoleon Noel, *The History of the Brethren*, ed. William F. Knapp, 2 vol. (Denver: W. F. Knapp, 1936); also Timothy C. F. Stunt, ‘Darby’, in *Blackwell Dictionary*, 290-291.

¹³ Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra [pseudonym for Manuel Lacunza], *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*, translated by and with preliminary discourse by Edward Irving (London: L. B. Seeley and Son, 1827).

¹⁴ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 76-104; Sheridan Gilley, ‘Edward Irving: Prophet of the Millennium’, in *Revival and Religion Since 1700*, 95-110, ed. Jane Garnett and Colin Matthew (London and Rio Grande, Ohio: Hambledon Press, 1993).

¹⁵ Darby’s influence was more marked at the later Powerscourt conferences of 1831 and 1833.

Although there was some contact between Darby and Irving, at least in this early period, they, and their followers, took very different approaches to the matter at hand. Irving took a charismatic and ‘pentecostal’ path. Like later radical evangelicals, he embraced tongues and prophecies, which he considered signs of the second coming.¹⁶ The more romantic figure of the two, he died in 1834, shortly after the Scottish church concluded his Christology was heretical.

By 1828, Darby, who became a chief architect of the ‘dispensational’ system of interpretation, was involved with the primitivist, anti-clerical Brethren movement. He became informal leader of the exclusive Brethren after a split in 1849.¹⁷ The influence of Darby and the Brethren on North American premillennialism was quite direct. Although Brethren immigrants brought forms of this teaching to America in the 1840s and 50s, it did not gain wider acceptance until after the Civil War, when it became an attractive alternative to liberal ideas.¹⁸ Darby made seven teaching tours to North America between 1862 and 1876, initially speaking to Brethren immigrants, but then to wider audiences.¹⁹ Between 1868 and the early 1900s, a series of popular Bible Conferences, such as the one at Niagara-on-the-Lake in Ontario, begun in 1876, further helped spread premillennial

¹⁶ Similarities between the thought of Irving and radical evangelicals are addressed in chapter five.

¹⁷ There is debate as to the exact sources of some elements of the dispensational system, such as the rapture, also attributed to Irving’s followers. Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism*, 38, votes for Darby.

¹⁸ As noted in the last chapter, this acceptance of new beliefs also corresponded to a crisis in experienced spirituality. George Marsden reads the adoption of premillennialist beliefs as an outcome of inadequate intellectual categories. See George M. Marsden, ‘The Collapse of American Evangelical Academia’, in *Faith and Rationality: Reason and Belief in God*, ed. by Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff (Notre Dame/London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983); also Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 17-21, 48-51; 215-221. Weber views the wider acceptance of premillennial beliefs after the Civil War as a way for conservative evangelicals to maintain their biblicist, primitivist, and supernaturalist beliefs over against the rising tide of liberal Christianity (Weber, *Living in the Shadow*, 36-42).

¹⁹ See Stunt, ‘Darby’, 291, also Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism*, 71-73. George Müller also made teaching tours (see Pierson, *George Müller of Bristol*, 261).

beliefs.²⁰ Through the conferences, through books by the likes of James Brookes, W. E. Blackstone, and later C. I. Scofield, and through the acceptance of premillennial ideas by key figures such as D. L. Moody, dispensational forms of premillennialism gained ground among North American Calvinistic evangelicals by the end of the century.²¹

The term ‘dispensationalism’ derived from a characteristic division of biblical history into (usually) seven ‘dispensations’, or eras.²² The first five divisions, which encompassed Old Testament history, covered creation to the expulsion from Eden, the fall to the flood, the flood to Babel, Abraham to Egypt, and the Exodus to Christ. The present dispensation was considered the age of the Church, or, sometimes, of the Spirit. Essential to dispensational theory was the dictum that in each age, God works with humanity in a unique way. According to C. I. Scofield, ‘each of the dispensations may be regarded as a new test of the natural man, and each ends in judgement—marking [man’s] utter failure in every dispensation’.²³ While this division of history gave dispensationalism its name, it was perhaps not its most important feature. Rather, as noted above, a distinction drawn between the Church and Israel, based on a literal reading of Old Testament prophecy, and the consequent differentiation between God’s final purposes for Israel and the church, drove the dispensationalist system. As Stanley Grenz phrased it, the new element in dispensationalism was ‘not the division of history into periods of time’ but ‘the strict literalism in interpreting Bible prophecy, which set the

²⁰ For the spread of premillennial beliefs in North America, see Weber, *Living in the Shadow*, 26-35; Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism*, 71-73, 134-143.

²¹ See Clouse, *The Meaning of the Millennium*, 12. Darby’s ideas passed to these writers through Brethren thinkers such as Mackintosh, Kelly and Grant; and influenced D. L. Moody through Henry Moorhouse.

²² For outlines of the dispensations, see James H. Brookes, *I am Coming* (1895, Glasgow: Pickering and Inglis; London: J. E. Hawkins, c.1910), 112; Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming*, 161-163; C. I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth: Ten Outline Studies of the More Important Divisions of Scripture* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, n. d), 18-23.

²³ Scofield, *Rightly Dividing*, 8.

predictions of Daniel and Revelation into the future and demanded a reintroduction of Israel, rather than the church, as the major subject of biblical prophecy'.²⁴ This way of reading scripture prophecy resulted in a distinctive way of understanding the church

In classic dispensationalism, the contrast between Church and Israel was not merely temporal and covenantal, but, as C. I. Scofield explained in *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth*, included 'origin, calling, promise, worship, principles of conduct, and future destiny'.²⁵ The church was unknown in Old Testament times, and unmentioned in Old Testament prophecy.²⁶ At Christ's first coming, he made an offer of the 'kingdom' to Israel, as promised by the Old Testament prophets. However, because the Jewish people rejected that offer, the nation of Israel was 'set aside' for a period, and the church was elected as the medium of God's purposes.²⁷ During this 'great parenthesis' in God's plan for Israel, God worked through the church.²⁸ Still, the church only temporarily displaced Israel; it did not 'supersede' it. Nor was the Church the kingdom of God, as held by much of the established church.²⁹ In the future (hopefully before the great tribulation), Christian saints would be 'raptured', or removed from earth for the wedding feast of the Lamb.³⁰ Israel would come to faith in Christ, and Christ would return to establish the millennial kingdom. That kingdom would be Jewish, and earthly. In

²⁴ Grenz, *The Millennial Maze*, 60; drawing upon Weber, 17; Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism*, 66-67.

²⁵ For a discussion of the distinctions between Israel, the Church, and the 'gentiles', see Scofield, *Rightly Dividing*, 7-17, also Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming*, 97. The gentiles in these discussions serve only as the object of evangelism.

²⁶ Scofield, *Rightly Dividing*, 9; Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming*, 59.

²⁷ For 'the kingdom in abeyance', see Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming*, 55-59; A. J. Gordon, *Ecce Venit* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1890), 52, 57, 60; A. B. Simpson, *Romans* (1904; Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, n.d.), 210, 213.

²⁸ For the 'great parenthesis', based on interpretation of the seventy weeks in Daniel 9:20-27, see Stevens, *The Book of Daniel: A Composite Revelation of the Last Days of Israel's Subjugation to Gentile Powers*, intro. James M. Gray (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1915, rev. 1918), 160-165; Stevens, *Revelation, The Crown Jewel of Biblical Prophecy*, 2 vol. (Harrisburg, PA: Alliance Publishing, 1928), 1:247.

²⁹ See Gordon, *Ecce Venit*, 150, also Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming*, 55, 58.

³⁰ Premillennialists divided over whether the rapture occurred pre-, post- or mid-tribulation.

contrast, the church was the spiritual ‘body’ of Christ, and His ‘bride’, who awaited the return of her groom and the establishment of the kingdom, over which she would rule with Christ.³¹

Although dispensationalism was the best-known form of premillennial teaching, its practitioners shared the premillennial scene with both historicists and non-dispensational futurists. The essential difference between historicism and futurism (of which dispensationalism was one form) lay in how biblical prophecy, especially as recorded in the books of Daniel and Revelation, related to history. Did these prophecies describe the history of the present church age, or a future time yet to come? The *historicist* account considered prophecy to describe history. As self-proclaimed historicist A. J. Gordon put it, ‘Prophecy is the mould in which history is cast’.³² Thus, for Gordon and A. B. Simpson, who held a modified historicist position, events predicted in the Apocalypse, such as the Anti-Christ, the great apostasy, and the tribulation, occurred as part of present church history.³³ In the *futurist* interpretation (outlined above), prophecy described what was yet to come. Stevens’ pattern of prophetic interpretation, although not strictly ‘dispensationalist’, fell into the futurist camp. He

³¹ Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming*, 89. For the distinction between the Church and Israel during the millennial kingdom, see Stevens, *Mysteries*, 112-124; for the political restoration of Israel, *Revelation* 1:275, 305 ff; *Daniel* 109-110. See also A. B. Simpson, *The Four-Fold Gospel*, intro. Frederic H. Senft (1887; Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, n.d.), 88. This outline does not include various events, including resurrections, judgments, and a final rebellion.

³² Gordon, *Ecce Venit*, 126. On late-nineteenth century historicism, see vi, 126-127. For Gordon, the issue is timing: is prophecy about the church fulfilled in history, or in the future?

³³ Gordon outlined this historicist position in *Ecce Venit* (see vi, 80, 108, 126-127). For Simpson’s historicist interpretation of the papacy, see Simpson, *Four-Fold Gospel*, 84. For other characterisations of Simpson as a historicist, see Franklin Pyles, ‘The Missionary Eschatology of A. B. Simpson’, in *Birth of a Vision*, ed. David F. Hartzfeld and Charles Nienkirchen, *His Dominion*, Supplement 1 (Regina, SK: 1986), 30, 32-35; and Charles W. Nienkirchen, *A. B. Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement* (Peabody, MS: Hendrickson Publishers, 1992), 21-22. Nienkirchen names his influences as Gratton Guinness and Gordon, 22. Unlike Gordon, Simpson holds a pre-tribulation position, and thus places the tribulation, during which the Jewish people convert, as post-rapture (Simpson, *Romans*, 218; *The Four-Fold Gospel*, 83).

rejected the historicist mantra of ‘history unveiling prophecy’, claiming it placed the ‘candle’ of prophecy ‘under a bushel’.³⁴ Instead, he asserted, ‘prophetic prediction is simply history revealed in advance by God to man’.³⁵ Accordingly, Stevens looked for the Anti-Christ, the tribulation, and various other prophesied signs to come in the future.³⁶

Gordon, Simpson and Stevens all accepted the distinction between the nation of Israel and the church. However, rather than holding to the dispensationalist schema in which God worked in each dispensation in different ways, they argued for the unity of God’s plan in Christ in all history. As noted previously, Stevens’ Christocentric model determined that God worked through Christ and the cross in all of history, rather than only in the latter ‘church’ dispensation. Because ‘Calvary is in operation in history universally’ there was only one ‘plan of salvation throughout all the Dispensations of man’s history’.³⁷ Instead of seven dispensations, Stevens talked of a threefold ‘Christocentric division of the Bible’ ordered by the subjects of grace: 1) the human race (Genesis 1-11); 2) Israel as God’s channel (Genesis 12 ff); and 3) the Church (the ‘protoevangelium’ of Genesis 3: 15).³⁸ Thus, he insisted that the gentile church was not a ‘new’ plan due to Jewish rejection of the kingdom, as held by many dispensationalists, but part of the overall purposes of God.³⁹ (One difficulty with the parenthesis theory was

³⁴ The phrase is likely that of historicist H. Gratton Guinness. Stevens, *Daniel*, 169. For Stevens’ premillennial teachings, see Stevens, *Triumphs of the Cross* (San Francisco: M. G. McClinton, c.1903; 2nd ed. 1915); *Mysteries of the Kingdom* (San Francisco: M. G. McClinton, 1904; 2nd ed.1915); *The Unique Historical Value of the Book of Jonah*, foreword Philip Mauro (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1924); *Revelation, The Crown Jewel of Biblical Prophecy*, 2 vol. (Harrisburg, PA: Alliance Publishing, 1928).

³⁵ Stevens, *Revelation*, 1:21. Prophecy ‘unveils history’ (Stevens, *Revelation*, 1:30) and ‘throws light upon history’, while history verifies prophecy (Stevens, *Daniel*, 167).

³⁶ Antichrist will be a ‘prince’ who restores the nation of Israel before the tribulation, see Stevens, *Daniel*, 161-166, 204-212. Stevens held to a pretribulation rapture (*Mysteries*, 57-81, *Revelation*, 1:456ff), but also to a series of partial raptures (*Revelation*, 2:135).

³⁷ Stevens, *Jonah*, 82; also see the advertisement for *Revelation: The Crown Jewel of Biblical Prophecy* (1928). PBI archives, un-catalogued.

³⁸ Stevens, *Revelation*, 1:35-37.

³⁹ Stevens, *Revelation*, 1:343.

making sense of the cross). The church, as a ‘spiritual’ descendent of Israel, *supplemented* rather than superseded Israel.⁴⁰

An important aspect of dispensational ecclesiology was its strongly dualistic orientation. Dispensationalists operated in oppositional categories: the church and the nation of Israel, the ‘spiritual’ church and the ‘material’ Jewish kingdom, law and grace, and so forth.⁴¹ Dispensationalism depended upon a dichotomy between the spiritual and material, as well upon a spatial distance between Christ and the believer. In this dispensation, the ascended and coming Christ was absent, in the heavens. The heartbeat of premillennial spirituality was the longing for Christ’s presence within, and for His literal and physical return.

To overcome this distance, dispensational ecclesiology gave a central role to the Holy Spirit. During Christ’s absence in the present dispensation, the Holy Spirit was ‘sent from heaven’, to unite believers to Christ and one another.⁴² J. N. Darby considered this discovery of union of the believer with Christ as effected through the Holy Spirit as the beginning of his theological journey: ‘I came to understand that I was united with Christ in heaven; and that, consequently, my place before God was represented by His own ...’.⁴³ Most aspects of his ecclesiology followed from this doctrine of union. Union with Christ was both individual, and corporate. On the one hand, the Holy Spirit was ‘sent from heaven to abide in the believer as the “unction”, the “seal”, and the “earnest of

⁴⁰ Stevens, *Revelation*, 1:492-495.

⁴¹ On the division of law and grace, see Scofield *Rightly Dividing*, 50-65.

⁴² Noel, *History of the Brethren*, 1:48, 42.

⁴³ Darby made this connection clear in a personal account of his beliefs addressed (but never sent) to Friedrich Tholuck of Halle University. J. N. Darby, unsent letter to Friedrich Tholuck, cited in Noel, *History of the Brethren*, 1:35-36; also 1:34-43. I have removed editorial italics.

our inheritance”’. On the other hand, the Spirit united believers as one ‘body’, the Church, under Christ, ‘the Head of the Church in heaven’.⁴⁴

This double mystical sense of the individual’s union with Christ and believers’ corporate union in Christ likewise runs throughout the theology of Stevens and Simpson. For Stevens, regeneration or new birth restored the mutual indwelling of Christ and the believer lost through Adam.⁴⁵ Unity in the Church came about both by means of Christ’s death, and by ‘His embodying Himself in it in one common life through the Spirit’.⁴⁶ Thus, ‘the entire church constitutes one mystical man in Christ without individual distinction’.⁴⁷ As Simpson put it, ‘the Church is not an organisation. It is an organic life, it is a living body constituted by the Holy Ghost and united to Jesus Christ, its life and living head’.⁴⁸

One essential difference between Darby’s view of union and that of these later radical evangelicals, however, was the extent of that personal union. Whereas Darby’s Christ was heavenly, and the Spirit united him to Christ ‘in the heavens’, for Stevens and Simpson, union with Christ had mental and physical implications for this life. ‘Each individual is connected directly with the Lord Jesus Christ, as the source of his individual life, and from Him life must come to every member and extremity of the body’, Simpson explained.⁴⁹ For Stevens and for Simpson, this meant that the benefits of salvation were also this-worldly. That the Spirit mediated Christ’s very life, holiness, and power to the believer allowed for their interventionist interpretations of healing and of sanctification as

⁴⁴ Darby, in Noel, *History*, 1:37-38; 1:42; also 1:27.

⁴⁵ Stevens, *Revelation*, 1:496-497.

⁴⁶ Stevens, *Triumphs*, 70-71.

⁴⁷ Stevens, *Triumphs*, 68; *Revelation*, 1:261.

⁴⁸ A. B. Simpson, *Holy Spirit, or Power From on High*, foreword Walter M. Turnbull (1896; New York: The Christian Alliance, 1924), 119.

⁴⁹ Simpson, *Holy Spirit*, 121, 160-165; see also Stevens, *Triumphs*, 15.

a direct sharing of Christ's life. Their theology was no less spiritualised than Darby's; rather it was more interventionist.

On a larger scale, this doctrine of union with Christ defined the boundaries of the church. For instance, it was clear to Darby that the established Church was in 'ruins'. The real church, as God considered it, consisted 'only of those who were so united to Christ; whereas Christendom, as seen externally, was really the world'.⁵⁰ The true church was the 'Body', not its worldly representations as found in established or professing denominational forms. Thus, Darby and the Brethren sought to create pure gatherings of local believers. Because union with Christ through the Spirit was the only possible basis for church unity, attempts at formal unity on other grounds, whether professing churches, denominational churches or dissent, were false.⁵¹ Instead, the Holy Spirit, shared belief, practice, and experience bound true believers together.

Here, in this shared Spirit, we find the theological rationale for Stevens' expectation of evangelical cooperation, both within Midland school, and in the larger community. While the 'populist' or 'democratic' nature of nineteenth-century evangelicalism might reflect larger philosophical and cultural patterns, this organic doctrine of the church and of the Spirit provided the underlying principle for this practice. The creed adopted by the Niagara Bible Conference (1890) captures this sentiment:

We believe that the Church is composed of all who are united by the Holy Spirit to the risen and ascended Son of God, that by the same Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, and thus being members one of another we are

⁵⁰ Darby does credit the 'Church' with some 'responsibility attaching to the position which it professed to occupy'. Darby, in Noel, *History*, 1:35. See also Darby's early (1828) statement, 'The Nature and Unity of the Church in Christ', in *Collected Writings of J. N. Darby*, 1: 20-35. Darby does not yet use the language of fallen (or apostate) here.

⁵¹ Darby, in Noel, *History*, 1:35-36.

responsible to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, rising above all sectarian prejudices and denominational bigotry...⁵²

Accordingly, the first generation of North American premillennialists who held this view of the church worked together across denominational boundaries in a wide range of activities, institutions, and projects. In turn, this model of unity derived from the individual union of believer with Christ through the Spirit outlined above.

By this increased focus on the role of the Spirit in joining individuals together as the ‘body of Christ’, both Stevens and Simpson moved away from their Presbyterian heritage. The classic Reformed distinction, as articulated in the Westminster Confession of their Presbyterian tradition, also differentiated between the ‘visible’ and ‘invisible’ church.⁵³ The ‘invisible church’, according to the Confession, encompassed the ‘whole number of the elect’ from all time and places, ‘gathered into one under Christ the head’. It was the catholic, universal, spouse and body of Christ.⁵⁴ The ‘visible church’, which was more or less ‘pure’, consisted of all professors of the ‘true religion’, and their children. Although this church was ‘mixed’, it was the vehicle of God’s grace to the world. The visible church, ‘the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ’, possessed ‘the ordinary means of salvation’, including word, sacrament, and ministry.⁵⁵

While neither Stevens nor Simpson followed the Brethren in condemning the established church as ruined, when they did discuss the church, their ideas bore far more resemblance to those of Darby than to the words of the Confession. Theoretically,

⁵² ‘Declaration of Doctrinal Belief of Niagara Bible Conference,’ *The Truth* 20 (1894): 509-511; reprinted as an Appendix in Sandeen, *Roots of Fundamentalism*, 273-277. Cited by Larry Pettegrew, ‘Dispensationalists and Spirit Baptism’, *The Master’s Seminary Journal*, 8/2 (Spring 1997): 33.

⁵³ See *Westminster Confession*, 25-26, *Larger Catechism* Q. 62-65. This usage begins at least with Augustine. For Anabaptist and pietistic emphasis on the invisible church, see Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 560-561.

⁵⁴ *Confession*, 25; *Catechism*, Q. 64.

⁵⁵ *Confession*, 25; *Catechism* Q. 63; see also Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 560-561.

fraternal association as practised by the Christian and Missionary Alliance, or at Midland Bible School, supplemented rather than replaced denominational structures or the local church. In actuality, the new organisations created by these evangelicals often supplanted the authority and roles of the local church community. The structure and purposes of the institutional church rarely impinged upon their thought. Instead, like Darby, they placed their focus on the organic ‘body’ of Christ. At the same time, like most North American evangelicals, they were reluctant to adopt the more separatist implications that Darby drew from this theology.⁵⁶ Although Simpson resigned from the Presbyterian ministry, his New York tabernacle operated more like a local church than like a Brethren assembly. Stevens maintained his Presbyterian connections and ordination at least into the mid 1920s. Although A. J. Gordon, a Baptist pastor, remained concerned with the role of the church and of the sacraments, he held that the primary calling of the church was not ‘worship’, but the work of witnessing to the coming of Christ.⁵⁷

A further aspect of dispensational ecclesiology, following also from the doctrine of union with Christ, was a Spirit-centred view of ‘ministry’ that undercut the importance of ordained clergy. Darby, like Müller (see above), considered the Holy Spirit to be the source of true ministry in the church. The Spirit, who united believers to Christ to form the body, was also the life force of that body. ‘The Holy Spirit was given to be the source of the unity of the Church; as well as the spring of its activity; and indeed of all christian [sic] energy’ until Christ’s return.⁵⁸ As the unifying and empowering agent of

⁵⁶ See Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 70.

⁵⁷ Gordon, *Ecce Venit*, 103, 135, 150, 170-171.

⁵⁸ Darby, in Noel, *History*, 1:36.

the body, the Spirit allocated ‘gifts to the members according to His will’.⁵⁹ For Darby, this latter truth led to a further discovery:

From whence came this ministry? According to the Bible, it clearly came *from God*, by the free and powerful action of the Holy Ghost’.⁶⁰

This raised questions in his mind regarding the place of the clergy, who owed their positions to the system, rather than to the Spirit.

I saw in scripture that there were certain ‘*gifts*’ which formed true ministry; in contrast to a clergy, established upon another principle.⁶¹

That is, ‘ministry’ was of the Spirit. Authority for ministry came not from ecclesiastical approval, but from the believer’s direct relationship to Christ as Head ‘in heaven’, and from the Spirit’s present activity within each believer and the community. Accordingly, Darby emphasised the invisible spiritual church, spiritual gifts, and lay ministry, to the virtual exclusion of the established church and ordained ministry. The larger Brethren movement did not create a clerical order to lead their assemblies, but, based on the concept of the priesthood of all believers, and the gifting of the Spirit, drew upon a system of lay teachers and local elders. Dispensationalist C. I. Scofield later perpetuated this view of the church in his Scofield Bible and in his writings. He interpreted ‘the division of an equal brotherhood into “clergy” and “laity”’ as an outcome of the church’s failure to realise her heavenly calling.⁶²

Simpson and Stevens maintained much of this ‘lay’ interpretation of ministry in their thought.⁶³ As with Darby, the doctrine of union with Christ through the Spirit led them to focus on spiritual gifting. Both insisted that all Christians have and should

⁵⁹ Darby, in Noel, *History*, 1:37.

⁶⁰ Darby, in Noel, *History*, 1:37; see also 1:26-27.

⁶¹ Darby, in Noel, *History*, 1: 38; also 1:42.

⁶² Scofield, *Rightly Dividing*, 17.

⁶³ Revivalist practices also played a large role in the rise of lay ministry. See Jerald C. Brauer, ‘Conversion: From Puritanism to Revivalism’, *Journal of Religion* 58/3 (July 1978): 242.

manifest spiritual gifts, distributed ‘by the Spirit’s will’, not by human decision.⁶⁴ In his 1896 work on the Holy Spirit in the New Testament, *The Holy Spirit, or Power from on High*, Simpson discussed these truths at length. He began by examining the role of the Spirit in uniting believers first to Christ and then to one another, then proceeded to a consideration of ministry.⁶⁵ To be ‘effectual’, ministry needed to be Holy Spirit inspired and empowered. ‘It is not splendid talent, it is not deep culture, that constitute efficiency in the body of Christ, it is simply and absolutely the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a divine ministry and must have a divine equipment’. This empowerment was for all believers; however, each believer was but an instrument used by the Spirit.⁶⁶

At first glance, this lay interpretation of ministry should have allowed full female participation in ministry, as full members of the body of Christ. If ministry was not based upon talent, or culture—that is, upon this-worldly qualifications—but upon the gifting and empowering of the Holy Spirit, the ‘sex’ of the minister should not matter. Those in dispensationalist and premillennialist circles did allow some forms of female work and witness. Not even the Brethren, usually considered conservative on this front, universally rejected female preaching or teaching.⁶⁷ Thus in the 1860s Gordon Forlong, of the Plymouth Brethren, could defend female preaching on scriptural grounds.⁶⁸ Generations

⁶⁴ Stevens, *Triumphs*, 73; see also Simpson, *Holy Spirit*, 123, *Romans*, 231-233.

⁶⁵ Simpson, *Holy Spirit*, 121, 160-165.

⁶⁶ Simpson, *Holy Spirit*, 123-124.

⁶⁷ Olive Anderson connects the rise in female ministry during the mid-century second evangelical awakening in England to its lay orientation. She argues that this is due to Brethren influence, rather than being an American import. See Olive Anderson, ‘Women Preachers in Mid-Victorian Britain: Some Reflexions on Feminism, Popular Religion and Social Change’, *Historical Journal* 12/3 (1969): 467-484.

⁶⁸ See Anderson, ‘Women Preachers’, 470.

later, Dorothy Ruth Miller remarked (albeit with some astonishment), that the man who encouraged her to attend Bible School, and take up teaching Bible, was Brethren.⁶⁹

Dispensationalists did tend towards conservative positions on female roles.⁷⁰ The literalist approach to scriptures necessary to dispensationalism was certainly one factor. A further element appears to be the tendency towards dualism between the spiritual and the worldly. The opposition between the heavenly and spiritual church and the material world easily corresponded to a division between female 'spiritual' roles, and female 'nature', which required modesty and subordination. In contrast, radical evangelicals, with their stronger sense of God's intervention in the material, could more easily perceive of natural gender boundaries being overridden by spiritual experience.

The boundaries placed around the present dispensation also affected the extent to which Spirit gifting might determine gender roles. Based on their division of the ages, dispensationalists often insisted that verses about prophesying women referred to a future time, and warned that female prophesying was a sign of the deterioration of the present age.⁷¹ Most radical evangelicals, in contrast, considered female prophesying to be a characteristic of the *present* age, and its renewal as a sign of a final outpouring of the Spirit to precede the second coming of Christ.

Radical evangelicals considered the supernatural events of the day of Pentecost to be normative for the present church age, while dispensationalists often read those events as final signs for the Jewish people. Thus, radical expectations of which spiritual gifts

⁶⁹ D. R. Miller, 'On Women Speaking', *Prairie Pastor*, 12/12 (Dec 1939):7- 8.

⁷⁰ However, as Timothy Larsen is at pains to point out, dispensational fundamentalists did accept women speakers, as evidenced by their support of the preaching ministry of Christabel Pankhurst during the 1920s. See Timothy Larsen, *Christabel Pankhurst: Fundamentalism and Feminism in Coalition* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2002).

⁷¹ For this dispensationalist position, see Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender*, 46; also Betty DeBerg, *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 76.

were available, and who manifested what gifts, could differ markedly from dispensational readings. Here Peter's proclamation, found in Acts 2:17, that 'in the last days', the Spirit will be poured out on all flesh, and 'your sons and your daughters shall prophesy', is of importance. Radical evangelical supporters of female ministry turned from this text to Paul's discussion of spiritual gifts in First Corinthians 14, where the gift of prophecy was set up as the most desirable gift. There, Paul had stated that 'ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted'. Thus, according to Stevens, 'prophecy', understood not as predictive, but for purposes of 'edification, exhortation and comfort', is 'the one gift of ministry that all may have'.⁷² Although Stevens did not state the obvious, 'all' here includes women as well as men. This was essential to his support for Miss Miller and other women at Midland whose roles might be summarised precisely as 'edification, exhortation and comfort'. Simpson made this connection between prophecy and female ministry explicit in his commentary on Romans, where he explained, in a somewhat backhanded restriction, that the gift of prophecy 'includes about all any Christian woman ever wants to say'.⁷³

The full implications for female ministry of the 'pentecostal' view of the Spirit developed from this passage and from the related text in Joel 2 are explored in the next chapter. At this point, it suffices to note the connection made between the Holy Spirit, a special 'last days' gift of 'prophecy', and female prophesying. This practice of defining female ministry as 'prophecy', and classifying it as a spiritual gift, explains in part why public speaking and ordination remained separate issues. For Simpson at least, female

⁷² Stevens, *Triumphs*, 73-74. For example, in *Bobbed Hair, Bossy Wives and Women Preachers* (Wheaton, IL: Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1941), John R. Rice limited prophecy to 'foretelling' only, in order to restrict female roles. For the counter position, made in response to Rice, see 'Shall Women Preach?' (Tract; Virginia, MN: Northern Gospel Mission, n. d.), 4.

⁷³ Simpson, *Romans*, 286-287.

prophecy, as a special gift of the Spirit, did not equate with leadership. Like much of the wider culture, he assumed that the different natures of men and women determined their appropriate roles, at least in part. In discussing Paul's inclusion of women workers in the last chapter of Romans, he explained that the apostle allowed women to minister 'within the restraints required by her nature and her distinct place in the social economy'.⁷⁴ As he explained it, 'the woman therefore who will keep the modest place that both nature and the Bible require, may speak about anything that is unto 'edification, exhortation, and comfort'.⁷⁵ Thus, women were free to teach or prophesy, but not to be ordained or to rule.

Other evangelicals, for instance Welsh holiness teacher Jessie Penn-Lewis, whose name often turned up in Alliance publications, interpreted these ideas more radically. In her *'Magna Charta' of Woman* (1919), Penn-Lewis made a case for the importance of specifically 'female' prophesying.⁷⁶ For example, she thought it 'impossible for the invisible church, consisting of the living members of Christ, to reach "full stature" in preparation for the Lord Return [sic], unless each member of the "body", set in its place by God, fulfils its office'.⁷⁷ Thus, the right of Christian women 'to speak or pray in the assembly of saints' was of vital concern. '[If] a member of the Body, in which Paul says

⁷⁴ Simpson, *Romans*, 286-287.

⁷⁵ See Simpson, *Romans*, 286.

⁷⁶ Mrs. [Jessie] Penn-Lewis, *The 'Magna Charta' of Woman 'According to the Scriptures', being light upon the subject gathered from Dr. Katherine Bushnell's Text Book, 'God's Word to Women'* (Bournemouth: 1919, 3rd ed. 1948). Although Penn-Lewis claimed to be making Katherine Bushnell's larger work accessible, the last section of the *Magna Charta* reflects her own interpretations. For instance, Bushnell did not argue from the 'body' image. See Katherine C. Bushnell, *God's Word to Women: One Hundred Bible Studies on Woman's Place in the Divine Economy* (1923; reprint; 'God's Word to Women Publishers', Box 315, Mossville, IL).

⁷⁷ Penn-Lewis, *'Magna Charta' of Woman*, 40.

there cannot be “male or female”, fails to carry out the will of the “Head”, *it checks the life of the entire Body, and the manifestation of the Spirit through all its members*’.⁷⁸

Through the cross all, whether Jew, Gentile, bond, free, male or female, were made one body. Therefore, she argued, ‘Is it not clear that *the “Cross” has also removed the “middle wall of partition” between “male and female” in the service of God?*’⁷⁹ She concluded that surely the biblical assertion that ‘all may prophesy’, and ‘all might learn’, meant ‘women as well as men’, for both ‘alls’ obviously include ‘all’ who are ‘in the assembly’.⁸⁰ Penn-Lewis resolved the issue of ordination by distinguishing between the visible church as ‘organisation’, and the invisible church as ‘organism’. ‘In the first, are rules and laws made by men, who have a right to say who shall, and who shall not occupy certain places and do certain work in its services’, she explained. ‘In the second the “church” as an organism, formed of living members of Christ are the “laws of the Spirit”, which govern members of the Body according to the will of the Head, and each member must be free to obey the Spirit’.

It is this difference between the professing church of the present time, and the mystical ‘church’ [Body] of Christ, which Christian women also need to understand in their service for Christ, when, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit they are called to ‘proclaim godliness’.⁸¹

Therefore, when called to speak by the Holy Spirit, the question women must answer is this: ‘Do they “speak” as “women” or from their *spiritual* position as members of the Body of Christ, “new creations” in Him?’⁸² In the home, a woman might be wife or daughter; but in the church, ‘she is a “partaker of the Divine nature”, a messenger of the

⁷⁸ Penn-Lewis, *‘Magna Charta’ of Woman*, 40, italics in original. Penn-Lewis cites 1 Cor 12:26 as support.

⁷⁹ Penn-Lewis, *‘Magna Charta’ of Woman*, 40; for this discussion of Galatians 3:28 see 41.

⁸⁰ Penn-Lewis, *‘Magna Charta’ of Woman*, 11; also Bushnell, *God’s Word to Women*, para. 190, 213.

⁸¹ Penn-Lewis *‘Magna Charta’ of Woman*, 41. In the previous section, Penn-Lewis recounted Bushnell’s arguments for mutuality between male and female (31-40).

⁸² Penn-Lewis, *‘Magna Charta’ of Woman*, 41.

Lord of Hosts, a member of the heavenly Body, the church'. By separating the 'body of Christ' from the visible church, and spiritualising the act of public speech, Penn-Lewis placed the question of female ministry outside the realm of 'the rules and laws of men'.⁸³

Penn-Lewis made two further moves, in which Stevens, Simpson and Gordon could also participate. First, she linked this female witness to the nearness of Christ's return. Second, she drew upon a *non*-dispensational reading of Acts chapter two for support. 'That this was God's purpose for redeemed women, as well as redeemed men was unmistakably expressed in the prophecy of Joel foretelling the outpouring of the Spirit at Pentecost', she wrote.⁸⁴ Penn-Lewis thus linked an organic model of the church with the Acts 2 promise of prophesying daughters to provide an explicit argument for female ministry.

⁸³ See Bushnell, *God's Word to Women*, para. 816-822: 'Women belong, in large numbers, to the *mystical* Body of Christ, the true church; they do not actually belong to that body the visible church which merely enrols their names on a list while it make them irresponsible as regards its entire polity'. Bushnell, unlike most of the other writers discussed here, held feminist views. Thus, the visible church 'masquerades' as a 'feminine' body (*ecclesia*), but is actually masculine, for it 'excludes women, for the most part, from ministry at its altar, and shuts them out of its councils, and out of the fullness of Christ's atonement'.

⁸⁴ Penn-Lewis, *Magna Charta' of Woman*, 42.

Chapter Five

Prophecy Daughters:

Pentecostal Pneumatology and the Latter Rain of the Spirit

The famous Edward Irving speaks thus pointedly on this subject: Who am I that I should despise the gift of God, because it is in a woman, whom the Holy Ghost despiseth not? ... That women have with men an equal distribution of spiritual gifts is not only manifest from the fact (Acts 2; 18:26; 21:9; 1 Cor 11:3, etc), but from the very words of the prophecy of Joel itself, which may well rebuke those vain and thoughtless people who make light of the Lord's work, because it appeareth among women. *I wish men would themselves be subject to the Word of God, before they lord it over women's equal rights in the great outpouring of the Spirit*.¹

A. J. Gordon, 'The Ministry of Women', 1894

In the spring of 1905, Elizabeth Tomlinson of Toronto graduated from the Missionary Training Institute in Nyack, New York. For her convocation paper, later published in the *Christian and Missionary Alliance Weekly*, she chose to write upon the interesting topic of 'The Latter Rain'.² Here, she linked the current revivals in Australia, England, and Wales, with the 'great outpouring' of the Holy Spirit to come in the last days.³ 'Undoubtedly, the awakening in Wales is the most remarkable evidence of the independent working of the Holy Spirit that has ever been witnessed since Pentecost', she enthused.⁴ Reports estimated 'over one hundred thousand souls' saved in three months.

¹ A. J. Gordon, 'The Ministry of Women', *World Missionary Review*, 1894 (Christians for Biblical Equality Reprint, photocopy): 5, citing Edward Irving, *Works*, 5.555. Italics in original.

² Elizabeth Tomlinson, 'The Latter Rain', *The Christian and Missionary Alliance Weekly* (June 10, 1905): 354.

³ The revivals here referred to were those led by R. A. Torrey and Charles Alexander; as well as the Welsh revivals of 1904-1905 associated with Evan Roberts and Mrs. Jessie Penn-Lewis.

⁴ Tomlinson, 'The Latter Rain', 354.

However, ‘most important of all’, in her estimation, a union in ‘one heart-felt Holy Ghost breathed prayer for world-wide revival’ had permeated the entire movement. For Tomlinson, the evidence was in. The latter rains were falling, the harvest was almost ready, and the long awaited second coming of Christ could not be far behind.⁵

One remarkable aspect of the new revivals, in Tomlinson’s estimation, was that two-thirds of its converts were men. She applauded this phenomenon; for, she felt, God’s work was ‘much retarded for lack of men’. This revival proved that religion was not ‘only good for women and children’. Evidently, the ‘feminization’ of religion also concerned female evangelicals! Ironically, what Tomlinson did not remark upon was the meaning of this latter-days, or last days, outpouring of the Holy Spirit for female ministry. Within radical evangelical circles, expectations of the latter rain paved the way, as A. J. Gordon put it in the article cited above, for ‘women’s equal rights in the great outpouring of the Spirit’.

This chapter explores the interconnections between radical evangelical expectations of a latter rain outpouring of the Spirit, and their support for female ministry. Further, it contrasts this set of ideas with ‘dispensational’ beliefs, which are found to differ quite sharply in some areas crucial to practices of female ministry. Radicals and dispensationalists disagreed over the ‘right divisions’ of prophetic history. One key variance centred upon their reading of prophetic events relating to the Holy Spirit and Pentecost; that is: were the latter rains of the Holy Spirit part of this dispensation, or would they follow the return of Christ? Underlying this divergence, however, lay an often-unnoticed theological debate over the role of the Holy Spirit in the

⁵ An ‘Ella Louise’ Tomlinson from the Toronto area became a missionary to Jamaica in 1907. See Lindsay Reynolds, *Footprints: The Beginnings of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada* (Toronto: Christian and Missionary Alliance, 1981), 333-334.

present life of the church and individual believers. This distinction between the ‘pentecostal’ pneumatology of the radical evangelical, and dispensational pneumatology, forms the latter portion of the chapter.

Because most discussions of early ‘proto-fundamentalist’ views on women’s roles overlook these theological differences, they misinterpret how radical Calvinistic evangelicals construed female ministry. In her important survey of turn-of-the-century evangelical ‘feminism’, Janette Hassey found two primary biblical defences for female ministry. One, most often held by later Methodists, built upon doctrines of creation and redemption, and promoted egalitarianism.⁶ The other, used by early holiness women and some Calvinistic evangelicals, argued from Pentecost to support Spirit-empowered female preaching.⁷ While Hassey noted a connection between these views on the Holy Spirit, eschatology, and support for ministry, she did not explore why such theological distinctions led to differing outcomes. Instead, she focused upon their scriptural exegesis of specific texts.⁸ Further, because Hassey labelled radical evangelicals such as A. J. Gordon as dispensational premillennialists, her discussions confused matters for later studies on gender and fundamentalism.⁹ Although not all of the Calvinistic supporters of female ministry whom Hassey discussed were ‘radical’ evangelicals, the majority,

⁶ Janette Hassey, *No Time for Silence: Evangelical Women in Public Ministry around the Turn of the Century* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan / Academie Books, 1986; CBE reprint), 104-105, 117. For a similar approach, see Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976).

⁷ Hassey, *No Time for Silence*, 121. Timothy Larsen gives a concise and helpful assessment of scripture passages most commonly used both in defence and in opposition to female ministry in *Christabel Pankhurst: Fundamentalism and Feminism in Coalition*, *Studies in Modern British Religious History*, vol. 4 (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2002), 133-134.

⁸ For her brief discussion of theological factors, see Hassey, *No Time for Silence*, 125-131. Hassey focuses on Gordon’s biblical exegesis, but does note that he promoted a second experience of the Spirit (126). Betty DeBerg takes the opposite and problematic position that later fundamentalist theology developed to maintain conservative gender roles in *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990).

⁹ Hassey, *No Time for Silence*, 110, 129.

including A. B. Simpson, A. J. Gordon, and Frederik Franson, were. Thus when Margaret Bendroth later suggests that early ‘dispensationalists’ Gordon, A. T. Pierson, or Fredrik Franson were ‘reluctant to accept the strict implications of their doctrine’, she misrepresents their theological viewpoint.¹⁰ However, as we saw in chapter four, Gordon, Simpson, and Stevens were not doctrinaire dispensationalists; but in crucial areas were modified ‘historicists’. This historicism allowed for their distinctive ‘pentecostal’, rather than ‘dispensational’ doctrine of the Spirit, for their full-gospel beliefs, and for their support of female ministry. Thus, far from evading the implications of their belief system in proclaiming the ministry of women, Gordon and others like him were upholding them.

Tomlinson’s enthusiasm for the latter rain echoed the hopes and expectations of W. C. Stevens, Principal of the Training Institute, and of Alliance president A. B. Simpson.¹¹ Each eagerly awaited these latter rains—to be manifested both as revival and as an increase in supernatural Spirit manifestations—in the early years of the twentieth century.¹² In 1904 and 1905, their expectations intensified as spiritual events unfolded around the globe.¹³ Both believed that the Welsh revival signalled the start of the latter

¹⁰ Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender: 1875 to the Present* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1993), 45. Franson was instrumental in the formation of the early Evangelical Free Church in North America. For his use of Joel 2, see Hassey, *No Time for Silence*, 108-111.

¹¹ Stevens became principal at the Missionary Training School in Nyack, New York in the fall of 1901.

¹² Simpson looked for an increase in spiritual manifestations as early as 1886; although he initially used ‘latter rain’ terminology for an empowerment for missions, rather than as a developed form of pneumatology. For this expectation of a latter day increase in Spirit power, see A. B. Simpson, *The Gospel of Healing* (1886; Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, rev. ed. 1915); Simpson, *The Holy Spirit, or Power From on High* (1896; New York: Christian Alliance Publishing, 1924), 83-84, 201, 281-282; Simpson, *Romans* (c.1894; Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, n.d.), 279.

¹³ Simpson’s application of ‘latter rain’ language to Spirit manifestations, rather than simply to revival, occurred during these years. This language is notably absent from his early discussions of the Holy Spirit, such as *The Holy Spirit or Power From on High*, 2 vols. (c.1894-1895; Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, n.d.), and his outline of Alliance doctrines in *The Four-Fold Gospel*, intro. Frederic H. Senft (1887; Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, n.d.). Charles Nienkirchen notes Simpson’s usage of ‘latter rain’ in the *King’s Business* (1886) and in the *Gospel of the Kingdom* (1890). See Charles W. Nienkirchen,

rains of the Holy Spirit. By 1905, Simpson's sermons and editorials in the *Christian and Missionary Alliance Weekly* commonly expressed his anticipation of imminent revival, while Stevens' reports on happenings at the Missionary Institute voiced similar hopeful yearnings.¹⁴ 'Spiritually the school has gone on pretty evenly, without any very special demonstration as yet, further than a lively interest in and expectation of the "latter rains"', he informed readers in February of that year.¹⁵ Further intimations of latter rain revival came in 1906, both at the school and at the Alliance tabernacle in New York. Still, the abundance of the Spirit that Stevens longed for was missing.¹⁶ Finally, in the fall of 1907, revival again broke out, this time with tongues and further signs.¹⁷

In a sermon on the 'latter rain' given at the Alliance conference at Old Orchard, Maine in 1907, Stevens called members to the 'expectation of increasing revival, demonstration of the Spirit and world-wide evangelism until Jesus comes'.¹⁸ As his text, he chose James 5:7:

Be patient, therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain (KJV).

'A. B. Simpson', in *The Birth of a Vision*, ed. David F. Hartzfeld and Nienkirchen, *His Dominion*, Supplement 1 (Regina, SK: 1986), 130-136. However, Nienkirchen does not distinguish between Simpson's usage before and after the Pentecostal revival in the early 1900s; most of his citations of 'latter rain' are from 1905 to 1908. See Charles W. Nienkirchen, *A. B. Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement* (Peabody, Mass: Hendrickson, 1992), 65-68.

¹⁴ See for example, A. B. Simpson, 'Pentecostal Outpourings of the Holy Spirit', *The Christian and Missionary Alliance Weekly* (Feb 18, 1905): 101-103.

¹⁵ W. C. Stevens, 'Missionary Institute', *Christian and Missionary Alliance Weekly* 24/13 (1905): 205.

¹⁶ For reports of the 1906 revival at Nyack, see F. E. Marsh, 'Revival in the Missionary Institute at South Nyack on Hudson', *The Christian and Missionary Alliance Weekly* (Nov 17, 1906): 316, 318; 'The Emphasis of the Holy Spirit in the Revival at Nyack and New York', *The Christian and Missionary Alliance Weekly* (Dec 1, 1906): 338; Fred R. Bullen, 'Among the Nyack Students', *The Christian and Missionary Alliance Weekly* (Dec 1, 1906): 363. For Stevens' version of events, see the *C&MA Annual Report* (1906-1907), 77-78.

¹⁷ See Stevens, *Annual Report* (1907-1908), 82. Although incidents of tongues speaking were reported throughout the nineteenth century, they apparently increased in the later years.

¹⁸ W. C. Stevens, 'The Latter Rain' (New York: Alliance Press, c.1907, tract). Archibald-Thomson Archives. This description comes from the price list located at the back of his books. This sermon is also in *Living Truths* 7 (Sept 1907), and *Triumphs of Faith* 28 (July 1908).

This verse, according to Stevens, related ‘specially to days immediately preceding the second coming of our Lord’. The second line of the verse, he explained, drew an analogy between precipitation patterns in the Holy Land and the Spirit’s work in this present age.¹⁹ In Palestine, the early rains came first, to soften the ground and allow planting. After the early rains came a lengthy growing season with only moderate rainfall. At the end of that time, another copious downfall of rain fell, which allowed for an abundant harvest.

This rainfall pattern provided a map for the history of the present ‘Pentecostal’ dispensation:

So this Pentecostal dispensation is here presented as an age of three stages: a brief introductory epoch of striking change from previous conditions and of extraordinary spiritual manifestation; a long, intermediate period of comparatively infrequent and moderate spiritual demonstration; and a final epoch, strikingly different from preceding centuries by virtue of extraordinary spiritual manifestations, and falling right into the same category with the first epoch of the dispensation.²⁰

The early rains comprised the Day of Pentecost, when ‘tongues of fire’ rested upon the gathered disciples, they were ‘filled with the Holy Ghost’, and began to speak in ‘other tongues’ (Acts 2:2-4), as well as the remainder of the early apostolic period. The long interlude of the church between the apostolic period and the present time represented the growing season.

Now, Stevens explained, the latter rains were falling. ‘Unusual convulsions of the spiritual atmosphere’ had occurred ‘in the past two years or so’ (here likely referring to the Welsh revival and to the recent revival among his students at Nyack). Even more important, the new manifestations of the Spirit made it clear that this was the latter rain.

¹⁹ For a literal reading of this idea, in which increased rainfall in Palestine, coinciding with the return of Jewish people to the area, suggests the imminent return of Christ, see J. Townsend Trench, ‘A Midnight Cry’, *The Christian Alliance and Foreign Missionary Weekly* (March 27, 1891): 201.

²⁰ Stevens, ‘Latter Rain’, 4.

A baptism of the Holy Ghost has followed after the same order of sudden, world-wide, uninfluenced appearance in various localities, a baptism characterised by phenomena, especially by signs, pre-eminently that of tongues of the Spirit, such as relates it to nothing this side of the first effusion of the Spirit.²¹

The connection made by Stevens and others between Pentecost and the latter rain drew upon Joel 2:23, a verse not quoted by Peter: ‘He hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month’. The result of these rains would be a time of plenty, in which Israel would know God (Joel 2:27). The promised outpouring of the Spirit followed ‘afterward’ (Joel 2:28).²² According to Stevens, this ‘final phenomenal outpouring of the Holy Ghost’, which heralded the nearness of the second advent of Christ, would be both like and unlike the first Pentecost. Believers could expect the same phenomena of Holy Spirit baptism, the same completeness of ‘glory and power, of signs and wonders, of gifts and graces, of sacrifices and exploits’ and the same evangelistic harvest of the apostolic age. However, while the original Pentecost took place in a single location, among one original community of believers, the latter rain would be global in occurrence and effect—an amazing event currently taking place throughout the world.

Simpson and Stevens shared this hope for a last days outpouring of the Spirit, most often in the form of a revival, with many late-nineteenth and turn-of-the-century evangelicals. Specifically premillennial interpretations of ‘latter rain’ appear to be a nineteenth-century innovation.²³ Mid-nineteenth-century British evangelicals, such as Robert Murray McCheyne and Horatius Bonar, had used latter rain terminology as a

²¹ Stevens, ‘Latter Rain’, 16.

²² Another important text was Zechariah 12:10.

²³ Within earlier postmillennial schemes, this final outpouring of the Spirit was usually expected before the return of Christ, as part of, or just before, the millennium. See Stanley J. Grenz, *The Millennial Maze: Sorting Out Evangelical Options* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 52, 69.

language for revival.²⁴ At Dwight L. Moody's Northfield conference in 1891, famed evangelical teacher F. B. Meyer spoke of a latter rain of the Spirit.²⁵ Irish evangelist J. Edwin Orr still expected a latter rain revival as late as 1937.²⁶

Latter rain could also be used in a more 'pentecostal' sense.²⁷ Again, this modification was most evidently connected with British premillennialist Edward Irving. In his lengthy preface to Ben Ezra's *Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty* Irving had set out his own views of the end times, including a discussion of a future 'latter rain' outpouring of the Holy Spirit, leading to the conversion of the Jews.²⁸ (Lewis Way, a fellow participant at Henry Drummond's Albury Park conferences, had presented this idea in his pamphlet *The Latter Rain* in 1821).²⁹ Irving's apparent contribution was to link this latter day outpouring of the Holy Spirit with a restoration of the 'miracle' gifts. In 1885, the call by William E. Boardman to a healing conference at Bethshan, London 'made special reference to the promise by the Prophet Joel, of an outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter days, both in saving power and supernatural signs'.³⁰ In the early

²⁴ For examples see Robert Murray McCheyne, 'The Cry for Revival' (Edinburgh: James Taylor, 1844); <<http://members.aol.com/rsichurch/revive1.html>>; also Horatius Bonar, preface to J. Gillies, *Historical Collections Relating to Remarkable Periods of Success of the Gospel* (1845; Reprint London: Banner of Truth Trust, 1981). The preface is available online as 'True Revival and the Men God Uses'. <<http://www.revival-library.org/catalogues/theology/bonar/title.htm>>

²⁵ Ian Randall calls this a 'latter rain' vision. See Ian M. Randall, 'A Christian Cosmopolitan', in *Amazing Grace: Evangelicalism in Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States*, ed. George A. Rawlyk and Mark A. Noll (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 175-176. See also S. P. Sprague, 'The Power that Converts', *The Word, The Work and The World* (Feb 1883): 22.

²⁶ See Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 112.

²⁷ I here distinguish between a 'pentecostal' interpretation of the Spirit's role in the present age, and the twentieth-century 'Pentecostal' movement.

²⁸ Edward Irving, 'Preliminary Discourse', in Juan Josafat Ben-Ezra [Manuel Lacunza], *The Coming of Messiah in Glory and Majesty*, translated by Edward Irving (London: L. B. Seeley and Son, 1827), 5, 6.

²⁹ Way argued for a division between the Church and Israel in God's plans, and for the conversion of the Jews before the second coming, an idea repeated in later dispensationalism.

³⁰ A. B. Simpson, 'The Conferences in Great Britain', *The Word, The Work and The World* (Sept 1885): 233; also Sprague, 'The Power that Converts', 22.

1900s, early Pentecostals interpreted glossolalia, or tongues speaking, as a sign of this 'latter rain'.

In his discussion, Stevens also cited Acts 2:16-21, another paradigm text for these latter rain believers. On the day of Pentecost, in explaining the phenomena of tongues to the gathered crowds, Peter had quoted from the Old Testament book of Joel:

This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams;

And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come;

And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved (Acts 2:17-21, citing Joel 2:28-32 KJV).

Upon this text rested expectations of renewed manifestations of the Spirit, including miracles and signs. Not surprisingly, female ministry could also be prohibited or promoted, depending upon how this Acts 2 /Joel 2 nexus was construed.

Belief in the imminent fulfilment of Joel's prophecy could create an unusually fertile environment for the development of female ministry. For instance, in the late 1820s, Edward Irving's hopes for the latter rain became reality, in the form of healings, glossolalia and prophetic utterances among his followers. Significantly, as Joel 2 foretold, many of the key recipients of these gifts were women; further, they exercised these gifts within public worship meetings. This argument for female ministry was also

prevalent among the mid-century English ‘lady preachers’ of the second evangelical awakening.³¹ According to Olive Anderson:

The spread of female preaching among these mid-nineteenth century historical premillennialists sprang quite specifically from the interpretation they placed upon one particular prophecy, that in Joel 2:28-29. ... They argued that since to prophesy did not mean to foretell the future, but to preach, exhort and instruct, one of the signs of the last days was to be the emergence of a female ministry.³²

For these women, their female sex made their act an important sign of the end times.³³

Nineteenth-century American Wesleyan Holiness women also interpreted these texts to explain female ministry. In her 1859 defence of female ministry, *The Promise of the Father*, Phoebe Palmer, who referred to prophecy as arising ‘from the immediate impulse of the Spirit’, considered female prophesy as a positive sign of the last days.³⁴ Methodist Dr. Katherine Bushnell, a later defender of female ministry, likewise argued for a special role of women in the end times. Women, she explained, must ‘hasten to bring about that FULL-filment (sic) of Joel’s prophecy regarding “daughters” and “handmaidens” and thus make way for the “latter rain” which opens the door for the

³¹ Olive Anderson, ‘Women Preachers in Mid-Victorian Britain: Some Reflexions on Feminism, Popular Religion and Social Change’, *Historical Journal* 12/3 (1969): 467-484.

³² Olive Anderson, ‘Women Preachers’, 479. Catherine Booth also based female preaching on Pentecost (480). As discussed in the previous chapter, full-gospel believers also understood prophecy as a spiritual gift, which all may possess (1 Cor 14).

³³ Olive Anderson, ‘Women Preachers’, 480.

³⁴ For Wesleyan Holiness arguments for female ministry, and for the importance of the Holy Spirit in determining ministry, see Phoebe Palmer, *The Promise of the Father* (1859); also Palmer, *Tongue of Fire on the Daughters of the Lord*, 1869; reprinted in *Phoebe Palmer: Selected Writings*, ed. Thomas C. Oden, Sources of American Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 31-56, 38-39. Bishop Benjamin Titus Roberts, *Ordaining Women: Biblical and Historical Insights* (1891; Indianapolis, IN: Light and Life Press, 1992, 1997); Katherine C. Bushnell, *God’s Word to Women: One Hundred Bible Studies on Woman’s Place in the Divine Economy* (1923; Mossville, IL: ‘God’s Word to Women Publishers’). For female ministry in Holiness circles, see Susie Stanley, ‘The Promise Fulfilled: Women’s Ministries in the Wesleyan/Holiness Movement’, in *Religious Institutions and Women’s Leadership: New Roles, Inside the Mainstream*, ed. Catherine Wessinger (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 139-157; and Nancy Hardesty, Lucille Sider Dayton and Donald Dayton, ‘Women in the Holiness Movement: Feminism in the Evangelical Tradition’, in *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 246. See also Janette Hassey, *No Time for Silence: Evangelical Women in Public Ministry around the Turn of the Century* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan / Academie Books, 1986; CBE reprint), 121.

Lord's second coming'.³⁵ Jessie Penn-Lewis, in her condensation of Bushnell's argument, *The 'Magna Charta' of Women* (1919), urged both redeemed women and men to witness 'in this last hour of the Christian Dispensation'.³⁶ If only the Spirit 'had right of way', the body of Christ would function as it had during the Welsh revivals, every member doing their part.

Baptist minister A. J. Gordon provided one of the more cogent defences of the radical 'pentecostal' and 'last days' vindication of female ministry in a 1894 article, 'The Ministry of Women'. Gordon began by reminding readers of *World Missionary Review* that 'we are living in the dispensation of the Spirit'.³⁷ According to Gordon, the prophecy of Joel rehearsed by Peter on the day of Pentecost was the *Magna Charta* of the new church, and thus gave the 'characteristic features' of this new age.³⁸ That *Magna Charta* gave women a 'status in the Spirit hitherto unknown'. Peter's citation of Joel 2—'I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh'—announced the inclusive privileges of the Spirit. As the apostle Paul later expressed it, 'in Christ there is no longer Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male or female' (Gal 3:15). Through the 'equal privileges' into which all believers, regardless of race, gender, age, or economic status, entered through the Spirit,

³⁵ Bushnell, *God's Word to Women*, Para 722; 791-794; 798; 838; for Joel 2 / Pentecost see para 207, 772. Bushnell does not give a clear account of her eschatology; various remarks upon prophecy, the tribulation and the rapture suggest a historicist and premillennialist position. For comments on the tribulation see para 111, 709, 813, 827; for the rapture see para 828, and for prophecy see para 8, 799.

³⁶ Jessie Penn-Lewis, *The 'Magna Charta' of Woman 'According to the Scriptures', being light upon the subject gathered from Dr. Katherine Bushnell's Text Book, 'God's Word to Women'* (Bournemouth: 1919, 3rd ed. 1948), 42.

³⁷ Gordon, 'The Ministry of Women' (1894, CBE). The *Alliance Weekly* reprinted a version of this article in 1928. See A. J. Gordon, 'The Ministry of Women', *Alliance Weekly* (Dec 8, 1928): 804-805; 'The Ministry of Women', *Alliance Weekly* (Dec 15, 1928): 820-821. The Alliance articles contain material not in the CBE version, and *vice versa*. For later use of this article by one of Stevens' students, see L. E. Maxwell and Ruth C. Dearing, *Women in Ministry* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1987), 67, 108, 76, 91.

³⁸ Penn-Lewis may be quoting Gordon in her title.

women gained ‘equal warrant’ with men to tell out the gospel. Accordingly, Gordon looked forward to that ‘closing chapter, now fulfilling, when “the women that publish the tidings are a great host”’.³⁹

If this text was the *Magna Charta*, as Gordon claimed, then its terms governed the interpretation of other apparently restrictive New Testament passages. Gordon took these to address the orderly behaviour of both sexes, to set patterns for marital relations, or to reflect misinterpretations of the text. *If* there were restrictions against women pastors, he concluded (that there are no examples of women in this position in the New Testament made it necessary for him to admit this possibility), these were grounded on ‘impediments of nature’ only.⁴⁰

Importantly, Gordon’s concluding argument turned upon experience.⁴¹ ‘The final exegesis is not always to be found in the lexicon and grammar’, he told readers. ‘The Spirit is in the Word; the Spirit is also in the Church, the body of regenerate and sanctified believers’. While it was not safe to ignore scripture, ‘it may be that we need to be admonished not to ignore the teaching of the deepest spiritual life of the church in forming our conclusions concerning the meaning of Scripture’. The evident truth that great blessing followed the ministry of ‘consecrated women’ made a rereading of scripture necessary. Thus, he advised critics to be cautious, lest by silencing women, they quenched the Spirit; for as the famous (perhaps more commonly known as the infamous) Edward Irving had said: ‘Who am I that I should despise the gift of God, because it is in a woman, whom the Holy Ghost despiseth not?’⁴² For radical

³⁹ Gordon, ‘Ministry of Women’, 6.

⁴⁰ Gordon, ‘Ministry of Women’, *Alliance Weekly* (Dec 15, 1928): 820.

⁴¹ See chapter three for the importance of experience in radical evangelical knowledge.

⁴² Gordon, ‘Ministry of Women’, (1894), 5.

evangelicals, such experiential proof was irrefutable; for others, it was simply preposterous. Some of those detractors, Gordon noted, limited the meaning of the word ‘prophecy’ to ‘inspired prediction or miraculous revelation’. (Radical evangelicals more often understood the spiritual gift of prophecy as encompassing ‘edification, exhortation and comfort’, rather than simply predictive ability).⁴³ Critics of female preaching then claimed that the age of miracles had ceased; in which case Joel’s prophecy was not an ‘authority for women’s public witnessing for Christ today’. Gordon found this argument specious: ‘our greatest objection to this theory is that it fails to make due recognition of the Holy Spirit’s perpetual presence in the Church—a presence which implies the equal perpetuity of His gifts and endowments’.⁴⁴ Many of Gordon’s targets were likely dispensationalists, who, due to their different divisions of the ages, or dispensations of God’s plan, interpreted the Acts 2 / Joel 2 passage quite differently from their radical, more ‘historicist’ brethren.⁴⁵ Several interrelated interpretative questions were at stake in this premillennialist debate over Joel 2 and Acts 2; each of which impinged upon the practice of female ministry, or prophesying.

The first lay in their larger interpretation of the events that took place on the day of Pentecost. That is, was the ‘baptism of the Spirit’ of Pentecost a one-time event that founded the church, or was it a unique experience available to every individual believer? The second difference concerned the subjects of prophetic fulfilment. Were the signs of Joel 2 for the church, or for Israel? A third, related issue turned around the timing of the ‘signs’ and miracles described in Joel 2. When would this prophecy be fulfilled? Were

⁴³ See chapter four, also Stevens, *Triumphs*, 73-74.

⁴⁴ Gordon, ‘Ministry of Women’, *Alliance Weekly* (Dec 8, 1928): 804.

⁴⁵ ‘Historicist’ here means a willingness to apply Old Testament prophetic texts to the present church age, rather than only to Israel.

the signs, wonders, and female prophecy described by Joel, and first manifested at Pentecost, to be part of this present dispensation? Did they ‘cease’ at the end of the apostolic age, or did they continue throughout the church age? Finally, would the end of the age be characterised by unmitigated spiritual failure, or by increasing revival and a ‘latter rain’ outpouring of the Spirit? Supporting these divergences, as noted previously, were quite different theologies of the Holy Spirit.

In the late nineteenth century, the revivalist ‘progenitors’ of fundamentalism held three general positions on Spirit baptism and the present role of the Spirit, here termed the ‘dispensational’, the ‘evangelistic’, and the ‘pentecostal’ views.⁴⁶ These divergent pneumatologies, and their related concerns, were not new to premillennialists of this period. For instance, the early nineteenth-century architects of the new premillennialism, J. N. Darby and Edward Irving and their followers, had also reached conflicting conclusions about the role of the Spirit in the present dispensation, which roughly paralleled later dispensational and pentecostal positions.

Within the irenic, cooperative atmosphere of the late nineteenth century, these differences were matter for curiosity, but not for schism.⁴⁷ Evangelical leaders holding quite distinct eschatological and pneumatological positions freely shared pulpits, teaching opportunities, and supported one another’s institutions. Within this milieu, dispensationalists C. I. Scofield and James Brookes, who taught the first view,

⁴⁶ I draw here upon John Fea’s helpful distinction between the ‘dispensational view’ of the Spirit, and the ‘evangelistic view’. See John Fea, ‘Power From on High in an Age of Ecclesiastical Impotence: The Enduement of the Holy Spirit in American Fundamentalist Thought, 1880-1936’, *Fides et Historia* 26/2 (1994): 23-35, 29. Fea argues that ‘the Holiness and Pentecostal approaches to the Holy Spirit were thoroughly rejected by the mainstream of American fundamentalism’ (27). However, my study suggests that the divisions were not so clearly set. Radical full-gospel evangelicals such as Gordon or Simpson, who held more pentecostal views, were also among the progenitors of later fundamentalism.

⁴⁷ The various lists of ‘fundamentals’ focus upon Christology, soteriology and scriptural authority, but do not address pneumatology, perhaps because little agreement existed.

evangelists D. L. Moody and R. A. Torrey, who practised the second, and radicals A. J. Gordon, A. B. Simpson and W. C. Stevens, who built their theological systems upon the latter pentecostal view, understood one another as allies. Thus Simpson, commenting upon a series of talks on the Holy Spirit given at the Northfield convention in 1885, noted the amusement of many that the forbidden topic of Divine healing ‘was dropped out, passed over, ignored; and some of the explanations of texts that a child could understand, showed a great deal of study and ingenuity’. He then reprinted talks on the Holy Spirit, or excerpts thereof, by A. J. Gordon, A. T. Pierson, D. L. Moody, and others.⁴⁸ Despite this cooperation, the underlying theological differences between these ways of looking at the Holy Spirit were not trivial. The dispensational and the pentecostal views, in particular, deviated on some basic theological tenets. This parting of ways began at the level of the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the incarnate Jesus Christ, led to incompatible understandings of how the Holy Spirit interacted with believers, both individually and corporately, and played out in divergent spiritualities and practices. To understand the importance of the pentecostal view of the Spirit for female ministry, it is necessary to grasp the spiritual dynamics at work in these various forms of pneumatology.⁴⁹

The first position under consideration here is the ‘dispensational’ view of the baptism of the Spirit.⁵⁰ Although the lineage of nineteenth-century evangelical ideas was

⁴⁸ A. B. Simpson, ‘The Northfield Convention’, *The Word, The Work and The World* (Sept 1885): 240; for the sermons see 240-246.

⁴⁹ The primary distinction between a pentecostal view of the Spirit, and the new Pentecostalism developing at this period was the evidential nature of tongues. Although both Stevens and Simpson looked for manifestations of tongues, both denied its obligatory nature.

⁵⁰ For a broader discussion of dispensational understandings of Spirit baptism, see Larry Pettegrew, ‘Dispensationalists and Spirit Baptism’, *The Master’s Seminary Journal*, 8/2 (Spring 1997): 29-46.

not direct, the dispensational view of the Spirit did follow logically from the basics of J. N. Darby's system.⁵¹ As discussed in the previous chapter, at the centre of Darby's dispensational belief system was his doctrine of the church as the Body of Christ. Accordingly, he explicated the role of the Spirit within this framework, focussing on the Spirit's mediation between the absent Christ and the believer, and the Spirit's role in uniting the believer with Christ in the heavens. Thus, until Christ's return, 'the Holy Spirit was given to be the source of the unity of the Church; as well as the spring of its activity; and indeed of all christian [sic] energy'.⁵² Later dispensationalists, such as C. I. Scofield, James Gray, or W. E. Blackstone, likewise interpreted the dogma of the Spirit in light of the doctrine of the Church.⁵³ From this perspective, the outpouring of the Spirit upon the assembled believers in Acts 2, as Scofield put it, told of the 'birth of the Church'.⁵⁴ In his popular text, *Synthetic Bible Studies*, Bible teacher James Gray taught that the baptism of the Holy Ghost on Pentecost was a one-time event for the Church, in which all members of the one body of Christ share upon conversion. Most proponents of this general view also taught, as did Gray, that 'from time to time' the believer may 'require and obtain a renewed infilling of the Holy Spirit', but not a second baptism.⁵⁵ As

⁵¹ See Pettegrew, 'Dispensationalists and Spirit Baptism', 32-32.

⁵² J. N. Darby, in Napoleon Noel, *The History of the Brethren*, ed. William F. Knapp (Denver, CO: W. F. Knapp, 1936), 1:36.

⁵³ Pettegrew, 'Dispensationalists and Spirit Baptism', 33; see previous chapter.

⁵⁴ C. I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth: Ten Outline Studies of the More Important Divisions of Scripture* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, n. d.), 9, 78; see also James M. Gray, *Synthetic Bible Studies*, enlarged and revised edition (New York/Chicago/London/Edinburgh: Fleming H. Revell, 1906-1923), 219; William E. Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming: A Scriptural Survey of the Arguments for a Literal, Personal, and Pre-millennial Coming of the Lord and its Practical Character* (London/Glasgow: Pickering and Inglis, c.1907), 48-49, 58; Fea, 'Power From on High', 32.

⁵⁵ Gray, *Synthetic Bible Studies*, 219; see Fea, 'Power From on High', 33. For a later discussion of classic dispensational beliefs about Spirit baptism, see Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *The Holy Spirit* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1965), 74-79. According to Ryrie, 'filling' was the repeated process in which the indwelling Spirit gained greater control of an individual's life, and in which the ministry of the Spirit became 'experimental' (93-103). He maintained the term 'baptism' for the original event.

Scofield phrased it, there was ‘one baptism, many fillings’.⁵⁶ Although this position led to the recognition that all believers had spiritual gifts, this was understood in a more restricted way than in the evangelistic or pentecostal views.

A second way of understanding the function of the Holy Spirit was the ‘evangelistic view’, held by revivalists such as D. L. Moody and R. A. Torrey.⁵⁷ This was a mediating stance between the dispensationalist view and the more pentecostal conception of Stevens or Simpson. In this view, later outpourings of the Spirit upon the believer, referred to as either baptism or fillings, most often brought power for service and evangelism.⁵⁸ As well, a latter day outpouring, given for the conversion of the world, might precede the second coming. Antecedents for this position are found in works such as *The Gift of the Holy Ghost* (c. 1845) by John Morgan of Oberlin College, and *Tongue of Fire* (1858), by British writer William Arthur. These authors did not expect visible signs or miraculous gifts, but sought spiritual influence and power for the believer and for ministry.

The third position, held by radical evangelicals and by many Pentecostals, was the ‘pentecostal’ view. A key difference between the evangelistic and pentecostal positions was encapsulated by A. B. Simpson, who argued that Holy Spirit gave not ‘primarily power for service’, as Moody might have put it, but ‘power to receive the life of Christ; power to be, rather than to say and to do’.⁵⁹ This ‘power to receive the life of Christ’

⁵⁶ See commentary for Acts 2:4 in the Scofield Bible.

⁵⁷ See Fea, ‘Power From on High’, 29-31; also Pettegrew, ‘Dispensationalists and Spirit Baptism’, 30-31. Ryrie complained that the views of Moody and Torrey were not entirely clear, perhaps because they fell down this middle line (Ryrie, *Holy Spirit*, 75).

⁵⁸ There was a tendency in this early period to use the related concepts of ‘baptism’ and ‘filling’ interchangeably, and it can be difficult to discern the different meanings.

⁵⁹ Simpson, *Holy Spirit*, 79; Simpson devotes a chapter to all the kinds of power received (77-89).

through the baptism and subsequent indwelling of the Holy Spirit served as the centrifugal point for W. C. Stevens' theology and spirituality, as it did for A. B. Simpson.

As we saw in the previous chapter, both dispensationalists and radical evangelicals agreed on the Spirit's role in conversion, the formation of the church, and in the gifting of believers. However, radicals did not limit the full experience of Pentecost to the early church era, as did dispensationalists, or view it primarily as power for service, as did the evangelistic position. Instead, their pentecostal pneumatology drew a direct parallel between the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of Christ, in the experience of the disciples at Pentecost, and in the life of the present believer. That is, what happened to Christ during his life (the Spirit's descent as a dove upon Christ at the Jordan River, and his subsequent ministry in word and deed) then happened to the apostles (the coming of the Spirit as 'tongues of fire', and the subsequent power for ministry and miracle gifts), and should happen to believers today.⁶⁰

An article by Stevens, published in the *Prairie Pastor* by former student L. E. Maxwell, contained a concise account of this parallelism between Christ and believer.⁶¹ Stevens explained that while the Holy Spirit was with Jesus from conception, throughout childhood and until full maturity, Jesus 'was not prepared for one word or deed of His public ministry until at Jordan the Spirit came upon Him for that purpose'.⁶² Thus, Jesus carried out his earthly ministry through the power of the Holy Spirit, not that of his own divinity. After his death, resurrection and glorification by the Spirit, Jesus received the

⁶⁰ Simpson, *Holy Spirit*, 11-20, 21, 50-52, 196, 197.

⁶¹ See W. C. Stevens, untitled article on 'The Holy Ghost', *Prairie Pastor* 6/2 (1933): 3-4. The piece appears to be part of a sermon based upon John 7:39: 'But this he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified' (KJV).

⁶² Stevens, 'Holy Ghost', 3-4; cp. Simpson, 'Baptism of Jesus', *Christian and Missionary Alliance Weekly* (Nov 11, 1905): 709-710.

Spirit from the Father, and gave to his followers ‘the particular promise of the gift of the Spirit predicted by the Old Testament for the times of the glorified incarnate Messiah’. Now is ‘the dispensation of the glorified Jesus as manifested in and through His followers by the gift and demonstration of the Holy Spirit’.⁶³ Following the pattern of Christ and the early disciples, Stevens considered Holy Spirit baptism to be a second event in the life of the believer, subsequent to the regenerating work of the Spirit.

This interpretation, in which Pentecost became a normative experience for the believer, rather than simply a foundational event for the Church, is also found earlier in the nineteenth century, for instance in the ‘incarnational’ Christology of Edward Irving, and in a later influential work by Asa Mahan, *The Baptism of the Holy Ghost* (1870).⁶⁴ Late nineteenth-century evangelicals recognised Mahan’s influence on this doctrine, as demonstrated by his inclusion in A. T. Pierson’s *Forward Movements*.⁶⁵ Irving was not often credited; perhaps due to his suspect theological status, but also because the influence was more indirect. Yet radical evangelicals had more affinity with the eccentric Irving than with his close contemporary J. N. Darby, in both attitude and beliefs.⁶⁶ Although Irving did not have North American followers in the same way that Darby did, there does seem to have been a gradual seepage of his ideas into the common

⁶³ Stevens, ‘Holy Ghost’, 4.

⁶⁴ Nienkirchen also finds similarity between Irving’s beliefs and those of Simpson (Nienkirchen, *Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement*, 58-72). Donald Dayton notes this pattern of parallelism in Mahan’s doctrine, but not the similarity with Irving. See Dayton, ‘Asa Mahan and the Development of American Holiness Theology’ (Wesley Centre for Applied Theology, 2004), accessed May 24, 2005. <http://wesley.nnu.edu/wesleyan_theology/theojrnl/06-10/09-7.htm>. See also Asa Mahan, *Out of Darkness into Light; or, The Hidden Life made manifest through facts of observation and experience: Facts Elucidated by the Word of God* (London: Wesleyan-Methodist Book Room, 1882), 148, 174.

⁶⁵ Pierson credited Asa Mahan with the renewal of evangelical interest in the Holy Spirit in the late nineteenth century. A. T. Pierson, *Forward Movements of the Last Half Century* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1905; reprint New York/London: Garland Publishing, 1984), 10.

⁶⁶ For affinities between Irving and later Pentecostalism, see Gordon Strachen, *The Pentecostal Theology of Edward Irving* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1973).

pool of ideas.⁶⁷ Irving's work crops up often enough in North American writings, notably in the work of A. J. Gordon, to demonstrate its ready availability.⁶⁸

Irving and Darby shared much in common, including Calvinism, premillennial and interventionist conceptions of God's participation in the world, and a 'primitivist' desire to restore the church to earlier and purer forms. However, while romantic breezes of the period swayed Darby's ideas, Irving lived and breathed those airs. As Mrs. Oliphant, an early biographer, phrased it, 'to [Irving] it was always easier to believe the miraculous than the mean and common'.⁶⁹ Whereas Darby endeavoured to return to the simplicity of the early church, Irving's more historicist theory sought the restoration of the supernatural power of the apostolic age. Both Darby and Irving emphasised the importance of the Holy Spirit, but interpreted the Spirit's present role quite differently. While Darby's doctrine revolved about the Spirit's role in uniting the believer to Christ in the 'heavens', Irving commenced with the Spirit in the life of the incarnate Christ on earth. His purpose was to combat contemporary 'spiritualised' views that devalued Christ's real humanity.⁷⁰ Irving held that the Son of God took on 'sinful flesh', yet remained sinless through the power of the Holy Spirit. This form of interventionist

⁶⁷ Irving's work was influential in leading at least some mid-nineteenth century British evangelicals into the premillennial camp. Horatius Bonar, for example, credited Irving for his conversion to premillennial beliefs. See Ernest R. Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism: British and American Millenarianism, 1800-1930* (1970), 26. In 1850, Bonar edited Irving's premillennial work *Last Days* (Andrew Landale Drummond, *Edward Irving and His Circle: Including the 'Tongues' Movement in the Light of Modern Psychology* [London: James Clarke, 1939], 132).

⁶⁸ See, for example, A. J. Gordon, *Ecce Venit* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1890), vii; Gordon, 'The Ministry of Women' (1894, CBE reprint), 5. James Brookes cited Irving's *Coming of Messiah* in 'I am Coming', (1895, Glasgow: Pickering and Inglis; London: J. E. Hawkins, c.1910), 106-107. See also A. T. Pierson, *Many Infallible Proofs: The Evidences of Christianity* (1886; London: Morgan and Scott, n.d.), 160.

⁶⁹ Mrs. Oliphant, *The Life of Edward Irving, Minister of the National Scotch Church, London* (London, 1862) 2:143. For Irving's romanticism, see also D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 80-84; Drummond, *Irving*, 66-67.

⁷⁰ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, 93. For a discussion of Irving's Christology, see Colin Gunton, 'Two Dogmas Revisited: Edward Irving's Christology', *Scottish Journal of Theology* 41/3 (1988): 359-376.

pneumatology also held important implications for the divine-human relationship. Just as the Spirit enabled Christ to live a sinless life, the Spirit within now enabled each believer to live a holy life.⁷¹ Likewise, just as Christ demonstrated the power of the Spirit, the Spirit's power should be manifest in present believers.⁷² This informed both his view of the supernatural spiritual gifts, and his understanding of personal holiness.⁷³

Baptism of the Spirit thus meant quite different things for dispensationalist and full gospel evangelicals. In dispensationalism, it represented the beginning of the Church, and the union of believers in Christ. In the full gospel version, based as it was on the paradigm of the Spirit's descent at Christ's baptism and at Pentecost, the second experience of Spirit baptism, which followed upon conversion, brought about a new form of relationship with God, expressed in terms of divine interventionism. Stevens described this second experience as a 'reception of the indwelling Spirit' that brought the believer into 'interior reunion with God'.⁷⁴ This was more than an external dependence, or influence, but an actual indwelling received through a 'direct personal act of embracing a person'.⁷⁵ A. B. Simpson's writings make the implications of this concept more explicit. 'The baptism of the Holy Ghost is our union with the living personality of

⁷¹ Drummond, *Irving*, 135. Drummond suggested that this belief led to 'perfectionism' among Irving's followers (113, 206). See also Gunton, 'Irving's Christology', 36.

⁷² Gunton questions whether John Owen influenced Irving here; certainly, Gordon, who held a similar position on the Spirit, credited Owen as a source. Gordon also recommended John Morgan, *The Gift of the Holy Ghost* (c. 1845); William Kelly, *Lectures on the New Testament Doctrine of the Holy Spirit*; John Owen, *The Holy Spirit*; Charles E. Smith, *The Baptism in Fire*; and G. Tophel, *The Holy Spirit in Man*. See Gordon, *The Two-Fold Life*, 2nd ed. (1884; Three Hills, AB: Prairie Press, 1963), i-ii, 54.

⁷³ Mid-nineteenth-century American holiness evangelicals used 'baptism of the Spirit' language in association with sanctification experiences. Scholars in this tradition debate when Holiness believers began to use this language. See Dayton, 'Asa Mahan'; Timothy Smith, *Righteousness*, 36.

⁷⁴ W. C. Stevens, 'Sanctification' (tract, self-published, n.d.), 2, 8-10. PBI Archives, un-catalogued.

⁷⁵ Stevens, 'Sanctification', 9.

the Spirit', he explained.⁷⁶ At the baptism of Christ, 'the Holy Ghost as a person actually removed from the heavens and came down to earth, and henceforth resided as a distinct person in union with the Son of Man. From this time forward there were two persons united in the life and ministry of Christ'.⁷⁷ Now poured out as the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit dwells in believers and 'makes [Christ's] person real to our hearts'.⁷⁸ Simpson then drew a direct parallel between the experience of Christ and that of the believer: 'This is just what happens to the consecrated believer when he receives the baptism with the Holy Ghost'.⁷⁹ Although the Spirit was 'with' the believer from conversion and regeneration, the Spirit was 'in' the believer in a new way after the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Now the believer was 'so united to him that all his life henceforth is accomplished in constant dependence upon and fellowship with that divine Presence'.⁸⁰ The conclusion of this argument was that believers might experience and manifest the Spirit in the same ways that Christ did. Dependence upon the indwelling Spirit, received through Spirit baptism, thus became a key element in full-gospel understandings of ministry. As Simpson put it, 'Born like Him of the Spirit, we, too, must be baptised of the Spirit, and then go forth to live His life and reproduce His work.'⁸¹ Through the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost and the giving of the gifts, believers extended Christ's life and ministry.⁸²

This parallel between the Spirit in Christ and the Spirit in the believer formed one reason for their refusal of claims that miracles had ceased. This 'cessationist' position, traditional to Calvinistic circles, posited that miracles were 'signs' of Christ's divinity, or

⁷⁶ Simpson, *Holy Spirit*, 15; 24

⁷⁷ Simpson, 'Baptism of Jesus', 710.

⁷⁸ Simpson, *Holy Spirit*, 12-13; 49.

⁷⁹ Simpson, 'Baptism of Jesus', 709.

⁸⁰ Simpson, 'Baptism of Jesus', 709-710.

⁸¹ Simpson, *Holy Spirit*, 21, 83; also 'Baptism of Jesus', 709-710. For a similar assessment of Simpson's view of the Holy Spirit, see Nienkirchen, *Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement*, 58-72.

⁸² Stevens, *Revelation*, 1: 428.

attestations of the truth of the gospel or of a specific revelation.⁸³ The miracle or sign gifts that accompanied the Pentecostal outpouring of the Spirit, such as tongues, or prophecy, were temporary and ceased with the foundation of the church (or, in other interpretations, with the end of the apostolic age).

Stevens, however, refused to read Christ's miracles in this way. Rather than signs, the miracles of Jesus were essential aspects of his ministry of 'divine word' and 'divine deed'.⁸⁴ Because the Spirit was the Spirit of the glorified Christ; because the Spirit came upon believers in the same manner as upon Christ; and ultimately, because those works were performed by the Spirit, not by the individual, those same 'gospel words' and 'gospel works' evidenced by Christ were normal aspects of present 'full gospel ministry'.⁸⁵ Thus, regarding the continuation of the gift of tongues, Stevens argued, 'there is nothing in the nature of the gift or in its uses to militate at all against the apparent intent of the Master to have this gift in uninterrupted exercise from Pentecost till the greater Pentecost which is to attend the return of Jesus'.⁸⁶ Continuity between the Spirit's part in the miracles of Christ, in the apostolic period, and in the present dispensation meant that signs and wonders were normative for the church. Thus, the events of Pentecostal, including Spirit baptism, miracles, mass conversions, and 'prophesying daughters' were to be part of the present-day experience of believers.

In contrast, dispensationalists, who found more discontinuity in how God worked in different periods, were usually cessationist. Because they considered Old Testament

⁸³ For the cessationist position, see for example, B. B. Warfield, *Counterfeit Miracles* (Glasgow: Banner of Truth, 1918); who targeted Irving's teachings on the 'extraordinary' spiritual gifts and Gordon's doctrine of healing. See also Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 176-177, 601; Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2 vol., ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, *Library of Christian Classics*, vol. 20 (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), P.A.3, 1.85, 1.13.13; 4.3.8, 4.19.6, and 4.19.18.

⁸⁴ Stevens, *Mysteries*, 40; *Triumphs*, 27.

⁸⁵ Stevens, *Mysteries*, 38-40; *Revelation*, 1:406-413.

⁸⁶ Stevens, *Revelation* 1:431-439; also 1:414.

prophecies to apply only to Israel, not to the Church, dispensationalists understood the miracles of Pentecost and the apostolic age as signs for the Jewish people, not for the Gentiles.⁸⁷ Thus, for C. I. Scofield, the ‘last days’ prophecy of Joel 2 and Acts 2 applied primarily to Israel.⁸⁸ While a ‘partial and continuous fulfilment’ of the latter rains began at Pentecost, the greater fulfilment will come upon Israel in the last days.⁸⁹ This latter rain outpouring (often expected after the rapture of the church) would lead to the conversion of the Jews.⁹⁰ Following this logic, the promises of Joel 2 and Acts 2, including the widespread Jewish conversion implied by the line ‘whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved’, and the prophesying daughters of verse 17, could not apply to the present dispensation. Thus for dispensationalists such as James Brookes, female prophesying was for the millennial age, not for the present dispensation.⁹¹

Alternatively, some considered the present increase in female ministry to be a *negative* sign of the coming end, which demonstrated the general apostasy of the final days.⁹² The logic of the dispensational system demanded that all ages, including the present ‘age of grace’, end in failure, thus making divine intervention necessary.⁹³ Accordingly, in conscious opposition to contemporary beliefs in progress and to postmillennial optimism, W. E. Blackstone weighed up the good and bad signs of his

⁸⁷ For the dispensational viewpoint, see Scofield’s comments on 1 Cor 14; also Ryrie, *Holy Spirit*, 85-87. Interestingly, Ryrie draws on the non-premillennialist Warfield for his arguments. Some dispensationalists considered the early part of Acts (chapters 2 to 13) to record a further offer of the kingdom to Israel; thus the signs and wonders promised in the Old Testament continued during the transitional period. See Hoyt, ‘Dispensational Premillennialism’, in *The Meaning of the Millennium: Four Views*, ed. Robert G. Clouse (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 88-89; Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming*, 58, although he also places the beginning of the church at Pentecost (144).

⁸⁸ Scofield Bible, notes on Acts 2:17.

⁸⁹ For example, see Scofield Bible, notes on Joel 2; Zechariah 12:1, note 3; also Ryrie, *Holy Spirit*, 109. See Pettegrew, ‘Dispensationalists and Spirit Baptism’, 33-34, for similar comments to this effect by Brookes, Gaebelien, and other dispensationalists.

⁹⁰ See Joel Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 112.

⁹¹ See Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender*, 46; DeBerg, *Ungodly Women*, 76.

⁹² Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender*, 45; also DeBerg, *Ungodly Women*, 124-126.

⁹³ See for example, Brookes, *I am Coming*, 112-117.

times, and found the world wanting.⁹⁴ In his view, so-called great leaders and thinkers were infidels; although slavery was abolished, communism, socialism and nihilism were gaining power; benevolence was coupled with monopolies and fraud; even the very useful mails allow for the dissemination of obscene literature; while the professing church was lukewarm.⁹⁵ At the same time, Blackstone looked for worldwide evangelism and the return of the Jewish people to the land of Israel.⁹⁶

While Stevens found warnings in the negative aspects of his times, his expectation of a latter rain final revival added a brighter note to his scenario. For instance, in *Mysteries of the Kingdom* (1904), he listed both the positive and the negative signs of the return of Christ. Although political, industrial, social, and moral unrest, as well as doctrinal and ecclesiastical heresy would distinguish the last age, it would also be characterised by the preaching of the gospel to all nations, by an outpouring of the Spirit, by the recovery of spiritual gifts to reach that of ‘apostolic and Pentecostal times’, and by increased ‘simplicity, separation, association and power’. (Thus, his eschatology linked together his beliefs in ‘association’ and in spiritual gifting).

There was also debate within premillennialist circles over whether the Second Coming was imminent, or if some signs remained unfulfilled.⁹⁷ Of course, if there were no more signs to be fulfilled in this age, then latter day references such as Joel 2:18-32 must refer to Israel after Christ’s coming.⁹⁸ On the other hand, if one took the stance of Stevens and Simpson, that the coming was soon, but not necessarily imminent, these latter rains might yet fall in the present age. Tension between these two readings—

⁹⁴ Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming*, 96, see also 26.

⁹⁵ Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming*, 94-104.

⁹⁶ Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming*, 165.

⁹⁷ Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming*, 42, 52-53.

⁹⁸ See Blackstone, *Jesus is Coming*, 109, 120.

between a pentecostal end-time revival preceding Christ's return, and the unrelenting negativity of dispensationalist expectations of failure—became part of fundamentalism itself.⁹⁹

In the same way, the tension over female prophesying engendered by these texts found its way into everyday practice. Part of the power of the Joel 2 passage was its grouping together of 'prophesying daughters' and signs and wonders. As Gordon complained, by limiting 'prophecy' to foretelling and insisting on the cessation of the miraculous, dispensationalist opponents of female ministry discounted the implications of Joel's prophecy for [Christian] women. Yet if the logic of dispensationalism *precluded* female prophesying within the present church age, the pentecostal viewpoint of the radical evangelical made it necessary, for an essential sign that the second coming of Christ was near was a new outpouring of the Spirit, and a 'latter rain' restoration of early apostolic practice, including the recovery of female prophecy.

However, with the triumph of dispensationalism as the dominant form of premillennialism among the new fundamentalists of the 1920s, the related non-pentecostal doctrine of the Spirit also prevailed. For many conservative Calvinists and fundamentalists, the baptism of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost was a one-time event for the founding of the church, rather than a repeatable experience for each believer. The miracles of the early church, including tongues, healings, and 'prophesying daughters' were considered to have ceased within the present day church.

At the same time, the apparent excesses of the Pentecostal movement (which built upon this same or similar pneumatologies), and the quackery associated with faith

⁹⁹ Carpenter considers this tension the 'paradox of revivalist fundamentalism' (Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*, 111).

healing, made the ‘pentecostal’ interpretation increasingly suspect. Radical Calvinistic evangelicals like Stevens, who held a ‘pentecostal’ pneumatology, yet rejected the new doctrine that ‘tongues’ was a necessary sign of Spirit baptism, became less common. With the loss of this pneumatology, and the loss of the corresponding argument for prophesying women as an integral aspect of the present dispensation, Calvinistic women lost a powerful means of defending their ministries. Still, with typical disregard for logic, later fundamentalist evangelicals kept the vestiges of this argument in circulation, thus ensuring the inconsistency of fundamentalist gender beliefs and practices. Thus, pietistic fundamentalist L. E. Maxwell could repeat its arguments, while rejecting the view of the Spirit on which it was based, well into the 1980s.¹⁰⁰

The doctrine of Spirit baptism also played a part in a second theological innovation important to turn-of-the-century radical evangelicalism; the adoption of holiness interpretations of ‘sanctification’. If the Joel 2 /Acts 2 nexus encouraged female ministry as ‘female’, Spirit baptised sanctification theories allowed it through a minimisation of the human ‘self’, and a corresponding erasure of gender. How and why this higher life or ‘sanctification’ spirituality interacted with questions of female ministry forms the subject matter of the following chapters.

¹⁰⁰ Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 67, 108, 76, 91.

Chapter Six

Holiness Spirituality:

Sin, Self, and Service

There is, perhaps, no part of Christian experience where a greater change is known, upon entering into this life hid with Christ with God, than in the matter of service.

Hannah Whitall Smith, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*, 1888

Experimental belief lay at the heart of turn-of-the-century radical Calvinistic evangelical religion. Expectations of immediate divine involvement permeated premillennial teachings, views of the voluntary church and ministry, and beliefs about the Holy Spirit's role in the present. This same close relationship between experience and belief remained central in radical evangelical holiness spirituality, in which belief became personal, interior and experiential. Described variously as 'sanctification', the 'Higher Christian life', the 'Victorious life', 'personal holiness', or the consecrated life, this spirituality mediated passage into a new plane of Christian life, distinguished by increased victory over sin, deeper piety, and a new passion for service, often experienced as a 'call' to a specific task or ministry.¹ Like the closely related doctrine of Spirit baptism, holiness spirituality had the potential to minimise the place of human particularity: the spiritual benefits of sanctification, including power over sin, and power

¹ For background to the larger Holiness movement, see Richard Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790-1865* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1978); Melvin E. Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century, Studies in Evangelicalism 1* (Metuchen, NJ/London: Scarecrow Press, 1980); Timothy L Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid Nineteenth Century America* (New York/Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1957); for a British perspective, see David W. Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth-Century England* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2000).

for service, necessarily applied equally to men and to women. It thus provided a populist, pragmatic, and egalitarian path to a deeper relationship with God. In turn, this new relationship with God, and the inner transformation it wrought, opened opportunities for both women and men to serve within the numerous Bible schools, missions, evangelistic campaigns, and church plants of the time.

The relationship between Calvinistic holiness beliefs and the practice of female ministry is often overlooked. One reason is a tendency to treat these teachings as ‘ideas’; that is, as carefully reasoned dogmas about the processes of sanctification. However, while expressed as a set of beliefs, holiness teachings are also ‘spiritualities’; that is, they are interpretative accounts of experienced belief.² Following Philip Sheldrake (1998), spirituality here signifies those ways in which ‘people subjectively appropriate traditional beliefs about God, the human person, creation, and their interrelationship, and then express these in worship, basic values and lifestyle’.³ Spirituality thus encompasses the interplay between religious belief, experience, and behaviour, or praxis. This means that aspects of Christian practice—in this case, the ministry of women—are integral to specific spiritualities. Theology (here meaning conscious reflection on faith beliefs) and spirituality operate symbiotically. That is, spiritualities are interdependent upon

² Important exceptions include Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Virginia Lieson Brereton, *Training God’s Army: The American Bible School, 1880-1940* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), Virginia Lieson Brereton, *From Sin to Salvation: Stories of Women’s Conversions, 1800 to the Present* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991); Bruce Shelley, ‘Sources of Pietistic Fundamentalism’, *Fides et Historia* 5/172 (1973).

³ Philip Randall Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology: Christian Living and the Doctrine of God, Trinity and Truth Series*, ed. Stephen Sykes (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1998), 34-35. Historian David W. Bebbington describes spirituality as ‘personal piety, public devotion, and their expression in action’ in a ‘framework of theology’ and ‘cultural context’ (Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth Century England* [Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2000], 1, 5). For a helpful study of later evangelical spiritualities, see Ian M. Randall, *Evangelical Experiences: A Study in the Spirituality of English Evangelicalism 1918-1930*, foreword by David Bebbington, *Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monographs* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 1999).

theological concepts; but theological formulations may shift over time and place to make sense of new experiences. As well, new patterns of spirituality suggest a correlative change in theological positions.⁴ Spirituality—that is, is theology as experienced and practised—must also make sense of, and within, the social, cultural, and intellectual setting of the individual and of the faith community.⁵

This interdependence between beliefs, personal experience of the divine and Christian service is central to both Calvinistic and Wesleyan holiness practices.⁶ Yet while studies of female ministry in Methodist and Wesleyan Holiness circles have long noted the importance of the sanctification experience, appraisals of Calvinistic evangelical gender practices most often discount or overlook this relationship.⁷ Thus, Margaret Lamberts Bendroth (among others) reads turn-of-the-century and early fundamentalist ‘Keswick’ forms of Calvinistic holiness teachings, with their stress on ‘victory’, ‘power’, and hard work, as part of a ploy to attract men instead of women.⁸

⁴ See Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology*, 83-88.

⁵ See Sheldrake, *Spirituality and Theology*, 35-36, 86.

⁶ Holiness believers of the nineteenth- and early twentieth century fall into two major categories: the theologically ‘Arminian’ Wesleyan Holiness movement (here designated by the capital ‘H’), and Calvinistic holiness strands. The latter included ‘Oberlinian’ perfectionism, ‘higher life’ teachings, the British Keswick movement and its American counterpart, ‘Victorious Christian Living’, and groups such as the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Although teachings overlapped in many areas, each Calvinistic version also had its own distinctives.

⁷ A rich literature is available on women in the Wesleyan Holiness movement. See for example, Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976); Nancy Hardesty, *Your Daughters Shall Prophesy: Revival and Feminism in the Age of Finney*, Chicago Studies in the History of American Religion 5 (Brooklyn: Carlson Publishing, 1991); Hardesty, Lucille Sider Dayton and Dayton, ‘Women in the Holiness Movement: Feminism in the Evangelical Tradition,’ in *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 225-254; Susie C. Stanley, ‘The Promise of the Father: Women called to Minister’, *Evangelical Journal* (Spring 1994): 35-40.

⁸ Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender: 1875 to the Present* (New Haven / London: Yale University Press, 1993), 22-24. This forms part of her larger thesis that ‘fundamentalism arose as a masculine alternative to the ‘feminized’ evangelical religion of the nineteenth century’ (Bendroth, ‘Fundamentalism and Masculinity, 1900-1950’, Paper, American Society of Church History, 1992 [1993, microfiche]). The gendered nature of holiness spirituality is addressed in the next chapter. See also Betty DeBerg, *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990), 145-147. See also George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The*

However, the creators of holiness theory, who were often women, *also* used this language in describing the empowering aspects of holiness experience for ministry. By dismissing holiness teachings too quickly, such treatments obscure their important role in motivating and enabling female ministry within radical Calvinistic holiness circles and among later pietistic fundamentalists.

Similarly, Janette Hassey, who sought to recover a feminist ‘reformed’ evangelical tradition, focused most of her attention on early biblical arguments for female ministry. Thus, she drew only tenuous connections between A. B. Simpson’s beliefs about sanctification and Spirit baptism, his views on ministry, and the actual participation of women, and ultimately credited his support to a pragmatic lay volunteerism.⁹ However, while these women might defend their activity by pointing to biblical texts, the validity of their individual ministries often rested upon other grounds. For many Calvinistic evangelical women like Dorothy Ruth Miller, the direct guidance of the Spirit served as a *primary* affirmation for ministry. As Miller explained in ‘On Women Speaking’, she was led to become a Bible teacher ‘not so much by the teaching of Scripture as by the still small voice of the Spirit’:

All through my Christian service I have had the clear, definite witness of the Spirit (I do not mean a sound of a voice) that I was in His will as to my service. This has been such a real thing to me that I can never understand people’s saying that they could not understand how to get guidance of God. It seems to me that it would be difficult to avoid knowing it.¹⁰

Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925 (New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 79-80, 96.

⁹ Janette Hassey, *No Time for Silence: Evangelical Women in Public Ministry Around the Turn of the Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/Academie Books, 1986; CBE reprint), 19; also 126-127.

¹⁰ D. R. Miller, ‘On Women Speaking’, *Prairie Pastor*, 12/12 (Dec 1939): 7-8.

The ‘call of the Spirit’ then informed how she read scripture. As it had for A. J. Gordon, spiritual experience provided the hermeneutic by which Miller interpreted Scripture.¹¹

Without due consideration of how interventionist spirituality influenced such interpretative practices, radical evangelical beliefs about and attitudes towards female ministry are easily misinterpreted.

If, as proposed, consecration spirituality is a primary supporting factor for female ministry, it becomes necessary to trace why and how the theology and experience of sanctification became part of Calvinistic evangelical practice. The present chapter addresses both the subjective, experiential dynamics of consecration, and its theological development in relationship to other changes in Calvinist belief and some of the larger cultural, historical, and ideological shifts of the nineteenth century. In this instance, the setting includes ways in which the holiness movement reflected the romantic, perfectionistic, and democratic moods of nineteenth-century America; the relationship of holiness spirituality to nineteenth-century gender beliefs and practices (a matter taken up in chapters seven, eight and nine); as well as the widespread project of ‘self-construction’ undertaken by ordinary Americans throughout the century.

The American Holiness movement took its initial shape in the 1830s, as theorists such as Methodist Phoebe Palmer, Oberlinians Asa Mahan and Charles Finney, and Congregationalist Thomas Upham all first experienced holiness. New Haven theologian Nathaniel Taylor wrote on holiness in 1835, as did Edward Beecher.¹² These new ideas were indicative of a rising belief in the perfectibility of individuals and society. As

¹¹ A. J. Gordon, ‘The Ministry of Women’, *Alliance Weekly* (Dec 15, 1928): 821.

¹² Timothy L. Smith, ‘Righteousness and Hope: Christian Holiness and the Millennial Vision in America 1800-1900’, *American Quarterly* 31/1 (Spring 1979): 23.

historian Timothy Smith phrased it, ‘a religious and political ideology described most accurately as perfectionist became pervasive in Jacksonian America and remained normative to the end of the century’.¹³ Such progress might come through religion, education, economic liberty, changed laws or institutions or through the creation of socialist or utopian communities.

It also might come through the conscious development of a proper self, or a ‘balanced character’.¹⁴ Once again, this was a democratic, ‘voluntary’ process available to the common person. The ‘right to self-construction’ was, as Daniel Walker Howe expresses it, ‘the right to decide what kind of person one wishes to be and also the right to fulfil one’s potential’.¹⁵ Whether creating the (masculine) character necessary to succeed in the new capitalist economic world, the ideal woman, or a more romantic ‘unfolding and perfecting’ of human nature, antebellum culture emphasised personal responsibility, self-help and self-improvement. Neologisms such as ‘individualism’, ‘self-made man’, or ‘autobiography’, also entered popular language during these same years.¹⁶ This language reflected notions of self-definition and self-construction, as well as a rising sense of interiority—of ‘self’ itself. In part, this extended the soulish contemplation required by Puritan and pietist conversion practices.¹⁷ It also echoed the new ‘romantic’ self, who honoured the intuitive and the inward, the natural and the

¹³ Smith, ‘Righteousness’, 24.

¹⁴ See Daniel Walker Howe, *Making the American Self: Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); also Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989). For discussion of changing conceptions of the Christian self, see Stanley J. Grenz, *The Social God and the Relational Self: A Christian Theology of the Imago Dei* (Louisville / London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001).

¹⁵ See Howe, *Making the American Self*, 9, 108-112.

¹⁶ Although coined earlier, several of these terms gained widespread usage in the 1830s. ‘Self made man’ is from 1832, individualism becomes common after used by Alexis de Tocqueville (1835). William Ellery Channing’s lecture on ‘Self Culture’ (1838) influenced Transcendentalist views of the self.

¹⁷ Grenz, *Social God*, 78-82; Howe, *Making the American Self*, 8.

immanent. Through introspection, the romantic discovered the infinite within; and created a unique self through self-discovery and self-expression.¹⁸

As Olive Anderson suggests, 'it is tempting' to consider holiness as the 'religious equivalent' of the 'secular cult of self-improvement'.¹⁹ However, this oversimplifies the relationship.²⁰ For many evangelicals, holiness teachings provided an alternative 'romantic' and interventionist path for resolving self-identity, and for creating balanced character. The holiness project of self 'construction' both mirrored contemporary nineteenth-century ideals of self-culture and self-improvement, and reflected unease with the optimistic belief in the perfectibility of human nature inherent in the larger cultural project. On the one hand, holiness teachings demanded perfection of character, and stressed personal responsibility in seeking that end. On the other hand, they denied human capacity to achieve this goal. The holiness believer did not consider the new or renovated 'self' realized through sanctification as his or her own handiwork, but rather, as a direct work of God. Simpson, for instance, refuted any claims that sanctification came through self-improvement, and subverted ideas of 'self-culture' by supplanting human agency by divine agency:

¹⁸ Grenz, *Social God*, 109-113; Howe, *Making the American Self*. In the United States, romantic ideas of self appear, for instance, in the thought of Emerson and the Transcendentalists. For the popularity of perfectionism among the 'romantic and transcendental generation', see Smith, *Revivalism*, 142-143; also 93, 113.

¹⁹ Olive Anderson, 'Women Preachers in Mid-Victorian Britain: Some Reflexions on Feminism, Popular Religion and Social Change', *Historical Journal* 12/3 (1969): 477; also Smith, *Revivalism*, 146.

²⁰ See for example Grenz, *Social God*, who links evangelical piety, the 'experimental self' of enlightenment evangelicalism, and the 'self-mastering self' (84-86), responsible for both inner certainty of salvation, and for 'self-mastery', or personal holiness (85). Howe also links self-construction to evangelical practices (Howe, *Making the American Self*, 9, 108, 114-118).

[Sanctification] is divine holiness, not human self-improvement or perfection. It is the inflow into man's being of the life and purity of the infinite, eternal and Holy One, bringing His own perfection and infusing in us His own will.²¹

From his interventionist perspective, self-improvement was impossible; change came not through struggle, but through relinquishing personal efforts to create the successful (sinless) self.

Holiness spirituality served to support ministry (including female ministry) in at least three ways: 1) through the inner psycho-spiritual dynamics of a central process of 'de-selfing'; 2) through the interventionist nature of the holiness experience itself, often understood as a direct encounter with God; and 3) through the direct theoretical connection between sanctification and service drawn by holiness believers.

This latter theoretical connection between sanctification and service was quite straightforward: holiness theology upheld service as the meaning and purpose of the Christian life. Holiness believers drew upon Old Testament usage of the verb form of sanctification—'to sanctify', or 'consecrate' for a purpose—to explain this relationship.²² For instance, Phoebe Palmer, 'mother' of the Wesleyan Holiness movement, taught that to be sanctified meant to be 'set apart' for 'holy service'. Thus, like the people of Israel and the vessels used in temple worship, believers were to be set apart as 'chosen vessels unto God'.²³ W. C. Stevens, drawing upon Leviticus 20:7-8, explained that to sanctify, or

²¹ A. B. Simpson, *Wholly Sanctified* (New York: Christian Alliance Publishing, 1890), ch.1 (accessed 2005-05-25) <<http://online.auc-nuc.ca/alliancestudies/simpson/wholsanc.html>>; A. B. Simpson, *Romans* (1904; Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, n.d), 172.

²² W. C. Stevens, 'Sanctification' (Self published tract, n.d), 2; also A. B. Simpson, 'Practical Christianity; or the Principles of Christian Service', *Christian Alliance and Missionary Weekly* (Feb 3, 1893): 68; A. B. Simpson, *The Four-Fold Gospel* (1887; Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, n.d.), 34-35; compare Palmer, in *Phoebe Palmer: Selected Writings*, ed. Thomas C. Oden, *Sources of American Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1988), 188, 193.

²³ Palmer, in *Palmer*, 187-190, also 175.

‘consecrate’ oneself, was the human action essential to the attainment of ‘sanctification’, or holiness of life. ‘Two agents act in cooperation in Sanctification, the human and the divine’, he wrote. “‘Sanctify yourselves.... I am the Lord which sanctify you’”.²⁴ The outcome of sanctification, or consecration, was fitness for service: ‘Holiness is not the end to be sought, but holy service’.²⁵ ‘The great object of sanctification or consecration is service’, declared A. B. Simpson.²⁶ Evangelical Quaker Hannah Whitall Smith, an eminent theorist on the matter, concurred. ‘There is, perhaps, no part of Christian experience where a greater change is known, upon entering into this life hid with Christ with God, than in the matter of service’, she told readers.²⁷

The inner dynamics of sanctification itself were not quite so simple. Despite Phoebe Palmer’s expert opinion that sanctification required only a simple act of consecration and faith, in which ‘we lay our all upon the altar’ of Christ, the search for holiness usually entailed a great deal of prayer, study, and inner struggle.²⁸

Although holiness theology developed in the first decades of the nineteenth century, it did not become widespread among North American evangelicals until the 1870s (the same period in which dispensational premillennialism and pentecostal views of the Spirit gained popular credence). The rapid shift to new forms of holiness spirituality undertaken by W. C. Stevens, A. B. Simpson and other men and women in the last quarter of the nineteenth century represented a crisis in faith; older views no longer

²⁴ Stevens, ‘Sanctification’, 2.

²⁵ Stevens, ‘Sanctification’, 14; also 1, 2, 10.

²⁶ Simpson, *Romans*, 223; see also Simpson, ‘Practical Christianity’, 68.

²⁷ Hannah Whitall Smith, *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life* (1875, 1888; New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1916), 186.

²⁸ Palmer, ‘Way of Holiness’, in *Palmer*, 196.

made adequate sense in their rapidly changing worlds. That crisis, however, does not appear to be intellectual, or even anti-intellectual, so much as practical and experiential. Those who sought this second ‘conversion’ experience commonly expressed two needs, for ‘power over sin’, and ‘power for service’, language which suggests a felt sense of inadequacy and helplessness. In order to gain power for service, power over sin—and over self—was first necessary. Paradoxically, in order to receive this new power, the believer must acknowledge his or her helplessness and ‘surrender all’; lay herself upon the altar, or, in a favourite phrase of A. B. Simpson, ‘die to self’. The underlying issue that Calvinistic holiness spirituality addressed was not simply ‘sin’ or behaviour, but also ‘self’, or identity.²⁹

Some outside the holiness camp also observed this phenomenon. In a pioneering study of ‘religious consciousness’ published in 1899, Edwin Diller Starbuck noted the importance of conversion and the closely related experience of sanctification for this resolution of self.³⁰ While acknowledging that those ‘who hold conceptions which separate sharply the spiritual realm from the mundane’ would view his project with ‘distrust and suspicion’, he cheerfully recast spiritual experiences as psychological processes, placed them within a fashionable developmental and pantheistic framework, and theorised ‘the growth of religious consciousness’ as a natural part of individual

²⁹ Brereton finds a similar shift from nineteenth-century concerns with sin to twentieth-century struggles with self-esteem among female conversion narratives. See Brereton, *Sin to Salvation*, 50-51.

³⁰ Edwin Diller Starbuck, *The Psychology of Religion: An Empirical Study of the Growth of Religious Consciousness*, intro. William James (1899). Secular critics were also suspicious. See Martin Marty, *Modern American Religion*, vol. 1, *The Irony of It All, 1893-1919* (University of Chicago, 1986), 264. William James drew upon Starbuck’s case studies for his Gifford lectures, published in 1902. See William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, edited with intro by Martin E. Marty (Penguin, 1982), xxxvi; also William James, ‘Introduction’, in Starbuck, *Psychology of Religion*. Because James did not differentiate clearly between initial conversion and later sanctification experiences, many of his conversion examples clearly refer to sanctification (see for example James, *Varieties*, 227, 241, 253). In consequence, he conflated the sanctification experience into his discussion of both ‘conversion’ and ‘mysticism’, thus confusing the phenomenology of religious experience influential upon later religious scholars.

maturation. Starbuck concluded that adolescent conversion resolved a conflict between ‘two selves’: the old life, and the new ideal adult life.

Three points in his discussion stand out: his emphasis upon ‘surrender of the will’, the necessity of ‘unselfing’, and the small group of believers who required a second experience in order to complete this process. First, ‘whether one’s effort is *against* the new life, as in resistance to conviction, or *toward* it, as in prayer and personal effort’, conversion required surrender of the will. ‘At the crisis of conversion’, he reported, ‘*it is an important step toward spiritual regeneration that the personal will be given up*’.³¹ This surrender allowed for the subconscious reorganisation of the inner life around a new, adult centre, or ego, and the internalisation of the new life and viewpoint. As long as the will operated, the old self acted from the old viewpoint, and conversion remained elusive.³² ‘*The act of yielding,*’ he explained, ‘*... is giving oneself over to the new life, making it the centre of a new personality, and living, from within, the truth of it which had before been viewed objectively*’.³³ Second, while conversion brought a new self, it also led to ‘unselfing’: a turning away from self ‘into active sympathy with the world’.³⁴ This transformative experience resolved identity, served as an essential means of establishing the veracity of truth claims, and prepared the believer for a ‘holy life and full service’.

However, for a small portion of converted adult individuals, a second event, ‘sanctification’, was necessary to complete this process. Here ‘de-selfing’ became essential. Although sanctification followed the same crisis pattern as conversion, it

³¹ Starbuck, *Psychology of Religion*, 99.

³² Starbuck, *Psychology of Religion*, 99.

³³ Starbuck, *Psychology of Religion*, 117.

³⁴ Starbuck, *Psychology of Religion*, 125-128, 130, also 112, 116, 145.

resulted in an intensified outcome. It brought ‘a fresh affirmation, when the new life has been established, that the old does not exist’, explained Starbuck.³⁵ Individuals now described themselves as cleansed and purified, and recorded a new ‘oneness with God’.³⁶ ‘[A]long with a strong tendency toward subjectivity, a narrowing down of objective interests, there is at the same time... the most intense altruism’, he reported. For the sanctified, ‘Love to God and love to man are the mainsprings of action’.³⁷ ‘No longer a mere participant in the Divine life’, the individual became ‘a medium’ through which the Divine expressed itself’.³⁸ Here Starbuck might be citing A. B. Simpson, or Hannah Whitall Smith, who insisted that in order to realise the goal of Divine union, ‘we must continually put self to death’, and ‘let Christ instead live and work in us’.³⁹ Holiness evangelicals surrendered their wills and died to self, in the hope of union with Christ, experienced as God’s immediate and direct participation in and through the individual life. The transformative event of sanctification led to new freedom to love and power to serve; but it also meant that God could use them directly.

In 1911, mystical scholar Evelyn Underhill noted that those ‘deep and permanent conversions of the adult type which some psychologists [i.e. Starbuck] call “sanctification”’ looked more similar to the first step on the mystic way than ‘the revivalistic phenomena encouraged by American Protestantism’.⁴⁰ Despite Underhill’s

³⁵ Starbuck, *Psychology of Religion*, 382. The unusual characteristics of sanctification merited it a separate chapter. Starbuck failed to correlate belief and experience. Not surprisingly, of the 51 participants in the sanctification sample, half (25) were Methodists, and 14 belonged to the Salvation Army (also a holiness sect).

³⁶ Starbuck, *Psychology of Religion*, 378.

³⁷ Starbuck, *Psychology of Religion*, 388.

³⁸ Starbuck, *Psychology of Religion*, 385.

³⁹ Whitall Smith, *Christian’s Secret*, 228.

⁴⁰ ‘As ordinarily understood’, noted Underhill, ‘religious conversion’ was the ‘sudden and emotional acceptance of theological beliefs which the self had previously either rejected or treated as conventions dwelling upon the margin of consciousness and having no meaning for her actual life.’ In contrast, in true

protestations, this close parallel between holiness experience and that of the mystic was not accidental. Holiness teaching had deep affinity with forms of mystical thought, in particular the ‘quietism’ of Madame Guyon.⁴¹ However, holiness theology systemised, popularised and democratised the path to mystical experience.⁴² With typical new world verve, the arduous and lonely mystical ascent became an instantaneous experience available to all. What traditionally had been the calling of the few—direct experience of and communication with the divine—now became the ‘normal’ Christian life.

While Starbuck’s analysis of conversion echoed much revivalist rhetoric, it complicates their claims in one essential place. Starbuck suggested that conversion hinged upon the surrender of the will. In contrast, many turn-of-the-century evangelicals spoke of conversion as volitional: it required the exercise of the will. The contradiction is not as sharp as it might seem; Starbuck recognised that some seekers struggled towards conversion; A. B. Simpson warned that the choice might be hard. Still, like other elements of nineteenth-century religion, he understood salvation to be voluntary. ‘Every man’s salvation’, he wrote in *The Four Fold Gospel*, ‘is hinged upon his own choice and free will. It is an awful thing to have the power to take salvation and to throw it away. And yet it is left to our choice. We are not forced to take it. We must voluntarily choose

mysticism, ‘the self is remade, transformed, has at last unified itself; and with the cessation of stress, power has been liberated for new purposes’. Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism: A Study in Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness* (1911; Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library), 41, 176. <<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/underhill/mysticism.html>> For a comparison of the mystical experience and that of sanctification, see Appendix A.

⁴¹ For quietist thought in nineteenth-century North America, see Patricia A. Ward, ‘Madame Guyon and Experiential Theology in America’, *Church History* 67 (1998): 484-498; also Smith, *Revivalism*, 107.

⁴² Ward suggests that Guyon helped ‘democratise’ spirituality (Ward, ‘Madame Guyon’, 485).

it or reject it'.⁴³ Such a claim reflects a radical shift away from earlier Calvinist understandings of conversion, which rested upon God's sovereign choice, or election, not upon human choice. However, in the newly 'democratised' ethos of the early nineteenth century, it became self-evident that a self-determined individual must establish his or her own salvation immediately through a simple act of will.⁴⁴ As popularised by revivalist Charles Finney (1792-1875), it became the duty of every person to respond 'now' to the universal offer of salvation.⁴⁵ By late century, 'free will' was an essential aspect of revival theology, a shift that had wide-ranging consequences for Calvinistic evangelicals.⁴⁶

On the immediate front, it changed the pattern of the conversion experience. Early nineteenth-century conversion narratives had closely resembled Starbuck's descriptions. Drawn from Puritan models, these narratives encompassed a religious melancholy, accompanied by a protracted struggle, and climaxed by a moment of conversion.⁴⁷ Key to this form of conversion was surrender to God's will and death of the self.⁴⁸ The expected outcomes were a 'totally reordered life', growth in holiness, and

⁴³ Simpson, *Four-Fold*, 23, 18-20. See also Alliance theologian G. P. Pardington, *Twenty-Five Wonderful Years: 1889-1914; A Popular Sketch of the Christian and Missionary Alliance* (New York: Christian Alliance Publications, 1914), 14.

⁴⁴ For debate whether the shift from traditional to moderate forms of Calvinism reflected that to liberal and democratic beliefs, see Mark A. Noll, 'Revival, Enlightenment, Civic Humanism, and the Evolution of Calvinism in Scotland and America, 1735-1843', in *Amazing Grace: Evangelicalism in Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States*, ed. George A. Rawlyk and Mark A. Noll (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 88-92; Carwardine, *Trans Atlantic Revivalism*, 91-92.

⁴⁵ See Carwardine, *Trans Atlantic Revivalism*, 91-92; 168, 191; Dieter, *Holiness Revival*, 59-61; Smith, 'Righteousness', 37; see also 27-31, *Revivalism*, 154-162. B. B. Warfield blamed Finney's ideas on the 'new divinity' of Yale (Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield, *Studies in Perfectionism* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1931], 2.33-35).

⁴⁶ This theological discussion applies to forms of Calvinistic holiness teachings. Wesleyan Holiness teachings followed different dynamics.

⁴⁷ Jerald C. Brauer, 'Conversion: From Puritanism to Revivalism', *Journal of Religion* 58/3 (July 1978): 230-231, also 232-233. For use of Puritan writings as a pattern for nineteenth-century conversion narratives, see Brereton, *Sin to Salvation*, 10-13.

⁴⁸ See Brereton, *Sin to Salvation*, 7; cp. Brauer, 'Conversion', 231. Although Brereton, who worked with female narratives, emphasised the necessity of surrender, Brauer notes the language of 'death' to self. This

hope of salvation.⁴⁹ Simpson's own conversion, which had followed the Puritan pattern, came after a ten-month mental breakdown.⁵⁰ Perhaps in reaction to that terrible experience, he adopted the newer version in the early 1870s, and truncated the process in his later teachings. He taught that conversion might take place instantly, with very little struggle, and little emotion:

We do not have to get up into some exalted state to find Christ, nor down into some profound or terrible experience, but we can find Him everywhere we are.... Take Him as you are, and He will lead you into all the experiences you need.⁵¹

While some form of surrender was still required, the active use of cognitive and volitional capacities became central. Salvation now hinged upon the human actions of 'accepting', 'claiming', embracing', 'believing', and 'confessing'.⁵²

The exercise of the voluntary will in conversion appears to be one factor in the Calvinistic move to doctrines of 'sanctification by faith'. Those who sought sanctification were, in the words of holiness historian Timothy Smith, 'looking for experience that made Christianity work'.⁵³ Many revivalist Calvinistic evangelicals, although 'saved' and 'justified', failed to grow in grace.⁵⁴ As A. T. Pierson explained the matter, 'Their supposed judicial standing and their lives of practical failure, were in startling contrast'. Despite their righteous status before God, 'there was a felt lack of,

may reflect a different reality for male and female converts or simply the comparative interests of Brereton and Brauer.

⁴⁹ Brauer, 'Conversion', 231, 234.

⁵⁰ See A. E. Thompson, *The Life of A. B. Simpson* (New York: Christian Alliance Publishing, 1920), 14-23; 25, 26, 64. Simpson's crisis was resolved through reading the English Presbyterian divine Walter Marshall (1628-1680). Marshall argued that belief came before knowledge of election: 'Therefore, we must believe on Christ before we know our election, or else we shall never know it, and shall never believe' (*The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification* [1692]).

⁵¹ Simpson, *Four-Fold*, 21; see Brauer, 'Conversion', 231; Brereton, *Sin to Salvation*, 23.

⁵² See for instance, Simpson, *Four-Fold*, 19. Starbuck's subjects continued to use surrender language. See also Brereton, *Sin to Salvation*, 23, 56, 65.

⁵³ Smith, *Revivalism*, 141-145.

⁵⁴ Brauer, 'Conversion', 233.

and a great hungering for, a personal righteousness'.⁵⁵ The solution, in direct parallel to conversion, became 'voluntary' sanctification.⁵⁶ To receive the fullness of their salvation (or the full resolution of self in relation to God), believers must *choose* to enter upon a second, higher plane of Christian living. A second 'sanctification' conversion was necessary to complete their spiritual transformation. This second experience, however, demanded the voluntary surrender of the will, and a radical de-selfing.⁵⁷

In 1874, Asa Mahan, a former associate of Finney, in considering the growing acceptance of 'perfectionist' beliefs in the United States and Britain, could claim that 'none will question the fact that the movement at Oberlin was one of the main causes of this change'.⁵⁸ A. T. Pierson agreed. He lauded Finney as a 'conspicuous promoter' of the advance in personal holiness through his doctrine of 'the *responsible activity of the human will, versus the passivity of a fatalistic election*'.⁵⁹ Pierson considered this a positive contribution. To Presbyterian theologian B. B. Warfield of Princeton Seminary, however, the views of Finney and Mahan were rank pelagianism (the view that sinners were able to do all that God required of them) and pelagianism inevitably 'begot perfectionism'.⁶⁰ Whether Warfield's criticisms were fair or not, this link between free

⁵⁵ A. T. Pierson, *Forward Movements of the Last Half Century* (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1905; reprint New York/London: Garland Publishing, 1984).

⁵⁶ Simpson, *Four-Fold Gospel*, 30; see also Pierson, *Forward Movements*. Among radical evangelicals, conversion and sanctification followed almost identical patterns. See Appendix B.

⁵⁷ Brereton draws similar conclusions regarding twentieth-century holiness narratives, suggesting that 'conversion was too easy, too inexpensively attainable, and therefore less that emotionally satisfying' (Brereton, *From Sin to Salvation*, 63-64).

⁵⁸ Asa Mahan, *Out of Darkness into Light; or, The Hidden Life Made Manifest Through Facts of Observation and Experience: Facts Elucidated by the Word of God* (London: Wesleyan-Methodist Book Room, 1882), 194. Phoebe Palmer, William Boardman and Hannah Whitall Smith also played large roles in the development and dissemination of holiness ideas.

⁵⁹ Pierson, *Forward Movements*, 10 (emphasis in original).

⁶⁰ Warfield, *Perfectionism*, 2:8-9, 24, see also 1:3; Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (London and Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1871-1873) 2:257. Timothy Smith argues that Finney was 'never a Pelagian' and refutes the charge that 'free will' leads to perfectionism. Smith, 'Righteousness', 34; also Smith, 'The Doctrine of the Sanctifying Spirit: Charles G. Finney's Synthesis of Wesleyan and Covenant

will and holiness teachings held true for many evangelicals, for whom the doctrine of voluntary conversion apparently merely postponed the surrender of the will necessary to a full internalisation and integration of the new life.

‘Therefore, the first step in the consecrated life is unconditional surrender’, Simpson told his congregation in 1890.⁶¹ ‘If God is going to make anything of you, you will have to let go of *all* your will’, he exhorted on another occasion.⁶² In turn, God’s will became the determining factor of the Christian life. ‘A sanctified Christian is wholly yielded to God to please him in every particular; his first thought always is, “Thy will be done”’; his one desire that he may please God and do His holy will’.⁶³ ‘His will plans our life completely,’ echoed W. C. Stevens. For Simpson, who fell on the more radical side, sanctification required not only submission of the will, but an exchanged will. It was true, he thought, that the life of faith required the ‘exercise of a strong will continually’ and that faith was the ‘exercise of a sanctified and intensified will’, yet to attain this our will must be ‘wholly renounced and God’s will invariably accepted instead’.⁶⁴

Sanctification, by fulfilling many of the spiritual and psychological functions previously accorded to conversion, completed the process, and as Starbuck noted, ‘intensified it.’⁶⁵

The doctrine of ‘free will’ also posited a different relationship between divine sovereignty and human agency than did traditional Calvinist conversion narratives.

There, responsibility for all aspects of salvation rested upon the sovereign choice of God,

Theology’, *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 13/1 (Spring 1978): 20. <<http://wesley.nnu.edu/theojrnl/11-15/13-6.html>>

⁶¹ A. B. Simpson, ‘Ishmael and Isaac; or, the Death of Self’, in *Christian and Missionary Alliance Weekly* (Aug 29, 1890): 116-121; 116.

⁶² A. B. Simpson, *The Self-life and the Christ-Life* (1896; Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1990), 10, 51.

⁶³ Simpson, *Four-Fold Gospel*, 34.

⁶⁴ Simpson, ‘Ishmael and Isaac’, 116.

⁶⁵ Brereton also notes the ‘intensified’ surrender language used to describe the holiness experience (Brereton, *Sin to Salvation*, 65-66).

not human choice. Sanctification logically followed justification in God's plan. Thus Charles Hodge, Warfield's predecessor at Princeton, taught that 'election is to holiness', and that 'the sanctification and ultimate salvation of believers are secured by the immutable decree of God'.⁶⁶ When salvation rested upon human choice, however, correspondence between God's sovereign actions and justification, regeneration and sanctification became more tenuous. The spectre arose that one might be saved, but not sanctified.

A further marked difference between Hodge and Warfield, and holiness Calvinists lay in their respective positions on sin and human nature. For Hodge, human inability to choose salvation did not arise from a lack of free agency, but from the corruption of the entire nature: 'such is the nature of inherent, hereditary depravity that men since the fall are utterly unable to turn themselves to God, or do anything truly good in his sight'.⁶⁷ Conversion required the prior action of the Holy Spirit in 'regenerating' the nature or soul.⁶⁸ Following on from justification and regeneration, sanctification, which entailed actual 'change in the state of the soul', consisted of both gradual removal of sin, and growth of spiritual life.⁶⁹ Sanctification was both an immediate benefit of salvation, and a gradual transformation of the entire person.⁷⁰ Further, although it was a work of free grace, the individual actively cooperated.⁷¹ The doctrine of free will, as held by Finney,

⁶⁶ Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:341-342; 3:214-215; 3:226; 329-230. Hodge promoted the Calvinist and 'Augustinian' doctrines of divine sovereignty, election, human inability, and limited atonement. For other reformed views of sanctification, see Anthony A. Hoekema, 'The Reformed Perspective', in *Five Views of Sanctification*, 61-90, ed. Stanley N. Gundry (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987); *Westminster Confession*, Ch. 13.

⁶⁷ Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:257. Hodge objected vehemently to the 'Arminian' position of 'free will' upon which revival theology (and holiness teaching) hinged.

⁶⁸ Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:261-263, 340-341.

⁶⁹ Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3:108; 3:221-226; *Westminster Confession* 13:3.

⁷⁰ See Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3:253-258.

⁷¹ Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3:214-215.

built upon a positive view of human nature. Sin was not a depraved ‘state’ out of which individual sins arose, but an individual act that countered the known will of God.⁷² By his logic, if we *ought* to be good, it must be *possible* to be good. Thus, conversion rested upon the will, and sanctification entailed doing ‘the known will of God’.

Free will did not necessarily translate into this positive assessment of human ability, however. Late-century Calvinistic evangelicals rejected Finney’s view of sin as act, and were much more pessimistic about human nature than Warfield and Hodge. As for Hodge, sin was both depraved state, and individual act. However, while justification, which occurred at conversion, dealt with the ‘penalty’ of sin—that is, it brought forgiveness of individual sins—it did not deal with the underlying old nature.

Regeneration, or new birth, was widely viewed as the implantation of a new, ‘divine nature’, which coexisted alongside, rather than transforming, the old nature.⁷³ This ‘two-nature’ view, held by A. J. Gordon, C. I. Scofield and D. L. Moody, among others, reflects the dispensational teachings of J. N. Darby.⁷⁴ Darby based his anthropology, like the rest of his theological structure, on a pessimistic dualism between the earthly and the divine.⁷⁵ Sin had so damaged human nature that it was irrecoverable: ‘I believe in the ruin of man’, he wrote.⁷⁶ Therefore the new nature must be just that—completely new.

⁷² See Warfield, *Perfectionism*, 2:57; for an Oberlinian perspective, see Asa Mahan, *Out of Darkness into Light*, 123-131. Note the use of facts and of experience as sources of authority.

⁷³ See A. B. Simpson, *The Holy Spirit, or Power From on High*, foreword by Walter M. Turnbull (1896; New York: Christian Alliance Publishing, 1924) 2:14; also *Four-Fold Gospel*, 15. It is not entirely clear what this new divine nature is, or how it relates to the human person.

⁷⁴ See J. N. Darby, ‘Letter on Free-Will’, (1861), in *The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby* (Winschoten, Netherlands: H. L. Heijkoop, 1971), Vol. 10: 185; also his commentary on Romans 7-8; Napoleon Noel, *The History of the Brethren*, ed. William F. Knapp (Denver: W. F. Knapp, 1936) 1:37, 1:27. For turn-of-the-century use of this concept, see C. I. Scofield, *Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth: Ten Outline Studies of the More Important Divisions of Scripture* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, n. d.), 69-71; A. J. Gordon, *The Two-Fold Life* (1884; Three Hills, AB: Prairie Press, 1963), iii, 21-22, also 103.

⁷⁵ Darby, following the logic of the ruin of man, held to the doctrine of election and rejected any claims for human ability, or ‘free-will’ (Darby, ‘Letter on Free-Will’).

⁷⁶ Darby, ‘Letter on Free-Will.’

‘Is it the old man that is changed, instructed and sanctified; or do we, in order to be saved, receive a new nature?’ he demanded. This new, eternal life was ‘communicated to us when Christ enters into us by the Word’.⁷⁷ The other side to this teaching was that the old corrupt and unchangeable nature, although reckoned dead, remained.⁷⁸ Although Darby did not find this a problem, others, who found the old nature more intractable, turned to holiness teachings for a solution.

The journey of Hannah Whitall Smith (1832-1911), who, along with husband Robert Pearsall Smith and fellow American William Boardman, helped lay the foundations of the British Keswick movement, demonstrates this link between a negative view of human nature and acceptance of holiness beliefs.⁷⁹ After her 1858 conversion to evangelicalism, Whitall Smith, a Quaker by birth, adopted doctrines taught by a local group of Brethren. However, she increasingly found their teaching both distasteful and at odds with her earlier tradition. Particularly problematic was their ‘legal fiction’ interpretation of the atonement in which the righteousness of Christ was ‘imputed’ to the saved. In this version, justification was a ‘change of clothing’ that covered over the old corrupt nature. Although under those clothes, the believer remained sinful, God *perceived* him or her as holy because of Christ’s work. ‘Why was it’, Whitall Smith complained, ‘that the God, who had planned such a glorious deliverance for us in the

⁷⁷ Darby, ‘Letter on Free-Will’.

⁷⁸ Scofield, *Rightly Dividing*.

⁷⁹ Hannah Whitall Smith, *The Unselfishness of God* (1902; Princeton, NJ: Littlebrook, 1987). Whitall Smith was the stronger character and the leader in their spiritual journey (see *Unselfishness*, 200-203, 206-207). Pearsall Smith’s inappropriate behaviour with a young woman cut short their influence before the Keswick conferences (named for their location) began in 1875. For early accounts of Keswick holiness, see J. B. Figgis, *Keswick from Within* (1914; New York/London: Garland, 1985); Pierson, *Forward Movements*; Walter B. Sloan, *These Sixty Years: The Story of the Keswick Convention* (London / Glasgow / Edinburgh: Pickering and Inglis, c.1935). For accounts that are more critical see Marsden, *Fundamentalism*; Carpenter, *Revive Us Again*; also Douglas Frank, *Less Than Conquerors: How Evangelicals Entered the Twentieth Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1986), and John Kent, *Holding the Fort: Studies in Victorian Revivalism* (London: Epworth Press, 1978).

future, had not also planned a better deliverance in the present?’⁸⁰ In 1865, Smith found relief from her continued struggle with ‘failure and sin’ in Methodist Holiness teachings of sanctification by faith.⁸¹ As she later explained in *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life* (1875), she discovered that Jesus was Saviour both from the ‘penalty of sin’, and from the ‘power of sin’.⁸²

However, while Smith did reject her earlier belief in the irreparability of the old nature, her new conception was not entirely positive. In formulating her holiness thought, Whitall Smith drew upon an odd collection of traditions: evangelical Calvinistic ideas, Methodist holiness teachings, the Quaker concept of ‘a life hid in Christ in God’, and the seventeenth-century quietist mysticism of Fénelon (1651-1715) and Madame Guyon (1647-1717).⁸³ This latter tradition in particular influenced her new views.

Several points stand out. For those who sought salvation in earlier decades, the primary concern was ‘sin’. Smith’s concern was not sin, or the old nature, but the ‘self’. ‘The greatest burden we have to carry in life is self; the most difficult thing we have to manage is self,’ she wrote. ‘In laying off your burdens, therefore, the first one you must get rid of is yourself’. ‘Self’ is ‘your temptations, your temperament, your frames and feelings, all your inward and outward experiences’.⁸⁴ Second, drawing upon quietism, she defined the self as the ‘will’. ‘Fénelon’, she remarked, ‘says that true religion resides

⁸⁰ Whitall Smith, *Unselfishness*, 175-177.

⁸¹ Whitall Smith, *Unselfishness*, 183, 186-187.

⁸² Whitall Smith, *Christian’s Secret*, 16-18.

⁸³ See Whitall Smith, *Unselfishness*, 199; *Christian’s Secret*, 22-23; for references to quietism, see *Unselfishness*, 174-175, *Christian’s Secret*, 81-83. She cites *Spiritual Progress* (1853), which included writings by Fénelon, Guyon, and Lacombe, as an important influence (*Unselfishness*, 174). Whitall Smith confuses two works here: *Spiritual Progress: or Instructions in the Divine Life of the Soul from the French of Fénelon and Madame Guyon*; ed. James W. Metcalf (New York: Dodd, 1853); and William Backhouse and James Janson, *A Guide to True Peace or the Excellency of Inward and Spiritual Prayer Compiled Chiefly from the Writings of Fénelon, Guyon, and Molinos* (1813). For Madame Guyon and quietism, see Underhill, *Mysticism*, 321-324, 469-470.

⁸⁴ Whitall Smith, *Christian’s Secret*, 38-39.

in the will alone; and he means that, since a man's will is really the man's self, of course, what his will does, he does.' The will is the person, or 'Ego', 'that which we feel ourselves to be', the 'spring of all our actions'.⁸⁵ Third, although sanctification was both a 'step of faith, and a process of works', the believer's work was to 'abandon' the soul into God's hands and lie passive, while God transformed, brought growth, and delivered from sin.⁸⁶ 'Could I but make each one of my readers realise how utterly helpless we are in this matter of growing', she exclaimed.⁸⁷ Trust, or faith, was both 'belief', and a passive relinquishment of responsibility. Although at times Whitall Smith could distinguish between giving up the will entirely, and giving up the 'misdirected' will, her teachings of 'abandonment', and her insistence upon the passivity of the believer, combine to suggest that the solution to the problem of the self or will is a displacement of human agency.

This same ambiguous relationship between sin, self, and will pervaded A. B. Simpson's thought, but in an intensified form.⁸⁸ Sometime in 1874, Simpson found the answer to his 'intense nature, his strong self-will, his peculiar temptations, and his spiritual life'.⁸⁹ While reading *The Higher Christian Life*, W. E. Boardman's important

⁸⁵ Whitall Smith, *Christian's Secret*, 80-83.

⁸⁶ Whitall Smith, *Christian's Secret*, 30-31, 47-48, 51.

⁸⁷ Whitall Smith, *Christian's Secret*, 30-31; also 175, 176.

⁸⁸ This next section focuses on the work of A. B. Simpson. One value of Simpson's work is the starkness with which it demonstrates of the logic of radical evangelical interventionist thought. Although Stevens' views were often very similar, Simpson's less moderate language sharpens the disjunction from earlier forms of doctrines, as well as delineating the causes of a newly problematic 'will' and 'self' in turn-of-the-century evangelicalism.

⁸⁹ For Simpson's holiness conversion, see A. B. Simpson, 'Personal Testimony', *Alliance Weekly* (Oct 2, 1915): 11-12; A. W. Tozer, *Wingspread: A. B. Simpson: A Study in Spiritual Altitude* (Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, 1953), 48; and Thompson, *Simpson* (1960 ed.), 63-71. Simpson was interested in holiness by the early 1870s, the same period in which he adopted revivalist practices. Nienkirchen notes that 'Simpson's conceptualisation of both the content of the gospel and the nature of the professional

contribution to holiness thought, Simpson received a ‘new revelation’.⁹⁰ ‘The Lord Jesus revealed Himself as a living all-sufficient presence’, and he discovered that sanctification entailed a direct ‘substitution’:

He who had justified us was waiting to sanctify us, to enter into our spirit and substitute His strength, His holiness, His joy, His love, His faith, His power, for all our worthlessness, helplessness, and nothingness, and make it an actual and living fact, ‘I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me’.⁹¹

Unlike justification, this substitution was not forensic or legal, but a direct inner exchange of Christ’s holiness for the believer’s unworthiness.⁹² Intervention was thus personalised; the righteousness of Christ was not a garment; but came attached to the Person who now indwelt the believer. As he put it in the *Four-Fold Gospel*, ‘Jesus Christ Himself comes into the heart and lives His own life there, and so becomes the sanctification of the soul’.⁹³

ministry was radically reshaped’ during this period (Charles W. Nienkirchen, *A. B. Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992], 12).

⁹⁰ William E. Boardman was an influential figure in the development of Calvinistic holiness, both through his volume *The Higher Christian Life* (1858), and through his participation in the early Keswick movement. See Dieter, *Holiness Revival*, 91. Scholars debate the sources of Simpson’s holiness thought, but most agree that Boardman was a primary influence. See Nienkirchen, *Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement*, 8-9; Samuel J. Stoesz, ‘The Doctrine of Sanctification in the Thought of A. B. Simpson’, in *The Birth of a Vision*, ed. by David F. Hartzfeld and Charles Nienkirchen, *His Dominion, Supplement 1* (Regina, SK: 1986), 109-112; Stoesz, *Sanctification: An Alliance Distinctive* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1992), 35, 41-45. A confusion of chronology complicates the question of influences. See Gerald McGraw, ‘The Climax of a Quest: A Centennial Inquiry into the Time of A. B. Simpson’s Profession of Sanctification’, paper presented at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, Dec 3-5, 1987, 22-25.

⁹¹ Simpson, ‘Personal Testimony’, 11.

⁹² Boardman, at least in this early work, does not use the word ‘substitute’, although the idea remains: ‘Exactly what is attained in this experience? Christ.... Christ objectively and subjectively received and trusted in. That is all. And that is enough. But what as to holiness of heart? Nothing! Nothing but a sense of unholiness...’ (*Higher Christian Life*, 1.4). For similar language, see Mahan, *Out of Darkness into Light*, 99.

⁹³ Simpson, *Four-Fold Gospel*, 37, 8.

During this same period, a friend gave him a copy of *True Peace*.⁹⁴ Like Whitall Smith, Simpson considered reading the quietists as ‘one of the turning points’ of his life.⁹⁵ Through the quietists, he learned to be ‘still’ in prayer, so that God could work:

[W]hen we cease from our works, God works in us; and when we cease from our thoughts, God’s thoughts come into us; when we get still from our restless activity, God worketh in us both to will and do of his good pleasure, and we have but to work it out.⁹⁶

While Simpson did not use the quietist word ‘passivity’, it remained true that a cessation of human activity was necessary for divine activity.⁹⁷ Another anecdote from this era also demonstrates the influence of quietism on his developing views of holiness, and on his oppositional view of divine and human agency. In the midst of a spiritual crisis, a friend (perhaps the same one) had advised him that ‘all you need in order to bring you into the blessing you are seeking, and to make your life a power for God, is to be annihilated’.⁹⁸ As he told the story,

The fact is, the shock of that message almost annihilated him for the time, and before God’s faithful discipline was through, he had learned in some adequate measure, as he has been learning ever since, the great truth which our text expresses, ‘I am not sufficient to think anything of myself’.⁹⁹

Again, the language used here is not Calvinist, but quietist. According to Madam Guyon, for instance, ‘When transformation [of the soul] begins, it is called *annihilation*, since in

⁹⁴ Backhouse and Janson, *A Guide to True Peace or the Excellency of Inward and Spiritual Prayer Compiled Chiefly from the Writings of Fénelon, Guyon, and Molinos* (1813).

⁹⁵ Simpson, *Holy Spirit*, 1:160-164; also Thompson, *A. B. Simpson*, 181. Affinities between quietist and holiness teachings include an experimental epistemology; and the negation of self and will as preliminary to union with the divine. See Ward, ‘Madame Guyon’, 486-487.

⁹⁶ Simpson, *Holy Spirit*, 1:160-164.

⁹⁷ Alliance scholars who note the importance of ‘stillness’ for Simpson’s spirituality overlook this language of annihilation and the matter of agency. See for instance Dwayne Ratzlaff, ‘An Old Medieval Message: A Turning Point in the Life of A. B. Simpson’, in *Birth of a Vision*, 165-194; also Nienkirchen, *Simpson and the Pentecostal Movement*, 9-11. Ratzlaff first identified Simpson’s book as that of Backhouse and Janson.

⁹⁸ Simpson, ‘Personal Testimony’, 11.

⁹⁹ Simpson, ‘Personal Testimony’, 11.

changing our form, we become annihilated as to our own, in order to take on His'.¹⁰⁰

Whether described as annihilation, abandonment, or death of the self, however, the point was the same: either self or God was in control; if God was to rule, the self must go.

As that unrelenting critic of perfectionism, B. B. Warfield pointed out, while a Protestant traditionally sought eradication of sin from his or her nature, 'what the quietist sought to be delivered from was self'.¹⁰¹ While Simpson defined sin as 'the transgression of God's eternal law, a deviation from that which is, and ever must be, right, and an act and state which God is bound to condemn and punish', self remained the greater hindrance to Christian holiness.¹⁰² For Simpson, self was a rival to God, a form of idolatry that 'leads to every other sin', prevents love, mars work for God, causes unhappiness, and always leads to a fall.¹⁰³ 'The root of all sin' is 'independence'; the 'self-asserting and dominant 'me' that would be a god', he declared.¹⁰⁴ In 1890, he proclaimed: 'we must become dead henceforth, not only to sin, but to that which is worse than sin, even self'. To reinforce this point, he quoted one of his hymns:

There is a foe whose hidden power
The Christian well may fear;
More subtle far than inbred sin,
And to the heart more dear.
It is the power of selfishness,
The proud and wilful I;
And e'er my Lord can live in me,
My very self must die.¹⁰⁵

As he explained elsewhere, 'the new man with all his strengths and self-confidence, too, must die'.¹⁰⁶ In turn, Jesus became the 'substitute for our miserable selves'.¹⁰⁷ Warfield,

¹⁰⁰ Guyon, 'Method of Prayer', in *Spiritual Progress*, 65.

¹⁰¹ Warfield, *Perfectionism*, 2: 389. This is born out by the language used in *Spiritual Progress*, where the word 'self' occurs 348 times, 'sin' only 17 times.

¹⁰² Simpson, *Romans*, 45.

¹⁰³ Simpson, 'Ishmael and Isaac', 118-119.

¹⁰⁴ Simpson, *Self-life*, 26, 37. Compare Pierson, *Forward Movements*, 6, 33.

¹⁰⁵ Simpson, 'Ishmael and Isaac', 116-121; 116; also *Self-life*, 38, 39; *Romans*, 165, 170-172.

not surprisingly, charged that this conception of the Christian life involved ‘a complete quietism on our part’:

It is not lived by the Christian, but by Christ in and through the Christian. Immediately upon our ‘letting go and letting God,’ God in Christ takes charge of our lives and lives them for us. The conception is that of a true substitution of the Christ within us for ourselves, as the agent in what are apparently our own activities.¹⁰⁸

Although ‘complete quietism’ might be putting it too strongly, Warfield’s accusation does raise a serious question: why was the self so problematic for Simpson and other holiness believers?

Another source of this negative interpretation of self may be the notion of ‘disinterested benevolence’ mediated through New Divinity theologian Samuel Hopkins (1721-1803).¹⁰⁹ According to Stephen G. Post, the ‘disinterested benevolence’ of Hopkins and his followers is a ‘form of disinterest or indifference to one’s own well-being requiring nothing less than a chaotic surrender of self which violates the structures of personal and social existence...’¹¹⁰ That is, when the death of self is interpreted as self-abnegation or ‘selflessness’, rather than as a healthy capacity for self-forgetfulness or

¹⁰⁶ Simpson, *Self-life*, 7, also Simpson, *Wholly Sanctified*, ch.1.

¹⁰⁷ A. B. Simpson, *Days of Heaven on Earth* (1897; Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1984), readings for May 16 and July 15; *Wholly Sanctified*, 2.3.

¹⁰⁸ Warfield, *Perfectionism*, 2.587. For this either/or dynamic, see Fénelon: ‘There is no middle course; we must refer everything either to God or to self; if to self, we have no other God than self; if to God, we are then in order, and regarding ourselves only as one among the other creatures of God, without selfish interests, and with a single eye to accomplish his will, we enter into that self-abandonment which you desire so earnestly to understand’ (Fénelon, ‘Spiritual Counsel’, in *Spiritual Progress*, 12).

¹⁰⁹ This possibility is suggested by the contrast between Wesleyan holiness and the ‘Hopkinsian’ tradition found by Christopher Robert Armstrong. See Armstrong, ‘The Emotional Culture of the Gilded-Age Wesleyan Holiness Movement’ (PhD dissertation, Duke University, 2003), 60. Other turn-of-the-century evangelicals who defined sin as ‘selfishness’ included British evangelical James Orr, Baptist theologian A. H. Strong, and Social Gospeller Walter Rauschenbusch (James Leo Garrett, *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996], 1:461).

¹¹⁰ Stephen G. Post, *Christian Love and Self-Denial: An Historical and Normative Study of Jonathan Edwards and Samuel Hopkins* (New York: University Press, 1987), 89; cited in Armstrong, ‘Emotional Culture’, 61.

self-transcendence, the outcome is destructive rather than regenerative.¹¹¹ Simpson's language teeters on the edge of this abyss. For example, in *The Self Life*, he explained:

Doing something because *you* like to do it is self-indulgence. No one has a right to do a thing for the pleasure it affords. ...

Doing things because they please you is wrong.... We have no divine warrant to seek ourselves in anything.¹¹²

This rhetoric seems quite disproportionate to the problem created by the free will of voluntary conversion. Even after making allowance for quietist influences, for contemporary definitions of sin as selfishness, or even for the sermonic nature of Simpson's writings, this insistence on the self as 'worse than sin' remains histrionic.

The death of the self, as Starbuck grasped, allowed not only for resolution of the inner person, but also for a new kind of relationship with the Divine. Calvinistic holiness solutions to the problem of the old nature, or of the self, might be more or less radical. For Simpson sanctification required direct means. He insisted that sanctification was neither repression, nor a state of blessing (as in Wesleyan teaching), but a personal union with Christ as living person.¹¹³ 'This is the only true and lasting sanctification', he claimed, 'the indwelling life of Christ in the believing and obedient person'.¹¹⁴ Simpson's views on sanctification here tied closely to his pentecostal pneumatology. Like healing,

¹¹¹ Stephen G. Post, 'Five Dimensions of Unlimited Love', in *Unlimited Love: Altruism, Compassion, and Service* (Templeton Press, 2003). (Accessed 2005-03-10). <<http://www.metanexus.net>> 'The key question in these perennial debates', Post notes, 'is the extent to which the agent of love can or should become self-forgetful or self-"disinterested"'.
¹¹² Simpson, *Self-life*, 10; also 'Practical Christianity', 69.

¹¹³ Simpson, *Days of Heaven*, readings for Jan 31, Apr 19, 28, and June 2. Within a 'two-nature' framework, sanctification entailed the 'suppression' or 'repression' of the old nature through the indwelling Holy Spirit. Later Keswick teachers spoke of 'counteraction', in which the power of the Holy Spirit counteracted the propensities of the old nature. For an overview of these positions, see Stanley N. Gundry, ed., *Five Views of Sanctification*; for examples see Lewis Sperry Chafer, *He that is Spiritual* (Chicago: The Bible Institute Colportage Association, 1929), 43-44, 178-179; Sloan, *These Sixty Years*, 11; Pierson, *Forward Movements*, 11.

¹¹⁴ Simpson, *Self-life*, 20.

or spiritual gifting, sanctification was part of the experiential, personal side of baptism of the Spirit.¹¹⁵ The Spirit's 'great business' was to unite the believer with Christ:

This is the life into which the Holy Ghost brings us, the life of personal union with and constant dependence upon the Lord Jesus Christ. To be filled with the Spirit, then, is to be filled with Christ.¹¹⁶

However, this 'union' had more in common with the negation of quietist mysticism than the mystical union of Calvinist orthodoxy. It was not 'Christ in me, and I in Christ', but rather 'Christ lives his own life' in me:

The sanctified heart is not a self-constituted engine of power, but is just a set of wheels and pulleys that are absolutely dependent upon the great central engine whose force is necessary continually to move them. It is just a capacity to hold God; just a vessel to be filled with His goodness, held and used by His hand; just a possibility of which He, in His abiding life, is constantly the motive power and impelling force.¹¹⁷

Simpson resolved the radical evangelical problem of self through a replacement of agency; an 'over-realised' union in which Christ or the Spirit became the active agent in the believer's life. The person became 'just' a machine, or an inanimate object, empowered by an externally sourced 'spiritual' energy. Here again the negative understanding of human nature becomes evident.

This same dynamic informed Simpson's understandings of Christian service.¹¹⁸ 'We are as dependent upon Christ for our service as for our holiness and salvation', he explained in an 1893 article, 'Practical Christianity; or, The Principles of Christian Service'.¹¹⁹ This required more than human reliance upon God, or cooperation with the Holy Spirit, however. Rather, 'the power to serve God is no natural talent nor acquired

¹¹⁵ Although baptism language became increasingly common by late century, not all holiness or higher life evangelicals embraced this 'pentecostal' interpretation. Often, as in the case of D. L. Moody, it bore more resemblances to ideas of 'filling'. For discussion of varying views on Spirit baptism, see previous chapter.

¹¹⁶ Simpson, *Holy Spirit*, 62, 93-94; *Romans*, 169.

¹¹⁷ Simpson, 'Ishmael and Isaac', 117. Keswick proponents and Pentecostals also used this language.

¹¹⁸ This dynamic of substitutionary replacement, whether of holiness, of agency, or of self, recurs throughout Simpson's work.

¹¹⁹ Simpson, 'Practical Christianity', 67-70; also *Days of Heaven*, May 13.

experience, but Christ's own life and power in us through the Holy Ghost'. His

illustration of this point illuminates the spiritual dynamics at work:

[Our service] is not the poor trembling hand of a child trying to copy the Master's round and perfect characters and lines, but it is the Master taking the hand of the child in His own and writing with it the characters of his own copy....

It is the Christ of Galilee again incarnate in His living members, and doing His works of love and power.¹²⁰

Paradoxically, retaining human freedom to choose God undermined meaningful human agency. At the same time, it provided grounds for a radicalisation of ministry. If the human person was 'but a capacity', the 'child's hand' with which the incarnate Christ wrote, ministry, whether that of a male or female, was a direct work of God. Logically, this should, and often did, lessen emphasis upon biological sex as a qualification for 'service'—but at what cost?

The next chapter explores a different aspect of holiness spirituality: its 'feminine' side. The counterpart to the nineteenth-century self-made man—who created himself and his success through hard work and self-assertion—was the ideal woman, enthroned within the home, and within the realm of religion. The ideal holiness self, in many ways a product of this feminized and domesticated faith, was meek, mild, and submissive; in short, she was a woman. In turn, this special female capacity for piety, embedded as it was in the teachings and practices of holiness spirituality became a powerful argument for the ministry of women.

¹²⁰ Simpson, 'Practical Christianity', 70.

Chapter Seven

Consecrated Womanhood:

The Feminization of Spirituality and Female Ministry

Let everything be merged in this; let our ministers preach for this; let our Seminaries and Training Colleges be on fire with this one theme; let our labourers toil for this; let our servant girls work for this; let our business men carry on their business for this; let our consecrated women sacrifice for this; let our homes be furnished and our wardrobes be purchased with reference to this; and let a whole army of true hearts prove to the world around and the heavens above that they understand the meaning of the cross of Calvary, the cry of dying souls, and the glory of the Coming Kingdom.

*The Missionary Crusade:
Annual Report of the International Missionary Alliance,
October 1892*

In April 1944, Leslie Earl Maxwell, now president of the thriving Prairie Bible Institute in Three Hills, Alberta, and an important holiness teacher in his own right, paid high tribute to his former teacher (and recent co-worker) Dorothy Ruth Miller.¹ In her eulogy, printed in the *Prairie Pastor* he confessed, ‘It is impossible to find any one person to replace Miss Miller as to gift for teaching combined with that rare spiritual discernment which came as a result of her deep consecration and spirituality’. Moreover, he claimed, ‘her teaching was dynamic because it was backed by a life that *lived* the cross’.² Such a tribute would have gratified Miller, for it acknowledged the achievement of her two greatest longings—to be fully consecrated, and to be spiritually useful—as recorded in the daily pages of her journals. Indeed, her first extant diaries from 1920

¹ Dorothy Ruth Miller became a staff member at Prairie Bible Institute in 1928.

² L. E. Maxwell, ‘She Being Dead yet Speaketh’, *Prairie Pastor* 17/4 (April 1944): 88-89.

described such a pivotal ‘reconsecration’ experience, marking her entry into a fully consecrated and useful life.

Maxwell’s commendation also recognised, perhaps unwittingly, Miss Miller’s special capacity, as a woman, to live the consecrated life. In his first public affirmation of female ministry, an editorial attached to a published letter, ‘On Women Speaking’, written by Miller in 1939, he took aim at restrictive elements within conservative fundamentalism:

According to certain legalistic positions held in the present day, Miss Miller has been out of order all of these past years when she has been so blessedly used of God in the training of hundreds of young people. While certain persons might contentiously hold for technicalities of the letter, God’s Spirit, the Spirit which gives liberty, not bondage, uses *yielded men and women* to further his glory (emphasis added).³

His argument reflected both Miller’s status as a consecrated woman, and the role of experiential evidence. That is, God’s Spirit used yielded men and women, Miller was yielded, and therefore the Spirit used Miller. In turn, that God ‘blessedly used’ her authenticated her ministry.

Maxwell’s arguments perpetuated (well into the twentieth century) the perspective of an earlier generation of radical holiness advocates, such as A. B. Simpson. In 1893, A. B. Simpson had scolded a fellow pastor for objecting to women speakers at a conference. This pastor, he suggested, having ‘forgotten all the glorious results of the great convention’, had focused upon ‘a little side issue of a purely speculative character’. God had already settled the matter of women speakers, ‘not only in His Word but in His providence, by the seal which He is placing in this very day, in every part of the world, upon the public work of consecrated Christian women.’ ‘Dear brother’, he concluded,

³ L. E. Maxwell, editorial comments, D. R. Miller, ‘On Women Speaking’, *Prairie Pastor* 12/12 (Dec 1939): 7-8.

‘let the Lord manage the women. He can do it better than you’.⁴ For Simpson, the outcome proved the point: God blessed the ministry of consecrated women. Of course, Calvinistic holiness believers expected consecration of both sexes. Still, as often as not, the accolade of ‘consecrated’ was applied to women, whose alleged capacity for religion, sacrifice, and motherly love made them ideal exemplars for the fully committed life. Thus, when the International Missionary Alliance *Annual Report* proclaimed, ‘Let our consecrated women sacrifice’ for the cause of missions, it expressed a peculiarly nineteenth-century view of female nature and female qualifications for spiritual service.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, the dynamics of consecration spirituality were central to holiness views of self and of service. Surrender to God, described variously as abandonment, death to self, or consecration, provided the means by which Calvinistic holiness believers resolved sin and selfhood. In turn, God gave power over sin, and power for Christian service. This freedom and power, and the possibilities it created for women, were inherent to consecration spirituality. Paradoxically, while the call to surrender and its empowering outcome applied to both men and women, it provided a special source of spiritual legitimisation for women, who had a special capacity for its demands.

This chapter traces how and why ‘consecrated women’ became the ideal exemplars of the holy life. It locates the development of holiness spirituality, and the holiness ‘self’, within a wider ‘feminization’ of religion that occurred among middle-class evangelicals in the increasingly urban and industrialised society of the northeastern

⁴ A. B. Simpson, ‘Trouble about the Women’, *Christian Alliance and Missionary Weekly* (Dec 29, 1893): 402.

United States in the middle years of the nineteenth century. It then traces reactions to and accommodations of this ‘feminine’ spirituality within turn-of-the-century Calvinistic and ‘Keswick’ holiness circles. Finally, a comparison of the consecration experiences of Dorothy Ruth Miller and L. E. Maxwell helps clarify the significance of this feminized self for holiness spirituality, and for the practice of female ministry.

To suggest that holiness spirituality was ‘feminine’, or feminized, is not to claim that holiness evangelicalism was a ‘female’ religion, or to advocate for a unique or ‘essential’ (natural, necessary) female way of experiencing and expressing relationship with God and the world.⁵ Because spiritualities, like gender, are composed of a constellation of interacting factors, claims for ‘male’ or ‘female’ versions of spirituality are dubious at best. Rather, it is to argue that the ‘self’ mediated by holiness spirituality was encoded with qualities and characteristics understood as ‘feminine’ within nineteenth-century society. As discussed previously, spirituality encompasses the interplay between religious belief, experience, and behaviour, or praxis. At the same time, gender beliefs—the ways in which society encodes and interprets sexual difference—influence both the spiritual experiences sought by each sex, and the interpretations given those sexed experiences. Thus, gender and spirituality form interrelated (and sometimes competing), aspects of subjective identity.

⁵ I here follow the North American practice, begun in the 1960s and 1970s, of distinguishing between ‘sex’ as biological, and ‘gender’ as the cultural meaning of sexual difference. See Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 12, for a history of this usage. For the role of human agency ‘as the attempt (at least partially rational) to construct an identity, a life, a set of relationships, a society with certain limits and with language’, see Joan W. Scott, ‘Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis’, *The American Historical Review* 91/5 (Dec 1986): 1067-1069. For the impossibility of determining whether gender differences in spirituality are due to nature or nurture, see Anne E. Carr, *Transforming Grace: Christian Tradition and Women’s Experience* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990), 204.

Holiness spirituality, as outlined in the previous chapter, formed part of a larger project of self-construction taking place in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. During this period, as middle-class men sought to create a fit self for the new, urban, capitalist jungle, their female counterparts were reinventing themselves as domestic experts, and the 'domestic' sphere in which they reigned as a safe haven from the moral contagion of the masculine economic world.⁶ Feminist historians and literary critics trace the development of this 'separate spheres' ideology in the pages of mid-nineteenth-century 'sentimental' and 'domestic' literature.⁷ These works, such as the journal *Godey's Ladies Book* (1830-1898), advice literature, and highly popular sentimental novels helped define both women's sphere and the ideal women who held sway within it.⁸ The nineteenth-century sentimental novel (written primarily by women for women) formed part of a larger and earlier sentimental literary tradition that

⁶ For the development of separate spheres ideology, see for instance Nancy F. Cott, *The Bonds of Womanhood: 'Woman's Sphere' in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), and Barbara Welter, 'The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860' in *Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Barbara Welter (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1976). For a class-based analysis of the development of 'separate spheres' in England in the early 1830s and 1840s see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987). Early writers of women's history interpreted 'separate spheres' negatively. Smith-Rosenberg shifted discussion in 1975 by demonstrating the positive nature of the 'female world' ('The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations between Women in Nineteenth-Century America', in *Disorderly Conduct*, 53-76); see also her introductory essay in *Disorderly Conduct*, 11-52; especially 11-22. Recent discussions recognise separate spheres as a complex concept, 'socially constructed both for and by women'; the language of spheres is thus a 'rhetorical construction' serving both prescriptive and instrumental purposes (Linda K. Kerber, 'Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History', *Journal of American History* 75/1 [June 1988]: 18-21).

⁷ See for example, Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977); Welter, 'The Cult of True Womanhood'; Welter, 'The Feminization of American Religion: 1800-1860', in *Clio's Consciousness Raised*, ed. Mary Hartman and Lois W. Banner, 137-157 (New York: Harper and Row, 1974); Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Gillian Brown, *Domestic Individualism: Imagining Self in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990).

⁸ Examples of the domestic or sentimental novel include Harriet Beecher Stowe's best selling abolitionist work *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1853), Catharine Sedgwick's *New-England Tale* (1822); Susan Warner, *The Wide, Wide World* (1850), and Maria Cummins, *The Lamplighter* (1854). For a helpful overview of this genre, see Donna M. Campbell, 'Domestic or Sentimental Fiction, 1830-1860', *Literary Movements* (Last modified 01/04/2004) <<http://www.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/enl311/domestic.htm>>.

acknowledged the noetic value of the affective.⁹ That is, they believed that ‘feelings’ might serve as guides to right action. Thus, these novels were highly emotive. A standard plotline revolved upon a young girl, who, cast upon her own resources through loss or circumstances, must learn her own worth and gain her place in the world. Several themes run through these narratives: the inherent goodness of humanity (over against Calvinist doctrines of depravity), the importance of personal relationships and intimacy, and the experience and meaning of loss read through the moral lens of the Christian story.¹⁰ By evoking ‘sympathy’ from readers, these stories helped create the corollary to the self-made man: the ‘true woman’, pure, pious, submissive, and domestic.¹¹

At the same time, and by similar mechanisms, religion became ‘the property of the ladies’.¹² In an influential and contentious thesis, Ann Douglas has argued for a ‘feminization’ of American culture and religion, which came about between 1820 and 1875 through an unlikely coalition of newly disestablished liberal clergy and northern middle-class literary women who had lost their traditional productive roles due to industrialisation and urbanisation.¹³ During this period, while literary women wrote sentimental fiction, advice books, and journal articles celebrating the salvific power of

⁹ Examples included Samuel Richardson, *Pamela* (1740) and Oliver Goldsmith's *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766). See Donna M. Campbell, ‘The Early American Novel: Introductory Notes’, *Literary Movements*. (Last Modified 03/03/2005) <<http://www.gonzaga.edu/faculty/campbell/enl311/earamnov.htm>>.

¹⁰ Sentimental literature ‘is premised on an emotional and philosophical ethos that celebrates human connection, both personal and communal, and acknowledges the shared devastation of affectional loss’. Joanne Dobson, ‘Reclaiming Sentimental Literature’, *American Literature* 69 (1997): 266, cited in Min Hyoung Song, ‘Sentimentalism and Sui Sin Far,’ *Legacy: A Journal of American Women Writers* (Jan 1, 2003).

¹¹ See Welter, ‘Cult of True Womanhood’, 115.

¹² Welter, ‘Feminization of American Religion’, 138.

¹³ Douglas, *Feminization*, 5-8, 90-91; Welter, ‘Feminization of American Religion’, 137-157. Douglas’s thesis is contentious; in good part due to its negative assessment of sentimentalism and of the feminization process as narcissistic, anti-intellectual, consumerist, and corrosive to American culture. Others (notably Jane Tompkins) consider sentimental fiction as ‘a monumental effort to reorganize culture from the woman’s point of view’. Tompkins, ‘Sentimental Power: Uncle Tom’s Cabin and the Politics of Literary History’, in *Sensational Designs*, 122-146.

their domestic sphere and of maternal influence, liberal clergy moderated Calvinist beliefs to appeal to their female constituents.¹⁴ Feminized religion took numerous forms. It displayed itself in increased female participation in church activities and voluntary organisations, in softened theology, and in a feminized God. In feminized theology, by Douglas' account, God became loving parent rather than sovereign authority; the atonement became universal; humans, no longer depraved, required nurture rather than conversion (as in the sentimental novel); and feeling replaced intellect and dogma.¹⁵ The nineteenth-century God became more like a woman, and God's love became motherly. Popular piety and hymnody cast Jesus in a more 'feminine' and maternal mould. Loving, meek and mild, self-sacrificing, a tender-hearted friend, Jesus exemplified all the virtues of the ideal woman.¹⁶

As *Godey's Ladies Book*, the American Bible of true womanhood, proclaimed in 1855, 'True religion is pure, peaceable, gentle, unselfish, exalting the tastes and pursuits, and brings glory to God and good-will to man'.¹⁷ These were, of course, qualities and skills its largely female readership would recognise as properly their own. Notably, these were also qualities expected of holiness believers, both male and female. In her important manual of holiness teachings, *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life* (1875), Hannah Whitall Smith described the sanctified character in very similar terms. The 'consecrated soul' was meek and quiet in spirit, submissive and pliable before God,

¹⁴ Douglas, *Feminization*, 11-12, 307-308.

¹⁵ Douglas, 5-7, 143-196; also Welter, 'Feminization'. In previous chapters, similar trends have been denoted the 'democratisation' of religion.

¹⁶ See Welter, 'Feminization', 140-142.

¹⁷ 'The Religious Education of the Young', *Godey's Ladies Book*, 51/1 (July 1855): 28. For *Godey's Ladies Book* see <http://cit.uvm.edu:6336/dynaweb/godey/@Generic__CollectionView>.

sweet, calm, and yielding to the wishes of others.¹⁸ This aspect of consecration spirituality—its essentially ‘feminine’ and sentimental nature—is vital to any discussion of female ministry among turn-of-the-century radical evangelicals.¹⁹

Like the liberal Calvinists and Unitarians of Douglas’s study, the conservative Wesleyan and Calvinist evangelical women and men who adopted holiness teachings during this same period were also middle class, often newly urban, and from the northeast. Like their authorial sisters, holiness women helped create and propagate theological ideas, a rare achievement among orthodox evangelicals.²⁰ In particular, Methodist Phoebe Worrall Palmer (1807-1874), mother of the American Holiness movement, and Hannah Whitall Smith (1832-1911), a leading player in the development of ‘Keswick’ spirituality, demonstrated this potential for women to domesticate and feminize nineteenth-century religious discourse. Both women formed alliances with male proponents of holiness theology, wrote widely-read guides to holiness, and gained broad influence through their international ministries as holiness teachers.²¹ In the

¹⁸ Hannah Whitall Smith, *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life* (1875, 1888; New York: Fleming H. Revell, new and enlarged edition 1916), 203-204.

¹⁹ For a similar characterisation of Wesleyan Holiness as ‘sentimental’ and romantic (in the sense of romantic love), see Christopher Robert Armstrong, ‘The Emotional Culture of the Gilded-Age Wesleyan Holiness Movement’ (PhD dissertation, Duke University, 2003). Between 1860 and 1890, he argues, Holiness believers shared the same commitments to empiricism, relational selfhood, and ‘eudaemonism’ found in sentimentalism and popular romanticism, as well as sharing values of dependence, autonomy, relationality, and personal transparency.

²⁰ Women had similar influence among earlier pietists and Quakers. The nineteenth century also saw a number of female-led sects and movements.

²¹ Important works by Palmer include *The Way of Holiness* (1843), *Entire Devotion to God* (1845) and an important defence of female ministry, *The Promise of the Father* (1859, later edited and republished as *Tongue of Fire on the Daughters of the Lord*, 1869). See *Phoebe Palmer: Selected Writings, Sources of American Spirituality*, ed. Thomas C. Oden (New York: Paulist Press, 1988). Nancy Hardesty proclaimed Palmer ‘mother’ of the Holiness movement (see Oden, ‘Introduction’, *Palmer*, 5). Works by Hannah Whitall Smith include the widely read *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life* (1875), *Every-day Religion; or, the Common-sense Teaching of the Bible* (1893); her autobiography, *The Unselfishness of God and How I Discovered It* (1903); and *God of All Comfort and the Secret of His Comforting* (1906).

process, they helped define the processes by which evangelicals might integrate ‘feminine’ spiritual values into the self.

Phoebe Palmer, whose career encompasses the sentimental era of Douglas’s study, illustrates the potential for antebellum women to domesticate religious discourse.²² Palmer, ‘arguably the best representative figure, male or female, of the beginnings of the holiness tradition of spirituality in America’, developed the ‘altar’ theology central to later holiness teaching.²³ In 1837, she discovered, through personal experience, that the attainment of sanctification required only a simple act of consecration and faith, rather than a lengthy struggle. As she later explained, ‘Holiness is a state of soul in which all the powers of the body and mind are consciously given up to God; and the witness of holiness is that testimony which the Holy Spirit bears with our spirit that the offering is accepted through Christ’. Further, she continued, ‘The work is accomplished the moment we lay our all upon the altar’.²⁴ Palmer’s altar theology is notable for its central dynamic of active passivity. Although initiated through an act of consecration (laying all upon the altar), the individual received and maintained holiness passively, through a ‘feminine’ act of ‘surrender’ to the Divine ‘Other’.²⁵ In turn, God cleansed the heart, or motives, so that the believer might live accordingly.²⁶ By divesting its attainment of all process, struggle and effort, and investing it instead with values of surrender and receptivity, Palmer encoded the sanctification experience with ‘feminine’ values.

²² For this assessment of Palmer’s theology as ‘domestic’, see Theodore Hovet, ‘Phoebe Palmer’s “Altar Phraseology” and the Spiritual Dimensions of Woman’s Sphere’, *Journal of Religion* 63 (July 1983): 264-280.

²³ Oden, ‘Introduction’, *Palmer*, 5. See also Charles Edward White, ‘The Beauty of Holiness: The Career of Phoebe Palmer’, *Fides et Historia* 19/1 (1982): 22-34.

²⁴ Palmer, ‘Way of Holiness’, in *Palmer*, 196.

²⁵ Although one might expect this Other to be masculine, this was not always the case. Nineteenth-century religion allowed a surprising fluidity in gendered conceptions of God, including the use of maternal language for the Holy Spirit. See next chapter.

²⁶ Palmer, *Palmer*, 115.

Palmer shared her insights, at least initially, from within the domestic sphere.²⁷ The ‘Tuesday Meetings for the Promotion of Holiness’, which she hosted with her sister Sarah Worrall Lankford at their home in New York City from 1835, served as a centre for holiness spirituality for women and men. Although a Methodist, like the American Holiness movement she inspired, Palmer also influenced early Calvinistic holiness leaders such as Asa Mahan, president of Oberlin College, Presbyterian William Boardman, author of *The Higher Christian Life* (1858), faith healer Dr. Charles Cullis, and Congregationalist scholar Thomas Cogswell Upham (1799-1872).²⁸ Through the Tuesday meetings, her books, and increasingly through revival campaigns held in conjunction with her doctor husband, her teachings on holiness spread widely.

If the ‘feminine’ spirituality of Phoebe is representative of the early sentimental period, that of Hannah Whitall Smith is emblematic of its latter stages. As noted previously, Whitall Smith developed her feminized version of holiness teaching in direct response to the negativity of some teachings of the Brethren with whom she associated, in particular their ‘legal fiction’ view of justification.²⁹ However, Whitall Smith also rebelled against the doctrine of reprobation, the idea that God elected some to hell, for this seemingly arbitrary decision on God’s part called divine justice into question.³⁰ Smith resolved this issue through the idealised image of redemptive maternal love.

²⁷ For this insight, see Hovet, ‘Phoebe Palmer’, 270-273.

²⁸ Dieter, *Holiness Revival*, 38, 53, 57; Oden, *Palmer*, 137. For an extensive listing of nineteenth-century leaders influenced by Palmer, see Oden, ‘Introduction’, in *Palmer*, 3-8.

²⁹ See chapter six.

³⁰ See Hannah Whitall Smith, *The Unselfishness of God and How I Discovered It* (1902), ch. 21. (Accessed 2005-03-30). <<http://www.godstruthfortoday.org/Library/smith/hwsmith9.html>> Standard North American editions of this work published after her death omit chapters 21 to 23, which in which Whitall Smith recounts her discovery of the unselfishness of God, and her move to a universalist position (see for instance Hannah Whitall Smith, *The Unselfishness of God* [Princeton: Littlebrook, 1987]). I am indebted to an article by Debra Campbell for alerting me to Smith’s use of mother language, which sent me on a complicated search for the original text. See Debra Campbell, ‘Hannah Whitall Smith (1832-1911): Theology of the Mother-hearted God’, *Signs: Journal of Women and Culture* 15 (1989): 79-101.

Based on her own experiences of motherhood, she concluded that if God was able to condemn some to hell for no reason, his love for humanity was less than that of a mother for her children. This led to her discovery of the ‘unselfishness of God’. In her spiritual autobiography, *The Unselfishness of God and How I Discovered It*, Smith explained the centrality of this notion to her theological method:

In fact most of my ideas of the love and goodness of God have come from my own experience as a mother, because I could not conceive that God would create me with a greater capacity for unselfishness and self sacrifice than He possessed Himself; and since this discovery of the mother heart of God I have always been able to answer every doubt that may have arisen in my mind, as to the extent and quality of the love of God, by simply looking at my own feelings as a mother.³¹

She came to see that ‘if I took all the unselfish love of every mother’s heart the whole world over, and piled it all together, and multiplied it by millions, I would still only get a faint idea of the unselfishness of God’.³² Therefore, God’s ‘remedy must necessarily be equal to the disease’ of sin, and ‘salvation must be as universal as the fall’.³³ This ‘discovery’ of God’s love underpinned her holiness teachings. ‘In fact, I believe that all the problems of the spiritual life... would vanish like mist before the rising sun, if the full blaze of the mother-heart of God should be turned upon them’, she later explained.³⁴

While consecration spirituality turned upon ‘feminine’ values, it also, to adapt the phrase of Jane Tompkins, possessed ‘sentimental power’.³⁵ That is, by invoking the dominant myths of antebellum culture—the redemptive power of death, the soteriological value of the domestic sphere, and ‘the story of salvation through motherly love’—women

³¹ Whitall Smith, *Unselfishness of God* (1902), ch. 23.

³² Whitall Smith, *Unselfishness of God* (1902), ch. 23; for a description of love as ‘tender and self-sacrificing and devoted’, but without the appellation of motherhood, see *Christian’s Secret*, 175.

³³ Whitall Smith, *Unselfishness of God* (1902), ch. 22.

³⁴ Whitall Smith, *Unselfishness of God* (1902), ch. 23.

³⁵ Tompkins, ‘Sentimental Power’, 122-146.

writers of sentimental fiction sought to sway their female readers to reform society.³⁶ Holiness spirituality transplanted these ideas back into the spiritual realm, where they grew into power for proclamation and service. As Theodore Hovet points out, by casting spirituality in a domestic framework Palmer both freed herself from the tyranny of the domestic, and infused it with ‘spiritual values’.³⁷ For instance, an expressed willingness to give up a family member or family ties (of high value in the domestic economy) in order to receive God’s best was common to consecration accounts. Palmer’s decisive act of consecration involved surrender of her beloved husband to God, a deed she associated with Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac.³⁸ Death might play a part in these avowals: Palmer lost a daughter a year before her sanctification experience; Hannah Whitall Smith experienced conversion shortly after the death of a child; Charles Finney experienced his final sanctification after surrendering his sick wife to God. Hannah Whitall Smith made this explicit in *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life*. ‘The first thing you must get rid of is yourself’, she explained. ‘Next, you must lay off every other burden, —your health, your reputation, your Christian work, your houses, your children, your business, your servants; everything, in short, that concerns you, whether inward or outward’.³⁹

As with sentimental theories of ‘influence’, power gained through holiness ‘submission’ could circumvent or displace the oppressive demands implicit in the rhetoric of ‘separate spheres’. Yet, by setting aside or loosening domestic ties, women received something of more value: sanctifying grace, in Palmer’s terms, or in Hannah

³⁶ Tompkins, ‘Sentimental Power’, 122-146.

³⁷ Hovet, ‘Phoebe Palmer’, 273. For a wary look at how holiness ideology mitigated the claims of domesticity, see Armstrong, ‘Emotional Culture’, 343-347.

³⁸ Oden, ‘Introduction’, in *Palmer*, 10; Palmer, ‘Way of Holiness’, in *Palmer*, 114-115.

³⁹ Whitall Smith, *Christian’s Secret*, 38, 39.

Whitall Smith's phrase, 'the happy life'. Further, they received a new focus for their life and energy in their service to God. As demonstrated earlier, to 'sanctify' meant to 'set aside for service'; within holiness circles, that often meant testifying to their experience. Palmer, for instance, taught that maintenance of the state of holiness depended upon two things: a 'continuous act' of consecration, and active testimony to the experience.⁴⁰ Through exercising their 'natural' aptitude for surrender and self-sacrifice, women thus became duty bound to tell others—often in public—of God's sanctifying grace. To defend this practice, Palmer turned to the 'pentecostal' argument that the Spirit still fell upon women and impelled them to speak, citing in support Methodist commentator Adam Clarke's assertion that such women 'assume thereby no *personal* authority over others. They are instruments through which divine instruction is communicated to the people'.⁴¹ By placing authority in the Spirit rather in the speaker, thus allowing female public ministry without challenging male authority, Palmer circumvented questions of appropriate gender roles.

While consecration spirituality served as a female strategy for negotiating gendered boundaries, it also played a role in the negotiation of an appropriate Christian self.⁴² Here it is important to recognise that the apparently binary categories of separate

⁴⁰Palmer, *Palmer*, 121, 179; 187-188; 200. For the importance of testimony, see *Palmer*, 177, also Nancy Hardesty, Lucille Sider Dayton and Donald Dayton, 'Women in the Holiness Movement: Feminism in the Evangelical Tradition', in *Women of Spirit: Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether and Eleanor McLaughlin (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1979), 243.

Although Smith did not make the connection between testifying and maintaining sanctification, she likewise expected service to follow the new experience. See Whitall Smith, *Christian's Secret*, 186-198.

⁴¹ See Palmer, 'Tongue of Fire on the Daughters of the Lord' (1869), in Oden, *Phoebe Palmer, Selected Writings*, 31-56; 38. For further discussion of the pentecostal argument for female prophecy, see chapter six.

⁴² Chris Armstrong also considers holiness spirituality to be a strategy for 'self-formation' within a rapidly changing society. Through 'emotional maps' encoded in their written documents 'holiness believers, like their sentimental grandparents and romantic cousins, sought an emotion-informed route to personal growth' (Armstrong, 'Emotional Culture', 20). Apparently believing that emotional maps are gender-neutral, he

spheres—domesticity and capitalism, self-made man and ideal women, morally challenged male and female religious guardian—represented interdependent strategies for re-ordering society and resolving identity within a transitioning culture, rather than an actual segregation of the sexes.⁴³ Indeed, as Gillian Brown has demonstrated, rather than simply opposing or acceding to new (male) concepts of individuality and market economy, the domestic sphere provided the necessary private space for their development.⁴⁴ That is, nineteenth-century men *needed* the private, domestic sphere; the domestic ideology of the era allowed for the ‘updating and reshaping’ of the male individual. However, this ‘domestic self’ was *feminine*: ‘aligned with and based on the feminine sphere’ and ‘inflected’ with traditionally ‘feminine’ values of ‘interiority, privacy and psychology’. Thus, ‘far from an account of the female subject, domesticity signifies a feminization of selfhood in service to an individualism most available to (white) men’.⁴⁵

Likewise, the ‘holiness self’, imbedded as it was in the domestic and sentimental, was also ‘feminine’. Holiness spirituality provided means for the internalisation of values—interiority, passivity, emotionality, and purity—once considered Christian, but now gendered ‘female’; and allowed as well as women the opportunity to assume these necessary (but feminine) Christian postures of submission, self-sacrifice and dependence

avoids discussing any crossover between the ‘feminine’ construction of mid-century sentimentalism, and the sentimental self.

⁴³ See note 6 above.

⁴⁴ Brown, *Domestic Individualism*, 1, 2, 205. Brown employs the concept of possessive individualism (the liberal individual as possessing the right to self-determination), as well as Marxist economic categories to make her argument.

⁴⁵ Brown, *Domestic Individualism*, 7, 9. This domesticated, or feminized self remains ‘in a state of conflict that resonates as much with the sets of contradictions we call male as with those we call female’ (206). Brown also looks to works by male writers for this domestic individual.

towards God.⁴⁶ While consecration allowed men to live by the ‘softer’ Christian virtues, women took on some aspects of masculine power and authority. In a sense, holiness spirituality was counter-cultural for both women and men. Although the initial steps of surrender conformed to gender expectations for women, after their sanctification or consecration experience, women often found themselves called to act with authority outside of conventional strictures. At the same time, men found themselves required to surrender authority or autonomy in order to gain holiness. Women were more likely to struggle with giving up family, men more likely to wrestle with a ‘controlling sin’.

While the ‘feminine’ and domestic character of consecration spirituality clarifies its power to support female ministry, it also helps explain later tensions over women’s roles in fundamentalist circles. Teaching that ‘self-denial’ was the route to spiritual power led to paradoxical outcomes for holiness women. This language reinforced nineteenth-century or ‘Victorian’ stereotypes of the submissive, self-sacrificial character natural to women. On the one hand, this meant that women had a natural affinity to consecration spirituality. Further, because it was difficult to argue with the leading of God’s Spirit, a ‘call’ to a specific task or ministry gained through this means could expand female ministry roles. At the same time, this language buttressed female submission to men.

By the end of the century, sentimentalism and domestic ideology no longer held the same power over American culture, although traces remained within religion and

⁴⁶ ‘Passivity’ differentiates the holiness self from the romantic self, with its ‘exaltation’ of the active, historical and political, and marks it as sentimental. See Douglas, *Feminization*, 81, 308. I take issue here with Hovet, who considers Palmer’s re-conception of sanctification as ‘romantic’ (thus a form of self-creation), rather than recognising the feminized tension between passivity and activity at its centre (Hovet, ‘Phoebe Palmer’, 267-270).

spirituality, and in changed gender roles. Men, particularly those involved in ministry, found ‘feminized’ and sentimental forms of Christianity, and the women who represented them, increasingly problematic. Turn-of-the-century Liberal Protestant enthusiasm for the ‘Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man’ may be part of this reaction.⁴⁷ The years 1911 and 1912 were the heyday of the Men and Religion Forward Movement, associated with both evangelical and social gospel concerns.⁴⁸ Among turn-of-the-century Calvinistic evangelicals, a new ‘muscular’ Christianity, of which evangelist Billy Sunday’s revivals provide one of the best-known examples, became popular.⁴⁹ Evangelicals now emphasised the ‘masculine’ side of their beliefs; language became assertive and militarised, and Jesus became a ‘manly man’. This same process occurred in Calvinistic holiness circles, where a new rhetoric of masculine ‘victory’, ‘power’, and hard work surfaced. Thus, when Charles Trumbull established the North American equivalent of Keswick holiness in 1913, it was the ‘victorious life’, rather than the ‘higher life’ of W. E. Boardman, or the ‘happy life’ of Hannah Whitall Smith that he promoted.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ See Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (New York: Macmillan, 1907), 70-71; 48; also Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion*, vol. 1, *The Irony of it all: 1893-1919* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 290-295.

⁴⁸ See Gail Bederman, “‘The Women Have Had Charge of the Church Work Long Enough’: The Men and Religion Forward Movement of 1911-1912 and the Masculinization of Middle-Class Protestantism”, *American Quarterly* 41/3 (1989): 432-65; also Betty DeBerg, *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990), 151.

⁴⁹ For conservative attempts to reclaim the church for men, see DeBerg, 75-98; also Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender: 1875 to the Present* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1993), 14, 30. Statistics of the period support these fears (DeBerg, *Ungodly Women*, 75, Bendroth, *Fundamentalism*, n.12, 130-131).

⁵⁰ George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture: The Shaping of Twentieth-Century Evangelicalism, 1870-1925* (New York / Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 96; Joel A. Carpenter, *Revive Us Again: The Reawakening of American Fundamentalism* (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 81; Walter B. Sloan, *These Sixty Years: The Story of the Keswick Convention* (London: Pickering and Inglis, c.1935), 91; see also ‘Announcement for Victorious Life Conference’, Midland Bible School, June 1919.

Yet a commonly made assessment that ‘victorious life’ language expressed growing concern with feminization needs to be qualified.⁵¹ Talk of victory rather than surrender was in part a shift in emphasis, not a change in language or doctrine. As we saw in previous chapters, surrender was essential to a psycho-spiritual resolution of self, but victory over sin and power for service was the outcome. Years earlier, in 1875, Hannah Whitall Smith had used this same language. In the first three pages of *The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life*—a book that served as an essential text for the Keswick movement—she used ‘victory’ five times, alternating it with ‘triumph’, ‘more than conquerors’, power, and deliverance.⁵² This victory, she insisted, came through ‘abandoning’ the self to God. In his 1858 holiness classic, *The Higher Christian Life*, William Boardman likewise emphasised ‘power’, a word he used at least 149 times.⁵³ Although he rarely used the language of surrender or submission, it remained crucial. ‘The point of despair to him who abandons all to Jesus is also the point of hope’, he explained. ‘Hopeless abandonment’ is ‘the victory that overcometh.’ Thus for both women and men in the early Calvinistic holiness movement, ‘masculine’ victory came through ‘feminine’ submission. That is, from its inception, holiness spirituality allowed both the integration of ‘feminine’ qualities, *and* the expression of ‘masculine’ characteristics.

Further, this re-masculinisation of some strands of Calvinistic holiness began much earlier, at the inception of the Keswick movement itself. Just before the first

⁵¹ See for instance Bendroth, *Fundamentalism*, 22-24; DeBerg, *Ungodly Women*, 145-147. See also Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 79-80, 96.

⁵² Whitall Smith, *Christian’s Secret*, 15-17; for the importance of this book to Keswick holiness, see D. W. Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth Century England*, The 1998 Didsbury Lectures (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 2000), 76.

⁵³ W. E. Boardman, *The Higher Christian Life* (Boston: Henry Hoyt; New York: Sheldon & Co., c.1858). <<http://online.cbccs.ca/alliancestudies/>>

convention at Keswick in 1875, a moral lapse led to the removal of Robert Pearsall Smith from leadership. With his expulsion, leadership passed into the hands of British clergy such as Anglicans Evan Hopkins and Prebendary H. W. Webb-Peploe, and Baptist F. B. Meyer, who ensured that Keswick remained in Calvinist channels.⁵⁴

If feminization as *per* Hannah Whitall Smith correlated with a softening of Calvinist doctrines and a kinder, gentler, more maternal God, the new Keswick formulations represented resistance to those trends.⁵⁵ Hopkins averted charges of perfectionism by positing that the Spirit ‘counteracted’ the tendencies of the ‘sin’ nature rather than transforming (or replacing) the self.⁵⁶ The Keswick insistence upon human depravity, and the remnant of the sin nature after sanctification, allowed for acceptance of holiness teaching within wider circles; and for their reintroduction to North American audiences by American evangelist D. L. Moody and his associates.⁵⁷ British Keswick teachers, like their American counterparts, continued to call for a ‘feminine’ pattern of consecration and surrender into the 1920s, although a suspicion of subjectivity and a new emphasis on a ‘sturdy spirituality’ became the norm.⁵⁸ Whitall Smith’s own work

⁵⁴ See Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 77-79; also Ian M. Randall, *Evangelical Experiences: A Study in the Spirituality of English Evangelicalism 1918-1930*, foreword by David Bebbington, *Paternoster Biblical and Theological Monographs* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster, 1999), 14-15.

⁵⁵ One sign of this shift is that women did not speak from the main platform at Keswick, although after the mid-1880s Keswick commissioned women as foreign missionaries. See Alison M. Bucknall, ‘Martha’s Work and Mary’s Contemplation? The Women of the Mildmay Conference and the Keswick Convention 1856-1900’, in *Gender and Christian Religion*, 405-420, *Studies in Church History* 34 (Woodbridge, England: 1998): 413-418. Bucknall, who uses a narrower and more negative interpretation of the term than the present study, denies that Keswick spirituality was ‘feminized’ (414-415). For an extensive list of men and women involved in the early years of Keswick, see Sloan, *These Sixty Years*. The ratio of women to men is 16 to 90. However, the first Keswick missionaries, Amy Carmichael and Miss Townsend, were female (60).

⁵⁶ Bebbington, *Holiness*, 83.

⁵⁷ Moody, *Life of Moody*, 132-135, 200; also Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 77-79. Marsden suggests that this trans-Atlantic baptism, and the Keswick insistence on the remnant of the sin nature, gave holiness teachings credibility amongst North American Calvinist evangelicals.

⁵⁸ See Randall, *Evangelical Experiences*, 27-29. Randall suggests that ‘another factor producing a less intense conception of the consecrated life was the diminishing role of women’; however, this puts the matter backwards.

suffered sooner. Editions of her spiritual autobiography published after her death in 1911 lacked the three chapters that formed the heart of her book on *The Unselfishness of God*. By these means, her evangelical publishers disguised the feminized nature of her teachings, erasing both her universalism, and her mother-hearted God.⁵⁹

A second area where critics mark the loss of the ‘feminine’ among Calvinistic holiness believers is an increasing stress on faith rather than feelings. As Hopkins, known for his moderating influence on Keswick doctrine, told listeners: ‘First fact, then faith, and last feeling’.⁶⁰ Again, it is important to note what is really happening here, for an insistence on faith rather than feelings runs throughout nineteenth-century holiness teaching. Hannah Whitall Smith, who considered the temptation to look to feelings as one of the ‘difficulties concerning consecration’, suggested, in words very similar to those of Hopkins: ‘God’s invariable rule in everything is, fact first, faith second, and feeling last of all’.⁶¹ For Smith, the refusal to depict sanctification as an emotional experience derived in part from her understanding of the will. ‘Now, the truth is’, she told readers, ‘that this life is not to be lived in the emotions at all, but in the will; and therefore, if only the will is kept steadfastly abiding in its centre, God’s will, the varying states of emotion do not in the least disturb or affect the reality of the life’.⁶² In turn, her emphasis on the will and her rejection of ‘feelings’ derived from the mystical and quietist tradition in which Whitall Smith was immersed.⁶³ Phoebe Palmer’s altar theology also centred upon the refusal to rely upon emotion; she received assurance of personal

⁵⁹ It is interesting to speculate whether the urgency of removing Pearsall Smith from power over ‘exaggerated rumours’ (Sloan, *These Sixty Years*, 21) related to evangelical unease with his wife’s doctrines.

⁶⁰ Sloan, *These Sixty Years*, 26.

⁶¹ Whitall Smith, *Christian’s Secret*, 60, 63-64.

⁶² Whitall Smith, *Christian’s Secret*, 80.

⁶³ See previous chapter for the importance of quietism to Whitall Smith’s holiness teachings.

holiness *after* she laid her all upon the altar.⁶⁴ According to Palmer, '*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'.⁶⁵

At the same time, it is important to note that by rejecting 'feelings', these women are not denying the importance of 'experimental knowledge' of God. In early holiness works, this constant discussion of faith and feeling (found in the work of both women and men), derived from the attempt to distinguish between these two forms of subjective experience. They sought 'experimental' knowledge, rather than simply emotion.⁶⁶ Like Jonathan Edwards before them, astute holiness advocates understood that spiritual knowledge and the emotional life were linked, but not equivalent. Thus Smith, who first discovered the 'joys of spiritual emotion' at a Wesleyan holiness camp meeting, commented that the intense emotions of some were a result of personality, not spiritual blessing. 'It was the truth', she explained, 'not the emotion, that set the soul free'.⁶⁷ Twentieth-century fundamentalists were even more wary of excessive feeling.

However, in rejecting sentimental 'emotion', later fundamentalism not only distanced from the 'feminine', but also from experimental epistemologies, and finally, from interventionist spirituality itself. If the Calvinistic holiness self was 'feminine', sentimental, and domestic, it was so in the same way as Gillian Brown's (male) domestic individual, uncomfortably trapped by the domestic ties that gave it being. Yet the only way to change the gender of this self was to alter its formative experience: to move it out

⁶⁴ See Palmer, *Palmer*, 119-122.

⁶⁵ Palmer, *Palmer*, 173.

⁶⁶ See previous chapter.

⁶⁷ Whitall Smith, *Unselfishness* (1987), 212-214.

of its sentimental ‘holiness’ house. To do so required modifying one or more of the interdependent elements—belief, experience, and practice—that shaped holiness spirituality. Thus, to de-feminize holiness teaching and the holiness self, it was necessary to distance from earlier relational patterns of surrender and receptivity and to adopt a more transactional and mechanical model for Christian life, a move signalled by, but not caused by, increased victory language.

Whereas the ‘higher life’ came through trust and an inner experience of ‘Christ Himself’ (as A. B. Simpson had expressed it), by the 1920s ‘victory’ increasingly depended upon the individual’s willingness to ‘make Christ Lord’.⁶⁸ This affected matters on several fronts. First, to acknowledge Jesus as Lord invoked images of pledging (male) allegiance to a male leader, rather than a ‘feminine’ surrender (to a husband).⁶⁹ The language of Lordship proclaimed the masculinity of Christ, over against the gentle Jesus of the Victorian age. Thus, Jesus no longer exemplified the ideal woman, but the manly man. Second, Victorious Life teachers backed away from pneumatological constructions of sanctification.⁷⁰ The believer experienced ‘filling’, rather than ‘baptism’, and the Holy Spirit ‘counteracted’ sin, rather than controlling motives or actions. As the Holy Spirit’s role lessened, the experience lost much of its power to overturn gendered boundaries.

⁶⁸ For this shift in British Keswick teachings during the 1920s, see Randall, *Evangelical Experiences*, 27-29; also J. Robertson McQuilkin, ‘Keswick View’, in *Five Views of Sanctification*, ed. Stanley N. Gundry (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1987), 166.

⁶⁹ For this language of husband and marriage, see for instance William C. Stevens, ‘Sanctification’ (Self-published tract, n.d.). PBI archives.

⁷⁰ For the importance of pneumatology in sanctification, see chapter six. For the ‘subdued pneumatology’ at Keswick during the inter-war period, see Randall, *Evangelical Experiences*, 30-32, 38-39. Carpenter notes this lessening of pneumatological language within American Keswick circles during the 1920s, but suggests a recovery of the Holy Spirit in the 1930s and 1940s (*Revive Us Again*, 115). The earlier shift away from describing sanctification as Spirit baptism may be due to concern over Pentecostalism.

As we saw in the previous chapter, the connection between sanctification and service operated on three levels: 1) service was a fruit of sanctification; 2) the self-transformation central to the consecration experience empowered the individual; and 3) consecration shifted agency and responsibility from the individual to the indwelling Spirit or Christ. This latter dynamic, particularly when connected to a pentecostal interpretation of Spirit baptism, had formed an irrefutable mandate for ‘prophesying women’.

Removing the psycho-spiritual (and mystical) dynamics at the heart of the holiness experience and the related pentecostal validations for service effectively undermined the holiness rationale for female ministry. Increasingly, fundamentalists argued for (or against) female ministry from scripture rather than spiritual experience. Yet, despite the rhetoric of fundamentalist leaders, consecration spirituality continued to empower Calvinistic evangelical holiness women into the middle of the twentieth century.⁷¹

Miller’s diary account of her consecrated life provides a classic case study of this spirituality, and provides insight into the event, its interpretation, and its close linkage to female ministry. Her re-consecration began in early 1920, triggered by a power struggle with Mrs. Althea A. Kirk, a co-worker at Midland Bible School. On the surface, the quarrel was relatively minor. Tensions routinely flared amongst the staff and students in the house at 2731 Troost Avenue, Kansas City, where over twenty assorted people lived, worked, studied, and prayed together.⁷² Limited funds, close quarters, and a hothouse environment born of intense holiness spirituality meant that emotions were often close to

⁷¹ For example, faith healer Katherine Kuhlman, (a student of Miller and of Stevens in the 1920s), whose 1946 surrender experience led to her renewed ministry. See Wayne E. Warner, *Kathryn Kuhlman: The Woman behind the Miracles* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications, 1993), 101-111.

⁷² On February 22, there were twenty-two in the house. This would include students and staff. Thirty students enrolled in 1920-1921, but some were day students (*Midland Manual*, 1921-1922, 4).

the surface.⁷³ For Miller, however, the quarrel held great symbolic significance. Mrs. Althea A. Kirk was not simply another household member, but the revered former ‘Ladies’ Superintendent’ of Miller’s *alma mater*, the Missionary Training Institute in Nyack, New York. There, Kirk had been a friend and associate of then Dean W. C. Stevens. Now, she was officially present in Kansas City to ‘stand by’ his new project, the fledgling Midland school. Unfortunately, Mrs. Kirk could not stand by if it was possible to interfere. By virtue of her reputation and prior experience, Mrs. Kirk functioned both as template for Miller’s new duties, and as the standard against which her performance was evaluated. The elderly woman considered it her duty to instruct Miller in all the details of the work, thus undermining Miller’s confidence, her authority with the students and her standing with Mr. Stevens. While Mrs. Kirk was apparently jealous of Miller’s present position, Miller deeply resented both her interference, and the confidence Stevens placed in her.

Some time during the Christmas season, the tension between the two women came to a head, resulting in Mrs. Kirk’s departure on January 6, 1920. Two days later, relieved of her tormentor, Miller found herself subjected to Stevens’ public praise of the vanquished enemy. When she objected, she found herself cast as the guilty party. Rather than agreeing with her assessment of Mrs. Kirk, Stevens condemned her own ‘critical spirit’, adding the charge that his wife ‘had no rest’ in Miss Miller. Although life with Mrs. Kirk had been difficult, living in the shadow of Mr. Stevens’ disapproval was impossible. This gap between her intentions and the outcome made Stevens’ rebuke a highly effective catalyst for her renewed ‘consecration’.

⁷³ Virginia Lieson Brereton describes the typical Bible school as an ‘emotional pressure cooker’ (*Training God’s Army*, 112-122).

Miller's subsequent spiritual journey followed the pattern Stevens delineated in a short self-published pamphlet, 'Sanctification'.⁷⁴ Like other holiness evangelicals, Stevens expected two stages of Christian experience: conversion and sanctification. As usual in these schemas, conversion brought justification or freedom from the penalty of sin, while sanctification brought power over sin and power for service. Stevens outlined three steps—act, state, and result—necessary to reach this second 'plane' of spiritual life. 'The act is a new crisis in dealing with God; the state is a new experience in the grace of God; the final result is a new plane in the service of God', he explained.⁷⁵ Stevens felt that the crisis usually came at a point of failure, which confronted the believer with his or her inability to live without sin.⁷⁶ This is how Miller interpreted the fiasco: as the outcome of her personal failure. Accordingly, she took Stevens' advice, and set out to 'love' both Mrs. Stevens and Mrs. Kirk. She began the process of restoration with a series of public confessions of her 'lack of love' and her 'critical spirit' towards both Kirk and the students.⁷⁷

Her attempts to rectify matters between herself and the Stevens's were less satisfactory. After meeting with Mrs. Stevens on January 10 Miller reported to her diary: 'I think she feels more kindly towards me.' More worrying, however, 'There are so many things of which she suspects me that except the Lord do a mighty work I shall be unable to gain her love and trust'. Although Miller never expanded on those suspicions, she was clearly horrified.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Stevens, 'Sanctification', 2; also Stevens, *Triumphs of the Cross* (c.1903; San Francisco: M. G. McClinton, second ed. 1915).

⁷⁵ Stevens, 'Sanctification', 2.

⁷⁶ See A. B. Simpson, *The Four-Fold Gospel* (1887; Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, n.d.), 41.

⁷⁷ Miller Diaries, January 9 and 25 1920; also January 21.

⁷⁸ Quite possibly, Mrs. Stevens questioned the nature of Miller's affection for Mr. Stevens, a question taken up at greater length in chapter eight below.

Miller's actions were more than attempts to restore Stevens' good opinion, however. Because she perceived the events as evidence of a spiritual lapse, she also sought to restore her relationship with God. By February 10, Miss Miller was undergoing the second stage of sanctification: a 'new experience in the grace of God'. Miller cast her story in the language of Romans, which she was then teaching as part of her one-year course, 'The Whole Bible Consecutively in Constructive Study'. In her class on February 20, Miller 'testified to God's revelation to me of freedom from Adamic sin'.⁷⁹ 'Adamic' or 'inbred' sin was inherited through Adam, 'the federal head' of the human race, but was imputed to the 'new federal head, Christ, the second Adam', who served as substitute not only for the individual, but also for Adam himself.⁸⁰ This meant, according to Stevens, that in Christ, 'we are delivered sacrificially from our former heredity of indwelling sin and given a new heredity of indwelling righteousness'.⁸¹

Then, on February 21, Miller had a further word from God. 'In the night last night God gave me a revelation of the love for all men [sic] with which He will fill our hearts if we will permit Him to do so. I have opened my heart to this love'. This led to further probing: Where had she previously failed 'to experience heart cleansing'?⁸² 'It seems to me,' she concluded, 'that it must have been in the 'reckoning' in some way'.

⁷⁹ Key texts are Romans 5:12 -19 and 1 Corinthians 15:22 and 45.

⁸⁰ For discussion of 'Adamic sin', see Stevens, 'Sanctification', 5-6; for the two 'Adams', see Stevens, 'Whom do you say that I am', part 2, *AW* (1924 Sept 20): 19. For a related claim that Stevens was a 'federal' theologian, see L. E. Maxwell, interview by Don Richardson, 1982, typed transcript, PBI Archives, Box 111.

⁸¹ Stevens, 'Sanctification', 6; also *Triumphs of the Cross*, 41-44.

⁸² Miller Diaries, February 21 1920. Compare Hannah Whitall Smith: 'The moment, therefore, that a believer who is walking in this interior life meets with a defeat, he must at once seek for the cause, not in the strength of that particular enemy, but in something behind, —some hidden want of consecration lying at the very centre of his being' (*Christian's Secret*, 140).

Her ‘stand’ against sin had not been ‘as absolute as necessary’.⁸³ To ‘reckon’ was to exercise ‘simple faith in Jesus and the efficiency of His blood’.⁸⁴ Having discovered her sinful ‘lack of love’, she sought heart cleansing and then reckoned herself dead to sin. Intimations of victory followed swiftly. On February 27 she recorded a ‘great blessing’, namely ‘the victory that is ours through union with the Living Christ’. As Stevens put it, ‘It is not our reckoning that makes us dead and alive, but Christ himself in vital touch with us’.⁸⁵

On March 2, 1920, Miller came to the crux of the matter. The sin that had previously missed death was her desire to ‘be something’. ‘God is showing me how in order to be perfect in the walk in the Spirit all desire to be anything must be laid aside,’ she wrote. The solution was complete surrender or ‘consecration’ to God of her longing for acclamation and recognition, and of her jealousy of Mrs. Kirk.⁸⁶ In setting aside what she most longed for—acknowledgment and prestige—Miller followed a similar path to holiness women of an earlier generation.⁸⁷ Miller’s reputation, as a single, childless woman, was all she had. Nevertheless, in giving up her search for recognition, Miller, like Palmer and Whitall Smith, gained her heart’s desire. In Miller’s case, this was a new affirmation and clarification of her future service.

⁸³ Miller Diaries, February 24 1920. See Romans 6.11: ‘Likewise reckon yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord’ (KJV).

⁸⁴ Stevens, ‘Sanctification’, 7.

⁸⁵ Stevens, ‘Sanctification’, 8, 11, 15; Stevens, *Triumphs*, 15, also A. B. Simpson, ‘Himself’, *The Word, The Work and The World* (Oct 1885): 258-261.

⁸⁶ Earlier, she recorded that the ‘Lord had shown me an intentional poisoning of minds, and a desire to be seen favourably in comparison with others’ (January 26, 1920).

⁸⁷ See Virginia Lieson Brereton, *From Sin to Salvation: Stories of Women’s Conversions, 1800 to the Present* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 94, for the continuance of this theme into twentieth-century women’s conversion narratives.

As Stevens' model predicted, the result was 'a new plane in the service of God'.⁸⁸ 'Last night', she wrote on March 9, 'The Lord brought me into a place of great peace with regard to my future service. I shall trust Him to bestow on me such evident gifts along the line in which He would have me serve that I may simply be appointed to that to which He calls and for which He appoints me'.⁸⁹ Over the ensuing months, Miller's diary evidenced her growing love and tolerance for members of the Midland Bible School community, a renewed relationship with God, and a revised perspective on her 'calling', or spiritual vocation.

Miller's commitment to this spirituality provided the blueprint for her life. Maxwell, her student at Midland that year, later told 'of the cost of consecration; referring to a crisis in Miss Miller's life when she was managing, drudging, and servant of all, while another was given undue prominence and praise. Finally, all bitterness was confessed and in that broken vessel Christ was seen and heard. She was set to have God's best at any cost'.⁹⁰ In the short term, the cost of her consecration included the ongoing burden of Mrs. Kirk, who soon put Miller's newfound peace to the test. In the long term, Miller wrote that daily cost between the lines of her diary: poverty, exhaustion, unjust treatment, primitive living conditions, and hard work. Her last complete diary, from 1936, concluded with a passage from devotional author Oswald Chambers: 'It is not a question of giving up sin, but of my giving up my right to myself, any natural independence and self-assertiveness', she wrote. 'It is the things that are noble and right and good from the natural standpoint that keep us back from God's

⁸⁸ Stevens, 'Sanctification', 2.

⁸⁹ Miller Diaries, March 9 1920.

⁹⁰ Katherine Anderson, 'Christmas talk' (c.1944). PBI archives, un-catalogued.

best'.⁹¹ Still, as her 'unsanctified' and worldly sister-in-law had commented years previously, Miller had made no great sacrifice; throughout her career she did exactly what she wanted to do: teach, preach, write, and disciple the multitudes of students in her care.⁹²

The consecration of L. E. Maxwell, which took place in early 1922 under the careful supervision of Mr. Stevens, demonstrates the continuities of the holiness experience across the sexes.⁹³ Like Miller's, his consecration crisis, which was triggered by relational issues and characterised by shame, led to a resolution of his sense of self and prepared him for service. However, his interpretation of the event, and his subsequent version of holiness teaching, shows the changing patterns of holiness ideas in the new fundamentalist context.

Years later, Maxwell recalled the event as follows:

I thought I was defending somebody who was being maligned in school... and I reported what I thought was true to the principal [Mr. Stevens], and he was just about to expel... the person who was guilty ... that I had charged with the guilt, and then we found out that my surmise was entirely imaginative on my part.

Accordingly, Stevens rebuked Maxwell for his interference.

I went from his office, and on to bed, but not to sleep. (It was not my business). The next night around the supper table when we had our usual time of devotion and confession of sin and getting right with God and others... I read James 3 [...] Then God broke my heart. I sat there at the table and bawled for about 15 minutes. Daddy

⁹¹ Miller Diaries, located between entries for Nov. 26 and Nov. 27, 1936. Although she does not give bibliographic details, the reading is from Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*, reading for December 9. Miller wrote out this passage, as well as the reading for December 11 on 'Individuality': "God wants to bring you into union with Himself, but unless you are willing to give up your right to yourself He cannot'.

⁹² L. E. Maxwell, 'Doing what you want to do', *Prairie Overcomer* 14/1 (Jan 43): 8.

⁹³ Maxwell, interview by Don Richardson. The official version of Maxwell's consecration experience is found in W. Phillip Keller, *Expendable! With God on the Prairies: the Ministry of Prairie Bible Institute* (Three Hills, AB: Prairie Press, 1966). Miller's insightful diary serves as an important but previously unexplored account of this event.

Stevens was sympathetic with me; he came around and lifted up my head and kissed me on the forehead. That was the circumstance.⁹⁴

Miller's diaries report the same incident, but with two key differences. First, she named the 'maligned' student as Miss Pearl Plummer (later Mrs. Maxwell). Maxwell believed two students were hiding their relationship behind Pearl. Outraged, he took the story to Miss Miller, who took the rather complicated matter to Stevens: 'I have told Mr. Stevens of Mr. Maxwell's having told of Richard's engagement and of his having himself taken up the matter of Pearl's manner toward Mr. Richards'.⁹⁵ Maxwell's fear of Pearl's implication appears to be one key to his emotional response. Her invisibility in his later version is due to his claim that he did not think of her until later in the year (by her own account, Pearl fell in love with Leslie Maxwell at first sight). However, their mutual interest was already apparent, at least to others, and likely added to the intensity of the experience.⁹⁶ Second, in Miller's version, it is *Richards*, rather than Stevens, who comforts Maxwell. Evidently, Miller regarded the matter as between the two young men; Maxwell considered it a breach between himself and his 'daddy', Stevens.⁹⁷ As with Miller, it was the emotional trauma of Stevens' disapproval, rather than the breach in relationship with his fellow student, that sent Maxwell into spiritual crisis.

This consecration experience served as the crucible for Maxwell's spiritual life, and provided the pattern for his later holiness teachings. As with Miller, this incident qualified Maxwell for active Christian service. When opportunity arose that year for a

⁹⁴ Maxwell, interview by Don Richardson.

⁹⁵ Miller, *Diaries*, January 9, 1922.

⁹⁶ See diaries for November 1921. During this same period, Miller prevented a young woman from telling Maxwell of her interest (January 9-10; August 31, 1922); Miller cautioned Maxwell on May 3 1921.

⁹⁷ His own father, for whom he had little affection, died shortly after Maxwell's discharge from the army.

graduate to go north to teach Bible in the small Canadian town of Three Hills, Alberta, Miller and Stevens chose Maxwell. (Their previous candidate, Bessie Dickie, disqualified herself during an illness by taking medicine and then denying personal responsibility for doing so, a grave spiritual failure among faith healers).⁹⁸ That autumn, Maxwell, newly ordained and graduated, set out for the remote train stop where he was to fulfil his calling.

In 1947, journalist James Gray summed up Prairie Bible Institute's extraordinary existence on the bald prairies of Alberta as the 'Miracle on the Prairies'.⁹⁹ In twenty-five years, Prairie had grown from a small group of farm youth, meeting in an old house in a tiny prairie village 80 miles from nowhere, to, at 450 students, the largest fundamentalist Bible institute in Canada.¹⁰⁰ By the 1950s, PBI was among the largest Bible schools in North America.¹⁰¹ It was a remarkable achievement, described by Robert C. McQuilkin, President of Columbia Bible College, and an early leader of the victorious life movement, as 'one of the modern miracles of God's supernatural working'.¹⁰² A second miracle, unrecognised at the time, was Prairie's continued support of women's ministry during a period of increasingly conservative views. Although the independent Bible school

⁹⁸ See Miller Diaries, January 11, February 2, 1922. Miss Dickie graduated in 1919.

⁹⁹ See James Gray, 'Miracle on the Prairies', *Macleans Magazine* 15 (Dec 1947): 16-56.

¹⁰⁰ William E Man, *Sect, Cult and Church in Alberta* (University of Toronto Press, 1955, reprint 1972), 83. Mann lists 27 western Canadian Bible schools in 1947. Briercreech Bible Institute, in Caronport, Saskatchewan followed Prairie with 215 students, Western Canada Bible Institute (Alliance) in Regina, Saskatchewan, with 190. Davidson gives the 1945 enrolment, including the high school, as 1200 (Roy L. Davidson, *God's Plan on the Prairies* [Roy L. Davidson, 1986], 56). In 1948-49, there were 900 students, including those in high school (John G. Stackhouse, *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to its Character* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 85. See also James Enns, 'Every Christian A Missionary: Fundamentalist Education at Prairie Bible Institute, 1922 – 1947' (MA thesis, University of Calgary, 2000).

¹⁰¹ Stackhouse suggests it may have been second only to Moody Bible Institute in Chicago (*Canadian Evangelicalism*, 244n53). J. Arthur Mouw described it as 'one of the two great miracles on the North American continent' (Keller, *Expendable*, 221). The other 'miracle' is likely Moody.

¹⁰² Robert C. McQuilkin, 'Foreword', L. E. Maxwell, *Crowded to Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1950).

fundamentalists were more open to female ministry than were their denominational kin, few supported women as boldly or for as long as did L. E. Maxwell. Maxwell held and maintained this position because of two factors: his continued holiness orientation, and the continued influence of Dorothy Ruth Miller, who joined Maxwell at PBI in 1928.

Despite the similar timing and structure of their consecration experiences, and their shared mentor in Mr. Stevens, Miller and Maxwell interpreted these events differently. While Miss Miller's consecration experience taught her to love others, and to let go of her desires for acclaim, Maxwell's consecration strengthened the disciplined, self-denying, and God-reliant character essential for the difficult early years of his new prairie school. However, he also learned the somewhat questionable idea that mortification is the prelude to victorious living, often cast in military language. This disparity derived in good part from their place on the evangelical timeline. Like Stevens, Miller's views reflected the older radical or full gospel tradition, while Maxwell shared many of the more 'masculine' enthusiasms and issues of his fundamentalist peers. Consequently, while still heavily indebted to the ideas of Stevens and Simpson, Maxwell's interpretation of holiness sounded increasingly like 'victorious life' or Keswick teachings. In his first book, *Born Crucified*, (1944), written initially as a series of articles for the *Sunday School Times* (a mouthpiece for American Keswick and fundamentalist thought), Maxwell explained:

God's way of victory over sin is not through *suppression* of sinful desires, nor through the *eradication* of the old nature, nor yet through the *cleansing* of inbred sin.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ L. E. Maxwell, *Born Crucified: The Cross in the Life of the Believer* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1945; London / Edinburgh: Oliphants), 25. For Maxwell's holiness teachings, see also *Abandoned to Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1955); *Crowded to Christ* (1950); and *Through Romans with L. E. Maxwell*, 3 vol. (Three Hills, AB: Prairie Bible Institute, 1965; reprint). Moody Publishers recently reprinted *Born Crucified* as *Embraced by the Cross: Discovering the Principles of Christian Life and Faith* (2002).

Stevens, however, had understood sanctification as the latter—as a cleansing of inbred sin. In contrast to the more mechanistic Keswick formulation, he had viewed sanctification in relational terms and mystical terms. Deliverance came through ‘interior reunion’ with God: ‘Christ himself in vital touch with us’, and a ‘personal voluntary reception of the person of the Holy Spirit’.¹⁰⁴ In these explanations, the personal presence of the divine drove out sin. In contrast to this relational pattern, Maxwell used the ‘Keswick’ mechanical imagery of ‘counteraction’.¹⁰⁵ For Maxwell, while ‘victory over present sin’ still came through ‘experimental union with Christ’, this was a legalised ‘identification’ with Christ that derived from the believer’s participation in the death of Christ.¹⁰⁶

Maxwell also deviated from his teachers in this fundamentalist fixation with the salvific death of Christ. Instead of the ‘higher life’, or ‘happy life’, or even the Alliance phrase ‘Jesus our sanctifier’, Maxwell spoke of the ‘cross-life’, entered through a ‘death life union’. The believer was ‘born crucified’.¹⁰⁷ This focus overshadowed talk of the life of Christ, and often of the resurrection. Dorothy Ruth Miller commented on this problem shortly after her arrival in Three Hills. ‘Mr. Maxwell preached a good sermon on the cross life’, she wrote in 1929, ‘but I fear that I could scarcely sympathise with his apparent magnifying of the life of suffering.... It seems to me that he keeps the victim forever squirming on the cross. To me there is a resurrection life’.¹⁰⁸ Although he

¹⁰⁴ See Stevens, ‘Sanctification’. Stevens advertised this tract as ‘entirely independent and distinctive. Embraces and harmonises the various, often conflicting, phases and theories on a vital subject’. See also Simpson, *Self-life*, 20; Simpson, *Days of Heaven*, readings for January 31, April 19, 28, and June 2.

¹⁰⁵ See L. E. Maxwell, *Prairie Pillars* (Three Hills, AB: PBI, 1971), 26. This sermon provides a good summary of his later teaching.

¹⁰⁶ Maxwell, *Pillars*, 19, 25-26; compare Stevens, ‘Sanctification’, 8, 11, 15.

¹⁰⁷ The phrase comes from the French preacher Lacordaire, as cited by F. J. Huegel, *Bone of His Bone* (c.1940; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1959), 30.

¹⁰⁸ Miller, *Diaries*, February 1929.

considered the resurrection important, it often appeared added on, rather than as a central element. Maxwell repeatedly proclaimed that ‘God’s way of victory is through *crucifixion*—deliverance is only through *death*’.¹⁰⁹ Christian experience no longer paralleled the life of Christ but his death; and ‘that death has a death-dealing power to eliminate all selfishness and self-centredness’.¹¹⁰

On the subject of self, Maxwell sounded more like Simpson than like Stevens, who spoke of ‘death to sin’ rather than self.¹¹¹ Yet Maxwell’s obsession with death of self lacks the mitigating quality of Simpson’s mysticism. When Simpson recounted his sanctification experience, he spoke of the discovery that Christ was enough. Maxwell told of his own weakness. While for Simpson, the discovery of ‘Christ Himself’ meant health and freedom from nervous collapse, for Maxwell, service was a painful, costly thing that led to several nervous collapses. It meant dying to self, going where you did not want to go, even ‘burning out’ for God.

A further difference between sanctification as Stevens or Simpson understood it, and as Maxwell came to teach it, revolved around their respective doctrines of Spirit baptism. Maxwell’s rejection of Pentecostalism, and of the doctrine of healing, led him to also reject the powerfully interventionist pneumatology central to the doctrine of sanctification in Stevens and Simpson. Stevens saw sanctification as a second experience, in which the baptism and indwelling of the Spirit brought the believer into communion with Christ and the Father. Maxwell, influenced by fundamentalism,

¹⁰⁹ Maxwell, *Born Crucified*, 25, also 15. Maxwell later admitted the extreme language of this book; in defence, he suggested Horatius Bonar, *God’s Way to Holiness* (1864) as his influence. However, the internal evidence of *Crucified* points instead to *Bone of His Bone* by missionary F. J. Huegel, and to Jessie Penn-Lewis, to whom Huegel gives credit (9).

¹¹⁰ Maxwell, *Pillars*, 19, 23; *Born Crucified*, 57-58.

¹¹¹ See Stevens, ‘Sanctification’. For Stevens, Adamic or inherited sin is the issue, rather than ‘self’.

rejected this pneumatological model in favour of a Christological and ‘Keswick’ version. He spoke of counteraction and ‘filling’, not a Spirit baptism that brought power.¹¹²

What Maxwell did maintain was the central holiness demand of ‘submission’. Through his consecration experience, Maxwell learned that his problem was wilfulness, and that the answer was submission. However, this was an inversion of the old ‘feminine’ value. It was not a passive ‘feminine’ surrender to a lover, but a violent coerced submission. In order to use him, he believed, it had been necessary for God to crowd him in, box him off, and force him into surrender of his ‘self-will’.¹¹³ ‘He asks not for our decision, but for our submission, submission to Him as Lord’, he stormed.¹¹⁴ ‘The triumph of true faith can only begin with God’s triumph over us. He must subdue us and reduce us to that despair that can give birth to victorious faith’.¹¹⁵ In a classic statement of his personal holiness views, Maxwell proclaimed,

We have been freed not to live as we please but to serve, to love, to suffer, to be loyal, to sacrifice, even to the laying down of life itself, if needs be. Where duty calls or danger we are to be never wanting there. We are expendable.¹¹⁶

Such a demand did not possess the transformative psycho-spiritual power of earlier ‘union’ based calls to surrender, nor was this version directly interventionist; yet it operated upon the same quietist principle of self-negation we saw earlier in the holiness spirituality of A. B. Simpson, or of Hannah Whitall Smith.¹¹⁷

¹¹² See Maxwell, ‘The Baptism of the Spirit’, *Prairie Pastor* 6/8 (1933), 7.

¹¹³ See Maxwell, *Crowded to Christ*.

¹¹⁴ Maxwell, *Pillars*, 39.

¹¹⁵ Maxwell, *Pillars*, 25, also 15-27.

¹¹⁶ Maxwell, *Pillars* 45.

¹¹⁷ Maxwell, who was heavily influenced by Quietism, commonly cited Guyon in his works. For many years, Thomas Upham’s biography of Madame Guyon served as a textbook at the Prairie high school.

Maxwell's holiness teachings reflected the same re-masculinization processes found in the larger Keswick movement: a lessening confidence in experimental knowledge, a stress on victory and behaviour rather than inner peace, and a move away from a pneumatological to Christological account of sanctification. Yet, he both illustrates and complicates claims for gender tension within fundamentalist theology, for despite being an acknowledged fundamentalist, and a Keswick conference speaker, he argued for the 'public ministry' of women throughout his life.¹¹⁸ This support outlasted Miller's life, popular social trends of the 1940s and 1950s, the later stresses of the women's liberation movement, and increasing resistance to public female ministry within neo-evangelical and fundamentalist circles, to become the topic of his final book, *Women in Ministry*. To the end, his argument remained consistent: 'The Lord gives the word, the women that publish the tidings are a great host'. In his view, God used consecrated women.

¹¹⁸ L. E. Maxwell with Ruth C. Dearing, *Women in Ministry* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1987; 1995). See also L. E. Maxwell, editorial comments, 'On Women Speaking', *Prairie Pastor* 12/12 (Dec 1939): 7-8;

L. E. Maxwell, letter to Mr. Scott S. Steele, February 1 1973 (PBI Archives, Maxwell Personal Files); Maxwell, 'Chosen of God', *Prairie Overcomer* (Dec 1980): 631-632. Maxwell's teachings on female ministry are addressed in chapter nine below.

Chapter Eight

Gendering Ministry:

Spiritual Motherhood and the Motherhood of God

Blessed and eternal Spirit, our Mother God and Everlasting Friend, oh, how much we owe to Thee!

A. B. Simpson, 1895

May the ministry of this 'Mother in Israel' live on in the lives of hundreds of young men and women until Jesus comes! Who follows in her train?

L. E. Maxwell, 1944

By March 1920, Dorothy Ruth Miller had reached a new plane in her spiritual life. Now fully consecrated and cleansed from inbred sin, she was ready to be 'set apart' for God's purposes; and to submit to God's will rather than seek her personal desires. Over the ensuing months, her diary demonstrated a renewed relationship with God, and a growing love and tolerance for members of the Midland Bible School community. Following the established pattern of sanctification experiences, she also gained new perspective on her 'calling', or spiritual vocation. 'Last night', she wrote on March 9, 'the Lord brought me into a place of great peace with regard to my future service. I shall trust Him to bestow on me such evident gifts along the line in which He would have me serve that I may simply be appointed to that to which He calls and for which He appoints me'.¹ On January 5, 1922 she wrote, 'How I pray that God will fit me to do my work

¹ Miller Diaries, March 9 1920.

here better than I have done it. I want greater ability to teach, to direct the household, to counsel the girls, to help Mr. Stevens.’ Within a month, her longing had metamorphosed into a new identity, that of spiritual mother: ‘It has come to me of late that God has given it to me to be the mother of Mr. Stevens’ spiritual children—his sons and daughters in the faith,’ she wrote in her diary. ‘To me this is a crown of glory. I could ask for nothing better in this life’.²

In claiming spiritual motherhood, Miller took on a respected and time-honoured female role. The conception of female ministry as ‘motherhood’ had a hallowed precedent within evangelical circles. Catherine Brekus, for instance, notes the usage of ‘Mother in Israel’ for early nineteenth-century female evangelists.³ Turn-of-the-century evangelical biographies and obituaries similarly described leading women as ‘mother’. Thus, ‘Mrs. Helena Keith’, who died in 1911, was ‘mother of the Christian and Missionary Alliance in Seattle’; ‘Grandma’ Kirk was ‘Mother of Prairie Bible Institute’, and ‘Mother Cunningham’ served as dean of women at Prairie in the 1950s.⁴ L. E. Maxwell likewise recognised Miller’s maternal stature. ‘She has been a “mother in Israel” to many, many young people’, he told readers of the *Prairie Pastor* in 1939.⁵ This figure derived from the Old Testament book of Judges, which proclaimed Deborah as a ‘mother in Israel’ for her role in delivering Israel from enemies.⁶

² Miller Diaries, February 13 1922.

³ Catherine A. Brekus, *Strangers and Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740-1845* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 15, also section two.

⁴ Obituary for Mrs. Helena Keith, *Alliance Weekly* (April 22, 1911): 62; obituary for ‘Mrs. Andrew (Grandma) Kirk, the Mother of Prairie Bible Institute’, *Prairie Pastor* 8/11-12 (1935): 9; Dr. John Cunningham, *She Hath Done What She Could: A Biography of Mother Cunningham...* (Prairie Bible Institute, 1976), 4; also Miller’s obituary notice, ‘She “Being Dead Yet Speaketh”’, *Prairie Pastor* 17/4 (April 1944): 89. For Alliance women as mothers in Israel, or mothers of a work, see *Alliance Annual Report* (1902), 71, 84; (1905), 127; (1909), 192, 195.

⁵ Maxwell, editorial on Miller, ‘On Women Speaking’, 7.

⁶ See Judges 5:7.

Turn-of-the-century conceptions of female ministry as ‘motherhood’ also drew upon specifically nineteenth-century ideals. The ‘true woman’ of the nineteenth century—pure, pious, submissive, and domestic—was the superlative parent.⁷ Society exalted her natural maternal instincts, her tenderness, her capacity for love, her moral superiority, and her religious sensibility, qualities that fitted her for the important work of the domestic ‘sphere’. In this model, marriage and motherhood offered women moral authority and power, or as proponents of this ideology put it, ‘influence’.⁸ From within the domestic sphere, women exerted influence upon their men folk, and trained the next generation of young men to take their place in the ruthless and competitive public sphere. However, for middle-class women of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, mothering was more than biological; it was also a sentimentalised and idealised vocation, a collective ‘cult of motherhood’.⁹

Maternal influence also served as a gateway out of the domestic sphere and into the civil and public spheres.¹⁰ Asserting a maternal prerogative allowed women, as historian Ann Douglas puts it, to undertake ‘conventionally unmaternal pursuits’.¹¹ On the strength of female moral superiority, capacity for influence, and maternal instinct, women argued for access to education, new fields of employment, and the vote.

⁷ See Barbara Welter, ‘The Cult of True Womanhood, 1820-1860’ in *Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Barbara Welter (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1976), 115.

⁸ Welter, ‘Cult of True Womanhood’, 120-121; for the doctrine of influence, see Ann Douglas, *The Feminization of American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 51-52; 81.

⁹ See Douglas, *Feminization*, 86-90; also Linda Gordon, ‘Voluntary Motherhood’, in *Clio’s Consciousness Raised: New Perspectives on the History of Women*, ed. Mary Hartman and Lois W. Banner (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 65-68.

¹⁰ Although early writers of women’s history in the 1960s and 1970s regarded ‘separate spheres’ negatively, later historians understand it in terms that are more neutral. As Linda Kerber points out, it became evident to historians how ‘that sphere was socially constructed both *for* and *by* women’, and that the language of spheres itself was a ‘rhetorical construction’ serving both prescriptive and instrumental purposes. Linda K. Kerber, ‘Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman’s Place: The Rhetoric of Women’s History’, *The Journal of American History* 75/1 (June 1988): 18-21. <<http://uk.jstor/journals/oah.html>>. See also the introductory essay in Rosenberg-Smith, *Disorderly Conduct*, 11-52; especially 11-22.

¹¹ Douglas, *Feminization*, 89.

Miller's generation of college graduates, educated in the 1890s, still used the language of domesticity and motherhood as a rhetorical tool to open new professional fields, while early twentieth-century suffragettes campaigned for the female vote as a 'consummation of motherhood'.¹² Thus in one sense, Miller's interpretation of her educational work as 'mothering' was not that different from her peers in secular circumstances. On another front, it was quite dissimilar. Here Miller's contemporary, Canadian feminist Nellie McClung (1873-1951) provides an instructive contrast. Both women were born in 1873—McClung in Ontario, Miller in Pennsylvania—and lived out their final years in Alberta. Both believed in female preaching, and both could encompass a wide range of female activity within the rubric of 'motherhood'. For instance, McClung drew on this 'mothering ideal' in 1915 when she maintained that women, due to their place as the natural 'guardians of the race', must be educated to take an active part in the public sphere of politics, the church, social action, and employment.¹³ However, McClung also used motherhood language in the service of feminist values. She was a 'liberal' evangelical with connections to the social gospel movement, who put her energy into public and political activity.¹⁴ Thus, during the same years in which Miller found her role as spiritual mother, McClung served as member of the Alberta

¹² See Smith-Rosenberg, *Disorderly Conduct*, 172-273; 176; also Sheila M. Rothman, *Women's Proper Place: A History of Changing Ideals and Practices, 1870 to the Present* (New York: Basic Books, 1978); Barbara J. Harris, *Beyond Her Sphere: Women and the Professions in American History* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 1978).

¹³ Nellie McClung, *In Times Like These*, intro. Veronica Strong-Boag (1915; Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1972), 22, 23. For McClung's use of 'the mothering ideal', see the introduction by Strong-Boag, especially viii; also Strong-Boag, "'Ever a Crusader": Nellie McClung, First Wave Feminist,' in *Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History*, 308-321, ed. Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman, second ed. (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1991).

¹⁴ For McClung's achievements, see Strong-Boag, 'Ever a Crusader', 308-321.

provincial legislature (1921-1926).¹⁵ When Miller arrived in Alberta in 1928, McClung and other Canadian feminist activists were in the midst of the landmark ‘persons case’, seeking a legal definition of women as ‘persons’ in order to ensure them full political access. In 1936, the year in which Miller quoted Oswald Chambers on ‘giving up my right to myself, any natural independence and self-assertiveness’, McClung helped United Church women claim their right to ordination.¹⁶ Miller did not follow the feminist path of McClung, and use motherhood to argue for her ‘rights’, for the validation of her ministry came from her female capacity for consecration, and her willingness to give up those rights.

Motherhood as an explanatory device for female ministry in the early twentieth century has attracted little attention among those evaluating ‘proto-fundamentalist’ views on women’s roles.¹⁷ Usually, critics point to earlier forms of gender belief, to separate spheres ideology, and to the ‘cult of domesticity’ to explain why later conservative and fundamentalist evangelicals repressed or restricted female roles.¹⁸ However, Miller’s use of ‘motherhood’ to validate her ministry illuminates the complexity of gender roles within nascent fundamentalist circles, and the capacity for conservative mechanisms to lead to unexpected results. Embedded within the nineteenth-century rhetoric of ‘female nature’, ‘separate spheres’, and maternal authority, was a tension between the mother as

¹⁵ For Maxwell’s disapproval of ‘women in politics’, see L. E. Maxwell, editorial on Dorothy Ruth Miller, ‘On Women Speaking’, *Prairie Pastor* 12/12 (Dec 1939): 7-8. The year previous, McClung had been a delegate to the League of Nations.

¹⁶ Miller Diaries, located between entries for Nov. 26 and Nov. 27, 1936.

¹⁷ One exception is Lillian Taiz, ‘Hallelujah Lasses in the Battle for Souls: Working- and Middle-Class Women in the Salvation Army in the United States, 1872-1896’, part 2 of 3, *Journal of Women's History* (June 1, 1997).

¹⁸ See for example Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, *Fundamentalism and Gender: 1875 to the Present* (New Haven / London: Yale University Press, 1993); Betty DeBerg, *Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1990).

the moral mainstay of the family and society, and the female as naturally self-sacrificing, weak, and dependent upon the male.¹⁹ Thus, the doctrine of sexual difference could lead both to claims for female rights, based on an assumption of female superiority, as in McClung, *and* to conservative injunctions for ‘silence’ and subordination. In adopting the role of spiritual mother, Miller assumed both sides of this paradoxical view of female nature. While on the one hand, Miller gained the power and authority still accruing to the cult of maternity and belief in female piety in the early years of the twentieth century, on the other, ‘spiritual’ motherhood, while creating space for her personal ministry, reinforced a conservative view of the proper divine ‘order’ between men and women.

This chapter examines the idea of spiritual motherhood from several angles. It finds an important precursor to Dorothy Ruth Miller’s approach to spiritual motherhood in the ideas of Christian and Missionary Alliance leader A. B. Simpson, under whom she studied at the Missionary Training Institute. Simpson’s dualistic interpretation of the sexes, his conception of the Holy Spirit as Mother God, and his typological interpretations of human relationships all supply background to her idea of spiritual motherhood. The chapter then turns to the paradigm of spiritual motherhood as it took form in Miller’s life and practice. It investigates Miller’s use of ‘mother language’ as a description of her vocation, evaluates her personal reasons for choosing this model, and examines the manifestation of this concept in her ministry. Miller’s choice of ‘spiritual motherhood’, and of ‘Levite’, as her working scripts, and the interpretation she gave to each role, illuminates how she justified the subordinate but important nature of her ministry as a female. Her journey casts light upon ways in which ministering women of

¹⁹ See Rosenberg-Smith, *Disorderly Conduct*, 199.

the Christian and Missionary Alliance and other radical evangelical groups negotiated the often-complicated gender expectations and boundaries of early twentieth-century evangelicalism and early fundamentalism.

Miller's usage of this paradigm of spiritual motherhood reflected the much earlier language of A. B. Simpson. His employment of 'motherhood' imagery was both longstanding, and complex. Surprisingly, in light of later evangelical resistance to 'feminine' imagery for God, he applied it, in the first instance, to the Holy Spirit.

In the spring of 1911, as Dorothy Ruth Miller completed her first full year of teaching at the Missionary Training Institute in Nyack, New York, the weekly Alliance newspaper reported upon a series of special meetings held in Great Britain by A. B. Simpson, British pastor F. E. Marsh, and missionary statesman Dr. Robert Hall Glover.²⁰ Marsh, who filed the report, found one address given by Simpson to be of such 'peculiar interest' that he outlined it for readers. While at a Baptist chapel in Newport, Simpson had taken as his topic 'the Motherhood of God as associated with the words of Christ, "I will not leave you orphans"'.²¹ In his sermon, Simpson explained that just as a human mother gave life, nourished, comforted and cared for her child, so too the Holy Spirit gave spiritual life, nourishment, comfort and training to the believer.

That Marsh, with his long association with Simpson and the Alliance, found the sermon noteworthy is itself peculiar, even disingenuous, for Simpson commonly used motherhood language when discussing the Holy Spirit. Years earlier, in *The Four-Fold*

²⁰ *Alliance Weekly* (April 22, 1911): 56. Canadian Dr. Robert Hall Glover (1871-1947), a medical doctor who also studied under Simpson, served as a missionary in China, taught at Simpson's schools as well as at Moody Bible Institute, and later worked with the China Inland Mission.

²¹ F. E. Marsh, 'Mr. Simpson's Visit to Great Britain', *Alliance Weekly* (April 22, 1911): 61.

Gospel (1887), his outline of foundational Alliance beliefs, he had informed readers that salvation ‘brings to us the help of the Holy Spirit, who is ever at our side as a gentle mother, helping our infirmities and bringing grace for every time of need’.²² The first chapter of his major two-volume work, *The Holy Spirit, or Power from on High* (1895-1896), claimed that ‘the great thought in the heart of God is motherhood, and God Himself possesses in Himself that true nature which has been manifested in the creation’.²³ The Bristol sermon itself drew upon his most recently published book, *When the Comforter Came*, a series of devotionals on the Holy Spirit that included a chapter on ‘the motherhood of God’.²⁴

What is more peculiar, in light of later twentieth-century evangelical antipathy for ‘feminine’ language for God, is the apparent lack of discussion regarding Simpson’s maternal imagery amongst his contemporaries. By casting the Holy Spirit as mother, Simpson in many ways anticipated later Christian feminist appeals to the ‘divine feminine’, or ‘metaphorical’ references to God as mother.²⁵ In reaction to such arguments, conservatives such as Reformed writer Elisabeth Achtemeier have asserted that God *is* Father, Son, and Spirit, because God has named himself in these ways.²⁶ According to Achtemeier, ‘the introduction of female language for God’ leads to

²² A. B. Simpson, *The Four-Fold Gospel* (1887; Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, n.d.), 15; see also A. B. Simpson, ‘Emblems and Aspects of the Holy Spirit’, chapter 5 of *Walking in the Spirit* (1889). <<http://online.auc-nuc.ca/alliancestudies/simpson/WALKSPIR.HTM>>.

²³ A. B. Simpson, *The Holy Spirit, or Power From on High*, 2 vol. (1895-1896). My citation is from A. B. Simpson, ‘Like a Dove’, *Christian Alliance and Foreign Missionary Weekly* (Sept 14, 1894): 245, which formed the first chapter of vol. 1.

²⁴ A. B. Simpson, *When the Comforter Came*, 1911. John Sawin gives the date of publication as February 1911 (*Birth of a Vision*, 293).

²⁵ See, for example, Donald Gelpi, *The Divine Mother* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984); or Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1982). A common liturgical solution is the use of Mother-Father language for the first person of the Trinity.

²⁶ Elisabeth Achtemeier, ‘Exchanging God for “No Gods”’, in *Speaking the Christian God*, 1-16, ed. Alvin Kimel (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992). This collection of essays is influential within conservative and evangelical circles.

‘identification of God with the world’. Female images—carrying in the womb, giving birth, suckling—imply that ‘creation has issued forth from the body of the deity’, therefore ‘shares in deity’s substance’ and is divine. She concludes, ‘If God is identified with his creation, we finally make ourselves gods and goddesses—the ultimate and primeval sin’.²⁷ However, Simpson, like other nineteenth-century evangelicals, did not share these fears of female language for God.

As noted in the previous chapter, one by-product of the nineteenth-century construction of separate spheres and the relegation of religion to the pure and pious female population had been a ‘feminization’ of religion.²⁸ Within a culture that idealised and exalted stereotypical views of women and motherhood, it was not a great step to consider female virtues as indicative, even necessary, facets of God’s nature. God became more like a woman, and God’s love became motherly.²⁹ Popular evangelical piety and hymnody cast Jesus in a more ‘feminine’ and maternal mould. Loving, meek and mild, self-sacrificing, a tender-hearted friend, Jesus exemplified all the virtues of the ideal woman.³⁰

While the feminization of liberal evangelicalism is well recognised, this tendency also affected conservative circles. Many, including Simpson and A. T. Pierson, held a gender inclusive Christology (see below); others spoke unselfconsciously of the motherhood of God. Hannah Whitall Smith’s discovery of ‘the mother heart of God’ also

²⁷ Achtemeier, ‘Exchanging God’, 4.

²⁸ See Barbara Welter, ‘The Feminization of American Religion: 1800-1860’, in *Clio’s Consciousness Raised*, 137-157; also Douglas, *Feminization*.

²⁹ See Douglas, *Feminization*, 131-132. Various nineteenth-century heterodox religious sects ascribed motherhood to God; for example, Christian Scientists addressed Deity as ‘Father-Mother’ God, while early Mormons conceived of both a father and a mother God.

³⁰ See Welter, ‘Feminization’, 140-142.

reflected this maternalising or feminizing trend.³¹ What is unusual in Simpson is his application of mother language to the Holy Spirit, rather than to ‘God’ in general, or to Jesus, as well as his extensive discussion of the Spirit as Mother. Contemporaries and colleagues like D. L. Moody, A. J. Gordon, or Pierson do not seem to have held a maternal pneumatology, nor do Alliance theologians W. C. Stevens or George Pardington use this language.³² Simpson nowhere indicated an external source for this conception. His ideas here have little affinity with those of medieval mystics such as Julian of Norwich, known for her images of Jesus as Mother. Although Simpson had some acquaintance with mystical writings, his taste leaned more towards the quietists.³³ One similar historical precedent is Moravian leader Count Nicholas von Zinzendorf (1700-1760), who also called the Holy Spirit ‘Mother’, and supported forms of female ministry.³⁴ Like Zinzendorf, Simpson extended the maternal metaphor beyond God’s love (although he could use this language), and instead applied it to the wider activities of the Spirit.

Regardless of the origin of Simpson’s ideas—whether they were the product of his own reflection and experience, or drawn from a source such as Zinzendorf—his ability to use them freely derived from the cradle of his theological context. For Simpson, the Holy Spirit was ‘Victorian’ mother *par excellence*. His description of the Holy Spirit as Mother God owed much to the nineteenth-century cult of motherhood and its depiction of the mother’s influence, through her nurturing instinct, relational

³¹ See chapter seven above.

³² There are traces of this idea in early Alliance and Pentecostal literature. Whether this derived from Simpson or a common source is not evident.

³³ See chapter six.

³⁴ For Moravian usage, see Craig Atwood, ‘The Mother of God’s People: The Adoration of the Holy Spirit in the Eighteenth-Century Brudergemeine’, *Church History* 12/1 (1999).

sensibility, and self-sacrificing spirit. Just as mothers instinctually gave sacrificial care to their children, so too ‘the infinite, everlasting gentleness and love of the mother heart of the Holy Ghost’ meant that the Spirit nurtured the believer, ‘vigilantly, tenderly watching over him, and guarding him with more than a mother’s care’.³⁵

Simpson considered this conception of the Spirit’s motherhood to be biblical: ‘All the representations which the Scriptures give us of the Holy Ghost are in harmony with this thought of Divine motherhood’.³⁶ He found the biblical record to be pregnant with maternal imagery. In the Bible, ‘the guidance and nurture of the Spirit ... are described in language borrowed from the nursery and the home, and in the deeper needs of the soul, the comfort of the Holy Ghost is described to us under the very image of a mother’s caresses and a mother’s love’.³⁷ One such representation was the biblical association of the Spirit with a dove. ‘The first metaphor in the Bible is the figure of the Holy Ghost like a great mother bird’, he wrote.³⁸ As Mother, the Holy Spirit gave spiritual life, nourished, comforted, trained, and sheltered the believer under ‘the gentle wing of heavenly love’.³⁹ ‘Here among sinful, suffering men, the same Dove is building Her nest and rearing Her broods for the celestial realms’.⁴⁰ Drawing upon Matthew 4:3, he associated this image of a brooding bird with healing: ‘This is the beautiful figure of our text. Divine healing comes under the brooding bosom of God’s great motherhood’.⁴¹

³⁵ A. B. Simpson, *Romans* (1904; Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, n.d), 95; Simpson, *The Holy Spirit, or Power From on High*, vol. 2, foreword Walter M. Turnbull, new ed. (1896; New York: The Christian Alliance Publishing, 1924), 168; 182, 205, 213, 252-253.

³⁶ Simpson, ‘Like a Dove’, 245.

³⁷ Simpson, ‘Like a Dove’, 245.

³⁸ Editorial comments, *Christian and Missionary Alliance Weekly* (Jan 30, 1909): 296. See Genesis 1:1.

³⁹ Simpson, ‘The Seven-Fold Spirit’, *Christian Alliance and Missionary Weekly* (July 29, 1892): 67-70.

⁴⁰ Simpson, ‘Like a Dove’, 244.

⁴¹ Editorial comments, *Christian and Missionary Alliance Weekly* (Jan 30, 1909): 296.

Divine motherhood also depicted one aspect of the intra-divine Trinitarian relationship: the place of the Holy Spirit in the incarnation, life, and ministry of Christ. This was central to the correspondence Simpson drew between events in Christ's life, and in the experience of the believer, as outlined in chapter five. For instance, just as 'our Lord was born of the Holy Spirit', so too the new believer was 'born of the Holy Ghost'.⁴² Both the life of Christ and the experience of the believer revealed the Spirit as mother.

The association between human and divine motherhood pointed two ways. Not only was the Spirit 'Mother', but also, according to Simpson, woman was a 'fitting type of the blessed Comforter, often represented, it would seem, under the image of a mother'.⁴³ Simpson did not simply mean that the Spirit was in some way 'like' a human mother. By type, he meant a divinely ordained pattern or image pointing to its fulfilment, or 'anti-type'.⁴⁴ Typological interpretation moves from earthly to spiritual, from present to future, from lesser to greater, and from image to real; indeed, types are 'symbols which at a future time are to be replaced by reality'.⁴⁵ Human motherhood, read as a 'type', was a symbol or image (albeit only a pale shadow) of the real 'Mother', or 'anti-type', the Holy Spirit.⁴⁶ The Spirit not only acted in 'motherly' ways, but also in some sense *was*

⁴² Simpson, *Holy Spirit*, 13, see also 14, 204.

⁴³ Simpson, *Luke*, 314, cited in Andrews, 'A. B. Simpson's Understanding'.

⁴⁴ See for instance Louis Berkhof, *Principles of Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1950), 142-147; Bernard L. Ramm *et al*, *Hermeneutics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1971), 101-106. These writers would have dismissed Simpson's use of typology as overly imaginative.

⁴⁵ As a rule, the correspondence is between an Old Testament person, event, or institution and the New Testament person event or institution it prefigures. A classic example here is that of the 'tabernacle'. See for example James Gray, *Synthetic Bible Studies* (1906; New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1923), 32-35; Berkhof, *Principles*, 147; also Ramm *et al*, *Hermeneutics*, 102-103.

⁴⁶ Simpson, *Luke*, 314, cited in Andrews, 'A. B. Simpson's Understanding'. This contrasts with the very different position of dispensationalist James Brookes, who considered woman as a type of the Church. By this reading, woman was to be subordinate to the man (just as the Church was subordinate to Christ) and remain 'silent' in church. See DeBerg, *Ungodly Women*, 50, 76.

‘Mother God’. Thus, Simpson could exclaim in doxology, ‘Blessed and eternal Spirit, our Mother God and Everlasting Friend, oh, how much we owe to Thee!’⁴⁷

This was not, however, a pagan fertility goddess or pantheistic mother earth. The typological relationship between ‘woman’ and the Holy Spirit drew its meaning not from biological sex, but from an asexual ‘maternal’ relationship. As Simpson explained at one point, ‘In the natural world, the first appearance of love is not in the sexual, but in the maternal relations’.⁴⁸ Simpson understood human relationships in general—marital, familial, or fraternal—as typological, for ‘in the Divine Trinity there is found the substance of all relationships’.⁴⁹ Human relationships said something true about who God is, what God is like, and how God is experienced. ‘Back of every earthly love ... there is a great eternal mystery of which these things are the imperfect earthly shadows and types’, he wrote in 1894.

God gave you a father’s love that you might understand the eternal Father; a mother’s tenderness, that you might comprehend the Motherhood of the Holy Ghost; a brother’s affection, that you might appreciate the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother; a child’s filial love, that you might know what it is to say “Abba Father” to your heavenly parent.⁵⁰

Thus, that relationship ‘expressed in human motherhood must always have been in the bosom of God’.⁵¹ Further, these relationships corresponded to the ‘personalities’ of the Trinity:

Human fatherhood expresses the need which is met in God the Father. Human motherhood has its origin in the Holy Ghost. Human brotherhood, and the higher,

⁴⁷ Simpson, *Holy Spirit*, 205; for other uses of ‘Mother God’ see *Holy Spirit*, 155-156, 168, 199, 213, also 253; *Romans*, 176.

⁴⁸ Simpson, ‘Like a Dove’, 245.

⁴⁹ Simpson, ‘Emblems and Aspects of the Holy Spirit’.

⁵⁰ Simpson, *Romans*, 155; original sermon printed in *Christian Alliance and Foreign Missionary Weekly* (May 4, 1894): 473-476. Note that Simpson overlooks female-to-female relationships, such as mother-daughter, or sister-sister.

⁵¹ A. B. Simpson, ‘Emblems and Aspects of the Holy Spirit’, chapter 5 of *Walking in the Spirit* (1889). <<http://online.auc-nuc.ca/alliancestudies/simpson/WALKSPIR.HTM>>

closer fellowship of the husband and the bridegroom, are met in Christ, the Son of God, our Brother and our Bridegroom.⁵²

The motherly actions of the Holy Spirit were an expression of the Spirit's personality, as those of the other members of the Trinity were unique to them.

Nor was the Holy Spirit female, although his struggle with language reveals the tension engendered by this typological approach.⁵³ 'It is almost difficult to use the masculine form in speaking of this blessed person, so womanlike is the sweetness and softness of His touch', he wrote in 1889.⁵⁴ On occasion, when using the metaphor of the Spirit as dove, or mother bird, Simpson used the feminine pronoun; elsewhere, however, he maintained the masculine.

Rather than 'woman' or the female sex, it was idealised 'motherhood', with its power of 'influence', that was central to this conception of the Holy Spirit as Mother.⁵⁵ As seen previously, although arguments for maternal 'influence' might lead to actual authority, this outcome was not certain. Thus, although women were, in Simpson's opinion, 'the most potent spiritual and moral forces of our age', he doubted if they were 'adapted' to leadership roles.⁵⁶ Women might possess a greater capacity to channel spiritual qualities than men did, but when it came to natural authority and power, they fell short. For instance, in *The Holy Spirit, or Power from on High*, Simpson used a number of images to describe the Spirit's work in the consecrated life:

⁵² Simpson, 'Like a Dove', 244-246; 245

⁵³ For instance, Simpson does not posit a holy family composed of father, mother, and son.

⁵⁴ Simpson, 'Emblems and Aspects of the Holy Spirit'.

⁵⁵ See for instance his discussion of Deborah's leadership role in Judges 4. While called to 'exercise the public functions of a leader', she was wise enough to lead from behind. Simpson, 'Holy Spirit in the Book of Judges', *Christian Alliance and Foreign Missionary Weekly* (Dec 7, 1894): 533. As we have seen above, Deborah's actions earned her the title 'Mother in Israel'.

⁵⁶ A. B. Simpson, 'Holy Spirit in the Book of Judges', *Christian Alliance and Foreign Missionary Weekly* (Dec 7, 1894): 533; see also A. J. Gordon, 'The Ministry of Women', *Alliance Weekly* (Dec 15, 1928): 820-821.

[The Spirit] takes His place there as the Pilot upon the deck to bring the vessel into the harbour; as the Contractor for that building ...; as the Teacher and Trainer of some important school ...; as the Mother, undertaking the care and oversight of her precious child; as the Commander-in-Chief for some great campaign...⁵⁷

Although teaching (but not necessarily a ‘trainer of some important school’) fell within the sphere of female activity, the other roles listed—pilot, contractor, and commander-in-chief—did not. Such tasks fell outside Simpson’s conception of female nature, and called for ‘male’ characteristics of authority, or leadership. Truly authoritative leadership was a male prerogative; it was outside the female sphere. Consequently, this typology did not lead Simpson to the conclusion that a woman might model all aspects of the Spirit’s roles. This dualism of male and female bounded Simpson’s use of mother language for God. Within this framework, God *cannot* be female, for such a move would discredit God’s authority.

The nineteenth-century idealisation of motherhood reflected a ‘binary’ view of the sexes, in which male and female were different in kind.⁵⁸ Because male and female were essentially different in ‘nature’, they possessed different qualities and virtues.

Throughout Simpson’s writings, he characterised women as gentle, tender, modest, loving, and self-sacrificing; in contrast, men were strong, virile, and natural leaders.⁵⁹

These innate, created dissimilarities indicated corresponding differences in function, thus underpinning the philosophy of separate spheres. His view of Jesus demonstrates the

⁵⁷ Simpson, *Holy Spirit*, 252.

⁵⁸ Mary Aquin O’Neill defines two-nature anthropology as ‘a vision of human being as divided into two distinct kinds, each with identifiable differences that become normative for each sex’ (Mary Aquin O’Neill, ‘The Mystery of Being Human Together: Anthropology’, in *Freeing Theology: The Essentials of Theology in Feminist Perspective*, 139-160, ed. Catherine Mowry LaCugna [HarperSanFrancisco, 1993], 149). See also Elaine Graham, *Making the Difference: Gender, Personhood and Theology* (London: Mowbray, 1995), 37-39; Nancy Woloch, *Women and the American Experience: A Concise History* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1996), 73.

⁵⁹ See for example, Simpson, ‘Holy Spirit in Judges’, 534.

theological implications of this binary interpretation of the sexes. Because the sexes were distinct, Simpson concluded that the humanity of Christ necessarily included both:

Jesus was not a man in the rigid sense of manhood as distinct from womanhood, but, as the Son of Man, the complete Head of Humanity, He combined in Himself the nature both of man and woman ...⁶⁰

Or, as he expressed the idea in *The Four-Fold Gospel*:

His humanity is so complete that He represents the softer traits of womanhood as well as the virility and strength of manhood, and even the simplicity of a little child...⁶¹

Simpson shared this belief in the duality of male and female, and this inclusive view of Christ's nature, with other evangelicals of the period.⁶² Arthur Tappan Pierson also drew upon a complementarian model of gender for his Christology. When Pierson explained that 'Christ represents the generic man', or that 'Christ seems to represent humanity, in its broadest range and in a very special sense, as a man, and, in its ideal perfection, as *the* man', he understood 'man' [Adam] to include the 'woman as well as the man'.⁶³ Because 'the ideal man combines and includes the womanly graces with the manly virtues; that which is gentle and tender with that which is strong and firm', the 'king of men [i.e. Christ] will be a woman also'.⁶⁴ Note, however, that the reverse is not true. Nowhere did Simpson or Pierson entertain the idea that the 'ideal woman' might combine manly virtues with her gentle nature. Maleness might incorporate femaleness, but woman did

⁶⁰ Simpson, *When the Comforter Came*, cited in Janette Hassey, *No Time for Silence: Evangelical Women in Public Ministry Around the Turn of the Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/Academie Books, 1986; CBE reprint), 16.

⁶¹ Simpson, *Four-Fold Gospel*, 96; also Andrews, 'A. B. Simpson's Understanding', 2.

⁶² For a Canadian example, see B. F. Austin, 'What Christ has Done for Woman, and What Woman has Done for Christ', in *Woman, Her Character, Culture and Calling ... in the United States and Canada*, ed. B. F. Austin, intro. Francis E. Willard (Brantford, ON: Book and Bible House, 1890), 204. <<http://www.canadiana.org/ECO/mtq?doc=06583>>.

⁶³ Arthur T. Pierson, *Many Infallible Proofs: The Evidences of Christianity* (1886; London: Morgan and Scott, n.d.), 216, cited in L. E. Maxwell and Ruth C. Dearing, *Women in Ministry* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1987), 31.

⁶⁴ Pierson, *Infallible*, 217. See also A. T. Pierson, *The Bible and Spiritual Life* (1908), 59, cited in Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 35.

not include man. Thus, despite a veneer of complementarity between the sexes, they retained vestiges of an older, asymmetric model, in which woman was a lesser man.⁶⁵

On the one hand, Simpson held to a concrete, binary view of the differences between male and female natures. On the other hand, Simpson used ‘feminine’ language freely, and fluidly, in his turn-of-the-century writings on spirituality. Thus, Simpson could describe his own ministry experience as a form of spiritual mothering. When Mother God is present, he explained, ‘we ourselves have the mother-heart for others ... Our prayers for others become maternal longings, travailings and soul-births’.⁶⁶ Within this framework, the act of bringing someone to Christ became ‘spiritual motherhood’:

There is no joy more exquisite than the joy of leading a soul to Christ. It is like the mother's strange, instinctive rapture over her newborn babe. ... It is, indeed, a spiritual motherhood, and it has all the joy and all the pain of a mother's love.⁶⁷

Here the Spirit’s presence in the believer meant that a spiritual feminization occurred, in which the believer (male or female) became mother after the pattern of the indwelling Holy Spirit.⁶⁸ Once again, however, this gender fluidity moved only in one direction. While men, such as Simpson, might become ‘spiritual mothers’, women did not become spiritual fathers. While men might evince ‘feminine’ qualities of gentleness and self-sacrificial love, women could not become correspondingly ‘masculine’—strong, bold, vital, and authoritative—without losing their special nature.

⁶⁵ Pierson understands woman only in relation to man: she has been man’s slave, victim and tool, rather than his ‘companion and equal, his helper and counsellor’. Pierson, *Bible and Spiritual Life*, 57-58, in Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 34.

⁶⁶ Simpson, ‘Like a Dove’, 245. Here we have an inkling of Miller’s concept of ‘spiritual motherhood’.

⁶⁷ A. B. Simpson, *Larger Christian Life*, 1890.

⁶⁸ For a similar feminization of the believer as ‘bride’ of Christ, see Simpson, *Romans*, 155; see also ‘Like a Dove’, 245; Simpson, ‘Sanctification by the Grace of Christ’, *Christian Alliance and Foreign Missionary Weekly* (May 4, 1894): 475.

Alliance scholar Leslie Andrews and evangelical historian Janette Hassey have both noted a possible connection between Simpson's acknowledgement of a 'male-female duality' in the Godhead and his support for women's ministry.⁶⁹ However, neither Andrews nor Hassey questions why Simpson could use this female language for God, what he meant by it, or how it functioned in his larger theology.⁷⁰ Andrews simply suggests that Simpson's recognition of a 'male-female duality in the Godhead' may have allowed him to 'make space' for female ministry; while Hassey notes that 'Simpson's theology of the Holy Spirit may have influenced his view of women'.⁷¹ As seen above, the reverse is true: Simpson's view of 'woman' influenced his theology of the Spirit. Nor do they note the negative aspects, in particular why Simpson's 'male-female duality' served to *restrict* female roles. While Andrews notes Simpson's reliance upon 'Victorian' notions of women, she does not consider the place of this ideology in the construction of his maternal pneumatology, or the determining power this held over his entire view of female ministry. Thus although Andrews finds 'ambiguity' or 'equivocation' in Simpson's position she is able to claim that 'clearly, spiritual ministry was not gender-limited in Simpson's thinking'.⁷²

⁶⁹ See Leslie A. Andrews, 'Restricted Freedom: A. B. Simpson's View of Women in Ministry', in *The Birth of a Vision*, ed. David F. Hartzfeld and Charles Nienkirchen, 219-240, *His Dominion*, Supplement 1 (Regina, SK: 1986); also Leslie A. Andrews, 'A. B. Simpson's Understanding of the Role of Women in Ministry' <<http://online.auc-nuc.ca/alliancestudies>>; Janette Hassey, *No Time for Silence: Evangelical Women in Public Ministry Around the Turn of the Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/Academie Books, 1986, CBE reprint), 16-19. Ruth A Tucker and Walter Liefeld made Andrews's conclusions more widely available in *Daughters of the Church: Women and Ministry from New Testament Times to the Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Academie /Zondervan, 1987), 287-288. I am indebted to Andrews' work for first drawing my attention to Simpson's use of mother language for God.

⁷⁰ Although Hassey includes a section on evangelical theology in her conclusion, she makes no further reference to Simpson's maternal pneumatology (see Hassey, *No Time for Silence*, 125-131). This reflects an evangelical tendency to consider female ministry as an issue of biblical interpretation, rather than of theology.

⁷¹ Andrews, 'A. B. Simpson's Understanding'; Hassey, *No Time for Silence*, 16, also 19.

⁷² Andrews, 'A. B. Simpson's Understanding'.

On the contrary, Simpson's view of female ministry was both highly gendered, and gender-limited. The apparent ambiguities that Leslie Andrews comments upon—Simpson's support for female ministry, and his objections to female leadership—were built into his understanding of the sexes as possessing different, but complementary natures. His conception of the Holy Spirit as 'Mother God' and his understanding of female ministry both rested upon a specific understanding of what it meant to be female in distinction from male. Thus, her 'restricted freedom' (Andrews) resulted from her nature: both her special openness to the gift of prophecy, which created a unique space for female witness, and from her special nature as 'female'.

Simpson's conception of the Spirit as Mother did not lead to an egalitarian view of male and female. His language was not a feminist ploy—an attempt to combat patriarchal bias in the church, or to raise the status of women within the Christian community. Turn-of-the-century radical evangelicals showed little consciousness of gender inequity; indeed, they considered women of their era to occupy a *high* status.

However, while women might have important, even 'equal' ministries, this did not equate as the 'same' ministry.⁷³ As A. T. Pierson rather bluntly put it: 'The law of sex runs through all Christian work'.⁷⁴ 'There is no doubt', argued Simpson, 'that the apostle limits woman's sphere in the Church of God; but only within the restraints required by her *nature* and her *distinct place* within the social economy' (my emphasis).⁷⁵ This is consistent with Simpson's view of the body of Christ, in which every member has a 'separate office'. 'Our ministries are determined in some measure by our place in the

⁷³ For the claim to equality, see Simpson, *Romans*, 286.

⁷⁴ A. T. Pierson, *New Acts of the Apostles* (1894), 387-388, cited in Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 135.

⁷⁵ Simpson, *Romans*, 286, 287.

body, by our environment, by the circumstances and providences amid which we are placed, by leadings, and natural instinct and preferences, and by the gifts of both nature and grace', he told his readers.⁷⁶ However, this teaching stands in tension with the interventionist dynamics of Simpson's theology of 'Christ Himself'. That 'the power to serve God is not natural talent nor acquired experience, but Christ's own life' in the believer was a common theme in his work. Nonetheless, Simpson could assert this spiritualised view of service on one page, and limit women from pastoral office due to 'nature' on the next.⁷⁷ Clearly, the distinctions of female nature usually overrode this spiritual dynamic, at least in theory.

Paradoxically, the very ideas that allowed Simpson to posit the Spirit as Mother prevented him from expanding the limits of female ministry. Although his maternal pneumatology allowed for a positive evaluation of female ministry—in those areas where it reflected 'maternal' capacities—it did not allow for more radical, egalitarian conceptions. That Simpson and the Alliance provided broad opportunity for women is not at issue here. He claimed, and the evidence bore him out, that from its inception his Gospel Tabernacle had given opportunity for female ministry.⁷⁸ Women also held key positions throughout the early Alliance, and on occasion held leadership roles.⁷⁹

When Simpson recognised the value of an individual woman's ministry, he described it in maternal language. For instance, Mrs. Althea A. Kirk, formerly 'Ladies' Superintendent' of the Missionary Training Institute in Nyack, New York, liked to tell

⁷⁶ Simpson, *Holy Spirit*, 123.

⁷⁷ Simpson, 'Practical Christianity', 68-69; see also his comments upon Deborah and Sampson in 'Holy Spirit in Judges', 534-536.

⁷⁸ See Simpson, 'A Story of Providence', Feb 11, 1907 <<http://online.cbccs.ca/alliancestudies/>>; for an example, see the tributes paid to Ellen Griffin in *The Word, The Work and The World* (Feb 1, 1887): 94-105; also Simpson, *Romans*, 288.

⁷⁹ See Hassey, *No Time for Silence*; also Andrews, 'A. B. Simpson's Understanding'.

the story of her first meeting with A. B. Simpson. On that occasion, Simpson prayed ‘Oh, Lord, may she be the mother of a thousand’, a prayer which led to ‘undreamed of enlargement of ministry’ for Kirk.⁸⁰

This complex interconnection of mother images provides background to Dorothy Ruth Miller’s use of spiritual motherhood. For instance, the power inherent in ‘motherhood’, and the territorial nature of maternal authority, explains much about the original tension with Mrs. Kirk that led to Miller’s re-consecration experience.⁸¹ That Kirk was ‘mother of a thousand’ undoubtedly influenced Miller’s longing for ‘spiritual children’ of her own. Miller may have heard this story from Kirk herself, or read it in Simpson’s official biography, with which she was certainly acquainted. (Student Leslie Maxwell had given a message drawn from its pages only the week before Miller’s revelation of her calling.)⁸² In turning to spiritual motherhood as a model, she claimed the mantle earlier placed upon the shoulders of Mrs. Kirk by A. B. Simpson himself.

For Miller, consecration provided a route to recast her ministry calling in terms that both legitimised her public ministry and affirmed traditional female roles. In reframing her vocation, Miller initially turned to an earlier understanding of her role as Levitical. In early 1921, drawing upon the theology of consecration, she reported to her diary that ‘the Lord renewed to me the assurance that he had given me “to Aaron ... to do the service of the the [sic] children of Israel in the tabernacle of the congregation”’.⁸³

Once again, the typological interpretative framework of A. B. Simpson provides

⁸⁰ A. E. Thompson, *The Life of A. B. Simpson: Official Authorised Edition* (Harrisburg, PA / New York: Christian Alliance, 1920), 191. See also *Alliance Annual Report* (1902), 82.

⁸¹ For the conflict, see previous chapter.

⁸² See Miller’s entry from the previous week: ‘This evening Mr. Maxwell gave a message on Dr. Simpson. I was sorry that I had seen him [Simpson] in a way that revealed God far less than he was revealed in the book’ (January 27, 1922). It is possible that Miller refers here to the issues that led to her and Stevens leaving the Alliance.

⁸³ Miller Diaries, February 6, 1921.

background. According to Simpson, the Levites were ‘Old Testament types of Christian service’.⁸⁴ Drawing a parallel between the consecration, or ‘setting apart’, of the Levites and their subsequent service in the temple, and Christian consecration and service, he explained: ‘So we may all be God’s Levites, redeemed, cleaned, separated, consecrated, and assigned to our own place in the body of Christ, “to every man his work”’.⁸⁵ Miller reinterpreted Simpson’s Levitical paradigm, by including a point Simpson omitted: the Levites were ‘given to Aaron’.⁸⁶ By re-introducing Aaron, Miller makes clear the helping nature of her position, for the tribe of Levi properly served as support staff to Aaron and his sons, the priests of Israel. For Miller, Aaron was her associate William C. Stevens, Principal at Midland Bible Institute. He held the priestly, ordained station, with its sacramental aspects, while Miller’s ‘levitical’ responsibility was to the physical tabernacle and the people: the daily life of the school and its students. This Levitical model allowed Miller to rationalize both her position as his co-worker, and the subordinate nature of her ministry. By playing a supporting role, Miller enabled Stevens to fulfil his calling as leader, teacher, and writer—but in so doing, Miller also acted the part of a female helpmate, or wife and mother.

Her interpretation of her role as maternal was born out of a complex set of internal and external factors. Life within the small school was patterned upon the family: shared meals and work, common living spaces, devotions at supper, and maternal/paternal control over the ‘children’.⁸⁷ Within this familial framework, Miller’s position as Matron made her assumption of the role as mother of the household quite

⁸⁴ Simpson, ‘Practical Christianity’, 69. See Numbers chapters 3, 4, and 8.

⁸⁵ Simpson, ‘Practical Christianity’, 69.

⁸⁶ Miller Diaries, February 6, 1921. See Numbers 8: 19.

⁸⁷ L. E. Maxwell’s references to ‘Daddy’ Stevens reflected this same familial relationship.

natural. Miller undertook oversight of the school, both materially and emotionally: she often performed housekeeping and maintenance tasks such as shopping, cooking, or painting; she counselled the ‘family’; and she supported Mr. Stevens. At the same time, she taught a full load of courses, acted as school registrar and secretary, sewed her own clothing, and maintained a large personal correspondence. She thus fulfilled the double obligations of a working mother.⁸⁸ Not surprisingly, Miller was usually exhausted, and often ill. Unlike most women, however, Miller *chose* to carry these extra domestic roles. By recreating herself as mother, Miller transferred the values and norms of the domestic sphere into a middle or ‘civil’ realm, the semi-private world of the small Bible school.⁸⁹ At the same time, it reinforced the image of the Bible school as family.

On a personal level, a precipitating trigger for her new self-understanding as spiritual mother was concern over her relationship with Mr. Stevens. ‘I have not been very happy today’ she recorded early in January 1922. ‘I have had the feeling that Mr. Stevens is not pleased with me and it is hard’.⁹⁰ That same month, concerns about the financial viability of Midland Bible School raised the possibility of the school’s dissolution, and physical separation from Stevens. On February 3 1922, Miller wrote: ‘Today God has given me special faith for our school. He has led me to say to Him ‘I will not have this school given up unless you have something better for Mr. Stevens and me’. This thought developed into her first reference to an emerging paradigm of spiritual motherhood:

⁸⁸ While women of the period found God leading them into new and more public ministry roles, the reverse was not true. Rarely did men adopt the more private, traditionally female ones. This reflects the underlying assumption, noted above, that male nature is more inclusive.

⁸⁹ The language of domesticity and spheres describes a societal ideal, rather than the actuality of women’s lives.

⁹⁰ See also Miller Diaries, January 2, 1922.

I will have either a good strong school—sons and daughters into whom Mr. Stevens can put himself and who will surround him with love and care—this or something better in ministry and care for him and in ministry for me.⁹¹

Over the next few days, this conception continued to develop. On February 13 she wrote:

I have been thinking today of my work as being so largely to make it possible for Mr. Stevens to have students about him to whom he can impart himself. It has come to me of late that God has given it to me to be the mother of Mr. Stevens' spiritual children—his sons and daughters in the faith.⁹²

Spiritual motherhood, as in Simpson, does not normally include a human 'father'. Her use of mother language here introduced connotations of fecundity and nurture, although placed within a spiritualised context. In this sense, spiritual motherhood provided an evocative resolution for the (perhaps subconscious) question of her relation to Mr. Stevens.⁹³ 'To me this is a crown of glory. I could ask for nothing better in this life. How I praise God for this privilege of giving to him sons and daughters in the Lord', she exulted, unaware of the confusion of spiritual and biological children implied.⁹⁴ To describe her work as 'spiritual' mothering allowed Miller to make sense of her feelings and her work, while remaining within the bounds of purity and propriety.

Like her Levitical role, Miller's maternal position was a supporting one, which relied upon the (male) Stevens for its meaning and validation.⁹⁵ This tactic gave legitimacy to her position, and allowed Miller to negotiate within a hierarchical system.

⁹¹ Miller Diaries, February 3, 1922.

⁹² Miller Diaries, February 13, 1922.

⁹³ If Miller knew her own heart on this matter, she did not express it overtly, or destroyed the evidence. The missing diaries suggest this as a possibility. Miller's relationship with Stevens was, of course, more complex than a simple case of unrequited (or unacknowledged) love. Stevens was her intellectual mentor, and her spiritual guide, as well as her 'elderly' father, as expressed on February 3, 1922: 'I am asking, too, for the privilege of ministering to Mr. Stevens comfort & happiness & usefulness in his closing years'. (Miller was now fifty-one; Stevens would be sixty-nine that August).

⁹⁴ Miller Diaries, February 13, 1922.

⁹⁵ The intensity of Miller's need for male approval, expressed in her diaries as a constant concern that 'something is wrong' between her and one or other of these men, suggests that her insistence on a secondary supporting role also served a psychological purpose. Her later struggles with Mr. Newberry, president at Simpson Bible School in Seattle, and her concern for Maxwell's approval while at Prairie Bible Institute support this interpretation.

As mother, under the authority of Stevens as ‘father’, she had both security and freedom to serve. At the same time, while both roles created space for her distinctly ‘female’ personal ministry, they also circumscribed the boundaries of her sphere. Miller’s interpretation of these ideas was fundamentally conservative; it allowed her to frame her ministry within a familial framework, and in relation to the men to whom she was accountable. Miller followed this pattern of situating her ministry with reference to particular men—a male ‘head’ or authority figure—throughout her career. This constant orientation towards male authority reflected both wider social expectations and evangelical Calvinistic concern for proper ‘order’, as well as Miller’s own firm beliefs in male headship.⁹⁶

However, the ideology of motherhood, as noted above, carried a weight of authority and responsibility that her Levitical role could not bear. As mother ‘of Mr. Stevens’ spiritual children’, Miller also asserted the necessity of her role, and her female capacity for spiritual nurture and influence. An ongoing debate over seating at the school dining table expressed both the prestige, and the derivative nature of the maternal role. As befitted his position as Principal of Midland School, W. C. Stevens sat at the head of table. Who rightfully sat at the foot was more problematic: Was it to be Mrs. Stevens, as his wife, or Miller as the ‘matron’ and mother of the school?⁹⁷ When the Stevens lived in the house with the students, Miller seemed satisfied to give precedence to Mrs. Stevens. However, when the Stevens lived outside the school, Miller considered her position as Matron to override Mrs. Stevens’ claim to the honour. Mrs. Stevens’ retiring personality

⁹⁶ See chapter nine.

⁹⁷ See for instance Miller’s diary entry for Christmas Day, 1923; also January 6, 1924.

and her lack of official role at the school exacerbated the problem.⁹⁸ This debate over seating arrangements, with their concomitant acknowledgement of maternal authority, became a motif in Miller's diary. It recurred in 1924 with Mrs. Kirk at Simpson Bible Institute, Seattle, and was an issue between Miller and Pearl Maxwell at Prairie Bible Institute, Three Hills, in 1929. In each case, Miller's position as school matron and mother of the household triumphed; while wives and senior female members of the household played secondary roles. Thus, by becoming mother, Miller was able to assert authority over both other female members of the household, and over her 'sons' and 'daughters', the students.

For some turn-of-the-century evangelical women, 'motherhood' served as a successful, albeit limited, strategy for supporting female ministry. Whether mothers and wives seeking freedom for public ministry, or single women seeking to serve within traditional male authority structures, spiritual motherhood created room for manoeuvre, while allowing them to retain their maternal and female power.

For many women consecration allowed a similar way through the double bind of spiritual calling, and social and familial expectations. There were a number of reasons for this, but the most straightforward is that consecration removed human accountability for such choices and placed them under God's direct control. The consecrated person gave up her or his will in order to do God's will, even though they might need to flout convention in order to obey. The turn away from 'natural' inclinations to do God's work could be romanticised, as in the case of evangelist Catherine Booth-Clibborn, daughter of

⁹⁸ The character of Mrs. Stevens remains vague and undefined. Reading between the lines of Miller's diaries, one gets the sense of an unhappy woman, ill at ease within her husband's world, and easily overwhelmed by the bustle and shifts of school life. She was apparently childless, and often ill; and on such occasions required her husband's attendance.

Salvation Army founders Catherine and William Booth. Like her mother, Booth-Clibborn was adept at using gendered concepts to further her ministry. She could argue against prostitution as damaging woman's 'delicate and complex nature' and at the same time, refute arguments against women's ministry by proclaiming that 'there is no sex in soul'.⁹⁹ The Maréchale (as she was known in France) considered long separations from her ten children as a necessary apostolic sharing in Christ's suffering. To get the "hundredfold" [i.e. harvest] of which Christ spoke 'she must leave father and mother, home and child. In some real way she must sacrifice and suffer'.¹⁰⁰

Although Dorothy Ruth Miller's call to spiritual motherhood still empowered her in the early 1920s, by this period the cult of motherhood was losing its power within North American culture. As evangelicals of all stripes reacted against 'feminized' religion, female language for God fell from favour. The power of motherhood, based as it was on gender, rather than personhood, was easily subsumed by the power of the father. Even in the early years of the twentieth century, Simpson's maternal language was at odds with an increasingly strident edge in conservative evangelicalism, and contrasted with much mainstream liberal Protestantism, which commonly spoke of the Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. Thus, Social Gospel proponent Walter Rauschenbusch wrote in 1907 that 'God is a father; men are neighbours and brothers; let them act accordingly'.¹⁰¹ Nellie McClung, also part of the Social Gospel movement, complained in 1915:

⁹⁹ James Strahan, *The Maréchale* (London: Marshall Morgan and Scott, n.d.), 135, 108.

¹⁰⁰ Strahan, *Maréchale*, 116-117.

¹⁰¹ Walter Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* (New York: Macmillan, 1907), 70-71; 48. Rauschenbusch, who like Simpson had been a New York pastor at the turn-of-the-century, considered female emancipation and equality to be an outworking of Christianity, yet believed that women were best married and in the home (134, 147, 150, 271-279). See also Martin E. Marty, *Modern American Religion*, vol. 1, *The Irony of it all: 1893-1919* (Chicago / London: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 290-295.

The church has been dominated by men and so religion has been given a masculine interpretation, and I believe the Protestant religion has lost much when it lost the idea of the motherhood of God.¹⁰²

In her view, contemporary concern for the so-called ‘feminization of the church’ said much about the church’s contempt for women.¹⁰³

Twentieth-century evangelical women increasingly moved away from ‘motherhood’ as an emblem of their ministry. Pentecostal evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson serves here as a transitional figure. McPherson was not a ‘spiritual mother’, but a ‘sister’; as an independent (and sexual) woman, she claimed the previously male prerogatives of ordination and authority, and gained access to a highly public ministry. By so doing, however, she helped undermine the grounds on which much nineteenth-century female ministry had rested. For McPherson, the connection between consecration and calling led to the eventual dissolution of her marriage, as she continually chose her calling to itinerant evangelism over her husband’s need for a more settled and conventional life. It also allowed her to shift blame for the divorce from herself to her husband’s unwillingness to follow God’s leading.¹⁰⁴ Consecration likewise led faith healer Kathryn Kuhlman to choose calling over her husband.¹⁰⁵

Even as Miller became a spiritual mother, changes in social mores led the developing fundamentalist movement to proclaim the failure of ‘mothers’, thereby undermining this long serving explanation for female ministry. By the 1920s, the behaviours of young women, as symbolised by the short skirts, sexual assertiveness, and

¹⁰² McClung, *In Times Like These*, 70.

¹⁰³ McClung, *In Times Like These*, 71.

¹⁰⁴ For McPherson’s consecration account, see Edith L. Blumhofer, *Aimee Semple McPherson: Everybody’s Sister* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1993), 105; for the break-up of the marriage see 127-129.

¹⁰⁵ See Wayne E. Warner, *Kathryn Kuhlman: The Woman behind the Miracles* (Ann Arbor, MI: Servant Publications, 1993), 101-111.

mannish demeanour of the ‘flapper’, had challenged earlier assumptions of female purity, piety, and modesty. A further challenge to spiritual motherhood came from a re-sexualising of female nature.

The matter of ‘female dress’ stood as a symbol of the new morality for tract writers of the period. Many, unwilling to admit that young girls might knowingly participate in the new morality, cast the blame for improper dress upon mothers. ‘Who is to blame for this poisonous breath that is sweeping over our country and endangering the very foundation-stones of our civilization?’ demanded Mrs. C. E. Broyles, an unidentified tract writer. ‘Not the giddy girl, for she does not know the danger ... I unhesitatingly say—**the mother!** ... If physical danger menaced her daughter she would protect her with her life, but moral and spiritual danger assails her and she leaves the inexperienced girl to fight the battle alone’.¹⁰⁶ ‘We have very little sympathy for the mother whose unchaste example has been the cause of her daughter’s downfall’, sniped an anonymous tract writer.¹⁰⁷ By their failure, mothers ‘jeopardized’ the innocent purity of their daughters, ‘forcing premature development of the sexual nature, instead of nourishing the spiritual nature’.¹⁰⁸ Belief in women’s superior morality has twisted into an increased focus on female culpability. That ‘we learn from history that the decline and fall of every great nation of the past has been preceded by the decline and fall of the modesty of its womanhood’ becomes a common refrain in the next few decades.¹⁰⁹ The

¹⁰⁶ Mrs. C. E. Broyles, *The Decline of Womanhood* (tract, n.d.), 1. Emphasis in original. PBI Archives, Maxwell Personal Files, ‘Dress’. G. C. Bevington published this same article (without attribution) in *What Next* (Los Angeles: Free Tract Society, n. d.), 23. PBI Archives, Maxwell Personal Files, ‘Dress’.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Does God Care? A Tract for Women Only’ (Los Angeles: Free Tract Society). PBI Archives, Maxwell Personal Files, ‘Women’.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Does God Care?’

¹⁰⁹ Broyles, *Decline of Womanhood*, 1; Bevington, *What Next*, 22.

failed mother, responsible for the immodest behaviour of her daughters, increasingly replaced the idealised mother of nineteenth-century evangelicalism.

The failure of society's (female) guardians to live up to their calling was particularly difficult for those within radical evangelical and holiness circles, where women had led the spiritual ranks. The 'matrons' of the Bible schools now acted as substitute mothers, maintaining their moral guardianship by worrying about and enforcing new rules put in place to constrain dress and morality. Rather than the 'most potent spiritual and moral forces of our age', as Simpson had held, for many fundamentalists, women were a source of social degradation.

Yet this discussion has raised some fascinating questions and possibilities. For instance, because of his exaltation of 'womanhood', and his (paradoxically) fluid application of gendered attributes, Simpson was able to attribute 'feminine' qualities both to the Spirit, and to Christ. Simpson's use of typology to cast these similarities in 'relational' terms; and to find the origins of both male and female qualities in God is a productive way to relate human sexed nature and the image of God. Likewise, the image of God the Holy Spirit as Mother created room for women to minister *as* women. Yet while a conception of ministering as 'mothering' provided tools and opportunities for female ministry, it, like other attempts to base women's roles upon a special 'nature', ultimately failed to deliver. The next chapter traces the boundaries this view of the sexes imposed upon the lives of women, and their practice of ministry, within radical and later fundamentalist evangelical circles.

Chapter Nine

‘She relinquished her glory and her protection’:

Ordination, Subordination and the Limits of Female Nature

The Lord revealed to me more clearly than ever before what it meant for a woman to accept ordination. That in consenting to accept a place of headship she relinquished her glory and her protection.

Dorothy Ruth Miller, 1923

Discussion of women’s roles within radical evangelical and, later, fundamentalist circles cannot be complete without addressing the thorny topics of male headship, female subordination, and the limits of female ministry. Although women played major roles within the voluntary associations of nineteenth and turn-of-the-century evangelicalism—teaching, acting as missionaries and evangelists, founding Bible schools and mission stations, and on occasion serving as pastors—women were rarely ordained. That is, few were officially acknowledged ‘leaders’ within denominational and ecclesiastical institutions.

To some extent, the lack of female ordination was simply a result of the ‘associational’ mindset of the Bible school and evangelistic networks, and of the premillennialist urgency driving overseas missions. For many of the women involved within the early Alliance, missions or the Bible school world, ordination was a lesser

matter for concern than their freedom to speak the gospel.¹ By serving within these networks, women (and lay-men) circumvented traditional ecclesial patterns of ordination. Much ministry took place outside the formal church; thus, ordination did not carry the same importance that it might within a more traditional denominational setting. Yet within many of these associations, such as the Alliance, the line between a woman who taught and even led a small community of believers, and an ordained pastor, was not always that evident.² At the same time, some radical evangelicals and early Pentecostals did ordain women.³ These exceptions, although more common during the founding years, when women might be ordained as evangelists or church planters, or when charismatic, Spirit-led patterns of leadership predominated, lasted into the twentieth century. On the whole, however, official ecclesial and institutional leadership positions remained male enclaves. To later feminist sensibilities, such restrictions suggest gender discrimination; Miller and many of her contemporaries, however, considered this gendered division of labour to be good and necessary.

By the fundamentalist era of the 1920s and 1930s, despite a generation of female involvement in Bible schools, missions, and evangelism, the issue of female ministry remained unresolved among radical evangelicals and their descendants. Two competing, and interdependent principles, both deriving from their interventionist spirituality,

¹ However, as Janette Hassey demonstrates, female ordination was more common among turn-of-the-century evangelicals than might be expected. See Janette Hassey, *No Time for Silence: Evangelical Women in Public Ministry around the Turn of the Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan/Academie Books, 1986; CBE reprint).

² For instance, women planted C&MA churches on the Canadian prairies (Interview #1, interview by author, 3 August 2000, Three Hills AB, tape recording).

³ For an overview of female ordination among turn-of-the-century Calvinistic evangelicals, see Hassey, *No Time for Silence*, 47-80; for the ordination of women in the early Evangelical Free Church (associated with Frederik Franson) see the six part series by Mrs. Arnold T. [Della] Olson, 'A Woman of Her Times', *The Evangelical Beacon* (May-Sept 1975); also Hassey, *No Time for Silence*, 81-94.

ensured that the matter remained at an impasse. That is, radical and interventionist evangelicals assumed that this-worldly affairs operated upon a set of divinely ordained and unchangeable principles—*unless* God intervened. Operating within a dualism of the natural and supernatural, the material and the spiritual, this-worldly and otherworldly, they always prioritised the latter. They were, as Grant Wacker framed it, ‘determined to eliminate the natural side of every equation’.⁴ Further, much radical evangelical theology was deeply pessimistic about this world, and about human nature. This pessimistic and static perspective grounded their rejection of postmillennial eschatologies, or evolutionary theory. It also informed beliefs such as the incorrigibility of the ‘old man’. When operating within the realm of earthly affairs, they bound that problematic natural side with rules and structures to ensure conformity to the spiritual.⁵ For similar reasons, they maintained a deep-seated commitment to the static view of created gender order summarised in the doctrine of ‘male headship’. While God’s supernatural intervention might empower women for ministry (‘God used women’) that ministry remained bounded by God’s divinely ordained patterns for male and female, as revealed in the Bible.⁶

⁴ Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 13-14.

⁵ In A. B. Simpson’s words: ‘Doing things because they please you is wrong’ (Simpson, *The Self-life*, 10, 11). This need to control the natural is one factor behind the strict behaviour code in many holiness and fundamentalist circles. Believers did not drink, dance, smoke, pet, wear makeup, play cards, etc. For this negative view of human nature, see chapter six. For an extensive study of nineteenth-century British Evangelical attitudes towards worldly amusements, see Doreen Rosman, *Evangelicals and Culture* (London / Canberra: Croom Helm, 1984); for a discussion of the abstinent life-styles of early British Evangelicals, see Ian Bradley, *The Call to Seriousness: The Evangelical Impact on the Victorians* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1976), 28-29. For the strict rules of the Bible school world, see Virginia Lieson Brereton, *Training God’s Army: The American Bible School, 1880-1940* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 122-126.

⁶ I here differ from Wacker, who understands Pentecostal support for and restrictions on female ministry to reflect the tension between their ‘primitivist’ and ‘pragmatic’ impulses. See Wacker, *Heaven Below*, 158-176; esp. 165ff.

The ordination of Mrs. Annie Bamford, a Kansas City mission worker, and the response of Dorothy Ruth Miller to that event, reveal some of the ambiguous margins of female ministry within radical and Pentecostal circles. In June of 1923, in an unsuccessful attempt to recoup costs, Stevens and Miller moved Midland Bible School from Kansas City to the campus of the ‘World’s Faith Missionary Society’, located in Shenandoah, Iowa.⁷ The removal meant more space for the school, lower expenses, and possibly a private home for Mr. and Mrs. Stevens. It also meant that Stevens shared control of affairs with the Rev. C. S. Hanley, founder of the society.⁸

Miller’s first impression of Hanley was good—she found his piety ‘impressive’. By August 1923, however, this joint administration led to a shocking announcement. ‘Today learned that Mrs. Bamford half expected to be ordained this evening’, Miller wrote in her diary.⁹ Mrs. Bamford ran a downtown Kansas City mission—responsibilities already at the edge of acceptability for some. In 1921, Midland board member Mr. Fardon, a local minister, had objected to Mrs. Bamford having charge of a mission because, in his words, ‘it is a church’, an objection overruled by the rest of the board.¹⁰ However, although Miller approved of Bamford’s role at the mission, she reacted with horror to this new step. ‘I expressed myself as feeling that I should not want to be present’, she wrote.

[Mrs Bamford] went to Mr. Stevens and to Mr. Hanley and told them that I felt I could not be present and that I did not want Mr. Stevens to have part in the ordination. Mr. Stevens was not pleased that I said I should not like him to have part & felt that I should not have said what I did.¹¹

⁷ Miller Diaries, January to June, 1923. The school closed in the summer of 1924. See below.

⁸ Rev. C. S. Hanley founded the ‘World’s Faith Missionary Society’, a precursor of the present Evangelical Church Alliance, in 1887.

⁹ Miller Diaries, April 2, 1923; August 1, 1923.

¹⁰ Miller Diaries, October 29, 1921.

¹¹ Miller Diaries, August 1, 1923.

Despite Stevens' disapproval (probably of her attempt to control his actions), Miss Miller was not repentant. The matter was too deeply personal to put off lightly. The day after Mrs. Bamford's ordination, Miller wrote:

I did not sleep until just morning. The Lord revealed to me more clearly than ever before what it meant for a woman to accept ordination. That in consenting to accept a place of headship she relinquished her glory and her protection.¹²

In defence, Stevens pled the necessity of conceding to Mr. Hanley, as head of the local work, an argument that failed to convince Miller.¹³ Hanley, unprepared for Miller's objections, attempted conciliation by inviting both her and Mrs. Bamford to serve communion, further displeasing her.¹⁴ Mrs. Bamford soon found the Pentecostal world more congenial. In February 1924, she left for California, where she organised and pastored a full gospel church for two years. She then joined the evangelism team of Pentecostal P. C. Nelson. In 1927, as 'Mother Bamford', she helped co-found Southwestern Bible School, an Assemblies of God institution in Enid, Oklahoma.¹⁵

The causes of Miller's distress were multiple. One unspoken issue was perhaps Miller's sense of betrayal. On this subject, as on others, Stevens had played a part in forming her views. For instance, in May 1922, Miller had travelled to Wichita to hear famed Pentecostal evangelist Aimee Semple McPherson. Miller was not impressed by what she heard at the meetings; in her estimation, Mrs. McPherson 'spiritualised' her texts. To this criticism, Stevens suggested that a 'lack of cover'—the lack of a male in authority over her—left McPherson vulnerable to such weaknesses: a comment that

¹² Miller Diaries, August 2, 1923. Miller here alludes to 1 Corinthians 11:3-16.

¹³ Miller Diaries, August 2, 1923.

¹⁴ Miller Diaries, August 2, 1923.

¹⁵ For Bamford's later career, see 'Mother Bamford', Nelson Memorial Library (accessed 2005-04-16) <<http://www.sagu.edu/library/reserves/subs/mother.shtm>>.

suggests a position similar to that of Miller.¹⁶ Like many nineteenth- and early twentieth-century evangelicals, Miller believed that God had ordained a proper order—a relatedness of headship and subjection—between men and women. For Miller, male headship was a matter of divine decree, and an essential element of the ways things should be. To pervert this order was to invite disaster, to relinquish both ‘glory’ and ‘protection’.

Her expressed fear was that the ordination would set a precedent for female ordination, both amongst those at Mrs. Bamford’s mission and amongst students at the school, which would undermine her own work:

I realised how much harder it would make my work, a part of which was to influence the girls of the school to find places where they could work under the headship and protection of men and without being made prominent.¹⁷

The next spring, that suspicion proved correct. When a Mrs. Nelson arrived at the school, expecting to be ordained at the school commencement, Stevens came close to apologising. He informed Miller that ‘he should simply have to decline to have part in the ordination of women’.¹⁸ Whether Stevens had changed his opinion, or simply wished to keep peace is not clear.

Miller upheld this position throughout her career despite the breadth of her own ministry responsibilities of teaching, mentoring, pastoring, and later, preaching and writing. In a letter, published in the *Prairie Pastor* in 1939, she told how she had refused a position as principal of an Alliance School, even though ‘Mr. Simpson urged it’, because she ‘knew that it was not God’s will and that a woman would be out of her place

¹⁶ See Miller Diaries, May 20-26, 1922. Miller, who rarely makes mention of events or persons outside of her immediate environs, later comments upon McPherson’s disappearance and supposed kidnapping (May 18, 23, Dec 30, 1926).

¹⁷ Miller Diaries, August 2, 1923.

¹⁸ Miller Diaries, May 8, 1924.

as head of a Bible school in which men were taught'.¹⁹ 'If we accept from our hearts this decree of God vesting headship in the man', she argued, 'then other things fall into order'.²⁰ As Stevens' participation in the ordination of Bamford, and Simpson's suggestion that she become principal indicate, Miller was often more conservative on this point than her male colleagues.

In her case, the cause was likely also personal, as evidenced by the constant concern for male approval expressed throughout her diaries. At times, Miller's concern for male headship could blur the distinction between divine and male authority. For instance, in her letter, written in response to a query from a 'pastor's wife' concerned about the appropriateness of preaching during her husband's absences, Miller described her own 'calling' to be a Bible teacher. Three authorities—the guidance of the Spirit, male affirmation, and scripture—had determined the sphere of her ministry. The initial impetus came through the encouragement of men, who recognised her gifting and asked her to become an adult Sunday school teacher and then a Bible school teacher: 'Those who voiced this call were all men', she wrote. She also followed the calling of the Spirit. 'Up to this point I had been led at each step not so much by the teaching of Scripture as by the still small voice of the Spirit. All through my Christian service I have had the clear, definite witness of the Spirit ... that I was in His will as to my service', she explained. Although the personal leading of the Spirit was theoretically primary, Miller clearly considered male corroboration essential. Scripture played a tertiary role in

¹⁹ D. R. Miller, 'On Women Speaking', *Prairie Pastor*, 12/12 (Dec 1939): 7-8. Simpson died in 1919. Maxwell and Dearing describe a similar incident in which 'Dr. Blanchard' offered her the chair of Bible at Wheaton College, which she refused, 'feeling that this position was a man's place' (L. E. Maxwell, with Ruth C. Dearing, *Women in Ministry* [Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1987], 114). It is difficult to tell if this is truly a separate event, or the same one, as neither occasion is recorded in her diaries. The letter served both as a personal apologetic for Miller's ministry, and as a public defence of policy at Prairie Bible Institute. See the editorial comments of L. E. Maxwell that accompany the letter.

²⁰ Miller, 'On Women Speaking', 8.

determining her vocation, as evidenced by her reliance upon ‘the still small voice of the Spirit’, rather than the ‘teaching of scripture’.²¹

Such a strategy worked well for Miller. By carefully adhering to the forms of male headship, Miller undercut any objectors who might consider her to be ‘usurping’ authority (perhaps an essential tactic for someone so domineering). Throughout her career, Miller was able to find male mentors willing to support her ministry. When, in the summer of 1924, it became evident that Midland was not financially viable, Stevens offered his services to W. W. Newberry, founder of the Simpson Bible Institute (SBI) in Seattle.²² Although Stevens proposed that his staff come with him, in order that the SBI course offerings be expanded to include teacher training and post-graduate courses, it was not to be.²³ Although unneeded in Seattle, Miller was able to choose between positions at the Omaha Bible Institute under Mr. Jordan, and at the Gospel Tabernacle in Omaha City, with Mr. Brown, superintendent of the Western District of the Alliance.²⁴ Having opted for pastoral work, she spent the winter of 1924–1925 as ‘assistant and director of Bible Study’ for Alliance work in the district, what Leslie Maxwell later described as ‘co-

²¹ Miller, ‘On Women Speaking’, 7; for an edited version of this letter, see Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 114–116.

²² See Editorials, *Alliance Weekly* (Nov 13, 1924): 170. Robert L. Niklaus, John S. Sawin, and Samuel J. Stoesz list the founder of Simpson Bible Institute as W. W. Newberry, and its opening date as 1921. See *All for Jesus: God at Work in the Christian and Missionary Alliance Over One Hundred Years* (Camp Hill, PA: Christian Publications, 1986), 150, 174. The Reverend W. W. Newberry, then supervisor for the Pacific Northwest as well as president of Simpson Bible Institute, was a long time Alliance member, with a penchant for writing moralistic articles for the *Alliance Weekly*.

²³ Miller Diaries, June 10, 18, 22; July 2, 15, 21, 22, 24; and Aug 11, 1924.

²⁴ See Miller Diaries, Sept 14–20, 1924. William H. Jordan, a Presbyterian pastor, founded the nondenominational Omaha Bible Institute (later Faith Baptist Bible College) in 1921. Robert Roger Brown (1885–1964), a long time Alliance worker, became superintendent of the Western District in 1920. A man of innovative talents, he founded the Omaha Gospel Tabernacle in 1921, and began a long-lasting radio broadcast in 1923. There are hints in her diaries that Alliance schools in Nyack and in St Paul, Minnesota, also made offers for Miller’s services.

pastor' to Brown.²⁵ Her diaries that year describe a routine of visiting the sick, leading services at the jail, and teaching weekday women's Bible classes, among other tasks. Although her work in Omaha was varied, and challenging, her heart was in Seattle. In August 1925, when W. C. Stevens needed a sabbatical year, Miller was his chosen replacement.²⁶

A major challenge at SBI, for Miller, was her lack of respect for the president of the school. Newberry was a spendthrift; and, in her opinion, more interested in how the Alliance could support him than how he could serve the Alliance.²⁷ (Even here, however, Stevens served as her surrogate 'head'). In time, her concern over Newberry's character led her to bring matters to the attention of the national Alliance leadership.²⁸ By the spring of 1929, the fallout from her failed attempts to effect change, as well as ongoing theological tensions centring over Pentecostalism, led to the loss of her own position.

Despite this experience, Miller never recorded doubts about the principle of headship. Once again, this may be due to the support of Stevens, and of Leslie Maxwell. In autumn 1929, Miller travelled north to Three Hills, Alberta, to join Maxwell's staff at Prairie Bible Institute (PBI). Here the situation was far more congenial. Although Miller might not always agree with Maxwell, who had moved away from Alliance beliefs into more fundamentalist positions, she did respect him. Maxwell, for his part, greatly esteemed his former teacher. He broadened her work to include preaching Sunday

²⁵ See Pearl and Leslie Maxwell, interview by Don Richardson, 1982, typed transcript. PBI Archives, Box 111.

²⁶ Stevens was likely beginning his final illness; he died in 1929.

²⁷ See Miller Diaries, 1926-1928. Miller's diaries contain a steady stream of prayers for Newberry's removal from his position. See for example June 28, 1926, Dec 7, 1926. To her diary, she expressed her 'disgust' that 'this work that professes so much should be honeycombed with selfishness and dishonesty' (March 19, 1927). 'I plead deliverance for the work from Mr. Newberry and his maladministration' (April 13, 1927). As well, Miller noted concern regarding Newberry's children, and wanted them away from the school (June 28, 1926; March 8, 1927; April 20, 1927).

²⁸ Miller Diaries, Jan-June, 1928.

sermons, teaching the men's Sunday school class, and working as co-editor of Prairie Bible Institute's publications. He also encouraged Miller to turn her 'Ancient History in Bible Light' class notes into a textbook.²⁹

It is important to recognise that Miller gained personal authority through deferring to male headship. By placing herself 'under' the authority of men like Stevens, Brown, and Maxwell, Miller gained wide opportunity to use her teaching and ministry skills. With only a few exceptions, such as her years at the Missionary Training Institute in Nyack, or the early months at SBI, she wielded power second only to the official male leaders. This was especially true at Midland, where she served as 'mother' of the household, and at Prairie, due to her influence over Maxwell.³⁰

Miller's advice in her letter to the pastor's wife was in keeping with her experience of male support. 'If your husband thinks you should not bring the message when he is away, then as a Christian wife you should not do it', she advised. Likewise, if the elders of the church objected, she should remain silent. However, if they felt that she had 'a gift from God', she should give the message, but take care to 'let a man be very evidently at the head':

²⁹ Dorothy Ruth Miller, *A Handbook of Ancient History in Bible Light*, intro. Robert Hall Glover (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1937). Miller gave Stevens credit for encouraging her to prepare the course. The book was used in both the Bible School and the High School. See W. Phillip Keller, *Expendable! With God on the Prairies: The Ministry of Prairie Bible Institute, Three Hills, Alberta, Canada* (Three Hills, AB: Prairie Press, 1966), 133; also William E. Mann, *Sect, Cult and Church in Alberta* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1955, reprint 1972), 88n12.

³⁰ For example, the Maxwell family suggest that the strict behaviour code at PBI was partly due to the influence of Miller, as was Maxwell's blindness to some of the faults of Miller's successor, Ruth Dearing. See Maxwell family, interview by Don Richardson, 1982, typed transcript. PBI Archives, Box 111.

Let it be evident that you are in subjection and that the very fact of your giving the message springs from your subjection to man's headship. This is the way God led me.³¹

Her letter says nothing about what to do when male decrees conflicted with the Spirit's bidding, however. Her own experiences blinded her to the difficulties other women might face in following their vocation, and (despite her encounter with Newberry), to the irony of her assumption that men best knew God's will for women.³²

One essential outcome of Miller's influence was Maxwell's lifelong support for female ministry, a support that imbued the culture of PBI.³³ In his editorial comments on Miss Miller's letter, Maxwell wrote:

According to certain legalistic positions held in the present day, Miss Miller has been out of order all of these past years when she has been so blessedly used of God in the training of hundreds of young people.³⁴

On the contrary, he argued, maintaining proper order need not prevent women from teaching and evangelising, for 'God's Spirit, the Spirit which gives liberty and not bondage, uses yielded men and women to further his glory'. That God used Miller demonstrated that she was *not* out of order. He backed up his argument with a further example of how God used women:

Some of our young women ventured forth in the last summer, winning perhaps hundreds of souls. Surely only the devil would contend that these were 'out of order'?³⁵

³¹ Miller, 'On Women Speaking', 7-8.

³² Other women were less confident. See for example 'Queries', *The Christian Alliance and Foreign Missionary Weekly* (April 20, 1894): 437. For an extreme version of submission, see Mrs. M. A. [Eliza] Leger, 'A Message to Women', *Alliance Weekly* (Nov 1, 1927): 596-598; *Alliance Weekly* (Nov 17, 1927): 612-613.

³³ Her highest and final accolade was that the school chapel (completed 1931) was later renamed 'Miller Chapel'. Keller, *Expendable*, 133.

³⁴ Maxwell, Comments, 'On Women Speaking', 7-8.

³⁵ Maxwell, Comments, 'On Women Speaking', 7-8.

Evidently, some did. The tension between God's actions in using women and the need to follow proper gendered order remained an issue.

Maxwell found himself still defending the cause in his later years. During the 1940s and 1950s, while the wider North American culture sent women back into the kitchen, Maxwell still argued the importance of women taking an active part in the missionary endeavours of their husbands. His continued defence of female ministry qualifies arguments made by commentators upon female ministry and fundamentalism. That is, Maxwell did not maintain his position for the pragmatic reasons often accredited to conservative evangelicals: the need for female missionaries,³⁶ indebtedness to female workers or constituents,³⁷ or as a 'by-product' of his lay orientation.³⁸ Certainly, these influenced his perspective; however, what such classifications obscure are the serious concern for spirituality, and the sincere respect for Dorothy Ruth Miller, that formed the starting point of his position.

His final book, *Women in Ministry*, responded to conservative evangelical reaction to the new feminist movement of the 1960s and 1970s.³⁹ Co-written with long-time staff member Ruth C. Dearing (1908-2000), the book was published posthumously

³⁶ For this description of Maxwell's position, see John G. Stackhouse, 'Women in Public Ministry in 20th-century Canadian and American Evangelicalism: Five Models', *Studies in Religion / Sciences Religieuses* 17/4 (Fall 1988): 471-485.

³⁷ Margaret Lamberts Bendroth, 'Fundamentalism and Femininity: Points of Encounter between Religious Conservatives and Women, 1919-1935', *Church History* 61 (1992): 222, 227.

³⁸ Virginia Lieson Brereton, *Training God's Army: The American Bible School, 1880-1940* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 129-130.

³⁹ Maxwell's files include a number of letters, written in the 1970s, defending Prairie's beliefs around women and female ministry. See for instance L. E. Maxwell, letter to Scott S. Steele, Feb 1, 1973; letter to Mrs. Ted Ekin, Apr 23, 1974 (both re: women teachers); L. E. Maxwell, letter to Mr. and Mrs. Ben Derkson, July 24, 1973 (on the issue of headship and submission); L. E. Maxwell, letter to Mrs. G. L. Maples, n. d. (re: Miss Miller). PBI Archives, Maxwell Personal Files. Maxwell's articles on women's issues are from the same period. See for instance L. E. Maxwell, 'Blessed be the homemaker', *Prairie Overcomer* (Oct 1977): 571-572; editorial on article by Myrnia Farnham, 'Just Housewives', *Prairie Overcomer* (July 1978): 391-392; 'Chosen of God', *Prairie Overcomer* (Dec 1980): 631-632.

in 1987.⁴⁰ Dearing was in many ways Miller's successor at PBI. Like Miller, she possessed a powerful personality, which left a personal imprint upon the life and character of the school. She arrived in Three Hills to study in 1938, and began teaching in the high school that winter. As with Miller, the school community became her home, and she remained in Three Hills for the rest of her life. She later taught at the Bible school, and was high school principal for eighteen years.⁴¹

Despite its late date, *Women in Ministry* is more representative of the ideas of an earlier generation of evangelicals, as collected by Maxwell over his long career, than of contemporary debate over women's issues.⁴² The final form of the book, which reflects Ruth Dearing's attempt to reflect the ailing Maxwell's notes faithfully, is often self-contradictory. One of its fascinating features is the naïve juxtaposition of experts from all sides of the headship question. Maxwell and Dearing's arguments for female ministry drew upon a handful of turn-of-the-century evangelical writers—A. T. Pierson, A. J. Gordon, Jessie Penn-Lewis, and Katherine Bushnell, among others—met in previous chapters. As well, they turned to earlier evangelical theologians: Methodist theologian and Bible commentator Adam Clarke (1760?-1832), and nineteenth-century conservative

⁴⁰ Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 16, also 146. Articles by Dearing include Ruth C. Dearing, 'For Women Only', *Prairie Overcomer* (April 1972): 186-189; Ruth C. Dearing, 'The Virtuous Woman', Study 1: 'As Portrayed in the Book of Proverbs', *Prairie Overcomer* (Jan 1983): 28-33; 'The Virtuous Woman', Study 2: 'Woman in the Pagan World', *Prairie Overcomer* (Feb 1983): 92-99; 'The Virtuous Woman', Study 3: 'As Portrayed in the Book of Proverbs: Woman in Hebrew Culture', *Prairie Overcomer* (March 1983): 158-162; cont., *Prairie Overcomer* (April 1983): 218-222.

⁴¹ Her sister Kathleen Dearing (d.1997) taught in the music department from 1943. Other women of influence included Maxwell's aunt, Katherine Anderson, 'Grandma' Kirk, a member of the founding family, and dean of women 'Mother' Cunningham.

⁴² President T. S. Rendall even apologized for the out-of-date content in the foreword (10).

Presbyterian Charles Hodge.⁴³ (The irony of citing these ‘experts’ in company with the often radical, sometimes heretical and always feminist Bushnell appears to have eluded both Dearing and Maxwell). This unrefined mishmash of contrary ideas helpfully elucidates the breadth of opinion in evangelical circles surrounding the concept of headship, and the limits of female authority.

Their defence of female ministry hinged upon the argument that God uses women, therefore, female ministry is of God. The Old and New Testament records, church history and recent examples, as exemplified by Miller and others, all proved this point. For instance, in the introduction to *Women in Ministry*, Dearing credited Maxwell, and by implication Miller, with making possible her own career. ‘I would like to bear testimony to the fact that Mr. Maxwell’s broad view of women’s ministry has made possible for me a far wider field of service that I had dreamed possible’, she wrote. In turn, she recognised Miller’s influence on Maxwell’s views:

Miss Miller’s capable and Spirit filled ministry both in the classroom and in the pulpit together with his own careful study and exegesis of God’s Word brought Mr. Maxwell to the convictions you will find set forth in these pages.⁴⁴

Later male bystanders did not necessarily make this connection between Miller’s example and Maxwell’s belief. In their prefaces to the same book, neither Ted Rendall (Maxwell’s chosen successor at PBI) nor the publisher gave Miller her due for helping

⁴³ Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 86-73. This use of Hodge separates them from earlier generations of Calvinistic holiness evangelicals, who rarely turned to Princeton to defend their beliefs. A survey of Prairie materials suggests that use of Hodge was limited in the earlier years. Many articles in Prairie publications were reprints; the first reprint of Hodge was in 1975. See ‘Source and Standard of all Theology’, *Prairie Overcomer* 48/1 (Jan 1975): 20-21; reprint of Charles Hodge, ‘Scripture contains all the facts of theology’, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1: 15, 16.

⁴⁴ Dearing, ‘Introduction’, *Women in Ministry*, 12.

shape Maxwell's practice; instead ascribing his views to W. C. Stevens and A. B. Simpson.⁴⁵

Their scriptural argument for female ministry began with examples of ministering women—Miriam, Deborah, the 'Woman of Samaria', Lydia, Phoebe and others—found throughout the Bible. Further, God continued to use women. The 'saints' of the holiness and missionary movements—Madame Guyon, Catherine Booth and her daughter Catherine Booth-Clibborn ('the Maréchale'), Jessie Penn-Lewis, Amy Carmichael, Dorothy Ruth Miller, Gladys Alward and Helen Roseveare, among others—confirmed this truth. 'It seems to us that these many exceptions serve to disprove the legalistic rule that would silence all women', concluded Maxwell and Dearing.⁴⁶ Significantly, this experimental evidence provided the key to interpreting scripture:

It is our conviction that God the Holy Spirit does at times use women in a public ministry; and since the Holy Spirit is the author of Scripture, such ministry must be in full accord with inspired scripture.⁴⁷

Maxwell and Dearing then buttressed this position with a series of proof texts. As one of Maxwell's favourites read, 'The Lord giveth the word: The women that publish the tidings are a great host' (Ps 68:11, Revised Version).⁴⁸ Likewise crucial were the prophetic words that 'your daughters shall prophesy', found in Joel 2 and Acts 2.⁴⁹

Armed with the belief that God both calls and uses women, and these texts, they could interpret the two verses that appeared to command female 'silence' within the

⁴⁵ Ted Rendall, 'Foreword', 7-10; K. Neill Foster, 'Publisher's Preface', *Women in Ministry*, 5. Maxwell's son Paul does credit Miller for inspiring his father's position on women. Personal conversation with Paul Maxwell, Three Hills, July 29, 2002. See also Richardson interview, April 12, 1982.

⁴⁶ Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 138.

⁴⁷ Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 16. Compare A. J. Gordon, who defended the ministry of women with the claim that 'We cannot ignore the lessons to be learned from the spiritual life of the church' (A. J. Gordon, *The Ministry of Women*, CBE reprint, 17).

⁴⁸ See Maxwell, comments, 'On Women Speaking', 8; see the dedication in *Women in Ministry*, also 12, 146.

⁴⁹ See chapter five.

public worship of the church as addressing culturally conditioned or local issues.⁵⁰ For instance, when Paul wrote:

Let your women keep silence in the churches; for it is not permitted unto them to speak, but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law' (1 Corinthians 14:34);

or

I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence (1 Timothy 2:12);

they understood him to address problems arising from women exercising their newfound freedom in Christ in disorderly or culturally inappropriate ways, not female 'prophesying' *per se*.⁵¹ As proof, they pointed to 1 Corinthians 11: 3-16, where Paul gave directions for the veiling of women when prophesying; for why would Paul provide guidelines for female prophecy here, then command silence three chapters later?

That same passage, however, also provided their concept of 'headship' as it related to female ministry. Paul began his argument for female headcoverings as follows:

I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man...⁵²

⁵⁰ Maxwell, comments, 'On Women Speaking', 8; Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 86-89. Compare to a pamphlet by D. M. Panton, who used the same passages to prohibit women from public teaching. D. M. Panton, *Marriage and the Women Movement*, Present Day Papers 9 (London: Charles J. Thynne and Jarvis, 1925), 6-8.

⁵¹ King James Version. Part of the debate rages over the meaning of the word *laleō*, which can mean to 'speak', or to 'chatter'. The question is therefore whether Paul is commanding women to not speak at all (to remain silent), or to not interrupt or disrupt the assembly by talking. For *laleō* as 'interrupting', see Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 85-87; for wider discussion, see Gretchen Gabelein Hull, *Equal to Serve: Women and Men Working Together Revealing the Gospel* (Tarrytown, NY: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1987); and Gordon D. Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), 699-708. Fee concludes that this passage is an interpolation (705-708).

⁵² The remainder of the passage reads: 'For the man is not of the woman: but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman

Both defenders and detractors of female ministry sought to make their case by harmonising chapters 11 and 14 of 1 Corinthians.⁵³ Maxwell and Dearing considered headship to allow public speaking, but not leadership or disruptive behaviour. Miller had interpreted this passage as teaching that unless a woman was ‘covered’ by a male head she lacked both ‘glory’ and authorisation for ministry. For others, like Charles Hodge or B. B. Warfield, headship meant that women should be silent: that is, not teach or preach in mixed gatherings at all, and thus the ‘prophesying’ women of Corinth were problematic aberrations rather than exemplars of normal practice.

Here it is important to note that literal and biblicist readings of scripture did not always determine behaviour in a straightforward manner. Although all parties to the evangelical debate over women’s roles considered their position to be the scriptural one, opponents each brought a set of experiential, social, cultural, and theological presuppositions to their readings of the pertinent scriptures. The concept of headship drew upon many sources, not least longstanding and wide-ranging cultural beliefs—whether rooted in biology, philosophy or Christian theology—in a hierarchy of the sexes.⁵⁴ Such notions, although increasingly challenged by arguments for ‘equal rights’, remained largely in place throughout the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century. Both the idealisation of female nature and the ‘separate spheres’ rhetoric explored in previous chapters represent an inversion, but not an overthrow, of this

to have power on her head because of the angels. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God. Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God’ (1 Cor 11: 6-16 KJV). Headship language is also used of the husband and wife relationship in Ephesians 5:23. Other important texts include Colossians 3:18, and 1 Peter 3:1-6, which call for wives to be subject to husbands.

⁵³ Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 84-89.

⁵⁴ For a classic account of the tenets of ‘patriarchy’, see Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy*, 1986.

conviction.⁵⁵ A. B. Simpson, for instance, more commonly reserved the language of headship for Christ. On rarer occasions, he used headship language to suggest that ‘the New Testament prohibits women from the formal and official ministry ... in the strictly ecclesial sense...’.⁵⁶ More often, his restrictions on female leadership turned upon the special nature of women: ‘her sweeter and gentler ways’ made her unsuitable for such tasks.⁵⁷ Thus, as Simpson consistently informed his readers: ‘Woman, too, has her ministry’; but ‘ever of course in a true womanly way and sphere’. Woman had ‘equal liberty in all except the pastoral office and the official ministry of the Christian Church’.⁵⁸ A. J. Gordon took the same approach, likewise explaining limitations on female ministry as due to nature, but without discussing ‘headship’:

Now there is no instance in the New Testament of a woman’s being set over a church as bishop and teacher. The lack of such example would lead us to refrain from ordaining a woman as pastor of a Christian congregation. But if the Lord has fixed this limitation, we believe it to be grounded, not on her less favoured position in the privileges of grace, but in impediments to such service existing in nature itself....⁵⁹

Use of the concept of ‘headship’ in this context appears to increase in the twentieth century. Later twentieth-century radical evangelicals emphasised headship, rather than ‘nature’. This may be due to reaction against a perceived ‘feminization’ of religion, as well as to more pessimistic view of female nature itself, as a consequence of changing

⁵⁵ See chapters six through nine.

⁵⁶ A. B. Simpson, *Christian Alliance and Missionary Weekly* (March 27, 1891): 195. Leslie Andrews considers Simpson to hold this position strongly; however, one example she cites is actually written by A. E. Thompson. See Leslie A. Andrews, ‘Restricted Freedom: A. B. Simpson’s View of Women in Ministry’, in *The Birth of a Vision*, edited by David F. Hartzfeld and Charles Nienkirchen, 219-240, *His Dominion*, Supplement 1 (Regina, SK: 1986), 228n27; for A. E. Thompson, see *Alliance Weekly* (Feb 5, 1916): 294.

⁵⁷ A. B. Simpson, *Romans* (1904; Harrisburg, PA: Christian Publications, n.d), 186, 286-287.

⁵⁸ Simpson, ‘Practical Christianity’; or, *The Principles of Christian Service*, *Christian Alliance and Missionary Weekly* (Feb 3, 1893): 69. Stevens, perhaps because he was slightly younger than Simpson, did not use this language of ‘female’ nature in his work. Although he believed in some form of male ‘headship’, he did not concern himself with the ‘limits’ of authority in the same way, as evidenced by his foray into female ordination.

⁵⁹ A. J. Gordon, ‘The Ministry of Women’, *Alliance Weekly* (Dec 15, 1928): 820.

female sexual mores. On another front, as arguments from ‘nature’ fell in face of the evident capability of women for ministry and leadership, those based on the divine dictates of scripture and ‘theology’ became more necessary. This tactic is most evident amongst later evangelicals who inherited ‘literalist’ approaches to scripture, and those who turned to ‘Princeton’ theology for substantiation of their arguments on female roles.

Charles Hodge, who produced perhaps the most sustained and influential argument for female subordination within the conservative Calvinist evangelical canon, held that male headship and female subordination were abiding principles of creation order.⁶⁰ He defended the doctrine of female subordination on theological, biblical, and ‘common sense’ grounds.⁶¹ Central to his theological system was the tenet that ‘headship’, or representation, was ‘one of the fundamental principles of both natural and revealed religion’.⁶² This insistence, derived both from his desire to protect the sovereignty of God from contemporary theological and philosophical attack and from his pedigree as a ‘federal’ Calvinist, runs throughout his work. His soteriology, built upon the parallel ‘headship’ of Adam and the second Adam, Christ; his ‘subordinationist’ depiction of the economic Trinity, and his hierarchical understandings of human relations, all reflect this principle.⁶³ (See Figure 1 below.)

⁶⁰ For the views of Charles Hodge, see his *Commentary on 1 Corinthians* (London: James Nisbet, 1857), 206-207; also *Systematic Theology* (London and Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1873), 3: 368-373. Benjamin B. Warfield continued this tradition. See ‘Paul on Women Speaking in the Church’, *The Presbyterian* (Oct 30, 1919), *Reformation Ink* <<http://www.markers.com/ink>> (acc. Jan 2001). Warfield considered Paul to ban female public teaching and ‘ruling’, on the universal grounds of sex difference, and ‘the relative places given to the sexes in creation and in the fundamental history of the race (the fall)’. For a similar mid twentieth-century version, see Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *The Place of Women in the Church* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1958), 79-80, 139. More recently, The Council for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood (CBMW) has promoted this position.

⁶¹ See chapter three for the place of common sense reasoning in evangelical thought.

⁶² Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:121, 198.

⁶³ For the ‘federal’ headship of Adam, and Christ as the second Adam, see Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:196-203. W. C. Stevens also considered himself a federal theologian. See chapter seven.

Perhaps the most problematic aspect of Hodge's work in relation to evangelical gender beliefs was his linkage of female subordination to the doctrine of the Trinity via 1 Corinthians 11:3. In his view, the passage taught 'that order and subordination pervade the whole universe, and is essential to its being':

The head of every man is Christ; the head of the woman is the man; the head of Christ is God. If this concatenation be disturbed in any of its parts, ruin must be the result. The head is that on which the body is dependent, and to which it is subordinate. The obvious meaning of this passage is, that the woman is subordinate to the man, the man is subordinate to Christ, and Christ is subordinate to God.⁶⁴

For Hodge, the passage did not present a simple chain of command: God – Christ – Man – Woman, but three parallel orders: God is head of Christ, Christ is head of the church, man is head of woman (see Figure 3).⁶⁵ The point he derived from this comparison was simple: although the 'subordination' in each pair was different in kind and degree, equality of nature was compatible with subordination in function. Thus, the second person of the Trinity, while of the same nature as the Father, was, as 'the incarnate Son', subordinate in function. Likewise, while the sexes were created equal and mutually dependent, woman was properly subordinate.⁶⁶ Such an association with the Triune nature of God gave an aura of universal and divine inevitability to gendered order. Thus, drawing upon Hodge, Maxwell and Dearing informed their readers that 'The principle

⁶⁴ Hodge, *1 Corinthians*, 206-207; also *Systematic Theology* 3:368. For contemporary uses of this argument by CBMW, see Wayne Grudem and John Piper, *Recovering Biblical Manhood and Womanhood*; Stephen D. Kovach, 'Egalitarians Revamp Doctrine of the Trinity: Bilezikian, Grenz and the Kroegers deny eternal subordination of the Son', *CBMW News* 2/1 (Dec. 1996): 1, 3-5. Hodge, whose treatment of the subject was more nuanced and sophisticated than his followers, was cautious about defining subordination within the Trinity too closely, considering such attempts to go 'beyond the facts of scripture' (*Systematic Theology* 1:464, 465; 1:467). Hodge built his account of gender upon this view of the Trinity; while the arguments of CBMW use his subordinationist account of the Trinity to prop up their gender beliefs. For example, Kovach links the difference between the Persons of the Trinity to 'roles': '*If we abandon eternal differences in role, then we also abandon the Trinity*' (4); by analogy this of course means that by changing gender roles, we lose the distinction between the sexes. In this account, the distinction of persons is dependent upon the differences in roles, an argument Hodge would not have made.

⁶⁵ Hodge, *1 Corinthians*, 206-207.

⁶⁶ Hodge, *1 Corinthians*, 207; *Systematic Theology* 1:444-445; 1:462-467; 3:377.

underlying the whole passage is that there is order and subordination in the Godhead as well as in human relationships'.⁶⁷ As part of God's design for creation, male headship and female subordination were universal and permanent principles. Although Hodge claimed the 'equality' of men and women, in both nature and spiritually, the subtext of his argument suggests otherwise. That Christ was head of 'man' referred to his headship over the entire body, or church, meaning all believers, both men and women. While women were 'spiritually equal', in this sense, they were doubly submissive. As Maxwell and Dearing summarised the doctrine, 'in their subordination the man submits directly to Christ, and the woman submits both to man and to Christ'.⁶⁸

Patterns of Representative Headship and Subordination in Charles Hodge

Initiator of Covenant	God (Father)	Father
Covenant	Covenant of Creation	Covenant of Redemption
Federal Head	First Adam for	Second Adam (Christ) for
	Human Race	Human Race

Figure 1 Covenantal relationships of creation and redemption

Male and female relationships			
Head	Adam	Man	Husband
Subordinate	Eve	Woman	Wife

Figure 2 Creation order

⁶⁷ Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 82-83.

⁶⁸ Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 82.

	Trinity	Church (As Body)	Church (As institution)	Society and family
Head	Father	Christ	Man	Man
Subordinate	Son	Man (includes Woman)	Woman	Woman
	(Spirit)			(Children)

Figure 3 Trinitarian and human headship and subordination

Notes: Within these orders, woman is always a secondary or tertiary category. The Holy Spirit does not fit neatly into this pattern of headship and subordination, likely because Hodge had an underdeveloped pneumatology. He placed little emphasis on the Person of the Spirit, and focused primarily on the Spirit’s instrumental roles. Both the Spirit and the woman are missing in the creation and redemption covenants.

Hodge was a treacherous ally in any attempt to defend female ministry. A position that started with headship and subordination as part of an essential pattern of reality had little hope of leading to a truly egalitarian view of ministry, and would, as twentieth-century women discovered, continually undercut all arguments for even limited service. Hodge precluded the question outright. While accepting that women might *receive* the gift of prophecy, they were not to exercise that gift in public.⁶⁹ ‘It is contrary to the relation of subordination in which the woman stands to the man that she appear as a public teacher’, he insisted.⁷⁰ ‘Women were not to speak in public; but to seek instruction at home. This prohibition rests on the divinely established subordination of

⁶⁹ Hodge, *1 Corinthians*, 305. As a postmillennialist, Hodge held a cessationist position on spiritual gifting; thus the radical evangelical argument that female prophecy constituted a sign of the present dispensation carried no weight.

⁷⁰ Hodge, *1 Corinthians*, 305.

the woman, and on the instinct of propriety'.⁷¹ The universal principle of subordination ruled out both public speaking within the church, and leadership roles.

Hodge, true to his generation, was also a committed believer in separate spheres, and in the ideal female nature.⁷² In his Commentary on 1 Corinthians Hodge further clarified what women's nature was—or was not. Here he built upon Paul's argument to explain that the Genesis account contained two 'facts' that explained female subordination: first, woman was derivative of the man, who was created first; second, she was created for the man, and not vice versa.⁷³ Thus, 'there is no deformity of human character from which we turn with greater loathing than from a woman forgetful of her nature and clamorous for the vocations and rights of men'.⁷⁴ Rather than finding fulfilment in the vocations and rights of men, female nature found its highest destiny in marriage and children.⁷⁵

In Hodge, female subordination looks suspiciously like the outcome of a lesser nature, not simply a different function. For instance, in his discussion of 1 Corinthians 11:7, he argued that man, 'in distinction from the woman', 'represents the authority of God. He is invested with dominion'.⁷⁶ 'But in the dominion with which man was invested over the earth, Adam was the representative of God. He is the glory of God, because in him the divine majesty is specially manifested'. Woman, as the 'glory of the man', is subordinate; 'she is not designed to reflect the glory of God as a ruler'.

Elsewhere, however, Hodge identified human will and agency as those powers that

⁷¹ Hodge, *1 Corinthians*, 299-300.

⁷² For maternal affection as 'instinctive' see Hodge, *Systematic Theology* 1:200; also 3:371.

⁷³ Hodge, *1 Corinthians*, 210.

⁷⁴ Charles Hodge, 'Cotton is King, and Pro Slavery Arguments,' cited in Donald W. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), 130. See Charles Hodge, 'Slavery', in *Essays and Reviews: Selected From the Princeton Review* (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1857).

⁷⁵ Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 3:368.

⁷⁶ Hodge, *Commentary*, 1 Corinthians 11:7.

enabled human dominion.⁷⁷ In thus distinguishing male and female dominion, he implied that female will and agency were more limited than that of the male. His understanding of the ‘legal’ capacity of women also points to this problem. This linked back to his belief in the principle of ‘representation’, and his soteriological model of federal headship. Through the sin of Adam, representative head of humanity, all humans became ‘legally accountable’. Christ, as second Adam, acted on behalf of humanity to deal with the legal penalty incurred by the first Adam.⁷⁸ Even though Eve was first to act, only Adam was legally accountable. This followed through into Hodge’s view of human affairs. Just as the (male) Adam and Christ were legal representatives of humanity, so too, man, as ‘head’, was the (earthly) legal representative for woman (table 9.1).⁷⁹ Within this soteriological model, ‘woman’ was all but legally irrelevant.

Maxwell and Dearing also drew on a Methodist tradition to build their arguments. While Hodge served as the expert on headship for Calvinistic evangelicals, Methodist theologian and Bible commentator Adam Clarke provided the counter-tradition for Methodists and Wesleyan holiness believers.⁸⁰ Within Clarke’s theological framework,

⁷⁷ Hodge, *Systematic Theology* 2:99: ‘He [the human] is the image of God, and bears and reflects the divine likeness among the inhabitants of the earth, because he is a spirit, an intelligent, voluntary agent; and as such he is rightfully invested with universal dominion’.

⁷⁸ See Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, 2:196-203.

⁷⁹ See for instance *Systematic Theology*, 3:386, 387, where Hodge refuses the wife separate legal rights. In his discussion of slavery, he also used the restrictions of female and juvenile legal status as a parallel to society’s restrictions upon slaves. Here he did not so much approve the matter, as suggest that society has the right to make decisions for the good of all. See Hodge, ‘Slavery’.

⁸⁰ The commentaries of Adam Clarke are online at <<http://www.godrules.net/library/clarke/clarke.htm>>. See Adam Clarke, commentary for Genesis 3:16, also commentary on 1 Corinthians 11; 1 Corinthians 14; and 1 Timothy 2. For Methodist reliance on Clarke, see for instance Katherine C. Bushnell, *God’s Word to Women: One Hundred Bible Studies on Woman’s Place in the Divine Economy* (1923; reprint, ‘God’s Word to Women Publishers’, Box 315, Mossville, IL); Thomas C. Oden, ed., *Phoebe Palmer: Selected Writings*, Sources of American Spirituality (New York: Paulist Press, 1988); Benjamin Titus Roberts, *Ordaining Women: Biblical and Historical Insights* (1891; reprint Indianapolis, IN: Light and Life Press, 1992, 1997); Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*,

headship and proper ‘order’ played a much lesser role. In his discussion of 1 Corinthians 11:3, he explained:

Here is the order-God sends his Son Jesus Christ to redeem man; Christ comes and lays down his life for the world; every man who receives Christianity confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father; and every believing woman will acknowledge, according to Gen 3:16, that God has placed her in a dependence on and subjection to the man.

Clarke considered female subjection to be women’s unhappy punishment for the fall, rather than a dictate of creation. In turn, he understood 1 Timothy 2:15—that woman would be saved through childbearing—in light of God’s promise to Eve in Genesis 3:15.

Thus, it referred to the role woman (but not man) played in bearing the Saviour.

Although Clarke vacillated on the question of female physical capacity for public life, he supported female ‘prophecy’ based on 1 Corinthians 11:6 and Joel 2, and interpreted ‘silence’ as commanding women not to ask questions or debate with men in church.⁸¹

This approach, which addressed Eve’s part in the fall, located her subjection as a result of the fall, and stressed woman’s role in salvation history, allowed much more leeway for female ministry.⁸² Because headship was grounded in the fall, rather than creation, it was less of an issue for Methodist evangelicals than for their Calvinistic relatives.⁸³ B. T. Roberts, in his argument for female ordination, dismissed female subjection without using the word ‘headship’.⁸⁴ Dr. Katherine Bushnell, on the other hand, spent much ink trying to disabuse her readers of belief in headship and subjection, instead translating head as ‘first in order’, or ‘ahead’, rather than ‘ruler’ or governor; and suggesting that

⁸¹ Compare his comments on Genesis 3: 16 and 1 Timothy 2:13-14. For use of Clarke in support of female prophesying, see Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 77.

⁸² This argument could also be turned to misogynist ends. See Leger, ‘A Message to Women’, *Alliance Weekly* (Nov 1, 1927): 596-598; *Alliance Weekly* (Nov 17, 1927): 612-613.

⁸³ See Ryrie, *Place of Women in the Church*, 79, who linked subordination to both creation *and* fall. Headship is ‘grounded in facts which are not altered by geography or centuries’.

⁸⁴ See for instance Roberts, *Ordaining Women*, 33-45. Roberts also drew upon John Stuart Mill (see 46-47).

Paul's language reflected cultural context.⁸⁵ Maxwell and Dearing happily cited Bushnell, as well as Jessie Penn-Lewis's editorialised version of Bushnell's work, alongside Charles Hodge.

By conflating these traditions, Maxwell and Dearing could conclude that because Adam chose deliberately, while Eve was deceived, Adam holds greater guilt for the fall. 'Scripture does not lay the blame for the entrance of sin into the world on Eve but rather on Adam', they explained.⁸⁶ This assertion sits uneasily alongside later assertions that Adam and Eve are 'equally guilty' and equally responsible and quotations from A. T. Pierson, proclaiming the moral virtues of female nature.⁸⁷

The debate over the meaning of Eve's sin runs throughout the literature. The view that female subordination came about as a result of the fall divided into two further positions: some, following Clarke, held that God's proclamation in Genesis 3: 16 was prescriptive (God ordered the woman's submission as punishment); others taught that it was descriptive (human sinfulness resulted in a hierarchy of relatedness between man and woman). In the first instance, the assumption was that the punishment was ongoing; in the latter instance, it was a part of sinful experience and could be overturned by redemption. Miller held a form of the first position. Thus, for Miller, 'the salient point' of 1 Corinthians 14:34-35 was 'being in obedience' (here following the King James and the Revised Version). 'This goes right back to Gen 3:16', she explained. 'The Law does not say keep silence, it says 'be in obedience''.⁸⁸ The second position was common

⁸⁵ See Bushnell, *God's Word to Women*, paragraphs 240-362.

⁸⁶ Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 36. For a different approach, interpreting the fall as a result of Eve's failure to recognise Adam's headship, see Leger, 'A Message to Women'.

⁸⁷ Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 41, 35.

⁸⁸ Miller, 'On Women Speaking', 8. For the question of the 'law' referred to, see Fee, *1 Corinthians*, 707. Miller understood it to refer to Genesis 3:16: 'thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee'.

among late nineteenth and turn-of-the-century Methodists and Wesleyan holiness believers, including temperance leader Francis Willard, Methodist B. T. Roberts, and Dr. Katherine Bushnell. For this group, the ‘Atonement’ necessarily overturned the effects of the fall. Thus, using Galatians 3:28 as a starting point, they read the Bible as promoting egalitarian practices, including female ordination.⁸⁹ In contrast, although Maxwell and Dearing concluded that ‘Truly, the liberating Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ has freed women to exercise their spiritual gifts in a public as well as in a private sphere’, such liberation did not overturn the proper order of the sexes.⁹⁰

Miller’s comment on obedience points to one further factor reinforcing female submission, or subjection, found in the constructs of ‘consecration’ spirituality. In chapter seven, this ‘consecration’ experience was found to underpin female ministry: God *used* ‘yielded’ individuals; women excelled at yielding; therefore, female ministry was of God. Given the interventionist account of ministry discussed earlier, sex should not have served as a limiting factor. If the human person is ‘but a capacity’, the ‘child’s hand’ with which the incarnate Christ writes, as A. B. Simpson described it, individual or natural characteristics should not be determinative of roles. In some instances, this dynamic could overturn gendered ‘order’.

The dynamics of consecration spirituality could cut both ways, however. For Miller, they reinforced submission to male headship. Thus, although she rejected the idea that the restrictive passages of scripture imposed actual ‘silence’ on women, she

⁸⁹ Thus Bushnell: ‘as long as women’s status is based on the fall rather than the atonement, man will be able to argue for women’s subordination’ (Bushnell, *God’s Word to Women*, para 363; also para 102, 341-342, 733, 736). See also Roberts, *Ordaining Women*, 40

⁹⁰ Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 16.

interpreted them as demanding ‘yieldedness’ and ‘obedience’. ‘That the “silence” is a matter of yieldedness is shown by 1 Tim 2:12’, she wrote. ‘It is “all subjection”’. To reinforce her point, she reminded her readers of a central holiness truth, that is, that ‘self assertion, the defence of one’s own rights is the very centre of the self life’.⁹¹ She then urged the pastor’s wife to do as her husband and the elders saw fit.

This was more than an argument for women’s submission. Rather, it located female submission within the larger obedience of the believer to God, an obedience that characterised the ‘consecrated life’. In arguing that ‘self assertion, the defence of one’s rights is the very centre of the self life’ Miller shifted the debate from the validity of the woman’s preaching, to her willingness to give up her ‘natural right’ to do so. Holiness spirituality hinged upon the notion that Christian liberty, freedom, and power came through complete submission of self to God. This requirement of submission applied to both men and to women, although its outcome might be different for each sex. When female ministry was at stake, the central holiness demand for submission intensified. This overlap between male authority and divine authority, already seen above in Miller’s personal life, helps explain why Calvinistic interventionist spirituality did not overturn natural order.

Maxwell’s holiness teachings made explicit the linkage between this consecration spirituality and female submission. Throughout his career, Maxwell argued, as he did in 1939, that the ‘gospel has freed woman wherever its transforming power has held sway’.⁹² However, within Maxwell’s frame of reference, true spiritual freedom was consequent upon submission (or consecration). ‘The simple and single condition of

⁹¹ D. R. Miller, ‘On Women Speaking’, *The Prairie Pastor* 12/12 (Dec 1939): 8.

⁹² L. E. Maxwell, Comments on D. R. Miller, ‘On Women Speaking’, *The Prairie Pastor*, 12/12 (Dec 1939): 7-8; Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 6.

liberty, paradoxical as it may seem, is complete captivity to Christ', he wrote in the early 1970s. 'He can save us only by subduing us. Our complete freedom is conditioned upon our captivity to Christ'.⁹³ His claims for 'female' liberty must be read within this framework.⁹⁴

True liberty involves responsibility—God sets us free to do what we ought to do. Women's true liberty allows her to be what God meant her to be and to do what God wills her to do.⁹⁵

Miss Miller's own ministry consistently followed this pattern, as one of her students recognised:

[Miss Miller] had a due respect for men. She didn't kick over the traces at all. She felt under them. She always felt under Mr. Maxwell, but under him she had liberty.⁹⁶

Under his authority, she had liberty to teach and preach.

This legitimisation through submission is the key to understanding Miller's freedom to teach and preach, and to Maxwell and Dearing's understandings of women's ministry. One might easily argue here that Miller conceded too much by grounding her authority to preach in 'subjection' to man's headship. However, Miller and Maxwell saw no contradiction in this position. Their spirituality allowed them to argue for both male headship and for women's preaching. By framing the Christian life in terms of sacrifice, a spirituality of submission could function to validate women's ministry. For some women, this submission meant the freedom to teach and preach. Yet the self-abnegating, world-denying and anti-human trend that valorises the spiritual and sacrificial at the expense of material existence holds back implications of spiritual equality and freedom.

⁹³ Maxwell, *Seven Pillars*, 39-40

⁹⁴ Maxwell brought this concept of submission home to men by telling them to 'die head down'. See Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 142-145.

⁹⁵ Maxwell and Dearing, *Women in Ministry*, 146.

⁹⁶ Interview #1.

Miller's ministry operated under two sources of authority: that of God, and that of man.

Because she submitted to authority, she was free.

Chapter Ten

Conclusion:

The Paradoxes of Radical Evangelical Support for Female Ministry

Perhaps my whole case might be summarized when I say that the shape of fundamentalism—its view of the Bible, of theology, and of life—is gravely docetic in tendency. It tends to violate or destroy the integrity of the human in its concern for the claims of the divine.

Daniel Stevic, *Beyond Fundamentalism*, 1964¹

This study has traced patterns of radical evangelical gender beliefs and practices within the framework of spirituality—that is, as integral aspects of the ways in which nineteenth- and early twentieth-century North American radical evangelicals understood, experienced, and lived out their faith. Each chapter has examined specific ways in which radical evangelicals navigated within an interdependent nexus of theological ideas, religious experience, and social and cultural influences in order to ascertain the appropriate boundaries of female ministry. Throughout, radical evangelical support for female ministry has proven to be paradoxical. While some aspects of radical evangelical spirituality compelled women to ‘prophesy’ and evangelise, other elements encouraged restraint. Whether drawing upon interventionist theology, biblical injunctions, patterns of spiritual experience, or conceptions of female nature and roles common to the wider culture, radical spirituality both supported female ministry, and limited its sphere.

¹ Daniel Stevic, *Beyond Fundamentalism* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1964), 64.

Elements that influenced radical North American evangelical gender practices in the period between 1875 and 1943 fell roughly into three categories: structures of religious belief, related modes of religious experience, and the wider social and cultural context in which these beliefs and experiences were embedded.

Of primary importance to radical spirituality, and thus to practices of female ministry, was the pivotal notion of divine interventionism. Radical evangelicals presupposed a fundamental dualism between God and the world, the spiritual and the material, the divine and the human, the supernatural and the natural. Only direct divine action could overcome the distance, or difference, between these two realities. This belief reflected both confidence in God as sovereign, and insistence that God's transcendence did not preclude intimate involvement in created affairs.

Closely tied to this interventionist perspective was an 'either / or' conception of agency, and a pessimistic interpretation of 'nature'. Interventionists assumed that any change in the natural order, or in human nature, occurred through 'crisis', rather than through process. Further, because of sin, positive change could only occur if God acted to bring it about. Left alone, nature remained static, or deteriorated; human individuals, cultures and institutions degenerated. Only divine intervention could alter the created order, human society, or human nature.

As we have seen, among radical evangelicals these principles manifested themselves in key areas of doctrine, including their views of the church and of the 'end times' (chapter four), their 'pentecostal' pneumatology (chapter five), and their holiness accounts of sanctification (chapter six). In each case, a direct act of God—whether the premillennial return of Christ, the coming of the Holy Spirit, or God's inner work of

sanctification, brought or would bring about the necessary change. Further, because God could (and did) intervene, radical believers expected to experience the supernatural and miraculous personally; whether in the form of mystical experience and knowledge, Spirit baptism, spiritual gifting, physical healings, or divine guidance.

Within the radical theological system, female ministry likewise hinged upon divine intervention. Defences of female ministry, whether framed in the concepts of premillennialism, as aspects of pietistic ecclesiology, or as an outworking of Pentecost or of sanctification, turned upon the direct involvement of God in calling or empowering women. Drawing on pietistic views of the church as the ‘body’ of Christ’, and on current notions of associationalism, radical evangelicals promoted the ministry of all believers, including women (chapters two and four). Similarly, their ‘pentecostal pneumatology’, which looked for the renewal of the supernatural experiences of the early church, in the form of Spirit baptism, present-day miracles, and ‘prophesying’ women, allowed women to defend their ministry as obedience to the call of the Spirit (chapter five). Their experimental hermeneutic, which allowed them to determine the meaning of biblical texts in light of personal experience (‘God used women’), also reinforced this argument (see chapter three). Although evangelical rhetoric claimed doctrinal or scriptural grounds for a practice, experience often played a leading role in determining both belief, and the meaning of scripture.

This oppositional conception of the interaction between God and the individual person also informed interventionist spirituality. Supernatural intervention was necessary to overcome the vast distance and difference between the holy and divine God, and incorrigible human nature, and bring reconciliation. Further, the central dynamic of

interventionist spirituality was a polarised, ‘either / or’ view of agency. Thus, all activity was determined by God, or by (sinful) human nature. Accordingly, without direct divine intervention the individual life—even the redeemed life—remained controlled by sin and self. Yet when God intervened in the individual life (whether understood as ‘sanctification’ or ‘a baptism of the Spirit’), the individual human nature was not transformed, but overcome or supplanted. As in A. B. Simpson’s account of sanctification, the ‘self’ had to die, so that God could act in and through the person.

Significantly, this ‘either / or’ model of agency meant that women could avoid questions of female authority by divesting themselves of ‘self’ through a holiness consecration experience (chapters six and seven), or by claiming the mantle of the ‘prophesying daughters’ foretold by Joel. In these instances, God became the primary agent of ministry, rather than the individual woman, who was ‘but a vessel’ employed as the mouthpiece of the Spirit. This provided many women with both motivation and an effective defence for their public ministry. Because it was difficult to argue with the leading of God’s Spirit, a ‘call’ to a specific task or ministry gained through this means could expand female ministry roles. Thus, a supernaturalist interpretation of ministry could lessen the importance placed upon individual agency, and, in turn, the particularities of sexed human persons.

Although this ‘interventionist’ and supernaturalist account of ministry bore the seeds by which to circumvent questions of biological sex in ministerial activity, radical practices remained highly gendered. As outlined in chapter seven and eight, this was due in part to their commitment to the common gender beliefs of much nineteenth- and turn-

of-the-century North American culture, which both promoted and controlled the forms of ministry available to radical evangelical women. For instance, aspects of the ‘feminized’ culture of nineteenth-century North America served to promote female ministry. Radical evangelicals often interpreted female ministry roles as an outworking of special female capacities for piety, spiritual nurture, or self-sacrifice. This meant that women had a natural affinity to consecration spirituality, for ‘feminized’ religion, and for reflecting the feminine qualities of God, whether the unselfish God of Hannah Whitall Smith, or the mothering Spirit of A. B. Simpson (chapter eight).

Chapter seven traced how holiness spirituality, with its central expectation of a ‘feminine’ surrender, reinforced a vision of women as especially open to divine leading. By re-framing the Christian life in ‘feminine’ terms, this spirituality functioned to validate women’s ministry and to limit male authority. Yet while the rhetoric and experiential dynamics of this spirituality valorised self-denial and submission as the route to power, that same rhetoric reinforced gender stereotypes of female self-abnegation, and traditional understandings of male headship and female subordination. As discussed in chapter nine, a primary conundrum for women in this tradition was how to balance their spiritual freedom with gendered submission. An ever-present temptation was a conflation of spiritual submission to God, and social or religious submission to ‘male’ leadership. Although women might gain the right to minister through an act of ‘entire consecration’—the complete dedication or submission of self to God—for many, freedom to minister hinged upon willingness to submit to ‘male’ headship. Thus, female activity, while expanded through this form of spirituality, usually remained within the control of male authority.

Chapter eight explored some of the interconnections between culturally informed interpretations of God as ‘mother’, and female ministry, often framed as ‘motherhood’. For instance, because of his exaltation of ‘womanhood’, and his (paradoxically) fluid application of gendered attributes, Simpson was able to ascribe ‘mothering’ qualities both to the Spirit, and to Christ, and to acclaim women as spiritual mothers. Thus, Alliance women like Miller considered her ministry as a form of spiritual mothering. Women’s capacity for ‘motherhood’, when detached from biology and spiritualised, allowed for broader female service in many evangelical circles. However, while the conception of ministering as ‘mothering’ provided tools and opportunities for female ministry, like other attempts to base women’s roles upon a special ‘nature’, it remained bounded by that nature. For many radical Calvinistic evangelicals, like Simpson, Dorothy Ruth Miller, or L. E. Maxwell, the inbuilt differences between male and female nature continued to determine the limits of female roles: God called women only to those areas of ministry for which their sex qualified them. Women lacked ability to perform ministry roles (such as ordained ‘leadership’) that depended upon male skills, rather than upon direct supernatural empowerment. Thus while interventionist beliefs and experiences encouraged female ministry, and close identification with middle class values and gender beliefs determined possible parameters for such practices, radical evangelicals in this tradition rarely construed such service as the same as that of male practitioners.

In an era where ‘Woman’ (but not necessarily real ‘women’) was idealised, claiming special ‘feminine’ capacities for ministry could circumvent some of the limits of female nature. Yet, like the fundamentalism described above, radical spirituality was

‘gravely docetic’.² That is, radical evangelicals deemed the human or material—all, that is, that was not directly divine—of lesser, even of problematic, value. For radical evangelicals, who, as Grant Wacker has astutely noted, were ‘determined to eliminate the natural side of every equation’, to claim that the special qualities of female nature fitted women for special forms of service was highly ironic.³ While believers of both sexes might be ‘just a capacity’, a vessel for God to fill and use, ‘woman’ clearly remained the weaker vessel.

This survey of the larger factors influencing nineteenth- and turn-of-the-century radical evangelical practices of female ministry suggests that the often-decried loss of women’s ministry in later fundamentalist and transdenominational evangelical circles may parallel the loss of the holiness spirituality. Thus, as fundamentalist evangelicals moved away from radical forms of interventionist spirituality after the 1920s, women lost a primary means for overturning the dictates of the natural or creation order through consecration or submission to God. Further, as the wider culture moved away from idealised interpretations of femininity, and from feminised accounts of religion, male adherents likewise no longer framed their spiritual experience within the language of a ‘feminine’ submission. At the same time, demands for female submission to male headship remained, based both on biblical injunctions and on traditional patterns of gender order. The outcome was that ministry opportunities for radical evangelical women (understood in spiritual terms) contracted as gendered power structures stratified and solidified.

² Stevic, *Beyond Fundamentalism*, 64.

³ Grant Wacker, *Heaven Below: Early Pentecostals and American Culture* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 13-14.

On another front, radical spirituality was fundamentally conservative. Because it was suspicious of human action, particularly any action claiming to change the world for the better, radical spirituality could not promote any real change in gendered order. Restrictions on female ministry derived not from overt misogyny, but from an overly spiritualized understanding of human life and calling. Thus, instead of confronting cultural gender stereotypes, this interventionist spirituality worked to reinforce them. Not surprisingly, when female nature lost its special status in the twentieth century, female ministry again became suspect.

Many of the paradoxes of radical evangelical gender practice—its potential, and its limits—turned upon its central dualism between the spiritual, supernatural order and the natural, material order. These two principles—the interventionist expectation of God’s supernatural empowerment of ministry, and a deep-seated commitment to a static, and pessimistic, view of creation and natural order—ensured that the matter of female ministry remained at an impasse. One possible alternative paradigm was a ‘pentecostal’ and incarnational spirituality, such as that of the nineteenth-century radical evangelical Edward Irving, who developed his pneumatology as one aspect of a larger project of reaffirming the humanity of Christ, *and* the value of the material. Ironically, in the hands of later ‘pentecostal’ premillennialists such as A. J. Gordon, A. B. Simpson, or W. C. Stevens, this construal of the incarnation was lost, along with its potential for the affirmation of the material and of human agency.

This study points to possible ways forward for women within that tradition. Viewing practices of female ministry within a framework of ‘spirituality’ suggests that alternative ways of understanding the relationship between God and the world—ways

that recognise both the sovereignty of God and the value of the human and the material—
might lead to new patterns of spirituality, and new gender practices.

Appendices

Appendix A Comparison of Mystical and Sanctification Experience

The Mystic Way	The Higher life	
1. Conversion	1. Conversion	
2. Mystical Awakening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • encounter with the divine or ‘real’ • may be abrupt or gradual 	2. Post-conversion crisis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the believer attempts to live a holy life • the believer fails to live a holy life 	
3. Purgation, or self knowledge; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the ‘completion of conversion’ • realisation of finiteness, or of imperfection • Detachment: freeing from senses, desires, the ‘unreal’, the ‘tyranny of selfhood’ • mortification: purification, death of the old self, remaking of character 	3. Sanctification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3a. Consecration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • acknowledges that he or she is ‘dead’, i.e. gives up any idea of personal goodness. • consecrates, or surrenders ‘everything into his hand for Him to do with as He thinks best.’ 3b. Sanctification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • takes Jesus as Sanctifier by faith 	
4. Illumination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • change of consciousness • ‘I’ remains • experience presence of the divine; new perception of the world • automatic activity i.e. voices, visions, automatic writings 	4. Union with Christ, baptism of the Spirit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shares Christ’s sanctification, or holiness • experience of divine presence, sometimes with physical manifestations • calling to service 	
5. The dark night of the soul <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • loss of divine presence • loss of mystic experience • or renewed sense of imperfection • emotional ennui • purification of the heart, will, personality leading to final surrender of the self... 	5. Failure, re-consecration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further experiences of the divine 	
6. Union, or unitive life; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘state’ • ‘deification’, or ‘spiritual marriage’ • absorption in ‘affairs of the infinite’ • self is in God • new order of life 	6. Union <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as a third stage in some writers (Upham, sometimes Simpson) 	
7. Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • activity • fecundity 	7. Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receives power over sin • Receives power for service 	

Figure 4 Comparison of the ‘mystic way’ as portrayed by Evelyn Underhill and standard ‘higher life’ holiness patterns of experience

Appendix B Comparison of Conversion and Sanctification Experiences

Step One: Conversion	Step Two: Sanctification
1. the seeker hears the gospel	1. the believer attempts to live a holy life
2. is convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit	2. fails to live a holy life 3. acknowledges that he or she is 'dead', i.e. gives up any idea of personal goodness.
3. 'apprehends' Jesus as Saviour,	4. sees Jesus as Sanctifier
4. repents, 5. 'comes' to Jesus, 6. accepts Jesus as Saviour	5. consecrates, or surrenders 'everything into his hand for Him to do with as He thinks best.' 6. accepts Jesus as Sanctifier
by faith believes that Christ has accepted him or Her	7. by faith believes that a) 'Jesus receives this dedication,' and that b) 'Jesus will be in me all I need in this life or in the next'.
7. confesses Jesus as Saviour.	8. does not note public confession, although this is a standard aspect of holiness thought.
Results: Justification, forgiveness, Regeneration, eternal life Accepted by God, helped by Holy Spirit	Results: Sanctification Union with God Baptism of Spirit, indwelling Christ
Receives pardon from sin	Receives power over sin

Figure 6 Comparison of conversion and sanctification patterns in A. B. Simpson, *Four-Fold Gospel* (1887)

Conversion (Triumphs of the Cross)	Sanctification, Stevens
Conviction in light of God's love Conversion Justification Regeneration: 'the birth into divine life'	Post-conversion crisis
	Initial 'instant' sanctification
	Stage One: Sanctify yourself Sanctification through the Father; Entire consecration to the Father's will
	Stage Two: Be ye holy Sanctification through the Son; Cleansing of heart from inbred or original sin <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • learn need, prayer for heart cleansing, faith in Jesus, 'reckon' self dead to sin • instantaneous and continuous cleansing through union with Christ • contingent upon 'abiding in Christ'
Love of the Holy Spirit Belief (heart knowledge, revealed by the Spirit), Regeneration through the Spirit.	Stage Three: Sanctification through the Spirit Baptism of the Spirit, Personal voluntary reception of the Holy Spirit <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • desire Spirit 'for love's sake'; trust, surrender to obedience • 'receive' the person of the Spirit; indwelling of the Spirit; Spirit's personal self-revelation to believer • 'marriage'; 'the nuptials of the soul' • contentment
Taken out of the world	1. Progressive sanctification Reconstruction into usefulness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • of outward walk • of practical living • of service • through the Word • through chastening • through obedience
Jesus our Saviour 'The very life of Christ Himself in us'	2. Jesus our sanctification: 'It is Jesus taking those steps in us' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goal is not holiness, but holy service • Consecration is not ours, but Christ within us • Holiness is not ours, but Christ within us • Spirit communes with Father and Son in us • Service, not ours, but Christ in and through us
Outcomes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new life • peace with God • experience love of God • know God as 'Abba' 	3. Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • interior reunion with God • Holy service

Figure 7 Comparison of conversion and sanctification in W. C. Stevens as outlined in 'Sanctification' and *Triumphs of the Cross* (1903)

God's action		Believer's state	Believer's acts
elects to holiness		elect	
Calls	Holy Spirit opens eyes to see and apprehend Christ	depraved	
	Holy Spirit gives faith and repentance	converted	repents, believes
Justifies	Christ's righteousness is imputed to believer	justified	
regenerates	Indwelling Spirit imparts new life	regenerated	
Sanctifies	Indwelling Spirit gives growth in new life	sanctified	co-operates with the Spirit to live holy life
Glorifies		glorified	

Figure 8 Conversion and sanctification in Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (1871-1873)

Conversion, Starbuck	Sanctification, Starbuck
1. Conversion:	1. Conversion
2. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enter adolescence 	2. Sanctification <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entry to adulthood intensified experience heightened subjectivity
3. 'dejection and sadness' two classes: those who <ul style="list-style-type: none"> seek escape from sin or spiritual illumination followed by <ul style="list-style-type: none"> self-surrender, breaking pride or 'determination, exercise of will' 	3. period of longing, striving [purgation] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> period of 'storm and stress' sense of incompleteness, imperfection faith, consecration self surrender (increased importance)
4. 'a point of transition' experience sense of forgiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> or experience God's help, or presence of outside power or 'spontaneous awakening' (83). Sense of newness 	4. transition Forces outside control at work upon the person (more prominent) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> unconscious activity of mind 'holy Spirit' sense of freedom from sin, pardon cleansing
5. joy and peace' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'feeling of oneness with God or with friends may be 'concrete and personal or abstract and spiritual 	5. Union <ul style="list-style-type: none"> oneness with God feel right with God, presence of the Holy Spirit become medium through which the divine expresses itself periods of exhilaration
6. Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> public confession 	6. Outcomes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> extreme subjectivity withdrawal from the world, and from sensual pleasures intense altruism
7. 'Dark night' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> period of storm, stress or doubt resolved in time, or leads to sanctification crisis 	

Figure 9 Comparison of conversion and sanctification in Edwin Diller Starbuck, *The Psychology of Religion* (1899)

Notes: Starbuck does not set the elements in this order, or view them as aspects of all experiences. He merely lists the elements and their frequency. Thus, 'spontaneous awakening occurs in about 24 % of cases, self-surrender in 13, determination in 9. His order of conversion: typical experience: 'dejection and sadness', 'a point of transition', 'joy and peace' (Starbuck 83, 90).

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