HEAD OR HEART?: THE RICHARDSON-FANNING CONTROVERSY AND ITS EFFECT ON SPIRITUALITY IN THE STONE-CAMPBELL MOVEMENT

by

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Thesis Summary Document

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The emphasis on Lockean epistemology within the Stone-Campbell Movement, an indigenous American religious community, consubstantiated Spirit and scripture. Furthermore, fear of revivalistic emotionalism like what resulted in the camp meetings during the Second Great Awakening resulted in a de-emphasis on spirituality. Little or no importance was placed upon the Holy Spirit outside of conversion and sanctification was not an important facet of the Christian lifestyle. No devotional publications were produced outside of sermons and hymnody other than scripture itself. "Head" religion was stressed over "heart" religion.

Early Disciple historians, both lay and professional, gravitated toward Turner's frontier thesis, albeit one that manifested Providential guidance. However, W. E. Garrison's *Religion Follows the Frontier* recognized the larger context of the movement's history beyond individualism and pragmatism to include the broad societal effects inherent in modernization. These forces continued to trouble the group, which, unfortunately, played out in a bi-polarity of forces ranging between democratic liberties and authority. Advocated by both conservative and liberal factions, the two paths became problematic, not to mention, confusing. The struggle became identified between "reformers" and "restorationists." Several scholars put the problem at the foot of the early leaders, especially Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell who attempted to forge a movement that melded freedom with the dual authorities of the individual and scripture. Followers were forced to choose either progressive or traditional views that,

unfortunately, largely manifested themselves in the northern and southern regions of the United States.

One early movement leader, Dr. Robert Richardson, challenged this extreme application of sensate materialism to scripture, natural theology, and sanctification and, in so doing, awoke spiritual slumbers and catalyzed devotional life in the movement resulting in the advent of pious literature.

Research methodology was based upon narrative primary sources: John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* was pivotal to the argument they engaged it, so the treatise was examined. 19th century religious journals and archived personal correspondence and published devotional literature. Primary sources were predominantly religious journals associated with the movement (*The Millennial Harbinger* and *The Gospel Advocate*) during the years 1857-1858, which provided the entire communication between the two denominational leaders. Historiographical research revealed the myriad of conflicting interpretations of the origin and principles of the indigenous American church. Primary documents were consulted that reported the "Great Revival" at Cane Ridge in Kentucky in 1801. In order to ascertain the effect of the debate, a review of devotional literature and supporting personal correspondence from before and after the debate took place to resolve if the thesis was supported.

In the four decades prior to 1900, the fifth largest church denomination in the United States did not produce many resources to aid in the understanding of the Holy Spirit or materials to enhance the spiritual lives of its members. Herculean forces resisted Richardson's efforts. From an entrenched Lockean philosophy, an inherent aversion to emotionalism and revivalism, a devastating debate with a southern leader who, along

with the southern states, cut off all communication during the Civil War to the chaos of competition by bishop-editors it is indeed surprising that despite those forces, Richardson any had any impact on the movement. Yet, largely due to his efforts and arguments after 1858, spirituality within the denomination began to take on life with the vocal and material support of leaders who recognized the value of Richardson's views for the church. Richardson challenged an extreme application of sensate materialism to scripture, natural theology, and sanctification and, in so doing, awoke spiritual slumbers and catalyzed devotional life in the movement resulting in an advent of pious literature.

The thesis was confirmed, yet the impact Richardson had on the spiritual life was not as great as expected. Notably, he *initiated* the advent toward spirituality within the denomination.

From the beginnings of the denomination in 1832 until the debate between Richardson and Fanning in 1857, no book-length publication on the Holy Spirit was printed. Additionally, no devotional resources, other than sermons, hymns and scriptures was available. Following the controversy, a few resources were available: A major treatise on the Holy Spirit and the first devotional resource were both written by Richardson. Other church leaders published spiritual materials, exhibited interest in devotional matters, and supported Richardson's program. After the contest in 1857 and until 1900, six books were penned that focused on Christian lifestyle and devotion. One Stone-Campbell publishing house issued only 6 titles from over 200 that addressed piety. With the start of the Civil War a few years following the exchange, all Southern churches were cut-off from the preeminent journal, *The Millennial Harbinger*, of which Richardson was associate editor, thus stopping his influence and writings to the South.

Nonetheless, spirituality began to be recognized as an important aspect of a Christian's growth in faith. A larger longitudinal study of the influence of Lockean epistemology on the movement many give insight into the continued resistance to spirituality and the Holy Spirit and the eventual, rapid growth of devotional publications.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The Stone-Campbell Movement, a reform initiative born in the early nineteenth century, became one of the most significant and original of American churches.[1] Dr. Robert Richardson (1806-1876), personal physician and confidant to its leader Alexander Campbell (1788-1866) and co-editor with him of its printed voice, the *Millennial Harbinger*, encouraged spirituality within the rapidly expanding group of believers.[2] However, Richardson perceived Campbell's view of the Holy Spirit, influenced by British philosopher John Locke (1632-1704), as having a cold, emotionless grip upon the spiritual life of the growing movement.[3] The issue surfaced in a heated controversy between Richardson and another Stone-Campbell personage, Tolbert Fanning (1810-1874), editor of the *Gospel Advocate,* through the pages of their respective journals.[4] The physician recognized an extreme interpretation of Enlightenment epistemology, to which its leading exponent Fanning subscribed, was strangling piety among the brethren. Additionally, to thwart any infestation of the emotional revivalism inherited from the Second Great Awakening (1790-1830), Locke's rationalism provided a prudent and

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[1] Michael Casey and Douglas Foster, eds., *The Stone-Campbell Movement: An International Religious Tradition* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2002), 1. The movement's name comes from Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell who joined their churches in 1832 with the intent to reform and restore New Testament Christianity. Stone's churches were often called "Christians" and Campbell's churches were called "Disciples." During the course of this study the designations "Christians" and "Disciples" will be used interchangeably for the Stone-Campbell Movement. "Restoration Movement" is another name often used. Since 1832, three groups have diverged: The Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Christian Churches and Churches of Christ, and The Church of Christ (non-instrumental).

[2] Paul M. Blowers, Douglas A. Foster, Anthony L. Dunnavant and D. Newell Williams, eds. *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), s.v. "Richardson, Robert"; *American National Biography Online*, s.v. "Alexander Campbell."

[3] James Gordon Clapp, "Locke, John," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 4, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., and the Free Press, 1967), 487-502.

[4] James R. Wilburn, "Fanning, Tolbert (1810-1874)," in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, 331.

effective vaccine.[5] Campbell's co-editor concluded that without intervention, the young denomination risked its very life and, therefore, challenged the philosophical views of its most celebrated advocate.

Mean-spirited debates, overweening attention to logical syllogisms, and unyielding scriptural interpretation became the offensive for Campbell's reforms. Richardson saw these as the logical outcomes of a strict observance to Lockean philosophy whereas the wondrous love of God and the heart-felt indwelling of the Holy Spirit were casualties. The core issue at hand was the relationship of the third Person of the Trinity and Holy Scripture. Was the outcome of this emphasis on Lockean epistemology, which Richardson feared, a paucity of spiritual feelings and a decrease of devotional publications in the years following the controversy? When one surveys publications from its beginnings in 1832 until the debate in 1857, a full twenty-five years, no book-length writings were available for the public that addressed the Spirit outside of articles in newsprint. In addition, no devotional resources were issued however, Richardson challenged this extreme application of sensate materialism to scripture, natural theology, and sanctification and, in so doing, awoke spiritual slumbers which catalyzed devotional life in the movement resulting in an advent of pious literature.

Beginning with a broad examination of the history and historiography of the Disciples of Christ within the larger Stone-Campbell Movement and American Christianity will reveal the democratic values imbedded in America were consonant with the new sect. Historians agree, personal freedoms were the foundation of indigenous churches such as the Disciples while transforming transplanted European denominations

[5] *American National Biography Online*, s.v. "Great Awakening, First and Second."

as well. Additionally, it will expose the historical tension between the group's bipolar principles of liberty and authority.

Historical Background

The Stone-Campbell movement was fostered in the geographic and religious context of the Second Great Awakening and burgeoning American Christianity. The revivals that broke out at the end of the eighteenth century in America were, by appearances, similar to that of their religious precursor, the Great Awakening (1720-1750).[6] Preachers thundered out sermons that induced powerful "bodily effects of conversion—fainting, weeping, shrieking."[7] Arguably the most important single volume work in American religious history, *A Religious History of the American People* published by Yale University's Sydney Ahlstrom in 1972, contended that the spiritual outpourings of believers who came from New England churches of "staid and routine formalism," unaccustomed to experiential faith, was momentous.[8] The possibility of regeneration, of being "born again," excited people in the pews and fueled revivals.[9] However, such heightened spiritual intensity was not sustainable and many detractors panned the soul-shaking experiences as unworldly excess.[10] Although most American historians do not agree on an explanation of the earlier revivals, Ahlstrom's departed from his colleagues by proffering that their advent resulted from the vast socio-economic, intellectual and religious vagaries occurring in the new republic.[11]

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 287.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., 294.

Following the First Great Awakening, a second spiritual outbreak in New England began at the end of the eighteenth century.[12] Initially, this Second Great Awakening distinguished itself from its predecessor by a lack of distressed cries and bodily exercises.[13] Yet, in western regions populated by rough and tumble frontiersmen, the countryside was ripe for missionaries who brought the wild phenomenon fortified with "plain gospel truths."[14] The largest gathering in the west was at Cane Ridge in Kentucky in the sweltering heat of 1801. "The Great Revival" at Cane Ridge attracted upwards of 20,000 to its sacramental occasion and highlighted simultaneous preaching followed by communion to all comers.[15] The tumultuous outpourings there were the summit but not the end of the revival fires in the western districts.

Ahlstrom acknowledged Frederick Jackson Turner's (1861-1932) "frontier thesis,"–the continuous westward expansion and settlement of free land as the key concept for understanding America–had impact on the republic's religion; however, he placed the enduring power of European thought and its churches at the forefront.[16] No frontier interpretation of America's "democratic church" or theology held sway he thought because, "The nation…was maturing in significant ways as a New World frontier *of Western civilization*."[17] The Yale scholar identified five developments that spurred new growth in the previously waning churches during the second revival: religious

[12] Ibid., 416.
[13] Ibid., 417.
[14] Ibid., 430-1.
[15] Paul Conkin, *Cane Ridge: America's Pentecost* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 88.
[16] Ahlstrom*, A Religious History,* 452-3: *American National Biography Online*, s.v. "Turner, Frederick Jackson."
[17] Ahlstrom, *A Religious History,* 453-4. My emphasis.

freedom, disestablishment, denominationalism, voluntarism, and the exceptional belief that America was a "city set on a hill."[18]

Cultural historian David Hackett Fischer offered another perspective in *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America*. Acknowledging the pervasive power of British immigrant groups, he theorized transplanted cultural folkways acted like a modified germ theory of European behaviors and were important for understanding the United States.[19] Particularly, those individuals from the borders of North Britain and Northern Ireland who established themselves in Appalachia and supported, in religious matters, reformed religion over and against establishment churches.[20] These travelers likely inculcated similar values in the nascent churches beginning formation.

Nathan O. Hatch writing in *The Democratization of American Christianity* in 1989, perceived a religious spirit —what he calls a "passion for equality"—from revolutionary times through the Second Awakening as the "incarnation of the church into popular culture."[21] Hatch identified three facets of its expression: it dissolved the orthodox distinction between the clergy and lay; it rejected the need for clergy to sanction the enthused spirituality they experienced in everyday life; and common folk had the capacity—and right! —to think, act and interpret scripture for themselves.[22] The spirit of independence–of individual liberty–was innate to the common men and women of the frontier.

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[18] Ibid., 379.

[19] David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 4-5.

[20] Ibid., 4-5, 616.

[21] Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 9.

[22] Ibid,, 9-11.

Church historian Mark Noll published *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* in 1992 and concluded the two great revivals were near polar opposites.[23] Whereas, in the first awakening people stood under the sovereignty of a God who exercised judgment over their salvation, the second acknowledged humankind's free and independent choice to come to Christ—confirmation of the Calvinist to Arminian theological shift most scholars recognize.[24] Noll challenged Ahlstrom's continental emphasis and stressed post-Revolution America's homegrown dynamism. Instead he saw the nation casting off the fetters of England and imbibing in liberty, which gave the second revival movement power to democratize the institutional church.[25] In so doing, it dissolved the ecclesiastical hegemony clergy had over scripture and handed it back to commoners.[26] A democratized Christianity resulted in what he called "theology in an American key."[27] This new reading wove together powerful preaching fortified by enlightened thinking and Scottish Common Sense Realism that spawned an "American Christian Enlightenment."[28] In a later work, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* in 2002, he continued to place weight on an American synthesis that was less dependent upon European theological traditions and "was a compound of evangelical Protestant religion, republican political ideology, and commonsense moral reasoning."[29] As a social historian of theology, Noll recognized that up through the Civil War the synthesis defined the boundaries of a vast quantity of American thought, while

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[23] Mark Noll*, A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1992), 170.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., 151.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Noll, *History of Christianity*,151-3.

[28] Ibid., 153-4.

[29] Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 9.

also providing an ethical framework, a moral compass, and a vocabulary of suasion for much of the nation's public life."[30] This model brought together diverse luminaries such as Harvard professor and Unitarian Levi Hodge, Yale's unconventional Calvinist President Timothy Dwight, Restorationist Alexander Campbell, and Princeton's conservative Presbyterian Archibald Alexander, who in common articulation, promoted both Christian and republican values.[31] Noll bolstered his argument as he cited Bernard Bailyn's observation in *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* of the religious cooption of republican language as a "contagion of liberty" that spurred churchly reforms many backwoodsmen sought.[32] Noll and Hatch agreed that egalitarian and libertarian ideals were strong forces in the developing country.

Whereas Noll and Hatch stressed the power of American republican theology, American church historian, E. Brooks Holifield writing *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* in 2003, subscribed to the trans-Atlantic context of American Christianity championed by his mentor at Yale, Ahlstrom.[33] Restorationists did not spring up, fully-formed in isolation, but transported British, Scottish, and Continental religious and philosophical ideas to the liberty loving peoples of the Western Reserve and Kentucky.[34] Restorationists in America sought to return the

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Noll, *America's God,* 9. "Restorationist" refers to one who advocates a restoration of New Testament principles, offices, and organizations. There is some discussion whether Campbell was a "restorationist" or a "reformer." Church of Christ scholars tend to see Campbell as a restorationist while Disciples of Christ recognize him as a church reformer.

[32] Ibid., 83.

[33] Noll, *America's God,* vii.

[34] E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 292-4. Much confusion has been caused by the numerous names by which the movement has been identified: "Restorationists," "Reformers ," "Reforming Baptists," "Christian Church," "Church of Christ," "Disciples," "and "Disciples of Christ." Derogatory names "Campbellites" and "Stoneites" were also given to identify followers. In 1981 Church of Christ historian Leroy Garrett referred to the group of churches as the "Stone-Campbell Movement." Most

Church to its pure, original forms of belief and organization while ridding it of all "human invention" including the dissolution of creeds, confessions, and doctrines foisted upon the laity throughout the centuries by the priestly elite."[35] In its place, rational, simple and commonsense reading of the Bible by ordinary Christians was championed. European enlightenment spawned this new world turn to reasonableness.

It is, therefore, not surprising three of the four restoration leaders were educated in Europe.[36] Two, Thomas Campbell (1763-1854) and his son, Alexander, received instruction at the University of Glasgow while Walter Scott (1796-1861) attended the University of Edinburgh.[37] Native Marylander Barton W. Stone (1772-1844) matriculated in David Caldwell's (1725-1824) log college in Guilford County, North Carolina, where he studied Scottish moral philosophy.[38] Corroborating Holifield, all four ministers had exposure to and ultimately applied European concepts to their newly forged religious program.[39]

Historiography of the Stone-Campbell Movement

The earliest reading of church historians maintained harmonious versions of Turner's frontier thesis albeit infused with providential destiny, liberty and hegemonic European influences. Other variations accepted the progressive change fashioned by the

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scholarly literature now uses Garrett's designation. Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell were the two most influential leaders, thus the appellation.

[35] Ibid., 291.

[36] Ibid.

[37] *American National Bibliography Online*, s.v. "Campbell, Thomas" and "Scott, Walter"; Holifield*, Theology in America,* 293-4.

[38] Holifield*, Theology in America,* 292-4; *American National Biography Online*, s.v. "Caldwell, David." David Caldwell graduated from Princeton in 1791. *American National Biography Online*, s.v. "Stone, Barton Warren;" D. Newel Williams. Barton Stone: A Spiritual Biography (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 17.

[39] Holifield*, Theology in America*, 293-4.

advancement of culture. This understanding was the dominant self-interpretation of the Disciples during the group's initial years.[40] The second explanation acknowledged the blossoming independent theological freedoms on one side and authority of scripture on the other. Two core principles were advocated: unity of believers and restoration of New Testament Christianity. This bipolar liability between these two ideals became emblematic of the dichotomic tensions within the denomination itself: liberty or authority, liberal or conservative, inclusive or exclusive, progressive or traditional values vied for ascendency. America's religious awakening, especially Cane Ride, shaped, in part, the struggle between these tenets in the Stone-Campbell movement.[41]

The maturing legacy of the Enlightenment in post Revolutionary America stimulated the thirst for liberty throughout all facets of society, in the churches no less than in government. Any new church, especially one without ecclesial bonds to Europe, might most certainly embrace American values. An association of churches in western Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Kentucky found this to be fertile soil in which to grow and at the turn of the nineteenth century several groups coalesced to become the Stone-

[40] Clark W. Gilpin, "Faith on the Frontier: Historical Interpretations of the Disciples of Christ," in *A Case Study of Mainstream Protestantism: The Disciples Relation to American Culture, 1880-1989*, ed. D. Newell Williams (St. Louis: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991), 260.

[41] The Stone-Campbell Movement is traditionally dated to the union of Barton W. Stone and Alexander Campbell's churches on January 1, 1832, in Lexington, Kentucky, though both groups had churches as early as 1805 (Stone) and 1810 (Campbell). The Stone-Campbell Movement remained undivided until 1906 when the United States Bureau of the Census categorized religious bodies and reported a separate group of Churches of Christ distinct from the Disciples. Again in 1968, a group separated from the Disciples calling themselves Christian Churches/Churches of Christ. For the historiographical purposes of this study neither the Churches of Christ nor the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ will be studied, as their origins were later than the issue of controversy between Richardson and Fanning in 1857-8.

Campbell movement. These infant churches of Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone united in 1832 but called themselves variously "Christians" or "Disciples."[42]

Some historians recognized the validity of Turner's theory in the frontier spirit of its people. A non-professional historian, minister W. T. Moore (1832-1926), published *A Comprehensive History of the Disciples of Christ* in 1909.[43] An impressive tome of some 830 pages, the book painted a dramatic mural in which Divine Providence had placed Disciples in the New World.[44] Moore likely had not known of Turner's frontier thesis yet, nonetheless, one can hear its faint refrain in the backdrop of his valorization of the denomination, "The new world offered itself to a new experiment, namely, the restoration of Christianity in its primitive simplicity...[to] be carried to the countries lying [*sic*] West."[45] Providence and Manifest Destiny, writ large and, perhaps a bit dramatic, mingled to call Disciples "to meet this emergency in the onward course of Christianity around the world...and take the heathen lands on the other side of the Pacific for the blood-stained banner of the cross."[46]

In that same year, 1909, James Harvey Garrison (1842-1931), another lay historian, Disciple minister and founder/editor of the *Christian-Evangelist* journal published *The Story of a Century*.[47] Garrison appealed to the prevalent unbelief at the beginning of the 19th century as the stimulus for a moral reformation necessitated by

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[42] Stone's "Christians" began forming churches in 1804 after distancing themselves from their Presbyterian roots. Campbell's "Disciples" date their start to 1811. When both groups united in 1832, the Stone faithful numbered more than 16,000 and Campbell's members were approximately equal in strength.

[43] *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, s.v. "Moore, W. T."; Gilpin, "Faith on the Frontier," 261.

[44] W. T. Moore, *A Comprehensive History of the Disciples of Christ* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1909), 35; Gilpin, "Faith on the Frontier," 262.

[45] Moore, *A Comprehensive History*, 35; Gilpin, "Faith on the Frontier," 262.

[46] Moore*, A Comprehensive History*, 35; Gilpin, "Faith on the Frontier," 262.

[47] *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement,* s.v. "Garrison, James Harvey."

"divine government" that was "inevitable as the tides."[48] Garrison shared the widespread millennial outlook that the new nation was providentially called to restore Christianity and bring light and liberty to the world. Accordingly, both Moore and Garrison interpreted the advancement of the Stone-Campbell movement as that providential force ushering in a new day in a new world.

Influenced by Turner, W. E. Garrison (1874-1969) considered the dean of Disciple historians, professor of church history at the University of Chicago and son of J. H. Garrison, wrote *Religion Follows the Frontier* in 1931.[49] Other Chicago historians, Peter Mode and William Warren Sweet, were Garrison's colleagues who also found Turner's insights engaging, yet all were aware of its weaknesses.[50] Garrison described the origins and progress of the Disciples not just in historical terms but, more importantly, as social evolution that he alleged constituted genuine American history.[51] The pioneer on the margins of the frontier lived a hardscrabble existence requiring both physicality and common sense methods that yielded practical results. This frontline philosophy adapted institutions to meet its needs.[52] Pragmatic individual and utilitarian values were the lenses through which the church and government were assessed.[53] Prevalent revivalism attracted backcountry folk precisely because it provided a needed socio-religious outlet for those

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[48] J. H. Garrison, *The Story of a Century: A Brief Historical Sketch and Exposition of the Religious Movement Inaugurated by Thomas and Alexander Campbell. 1809-1909* (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Company, 1909), 16-19. Garrison cites a number of other causes: Deism, the French Revolution, the American Revolution, religious "partyism," as well as the lack of spirituality in the churches of the time. The most common millennial view at the time was post-millennialism rather than the pre-millennialism of today.

[49] *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, s.v. "Garrison, Winfred Ernest; Gilpin, "Faith on the Frontier," 260. Garrison was, interestingly, the first individual in the United States to receive a Ph.D. in church history.

[50] Gilpin, "Faith on the Frontier," 267.

[51] W. E. Garrison, *Religion Follows the Frontier* (New York: Harper, 1931), xi.

[52] Ibid., 55-6.

[53] Ibid., 55-7.

on the isolated borderlands.[54] According to Garrison, such emotionalism, coupled with self-governing temperament, was the grist for new indigenous spiritual groups like the Disciples.[55]

In the 1970s the movement commissioned an updated history written by two church historians, Lester G. McAllister and William E. Tucker. Their efforts culminated in 1975 with the publication of J*ourney in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* but W. E. Garrison and Alfred DeGroot's *The Disciples of Christ: A History published* in 1948 served as its historical model. McAllister and Tucker deviated little from the predecessor while reinforcing Garrison's views in *Religion Follows the Frontier* that the pioneering spirit of the church was not to be examined in isolation but the interpretive key was to be found in its encounters with society.[56]

Professor of American church history Ronald E. Osborn (1917-1998) wrote *Experiment in Liberty: The Ideal of Freedom in the Experience of the Disciples of Christ* in 1978.[57] Osborn agreed with Dr. Edward Scribner Ames, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Chicago and minister of Hyde Park Christian Church, that in America, democracy influenced Christianity after having been entrenched in autocratic societies for millennia.[58] In so doing, Osborn admitted the significance of democratic freedom was not unique to the Disciples–it affected most of the nation's faith groups—but was essential to understanding this body.[59] Nonetheless, Osborn argued that the concepts of liberty and the restoration of primitive Christianity were equally important and continued to

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[54] Ibid.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Lester G. MacAllister and William E. Tucker, *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1975), 10.
[57] *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, s. v. "Osborn, Ronald E."
[58] Ronald E. Osborn, *Experiment in Liberty: The Ideal of Freedom in the Experience of the Disciples of Chris*t (St Louis: Bethany Press, 1978), 12-3.
[59] Ibid.

permeate the denomination up to the present.[60] The Claremont professor marshaled a portion of Thomas Campbell's 1807 "Declaration and Address" to illustrate the lofty position Campbell placed on American freedoms:

> Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion, put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem the holy city;… Shake thyself from the dust, O Jerusalem; arise, loose thyself from the bands of thy neck, O captive daughter of Zion."–Resume that precious, that dear bought liberty, wherewith Christ has made his people free; a liberty from subjection to any authority but his own, in matters of religion. Call no man father, no man master upon earth;–for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. Stand fast therefore in this precious liberty, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage. For the vindication of this precious liberty have we declared ourselves hearty and willing advocates.[61]

The force of these new republican values was, perhaps, more serious to Disciples because their commitment to non-conformity was rooted in leaders like the Campbells who, early on, challenged Presbyterian strictures on the Lord's Supper.[62] Unlike other groups, their pledge to individual freedom of thought and belief resulted in an absence of religious litmus tests for congregational members.

Religion historian Nathan O. Hatch examined the cultural roots of the Disciples in an article published in 1980 in the *Journal of American History* entitled, "The Christian Movement and the Demand for a Theology of the People." Hatch surveyed the cultural background of the American and French revolutions, republicanism, and inalienable rights of the *novus ordo seclorum* that spawned this religious sect.[63] Resisting previous historical interpretations that the *a priori* cause of the movement could be assigned to cultural dissent rife in America, he alleged instead, the movement was not just predicated

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[60] Ibid., 12.
[61] Ibid., 23.
[62] Thomas Campbell was defrocked for offering communion to non-Seceder Presbyterians while his son, Alexander, balked at elders judging the worthiness of individuals to receive the Lord's Supper.
[63] Nathan O. Hatch, "The Christian Movement and the Demand for a Theology of the People," *The Journal of American History* 67 (December1980): 547, 557.

upon the "frontier thesis" but was the prime example of it![64] However, this was not enough. Hatch thought the "collapse of certainty" throughout the nation empowered common folk to take up and champion their own views. Not since the 17th century was there such an unprecedented undertaking "of common folk ...[who] came to scorn tradition, relish novelty and experimentation, grope for fresh sources of authority...in its own way dethroning hierarchy and static religious forms."[65] Hatch thought this new religious way of thinking could have been unimaginable without a culture-wide crisis of authority.[66]

Writing in 1988, in the journal *Leaven*, W. Dennis Helsabeck Jr. disputed the Frederick Jackson Turner/W. E. Garrison frontier thesis that many assumed had explained the origin of all three streams of the Stone-Campbell Movement.[67] In an article entitled, "The American Frontier," Helsabeck asked three questions: What, where, and when was the "frontier?" Were West Virginia, Ohio, and Kentucky geographical front lines of the movement, actually the frontier? Perhaps the force of Turner's thesis, which Disciples had embraced, was too readily accepted. By the first two decades of the 1800s Ohio had a population of nearly one million and Kentucky had over half a million.[68] The homelands of both Stone and Campbell seemed to be hardly "frontier." Its rural influence was easily confused by its religious primitivism and roots in proximity to the outlands.[69]

The Campbells came to America already influenced by their Scottish roots in the Enlightenment, whereas, frontier forces more likely had impact on Stone at rural Cane

[64] Ibid., 561.
[65] Ibid., 565.
[66] Ibid., 567.
[67] Dennis W. Helsabeck, Jr. "The American Frontier" *Leaven* 7 (Jan 1999): 177-80, 211.
[68] Ibid., 178.
[69] Ibid., 179.

Ridge.[70] Both held to a restoration of primitive Christianity fused with John Locke's notion of the supremacy of the individual, which was well suited to the frontier mindset.[71] The frontier, according to Helsabeck, was of penultimate importance.[72] A more important ingredient was the educational, theological and philosophical influences of the Campbells' time at the University of Glasgow and their immersion in Enlightenment thought.[73] These influences, he suggested, should be consulted as a touchstone *prior* to understanding the movement to be grounded upon an ever-changing frontier mentality.[74] Helsabeck saw them as having not been born of the edge of American's borders but pictured the theology of the group akin to a surfboard of simple New Testament Christianity riding the great wave of westward expansion.[75]

Like Campbell, Barton Stone championed the growing religious freedoms. As the host minister of the Cane Ridge Revival, he and his fellow revivalists strived toward enlightened and egalitarian ideals–religious, political, ethnic, class, race, gender and age amid the chaos of the times.[76] Accordingly, the young nation's progressing transformations and the religious drive of Stone and the Campbells were harmonious.

The second interpretive key advanced by historiographers strayed away from Turner's theory and recognized a congenital problem in the Disciples' dual principles of liberty and authority. These principles surfaced in various bipolar forms: liberal or conservative, inclusive or exclusive, progressive or traditional. In the late 19th century several denominational pastors wrote brief histories of the movement. One of the first

[70] Ibid., 179.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid., 180.
[73] Ibid.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Ibid., 177, 179.
[76] See my unpublished paper, "America's Holy Fair: The Cane Ridge Revival as Egalitarian Kingdom amid Chaos" (University of Central Oklahoma, 2011).

professional historians of the Stone-Campbell Movement was University of Chicago professor Errett Gates (1870-1951) who, in 1905, wrote *The Disciples of Christ*.[77] Either unaware of Turner's "frontier thesis" promulgated in 1893 or dubious of it, Gates reported a simple history of the Disciples that identified two principles which animated controversy among members: unity of Christians, on the one hand, and restoration of apostolic Christianity on the other. These were the "seeds of disagreement" he suggested.[78] The clash found expression in several proxy issues. One that was particularly heated was over the new textual critical methods coming out of Europe. Gates, who advocated an educated clergy, sided with progressives who averred a literal reading of the Bible and observed, "The one lesson of this history is, the letter destroys unity while the spirit makes it alive."[79] This issue would plague the Stone-Campbell movement throughout its history down to the present.

W. E. Garrison's seminal work, *Religion Follows the Frontier*, could be understood to fall in line with the Turner hypothesis that emphasized America's westward expansion into free land as the explanation of national history, however Garrison, in fact, shifted the emphasis away from the pioneering and providential accentuation of previous historiography.[80] Disciple historian W. Clark Gilpin observed in his article, "Faith on the Frontier," that "Garrison described how the immediate, concrete exigencies of pioneer life modified inherited ways and thereby encouraged habits of mind that inclined strongly toward individual freedom and a self-reliant pragmatism."[81] Basic frontier prerequisites were individualism and pragmatism but Garrison veered away from

[77] Blowers. et al., eds., *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, s.v. "Gates, Errett."
[78] Errett Gates, *The Disciples of Christ* (New York: The Baker and Taylor Co., 1905), 61.
[79] Ibid., 333.
[80] Gilpin, "Faith on the Frontier," 267.
[81] Ibid., 268.

Turner and explained that those qualities failed when confronted with social and intellectual problems.[82] Frontier folk needed a more certain philosophical footing, according to Garrison, because whenever change to established institutions was advocated appeals to higher authority followed.[83] If one protested either government or church policy then invariably appeal was made to the next higher authority of government or church– the Constitution or scripture.[84] Garrison saw this as an "unstable synthesis of pragmatism and authoritarianism."[85] He faced the conundrum, as he saw it, of personal liberty in contrast to the unity embodied in social groupings, especially the church.[86] He posed the problem this way: "How is it possible to reconcile the individual's liberty of conscience and intellect with that degree of unity of the church in spirit and organization which is demanded by the will of Christ and by the practical requirement for efficiency in his service?"[87] The noted historian proposed that a practical solution needed to be found to synthesize individual liberty and the unity of disparate believers.[88] Disciples, and most notably Alexander Campbell, divined this synthesis, Garrison thought, "by interpreting the Christian life as willing citizenship within the kingdom of God, a kingdom whose forms and duties had been authoritatively set forth in the New Testament."[89] Here was a simple principle that wedded liberty and authority.

Gilpin astutely revealed Garrison's true purpose was to demonstrate the maturation of an increasingly urban church dependent upon its adaptation to social,

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[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid., 268-9.
[87] W. E. Garrison, *Alexander Campbell's Theology: Its Sources and Historical Setting* (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Co., 1900), 25, quoted in Gilpin, "Faith on the Frontier," 269.
[88] Ibid., 269.
[89] Ibid.

cultural, and intellectual contexts–not the frontier.[90] However, urbanization and modernization confronted the old frontier ways which, understandably, created tension between conservatives and progressives.[91] These inherent problems between the bipolar ideals of liberty and authority, once again, resurfaced for the body of believers. Not even Campbell's synthesis could resolve the issues for the folk on the frontier or those in urban settings.

David Edwin Harrell Jr. published his 1966 dissertation as a two-volume work in 1973. *Quest for a Christian America, 1800-1865: A Social History of the Disciples of Christ,* spurned the perspective of prominent leaders and intellectual elites of past histories and alternatively sought out the views of "minorities, nonconformists, and even the fanatics on the fringes."[92] Harrell questioned that religious and social reform shaped the movement and instead thought the problems manifested themselves in sectional ideological differences. Earlier histories described the movement as a theologically enlightened effort born on American soil and whose purpose was to drive toward church unity and the restoration of first century Christianity.[93] Unfortunately, that theological consensus proved ephemeral.[94] What exacerbated the issue was the diversity modeled between Alexander Campbell and Barton W. Stone of rationalism and emotionalism, legalism and humanitarianism. Harrell observed, the complex economic and cultural pressures on Disciples was not unique to them but nonetheless influenced their plea for unity and restoration.[95] Sociological factors of geographic location and economic status

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[90] Ibid., 270.
[91] Ibid.
[92] David Edwin Harrell, Jr., *Quest for a Christian America, 1800-1865*: *A Social History of the Disciples of Christ* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2003), xiii-xiv.
[93] Ibid., 31-3, 60-1.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid., 24.

shaped their message.[96] One obvious issue that altered unity was the geography of slavery. Uncompromising positions on human bondage for northern and southern members that culminated in War of the Rebellion only made matters worse.[97] After 1865, economic interests and middle-class denominationalism added to the split.[98] These all climaxed into a North-South rift with northern Disciples becoming more liberal and socially active while southern Disciples accentuated church and spiritual legalisms.[99]

Revisiting the bipolar stresses of liberty and authority identified by Garrison and Gilpin, but alluded to by others, Saint Mary's University's Richard Tristano, with an outsider's perspective, explored the schizophrenic and theological contradictions of Stone and Campbell in *The Origins of the Restoration Movement: An Intellectual History*. According to Tristano, Stone combined Lockean epistemology with emotional mysticism whereas Campbell believed all knowledge of the material world came through sensation.[100] The one exception was supernatural information.[101] Unlike the natural domain, testimony by the apostles found in scripture proved the reality of a transcendent realm.[102] Accommodating experiential knowledge from both the physical and metaphysical realms made conflicts. Stone and Campbell provided the intellectual foundations of the movement but one that Tristano observed contained a character, schizophrenia-like, flaw.[103]

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[96] Ibid.

[97] Ibid., 224. The "War of the Rebellion," popularly known as the Civil War, was the official name given the conflict by the federal government.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Richard Tristano, *The Origins of the Restoration Movement: An Intellectual History* (Atlanta, GA: Glenmary Research Center, 1988), 137-9.

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid.

Dr. D. Duane Cummins, historian of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) published the latest history of the Stone-Campbell Movement in 2009. Cummins, one time director of its Historical Society in Nashville, Kentucky, contended that a proper view of the group was reformational rather than restorational. This, he thought, remained true to Alexander Campbell's desire for reforming the Church. With scripture as the rule of faith, liberty, toleration, and unity were to be humbly advocated while accepting that the Church Universal was already united one in Christ.[104]

The "struggle" Cummins referred to was the differing historiographical interpretations within the larger Stone-Campbell movement beyond the Disciples of Christ that included the Churches of Christ and the Christian Churches/Churches of Christ. Here Cummins described the other two communions that emphasized restoration of the New Testament church and the "ancient order."[105] The argument was overly strict versus critical interpretation, conservative versus liberal, tradition versus toleration, inclusion versus exclusion in the growing disparate groups prior to their formal divisions in 1906 and 1968.[106] But, the feud continued. Some scholars reasoned the root cause was Campbell's "theological ambiguity" and called him schizophrenic and a "rational super-naturalist."[107] Others thought his changing positions evidenced a maturing nuanced understanding of faith.[108] Quoting Abilene Christian University historian Richard T. Hughes, "Campbell had raised up followers who, at many points, stood diametrically opposed to one another. Tragically, he found himself related to both but estranged from

[104] Duane D. Cummins, *The Disciples: A Struggle for Reformation* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2009), xii.

[105] Ibid., x-xi. Cummins defines "restoration" as the emphasis upon exclusiveness, restrictions, independence, and debate over small particularities of text and polity.

[106] Ibid., 118.

[107] Ibid., 119.

[108] Ibid.

both, standing in the middle of their contentions but able to do little or nothing to reconcile their disputes."[109]

Historians disagree on what caused the end of the Great Awakening but some point towards a wide range of socio-economic, intellectual and religious catalysts during the period. However, the Second Great Awakening is credited to frontier development, democratized religious freedoms and authority consonant with Enlightenment influences. Set in this context, the beginnings of the Stone-Campbell Movement found fertile soil in the new world. But, three of the four leaders of the effort were educated in Scottish universities and deeply imbued with enlightened religious and philosophical ideas. They were, consequently, less susceptible to frontier dynamisms and cool to experiential behaviors. Stone, the only one of the four born and educated in America traversed the boundaries of the frontier, pastored churches, and recognized God working throughout the revivals.

Early Disciple historians, both lay and professional, gravitated toward Turner's frontier thesis, albeit one that manifested Providential guidance. However, W. E. Garrison's *Religion Follows the Frontier* recognized the larger context of the movement's history beyond individualism and pragmatism to include the broad societal effects inherent in modernization. These forces continued to trouble the group, which, unfortunately, played out in a bi-polarity between democratic liberties and authority. Advocated by both conservative and liberal factions, the two paths became problematic, not to mention, confusing. The struggle became identified between "reformers" and "restorationists." Several scholars put the problem at the foot of the early leaders, especially Stone and Campbell who attempted to forge a movement that melded freedom

[109] Quoted in Richard Hughes, *Reviving the Ancient Faith* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 75.

with the dual authorities of the individual and scripture. Followers were forced to choose either progressive or traditional views that, unfortunately, manifested in the northern and southern regions of the United States.

Two contentious episodes illustrated the bewildering theological disagreement rooted in these various historiographical interpretations of the movement. One occurred in 1837 precipitated by a letter from a "conscientious sister" from Lunenburg, Virginia, to the editor of the *Millennial Harbinger* and leader of the movement, Alexander Campbell. The author, writing in response to Campbell's article in a previous issue, asked if there were Christians in other churches, especially those who had not been immersed?[110] The correspondence opened up the problem over scriptural legalism and the purpose of Campbell's reform, unity.

The second matter materialized in 1857 between Robert Richardson and Tolbert Fanning and is the subject of this paper. The "seeds of disagreement" that historian Errett Gates identified, W. E. Garrison's "unstable synthesis of pragmatism and authoritarianism," of liberty and authority, and Tristano's community-wide character flaw that set the hard reality of Enlightenment epistemology against supernatural experiences each exemplified by either Campbell or Stone, haunted the denomination. Whereas, these bipolar issues had conflicted members in the past, it was not until both Richardson and Fanning drew swords that the stark differences became apparent. Contributing to the tragedy was the looming Civil War, which fostered a separation of the group into two factions, geographically and theologically. Richardson attempted to

[110] Cummins, *Struggle for Reformation*, 119-21. See also my unpublished paper, "The Lunenburg Letter: Emerging Ecumenism in Alexander Campbell?" (University of Central Oklahoma, 2009).

traverse a middle path that nurtured a synthesis of liberty and authority, Spirit and word. Fanning demurred and became further entrenched in the philosophy of Locke.

Thesis Methodology

Turning to the next chapter will reveal the spiritual effects of the Second Great Awakening on Barton W. Stone (1772-1844).[111] Stone's religious influence, while not the subject of this thesis, is significant for understanding its influence on the movement. Next, the weight of John Locke and the Enlightenment upon the thinking and theology of Alexander Campbell is probed. Did the denomination focus excessively on enlightened principles that advanced "head religion," and starve the spirit of "heart religion?" While Enlightenment thinking was integral to his program, there existed, especially in Richardson, the counter-melody of Romanticism. How these were evident in their thinking and how they were joined–with tension–is scrutinized. With those issues explored, the argument between Richardson and Fanning is presented and the results analyzed. For both, the core issue was scripture and its relationship to the Holy Spirit. Richardson desired to reinforce the spiritual piety of his readers as well as the movement. However, he encountered serious roadblocks in the form of resistance to revivalism and the extremes of Enlightenment philosophy. A final study will be made of the positive and negative effects of the debate, the support which the Bethany, West Virginia physician received from denominational leaders, the impact of the dizzying array of other newspapers, the rapidly disintegrating sectional divide, and the volume of devotional materials published following the dispute. Previous studies have not identified many of the barriers discussed here. The results will provide clues to the success of the associate

[111] *American National Biography Online*, s.v. "Stone, Barton Warren."

editor's spiritual objective and point toward it being a catalyzing event in the future of the movement.

Chapter Two

Like the Roar of Niagara: Barton W. Stone and the Cane Ridge Revival[112]

> The noise was like the roar of Niagara. The vast sea of human beings seemed to be agitated as if by a storm…Some of the people were singing, others praying, some crying for mercy…My heart beat tumultuously, my knees trembled, my lip quivered, and I felt as though I must fall to the ground. A strange supernatural power seemed to pervade the entire mass of minds there collected…Soon after I left and went into the woods…and wished I had staid [sic] at home.
>
> – Robert Findley, 1801

Alexander Campbell and many of the first generation leaders of the indigenous Stone-Campbell movement were suspicious if not downright opposed to emotionalism, especially enthusiasm generated within religious society. The influence of John Locke was evident. Writing in his journal the *Millennial Harbinger*, Campbell described the passion present in camp meetings as "idealess, headless, heartless religion" without knowledge of grace or gospel.[113] However, by the time Campbell arrived in America in 1809 from his native Ireland the Second Great Awakening had gripped the young nation for nearly two decades. His co-religionist, Barton Stone on the Kentucky frontier, was fully immersed in its tumultuous spirituality.

When the two united their churches in 1832 in Lexington, they agreed on most issues and even upon the preeminence of Enlightenment epistemology. While the two groups had much in common there were differences. Historian David Edwin Harrell Jr. underscored the distinctions by describing the mind of the movement as "half law and

[112] The revival at Cane Ridge was a seminal event in the Stone-Campbell movement.

[113] Alexander Campbell, "Letters to England-IV," Millennial Harbinger 8, new series no.1 (January 1837): 423.

half love."[114] Cross-pollination of their dissimilarities took place over the years. Still, different strands of belief existed that caused friction by the time Dr. Robert Richardson and Tolbert Fanning began their pugilistic endeavors. One of those threads was the near complete rejection of the emotional and spiritual operations Stone witnessed and others experienced at Cane Ridge.[115] Stone's attitude toward religious enthusiasm was tempered by what he experienced in the revivals, which married New World liberties and egalitarian ideals with the Christian Kingdom. For Campbell, the chaos that occurred was anathema and deviated from his reformed background that called for all things to be done "decently and in order." The revivals were chaotic spiritual, even carnivalesque events. To appreciate Campbell's reticence toward, and Stone's acceptance of, religious enthusiasm, a closer investigation of the phenomenon will reveal why both held their respective views on the matter and the subsequent impact it had on the argument between Dr. Robert Richardson and Tolbert Fanning.

In time, the contest between the combatants revealed several important theological questions: the role of philosophy, natural theology, and the relationship between scripture and the Spirit. However, another immediate issue loomed in the background—revivalistic enthusiasm. One needs only to read Campbell's satirical response in 1837 sent to a British brother to taste his enmity for the practice:

> In America, my good brother, many things vegetate and luxuriate which would not germinate in your cold and moist climate. Neither melons nor camp-meetings grow in the open air in your fields; nor do mourning benches nor anxious boards grow in the forests and woods of England...It is this theory of spiritual operations—the species of divine influence in "camp-meetings" and "big meeting"—this idealess, headless, heartless religion which...has filled meeting-houses with converts that have no roots

[114] David Edwin Harrell, Jr., *Quest for a Christian America, 1800-1865: A Social History of the Disciples of Christ, Volume 1* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1966), 26.
[115] Ibid., 27.

> in themselves; that is, no clear perception of…the gospel of the kingdom–which we oppose.[116]

Critics disparaged raucous camp meetings at the turn of the nineteenth century like those of its precursor in Scotland, the holy fair:

> Hear how he clear the points o' Faith
> Wi' rattlin' an' thumpin!
> Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
> He's stampan, an' he's jumpan!
> His lengthen'd chin, his turn'd up snout,
> His eldritch squeel an' gestures,
> O how they fire the heart devout,
> Like cantharidian plaisters
> On sic a day!
>
> On this hand sit a Chosen swatch,
> Wi' screw'd-up, grace-proud faces;
> On that, a set o'chaps, at watch,
> Thrang winkan on the lasses.[117]
>
> —excerpted from the *Holy Fai*r by Robert Burns

In 1785, when the Scottish poet Robert Burns (1759-1796) penned this derisive description of Holy Fairs, the Eucharistic festivals that had originated in the Scottish western regions of his homeland, had more than a century of history.[118] Some considered these holy celebrations, or revivals, to have beginnings in the district that dated back as far as the mid 1620s.[119] By the mid-nineteenth century, the fairs grew to resemble raucous peasant carnivals. Henry Grey Graham (1842-1906), notable Scottish historian,

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[116] Alexander Campbell, "Letters to England–No. IV.," *Millennial Harbinger* 8, no. 9 (September 1837): 422-5.

[117] Quoted from Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scottish Communions and American Revivals in the Early Modern Period* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 3-4. This is an excerpted portion of Burns' much longer poem, *Holy Fair*, which, according to Schmidt, evidenced his negative view of the events as an "ungodly mixture of superstition and hypocrisy, pious presumption and outright depravity." Quoted in Schmidt, *Holy Fairs*, 4.

[118] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*, s.v. "Burns, Robert"; Schmidt, *Holy Fairs,* 27.

[119] Schmidt, *Holy Fairs*, 27.

described the gatherings like "pious saturnalia" which, in his opinion, should evanesce.[120] By 1742, expanded revivals culminated into a historic holy jubilee at Cambuslang near Glasgow when British clergyman, George Whitefield (1714-1770), fresh from his revival successes in America, came home to preach.[121] Exploding religious fervor swelled the event to an estimated thirty thousand.[122]

Across the Atlantic in British colonial North America, the magniloquent divine Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) joined with George Whitefield in 1739 to stir the colonies from spiritual slumbers, conventionally described by historians as the Great Awakening (1720-1750).[123] These near parallel pious developments reflected a spiritual transatlantic exchange. During the period, early revivals in central and western New York became such a nest of revivalism that Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875) called the area completely "burnt" over by evangelical zealots.[124] The scorched region was soon known as the "Burned-Over District."[125]

Only a half-century after the first revivals, similar events to Cambuslang began in the northeast colonies reached a fever pitch on the American frontier at Barton Stone's small Presbyterian church at Cane Ridge, Kentucky, in the summer of 1801. Variously called the "Second Great Awakening" or "Great Revival," this subsequent spiritual renaissance spread into Tennessee, Virginia, North and South Carolina, and northeast

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[120] *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*, s.v. "Graham, Henry Grey"; Schmidt, *Holy Fairs*, 4.

[121] Paul K. Conkin, *Cane Ridge: America's Pentecost* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 21-2.

[122] Schmidt, *Holy Fairs*, 42; Conkin, *Cane Ridge*, 22.

[123] *American National Biography Online*, s.v. "Edwards, Jonathan," and "Whitefield, George";

[124] *American National Biography Online*, s.v. "Finney, Charles Grandison." Charles G. Finney, *Charles G. Finney: An Autobiography* (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1908), 67.

[125] Linda K. Pritchard, "The Burned-over District Reconsidered: A Portent of Evolving Religious Pluralism in the United States," *Social Science History* 8 (Summer 1984): 245.

Georgia, from 1790 to 1830.[126] Between the two renewals, one can identify a similar resistance to hierarchical authorities and an atmosphere of frenzied emotional rejuvenation.[127]

Like its Scottish counterpart, the Cane Ridge camp meeting was an anticipated religious event and, therefore, attracted a wide range of individuals: pious Christians of various denominations, seekers, antagonists, deists, atheists, spectators, politicians, men, women, children, families, and single persons, rich, poor, Anglo and African-American, free and slave.[128] The chaotic atmosphere mirrored the precarious life on the frontier but also attested to the eternal security evidenced in spiritual gifts available to *all*. The egalitarian nature of the awakening crusades like that at Cane Ridge mirrored the democratic principles of the nascent Stone-Campbell movement.

Contextually, the state of religion in America during the late eighteenth century was dry and lifeless. Traveling though the South, French nobleman De La Rouchefoucauld noticed the lack of religious sentiment especially in Virginia.[129] Baptist, David Barrow bemoaned, "Of all the denominations…the Deists, Nothingarians and anythingnarians are the most numerous."[130] Unitarian minister and author, William Ellery Channing (1780-1842) lamented, "Christianity is here breathing its last. I cannot find a friend with whom I can even converse on religious subjects."[131] In 1797, Methodist bishop Francis Asbury (1745-1816) wrote in his journal that procuring land was of greater importance to frontiersmen than religion, except for perhaps "one in a

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[126] John Boles, *The Great Revival, 1787-1805: The Origins of the Southern Evangelical Mind* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1972), map, frontispiece.
[127] Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity*, 9-11.
[128] The various accounts of Cane Ridge make clear the diversity of individuals in attendance.
[129] Boles, *The Great Revival,* 10.
[130] Ibid.
[131] *American National Biography Online*, s.v. "Channing, William Ellery."

hundred."[132] The crisis was not confined to the west as a young Lyman Beecher (1775-1863) at Yale in 1793 reported the school was "in a most ungodly state" confirmed by its "intemperance, profanity, gambling, and licentiousness."[133]

Religion was not the only thing at low ebb. Deprived of regional justice, general lawlessness prevailed which resulted in hard drinking, immorality, gambling, and other degenerate amusements.[134] Some laid the blame on a host of factors: the "secularizing influence of the Revolution," "Tom Paine deist[s]," the French Revolution, "freedom from the moral obligation as part of civil liberty," and intra-, as well as interdenominational, feuding."[135]

Barton Stone, primogenital leader of the future Stone-Campbell Movement and pastor of the Cane Ridge church summarized, "So low had religion sunk, and such carelessness universally had prevailed, that I have thought that nothing common could have arrested the attention of the world."[136] Something unusual was about to occur.

On Friday, 6 August 1801, people on horses, in wagons and carriages or on foot crowded the roadway leading to the appointed location of the sacramental meeting at the little backwoods Presbyterian Church.[137] Stone quoted military men who estimated twenty to thirty thousand in attendance.[138] Other reports, perhaps more reliable, estimated ten to twenty thousand pioneers. The lower estimate is more credible based upon surmised logistical needs and recognition that people tend to inflate numbers.[139] If one

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[132] Ibid., s.v. "Asbury, Francis"; Quoted in Cleveland, *The Great Revival in the West*, 29.
[133] *American National Biography Online*, s.v. "Beecher, Lyman"; Boles, *The Great Revival*, 12.
[134] Ibid., 29-30.
[135] Ibid., 12,19-22.
[136] Stone. *Biography*, 38.
[137] Ibid.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Paul Conkin, *Cane Ridge: America's Pentecost* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 88.

considered the comings and goings of the crowd then it is possible twenty thousand or more attended at different times during the course of the six-day event.[140] The venue included several gathering areas: the large Cane Ridge meetinghouse capable of holding four hundred, the "tent" (a covered preaching platform) about one hundred yards from the church, an African-American area southeast of the main building, several tree trunks and wooded areas enabling "four or five preachers speaking at the same time, in different parts of the encampment, without confusion."[141] A total of eighteen Presbyterian ministers attended, preached, and presided at the sacrament.[142] Methodists numbered at least four.[143] One or more Baptist clergy attended. James Garrard, Kentucky's governor at the time was specifically recorded in attendance.[144] One unidentified black preacher was likely "Old Captain," founding pastor of Lexington's first African-American Baptist Church.[145] And with the Elkhorn Baptist Association meeting at the same time nearby, it is likely that some Baptist preachers might have taken the opportunity to join in the excitement.

Rev. John Lyle, who kept a diary while at "Cain Ridge," is considered the most accurate and balanced of the many reports, newspaper articles, and memoirs of the event.[146] Lyle was concerned about the excessive enthusiasm he witnessed but

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[140] Ibid.

[141] Stone, *Biography*, 37; D. Newell Williams, *Barton Stone: A Spiritual Biography* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 61.

Ellen T. Eslinger, "The Great Revival in Bourbon County, Kentucky" (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1988), 345-6.

[143] Ibid.

[144] William W. Woodward, comp, *Increase of Piety, or the Revival of Religion in the United States of America: containing several interesting letters not before published. Together with three remarkable dreams, in succession, as related by a female in the northern liberties of Philadelphia, to several Christian friends, and handed to the press by a respectable minister of the gospel* (Philadelphia: W.W. Woodward, 1802), 86. Many Baptists shunned Governor Garrard because he held Arian views.

[145] Williams, *Barton Stone*, 63; Conkin, *Cane Ridge,* 91.

[146] Eslinger, *The Great Revival*, 347.

nonetheless he preached, prayed, counseled, and communed with the multitude.[147] On Sunday afternoon, he assisted in the sacrament by serving the tables.[148] When it came time to preach to those communing he said he "felt uncommonly tender" toward the eight hundred who took of the loaf and cup.[149] Other ministers counted nearly 1100 participating in the ritual.[150]

The day following the sacrament, Lyle witnessed spiritual manifestations in many individuals. These actions were very physical. In his biography, Stone described each exercise in-depth: the "falling," "jerks," "dancing," "barking," "running" and, finally, the "laughing" and "singing" manifestations.[151] The host preacher admitted that many were probably caught up in the fanaticism and emotion of the event."[152]

First-hand accounts of the various incidents are readily available and illustrate why Campbell, Fanning and others viewed the excitement as dangerous. Such chaotic outbursts turned sanctified worship into crazed, boisterous affairs. Stone's own biography provided an intimate portrait of the six spiritual manifestations.

> The falling exercise was very common among all classes, the saints and sinners of every age and of every grade, from the philosopher to the clown…many, very many fell down, as men slain in battle…in an apparently breathless and motionless state…after lying thus for hours…they would rise shouting deliverance, and then would address the surrounding multitude in language truly eloquent and impressive.[153]

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[147] Rev. John Lyle's account of the great Cain Ridge [sic] camp meeting, August, 1801, Lyle Diary, 21-35. Reprinted in Catharine C. Cleveland, *The Great Revival in the West 1797-1805* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1916), 183-9. There are several different spellings and renderings of "Cane Ridge" in the various personal accounts: "Cain Ridge," "Kaneridge," "Kane Ridge," and "caneridge."

[148] Lyle, "Diary," 22-3.

[149] Ibid.

[150] Ibid.

[151] Stone, *Biography*, 39-42.

[152] Ibid., 42.

[153] Ibid., 39, 34-35.

The jerks were even stranger affecting the person with head motions side-to-side and forward and backward almost touching the ground in both directions.[154] Stone described four other phenomena: The dancing activity varied in tempo, between fast and slow, often followed along a track going back and forth until the practitioner fell to the ground. Some were infected with a unique and hearty laughter that was not the result of levity but produced solemnity in observers. Still others began running as if to escape the fearsome afflictions. Lastly, the most inexplicable was divine singing, which seemed to come from the chest rather than one's mouth.

Many who "fell," "dropping on every hand, shrieking, groaning, crying for mercy…praying, agonizing, fainting, falling down in distress, for sinners, or in raptures of joy." arose later to preach and exhort listeners.[155] Some of these were laypersons, men, women, youth, and children, irrespective of class.[156] One eyewitness remembered:

> One little girl, about nine years of age, was put on a man's shoulder, and delivered, I think, a body of divinity; at length, when exhausted, she sank back upon her upholder, upon which a man who stood near, affectingly said, "Poor thing, set her down." She replied, "Don't call me poor; I have Christ for my Brother, God for my Father, and am an heir to a kingdom.[157]

Personal accounts, diaries, and other writings testify to the cacophony of the revival. The best description was by James B. Finley, son of Cane Ridge's first settled minister, Robert Finley. The youngster, who described himself as a rough character,

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[154] Ibid., 34-6.

[155] Extract 26. "Of a letter, from the Rev. Moses Hoge, of Shepherds Town, to the Rev. Asbel Green, of this city, dated Sept. 10, 1801," in Woodward, *Surprising Accounts of the Revival of Religion in the United States of America*, 53-4.

[156] Ted A. Smith, "Out of the Mouths of Babes Exhortation by Children and the Great Revival in Kentucky." *Practical Matters* 2 (2009), http://practicalmattersjournal.org/issue/2/analyzing-matters/out-of-the-mouths-of-babes (accessed April 16, 2011), 9.

[157] Ibid.,10.

decided to go see the religious furor that many anticipated would take place.[158] He boasted emotionalism would not affect him. When he arrived at the meeting grounds,

> The noise was like the roar of Niagara. The vast sea of human beings seemed to be agitated as if by a storm. I counted seven ministers, all preaching at one time, some on stumps, others in wagons, and one…was standing on a tree which had, in falling, lodged against…another. Some of the people were singing, others praying, some crying for mercy in the most piteous accents, while others were shouting most vociferously. While witnessing these scenes, a peculiarly-strange sensation, such as I had never felt before, came over me. My heart beat tumultuously, my knees trembled, my lip quivered, and I felt as though I must fall to the ground. A strange supernatural power seemed to pervade the entire mass of mind there collected…Soon after I left and went into the woods…and wished I had staid [*sic*] at home.[159]

Like Finley, many went to the revival to see the commotion. Others went for less honorable reasons. Sexual "irregularities" were common.[160] Six men and a woman of "easy virtue" were lying under a preaching stand when discovered.[161] At night, the nearby woods tempted some to adultery.[162] The holy fair that was at Cane Ridge was loud and brash, at times rude and lewd, often full of prayer, praise, noise, and overloaded with people.

For Rev. Barton W. Stone, the host pastor of the revival and for whom faith was at one time filled with Presbyterian doctrine, a freewheeling spirit stood in stark contrast to the heavy clog of Calvinism.[163] He wrestled with the prevalent teachings: total depravity, one's inability to believe or repent, spiritual election, irresistible grace, and all

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[158] James B. Finley, *Autobiography of Rev. James B. Finley; or, Pioneer Life in the West*, ed. W. P. Strickland (Cincinnati: Cranston and Curtis, 1853), 164-5.

[159] Ibid., 166-7.

[160] Charles A. Johnson, *The Frontier Camp Meeting: Religion's Harvest Time* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1955), 65.

[161] Ibid.

[162] Ibid., 66.

[163] Stone, *Biography*, 33.

in God's time, one must wait for God to act.[164] The Genevan reformer's contradictory doctrine was mocked in a popular jingle:

> You can and you can't.
> You will and you won't.
> You're damned if you do.
> And damned if you don't.[165]

Yet some ten years prior to Cane Ridge, Stone, while preparing for ministry, heard a "new light" Presbyterian minister, William Hodge, preach on the theme "God is Love."[166] The freshness of this thought burst through Stone's burdensome Calvinism, "I yielded and sunk at his [Christ] feet a willing subject…I confessed to the Lord my sin and folly in disbelieving his word so long –and following so long the devices of men. I now saw that a poor sinner was as much authorized to believe in Jesus…that *now* was the accepted time, and day of salvation."[167] Stone realized that he was free to choose Christ on his own accord. The young minister's religious views contrasted with traditional Presbyterian belief that one's salvation rested on being destined by God for salvation and evidenced by way of dreams, visions, or miraculous interventions. But his budding New Light Presbyterian theology held to a rational submission to Christ who saved sinners through the love of God.[168] This he called his unique doctrine.[169] When a sinner read or heard the gospel that the Creator loved the whole world, that individual, on his or her own accord, could believe (or not) the Good News and see the goodness and divine glory without a predetermined spiritual intervention.[170] Therefore, one's faith came by the

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[164] Ibid., 9.
[165] William G. McLoughlin, Jr., *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1959), 98.
[166] Ibid.,10.
[167] Ibid., 11.
[168] Newell D. Williams, *Barton Stone: A Spiritual Biography* (St Louis: Chalice Press, 2000), 52.
[169] Stone, *Biography*, 44-5.
[170] Ibid., 52-3.

Almighty's transforming grace through the hearing of the gospel and not by the work of predestined election or the *prior* work of the Holy Spirit.[171] A sinner did not need to wait but could understand and choose to believe immediately. Stone described his own journey in committing his own life to the Maker this way.

Yet, from what he witnessed at Cane Ridge he thought the spirit of God worked in an individual's life. Several months before calling the camp meeting at his own church, Stone went to see for himself the religious excitement occurring in the revivals. Sitting next to several acquaintances, he carefully observed how they were "struck down."[172] Confession of sin, prayers, repentance, deliverance and thanksgiving on the lips of those so struck astounded him, "my conviction was complete that it was a good work–the work of God; nor has my mind wavered since on the subject."[173] While Stone never had this heightened experience in his own life he, nonetheless, validated the Spirit's work in others.[174]

Central to the Cane Ridge pastor's spirituality were New Light Presbyterian views which included knowing and enjoying God.[175] The Disciple historian and president of Brite Divinity School, D. Newell Williams, defined spirituality as "one's fundamental orientation to God."[176] For Barton Stone, William Hodge facilitated that orientation of a loving encounter with a caring Creator. The preaching moved the young minister, "My heart warmed with love for that lovely character described."[177] The intimate relationship Stone had with the Lord, spilled over into his personal life as he was known for his pious

[171] Ibid., 55. My emphasis.
[172] Ibid., 35.
[173] Ibid.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Williams, *Barton Stone*, 240.
[176] Ibid., 4.
[177] Stone, *Biography*, 10-11.

and irenic spirit. One lady who knew him for years yet disagreed with his theological positions declaimed, "I don't care how much you love Mr. Stone, *I* love him as much as any of you."[178] And another opponent alleged, "B. W. Stone has done more harm by his good conduct than by all his preaching and writing: because…he has lived so much like a Christian, that the people take him to be one."[179]

At Cane Ridge, he observed the full-blown awakening spirit. Still, Stone was not naive, "Much did I then see, and much have I since seen, that I considered to be fanaticism; but this should not condemn the work."[180] Some declaimed it the work of the devil but Stone retorted, "[It] cannot be a Satanic work, which brings men to humble confession and forsaking of sin. I am always hurt to hear people speak lightly of this work. I always think they speak of what they know nothing about."[181]

The largest and most raucous of America's camp meetings had its roots in the even larger holy fair at Cambuslang, Scotland. Both were highly emotional religious events drawing thousands of people from all levels of society. The sphere of people in and around Cane Ridge accounted for much of what occurred during the second week of August in 1801. Its seedbed was the wave of excited religious events spreading through the region during the Second Great Awakening. After a long dry spell, the revival looked to be God's work bringing the hard rain of the Spirit on sinners.

America's Pentecostal gathering was far from perfect. Nonetheless, it exhibited the egalitarian ideals of the Christian Kingdom among a frontier people. The spiritual chaos of the camp was emblematic of the old order unable to contain a new structure

[178] Ibid, 263.
[179] Ibid.
[180] Ibid.
[181] Ibid.

based upon "American" values, fostered in the Enlightenment, that all people are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights: life, liberty, the pursuit of [eternal] happiness, and, perhaps even, the Holy Spirit. Despite all its enlightened New World values, Alexander Campbell and many of the first generation leaders within the Stone-Campbell movement were suspicious of, if not down right opposed to, such emotionalism and participation in it. Religious liberty was sanctioned but when it included dangerous emotional forces it ran up against the authoritarian wall of Lockean epistemology and, for some, a scriptural interpretation constrained by that same philosophy.

The churches Barton Stone inaugurated in the years following the assembly humbly called themselves just "Christians."[182] In 1832, they united with Alexander Campbell's "Disciples." These two groups had much in common and integration of their dissimilarities took place over the years. Still, different strands of belief existed that caused friction by the time Dr. Robert Richardson and Tolbert Fanning began their dispute. One of those threads was the near complete rejection of the emotions and spiritual operations like that experienced by Stone and others at Cane Ridge.[183] That denunciation had its nativity in the philosophy of British philosopher John Locke.

[182] Barton W. Stone, "The Biography of Elder Barton Warren Stone, Written by Himself; with Additions and Reflections by Elder John Rogers," in *The Cane Ridge Reader*, ed. Hoke S. Dickinson (1847: repr., n.p., 1972), 50.

[183] Ibid., 27.

Chapter Three

The Locke on Spirituality

> Reason must be our last judgment and guide in everything.
>
> - John Locke

> Now we cannot separate the Spirit and word of God…Whatever the word does, the Spirit does; and whatever the Spirit does in the work of converting men, the word does. We neither believe nor teach abstract Spirit nor abstract word, but word and Spirit, Sprit and word."
>
> - Alexander Campbell

> Christian faith is the perfection of human reason.
>
> - Samuel Taylor Coleridge

When John Locke published his seminal *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in 1689 his objective was to oppose scholasticism and promote reason, sensate knowledge, egalitarianism, practical religion, and secular values.[184] Following its release, Locke responded to the criticism it engendered.[185] Yet the writing, as well as Locke's other works, *Two Treatises of Government*, *Letter on Toleration, Some Thoughts Concerning Education* and *The Reasonableness of Christianity* propelled him as the "most influential philosopher of modern times."[186]

On American soil, the most profound influence upon the first generation leaders of the Stone-Campbell Movement was the philosophy of the British empiricist.[187] The four primary heads of the emerging group were: father and son Thomas and Alexander

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[184] John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Peter H. Nidditch (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), xvii.

[185] Ibid., xvi.

[186] Ibid.; William Uzgalis, "John Locke," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2014 Edition), Edward N. Zalta (ed.), http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2014/entries/locke (Accessed 7 January 2015).

[187] Michael W. Casey, *The Battle Over Hermeneutics in the Stone-Campbell Movement, 1800-1870* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 35-40; Robert Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell*, rev. ed., 2 vols. (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1897), 2: 356.

Campbell, Walter Scott and Barton W. Stone.[188] All had significant exposure to Enlightenment thinking prevalent at the time.[189] Immigration of those ideas to America and transplanting them into the libertarian soil of the young nation, as historians E. Brooks Holifield and Nathan O. Hatch intimated, was natural. In the wake of the tumult created by the enthusiastic revivals, a strict interpretation of the *Essay* gave opponents a rational means by which to quell chaotic sacramental occasions by encasing the Holy Spirit into the words of scripture.

The writings of the father of empirical philosophy infused American principles, values, government, and the Constitution. A devout Christian, his purpose was to inquire and explore the breadth and limits of human knowledge.[190] In opposition to scholasticism, he denied the universality of innate ideas in the human mind.[191] Instead, he portrayed the human mind more akin to a sheet of "white paper" completely blank of content or ideas.[192] He explained that our minds became vessels for ideas and knowledge by way of experience and "Observation, employ'd [*sic*] either about external, sensible Objects [*sic*]; or about the internal Operations [*sic*] of our Minds [*sic*], perceived and reflected on by our selves [*sic*]…[which] supplies our Understandings [*sic*] with all the material of thinking."[193] Consequently, he recognized only sensate experience along with the mind's contemplation of those external impressions as the basis for all knowledge. No one, no matter how intelligent or open to creative thoughts, can "invent or frame one new simple Idea [*sic*] in the mind, not taken in by the ways...mentioned."[194]

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[188] Walter Scott is not to be confused with the writer and poet, Sir Walter Scott.
[189] Holifield, *Theology in America*, 293-4.
[190] Locke, *Essay,* 43.
[191] Ibid., 48-51.
[192] Ibid., 104.
[193] Ibid.
[194] Ibid.,119-20.

For Locke, intuition was the most reliable type of human information.[195] The capability to consider two ideas in the mind and then perceive how those notions agree or disagree without exterior influence was a certain truth.[196] Because we intuit our own existence to be true, that very insight drives us to know the existence of a Creator.[197] The basis for this relied on the self-evident axiom that non-existence cannot produce life.[198] Some power must have created humans that force is called God.[199] Overall, knowledge of and from the external world, as well as the operation of the human mind via reflection, was "very short and scanty."[200] Yet, the Author of Life has given the faculty of judgment to weigh the ideas one received from the world.[201] With the ability to make decisions, the mind ascertained the probability of a notion to be true.[202] The veracity of any idea, argument or proof, must conform to one's own information, observation and experience or, if lacking those then, the testimony of others may be considered.[203] In such an instance, one must ponder the number of witnesses, their integrity, skills, the intent of the speaker or author, consistency and inspect contrary testimonies.[204]

Locke divided his *Essay* into four books. The first three dealt with innate ideas, words, language and substance, which led up to Book IV. This last book of the *Essay*, addressed the various degrees of knowledge, religious questions of the existence of God, faith and reason, and religious enthusiasm. According to Locke, faith falls into another

[195] Ibid., 531, 537.
[196] Ibid., 530-1.
[197] Ibid., 621.
[198] Ibid., 620
[199] Ibid.
[200] Ibid., 652.
[201] Ibid., 653.
[202] Ibid., 654-5.
[203] Ibid., 655-6.
[204] Ibid.

category of understanding.[205] Whereas; the most accurate knowledge is derived "according to reason," faith is "above reason," and is "the assent to any proposition, not thus made out by the deductions of reason, but upon the credit of the proposer, as coming from God in some extraordinary way of communication. This way of discovering truths to men we call *revelation*."[206] In *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, the British empiricist filled in his argument, outlined in the *Essay,* with testimony based upon a "proposer."[207] Validity then is based upon the veracity of the advocate. The Christian faith is, therefore, reasonable because the witness is Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah.[208] Additionally, this divine man revealed outward signs of fulfilled prophecy and performed miracles throughout his life and ministry, which supported its trustworthiness.[209]

Testimony by a sponsor was important to Locke but so was credible faith. One's ascent to belief must be regulated and confirmed by reason otherwise such conviction was built on fancy.[210] If a religious idea was in opposition to our factual knowledge that notion was unbelievable.[211] Revelation that purported to be from God yet contradicted reasoned knowledge destroyed the enlightened state placed in humankind by the Deity.[212] Locke denied revelation when reason or evidence was absent, "Reason must be our last judgment and guide in everything."[213]

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[205] Ibid., 665 -7.
[206] Ibid., 687-9.
[207] Ibid.
[208] John Locke, *The Reasonableness of Christianity with a Discourse of Miracles and part of A Third Letter Concerning Toleration*, ed. I. T. Ramsey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958), 12-13, 32-3.
[209.] Ibid., 12-13.
[210] Locke, *Essay*, 687.
[211] Ibid., 692.
[212] Ibid., 692-3.
[213.] Ibid., 704; Nicholas Wolterstorff, *John Locke and the Ethics of Belief* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 120-21.

At the time of Locke's writing, "enthusiasts" so vexed him he added an additional chapter in the fourth edition of his *Essay*.[214] Who were these individuals? They were folk who thought they received special guidance from the Spirit of God, which transcended reason and, thereby, placed an imprimatur upon their lives.[215] Further, they thought heaven purposefully gave them a special infusion of the Spirit and so must obey it despite strange or unreasonable commands.[216] The nativity of these other-worldly thoughts, he held was from "a warmed or over-weening [*sic*] Brain."[217] Religious fanatics were certain God had revealed knowledge to them because they *strongly* believed it was so.[218] Accordingly, their thinking was, for the philosopher, begging the question and fallacious.[219] Reason and revelation are complimentary, according to the treatise, and one without the other, in the realm of faith, produces absurdities like Tertullian's "I believe, because it is impossible."[220] St. Anslem's "*fides quaerens intellectum*" or St. Augustine's "*credo ut intelligam*" are closer to the essayist's position.[221]

Irrationality and arbitrary revelation based solely on one's belief or persuasion lends itself, ultimately, to religious intolerance, which Locke, abhorred.[222] So, how does one know if a revelation came from God? If an individual does not *know* if it was from Heaven, then, it simply is not.[223] One is required to substantiate inspiration by testing it against natural reason or by receiving other convincing physical evidences, such as

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[214] Wolterstorff, *John Locke,* 118.
[215] Locke, *Essay*, 699.
[216] Ibid.
[217] Ibid.
[218] Locke, *Essay*, 700, 702.
[219] Locke, *Essay*, 700; Wolterstorff, *Ethics of Belief*, 120.
[220] Locke, *Essay*, 696.
[221] "Faith seeking understanding" and "I believe in order to understand."
[222] Ibid., 659-61.
[223] Ibid., 701.

miracles, to know it is supernatural.[224] Locke believed the deity gave insight to people through the Holy Spirit yet, he was sure the enthusiasts were deluded.[225] In those instances where no physical evidences was given, the British philosopher kept open the door to light from above.[226] But inspiration that was true was "consonant to the *Revelation* in the written word of God…and reason."[227] If the Almighty gave spiritual insight then, it was incumbent upon the believer to measure it against reason or scripture.[228] To reject testing a vision against those two guides was tantamount to laziness and contributed to possible confusion among religionists by making the deity the originator of "opposite and contradictory Lights."[229] Otherworldly urges that were attested by none other than the individual, him or herself, were errors and Locke strongly rejected such as coming from God.[230]

Apart from written revelation and intuitive certainty, the *Essay* upheld the cosmological argument for the Creator's existence.[231] A Supreme Being was knowable through the evidence of the created world.[232] As one expects from an empiricist, natural theology was not circumscribed. However, as Locke affirmed the reasonableness of Eternal Divinity, he seemed reluctant to speak of the Holy Spirit. Although, he wrote about infinite numbers of angels, spirits, and demons, the third Person of the Trinity was rarely mentioned.[233] Vere Chappell, in his *Cambridge Companion to Locke* observed that

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[224] Ibid., 704-5.
[225] Ibid., 705; Wolterstorff, *Ethics of Belief*, 119.
[226] Ibid., 705.
[227] Ibid., 705-6.
[228] Ibid .
[229] Ibid., 698-9.
[230] Ibid., 706.
[231] Ibid., 620.
[232] Ibid., 622.
[233] Ibid., 557. Locke accepted scripture as being trustworthy revelation, which, therefore, led him to assume the existence of heavenly spirits beyond sensory evidence.

the great philosopher was theologically, in the last fifteen years of his life, a Unitarian.[234] Perhaps this was why the notion was infrequent. Five years later *The Reasonableness of Christianity* completely avoided the orthodox doctrine.[235] Nonetheless, whether he acquiesced to the Holy Spirit as one of the three Persons of the Godhead, he did, paradoxically, trust God's ability to spiritually enlightenment men's minds.[236]

Locke never transcended the empirical world. For the existence of things that fall outside of our senses we have words from scripture used in the secular world that imply their essence though not their existence: Spirit = "breath."[237] Throughout the *Essay*, the author infrequently mentions the Spirit or spirits, which was likely due to his emphasis on sensate reality and to avoiding speculation.

A glimpse of the British philosopher's conflicted understanding of the Paraclete was revealed in the last years of his life in An *Essay for the Understanding of St. Paul's Epistles*, which was published posthumously. In his commentary notes on Romans 8: 9-29, he concentrated on verse 11. The issue was whether the Spirit was a force that will enliven believers at the eschaton or if the Intercessor was given in the present time to mortal believers to aid them in their battle against sin.[238] Locke explains Paul's meaning,

> Here he [Paul] shows, that christians [*sic*] are delivered from the dominion of their carnal, sinful lusts, by the spirit of God, that is given to them, and dwells in them, as a new quickening principle and power, by which they are put into the state of a spiritual life, wherein their members are made capable of being made the instruments of righteousness, if they please, as living men, alive now to righteousness, so to employ them.[239]

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[234] Vere Chappell, *The Cambridge Companion to Locke* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 185.
[235] Ibid.
[236] Locke, *Essay*, 699, 705.
[237] Ibid., 402-3. The biblical word is "pneuma" or in the Greek: "πνευμα."
[238] John Locke, *The Works of John Locke*, vol. 7 (London: C. and J. Rivington, et. al., 1824), 361.
[239] Ibid.

The common sense understanding of Paul shows divine infusion into the lives of living Christians. According to Church of Christ scholar, Patrick Leon Brooks, this passage and its attendant notes are the most instructive explanation of the work of the third person of the Trinity by the English sage.[240] But juxtaposed against this in chapter twenty-one of Book IV, he unambiguously said, "Ideas of Spirits does not make us know that any such Things do exist without us…We have ground from revelation…to believe with assurance, …but our Senses [are not] able to discover them."[241] Here we see the limits of Locke's own philosophy unable to explain how one can have the heavenly indwelling when only sensate knowledge is recognized.

All four leaders of the new American church were influenced by the thoughts of the British empiricist. In 1786, when Thomas Campbell, father of Alexander, graduated from the highly regarded University of Glasgow, the philosophic influence of Scottish Enlightenment was at its zenith.[242] Commonsense thinking propounded by Thomas Reid (1710-1796) was foundational as was the study of Bacon and Locke.[243] So taken by Locke's writings, Thomas introduced his son Alexander to the *Letters of Toleration* and *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* on the occasion of the boy's sixteenth birthday.[244] The elder Campbell also tutored his youngster in the English classics, French, Latin and Greek.[245] By the time the lad was twenty he matriculated into the same university his father had attended and sat under some of the same professors as his father

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[240] Patrick Leon Brooks, "Lockean Epistemology and the Indwelling Spirit in the Restoration Movement" (master's thesis, Abilene Christian University, 1977), 30.

[241] Locke, Essay, 637.

[242] Cummins, *Struggle for Reformation*, 39-40.

[243] Ibid., 3, 40.

[244] Ibid., 49; Eva Jean Wrather, *Alexander Campbell: Adventurer in Freedom, A Literary Biography*, ed. D. Duane Cummins (Fort Worth: TCU and Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 2005), 1:42.

[245] Ibid.

some twenty-five years previously.[246] Alexander, who eventually became the preeminent leader of the Stone-Campbell movement, was, like Thomas, well acquainted with continental and Scottish Enlightenment thought.[247]

While the Campbell's were Irish, Walter Scott's homeland was Scotland.[248] In 1812, he traveled to and enrolled at the University of Edinburgh.[249] Undoubtedly the prevalent rationalist philosophy and theology taught there affected his views.[250] He read Locke among other important rational thinkers while completing the standard six-year course work in 1818.[251] In contrast, Barton Warren Stone was the only one of the four-primogenital leaders to be born in America. A native Marylander, Stone attended the highly respected academy established by David Caldwell, who, himself, graduated from Princeton in 1761.[252] At the college, the future leader was schooled in the New Light tradition and in the classics, moral philosophy and British empiricism.[253]

Arguably, the most profound influence upon the first generation leaders of this frontier faith was the philosophy of John Locke.[254] An example of how powerful Locke's writings had on the younger Campbell is reflected in a letter from Dr. Robert Richardson, friend, co-editor and biographer of the leader to fellow Disciple, Reverend Isaac Errett

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[246] Robert Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell,* rev. ed., 2 vols, (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1897), 1:131.

[247] A. T. DeGroot, *Disciple Thought: A History* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University, 1965), 48.

[248] MacAllister and Tucker, *Journey in Faith*, 130.

[249] Mark G. Toulouse, ed. *Walter Scott: A Nineteenth-Century Evangelical* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1999), 81.

[250] Ibid., 85.

[251] Ibid., 82-3.

[252] *American National Biography Online*, s. v. "Caldwell, David;" Williams, Barton Stone, 17.

[253] Ibid.; Anthony L. Dunnavant, *Cane Ridge in Context: Perspectives on Barton W. Stone and the Revival* (Nashville: Disciple of Christ Historical Society, 1992), 78.

[254] Michael W. Casey, *The Battle Over Hermeneutics in the Stone-Campbell Movement, 1800-1870* (Lewiston, NY: the Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 35-40; Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell,* 2: 356. Richardson remarks that early Stone-Campbell evangelists often carried only a Bible, hymnal and a copy of Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in their saddlebags!

(1820-1888), in 1857. The good doctor was extremely troubled, "The philosophy of Locke with which Bro[ther] Campbell's mind was deeply imbued in youth has insidiously mingled itself with almost all the great points of the reformation and have been all the while an iceberg in the way–chilling the heart and benumbing the hands, and impeding all progress in the right direction."[255] Richardson's dark analysis was indicative of the sway sensate theories had on Campbell.

Alexander Campbell was doubly disturbed by both the spiritual mysticism inherent in Calvinism and by the same emotionalism that troubled Locke.[256] The young leader tossed aside the "christian [*sic*] experience" of regeneration ubiquitous in Reformed theology.[257] Preaching that endorsed a supernatural "invisible, indescribable energy" that overwhelms individuals prior to believing, he thought was the "most insipid and useless thing in the world."[258] So, too, that all people were spiritually dead and lifeless unless God acted on them but first must despair until signs of election were evident.[259] Disciple historian W. E. Garrison observed that Campbell, like Locke before him, abandoned rigid adherence to empiricism when it could not explain spiritual operations.[260] He noticed divergent positions in several of the leader's writings and debates. In the 1835 text of *The Christian System*, regeneration of the individual was explained: "All that is done in us before regeneration, God our Father effect by *the word*,

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[255] Dr. Robert Richardson to Rev. Isaac Errett, July 16, 1857, Richardson Papers, Bethany College, Bethany, WV; *Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, s.v. "Errett, Isaac." Errett was a prominent minister in the movement and editor of the *Christian Standard*.

[256] Winfred E. Garrison, *The Sources of Alexander Campbell's Theology: Its Sources and Historical Setting* (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Company, 1909), 255.

[257] Alexander Campbell, "Address to the readers of the Christian Baptist, No. IV," *The Christian Baptist*, 12th ed. D. S. Burnett, (March 1824), 49; See also Winfred Ernest Garrison, *The Sources of Alexander Campbell's Theology: Its Sources and Historical Setting* (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Company, 1900), 260-1.

[258] Ibid.

[259] Ibid.

[260] Garrison, *Sources of Alexander Campbell's Theology*, 258.

or the gospel…but…after our new birth the Holy Spirit is shed on us richly through Jesus Christ." Here the Comforter was consubstantial with the words or text of the gospel and thereby revealed spiritual ideas to humans and consequently, avoided being mysterious.[261] Unequivocally he states, "Now we cannot separate the Spirit and word of God…Whatever the word does, the Spirit does; and whatever the Spirit does in the work of converting men, the word does. We neither believe nor teach abstract Spirit nor abstract word, but word and Spirit, Sprit and word."[262] Nonetheless, later in the same writing he observed that extramundane qualities are showered on the individual after new birth, separate from the word.[263] Contrarily, during a debate in 1843 with Presbyterian Nathan Rice in Lexington, Kentucky, he reiterated his previous opinion that the holy Messenger had no power except in and through scripture itself.[264]

While Campbell rejected the Calvinist theory of regeneration and spiritual phenomena, Robert Richardson recorded two incidents in Campbell's life that attested of such experiences. One occurred during the shipwreck near the Hebrides on the young leader's first attempted voyage to America.[265] Another was recorded while riding with the Baptist minister, "Raccoon" John Smith (1784-1868): "Having crossed Licking River and riding slowly up the bank, I asked brother Campbell to tell me *his experience*. He readily did so, and in turn asked a relation of mine, which was given. After hearing his experience, I would cheerfully have given him the hand of fellowship."[266] It seemed the

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[261] Ibid., 265.

[262] Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System, In Reference to the Union of Christian, and a Restoration of Primitive Christianity, As Plead in the Current Reformation* (St. Louis: John Burns, 1866), 64.

[263] Ibid.

[264] Ibid., 268, 275; Campbell, *The Christian System*, 267.

[265] Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell,* 1: 99-102.

[266] Ibid., 2:111-2; *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, s.v. "Smith, "Raccoon" John. Smith later left the Baptists and became a leader in Campbell's movement.

leader of the movement, who was himself a disciple of Locke, had difficulty being consistent to a sensate philosophy that ruled out an extra-biblical spirituality.

In the group's preeminent journal, the *Millennial Harbinger*, Campbell wrote a series of article entitled, "Dialogue on the Holy Spirit."[267] Robert Richardson, his biographer, assessed the author's effort, "he was led to employ abstractions and philosophical distinctions in relation to moral and physical power…with a view, as he said, to make himself understood, but which only opened the way to new misunderstandings."[268]

The thread of Enlightenment thinking, especially that of John Locke, was a pervasive power on leaders of the movement: Thomas and Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott, and, perhaps less so, upon Barton W. Stone. A fifth, and yet behind the scene, leader was Dr. Robert Richardson. Like the previous four, he was well acquainted with the writings of the influential British philosopher. Richardson was a private student of Walter Scott, graduated from Western University of Pennsylvania (now University of Pittsburg) and matriculated into the most prestigious medical school of its day, the School of Medicine of the University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia.[269] Called the movement's "Phillip Melanchthon" by Church of Christ historian Leroy Garrett, the doctor was a scholar of the first rank and wrote more journal articles for *The Millennial Harbinger* than anyone except Alexander Campbell himself.[270] Fluent in French, and proficient in

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[267] The series commenced in the January 1831 issue of *The Millennial Harbinger*.

[268] Richardson, Memoirs, 2:354-5.

[269] Cloyd Goodnight and Dwight E. Stevenson, *Home to Bethphage: A Biography of Robert Richardson* (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1949), 35, 44.

[270] Leroy Garrett. "The Role of Robert Richardson in the Restoration Movement," *Restoration Review* 3 (January 1961), http://www.leroygarrett.org/restorationreview/rr03_01/rr03_01b.htm (accessed 22 January 2015). Richardson's library is housed at Bethany College in Bethany, West Virginia. The collection contains some 300 volumes ranging from William Cowper, Charles Darwin, Thomas Chalmers, William Chillingsworth, Martin Luther, William Paley, Charles Rollin, Samuel

Latin and Greek, he mastered the violin and owned a Stradivarius.[271] However, his principal focus was the blossoming reformation movement.[272]

In March 1836, at the invitation of the leader of the Disciples, Richardson moved to Bethany, Virginia to be co-editor of the widely read *Millennial Harbinger*, professor of Chemistry at Bethany College, and town physician.[273] Once he settled into his farm outside of town, which he called Bethphage, he and the Sage of Bethany formed a close alliance.[274] The professor began publishing a series of articles in 1842-43 on "The Spirit of God."[275] The purpose was to advance thinking of spiritual matters and mute the cold literalism of the material rationalism that held sway throughout the movement.[276] The writing resulted in a private and passionate discussion between the two editors.[277] However, the dialogue readied Campbell for a debate in 1843 with N. L. Rice, a well-regarded Presbyterian, concerning the work of the Holy Spirit.[278] The physician sought to convince his friend that he should not defend a position that limited the work of God's Spirit in conversion to only the text of scripture.[279] Tolerance, devotion, liberty and freedom of opinion were the likely casualties in such an exchange, he thought, while

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Taylor Coleridge, Virgil, and Plutarch, et. al. One who reads Richardson's personal correspondence will immediately recognize he was careful, accurate, and clear thinking.

[271] Goodnight and Stevenson, *Home to Bethphage*, 28.

[272] Ibid., 56, 70.

[273] Ibid, 65, 101. Bethany was located in Virginia prior to the admission of West Virginia to statehood in 1863.

[274] Ibid., 83-4, 90.

[275] Ibid., 119; Robert Richardson, "The Spirit of God—No.1," *The Millennial Harbinger*, new series, 6 (December 1842): 533-8.

[276] Goodnight and Stevenson, *Home to Bethphage*, 118-22.

[277] Ibid., 122.

[278] Ibid. The debate was later published in 1844. Alexander Campbell and N. L. Rice, *A Debate between Rev. A. Campbell and Rev. N. L. Rice, on the Action, Subject, Design, and Administration of Christian Baptism; Also on the Character of Spiritual Influence in Conversion and Sanctification, and on the Expediency and Tendency of Ecclesiastic Creeds, in Terms of Union and Communion* (Cincinnati: A. T. Skillman & Son, 1844).

[279] Goodnight and Stevenson, *Home to Bethphage*, 123.

mechanical literalism and logic were already straining members in churches.[280] Followers became divided into separate groups. Some favored a "Word alone" position that imprisoned the Paraclete within the actual text of scripture while others favored an unfettered "Spirit only" approach that relied heavily on feelings, the latter of which Campbell and others objected.[281] The doctor sought to promote a middle way that encouraged devotional life, which he thought, was lacking in the people.[282] Opposed to rampant spiritual emotionalism, he nonetheless thought no philosophic system such as Locke's should squeeze out an "inner quality of life" marked by a devotional "seek[ing] after fellowship with God, and…real communion to be enjoyed with the spiritual world."[283]

Still, he believed Locke was right: "facts first, then testimony, then faith, then feeling, then action."[284] Yet, when facts and testimony are valorized too highly religion was reduced to mere belief in gospel *facts*.[285] Belief was then betrayed.[286] "True Christian faith, reached beyond the recorded facts to the PERSON concerning whom the facts are related. It is CHRIST himself, and not any, nor all of the facts in his history, that is the true and proper object of this faith."[287]

The physician from Bethphage called the philosophy of empirical and material reality embodied in the writings of Locke and Bacon, "dirt philosophy."[288] Whereas,

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[280] Ibid.
[281] Ibid., 120-1.
[282] Ibid., 122.
[283] Ibid., 173, 122.
[284] Goodnight and Stevenson, *Home to Bethphage,* 172.
[285] Ibid. Emphasis mine. Campbell defined fact in *The Christian System* as "something done…they are "things" not words, 110-12.
[286] Ibid.
[287] Ibid.
[288] Leonard C. Allen and Danny Gray Swick, *Participating in God's Life: Two Crossroads for Churches of Christ* (Orange, CA: New Leaf Books, 2001), 43, 61.

older leaders of the Stone-Campbell fellowship were immersed deeply into Enlightenment ideas, the expanding Counter-Enlightenment/Romantic movement in Europe and America impressed Richardson.[289] When the countervailing ideas to empiricism reached the shores of the United States they found ready reception in Richardson. He obtained a copy of the first American edition of *The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge,* published in 1853 by James Marsh (1794- 1842) and William Shedd (1820-1894), and closely read the first volume, *Aids to Reflection*.[290] The work was influential in the nineteenth century and was consonant with much of the Bethany doctor's thinking.[291] In the preliminary essay to the *Aids*, Dr. Marsh wrote that reason and right faith were never contradictory however, if reason ran counter to an article of faith or creed then it was the article or the creed that was deficient and an individual was not obliged to believe it.[292] There was consistency between reason and faith, in truth, "Christian faith is the perfection of human reason."[293] However, it may seem contrary that Christianity was not discoverable by human reason; instead "Religion passes out of

[289] *American National Biography Online*, s. v. "Romantic Movement;" Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*, ed. Henry Hardy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), xiii; Graeme Garrard, *Counter-Enlightenments: From the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 4. This is a notoriously difficult movement to categorize or date. *American National Biography Online* assigns 1770-1830 to the European strand of Romanticism but lists no other dates to indicate its abiding influence in America down to the present time. Sir Isaiah Berlin in *The Roots of Romanticism*, 1, thought it was too difficult to define it other than as a "revolution." (page 1).

[290] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection,* Vol. 1 of *The Complete Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Professor Shedd (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1853), 117-416. Richardson wrote notes in the margins of his copy that showed his agreement with the author at various points. Richardson's personal library is held in the Campbell Archives at Bethany College, WV; *American National Biography Online*, s.v. "Marsh, James" and "Shedd, William Greenough Thayer."

[291] Douglas Hedley, *Coleridge, Philosophy and Religion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2.

[292] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, 77, 321.

[293] Ibid., 73.

the ken of Reason only where the eye of Reason has reached its own horizon—and that Faith is then but its continuation."[294]

Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection* focused upon the metaphysical concept of "spirit." This rejected Locke's own dismissal of metaphysics from philosophy, while keeping only natural philosophy, ethics, and logic.[295] The British poet claimed, "Locke erred in taking half of the truth for the whole of truth" for how can something non-physical effect physical, sensate bodies which apprehend or perceive the non-physical unless the effected force is metaphysical?[296] If there is something called "spiritual" in the individual it is the "will," for the mind is the spirit in humanity.[297] Coleridge asserted that humans were more than nature's "mechanisms of Organization" because the will was not a machine but the spirit of humanity.[298] Reason, at its core, was spiritual and it was that spirit—the indwelling of the divine spirit in our souls—which was an outpouring from the Divine Father.[299]

In 1854, Alexander Campbell, himself, added the seven volume work of Coleridge to his library and was reading carefully the "Aids to Reflection."[300] He described the British sage as a "pre-eminent Christian philosopher, metaphysician…none

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[294] Ibid.

[295] Basil Willey, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1971), 21.

[296] Coleridge, *Aids to Reflection*, 155.

[297] Ibid., 192.

[298] Ibid., 193.

[299] Ibid., 242.

[300] Alexander Campbell, "Coleridge and Regeneration," *The Millennial Harbinger* IV, Fourth Series, V (May 1854): 241; Alexander Campbell, "Coleridge on Baptism," *The Millennial Harbinger* III, Fourth Series, 6 (June 1853): 309.

have equaled him."[301] The Bethany sage was delighted to find so much in common with the English poet and philosopher,

> No evidence [is]…less paramount, to reason, pure reason, when enlightened and guided by revelation; yet to have the assent…of Coleridge—the paragon of orthodox reason and faith, in English, and Scotch, and American esteem—to our capital positions…is gratification which cannot be increased.[302]

The movement's leader's strict observance of Locke's epistemology must have undergone a maturing shift that revealed a more nuanced position.[303] Whether he agreed with all of Coleridge's positions is uncertain but what was assured was his high regard for the thinking of the Anglican churchman. However, wavering with regard to once firm positions may have confused members for whom liberty and authority were both conflicting and perplexing ideals.

Amid the swirl of philosophic thought in the nineteenth century, Dr. Robert Richardson–physician, professor, and theologian–was a reasonable Romantic who allied himself with a holistic interpretation of religious experience like that of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and was reluctant to swallow whole the rational-empirical knowledge barrier that the Enlightenment championed and the Counter-Enlightenment/Romanticism defied. The empirical philosophy of John Locke served as a powerful foundation for the Stone-Campbell movement. Early leaders highly regarded the *Essay*. Second generation leaders such as Tolbert Fanning continued that reverence. Richardson's spiritual and devotional emphasis came into conflict with any position that alleged the Holy Spirit was

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[301] Campbell, "Coleridge and Regeneration," *The Millennial Harbinger* IV, 4th ser., V (May 1854): 241.

[302] Ibid., 241-2.

[303] See my unpublished paper, "The Lunenburg Letter: Emerging Ecumenism in Alexander Campbell?" (University of Central Oklahoma, 2009). It is not uncommon for one to change positions on issues due to maturation or the cross-pollination of other views. But it can lend itself to questions that an individual is not standing firm.

consubstantial with scripture. Their strict interpretation of the *Essay* gave opponents a rational means by which to quell the carnivalesque revival. Desiring to rescue the current reformation in America from a frigid and spiritless faith, the co-editor in Bethany took to the pages of *The Millennial Harbinger* to correct the errors of Fanning and other church leaders who locked spirituality away in words.

Chapter Four

The Richardson-Fanning Controversy

> It is a cardinal feature of this religious reformation, to direct the attention of men to words, even to the precious words of Holy Scripture. But it was never intended that these should be made a substitute for the things they reveal, or that mere grammar and logic should replace spiritual discernment, and be permitted to establish themselves as a barrier between the soul and spiritual enjoyment.
>
> - Robert Richardson

Leaders and members alike in the Stone-Campbell Movement identified themselves as participants in a frontier religion. The developing indigenous group reflected the egalitarian values of its native land but struggled with the internal competition of bipolar forces in epistemology, hermeneutics, theology and culture. Additionally, religious enthusiasm, which had caught much attention in the nineteenth century and of which Disciples took part, ran headlong into Enlightenment principles. Those stresses found their way into a host of issues. Emblematic of them, and the influence of Locke throughout both church and state, was a vociferous altercation between Robert Richardson, who sought to foster spirituality in the denomination, and Tolbert Fanning, who shunned emotional excess, through their respective journals, *The Millennial Harbinger* and the *Gospel Advocate*.[304] Although the Bethany physician and the college president were leaders in the same denomination, their divergent positions with regard to Locke and the operation of the Holy Spirit developed into a bitter

[304] Leroy Garrett. "The Role of Robert Richardson," *Restoration Review*, http://www.leroygarrett.org/restorationreview/rr03_01/rr03_01b.htm (accessed 22 January 2015).

exchange that resulted in virtual dissolution of fellowship. Church of Christ scholar C. Leonard Allen declared the exchange a "clash of two incompatible theologies."[305]

The Antecedents of Conflict

Prior to the confrontation between the two journalists, a number of events and publications catalyzed their encounter and polluted the waters between Virginia and Tennessee. Considered a champion of the Southern churches and editor of the one of the region's most influential monthlies, *The Gospel Advocate*, Fanning entered the University of Nashville in 1832 and graduated three years later.[306] Due to his advancing popularity as a preacher and leader with Tennessee churches, he established Nashville's Franklin College in 1845 and, as its president, founded it as a classical and liberal arts college.[307]

The following year a young talented new preacher, Jesse Babcock Ferguson (1819-1870) arrived in Nashville with whom Fanning struck up a close friendship.[308] Within a few years, the young Ferguson published an article, "The Spirits in Prison," based upon his interpretation of 1 Peter 3:18-20, which contemplated the "harrowing of hell" by Christ–a unique understanding in nineteenth century Tennessee.[309] The college administrator was aghast at having supported such a dangerous man who contemplated both universalism and spiritualism.[310] The incident led Fanning to scrutinize others so inclined.

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[305] C. Leonard Allen, *Things Unseen: Churches of Christ in (and After) the Modern Age* (Siloam Springs, AR: Leafwood Publishers, 2004), 71.

[306] Blowers, et. al., eds, *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, s.v. "Fanning, Tolbert;" James R. Wilburn, *The Hazard of the Die: Tolbert Fanning and the Restoration Movement* (Malibu, California: Pepperdine University Press, 1980), 26.

[307] Ibid., 77-82.

[308] Ibid., 123-30

[309] Ibid., 131-41, 270.

[310] Ibid., 137-43.

A decade prior, in 1842, Dr. Robert Richardson wrote a series on the "Spirit of God" for the *Millennial Harbinger* because he thought "there [was] so little real devotion to God."[311] The installment consisted of seven articles whose purpose was to provide a scriptural view of the Comforter to a community who knew little of its personal activity.[312] Unlike Calvinist theology that required a verifiable spiritual experience prior to believing that signified heaven's "election," Disciples thought the Advocate was present in the gospel, which sinners heard and then made a reasoned decision for Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit was then given as a gift after baptism. There were two prevalent hermeneutical theories at the time as to how the Paraclete operated. One thought scripture contained a power to make itself understood, to any and all, independent of the reader's heart, mind and soul.[313] Obviously, such a position required no knowledge of scripture and, in fact, wholesale ignorance was not any detriment to understanding the Living Oracles in their entirety.[314] The second position alleged the written word was lifeless and had no transferable capacity to assist the reader's in its interpretation.[315] However, the

[311] Robert Richardson, "The Spirit of God–No.1," *The Millennial Harbinger* VI *,* New Series, 12 (December 1842): 533.

[312] Ibid.

[313] Ibid., 533-8. Richardson explains in more detail these views in another series of articles entitled, "Interpretation of the Scripture" in 1847-8. See Robert Richardson, "Interpretation--No. VIII," *The Millennial Harbinger* IV, Third Series, 10 (October 1848): 543-4.

[314] Richardson, "The Spirit of God–No.1," *The Millennial Harbinger* VI*,* New Series, 12 (December 1842: 536. Alexander Campbell, in 1826, published a new translation of the New Testament, which he called *The Living Oracles*. Campbell based the translation upon the work of Scottish churchmen, George Campbell, Philip Doddridge, and James MacKnight and included extensive appendices and notes. Campbell promoted "Bible names for Bible things" to confront the ambiguity and confusion of non-English words used in the Bible. Thus, "baptism," a Greek word that means to "dip or immerse" is rendered "immerse" rather than retained as a transliteration of the Greek. A humorous change in Campbell's translation made John the Baptist printed as John the "Immerser."

[315] Ibid., 537-8; Richardson, "Interpretation--No. VIII," *The Millennial Harbinger* IV, Third Series, 10 (October 1848): 543-4.

remedy for this inability was a "direct and independent operation of the Holy Spirit" which empowered a person's mind to comprehend.[316]

Those that opted for the first theory, called the "Word alone," thought the metaphysical third person of the Trinity was not literal but figurative—a metaphor.[317] The words themselves had a power in themselves and in that sense the gift from heaven was given to believers.[318] The second theory, called the "Spirit alone," made receiving the Holy Spirit paramount even subordinating scripture to one's supernatural experience.[319]

Years previously, Walter Scott, the denomination's foremost evangelist, in 1833, reacted to the "Word alone" theory that equated scripture and spirit with a sarcastic illustration:

> When Bro. John S_____ was preaching, shortly after the public restoration of the immersed of remission, he was asked what he meant by the Holy Spirit, for he urged the people to be baptized that they might receive the Holy Spirit, he answered that he meant the word of God–for he did not believe that the Spirit was any thing [*sic*] distinct from the word. Then replied Bro. M_____, you should say, and people will understand you, "Be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of our sins, and you shall receive a New Testament."[320]

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[316] Ibid., 544.

[317] Richardson, "The Spirit of God–No. V" *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, New Series, 10 (October 1843): 509; Richardson, "The Spirit of God-No. III" The Millennial Harbinger VII, New Series, 3 (March 1843), 125-6.

[318] Richardson, "The Spirit of God-No. V" *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, New Series, 10 (October 1843), 509-10.

[319] Richardson, "The Spirit of God-No. I " *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, New Series, 12 (December 1842), 537-8; Richardson, "Interpretation--No. VIII," *The Millennial Harbinger* IV, Third Series, 10 (October 1848): 543-4.

[320] Quoted in Michael Casey, "Mastered by the Word: Print Culture, Modernization and 'The Priesthood of All Readers' in the Churches of Christ," *in Restoring the First-century Church in the Twenty-first Century: Essays on the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement*, edited by Warren Lewis and Hans Rollmann (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2005), 315.

Richardson opposed both systems. He thought the scriptures were relatively clear but that several factors contributed to properly interpreting the Bible.[321] Primarily he wanted to disavow a supernatural dependency within either scripture itself or the Spirit itself to provide true understanding of God's message.[322] The *Harbinger* coeditor struck a middle path between that valued the condition of one's heart in the interpretive process.[323] Yet, the Comforter was not a figure of speech. He explained, "The Spirit of God literally is imparted to the believer, really and truly; taking up his abode in his person, as a distinct guest."[324]

Beyond the issue of scriptural interpretation was the working of God in the life of believers. Theorist's had a variety of positions similar to those in hermeneutics. First, were those who denied the reality of anything metaphysical and secondly, at the other extreme were those for whom everything depended upon receiving the supernatural experience.[325] Two, more nuanced, positions occupied the middle ground between those extremes. Individuals who held to a third position thought the divine presence were "purely the effect of the word of God…upon the mind of the believer."[326] The fourth were those "firm believers in the reception of the Spirit in his own person, character, and office."[327] Fanning and many others were in the third camp that opposed excess religious excitements and were "lovers of the scriptures…good citizens…have more morality than

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[321] Richardson, "Interpretation--No. VIII," *The Millennial Harbinger* IV, Third Series, 10 (October 1848): 545.

[322] Ibid., 545-6. Once again the "Word alone" and the "Spirit alone" issue was described as mutually exclusive of one another.

[323] Ibid.

[324] Richardson, "The Spirit of God-No. IV," *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, New Series, 10 (October 1843): 436.

[325] Richardson, "The Spirit of God- No. I," *The Millennial Harbinger* VI, New Series, 12 (December 1842): 536-8.

[326] Ibid., 536.

[327] Ibid., 537.

religion, and more philosophy than feeling."[328] Richardson, himself, affirmed the fourth position. However, he thought those who adhered to the third opinion, such as the Nashvillian, were right in opposing the emotional temperature of the spirit alone faction—"shouting, faintings, fallings, and other extravagancies"— but in doing so had denied the presence and power of the Advocate.[329] In the last installment of the series, the Bethany physician denigrated the rampant enthusiastic excesses, but still thought the word alone proponents harbored the greater problem.[330] The emotionalists, at least, sought out fellowship with the Divine.[331]

Spiritualism spread across the United States beginning in 1848 in Hydesville, New York.[332] Tapping into the booming interest in the strange and mysterious rapping, Richardson wrote a series of five articles entitled, "Christian Knockings" and using the scriptural entrée of Revelation 3:14-20, which portrayed the risen Christ as standing at an individual's door and knocking in hopes of being invited into one's life, suggested the Holy Comforter was waiting to be welcomed into people's hearts.[333] Like those in his day, the Bethany doctor assumed the reality of both benevolent and malevolent forces in the world. Those who were enthralled by otherworldly visitations thought demons could influence humans yet, restricted, similar angelic effects to the time of the Apostles or to miracles[334] Religious theorist's often claimed either sinful man or Satan was the

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[328] Ibid., 536. Richardson saw Campbell as being included in this group. Because of this, Richardson was very careful how he addressed the problem without trespassing the movement's leader.

[329] Robert Richardson, "The Spirit of God- No. III," *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, New Series, 3 (March 1843): 125-6.

[330] Richardson, "The Spirit of God-No. VII," *The Millennial Harbinger* VI, New Series, 12 (December 1843), 560.

[331] Ibid.

[332] *American National Biography Online*, s.v. "Spiritualism."

[333] Robert Richardson, "Christian Knockings—No.1," *The Millennial Harbinger* I, Fourth Series, 6 (June 1851): 305-9.

[334] Ibid., 307-8.

originator of evil. If that was the case then, the same must be true for an individual who planned to do something beneficial and good.[335] That is, the holy Counselor is just as logical a reason for motivating people, as is the Devil.[336] Anticipating objections from those who advocated Lockean empiricism, he agreed that the external world can influence thoughts and deeds but, when there is none, a solitary man or woman can pray and awaken a divine presence that directed one's heart and hands to do good, too.[337] It was best, he maintained, to "look at philosophy through the Bible, rather than at the Bible through philosophy" instead of trading the fruits of the indwelling Spirit for rationalism and cold-handed philosophy.[338]

The Bethany professor thought the goal of religion in general, and Christianity in particular, was for the individual to live in a close relationship with God.[339] A personal relationship with the Almighty evidenced by inner communion was the true purpose of the gospel and all one really needed do was to hear and respond to the knocking, open the door, and let the Father enter.[340]

By the middle of the nineteenth century the reforming movement that Stone and Campbell had instituted in 1832 was reaching a membership of 250,000.[341] Yet, the associate editor of the *Harbinger*, was convinced their purpose to restore apostolic Christianity was stymied by a minority of "intolerant bibliocentric" literalists who extolled Locke's philosophy as the lens through which scripture was to be properly

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[335] Ibid., "Christian Knockings—No. II," *The Millennial Harbinger* I, Fourth Series, 6 (June 1851): 326. Richardson was obviously energized by his subject as he writes more than one installment for the same month, as seen here.

[336] Ibid.

[337] Ibid., 327-8.

[338] Ibid., 331.

[339] Ibid., "Christian Knockings—No. V.," *The Millennial Harbinger* I, Fourth Series, 12 (December 1851): 704.

[340] Ibid., 707-8.

[341] Goodnight and Stevenson, *Home to Bethphage*, 169.

understood.[342] In so doing, they, admittedly, blocked rampant emotionalism and spiritualism; however, the personal, joyful, life-fulfilling relationship God desired with his people was thwarted in the process[343].

Consequently, fourteen years, after writing "The Spirit of God," and enduring Tolbert Fanning's attacks in the *Gospel Advocate* on spirituality and on moderate leaders of the movement, including himself, the *Harbinger's* associate editor wearied of it. [344]

The Richardson-Fanning Argument 1857-58

The scope of the disagreement between the two heavyweight leaders was spread over their respective journals for nearly two years and some eighteen exchanges, some of which reached ten pages or more and consumed 150 pages of newsprint. Accusations were hurled, "infidel," "sensual dogmatist," "apostate," "imbecile," and "transcendentalist." Once Campbell entered the fray many more indelicate words were published. The thrust of their pugilistic efforts is summarized in the following pages and centered on Locke's epistemology, the role of the Spirit in conversion/regeneration, natural theology, and the personal indwelling of God.

After the dissemination of one of Richardson's graduating student's highly regarded valedictory address at the 1856 commencement at Bethany College, lauded by the college's president and published in *The Millennial Harbinger*, Fanning called it "one of the most infidel productions we have seen."[345] A few months earlier, he denigrated

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[342] Ibid.

[343] Ibid., 165.

[344.] Michael W. Casey, *The Battle Over Hermeneutics in the Stone-Campbell Movement, 1800-1870* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1998), 172.

[345] Tolbert Fanning, "Metaphysical Discussion—No.5," *The Gospel Advocate* 3 (February 1857): 35, quoted in Casey, *The Battle Over Hermeneutics*, 171-2. Walter Scott Russell was Richardson's student and became increasingly injudicious in his spiritual writings.

Richardson's articles as "metaphysical" and "introduce[d] novelties among the brethren."[346] In response, the *Harbinger's* coeditor unleashed ten essays entitled, "Faith versus Philosophy." The exchange of words between the two became symbolic of the growing social, sectional, and theological divide.[347] For Richardson, this was a life or death issue for the American reformation movement instituted by the Campbells, Stone, and Scott, and, as he assessed it, "The Reformation has got stuck in the mud of a materialistic 'dirt philosophy.'"[348]

The Bethany professor began the sequence of articles using an epigraph from Colossians 2: 6, "Beware, lest any man spoil you, through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ."[349] He thought the time was ripe to warn against human philosophies that corrupted the church and against which leaders and members, alike, had fought. Heads of the movement strove to bring about true faith based upon the Bible and, hopefully, unite all believers in friendly communion.[350]

He supposed the reason for its tepid success must lie in a problem with one or more of three possibilities: the basic principles of Campbell's movement, the doctrines were not properly carried out, or some human philosophy had infiltrated and diverted the cause.[351] The first rule held scripture to be the guide for faith and each individual had the right and responsibility to judge what the Bible taught.[352] The second advocated baptism

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[346] Fanning, "Metaphysical Discussions—No. 2," *The Gospel Advocate* 2 (1856): 328, quoted in Casey, *Battle Over Hermeneutics*, 171-2.

[347] Ibid., 172.

[348] Richardson to Errett, July 16, 1857, Richardson Papers, Bethany College, Bethany, WV.

[349] Robert Richardson, "Faith versus Philosophy—No. 1," *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, Fourth Series, 3 (March 1857): 134.

[350] Ibid.

[351] Ibid., 135-7.

[352] Ibid., 136.

of believers based upon a person's confession of faith in Jesus as the Messiah.[353] In analyzing these first two, he found no defects.[354] He identified the third as the aberrant path.

In the following month's article of "Faith versus Philosophy" he praised preachers' evangelistic efforts, however he alleged more emphasis was placed on numbers than on a person's spiritual progress.[355] He thought Christianity was not intended to be only a system of conversion practices to increase membership but instead its real purpose was to renovate the heart and bring a believer into fellowship with God.[356] Another concern he had was the emphasis on organization within the church.[357] While undeniably important, the churches needed compassionate shepherds to care for the spiritual welfare of people rather than becoming spiritual "undertakers."[358] Unfortunately, elders were assumed to attend and preside at meetings, administer discipline, and cut off religious offenders.[359] Thus, local leaders thwarted the warm, joyful fellowship among believers and their personal relationship with the Almighty.

Then, in the May article in the *Harbinger*, for the wide-ranging lack of spiritual progress in both the church and in individual lives, Richardson issued a clear, diagnosis of the cause, "the error consists in the introduction of theories and speculations in direct violation of the very fundamental principles of this Reformation; in other words…the commingling together of human opinions with the Divine teachings and thus adulterating

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[353] Ibid., 136-7.
[354] Ibid.
[355] Richardson, "Faith versus Philosophy—No. II," *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, Fourth Series, 4 (April 1857): 193.
[356] Ibid.
[357] Ibid., 194.
[358] Ibid.
[359] Ibid. Ministers were called elders in the early Stone-Campbell movement.

faith with human philosophy."[360] Richardson identified President Tolbert Fanning of Franklin College and editor of *The Gospel Advocate* as "an excellent illustration of that insidiousness."[361]

With the backdrop of his embarrassment over the Ferguson affair and the contemporary upsurge in spiritualism's communication with the dead, the college president perceived its specter as entering his beloved church through Richardson. Not until the chemistry professor had finished four of eleven articles on the theme did the Nashvillian polish off his first of six snappish replies defending his position and condemning the views coming out of Virginia.

The college president laid bare his admiration of the British empiricist for all his readers in the *Advocate*, claiming, "Locke [was] the *real* author of the Baconian philosophy, and all correct thinking in England, since his day."[362] The Virginian pounced. He remarked that this could not be since Locke was born six years after Francis Bacon (1561-1626) had died.[363] Additionally, he observed that if the Tennessean thought the writer of the *Essay* was the author of all correct thinking in England then, unless Americans thought differently than their Atlantic neighbors, the empiricist was, evidently, the initiator of all thinking here, too.[364] The tenor of the exchange between the two rapidly became acerbic. Richardson's logic was cruel: "Unless President F. [*sic*], thinks *incorrectly or not at all*, it must be admitted that John Locke is the author of *his*

[360] Robert Richardson, "Faith versus Philosophy—No. 3," *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, Fourth Series, 5 (May 1857): 255.
[361] Ibid., 258-9.
[362] Quoted in Robert Richardson, "Faith versus Philosophy- No. 4" *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, Fourth Series, 5 (May 1857): 272.
[363] Ibid., 272-3. *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Online*, s.v. "Bacon, Francis."
[364] Ibid. 274.

thinking, and that he is, however *unconscious* of it, a philosopher of the School of Locke, or what is usually termed a sensual dogmatist."[365]

Supporting his accusation, he reiterated the college president's propositions: humans are not able to learn of God or his divine attributes from the observance of nature and, men and women are incapable of learning anything from their "inner spiritual nature."[366] Here was proof of the Nashvillian editor's philosophic system that understood all knowledge came by way of sensations and that metaphysical information cannot be derived from the external world.[367] Fanning thought transcendent knowledge must come only from revelation, "that is, upon words, divine communications addressed to the bodily senses, which are, in this system, regarded as the only avenues to the soul."[368] Protesting the Virginian's labeling of his philosophy that all knowledge came via the five senses and that heavenly knowledge was not obtained from one's inner nature, he countered that some may say such thinking is opinion but the Tennessean reminded his readers all bible knowledge is fact.[369] Richardson calmly replied that those two propositions were not found in scripture.[370] Furthermore, he reminded the southern preacher that he had boldly printed the assertion that humanity was so completely incapable of learning about God and heaven that a toddler knew as much as did Locke, Kant, or Bacon.[371] Attempting to deny he was imprisoned by the sensate theories of Enlightenment thinking the Tennessean, incomprehensibly, asserted that since Locke

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[365] Ibid. Richardson's emphasis.
[366] Ibid., 270.
[367] Ibid., 271.
[368] Ibid.
[369] Tolbert Fanning, "Reply to Professor Robert Richardson," *The Gospel Advocate* 3(June 1857): 189; Robert Richardson, "President Fanning's 'Reply'" *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, Fourth Series, 8 (August 1857): 445.
[370] Richardson, "Faith versus Philosophy- No.4," *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, Fourth Series, 5 (May 1857): 271.
[371] Ibid.

disavowed philosophical theories and speculation then, really, the British empiricist was not a philosopher.[372] The Bethanite thought this was childish logic and not worthy of comment.

Here was the issue Richardson was trying to prove: that individuals throughout the Stone-Campbell movement, like Fanning himself, were unwittingly replacing biblical truth with human philosophic theories. [373] Once this thinking became the truth by which everything else was measured, anything contrary became anti-spiritual "so that one cannot…say with an apostle, 'that the things of the Spirit are spiritually discerned,' without…being charged…with teaching 'strange things.'"[374] The ultimate outcome was a drying up of "the fountains of spiritual sympathy" which were replaced by mere nominalism in an effort to cure religious enthusiasm.[375]

The "very life of religion" was at stake according to the *Harbinger's* associate editor as he endeavored to clarify how the materialist philosophy of Fanning and others was strangling the sect.[376] He thought followers of sensualist thinking exaggerated the power of facts which gave scripture "unwonted efficacy," limited faith to material forms, denied the indwelling of God, negated special providence and the efficacy of prayer.[377] Yet, because he steered a middle course, he agreed evidences were an important *beginning* point for conversion and new faith.

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[372] Richardson, "President Fanning's 'Reply'" *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, Fourth Series, 8 (August 1857): 445.

[373] Robert Richardson, "Faith versus Philosophy-No. 3" *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, Fourth Series, 5 (May 1857): 256.

[374] Robert Richardson, "Faith versus Philosophy-No.5" *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, Fourth Series, 6 (June 1843): 329.

[375] Ibid.

[376] Robert Richardson, "Faith versus Philosophy-No. 5" *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, Fourth Series, 7 (July 1857): 395.

[377] Ibid.; Robert Richardson, "Faith versus Philosophy-No. 8" *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, Fourth Series, 10 (October 1857): 560.

An eleven-page installment in July provided the backdrop for the physician's analysis of the Stone-Campbell's thoughts on rebirth. Calvinism claimed a direct mysterious (and predestined) working of God on the human heart completely independent of the written word, which made the Bible superfluous in regeneration.[378] Contrarily, the American reformation placed the gospel—written or voiced—as the foundation of conversion. The schema of faith was causal: facts (of the gospel) first, testimony to those facts (either spoken or read) from which, when believed, comes faith, then feeling and, finally, one's life acted out that faith.[379] But when a Lockean sensualist, like Fanning, took over, facts were elevated to the acme and faith became merely assent to historical facts.[380] The Christian conviction was, therefore, no more filled with the devotion than one who asserted Julius Caesar lived and died.[381] Belief had no part in such a scheme but the facts were "the subject-matter—the terminus of faith—the *ne plus ultra* in this philosophy, the genius of which is ever to resolve, as far as possible, every thing [*sic*] into words, propositions, arguments, and to reduce all spiritual phenomena to the forms of the ordinary understanding.[382]

The associate editor began a careful explanation of the growth of faith, or regeneration, as the sect understood it. The Christian religion did not end with facts, like materialists thought, but was the point at which it began and was the means whereby it led to the true and proper object of faith—Christ himself.[383] Here he referenced Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus, who spoke of the trust Jewish converts had *in* Christ after

[378] Ibid., 395.
[379] Ibid., 396.
[380] Ibid.
[381] Ibid.
[382] Ibid., 396-7.
[383] Ibid., 397-9.

hearing the gospel.[384] Scripture used the Greek word εις to indicate belief *on* or *into* Christ.[385] It is unusual, he asserted, to speak of trusting *in* or *on* facts when trust implies a relationship that can only be had with persons, not words or facts.[386] Therefore, Christian faith was "a simple trusting in Christ as the Son of God."[387] An accumulation of facts did not increase or grow faith in contrast to what sensual philosophers thought. Richardson understood however, that when gospel facts were added to one's trust in Christ, then it was evident that faith flourished.[388] As an individual opened him or herself to the Redeemer, love, mercy and wisdom flowed from the Comforter.[389] Ancient, external facts did not produce mature faith, a heartfelt Christian life, however, did produce growth and grace.[390] Those with a "false philosophy of faith" were cold and agitated "ready to argue, debate, discuss" and defend their position.[391] Sadly, he argued, they were unwilling to share fellowship in Christ with a brother or sister, or spend time in conversation with other believers talking about Jesus, or discussing their spiritual struggles to become more Christ-like, or pray together, teach one another, or study the scriptures together, or ask for the spirit to guide them in their walk.[392]

Richardson reminded his readers of the proper balance between word and Spirit, testimony—whether by scripture or sermon—was the indispensable foundation of faith.[393] A relationship with God without gospel facts as a foundation for trust was, in

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[384] ibid., 401-2. Ephesians 1:11-13.
[385] Ibid.
[386] Ibid., 400-1.
[387] Ibid., 401.
[388] Ibid.
[389] Ibid., 402.
[390] Ibid., 403.
[391] Ibid.
[392] Ibid., 403-4.
[393] Ibid., 405. Richardson here alluded to Campbell to once again shore up his position.

fact, building a house on unstable ground.[394] Yet, here was the problem: material philosophers visualized faith proceeding immediately from testimony of the facts but, in truth, faith came from facts which, in turn, rested on testimony.[395] Their failure was in not "connecting believed facts with Christ himself." Consequently, facts were more than external particulars but related people to the reality (or fact) of the loving, divine person of Jesus Christ.[396] This nuanced position escaped most readers because of its subtle position. The *fact* of Jesus Christ was more often confused, and substituted, for a relationship with the Messiah.

President Fanning replied in August to his opponent. He questioned the title of Richardson's essays "Faith versus Philosophy" which inferred the physician had taught faith not philosophy.[397] His goal was, he alleged, to teach a "dreamy and mystic" theory obtained through "inner consciousness."[398] Then, he accused the coeditor of insulting readers by insisting the whole argument was nuanced, delicate, and needed to be given close attention by those of a "common mind."[399]

Furthermore, he recommended the doctor consult with Campbell about the excessive reliance upon facts because that is what the leader had taught. According to Fanning, what the Bethanite contended for was two different systems: one relied on facts and the other on direct spiritual knowledge. Those two contradictory schemes were the signal feature of his essays, he thought.[400] The Tennessean wondered whom the Bethany professor was talking to when he said true faith "reaches beyond the recorded facts to the

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[394] Ibid., 404-5.
[395] Ibid. 405.
[396] Ibid.
[397] Tolbert Fanning, "Third Reply to Professor Robert Richardson," *The Gospel Advocate* 3, 8 (August 1857): 251.
[398] Ibid., 252.
[399] Ibid., 252-3.
[400] Ibid., 254.

person…Christ is the proper object of faith."[401] Are the readers "simpletons?" he asked, for he knew of no "man or woman, black or white" who thought faith was about facts rather than Jesus.[402] Lastly, learning more and more about the Redeemer, as opposed to what the man from Bethany supposed, advanced knowledge of the kindly qualities of Jesus—love and mercy.[403]

Fanning was right: Campbell over the years had said, "Where there is no testimony there is no faith" and, by inference, if one received strong testimony firm devotion was the result.[404] In this regard, the movement leader's understanding of faith was akin to Locke's, "Faith is the assent to any proposition not made out by the deductions of men, but upon the credit of the proposer as coming from God."[405] But, according to the *Harbinger* journalist, adhering to that definition made religion head knowledge, or an intellectual proposition.[406] To accept data as the goal of religion was not the divine intent.[407] Heaven's purpose was for humankind to go beyond facts to a relationship with the Almighty.[408] Some Christians mistook confidence in the truth of words as containing the power to effect salvation.[409] Verbiage did not save sinners…however, trust in the Messiah did.[410] Further, reception of the Comforter was

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[401] Ibid.
[402] Ibid., 254-5.
[403] Ibid.
[404] Robert Richardson, "Faith versus Philosophy-No.5" *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, Fourth Series, 7 (July 1857): 404.
[405] Locke, *Essay*, 687; Fanning, "Fourth Reply to Professor Robert Richardson," *The Gospel Advocate* 3 (1857): 281.
[406] Robert Richardson, "Faith versus Philosophy-No. 5, *The Millennial Harbinger* VII Fourth Series, 7 (July 1857): 398.
[407] Ibid.
[408] Ibid., 399.
[409] Ibid., 400.
[410] Ibid.

the final goal of conversion not the act of conversion itself as the word alone proponents thought:[411]

> It is a cardinal feature of this religious reformation, to direct the attention of men to words, even to the precious words of Holy Scripture. But it was never intended that these should be made a substitute for the things they reveal, or that mere grammar and logic should replace spiritual discernment, and be permitted to establish themselves as a barrier between the soul and spiritual enjoyment.[412]

The Bethanite did not denigrate materialism of Locke, only its extreme position that offered no room for the Spirit and absence of any balance. Faith he proffered,

> Does not terminate on the facts recorded, but these are recorded that our faith might reach forward to something else—to something which is not recorded; to something which could not be recorded; to something which passes wholly beyond the vision of this wretched objective philosophy under review, even to the power, the love, the personal and official character of our blessed Redeemer himself, realized subjectively in the inner consciousness and affections of the soul.[413]

Faith is first, while philosophy aids in the understanding of it rather than being the conduit for its reception. Therefore, Richardson's understanding of faith placed him squarely with the Church fathers and classic theology of Augustine's *credo ut intelligam*, faith seeking understanding, and Anselm's *fides quaerens intellectum,* I believe so that I may understand.[414] When philosophy is given priority, sensualists declaim scripture most, but quote it least, neither devote time to it, nor question their spiritual condition or attend to the unseen spirit moving in the world."[415]

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[411] Robert Richardson, "Faith versus Philosophy-No. IX" The Millennial Harbinger VII, Fourth Series, 12 (December 1858): 697.

[412] Robert Richardson, "Faith versus Philosophy-No. 5" *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, Fourth Series, 6 (June 1857): 330.

[413] Ibid., 400.

[414] C. Leonard Allen, Things Unseen: Churches of Christ In (and After) the Modern Age (Siloam Springs, AR: Leafwood Publishers, 2004), 79.

[415] Robert Richardson, "Faith versus Philosophy-No. 5" *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, Fourth Series, 6 (June 1857): 335-6.

One who advocated knowledge arising from only the five senses undoubtedly had problems with natural theology, which inferred the existence of God from the observable universe. A leap from physical evidence to a metaphysical conclusion was too great. According to the Tennessean, all knowledge of the Divine came through revelation and so otherworldly information was contained only in the Bible and could not be obtained anywhere else.[416] To illustrate the absurdity of natural theology he marshaled the circular argument: a design must have an intelligent Designer, and the world exhibits design therefore, the world has an intelligent Designer.[417] To disprove this argument he asserted the minor premise was false and thus, he affirmed, the conclusion was also false. Richardson fell on this, incredulous that the college president was oblivious of what he had said: the world has no intelligent Creator.[418]

To support his argument for natural theology, the Bethany doctor produced the text of Romans 1:19-20, "For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them, ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made" as supporting natural theology.[419] The Nashville editor rebuffed, that scripture taught humankind's knowledge came not by looking to nature but by God *actually* showing it to them; thus, revelation was intact and natural theology debunked.[420] So problematic was this line of thinking that he thought any school that taught courses in

[416] Robert Richardson, "Faith versus Philosophy-No. 4" *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, Fourth Series, 5 (May 1843): 272.
[417] Ibid., 271.
[418] Ibid.
[419] Ibid., 268.
[420] Tolbert Fanning, "Reply to Professor Robert Richardson," *The Gospel Advocate* 3, (June 1857): 186.

philosophy or natural theology, were preparing "infidels" rather than Christians.[421] In the following response, Richardson nonchalantly mentioned that, in fact, the revered leader of the movement, Alexander Campbell, himself, taught Natural Theology at Bethany College.[422] Additionally, he quoted Locke's predecessor, Francis Bacon, who alleged natural theology was needed to appreciate revelation itself and that it opened up "our understanding to the genuine spirit of the Scriptures."[423]

With an air of victory, Tolbert Fanning revisited the controversy, his argument, and the breadth of Richardson's ambiguities enveloped in his "new theology" of "modern spiritualism."[424] Touting that his opponent had been "driven to the wall," he observed the Bethany professor was forced to revise his heterodox position and retreat toward the Bible.[425] He objected to the idea of a personal indwelling of God's Spirit because that same personage dwelt in the word and church only.[426] He made his thoughts clear:

> We profess no religious belief beyond what is written or "verbal." Words limit our confidence in religious truth. We also admit that we acknowledge none but a "formal religion," and we can with a good conscience pronounce all men infidels and profane scoffers at spiritual truth who profess anything beyond "verbal truth or truth taught in words," or beyond the "formal religion" of the Bible.[427]

In effect, Fanning pronounced a loud "No" to a Spirit that comforts, aides, and nurtures a Christian throughout his or her life except as that power is found expressly in the language of preacher or book.[428]

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[421] Richardson, "Faith versus Philosophy-No. 4" *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, 4th ser., 5 (May 1843): 268.
[422] Ibid., 268.
[423] Ibid.
[424] Tolbert Fanning, "Sixth Reply To Prof. Robert Richardson," *The Gospel Advocate* 3, 11 (November 1857): 337-8.
[425] Ibid., 338.
[426] Ibid., 340.
[427] Ibid., 339.
[428] Ibid.

The *Harbinger's* associate editor summarized the error of the Nashvillian,

> This extravagant religious nominalism…has been appropriately termed Bibliolatry. It is an ignorant, pretentious adulation, a blind, unreasoning partiality, which, in reality, degrades the Bible, by placing it in a false position, and ascribing to it exclusive power and attribute which it never claims for itself…it is a matter of serious regret, that it should be perverted by any who profess to be its advocates…[who convert it] into a cold and heartless nominalism…barren of religious fruits.[429]

Contrary to the Tennessean, Richardson gave a firm "Yes" to that divine indwelling Messenger and stood with the Apostle Paul when he commended the Thessalonians for the gospel given to them not "in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit."[430]

In closing, the Franklin College president revealed that he had advanced his cause against religious speculation more than he thought possible and "the brethren are generally alive to the danger…[while] Prof. R. is wounded to the death by his own hand, and is attempting to leave the field."[431] His final words to his readers and the Bethany physician were "God's word is the Spirit's only truth. Beyond it all is darkness—all is death."[432]

Beginning in 1858, the combatants of the controversy changed. A new series of articles emerged within the pages of *The Millennial Harbinger* that railed against Fanning, Franklin College and *The Gospel Advocate*. The author was not Dr. Robert Richardson but the senior editor of the *Harbinger* and undisputed leader of the entire movement—Alexander Campbell. Whereas earlier, the denomination's leader scolded his associate

[429] Ibid., 336.
[431] Ibid., 343.
[432] Ibid.

editor within the pages of the *Harbinger*, he warned both parties to temper their quarrel lest he intervene.[433]

The storm grew larger than a contest between Fanning and Richardson or Campbell entangling the institutions they represented. Campbell, founder and president of Bethany College, was convinced his academy was the foremost and finest and so the slight that the Nashville institution was better instructed and less tainted by unchristian philosophy became personal. The issue quickly devolved into a North versus South, Bethany College versus Franklin College, *Millennial Harbinger* versus *Gospel Advocate* dispute. The Virginian claimed no known subversive motive by the Tennessean but thought he had "greatly exaggerated the magnitude of the [theological] issue he has formed."[434] Like both the Nashville preacher and Dr. Richardson, the leader was opposed to mixing philosophy with the gospel.[435]

In the meantime, Richardson tendered his resignation as associate editor of the *Harbinger* and then received a letter in February from the newly chartered Kentucky University in Harrodsburg offering him a position as professor of natural science and vice-president of the faculty.[436] He accepted the position with enthusiasm.[437]

Campbell returned in April to Bethany from raising money for the rebuilding of the main campus building, which was destroyed by fire in December of the previous year.[438] Realizing he was soon to lose his associate editor, Chemistry professor, personal

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[433] Alexander Campbell, "Faith versus Philosophy," *The Millennial Harbinger* I , Fifth Series, 2 (February 1858): 86. See footnote; Alexander Campbell, "Christianity the True Philosophy No. 1," *The Millennial Harbinger* VII, 9 (September 1957): 481, 485.

[434] Alexander Campbell, "Faith versus Philosophy," *The Millennial Harbinger* I, Fifth Series, 2 (February 1858): 86. West Virginia became a state in 1863.

[435] Ibid.

[436] Goodnight and Stevenson*, Home to Bethphage*, 189-90.

[437] Ibid., 191-2.

[438] Ibid., 186, 192.

physician, and friend shocked the leader to set about convincing the doctor to remain at Bethany at that critical juncture.[439] A change seemed to have taken place in the movement's commander and when reminded about the disagreement with Tolbert Fanning he promised to rectify the issue.[440]

In May, Campbell, true to his word, issued "A Correction" to one of his earlier essays that had criticized his associate editor, Robert Richardson, as advocating a spirit-alone theory.[441] Referring to the physician's position on the Holy Spirit,

> These are just the views which we have held and advocated, and I know not how the misstatement…could have occurred, unless that writing the article away from home, I had not an opportunity of examining Bro. R's essays, and had probably before my mind some of those misquotations and misrepresentation of which he has complained and which we have regretted to see in some of our western periodicals.[442]

The rancor between Campbell and Fanning continued through July of 1858 descended into hardening of lines and personal attack. In July, the *Harbinger's* senior journalist terminated his side and condemned the attacks on the Bethany physician, an "outrage" of "grossest injustice."[443]

The *Gospel Advocate* concluded its side of the controversy with the July installment's words: "If Bro. Campbell is determined to conduct a war of extermination against all who oppose the new theology of Dr. R.,…we can not hope for peace or Christian union."[444] After nearly two years of acrimonious debate, the Richardson-Fanning controversy ended. Like the War of the Rebellion, one geographical entity was

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[439] Ibid., 192.
[440] Ibid.
[441] Alexander Campbell, "A Correction," *The Millennial Harbinger* I, Fifth Series, 5 (May 1858): 289.
[442] Ibid.
[443] Alexander Campbell, "President Fanning," *The Millennial Harbinger* I, Fifth Series, 6 (June 1858): 353.
[444] Tolbert Fanning, "Reply to President Campbell," *The Gospel Advocate* IV, 7 (July 1858): 198.

victorious but the deep and festering wounds lingered still; so, too, with the abiding effects of the stormy dispute between Richardson and Fanning.

Chapter Five

The Results of the Richardson-Fanning Controversy

> The final end and purpose of the entire gospel… is the renewal of the believer by the Holy Spirit, through which alone can be produced the proper fruits of Christianity, either in the individual or in the church itself.
> - Robert Richardson

The historiographical key to understanding the Stone-Campbell movement rests in recognizing the larger urban milieu and its adaptation to the emerging frontiers of social, cultural, and intellectual circumstances. As the denomination confronted urbanization (later, suburbanization) and modernization with its Turnerian sub-theme, the movement's split ideals of liberty and authority remained constant. Yet, Campbell's synthetic solution of a "willing citizenship within the Kingdom of God, a kingdom whose forms and duties had been authoritatively set forth in the New Testament" nonetheless, was unable to resolve the theological ambiguity that stressed those paradigms for members and their church alike.[445]

Allied to the two principles was the powerful underpinning of the Enlightenment typified in Lockean epistemology, which prioritized knowledge in sensate externals. The earliest foundations of the organization rested on Enlightenment principles that permeated European and American cultures in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The experiential effects of the frontier camp meetings, however, intervened into the lives of many pioneers promoting a carnivalesque sense of the world that overturned ordered principles of religious acquisition.[446] Additionally, egalitarian values, experienced in the open-air gatherings, inverted the full spectrum of hierarchical human endeavors:

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[445] Gilpin, "Faith on the Frontier," 268.

[446] This refers to Russian linguistic and literary critic, Mikhail Bakhtin, who wrote of the import of the carnivalesque as medieval anarchy and liberation.

religious, social, political, and intellectual. The juxtaposition of the Spirit with individualism promoted the ideal of liberty but undermined authority. The religious enthusiasm exhibited in Kentucky was problematic for Campbell, who saw it as a return to Calvinistic election theories and worse, spiritual chaos.

Dr. Robert Richardson, however, prized the Counter-Enlightenment views of British thinker Samuel Taylor Coleridge and his conjoining of both reason and spirit. In doing so he had not denigrated Locke's system but worked to fend off the extreme views of those who read the Bible though its lens and thereby twisted scripture to deny the believer's intimate relationship with God's Spirit.

The original plea of the Disciples was for both unity and restoration of the Church based upon New Testament principles of order and practice. In 1809, Thomas Campbell penned the "Declaration and Address," one of two founding documents of the group.[447] In it he claimed "the Church of Jesus Christ upon earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one; consisting of all those in every place that profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him."[448] His son Alexander further expanded the notion of unity to rather latitudinarian measures: "But who is a Christian? I answer, Every one [*sic*] that believes in his heart that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, the Son of God; repents of his sins, and obeys him in all things according to his measure of knowledge of his will."[449] Unity was originally intended to be inclusive of a broad spectrum of beliefs, doctrines, and opinions. The one and only essential was profession of Jesus as Messiah.

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[447] The second, not addressed here, predated the "Declaration and Address" by about five years. Barton W. Stone and five other elders of the Presbytery authored *The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery* (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1960).

[448] Thomas Campbell, *Declaration and Address* (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1960), 44.

[449] Alexander Campbell, "Any Christians Among The Sects," *The Millennial Harbinger* 1 (November 1837): 411.

The second element of the claim based restoration of the New Testament church's order and practice solely on scriptural authority. The elder Campbell wrote,

> In order to do this, nothing ought to be inculcated upon Christians as articles of faith…but what is expressly taught and enjoined upon them in the word of God. Nor ought anything to be admitted, as of Divine obligation, in their Church constitution and managements, but what is expressly enjoined by the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ and his apostles upon the New Testament Church; either in express terms or by approved precedent.[450]

The plea for unity and New Testament principles was expressed in the movement's values of liberty and authority which played out in a host of proxy issues: hermeneutics, instrumental music, Lord's Supper, unity, ministerial titles, missionary societies, spirituality, political issues, eldership, women and a host of other issues. At its root, those two ideologies were oppositional. Authority restricts liberty proportional to the magnitude of authority–personal, corporate or scriptural. As that degree variegated, the stresses of the two became a seedbed of ambiguity.

One product of ambiguity was the debate in 1857-58 between journalists of *The Millennial Harbinger* and *The Gospel Advocate*. The locus of the Fanning and Richardson contest was the understanding of scripture and the doctrine of the Trinity.[451] The Nashville journalist read the sacred writings through a rigid and literal viewpoint that was resolutely Lockean and required word and Spirit to be co-located within the words themselves. The Bethany professor held a more generous position that acknowledged Locke, but balanced the letter of the Bible with the inspiration of the Spirit that helped suffuse the believer with a living, dynamic relationship with God.

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[450] Campbell*, Declaration and Address*, 45.

[451] Leonard C. Allen. and Danny Gray Swick, *Participating in God's Life: Two Crossroads for Churches of Christ* (Orange, CA: New Leaf Books, 2001), 56-7.

The goal of the Bethany physician was not, of course, to teach proper hermeneutics. Rather his objective was to inculcate the "final end and purpose of the entire gospel…[which] is the renewal of the believer by the Holy Spirit, through which *alone* can be produced the proper fruits of Christianity, either in the individual or in the church itself."[452]

From its earliest days, because of its strong deference to scripture, most individuals of the denomination sought divine inspiration from their Bible.[453] Scripture, sermons and hymnody were the sources of inspiration.[454] Each resource emphasized words—the language of the gospel. Campbell published his first hymnal *Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs, Adapted to the Christian Religion* in 1828, which eventually went through forty-five editions but included no musical notation.[455] No words were printed in those versions because the leader worried that following musical notes distracted the worshipper from giving proper praise to God and the truth they contained.[456] The original intent of the songbook was to encourage not just congregational worship but also personal and family devotions without worldly distractions.[457] Aside from scripture, sermons, and hymnody in the nascent group, numerous writings of Barton W. Stone, in his publication *The Christian Messenger,* which he printed from 1826 to 1845, were

[452] Robert Richardson, *A Scriptural View of the Office of the Holy Spirit* (Cincinnati: Bosworth, Chase & Hall, 1873), 221.

[453] Gary Holloway, "Devotional Literature," in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, ed. Paul M. Blowers, Douglas A. Foster, Anthony L. Dunnavant and D. Newell Williams (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 270.

[454] Ibid.

[455] Jim Mankin, "Alexander Campbell's Contributions to Hymnody," *The Hymnal* 49 (January 1998): 11. Campbell was involved in other hymnals by reform leaders such as *The Christian Hymnal* in 1865.

[456] Ibid.

[457] Ibid.

devotional.[458] For one who was open to the workings of the Comforter at Cane Ridge, this was not unexpected.

Dr. Robert Richardson penned a modest number of articles that can be characterized as devotional in nature prior to his troubles with Tolbert Fanning. Beginning in June 1847 he wrote a series of deeply spiritual meditations entitled "Communings in the Sanctuary." The fifteen installments illustrated the mystery of the holy, the mystery of Christ's atoning death, and the mystery of union with God and Christ.[459] He believed "the secret of the early church's power was nothing less than this: 'the indwelling of the Spirit of God, giving unity, imparting energy, evolving the glorious fruits of Christianity, and presenting to the world, in every disciple, an illustration of the life of Christ."[460] Second generation leader J. W. McGarvey (1829-1911) reminisced that the communion talks given in worship by Richardson were "gems of beauty."[461]

For some fourteen years, prior to 1856, the associate editor of the *Millennial Harbinger* tried to convince his brothers and sisters of the need to grow religiously through the indwelling of the Paraclete.[462] After the debate between Bethany and Nashville subsided, the opportunity to realize positive results was possible. If Richardson's perspective of the need for the Stone-Campbell movement to mature in its devotional and spiritual life had won the day, then evidence of his influence should be identifiable. Inclination toward spirituality and personal devotion should be evident after the incident by the turn of the century if, in fact, Richardson's goal was having effect.

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[458] *The Christian Messenger* was accessed on CD-ROM from Faith and Facts, Inc., 1984.

[459] Robert Richardson, *Communings in the Sanctuary*, ed. C. Leonard Allen (Orange, California: New Leaf Books, 2000), xiv-xv.

[460] Ibid., xi.

[461] Blowers, et. al., eds, *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, s.v. "McGarvey, John W."; Richardson, *Communings*, xiii-xiv.

[462] Letter from Dr. Robert Richardson to Rev. Isaac Errett, July 16, 1857, Richardson Papers, Bethany College, Bethany, WV.

Demand for and publication of such material would be apparent. Only a sociological study can ascertain if the *Harbinger's* associate editor's affected a religious increase in the personal lives of the movement's adherents. Short of that, positive indication of the influence he made will show in indirect signs as requests for and publication of pietistic resources.

In the years following their exchange, the *Millennial Harbinger* continued to include articles of a devotional nature by Richardson and a few others. The number of such articles was unexceptional, yet they continued to be printed.[463]

Nonetheless, the associate editor received encouragement from numerous sources. The local Adelphian Society at Bethany revealed the popularity of their Chemistry professor when thirty-one students signed a request for him to speak to them of the "influence of the Holy Spirit, as exerted at the present day, in conversion, and sanctification."[464] Moreover, polymath and former Bethany colleague, Robert Milligan, president of Kentucky University pressed Richardson to print a tract of his recent article on the baptism of the Holy Spirit that appeared in the *Christian Quarterly*.[465]

Disciple historian Dr. Ronald E. Osborn claimed the engine for the soul of the movement was the Bethany physician and other leaders of the movement voiced their sincere interest to follow after the pious professor's goal.[466] P. H. Murphy (1824-1860), president of Abingdon College (later Eureka College) in Illinois, corroborated the

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[463] This is based upon my examination of *The Millennial Harbinger* from the year 1858 until the journal was discontinued in 1870.

[464] Letter to Robert Richardson from the Bethany College Adelphian Society dated 24 May 1858. Richardson Papers, Campbell Archives at Bethany College, WV.

[465] Letter to Robert Richardson from Robert Milligan dated 3 October 1874. Richardson Papers, Campbell Archives, Bethany College, WV.

[466] Ronald E. Osborn, "Hidden Heritage: Spirituality in the Disciples Tradition," Mid-Stream 36 (1997): 248-9.

influence of Richardson's plea for spirituality.[467] In a letter to the *Harbinger's* associate editor dated 7 September 1858, he noted "a great many of our wisest and best brethren are becoming very much aroused as to the importance of a more close communion with God and a deeper piety, a better appreciation of the work of the Holy Spirit."[468] He identified several well-known leaders: D. S. Burnett, Isaac Errett, C. L. Loos, Robert Milligan and a "host of us smaller men" as supporting the effort.[469]

However, resistance to his activities existed. By 1846 the Stone-Campbell movement had traveled to Australia under the leadership of Thomas Magarey (1825-1902).[470] The *Harbinger's* coeditor wrote to Magarey in 1873 complaining prayer life was neglected in the brethren.[471] He observed that J. S. Lamar (1829-1908) had made an impassioned plea, as associate editor, in *The Christian Standard* for a book of devotions to aid folk in their spiritual endeavors however, he noted, Lamar's recommendation did not receive a good reception.[472] Furthermore, he observed that resistance to the idea revealed it was not the right time to pursue the matter and instead he diagnosed "a more pressing necessity [is] that the brotherhood should be filled with the Spirit of prayer and supplication and better instructed as to the nature of acceptable prayer…the office of the Holy Spirit in prayer ought also to be better understood."[473]

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[467] "Obituary Notices: Tribute of Respect," *The Millennial Harbinger* III, Fifth Series, 11 (November 1860): 659-60.

[468] Letter to Robert Richardson from P. H. Murphy dated 7 September 1858. Richardson Papers, Campbell Archives at Bethany College, WV.

[469] Ibid.

[470] Blowers et. al., eds, *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, s.v. "Australia, The Movement in."

[471] Letter to Thomas Magarey from Robert Richardson dated 3 February 1873. Richardson Papers, Campbell Archives at Bethany College, WV.

[472] Ibid.; Blowers, et. al., eds, *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, s.v. "Lamar, James Sanford."

[473] Letter to Thomas Magarey from Robert Richardson dated 3 February 1873. Richardson Papers, Campbell Archives at Bethany College, WV.

The traditional genre of devotional literature and published sermons saw some heightened interest. W. T. Moore's (1832-1926) elegant issue of *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church* in 1868 offered popular reading for spiritual benefit.[474] Moore's anthology included homiletical addresses from the denomination's finest voices: D. S. Burnet (1808-1867), L. L. Pinkerton (1812-1875), M. E. Lard (1818-1880), W. K. Pendleton (1817-1899), J. W. McGarvey (1829-1911), Robert Milligan (1814-1875), J. S. Lamar (1829-1908), C. L. Loos (1823-1912), Isaac Errett (1820-1888), and Tolbert Fanning.[475] Perusing through the various homiletical pieces in the volume, only three of the twenty-eight addresses could be considered devotional in substance. Most were offered to "supply the Christian with his best armor for defensive and offensive warfare with Infidelity."[476] Evangelist and editor of *The American Christian Review*, Benjamin Franklin (1812-1878) added his name to the popular genre with one sermon on prayer in his two-volume set of *Gospel Preacher: A Book of Twenty-One Sermons* in 1877.[477] Ashley S. Johnson (1857-1925), founder of Johnson Bible College in Tennessee, wrote a series of pulpit talks on "believing prayer" entitled, *The Life of Trust* in 1897.[478]

Only a few less homiletical and didactic manuscripts were published after 1857. Robert Milligan compiled from the *Harbinger* a series on prayer, which he had authored

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[474]Holloway, "*Devotional Literature,"* 269. Published sermons were just that, sermons. The topic of which was normally exposition of scripture rather than devotional in nature.

[475] W. T. Moore, ed. *The Living Pulpit of the Christian Church: A Series of Discourses, Doctrinal and Practical from Representative Men Among the Disciples of Christ* (Cincinnati: R. W. Carroll & Co., 1868),v-vi; Blowers, et. al., eds, *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, s.v. "Moore, William Thomas," " Burnett, David Staats," "Pinkerton, Lewis Letig," "Lard, Moses E.," "Pendleton, William Kimbrough," "McGarvey, John W.," "Milligan, Robert," "Lamar, James Sanford," "Loos, Charles Louis," and "Errett, Isaac."

[476] Moore, *The Living Pulpit*, viii.

[477] Benjamin Franklin, *The Gospel Preacher: A Book of Twenty-One Sermons* (Cincinnati: G. W. Rice, 1877), 171-93. Not *the* Benjamin Franklin but the grandnephew of the famous founding father.

[478] Ashley, Johnson *The Life of Trust: A Series of Biblical Sermons on the Conditions, Limitation, Encouragements and Possibilities of Believing Prayer* (Dallas: Eugene S. Smith, 1949); Blowers, et. al., eds, *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, s.v. "Johnson, Ashley S."

previously. Published in 1867, *Treatise on Prayer* was inspirational material based on scripture.[479] Following Milligan's example, in 1872, Richardson collected the separate installments of his "Communings in the Sanctuary" from the 1847-48 *Harbinger* issues into a small reader; this publication is considered to be the first devotional classic printed by a leader in the movement.[480] Nonetheless, the work was criticized by some as "mystical and Methodistic."[481] In the year following in 1873, he penned a substantial 325-page treatise *A Scriptural View of the Office of the Holy Spirit*, a clear and most thorough treatment of the issue. It remains the best source on pneumatology for present-day Disciples.

Isaac Errett, editor of the *Christian Standard*, continued the bibliocentric emphasis prevalent in the denomination when inscribing, in 1871, *Walks about Jerusalem* and *Talks with Bereans* in the following year then, similarly, in 1884-9 three volumes entitled *Evenings with the Bible*.[482] Using some material from classical and contemporary thinkers, J. H. Garrison, editor of *The Christian Evangelist*, wrote a spiritual handbook, *Alone with God*, in 1891, which included meditations based upon scripture, private devotions for special needs and occasions, and family worship.[483] Five years later in 1896 he penned, *The Heavenward Way*, a book on prayer.

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[479] Blowers, et. al., eds, *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, s.v. "Devotional Literature."

[480] Richardson, *Communings*, xiv.

[481] Winfred Ernest Garrison and Alfred T. DeGroot, *The Disciples of Christ: A History* (St. Louis: Christian Board of Publication, 1948), 545.

[482] Isaac Errett, *Walks about Jerusalem: A Search After the Landmarks of Primitive Christianity* (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Company, 1871); Isaac Errett, *Evenings with the Bible* 3 vols., (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Company, 1884); Isaac Errett, *Talks to Bereans* (Cincinnati: R. W. Carroll and Co., 1872). Historians W. E. Garrison and Alfred T. DeGroot identify Richardson's *Communings in the Sanctuary* and Errett's three offerings as being the only devotional books published during this period. See Garrison and DeGroot, *The Disciples of Christ: A History*, 545.

[483] James H. Garrison, *Alone With God: A Manual of Devotions Being a Series of Meditations With Forms of Prayer for Private Devotions, Family Worship and Special Occasions* (St. Louis: Christian Publishing Company, 1891).

By 1900, a full forty-two years after the conclusion of the Richardson-Fanning disagreement, the denomination of over one million members had published but ten books, which had spirituality as its focus and purpose.[484] Of those ten, three conformed to the traditional genre of sermons for pietistic benefit and only one of those sermons was devoted to prayer. The remaining six publications were more akin to modern religious books.

Prominent periodicals during the latter half of the nineteenth century provided minimal emphasis on spirituality. The *Christian-Evangelist* ran infrequent prayers and devotional pieces but often as staid editorials.[485] Within the pages of the *Millennial Harbinger*, arguably the most influential journal and with which Richardson was employed, only a nominal number of articles with metaphysical and Christian life topics were published each year. If that journal did not promote the subject it was not likely other, lesser, journals would print more.[486]

The full catalogue of the prominent St. Louis publisher, John Burns, listed 207 titles in 1881, a full twenty-five years after both Bethany and Nashville laid down their pens.[487]Counting all inspirational or devotional titles written by Stone-Campbell authors included: "Grandma's Gift," "Autumn Leaves," "Sacred Time," "Tract on Prayer," "Lessons from Holy Mount," and "Union with Christ," these six account for the total listed in the collection—a mere 3 percent.

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[484] U.S. Department of Commerce and Labor, Bureau of the Census, *Special Reports: Religious Bodies: 1906* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1910), 30, http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=pst.000047054851;view=1up;seq=34 (accessed 13 March 2015).

[485] William O. Paulsell, *Disciples at Prayer: The Spirituality of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)*, (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1995), 25.

[486] Research of other journals is quite difficult since only *The Millennial Harbinger* and *The Gospel Advocate* are known to have all their issues available on CD-ROM during this time period. Most of the other periodicals are lost or very difficult to access and research.

[487] Burns' full catalogue of religious titles related to the Disciples was printed behind the index of the book: Alexander Campbell, *The Christian System*, 358ff.

Four years after the debacle ended, the flames of war erupted at Ft. Sumter, South Carolina, on 12 April, 1861, which signaled the demise of the *Harbinger's* circulation to southern states and any influence it had there.[488] The dominant leader of southern churches within the Stone-Campbell movement was Tolbert Fanning.[489] With Campbell and Richardson's voices stilled by the dissolution of mail service, the southern journalist's theological views dominated and any "spiritualism" that emanated from Bethany was crushed.[490] The loss of communication and influence with those churches was significant. Perhaps as many as half of the movement's churches were located in the South and with the *Harbinger's* monthly circulation as high as 9,000 the severance of half was devastating both financially and theologically.[491] Little demand for, or publication of, devotional materials originated after 1857 from southern states.[492]

Another contributing factor to the resistance of pietistic production was, in fact, the large number of periodicals produced by the movement. From the beginning of Campbell's first periodical, *The Christian Baptist* in 1823, to the middle of the twentieth century the denomination spawned nearly 400 journals.[493] James Brooks Majors in his 1966 Vanderbilt dissertation discovered that during the decades between 1820 and 1860, followers of the group published more than one hundred journals.[494] After Campbell's

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[488] Alexander Campbell, "To Our Subscribers," *The Millennial Harbinger* IV, Fifth Series, VI (June 1861): 357.

[489] C. Leonard Allen and Danny Gray Swick, *Participating in God's Life: Two Crossroads for Churches of Christ* (Orange, CA: New Leaf Books, 2001), 53.

[490] Campbell, "To Our Subscribers," *The Millennial Harbinger* IV, Fifth Series, VI (June 1861): 357.

[491] Holloway, "Campbell as a Publisher*," Restoration Quarterly*. http://www.acu.edu (accessed 13 March 2015). *Restoration Quarterly* is archived on the Abilene Christian University site.

[492] Allen and Swick, *Participating in God's* Life, 53.

[493] Robert Friedly, "Journalism," in *The Encyclopedia of the Stone-Campbell Movement*, ed. Paul M. Blowers, Douglas A. Foster, Anthony L. Dunnavant, and D. Newell Williams (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2004), 434.

[494] Michael Casey and Douglas Foster, eds., *The Stone-Campbell Movement: An International Religious Tradition* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2002), 25.

death in 1866, the number of papers "multiplied."[495] Despite the fact that many of these failed within a few short years, the torrent of print was formidable.

A popular cliché of the movement was: "Disciples do not have bishops; they have editors."[496] The American reforming churches had no central authority, though during his life Alexander Campbell came closest to such a designation, allied editors, therefore, had significant influence upon their readers.[497] The cacophony of hundreds of viewpoints expressed in newsprint by "editor-bishops" undoubtedly made for confusion on issues or, at least, fractious beliefs and opinions regarding spirituality. An interesting example of this confused state is the monthly magazine, *The Disciple of Christ,* edited by father and son, Isaac and Russell Errett. The elder Errett promoted Richardson's goal by writing three previously mentioned devotional works. Yet, in the January 1885 issue the spiritual exercises of the Cane Ridge Revival were diagnosed through the new science of psychology as an "epidemic" of "excitable people" due to "the state of society…border warfare…deficiency of family religion and proper training of young…decidedly unfriendly to the administrations of Gen. Washington and of the elder Adams…[and] indeed of everything French."[498] This demonstrated the continued ambiguity with regard to the perceived manifestations of the Holy Spirit within this community.

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[495] Gary Holloway, "Alexander Campbell as a Publisher," *Restoration Quarterly* 37, No. 1 (1995). http://www.acu.edu (accessed 13 March 2015). *Restoration Quarterly* is archived on the Abilene Christian University site.

[496] W. T. Moore, *A Comprehensive History of the Disciples of Christ: Being an Account of a Century's Effort to Restore Primitive Christianity in Its Faith, Doctrine, and Life* (New York: Fleming H. Revel Co., 1909), 12. This is a common cliché of Disciples but Moore's actual words were: "The Disciples have no Diocesan Bishops, and consequently their leading religious periodicals have practically occupied that place." Quoted in Moore, *Comprehensive History,* 12.

[497] *Holloway, "Campbell as a Publisher," Restoration Quarterly*, http://www.acu.edu (accessed 13 March 2015).

[498] Reprinted from W. F. P. Noble*, A Century of Gospel Work: A History of the Growth of Evangelical Religion in the United State; Containing Full Descriptions of the Great Revivals of the Century, Personal Sketches of Eminent Clergymen, Narrative and Incidents of Christian Work, Accounts of*

Church historian Leroy Garrett blamed the "inordinate influence of editor bishops" as one reason for problems between the Stone-Campbell churches.[499] If "bishops" were one reason for theological ambiguity, Campbell's program was another. Competing values of unity (liberty in opinions) and New Testament (authority) set up competing standards. What authority counted most: the individual's, the community's (the church), or scripture? If the sacred writing was ultimate authority and the individual was "free and capable to interpret the Bible for themselves" then a conflict arose when individuals understood scripture in oppositional ways. Early Disciples knew it was not individual interpretation but understanding in dialogue with the community, yet the distinction was not always apparent.[500] This equivocation of authority plagued the movement throughout its history and rendered the disagreement between Richardson and Fanning a proxy issue.[501] Stand-in issue or not, for the Bethany physician, spiritual growth–sanctification—was absolutely paramount for the movement because, as with all Christians, the ultimate goal of the Christian faith was a loving relationship with God.

Conclusion

Amid the swirl of philosophic thought in nineteenth century America, Dr. Robert Richardson—physician, theologian, and reasonable Romantic identified with a holistic interpretation of religious experience like that of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and sought to loosen the tight grip of Lockean philosophy, especially the extremes found in Tolbert

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the Rise of the Union Organizations, Statistics of Religious Denominations, etc. (Philadelphia: H. C. Watts & Co., 1876) in *The Disciple of Christ* 2, 1 (January 1885): 18- 35 (especially pages 25-35).

[499] Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement*, 545; Casey and Foster, *The Stone-Campbell Movement: An International Religious Tradition*, 25-6.

[500] Eugene Boring*, Disciples and the Bible: a History of Disciples Biblical Interpretation in North America* (St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1997), 23.

[501] Richard T. Hughes and R. L. Roberts, *The Churches of Christ* (Eastport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2001), 45; Cummings*, Struggle for Reformation*, 119.

Fanning of Nashville. The twin ideals of unity and scripture manifested themselves in contentious stresses of liberty versus authority, which vexed leaders and members alike. Emotionalism was eschewed, as was the Calvinist theology of spiritual operations yet, the legacy of the empowering Holy Spirit found at Cane Ridge remained. The pugilistic encounter with the Nashville editor laid bare the full specter of all those issues and, occurring shortly before the War of the Rebellion, its sad effect was a hardening of positions once hostilities erupted.

The movement's first interpretive key recognized the frontier's free and pragmatic lifestyle, which Disciples embraced. The best explanation of the young indigenous church, however, documented "seeds of disagreement" intrinsic to the bipolar principles of liberty and authority and its many manifestations. Those problems plagued the group from its beginnings when Stone's "heart religion" united with Campbell "head religion." The intellectual and spiritual strains were then personified in the debate between Richardson and Fanning and, unfortunately, opened the wound the War of the Rebellion would exacerbate.

In the four decades prior to 1900, the fifth largest Christian denomination in the United States did not produce many resources to aid in the understanding of the Holy Comforter, or materials to enhance the spiritual lives of its members.[502] Herculean forces resisted his efforts. From an entrenched Lockean philosophy, an inherent aversion to emotionalism and revivalism, a devastating debate with a southern leader who, along with the southern states, cut off all communication during the Civil War to the chaos of competition by bishop-editors it is indeed surprising that despite those forces, Richardson any had any impact on the movement. Yet, largely due to his efforts and arguments,

[502] Except the traditional mediums of scripture, sermons, and song.

spirituality within the denomination began to take on life with the vocal and material support of leaders who recognized the value of Richardson's views for the church. Prior to Richardson, no devotional publications were printed and little attention was paid to the Holy Spirit because of church-wide repugnance of religious enthusiasms like those that occurred during the Second Great Awakening. Richardson's challenge to this extreme application of sensate materialism, natural theology, and sanctification awoke spiritual slumbers, catalyzed piety and promoted the writing and publication of devotional literature in the movement.

Interest in the "proper fruits of Christianity" began inauspiciously, but begin it did in a way that joined head and heart.[503]

[503] Richardson, *A Scriptural View*, 221.

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