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Humanitarian reform and organized benevolence in the southern United States, 1780-1830

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HUMANITARIAN REFORM AND ORGANIZED BENEVOLENCE
IN THE SOUTHERN UNITED STATES,
1780 - 1830

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by
John Christie Dann
1975
APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

One of the striking aspects of the American scene in the second and third decades of the nineteenth century was the proliferation of voluntary reform organizations. Those which were formed in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia have received historical attention; the vast number of organizations which arose in the South have not.

Using Church records, contemporary pamphlets and periodicals, legislative acts of incorporation, manuscripts, and local histories, the author has traced these Southern benevolent societies from their colonial and Revolutionary origins to the late twenties, when a series of unsuccessful national reform campaigns damaged the societies' credibility as a vehicle for reform.

The benevolent organizations arose for a number of reasons. The destruction accompanying the Revolution, Anglican disestablishment, and the rise of cities created a need for new forms of poor relief. The theoretical developments accompanying the War for Independence produced a religio-republican ideology conducive to voluntary reform. The growing denominational Church bodies provided encouragement and gave most of the reform a decidedly religious character.

Societies aimed at easing and eradicating urban poverty were an important precursor of professional social work. Sunday schools and tract distribution efforts laid the foundations for universal public schooling. Moral reform societies, growing out of traditions of lay discipline within the Churches, promoted the middle-class standards of behavior now associated with Victorianism. Enlightenment theories of education and psychology were enunciated and popularized to a far greater extent than they had been in the previous century. Women gained their first opportunity to deal directly and publicly with social problems, independent of male direction, and yet maintain their respectability.

In the South, slavery and the growing political debates over its existence did weaken reform efforts. Many of the leaders were men of Northern origins, increasingly suspect unless they defended the "peculiar institution." By the thirties, they had compromised much of the moral power which had inspired organized reform. The concept of democratic responsibility for solving social problem, however, survived as an ideal to which Southern (and Northern) society is as yet nominally, and at times actually, dedicated.
HUMANITARIAN REFORM AND ORGANIZED BENEVOLENCE IN
THE SOUTHERN UNITED STATES, 1780-1830
CHAPTER 1

INTELLECTUAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ORIGINS
OF ORGANIZED REFORM

I. Organized Benevolence in the South--
Rationale for Study

One of the striking aspects of the American scene
of the second and third decades of the nineteenth century,
ever of quite such visibility before or since, was the
proliferation of voluntary organizations of every size,
variety, and purpose. They drew the attention of the
swarm of literate European travelers who, in their pub­
lished diaries and letters, dissected the American dream
and reality with such relish in the nation's first half
century.

Captain Marryat, with his characteristic ir­
reverence, devoted a section of his Diary in America to
societies and organizations. Alexis de Tocqueville, with
unmatched critical sense, probed and analyzed the pheno­
mena in four chapters. To borrow Arthur M. Schlesinger,
Sr.'s oft-quoted phrase, adolescent America was a "nation
of joiners," a country intoxicated with the application of
the corporate form to every social ill and patriotic ambition.¹

The corpus of professional literature of the past two decades, which finally recognizes the importance of organized benevolence in fields other than antislavery, greatly furthers our knowledge of the evangelical reform movement in the nation as a whole.² But it does not yet provide a synthesis. Historians of the general developments of reform have failed to look beyond the secular societies and have ignored developments beyond Boston,


New York, and Philadelphia; historians of a particular geographical area, or denomination, or reform, have failed to place their studies within the broader national context.

In terms of geography, the most glaring deficiency is the complete lack of scholarly attention given the substantial reform impulse which materialized in the South. In the land of slavery, from Delaware to Florida and west to the Mississippi, benevolent organizations of bewildering variety proliferated in the first fifty years of national existence. As in the North, they laid the foundations of public education, penology, public health care, and poor relief; the self-confident moralism of the evangelical reform campaigns permeated Southern as well as Northern public opinion for two generations.

This omission is understandable. The sources, obscure pamphlets and religious periodicals, a scattering of manuscript records, are inaccessible without exhaustive travel. Southern culture, especially before the ardent sectionalism of the 1850s, was derivative, possessing little of the originality which attracts scholarly attention. On a superficial level, evangelical reform had a universal appearance, North and South.

Conversely, historians of the South, in their efforts to find deeply-rooted causes of the Civil War, have overestimated the unique aspects of the section. The distinctive elements were there, but they were complex; they brought about a modification, not an absence
of the cultural trends of the nation as a whole. Although the discontinuities were never as sharp as in the North, this was also a land of regional peculiarities and modest ethnic diversity. Every Southern state gave birth to the urban and small-town culture which spawned the religious and educational institutions, the press, and the concentrated reading public which became caught up in the excitement of organized benevolence.

From a mere dozen organizations founded in the colonial South, the majority of them mutual aid and ethnic societies which only adopted general charitable aims in the post-Revolutionary period, there materialized well over a thousand societies in the ensuing half-century. A handful of additional immigrant aid groups were augmented by dozens of mutual aid societies. Close to one hundred miscellaneous charity schools, orphan asylums, and relief organizations were formed between 1776 and 1830. Twenty-six abolition societies, ninety-seven auxiliaries to the American Colonization Society, eleven organizations for the aid of seamen, at least three anti-dueling societies, and literally hundreds of Bible, missionary, and tract organizations arose in the same period, not to mention the somewhat artificial auxiliaries of denominational societies which existed in the congregations of each of the major Churches.\(^3\) Hand-in-hand with the rest

\(^3\)See Appendix for the specific societies.
of the nation, the South went society-mad in the post Revolutionary era. Of negligible importance in global terms, the organizational mania was a vital influence upon the social and intellectual development in the section itself.

The growth of these societies was intimately related to the religious history of the nation, but church historians have themselves clouded the picture. By placing such emphasis upon the eternal pietistic-rationalistic divisions in American religious life, particularly revivalism in the South, they have obscured the existence of a middle ground. From the days of Thomas Bray, James Blair, Thomas Bacon, Edmund Botsford, and Samuel McCorkle to that of Henry Holcombe, John Holt Rice, William Meade, and Theodore Dehon, there were clergymen and laymen alike of the highest educational backgrounds who were ardent evangelical Christians as well; men devoted to both the rational pursuit of knowledge and the spiritual assurances of the millennial vision. It was in this broad territory between the arid rationalism of Unitarianism and the tear-drenched emotionalism of the camp meeting that the benevolent organizations took root and flourished. Far less distinct in denominational origin or affiliation than particular church studies suggest, possessing little originality, the hundreds of organized efforts gave rise to, and were nurtured by thousands of would-be John Howards, William Wilberforces, and Hannah Mores in the land of slavery as well as to the North. Their intel-
lectual approach and skillful use of the arts of public persuasion gave them an influence far exceeding their numbers.

Historians have also missed a great deal by overlooking the organic development of benevolence on the local level. With all their trumpetry and fanfare, the national societies of the second and third decades of the nineteenth century were, like the political parties of the day, but loose coalitions of state and local societies; they provided ideological leadership, but were dependent upon local enthusiasm and financial support. The national religious denominations which were behind many of the later organized efforts were similarly decentralized. A half century after the adoption of the Constitution, Alexis de Tocqueville could still speak of the United States as an agglomeration of "twenty-four small sovereign nations," of the Federal government as "the exception; the government of the states as the rule."^4

Historical vision from the locality is revealing in many ways. It becomes clear that there was a continuity between the mutual aid and relief organizations and the societies with religious purposes—between the Enlightenment approach of local efforts and the national perfectionist campaigns of the late twenties. The history of the entire phenomenon of organized benevolence becomes

^4Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, vol. 1, 61.
one characterized more by gradual evolution than sudden
developments; by continuity rather than by sudden inno-
vation. The rise of the humanitarian and organizing zeal
of the post-Revolutionary era was clearly not an effect
of the Great Revival. It was far more than simply a
reaction to the French Revolutionary crisis.

From the vantage point of the community, the motive
of social control which John R. Bodo, Charles C. Cole,
and Clifford S. Griffin put forward as the essence of
evangelical "reform" does not deserve such exclusive
emphasis. The complexity of motives becomes apparent.
In fact, ideology is greatly overshadowed by energy and
enthusiasm. The efforts of laymen far outweigh the direct
influence of theoretical political economics and systematic
theology in the construction of "the benevolent empire."

II. Revolutionary Origins of the Reform Impulse

All of the historical evidence points to a com-
prehensive explanation of the nature and timing of the
rise of voluntary societies in the South emanating from
the American Revolution itself and from the accompanying
atmosphere of political and social instability. The
timing and character of the rise of voluntary benevolent

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5 Bodo, Protestant Clergy and Public Issues; Cole,
Social Ideas of the Northern Evangelists; Griffin, Their
Brothers' Keepers. For a critical examination of the
thesis, see Lois J. Banner, "Religious Benevolence as
Social Control: A Critique of an Interpretation," Journal
societies in the South as well as the North was to a large extent determined by the post-Revolutionary political adjustments of the early national period. The perception on the part of the humanitarian reformers of the practical if not the theoretical realities of democratic society to a considerable extent explains the widespread appeal and influence which their organizations enjoyed in the first three decades of the nineteenth century. Limitations inherent in religious reform in general and in the democratic republican system explain the failure of the evangelical reform effort. And, although unsuccessful in its effort to create either earthly or heavenly perfection, the evangelical reform impulse vastly furthered the democratic process.

In the immediate sense, the war and the attainment of political independence provided two of the preconditions for the widespread formation of benevolent societies. On the destructive side, the combined pressure of wartime disruptions, legal disabilities, economic hardship, and demoralization decimated the Anglican parish system, severely crippled a high percentage of dissenter congregations as well, and thereby destroyed the traditional vehicles of public and private poor relief. Barely adequate at best in the colonial period, the poor relief system had at least operated on a fairly intimate community basis when lodged in the parish. Transferral to the more impersonal county unit and the outright dis-
appearance of congregational relief machinery created a void which helps to explain the proliferation of charity schools and relief organizations in the post-Revolutionary era. 6

On the constructive side, however, the Revolutionary period popularized the organizational techniques which were essential for sustained charitable activity. The contractual experience exercised in the formation and operation of town and congregation, fundamental to New England life, had no counterpart in the eighteenth-century South in other than isolated pockets of Dissenter strength. What local institutions there were, the vestry, the county judicial establishment, were of exterior appointment and of markedly paternalistic character. Therefore, the organizational experience gained in the course of the

War for Independence and its consequential political consolidation—the formation of committees of correspondence and safety, militia units, provincial and state governments, and religious bodies—possessed a significance of far greater import than similar developments in the North.

The intellectual atmosphere of the post-Revolutionary Era could not have been more conducive to the rise of benevolent organizations. For the nation as a whole, particularly for rural America, the march toward independence was very much an exercise in popular education. The colonies were remarkably fortunate to effect their political liberation in the naively confident age of the Enlightenment. Truth was seemingly obtainable, and political thought encompassed a breathtaking combination of inherent truths which explained the very limits of human existence. An increasingly active popular press disseminated a political literature saturated with abstractions formerly confined to the candlelit drawing rooms and libraries of the gentry. For the average man, the age of Revolution and constitution making, accompanied as it was by a proliferating newspaper and pamphlet literature, became an era of educational uplift without precedent. It was the sort of cultural change which defies reversal. It created the rudiments of a thinking public susceptible to the ideology of evangelical benevolence; it established the techniques of popular intellectual change which were so adaptable in the non-political realm.
The intellectual emphasis of Revolutionary scholarship in the past decade is particularly revealing of the mentality of the generation which could tear down an empire and construct a nation with equal proficiency. Returning to the voluminous pamphlet literature in a spirit willing to accept the sincerity if not the accuracy of American and British argument alike, Caroline Robbins, Bernard Bailyn, Alan Heimert, and others have mapped out the traditions, the literary devices, the very thought patterns of Revolutionary Americans. Whatever revision the "New-Whig" school may earn in the next decade, it has endowed the Revolutionary mind with an enduring coherence.  

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Essentially political and constitutional in character, the verbal warfare of the 1760s and 1770s was strikingly moralistic in tone. Applying the Biblical concept of a chosen people to their own situation, drawing upon a long tradition of dissenter and radical pamphlet literature, employing the contemporary art of mining history from presentist motives, the American colonists conceived of the conflict as far more than a civil war. They enunciated, perhaps to a greater extent than Bailyn and company suggest, the deep current of moral uneasiness which ran through the mainstream of British popular thought as well as the intellectual fringes in the mid-eighteenth century. They expressed a deepfelt sense of guilt at a debauched, immoral age which knew not its humble origins.  

It was, of course, a mentality with roots deep in classical and Biblical literature, providing an intellectual framework which could nourish any sense of discontent and give it historical form and dignity. The American Revolution was seen by participants as a struggle for the life and death of political freedom--of civilization.

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The moralism identified with the dissenter and radical political theorists ran through much of the popular and commonly used educational literature of the day as well. The strain is very apparent in Seneca's _Morais_, Cicero's _Moral Duties_, the satires of Horace and Juvenal, the works of Stoic philosophers Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, as well as the Bible and works of the early church fathers. Even popular literature, from Dryden and Pope to Fielding, Goldsmith, _Gentleman's Magazine_, and the hundreds of etiquette books and guides to pious behavior, imparted a shallow moralism which undoubtedly contributed to the Revolutionary mentality.
itself. The mentality of moral crisis survived through the Confederation period and well into the nineteenth century and was an important aspect of the rationale for organized benevolence and reform.

III. Education for a Republican Society

It was in the Revolutionary period and the succeeding half century that higher education in the South and the nation as a whole developed. From the single fully-operating college in colonial Williamsburg, some two dozen colleges and theological seminaries had been founded and were flourishing in the South of 1830. Secondary schools multiplied throughout the section. And with the expansion, there was a growing uniformity in educational method and subject matter. 9

Moral Philosophy, the cornerstone of formal education in the post-Revolutionary era, was itself very much a product of the Enlightenment. As the persuasiveness of modern reason pushed the medieval morality of fear into intellectual oblivion, a secular system of ethics became an inevitability. The works of Wollaston, Shaftsbury, Hutchinson, Hartley, Adam Smith, and others earned places on the bookshelves of a handful of inquisitive Southerners in the colonial period. Locke's Essay Concerning

9 Albea Godbold, The Church College of the Old South (Durham, N.C., 1944); D. G. Tweksbury, The Founding of American Colleges and Universities before the Civil War (N.Y., 1932).
emphasis has been placed upon the Scottish Common Sense tradition which Isaac Woodbridge Riley likened to "a kind of intellectual glacier, an overwhelming mass of cold dogma which moved slowly southward and ground out all opposition." Transmitted by the network of Presbyterian educators who dominated many of the Southern schools and colleges, the Princeton moral philosophy of John Witherspoon and Samuel Stanhope Smith was provided a wide audience. Merely as example, William Graham at Washington College in Lexington, Virginia, and David Caldwell at Chapel Hill, North Carolina, transmitted their own lecture notes of Witherspoon to a generation of college students. Smith had himself served as first Rector of Hampden-Sydney Academy; his brother, John Blair Smith, was the first president of the post-war college. Samuel Doak, who was exposed to both Smith and Graham in the Prince Edward County institution and to President Witherspoon at Princeton, presented a series of "Lectures on Human Nature" throughout a teaching career at Washington College and Tusculum Academy in Tennessee which were

"Reading Interests of the Professional Classes in Colonial Maryland, 1700-1776," Md. Hist. Mag., 36 (1941), 184-201, 281-301.

Isaac Woodbridge Riley, American Thought from Puritanism to Pragmatism and Beyond (N.Y., 1923), 121.
published after his death for continued classroom use.\textsuperscript{12}

But exclusive emphasis should not be placed on the Presbyterians or the Common Sense School. Primarily because of its one-volume length and wide availability, William Paley's \textit{Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy} (1785) was the basic textbook for Moral Philosophy courses on secondary and college level in the early nineteenth century. James Beattie's \textit{Elements of Moral Science} (1813) and Thomas Brown's \textit{Lectures on the Philosophy of the Human Mind} (1824 ed.) alone among works in the field were published in the South; their length made them prohibitive for student use, but they became widely available through circulating libraries.\textsuperscript{13}


Until Francis Wayland's *Elements of Moral Science* (1835) and Jonathan Dymond's *Essays on the Principles of Morality* (1834) were made universally available by the great national publishing houses which arose in the thirties, dissatisfaction with sources for teaching the subject was widespread. 14 Witherspoon's and Smith's *Lectures* were both published at the conclusion of their teaching careers but in obscure and limited editions. 15 Paley's marked utilitarian emphasis consistently bothered evangelicals who used his work out of necessity only. A correspondent of the *Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine* (1827) lamented that "Locke is antiquated; Stewart is incomplete; and yet very much filled with


15 John Witherspoon, *Lectures on Moral Philosophy and Eloquence* (Phila., 1810, and 1822); Samuel Stanhope Smith, *The Lectures Corrected and Improved, which have been Delivered for a Series of Years in the College of New Jersey; On the Subjects of Moral and Political Philosophy* (Trenton, N.J., 1812), 2 vols.
metaphysical controversy, which is as uninteresting to such students, as it is unintelligible; and Brown is too voluminous and expensive . . ."¹⁶

But in spite of difficulties in obtaining satisfactory source materials and a certain amount of individual variation, the lectures in Moral Philosophy, which in American institutions became the primary teaching responsibility of the college president, left a permanent imprint upon American culture. Although they presented few ideas which were new or controversial, they systematized and popularized Enlightenment thought to an unprecedented degree among educated Southerners. The lectures in Moral Philosophy encouraged a fairly universal mental approach to social problems which cut across political and denominational lines and provided a structure and a scientific appearance for the nationalistic moralism of the Revolution. At the same time, they created a mental framework with which a second generation of American "patriots" could carry the democratic crusade of the battlefield into the humanitarian reform efforts of the new century.

The subject matter of Moral Philosophy was broad indeed. Witherspoon defined it as "an inquiry into the nature and grounds of moral obligation by reason, as distinct from revelation," and then devoted his lectures

¹⁶Theodosius, "Review of the Cultivation of Female Intellect in the United States," Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine, 10 (1827), 305.
to proving that there was no incompatibility between the two; Paley described it as "that Science which teaches men their duty, and the reasons of it." Until well into the nineteenth century, this encompassed the analysis and classification of not only mental and bodily action, but man in civil society as well as personal ethics.

A growing number of Americans were provided with their first popular lesson in psychology, and they seized upon this apparent key to the mysteries of human behavior with all the excitement of the Freudian popularizers of our own century. Alexander Murphy, in his 1817 Report

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17 Jonathan Witherspoon, Lectures on Moral Philosophy (Princeton, N.J., 1912), 1; Paley, Moral Philosophy (Boston, 1810), 23.

For evidence of the importance of the Moral Philosophy course, and particularly of Paley's text, see: Alexander Campbell, Editor, "Letter," April 7, 1825, Christian Baptist, 2 (1824-25), 236-40; Doak, Lectures on Human Nature; William H. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, Historical and Biographical (Phila., 1855), 460-62; Lafayette Female Academy, Lexington, Ky., Visit of General Lafayette to the Lafayette Female Academy in Lexington, Kentucky, May 16, 1825, and the Exercises in Honour of the Nation's Guest: Together with a Catalogue of the Instructors, Visitors, and Pupils of the Academy (Lexington, Ky., 1825), 74-75; David J. McCord?, A Review of the Plan of Education in South Carolina (Columbia, S.C., 1821), 18-19; Archibald DeBow Murphy, An Oration Delivered in Person Hall, Chapel Hill, on the 27th of June, 1827, the Day Previous to the Commencement, under the Appointment of the Dialectic Society, 2nd ed. (Raleigh, N.C., 1843), 18; South-Carolina Society, Charleston, General Plan of Education Appointed for the South Carolina Society's Male Academy, July, 1827 (Charleston, S.C., 1827), 3-4; Alva Woods, Intellectual and Moral Culture. A Discourse Delivered at his Inauguration as President of Transylvania University, Oct. 13th, 1828 (Lexington, Ky., 1828), 2-4; Course of Studies in Transylvania University, Lexington, Kentucky (Lexington, Ky., 1830); Kentucky, Report on the Transylvania University and Lunatic Asylum (Lexington, Ky., 1824?), 16; Second Examination of the Class of Moral Philosophy, December 11, 1826, University of Virginia, Ms., University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va.
on Education to the legislature of North Carolina, voiced this spirit of expectation in the typically stilted language of the day:

The philosophy of the mind, which in ages preceding had been cultivated only in its detached branches, has of late years received form and system in the schools of Scotland. This new science promises the happiest results. It has sapped the foundation of scepticism by establishing the authority of those primitive truths and intuitive principles, which form the basis of all demonstration; it has taught to man the extent of his intellectual powers, and marking the line which separates truth from hypothetical conjecture, has pointed out to his view the boundaries which Providence has prescribed to his enquiries. It has determined the laws of the various faculties of the mind, and furnished a system of philosophic logic for conducting our enquiries in every branch of knowledge.18

In the field of education, the theories of cognition stemming from Locke placed great emphasis upon exercising the various parts of the mind (reason, moral sense) by repetitive use of proper example. As Thomas Brown expressed a modified version of Hartley's "Theory of Associations,"

It is not merely, therefore, by having traced, more accurately than others, the consequences of vice and virtue, as affecting the general character, that the lover of moral science strengthens his admiration of virtue, and his

aborrence of vice. But by the frequent consideration of virtue, together with its constant misery, the notions of these become so permanently and so deeply associated, that future virtue appears almost like happiness about to be enjoyed and future vice like approaching misery. The dread of misery, and the love of happiness, which are essentially principles of moral conduct, that operate, before reflection, with the rapidity, and almost with the energy of instincts—and that, after reflection, add to our virtuous resolutions a force and stability, which, as results of mere reasoning they could not possess.19

Virtuous example and illustration; repetition. The formula shaped school curricula, tracts and text books for a century.

The participants in organized reform activity reveled in their new-found knowledge, crudely manipulating their science of human action with the self-satisfied enthusiasm of children with a new toy. The poor could be tricked into respectability, the sinner into the paths of righteousness! If pride is the reigning vice of the world, use it to the Lord's advantage. Vain desires for the glitter of an education can lure the child of degeneracy away from the degrading atmosphere of home; sending him back a pious Christian can reform the entire family. Always stay one step ahead of the charitable

recipient, catering to his vanities in a way which will form unconsciously virtuous habits.

Sell a Bible to a poor man rather than give it to him and he obtains not only a Bible, but an incipient habit of religious benevolence, and his pride to boot. Entrust Sunday school teaching to young men and women and watch the responsibility turn them into adults, their pious teachings turn them into church members. As Leigh Richmond, the immensely popular English writer of moral tales, phrased it, "In the schools of spiritual charity, the teachers are taught, the benefactors are benefitted, the comforters are comforted; and the visits of mercy to man are repaid by visits of mercy from God."20

This Anglo-Scottish educational tradition shaped the methods of the evangelical reformers in their every undertaking, but it did more than this. It provided a scientific basis for all of the fears of social decay and corruption which haunted the Revolutionary generation. It gave reasoned intellectual expression to the emotion-

20 Leigh Richmond, Memoir of Miss Hannah Sinclair (Baltimore, Md., 1822), p. 42. The same idea was presented by a Presbyterian visitor to Charles Fenton Mercer's Sunday school in Essex Co., Virginia, when describing the effects of such activity on the teachers: "... if we attempt publicly to inculcate upon others the necessity of fulfilling our moral and religious duties, we necessarily become, if not more active in conscientious performance of them, at least, more circumspect in avoiding their open, positive violation; and this avoidance of evil, is the incipient step to the doing of good." Anonymous Presbyterian clergyman, March 30, 1820, "The following Account of a Sunday School in the upper end of Essex County ...," Va. Evan. and Lit. Mag., 3 (1820), 241.
alism which had generated the military and political struggle.

The half century between 1765 and 1820 was an era of more intense crisis than any period of American history, in good part because of the Enlightenment ethics popularized by the moral philosophers of the day. A generation which was indoctrinated in social and political theory, in the principles of morality, and in aesthetics within the unified framework of the Moral Philosophy course, was hardly capable of compartmentalizing this knowledge in later life. All areas of human thought and action were viewed in moral terms. To the educated American as well as to the uneducated man, the political sphere blended into religious and social life. Crisis in any area carried over to all others.

The Moral Philosophy courses, borrowing heavily upon the mechanistic political theory of Montesquieu and DeLolme, hammered upon the idea of the delicacy of political balance. They underlined the need to guard carefully against luxury and extremism; they placed primary emphasis upon the duties, not the rights, of citizenship.

The entire approach of the late eighteenth-century moralists confirmed Lockean emphasis upon environment and education as the formative influences upon personal and social development. The minutiae of child rearing, educational method, and public behavior took on national importance as both determinants and measurements of national
character and morality. Purification of the infant and adolescent environment, seen as mildly desirable in the worldly atmosphere of the mid-eighteenth century, became a matter of vital concern. Foolish rhymes and mindless nurses must be kept from perceptive infants; impressionable children from the grasp of debauched parents. Sumptuary legislation, in fact the entire negative strain which runs throughout the evangelical reform tradition, could be justified on scientific authority.

No conviction was stated with more frequency or unanimity than the absolute necessity of public virtue. The state and society is only as good as its members. The idea of political well-being as a consequence of personal morality was basic to classical and Biblical political theory, but it took on added meaning in a gigantic republic whose downfall was predictable on the basis of the whole corpus of European political science. As Henry Holcombe stated in 1803, "without virtue, there can be no liberty. At least, it is allowed, on all hands, that a large Republic especially, cannot long subsist without virtue." Personal freedom and the longevity of the state were seen to be directly proportional to the moral responsibility of the citizenry. And the theological trend denying God a direct role in human affairs only

heightened the necessity of popular standards of behavior.

Even for a colonial environment accustomed to economic growth, to mobility of population, and to rapid cultural change, the Revolutionary era and the succeeding decades were a period of intense disruption and mental anguish. The Declaration of Independence, viewed at the time as the culmination of a decade of political activity, was in many ways but the act of raising the lid to Pandora's Box. Only from hindsight do the crises of the early national period take on any sort of orderly progression in the evolution from colonial dependence to democratic independence. To contemporaries, embroiled as well in the emotionalism of the Napoleonic conflict, the institutional changes and intellectual compromises which were forced upon them by an invisible logic were excruciating.

This sense of crisis was far more than a figment of the Enlightenment mind, however. Extralegal bodies on local and state level in every colony were compelled to legitimize their assumption of political power. On the state and national levels, practical politics became indeed an exercise in the essential theories of social and political organization as the very constitutions of state and nation were formulated and amended.

The vast majority of the humanitarian reform efforts which did materialize in such profusion between 1776 and 1830 were rooted in this same spirit of anxiety which per-
meated the political world; on the impersonal level, in fear of national well-being and whether the country possessed the strength to survive; on the personal level, in religious doubts, economic insecurity, and the gnawing rootlessness of urban growth. The Enlightenment mentality, so thoroughly ingrained in the educated men and women of the day by means of the contemporary system of moral education, gave these anxieties definition and laid out solutions in no uncertain terms. It propagated the audaciously naive sense of confidence which would characterize nineteenth-century reform.

IV. The Millennial Vision

For the vast majority of those who actively participated in the organized reform activities of the period, this composite of doubts and fears of the early national period were expressed in religious terms. Religious faith provided a sense of dedication, of compulsion, which was rarely found in "men of the world."

The urgency of the Revolutionary crisis, if a disastrous influence upon church organization, sowed the seeds of religious rebirth. The Methodist and Baptist revivals, which burned across the Southern rural landscape in the late 1770s and the 1780s, led, by a somewhat tortuous chain of events, to the Revival of 1800. This, the Great Revival, set a tone of Southern Protestantism as a whole, which is yet apparent.
It was not in its most direct manifestations, the development of the Methodist and Separate Baptist movements, however, that the religious reawakening of the period was to be felt in organized reform and benevolence. The legacy of The Great Revival was far too individualistic: the revivalistic denominations were incapable of transposing beliefs in almost magical change on the personal level to the wider social context.

One clear result of the anxieties of the period, obviously tied to the rising nationalistic vision in the political sphere, was a growing millennial strain in religious life. It was present in the outdoor meetings led by Methodist and Baptist itinerants in the War years and seems to have been largely responsible for the wave of slave manumissions which they encouraged; it was present at the campgrounds of 1800 to 1805. But more importantly for the history of organized reform and benevolence, it also permeated the thought of the educated clergy as well, adding to the secular sense of mission which the War and the intellectual atmosphere of the age had brought forth.

Ernest Lee Tuveson, in his *Millennium and Utopia* (1949) and *Redeemer Nation* (1968), Alan Heimert in his controversial *Religion and the American Mind* (1966), and a growing number of historians have taken new interest in apocalypticism, particularly in the Biblical concept of the millennium. Long recognized as a basic element of revival enthusiasm, the idea of the imminence of the
"final things" of the Books of Daniel and Revelations has emerged in the past decade of historical study as a legitimate, in fact vitally important, element of even the most intellectually respectable wings of early American Protestantism. The obscure treatises on the millennium by Jonathan Edwards, by Samuel Hopkins, and others, previously dismissed as exercises in theological speculation, are being dusted off and convincingly re-evaluated as works of serious intent and widespread impact. Like frontier revivalism, millennialism was responsive to popular anxieties and subject to the self-generative process of escalating enthusiasm.  

Although clearly visible at the height of the Great Awakening and the Southern revivals of the 1770s, 1780s, and 1800 to 1805, it was in the second decade of the nineteenth century that millennialism, as an intellectual movement, rose to a crescendo. The vision pervades the organizational work of the religious and humanitarian reforms, giving it much of its sense of urgency and importance.

Of course, the belief in a tangible millennium was predicated upon a providential view of history. If one were to search through the vast literature of reform for the Biblical text most widely quoted by participants, Matthew XVI, 1,2,3, would appear at every turn: "O ye hypocrites! ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye discern the signs of the times?"

The Presbyterians, with a tradition and literature reaching back into their seventeenth-century Scottish past and strong American roots in the age of Whitefield, were most vocal in their enunciations of the providential view of current history. But the primary source was the Bible, and if less eloquent, less defined, and less frequent, allusions documents the vitality of a literal providential interpretation throughout Southern Protestantism. The rationalism of the eighteenth century did

result in a growing tendency to find God's intercession through natural rather than supernatural means. But if suggesting that God generally worked through man took a degree of the mystery from the Deity, it endowed human action with enhanced prophetic consequences.

The comparisons were often quite specific and direct. In a published sermon of 1795, the Rev. Samuel Eusebius McCorkle of North Carolina cast the United States in the role of the new Israel and equated manna with paper currency and the victory of Yorktown with the fall of Jericho.  

The War of 1812 brought out the full dimensions of the providential view. At the outset in 1812, "A True Republican" of Baltimore warned of God's retribution:

Which side, then, is Providence likely to favor? . . . If the English throng the houses of God, whilst we throng play houses, or houses of ill-fame; if they crowd their communion tables, whilst we crowd the gaming tables or festal board; if they pray whilst we curse; if they fast, whilst we get drunk, and keep the Sabbath, whilst we pollute it; if they shelter under the protection of heaven, whilst our own chief attention is to our troops, we are in danger . . . great danger.  

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23Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, The Comparative Happiness and Duty of the United States of America, Contrasted with Other Nations, Particularly the Israelites (Halifax, N.C., 1795), 5-42.

24The Bible and the Sword; or, the Appointment of the General Fast Vindicated: in an Address to the Citizens of America; Concerning the Propriety of Opposing British Piracy and Outrage, and of Fasting when the Sword is Drawn for that Purpose (Baltimore, Md., 1812).
The Rev. John Matthews, portraying the burning of Washington as a punishment of God, compared Gen. Ross to Cyrus of Persia. Rev. James Inglis had no second thought about ascribing to Providence the successful defense of Baltimore in a sermon to the very soldiers involved. He told the First Regiment of Artillery, Baltimore militia, that "It was he who covered your head in the day of battle, and planted your feet in proud security on the heights of honour." Rev. Charles Coffin of Tennessee suggested a direct correlation between battlefield successes and popular attention to God. As surely as the defeat of the initial Canadian campaign was attributable to "vain self-dependence," the successes on the Lakes and at New Orleans were the result of official proclamations of days of humiliation and prayer. The Virginia Episcopal Convention of 1817 described the War as punishment for "total neglect of God, the abandonment of his worship, the ruin and destruction of his temples, the profanation of his word, the contempt of his revela-

25 John Matthews, The Divine Purpose Displayed in the Works of Providence and Grace (Richmond, Va., 1825), 48-49.

26 James Inglis, A Discourse delivered in the First Presbyterian Church in the City of Baltimore, Lord's Day Morning October 2, 1814 (Baltimore, Md., 1814), 18.

27 Charles Coffin, A Sermon, Delivered in Rogersville, April 13, 1815 ... For the Restoration of Peace (Rogersville, Tenn., 1815), 7-9.
tion, the pursuit of all follies, the practice of all impieties."  

Rev. John E. Latta of Delaware provided a summation of the classical providential view of the conflict.

God had long bestowed upon us peculiar blessings, blessings far surpassing those vouchsafed to any other nation. But we neither recognized the author nor suitably improved the blessings. God therefore, withdrew them from us for a time, that he might shew us our dependence upon him, and convince us of the sin of abusing his mercies.

There was in the South of the period, as in most societies in time of stress, a lunatic fringe which went beyond the providential outlook to real apocalypticism.

28 Protestant Episcopal Church Convention, 1817. "Journals of the Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia from 1785 to 1835, inclusive," 116-17. Published as an Appendix to Francis L. Hawks, A Narrative of Events Connected with the Rise and Progress of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia (N.Y., 1836. vol. 1 of "Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of the United States of America").

Adam Freeman, onetime schoolmaster, preacher, would-be faith healer, and lawyer, of Lexington, Virginia, of the 1790s, supposedly wandered the South in beard and white cloak, preaching of the millennium until returning to his senses and legal practice in the deep South. A thoroughly insane Jonathan Brunt, in a remarkable pamphlet published in Knoxville in 1809, predicted a "Christian revolution which would entirely remove the very great domestic disorders, which at present, infest personal civil society." Nimrod Hughes of Richmond, in A Solemn Warning... (1811) announced God's personal revelation of the world's end on June 4, 1812.

The ravings of the last two men, however, were symptomatic of a growing millennial strain within the mainstream of Southern religious thought. Men of the early nineteenth century were not so far removed from the

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31 Jonathan Brunt, The Little Medly. Containing Short Remarks on the Genuine Principles and Exalted Spirit of the Glorious Gospel of the New Testament (Knoxville, Tenn., 1809). Brunt was indeed a troubled man. He noted that even before his immigration in 1794, neighbors had called him "crazy or insane." In the pamphlet, which is mostly unintelligible, he describes "She-Cains" trying to force him into marriage and plots to force him to consume poison and human flesh. He had petitioned Pres. Madison for "additional good laws against personal domestic corruption, consisting of all sorts of illegal intrigues."
32 Nimrod Hughes, A Solemn Warning to All Dwellers Upon Earth (Martinsburg, Va., 1811).
age of seeming miracles and popular superstition as to be
oblivious to extraordinary phenomena within the natural
or human world, and 1811 provided more than its share of
surprises. As early as January 29, Parson Weems, in his
introduction to God's Revenge Against Gambling (1811),
warned that "It is high time for the Inhabitants of these
Southern states at least, to open their eyes, and look
around them; for never since the days of Noah and his
second Dove have the judgments of God stalked so fearfully
as they have done through our land in these latter times."
(He noted the unprecedented appearance of floods, cater-
pillars, tornadoes, and yellow fever.) 33 Between Decem-
ber 16 and 23, eighty-nine separate earthquakes were
reported in the Southwest, the reverberations of which
could be felt from Georgia to Pennsylvania. Entire for-
est were uprooted, islands destroyed, and rivers diverted.
Explosions of natural gas were heard for hundreds of
miles. A week later, the Richmond theater burned, con-
suming Virginia's governor and seventy-two of her leading
citizens. 34

33 Mason Locke Weems, God's Revenge against Gambling,
2nd. ed. (Phila., 1812), 5-6.

34 See Walter B. Posey, "The Earthquake of 1811
and Its Influence on Evangelistic Methods in the Churches
of the Old South," Tennessee Historical Magazine, 2nd
Ser., 1 (1931), 107-14; James Muir, "Repentance, or Rich-
mond in Tears," Ten Sermons (Alexandria, Va., 1812), 39-
71.
It was more than enough to turn the most resolute sinners to thoughts of repentance. In Asheville, North Carolina, noted in the state for decades as a stronghold of irreligion, the Raleigh Star observed that at the height of the quakes "a wonderful change has taken place in the manners of the people. I believe so many fervent prayers never were put up in this place as were on that fearful night and morning." Similar instances of short term piety surfaced throughout the South, themselves interpreted as signs of impending upheaval.35

In a sermon delivered at a community service in the Episcopal church of Alexandria, Virginia, on December 29, the doughty Presbyterian Rev. James Muir delineated "the signs of the times." Political revolutions and war in Europe, malignant fevers, economic depression, a revolutionary spirit in South America, and a threat of war in the United States were joined by the appearance of Halley's comet, by a violent hail storm on June 7, an unexplained day of darkness of Nov. 1 (in the Alexandria area), the earthquakes, and the Richmond fire.36 If fulfillment of millennial prophesy eluded Muir and others in 1811, the air of expectation was rejuvenated with


periodic regularity. The innovations and mysteries of each new day were fitted into the variety of current eschatological interpretations.

The Presbyterians, and seemingly most of the Southerners who voiced such sentiments, were technically premillennialists, expecting the Second Coming only after a period of 1,000 years of strifeless existence in which all people of the Earth would turn to Christ. To be ushered in not by miracles but the natural works of man, the millennium could begin momentarily. To Protestants who tended to view the Antichrist literally to be the Pope and the Catholic Church, European upheavals and South American revolutions were propitious signs of his impending fall.

Citing the discovery of America, the expansion of knowledge (particularly of mental processes), reaction to the excesses of the Illuminati and the French Revolution, abolition of the slave trade, the rapid elevation of women in the literary and religious world, a "prevailing disposition to pity and to help the poor," and "the remarkable spirit of association among Christians," Presbyterian James Blythe exclaimed before the Synod of Kentucky in 1814, that

It is impossible but with astonishment, to contemplate the scene that is passing before us, and in which we are acting our destined parts. It is difficult to determine whether the political or the moral world exceeds in the grandeur, the novelty, and importance of the
objects presented to the mind of the
Christian philosopher . . . events
of ages and centuries have been, by
the great arbiter of the universe,
crowded into a few years.\textsuperscript{37}

Rev. James McChord of Lexington, Kentucky, was
confident enough of the direction of historical change in
1814 to predict that "the year 1823 will present events
of such a nature as shall entitle it to be looked upon as
the commencement of another era—the beginning of a period
that shall finish "the mystery of God!".\textsuperscript{38}

The conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars and the hard
years of depression which followed perpetuated the vision
of impending change. Benjamin M. Palmer of the Circular
Congregational Church in Charleston preached in 1819 on
the "signs of the times." Growing Christian unity, the
proliferation of charitable societies, revivals, concerts
of prayer, and the conversion of the heathen appeared to
point directly to the new age.\textsuperscript{39} Judge John Haywood, in

\textsuperscript{37}James Blythe, \textit{A Portrait of the Times; being a
Sermon delivered at the Opening of the Synod of Kentucky,
which Met at Lexington, Sept. 7th, 1814} (Lexington, Ky.,
1814), 3.

\textsuperscript{38}James M'Chord, \textit{The Morning Star, or Procuror of
the Millenium, A Sermon, Delivered in the Presbyterian
Church of Lexington, the 17th of July, 1813} (Lexington,

\textsuperscript{39}Benjamin M. Palmer, \textit{The Signs of the Times Dis­
cerned and Improved, in Two Sermons, Delivered in the
Independent or Congregational Church, Charleston, S.C.
(Charleston, S.C., 1816), 3-12.

The Report of the Committee of the Presbyterian
General Assembly in 1816 which created the Board of
Missions enunciated the spirit of expectancy: "God, in
his adorable providence, seems to have changed, in these
latter times, the scale on which he had for ages conducted
the same year, pointed to the 1811 earthquake, to peace societies, to opposition to dueling, the prohibition of trade in slaves, and his own combination of Biblical quotations and mathematical calculation as proof that the end was nigh. He found that "there is perceptible in these transactions, a disposition springing up, under the culture of Providence, to mitigate the wretchedness of humanity. It grows; it spreads; respect for the rights of others is everywhere germinating; such as never appeared in the world at any former period." The brilliant leader of Virginia Presbyterianism, John Holt Rice, sounded a similar note:

The enemy conceived the most sanguine hopes, and it was often predicted that the nineteenth century would witness the extinction of the name of Christ. But God spoke the word, and Missionary Societies, Bible Societies, Tract Societies, Sabbath Schools started up like new suns, to pour their light through the immense darkness of the moral world—and in about a quarter of a century, through this instrumental-ity, the horizon seems to brighten

the affairs of his government. Changes which formerly were the work of years, are now produced in a day. Magnificent and astonishing events have passed so often before the eyes of men of the present age, that their minds have acquired a tone and vigour which prompt them to undertake and accomplish great things. We ourselves witness every day the wonderful effects of combined counsels and exertions, both in the moral and political world." Presbyterian Church. General Assembly. Minutes, vol. 1 (1816), 631-2.

with the dawning light of Millennial glory. 41

With the return of prosperity and speculation, the collapse of the Congress System in post-Napoleonic Europe, and a renewal of domestic political strife after the era of good feelings, the millennium began to seem a more distant reality. F. Carlton Henry, in a missionary sermon in 1824 still predicted that "Some wonderful consummation is rapidly advancing. At this moment there is a general movement over the whole earth. The fans of idolatry are nodding." 42 And the emotional Angelina Grimké confided in her diary on January 14, 1828 that "there is one grand movement among Christians . . . Zion's King is about to take possession of our World. He is now marshalling his forces and making preparation for a Great and Glorious conflict . . . " 43 But, in general, references to the millennium are increasingly formalized and devoid of conviction. The turmoil of Jacksonian America was far too visible by the late twenties to suggest an imminent


cessation of earthly strife, and at the same time, America's existence no longer had the precarious appearance which had bred the sense of urgency characteristic of political disputes before the War of 1812.

The political moralism with a millennial accent which dominated the American evangelical mentality between 1776 and the 1820s gave American charity and reform a distinctiveness of purpose which transcended the constitutional similarities to colonial and British antecedents. The rhetoric on this side of the Atlantic was more insistent, more naively confident.

British charity was essentially paternalistic—at its worst an effort to quiet the masses, at best an exercise in disinterested kindness. American efforts always betrayed a perfectionist tendency of political and religious dimensions. The benevolent societies in the United States, from modest local efforts to the brazen national societies of the twenties and thirties, were instruments in the quest for republican democracy and the spread of God's kingdom. Tocqueville spotted the subtle difference between the organizing phenomena in Britain and her stepchild: "The English often perform great things singly, whereas the Americans form associations for the smallest undertakings. It is evident that the former people consider association as a powerful means of action, but the latter seem to regard it as the only means they have of acting." He saw the tendency as fundamental to democratic society, proposing that "among the laws that
rule human societies there is one which seems to be more precise and clear than all others. If men are to remain civilized or to become so, the art of associating together must grow and improve in the same ratio in which the equality of conditions is increased." In an address delivered in 1827 in Charleston, Thomas S. Grimké effectively made the same point:

Formerly, the community was a mere bystander, a mere spectator, as to all that was going on. The government, a few ancient, well-endowed institutions, and a handful of individuals, were the only agents. Now, the people are everything, and do everything, through the medium of a vast multitude of organized associations . . . [the people are] at once the final and the efficient cause.

If they never attained their intended effectiveness as vehicles of democratic and religious perfection, the charity and reform organizations did embody an idealism which was an important feature of the nation's being in its first half century.

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44 Tocqueville, Democracy in America, vol. 2, 115, 118.

45 Thomas S. Grimké, An Address on the Character and Objects of Science and, Especially, the Influence of the Reformation on the Science and Literature, Past, Present, and Future, of Protestant Nations, Delivered in the First Presbyterian Church . . . Anniversary of the Literary and Philosophical Society of South-Carolina (Charleston, S.C., 1827), 54.
CHAPTER 2

REFORM ORIGINS WITHIN THE ORGANIZED CHURCHES

The benevolent societies of the early nineteenth century, because they had their origins in the historical traditions of both the religious and secular worlds, fitting neatly into neither, have received little of the scholarly attention they deserve. Church historians, whose productions are rarely noticed by the historical profession at large, have tended to portray the benevolent societies as merely vehicles for denominational expansion. Such an interpretation is valid for the societies of the mid-century, but it deprives those of the first three decades of the broader idealism described in Chapter 1. Secular historians, on the other hand, have been woefully remiss in failing to give religious developments of any sort the emphasis accorded them by past generations themselves. They have not employed church records and religious writings with any approximation of the care given to municipal or political sources. They have generally underestimated the social and intellectual impact of the churches in early American society.

Even the two important book-length studies of the national reform societies, Charles I. Foster's _An Errand_
of Mercy, the Evangelical United Front, 1790-1837 (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1960), and Clifford S. Griffin's Their Brothers' Keepers, Moral Stewardship in the United States, 1800-1865 (New Brunswick, N.J., 1960), isolate their topics from antecedent and complementary developments within the Churches. Among active students in the field, only Lois J. Banner, who began her work with a dissertation on the missionary and reform impulse, displays a solid grasp of the inseparability of Church development and social reform.¹

The organized Churches were an important foundation of the reform organization movement. Local humanitarian efforts and the national reform societies arose in response to the same pressures of republicanism which produced the voluntary denominational system. Based upon the same emotional fears of irreligion and human degeneracy, they both breathed deeply of the spirit of millennial urgency which was the cornerstone of American national identity.

Growing institutions possess a momentum of their own, and the reform societies were products and part of the same process of expanding functions and procedures

which turned inward looking denominational bodies into Church organizations with national influence. The goals and attitudes of the societies were logical extensions of the revival of church discipline and the missionary impulse. The tangled web of personal ties between churches and societies renders incomplete any study of one which does not consider the other.

I. From Established Church to Republican Ecumenism

One of the central features of Southern colonial history was the Anglican Church establishment, stretching from Maryland to Georgia. In reality, the Presbyterians, the Moravians, the Mennonites, the Lutherans, and a confusion of smaller German and Scottish sects dominated a vast frontier stretching from Delaware and Pennsylvania to northern Georgia. Quakers, Baptists, even Congregationalists, coexisted and modestly flourished in the South. But the Established Church possessed the legal recognition, the financial security, the social prestige, and the transatlantic patronage which gave it an overwhelming dominance in the provincial centers of political power from New Castle to Savannah. With all its decentralization, its lethargy, its imperfections in personnel, the

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Anglican establishment was the pervasive religious influence in Southern colonial society.

Behind the facade of legal recognition, the Church itself had been slowly adapting to the American environment. In gaining a foothold in the colonies, even the Established Church had been forced to take on the character of a missionary faith typical of the dissenter sects which independently developed in the colonies. Active congregations themselves could be created only with the thankless labor of dedicated missionaries whose achievements defy the stereotypes of either a colonial Anglican clergy made up of the misfits and rejects of the British hierarchy or of an eighteenth-century English Church devoid of religious vitality.3


See also: Nelson W. Rightmyer, The Anglican Church in Delaware (Phila., 1947); Rightmyer, Maryland's Established Church (Austin, Tex., 1957); G. MacLaren Brydon, Virginia's Mother Church and the Conditions Under Which It Grew (Richmond, Va., 1947-52, 2 vols.); Spencer Ervin, "The Anglican Church in North Carolina," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, 25 (1956), 102-61; Frederick E. Dalcho, An Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina (Charleston, S.C., 1820); Edgar Legare Pennington, "The Beginning of
The absence of an American bishop and of sustained, effective ecclesiastical supervision further narrowed the actual gap between established and dissenter Churches. A growing tendency toward parish autonomy in all of the Southern colonies and the political nature of lay offices severely limited the efficacy of the Church as a force in the individual colony or on a continental basis. 4

But appearances and symbols frequently count more than reality. The Anglican Church's identification with the Crown doomed the institution to the sudden and nearly total collapse which it suffered in the course of the war. The Revolutionary constitutions of every Southern province but Virginia effectively prohibited state religious support. Legislative action in the Old Dominion between 1779 and 1786 accomplished the same result. 5 The declen-
tion was predictable because of the inherent incompatibility of democratic republicanism and religious establishments, but it was nevertheless a shocking, highly visible alteration in the Southern way of life. In the course of Southern history, the termination of chattel slavery in 1865 alone has surpassed Anglican disestablishment as a decisive institutional alteration with far-reaching consequences. The sharpness of the discontinuity, not shared by the North, has not been accorded the weight it deserves as a formative influence in the section's development. Organized religion was debilitated from top to bottom. The Anglican Church as even a spiritual entity was crushed; the German Reformed Church, the Presbyterian, the Scottish Reformed bodies, the Lutherans, the Regular Baptists, sharing the penalties of the pervasive anti-clerical atmosphere, were severely weakened. The Separate Baptists and the Methodists registered remarkable gains in terms of converts, due in part to the uncertainties of the War itself, but formal denominational foundations remained very insecure well into the 1780s.

To a far greater extent than was true in the Middle or Northern states, the Revolution created a religious vacuum in the South. The scattered settlement patterns naturally facilitated the breakdown in social cohesion.

The spiritual destitution of the South profoundly affected the nature of the religious life which did
develop. It rendered the section particularly prone to revivalism. It very possibly obviated the rise of popular political involvement by failing to transmit to a broad segment of the Southern population by means of regular Sunday services the moralism which was so basic to political ideology in the Federalist-Republican era.

Inevitably, it reduced matters of ritual and theology to minimal importance. To people who were indeed starved for regular worship of any sort, the niceties of sectarianism simply had no meaning. Southern religious life between 1770 and 1820 often demonstrated a pronounced non-denominationalism which was not the minor aberration one would gather from church histories, nor truly in the spirit of present-day ecumenism. To some extent, it was simply an eleventh-hour manifestation of the latitudinarianism and religious secularism of the eighteenth century. Few of the founding fathers allowed themselves to be pinned down on their religious beliefs, but a Deistical spirit, in fact if not in name, was widespread. Madison, Jefferson, and many other Southerners of their generation envisioned a religion of moral truths, essentially an independent educational adjunct to the democratic state, with neither clerical hierarchy nor permanent legal establishment.  

Men with denominational affiliations abhorred this dismissal of church tradition, yet they shared, within a sectarian framework, a harmonious religious vision and purpose which was not greatly dissimilar. Without exception, denominations in the early national period viewed themselves as "the Church." Each had come into existence with the enthusiastic conviction that it represented the purified faith of the Church Fathers; their rituals and doctrines, no more than the discredited Catholic Church itself, institutionalized the idea of being simply one of many religious alternatives. It was this very self-assurance on the part of each denomination which permitted acts of cooperation to be carried out with a sincerity unthinkable by mid-century. After all, the delusions of rival sects would be exposed in the imminent millennium.

The superb dissertations of Howard Miller and Fred J. Hood describe the process by which the emotional revivalism of the Great Awakening, recurrent millennialism, and the Revolutionary crisis gave rise to a spirit of religious republicanism in the Presbyterian Church which temporarily sublimated sectarian impulses.7 Their findings are


applicable in the other Churches as well. By the 1790s, when the initial work of national political consolidation had been successfully concluded, the literature of the Clapham sect and their non-conformist allies, with its de-emphasis of theology and liturgy, was permeating transatlantic channels of religious communication, encouraging a similar spirit of Christian fraternity against the forces of irreligion and anarchy. The Great Revival, the economic and political uneasiness of the Napoleonic era, and the mutual weakness of organized churches in the South all perpetuated an air of sectarian harmony which survived into the nineteenth century's third decade.

The sharing of church structure at the time of clerical conventions became a matter of common courtesy; non-voting delegates from rival sects were welcomed at


clerical association meetings with increasing frequency.  

A special relationship developed between certain denom-
ninations. The Presbyterian, Congregationalist, and 
Associate Reformed churches of the South were close 
because of similarities in doctrine and government; 
the Methodists, generally more exclusive than other sects, 
showed themselves to be receptive to itinerant Quakers.  

German sects, with a common language barrier and pietistic 
heritage, were in such frequent communion as to make their 
denominational histories difficult before the mid-nineteenth 
century.  

Episcopalian and Lutherans exhibited a

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9 See any of the minutes of clerical bodies listed 
in the bibliography. For examples of outside delegates 
attending such meetings, see: Presbyterian Church, 
"Minutes of the Synod of the Carolinas, 1788-1812," Ms., 
vol. 2 (1800-1812): (1805), 143-45; (1807), 188, and 
"Minutes of the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia, vol. 
1, 1813-1836," Ms.; (1821), 74-75; (1828), 193; (1829), 
218-19. Both at the Historical Foundation of the Presby-
terian and Reformed Churches, Montreat, N.C.

10 The particular kindness shown a Quaker preacher 
by Methodist congregations is brought out in the travel 
literature of the period. See, for example, Samuel M. 
Janney, Memoirs of Samuel M. Janney, A Minister in the 
Religious Society of Friends (Phila., 1881), 37-40. It 
can be explained by: 1) a mutual heritage of pietism and 
de-emphasis upon reason and intellect obviated unavoidable 
thological disputes; 2) particularly in the Delmarva 
peninsula, many of Methodism's earliest converts were of 
Quaker background; 3) in their growing weakness in the 
South, particularly after the Hicksite division, the 
Society of Friends offered no threat to Methodist expansion.

11 Much of the confusion stemmed from the common 
pietistic origins of most of the German sects. The 
Lutheran, German Reformed, Moravian, and United Brethren 
in Christ churches all could trace their founding in part 
to the influence of August Hermann Francke and associates 
at Halle. One of the very few descriptions of German 
Pietism available in English is Chapter 2 of John T.
certain compatibility in the South, with the Diocese and the Synod of North Carolina even uniting briefly in 1821 under the cosmopolitan guidance of Gottleib Shober and Robert J. Miller.\textsuperscript{12}

The enthusiasm of the Great Revival and the common hardships of the frontier could foster instances of collaboration remarkable by later nineteenth-century standards. At a conference held in Bedford, Virginia, on Christmas day, 1801, ten Methodist, and six Presbyterian clergymen agreed to a plan of exchanges for both preaching and attendance at judicial functions; competition for

\textsuperscript{12}For documentation of the brief union of the Lutheran Synod and the Episcopal Annual Convention of North Carolina, see: Gottleib Shober, \textit{Comprehensive Account of the Rise and Progress of the Reformation of the Christian Church by Dr. Martin Luther, Actually Begun on the 31st day of October, A.D. 1517 . . .} (Baltimore, 1818), 162; W. Peschau, trans., \textit{Minutes . . . Synod of North Carolina} (n.p., 1894), 4, 10-11, 48, 51; Protestant Episcopal Church, Diocese of North Carolina. \textit{Journals:} (1820), 4, 6-7; (1821), 4, 14, 18, 22; (1822), 11-12, 18; (1823), 6. See also Robert M. G. Libby, "Anglican-Lutheran Ecumenism in Early American History," \textit{Hist. Mag. P. E. Ch.}, 36 (1967), 211-32. The Swedish Lutheran church in Wilmington, Delaware (as in Philadelphia), was transferred to the Protestant Episcopal Church upon the death of the last Swedish missionary.
members was to cease. Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist delegates to a "Religious Convention of Christian Denominations," meeting at Washington, Mississippi, November 19-24, 1818, agreed to attack the vices of the frontier and "to promote a spirit of mutual forbearance and brotherly affection between its members and between their respective denominations."

The financial inability of many communities and the inadequate supplies of clergymen gave birth to "union churches" throughout the section. In Washington, Richmond, Petersburg, Raleigh, Salisbury, Savannah, to name but a few of many such towns, interdenominational services comprehending Presbyterians, Episcopalians, frequently Baptists, and Methodists met in public buildings or the solitary church structure in the first two decades of the century. The Johns Island and the Friendship Churches in South Carolina, eventually to become Presbyterian, were built jointly by Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists. The state of Kentucky constructed a public meeting house on the capital grounds in Frankfort which housed common services. As Jefferson was pleased to note,


It is certainly true that the union churches and instances of clerical cooperation were in most part marriages of convenience founded upon mutual weakness. Eventual sectarian division of joint congregations was clearly expected in many cases. The Eatautow Church in Putnam County, Georgia, built jointly by Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and Socinians, was from the beginning assigned to each, one Sunday per month. The union church in Mobile was established with the provision that a two-thirds majority would eventually determine permanent affiliation. The Monumental Church in Richmond was built with the understanding that denominational ties would be decided by majority vote of subscribers upon its
By the thirties, the growing size and wealth of Southern urban centers, the expansiveness of national denominations, and home missions had eliminated much of the financial weakness and theological indifference upon which joint efforts had been based.

But the previous decades of fluidity, even if based in large part upon the weakness of the churches, had been productive. Religious activity, because of its infrequency, because demands for things religious exceeded supply, because there was a spirit of excitement inherent in the faith itself, seemed to possess a crucial importance which was diluted when it became readily available. The smallest act in the most remote corner of the earth seemed to the actors to have world importance. To construct a church or support the educational expenses of one more ministerial candidate was conceived as adding a precious brick to the foundation upon which Christ's Kingdom on earth would rest. The pervasiveness of this non-sectarian idea of a greater purpose directly stimulated independent charity and reform effort.

II. From Emotional Despair to Denominational Self-Confidence

If the war had diverted public attention from the spiritual realm, if it thinned the ranks of Christ's Southern spokesmen, it did not silence those who remained.

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The clergymen and laymen who continued to consider other-worldly things in the 1780s and 1790s spoke in an increasingly shrill tone of alarm at the course of American development.

A certain amount of lawlessness, of flagrant drunkenness and debauchery have always followed the return of war-hardened veterans to civilian life. Social pressures were particularly intense in post-revolutionary America because of the chaotic state of public finances and runaway currency inflation. Tory removals and estate confiscations, population dislocation, the infusion of a new military "aristocracy" into American life, altered the economic and social structures of the vast majority of American communities. It naturally bred an air of uneasiness which is apparent in the scattered records of Southern life in the 1780s.¹⁷

In his perceptive analysis of the consequences of the recently-concluded war, David Ramsay expressed the fears which run throughout the public and private utterances of educated Americans of the mid-1780s:

War never fails to injure the morals of the people engaged in it. The American war, in particular, had an unhappy influence of this kind. Being begun without funds or regular establishments, it could not be

on without violating private rights; and in its progress, it involved a necessity for breaking solemn promises, and plighted faith. The failure of national justice, which was in some degree unavoidable, increased the difficulties of performing private engagements, and weakened that sensibility to the obligations of public and private honor, which is a security for the punctual performance of contracts. 18

As Gordon Wood has so persuasively documented in his Creation of the American Republic (Chapel Hill, 1969), this republican despair permeated American political thought in the 1780s and led in a step-by-step process to the Constitutional Convention of 1788. 19

To those nurtured within the folds of organized religion, who equated morality and religion, it was essentially a spiritual crisis. Spokesmen for the formal sects, the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians, the Lutherans, the German and Scottish Reformed churches found an easily-arrived-at explanation in the very real losses in active clergymen and congregations within their own denominations. Among the literate and vocal elements of Christian society in the South, the opportunities for public worship conducted by an educated clergyman were indeed rare in the 1780s, and rarer still in the next two decades. In fact, the number of liberally educated men of the cloth


in the South did not surpass pre-Revolutionary levels until the second decade of the nineteenth century. 20

The simultaneous creation of clerical associations within each new denomination only magnified the frustrations. They served as countless platforms from which to sound the alarm but possessed few of the resources capable of combating the forces of irreligion. In his address to the Virginia Episcopal convention of 1790, Bishop James Madison sounded this common note of discouragement:

When I consider the present situation of our church, and further, when I cast my eyes towards the many obstacles to its prosperity which present themselves on every side, I confess to you that, struck with the arduous enterprise, I feel myself for a moment intimidated; that for a moment, despondency instead of hope, fear of evils greater than we have yet experienced instead of the consolatory anticipation of better prospects, take possession of my soul. 21

Eight years later, in 1799, he expressed desperation:

That dreadful prostration of religious and moral principles which we every-

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20 For statistics of active clergymen, see the minutes of the clerical conventions. See also: "Religious Denominations," in Jedidiah and Richard C. Morse, A New Universal Gazetteer, or Geographical Dictionary ... (New Haven, Ct., 1823), 855; "Ecclesiastical Register: A Statistical View of the Principal Religious Denominations in the United States, and in Other Portions of the World," Quarterly Register of the American Education Society, 3 (1830-31), 213-21.

21 "Journals of the Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia from 1785 to 1835, inclusive," 37. Published as an Appendix to Francis L. Hawks, A Narrative of Events Connected with the Rise and Progress of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia (N.Y., 1836, vol. 1 of "Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of the United States of America").
where experience, manifests the awful truth. Religion, the only anchor which holds man to his duties, no longer finds that firm ground in which it can inhere; morals, and with them private and public, present and future happiness, are left to the mercy of a rude storm, which threatens their destruction. Even they who still call themselves Christians, have grown cold and languid; while thousands, availing themselves of that languor, treat religion as a prejudice which debases the human mind; deride its sacred obligations, and exultingly anticipate its obliteration from the earth.22

Because of the magnitude of their Church's decline, Episcopalians spoke with a tone of unmatched anguish. The Presbyterians were equally articulate and well organized for making themselves heard. Ironically the Methodists and Baptists, immersed in revivalistic expansion which refuted the very basis for alarm in the formal churches, lent their voices to the prophetic chorus. The revivalistic emphasis upon conversion, upon distinctions between the "saved" and "the worldly," caused them to be receptive to any portrayal of unregenerate human sinfulness.

The relative harmony which existed within the greater religious community in the early national period did not carry over to relations between the Churches and

22 Hawks, ed., "Journals of . . . Diocese of Virginia," 78. For a similar statement delivered in the form of a circular letter to the Diocese of Maryland, see: Protestant Episcopal Church. Diocese of Maryland. The Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the State of Maryland, to the Vestries and Other Members of the said Church (Baltimore, 1794).
their envisioned enemies. In fact, if one were to distill the vastness and intricacies of American church history in the early nineteenth century for a common attitude or quality which cut across denominational lines, which set it apart from its eighteenth-century origins, it would be the pervasive mentality and language of conflict. To be a Christian in 1820, was to be at war with those who were not.

Conversionary religion, by emphasizing the dissimilarities between the saved and the damned, naturally heightened the concept of church membership as a fraternal bond uniting Christians against the forces of evil. But conversion, even through the medium of the camp meeting revival, remained an individual act. Merely in its spiritual context, a church's sense of superiority had no social significance beyond the congregation itself.

In sharp parallel to the development of national political parties between 1788 and 1800, it was the pressure of the French Revolution and its threat of social chaos which gave the disparate fears of religious extinction and moral decline definition and shape. According to the report on the state of religion presented to the Presbyterian General Assembly of 1799, "a vain and pernicious philosophy has, in many instances, spread its infection from Europe to America, and the introduction of a multitude of licentious and unprincipled writings
has poisoned the sources of morals . . .”\(^\text{23}\)

It was Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* which transformed, for the average Christian in the South, what was essentially an emotional political crisis into a broader crisis with religious significance. Written in strident prose, it sold well in Britain and went through nineteen editions in the United States between 1794 and 1796.\(^\text{24}\)

It was read widely in the South and, alone among the anti-religious efforts of the period, provoked a broadly-based reaction in print. Presbyterian James Muir of Alexandria issued *An Examination of the Principles Contained in The Age of Reason* (Baltimore, 1795), and the energetic Episcopal clergyman of Elkton, Maryland, William Duke, published *A Clew to Religious Truth* (Wilmington, 1795) "to combat infidelity."\(^\text{25}\)

Rev. Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, North Carolina Presbyterian of unabashed Federalist sympathies, published three of his numerous

\(^{23}\)Presbyterian Church, Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive (Phila., 1847), 181-83.


discourses against Deism in 1797 and 1798. The earthy "Delaware Waggoner" David Nelson, who admitted that "a whip would suit my hand better than to take up the pen against such an ignorant antagonist," compensated for his lack of rational arguments with fervent invective in his An Investigation of that False, Fabulous and Blasphemous Misrepresentation of Truth (Wilmington, 1799).

Samuel Eusebius McCorkle, Four Discourses on the General Principles of Deism and Revelation Contrasted; Delivered in Salisbury and Thvatira on Different Days in April and May, 1797; Discourse I (Salisbury, N.C., 1797), and Four Discourses on the General First Principles of Deism and Revelation Contrasted; Delivered in Salisbury and Thvatira, on Different Days in April and May, 1798; Discourse II (Salisbury, N.C., 1798), and A Discourse on the Doctrine and Duty of Keeping the Sabbath (Salisbury, N.C., 1798).

David Nelson, A Delaware Waggoner, An Investigation of the False, Fabulous, and Blasphemous Misrepresentation of Truth, Set forth by Thomas Paine, in his two Volumes, entitled the Age of Reason, Dedicated to the Protection of America (Wilmington, Del., or Lancaster, Pa., 1800). Nelson was one of the most curious and interesting figures to appear in print during the period. Particularly incensed by Paine's claims that opposition to his views came only from those of the upper class, he believed it his Christian duty as "one of the middling class of lay-men" to respond. "Yet, not knowing whether or not I may be accused for publishing my own ignorance: but be that as it will, I suppose that I have done my duty; therefore the censures of a criticizing genius whose head ... is filled with vacuum and atoms; or stuffed with grammatical distinctions, and their bellies crammed with syllables; and at the same time can see no further than their noses, or than their self-conceitedness will permit: I say, the censures of such, shall not trouble me in the smallest degree; as I flatter myself with the hopes of having the approbation of the wisest, worthiest, and most refined thinking parties; who, by the rough draft, can perceive how the work should be done; without finding fault ... ." (p. 2)

Addressing himself to Paine, he urged that Americans, "if they act in duty to themselves, and to your memory, they will take the following directions; and that is, that in every convenient place they will set up your effigy, and then as often as nature requires, they may
Presbyterian Archibald Alexander, and even Patrick Henry supposedly had replies to *The Age of Reason* well underway when the publication of Bishop Watson's *Apology* (1786) satisfied the need for a Biblical answer to Paine.\(^{28}\)

As in the country as a whole, the Deistical threat in the South possessed a good measure of obvious artificiality even at its height in the Anglo-French conflict of 1797-1798. The spectre of the Illuminati plot outlined in Abbe Barruel's *Memoirs* (Hartford and New York, 1799) and John Robeson's *Proofs of a Conspiracy* (Philadelphia, 1798) attained some currency for two decades but was far too preposterous for general acceptance; even the equation of the Republicans with French scepticism, a common expedient in the Federalist North, could not be resorted to any more safely by aspiring Southern clergymen than by politicians.\(^{29}\) The Jeffersonians were rapidly turning the territory south of Delaware into a one-party preserve.

What atheism and Deism did surface was in reality scattered, superficial, and in those few cases where it

\[\text{have a convenient opportunity to piss in your face, in memory of the respect shown them by you, as you wanted them all to follow you to the devil; alias to become subjects of his smutty majesty, your father.}^{28}\] (p. 26)

\(\text{28}^{\text{Alexander, Archibald Alexander, 177, 201-3; \ Herbert M. Morais, Deism in Eighteenth Century America (N.Y., 1934. Studies in Hist., Econ. and Public Law, Columbia U., no. 397), 97.}}\)

\(\text{29}^{\text{Augustin de Barruel, Memoirs . . . Part I (Hartford, Ct., 1799); Memoirs . . . Part II (Hartford, Ct., 1799); Memoirs . . . Part III (N.Y., 1799); John Robison, Proofs of a Conspiracy (Phila., 1798).}}\)
was well thought out, a matter of personal speculation as to the existence of Divine Revelation. There was nothing in the Deism of Thomas Jefferson or his contemporaries which was original or new, which was not firmly rooted in the eighteenth-century rationalist tradition of Shaftesbury, Locke, Wollaston, Chubb, Bolingbroke, or the French philosophers. The reputed free-thought societies of Baltimore, Mecklenburg, North Carolina, and elsewhere possessed little more substance than their shock value. America's foremost Deist Elihu Palmer did speak in Baltimore in August-September, 1801, but seems to have had no real effect. Samuel A. Holmes' dismissal from the faculty at Chapel Hill in 1795 and 1799 on the grounds of Deism was due more to the natural faculty disputes experienced by all new colleges than to any effectiveness on the wayward professor's part in creating a nursery for infidels.30

In character with all outpourings of public emotionalism, the crusade against infidelity was conducted with minimal concern for definition of the adversary. Verbal shots were fired in scattergun fashion at not only intellectual Deists, but at materialists, andUniversalists, at Freemasons and general opponents of

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30 Kemp P. Battle, *History of the University of North Carolina, from its Beginning to the Death of President Swain, 1789-1868* (Raleigh, N.C., 1907; vol. 1 of the History of the University of North Carolina), 156-7; *Temple of Truth*, no. 5 (Sept. 5, 1801), 65-69.
religious establishments. This lack of discrimination reduced the charges of a "Deistical conspiracy" to little more than a scarce campaign and thereby deprived it of immediate effectiveness in the 1790s. The essential enemy was still religious indifference and ignorance. Even Samuel E. McCorkle, in describing Deistical character, did not convincingly demonstrate the immediacy of any threat to American society when he noted that "I do not know a single deist that has the character of a man of plain good sense, and unaffected goodness of heart. They are all that I know either men who have not thought much about religion, or vain self conceited men, or drunkards, or gamblers, or whoremongers. I do not know a deist that does not fall under some one; but I know some who fall under two or three of the above descriptions." 31

But if the short term effects of the Deistical controversy were of little substance, the longer range influence was subtle but powerful. The timing of the crisis in the 1790s, intermixing religious and political fears, touching the very heart of the patriotic nerve at the gestation period of American denominationalism, left a deep impression on the American Christian mentality. It encouraged the intellectual imprecision and smear techniques which made honest theological debate impossible. The deficiencies of reasonable argument were

31 McCorkle, Four Discourses: Discourse I (1797), 51.
made up for with a spirit of contention and a rhetoric of mortal conflict. The concept of a duality, "we" versus "they," strengthened and was strengthened by the growing revivalistic emphasis upon the conversionary experience and the blind acceptance of divine revelation. Perfected in the nineties, the approach was easily employed to combat Uniterianism, Catholicism, and resurgent free-thought of the Jacksonian era, the exaggerated threats to God and country of the early nineteenth century.

Unitarianism, never strong in the South, provoked the loudest reaction because of the suddenness of its appearance and the intellectual abilities of its early missionaries. In 1817, the Second Congregational Church of Charleston followed its pastor, Anthony Forster, into Unitarianism. Within five years, congregations existed in Baltimore, Washington, and Augusta. 32 William Ellery Channing's 1819 sermon at the ordination of Jared Sparks in Baltimore was just the masterpiece which was needed to obtain social respectability in the worldly urban society of the upper South, and, to the horror of the orthodox throughout the nation, Sparks was appointed chaplain of the House of Representatives in 1821. 33


33 William Ellery Channing, A Sermon Delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Jared Sparks, to the Pastoral Care of the First Independent Church in Baltimore, May 5,
The colleges, ever to be watched since the uproar over Unitarian Henry Ware's election to the Hollis Professorship of Divinity at Harvard in 1804, provided even greater cause for concern. In short order, three seminaries of infidelity loomed upon the Southern horizon; Transylvania elected Horace Holley and South Carolina College, Thomas Cooper, to their presidencies. Jefferson's secular University of Virginia received its charter in 1819.34

Joining the threat of Unitarianism in the late 1820s, and promiscuously associated with it in the minds of most Protestants, was the resurgence of free thought. It evolved as essentially a workingman's movement, centered in New York, Philadelphia, and Boston. But the national news coverage and minor developments were sufficient to arouse defenses in the Southern churches.35


34 Even before the arrival of Pres. Cooper, Prof. George Blackburn of South Carolina College had been charged with teaching "dangerous doctrines (1814)." George Blackburn, Narrative of the Transactions in the South Carolina College, During the Three Last Courses (Columbia, S.C., 1814); Dumas Malone, The Public Life of Thomas Cooper, 1783-1839 (New Haven, 1926); Niels H. Sonne, Liberal Kentucky, 1780-1828 (N.Y., 1939).

Robert Owen did make several speaking tours in the South and had even thrown out the challenge in New Orleans in January, 1828, which eventuated in the famous debate with Alexander Campbell the next year. Fanny Wright flaunted her principles of free thought at the doomed colony of Nashoba, Tennessee, in 1825, and one radical newspaper, the *Free Inquirer* of Wilmington (1830), did survive for about a year below the Mason and Dixon line.

In the case of both Unitarianism and organized freethought, the initial religious fears were not warranted by future results. The national identification of Unitarianism with New England anti-slavery, and the absence of that element of enthusiasm so characteristic of the evangelicals, curtailed the Church's southern expansion in the 1830s. The freethought of Owen, Wright, and their contemporaries was too intellectual for their laboring followers, and they, the working class, too poor, too

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36 Robert Owen, *A Discourse on a New System of Society; As Delivered in the Hall of Representatives of the United States... 25th of February, 1825* (Washington, D.C., 1825); Robert Owen, *A Discourse on a New System of Society; As Delivered in the Hall of Representatives of the United States... 7th of March, 1825* (Washington, D.C., 1826); Post, Popular Freethought, 131-37; Robert Owen and Alexander Campbell, *Debate on the Evidences of Christianity; Containing an Examination of the "Social System," and of All the Systems of Scepticism of Ancient and Modern Times. Held in the City of Cincinnati, Ohio, from the 13th to the 21st of April, 1829* (Bethany, Va., 1829).

ignorant, too mobile, and too scattered to create an effective organization.

In a September, 1829, letter to the Presbyterian Board of Missions, Rev. David R. Preston of Abington, Virginia, expressed the sense of alarm but with a new emphasis: "Infidelity, and error, in all its shades and colors, abound. Their papers are circulated in great numbers in this country -- The Reformer, Gospel Advocate, Miss Wright's Papers, Liberal tracts, etc. inundate the land, and poison the moral principles of both old and young." He added, "and then comes the Popish influence, more formidable than all the rest." 38

Protestant consternation at the expanding Catholic church was predictable. Baltimore was the center of early nineteenth-century Catholicism and the Maryland-District of Columbia area became the natural zone of friction; Charleston, with the inimitable John Ireland and his United States Catholic Miscellany, emerged in the 1820s as a vocal center of Irish nationalism and denominational defense. Neither Protestantism nor Catholicism had a firm enough grip on Kentucky, Missouri or Louisiana, other areas of mutual presence, to afford the luxury of time-consuming controversy.

38David R. Preston to Corresponding Secretary, Presbyterian Board of Missions, Sept. 28, 1929, in Missionary Reporter and Educational Register, 1 (1829-30), 40.
The bickering was rarely a credit to either side, particularly the Protestants. The excellent Catholic schools and colleges in this section were jealously and recurrently denounced as organs of Church propaganda. Distribution of the King James Bible and of Protestant tracts, often containing strong anti-Papal diatribes, understandably provoked a Catholic reaction. Partly from the competition forced by geographical proximity, primarily from an inescapable heritage of distrust forged into their Church's constitutional beings, the Presbytery of Baltimore, the Episcopalians of the Alexandria-Washington-Baltimore area through their Washington Theological Repertory (1819-1826), and the Maryland Lutherans, by

39 A resolution by the 1810 session of the Presbytery of Baltimore that "measures ought in wisdom and charity to be taken to counteract certain attempts alleged to be made and to be persisted in, to corrupt Protestant Youth," initiated a pamphlet war of considerable bitterness. See: Presbytery of Baltimore, A Pastoral Letter from the Ministers, or Bishops, and Ruling Elders of the Presbytery of Baltimore to all Under their respective Charges; On Various Duties; but Especially on the Religious Education of their Youth (Baltimore, Md., 1811); Louis W. V. Dubourg, St. Mary's Seminary and Catholics at Large Vindicated, against the Pastoral Letter of the Ministers, Bishops, etc. of the Presbytery of Baltimore (Baltimore, Md., 1811); A Defence of the Pastoral Letter, of the Presbytery of Baltimore, in Reply to the "Vindicators of St. Mary's College" (Baltimore, Md., 1812).

For evidence of similar disputes, see: "The Seminary," United States Catholic Miscellany, 1 (1822), 86-87 [re. The Philosophical and Classical Seminary, Charleston]; Samuel Knox, A Letter to the Trustees of Frederick Academy, from the Late Principal (Baltimore, Md., 1827), 27-29.

means of the *Evangelical Lutheran Intelligencer* (1826), escalated the occasional disputes into a running exchange of vituperation and insult. 41

In an editorial preface to the first issue of the Charleston periodical, *The Unitarian Defendant* (1822), it was charged that "Epithets the most odious, associated ideas the most loathsome, and a spirit and language the most vulgar, have been employed against Unitarians." 42 Southern Protestants were guilty as charged in their entire approach to these external threats, however explicable on the basis of historical tradition. Even the most erudite and humane of the new nation's spiritual leaders displayed a singular blindness to the glaring disregard of their much-heralded principles of reason when confronted with the enemies, Catholicism, Deism, and Freethought.

Anti-Catholic crudities were resurrected from two centuries of post-Reformation literature and circulated

*Catholic Miscellany* (1826-) provides a good record of the Catholic side to the various Protestant-Catholic disputes in the period.

41 See Roger Baxter, *The Alexandria Controversy: or A Series of Letters between M. B. and Quaero, on the Tenets of Catholicity, which Appeared in the Alexandria Newspapers* (Georgetown, D.C., 1817).

On the Protestant side, Bishop England's address in the hall of the House of Representatives, Jan. 8, 1826, was viewed as a symbol of the growing Catholic presence. See "Review," *Va. Evan. and Lit. Mag.*, 9 (1826), 137.

42 *The Unitarian Defendant*, 1 (1822), 1-3.
in religious periodicals. References to the foreign threat and the "anti-American influence" of the Roman Church appeared with growing frequency in the pamphlet and periodical literature of the twenties, a clear portent of the ugly nativism of the following decade.

What is particularly striking is how far out of proportion evangelical belligerence was in relation to the threat. Militant atheists and Deists were almost non-existent. Catholics made up less than 4% of the nation's population as late as 1830, and the total of Southern adherents of Unitarianism in the same period numbered less than 1,000. The Devil himself was certainly no more evident than he had ever been. Even the most sympathetic biographical and denominational studies cannot explain away the divergence between rhetoric and reality on other than psychological grounds.

The paradox did not escape the notice of opponents to evangelicalism. In fact it infuriated them. But to

43 See for example: Luther, "For the Repository," Washington Theological Repertory, 5 (1823-24), 382-3.

44 "Opposition to Religious Liberty," Va. Evan. and Lit. Mag., 8 (1825), 124-32; Samuel Knox, Letter . . . Frederick Academy, 27-29; John Latta, A Sermon Preached on the Twelfth of January, 1815. A Date Recommended by the President of the United States to be Observed as a Day of Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer (Wilmington, Del., 1815), 12-19.

45 For the anticlerical mentality in all its glory, see any of Mrs. Anne Royall's outspoken travel narratives: A Traveller, Sketches of History, Life, and Manners, in the United States (New Haven, Ct., 1826); The Black Book; or, A Continuation of Travels in the United States (Wash-
become preoccupied with it is to miss the larger context within which the artificiality is explicable.

In the Revolution and Confederation decades the debris of religious establishment had been cleared away and the legal and institutional foundations of the voluntary denominational system created. But it took a widely perceived threat to put life into the system. Christian literature, from the time of the Prophets to Foxe's age of English martyrs, resplendent in the narrative of heroic conflict, provided a framework which was easily and automatically adapted to the American environment. Popular indignation can only be created with an easily identifiable adversary; not by the ideas of religious indifference and institutional decay, of human inability and numerical weakness, which were the actual culprits in Southern religious prostration during the early national period.

In a tradition as old as religion itself, the American churches personified and impersonalized their own weaknesses. Concepts of Deists, of atheists, of papists, or Satan could project the plaintive religious cries of the 1780s into the popular clamor of the 1820s within the Churches and within the interdenominational societies as well. The mundane was endowed with the

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elements of doubt and excitement which are the motivating forces of voluntary democratic change.

III. The Process of Rebirth

In spite of the solid abilities of many American clergymen in the century between the Great Awakening and 1830, evangelicalism was essentially a non-intellectual movement. Even the brilliant voices of Jonathan Edwards, John Witherspoon, and Samuel Hopkins, men who greatly influenced the evangelicals, if not strictly within their camp themselves, achieved fame and are remembered for their rationalizations of non-intellectual action: Edwards, of emotional conversion; Witherspoon, of morality in public and private life; Hopkins, of good works.46

The great leaders of expansive American Protestantism, George Whitefield, Count Zinzendorf, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg, Samuel Davies, Philip Asbury, Lyman Beecher, played down theology in their concern for practical piety and church growth just as their spiritual teachers in Europe had done. The emphasis of Francke's German pietism, of Bray's Anglican rejuvenation, of Wesley's revivalism,

of the Claphamite evangelicalism had been personal piety, family worship, restoration of a spiritual priesthood, plain but fervent preaching, good works, and Christian mission, not liturgical formality, and not theology.\textsuperscript{47}

The bickering over Scriptural passages and doctrinal minutiae which accompanied the rise of denominationalism, as in the case of fundamentalists today, reflected the growing formalism and mindlessness of theological indoctrination rather than a real interest in the ideas themselves. To emphasize, say, the theology rather than the practicalities of perfectionism, of Calvinism, or of pietism in the Methodist movement is to portray incorrectly the real impact of the faith. The Articles of Religion adopted by the first General Conference of 1784 did not transform the Methodist itinerants into a group of learned scholastics. It relegated theology to a neat formula which could be given periodic affirmation, but the meaning of which could be conveniently ignored in the interests of practical growth.\textsuperscript{48}

Contemporary tracts and denominational histories, defensive of sectarian peculiarities and anxious to vin-


dicate their correctness and their effectiveness, naturally encourage the distorted overemphasis upon particular theological beliefs as a source of reforming zeal. Historians are easily trapped into perpetuating such claims. The exaggerated attention given to Samuel Hopkins' "theology of divine benevolence" by recent students of the reform societies illustrates the danger of taking contemporary explanations at face value. The avowed Hopkinsians in the South, Charles Coffin and Hezekiah Balch of the Abington Presbytery, demonstrated no conspicuous affinity for good works. Even their Hopkinsian New England brethren accomplished nothing in a reforming way not undertaken by humanitarians of Calvinist, Quaker, Methodist, or evangelical Anglican persuasion in other cities and regions. 49

It would be inaccurate to dismiss ideas as a source of historical action. There was a Calvinistic tone to much of British and American evangelicalism which shaped its approach to infancy, education, and poverty; there was a widespread belief in the concepts of human depravity and man's inability to achieve salvation without regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

But, the emotional attachments which grew up around sectarianism were more often than not based on the simple existence of theological differences, rather than their substance. Among even the intellectual leaders of nineteenth-century Southern Christianity, it was not in Calvin's Institutes, or the Westminster Confession, or the Thirty-nine Articles, or Hopkins' System of Divinity that the initial inspiration for spiritual rebirth occurred, but in pious classics such as Soame Jenyns' A View of the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion (1776) or William Wilberforce's Practical View (1797), in the persuasiveness of an individual preacher, or the disturbing influence of a particular scriptural passage. To the uneducated common man, religion was almost exclusively a matter of emotion, of magnetic personalities, and of the excitement of change. As in politics or any other popular movements, it was primarily the enthusiasm itself, not the theories behind it, which was infectious.

Church history in the tumultuous decades of the 1770s, 1780s, and 1790s could be told largely in biographical terms. The survival and growth of every sect, in a country preoccupied with war and politics, was, to a greater extent than in any other period of its history, due to the efforts of towering personalities. It was an age of missionary giants in a hostile environment which offered them few rewards and none of the public recognition accorded religious leaders in the next century.
It was the irresistible zeal of the first group of Methodist missionaries from England which ignited the rural South. Robert Strawbridge, Capt. Thomas Webb, Joseph Filmore, Robert Williams, John King, and Thomas Rankin were men of little education and less formality. King was noted for a boisterous, loud style of preaching which even warranted a letter of disapproval from John Wesley; Strawbridge proved incapable of accepting supervision of any sort. But, with all of their failings, they were able to electrify their audiences and obtain converts. They gave Methodism a special spirit of excitement which the more disciplined church of Francis Asbury, Thomas Coke, and the first generation of native Methodist preachers were able to perpetuate.  

A small group of outstanding Regular Baptist clergymen, Oliver Hart, Henry Holcombe, Edmund Botsford, and Richard Furman, maintained the vitality of the denomination in the Charleston area. The missionary labors of Shubael Stearns, Daniel Marshall, Col. Samuel Harris, Elijah Baker, Philip Hughes, and other "apostles"

50 For biographies of these pioneers of Methodism, see Matthew Simpson, ed., Cyclopaedia of Methodism. Embracing Sketches of Its Rise, Progress and Present Condition, with Biographical Notices and Numerous Illustrations, 5th ed., Revised (Philadelphia, 1882).

51 H. A. Tupper, Two Centuries of the First Baptist Church of South Carolina, 1685-1883, with Supplement (Baltimore, Md., 1889); Leah Townsend, South Carolina Baptists, 1670-1805 (Florence, S.C., 1935); Joe M. King, A History of the South Carolina Baptists (Columbia, S.C., 1964).
came to fruition in the Separate Baptist Movement, which swept through the South in the 1760s, 1770s and 1780s.52

Until his death in 1787, Henry Muhlenberg was the true patriarch of the Lutheran Church in America; Philip Otterbein and Martin Boem, consciously initiating the revivalism of the Methodists, created in Maryland in the 1770s the nucleus of what would emerge in the nineteenth century as the United Brethren of Christ. It was due entirely to the failure of the German Reformed sect to produce dominant leaders of this calibre that all its congregations below Maryland disappeared in the Revolutionary period.53

Presbyterianism was kept alive by men such as Henry Patillo, a Samuel Davies convert, by the famous blind preacher of Virginia James Waddell, by the Virginia Synod's first missionary Nash Le Grande, and by James Hall, Samuel E. McCorkle, Samuel Doak, William Graham, men who came under the influence of dynamic President Witherspoon in the early seventies and were able to transmit his


dedication to thousands of Southern Presbyterians in the following decades.54

The chain of personal enthusiasm is particularly clear in the Episcopal Church of the South, which was kept alive only by the perseverance of a few dedicated individuals. William Duke of Maryland was an Asbury convert who could not bring himself to formally break with Anglicanism. Walter Dulany Addison, familiar by direct contact with English evangelicalism, profoundly influenced William Meade, who in turn nurtured a generation of Southern evangelical churchmen. His contacts with laymen and clergymen of similar persuasion in Virginia and the Baltimore-Washington area, William H. Wilmer, Francis Scott Key, Oliver Norris, and others, resulted in the call of the dedicated Bishop Richard Channing Moore and the founding of the seminary in Alexandria. A similar combination of personal associations between a handful of native Charlestonians, among them Christopher Gadsden and Frederick Dalcho, and Northerners Theodore Dehon and Nathaniel Bowen, revived a dying Episcopal Diocese of

54 For the general history of the Presbyterian Church in the colonial and Revolutionary periods, see: Ernest T. Thompson, Presbyterians in the South, vol. 1 (1607-1861) (Richmond, Va., 1963); William H. Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical, Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of Her Early Settlers (N.Y., 1846); William H. Foote, Sketches of Virginia, Historical and Biographical (Phila., 1855); Rumple, Presbyterianism in N.C.; Howe, Presb. Church in South Carolina. For additional biographical data, see, William B. Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, vols. 3, 4; Samuel Davies Alexander, Princeton College during the Eighteenth Century (N.Y., 1872).
South Carolina. Almost without exception, the leaders of Episcopal regeneration were converts—men such as Meade, Addison, Norris, Edward C. McGuire, who had experienced a spiritual awakening of the sort expected in the Baptist or Methodist churches, or, zealous converts from another faith of the likes of James Kemp, Benjamin Allen, Jr., and James S. Ravenscroft.

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In the Presbyterian and Baptist churches, with a Calvinistic vision of the congregation as a constitutional entity, churches themselves could be self-generating. In a continuation of the organic settlement pattern down the Shenandoah Valley, flourishing older churches in Virginia and the Carolinas parented new congregations in Kentucky, Tennessee, and the deep South, almost oblivious to the support or lack of it from the denomination as a whole. Shubael Stearns' Separate Baptist congregation at Sandy Creek, North Carolina, founded in 1760, was "mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother," to forty-two churches by 1787.56

The mental attitude of a Church's clergy greatly determined denominational effectiveness. Only where clerical leaders themselves were convinced of the importance and the viability of their mission was there a chance of survival.

The newer sects had an obvious advantage. Faith in the efficacy and necessity of conversion inspired self-

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confidence; the Deistical and other threats demonstrated the crucial need for immediate action. Every earthquake, plague, fire, economic depression, and instance of human failing provided the emotional fuel upon which evangelism thrived. With the separation of church and state and the loss of any element of legal compulsion, religious bodies possessed only the weapon of persuasion. Other developments beyond their control forced the Churches to adopt the offensive. Immigration, the inexorable processes of acculturation, and a high rate of mobility in response to opening frontiers and growing cities eroded the natural ethnic constituencies of colonial Churches, increasing this need to attract and serve the public. Exerting themselves with equal force upon each sect, these personal and impersonal changes relentlessly exacted an element of conformity in form and approach.

The sooner that a Church realized and accepted the nature of the voluntary system which democratic republicanism made inevitable, the sooner it became a vibrant, expanding denomination. The evangelical attitude made this process of "Americanization" easy, because it reduced the prerequisite elements of religious faith to such bare essentials and demanded at least mental activity on the part of the individual as a condition of membership. A truly revivalistic church automatically based its existence on the enthusiasm of its members rather than outside support or the accrual of a membership which could
be taken for granted. The Methodist and Separate Baptist churches, totally dependent on their own exertions and on conversion among the existing population, were indeed prepared for the demands of religious freedom. The Quakers were fully capable of self-support but had lost the capacity and desire to convert outsiders by the mid-eighteenth century. For the Scottish Presbyterians, the Lutherans, and particularly the Episcopalians, all of whose forms and rituals had been the product of the state church tradition, it demanded difficult mental adjustment. But the voluntary system was accepted and gradually transformed into a virtue by all of the Churches.

Doubtful of even their continued existence in the dark days before the War of 1812, formal Churches as well as the revivalistic sects were pestering rich and poor alike by 1830. Symbolic of the change, was the willingness of clergymen to hound Andrew Jackson, although an unrepentant duelist, for money, for board while passing the Hermitage, even for a public profession of faith.57

57 On their famous missionary tour of 1812-13, Mills and Schermerhorn "descended the Mississippi with major Andrew Jackson, and the volunteers under his command" and on the trip frequently urged the formation and support of the Nashville Bible Society, for which they collected $100. Samuel J. Mills, Communications Relative to the Progress of Bible Societies in the United States (Phila., 1813), 5-6. An American Bible Society agent, Richard D. Hall, who stayed at the Hermitage on Aug. 19, 1823, reported back to the parent society on the family's spiritual condition (his wife "very pious and he has a great respect for religion"). Richard D. Hall, "Journal," Ms., typed copy, American Bible Society Library, New York, N.Y., 95.

Dr. Charles Coffin, president of East Tennessee
Badgering of this sort would have been unthinkable in the time of Washington—it would have been viewed as hopeless under Jefferson. In fact, by 1830, it required exceptional dexterity to maintain an unspotted public reputation without some favorable accommodation with organized Christianity.

Sustained growth in membership and congregations, however, was dependent on far more than a positive attitude and revivalistic ferment. Times of religious excitement, essential to expansion, invariably rested upon a foundation of religious preparation. Recent studies of even the Great Revival itself, seemingly the most impulsive and startling event in Southern religious history, demonstrate that a decade of development alone made the experience possible—the silent expansion of congregations accompanying frontier settlement, the forming of a mentality conducive to religious cataclysm, and the overlapping of local "outpourings of the Spirit" in the 1790s.\(^{58}\)

Praying societies, days of "fasting, humiliation, and prayer," weekday services, and an observable seriousness

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became the hallmark of an imminent revival in the nineteenth century, and all of the churches became adept, unconsciously or not, at staging these "signs of the times."

The ultimate success of a period of religious awakening was dependent on the ability of the Churches to capture the momentary zeal and sustain it in institutional form. It was not in their mere employment of mass revivalism that the Methodist and Baptist Churches registered dramatic increases in members from the 1770s on. It was the ability of their constitutional beings to expand almost instantaneously and bring converts into organized churches, their capacity to provide regular services of worship and effective disciplinary control, which enabled revivalism to work. The use of uneducated preachers, and the reduction of theology and essential belief to a minimum alone made the revival an effective method of denominational advancement. The Baptists, with their distinctive localism, the Methodists, with their delicate balance between central authority and democratic responsiveness in the locality, were perfectly organized for rural frontier expansion, and in the antebellum period, they captured all prizes in the contest for members. In the long run, they were penalized for their very success. Their mastery of the formula for numerical success encouraged an intolerance for innovation and change which was already apparent by the early nineteenth century.
They were slow to meet the new challenges of urban growth; after the initial frenzy of the Great Revival of 1801-1807, they displayed a self-satisfied aloofness from interdenominational charities and reforms. In terms of direct, personal contact, however, the two sects exerted an influence which dominated and created the moral climate one associates with the best features of the rural South.

Mass revivals were not an effective tool of the older Churches. Presbyterian clergymen dominated the preliminary "awakenings" in the 1790s, and they participated actively in the early years of the Great Revival. In the Synods of the deep South, where Methodist and Baptist competition was intense, the domesticated camp meetings remained a part of Presbyterianism throughout the antebellum period. But, as the General Assembly had quickly learned in the dispute over unlicensed "exhorters" which resulted in the Cumberland Presbytery schism, revival success was directly proportional to a Church's

59 Presbyterian missionary Rev. John Lyle, as late as 1817, reported to the Board of Missions that two women experienced the "jerks" at an "unusually solemn" meeting. Presbyterian Church. Board of Missions. Report (1817), 15. See Margaret B. Des Champs, "The Presbyterian Church in the South Atlantic States, 1801-1861," (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1952); Catherine C. Cleveland, The Great Revival in the West, 1797-1805 (Chicago, Ill., 1916); Charles A. Johnson, The Frontier Camp Meeting; Religion's Harvest Time (Dallas, Tex., 1955); William Warren Sweet, Revivalism; Its Origin, Growth, and Decline (N.Y., 1945); Bernard A. Weisberger, They Gathered at the River, The Story of the Great Revivalists and Their Impact upon Religion in America (Boston and Toronto, 1958).
ability to field ministers. In all of the Southern Churches, there was some compromise. District plans for clerical itineracy to vacant and aspiring congregations, approximating to some extent the Methodist circuit, became commonplace. Episcopal lay readers and Presbyterian ministerial candidates, despite occasional difficulties, were employed to preserve regularity of worship. And within the individual congregation, where the phenomenon could be carefully controlled (and no additional clergymen were needed), revivalism was accepted by all Churches as the work of God.

If the Methodists and Baptists based their appeal on the tried and true formula of the revival, the Churches requiring an educated clergy succeeded in arousing a

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60 Thompson, Presbyterians in the South, vol. 1, 144-53.
61 For examples of district plans see: Lexington Presbytery. Lexington Missionary Society. 3rd Report (1820), 5-14. Hawks, ed., "Journals of . . . Diocese of Virginia" (1805); 86; (1814), 92-3; (1827), 207-8. Protestant Episcopal Church. Diocese of Maryland. Journals: (1788), 28; (1796, printed 1797), 6-7; (1797), 13-16; (1809), 11-14; see also Journal of the Proceedings of a Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland, Held at Easton from Tuesday May 27th to Monday, May 31st, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety (Wilmington, Del., 1790). Dalcho, Protestant Ep. Church in S.C. (1815 Convention), 543.
63 See section on urban revivals in Chapter 3.
similar sense of excitement by institutional innovation. Praying societies appeared on a formal basis in the 1790s; missionary organizations and local charitable efforts in the following decade. Tract societies and Sunday schools arose in the 'teens'; church libraries and Bible classes proliferated in the twenties, not to mention the massive efforts of the interdenominational societies which were carried out largely through the local churches. For the first time in the mainstream of American religious history, women enjoyed the rights of organization without loss of respectability. Indeed, the revival of the formal colonial Churches, and the rise of the evangelical reform society movement was to a large degree built upon this feminine enthusiasm. Somewhat more reluctant, husbands were inevitably drawn by the very presence of the ladies, if not by deeper convictions. For the man in search of a respectable wife, church attendance, if not membership, was prerequisite by the thirties. 64

64 The numerical predominence of female church members in the average new, or reviving congregation was striking. For example, at its founding in 1816, the First Presbyterian Church of Frankfort, Ky., had 59 communicants, 45 of them females. As of 1830, there were 130 females, 73 males. The Presbytery of Baltimore estimated in 1814 that "of communicants . . . it is believed that the proportion of females is about four to one." Mrs. Trollope reported that "I never saw, or read, of any country where religion had so strong a hold upon the women, or a slighter hold upon the men." Actually, the proportions became increasingly regular as the century wore on. Averill, 1st Presb. Church, Frankfort, 67-8, 243-5. Presbytery of Baltimore, "Minutes," Ms. (1814), vol. 2, 184. Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia; Frances Trollope, Domestic Manners of the Americans, Donald Smalley, ed. (N.Y., 1949), 75.
The Episcopal, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Reformed Churches all turned to theological seminaries and centrally controlled home missions between 1810 and 1830 as alternatives to the use of untrained preachers. The growing emphasis on church conventions and the proliferation of religious magazines constituted a remarkably efficient network of religious intelligence by the 1820s which even the Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, and Unitarians found worthy of imitation. Much of the momentum of the churches carried over to the interdenominational societies, whose development would have been impossible without the existence of an expanding religious community.

IV. From Church Discipline to Reform

Associated in the public mind only with the "peculiar" sects in America—the Mennonites, the Jehovah's Witnesses, perhaps the Quakers—moral discipline of church members has at one time or another played a fundamental role in every Christian sect. In fact, no aspect of church life was more indicative of the vitality of religion in the pre-Civil War period or more responsive to the emotional pressures which breathed life into American religion in the early nineteenth century. The evolving pattern and scope of church discipline was a direct antecedent of the moral reforms of the early nineteenth century.

Clerical and lay discipline displayed a remarkable similarity in form and procedure in all denominations.
because it emerged from the common heritage of the medieval, particularly the British, parish. The rural parish was indeed a remarkable institution of social control, with the church, the priest, and lay officers central to all aspects of organic community life. Except that it provided new legal definition and, to a degree, secularization of parish functions, the Elizabethan Reformation only strengthened the system. The Anglican parish of seventeenth-century Virginia was simply an extension, slightly adapted by the institution of the vestry, of the English parochial establishment.

Among militant Reformers, particularly the Geneva Calvinists and their followers, with an emphasis upon both moral reform and the resurrection of the purified Church of the first century, the congregational unit took on great importance. The accentuation of lay and clerical discipline was shared by Presbyterian and Independent alike. In the tension-filled decades between 1580 and 1640, Puritan congregations cropped up which were the


foundations of both New England Puritanism, English Non-conformity, and, to some extent, Scottish Presbyterianism.

The Quakers, a further refinement of the religious enthusiasm of the Civil War era, put a singular emphasis upon discipline. New England Puritanism was in turn the lineal ancestor not only of Southern Congregationalism, but as well the congregational system of the Independent Baptists which was so successfully transplanted south in the latter eighteenth century.⁶⁷

The Puritan Revolution, whatever its ultimate lack of success, did encourage a partial counter-reformation within the Established Church itself between 1690 and 1720. It created a respectable place in the Church for

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⁶⁷ Congregational discipline of members, encompassing public confessions, existed in the second century. By the fifth and sixth centuries, the clerical hierarchy and the system of private confessions typical of the Catholic Church had developed. Since then, periodic efforts have been made to revive congregational discipline: at the time of Charlemagne, at scattered times and places in the Middle Ages, in Calvin's Geneva, Knox's Scotland, and Puritan England and America. For a general sketch of early church discipline, see: Stanley L. Greenslade, Shepherding the Flock: Problems of Pastoral Discipline in the Early Church and in the Younger Churches Today (London, 1967).

the puritanical missionary zeal which had been characteristic only of dissenters. The Society for the Reformation of Manners (1692) was indicative of the moralism; The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (S.P.C.K., 1699) and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (S.P.G., 1701), by means of their publications and missionaries, gave the American establishment a missionary character throughout much of the colonial period. The worldliness of the mid-eighteenth century was not conducive to vigorous enforcement of church

68 For a brief summary of the Anglican reawakening of 1690-1720, see Chapter 1 of Quinlan, Victorian Prelude. The instructions for a missionary employed by the S.P.G. demanded not only spotless conduct, but appearances to match. It was prohibited that they "board in, or frequent public-houses, or lodge in Families of Evil Fame; that they wholly abstain from Gaming, and all vain Pastimes; and converse not familiarly with Lewd or pro­ phane Persons, otherwise than in order to reprove, admonish, and reclaim them." They were enjoined "to acquaint themselves thorowly with the . . . worship and Discipline, and Rules for Behavior of the Clergy," to "be not nice about Meats or Drinks, nor immoderately careful about their Entertainment . . .," to "be Frugal in Opposition to Luxury"; "the Chief Subjects of t' ir Sermons" were to be "the great Fundamental Princi­ es of Christianity, and the Duties of a sober, righteous, and godly Life, as resulting from those Principles," and they were asked that they "particularly preach against those Vices, which they shall observe to be most Predominent in the Places of their Residence," "Instructions for the Clergy Employ'd by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," Appendix I, Rightmyer, The Anglican Church in Delaware, 187-90.

An emphasis upon clerical discipline has, in fact, been typical of any missionary church. Presbyterian Scotland was declared a "Mission" by the Catholic church between 1695 and 1718, and was treated as such by the Protestant Episcopal Church of Scotland a century later. The Scottish Catholic "Code of Statutes" (1710-1780) and the Episcopal "Code of Order and Discipline" (1811-) are strikingly similar to the equivalent codes in the American
discipline, but, as in the New England towns and congregations, there were areas in the South where vestries functioned as moral courts throughout the colonial period. 69

One of the penalties of Revolutionary republicanism in the minds of educated men was the loss of this element of moral compulsion which bound the threads of the social hierarchy together. With the abolition of the Church establishment, the official functions of the vestries as moral courts ceased. Similar restraints were perpetuated only in those rare cases where secular magistrates felt a strong responsibility for public morality. 70 Within churches themselves, Anglican or dissenter, social control could only be effective where an active clergyman and a strong congregation provided the requisite social pressure for conformity. The war left few such church bodies intact. Even in those which survived, the dis-

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69 Gerald E. Hartdagen, "The Vestries and Morals in Colonial Maryland," Maryland Historical Magazine, 63 (1968), 360-78.

70 Joseph Morton of Prince Edward Co., Virginia, a Samuel Davies convert, was one such guardian of public morality. As Justice of the Peace, he even enforced laws against profanity. Alexander, Archibald Alexander, 181-182.
continuity was enough to weaken moral enforcement. In only a handful of obstinate Presbyterian and Baptist congregations, or in the Quaker and pietistic German meetings which were aloof from the contest, was the tradition of congregational lay discipline perpetuated unbroken from the colonial period to the nineteenth century.

It was the Methodist and Baptist revivals of the 1770s and 1780s which reversed the pattern of declining lay discipline. From their earliest beginnings, both were lower class movements. For the vast majority of Southern laborers or marginal planters, even more for their wives, the Methodists and Baptist societies were the first institutions to court their favor, to challenge them to importance, to bring them a message of self-confidence and superiority in a world which contained few amenities and few obvious inferiors. Preached by men of their own limited education, uncomplicated by theology, the conversionary faith dared them to accept true religion and to adopt the outward changes in behavior which the state of grace implied.

Methodist discipline, which was based on Wesley's "Larger Minutes" (1766-1784) and the regularly revised Book of Discipline (1784), was effective because it maximized social pressure to conform. If the targets were most often the superficial sins, they exacted a concern for self-discipline among men and women who had never been thought of as even capable of responsible
action. Drunkenness, sexual immorality, deceit, were obvious offenses, but the social controls were extended to manners and attitudes as well. Extravagance of dress, waste of time, election bribery, and irregularities in trade were grounds for investigation. Negligence in church attendance or family worship, actions which deprived churches of members, were punished without fail, and withdrawal from the denomination without censure was impossible. Guilt or innocence was decided by popular vote after confrontation between accused and accusor, and appeals were allowed to the Quarterly meeting of preachers and elders; penalties ranged from reproof and suspension to exclusion. Discipline of wayward clergymen followed similar procedures on the conference level.\(^71\)

Although lacking the standardization supplied by the Methodist hierarchy and the official Discipline and providing no avenue of appeal, Baptist congregations exerted similar control over their membership. They based their authority on the church covenant. Deviants were tried before monthly business meetings of the entire congregation and forgiven, admonished, censured, or

excluded. In the rural and small town environment most conducive to both sects, such pressure could be far more overpowering and effective than the strictest sumptuary legislation.

Both of the new denominations possessed certain unique advantages which facilitated the imposition of strict standards of discipline. The Methodist Church, and to a lesser extent, the Baptist churches, capitalized upon their conscious lower-class identity. It provided an exaltant sense of unity-against-the-world not unlike that of the pietistic sects. Their newness endowed

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Even after the formation of the General Association, no book of discipline was given official sanction. However, procedures throughout the denomination seem to have been similar to those outlined in, Charleston Association of Baptists, A Summary of Church-Discipline (Charleston, 1813). For discipline in practice, see the minutes of any of the early churches, some of which are listed in the appendix.


73 For a picture of Quaker discipline in the South, see: Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, Held in Baltimore, for the Western Shore of Maryland, Adjacent Parts of Pennsylvania and Virginia; as Revised and Adopted 1821 (Baltimore, Md., 1821); Rules of Discipline of the Yearly Meeting of Friends, Held in Virginia (Richmond, Va., 1814); The Discipline of Friends, Revised and Approved by the Yearly Meeting, Held at New Garden, in Guilford
participation in their activities with the elements of novelty, of daring, of revolt from the status quo which could attract people and cause them to adopt radical changes in personal conduct not otherwise possible.

Conversion itself was a decisive action, implying change in behavior as well as thought, and the discipline which followed it was a logical extension of initial conditions of membership. It was a most effective method of retaining members and translating camp meeting crowds into permanent denominational gains.

Discipline within the Episcopal and Presbyterian churches was based upon British precedent. Authority in the former church rested upon whatever canons had been adopted by the individual diocese or by the triennial General Convention. The accused layman was tried before the vestry; appeals were permitted to the diocesan convention. In the Presbyterian church, discipline rested

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For the legislation of the General Conventions, see: William Stevens Perry, ed., Journals of General Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the
upon the Confession of Faith adopted in 1788 (which included the Longer and Shorter Catechisms, printed with marginal notes), upon the prohibitory legislation of the General Assembly, and upon the local church covenant. Cases were tried before the session of the individual church (minister and elders), and appeals could be carried to the Presbytery, the Synod, and the General Assembly. Procedures within the Lutheran church, as


See the published Journals of the diocesan Annual Conventions, listed in the bibliography, for legislation on this level. The constitutions and canons were periodically published as appendices, or separately (see bibliography).

The basis and historical development of church discipline in the Presbyterian Church is traced in: Presbyterian Church. The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America Containing the Confession of Faith, the Catechisms, the Government and Discipline, and the Directory for the Worship of God, Ratified and Adopted by the Synod of New-York and Philadelphia May the 16th 1788, and Continued by Adjournments until the 28th of the Same Month (Phila., 1789); Presbyterian Church, A Digest, Compiled from the Records of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, and from the Records of the Late Synod of New York and Philadelphia, of their Acts and Proceedings, that Appear to be of Permanent Authority and Interest (Phila., 1820); Samuel J. Baird, ed., A Collection of the Acts, Deliverances, and Testimonies of the Supreme Judiciary of the Presbyterian Church from its Origin in America to the Present Time. With Notes and Documents, Explanatory and Historical: Constituting a Complete Illustration of Her Polity, Faith, and History (Phila., 1856).

Publication of the by-laws of the individual church did not become common practice until the 1830s and one must generally go to the manuscript minutes. One early example of printed rules is: By-laws of the Presbyterian
they evolved in the nineteenth century, were similar. Lay members were tried by the church council (pastor, deacons, elders); clergymen before the Synod. 76

Within these older Churches, having elders and vestrymen of advanced age and little taste for change, the revival of discipline was often an unwelcome innova-

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Church of the City of Charleston (Charleston, S.C., 1814).

The session book (manuscript), common to all Presbyterian churches by the 1820s, took its standard form only after the Revolution. For an example of the very scarce records of a colonial Presbyterian congregation in the South, see: "Covenant and Register, 1743-1758," Ms., of the Stony Creek Church, S.C. For a good example of the initiation of the disciplinary process by means of the "church compact" in a new congregation, see: First Presbyterian Church, Norfolk, Va., "Session Minutes and Register, 1814-1838," Ms. volume on film, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va.

For the almost identical procedures of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, see: The Confession of Faith of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Revised and Adopted by the General Assembly, at Princeton, Ky., May, 1829 (n.p., 1829).


76 For discipline within the Evangelical Lutheran Church, see: Gottlieb Shober, A Comprehensive Account, 152-71 (which outlines discipline in the Synod of North Carolina); Formula for the Government and Discipline of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Maryland and Virginia (Hagers-Town, Md., 1823?); Evangelical Lutheran Church. Constitution of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of the U.S. of North America, together with the Proceedings of the Convention in Which it was Formed, tr. from the German (Lancaster, Pa., 1820); Z., "Church Discipline," Evangelical Lutheran Intelligencer, 5 (1830-31), 211-19, 243-52.
tion. The conservative rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Baltimore, Frederick Beasley, in an 1813 pamphlet directed against the controversial evangelical George Dashiell, damned "that demure, shy puritanical and contracted Christianity, which displays itself in the trumpetings of its own holiness, in assuming the exterior of austerity, mortification and gloom, to captivate the attention of the vulgar, and gain a reputation for sanctity, while the worst passions hold their mis-rule in the bosom, and which directs its bitterest hostility and exhausts its holy rage against a few indulgences unessential to virtue, while it permits to pass off unreproved, those vices that disturb the peace and endanger the existence of society . . ." 77 William Hebb, a layman from Prince George, Maryland, expressed similar sentiments in an 1819 letter to Bishop Kemp, reporting that one young clergyman "had the presumption (not to say impudence) to refuse the cup to one of his parishioners at the Communion because he had thought it proper to attend a dancing party . . . if these men have their way, they will take us back to the darkness and bigotry of the fifteenth century." 78

77 Frederick Beasley, Serious Reflections Addressed to Episcopalians in the Maryland [Diocese], on the State of their Church Generally, but More Particularly on the Pending Election of a Suffragan Bishop, to Assist Our Present Diocesan in the Discharge of His Episcopal Duties (Baltimore, Md., 1813), 26-29.

78 William Hebb to Bishop James Kemp, Prince George, Md., Jan. 30, 1819, The Maryland Diocesan Archives, housed
Implementation of statutory enactments was a slow business on the local level, largely dependent upon the zeal or lack of it on the part of the individual clergyman, and the willingness of both the congregation and the church judicial bodies on the higher level to back him up. Permitting the General Assembly a position of dominance never allowed the General Convention by the Episcopalians, the Presbyterians were far more successful in exacting an approximation of uniform strictness throughout the church. The Lutherans, who were hampered by their transition from German to English and by their lack of national organization, attained some standardization only by the 1820s.

Whether it actually represented a growing sense of moral behavior, or a tacit admission that modern society had weakened the informal pressures of family and community for social conformity, congregational discipline was given constitutional basis in most of the churches of the South by 1830. It is difficult to assess its effectiveness within either the religious community or the nation as a whole. To a degree, the advent of organized religion certainly moderated the excesses of frontier life; the exercise of disciplinary procedures undoubtedly limited the incidence of sexual license and

at the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Md.
dishonesty, although there are no hard statistics to prove the point. 79

It is probably safe to say that crimes of any sort were then, as always, less common among church members than among non-church members. It requires, and in that period to a far greater extent required, a certain willingness to subsume personal desires to join any organization, particularly a religious body which was, as they all were, a self-proclaimed guardian of public virtue. Between 1780 and 1830, the nature, even the frequency of discipline within any given church which actively carried out such actions seems to have remained fairly constant. But the volume of discipline—the number of churches exercising disciplinary functions, the number of communicants coming under their care, and the percentage of such persons within the population as a whole—did rise perceptibly.80 It would be reasonable to assume that the revival of discipline and the multiplication of churches at a faster rate than population growth in the South brought about some improvement in the standards of public morality which would not have occurred otherwise.

79 Statistics gathered by Guion Griffis Johnson for Ante-Bellum North Carolina, A Social History (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1937), 211, suggest that there was a decreasing incidence of illegitimacy in the antebellum period, but they are far from conclusive.

80 See footnote 20.
But to look at congregational discipline on a mechanical basis, emphasizing, as most historians have, the offenses and procedures by themselves, is to overlook the far more important social functions of the phenomenon. On the level of the congregation itself, its purpose was not primarily to punish but to prevent evildoing, not to condemn, but to save souls through confession and penance. Punishments were not meted out lightly. Congregational records demonstrate surprisingly few instances in which those summoned were not tried fairly or proven guilty by overwhelming evidence. It is clear that church discipline was an effective deterrent to immoral behavior, having a far wider social impact than statistics of judicial actions would suggest.

From the vantage of the denomination as a whole, the disciplinary process had the dual function of attracting and retaining members on the one hand, and of purifying the church, and preserving the historical distinctions which set it apart on the other. The balance between the two, popularity and exclusiveness, was a delicate one, difficult to maintain. Rev. John E. Latta, Presbyterian minister of New Castle, Delaware, described the second tendency in a sermon of 1814:

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\text{If persons corrupt in principle and profane and licentious in practice are admitted into the kingdom of Christ, and permitted to continue in it, no difference then would be distinguished between it and the kingdom of the world and Satan. In consequence of this mankind would discern no advantage to be}\]

derived from belonging to what is called the kingdom of Christ, and therefore they would not press into it. They would consider it a mere name, without a reality, a distinction without a difference. ... We must, by guarding the peace of the church and preserving the purity of its members cause their light so to shine before the world, that others seeing their good works, the difference of their character, from that of the men of the world, may be led also to glorify God, by seeking admittance into his kingdom.81

Several of the smaller sects, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, the United Brethren of Christ, the Mennonites, the Reformed Methodists, and, to a degree, the Disciples of Christ (Campbellites), although extremely efficient in comparison with the larger Church bodies, pushed the emphasis upon self-denial and otherworldliness to the point of diminishing returns. The Quakers, fractured in the 1820s by the Hicksite controversy, showed themselves to least advantage in this period by carrying their convictions of spiritual uniqueness to the point of vanity. Their membership declined sharply, and except for antislavery, Indian missions, and limited participation in local charities, the body remained aloof from the mainstream of benevolent activities.

Even in the Churches which did not withdraw from society, there were the continual tendencies to place

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81 John E. Latta, A Sermon Preached June 1814, at a Meeting of a Committee of the Presbytery of New-Castle (Wilmington, Del., 1815), 15.
discipline itself beyond the rationality for its existence. Endless disputes over activity on the Sabbath, over harmless amusements and even religious novels, over what was called the incest issue (actually consanguinity—whether the Bible permitted second marriages to sisters, half-sisters, even sisters-in-law), wasted the time of clerical conventions in all the major sects and discredited the whole disciplinary process among thinking people.  

It was in its function on a yet higher plane, the exertion of moral influence upon society as a whole, that discipline rose beyond the matter of church politics and took on national significance. Unlike the medieval parish court or even the vestries of colonial Virginia or Maryland, congregational governments of the post-revolutionary period possessed no legal authority whatsoever. Enforcement of church law, as much as church attendance, was voluntary. It was the successful use of persuasion and social pressure alone which powered the disciplinary machinery. The effectiveness of the churches' utilization of the techniques of popular motivation encouraged them to attempt a logical extension of church influence; first toward the molding of opinion as well as behavior within the church; secondly, by influencing public opinion as well.  

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82 See the published and manuscript minutes and journals of church judicial bodies listed in the bibliography.
Church leaders between 1784 and 1830 saw their mission as the creation of not only a pure church, but a Christian society. Visions of theocracy were hardly new to American Christianity, but now, the vehicle for exerting such influence seemed within grasp. The clearest manifestation of the change was the growing importance of the Church convention. Initially viewed as meetings for privately dealing with matters of internal church concern, the Episcopal conventions, the Baptist Associations, the Methodist conferences, the Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Reformed Synods, gradually took on a festival-like, publicity-oriented air. Minutes and addresses began to find their way into print; contrived questions, formal resolutions, and public sessions began to rival serious business. The national conventions, particularly the Presbyterian General Assembly (1788), but also the Episcopal General Convention (1789), the Methodist General Conference, the Baptist General Convention (1814), and the Lutheran General Synod (1821), received wide coverage in even the secular press of the late twenties and early thirties.

Between 1800 and 1830, the list of disciplinary offenses in all of the major denominations was enlarged. The Hamilton-Burr contest of 1804 initiated a clerical reaction against dueling which resulted in the enactment of disciplinary legislation throughout the American Churches. Federal legislation permitting post offices to remain open and mail contracts which required passage
of stagecoaches on Sunday inspired disciplinary enactment against Sabbath day activity. The post-War of 1812 period witnessed a flurry of statutory prohibitions against gambling, horse racing, dancing, the theater, and popular novels; lotteries were receiving increasing notice. Encouraged by the American Temperance Union (1826), legislation against alcoholic beverages shot through the American Protestant churches in the late 1820s. The growing interest in "reforms" inevitably increased the power of the highest Church judicial bodies in relation to those of inferior rank (i.e., General Assembly as opposed to Presbytery), and gave added importance to circular letters, narratives of the state of religion, judicial appeals, and Church publications in general as vehicles to communicate the changing nature of moral respectability.

The ultimate development of the disciplinary process was embodied in efforts to extend moral prohibitions beyond the denomination. Problems over the moral control over baptized non-communicants, over members of the larger family--hired help, slaves--had been a constantly vexing problem, and the tendency was to insist upon their inclusion under the disciplinary wing. In

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83 See any of the published and manuscript minutes of church judicial bodies listed in the bibliography.

the case of the moral prohibitions, however, there was a growing willingness to apply political pressure. A study of moral legislation on the municipal level in the South suggests that the clamor against dueling, gambling, drunkenness, within the Churches was to a degree effective in bringing about political action.

Although the data is too fragmentary to support firm conclusions, it would appear that times of economic depression, the mid-1780s, 1796-97, 1807-1808, 1817-1819, particularly were conducive to such legislation. The Sabbath mail controversy, responsible for the first petition reform campaign in 1812, was launched by Presbyterians and strongly supported by the General Assembly.

Effectiveness of discipline was totally dependent upon the very public opinion which it attempted to influence. Although some opposition to "innovations" in general surfaced, no one within any of the Churches could object to legislation against duels, gambling, drunkenness or even lotteries. While there is no way to evaluate the influence of the Churches, public opinion was effectively aroused. In the case of fashionable amusements (dancing, novels, cards, games) and total abstinence, however, divisions within churches delayed action and limited the effectiveness of judicial processes. On the issues of Sabbath travel and mail and on any efforts touching upon

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85 See the published collections of city ordinances listed in the bibliography.
slavery, about which there was sharp division, church
discipline was virtually unenforceable and the campaigns
to change public opinion were without a degree of success.

With the rise of the interdenominational societies
after 1816, leadership in the multitudinous reforms was
taken from the less efficient church bodies. But, to a
considerable degree, the very birth of these groups
marked the culmination of the movement within democratic
church discipline from negative social control to reform
with a broader purpose.
CHAPTER 3
LOCAL CHARITY

I. Introduction

Organized voluntary benevolence was, as much as constitutional political democracy and the free corporate business system, a product of the post-Revolutionary American world. There were roots deep in the colonial and European past. The original process of American colonization, for all its aura of daring adventure and innovation, its grand visions of riches and utopian social reformation, had been but the endeavor of frail mortals. The colonists brought with them the problems of the human condition and saw them multiply tenfold in the unavoidably brutal conflict with the hostile wilderness environment. Poverty and disease were an ever present feature of American life from the first days at Roanoke, and the existence of such widespread human need called for accommodation beyond the resources of the colonial governing bodies.

Individual giving, charitable relief from church and state, even societies for the mutual aid of members and associates arose to meet these needs and form the base upon which the charities of the early national period
would develop. But it was in the period from 1780 to 1830 that truly disinterested voluntary benevolence, concerned not merely with one's own kind but mankind in general, administered not by the state but by the charitable agents themselves, achieved a firm foundation. It was an aspect of democratic growth which has been important to American life, one which has not received due attention by historical scholars.

II. Charity in the Colonial South

W. K. Jordan's monumental studies of benevolence in Tudor England demonstrate in rich detail that America's earliest colonists emerged from a society familiar with multitudinous charitable enterprises.¹ Charity briefs (officially sanctioned church collections) aided colonization efforts from the time of the Virginia Company to the settlement of Georgia; private transatlantic benevolence supported missionary activity and paid for the construction of churches; British funds created libraries and endowed colleges. The first generation of colonists

also brought with them the habits of giving which were to be the roots of indigenous charity. ²

Charitable giving in the colonial period was, in contrast to the post-Revolutionary age of organized benevolence, essentially an individual activity. In the medieval world, the seemingly eternal institution of the Church received and distributed all alms. The individual donor's action was prized, but only as it reflected upon his personal goodness. The citizen, in his individual or collective capacity, was not seen to be capable of producing social change. In fact the Church itself was infused with a socio-religious ideology which inherently denied progress in other than religious terms and as such, was incapable of judging benevolence on the basis of its efficiency.

The Reformation and the growth of capitalism, initially at least, only changed the institutional vehicles of charity, not the ideology behind it. The vast majority of charitable bequests in seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century America, as in the British parish civilization from which America's colonists

emerged, were indiscriminate, directed to the Church. Monetary gifts were most common, but there were also donations of real property, of land, slaves, and working plantations, which were sold or administered as trusts.

Until the historical quantifiers comb probate records with thoroughness, the full dimensions of personal charity in the American colonial period will escape the historian. But the scattered collections of wills, vestry books, and private statutes document the very real existence and suggest certain characteristics and tendencies of private benevolence which carried over to the field of organized charity as well.

The ethnic and social origins of donors appears to indicate the crucial significance of social insecurities

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4 Such benefactions varied as widely as the personalities of the donors: Thomas Corpren of Chowan Co., North Carolina, left a Negro man to the poor of St. Paul's Parish. Under the broad influence of both the Enlightenment and parish tradition, John Paine of New Hanover Co., North Carolina, left £13 proclamation money to the churchwardens (who oversaw poor relief) in every county in 1767. J. Bryan Grimes, North Carolina Wills and Inventories (Raleigh, N.C., 1912), 83, 276.

5 For wills, see any number of genealogical publications, the state and local historical journals, and: Noel Currier-Briggs, Settlers and English Adventurers: Abstracts of Wills, 1485-1798; and Legal Proceedings, 1560-1700, Relating to Early Virginia Families (Baltimore, 1970); Grimes, Abstract of North Carolina Wills; Caroline P. Moore and Agatha A. Simmons, Abstract of the Wills of the State of South Carolina, 1670-1740 (Columbia,
in motivating charitable giving. Immigrants, members of ethnic minorities, merchants and tradesmen with social aspirations and wealth but without the family connections, landed "aristocrats" attempting to erect the traditions of paternalism associated with British landed society: these were the men and women who felt the charitable compulsion most strongly and most often. Contributions and bequests were in some cases a logical extension of the regular habits learned within the European parish or congregational community; they often represented efforts by unassimilated religious-ethnic communities to protect their fellow members; by some, they clearly were a symbol of gratitude for that acceptance. Consciously or unconsciously, charitable gifts were a statement of social superiority to the recipient.


The incidence of personal charity was great among unassimilated ethnic groups, where a sense of communal solidarity was particularly strong. Motivated partially by the measure of hostility which any distinctive group receives from the rest of society, partly by the desire of members to perpetuate this very distinctiveness, the Huguenots of South Carolina, the New Englanders of St. Paul's Parish, South Carolina (who later moved as a group to Midway, Georgia), the Moravians of North Carolina, and the German, Scottish, and Scotch-Irish along the frontiers of all of the Southern colonies seem to have given more liberally than more secure inhabitants in older settlements. In Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, where the Church establishment was hostile to dissenter congregations and where the institutions of local government were woefully inadequate to frontier settlement, unofficial charitable assistance was the only alternative.
There was also in the personal charity of the colonial period a perceptible shift from simple giving to restricted gifts. The transition was due, in large part, to the inevitable maturation of colonial institutions on the local level. Legislative enactments did begin to standardize the mechanics of public poor relief in each colony, entrusting parish and county officials with supervisory and financial responsibilities for the local population. Simultaneously, Quaker, Baptist, Presbyterian, Lutheran, and Moravian congregations began to attain a measure of permanence themselves, establishing regular patterns of charity and mutual aid for their own members.7 Government poor relief was funded by local tax levies on personal property. Welfare programs within the independent churches were funded by assessments of congregational members; non-payment was proper grounds for discipline. The combination of increasingly obvious provisions for the poor and mandatory assessments for their support had restrictive effect upon voluntary gifts to the poor of an unspecified, general nature.

In a pattern which has been repeated again and again in the history of American charity, the expanding responsibilities of political institutions brought about

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7 The acceptance of relief from the Anglican parish, no matter how secular the administrative body (vestry or churchwardens), would have violated the spirit of discipline in most Presbyterian, Baptist, or Quaker congregations.
a retreat and shift in the direction of voluntary benevolence. The absolute necessity for indiscriminate charity for the poor lessened as the eighteenth century progressed. At the same time, growth of the general population, of ethnic diversity, and of towns, rendered the existing problem far more complex than it had been in the homogeneous, totally rural, environment of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Charitable bequests were increasingly specific and purposeful. Christianity was viewed as the bulwark of public morality and social stability, and gifts of communion silver, church furnishings, and even churches themselves were given with a clear intention of social improvement. Following a pattern in British charity, "free schools" or "charity schools," viewed as nurseries of morality for the potential criminals and vagabonds of

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8 A few examples of bequests to churches include: Peter Taylor of St. James, Goose Creek, South Carolina, left a slave for use of the parish rector in 1757; Hector Beringer de Beaufain of Charleston, in 1762, left his pew in St. Michael's to the poor; in his 1758 will, Charles Pinckney established an endowment for a semi-annual Pinckneyan Lecture "to encourage and promote religious and virtuous practices and principles among us, and to raise an ardent love of the Deity in us"; Daniel Blake of St. George's Parish, South Carolina, endowed an annual lecture to be preached every April 23rd; Robert "King" Carter of Middlesex Co., Virginia, built Christ Church in 1728 for the spiritual benefit of his household and friends. Frederick E. Dalcho, *An Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina* (Charleston, 1820), 179-80, 259; "Blake of South Carolina," *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 1 (1900), 160; "South Carolina Gleanings in England," *S.C. Hist. Mag.*, 11 (1910), 132; Clifford Dowdey, *The Virginia Dynasties, The Emergence of "King" Carter and the Golden Age* (Boston, 1969), 330, 370-71.
society, emerged as the most popular vehicles of individual charity in the late colonial period.

In an era which antedated the millionaire and the private trust, there were limits to the effectiveness of individual charity. The desirability of pooling financial resources, and broadening both the vision and the responsibility of charity, led naturally to united efforts. Twelve organizations did appear in the colonial South. None of them qualify as a truly popular, democratic, voluntary, nondenominational society with general charitable aims and none was deeply rooted in southern society.

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9 For example, wealthy South Carolina gave rise to more than half a dozen charity schools as a result of individual charitable bequests. Rev. Richard Ludham, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel missionary in St. James, Goose Creek Parish, left his real and personal property for the erection and maintenance of a poor school for the parish in 1728, and the endowment was enhanced by others in the course of the colonial period; among the provisions for his speculative town of Childsbury in St. John's, Berkeley, James Child left £600 currency and a lot for a free school, to which inhabitants added over £2000; Richard Beresford left property of the value of £6,500 for the education of the poor of St. Denis Parish which was invested in a plantation and the profits employed to maintain a school; Meredith Hughes left £100 for a school in Georgetown, Prince George's Parish; John Whitmarsh of St. Paul's provided a legacy at his death in 1728 of £100, half of which was to be used for education; Elizabeth Fleming left funds in her 1775 will for the construction of and support of a poor school in Christ Church Parish, although the outbreak of the Revolution delayed its establishment for over a quarter of a century. South Carolina, with its remarkable prosperity from rice and indigo and its close contacts with London, enjoyed greater provisions for the education of the poor than any of the other Southern colonies, but similar establishments and a similar pattern of educational bequests was common to all. David J. McCord, ed., The Statutes at Large of South Carolina (Columbia, S.C., 1840; vol. 8, Containing Acts Relating to Corporations and the Militia), 106-370.
but these earliest societies provided foundation for the
later growth of such bodies.

The oldest groups, the ethnic societies, were a
phenomenon of the increasingly mobile world of seventeenth-
and eighteenth-century Europe. In the course of the
seventeenth century, the same impulse which motivated the
formation of dozens of independent religious, economic,
and colonizing groups, caused members of unassimilated
ethnic groups to organize themselves into benefit societies
or "box clubs" as they were frequently called. Created
for a variety of motives—to provide mutual aid and
security in time of hardship and death, to aid members of
the ethnic group during the process of immigration and
resettlement, to provide social contacts, and to preserve
the old culture—the vast majority were of a transitory
nature. The oldest organization in America, the Scot's
Charity Box of Boston of the 1650s, is the only known
seventeenth-century society.\(^{10}\)

The earliest society in the South, second only to
the Boston group, was the St. Andrew's Club of Charleston,
formed in 1729. First of several societies of the same

\(^{10}\) See: Scots' charitable Society. *The Constitution
and By-laws, of the Scots Charitable Society of Boston,
(instituted 1657), with a List of Members and Officers, and
Many Interesting Extracts from the Original Records of the
Society . . . (Boston, 1896). To appreciate the Anglo-
American context within which these ethnic and immigrant
societies arose, see: Owen, *English Philanthropy*, 67-8;
P. H. J. H. Gosden, *The Friendly Societies in England*
(Manchester, Eng., 1961).
name which were founded in other cities in the American colonies for Scottish and Scotch-Irish immigrants, it was followed in Charleston by the St. George's Club for homesick Englishmen in 1733, the Huguenot's Two Bit Club which was active by 1736, and later by the German Friendly Society of 1766 and the St. Patrick's Club of the last decade of the colonial period.\textsuperscript{11} In all such societies which survived beyond the earliest years, mutual benefit functions were gradually overshadowed by general social and charitable concerns. Membership came to represent more a sense of ethnic pride than economic necessity.

The South-Carolina Society, the modified product of the Huguenot mutual benefit group of the early 1730s and the wealthiest charitable group in colonial America, deserves particular mention. By some turn of fortune which has been lost to history, the Huguenot Two Bit Club had been transformed into the anglicized Carolina Club by 1737, retaining the social and mutual aid provisions of the normal ethnic society. The 1739 constitution listed a hierarchy of officers common to eighteenth-century English clubs and employed by several of the other Charleston societies years after American independence: Stewards, a Treasurer, a Clerk, Wardens, and Constables. The pri-

\textsuperscript{11}See Frank W. Crow, "The Age of Promise, Societies for Social and Economic Improvement in the United States, 1783-1815," (Ph.D. diss., Wisconsin, 1952), 277-92, 324. For documentation of specific societies in the South, see Appendix.
mary concern of the Steward was the supply and accounting of liquors at periodic dinner meetings, at which discussions of divinity and politics were prohibited in the interests of fraternal harmony. By means of dues, gifts, and bequests, a stock of £3081 in 1744 was expanded to £52,686 by 1770 (Carolina money). Paralleling the rising affluence, the charitable endeavors were expanded from that of death benefits and support of orphans and widows of deceased members, to general charitable concern for orphans independent of membership, and after 1769 to the support of a free school with tuition and clothing provided. A £5000 sterling bequest of Gabriel Manigault in 1786 restored the society to its pre-War days of glory. An extensive educational program for poor students was continued for several decades until the establishment of public institutions rendered it obsolete.

Of course the secret to success of the South-Carolina Society, one which was not lost on the pious evangelicals of the early nineteenth century, was the shrewd combination of social and benevolent motives. By 1751, the date of the organization's incorporation, it was the most prestigious club of an increasingly aristocratic Charleston society, and the annual meetings became

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12 J. H. Easterby, The Rules of the South Carolina Society established at Charleston in the Said Province, Sept. 1, 1737 . . . and an Historical Account of the Institution from the Date of its Foundation to the Year 1937 (Charleston, 1937).
a leading social event. The society's success naturally encouraged imitation, and two other organizations of a somewhat different character were formed in Charleston during 1762.

The Society for the Relief of the Widows and Orphans of the Clergy of the Church of England in the Province of South Carolina, formed in 1762 as a mutual benefit society to provide support for widows and orphans of deceased members, was the first such organization of Anglican clergymen in America. It was modeled after The Sons of the Clergy which had been incorporated by Charles II in 1678, with which the predominantly immigrant members were thoroughly familiar, and was perhaps also influenced by the Corporation for Relief of Poor and Distressed Presbyterian Ministers in Pennsylvania, the first ministerial benefit society in America founded only three years before in Philadelphia. After eight years of struggling existence, the lessons of the South-Carolina Society were applied by opening membership to laymen and padding the membership rolls with all of the social leaders of the province. After 1772, the October anniversary was about as fashionable and as lively a social occasion as that of the older group.13

13For documentation of this clerical benefit society in South Carolina, see Appendix. For a brief description of the Sons of the Clergy Corporation (1678), see Owen's Philanthropy in England, 22-23. A similar body was established by Queen Anne in 1704. See: John Ecton, A State of the Governours of the Bounty of Queen Anne, for the Augmentation of the Maintenance of the Poor
The third organization of a similar nature, the Fellowship Society, was founded by the son of an Anglican clergyman of Philadelphia, Edward Weyman (d. 1793), for the specific purpose of supplying Charleston with a hospital "for affording relief to distressed persons in the province, whose unhappy circumstances deprived them of lodging, advice, medicine and regular attendance," and "for the reception and relief of lunatics, and other distempered poor and sick persons." In spite of good intentions, the hospital and insane asylum never materialized, and the society took on the usual functions of mutual benefit for members and education of poor children, with semi-annual dinners and an annual meeting serving as an equivalent social gathering for those merchants and planters of lesser social standing than the members of the South-Carolina Society. One other Charleston organization, a mutual benefit society known as the Amicable Society, was active in the 1730s, but there is no existing documentation of its character.

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Clergy, from the First Establishment in the Year 1704, to Christmas 1718. Giving a Particular Account of their Constitution, Benefactions, and Augmentations, with Directions to Such as Desire to become Benefactors to so Pious and Charitable a Work. (London, 1719). For a full account of the Presbyterian body in Philadelphia, see: Alexander Mackie, Facile Printeps; The Story of the Beginning of Life Insurance in America (Lancaster, Pa., 1956).

14 The Fellowship Society, History of Society Compiled up to 200th Anniversary (mimeographed sheets, n.p., [c. 1968]).

One of the most interesting organizations because of its diversity of purpose was the Winyah Indigo Society of provincial but wealthy Georgetown, South Carolina. Founded in 1755 and incorporated two years later, the society was formed by the indigo planters of the vicinity as a forum for the enunciation of a united marketing policy of the recently successful crop of dyestuff and for the purpose of providing this remote area with a school and a library. Never opulent, the institution nevertheless provided education for paying and charity students in the area until the middle of the next century.16

Savannah, with its close cultural ties to Charleston and a population made up largely of recent British immigrants, gave birth to the one other organization in the Charleston tradition. The Union Society, founded in 1750, appears to have been sustained by the happy mixture of conviviality and benevolence, applying funds for the support of surviving dependents and for education of the poor.17


17 For a very thorough record of the society's history, see: Union Society. Minutes of the Union Society: being An Abstract of Existing Records from 1750 to 1858: Comprising, also, Chronological Lists of its Officers, Members, and Beneficiaries, with the Anniversary Addresses . . . also, A Historical Sketch of Bethesda (Savannah, 1860).
None of the other Southern colonies, North Carolina, Virginia, Maryland, nor the Lower Counties on the Delaware, possessed the heterogeneous urban immigrant culture nor the intimate ties with Britain which proved to be conducive to the development of charitable societies. The two other organizations of the colonial South, the products of individual rather than social initiative, deserve attention because of the remarkable talents of their founders and because they were each forerunners of a type of society which was to become quite common in the nineteenth century.

Thomas Bacon, founder of the Charity Working School of Talbot County, Maryland, ranks with Thomas Bray, James Blair, and Alexander Garden as one of the outstanding Anglican clergymen of the colonial South, although largely forgotten by historians. A native of the Isle of Man, later resident of Dublin and author of a well-received work entitled *A Complete System of Revenue in England* (1737), he did not enter the priesthood until 1745. Nurtured in the diocese of and ordained by the saintly Thomas Wilson, Bishop of Sodor and Man, he brought all of the elder man's enthusiasm for clerical and charitable endeavors to Maryland, to which he emigrated in 1746 as a chaplain to Lord Baltimore. A man of great intellect and boundless energy, he published a folio edition of the laws of Maryland, and, of particular interest here, established charity schools in both of his parishes, St. Peter's,
Talbot County, and All Saints, Frederick County, before his death in 1768. Fortunately for the historian, Bacon was as good a publicist as he was an organizer, and not only his sermons on the education of Negro servants, but a description of his St. Peter's Charity Working School, 1750, was printed in London and had at least a limited distribution there and in America.

It is entirely fitting that this earliest example of a subscription charity school in the South should have appeared in Maryland, the scene of Thomas Bray's labors of a half century before. Bray's own Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge adopted the predominantly secular charity school of Tudor and Stuart England as its primary vehicle of Christian charity at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and so successfully promoted them that Mary G. Jones could justifiably call the schools the "favorite form of benevolence" of a century noted for its charitable endeavors.

Not, of course, that there was anything new about charity schools. Wealthy members of the gentry and the rising urban bourgeoisie had been endowing these institutions in British towns for well over a century. The

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18 For biographical information on Bacon, see: Nelson W. Rightmeyer, Maryland's Established Church (Austin, Tex., 1957), 158.

significant departure of the S.P.C.K. crusade, given publicity in their widely available *Account of Charity Schools* (1704), was the promotion of subscription rather than endowed schools. Education, geared primarily to giving poor children a sufficient knowledge of the three R's and religious training to make them useful and law abiding citizens, was not a terribly costly business, and the subscription method enabled the poorest community, by means of united action, to provide minimal opportunities.\(^{20}\)

Conscious of the heritage of half a century, Bacon saw his effort in St. Peter's Parish, Talbot County, Maryland, as a model which would "raise a Spirit of Emulation among the adjacent Counties . . ."\(^{21}\) Although it was denominational in that it was tied to the Established Church, this was the first society in the colonial South founded exclusively for the benefit of those other than the founders. Funds were to be provided by annual subscriptions, "casual benefactions," and charity sermon

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\(^{20}\)The *Account of Charity Schools* was published yearly as a report and model for the spread of charity schools. See: Jones, *Charity School Movement*.

\(^{21}\)Thomas Bacon, *A Sermon Preached at the Parish Church of St. Peter's, in Talbot County, Maryland: On Sunday the 14th of October, 1750. For the Benefit of a Charity Working School to be Set Up in the Said Parish, for the Maintenance and Education of Orphans and Other Poor Children, and Negroes . . . To Which is Added, Copies of the Proposals, Rules, Subscription-Roll, and Other Matters, and Proceedings Relating to the Said School. To be sold for the Benefit of the Said Charity School* (London, 1751).
collections; management was placed in the hands of annually elected trustees. In its first year of operation, the Charity Working School had obtained £117 16 s. in annual pledges and £70 14 s. in miscellaneous gifts from individuals throughout the state.

In phraseology which would become commonplace with the growth of charitable institutions in the next century, Bacon justified the support of the school on three foundations: improvement of the children and the community, moral refinement of the donors in the awakening and exercising of their charitable impulses, and acting in time to avoid God's wrath for the community's failure to worthily employ its resources for the general good of society.

We are indeed, my Brethren, by God's Blessing, in Possession of a very plenteous Land. We ought to shew our Thankfulness to him by endeavouring to promote his Worship among us, which can never effectually be done without some such Provision as this, for bringing up the poorer Sort (who make up the Bulk of a People) in his Knowledge and Fear, and in the Way of providing for themselves by honest Industry. Should we neglect it, and Vice and Immorality greatly prevail by our Negligence, may it not justly provoke him in his Anger to dispossess us, as he did the Israelites of the Land of Canaan . . .\(^2\)

The one other colonial organization and the only missionary society which was active in the South before

the Revolution was Samuel Davies' Society for Promoting Christianity among the Indians. Although a native, Davies embodies the same missionary zeal, concern for the eternal welfare of poor Whites and Blacks alike, and familiarity with British institutions which Bacon brought to Maryland. Very little is known of this short-lived society, although it would appear to have been closely connected with Hanover Presbytery, active from 1756 or 1757 until the departure of its secretary, Davies, in 1758, to assume the presidency of Princeton. The purpose was the sending of missionaries to the Indians of backcountry South Carolina, but the hostilities prefacing the French and Indian War rendered the two missionary journeys which were taken failures.23

But if forms of private and organized benevolence which would be employed in the early national period were a familiar part of American life by the late colonial period, motivation was yet rudimentary. The societies which did develop, with the single possible exception of

Bacon's charity school society, were indistinguishable from similar bodies in the outlying towns of England. They lacked both the greater republican purpose and the democratic membership so characteristic of the post-Revolutionary organizations.

III. Urban Growth in the South: Precondition for Reform

Between 1780 and 1830, widespread organized charity did develop in the South as in the rest of the nation. Societies for the relief of the poor and the prevention of poverty, city missionary efforts, societies for the aid of seamen, Sunday schools, and indigenous non-denominational orphan asylums were innovations of the early national period.

The preconditions for widespread voluntary charity organization seem to have been: 1) social problems of sufficient magnitude to warrant public action, 2) sensitivity and awareness of the reality of such problems, 3) the failure of existing institutions to provide for their solution, 4) a familiarity with the mechanics of organizing corporate bodies, 5) a community of sufficient size or enthusiasm to sustain organizations once founded. Only the first of these, the social problems, can be considered to be a constant factor. The second was met by the growing humanitarianism which permeated literature and thought in the course of the eighteenth century; the third and fourth, by the Revolution. The fifth, the
development of popular support, could only come with the leisure, the wealth, and the ease of communication existing in the village or urban environment. Intense religious enthusiasm could produce examples of remarkable social unity in rural areas as well, but the driving force could never be sustained. The centrifugal forces of isolation were, in the plantation South, unremitting. Charleston was the one real city in the colonial period. It alone provided a permanent foundation for popular charitable organizations.

Historians are coming to appreciate the role of the town and city in antebellum Southern life. But recognition has not evolved to the point of deep understanding. Although they possessed far less political or economic influence than their northern counterparts and they exercised less social and intellectual dominance over their rural surroundings, sixteen cities of greater than five thousand inhabitants were existent in the slave South of 1830.


### TABLE 1

**SOUTHERN CITIES WITH MORE THAN FIVE THOUSAND INHABITANTS, 1790-1830**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City</th>
<th>1790</th>
<th>1800</th>
<th>1810</th>
<th>1820</th>
<th>1830</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>13,503</td>
<td>26,514</td>
<td>46,555</td>
<td>62,738</td>
<td>80,620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charleston</td>
<td>16,359</td>
<td>18,712</td>
<td>24,711</td>
<td>24,780</td>
<td>30,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Orleans</td>
<td>5-6,000</td>
<td>17,242</td>
<td>27,176</td>
<td>29,737</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td></td>
<td>8,208</td>
<td>13,247</td>
<td>18,826</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>5,739</td>
<td>9,735</td>
<td>12,067</td>
<td>16,060</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisville</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10,341</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>5,668</td>
<td>8,478</td>
<td>9,814</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgetown</td>
<td></td>
<td>7,360</td>
<td>8,441</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexandria</td>
<td>7,227</td>
<td>8,371</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petersburg</td>
<td>5,668</td>
<td>6,328</td>
<td>8,322</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savannah</td>
<td>5,195</td>
<td>7,523</td>
<td>7,776</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frederick</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7,255</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6,694</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilmington</td>
<td>5,268</td>
<td>6,628</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexington</td>
<td>5,279</td>
<td>6,087</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nashville</td>
<td>5,556</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In spite of the incompleteness of Southern urban development in comparison to the North, these cities were the dominant force in whatever cultural life the section did enjoy. Organized charities of every variety appeared first, flourished to the greatest extent, and gained a more permanent foundation there than in the rural areas, exercising some influence upon legislation and institutional development in the Southern states.

The urban existence was conducive to organized benevolence for a variety of reasons. The very closeness of living quarters exposed the shades of poverty, ill-housing, criminality, and drunkenness which were hidden in rural areas, generating the mixture of public outrage, fear, and concern which lay at the foundation of urban charity. It displayed and encouraged class differences and the attendant anxieties so basic to the generation of public social activity.

By their very size, their economic opportunities, and their impersonality, cities beckoned immigrants and fostered a mobility of population foreign to country areas. The ethnic minorities and the transient poor were numerous, and, without the margin of agricultural self-sufficiency and barter available to the poorest tenant farmer, were at the mercy of the weather and the economic cycle. Parish and county relief systems, all that men knew to relieve want, were totally inadequate.
As the Jeffersonian agrarians so disdainfully emphasized, money was the lubricant of urban life, the very foundation which alone could liberate man from toil in the field. The money economy freed men and women from the restraints of rural customs, but, while maximizing personal freedom and individuality, it did cheapen social relations in innumerable ways. Money was increasingly seen as both cause and cure of problems of any sort, and the organized society, demanding from most members money, not direct involvement, epitomized the impersonal efficiency of urban existence.

The charitable society arose because of the breakdown in those very services which they tried to meet. From the start, it was a losing battle. To find a solution, even to meet the problems as well as had the pre-organization society, was impossible with the growing pressure of economic change, technological progress, and population growth. But the humanitarian demands were insistent and the efforts to meet them, a vital bridge between medieval and modern society.

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26 The writings of John Taylor of Caroline are the source of much of the militant agrarianism which became a major element of Southern sectional rhetoric in the pre-Civil War decades. See: John Taylor's Arator, Being a Series of Agricultural Essays, Practical and Political (Petersburg, Va., 1818) and Construction Construed, and Constitutions Vindicated (Richmond, 1820).
IV. Secular Charity

Even at the height of their influence between 1790 and the 1830s, evangelical Christians did not exercise a complete monopoly over humanitarian activity in the United States. They, more than persons of secular motivation, were responsible for introducing the traditions of Enlightenment benevolence into Southern society, but there were several forms of charitable organization which, for logical reasons, were of non-religious management from their inception and which deserve brief mention. 27

The numerous charity schools which arose in the decades after the Revolution and before the Sunday School craze of 1815-1830, although they involved a certain amount of Biblical and moral training, were of a secular tone. Established by legacy, their longevity caused whatever perfectionist zeal existed at their initiation to subside as they performed the same limited educational function, year after year. South Carolina, which adopted general laws of incorporation well before the other

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27 The concept of humanitarianism which arose in the eighteenth century, of doing good irrespective of its utilitarian results (although it was firmly believed that no conflict existed) was an inherently secular idea. For some discussion of the secular origins of Evangelical Charity, see: Crane Brinton, A History of Western Morals (N.Y., 1959), 308-28; Howard R. Murphy, "The Origins of the Humanitarian Ethos in England, with Special Reference to the History of Ethical and Theological Ideas, 1700-1870," (Ph.D. diss., Harvard, 1951). The publication of Norman S. Fiering's study of eighteenth-century moral thought promises to shed light on this neglected area of Western intellectual history.
Southern states, gave birth to eleven charity school societies in the 1770s and 1780s. Similar bodies proliferated in all states.  

Public health and legislative reforms, because of the marked secularism of both the medical and legal professions, never possessed the religious-millennialist character of most organized efforts. Suspect to evangelicals in principle because it smacked of broken contracts and speculation, the campaign for the abolition of imprisonment for debt was in the hands of worldly lawyers of the likes of Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky (whose advocacy of Sabbath mail service in 1829 brought him to villain status among evangelicals).

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28 See the Appendix for documentation of these charity schools and all other charitable organizations mentioned in this chapter.

29 The issue of imprisonment for debt brought forth moralizing arguments on both sides. In his famous congressional speech of Jan. 14, 1823, Richard M. Johnson noted that "moral power" was the backbone of a nation. Defining this as "love of liberty--devotion to country--consisting in high-minded, honourable, gallant, magnanimous and virtuous feelings," he claimed that imprisonment for other than criminal acts degraded a man, denied him or his rights, gave one citizen control over the personal liberty of another, and thereby destroyed the very secular social contract which he described as this "moral power."

Willard Hall, Delaware congressman and ardent Presbyterian, reasoned on lines far more congenial to the evangelical mentality. In a private letter of 1822 regarding the debtor issue, he noted that "I must confess, that the subject appears to me to smell strongly of the sickly sensibility of a diseased imagination, and that the proposition to abolish it would be more in place in a boarding school than a senate chamber." Arguing that there was great danger in departing from "certain first principles," he suggested that "to enforce the keeping of engagements, the performance of contracts," must therefore
Dispensaries for the medical care of the poor fulfilled an important function in the growing cities. The Medical Society of South Carolina established one in Charleston in 1801; a second, The Shirras Dispensary, was created in the same city in 1813 as a result of a private bequest. A Baltimore General Dispensary opened its doors in 1801; a Second Baltimore Dispensary for the care of residents on the eastern side of town opened in 1816. In providing both general medical attention and smallpox vaccinations, these institutions were of inestimable public value. The Baltimore General Dispensary alone, in its first twenty years (1801-1821), served 38,000 persons free of charge.

One of the oddest, and undoubtedly most ineffective, forms of organized benevolence was the Humane Society.

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30 The first dispensaries in America were opened in Philadelphia in 1786; New York, 1791; Boston, 1796. Crow, "Age of Promise," 452-53.

31 See: One Hundred Years of History of the Baltimore General Dispensary (Baltimore, 1901).
Based upon Dutch and British precedent, a Humane Society was formed in Baltimore in 1790 and re-formed as part of the Dispensary in 1804; a Humane Society of Wilmington was organized in 1812. Intended primarily for the rescue of drowning persons, they would also treat those apparently killed by "suffocation by burning charcoal, or other noxious vapors, drinking cold water, strokes of the sun, damps of wells, lightening and other similar casualties." Depositories were stocked with apparatus and medical supplies and were assigned to volunteer physicians. Premiums were offered for the recovery of bodies, animate and inanimate. There is no record of any substantial success in the saving of lives, but the societies' founding was indicative of the growing sense of private concern for the public welfare.

The charity schools, Humane Societies, dispensaries, and legal reform campaigns served to publicize civic needs which would gradually and easily be taken over by

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32 The first society of this sort was founded in Amsterdam in 1767 to rescue persons who accidentally fell into the city's canals. The idea was brought to London by Dr. Thomas Cogan, and the Royal Humane Society was founded in 1774. Similar organizations were formed in Jamaica, Prague, St. Petersburg, Philadelphia (1780), Boston (1786), New York (1795), Newburyport (1802), and Halifax, Nova Scotia. Crow, "Age of Promise," 408-20; Owen, English Philanthropy, 60-61; Kraus, Atlantic Civilization, 138-39.

33 A Directory, and Register for 1814; Containing the Names, Professions and Residence of the Heads of Families, and Persons in Business, &c. &c. of the Borough of Wilmington, and Brandywine (Wilmington, Del., 1814), 71-77.
state and local government in the course of the century. They complemented the evangelical reforms and, in varying degrees, received support from the religious community. But in the first decades of the nineteenth century, the excitement was found in organizational efforts which demanded a greater emotional commitment and envisioned more spectacular successes.

V. Voluntary Poor Relief Organizations

Voluntary societies for the alleviation and cure of poverty, the earliest indigenous organizations dedicated to general charitable aims, were almost entirely the creation of educated persons of strong religious conviction. Although originating in the predominantly secular tradition of eighteenth-century Anglo-American benevolence, these societies quickly came to exude the religio-republican idealism of their founders. Because poverty was a problem which could only be dealt with effectively on the local level, the societies which came into being were never given wide national publicity and have, therefore, received little of the scholarly attention which they deserve. But, they served as a vital link, on the local level, between secular humanitarianism characteristic of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment and the perfectionist reform which captivated nineteenth-century America. The secular mutual aid societies were the direct ancestors of these relief organizations; they were, in turn, precursors of the sunday schools and city
missionary efforts which played such an important role in setting the stage for, and inspiring the moral reforms of the 1820s.

The immediate effect of the Revolution in the field of organized benevolence was to encourage a new wave of ethnic mutual aid societies. A German Society of Maryland was formed in 1783 and, along with its older counterpart in Charleston (German Friendly Society, 1766), played an important role in protecting the wave of German and Swiss redemptioners who poured into American cities after the War of 1812. A Hebrew Benevolent Society was formed in Charleston in 1784; a Society of St. George in Maryland was organized in Baltimore, 1799; a St. Andrews Society in the same city, 1806. There were a sufficient number of southward-moving Yankees to warrant the formation of a New England Society of Charleston in 1819.  

The most numerous ethnic immigrant group of ante-bellum America was the Irish. Hibernian Societies came into existence in considerable numbers throughout the nation, South and North: in Charleston in 1799, Baltimore in 1803, Savannah in 1812, even Mississippi in 1826. As in the case of their older counterparts, those mutual aid organizations which did survive beyond the initial generation adopted an increasingly broad conception of

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34 William Way, comp., History of the New England Society of Charleston, South Carolina, for One Hundred Years, 1819-1919 (Charleston, 1920).
community responsibility.

Two other types of mutual aid organizations proliferated in the post-bellum period, not to mention the variety of political, patriotic and fraternal groups which incorporated mutual aid functions. Societies for the Relief of Widows and Orphans of clergymen, actually life insurance groups with certain charitable responsibilities, became common to all Southern churches. Mutual aid societies of tradesmen, the Master Taylor’s Society (Charleston, 1788), the Savannah Association of Mechanics (1793), the Charitable Marine Society (Baltimore, 1796), the Baltimore Carpenters Humane Society (1809), were in part social organizations, partly incipient trade unions, and partly life insurance corporations.

In times of particular hardship, in wartime, during intensely cold winters, upon the arrival of unexpected hoards of immigrants, in the wake of economic deprivation or natural disaster, mutual aid societies were simply not adequate to meet the needs of urban society as a whole. The Santo Domingo slave revolt brought thousands of refugees to Southern ports in the summer of 1793. The winters of 1798, 1813-14, 1817, 1829, the depression of 1819, the Savannah fire of 1822, the tide of German

immigrants in 1817-18, the flow of poor Irish immigrants in the mid-twenties, and similar periods of local hardship forced a measure of innovation upon city and state governments and created a complexity of problems to which only private initiative could begin to respond.

The first female benevolent society in America, the Society for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children (1797), clearly illustrates the easy transition from mutual aid to poor relief. Isabella Graham of New York had organized the society specifically to reach "widows not entitled to share in the bounty of the St. Andrew's Society." It was a similar logic and gap in the public and private provisions for the poor in time of hardship which brought into existence the first private relief societies in each of the Southern cities.

Baltimore, growing from thirteen thousand to twenty-six thousand in the decade of the 1790s and reaching thirty-five thousand by 1810, sixty-two by 1820, eighty by 1830, developed the greatest reservoir of charitable need and the most diverse institutions to meet it. The first incorporated Southern society dedicated specifically to public relief, The Corporation for the Relief of the

36 The Power of Faith Exemplified in the Life and Writings of the Late Mrs. Isabella Graham (N.Y., 1843), 143.

37 See chart of population growth of cities in this chapter.
Poor and Distressed of Every Sect or Religious Denomina-
tion, was founded in 1792. It was an obvious outgrowth
and admission of the failure of relief efforts of the
individual churches to meet the demands of a city at large.
Authorized to hold and distribute property in order to
"lessen that bulk of human miseries so peculiar to large
cities," the organization was dedicated to "providing
poorhouse keepers, and others, with fuel and necessaries,
especially during the winter and seasons of uncommon
distress" and to raising funds for an orphan asylum. The society seems to have been short-lived, but its place
was soon filled by others.

The Anglo-French War brought intense economic hard-
ship back to every American port in the winter of 1798-
99 and led to the formation of the first women's charitable
organizations below the Mason and Dixon Line. The Female
Humane Society of Baltimore, interdenominational by
constitutional provision, was formed to aid indigent
females in the winter of 1798-99. Perpetuated beyond the
immediate crisis as a charity school society and orphan
asylum, it became one of the leading institutions in the
city.

The depressions of neutral maritime commerce in
the Napoleonic wars similarly crippled the Baltimore

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38William Kilty, ed., The Laws of Maryland . . .
(Annapolis, Md., 1799-1800), 2 vols., 1792, ch. LVI.
economy, forcing a measure of innovation to meet social needs. The Handelian Charitable Society, founded in 1803 and renewed on several occasions, added proceeds from oratorios to a charity fund for the alleviation of the poor during the winter. Its timely relief in 1815 enabled the Baltimore General Dispensary to maintain operations. A Baltimore Female Association for the Relief of Distressed Objects, formed to "search out distressed objects, to administer to their relief" was in operation by 1808; the Society for the Relief of the Poor of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the City and Precincts of Baltimore, organized to provide food and fuel for members of the denomination throughout the city, was formed in 1815. In response to the Panic of 1819, the Baltimore Economical Soup Society established soup houses for the distribution of soup and bread. A Society for the Relief of Indigent Sick was formed in 1824; The Maria Marthian Society, made up of Catholic women but offering assistance to those of "all denominations, ages, sexes, and colours," was formed in 1827.

The Quakers, whose pietism never permitted a comfortable fellowship with Calvinist-tinctured evangelicalism and who recoiled from the majority of the reform efforts, threw most of their energy into direct relief, unaccompanied by moral strictures and religious indoctrination. Charity without ideological strings flourished in Philadelphia as it did in no other American city, and
some of the character pervaded its satellite city to the South, Wilmington, Delaware. 39 The Female Benevolent Society (1800), enjoined by a bequest to admit only Quaker women, began more than a century of providing, "without distinctions of nation or color," relief for those "who suffer from the afflictions of poverty, indisposition, or the infirmities of age." A male Society for the Relief of the Poor and a Female Distributing Society for the Relief of the Poor, both directed by members of the Society of Friends, were formed to meet the crisis of a severe 1813-14 winter. An interdenominational Dorcas Society came into being "for clothing the poor" in 1818; a Female Hospitable Society, "for the relief of the aged poor and sick children," in 1819.

Charleston, with modestly successful public institutions for the care of paupers, orphans, and the sick, with the well endowed charitable and mutual aid organizations of the colonial period, with the necessity to accommodate only slight population gains, was slower to

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develop relief societies. At the urging of Francis Bishop Asbury, a Methodist Female Friendly Association, formed in 1810, was converted in 1811 to a general charitable society.  

The outstanding charity organization, the Ladies Benevolent Society, was formed in 1813 to "relieve the distresses of the poor, and administer comfort to the sick." Its operations were typical of the most successful organizations of this type. Membership cost five dollars annually, fifty dollars for life; the society, with some three or four hundred members, was entirely inter-denominational. Leadership was officially in the hands of a board of socially prominent managers; actual day to day operations were handled by a Superintendent, a Junior Superintendent, and a Secretary-Treasurer; the leg work was performed by a board of visitors divided into ward committees.  

Charleston possessed class divisions of a breadth and rigidity unequaled in American culture, and the meeting of top and bottom segments of society occurred—

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40 Founded by the ladies of the Methodist congregation as a mutual aid society in 1810, the organization submitted its constitution to Bishop Asbury. In a letter of 1811 to Mrs. M'Dowall, he suggested that funds above $2000 be employed for non-denominational relief. The constitution was changed, and the society's benefactions and sources of financial support broadened to include many non-Methodists. "Methodist Female Friendly Association," Wesleyan Journal, 2 (1826-27), 72.

41 The Ladies Benevolent Society, Charleston, South Carolina, Centennial Pamphlet, February 11, 1913 (Columbia, S.C., 1913).
ring in the daily operations of the Ladies Benevolent Society could verge on the ludicrous. Reviewing an earlier policy of providing variety in the diet of the society's dependents, the board concluded in 1819 that it was ill-advised to provide too much "variety of butcher's meat, pigeons, partridges, eggs, fruits, jellies and sweet-meat; the supplies of wines were also too liberal and too costly. Resolutions were accordingly formed to check this pernicious indulgence of all the cravings of a wayward fancy as experience proved it to be a serious injury to the poor, tending to render them unreasonable, capricious and dissatisfied." Necessities were simply supplied for half the cost in 1819.42

But if their efforts exposed the innocence and naivete of the rich, it also brought the members into contact with "scenes of distress, want, misery, and woe, scarcely to be conceived by those who have never entered the frail and unsheltered tenements of this city, where poverty, sickness and wretchedness dwell."43 Searching for the gaps in existing charitable and governmental provisions, the Ladies Benevolent Society aided the senile, Black and White, who failed to meet institutional require-


ments; infants who were too young for the orphan asylum; persons with debilitating and fatal diseases and handicaps. Pensioners in 1825 included: three penniless White women; a Mrs. Cowie, "her body a perfect skeleton," who suffered from blindness and leprosy; Clarissa, and Mary, crippled free Black women; Mary McNeile, a free Black with leprosy. However unequal to the social problems of Charleston as a whole, the society and those like it provided a measure of direct, personal involvement. Defending itself on this ground against general attacks upon charity as encouragement for indolence, the society's report affirmed that "every system of charity, which takes the rich among the poor, must be particularly efficacious and beneficial; it improves the condition of one party, the feelings of the other, and the virtues of both." The Sisters of Charity was formed in Charleston in 1817 to aid the "aged, infirm, and destitute" who, because they were not sick, did not come under the care of the Ladies Benevolent Society; the Female Charitable Association, for the Relief of the Sick Poor of Charleston Neck came into existence in 1824 to carry out the mission of the Ladies Benevolent Society. Charleston., Ms. Journal (1824–70), 1825. On deposit at the South Carolina Historical Society. Charleston, S.C.

Benevolent Society in outlying districts.46

Similar bodies grew up in the other larger towns throughout the section. In Virginia, the Richmond Charitable Association of Young Men arose in 1817 to aid the "many cases of indigent and distressed persons, among the inhabitants of this City and its vicinity, not sufficiently provided for by the existing Laws, or by the Societies formed for their relief"; a Ladies' Society of Columbia, for the Female Poor and Especially for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children, of self-explanatory purpose, was organized in South Carolina. Undoubtedly influenced by the examples of such bodies in Baltimore and Charleston, there came into existence for the care of the sick and destitute poor The Charitable Society of the City of Annapolis (1811), the Female Benevolent Society of Georgetown (1813), The Charitable Society of Easton (1814), The United Female Benevolent Society of North Carolina (Fayetteville, by 1820), the Female Benevolent Society (Newbern, North Carolina, 1821), the Female Benevolent Society (Raleigh, North Carolina, by 1824), the Female Charitable Society (St. Louis, 1824), and others.

VI. From Relief to Scientific Reform

As quickly as relief societies did come into existence between 1815 and 1830, there developed a clear shift in the general approach toward the poor. Experience as well as external currents of thought brought about a rapid maturation of charitable thought. Poverty was increasingly seen not as an inevitability but as an aberration.

The economic crisis of the Napoleonic era and the burdens of urban growth had the same effect within the realm of social thought that the Revolution had had in the political sphere. The realities of unexpected events had forced men to re-examine the very basis of social cohesion, to delve into the enticing world of social theory and human behavior. As in the process of popular political maturation which occurred in the agonizing years of independence and constitution-making, the social theories of the Enlightenment were finally catching up with American settlement, permeating the provincial recesses of the South and grafting their legacy of optimism upon the public mentality. There developed a new curiosity with regard to the primary causes of social action. There was a growing faith in the efficacy of reason in understanding the intricacies of the social mechanism and in comprehending the nature, cause, and solution of society's problems. In spite of a residue of Hobbesian pessimism which surfaced in some of the Revolutionary
pamphlet literature, in spite of the Calvinist tone of American colonial thought, there was a growing faith that man could, in the proper social and political environment, achieve earthly happiness and comfort. With this emerging belief in progress, there were irretrievably scattered the seeds of eternal dissatisfaction with the status quo which has been the salient characteristic of modern civilization.

Private benevolence, like private morality, was never viewed by the eighteenth- or nineteenth-century man as an isolated aspect of human behavior. But the larger cosmological frame of reference shifted perceptibly between 1790 and 1830. The eighteenth-century charity sermons and tracts, with all their emphasis upon practical morality, upon man's duty to God, to himself, and to his fellow man, were founded upon a mechanistic concept of society, Newtonian in its movement, but not greatly removed from the Great Chain of Being in its adherence to the concept of social gradations. The mutual duties of master and servant, or rich man and poor man, were, to the eighteenth-century mind, more than a matter of morality; they were essential to the mechanical operation of the human universe. In the course of the post-Revolutionary period, the infusion of republican and religious perfectionism in organized benevolence transformed static charities into progressive reforms.
The revolution in the theory of poverty was due to the final acceptance, in principle at least, of inductive logic as a tool in the understanding of the phenomenon. Without compromising their faith in a higher natural or moral law, the men and women who took an active concern for the plight of the unfortunate began for the first time to treat poverty as a subject of intellectual speculation, to formulate from observation the laws which would not only explain, but eliminate this social evil. Gradually, the purpose of charitable action was seen not simply that of making the best of a hard world, but actively working to make the future world, earthly or heavenly, a perfect society. The mental prejudices of the era's reformers brought them little closer to the ideal of truth, their naivete caused them to grasp at easy answers and simple solutions, but the very act of intellectual exploration opened doors which could not be closed. Men began to think seriously in terms of solutions; they had merely to uncover the mechanism of the social disease and apply the cure. This intellectual awakening in the area of social responsibilities, a process of centuries in Europe, came suddenly in post-Revolutionary America.

Like so many of the classic books in world history, Thomas Malthus' *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798) was perfectly timed to its age. Britain, deeply embroiled in the Napoleonic conflict for over half a decade, felt the reality of social and economic crisis to a far greater
extent than did the United States. The Essay, born of international pessimism as to the very survival of civilization, emphasized, as no previous work had done, the deadly seriousness of what the author foresaw to be geometric population growth in the face of arithmetic expansion of food supplies. With its menacing prophecy of general starvation, the thesis screamed for permanent solutions, not cosmetic, temporary relief.

Indirectly, the Essay presented an approach toward charity. Malthus opposed public assistance in any form, but he stressed the need for voluntary benevolence. The key concept was discrimination. Discriminate charity, sensitive to its effects, could alleviate without compounding social problems.

The work was of direct impact in the South. It was published in Washington in 1809, and, by the 1820s, was widely available in the circulating libraries of the section. The popular Baltimore periodical, Niles' Register, had published a lengthy six-part review in 1811-12. Thomas Cooper of the University of South Carolina, a dedicated Malthusian, strongly supported Malthus' stand on poor relief in his Lectures on the Elements of Political Economics (1826). Indirectly, the ideas embodied in

the Essay on Population permeated the very foundations of American evangelical charity. The prosperity of the American rural environment and the comparative isolation from the greatest hardships of the Napoleonic wars softened the pessimism and the determinism of Malthusian theory to some extent. But the prevailing belief in man's sinfulness and the era's practical faith that man was responsible for his actions and his condition conversely limited the objectivity of their approach to poverty. There simply was little room for the impersonal explanations which so completely dominate modern social thought.

Beginning in the economically depressed decade of the 1790s in Britain, somewhat later in America, the clamor for efficiency and productivity in charity became more universally insistent, a changing attitude toward poverty itself.

The persistence of economic crisis in the three decades of the Anglo-French wars and their aftermath forced the matter of poverty before the public vision for a sufficient length of time to necessitate more than palliative action. Britain, with its more complete involvement in the wars themselves, with its greater organization and industrialization, felt the pressure far more intensely than America. In the United States, the

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economic disruptions were only periodic. But for a nation, many of whose towns were only now growing into cities, the winters of hardship in the Napoleonic years were more difficult than had been known before. The undeclared war with France, the Embargo, the War of 1812, and the world depression which followed left no section of the country untouched. As with politics in both Britain and the United States, the totality of international conflict endowed economic difficulties with a moral significance which would not have been felt with such intensity in calmer times.

Evidence, however unscientific in actual fact, was accumulating rapidly between the 1790s and 1820s which seemed to prove that poverty was a soluble problem. Running debates in the British House of Commons and its committees between 1807 and 1819, which received coverage in the Anglo-American press, brought forth public discussion and helped to define the issues which would appear again and again in the next decades.48

The official reports and statistics, distinctly Malthusian in tone, were highly critical of the entire concept of public relief, but they, as well as the

48 An 1817 report of a Select Committee of the House of Commons, although of no practical legislative force, became a classic statement in favor of abolishing relief. The variety of interviews and statistics which the committee collected between 1816 and 1819 provided basic proof of the folly of unrestricted charity. See: J. R. Poynter, Society and Pauperism: English Ideas on Poor Relief, 1795-1834 (Toronto, 1969).
literature of the opposition, accepted the possibility of improvement. Malthusian pamphleteers James Bichero and John Davidson, conservative critics Coleridge and Southey, cooperationist Robert Owen, radicals William Cobbett, William Godwin, and Francis Place, at swords points with each other, argued not over the practicality of reform but simply its methods.49

In the difficult winter of 1816-17, Rev. Thomas Chalmers took over the care of the poor in his Glasgow, Scotland, parish. He registered striking success with a combined policy of relief for the helpless, work for the idle, and education. Although it was his administrative ability and circumstances as much as anything which produced results, his well publicized efforts were hailed in the British periodical press as a vindication of Malthusian principle.50

A public meeting was called in Philadelphia on February 17, 1817, by several of the city's leading humanitarians to probe the causes of poverty. Organizing themselves as the Pennsylvania Society for the Promotion

49 See Poynter, Society and Pauperism.

of Public Economy, the body launched an investigation of the nature and cause of indigence in the city. Citizens of New York formed the New York Society for the Prevention of Pauperism in December, 1817. The published reports of both organizations, based upon questionnaires, statistics, and hard analysis, reinforced the findings of the Parliamentary debates. Indiscriminate charity, benevolence without a system, was, even more than the impersonal forces of economic and demographic change, portrayed as the foundation of the poor relief problem. Idleness, intemperance, and sickness were presented as the basic causes; employment, education, enactment and enforcement of liquor regulations, and strict supervision of discriminating relief were the viable solutions. 51

The irony of the debate was that almost nothing could be done about public poor relief. With few exceptions, those on the public dole or those housed in city and state institutions were a pitiful collection of helpless widows, orphans, sick and infirm persons, for whom no amount of reform could recreate self-sufficiency. Legislative committee reports, governor's messages, resolutions of city commissioners of the poor in the late

teens and early twenties, echoed and re-echoed the brave Malthusian resolutions against indolence and dissipation without having the slightest practical effect on the relief rolls themselves. 52

It was private charitable organizations, free from immediate public responsibilities, which could afford the luxury of experimentation. Their efforts were on a pitifully small scale in proportion to actual public need, they were totally ineffective in finding permanent solutions to the timeless problems of want, but they did create a spirit of innovation which would be perpetuated in the professional social work of the present century.

VII. Urban Missionary Movement

As was true in the vast majority of charitable movements in the period, evangelical religion provided the human inspiration needed to turn intellectual speculation into organized reform. The religious denominations

52 South Carolina's Governor Pickens, in his 1817 message, noted that "in some districts, the provisions made for the poor has, within a few years, augmented threefold, without any visible increase in the number of those who are real objects of charity," and urged that "it is of great importance that the line of distinction between the indolent and dissipated, and the poor, should be strongly marked." Governor Thomas of Delaware warned the legislature in 1824 that "if the door of public comiseration is thrown too widely open the great stimulus to exertion, which providence in his wisdom, has implanted in the bosom of the community, is too apt to be weakened." David J. McCord, A Review of the Plan of Education in South Carolina . . . . (Columbia, S.C., 1821), 28-31. Gov. Thomas's address is quoted in: Benjamin J. Klebaner, "Poverty and its Relief in American Thought, 1815-61," Social Science Review, 38 (1964), 390.
were beginning to take an interest in the rising urban centers in the first and second decades of the century, and, because they employed a liberally-educated and paid clergy, the Presbyterians and Episcopalians were more than equal to the Methodists and Baptists on this one "frontier." Far more than the average clergymen in the West, the urban missionaries were men of education as well as fervent Christian zeal who were well read in contemporary reform literature.

Early American towns were too distinctive, the organizing process far too intimately tied to the social fabric of the community, to attack urban problems on a national scale. Although intelligence of charitable innovations was provided by the international vehicle of the Anglo-American religious press, although there was no originality or regional distinctiveness in the methods brought to bear upon these universal problems, only sincere, dedicated probing of the "haunts of poverty and vice" on the local level itself could begin to define the needs of the inarticulate substratum of urban society. Money was necessary for success, but thankless voluntary labor was the essential element. No week-end trip on the part of a traveling agent, all that was needed to initiate a Bible or tract society, could begin to provide this ingredient. Active members as well as organizers were predominantly laymen who felt a personal religious compulsion of sufficient strength to inspire the requisite
commitment of time and money needed to support charities of personal contact. The wave of urban revivals in the second decade of the century, in Wilmington, Charleston, Baltimore, Fredericksburg, and elsewhere, cut across denominational boundaries, creating vibrant churches and zealous converts who were game for any sort of organized reform activity. To evangelicals, poverty and ignorance were intolerable barriers to the religious and republican perfection which they so earnestly desired.

The missionary movement which dominated eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Protestantism captured the excitement of the religious world for three reasons:

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53 For references to a few of these outpourings of faith in urban areas of the South, see: (Wilmington, Del., 1815, 1827) Joshua Bradley, Accounts of Religious Revivals in Many Parts of the United States from 1815 to 1818 . . . (Albany, N.Y., 1819), 22-26, and The One Hundredth Anniversary of Hanover St. Presbyterian Church, Wilmington, Del., Celebrated Thursday October 24, 1872 (Wilmington, Del., 1872), 17, 33-5; (Lexington and Petersburg, Va., 1822) Presbyterian Church, Synod of Virginia, Ms. "Minutes," vol. 5, 30-31. Microfilm copies, Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va.} (Fredericksburg, Va., 1822-23) William S. Perry, ed., Journals of General Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church, in the United States, 1785-1835 (Claremont, N.H., 1874), vol. 2, 40; (Charleston, 1822-23) William B. Sprague, ed., Annals of the American Pulpit . . . (N.Y., 1857-69), vol. 2, 664-66.

In her excellent study of religious reform in New York city, Carroll Smith Rosenberg places major emphasis upon the revivalism of the 1820s as a cause of the growing perfectionism of humanitarian efforts. Because there was a minimum of contact with Finney's revivalism in the South, direct parallels are not valid. But the scattered revivals between 1815 and the 1830s which were effective in the South served in much the same manner to quicken the pace of religious reform efforts. Carroll Smith Rosenberg, Religion and the Rise of the American City; the New York City Mission Movement, 1812-1870 (Ithaca, N.Y., 1971), 7-8, 277-80.
there was the adventure of exploring new lands; there was the challenge of bringing non-Western civilizations to the kingdom of Christ (revealed in the Scriptures to precede the millennium); and, for Protestants, there was the daring excitement of breaking from a strong congregational tradition which, in reaction to Catholicism, had placed such importance on the individual clergyman, married, and rooted deeply in community life. To a degree, the missionary experience moved the Protestant vanguard back closer to the ideals of celibacy and a world church. The Methodists, with their unmarried and virtually unpaid itinerants, could rival the Catholic priests in their complete dedication to duty, unhindered by loyalty to place or person. The efficiency of the method was obvious. It was indeed this freedom from parochial duties and restraints which both infuriated critics and made the urban missionaries of early nineteenth-century America such an effective vehicle of charitable action and reform.

The urban missionary movement can be dated from May, 1816, when the Female Missionary Society for the Poor of the City of New York hired Rev. Ward Stafford as missionary-at-large. A Timothy Dwight student, fired with the zeal for mission work, publicist of his own activity, he helped to define what he called the *New Missionary Field*. . . (New York, 1817).  

54 Ward Stafford, *New Missionary Field, A Report to the Female Missionary Society for the Poor of the City of*
The city missionaries were able to fill the gaps in the congregational system. Systematic attention was given to the spiritual needs of institutionalized prisoners and orphans. For the first time clergymen were paid to gain the confidence of the poorest element of society. The erection of mission churches with free seating, not the few charity pews which automatically branded one a pauper, became an issue of real importance and, in fact, spelled the eventual demise of the entire pew-rental system. The city missionaries greatly encouraged the Sunday school movement. In the eastern port cities, seamen, with their notorious reputations and evil associations, were a particular challenge. Once evangelicals fathomed the child-like simplicity of the sailor's mind, they grew ecstatic over visions of Christian sailors, criss-crossing the globe, with Bibles, tracts, and conversionary zeal.

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New York and its Vicinity (N.Y., 1817).

55 The construction of churches for the poor, the basis of urban Methodist growth in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England, spread to the older dissenter denominations and eventually back to the Anglican establishment, which in turn was popularized by the Evangelicals and brought to the attention of American urban reformers. John Bowdler's Society for the Building and Enlargement of Churches and Chapels (1818) undoubtedly inspired the "free churches" in the Episcopal Church in America. See "Memoir of John Bowdler," Gospel Messenger, 1 (1824), 21-3; Michael Hennell, John Venn and the Clapham Sect (London, 1958), 177-78.
The Female Domestic Missionary Society, founded in Charleston in 1818, was the first and the most important city missionary society in the South. Strongly supported financially by Charleston's social leadership, the organization employed a succession of enthusiastic Andover seminary graduates who left no alley unvisited, no door unentered. Charged with meliorating "the condition of the poor, and the ignorant, and the vicious," they distributed Bibles and tracts, conducted house-by-house visits to the poor, Black and White, organized Sunday schools, preached to the poor, encouraged observance of the Sabbath, and attempted to "stop the progress of vice." Except in regard to slavery itself, which missionary Jonas King was careful to point out in his 1821 report he "studiously avoided saying anything [about] which should tend to make them discontented with their situation as slaves," the agents were given wide latitude. As was true in other cities, the urban missionary movement launched Charleston's efforts with seamen.56

The recently formed Young Men's Missionary Society of Richmond hired Rev. Mr. Orin Fowler in 1819. He "preached to the sailors at Rocketts, at the Poor House, the Armory, Penitentiary and other places," systematically visiting "from one abode of want and wretchedness to

another," ascertaining the vast spiritual need of the
community and in the process, encountering ignorance and
poverty of a sort unknown to the comfortable middle class
membership. The pattern of visitation of the poor was
copied by the other benevolent societies of the city with
equally revealing results. A Female Domestic Missionary
Society was formed in the same year by Baltimore Episco-
palians in order to employ missionaries to administer to
the spiritual needs of the poor and for the establishment
of a "free church" in the Sabbath School building on
Federal Hill. When the Young Men's Bible Society of
Baltimore undertook to furnish every family in the city
with a Bible in 1827-28, they reported that "in exploring
the haunts of wretchedness and poverty, your Board have
been made conversant with much of human misery and depre-
vation." They found that "in a large majority of cases,
ignorance and misery, want of Scriptures, and of the common
comforts of life, go hand in hand . . . ." 58

57 Young Men's Missionary Society of Richmond,
Extracts from the Minutes . . . Constitution and Annual
Report . . . with an Address (Richmond, Va., 1819), 32-33.
For examples of similar campaigns of visitation by dis-
tricts, see: "The Richmond Sunday School Union," Virginia
Evangelical and Literary Magazine, 2 (1819), 290-92; "Dis-
tribution of Tracts in Richmond and Manchester," Religious
Herald, 2 (Richmond, Va., 1828), no. 48.

58 Young Men's Bible Society of Baltimore, Report . . .
Presented March 24, 1828. Detailing the Progress Made by
the Committee of Management, in Carrying into Effect the
Resolution Adopted by the Society at their Late Annual
Meeting, to "Undertake with a firm Reliance upon Divine
Providenice, to Supply each Destitute Family in the State
of Maryland with a Copy of the Sacred Scriptures within
One Year." (Baltimore, Md., 1828), 17.
The Young Men's Bible Society of Washington employed Asa Mead, a young Andover graduate, to tour the District in 1821-22 and "learn who were destitute of the Holy Scriptures." Mead in fact compiled a literary census of the city. Visiting house by house, he found 289 families without Bibles and estimated a total of 350; there were 75 families (half White, half Black), none of whose members could read: 428 children attended day school, 254 Sunday school. As Mead noted, "while employed as I have been in this city, no one could fail to think of the moral state of the people. Every one would see what kinds of vice are most prevalent . . . and if anxious for the happiness of the fellow-men, he would be led to think of the causes why these vices prevail—and the means by which they might be repressed and eradicated. In any city, he would soon be convinced, that the extent or enormity of vice is very little known to those who take no particular pains to search it out." Like his counterparts elsewhere, he found intemperance to be "the loud-crying sin of the place." 59

A Domestic Missionary Society of Wilmington, Delaware, hired Rev. Mr. J. H. Smaltz to visit the destitute and preach at the poor house and at the mill villages along the Brandywine in 1821. The pious citizens of

Georgetown, District of Columbia, in the same summer launched a vigorous door-to-door campaign and held Sunday services at the market house aimed at the "hundreds and thousands of the wretched wanderers in our streets [Black and White], who are now prevented by want of suitable dress or other causes from entering the sanctuary." The Savannah Missionary Society, formed in 1819, dedicated itself three years later "to carry the gospel to the doors and firesides of that part of our population that rarely, or never enter a house of public worship . . ." Charleston's Protestant Episcopal Domestic Missionary Society, formed in 1823, built St. Stephen's Church to provide a place of worship free from pew rents.

The urban mission movement gave the concerned public a glimpse at the nature of urban poverty. For the first time, the poor themselves were being visited, inter-

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62Edward Thomas, On the Necessity of Promoting the Knowledge and Practice of Christianity. A Sermon, Preached before the Protestant Episcopal Society for the Advancement of Christianity, in South Carolina, on its Twentieth Anniversary, in St. Phillip's Charleston, February 16th, 1830 (Charleston, S.C., 1830), 15-16; Perry, Journals of General Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church, vol. 2, 44-45, 159-60.
viewed, counted, and analyzed. However rudimentary the methods of observation, however biased the interpretation given these facts, society's problems were being openly exposed and discussed. In spite of the evangelical tendency to equate poverty with sinfulness and unregeneracy, certain social wrongs emerged which were larger than the individual, no matter how corrupt. Illiteracy, alcoholism, and idleness stood out in particularly sharp profile as visitors poked into the recesses of dark alleys and decaying houses of the poorest sections of America's growing cities. The vast differences in manners, which were real barriers to social homogeneity, were brought into the open.

If the evangelical reform was overwhelmingly paternalistic, it became, in spite of itself, more responsive to the feelings of the poor themselves than earlier charity. As participants gradually realized, voluntary democratic reform was as dependent on the public opinion of the recipient as it was of the supporting donors. The reports of the city missionaries, the Bible and tract society agents, and the Sunday school teachers showed a growing appreciation of the existence of sensitivity and pride among the poor themselves. That shame over lack of decent clothing was a major explanation of low church and school attendance came simultaneously as a shocking revelation to the comfortable philanthropists of every community as urban missionaries began to report back to the societies which employed them.
The pious reformers discovered that poor people did love their children, that they frequently resented paternalistic charity, and that, in the face of immigration and ethnic differences, the poor were not all alike.

Much of the minor innovation in charity work was brought about in an effort to meet these challenges. Missionaries went out to the places where the poor would attend religious services, preaching in taverns and warehouses, organizing free churches, attempting to overcome this sense of social inferiority. So as to obviate the shame of poor standards of dress, women's societies for the clothing of poor children became common auxiliaries to charitable Sunday schools. A variety of schemes were devised to allow the poor to pay at least something for their tracts, their Bibles, even their "free" food and soup. 63

At the same time, comprehension was not synonymous with tolerance. In their attempts to understand the poor, the evangelical reformers displayed a minimal ability to like them or their way of life. An age dedicated to the search for ultimate truth and progress could never accept the concept of cultural pluralism extolled

63 During the hard winter of 1820, the Baltimore Economical Soup Society found, as had the Bible and tract societies, that the poor were often too proud to accept outright charity. In addition to the free soup-house, they opened a pay soup-house in Jan., 1820 to accommodate such individuals. Scharf, History of Baltimore, vol. 2, 593.
in today's world. Human diversity, as intriguing as it was to the eighteenth-century rationalist, implied inequality. Familiarity with the poor and their ways only intensified the reformer's will to reform them.

Charitable societies were increasingly expected to work fundamental changes in personal habits. Relief organizations were called upon to prove, in good Malthusian fashion, the deserving character of their recipients. Relief was more and more frequently tied to the acceptance of moral and vocational training.

The Female Benevolent Society of Wilmington (1800), the first of several working societies in the South, provided flax and equipment for poor women to make thread, linen cloth, towel linen, and bagging which was then sold. The Female Benevolent Society of Georgetown (1813) supplied materials and equipment and distributed finished clothing to poor school children.64

The Society for the Encouragement of Industry (Charleston, 1820) took special pains to justify their policy of charity in return for labor. "In the one case, the pauper fold his arms, and content to subsist on charity, loses eventually all ambition to live indepen-

64 Ann Ferris, A Historical Sketch of the "Female Benevolent Society" of Wilmington (Wilmington, Del., 1873); Female Benevolent Society of Wilmington, History of the Female Benevolent Society (n.p., n.d.); George M. Kober, comp., Charitable and Reformatory Institutions in the District of Columbia (Washington, D.C., 1927), 203.
dent. In the other case, the female who receives work with a view of supporting herself by her industry, has her independence of character preserved, feels a happy consciousness of earning the bread she eats, and in the event of her habits of industry and character becoming known through the instrumentality of the Society, she will probably be enabled to subsist without their aid."65 The Female Charitable Society of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Alexandria (1822), was dedicated to "teaching female children to sew, knit, etc.; of supplying the most indigent among them with clothes, and, in general, of cultivating in them the principles and habits of knowledge, industry and virtue."66

The private orphan asylum was also a product of this determination to eradicate poverty at its source rather than simply treat its effects. The Benevolent Society of the City and County of Baltimore (1799), the oldest female orphan asylum in the South, stated a purpose which was applicable to all such organizations: the


66"Journals of the Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia from 1785 to 1835, inclusive," 155, 182-83, 190, 201. Published as an Appendix to Francis L. Hawks, A Narrative of Events Connected with the Rise and Progress of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia (N.Y., 1836; vol. 1 of "Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of the United States of America").
society was intended "to draw indigent female children at a tender age, from the haunts of vice, to rescue them from nakedness and hunger, to preserve them from ignorance, that prolific parent of evil, to imbue their minds with virtuous and religious principles, to train them in habits of industry, and to render them useful members of society, instead of leaving them to become its scourges and burdens."  

The Savannah Female Asylum, "formed on the principles of similar institutions in the northern states," was organized in 1801. Orphan asylums supported by like-minded female charitable societies were founded in Norfolk (1804), Baltimore (1808), Petersburg (1813), Fayetteville (1813), Richmond (1815), Washington (1815), Georgetown (1816), Augusta (by 1823), Wilmington (1824), and Natchez (by 1825). The public Charleston Orphan House, which had been opened in 1794, benefited from substantial private benevolence in the second decade of the nineteenth century and increasingly displayed the same evangelical approach in their educational function employed by the private institutions.

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67 The Past History and Present Condition of the Institution of St. Paul's Parish, Originally Incorporated under the Title of The Benevolent Society of the City and County of Baltimore (Baltimore, 1860), 14-16.

68 See Appendix.

69 Charleston Orphan House, Centennial Celebration (Charleston, S.C., 1891).
Carried to its logical Malthusian conclusion, charity reform became an exercise in prohibition and restraint. The strong tradition of sumptuary legislation in church and state made evangelicals receptive to a harsh approach toward the poor which on the surface contradicts the growing crescendo of benevolence. A Society for the Prevention of Pauperism in the City of Baltimore was founded in March, 1820, and declared that, "not contented with sympathizing and relieving the sufferings of fellow-beings, [it] strikes at the very root and cause of those evils." Quoting from Malthus and the investigatory reports from the Northern states, fortified with statistics from Thomas Chalmers' and Count Rumford's efforts, an 1822 presentation of the society's Views stated bluntly that "in general, idleness is the very core of the disease; and that a system of benevolence which nurses the crime, must be viewed as the practical agent that introduces, and instead of lessening, must always greatly increase its consequent evils." 70 Less scientific in its

70 The most radical poor relief society in the South, the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism (Baltimore, 1820) had a short, stormy existence. An anonymous pamphlet opposing the organization's efforts to survey the extent and nature of vice in the city declared that its purpose was the formation of "a great moral police, to pervade every part of the city from its center to its utmost limits . . . to intrude into grocery and spirit stores, in order to discover and classify the persons who may chance to purchase or drink liquors in the said stores." Acting as "spies, informers, inquisitors, evidences, judge and jury," they were planning to visit and inspect taverns, oyster cellars, grog shops, schools, gambling houses, to prohibit lotteries, even "to penetrate
ideological basis but of a similar approach, the Howard Society (1825) of Washington not only came into being "to give immediate relief, providing work," but also for "encouraging economy, and aiding the corporation to carry out the laws for the punishment of disorderly persons, and from binding out children found begging on the street." The Charleston Benevolent Society (1827), an ambitious poor relief organization involving systematic visits to poor neighborhoods at regular intervals, "fully impressed with the belief, that numerous impositions are practices upon the benevolence and humanity of our fellow-citizens, by persons presenting themselves at their doors; as petitioners for charity--while many more, real and

to the inmost recesses of those temples, devoted to the purposes of criminal intercourse between the sexes, a subject to be discussed at a meeting to which ladies have been invited!" This opponent of the society, to whom Baltimore's earthy sins were an obvious delight, claimed that their ultimate goal was "to prevent, not pauperism, but every species of public amusement, to proscribe all meetings, except such as the inquisitors would call religious meetings, to place all our citizens under the ban of a fanatical 'moral restraint,' under the scowling tyranny of a police, worse than that of the Holy Alliance, and to the full as Hypocritical!--to scatter around, like so many pestiferous reptiles, spies and informers, destroying all confidence between man and man, covering our city with a gloom, from which the enlightened and cheerful would fly as from a pestilence." A Warning to the Citizens of Baltimore (Baltimore, Nov., 1821). For a defense of body, see: Society for the Prevention of Pauperism in the City of Baltimore, Views of the Society . . . (Baltimore, 1822), and To the Citizens of Baltimore (Baltimore, 1822). For an excellent study of the Society, see: Blanche D. Coll, "The Baltimore Society for the Prevention of Pauperism, 1820-1822," American Historical Review, 61 (1955-56), 77-87.

deserving objects, are concealed by their sensibility of feeling from public view," stated as a major goal "judi-
ciously discriminating between the truly indigent, and the shameless abuser of public sympathy." 72

The first and most radical of these, the Baltimore organization, fell victim to its own impetuosity. Its harsh criticism of other charities alienated its natural support; its failure to gain Catholic backing, its opposition from liquor interests, and its demeaning attitude toward the poor as persons, eliminated the public approval which alone could have made the effort an effective one.

VIII. Democratic Social Responsibility

The very real frailty of the urban charities which arose in the cities of the American South between 1780


David J. McCord, in his A Review of the Plan of Education in South Carolina (Columbia, S.C., 1821), voiced the restrictive view of benevolence in even stronger terms: "There cannot be a greater curse upon any nation than these stupid and ostentatious benevolent societies, that advertise their generosity, mixed up with a few compli-
ments to themselves. They are at best founded on ignorance of every principle of politics, and supported by fanaticism."

"They are the banners under which all the idle vagabonds, debauchees, and dirty villains are recruited. They bring upon the unfortunate places where they erect their gorgan heads such a flood of beggars and rogues, that they choke up every avenue to private benevolence, and sweep away every atom of charity in the community for those who are truly miserable." pp. 31-32.
and 1830 belies their importance as a landmark in the growth of democratic social responsibility. Admittedly, while hundreds of poor children who knew only wretchedness were provided for the first time the basic necessities of life and an opportunity in the newly formed orphan asylums to escape their dismal fate, thousands were left untouched; while many were given basic standards of education and moral training in the sunday schools which evangelicals promoted with such success, even greater numbers were not reached. The mechanistic framework of thought blocked comprehension of many of the complexities of social problems in truly human terms; the dependence of charitable societies on public enthusiasm made them far too responsive to faddish enthusiasm, far too inadequate, and far too wary of controversial areas of charitable work. But, at least efforts were finally being made.

In terms of theoretical development, the era between the outbreak of the War for Independence and the turbulent 1830s was as revolutionary, as creative, in the field of public charity as in the sphere of politics. The same momentum which rendered restrictive concepts of legislative representation historical curiosities in the course of the constitutional revisions of the 1770s, 1780s, and 1820s subtly undermined and redefined the very foundations of charitable action.

To a large extent, the right to charitable assistance was based in the colonial period, as much as the
right of political suffrage, upon a theory of interest representation. An individual in distress could turn for assistance to the town, or church, or ethnic society because and only if he were a member of the corporate body. The body politic was perceived to be a composite of personal and geographical interest groups, each fulfilling its independent function in the grand mechanism of God's delicately balanced universe. The predominance of ethnic and mutual-aid societies in colonial America bore witness to the more restricted concept of loyalties of the pre-nationalistic era. Men were first and foremost Scots, mechanics, Presbyterians, and within this framework, were good citizens.

For Britain, only the gradual Parliamentary dispossess of parish and borough power, accompanying the extension of suffrage, created a sense of national purpose which was more than a matter of vague emotion. For America, this sense of unity crystallized earlier than in the mother country in the Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary periods, giving social thought a far broader, democratic context. British example provided the forms of organization, but the impersonal forces of population and mobility and urbanization, the spread of a deeply rooted sense of religio-republican purpose, the cumulative lesson of firsthand experience with charitable work gave a distinctive American character to the phenomenon.

The very development of charitable organizations between 1780 and 1830 where there had been almost none was
an admission that social problems did exist and that the individual citizen did have a public responsibility which went beyond his immediate social and economic connections. The periodic statements of purpose contained in the constitutions and annual reports document a deepening perception of poverty, disease, immorality, idleness, not merely as sins or as threats to social stability, but as inhumane, unfair, and threatening to the very existence of republican society.

It was the commitment that a democratic citizenry is responsible for society's well-being that was the major break with the past. Once made, it was simply a matter of shifting ideologies, methods, and timing as voluntary charities expanded and were gradually supplemented or superseded by governmental action. Voluntary orphanages laid the groundwork for public institutions; sunday schools preceded and encouraged public educational legislation; private initiatives for the prevention of poverty were reflected in revised methods of public institutional care.

From this period of creativity there arose the two approaches to social action which have dominated the field of American charity and welfare in the succeeding century and a half. On the one hand, the evangelical societies represented the first instance in American history in which basic social problems were met by broadly-based community involvement. Experience would prove it to be an ineffective approach but one which has periodi-
cally given rise to some of the purest expressions of the nation's democratic ideals. On the other hand, the interdenominational urban missionary movement planted the seed from which secular, professional social work would emerge by the end of the century.
CHAPTER 4

TO REFORM A NATION

Part I: Religious Societies

I. Organization on a National Basis

With tear-filled eyes and emotional cries of "Thank God! Thank God!" the convention chairman and otherwise stolid Episcopal layman from New Jersey, Joshua M. Wallace, ably expressed the emotional significance which agreement on the formation of the American Bible Society had for the delegates and for evangelical America as a whole. Fifty odd representatives of local Bible societies throughout the nation, church leaders drawn from five denominations, had assembled with nervous anticipation in the consistory of the Garden Street Dutch Reformed Church in New York, May 8, 1816.¹ In the course of three days labor, carefully orchestrated to avoid injury to sensitive sectarian egos, they created

¹Henry O. Dwight, The Centennial History of the American Bible Society (N.Y., 1916), vol. 1, 24; Constitution of the American Bible Society, Formed by a Convention of Delegates, Held in the City of New-York, May, 1816, together with their Address to the People of the United States; A Notice of their Proceedings; and A List of their Officers (N.Y., 1816).
an interdenominational society which captured the mood of expectancy permeating a nation settling into an exhausted post-War of 1812 peace. The American Bible Society, always to remain the preeminent symbol of evangelical endeavor, set the example which inspired two decades of frenzied national reform society activity and was to be the culmination of the Age of American Benevolence.

In retrospect, much of the intense drama which nineteenth-century chroniclers of the Bible Society's founding describe has an exaggerated air of unreality about it. Neither benevolent societies nor interdenominational cooperation were extraordinary on the local level. The opposition which surfaced, however much excitement it inspired in a group of men who had spent too many hours with narratives of Christian martyrs not to relish similar self-portrayals, was minimal. The innovative factor was the breadth of purpose which these delegates expressed in permanent form. For the first time, a widely acceptable humanitarian effort was espoused by men universally admired, drawn from all geographical sections and dedicated to a purpose which embodied no element of local or regional self-interest. This, and the dozen or so national societies less perfectly capturing this spirit of unity which arose within a decade and a half, gave substance to visions of a strengthened sense of national purpose as no local societies could do.
Organization on a national scale for any purpose was, in fact, a relatively new phenomenon in America. The Churches had been the one and only colonial institution to establish themselves firmly on American soil and develop strong bonds of cooperation which crossed provincial boundaries. Presbyteries, synods, and classes in the non-established Churches had been expanded to meet the exigencies of frontier settlement. Patterns of continental clerical authority had been established which ignored political jurisdictions entirely. Even in the Anglican Church, which in all but one of the Southern colonies was tied to the provincial political establishment, a certain measure of denominational unity had been created by means of correspondence and cooperation in missionary work.\(^2\) The Presbyterians, who were the most firmly organized national denomination, had gone even one step farther by participating in annual conventions with the Congregational General Association of Connecticut.

\(^2\)For example, New Castle Presbytery included Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and parts of Pennsylvania until the middle of the eighteenth century; the Synod of New York and Philadelphia encompassed the entire colonial Presbyterian establishment; the Lutheran Synod at Philadelphia (1748) and the German Reformed Coetus of Pennsylvania (1746) exercised continental leadership within their denominations. The Anglican churches of the "three lower counties on Delaware" were tied to the churches in Pennsylvania.

(1766-1775) in the decade before the Revolution. Masonic lodges, the one other form of social institution whose affiliations transcended colonial boundaries, were actually a loose confederation of autonomous organizations whose central direction, what little there was, came from Britain.

The Revolutionary crisis greatly accelerated the unifying process in the American colonies. The network of revolutionary committees which sprang up as the British-American imperial crisis deepened foreshadowed permanent political union. Congress provided a focal point around which national factions, then organized political parties, developed. The Churches themselves achieved legal recognition as national bodies; a Bank of the United States

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4 See Norris S. Barratt's Freemasonry in Pennsylvania, 1727-1907, As Shown by the Records of Lodge no. 2, F. and A.M. of Philadelphia, from the Year A.L. 5757, A.D. 1757; Compiled from Original Sources (Phila., 1908).

5 To gain an awareness of the growing spirit of intercolonial cooperation which developed in the Revolutionary era, see: Edmund C. Burnett, ed., Letters of Members of the Continental Congress (Washington, 1921-36), 8 vols. To appreciate the mechanical aspects of the rise of national parties, see: Noble E. Cunningham, The Jeffersonian Republicans; the Formation of Party Organization, 1789-1801 (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1957) and The Jeffersonian Republicans in Power; Party Operations, 1801-1809 (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1963).
was chartered; a variety of fraternal and patriotic societies with national affiliations came into being.  

II. The Enigma of National Antislavery Reform

One area of humanitarian concern developed national organization in the last decade of the eighteenth century. It deserves particular attention because, although the pioneer effort in national reform, in many ways the most truly humane in purpose, it had no acknowledged influence on the development of the national societies arising between 1810 and 1830. Impelled by the libertarian impulse of Revolutionary republican thought and Quaker humanitarianism, the antislavery leaders of Philadelphia called a Convention of Delegates from the Abolition Societies Established in Different Parts of the United States in January, 1794. Twenty-four conventions were held between that date and 1829, attracting delegates from eleven states, including Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, Tennessee, and the District of Columbia. Without any central power, rarely able to attract even a dozen delegates, they did serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas.

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6 The Society of the Cincinnati and the Washington Benevolent Societies existed throughout the states in the early national period.

7 The American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery and Improving the Condition of the African Race (N.Y., 1969; 3 volume photoreproduction of the published annual reports, 1794-1829).
The Antislavery Conventions demonstrated, for the first time, the feasibility of national reform organization, but, for a variety of reasons, they cannot be considered as part of the same movement which produced the American Bible Society and its counterparts in the evangelical world. The Conventions had attracted men of national prominence from Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware in their first decade; among the delegates were Jonathan Edwards, Jr., Uriah Tracy, William Dunlap, Thomas Eddy, Samuel Miller, John Griscom, Robert Patterson, Benjamin Rush, and John Vaughan. But the national tolerance for radical reform was lessening as the revolution in France took an ugly nationalistic turn, as the admonitory significance of the Santo Domingo slave revolt was brought close to home with the Gabriel Plot, and as the three-fifths clause became a frequently mentioned source of sectional political dispute.\(^8\) Active participation in antislavery activity became an increasingly dangerous step from a social standpoint by the early nineteenth century; it was unthinkable for anyone with political ambitions.

Twenty-six societies from communities south of the Mason and Dixon line had some affiliation with the Conventions in the course of their history. The national

\(^8\)Mary S. Locke, *Antislavery in America, 1619-1808* (Boston, 1901. Radcliffe Monograph No. 11).
organization did give some encouragement to Southern efforts to educate free Blacks and protect them from kidnapping, but it exerted no influence upon governmental policy. More so than Northern participants, delegates from the South were primarily Quakers, generally men of little financial substance and even less influence in public life. In keeping with most members of their sect, they maintained a calculated aloofness from evangelical reform activities which was reciprocated. The mutual silence of contempt which existed between national anti-slavery and the other national reform societies concealed a similarity in methods and organization which did exist, but it also effectively eliminated the former effort as a significant factor in the greater development of religious reform.

III. Seminaries, Missions, and Education Societies

Although it was their independence of direct sectarian control which gave the American Bible Society and its counterparts much of the element of daring innovation and excitement, the momentum which created them had in large part developed within the Churches themselves. By the turn of the century, the national denominations possessed formal organization, well-tuned systems of communications, the beginnings of a specialized press

\footnote{Statistics obtained from the Annual Reports. See footnote 7.}
which reached an ever-widening audience, and an ideological outlook favorable to perfectionist logic.

The vision of American greatness which captured the imaginations of America's clerical leaders was grand, it was noble, and in many ways far more practical than the secular moral idealism of Thomas Jefferson or John Taylor. Morality through legislation, almost impossible to effect by means of the tainted political process anyway, has never, as the secular moralists believed, been able to create a moral citizenry. The actual historical record would suggest that this is putting the proverbial cart before the horse. Although the religious idealists deluded themselves with equally fallacious illusions of mechanistic paths to perfection, they had learned that only positive action would mold men's habits and opinions and that only by this method, not by the simple enactment of laws, could social change be brought about. The Churches had experience with the methods by which one reaches men's hearts and minds, and they possessed the organization to accomplish their ends within the denominations themselves. A momentum was building within the Churches in the early national period with aims of national reform which looked beyond the sectarian boundaries themselves. When the limitations of the denominational vehicles became apparent in reaching the nation as a whole, the national reform societies appeared as an obvious, logical
extenuation of and alternative to these tendencies within the Churches themselves.

In countless ways, the minutes of clerical associations in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century betray the growing awareness among Church leaders that in a free society, only positive action could perpetuate a national respect for Christianity and formal religion. Ministers were increasingly enjoined to provide catechetical instruction of children and servants and to encourage regular family worship. Efforts, however ineffective, were made to provide Bibles, prayerbooks, catechisms, and standard works of practical piety for the restless, mobile population of the expanding nation.¹⁰

The basic problem, both in rural and urban areas, was not a lack of men and women who were willing to be preached to, converted, and reformed, but an abysmal shortage of qualified clerical agents. With the very material exception of the Methodist and Baptist Churches, which as new denominations expanded only in proportion to their overall growth, every colonial sect was faced with large numbers of established pulpits lying vacant until well into the nineteenth century and a total inability to meet the spiritual demands of new settlements.

Ministerial training and missions were the areas of greatest need and concern of the formal denominations, and

¹⁰See Chapter 2.
the failure to adequately meet demands in either one, more than any other factor, pointed up the inadequacies of existing Church organization. All of the colonial Churches in the South as late as the Revolution were to a large degree dependent upon Europe for their clergy and for the extra financial support of missionary activity. The Anglican Church, requiring English ordination of clerical candidates, had had a particular handicap which retarded the indigenous growth, but even the German Churches, the Moravians and Lutherans, which had made efforts to develop a native clergy, continued to look to Germany and Holland for primary support.\(^{11}\) The Presbyterians, with roots in New England Congregationalism as well as the Scottish and Irish Churches and with Princeton College and a handful of strong academies under clerical direction, were beginning to produce American clergymen by the late colonial period. Even so, they, as well as the Associate Reformed Church, still relied upon immigrant pastors for growth.\(^{12}\) An effective missionary effort was an impossible dream until a regular supply of clergymen was secured.

\(^{11}\) See: Frederick L. Weis, *The Colonial Clergy of Maryland, Delaware and Georgia* (Lancaster, Pa., 1950) and *The Colonial Clergy of Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina* (Boston, 1955).

\(^{12}\) For biographical sketches of many of the early Presbyterian clergymen, see: Richard Webster, *A History of the Presbyterian Church in America, from its Origin until the Year 1760. With Biographical Sketches of its Early Ministers* (Phila., 1857).
Every Church was forced to fall back upon its own resources with the coming of the War. The institution and strengthening of Church judicatory establishments was motivated in large part to give a formal sanction to the ordination process. The wave of new colleges which appeared in the post-Revolutionary period (Bowdoin, Union, Dickinson, Franklin, Washington [Pennsylvania], Jefferson, St. Johns, Washington [Maryland], St. Mary's, Georgetown, Washington [Virginia], Hampden-Sydney, North Carolina, Transylvania, Greenville) was in part an attempt by the Churches to open new sources for qualified clerical talent. In fact, these new institutions generally proved to be too responsive to the wider public to adequately serve sectarian aims, but they did increase the literacy levels of potential candidates for the ministry.  

Into the first decades of the nineteenth century, theological training itself, like legal training, was little different from apprenticeship in trade. Church judicial bodies gave occasional financial support; they examined and licensed clergymen. But the actual educational process remained the work of individual men, often thorough, but subject to the many interruptions of private lives, personalities, and financial hardship.

It was this need to provide a system to the process of clerical production, to give it a permanence and efficiency which would stand above the individual teacher, which logically led to the formation of theological seminaries. With an anxious eye on the New England emigrants who were departing from settled churches in the East for western New York and Ohio as well as dismay at Unitarian Henry Ware's election to the Hollis Professorship of Divinity at Harvard, the Congregationalists took the lead with the formation of Andover Seminary in 1808.\(^{14}\) Born of a remarkably easy alliance between the Calvinist and Hopkinsian leaders, directed in its first decade by a group of outstanding scholars and fervent evangelicals (Leonard Woods, Moses Stuart, Justin Edwards, Ebenezer Porter), Andover set a remarkable example of missionary zeal for the American churches to follow. Graduating a first class of sixteen in 1810, they had sent over two hundred and fifty apostles into the field by 1820, over six hundred by 1830.\(^{15}\) Aroused to imitate their example, the Presbyterian General Assembly formally laid the founda-


\(^{15}\) These figures are derived from: C. C. Carpenter, ed., *General Catalogue of the Theological Seminary, Andover, Massachusetts, 1808-1908* (Boston, 1909), 31-115.
tion for Princeton Seminary in 1812. There were 652 candidates for the ministry who had been educated by 1830.16

The obvious successes of the Andover and Princeton seminaries brought about a commitment to formal theological schools throughout American Protestantism. The Congregationalists followed up Andover with seminaries at Bangor, Maine (1816), and Yale (1822); the Presbyterians established six more institutions before 1830: Southern and Western (at Maryville College, Tennessee, 1819), Auburn (1821), Union (at Hampden-Sydney College, Virginia, 1823), Western (Pittsburgh, 1828), Southern (Columbia, South Carolina, 1828), and Lane (Cincinnati, 1829). The Dutch Reformed Church expanded their program of ministerial training at Rutgers into a real seminary; the Lutherans did the same at Hartwick, New York, and established Gettysburg Seminary in 1826 which was well situated to serve the South. A German Reformed Seminary was founded in 1825 and remained briefly at Dickinson College (Carlisle, Pennsylvania), then York, Pennsylvania, before sinking firm roots at Lancaster, Pennsylvania. The Episcopalians, for whom the encouragement of clerical candidates was of crucial importance, founded General Seminary in New York (1817); the Diocese of Virginia

established a seminary in connection with William and Mary (1821) which, on its removal to Alexandria (1825), soon put new life into the weakened Southern Church; the Diocese of Ohio established a seminary in conjunction with Kenyon College (Gambier, Ohio, 1828). The more intellectual elements of the Baptist denomination in the North established seminaries at Hamilton, New York (1820), and Newton, Massachusetts (1826). The Unitarians revived theological training at Harvard in 1824.17

The impact of theological seminaries upon the development of the American Churches, particularly those requiring a clergy with high educational attainments, was indeed profound. From a method, it could hardly be called a "system," of producing clergymen, dependent upon the inspirational teaching (or lack of ability) of a few individuals and upon the uncertain appearance of "revivals" and "refreshings" for arousing enthusiasm in potential candidates, there was now an effective means of securing and anticipating an infusion of far more additions to ministerial ranks than were taken by old age and death. By the 1820s, the seminaries were producing over one hundred men a year and twice that number in the following decade. Now, and only with this assurance, plans for Christian expansion acquired the touch of reality which could inspire real enthusiasm and confidence.

17"Theological Seminaries," American Quarterly Register, 13 (1840-41), 116-18.
The immediate success of Andover and Princeton to a large degree launched the national reform society movement by infusing this new spirit of realistic optimism into American religious life. The seminaries produced the numerous body of young, dedicated "servants of the Lord" who were responsive to evangelical trends in British Christianity; they created, through the very production of these individuals, a variety of related needs for funds, Bibles, tracts, and, once existing pulpit vacancies were filled, jobs, which fueled the engine of Christian expansion. As with all professions, the growth of clerical ranks to a considerable degree created its own demand and expanded the scope of its activities. Although an older generation of clerical "worthies" and wealthy laymen would dominate the boards of the national societies in their first years, it was this first generation of enthusiastic seminary graduates which would perform the real labor as fund raisers and promiters. It was they who brought the national reform impulse to the towns and churches, merging it with the local reform efforts and molding it into a real social movement.

Much of the energy of these first seminary students was immediately channeled into missions. The Church bodies themselves had done considerable groundwork in the field during the preceding century as a logical extension of the European Church expansion which had brought them into existence. Care for established congregations which were
vacant and evangelistic outreach to new settlements were an essential duty of clerical bodies in all of the Churches. Extension of this labor to neighboring Indian settlements was relatively easy and provided at least the visions of "conversions of the heathen" which had so captivated the Christian mind from the time of Paul.

Until the middle of the second decade of the nineteenth century, most of the missionary activity in the South was supported and supervised by committees of the Church judicial bodies themselves. The Presbyterian General Assembly sent evangelists to settlements in the South at periodic intervals between the 1720s and the early nineteenth century: the Synod of Virginia and the Synod of the Carolinas pursued Indian missions with general fidelity between 1790 and 1817. The Lutheran synods of

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For Southern missions under the auspices of the General Assembly, see: Presbyterian Church, Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, from its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive (Phila., 1847), 60, 74, 81, 86, 115; William Henry Foote, Sketches of North Carolina, Historical and Biographical, Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of Her Early Settlers (N.Y., 1846), 304.

For independent missionary labors of the synods of Virginia and the Carolinas, see: Presbyterian Church, "Minutes of the Synod of Virginia," Ms. volumes on microfilm at Union Seminary, Richmond, Va.: vol. 1, 14-16, 91-92, 94, 103-4, 116, 136-7, 161, 170-71, 175-76; vol. 2, 2-3, 26-27, 30, 76-78, 80-82, 108-9, 129-33, 135, 142-43, 162-63, 173-74; vol. 3, 14-17, 41-46, 77; vol. 4, 142, 164; Presbyterian Church, "Minutes of the Synod of the
the South and the Southern synod of the Associate Reformed Church initiated domestic missionary efforts within their bounds despite lack of both money and manpower. The Episcopal Church, lacking clergymen within the Southern dioceses and any real direction in the triennial General Conventions, effectively had no missions until 1820.

The Church bodies which did not require a highly educated clergy, in which itineracy had always been a part of their denominational existence, were inherently domestic missionary organizations and were thereby freed to put any extra efforts into work with the Indians. The Moravians established a mission to the Cherokee in Georgia in 1801; the Baltimore Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends supported Indian missionary work in Ohio from 1795 until 1816; the Charleston and Georgia Carolinas. Ms. volumes at the Hist. Foundation of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S., Montreat, N.C.: vol. 1, 54-56, 62-70, 103-13, 122-57; vol. 2, 17-18, 27-29, 101, 127; Presbyterian Church, "Minutes of the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia," Ms. vols., Hist. Foundation, Montreat, N.C.: vol. 1, 234-35; George Howe, History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina (Columbia, S.C., 1870, 1888), vol. 2, 305-7.

19 W. Peschau, trans., Minutes . . . Synod of North Carolina (n.p., 1894); S. T. Hallman, History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of South Carolina, 1824-1924 (Columbia, S.C., 1924), 33; Abdel R. Wentz, History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland, of the United Church in America, 1820-1920 (Harrisburg, Pa., 1920), 103-6; Robert Latham, History of the Associate Reformed Synod of the South (Harrisburg, Pa., 1882), 375-79.

Associations of Baptists and the South Carolina Methodist Conference both established mission stations among the Civilized Tribes of Georgia and Alabama in the first decades of the century. The Catholic Diocese of St. Louis (whose members were formally educated, but whose celibacy and hierarchical system of authority rendered them equally mobile) opened an Indian school in Missouri in 1823.

Overall, the missions which had been undertaken directly by the Church judicial bodies produced few results because of their utter inefficiency. The Presbyterian Church had given the most consistent, sustained attention to missionary activity, yet their endeavors lacked strong administration and secure financial support. There were no extra clergymen in any of the Churches, so that missionaries in most cases were drawn from active congregations, a system which certainly obtained a few outstanding, capable men, but more often probably filled the ranks with the chronically dissatisfied and restless.

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22"Diocese of St. Louis," *United States Catholic Miscellany*, 10 (1830-31), 205.
who were least productive in any calling. Because of obligations to settled congregations and lack of financial backing, tours of duty were rarely more than six months in duration, often a matter of only weeks; the fruits of even the most promising successes could wither without a more sustained effort.

The need for greater systemization, efficiency, and solid financial backing of missionary activity inevitably pointed to the adoption of the corporate form of organization and control. The independent society had been employed in support of mission work in America. The British S.P.G. had underwritten much of the Anglican establishment in colonial America, and similar bodies had helped to support the efforts of dissenters. The venerable Company for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England and the parts adjacent in America had supported Indian missions from the time of John Elliot until the Revolution. The labors of the Presbyterian Indian missionaries David and John Brainard in New Jersey and New York in the mid-eighteenth century had been supported by the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge of Edinburgh and a corresponding body in New York. As noted in Chapter 3, a Society for Promoting Christianity among the Indians had a brief existence in conjunction with Hanover Presbytery in the late 1750s.  

Charles F. Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G. . . . 1701-1900 (London, 1901); William Kellaway, The New England Company, 1649-1776, Missionary Society to the American Indians (N.Y., 1962); Thomas Brainard, The
It was the founding of the interdenominational London Missionary Society in 1794 and its successful establishment of Baptist William Cary as the first foreign missionary in India which, in otherwise somber times, stimulated new enthusiasm for an old form.24 American evangelicals were quickly moved to imitate. An interdenominational New York Missionary Society was founded in November, 1796 and within three years had established a station among the Chickasaw tribe in present day Mississippi; the Congregational General Association of Connecticut formed the Missionary Society of Connecticut in 1799; the Massachusetts Association, a Massachusetts Missionary Society, the same year.25

Life of John Brainard, the Brother of David Brainard, and His Successor as Missionary to the Indians of New Jersey (Phila., 1865). For citations regarding the Virginia society, see Chapter 3.


The efforts of the Congregational societies were generally directed within New England or in frontier areas settled by Yankees (Western New York, the Connecticut Reserve). Responding to a call from former residents of Massachusetts, however, the Hampshire Missionary Society sent Rev. Mr. Asa Brooks to French Creek, Lewis Co., Virginia, in 1818 and supported him until a formal Presbyterian congregation had been founded. "Revival of Religion in Lewis County, Va.," Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine, 8 (1825), 45-48.
The religious community in the South soon followed the British and Northern lead. The minutes of the Presbyterian Synod of Virginia mention the establishment of a Missionary Society of Kentucky in 1800 "to use every means in their power for the instruction of the frontier white inhabitants, the Indians, and the Black people in the doctrines and practice of Christianity." Lexington Presbytery formed the Lexington Missionary Society in 1804 and had a missionary in the field the following year.  

Enthusiasm in the Independent Church in Charleston gave rise to The Congregational Society of the State of South Carolina for Promoting the Interests of Religion in 1802.

The Great Revival and economic depression temporarily checked the impulse for founding formal societies in the first decade of the nineteenth century, but the activity was zealously resumed after 1810. As in the rest of the nation, the organizations created in this first wave of Southern missionary enthusiasm were of mixed character. Some were the creation of existing Church judicial bodies, denominational in membership, if not in stated purpose; others were the creation of men possessing Christian zeal but acting in their private capacities. The latter were

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26 For documentation of this society, and all of the societies mentioned in this chapter, see Appendix.

An overture was made to form a society in Hanover Presbytery as well, but it was dropped because of lack of support. Presbyterian Church, "Minutes of the Synod of Virginia," Ms., vol. 2, 52, 162-67, 173-74.
primarily urban in foundation, usually under lay rather than clerical control, and often, although not always, interdenominational in membership and purpose. The timing of the founding of the former variety was primarily the result of urgings from within the national denominations and intelligence, communicated by the religious press, of similar organizations in other areas; the latter were responsive to these forces as well, but they were also subject to developments on the local level. In Charleston or Baltimore, these missionary organizations were a product of the same impulses and social pressures which produced the relief and urban missionary societies dealt with in Chapter 3 and to a greater extent were frequently the products of rivalries between different churches.

A momentum gradually developed in the second decade of the century: in 1811, the Presbyteries of South Carolina and Georgia joined the Congregationalists of Charleston in the formation of a short-lived Union Missionary Society which was to meet alternately in Charleston and Savannah. Under the guidance of Charles Coffin and Isaac Anderson of Maryville College, the East Tennessee Missionary Society was formed by Presbyterians in 1812 and pursued a constant missionary effort for well over a decade despite meagre financial resources. A North Carolina Missionary Society, apparently Presbyterian, came into existence in 1814. At least three Baptist societies appeared in the South before the formation of
the national Baptist Board of Foreign Missions in May, 1814; the Richmond Baptist Foreign and Domestic Mission Society (1812 or 1813), the Baptist Mission Society of Virginia (by 1814), and the Wadmalaw and Edisto Female Mite Society (before 1814).

After the War of 1812, the missionary bodies multiplied rapidly. The concern for the state of the urban environment expressed by the growth of urban missionary activities, formed to help and correct the problem of poverty, was also exhibited in the rise of traditional missionary societies in the cities and neighboring areas aimed at saving souls. A number of these were modeled upon the highly successful and well-publicized Young Men's and the Young Ladies Missionary Societies of New York (1815) and like them, shrewdly capitalized on an appeal to the young generation to give them an air of excitement exceeding their stolid purposes: a Young Men's Missionary Society of Richmond, a Young Ladies' Missionary Society of Richmond and Manchester, and a Protestant Episcopal Missionary Society in Charleston, South Carolina, Composed of Young Men and Others appeared in 1819; a Young Men's Missionary Society (Petersburg, Virginia) and a Young Men's Missionary Society of South Carolina (Presbyterian and Congregational, Charleston) were formed in 1820 and a Young Men's Missionary Society of Savannah in 1821.

As with all youthful fads, these were generally of more show than substance and able to sustain enthusiasm for only short periods of time without rejuvenation.
Between 1810 and 1830, all of the denominational bodies in the South became involved in missionary society work in some manner. Although there was a measure of general public support for the earliest of these denominational societies, they met at the time of Church conventions and were dependent only on clerical support. By the 1820s they were, in all denominations, essentially administrative bodies for the Churches. But the official separation, if in reality deceptive, did create a financial independence which enabled members to give a single-minded attention to missions if they cared to. By particularizing the function of these "independent" clerical organizations, potential donors were given an assurance of the ends to which their gifts would be employed, undoubtedly increasing the overall contributions for Church expansion.

The enfeebled Diocese of Delaware formed an Episcopal Missionary Society of Delaware in 1816 to support short missionary tours within its boundaries; a Missionary Society of the Diocese of North Carolina appeared in 1817; a Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Kentucky and a Protestant Episcopal Missionary Society of the Diocese of Virginia were organized in 1829; the first class of students at the seminary in Alexandria formed a Society for Inquiry upon the Subject of Missions in 1824. Throughout the Episcopal dioceses of the United States, Societies for the Advancement of Christianity were given official encouragement in the first three decades
of the century. In some cases they were dedicated to distribution of Bibles, prayer books, and tracts, or the support of theological education, but in those dioceses which had not yet formed independent societies, they also served as missionary organizations. The Protestant Episcopal Society for the Advancement of Christianity in South Carolina (1810), a group which did draw considerable support from laymen in Charleston; underwrote the first of the denomination's missions in Florida. The Society for the Advancement of Christianity in the Diocese of Maryland (1818) and the Protestant Episcopal Society for the General Advancement of Christianity in the State of Georgia (1823) both emphasized missions.

The Presbyterian and Congregational clerical associations took similar action to form semi-independent missionary bodies. Synodical societies appeared in North Carolina (by 1821), South Carolina (1825), and Georgia (1825); a Congregational and Presbyterian Missionary Society of South Carolina was organized by Charleston congregations in 1819.

Once the Lutherans had organized in the South on a synodical basis, they created societies as well. The Evangelical Lutheran Missionary Society of North Carolina and Adjacent States appeared in 1828; a Lutheran Society for the Promotion of Religion in South Carolina and Georgia had come into existence by the following year.
Because of the proximity of the territories of the Civilized Tribes in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi, yet a sufficient distance to allow a measure of objectivity, the religious community of South Carolina and eastern Georgia took particular interest in Indian missions. The Presbyterian Missionary Society of the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia and the Elliot Society (apparently Presbyterian or Congregational) were formed in 1819 in support of missionary work; The Missionary Society of the South Carolina Conference (Methodist) was organized in 1821 and placed major emphasis on their mission to the Creeks. At the personal urging of Jeremiah Evarts and converted Cherokee, Elias Boudinot, an interdenominational Charleston Society in Aid of Missions to the Heathen was formed in 1826 to aid missionary work and "the establishment of a Printing Press in the Cherokee nation." 27

Inevitably, the same tendencies in favor of efficiency which had resulted in acceptance of corporate

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27 In spite of the fact that political maneuvering in the lower South contributed to the removal of the Civilized Tribes in the 1830s, there had been considerable sentiment in the religious community favorable to the rights of the Indians. In A Plea for the West (Charleston, 1824), Charleston Presbyterian minister T. Charleton Henry declared outright that "Art and cunning have impoverished them. The increase of a white population has thinned their forrests of the means of subsistence. The vices of a border-people—never the most exemplary in their conduct—have introduced disease in new and wasting forms. . . . One addition completes this deplorable picture—ignorance, cherished for selfish purposes, by unprincipled neighboring whites. . . ." See also: Robert Campbell, The Present State of the Cherokee Indians is Recommended to the Attention of every Citizen . . . (Savannah, Geo., 1829), and footnote 21 of this chapter.
management of missionary work exerted themselves in bringing about central direction of efforts on the national level. Much of the zeal for national missionary organization, initially aimed at the foreign field, emanated from Andover Seminary. A group of exceptionally pious graduates of Williams College, led by Samuel J. Mills, brought an obsession for conversion of the heathen which the faculty was only too glad to encourage to Andover in 1809 and, arousing support among the student body, petitioned the Congregational General Association of Massachusetts. At their meeting of June, 1810, the Association created the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions which spearheaded American foreign missionary work in the nineteenth century. The first successful station was settled at Bombay in 1813 and was followed by establishments in Ceylon (1816), the Sandwich Islands (1819); Malta (1822), Beirut (1823), and Smyrna (1826); Madura, Madras, Siam, China, Singapore, Borneo, Greece, West Africa, and South America in the following decade.

Androniram Judson and Luther Rice, two of the Andover enthusiasts who made up the first voyage under A.B.C.F.M.

28 For an account of the Williams College prayer group which developed the interest in foreign missions, see: Calvin Durfee, Williams Biographical Annals (Boston, 1871), 117-28.

29 Andrew M. Smith, Brief History of Evangelical Missions, with the Date of Commencement, and the Progress and Present State (Hartford, Ct., 1844), 102-23.
auspices, defected to the Baptists while overseas, and on their return in May, 1814, engineered the formation of The Baptist Board of Foreign Missions. Stations were established at Burma (1815), West Africa (1821); Siam, China, France, Germany, Denmark, and Greece in the 1830s.

Practicalities determined, however, that even in the field of international missions, the primary thrust would be directed within the United States. The A.B.C.F.M. and the Baptist Board loosely defined "foreign" to include American Indians. Establishment of stations in the territories of the Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Osages, Wyandotes, Delawares, and Cherokee was relatively inexpensive. It was done with the encouragement of the federal, if not the state and territorial governments, and it involved interaction with people who were already acclimated and receptive to Western culture and the English language. The psychological satisfactions of "civilizing" and "Christianizing" were as great as in Asia or Africa and the chances of success far greater.

Indirectly, the burst of enthusiasm for foreign missions at Andover also contributed to the development of domestic missions on a national scale. While waiting for a foreign position to open, Samuel J. Mills, leader of the original Williams College group, and Andover classmate John Schermerhorn undertook a tour of the country

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west of the Allegheny Mountains under the auspices of the Massachusetts and the Connecticut Missionary Societies. Mills made a second expedition with Daniel Smith financed by the Philadelphia Bible Society and the Massachusetts Missionary Society in 1814. Their published reports, defining the vast spiritual needs of the territory with a Congregational-Presbyterian bias, grudgingly complimentary of superior Methodist and Baptist efficiency in frontier religious work, served as uncompromising calls for an organized missionary assault on the Mississippi Valley by the Calvinist-Reformed churches. At the conclusion of his report, John F. Schermerhorn outlined a plan for action:

The field of missions should be divided into circuits, and these into societies and places for preaching, so that a missionary by preaching three or four times in a week could visit each society once a month, or more frequently as circumstances should direct. That no missionary should be employed for less than one year; and that however small the number of circuits, there should be an immediate succession of laborers. That the great object should be to organize churches and societies, and thus prevent Sectaries from establishing themselves. That besides preaching,

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31 John F. Schermerhorn and Samuel J. Mills, A Correct View of that Part of the United States which Lies West of the Allegheny Mountains, with Regard to Religion and Morals (Hartford, 1814); Samuel J. Mills and Daniel Smith, Report of a Missionary Tour through that Part of the United States which Lies West of the Allegheny Mountains, Performed under the Direction of the Massachusetts Missionary Society (Andover, Mass., 1815).
the business of the missionary should be to give catechetical instructions to the children; to distribute Tracts and Bibles; to organize social libraries, and societies for the suppression of vice, to search out young men of piety and talents, and encourage them to prepare for the ministry . . . .

Only national organization with wide support could possibly undertake this sort of sustained effort on a large scale. The American Board of Foreign Missions, realizing that its purpose exceeded the resources of New England Congregationalism, added Presbyterians to its governing body in 1812 and, with the far-reaching approval of the Presbyterian General Assembly, was able to rely on increasingly broad support from throughout the nation. Registering its first donation from the South in 1813, the Board could depend upon several thousand dollars a year from individuals, churches, and societies in that section by the early 1820s.

The Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, with a central location in Philadelphia, also developed broad national support. Within a year, it drew upon contributions from thirty auxiliary societies on the congregational level; seventy-one by 1816. By the 1820s, organi-

32 Schermerhorn and Mills, A Correct View, 44.

33 See annual reports for minutely detailed information on contributions, auxiliary societies, etc. See also: American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, Memorial Volume of the First Fifty Years of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (Boston, 1861).
zations such as the North Carolina Baptist Society for Foreign Missions, the Roanoke Baptist Missionary Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen, and the Hepzibah Baptist Society for Itinerant and Missionary Efforts had appeared in every district and county of the South as well as the North possessing a Baptist church community. It was, in fact, largely the need for coordinated missionary support which created the General Associations of Baptist churches on the state and national levels. A third organization with national pretensions, the Young Men's Missionary Society of New York, was formed by members of the Presbyterian and Associate Reformed Churches in 1814. It drew support from several auxiliaries in the South and sent missionaries into all sections before being incorporated by the larger United Domestic Missionary Society in 1824.

The Presbyterians, who had introduced a measure of administrative uniformity with the formation of a Standing Committee on Missions at the General Assembly of 1802, created an even stronger Board of Missions in 1816. Having been upstaged by their congenial Congregational brethren, the General Assembly left the field of foreign missions entirely to the A.B.C.F.M. until after the New School - Old School division of 1837. New York Presbyterians joined the Dutch Reformed and Associate Reformed Churches in the formation of the United Foreign Missionary

34 Baird, Collection ..., Presbyterian Church, 350-55.
Society in 1817. The organization restricted itself to Indian missions. Like its counterpart, the United Domestic Missionary Society (1822), it was too thoroughly the organ of the religious community of New York City to become a true national organization, and neither body received much Southern support. In 1826, the United Domestic Missionary Society gave way to the American Home Missionary Society, which successfully created auxiliary societies in Presbyterian congregations in New York State and to some degree elsewhere. Southern Presbyterians continued to work primarily through the Board of Missions. The United Foreign Missionary Society was absorbed by the A.B.C.F.M. in 1827.

Despite a record of frontier expansion which rendered a national society superfluous, the Methodists formed a Missionary and Bible Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1819 which gave some direction to auxiliary societies on the Conference level. The Episcopalians created the Protestant Episcopal Missionary Society in the United States, for Foreign and Domestic Missions in 1820. Their first Indian mission was established in 1828 at Green Bay; their first foreign missionary was settled in Greece in 1831. 35 One other national society with roots in the missionary movement, The American Society for Promoting the Civilization and General Improvement of

35Andrew M. Smith, *Brief History of Evangelical Missions*, 171-77.
the Indian Tribes within the United States, was projected in 1822 by Jedidiah Morse but never became operational.

The missionary societies, because they directed their efforts to the basic drive of expansive evangelical Protestantism, were in many ways the backbone of the benevolent empire. Strategically headquartered in Philadelphia (Presbyterian Board, Baptist Board, P.E. Missionary Society), New York (American Home Missionary Society), or Boston (A.B.C.F.M.), where they could draw upon graduating classes of Andover, Princeton, and Union Seminaries, they offered a broad field of employment, and in turn were themselves molded by the youthful enthusiasm of their employees. By 1830, 186 students from Princeton Seminary and 98 from Andover had served as clergymen, teachers, missionaries, or society agents below the Mason and Dixon line. Andover, the real nursery of the early missionary movement, created the model upon which succeeding theological seminaries in America were built.36

The missionary enterprise, brought to the local level by class after class of enthusiastic seminary

36 Roberts, Biographical Catalogue . . . Princeton Seminary, 1-52; Carpenter, General Catalogue . . . . Andover, 31-115. The growing interest in missions had repercussions on the undergraduate level. Several colleges, promoting the idea that missionary work represented the highest professional calling, began to emphasize their role as seminaries of potential missionaries: Eliphalet Nott's Union College, Edward Dorr Griffin's Williams College, Heman Humphrey's Amherst College. Mary Lyon took special pride in Mt. Holyoke's role as a nursery for missionaries' wives. In the South, Hampden-Sydney aspired to a similar reputation, quite naturally supplying many of Union Seminary's early students.
graduates, left a deep impression on every church com-
munity, creating the mentality of nineteenth-century
Protestantism. Foreign missions particularly, if they
produced very meagre practical results in comparison to
the effort and funds expended, provided a psychological
lift which touched the ever-growing religious community
of the nation to its very core; they gave proof to the
world of America's coming of age as an exporter rather than
importer of civilization as religious men defined it and
thereby reaffirmed the sense of higher purpose inherent in
millennial-republican idealism. As in all the popularly-organized reform efforts, but particularly so with mis-
sions, the major effects were registered in these atti-
tudes and responses of the reformers, the missionaries,
the Churches, and the members of society throughout
America. What happened at the missionary stations
themselves, as long as appearances were maintained, was
almost beside the point.

Although the national missionary society foundings
between 1812 and 1826 were essentially administrative
adjustments, they brought about dramatic changes on the
local level. There was a sharp reversal in the direction
from which initiative and authority in missionary endeavors
came. Most of the independent societies which had
appeared between 1800 and 1820 were absorbed by the national
societies in the 1820s; the actual sending of missionaries
became almost exclusively a function of the larger bodies,
with the raising of funds left as the primary responsibility of the local groups. In terms of efficiency, the change was a clear step forward. However, in the removing of responsibility for full operations from these local organizations and in the placing of ultimate authority and direction in the hands of directors and administrators in distant, Northern cities, the national directors planted the seeds of jealousies and weakness which would create sectional animosity in the 1830s and 1840s.

Immediately, there was a substantial expansion of overall missionary activity and support. From fewer than a dozen societies in the South before the War of 1812, there literally appeared hundreds by the mid-twenties. Within every Southern state and every denomination, the spiritual needs of vacant churches were receiving systematic attention through the religious associations, the Presbyterians Board of Missions, and the American Home Missionary Society.

The youthful seminary graduates who filled the pulpits and agencies in the South brought with them not only their enthusiasm for benevolent societies, but a variety of new ideas as to the needs of an expanding religious community. Successful missionary work required a greater availability of Bibles and religious literature; in Churches which required a certain comprehension of religious doctrine for membership, there was a need for expanded efforts in education. In creating and drawing
attention to these needs and in supplying a self-confident personnel who could respond to them, the national missionary society movement was to a large degree parent to the entire reform society phenomenon.

One inevitable effect of formal theological training and the growth of missionary societies was the recognition that financial support for the increased number of theological candidates must also be placed on a formal, permanent basis. Education Societies, a term which until the rise of professional popular education in the 1830s and 1840s referred only to theological education, were a direct by-product of the rise of mission-oriented seminaries. Unlike the other reform organizations, they had no real intellectual impact on the nation, except that they supported the larger missionary movement. They were strictly fund-raising efforts on the local level, but they were a necessary prop of the entire corpus of benevolent organizations and an area of concern which claimed a certain amount of time and money of most conscientious evangelicals.

The support of promising but improvident candidates for the ministry had been a problem throughout American church history which had never been satisfactorily met in any denomination. Official responsibility rested with the clerical associations, but a variety of charitable sources, from the kindness of an individual clergyman to support from the individual congregation or the larger denominational bodies, had sufficed until the beginning
of the nineteenth century. With the emergence of distant, mass education of candidates, however, there was a need for more systematic financing. The naive optimism that the endowments which helped to found the seminaries would be sufficient for student support was quickly dispelled as bequests failed to materialize in their promised magnitude and as others were not forthcoming. The first decades of the nineteenth century were periods of neither financial security nor vast personal wealth.

Princeton Seminary received six endowed scholarships between 1816 and 1826 from wealthy Presbyterian laymen in South Carolina, Georgia, and Mississippi. General Episcopal Seminary was left $100,000 by one-time Charleston resident Frederick Kohne at his death in 1829. But as welcome as major contributions would have been, it was necessarily small gifts which would provide the extra margin which alone could enable poor students to enter the ministry.

Reacting to the Mills and Schermerhorn reports on the spiritual destitution of the West, the Congregational Association of Massachusetts established the American Society for Educating Pious Youth for the Gospel Ministry in 1815 (after 1820, the American Education Society), "calculated to produce in the minds of every man, woman, 

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37 Princeton Seminary. Board of Directors, Annual Reports, 5, 6, 9, 12, 14 (1817, '18, '21, '24, '26); Perry, Journals of the General Conventions ... P. E. Church, vol. 2, 317.
and child, a heartfelt, operative conviction, that it is
the imperative and indispensable duty of every human
being, while life remains, to contribute all in his
power to the cause of Christ" by supporting poor ministerial
candidates. Although initially tied closely to Andover
Seminary, the society rapidly broadened its support on a
national scale, drawing funds after 1818 from individuals
and affiliated branch societies of Congregationalists in
South Carolina and Georgia. The Presbyterian General
Assembly imitated their example by forming a Board of
Education and also began to draw upon a variety of
auxiliary education societies, female working societies
(which made clothing for students), and individual con­
tributions from Presbyterian congregations throughout the
South, as well as the North. Under a new constitution,
the Presbyterian Board merged, as the Presbyterian Branch,
with the American Education Society in 1827. By the late
1820s, a network of state and congregational education,
working, and sewing societies was providing financial and
material aid to the American Education Society or directly
to the Presbyterian Seminaries at Princeton or Maryville.

With the formation of their own seminaries, the
other denominations followed the Congregational - Presby­
terian example. A Society for the Education of Pious
Young Men for the Ministry of the Protestant Episcopal
Church was formed in 1818 by the circle of ardent evan­
gelicals in the Alexandria-Washington-Georgetown area
which, through a Standing Committee, served as the inspiration and governing body of the Virginia Seminary in its first years. Auxiliary societies came into existence in the 1820s, mostly in Maryland and Virginia, but including one in Brooklyn, New York, and one in Beaufort, South Carolina. A Claremont Theological Scholarship Society in Charleston, South Carolina, was formed in 1826 to support General Seminary in New York. A Female Lutheran Society of Charleston, South Carolina, was formed in 1826 to aid clerical candidates, and a Parent Domestic Missionary and Education Society of the Lutheran Synod of Maryland and Virginia, formed by the Synod in 1828, fostered auxiliary congregational societies for the support of indigent students at Gettysburg Seminary. Educational societies and female sewing societies were, by 1830, a normal part of a Southern church's social existence on the local level.

IV. Bibles, Tracts, and Sunday Schools

The right of popular access to the Scriptures in native tongues had been a cherished victory of the Reformation. All of the Protestant denominations which established themselves in America accepted this as a denominational privilege and duty, and the annals of the colonial Churches record constant efforts to obtain supplies of Bibles adequate to their constituencies' needs. Organized efforts for supplying them had been put into operation: the S.P.G. and the S.P.C.K. distributed Bibles as well as tracts throughout the English-speaking world
in the eighteenth century; a Rev. Mr. Thomas Gouge had formed a corporate "Welsh Trust" in the 1670s for the translation and distribution of Bibles and religious works in Wales; anticipating, as he did, so many of the evangelical efforts, August Herman Francke had established a Bible society at Halle at the beginning of the eighteenth century. 38

It was the formation of the British and Foreign Bible Society (1804) at the height of French expansion, bringing together a previously unthinkable combination of socially-prominent lay and clerical leaders from the Established and dissenter Churches, which transformed the inherently pedestrian labor of Bible distribution into a dramatic, intense reform. Revolutionary France, in spite of its revolt against Catholicism, was viewed by British aristocratic founders of the Bible Society as a very real threat to civilization itself, to constitutional freedom, religion, mortality, and all recognized standards of social behavior; the Bible Society, expediently bringing together theological opposites in the face of crisis, embodied hopes and visions which far exceeded its immediate purpose. The Anniversary (yearly meeting) of the British and Foreign Bible Society became the high point of

38 Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G.; David E. Owen, English Philanthropy, 1660-1960 (Cambridge, Mass., 1964), 19, 29; J. Taylor Hamilton, A History of the Church Known as the Moravian Church, or the United Fratum, or the Brethren, during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries (Bethlehem, Pa., 1900), 4-5.
the Anglo-American religious calendar year, and the spirit of a crusade pervaded Bible Society work as it was systematically spread by the parent society throughout the globe. 39

Americans, closely attuned to developments within the London religious community, were quick to follow British example. The Philadelphia Bible Society was formed in 1808; state societies appeared in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York the following year, and the momentum rapidly moved southward. 40 A short-lived Kentucky Bible Society was formed in Lexington in September, 1809, and was reorganized two years later; societies were organized in Beaufort (March, 1810) and Charleston (June, 1810), South Carolina, Savannah (the Georgia Bible Society, September, 1810), and Baltimore (September, 1810) the following year. In 1813, five state societies (Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, Louisiana, Mississippi), a Bible Society of the District of Columbia, and a Nashville Bible Society came into existence, and in 1814-15, fourteen auxiliary societies were formed in Virginia and Maryland. Four more, an Amite and West-Florida Bible

39 Foster, Errand of Mercy, 82-100; John Owen, The History of the Origin and First Ten Years of the British and Foreign Bible Society (N.Y., 1817). For an exhaustive history of the mechanical growth of the British society, important because it set patterns which were adopted by all of the reform societies, see: C. S. Dudley, An Analysis of the System of the Bible Society, Throughout its Various Parts (London, 1821).

40 Griffin, Their Brothers' Keepers, 25-28.
Society, a Columbia [South Carolina] Bible Society, a Bible and Charitable Society in Nashville, Tennessee, and a Female Bible Society in Charleston, South Carolina, were established in 1816, before the formation of the American Bible Society.

Although no formal connection tied these early American Bible Societies to the British and Foreign Bible Society, the latter supplied bound Scriptures at cost, contributed to their treasuries, and even cooperated with them to some extent while the two nations were actively engaged in war. From the beginning, both the Philadelphia and the New York societies conceived of their mission in national terms; they encouraged the formation of other societies and provided them with Bibles for distribution.

The mood of urgency which pervaded Bible society efforts of England in 1804 was entirely congenial to the predominantly Federalist founders of the American Bible Society in 1816 and was easily naturalized to encompass

41 By 1816, the British and Foreign Bible Society had contributed £3,122 to the American societies. During the War of 1812, the Bible Society of Massachusetts replaced a shipment of Scriptures captured on its way to Nova Scotia, noting in an address to the English society that "It is true, we are at war with England; but we are not at war with her pious and charitable Institutions." The Louisiana Bible Society paid particular attention to the needs of British prisoners at New Orleans, as did the British society for American prisoners. Owen, History . . . Br. and For. Bible Society, 511-13, 573.

42 See the published Annual Reports.
the broader republicanism of evangelical expectancy in the United States. Until the novelty had worn off and the simple passage of time had proven Bible societies not to be the cure of society's ills, there were always claims of anticipated public effects which tended to extravagance. In its 1816 report, the Bible Society of the District of Columbia pronounced that Bible distribution would encourage industry, sobriety, and religious harmony, increase the effectiveness and character of servants, elevate the general level of knowledge, and decrease the extent of poverty.  

The national organization, with over ten years of British experience to draw upon, quickly established itself as the leading benevolent society in an increasingly crowded field. Although occasional instances of independence and rivalry developed, most of the existing Bible societies quickly affiliated themselves as auxiliary or branch societies of the national organization. The parent body immediately charted a course of steady expansion. With thirteen Southern auxiliaries at the end of the first year of operations, the American Bible Society possessed fifty-seven in 1820, 177 in 1825, and 255 by 1830. By the latter date, the society reported an annual income

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44 Compiled from lists of auxiliaries appended to the American Bible Society's Annual Reports.
of over $170,000 and close to a million dollars in its fourteen-year existence.\footnote{45}  

In perfecting its organization, the American Bible Society established the patterns which would be followed in all of the national organizations. The trend was toward increasing centralization of authority. An initial proposal to place stereotype plates in various sections of the country to minimize transportation costs, employed with the Kentucky Bible Society with poor results, was dropped in favor of printing exclusively in New York. Auxiliary societies were encouraged in all forms (state and local organizations, Female, College, Juvenile, Young Men’s, Young Ladies, African, and Marine Bible Societies), but all were required to remit funds exceeding expenses (which were for Bibles purchased from the American Bible Society) to the New York headquarters. Increasingly, the Society relied upon agents to solicit funds and form auxiliary bodies; Richard D. Hall toured the Southwest, Ward Stafford, the Delaware Peninsula in 1821; Robert Gibson worked in the lower Mississippi Valley in 1827-8. Refining their system to an even greater degree in the 1820s, the Society appointed stationary agents for districts of the country and traveling agents who worked

\footnote{45} "Table of Benevolent Societies, in the United States, with their Officers, Income, etc.," Quarterly Register of the American Education Society, 3 (1830-31), 63.
under them. In faithfully pursuing a single, relatively non-controversial object, the American Bible Society came closest to the ideal of a truly non-sectarian, national organization. But its very success prodded the other national societies possessing far narrower bases of support to aspire to heights beyond the limits of public unanimity. Like its fellow societies, in emphasizing efficiency, the American Bible Society sacrificed much of its real strength on the community level.

The elevation of religious tract distribution to a national reform followed a pattern similar to that of the Bible societies. The supply of religious and moral literature had been a fundamental part of the English missionary effort in the American colonies. The S.P.G. provided a standard library of books and tracts conducive to piety for each Anglican parish and periodically sent supplies of timely works, such as John Leland's *View of the Principle Deistical Writers*, for distribution. A variety of moral tracts were sent with the Georgia

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47 Even the American Bible Society failed to get unanimous support. High Church Episcopalians maintained a distance and eventually formed their own Prayer Book and Bible Society. A few individual Quakers and a fair number of Methodists actively supported the Society, but the denominations officially remained aloof.
colonists; Samuel Davies arranged for shipments of works such as Phillip Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of the Human Soul*, George Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted*, and Isaac Watts' *Hymns and Catechisms* from the Society in London for Promoting Religious Knowledge among the Poor in the 1750s.48

After the Revolution, as the American presses began to turn out a broader selection of printed literature, supplies of tracts became subject to individual initiative. Parson Weems, who had become familiar with early British tract distribution while in England in the 1790s, wrote, published, and sold a delightful collection of moral tales throughout the South in the first decades of the nineteenth century.49 South Carolina Baptist clergyman Edmund Botsford wrote two moral tracts, *The Spiritual Voyage* and *Sambo and Toney: A Dialogue between Two Servants*, which were widely distributed in England as well as America.50 Presbyterian clergyman James Wharley of Virginia carried on his own tract business, buying material

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49 For a biographical sketch of Mason Locke Weems and a list of his moral tales, see Appendix A.

50 For a biographical sketch of Edmund Botsford and biographical references, see Appendix A.
at discount in Richmond and selling and giving them away in conjunction with his pastoral duties.  

It was the Methodist example, however, which revolutionized the entire business of religious literature. John Wesley, unrivaled as a religious organizer, made the publication and distribution of cheap moral and doctrinal tracts a cardinal element of Methodist expansion in the eighteenth-century British world. The Methodist Episcopal Church in America carried on the tradition, establishing a non-profit Book Concern and making distribution of tracts a primary pastoral duty. Wherever Methodist itinerants penetrated the rural frontiers of the land, and they touched them all, they left a tangible legacy of Methodist Disciplines, Wesley's and Fletcher's sermons, hymnals, and moral tales. When Samuel J. Mills and Daniel Smith pursued their Western tour of 1814-5, supposedly to a spiritual wilderness, they reported finding these publications "almost every where. In the possession of the obscurest families . . ." and declared that the Methodist Book Concern "puts to the blush all the other charitable institutions in the United States."  

As in every aspect of success, the Methodists provided an example which was quickly imitated by older

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51 See Appendix A.  
52 For a brief sketch of Methodist publication efforts in England and America, see: "Book Concern" and "The Book Establishment" in Matthew Simpson, ed., Cyclopaedia of Methodism (Phila., 1882, 5th Rev. ed.), 117-21; Mills and Smith, Missionary Tour, 49.
denominations. Beginning in the 1780s and intensifying in the period of the French Revolutionary crisis, a vast literature of penny tracts, moral tales aimed directly at the masses in an effort to calm the flames of international revolution, began to pour from the presses of London. Female authors, with a better understanding of the young mind, attained prominence; first Sarah Trimmer, then Henrietta Maria Bowdler, Maria Edgeworth, and the incomparable Hannah More who, according to an American Tract Society publication of some years later, "has done more for the preservation of England, by her Cheap Repository Tracts, than did the celebrated Nelson, as a naval Commander, by all his splendid achievements." 53

In 1799, the British evangelicals established the London Religious Tract Society and, within a decade, had created an organ of propaganda for their conservative morality unequalled in the long annals of pamphleteering. Synthesizing the time-honored antidotes to "infidelity," commissioning a whole new body of tales promoting deference, public morality, contentment with poverty, and religious conversion, the Society revolutionized the system of distributing printed matter. The purpose was

to get as many tracts into the hands of the poor as possible; new titles were advertised by posters, prices were fixed to encourage large purchases for free distribution, tickets were even sold to be distributed to beggars, redeemable only for publications. Hannah More's *Shepherd of Salisbury Plain* and Leigh Richmond's *The Dairyman's Daughter*, presenting the standard themes of Christian contentment in the face of poverty and the deathbed conversion of a parent through the admonitions of a pious child, the best sellers, were representative of the genre.\(^5^4\) As in the case of Bible Societies, the emotional crisis of the French revolutionary era instilled the element of immediacy which transformed an inherently prosaic activity into an exaggerated life-and-death reform, perfectly tailored to the American evangelical mentality.

The Churches in the United States gradually moved toward organized tract distribution in the early part of the nineteenth century. The Massachusetts Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (1803) was the first organization: a tract committee of the Congregational General Association of Connecticut, formed in 1805, created the Connecticut Religious Tract Society in 1807; an abortive Society for Confirming and Extending the Interests of the Christian Religion in General, and of

\(^{54}\)Foster, *An Errand of Mercy*, 69-78.
the Protestant Episcopal Church in Particular was formed by the Diocese of Maryland in 1807 to distribute "good books"; a New York Religious Tract Society came into being in 1812. Noting that "whereas it appears . . . that great and increasing good has accrued to the Church of Christ by the distribution of small cheap religious tracts," the Presbyterian General Assembly of 1809 recommended the formation of societies to the synods. Two Presbyterian clergymen who were also printers, George Bourne and A. B. Davidson, formed the Virginia Religious Tract Society in 1812 and received approbation of their first six tracts from the Synod of Virginia. The Episcopalians established a Protestant Episcopal Tract Society in 1810.55

It was from the center of Congregational evangelicalism, as in so many benevolent undertakings, that tract distribution was placed on a national footing. The New England Tract Society, formed in 1814, because of its ability to produce stereotyped tracts in large quantities and promote them through Andover's swarming missionaries, quickly achieved national dominance in the field. With a selection of 167 titles for sale, with depositories in every state, the organization was lured by Arthur Tappan's and Moses Allen's gift of a $12,000

55 Griffin, Their Brothers' Keepers, 32-35; Presbyterian Church. General Assembly, Minutes, 1789-1820, 429-30. For specific societies, see documentation in Appendix B.
headquarters to move to New York City and become the American Tract Society. As of 1830, the Society reported 823 branches and auxiliaries, 170 in the South. Like the American Bible Society, the organization put increasing reliance on agents for expansion. A certain number of stronger tract societies in Southern (as well as Northern) cities maintained administrative and financial independence from the American Tract Society, but almost all turned to the larger body for supply of tracts themselves. Tract society membership on the local level, to a far greater extent than with Bible societies, tended to follow denominational lines.

With hundreds of publications presenting, in no matter how well-edited a form, a variety of beliefs and viewpoints, the American Tract Society inevitably raised denominational jealousies. Although the Society attempted to print and edit only works acceptable to the Congregational - Presbyterian outlook, strict Calvinists discovered traces of Unitarianism in some of the tracts; High Church Episcopalians could not live with the predominant Calvinism of many of the publications; South

56 Griffin, Their Brothers' Keepers, 32-35.

57 Computed from the Annual Reports.

58 To provide an alternative, the Episcopal Rev. Mr. Barlow of South Carolina proposed the formation of a Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and Literature in the United States at a public meeting in Charleston. The society, which was to publish six volumes of "Christian classics" annually apparently never materialized. "Episcopal Meeting," Gospel Messenger, 3 (1826), 171-75.
Carolinians, finding so many instances of sympathy with the plight of the slave, and generally fearful of wide pamphlet distribution, deprived the society of the support it bestowed on most reform efforts. Even the most ardent supporters of the American Tract Society voiced some uneasiness about the moral effects of fiction, no matter how religious in character. 59

In spite of their successful Book Concern, the Methodists created a Tract Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1817; between 1815 and 1829, Southern Episcopalians established their own "Prayer-Book and Tract," "Prayer-Book and Homily," and "Tract" societies in Maryland, Virginia, South Carolina, and Mississippi; following the lead of their counterparts in Philadelphia and New York, Maryland Quakers formed the Baltimore Association of Friends, for Publishing and Distributing Tracts on Moral and Religious Subjects in 1817; a Charleston Catholic Book Society was founded in Charleston in 1822; in 1821, a national Baptist General Tract Society was established in Washington.

59 Lurking doubts about the propriety of religious fiction inspired evangelicals, when they could, to prove that their stories were true to life. The Dairyman's Daughter gained particular favor, in part, because it was supposedly based on fact. Rev. T. Charleton Henry, Presbyterian minister of Charleston, went so far as to visit the site of the story on the Isle of Wight! "Rev. T. C. Henry," Charleston Observer, 2 (1828), 58-9.

For a statement of opposition to religious fiction based on moral grounds, see: H.S., "On Juvenile Novels," Gospel Messenger, 7 (1830), 326-31.
When viewed from the sober distance of historical perspective, the hopes of the early tract society advocates seem particularly out of touch with reason. In much the same spirit that human beings recorded their first contacts with the horseless locomotive, a generation which had known only hand-printed editions of one or two thousand impressions displayed an initial intoxication with the unlimited possibilities of stereotype printing, oblivious to the fact that with proliferation of the printed word, there was also a cheapening of its effectiveness. The attributions of instantaneous conversion, abstinence from alcohol and tobacco, and personality transformation to the single tract (published as fact in the Annual Reports of the parent society) encouraged the widespread belief that these "silent, unwearied, pungent, and successful little preachers of righteousness [tracts]," by themselves, could reform and convert the nation. The national society advocated a variety of devious methods of slipping tracts to unsuspecting sinners, convinced that their arguments, if read, would effect that which lifetimes of social influences had failed to accomplish.

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60 The quotation is from: Religious Tract Society of the City of Washington, 2nd Annual Report (1821), 4.

61 The embittered Mrs. Anne Royal described females "scattering tracts along the road, they throw them out of the coach windows, strew them over the decks of steamboats, scatter them through the bed chambers of taverns, slip them into the pews of churches." Anne Royal, The Black Book; or, A Continuation of Travels in the United
But in spite of extravagant claims, in the larger context of the benevolent empire as a whole tracts did not have to do their work alone. They were extremely useful tools of the missionary enterprise and of church expansion, rarely serving to introduce new ideas, but effectively reinforcing the basic themes of evangelical Christianity which became so firmly entrenched in nineteenth-century popular culture. Even more importantly from a social standpoint, religious tracts, irrespective of content, did for the first time bring printed material to every cabin and public building in the South.

Only with the simultaneous expansion of printed matter capable of arousing and satisfying the curiosity of child readers which the tract societies offered, only with the growing presence of idealistic young clergymen aware of trends in Anglo-American Protestantism, was the

_American Tract Society, 5th Annual Report (1830), 53._
scene established for the most socially significant religious reform, the rise of Sunday schools.

Although they were to spread across America as an arm of the greater evangelical expansion, Sunday schools had their birth in the secular-egalitarian atmosphere of lower-middle class British Quakerism. Robert Raikes founded a Sabbath day school for working children in London in 1780 which grew into the non-sectarian London Sunday-School Society (1785) with over a thousand affiliated schools by the mid-seventeen nineties. Holding them on Sunday was a necessary expedient to reach children who worked during the week; teaching the three R's, although naturally within the usual moral context, was the primary function, religious instruction secondary. British evangelicals were not slow to perceive the possibilities of luring the children of the poor from the evil associations of their homes. The Methodists, long aware of the need to accomplish, with children of the working class, what the upper classes could spread throughout the week, had in effect conducted Sunday schools with religious emphasis for years. The Claphamite Evangelicals formed the London Sunday-School Union in 1803 which gave the movement a social respectability it had not had and, putting their own stamp of religious purpose and moral conservatism on the curriculum, launched the first real campaign for universal literacy in world history.\(^{62}\)

\(^{62}\) Foster, An Errand of Mercy, 78-81.
J. A. Adams, author of a Sunday school teachers' guide, expressed the precious opportunity for social reform which the evangelicals sensed in the vehicle: "We have arrived at that important era of the moral history of this country, when by an unconstrained election, the lower classes of the community have chosen their better instructed neighbors as the guardians of their children." 63

Two generations ago, when Sunday schools commanded a social importance no longer present, considerable energy was wasted on arguments over who started the first American Sunday school. Actually, the origins were multiple, growing out of existing charity school and catechetical education, coming from within the Methodist Church, and introduced by immigrants who had known British schools first-hand. There was some form of Sunday instruction being given in Plymouth, Massachusetts, as early as 1669, in Roxbury in 1674, and by Joseph Bellamy in Bethlehem, Connecticut, 1740-90. A William Elliott (presumably Methodist) supposedly established a Sunday school in Accomac County, Virginia, in 1785, and Methodist schools in Baltimore are briefly recorded in 1787 and 1804. The earliest school clearly based on the plan of Raikes' English Sunday schools was the First Day School, opened by Benjamin Rush and Bishop William White for poor children in Philadelphia in 1790. A Sunday school modeled

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after the British example was opened for the education of free Black children by the Abolition Society of Alexandria in 1795.  

Although the denomination would be slow in adopting the method, the Lutheran Synod of North Carolina passed a resolution in April, 1812, that Sunday schools be recommended in all congregations. On his arrival in America, Quaker education reformer Joseph Lancaster published *The British System of Education* (Georgetown, D.C., 1812) which included a section on the advantages of Sunday schools. By at least 1814, a Delaware mill owner, John Siddall, was conducting a Sunday school for laborers' children with the help of a former student of Raikes.

A few Sunday schools had appeared in the South by 1816, but it was the formation of the non-denominational Philadelphia Sunday and Adult School Union in May, 1817, tying together by a band of communication the few schools which had developed and embarking upon an ambitious plan.

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65 Gotthardt Bernheim, *History of the German Settlements of the Lutheran Church in North and South Carolina, from the Earliest Period of the Colonization of the Dutch, German and Swiss Settlers to the Close of the First Half of the Present Century* (Phila., 1872), 395-96; Joseph Lancaster, *The British System of Education* (Georgetown, D.C.,
of expansion, which turned this effort into a national reform movement. With the direct encouragement of this national body (which changed its name to the American Sunday School Union in 1826) and in imitation of its operations, hundreds of Sunday schools opened in the last year of the decade. Fifteen Southern auxiliary bodies, many of them union societies with several schools under their care, had been listed by the 1820 Report, 58 by 1824, and this did not include many similar societies which did not have direct affiliations with the Philadelphia organization. 66

The earliest Sunday school societies in the South were generally, like British and American precedents, interdenominational and in towns and mill villages, organized in most cases with the encouragement of urban missionaries and seminary-graduate clergymen. In cities, individual schools were quickly enveloped by city-wide "union societies" which facilitated curriculum standardization, teacher training, and the supply of educational materials. Male and female union societies were formed in Baltimore in 1817; a Sunday School Union Society was formed in Richmond in 1818, in Charleston and Columbia, South Carolina, the following year. In the 1820s,

66Computed from the Annual Reports.
societies incorporating even larger areas came into existence: the Savannah Sabbath School Teachers' Society (by 1822, representing the entire state), the New Castle County Sabbath School Union (Delaware, 1827), and the Sunday School Union, for the State of Maryland (mid-1820s).

Interdenominational sunday schools were far less practical in rural areas, but there were notable instances of such. Former Congressman and staunch Episcopal layman James M. Garrett, whose wife later conducted an important girls' academy at his Essex County, Virginia, estate (Elmwood), organized an interdenominational sunday school in 1819 which attracted 180 regular students and some 20 teachers from the surrounding area.67

To an even greater degree than in the other national religious reform societies, the interdenominationalism of the Sunday School Union was illusory. The Sunday School Union was situated in Philadelphia, the headquarters of Presbyterianism, and it was natural that this denomination, through the efficient vehicle of communications, the annual General Assembly, should take the lead in this reform. Although the earliest sunday schools were truly non-denominational in curriculum and

student body, although there was some involvement by Baptists, Lutherans, and Episcopalians, the direction was generally from Presbyterians, and the other denominations realized it. The teaching of reading was a primary function, but moral training inevitably took on religious and denominational overtones, introducing the matter of youthful conversion, and therefore church membership. Neither Methodist parents nor clergymen relished the thought of Presbyterian conversion of their children, and as Sunday schools unintentionally became a means of proselytism, denominational jealousies were around.

The Quakers, who resented intrusions into their world of benevolence, were uncooperative after the initial Sunday school foundings in England and Philadelphia. The Methodists, similarly prideful, put their energy into their own Sunday schools from the beginning in Baltimore. They established an Asbury Sunday School Society for boy's schools and a McKendrean Sunday School Society for girls' schools in November, 1816, and a Wesleyan Sunday School Society to oversee those of East Baltimore in 1819. A national Sunday School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church was formed in 1827. Generally throughout the country, Methodists were less likely to join and the first to pull out of "interdenominational" efforts, founding their own educational work within the individual churches. The Episcopalians of the South gradually did the same. Denominational Sunday schools receive notice in diocesan reports in 1819; a Charleston Protestant Episcopal Sunday
School Society was formed in 1819; and in 1826, a General Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Union was formed by the General Convention. It had formed 202 auxiliaries by 1830, 35 in the South. Lutheran Sunday Schools began to appear in the 1820s. Even in the Sunday School Unions of small towns, there was a growing tendency in the 1820s to segregate individual classes by the denominational affiliation of students.

More than any area of early nineteenth century reform, the Sunday school movement captured the vision of the evangelical impulse in its grandest form. For the first time, there appeared to have opened up the opportunity to apply the precepts of Enlightenment educational theory to an entire generation, to counteract nation-wide

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68 See: "Journals of the Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia from 1785 to 1835, inclusive," published as an Appendix to Francis L. Hawks, A Narrative of Events Connected with the Rise and Progress of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia (N.Y., 1836; vol. 1 of "Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of the United States of America"), 136-37, 141-42, 155-56, 162-63.

69 William E. Eisenberg, The Lutheran Church in Virginia, 1717-1962, Including An Account of the Lutheran Church in East Tennessee (Roanoke, Va., 1967), 299; Evangelical Lutheran Church, Synod of South Carolina, Minutes (1825), 13, 19.

70 For example, the interdenominational Sunday School Union Society of St. Luke's Parish, South Carolina (1828-29) supplied books and clothing and supported a library for all students, but classes were denominational. In the rural South, where churches were the only public buildings in most areas, Sunday schools naturally formed within organized congregations. In urban areas, where there were alternative meeting places, reform societies of all sorts could preserve existences distinct from church congregations. Protestant Episcopal Church. Diocese of South Carolina, Journal (1829), 15.
the cumulative burden of ignorance and superstition which had, time and again, overwhelmed the most enlightened efforts of Christian reform in ages past. Compounding the inherent over-confidence of Enlightenment educational faith with the naivete born of first efforts in general, the promoters of the earliest Sunday schools threw themselves into the work of creating an instant, popular educational network which would abolish crime, poverty, and ignorance in a matter of decades. The claim by a British House of Commons Report (1815) that no student of Raikes' Sunday schools had ever been guilty of a crime in afterlife was, until well into the twenties, frequently cited to prove the effectiveness of the method which, if universally applied to all sinful, ignorant children, could bring about total reformation.  

The first Sunday schools were aimed directly at poor children alone. With the rise of simultaneous urban

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71 Robert Raikes had claimed that only one pupil in twenty years (3,000 pupils) at his Gloucester Sunday School had become a criminal; Joseph Lancaster had claimed that not one (of 4,000) of his students had ever been charged in a court of justice. These "facts," reported in an 1815 House of Commons committee investigation of poverty, were widely repeated in Britain and America until evidence proved them to be exaggerations.

Rev. James E. Welch quizzed 90 inmates at the penitentiary in Milledgeville, Georgia, in 1829. He found that 11 had attended Sunday schools, but he proudly reported that they had been to only a few classes (mostly 2-3; not one over 12). Christopher E. Gadsden, The Address to the Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Society, in Charleston, So. Carolina, on their Second Anniversary, Whitsun Tuesday, 1821 . . . Annual Report . . . Constitution; Names of Members, etc. (Charleston, S.C., 1821); Male Sunday School of Baltimore. Board of Delegates, 1st and 2nd Annual Reports (1820), 43-44; "Sunday Scholars in Prison," American Sunday School Magazine, 6 (1829), 95.
missionary efforts, the poor neighborhoods were visited, children enumerated, and efforts made to entice them into regular Sunday school attendance. When it came out that poor clothing humiliated children, clothing was provided; when it became clear that "many of them [the children] will be more influenced by the bad examples before them six days in the week, and a great part of the seventh, than by the precepts inculcated during a few hours of the Sabbath," home visitations were advocated and put into practice. It was confidently hoped that the combined influence of reformed children and the frequent visits of teachers would have a secondary effect on parents, who would be naturally "grateful, on account of the attention paid to their children" and be led themselves "to form and maintain a character, of which they before thought little or nothing."^2

Immediately, it was apparent that the appeal to the poor alone was ineffective. It became clear that they possessed no monopoly on ill-mannered children, that "there are children rich in this world's goods, but poor toward God, utterly ignorant of their duty, their destiny, and their spiritual danger."^3 Secondly, the poor simply

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^3Gadsden, Address to the Protestant Episcopal Sunday School, 3-6.
would not attend that which was beneath their self-appointed betters. In a shrewd appeal of 1818 which both flattered and chided his congregation of "aristocrats," Rev. Joseph Thomas of Virginia noted that:

By sending your children here, though you have ample means to educate them to your pleasure, without the aid of a charity school, who set the example for and encourage those who are poor and measurably unable for any other method of education. But if you detain your children because you are wealthy and respectable, they will object sending theirs, because they are stubborn and apt to think themselves as good as you are; and will not condescend to a measure which you seem to be above.  

By the middle of the 1820s, American Sunday schools had become, unlike their British models, truly democratic, aimed at and incorporating children of all economic and social backgrounds. If, by including wealthier children who did not need basic literary education, the emphasis was increasingly placed on religious instruction, the resulting democracy gave expectations of universal moral reform an even greater appearance of potential reality.

Whether the emphasis in the individual school was on reading or religious instruction, the Sunday schools gave rise to unprecedented popular interest in educational methods and theory. Although the curriculum (including reading exercises, in some schools writing, memorization

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74 Joseph Thomas, A Discourse Dedicated to the World, on the Benevolent Institutions of Sunday Schools (Winchester, Va., 1818), 27.
and discussion of Scriptural passages) was fairly simple, hundreds of men and women who had never been instructors before were forced to deal with the timeless problems of educational motivation. Sunday school teachers guides came on the market. Teachers' associations arose in towns and cities, and their meetings and the columns of religious periodicals soon rang with the debates over the utility and nature of rewards, discipline, and memorization which continue to dominate the conventions and journals of professional educators to this day. The Lancastrian Method, emphasizing emulation, rewards, and punishments as the grand principles of educational motivation and employing older students as monitors of the progress of younger children, provided the basic model of early sunday schools, but an individual approach developed in every school's methods.

A visitor described that in James M. Garrett's Essex County, Virginia, school: "an attempt has been made to dispense with two things which for ages appear generally, to have been thought essential to the prosperity of Schools: these are the principles of emulation,

75James, The Sunday School Teacher's Guide; Hints on the Establishment and Regulation of Sunday Schools, with Forms of Books Necessary for Keeping a Methodical Account of the Scholars. Copied from an English Publication (Balt., 1821).

76For mention of teachers' associations in Winchester and Charleston, see: Philadelphia Sunday and Adult School Union, 5th Report (1822), 52; Protestant Episcopal Church. Diocese of South Carolina, Journal (1825), 11, 15.
as, made to operate among the Scholars against each other, and the fear of their instructors."  

Joseph Thomas of Kernstown, Virginia, advocated prizes for all students, because experience showed that "a majority who are backward in reading and some who cannot read any, find no incentive to induce them to diligence, during their intervals from school, being convinced from the start, that even the third prize would be out of the power of their most ardent pursuits, and having no reward held out before them, discouraged and seemingly neglected, they have attempted nothing more than attention to their lessons while under the notice of their teachers."  

The Savannah Sabbath School Teachers' Society, advocating small classes of eight to ten, strict records of attendance, and sparing use of both rewards and punishments, advised in an 1822 circular that "long lessons, superficially learned, will not be found so profitable, as short ones, well understood."  

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78 Thomas, Discourse, Dedicated to the World.


As soon as sunday schools became widespread, many of the concerns and characteristics of present-day professional education appeared. The Juvenile Protestant Episcopal Society of Charleston became enamored of "visual aids" in 1828, purchasing a "Lantern Microscope" which could reproduce Scriptural scenes "almost as large as life." A sunday school Superintendent demonstrated an early penchant for educational jargon when reporting
president of the High Hills Sunday School, Sussex County, Virginia, reported in 1828 that:

With regard to the plan of instruction, the opinion of the teachers has been unanimous, I believe, to pursue that course which would insure an improvement of the mind, rather than overload the memory . . . the scholars have been taught to commit ideas instead of words, to exercise their judgment in gaining the full import of sentences, and in changing figurative, into literal language. The preference of learning ideas rather than words, although often overlooked, is all important to those who wish to be profitted by study; for it compels the student to search for the meaning of language; and twenty ideas are more easily retained, when they are perfectly understood, than twenty words which contain but a single idea, when the sense is ambiguous.  

The interest in education, which the rise of Sunday schools fostered, had effect in the broader community as well. Undoubtedly but two of many such individuals, James M. Garnett and Samuel M. Janney, whose first experience in teaching was gained in Sunday schools, went on to organize noted private academies in Virginia.  

that one class of School N. 1, Baltimore, calling themselves the "Tropological Band," was busy "illustrating the figurative, typical, symbolical, emblematical, metaphorical, parabolical, and proverbial expressions of Holy Writ." "Missionary Transactions," and "Religious Instruction of Children," Gospel Messenger, 6 (1929), 10-11, 55; Cook, Early History of Methodist Sabbath Schools, 47.

80 J. D. Williams, Pres., "High-Hills Sunday School, Sussex Co.," Religious Herald, 1 (1828-29), no. 36.

81 James M. Garnett ran a boys' academy on his Elmwood estate and earlier, had assisted his wife in running a girls' academy (1821-29). See footnotes 67, 77, and 82; Quaker Samuel M. Janney (1801-1880), whose teaching career began in a Presbyterian Sunday School,
Garnett, John Holt Rice, and William Maxwell, who were deeply involved in the formation of early Sunday schools in Virginia, later published significant books and articles on educational theory. The whole movement created a new audience for printed material dealing with education in all its aspects. Fascination with the process of mental development which the popularization of educational theory created brought about an interest in the education of infants (ages 2 to 6) and the formation of Infant School societies in Norfolk (1829), Charleston (1829), Savannah (1829), and St. Louis (1830). Philip Lindsley, first organized a boarding school for girls in Loudon Co., Virginia (1839-54). Samuel M. Janney, Memoirs of Samuel M. Janney, A Minister in the Religious Society of Friends (Phila., 1881), 11.

82 See: James M. Garnett, Lectures on Female Education Comprising the First and Second Series of a Course Delivered to Mrs. Garnett's Pupils, at Elmwood, Essex County, Virginia (Richmond, Va., 1824-25; 3 eds.), Lectures on Various Topics of Morals, Manners, Conduct, and Intellectual Improvement, Addressed to Mrs. Garnett's Pupils at Elmwood, Essex County, Virginia, 1825-1826 (Richmond, Va., 1827), and Token of Regard, Presented to the Pupils of the Elmwood School (Richmond, Va., 1830); William Maxwell, An Oration on the Improvement of the People, Spoken before the Literary and Philosophical Society of Hampden-Sydney College . . . September 28, 1826 (Norfolk, Va., 1826); For John Holt Rice's ideas on education, most of which appeared as contributions to his Christian Monitor and his Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine, see David E. Swift's "Thomas Jefferson, John Holt Rice and Education in Virginia, 1815-1825," Journal of Presbyterian History, 49 (1971), 32-58.

83 For evidence of interest in infant education in the South, see: "We have started . . . ," Family Visitor, 1 (1822-23), 7-8; A Father, "Infant Schools," Gospel Messenger, 1 (1824), 68-73; J. Heyworth, Observations on the Principles of Correct Education (Buffaloe, Va., 1823; 2nd ed.); Le Roy J. Halsey, ed., The Works of Philip Lindsley, D.D., Formerly Vice-President and President Elect of the College of New Jersey, Princeton; And Late
president of Cumberland College, carried a fascination with the educational theories of Philipp Emanuel von Fellenberg to Tennessee, and, in the Presbyterian schools and colleges of the area, brought about the first widespread use of manual labor in the country, 1826-30 (Cumberland College, Maryville College, Synodical Academy of W. Tennessee, Manual Labor Academy in Maury County). 84

With the passage of time, as the element of novelty wore off, as predictions of a moral revolution showed themselves to be premature, as a mobile population expanded beyond the confines of Sunday schools or churches, the expectations and much of the excitement went out of the effort. The enthusiasm for universal education was transferred to the public schools which were established in more and more towns and counties in the antebellum period and given a prestige with the rise of normal

schools. Sunday schools, particularly in the South, which was slow to expand public schools, played a crucial role in setting the stage for their development. By popularizing the timeless debates over the learning processes on however superficial a level, by providing rudimentary education for thousands who would not have been reached otherwise, by training potential teachers, and by merely setting a goal of universal literacy, however far they were from attainment, the evangelical promoters of Sunday schools made increasing interest in private schooling and eventual public action inevitable.

V. Conversion of Jews and Seamen

Two other organizations of religious purpose grew directly out of the national evangelical reform movement. Both were aimed at encouraging the conversion of a particular group of persons, and, lacking broad appeal, both failed to get widespread public support.

The American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews, founded in New York in 1820, dedicated to establishing a colony for European Jews "who profess Christianity or are interested in instruction," was certainly the oddest and most impractical of the national societies. Ideologically rooted in the millennial vision of Jewish submission preceding the Second Coming, Hebrew conversion had always held a fascination for Christians. Jewish failure to see the light had been a basic cause of medieval persecution. A London Society for Promoting
Christianity Amongst the Jews was founded in 1808, a similar body in Edinburgh, 1819, and others in Britain and on the Continent, even one in Asia. The foundation of the American organization was the work of two converted Jewish immigrants, Mr. Jadownicky and Rev. Mr. J. S. C. F. Frey, who engrafted themselves in the evangelical community of New York City and obtained a measure of Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Associate Reformed support.

Mr. Frey, who became agent for the organization, toured New England, New York State, and the South (1822-23) preaching, organizing auxiliary societies, and soliciting funds. The annual report of 1823 located eleven Southern auxiliaries stretching from Delaware to Georgia, thirty-three by 1824, forty-nine by 1825, almost entirely in Presbyterian congregations except in South Carolina where Episcopalians were dominant. The direction of the society was entirely centered in New York, however, and when infighting among board members erupted in 1826-7, this paper empire vanished as quickly as it had appeared, leaving Southern evangelicals a few hundred dollars poorer and considerably more wary of Northern fund raisers. Southern as well as Northern Jews remained as untouched and unrepentant as before. 85

The other national society for the benefit and conversion of a particular segment of the population, the American Seaman's Friend Society, was of a decidedly different character than the Jews' Society. A direct outgrowth of the urban missionary movement of the decade after the War of 1812, it received no broad financial support from the religious community at large, yet it established a record of modest but solid accomplishment.

Seamen, traditionally portrayed in the British world as the most important and, simultaneously, the most abandoned human resource for mercantile and military strength, were an irresistible challenge to Anglo-American evangelicals. Waterfront sections of American cities, like their counterparts throughout the world, concentrated all of the human vices known to man; sailors, free from the confinement of dictatorial shipboard discipline and liberated from family and community pressures, then, as always, were prone to violence, whoring, swearing, drinking, and petty crime. A constant source of irritation and scandal in a seaport town, seamen were nevertheless tolerated by the eighteenth-century Anglo-American world as a necessary evil which must be accepted for the greater commercial benefits which they provided. The sailor's character was sadly viewed as incorrigible. Until the second decade of the nineteenth century, a religious service had never been performed on American
shipboard for the benefit of the crew, and no missionary had even tried to save the souls of what were thought to be hopeless sinners. 86

One of the revelations to the urban missionaries, as they began their pioneering house-by-house visitations of the poor sections of American cities, was the discovery that sailors, in spite of their rough exterior, were at heart, guileless, simple human beings, ideally suited mentally to receive emotional religion. It opened an entirely unexpected field of evangelical endeavor which was rapidly attended to.

Ward Stafford, the city missionary of New York, conducted the first prayer meetings for sailors in 1816, and the following year, a Marine Bible Society of New York and a Marine Missionary Society were formed. A Mariner's Church, the first in the world, was opened in June, 1820. Seamen's meetings were commenced by Boston's city missionary in 1817.

Charleston, with a sizeable wintertime population of seamen and a strong urban missionary movement, became the center of efforts for the improvement of seamen in the South. In 1818, a Marine Bible Society was formed, and, beginning the following year, Jonas King, the city

missionary employed by the Female Domestic Missionary Society, began regular services for seamen in Mr. Cleapor's sail loft. An empty Baptist church was secured in 1822, and The Charleston Port Society for Promoting the Gospel among Seamen was created to supervise its expanding activities. Three supporting organizations arose as well: the Charleston Bethel Union (1822) for conducting prayer meetings, distributing tracts, establishing a library, and encouraging the establishment of morally-conducted boarding houses; a Charleston Female Seamen's Friend Society (1826), to help "establish a Boarding House for Sailors, where they might find a safe retreat from temptation"; The Windward Anchor Society of the Port of Charleston (1830), made up of seamen and ships' captains themselves, "to aid the several institutions established in this city, for the moral and religious improvement of seamen . . . ."

Founded with the broad support of Presbyterians, Lutherans, Methodists, and Episcopalians, a Seamen's Union Bethel Society and a supporting female Society for the Relief of Widows and Orphans of Seamen came into being in Baltimore in 1823, and a Mariner's Church was opened in 1826. Bethel Unions were established in Norfolk (1823), New Orleans (1823), and Louisville (1830), and a Richmond Bethel Union was formed with Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist support in 1821. Finally, a National American Seamen's Friend Society was formed
in New York, 1826, which, by means of correspondence, agents and a periodical, The Sailor's Magazine (1828), gave the reform central direction. 87

The successes which these societies for the improvement of seamen enjoyed, in spite of a limited financial base, were due to the dedication of a few individuals. Jonas King, a recent Andover graduate, began the work in Charleston. It was the untiring efforts of his successor, Joseph Brown, also of Andover, which made the city the innovative center of seamen's activity for the country. Forced to retire from the Southern climate for health reasons in 1828-29, Brown served as agent for the national American Seamen's Friend Society until his death in 1833. Norfolk's Bethel Union was formed by a twenty-one-year-old Baptist clergyman, Noah Davis, later the founder of the Baptist General Tract Society. Baltimore's seamen's organizations were given strength by Stephen Williams, a licentiate of the Presbytery of Baltimore, who devoted a lifetime to city missions. 88

The agents were successful because they made the personal effort necessary to gain the confidence of sailors, who proved to be flattered by the unprecedented

87 See the Annual Reports and Yates, An Historical Address of the Rise and Progress of Religious and Moral Improvement among Seamen, 5-14.
88 For sketches of, and documentation on Jonas King, Joseph Brown, Noah Davis, and Stephen Williams, see Appendix A.
attention; they sustained the societies by combining social incentives and religious appeals and by not raising expectations to the unreasonable levels characteristic of many of the reforms. 89 The stated purposes of the American Seamen's Friend Society at its formation in 1826 were: 1) the establishment of boarding houses and reading rooms, where the property and rights of sailors would be protected; 2) establishment of registers of responsible, moral seamen; 3) savings banks; 4) employment of agents to further the cause; 5) establishment of schools for seamen and their children; 6) aid to any "marine teaching establishments." 90 The Society also brought pressure to bear on the United States Navy to provide chaplains and chapels. 91 By May, 1830, there were Mariner's Churches in Baltimore, Charleston, and New Orleans, good boarding houses in Charleston (2) and Savannah, Register Officers in Baltimore and Charleston, and seamen's preachers in Charleston, Savannah, and New Orleans. 92 The missionary

89 Illustrating the down-to-earth nature of this reform, the Bethel Society sent out "pressgangs" of pious sailors to coax their fellow mariners from the company of prostitutes. "At other times the women cleave to them, the good men then give each girl a religious tract, and invite her to attend also, and sometimes they have walked in company with the sailors they have picked up for their purposes, and staid the whole time with great success." "Extraordinary Mission," U.S. Catholic Miscellany, 1 (1822-23), 23.


visits on shipboard, bi-weekly prayer meetings, Sunday services, and library and boarding facilities provided in Charleston and to a lesser extent in the other Southern ports served much the same social function as the Y.M.C.A. in the early decades of the present century.

Conversion was always a goal of the missionaries and the societies. The Charleston Port Society, in its first report, described its ultimate mission as that of "training soldiers of the Cross, to go through the lanes and alleys of our maritime cities, and to pluck, as brand from the burning, many sailors ready to perish in the haunts of wickedness and folly," as that of "gathering a host of missionaries to visit every corner of the dry land, and every isle of the sea." The organizations promoted the use of the Bethel flag (signifying that religious services were held on the ship flying it) and encouraged ships' crews and officers to make pledges against swearing and drinking.

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93 A piece in *Sailor's Magazine* (vol. 1, 1828-29, p. 67) expressed the same vision: "At a foreign port the Sailor is in his own castle, and can do many things for the promotion of religion, which a missionary could not do, without the special leave of the government."

94 The Bethel Flag was introduced in England in 1817 and brought to America in 1821 by Rev. Mr. John Allen, a Presbyterian minister from Tennessee. Langley, *Social Reform in the U.S. Navy*, 46-54.

A communication from Baltimore to the *Sailor's Magazine* (vol. 2, 1829-30, pp. 258, 322-23) reported that two ships, in which pledges against swearing and use of ardent spirits had been agreed to by all officers and hands, had recently sailed from the port.
In meeting their stated goals, the seamen's societies, like all their counterparts in the evangelical world, failed. Conversion and reform of personal morality was effected in the Mariner's Churches, but never as widely or permanently as anticipated by the reformers. The converts, however pious, could not have been less suited to their role in the vanguard of world missions. And however remarkable an occasional "dry" ship of non-swearing seamen, however exciting the thoughts of registries which would eventually place all business in the hands of pious captains and morally proper crews, the hard reality was that the ways of commerce and the ways of God were, and always have been, along different paths.

What these societies did do was, for the first time, to recognize sailors as human beings with human needs and show them their first element of respect as persons. As Joseph Brown reported with some amazement after attending an early meeting of the Charleston Port Society, "the general behavior of the audience has indeed shewn, that sailors have hearts equally susceptible of impressions, as those of other men."95 The societies provided at least an alternative to the grog shops, sleazy hotels, and criminal associations which few sailors could have escaped before.

95 Charleston Port Society, 1st Annual Report (1823), 8-11.
I. A Change in Direction

The evangelical vision, a dream of men inspired by faith, was quite naturally given initial organizational substance in essentially religious form. Missionary, Bible, and tract societies, sunday schools, societies for the conversion of Jews and seamen, were created for the immediate furtherance of Christ's kingdom on earth. They were inherently conservative, aimed not at introducing new ideals, but at reaffirming, strengthening, and expanding traditional religious and moral beliefs. But, as in most of the social upheavals of world history, the primary movers of this subdued evangelical revolution were neither capable of foreseeing the effects of their own actions nor able to control their direction, once set in motion. With their eyes fixed on ultimate purposes, they failed to comprehend the social significance of the expedients and methods which they had introduced for the attainment of their goals: they were oblivious to the social innovations which would far outlast the dreams themselves.
As the actual operation of the national reform societies passed into the hands of seminary graduates who were a generation younger than the middle-aged clerical and merchant founders, there was a subtle shift in the ideological foundations upon which national reform rested. From their secure social positions in New York, Boston or Philadelphia society, the founders of the national societies sacrificed but relatively small amounts of either time or money for the causes they espoused. For the average board member, personal involvement in reforms which were to save a nation required only a generous annual contribution, attendance at dignified meetings, and periodic reaffirmations of purpose at the socially-prestigious Spring Anniversaries. For the younger employees, however, the society operations entailed endless correspondence, tiring travel, and thankless solicitations of funds from total strangers.

Inevitably, this virtually unpaid and unrecognized bureaucracy of part and full time agents and secretaries became far more conscious of the effects of the day-to-day mechanical operations of reform societies than their socially-prominent employers. If the men at the top tended to view the mechanical innovations as merely the means to greater ends, the agents tended to become preoccupied with the methods themselves and their effects, often losing sight of the ends altogether. The latter group, viewing reform society activity from ground level, could evaluate the effectiveness of the national societies
in terms of human response and need. They appreciated that, however conservative their goals, the national societies had brought substantial social change to the local communities. They became conscious of the human requirements which were not being met.

For the simple reason that successful operation demanded energetic, full-time attention, the secretaryships of all of the national benevolent societies, soon after their foundings, fell from the hands of prominent but busy clergymen to younger men. By the mid-1820s most of the religious benevolent societies were directed by seminary graduates in their thirties, many of whom had served as missionaries and agents before taking their positions and who brought their energetic activism to their new jobs.

Jeremiah Evarts, who became corresponding secretary of the American Board in 1821, had established contacts and traveled widely for the society in his earlier capacity as editor of their periodical; Elias Cornelius, Andover (1819), who became secretary of the American Education Society in 1826, had served as an agent and missionary in the South; Noah Davis of the Baptist General Tract Society and Joseph Brown of the American Seamen's Friend Society both brought experience with city missions and seamen to their posts; William A. Hallock, made corresponding secretary of the American Tract Society in 1825, had been agent for the New England Tract Society. R. R.
Gurley was twenty-five years old when appointed secretary of the American Colonization Society in 1822; Absolom Peters, appointed secretary of the American Home Missionary Society in 1826, was an 1819 graduate of Princeton Seminary. The missionaries and agents which they employed, in most cases straight from seminary, were younger, more naively enthusiastic, and even more prone to view the methods of the societies, the organizational procedures, and their community effects, as ends in themselves.

The overall effect of this generational factor within the national societies was an increasing willingness to admit, accept, and encourage social change, not merely as a method of accomplishing religious goals but as a positive end in itself. As the missionaries and agents began to appreciate the power to raise funds and influence public opinion which organized local societies gave to the national benevolent organizations, they began to dream of greater social reformation for its own sake. Nurtured in the religious environment of their fathers, this younger group of reformers continued to view perfection in the moral terms of Christian tradition, but the morality was increasingly separated from the religious context from which it grew.

Although very much within the framework established by the older religious reform societies, the reform impulse of the 1820s was essentially aimed at changing society on earth, at making the nation conform to the
moral ideals of both republicanism and Christianity whether or not the changes were entirely acceptable to the formal Churches. In developing with and drawing upon the revivalism which was sweeping the Northern half of the nation under the leadership of Charles G. Finney, the new approach in national reform included much of the perfectionist logic which made an impression in all of the national Churches. But if the methods of the national reform societies paralleled that of denominational religion, the purposes to which they were applied were increasingly secular and removed from Church expansion itself. Until the early 1830s, the organized Churches did support the newer reforms wholeheartedly, but the initiative was from within the societies and potentially in conflict as the process of secularization continued.

II. Asylums for the Deaf and Dumb, Prisoners, and the Insane

In three areas of nineteenth-century reform, education of the deaf and dumb, prison reform, and care of the insane, which represented important efforts to correct the faults of society, the evangelicals were influential bystanders. Thomas Gallandet, founder of the American Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, was an Andover graduate of 1815. He aroused interest in this essentially secular reform in the Congregational-Presbyterian community. His school, along with the Pennsylvania Institution for the Deaf and Blind (1820), obtained some financial support
from within the Churches. Asylums of all sorts, however, possessed two characteristics which rendered unworkable the financial base of broadly scattered local societies present with the national societies: 1) the institution was rooted to a single locality, its benefits centered in a particular geographical area and not easily transmitted back to distant contributors in the tangible form available to Bible, tract, or missionary societies, and 2) with fixed overhead expenses, buildings to maintain as well as salaries to pay, they were permanently expensive. Governmental support in some form was essential. In the case of the American Asylum, an 1819 federal grant of land in Alabama provided additional income, a precedent which was extended to similar institutions as they were formed.¹

Although several of the state legislatures made overtures in that direction, only one Southern asylum came into being before 1830. The Kentucky Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb was founded at Danville in 1822 with state and later federal aid. Direction was placed in the hands of the Presbyterian trustees of Centre College. A Presbyterian clergyman, Rev. Mr. John R. Kerr, and his wife served as Superintendent and Matron in its first decade.²

Samuel Gridley Howe opened the first American asylum for the blind in New England in 1829, but it was two decades before similar institutions appeared in the South.  

Prisons were, by law, the responsibility of civil government, but as in the case of asylums for the deaf and dumb, the American evangelicals played a supporting role in the prison reform movement which developed on a national scale in the early nineteenth century. The most important single advocate of penitentiary reform was Louis Dwight, Andover graduate of 1819, then agent for the American Tract Society and the American Education Society, whose exposure to the awful conditions of Southern prisons while distributing Bibles to inmates caused him to devote a lifetime to this work. His American Prison Discipline Society, established in Boston in 1825 as a basis for the collection of reports and statistics on prisons and disciplinary reform, became the pre-eminent force in the professionalization of the field.

Prison conditions had been an object of concern to the first generation of eighteenth-century humanitarians. The S.P.C.K. and the early Wesleyan Methodists undertook prison visitation in the interests of saving


prisoners' souls if not of improving their earthly lot, and James Oglethorpe was motivated to found Georgia in part as a prisoners' refuge. Montesquieu, Beccaria, Voltaire, Filangieri, and Fielding all gave attention to the problem in the eighteenth century, and their ideas by direct and indirect contact had some currency and impact in America. More than any single individual, Quaker prison reformer John Howard, whose studies of European prison conditions spoke with a forcefulness exceeding all theoretical argument and whose biography became a fixture of every circulating library in America, awakened American concern for the subject. Pennsylvania, which from its Quaker background had a tradition of leniency built into its penal code, gave birth to the first prison reform society in 1776 and periodically took the lead in penitentiary reform throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.\(^5\)

In the South, prison reform had received some attention in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Delaware legislature, in close proximity to the experimentation in Philadelphia, was pressured to consider the establishment of a penitentiary in its 1776

session and periodically thereafter although it never wavered from its antiquated penal code of corporal punishment until well into the twentieth century. George K. Taylor emerged as a successful champion of the penitentiary system in the Virginia assembly session of 1796, and Thomas Jefferson, a close student of Beccaria, designed a structure embodying the principle of solitary confinement which was built in Richmond in 1800, although it was emasculated by the timeless forces of legislative economy. Following the lead of its parent state, Kentucky authorized the construction of a penitentiary in 1798 which was to provide solitary confinement in its early years. Robert J. Turnbull of South Carolina published an account of the prison and penal system of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, 1796, which was reprinted in London, Dublin, and Paris, and was at least available, if not influential, in the South. The Maryland legislature, basing its effort directly on the example of Pennsylvania, authorized construction of a penitentiary in 1801 which was completed ten years later. Georgia, responding in part to the urging of Baptist evangelical clergyman Henry Holcombe who was familiar with the Philadelphia system, authorized the building of a penitentiary in 1811.  

6 Robert G. Caldwell, The Penitentiary Movement in Delaware, 1776 to 1829 (Wilmington, Del., 1942), 58-238; Edward A. Wyatt IV, "George Keith Taylor, 1769-1815, Virginia Federalist and Humanitarian," William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine, 2nd Ser., 16 (1936), 1-18; Alice Felt Tyler, Freedom's Ferment, Phases of
By the second decade of the century, the creation of a modern penitentiary system had become a matter of state pride. With the exception of Delaware, which was really too small to support such a facility, every Southern state on the Atlantic seaboard as well as Kentucky and Tennessee had created or reformed an existing penitentiary by 1830, establishing solitary confinement of prisoners, physical exercise, and productive labor (hopefully which would make the institutions self-supporting) as the ideals if not the actual realities.

Maryland began construction of a wall to enclose four acres of exercise grounds, solitary cells, and a separate building for females in 1826 and instituted a weaving workshop which actually did pay prison expenses in the early years. Congress authorized the building of a penitentiary in the District of Columbia in 1816 which

opened in the late 1820s. With legislative assistance, Warden Samuel P. Parsons, a thoroughly professional student of modern penology, reformed the system of discipline in the Virginia Penitentiary, collected statistics, and attempted to bring about modernizing architectural changes. The North Carolina legislature created a committee to make a comparative study of prison systems in 1828 and built a modern penitentiary in the following decade. The Kentucky Penitentiary was enlarged in 1823 and 1829; a professional keeper, Joel Scott, was hired, and a thorough reform of discipline, work, and solitary confinement instituted. Tennessee authorized construction of an up-to-date penitentiary in 1829 and placed it in the hands of the former assistant keeper of the Kentucky institution.7

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the 1820s, two Southerners, Edward Livingston of New Orleans and Charles Caldwell of Lexington, Kentucky, published important treatises on prison discipline.\(^8\)

The evangelical community played a minor role in nineteenth-century prison reform. The religious press gave only occasional coverage to matters of prison discipline.\(^9\) But more importantly, both the Auburn (complete solitude at night, collective work in the day) and the Pennsylvania (constant solitude) systems of solitary confinement, models whose distinction was never very important in crowded Southern penitentiaries which had trouble providing any solitude, made moral training a crucial feature of their formulae for criminal rehabilitation. While solitary confinement and the prohibition of conversation between prisoners was conceived partially as a punishment, partly a method of averting the spread

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\(^8\)Edward Livingston, Introductory Report to the Code of Prison Discipline: Explanatory to the Principles on Which the Code is Founded. Being a Part of the System of Penal Law, Prepared for the State of Louisiana (Phila., 1827); Charles Caldwell, New Views of Penitentiary Discipline and Moral Reform (Phila., 1829). See also: Beccaria, An Exposition of the Penitentiary System of Punishment (Richmond, 1821), written by an individual "having an agency in the management of" the Virginia Penitentiary.

of corruption among prisoners, and partly an effort to get prisoners to meditate on the awesome magnitude of their sins, it was also an opportunity to instill morality in unprincipled minds.

Most of the disciplinary codes enacted by state legislatures and prison wardens after the middle of the second decade of the century emphasized education of prisoners and called for regular Sunday services and the making available of Bibles and moral literature. This was of course an open invitation to local missionaries, Bible and tract society agents, and they took full advantage of the opportunity. The Baltimore clergy began interdenominational services in the Maryland penitentiary after 1810, and Sunday schools were instituted within the walls in the 1820s. Regulations for the new penitentiary in Washington (1830) required morning and evening services under the direction of a chaplain and the placing of Bibles and religious books in every cell. The Keeper of the Georgia Penitentiary was required to periodically distribute "moral and religious books as shall be recommended by the inspectors."^10

By 1830, remarkable progress had been made in the field of penology. In spite of the fact that legislatures showed themselves far more willing to pass noble prison reform legislation than they were to appropriate sufficient funds to carry them into effect, in spite of the fact that

^10 See sources cited in footnote 7.
overcrowding quickly destroyed the effectiveness of even the best institutions, the principle of scientific treatment of the criminal had been firmly established. Complementing the work of the urban missionaries in the slums and docksides of America's cities, the growing number of professional prison administrators, with the invaluable encouragement and aid of Louis Dwight's American Discipline Society, began for the first time to collect statistics on prisoners and to attempt to understand the nature and causes of criminal behavior. Their findings, particularly of lack of education and moral conviction and of the devastating influence of drunkenness, were an important incentive for expanding the moral reform societies.

In the third area of early nineteenth-century reform involving the creation of asylums, the care of the insane, the evangelicals played almost no active part. Five Insane Asylums were built in the South before 1830: the asylum in Williamsburg, chartered in 1768 and for almost half a century the only public institution of its kind in the country; the Lunatic Asylum at Columbia, South Carolina, begun in 1821, but not opened until 1828; the Kentucky Lunatic Asylum, opened in 1824; and the Western Lunatic Asylum at Stanton, Virginia, opened in 1828. Maryland began appropriating funds for a hospital-poorhouse-insane asylum in 1798 but did not take over active control until thirty years later.¹¹

¹¹Norman Dain, Disordered Minds: The First Century
Because of the logical materialist tendencies of most of the medical men who dealt with the insane and because nineteenth-century insanity was often tied to religious fanaticism, assistance of the evangelicals in any form was not particularly welcome. But as in the case of penitentiaries, the growing ability of men to view insanity as a disease susceptible of scientific cure and the efforts made to define the nature and cause of insanity strengthened the ideological determination of the entire reform movement.

III. Moral Societies

If the evangelical reformers were, by necessity, forced to play a secondary role in the construction and management of asylums, they were very much within their element in the increasingly radical reform impulse aimed at changing human behavior in the country at large through modification of public opinion. The Churches, with their long traditions of congregational discipline, had always supported and encouraged civil legislation upholding moral

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of Eastern State Hospital in Williamsburg, Virginia 1766-1866 (Williamsburg, Va., 1971); Emerson Davis, The Half Century; or, A History of Changes that Have Taken Place, and Events that Have Transpired, Chiefly in the United States, between 1800 and 1850 (Boston, 1851), 114-18; John Percy Wade, History of the Maryland Hospital for the Insane, Catonsville, Md. (Balt., 1897), 3-9; "The Lunatic Asylum at Columbia," Charleston Observer, 2 (1828), 14; "Lunatic Asylum of Kentucky," Wesleyan Journal, 1 (1825-26), no. 18; Kentucky, Report on the Transylvania University and Lunatic Asylum (Lexington, Ky., 1824), 45-50.
behavior in the population as a whole. Well before the nineteenth century, they had given this impulse organizational form.

Through the efforts of Rev. Mr. Thomas Bray, founder of the S.P.G., the Society for the Reformation of Manners (1692) which flourished briefly in the reforming atmosphere of England following the Glorious Revolution was known to American colonists. A pamphlet account of the organization was made part of the basic parochial libraries which Bray established throughout the Southern colonies. Maryland alone received 500 copies. Through the efforts of S.P.G. missionary Thomas Crawford, a Society for the Reformation of Manners was formed in Kent County, Delaware, in 1706. In the tradition of the London model, this society of private citizens, with the cooperation and encouragement of the local Justice of the Peace, reported and brought to punishment persons guilty of Sabbath breaking, drunkenness, or flagrant sexual abuses. By 1708, Crawford could report that "we punish all that offended, but now our Work is easy. Our meetings were

once monthly, but now are quarterly, and then have little or no business, possibly not one found guilty in that time in all the County."\(^{13}\) A Society for Reformation of Manners, and Punishing of Vice, Profaneness and Immorality, based upon a copy of the seventy-year-old pamphlet, was formed by laymen in Queen Anne's County, Maryland, in 1763, and it is probable that similar organizations appeared in the colonial South, the existence of which have been lost to the historical record.\(^{14}\)

The organizational form, briefly reviewed by a coalition of British Anglicans and Methodists in 1757 and more permanently by the Clapham Evangelicals as the Proclamation Society (1787) and the Society for the Suppression of Vice (1802), was given new attention in American evangelical circles as well at the turn of the century.\(^{15}\)

\(^{13}\)Thomas Crawford to Mr. Stubbs, Dover Hundred, April 8, 1706, and Thomas Crawford to Sec. S. P. G., Kent Co., Aug. 31, 1708, printed in: William S. Perry, ed., Historical Collections Relating to the American Colonial Church, vo. 5, Delaware (n.p., 1878), 3-4, 16-19.


For the more secular forms of vigilence groups in the South, see: Richard M. Brown, The South Carolina Regulators (Cambridge, Mass., 1963); George Gibson, "Stop Thief! Constitution and Minutes of the Friends to Justice, 1786-1794," Delaware History, 9 (1964-65), 91-110.

\(^{15}\)The title of the 1787 organization was derived from a special proclamation of George III against vice, issued with the encouragement of William Wilberforce and his associates. Quinlan, Victorian Prelude, 33, 54-55, 202-7.
North Carolina Presbyterian clergyman Samuel E. McCorkle, in a 1798 sermon on Sabbath-keeping, noticed favorably "a number of excellent rules and regulations recently entered into by many respectable characters in the higher ranks of life in London, in Edinburg" and by magistrates in Pennsylvania for "publickly proposing a strict and impartial execution of the existing laws against all breakers of the Sabbath" and urged his audience to do likewise.16 A secret Moral Society was formed at Yale in 1797, and its most illustrious member, Lyman Beecher, published The Practibility of Suppressing Vice, by Means of Societies Instituted for that Purpose (New London, Connecticut, 1803). With his characteristic energy, he aroused similar interests among his wide Congregational and Presbyterian contacts.17 The "Report on the State of Religion" which was prepared by the Presbyterian General Assembly in 1811 included the statement that "we hope that associations for the suppression of vice and promotion of morals, will be generally established, so as to arrest the wicked, and support faithful magistrates in enforcing the

16 Samuel E. McCorkle, A Discourse on the Doctrine and Duties of Keeping the Sabbath (Salisbury, N.C., 1798), 29-36. For mention of "watch and ward societies" in western Pennsylvania, c. 1800, see: Marian Silvens, "Churches and Social Control on the Western Pennsylvania Frontier," Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine, 19 (1936), 133.

laws." The Congregationalists took up the idea with enthusiasm, and Moral Societies aimed at discouraging swearing, Sabbath-breaking, idleness, and intemperance became common in New England, New York State, and Ohio. Conventions of delegates from these groups were held annually in western New York in the early 1820s. Samuel Mills and Daniel Smith, on their missionary tour in the West, 1814-15, distributed copies of the constitutions of Moral Societies along with other tracts. With encouragement from Presbyterian synods and presbyteries, a few Moral Societies came into brief existence in the South, although there was no broad movement or coordinated effort.

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18 Presbyterian Church, Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive (Phila., 1847), 485, 682, 685.


20 Samuel J. Mills and Daniel Smith, Report of a Missionary Tour through that Part of the United States which Lies West of the Alleghany Mountains, Performed under the Direction of the Massachusetts Missionary Society (Andover, Mass., 1815), 41-42.

21 New Castle Presbytery and the Synod of Virginia both urged formation of Moral Societies in 1814; the Synod of North Carolina made similar recommendations in 1815, 1816, 1818, 1819, and ordered the printing of a "model constitution for a Moral Society" in 1820. In 1821, their minutes reported that several societies had been formed. McMaster notes the existence of a Moral Society in Pendleton District, South Carolina, following the War of 1812. An interdenominational Guardian Society of
The Moral Societies, somewhat akin to vigilantism of the Western frontier, seem to have been envisioned and been effective as temporary expedients. They arose to meet instances of flagrant immorality; if they had "the right people" behind them, they effectively and quickly served their purpose; if not, they were useless. Either way, they were too short-lived to make a major impact on society. Their purposes were too broad to form a popular reform movement, and their ultimate authority was not of their own making but based on the potential of civil authorities doing their duty with citizen support. Once this dereliction of civic duty and public responsibility had been corrected, the societies had lost their reason for existence.

IV. Anti-Dueling Societies

A reform movement which could capture and retain popular interest could only be built around a particular

sin. Inevitably, the long tradition of discipline within the churches crossed paths with the growing impulse toward national reform. The marriage of the two resulted in national reform societies aimed not at enlarging the Kingdom of Christ but at effecting moral reformation. Because of the nature of republican society, the only method available was the influencing of public opinion, hopefully to a sufficient degree to produce legislation. In taking up matters of personal behavior beyond the memberships of their churches, the reformers were inviting controversy.

The first of the "crying national sins" to achieve the honor of organized popular opposition was dueling. The tradition of combat between men of courage and honor was a medieval vestige brought to the colonies by the eighteenth-century British army. It gained an indigenous foundation in the Revolutionary and War-of-1812 eras of military preparedness. Dueling was portrayed as a recourse of aristocrats, and in the post-Revolutionary South, where militia duty made every planter an officer, there were many who claimed the distinction. Plantation society, embodying a rural need for excitement, a haughty authoritarianism and constant air of potential violence born of slavery, a love of gambling, drinking, and romantic intrigue, provided conditions far more conducive to dueling than small-town life in the North.  

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22 For an interesting theory on Southern manners,
The same national emotionalism of the Anglo-French conflict which produced America's national political parties and the beginnings of widespread humanitarian organization was conducive to gentlemanly combat as well. In a six-week period alone in 1800, there were, in the country, twenty-one duels resulting in six deaths.\footnote{Pendleton, "The Influence of the Evangelical Churches," 247-53.}

Mere opposition to the practice was not a departure from accepted ethical thought. Almost no one, including most duelists themselves, approved of it in principle. The problem was that it was tolerated as a necessary evil by the military officialdom and by politicians, if not by the average man, and these were the very authorities who by the passage and enforcement of legislation and regulation could have put a stop to it.

The only possible method of effectively curtailing the duel was to arouse public opinion to such a point that governmental bodies and the military would be forced to legislate and to enforce their prohibitions and that polite society then would refuse to countenance duelists among themselves. The Churches and men of church affiliation, with very few duelists among their ranks, took a logical lead in organizing opposition, but they could

\footnote{\textit{The Southerner and the Laws}, Journal of Southern History, 6 (1940), 15-17.}
rely on some political support. Walter Dulany Addison, the aristocratic Episcopal clergyman of Alexandria, conducted a fearless one-man campaign against the practice, arresting and threatening the likes of John Randolph and a nephew of Jefferson's, making the Washington area at least a far less hospitable site for engaging in such conflict. The national tragedy of Alexander Hamilton's death in 1804 produced the first broad denunciation. Maryland's Bishop Kemp, in an oration on his death, came out squarely against the practice. The Charleston Association of Baptists sent a petition to the legislature of South Carolina, and the Presbytery of Baltimore, noting that dueling could only be "combatted by direct influence on public opinion," instructed their delegates to the General Assembly "to use their endeavours to obtain the passing of a resolution by that venerable body enjoining upon the clergy of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America that they scrupulously refuse to join in rendering any kind of funeral honours to any person who has fallen in a duel, or is known even to have fought a Duel, or to have given or accepted a challenge for that purpose." The General Assembly passed a strongly-worded resolution against this "remnant of Gothic barbarism" and recommended that Presbyterian clergymen not attend

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funerals of fallen duelists and that they observe "a just sense of guilt" and "satisfactory evidence of repentance" in any past participant in a challenge before admitting him to membership or the privileges of the Church.25

The General Convention of the Episcopal Church, which because of its social prestige possessed real influence in such a matter, passed a resolution against clerical participation in duelists' funerals in 1808, amending it three years later if "the person giving or receiving a challenge has afterwards exhibited evidences of sincere repentance."26

The problem, in a society in which church members were yet a distinct minority, especially among politicians and professional men, was to reach beyond the limits of denominational influence.27


27 The Medical Society of South Carolina adopted a lengthy code of ethics in 1810 which included a prohibition against dueling. This rule was suspended within a year because of pressure from members. Joseph I. Waring, A
Episcopal rector of St. Paul's Church in Baltimore, suggested in an 1811 sermon that pressure be brought to bear on the press to curtail the publication of exciting accounts of challenges. The Grand Jury of Charleston District, South Carolina, in 1823, undoubtedly with the urging of some pious clergymen or laymen, urged a Constitutional amendment disqualifying duelists and seconds from national office. A correspondent of The Missionary (Augusta, Georgia) in August, 1825, called for the formation of a national Society for the Suppression of Duelling in Washington which would keep a Roll of Infamy listing every known duelist and publish it annually throughout the country. Auxiliary societies would be created in every county, their members to agree neither to vote nor have business dealings with those listed and to urge the public to "shun him as you would any other notoriously infamous person, such as an assassin, a thief or a liar."  

Three regional anti-dueling societies did eventually appear, all in the South. The first and most important of these, The Charleston Anti-Duelling Association, was formed at a meeting attended by the leading clergymen of all the city's churches, the Episcopal and Catholic bishops,  


28Frederick Beasley, A Sermon on Duelling, Delivered in Christ Church, Baltimore, April 28, 1811 (Baltimore, 1811); "Duelling," Missionary, 5 (1823-24), 22; Anti-Duellist, "To the Editor of the Missionary," Missionary, 7 (1825-26), 8.
and prominent members of Low-country society, among them Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. The stated purposes were to see that laws against dueling were enforced and to make the practice socially unacceptable by destroying the idea that a sense of honor made conflict necessary; one committee was established to petition the legislature against slanderous publications which were frequent causes of duels; another was formed to launch an educational campaign in schools and colleges. An Anti-Duelling Society of Savannah was formed by a similarly august cross section of this city's social and religious leaders in January, 1827, and a third organization was created in Georgetown, South Carolina, in December of the same year. The Savannah organization actively sought the prosecution of a duelist in Augusta in January, 1829, and they established an essay prize which attracted twenty-one competitors. Undoubtedly to their later embarrassment, the prize was awarded to William Jay of New York, soon to gain considerable reputation as an active advocate of antislavery.  

Overall, the small but enthusiastic campaign against dueling was a failure. A society which tolerated congressmen, senators, and presidential candidates who had participated in duels simply could not be brought to total

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29 For the societies, see Appendix B; William Jay, An Essay on Duelling, For Which the Gold Medal was Awarded, by the Savannah Anti-Duelling Association (Savannah, Ga., 1829).
condemnation of the practice. Even in Charleston, where strong organized effort was effected, primary leadership was left to Catholic Bishop England, who, if he possessed great respect and energy, was not ideally suited to appeal to the segment of society most commonly involved. The rise of militant pro-slavery sentiment in the thirties would restrict criticism of Southern "institutions" of any sort. Gradually, as church membership did become the norm even for politicians, a broader national opposition developed, at least potentially, but it was not until the Confederate defeat that the practice was effectively curtailed in the South as a whole. At best, the campaign against dueling was an invaluable lesson in frustration for the evangelicals. It showed clearly, that moral change could be effected only through the transformation of public opinion, and, it demonstrated what a difficult task that was.

V. Sabbath Reform

The second evangelical foray into the modification of public behavior, Sabbath reform, was somewhat better organized on the national level but far more controversial than opposition to dueling. Honoring the Fourth Commandment, of course, had a tradition in civil and church law antedating Christianity itself. Although the example and teachings of Jesus had imposed a measure of humane reason on the legalism of the Jewish Sabbath, strict Christian practice opposed unnecessary activity of any sort diverting
from the worship due the Creator on the Lord's Day. Statutory prohibitions in the Southern colonies were phrased with all of the strictness of Puritan New England, even if dispersed settlement made enforcement far less practical. By the Revolution, the mere breaking of the Sabbath, unless compounded with another sin such as drunkenness or fighting, was not a cause for civil prosecution in any Southern colony, but it was continually grounds for discipline in the active congregations of every denomination.

To the Churches, it was more than a matter of moral behavior. As the 1814 Pastoral Letter of the Presbyterian General Assembly explained it, "the Lord has instituted the Sabbath as a sign between him and his people—a visible test of their sincerity. If they violate the duties of this day, or fold their hands in supineness and indifference when they are violated by others, he will regard their offerings as hypocritical and vain." To men who retained a providential vision of world events, Sabbath-keeping was the most visible sign by which God could judge a nation's promise. The subject was brought up with regularity in Church judicial bodies of all denominations.

It was an act of Congress, passed in 1810, requiring post-offices to open for one hour on Sunday (and the con-

30. Presbyterian Church, Minutes of the General Assembly, 1789-1820, 569-70.
sequent transportation of mail on that day), which inspired the first public action. An act of 1825, authorizing full-day postal operations (not merely enacted but defended vigorously in anti-clerical tones by Richard M. Johnson's report of 1830) created an issue of some popular appeal.  

The Presbyterians and Congregationalists, whose discipline had always given special emphasis to Sabbath-keeping, took the issue most to heart. The Presbyterian General Assembly demonstrated its determination in 1810 and 1812 when it upheld the Synod of Pittsburg's exclusion from Church ordinances of a legally-appointed postmaster for merely obeying the United States law, and their encouragement of Moral Societies between 1811 and 1814 was aimed at this sin in particular.  

In 1812, the General Assembly petitioned Congress for repeal of the obnoxious postal law without success. Lyman Beecher, who was neither capable of accepting defeat in the pursuit of righteousness nor able to confine his inexhaustable pious energy to immediate pastoral duties, broadened the effort by successfully urging the 1814 Congregational Association of Connecticut to countenance and encourage a public petition drive. Its adoption by the Presbyterian General Assembly gave the effort a national base. Two thousand blank petitions were printed

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32 Presbyterian Church, Minutes of the General Assembly, 1789-1820, 456, 508.
and distributed to appointed agents in every presbytery, North and South, and a committee was appointed to obtain concurrence from other denominations. The petitions were rejected by Congress on technicalities, but the General Assembly, convinced that in spite of refusal "the very act of petitioning will have no small effect, both to animate the friends, and to weaken the enemies of this cause," renewed the effort in 1815. They were again rejected. 33

If the Presbyterian Church then momentarily turned its energies inward, strengthening its own discipline against Sabbath-breaking in general and particularly travel on the Lord's Day, the subject and the method of attack were not abandoned. Growing concern over the profanation of the day continued to surface in spite of the fact that it temporarily lacked firm national direction between 1815 and the late 1820s. The Journeymen Printers of Charleston, casting their proposals in strictly religious terms, held a public meeting in January, 1827, to sound out public opinion on the idea of curtailing Sunday printing (meaning only that Monday newspapers would not contain news from

Sunday's mail). Bishop Kemp placed particular emphasis on Sabbath observance in his 1827 address to the Maryland Episcopal Convention.

The Presbyterian General Assembly had already begun action which would result in a national reform society. At the 1826 session, discontent crystallized into resolutions defining the evil, urging ministerial exhortation and congregational discipline, and recommending that ministers give preference to public carriers (steamboats, stage lines, canal boats) which did not operate Sunday schedules. Commissioners were sent to other clerical bodies, and agents for each Synod were appointed to formulate broader measures which could be taken in concert "to combat the evil."

In Anniversary Week of 1828 (at which time the annual meetings of all the denominational and inter-denominational societies based in New York were conveniently scheduled to permit the pious to attend all of them and still get to Philadelphia for the General Assembly and the Quaker city's equivalent festivities), a predominantly Presbyterian gathering sprinkled with enough

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34 "At a Meeting of 'Journeymen Printers,'" Wesleyan Journal, 2 (1826-27), 70.
36 Presbyterian Church, Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States from A.D. 1821 to A.D. 1835, Inclusive (Phila., 1850), 182-83.
Baptist and Episcopal worthies to maintain appearances convened in the meeting room of the new American Tract Society headquarters and created the General Union for Promoting the Observance of the Christian Sabbath. The South was represented by John Holt Rice of Virginia, R. R. Gurley of the Colonization Society, and several other Presbyterians; five of the Vice Presidents and two of the directors who were elected were from below the Mason and Dixon Line. Its declared purpose was to employ the "influence of personal example, of moral suasion" to restore the Holy Sabbath. In keeping with its aims, the Sabbath Union required a pledge, not money, of members. They were to agree "to refrain from all secular employments on that day," to not travel on Sunday except in case of absolute necessity, and like the Presbyterian clergymen two years before, they were urged to boycott those stage lines which scheduled such runs. 37 Immediately, the organization set in motion another petition campaign and solicited support from not only the denominations but other benevolent societies as well. The American Tract Society was only too glad to find a new market and to promote their extensive list of Sabbatarian literature.

37 The pledge is included in: General Union for Promoting the Observance of the Christian Sabbath, The Address of the General Union for Promoting the Observance of the Christian Sabbath, to the People of the United States. Accompanied by Minutes of the Proceedings in its Formation, its Constitution and Officers (N.Y., 1828), 7-8.
Agents for the national societies and society patrons were at least made to examine their activities on the Lord's day and if not correct, at least rationalize and feel pangs of guilt over all manner of Sunday recreation and travel. The American Seaman's Friend Society in 1828-29 launched an effort to discourage the sailing of merchant vessels on the first day of the week.

The Sabbath campaign, if it gave substance to a fundamental element of the evangelical vision for social well-being, aroused equally basic emotions among the opposition. For the first time, a national reform society, aimed not simply at spreading the word of Christ, not simply at creating a popular sense of morality in a growing nation, not even at putting an effective end to a widely disapproved evil as in the case of dueling, was attempting to alter the behavior of men and women who neither desired the change nor accepted the arguments upon which it was based. To non-churchgoers, Sunday travel and Sabbath mails were desirable conveniences and any effort to stop them, an act of clerical repression. The employment of moral boycotts, particularly in light of

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38 Even as stalwart a pillar of evangelicalism as Jeremiah Evarts, secretary of the American Board, admitted having doubts over whether it was wrong to travel on the Sabbath when occupied in furthering God's work. See E. C. Tracy, Memoir of the Life of Jeremiah Evarts, Esq. (Boston, 1845), 232-33, 242-43.

39 Fifty dollars was raised in Charleston in 1829 as a prize for the best tract against Sunday sailing. Sailor's Magazine, 1 (1828-29), 218.
the fact that like it or not United States law did require daily transportation of the mail, smacked of interference with the system of free enterprise. Like the American Society for the Conversion of Jews, the Sabbath Union appeared even to many religious citizens illiberal in its foundations; to many non-Presbyterians, it appeared to be a vehicle for gaining denominational advantages; to the opponents of the Churches, it was proof positive of the ambitions of political power which they had always seen behind every instance of denominational and reform society growth.

In the South, there were additional factors limiting the appeal of this reform. Distances between homes and villages were greater. Even attendance at church required enough local travel to weaken the logic of the prohibition, and for long-distance trips, there were too few alternative modes of transport to permit discriminating choice of carriers. Most Southerners, including many lay Presbyterians, were Jeffersonian-Jacksonian Democrats, who, in opposing Sabbath mails, would go against their party. On plantations, Sunday was traditionally the day in which slaves were free to labor and socialize for themselves, and to prohibit either recreation or business to Negroes was indeed repressive. And, to a people already wary of reform which might shake the foundations of the "peculiar institution," the petition campaign of 1828-29 was probably far too reminiscent of the antislavery petitions
which had occasionally been forwarded to Congress and the legislatures of the upper South.  

Of twenty-six auxiliary societies noted in the 1830 annual report of the Sabbath Union, only two (Virginia, Tennessee) were in the South. An independent Savannah Union for Promoting the Observance of the Sabbath also had been formed in July, 1828, but its primary object was local. Of 467 petitions received by Congress in 1829, but 87 came from the South, two-thirds of these from Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Leading Presbyterian, Baptist, Episcopal, and Methodist laymen of Baltimore and Charleston did affix their names, but others were noticeably absent. The petitions met with their accustomed failure in Congress. As in the case of the anti-dueling campaign, there had been valuable lessons in both the techniques and the limitations of public opinion reform for the religious community, but the price, in the form of ill-will to religious reform, had been high.

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40 For brief treatment of these early petitions, see: Alice D. Adams, The Neglected Period of Antislavery in America (1808-1831) (Boston, 1908. Radcliffe College Monograph, No. 14), 48-50.

41 An Account of the Memorials Presented to Congress during its Last Session, by Numerous Friends of their Country and its Institutions; Praying that the Mails May Not be Transported, Nor Post-Offices Kept Open, on the Sabbath (N.Y., May, 1829), 5-7, 25-29.
VI. Temperance

In point of organization and effectiveness, the temperance movement proved to be the most important of the national moral reform efforts. For the South, which needless to say would not participate in the antislavery impulse of the 1830s, it was the last of the innovative crusades, the culmination in terms methodological and ideological sophistication of three decades of organized reform efforts.42

An opposition to drunkenness was traditional to Christianity from its beginning and common to most civilizations. It was a periodic disciplinary concern of all of the American Churches at every level in the judicial process, and, with Sabbath desecration, drunkenness was viewed with particular nervousness as an obvious sign to God of public immorality, offensive as a blot on both the religious and republican character of the American people.

The evidence in no way suggests that alcoholism was a greater problem in the early nineteenth century than it had been in the colonial period, but it was a more obvious one. The rise of cities and towns exposed personal drinking habits to the public eye which could be more easily hidden in the rural setting. Obtaining liquor was necessarily

42 Three national reform societies of the period have been omitted from this chapter: The American Colonization Society and the African Education Society are dealt with in Chapter 7. The American Peace Society had no following in the South.
divorced from the agricultural process which produced it, and with urban growth, there was a proliferation of grog shops, always more bothersome to the righteous mentality than taverns and country stores because they existed solely to gratify man's appetite for drink.

Historians of the early temperance movement have generally overlooked the vital role of urban missions, penitentiaries, and insane asylums in statistically establishing the seeming magnitude and nature of the problem on a scientific basis. A committee of reform-minded citizens formed in Wilmington, Delaware, in 1818, reported that their town of slightly over four thousand inhabitants contained over fifty houses where liquor was "illegally retailed" at an estimated annual cost of $18,250 a year. They concluded that 19/20 of the adult wards of the county poor house were "the victims of this unhappy passion."43

After close personal observation, the city missionary of the Female Domestic Missionary Society of Charleston reported in November, 1820, that three-fourths of the inmates of the Poor House, over two-thirds of those in the Marine Hospital, half of the pensioners of the Ladies Benevolent Society, and two-thirds to three-fourths of the charges of the Orphan Asylum were reduced to their condition by intemperance. They projected that alcoholism

43 Delaware Gazette (Wilmington, Del.), Dec. 12, 1818, p. 3.
imposed a tax of $40-60,000 on the city, irrespective of the family suffering and wasted time which defied economic measurement.44

The trustees of Baltimore's Alms House at Calverton, among them leaders in the city's benevolent societies, directed an inquiry as to why, "in a country where the means of obtaining a comfortable subsistence are so abundant," there could be so much poverty which was "constantly augmenting, both in magnitude and depravity." They closely interviewed the 623 adults admitted in 1825-6, and found that 554 were positively reduced to their condition by drunkenness and that "it is believed that a considerable portion of the remaining 69 were likewise reduced to the same necessity, either remotely or directly by the same cause."45 Joel Scott, Keeper of the Kentucky Penitentiary, reported in 1830 that over two-thirds of the inmates "attribute their confinement directly or indirectly to intemperance."46 In his 1827 baccalaureate address at Cumberland College in 1827, Philip Lindsley, who was abreast of all developments in the world of religious benevolence, called on the students

44 "A Number of Persons . . ." Southern Evangelical Intelligencer, 3 (1821-22), 253-55.
45 Baltimore, Report of the Trustees of the Alms-House, for Baltimore City and County--1827 (Baltimore, 1827), 6-7.
to help deliver the nation "from the grasp of this many-headed monster" which was scientifically proven to cause three-quarters to nine-tenths of the nation's crime and poverty. 47

There had been a drift in the direction of temperance reform even before statistics and revivalistic perfectionism added the new sense of immediacy to the problem. The mere strengthening of national Church organization instilled a certain systemization to long-standing efforts and provided a vehicle for diffusing new attitudes. By the 1750s, Quakers had registered disciplinary opposition to excessive use of alcoholic beverages at festive occasions; by the early nineteenth century they

47 Philip Lindsley, "Baccalaureate Address at Cumberland College, 1827," in Le Roy J. Halsey, ed., The Works of Philip Lindsley, D.D., Formerly Vice-President and President Elect of the College of New Jersey, Princeton; And Late President of the University of Nashville, Tennessee (Phila., 1866; 3 vols.), vol. I, 121-54.

The correlation between intemperance and poverty and crime came to be seen as an accepted fact by the late 1820s. Robert Mills, whose eminently readable gazetteer of South Carolina was based on thorough knowledge of the people of the state, reported that "pauperism may be traced most generally from the dram shop, which has become the licensed hiding place of the vagabond and dissipated men." The preamble to the constitution of the Baltimore Temperance Society began with: "Whereas the great and increasing evil of intemperance is deplored by all good men, and acknowledged to be the prolific source of most of the pauperism and crimes which have lately multiplied so fearfully in this country ..." Robert Mills, Statistics of South Carolina, Including a View of its Natural, Civil, and Military History, General and Particular (Charleston, S.C., 1826), 440-41; The Constitution and Address of the Baltimore Temperance Society; to Which is Added An Address, Delivered before the Society by N. R. Smith (Baltimore, 1830), 4.
were disowning tavern keepers and distillers and strenuously opposing distribution of liquor at harvest time.

The Presbyterian Church, whose Scottish and Irish founders displayed an infatuation with spiritous beverages unmatched in colonial America, gradually imposed Philadelphia manners and moral sensibilities on its national constituency. Between 1790 and 1820 they brought about an official elimination of stimulants from the festivities of clerical associations, weddings, funerals, and baptisms.  

From the second decade of the nineteenth century on, as urban missionaries, citizens groups, and professional administrators of asylums and prisons began to bolster temperance sentiments within the Churches with statistical fact, city and state governments felt the weight of public pressure in favor of legislative action. Maryland's Bishop Kemp, who ironically would be killed in an accident caused by a drunken stage driver eight years later, urged the members of the Episcopal state convention of 1819  

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to prudently exert themselves against the "multitude of little stores, where laboring people meet, particularly on Saturdays, and engage in every kind of vice . . . ."49 Citizens of both Baltimore (which contained an estimated five hundred grog shops) and Wilmington petitioned their state legislatures. Urban missionaries in Washington and Charleston called for effective laws controlling the sale of liquor in small quantities. Leaders of the Society for the Prevention of Pauperism in the City of Baltimore considered grog shops to be a primary cause of poverty and crime and made their destruction a major part of their controversial reform program.50

The gradually building temperance pressure between 1815 and 1826 did produce a general review and reform of liquor legislation in many of the states and cities of the South. But the translation of reform sentiment into effective governmental controls was impossible in the absence of a professional governmental bureaucracy, something which would not develop in most of America until late in

49 Protestant Episcopal Church, Diocese of Maryland, Journal (1819), 10; United States Catholic Miscellany, 7 (1827-28), 147.

the nineteenth century. The problem of drunkenness was most obvious and acute in the cities. State legislatures, dominated by rural interests, if willing to pass laws, were not concerned enough or constitutionally empowered to enforce the law on the local level. Municipalities, not yet possessing real police forces, were largely dependent upon the good will of the local community leaders for social controls of any sort.

What success the evangelical reformers had enjoyed in all of their efforts had been based upon their shrewd realization that social change could only come through reaching the individual, through transforming attitudes and behavior of a sufficient number of persons to create a base of public opinion and enthusiasm which could influence society as a whole. With temperance, there were no alternatives. Effective enforcement of legislation could be effected only by first convincing social and economic leaders that heavy use of alcoholic beverages was bad for the country; effective social reform could only be brought about when these community leaders modified their own drinking habits and a sufficient percentage of the general public followed and supported their lead.

Although the almost instantaneous acceptance of the temperance cause in the country as a whole can only be explained by this preliminary development of favorable sentiment, the actual spread of temperance societies was, to a greater extent than in any of the other reforms,
the direct and consequent result of national organization and the shrewdness of the national society's brilliantly contrived appeal to American evangelical emotions.

Reacting to public outrage over two fatal accidents caused by drunkenness, a congenial group of evangelical Bostonians and clerical leaders from Andover met at the Park Street Church on January 10, 1826, and founded the American Society for the Suppression of Intemperance (changed, two years later, to the American Temperance Society). Although it would be six years before the national organization would officially adopt the pledge of total abstinence rather than temperate use of alcoholic beverages as its ideal, it possessed from the first a revolutionary quality which set it apart from the national reforms which preceded it.

Historians, in emphasizing the interaction between the temperance crusade and the revivalism which swept the North and West under the leadership of Charles G. Finney and writing from a vantage point which knows the failures of national Prohibition, have portrayed the national temperance movement as a frenzied exercise of pious emotion. From the beginning in 1826, even before

51 Foster, An Errand of Mercy, 171-72.

the adoption of total abstinence, temperance society membership was based on a moral pledge, upon a personal commitment requiring (for the drinker at least) a fundamental break with past behavior closely akin to the conversionary experience. The similarities were not lost upon the clerical emissaries of both the American Temperance Society and revivalistic religion, and in frontier areas, particularly the Burned Over District of New York, temperance society and church foundings became intimately associated in the heated revivalism of the late 1820s.

But, it is historically inaccurate to portray the temperance movement in its earliest period, whatever methods encouraged its diffusion, as an exercise in irrationality. Alcoholism was a serious problem in the early nineteenth century, the magnitude of which was being made increasingly apparent by the relatively objective witness of the growing army of city missionaries and asylum wardens who visited and interviewed the lowest element of American society. The evangelicals were simplistic in not appreciating that alcoholism often represented deeper emotional problems and social frustrations. In frequently portraying the national threat of drunkenness as primarily a problem of the poor, they demonstrated a snobbish blindness to alcoholism in the upper segments of society. But neither failing minimized the seriousness of the problem in the slightest. As the somewhat unwieldy first title of the national society indicated, the initial purpose of
the movement was the suppression of drunkenness, not moderate drinking. Then, as now, alcoholic consumption only became a public problem when the individual drinker consumed sufficient quantities regularly enough to create financial and social hardship. This first generation of reformers were quickly led to realize that for the problem drinker, temperate use of alcohol was an impossibility. They turned to total abstinence as the only effective method of control. It was a change in direction congenial to the moral absolutism of conversionary religion and easily carried to extremes, but, as directed toward alcohol addiction as opposed to occasional social drinking, total abstinence was and, even in today's world of medical and psychological sophistication, is viewed as the only effective cure.

Within months of the founding of the Society for the Suppression of Intemperance, temperance received organizational form below the Mason and Dixon Line. By one of those accidents of simultaneous historical development, a small group of Baptist clergymen, unaware of the national organization but receptive to similar influences which produced it, laid plans for what became the Virginia Society for the Promotion of Temperance on October 27, 1826. The same month, a Society for the Suppression of Intemperance, within the Bounds of the Orange Presbytery was formed by North Carolina Presbyterians.53

53 For particular societies, see Appendix. See also:
ust 12, 1826, the Methodist Quarterly Conference, Caroline Circuit, Maryland, passed resolutions against voting for intemperate political office seekers or those who treated potential voters at election time; the preachers of Charleston District Conference passed similar resolutions three months later. On September 2, 1826, the Baptist Church of Sumterville, South Carolina, resolved "that the members of this Church will not drink any spiritous liquors, except when prescribed as medicine." In November, the Charleston Baptist Association formed the South Carolina Anti-Intemperance Society. 54

Within two years, the temperance pledge had spread through many of the Baptist churches and Methodist Circuits of the South, and local auxiliaries of the South Carolina and Virginia societies as well as of the national Society for the Suppression of Intemperance were coming into existence with increasing rapidity. By 1829, the Virginia society reported 29 branches; the (Baptist) Georgia Temperance Society reported 42 societies in the state by 1830; by 1831, the American Temperance Society noted 348 Southern affiliates and estimated this to be


far fewer than the actual total of existing organizations. 55

With this growth into a popular reform, the initial
Baptist leadership in Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia
was quickly supplanted by a broader non-denominational
base which included Presbyterians and Episcopalians, able
to exert influence in the upper class and urban areas of
the South.

Although the fraternal nature of organizations
based upon mutual pledges gave temperance societies a
greater autonomy than auxiliary organizations of the other
national benevolent societies, a general approach developed
throughout the movement "to counteract, lessen, and pre­
vent, by such means as seen best calculated to accomplish
the object, the detestable and ruinous vice of intemper­
ance." Local societies were primarily disciplinary bodies,
formed to extend membership as widely as possible in the
church and community, to see that members lived up to the
terms of their pledges, and to pressure tavern owners,
storekeepers, and distillers to discontinue traffic in
spirits. The state societies and national organizations
encouraged expansion of the local efforts, collected and
published statistics and narratives of miraculous cures,
distributed tracts, and petitioned courts and legislatures

55 For these statistics, see: Virginia Society for
the Promotion of Temperance, 3rd Annual Report (1829);
"Georgia Temperance Society," Charleston Observer, 4
(1830), 75, 95; American Temperance Society, 4th Annual
in favor of temperance legislation and enforcement. In the South as well as the North, Justin Edwards' *The Well-Conducted Farm*, Lyman Beecher's *Six Sermons*, and Jonathan Kittridge's *Address on Intemperance*, reprinted in vast quantities by the American Tract Society, became popular favorites among the growing temperance literature.

Embodying the evangelical logic of social action (through changing public opinion) at its best, perfectly timed to find a receptive public audience within a country softened by revivalism and growing sentiment in their favor, the temperance societies enjoyed remarkable success. Between 1827 and 1830 most of the clerical associations of the Presbyterian, Episcopal, and Lutheran Churches in the South followed the lead of their Baptist and Methodist counterparts in strongly condemning the use of ardent spirits and urging support of the temperance societies. By the 1830s and 1840s, discipline in all of the Southern churches effectively prohibited membership to distillers, tavern keepers who dispensed liquor, and obvious heavy drinkers.

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56 For a random sample of such resolutions, see: Presbyterian Church. Synod of Tennessee, "Minutes" (1827), Ms. Hist. Foundation of Presb. Ch. of the U.S., Montreat, N.C.; "Journals of the Conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Virginia from 1785 to 1835, inclusive," published as an Appendix to Francis L. Hawks, *A Narrative of Events Connected with the Rise and Progress of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Virginia* (N.Y., 1836, vol. 1 of "Contributions to the Ecclesiastical History of the United States of America"), 237; Evangelical Lutheran Church. Synod of Maryland, "Minutes," *Evangelical Lutheran Intelligencer*, 5 (1830-31), 294.
Although advocates of the cause greatly exaggerated their influence, there are reliable indications that opinions and drinking habits in the South as a whole were effected dramatically by the growing temperance movement. In Georgia, a state which adopted temperance societies with wholehearted enthusiasm, Milledgeville tavern keepers reported a 50% decline in liquor sales during the 1829 legislative session over the previous year. At a July 4th dinner in Lexington, Georgia, presided over by William H. Crawford, lemonade was the only beverage served. Judge Joseph H. Lumpkin, the leader of the state's temperance forces, reported with delight that on his February Circuit for the Superior Court, he saw only one member of the bar resort to alcoholic beverages and "very little [alcohol consumed] by any body else of standing in the community. A Church man, who makes them, sells them, or drinks them, begins now to be considered, even by the irreligious, as still in the gall of bitterness." Admittedly, even the most confirmed of drunken lawyers, were he likely to appear before the abstinent judge, would undoubtedly have gone to great pains to conceal his habit. But the very fact that such personal


pressure could be effective was a remarkable change of attitude.

As the 1830 report of the Washington County Temperance Association (Maryland) noted, "those who still habitually lift the bottle, find it less sweet than when they drank, unwarned. They hate, affect to despise, but seldom fail to think of the Temperance Societies." By 1829 and 1830, reports of declining liquor sales, distillery closings, and "cold water" Fourth of July celebrations crowded the pages of religious and secular newspapers, temperance and tract society reports, and journals of clerical conventions. Temperance hotels and boarding houses first came onto the American scene in the late 1820s. By 1830, English traveler James Stuart reported from rural Alabama "that the influence of the temperance societies is now such that spirits are to be had in one-half of the houses in this country where they were formerly sold." Even colleges took on a temporarily sober appearance. Students of the University

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59 Washington County Temperance Association, Proceedings of the 1st Annual Meeting . . . 1830 (Hagerstown, Md., 1830), 5.


61 James Stuart, Three Years in North America (London, 1833; 2 vols.), vol. 2, 121.
of North Carolina formed a temperance society in 1829 which met with sufficient support for Professor Elisha Mitchell to report in April, 1831, that there was "one form of vice from which they [parents] have nothing to fear for their sons at the University."  

Much of the progress reported in the initial period of excitement, of course, proved to be less permanent and less universal than appearances indicated to the avid temperance advocates. Georgia lawyers would continue to enjoy a nip when beyond the withering gaze of Judge Lumpkin, and for every Southern temperance hotel, there were two which continued to quench the alcoholic thirsts of those who had not yet seen the light.

The temperance battle was generally fought in moral absolutes, but it did contribute a scientific knowledge of alcohol's effect on the human body which would live beyond the emotional arguments. For the first time in American history, large numbers of people eliminated alcoholic beverages entirely from their diet. Penitentiary wardens began cutting liquor from prisoners' fare in the late 1820s and reported with some amazement that the change had resulted in no observable deaths. In 1829,

62Elisha Mitchell, Arguments for Temperance; A Sermon Addressed to the Students of the University of North-Carolina, March 13th 1831 (Raleigh, N.C., 1831), 1.

63Ethan Allen, Discourse Delivered in Christ Church, Washington, D.C., in April Last, at the Request of the Board of Managers of the Washington City Temperance Society, in Aid of its Cause (Washington, D.C., 1830), 15.
the *Sailor's Magazine* reported two instances in which coffee had been substituted from grog without either physical difficulties or sailors' complaints. Only one year later, thirty of the vessels which cleared Charleston in a two-month period were "dry." In 1831, the United States Navy allowed sailors to accept pay in lieu of grog. Doctors, who did take an interest in this one area of reform, began presenting evidence to prove the destructive nature of heavy drinking on the human body, to show that the effect was as pernicious in warm as in cool climates, and that alcoholic beverages were of no known medical value. Enunciating an idea which present-day America is only beginning to accept, Dr. N. R. Smith told the Baltimore Temperance Society in December, 1829, that "drunkenness is a disease."  

64 *Sailor's Magazine*, 1 (1828-29), 286; 2 (1829-30), 96, 260.  

An anonymous correspondent to the *Wesleyan Journal*, describing drunkenness as a mental disease, called on the South Carolina legislature to set aside a section of the new Lunatic Asylum for "the reception and cure of all Patients, subject to derangement from intemperance." A South Carolinian, "Intemperance," *Wesleyan Journal*, 2 (1826-27), no. 53.
The temperance movement, like most of the reforms, was at its best in the earliest years, while the excitement was untarnished by hard realities, while even its staunchest advocates continued to search for understanding of the evil which they challenged and for methods which could convince a hostile public. The evidence did point to total abstinence as the one effective cure of alcoholism, but in applying it indiscriminately, the temperance movement after 1831, if it gained emotional strength, lost a measure of rationality in its approach to men who could control the habit.

In its first decade, the temperance movement aimed its message at the evangelicals' traditional target, public opinion, and it enjoyed success which exceeded that in any of the other areas of national reform. Alcohol was banished from the lives of respectable, religious society in a generation, and public opinion was transformed sufficiently to bring about legislation and enforcement of liquor laws in many areas of the country. In rural areas, where the advocates of temperance were able to win over the local elites, drunkenness could be and was effectively controlled. But there were men who could not be convinced, areas which defied change. Then, there were always the cities, which seemed impossible to effectively convert to anything. In turning to legislative prohibition in the 1840s, the forces of temperance were following the only logical step to expand their influence. But in
so doing, they turned their backs on the key to evangelical success; they stopped trying to convince, and started to force men against their will. As state and national Prohibition would prove, the appeal to personal conviction and responsibility, the very core of the early evangelical temperance movement, was an approach, the abandonment of which would win battles but lose a war.
CHAPTER 6

TO REFORM A NATION

Part III: The Culmination, 1826-1830

I. The Reforming Mood of the Nation, 1826-1830

In one of those great historical changes which defies complete explanation, the whole pulse of American life quickened in the mid-twenties. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., brilliantly captured much of the excitement in his *Age of Jackson*, although, as revisionist historians have tended to suggest, the age of the common man was as much the result of, as the parent of the rising political activity on the national level.¹ The revival of political competition in the 1820s caused office seekers and their supporters to court the average voter and give him a new sense of importance. Indirectly, it brought about the decade's wave of constitutional conventions which carried the country far closer to the principle of universal manhood suffrage. It produced an atmosphere of change, of human progress, which inspired creative social experi-

mentation in the form of working men's associations, utopian schemes, and literary and artistic production, however provincial and transitory they would prove to be.

The benevolent societies, in proportions which are impossible to define, were both causes and manifestations of this larger social revolution. The heady excitement of Jacksonian politics, even if greeted with repugnance by most educated clergymen who had nurtured millennial visions in the politically calm days of the Era of Good Feelings, did produce an intensity in all areas of social endeavor. It did invigorate their own version of republican and religious perfection, if not in the same spirit of expectation common in the previous decade, with an equally powerful sense of desperation. The revivalism of the late twenties had clear, if not easily definable, emotional ties with rising political and social expectations in the secular world, and this in turn energized the entire reform society movement.

II. Internal Expansion of National Societies, 1810-1825

The year 1825-26 was also a turning point in the internal development of the national reform societies themselves. Undoubtedly the timing was influenced by the external forces of political excitement and revivalism, but it was the inevitable culmination of an organizing process which would have occurred, had neither Andrew
Jackson nor Charles G. Finney stepped onto the historical stage at the opportune moment.

Although the national societies were, from their beginnings, forged as weapons in the Holy War, their work between 1810 and 1825 had little to do with the abolition of ignorance, irreligion, and human sinfulness to which they were dedicated. Between 1810 and 1825, Bibles and tracts were distributed, ministerial candidates educated, and moral standards somewhat elevated. But the major accomplishment, in spite of the rhetoric, was that the reform societies successfully sold themselves to the public; from a set of dreams possessing no substance at all in 1810, they were formed into seemingly powerful institutions by 1826, poised to accomplish the national reformation to which they were dedicated.

The major thrust of national reform society energy before 1826 was necessarily directed toward creating this foundation of public support. They aroused initial enthusiasm partly from the purposes to which they were dedicated, but also because they were excitingly different from anything which had come before them. It was a lesson which they unconsciously took to heart, and they turned again and again to the stimulants of novelty and innovation in the following decades to extend their base of popular support to a level which could command an influence on national policy.
Part of the early excitement was built on nothing more than a glorified game of musical chairs. Local societies were eclipsed by state societies, state societies by national organizations; the loose affiliation of auxiliaries characteristic of the earliest national societies was supplemented by part time, then full time national agents who could organize local efforts with calculated efficiency.

On the local level, the reform societies catered to the public need for innovation by emphasizing mechanical efficiency and the festival atmosphere. Independent Sunday schools were incorporated into union societies with their teachers' conventions and public anniversaries. Indirectly modeled after the charity school and hospital anniversaries of London which had amazed American travelers for a century, Sunday school processions flourished in the late twenties in American cities. Over 4,300 children from fifty-three schools turned out to march the streets of Baltimore in 1828, and similar festivities enlivened Washington, Richmond, and Charleston in the same period.2

2For a description of the London processions, see: Nathaniel S. Wheaton, A Journal of a Residence during Several Months in London; Including Excursions through Various Parts of England; and a Short Tour in France and Scotland; In the Years 1823 and 1824 (Hartford, Ct., 1830), 220; Isaac Parker Cook, Early History of Methodist Sabbath Schools, in Baltimore City and Vicinity; and Other Interesting Facts Connected Therewith. Compiled by a Sabbath Scholar of 1817 (Baltimore, 1877), 45; John Marshall to Sabbath School Association of Richmond and Manchester, Richmond, June 28, 1828, Sailor's Magazine, 1 (1828-29), 81.
Adopting the model of the national societies of London and New York to the provincial level, leaders of the benevolent societies and churches in the major Southern cities timed annual meetings and clerical associations so as to create their own anniversary weeks. In Charleston, the combined exertions of local organizations were directed toward establishing a headquarters for benevolent activity. A separate building was dedicated on April 8, 1829; it served as a depository for Bibles, tracts, and Sunday school literature and was open for meetings to all societies. A non-denominational Sunday school structure served a similar purpose in Baltimore.

The national societies, subject to the same need to constantly demonstrate newness and progress, were only too glad to feed local appetites with an endless series of mechanical innovations. New tracts were produced to satisfy every turn in the benevolent sphere. Sunday school curriculums were formulated, promoted, debated, and amended; the use of tickets and prizes was encouraged, then discouraged, then promoted again. At first, Bibles and tracts were given to the poor. Then, in the 1820s, it

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4 Thomas S. Grimke, Address at the Dedication of the Building in Chalmers Street designed as a Depository for Bibles, Tracts, and Sunday School Books, and for the Anniversary Celebration of Religious Societies, Delivered on Wednesday Evening, April 8, 1829 (Charleston, S.C., 1829).
was decided that exacting minimal payment was necessary to preserve the recipient's pride and to cause him to value the gift, and a whole new approach to the poor was formulated and put into operation. The direct distribution of tracts which was employed in the early years was supplemented by tract boxes in churches, steamboats, and public buildings.

Much of the spirit of innovation originated in the fund raising process. Very soon after charitable societies began to proliferate in the early national period, society organizers came to realize that popular financial support demanded popular methods of solicitation. The eighteenth-century endowment-like annual subscription, suited only to society possessing an entrenched, timeless aristocracy, was abandoned in favor of precarious but potentially more rewarding appeals for funds which were renewed annually. With all the ingenuity which they could muster, the evangelicals, indeed, created the techniques and gimmicks which remain the basis of modern fund raising.

A cardinal rule of the evangelical approach, inspired partly to give recognition but even more to inspire emulation, was to publicize every donation, no matter how insignificant. For even the smallest local society, publication of the annual report, the names of officers, and the complete list of subscribers and their gifts, was viewed as essential a duty as any of the good works to which they were dedicated. The possibilities of
categorical memberships were quickly appreciated and effectively employed, particularly by the national societies. There were annual memberships, life memberships, and honorary life memberships which devoted congregations were encouraged to confer upon their pastors.

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the American Society for the Education of Pious Youth displayed particular ingenuity. The A.B.C.F.M. created separate funds for education, foreign missions, and Indian Missions and, attempting to suit their appeal to personal whims, encouraged unusual gifts for a specific purpose. Reviving a technique originated a century before by the Foundling Hospital of London, the society began naming missionary children as directed by those who would provide adequate support. Organizations which would provide sufficient funds were allowed to name mission schools. Due to the benevolence of Southern ladies, a Charleston School and an Augusta School were founded in India in 1819, and dusky children in India and among the Civilized Tribes who had no choice in the matter nominally became Benjamin M. Palmer, Nathaniel Russel, James Gregorie, William Hollinshead, and Thomas Witherspoon, namesakes of deceased husbands and beloved clergymen of the donors.

Among monetary donations accepted by the A.B.C.F.M. and the Education Society between 1819 and 1826 were those raised by: a friend who "retrenched from ornaments on Wedding Cake"; a ten-year-old girl who abstained from
using sugar; a physician who donated fees for practice on the Sabbath; the "proceeds of an onion garden"; the "avails of a small cherry tree"; agricultural profits from an "Education field"; the profits from "jewelry renounced by a Cherokee convert." Both societies, which encouraged gifts of clothing and provisions, accepted and acknowledged other goods as well. The American Education Society, in 1821, was given a "vest of black cassimere"; the A.B.C.F.M. received jewelry, unopened Christmas presents, and, from one strangely motivated individual, two bugles. The innovative fund raising techniques developed so fully by the national organizations were copied by local societies and helped to maintain interest after the immediate excitement of founding subsided.

The benevolent society agents were, in many respects, America's first generation of professional fund raisers. Jeremiah Evarts, whose diary documents his shrewd ability to modify appeals to suit the character of his audience, wrote from Charleston in 1826 that "Southern people have always been more ready to give their five and ten dollars than Northern people." Noting that all Charleston needed was "that the principal of religious charity should be cultivated," he wistfully predicted

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5To ascertain the techniques employed by the different societies to raise funds, see the Annual Reports.
that an agent could devote five to ten years in that city alone "in organizing the inhabitants for this effort and in bringing them to work."6 By the late 1820s, C. S. Dudley's An Analysis of the System of the Bible Society (London, 1821), a manual for society agents which set forth the techniques of fund raising in minute detail, was available and known within American benevolent society circles.7

III. National Reformation, 1826-1830

For the first generation of national societies, the A.B.C.F.M., the Education Society, the American Bible Society, the New England Tract Society, and the Presbyterian and Baptist Boards of Missions, the mechanical innovations and gimmickry served well in creating and sustaining growth. By the middle of the twenties, these were strong organizations with popular constituencies throughout the country.

But there was a limit to the effectiveness of changes within the societies and by 1826, the point of exhaustion had more or less been reached. Although there

6 E. D. Tracy, Memoir of the Life of Jeremiah Evarts, Esq. (Boston, 1845), 117, 226.

7 C. S. Dudley, An Analysis of the System of the Bible Society, throughout its Various Parts (London, 1821). Charles I. Foster, in An Errand of Mercy: The Evangelical United Front, 1790-1837 (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1960), probably overrates the influence of Dudley's book. It was never reprinted in this country, and in fact, much of his advice was picked up independently through trial and error and common sense.
would be further expansion and new reforms in the succeeding years, the techniques of creating the reform society, of obtaining financial support, and of administering a national organization had been refined to an efficient science which would see few changes in the remainder of the century.

With the essential work of establishment behind them, conscious of the fact that continued preoccupation with the increasingly slick and boring process of internal growth threatened to lose the attention and interest of the public, the national society leadership was forced to re-examine the declared purposes upon which they operated. Finally, they had to direct their strengthened resources to these ends.

In the case of the national foreign missionary and education societies, there was no sharp discontinuity in the 1820s. For the A.B.C.F.M., the Baptist Board of Foreign Missions, and the United Foreign Missionary Society and its predecessors, their aim of converting the world to Christianity was obviously too extensive to foster any visions of a quick, successful completion of the task without divine intervention. Confident in their millennial faith that, with God's help, they or their successors would eventually witness success, they were in their everyday labors forced to accept the personal satisfaction of doing their job well, of gradually building an international base for an eventual triumph. The education
societies were never conceived in more than a supportive role for the larger work of reform and church expansion. As in the field of foreign missions but for these entirely different reasons, their work was of a plodding nature, built upon visions of steady growth but no grand expectations that the efforts alone could speedily, or ever, bring on the millennium.

In the field of domestic reform, Bible societies, tracts, domestic missions, and moral improvement, however, the purposes were both ambitious and, to the religious visionary (which all good reformers were), seemingly attainable. The national societies had never seen their mission as simply that of making Bibles and religious literature readily available, of getting missionaries into the field. The printed matter and the evangelists were but the instrumentality in the far larger goal of bringing an entire nation to moral and religious perfection. Fattened and confident after ten years of growth, simultaneously inspired and threatened by the temper of the secular world, the national reformers turned in 1826-30 to the implementation of this ultimate goal. In the short space of a few years, a self-confident mentality of urgent Heavenly combat spread throughout the religious reform society community, briefly drawing all of the national societies together in an escalating series of "campaigns" aimed at saving the United States.

The national society foundings of 1824-28 were essentially logistical maneuvers to expedite the greater
purpose at hand. The American Sunday School Union (1824), the American Tract Society (1825), and the American Home Missionary Society (1826) placed on a firm national footing reform activities which had already been developed. The American Prison Discipline Society (1825), the American Society for the Suppression of Intemperance (1826), the American Seamen's Friend Society (1826), and the General Union for Promoting the Christian Sabbath (1828), were formed to give particular areas of the entire reform vision the single-minded attention which they could not adequately receive from the larger societies (Bibles, tracts, missions). But this second generation of national societies did not have to go through the maturation process which had dominated the first decades' energy of the older organizations. In a sense, they came into the world full-grown, their procedures mapped out in detail and their constituencies ready and waiting. Almost from their inception, they were able to turn their sights to the greater effort and contribute to its course of develop­ment.

The Bible societies appropriately fired the first shots of the Holy War. To dispel a sense of restlessness which seems to have overtaken many local auxiliaries after the first excitement of founding had subsided, they hit upon the idea of setting goals and attempting to meet them in a specified time period. In 1822, the Bible Society of Baltimore resolved to distribute the Scriptures to
every family in the city which did not have them; the Bible Society of Virginia vowed to supply Richmond in 1825; the Delaware Bible Society, all of New Castle County in 1826. In 1827, the Young Men's Bible Society of Baltimore announced an all-out effort to supply the entire state of Maryland within a year.

The concerted campaign with specific objectives and times for completion, in reality the application of the systematic techniques used for several years by the urban missionary societies to ever-larger geographical areas, instantly captured the imaginations of the national reformers. Between 1827 and 1829, major Bible campaigns on a state-wide level were launched throughout the South, involving simultaneous drives for funds and schemes for distribution. Exploratory missions were set in motion to ascertain needs, and state Bible conventions were convened in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, and Louisiana to give even greater authority to efforts than individual societies could provide.8 Drawn by the groundswell of local fervency and prodded by the purse of Arthur Tappan, the American Bible Society dedicated itself in May, 1829, to supplying Bibles to every family in the

United States within two years. 9

The Bible Society was not to have the continental field to itself. The election of Jackson, not only a Democrat but a product of the irreligious Western frontier and almost universally viewed with alarm by the leaders of the national benevolent societies, rekindled the concern for the spiritual state of the nation's heartland which Samuel J. Mills had aroused fourteen years earlier. As Jacob Van Vechten, a Dutch Reformed clergyman from Albany, expressed it in 1829:

The strength of the nation lies beyond the Allegheny. The center of dominion is fast moving in that direction. The ruler of this country is growing up in the great valley—leave him without the gospel, and he will be a ruffian giant, who will regard neither the decencies of civilization, nor the charities of religion. 10

Organized in 1826 to give domestic missions national direction, the American Home Missionary Society launched an all-out campaign in 1828-29 to bring the Gospel to every settlement west of the Allegheny Mountains. The American Tract Society, which had already in that year entered into a plan to distribute one tract per month to every family in New York City and which had the capacity

9Foster, An Errand of Mercy, 194-95.

10From an address of Jacob Van Vechten at the anniversary of the American Home Missionary Society, May, 1829. Printed in The Home Missionary (June, 1829) and reprinted in Peter G. Mode's Source Book and Bibliographical Guide for American Church History (Menasha, Wis., 1921), 426-27.
to produce a limitless supply of their product, joined in the Mississippi Valley campaign with enthusiasm. The American Sunday School Union followed suit in 1830 with the resolution to establish, within two years, "a Sunday School in every destitute place where it is practicable, throughout the Valley of the Mississippi." For each society, the resolutions launched a flurry of public meetings and fund drives in the cities and churches possessing strong branch societies and led to the dispatch of dozens of new agents and missionaries to reap the financial and spiritual rewards.11

For the South, the exhilaration of the religious reform community was as intense in the late 1820s as in the North, but it took a somewhat different form. Of the national benevolent societies which committed themselves to saving the nation, only the American Bible Society had strong auxiliary organizations, independent of the churches, throughout the urban and rural South. Second only to the Bible Society as the driving force behind the great evangelical campaign of 1826, the American Home Missionary Society had very little following in the section. The American Tract Society did exude a general moral fervor, it did have broad connections in the South, but its major role in the national campaign was in support of missions and the moral reforms. Sunday schools, except

11 See the Annual Reports and Foster, An Errand of Mercy, 179-200.
for a handful of interdenominational unions in the section's few major cities, were by this period overwhelmingly denominational, tied directly to local churches, particularly of the Presbyterians. Although this denomination dominated large areas of Virginia, the Carolinas and Kentucky, although their presence and intellectual leadership was felt throughout the nation, they could not speak for the Southern people as a whole with the authority that the Presbyterian-Congregational alliance could in New England, western New York, Pennsylvania, and the Midwest.

The focus of Southern religious life was by the middle twenties, because of its dominant rural character, more strictly sectarian than in the North, and the geographical-denominational configuration of churches in the section uniquely shaped the reform excitement of 1826-30 as it unfolded. To a far greater extent than in the North, which possessed the entire spectrum of independent benevolent societies, interdenominational Southern efforts were thrown primarily into the campaign of the American Bible Society. A greater percentage of the remaining effort was directed within the denominational framework, primarily the Presbyterian Church but within the other sects as well. And because of the lessened presence of the interdenominational religious societies as a whole, a greater portion of the reform effort was devoted to the moral reforms, particularly temperance. Where the reform excitement did burn, it did so with the same intensity
as in the North, but the fires were more scattered and more vulnerable to rapid extinction when the national campaigns began to falter in the 1830s for lack of fuel.

In terms of numerical growth alone, the quickened pace of organized reform between 1825 and the thirties produced significant results. But in many ways, it was the clear transformations of individual character and the symbolic victories which inspired the greatest hope that a new age was dawning: the moral reformation and conversion of seamen; the signs that the Popish tyranny of Spanish America was tottering on the brink of democratic revolution, hopefully ripe for Protestant Missionary conquest. In polite society, church membership, temperance, opposition to dueling, the theatre, and lotteries were gaining ground and setting a new tone for acceptable behavior. Honestly considered by many incapable of personal self-control, Negroes, in the few cases they were permitted to do so, entered into temperance societies and missionary work with all the responsible fervor shown by

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12 See the appropriate sections of Chapters 4 and 5 for statistics of growth of the national reform societies.

13 Presumably because of frequent trade contacts and closer proximity, Southerners displayed considerable interest in extending benevolent society work to Spanish America. See, for example, the Annual Reports of the Bible Society of Baltimore in the 1820s.
any White Southerners. Members of the Civilized Tribes took up evangelical religion and moral reform with an enthusiasm which put their White neighbors to shame, organizing Sunday schools, education and temperance societies, participating in revivals, and faithfully keeping the Sabbath.

Thomas Jefferson's removal from the earthly world at the age of eighty-four in 1826 hardly had the appearance of retribution from an angry God. But to most evangelicals, it marked a relief-filled passing of the old order, of the embodiment of Deism and egalitarian radicalism in its most dangerously attractive form. When William Meade, soon to be Episcopal Bishop of the Old Dominion, was invited to preach at the University of Virginia in the memory of nine students who had died in

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14 The Richmond African Missionary Society (1815), which had an integrated membership and a branch society in Petersburg, was one of the strongest Baptist benevolent societies in the South. Among auxiliaries to the Virginia Society for the Promotion of Temperance were: The Fork Union Temperance Society (1829) made up of both slaves and free Negroes; The Richmond African Temperance Society (1829). For notices of the Richmond African Missionary Society, see the Annual Reports of the Richmond Baptist Foreign and Domestic Mission Society; for the two temperance organizations, see: Virginia Society for the Promotion of Temperance, 4th Annual Report (Richmond, Va., 1831).

1828-29, he came with all the righteous confidence of a crusader planting the Christian flag in the land of the infidel. He drew a picture of a proud university kneeling penitently down after a decade to its Maker. As he described it, the university community, trying to explain the deaths, "at length, despairing to find any secondary cause which might be brought within the reach of man and be removed by human skill, they have looked up to the great cause of all causes, and humbly bowing before it, have said, and publicly said it, 'This is a visitation of divine providence; the hand of God hath done it.'"

Never a man to shrink from whatever he saw as his Christian duty, Meade directly attributed the deaths to God's displeasure with the university's godless ways and called for the immediate institution of chapel and Sunday services, religious instruction, hiring of a chaplain, and use of the Bible as a text. Meade drew heavy criticism for his forthrightness, but the University did soon incorporate chapel services in its curriculum. A year later, an interdenominational coalition of evangelical clergymen and laymen, including Meade and John Holt Rice

15 (1824), 93; 19 (1828), 64-110; 20 (1829), 64; 21 (1830), 78.

16 William Meade, Sermon Delivered in the Rotunda of the University of Virginia, on Sunday, May 24, 1829. On the Occasion of the Deaths of Nine Young Men Who Fell Victims to the Diseases which Visited the Place during the Summer of 1828, and the Following Winter (Charlottesville, Va., 1829).
with whom Jefferson had vigorously sparred over religious establishments, was gleefully making plans to convert Monticello into a religiously-oriented boarding school.  

IV. Opposition

Organized reform in the South and in the nation as a whole had not, from the very beginning, gone unopposed. In some cases, it was a matter of denominational rivalry. The Catholics, rightly sensing that these vehicles of militant Protestantism were directly hostile to their very existence, consistently disapproved of all of the benevolent societies, except for secular charities, anti-dueling, and to some degree, temperance societies. The Episcopalians were divided on the matter, but there was a High Church wing which, strongly believing their denomination to be the one true faith, resisted cooperation with

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17 Proposals for a New School for Boys (Charlottesville, 1828. Broadside advertisement). The prospectus, signed by, among others, John Holt Rice, Richard Channing Moore, James M. Garnett, Edward C. McGuire, William Meade, Charles Fenton Mercer, John Hartwell Cocke, and William Maxwell, stated that "as it is believed that religious instruction will greatly conduce the maintenance of proper discipline in such an establishment, and otherwise essentially promote the welfare of its members." Students were to be required to attend morning and evening prayers, afternoon chapel services, and Sunday worship. Students were at all times to be taught "both by precept and the example of their instructors, to 'fear God and keep his commandments, which is the whole duty of man.'"

18 For an illiberal summary of Catholic-Protestant conflict over Bible distribution in Frederick, Maryland, in 1828, see: Review, The Reverend Rector of the Roman Catholic Church in Frederick-Town, vs. The Young Men's Bible Society (Frederick, Md., 1828).
other Churches in benevolences. Nationally, Bishop Hobart of New York led this party. In the South, Bishop Kemp of Maryland and Bishop Ravenscroft of North Carolina, both converts to Episcopalianism, actively opposed interdenominational Bible and tract societies, to the thorough embarrassment of their evangelical counterparts in Virginia and South Carolina.19

Although individual members of the sect participated, the Quakers were generally disapproving of all benevolent societies except in the field of antislavery. Their repugnance for Calvinist concepts of human depravity, their inherent dislike of ostentation, and, a certain resentment of the sudden professions of the humanitarianism which they had glorified in as their own thankless calling, made them wary of even Bible societies. The Jeremiah complex was too deeply ingrained in the soul of Quakerism to permit many of its members to accept as a

19 For Bishop Kemp's opposition to the American Tract Society, see: Protestant Episcopal Church. Diocese of Maryland, Journal (1827), 9-10.

Bishop Ravenscroft, who vehemently opposed interdenominational cooperation with English speaking Churches in any form, scandalized the evangelical community of the South by delivering, without warning, an address to the Bible Society of North Carolina in 1824 which opposed the principles for which it stood. John S. Ravenscroft, A Sermon Preached before the Bible Society of N. Carolina, on Sunday, December 12, 1824 (Raleigh, N.C., 1825). For titles in an ensuing war of words with John Holt Rice and Elisha Mitchell, see Bibliography. For a hostile review of the speech in a publication of Virginia evangelical Episcopalians, see: Washington Theological Repertory, 6 (1924-25), 444-45. For documentation of his opposition to interdenominational cooperation, see: Protestant Episcopal Church. Diocese of North Carolina, Journal (1825), 10-11, 22-23.
reform anything which was popular; their primary concern with personal holiness made the entire concept of public opinion reform, no matter how effective, distasteful. Somewhat inconsistently, however, Friends did begin to organize their own tract societies in the 1820s. The Moravians shared much of the Quaker outlook, and along with the German Lutheran and Reformed Churches, were encouraged in their exclusive ways by their use of the German language.

The most widespread and vocal opposition stemmed from Separate Baptists and Methodists, based in part on rivalry, but more directly in the deep-seated egalitarianism which both sects elevated to a proud virtue. Strongly opposed to any hint of religious establishment, in practice unfavorable to a salaried clergy, they were receptive to

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20 In the biography of his abolitionist father, John S. Tyson of Baltimore expressed this idea well: "... When the will of Heaven is suited to the will of man, in any particular, how easy it is to comply! ... the philanthropist who makes the will of Heaven his guide ... whose ardor is as unabated when single handed and alone he wields the weapons of his warfare, as when backed by the collected power of a nation; and who clings closer and closer to his God as he is more and more abandoned by man--HE is the only true philanthropist." John S. Tyson, The Life of Elisha Tyson, the Philanthropist (Baltimore, 1825), 4-6.

For the debate between Presbyterian clergyman Eliphalet W. Gilbert and Quaker Benjamin Gilbert which included discussion of the benevolent societies, see: Eliphalet W. Gilbert, Letters of Paul and Amicus Originally Published in the Christian Repository, A Weekly Paper, Printed at Wilmington, Delaware (Wilmington, Del., 1823), 21-28.

21 See Appendix B for the Baltimore Association of Friends, for Publishing and Distributing Tracts on Moral and Religious Subjects (1817).
the sort of anticlericalism promulgated by the British working class movement of 1815-30 and undoubtedly drew some of their arguments and inflection from this source.  

Joshua Lawrence, a North Carolina Baptist preacher, who portrayed himself as just "a millpond boy, a farmer, that can only write and read," voiced characteristic sentiments in *The North Carolina Whig's Apology* (Tarborough, N.C., 1830). He described temperance societies as unscriptural, Bible societies as money-making schemes, "and as regards Tract Societies and Sunday School Unions, they are about the worst of the whole gang . . . I tell you, my audience, that it is my candid opinion, that this society craft will enslave our country. In a word, all these chief societies will make use of employed runners as sponges to suck the riches of a town, and squeeze it and then send them off in another direction to be filled again."  

He elaborated his description of the agents:

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22 Through Anglo-American Methodist and Catholic contacts, particularly in their periodical literature, Americans were kept somewhat abreast of developments in the English and Irish workingmen's movement. From 1815 to the mid-twenties, William Cobbett's publications were printed in America, widely excerpted in the press, and they undoubtedly helped to set the tone for much of the egalitarian anti-clerical literature. Popular opposition to Presbyterian advocacy of tithes can hardly be explained except as a transposition of the British Tithes Controversy (in Britain tithes were mandatory, in America only voluntary). See: Eleazer Harris, *The Christian's Remembrancer* . . . (n.p., 1821); United States Catholic Miscellany, 1 (1822), 26-28, 34-35, 42-43.

23 Joshua Lawrence, *The North-Carolina Whig's Apology, for the Kehukee Association* (Tarborough, N.C., 1830), 14-18, 47.
These tyrants, these proud hirelings, these men that can't preach without pay, these stiff, glove-handed, school polished gentlemen, that are now strutting through our country seeking a place of profit almost in every town and village, to live in idleness on the honest labors of the farmer and mechanic. I have heard many of them preach, and so far as my knowledge extends about preaching, I would not give an old jack knife for a cowpen full of such grammar, Latin, Greek, gospel spoiling fellows, to preach to me.24

The societies were criticized because they were not mentioned in the Bible, and, in fact, an Anti-Missionary Movement became widespread among Baptists in Kentucky, Tennessee, and neighboring areas.25 Benevolent organizations were pictured as bureaucracies which swallowed most of their funds for salaries. They were portrayed as being undemocratic, power hungry, willing to employ tainted

24Lawrence, North-Carolina Whig's Apology, 38-39.

25Although a leading advocate of educational reform, Alexander Campbell strongly opposed benevolent societies as unscriptural. In a piece published in his Christian Baptist (vol. 1, 1823-24, p. 20), he mockingly noted that [in the early days of Christianity], "the head of a believing household was not, in those days, a president, or manager of a board of foreign missions; his wife, the president of some female education society; his eldest son, the recording secretary of some domestic Bible society; his eldest daughter, the corresponding secretary of a mite society, and his little daughter, a tutoress of a Sunday school. They knew nothing of the hobbies of modern times."

money, and guilty of encouraging the idea that salvation could be purchased. 26

"Timothy," an 1828 correspondent of the Methodist Wesleyan Journal, emphasized hypocrisy and ostentation. Attacking the claims of "national" societies which were not national, "interdenominational" societies which were not interdenominational, deriding the overblown style, corrupted English, and cost of publications, and the willingness of societies to give offices to "debauchees, infidels and duelists, . . . aspiring men, who have no principles but ambition . . . designing men who have no religion but interest . . . " he suggested that:

. . . charity, once a meek and blushing angel that shrunk tremulously away from the world's observation and concealed from its own left hand the doings of the right, is transformed into a forward and blustering coxcomb, who will not move a step without a flourish of trumpets. 27

In urban areas, the whole missionary movement was occasionally criticized for sending "for the good of other countries, a portion of our wealth and our services: that whilst the poor and ignorant, the vicious and unconverted, abound in our own land, they should be the sole objects of our care." 28

Societies for the reformation of the

26 Lawrence, North-Carolina Whig's Apology, 44-47; Millennial Harbinger, 1 (1830), 76.
28 This criticism was noted and answered in Thomas S. Grimke's Address at the Dedication of the Building in
poor and ladies' sewing societies were criticized for competing with honest laborers and thus causing unemployment. 29

Reversing the protagonists of the evangelicals' Deistical Plot of the 1790s, the most ardent opponents of religious societies periodically painted a fantastic picture of a vast "secret combination" methodically working through the reform societies to effect clerical domination of the political process. 30 Joshua Lawrence, who was obviously feeling the competitive effects of the Great Campaigns with his "good old time religion," advised:

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Chalmers Street designed as a Depository for Bibles, Tracts and Sunday School Books, and for the Anniversary Celebration of Religious Societies. Delivered on Wednesday evening, April 8, 1829 (Charleston, S.C., 1829), 11-12.

The Annual Report of a missionary society in Baltimore also noted "Considerable opposition to sending our money to a distance, while there is so much to do at home." Baltimore Female Mite Society for the Education of Heathen Children in India, Annual Report (1818), 3-4.


30 For positive and negative references to the "Great Plot" theory, see: Ceres, Observations on Infidelity (Wilmington, Del., 1809); William K. Clowney, A Reply to the Goats of Columbia, in the State of South Carolina (Columbia, S.C., 1823); "Slander," Charleston Observer, 2 (1828), 190-1; Samuel J. Baird, ed., A Collection of the Acts, Deliverances, and Testimonies of the Supreme Judiciary of the Presbyterian Church from its Origin in America to the Present Time. With Notes and Documents, Explanatory and Historical; Constituting a Complete Illustration of Her Polity, Faith and History (Phila., 1856), 830-31.

In the next decade, the theory was expanded and widely popularized by apostate Andover graduate Calvin Colton in Protestant Jesuitism (N.Y., 1836).
... first, don't give one cent to any of these societies; but what you have to give, give to the poor and the needy, the fatherless and the widow. . . .

secondly, discountenance [agents] . . . not even honor him with a hearing as money is his design . . .

to save your country, you should not support any man for public office in the State, that is a member of, or that is in favor of the societies of the day, lest any bill supporting priestcraft should come before the State or National, and there meet with priest-made friends to rivet the yoke on your necks . . .

The irascible Mrs. Anne Royal, whose violent hatred of the evangelicals and their benevolent societies was carried to the point of an obsession, called for an alliance of separate Baptists, Quakers, Methodists, High Church Episcopalians, Catholics, Unitarians, Universalists, and Jews against the spreading influence of the "priests." In Pennsylvania, lay and clerical members of the German Lutheran and German Reformed Churches, bitterly divided with the English-speaking members of their own denominations, convened public meetings during the height of the Campaigns to protest the "actions of unbelieving hypocrites or blind fanatics, seeking their own aggrandizement who were promoting Bible, Missionary, Tract and Sunday School Societies, as well as Theological Seminaries,

31Lawrence, North-Carolina Whig's Apology, 18-19.

32Anne Royal, The Black Book, or A Continuation of Travels in the United States (Washington, D.C., 1828-29; 3 vols.), 232-33. Her title was taken from a widely-circulated radical work by John Wade (pub. 1820) which railed with the same invective against the Church, the Bank of England, and the East India Company.
Far more effective than opposition based upon emotion and jealousy were the rational arguments of the Jeffersonians, too intellectual in their most telling form to gain a popular following, but productive of an anti-clerical strain in Jeffersonian-Democratic counsels which had political repercussions. Jefferson in his private correspondence, James Madison in his "detached memoranda," John Taylor in Arator and his political works, drawing upon traditions with deep roots in British and European radicalism and dissenter Protestantism itself, expressed a coherent argument against religious establishments. Taylor portrayed the clergy as an inherently unproductive "order" (along with the military, bankers, etc.), propped up by the unnatural advantages of education, tradition, wealth, and legal anachronisms, an aristocracy without function except as it deprived agrarian and laboring society of its just earnings. Jefferson and Madison, their theories sharpened by the fight for Anglican disestablish-

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ment in the Virginia legislature, opposed support of religion by the state. As Presidents, Jefferson, and Madison until forced by public opinion at the time of the War of 1812, opposed proclamations of days of public prayer and paid military chaplains. Strongly convinced that the earth was for the living, both men opposed perpetual establishments and legal monopolies of any sort or the use of public funds for religious indoctrination. Neither became involved in any direct confrontation with the evangelicals or the benevolent societies themselves, but their outlook influenced and was shared by Democratic congressmen and jurists. The fact that the majority of churchmen and almost all of the leaders of the national societies (who were predominantly Northerners) were Federalists and later Whigs encouraged the anticlerical tendencies of their political opponents and did magnify the anti-society strain inherent in secular and religious liberalism.

The Jeffersonian attitudes did retard progress toward the acceptance of general incorporation in Virginia and led in that state to an inconsistent but essentially negative attitude toward statutory incorporation of

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organizations with religious purposes. State and then federal decisions in the case of Baptist Association of Philadelphia vs. Hart Executors (1819), invalidating the bequest of a Virginia Baptist to the Philadelphia body, led to two decades of highly restrictive Jeffersonian judicial decisions in Virginia, North Carolina, and Maryland regarding bequests. These decisions effectively denied the Common Law doctrine of *cy prist* (the right and duty of a court to reinterpret the terms of an unfulfillable bequest to suit the contemporary situation yet uphold the donor's intentions). The courts overturned a number of significant benefactions and undoubtedly discouraged endowments in general, but by the 1840s, the broader interpretation regained favor, even in the South.

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36 For the difficulties which arose over the incorporation of a Presbyterian seminary, see: John Holt Rice, *An Illustration of the Character and Conduct of the Presbyterian Church in Virginia* (Richmond, 1816), 4-5-56.

37 John Marshall's decision in this case, seeming to contradict his usual broad constitutional interpretation, deserves further scrutiny by legal historians. The decision is found in Henry Wheaton's *Reports of Cases Argued and Adjudged in The Supreme Court of the United States. February Term, 1819* (N.Y., 1819; vol. 4 of Wheaton's Reports), 1-51.

In spite of the inconveniences and the encouragement it gave to detractors, the opposition which reform societies encountered was, in final analysis, a major asset. Except in the case of Jeffersonian theory, it was intellectually weak. As a whole, it was unorganized and overwhelmingly negative, critical or evangelical motives and methods but incapable of formulating alternative action to meet the popular social and emotional needs to which the many humanitarian societies were directed.

As was true in the case of the formal Church growth discussed in Chapter 2, men nurtured in a Biblical and Protestant tradition of Christian conflict could not have found emotional satisfaction in reform society efforts without casting themselves as soldiers involved in mortal Christian conflict. Bishop Ravenscroft's injudicious remarks to the Bible Society of North Carolina, Mrs. Royall's invectives, the harrangues of a backwoods Baptist preacher, were effective only with men and women who were naturally ill-disposed toward reform societies anyway. It was the reformers themselves, not opponents, who joyously gave them recognition, magnified their carping criticisms into threats of major proportions, and then demolished them with immodest delight.

see: St. Peters School. Baltimore, Address of the Trustees of St. Peter's School to the Congregation of St. Peter's Church and to the Public (Baltimore, 1822).
Jeffersonian opposition to days of fasting and prayer, to chaplains, to religious content in public education, to perpetual endowments, and to religious incorporations in truth did deny Americans free access to religion in certain circumstances and did pinch evangelical nerves in sensitive areas. But even where the evangelicals possessed a clear case in their favor, they showed no more interest in sticking to rational arguments than did their opponents.

The foundations of Lockean educational and psychological theory and the emphasis upon personal and public morality were shared in the social visions of both sides. Even the idea that the earth is for the living, that human institutions must continually justify themselves by public support rather than rest upon the endowments of previous ages, was as basic to evangelical theories of volunteerism as it was to Jeffersonian visions of social harmony; the only real difference lay in conflicting conceptions of the importance of life on earth, and the differences were of minimal significance in the practical matters of reform efforts.

But to be effective, evangelicals had to be promoters; they all possessed a certain capacity and penchant for showmanship. The clerical profession in a free society inevitably nurtured the dreams of would-be actors in the world of business and political action, and the unconsciously frustrated heroes, where they could not find
satisfaction in existing challenges, had to create and rationalize them. It was as psychologically effective a technique in dealing with society as a whole as it was in rallying the reform leaders themselves, and the atmosphere of conflict paid dividends in the form of public enthusiasm which could never have been engendered by a quiet, rational, reform movement.

For all parties, the abrasion inherent in the evangelical reform impulse left a positive legacy, forcing each group to critically examine and define its position before launching an exterior defense. Jeffersonians, Unitarians, and the forces of secularism, in defending themselves against religious attacks, were forced to emphasize the moral content of their social and educational theories. Churchmen had to make a virtue of religious toleration and freedom of choice. Jeffersonian legislatures and courts, in the very act of opposing religious incorporations and disallowing religiously motivated bequests, were forced to examine, comprehend, and eventually accept the social utility of the principles upon which they were based. Baptists and Methodists, while flailing at the unscriptural nature of societies or the aristocratic ways of degree-laden clergymen, were themselves led to appreciate and gradually adopt corporate reform organization and formal education.
V. Culmination

Ironically, the evangelical campaigns of 1826-30 themselves, the culmination of the reform movement which had germinated in the fertile crossbreeding of religious, republican, and Enlightenment ideals, brought about the destruction of the very impulse which produced them. In effect, the campaigns put the entire reform movement to the practical test, calling their own bluff. If, as the national societies claimed, American society was shown to be riddled with inconsistencies and imperfections, the organizations proved themselves entirely inadequate to providing necessary solutions. National reform societies survived their failure to meet the goals of 1826-30 and continued as a whole to expand for two decades, but they never again possessed the same innocence and credibility on which they had built expectations in the previous decades. They continued in the 1830s and beyond to pursue their particular missions with all of the techniques and rationalizations of the earlier period, but neither the societies nor their public could seriously believe that they could save the nation.

By its very nature, perfectionist reform of any sort is inherently suicidal. Short of the millennium, none of the reforms which were aimed at creating a completely harmonious, moral, Christian society, could possibly satisfy the expectations which they themselves had defined. Even the staunchest reform advocates, however
pleased with the successes which were recorded, could not have taken much satisfaction in the aspect of American society as a whole in the 1830s, if anything, more blatantly secular, political, and hedonistic than ever before. In spite of the most well-intentioned efforts, Bibles had not been put in the hands of every American family, missionaries had not converted even a fraction of the inhabitants of the Mississippi Valley, and drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, and crime remained very real and obvious social problems. To societies whose declared purpose and popular following was geared toward accepting only complete success, not mere progress and certainly not failure to meet immediate goals, the unfulfilled efforts of 1826-30 produced an inevitable letdown.

The seemingly powerful and efficient engine of reform which the combined force of the national societies had, to both critics and supporters, appeared to represent in 1826, was proven in the course of campaign failures to have been largely an illusion. The national organizations, for all their ability to attract a broad following and speak with the authority of thousands, were built on most shallow foundations. Membership on the local level required no more commitment than a minimal contribution and perhaps attendance at an annual meeting; auxiliaries often represented no more than a momentary expression of approval aroused by a passing agent. The claims of critics that the annual reports of national societies greatly
distorted the depth of popular support were proven to be only too true, but national leaders, allowing their dreams to overshadow their practicality, had become intoxicated with their own exaggerations. When the local societies were called upon to participate in the final assault, all too few responded with anything more than half-hearted approval. Except where local societies were infused with the enthusiastic direction of local leaders, a characteristic which could no longer be taken for granted in the twenties as the initiative in society expansion was pre-empted by national agents, they proved themselves to be mostly talk and little action, quick to accept the laurels of participating in a glorious cause but equally quick to vanish when called upon to perform thankless labor. The element of weakness which, for the first time, the reform campaigns exposed publicly, did not entirely dissipate efforts at expansion. But it more than matched successes with a loss of confidence.

By 1830, signs of weakening faith in the whole principle of voluntary benevolent societies were particularly damaging, because there were now strong alternative vehicles for Christian expansion. The denominational bodies, which through weakness had encouraged the rise of independent national societies and which had benefited greatly from their successes, were acquiring sufficient strength to work alone. The 1820s had given rise to denominational tract, Sunday school, and missionary
societies which, although complements to the efficiency of the voluntary principle established by the independent organizations, were rivals for public support. The methods of arousing a popular following and attracting financial support, developed with such perfection by the non-denominational societies, were easily applied to denominational ends. Once the feasibility of cheap tracts was proven, once the economic efficiency of the agency system was established, the methods were available to all. As has always been true with technology of any sort, late-comers had the advantage of sharing benefits without having to consider or pay for the costs of its creation.

Although the fact had rarely been mentioned by men who desired to preserve what had always been to some extent an illusion of Christian unity, the ideal of interdenominational cooperation had lost much of its magic before the benevolent campaigns were launched. Its breakdown certainly contributed to the desperation which propelled the efforts in the first place. It weakened the campaigns while in progress. And it helped to discredit the whole concept of interdenominational religious reform itself when complete success was not attained.

The 1830s ushered in a new religious environment. Episcopalians, Methodists, and Baptists had never found complete satisfaction in the Presbyterian-Congregational cooperative sunday schools, tract, mission, and Bible societies, and they now offered their constituents denomi-
nationally distinctive vehicles for accomplishing the same ends. Even within the congenial company of Presbyterians and Congregationalists, there was growing friction. New England Congregationalists, to some degree, resented the fact that the Plan of Union of 1801 was proving to work almost wholly to the advantage of the Presbyterians as missionary congregations became formally organized churches. Presbyterians, on the other hand, resented Congregational dominance of several of the benevolent societies, and rivalry resulted in open conflict between the Presbyterian Board and the American Home Missionary Society and the A.B.C.F.M. in the early 1830s. The "new measures" associated with revivals and the related rise of militant antislavery as embodied in the American Antislavery Society sharpened divisions within denominations, particularly alienating Southerners, and served to discredit even further the already weakened national benevolent societies. It made ludicrous any of their claims to actually represent a unified Christian public. The New Side - Old Side division of the Presbyterian Church in 1837, in which Southerners aligned themselves almost exclusively with the latter group, effectively destroyed the national reform society movement below the Mason and Dixon Line. Presbyterians joined their

39 See Appendix B.

40 See pamphlets exchanged by Rev. Mr. Absolom Peters and the Presbyterian Board of Missions in 1831.
Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, and Baptist counterparts in pursuing whatever reforming zeal they retained through strictly denominational channels. Various societies survived, but they lost all of the aura of excitement and importance which they had once enjoyed.

To a rising generation which had not known the agonizing price which the Revolution had exacted from American society, the fears of political and social disharmony could never seem as real or the consequences as disastrous as they had to their fathers. The longevity of the national government in spite of external and internal discord, the retreat of European political convulsions from the national consciousness, the individualism which the Romantic Age instilled in every avenue of cultural endeavor, encouraged a recklessness in American life which was kind to none of the inherited institutions and theories of the Revolutionary generation. Social stability, public morality, unity of national purpose, the ideals which had inspired the evangelical reform impulse, did not seem to possess the urgent importance they once had, and institutions such as the national reform societies which had furthered these goals suffered a consequent loss of confidence. Politics was to an ever greater extent dominated by local and personal interests.

For a good history of the Presbyterian division from the Old School viewpoint, see Samuel J. Baird's History of the New School (Phila., 1868).
An air of militant individualism and selfishness seemed to be gaining ground in every area of national life.

By 1830, in spite of their activity, the national reform societies had in many ways outlived the religious-republican ideology which had given them birth. The confidence with which the societies had launched the campaigns of 1826-30 proved, in many ways, to have been a mask for internal weakness and a conscious loss of social influence on the part of the evangelical community. National reform societies would continue to exist, but they would no longer be an innovative or dynamic force. Their glorious failure marked the end of an epoch in American social history and religious development.
I. Southern Distinctiveness

The evangelical reform impulse which flourished in the South between 1790 and 1830 was part of a national phenomenon. The ideological foundations of the reform societies, local and national, were monotonously common to all sections of the country; the forms, the methods, the expectations were almost without a touch of regional distinctiveness. But the South itself was different from the rest of the country by the early nineteenth century, not as fundamentally as the voices of secession or ardent pro-Southern historians have claimed and not to such a degree as to modify the character of the national reform impulse as a whole, but sufficiently so to influence the section's reception of organized benevolence.

The basic differences between the South and the North were simply matters of history, geography, economics, and ethnic origin. One of the most obvious characteristics of the South, a source of constant wonder and dismay to travelers, was its overwhelmingly rural character. There were areas of compact settlement, there were towns and cities, but they were scattered islands in a vast section
of isolated plantations and homes which made social interaction of any sort far more difficult than in the community-oriented North. In despair, Virginia reform leader William Maxwell noted in an 1826 address at Hampden-Sidney College that Virginia's "woods and wilds, and large plantations, separated from each other by horrid intervals are always baffling our benevolence, and spoiling our projects of improvement."¹ Jeremiah Evarts, the indefatigable agent for the American Board, lamented in his diary in 1824 that the section as a whole could sustain "none of the small municipal legislation and government, which are of immense value at the north, in making the people acquainted with each other, and forming the rudiments of our republican institutions," that because of dispersed settlement, "there is no such thing in this country as thoroughness or perseverance in any plan of united and concentrated action. If a good undertaking is begun today, this is no reason why it should not be abandoned tomorrow."²

Wilber F. Cash, in his monumental study of The Mind of the South (1941) persuasively suggested that antebellum Southern society, in spite of its superficial polish, was


²E. C. Tracy, Memoir of the Life of Jeremiah Evarts, Esq. (Boston, 1845), 196.
in most areas hardly a generation removed from the ruggedness and lawlessness of frontier conditions of a sort which New Englanders had never really experienced and which New Yorkers and Pennsylvanians had not known since the Revolution. Political and social leaders of the middle and deep South, who adopted all the outward symbols of gentility, betrayed an inherent anti-intellectualism, a fierce spirit of independence, and a militant self-satisfaction with the world which they had forged from a barren wilderness. Their attitude bred a hostility to innovations of any sort which were of exterior origin.  

To a considerable degree, the cultural life of the section was imported from the North. Without the Puritan tradition of popular literacy, lacking a significant urban-mercantile community, and haunted by the constant apprehension that efforts to improve the common man might undermine the rationale for Negro servitude, the Southern colonies had placed far less emphasis upon education than had the colonies to the North. Levels of popular literacy were far lower, educational institutions less common and less permanent. Until well into the nineteenth century, Southerners who did value higher education sent the majority of their sons beyond the section for college training: in the colonial period, to the British universities, to Princeton, and to a lesser extent, to Yale,

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Harvard, Kings College, and the College of Pennsylvania; after the Revolution, also to Dickinson (Carlisle, Pennsylvania), Union (Schenectady), St. Mary's (Baltimore), and Georgetown (District of Columbia). A high percentage of the tutors and schoolteachers employed in the antebellum South were drawn from Northern colleges, and when Southerners did create their own institutions of higher learning, they were forced to depend upon Northern faculty members. Between 1810 and 1830, the presidencies of the University of Georgia, South Carolina College, the College of Charleston, Greenville College, East Tennessee College, Cumberland University, Transylvania College, Georgetown College (Kentucky), Hampden-Sydney College, and the University of Alabama were all filled by New Englanders, and faculty members and trustees of the same origin or themselves educated in the North were influential in almost every Southern college and theological seminary. In far larger proportion than their percentage of the Southern population, Northerners and Southerners with Northern educational training assumed leadership in all of the South's cultural institutions: literary societies, libraries, lyceums, mechanics' societies, and education conventions.4

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4George F. Mellen, "Contributions of New England to the South's Culture," in John Bell Henneman, ed., History of the Literary and Intellectual Life of the South (Richmond, 1909; vol. 7 of The South in the Building of the Nation), 295-313. For the best study of Northern influences on Southern culture, see: Fletcher M. Green, The Role of the Yankee in the Old South (Athens, Ga., 1972; Mercer University Lamar Memorial Lectures, No. 11).
The most obvious dissimilarity of all between South and North was the different racial and ethnic makeup of their populations. The Southern White population itself was more ethnically homogeneous and British in origin and of longer settlement in the country than the residents of the Middle States. Immigration for the nation as a whole was low between 1790 and 1830 and few of those who did come to America in that period made their way to the South. Except in Maryland, northern Delaware, Louisiana, and to a limited degree Charleston, the post-Revolutionary South did not live with the constant presence of ethnic diversity to the degree present to the North. The South avoided much of the nativism and class antagonism to which an alien population gave rise, but it also lost the benefits gained in the process of cultural assimilation.

It was the racial makeup of the Southern population, however, which to a greater extent than any factor set the section apart from the rest of the nation. The statistics speak for themselves.  

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As of 1850, only 3% of the South's residents (including Delaware, Maryland, Kentucky) were of foreign birth as opposed to 14% for the rest of the nation. "Series A95-122. Population, by Race and Nativity, for Regions: 1790 to 1850," Hist. Statistics of the United States, 11-12.

6 Compiled from "Series A95-122."
### TABLE 2

Negro and Slave Population, South and North 1790-1830

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
<th>Slaves</th>
<th>Percentage of Blacks</th>
<th>Percentage of Slaves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOUTH</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>1,961,174</td>
<td>689,784</td>
<td>657,327</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>3,461,099</td>
<td>1,268,637</td>
<td>1,160,977</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>5,707,848</td>
<td>2,161,885</td>
<td>1,980,384</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>NORTH</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790</td>
<td>1,900,616</td>
<td>76,424</td>
<td>40,354</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>3,676,545</td>
<td>109,717</td>
<td>30,385</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>7,152,854</td>
<td>166,757</td>
<td>28,659</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The pervasive existence of Negro slavery had a profound and overwhelmingly negative influence on the section, enforcing agricultural dependence and limiting the growth of towns and cities. The nature of the institution effectively allowed a measure of personal tyranny and sexual freedom which was not tolerated in free society. Fear that any enforcement of the legal protection for slaves and free Blacks would weaken the institution of slavery itself perpetuated the frontier idea that men were law unto themselves. The total effect of these factors, rural separation, a strong frontier legacy, slavery, and a literacy rate below the rest of the nation, was to encourage the haughtiness, the predilection for violence, and the frustration born of realized inferiority which came to be associated with antebellum Southern character.

The differences between South and North were essentially a matter of degree rather than of sharp divergence. The South possessed cities and towns and native intellectuals, just not as many. Until the third decade of the century, slavery was legally recognized in Northern states, and harsh racial discrimination was widely enforced thereafter. Frontier conditions, lynchings,

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7For the most comprehensive study of discrimination against free Negroes in the North, see: Leon F. Litwack, North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860 (Chicago, 1961).
and violence existed to some degree in all sections; language, culture, and political ideals were common to the entire country.

But as a whole, the differences caused the South to be far less receptive to new ideas. Because of ignorance, rural separation, and poor communications, the section was simply incapable of absorbing to any major degree things intellectual. To a greater degree than the North, it was incapable of sustaining a popular movement on grounds other than emotion or of being fundamentally changed by ideas of any sort.  

There were factors in America's development in the nineteenth century which were accentuating these inherent sectional differences. The introduction of long staple cotton and Whitney's gin, rejuvenating agricultural slavery and indirectly supporting the growth of manufacturing in the North, heightened the disparities between the sections. The South's economic role was increasingly fixed as that of a producer of raw materials, dependent on outsiders for shipping, banking, marketing, and manufactured goods. While, decade by decade, economic progress in the North was marked by growing diversification and

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8An argument could be made that even the Great Revival of 1800, the most pervasive cultural phenomenon of antebellum Southern history, was more a witness to than a formative influence upon Southern character. For the latter interpretation, see: John B. Boles, The Great Revival, 1787-1805. The Origins of the Southern Evangelical Mind (Lexington, Ky., 1972).
specialization, that of the South could be measured in quantitative agricultural production. Ever larger cotton crops greatly enhanced the world economic position of the United States as a whole, but it only served to increase the South's colonial economic status, to discourage innovation and diversity, and to minimize the urban growth so crucial to social progress. Because of the widening economic gap between North and South, issues which were essentially economic (tariffs, national finance, internal improvements, and territorial expansion) emerged as political issues and became enmeshed with the emotional issue of slavery.  

The correspondence of delegates to the proceedings of the Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention demonstrate clearly that sectional distrust existed from the earliest decades of the nation's political history. From the first, South Carolinians displayed jealousies over slavery, Virginians over the western territories and national finance. The economic and foreign policies of the Federalist administrations channeled Southern discontent into Democratic-Republican support, and, with the enthronement of Jefferson and twenty-four

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years of Virginia presidencies, Northern Federalists returned this spirit of contempt by endowing their political rhetoric with a distinct anti-Southern tone. The Missouri debates of 1819-21 in Congress, a product of years of Federalist frustrations, brought the slavery issue directly onto the national political stage and, more than any other event, planted the seeds of sectional conflict which would not find resolution until the Civil War. After the Missouri Debates, the Denmark-Vesey Plot of 1822; the Nat Turner Rebellion of 1831, and the rise of militant Garrisonian antislavery, Southerners displayed a measure of sectional mistrust in their every undertaking.

II. Reform within the South: Inherent and Potential Weaknesses

This atmosphere of moderate but growing Southern distinctiveness gave the history of organized reform in the section a degree of uniqueness. It subtly shaped Southern reactions to reform societies; it placed the entire reform movement on a far more precarious foundation than it enjoyed in the North or than enthusiastic

participants at the time realized. Once reform societies became controversial, Southern opinion deprived reformers of the freedom to look at social problems with scientific detachment, emasculating the best impulses which it had engendered and simultaneously giving witness to the dangerous flaws in Southern civilization which made secession inevitable.

Part of the explanation for the inability of organized reform to penetrate to the soul of Southern society, to gain its confidence and deeply influence its character, rests in the shallowness of the roots of organized native religion upon which it was based. From the earliest colonial period until the 1820s, the South had produced very few educated ministers of native birth. Certainly 75% of the clergymen with higher educational credentials, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Associate Reformed, Regular Baptists, Lutherans, were natives of Europe or the North who had emigrated South after completing their formal training.¹¹ The lack of educational institutions meant that almost all of the few Southerners who were drawn into the clerical profession (in the Churches requiring an educated clergy) had received college and perhaps theological training beyond the section's borders. These were the men who challenged the South with new ideas and social theories, but their foreign origins perpetuated a

¹¹This figure represents only a guess, but if anything a conservative one.
veil of mistrust between them and the Southern social hierarchy which was always present. The growing army of native Methodist and Separate Baptist preachers enjoyed complete regional acceptance, but their fundamentalism made them resistant to innovation. What intellectual stimulation they offered was aimed at bringing the uneducated masses up to a fairly low common denominator, but they offered nothing in the way of ideas which could inspire educated men and women to reach for greater heights. Until colleges and seminaries became numerous in the thirties, and until political controversies of the 1840s convinced ardent fire-eaters that independence was the only way to preserve their way of life, Southerners ignored their responsibility to produce a native intelligentsia.

The pervasiveness of Northern religious leaders in a Southern environment is well illustrated in Charleston, the very center of pro-Southern sentiment. Isaac S. Keith and William Hollingshead, pastors of the Congregational Church from the 1780s to 1815 and leaders of every reform effort undertaken in the city, were born and trained in Philadelphia and its vicinity; Benjamin M.

12 For an excellent study which deals with the social aspects of early Methodism, see Donald G. Mathews, Slavery and Methodism, A Chapter in American Morality (Princeton, N.J., 1965).

13 For biographical data on individuals mentioned in this chapter, see Appendix A.
Palmer, their successor, was born in Philadelphia and educated at Princeton. Theodore Dehon, Charleston clergyman and the first evangelical bishop of the Diocese (1812-17), was a native of Rhode Island; his successor, Nathaniel Bowen, was born in Connecticut and held pastorates in Boston and Providence before his election. Both were Harvard graduates. T. Charleton Henry, Presbyterian pastor in Columbia (1818-24) and Charleston (1824-27), was a Philadelphian, son of the president of the American Sunday School Union, and a Middlebury and Princeton Seminary graduate; Artemas Boies, Presbyterian minister and active promoter of reform societies in the 1820s, was born in Massachusetts and a graduate of Williams College and Princeton Seminary. John Bachman, Lutheran minister, was born, educated, and ordained in New York state. Even Richard Furman of the First Baptist Church was born in New York, although a South Carolina upbringing and a conspicuous Southern Revolutionary War record gave him complete native acceptance.

The pattern held true, to greater or lesser degree, throughout the South from the colonial period through the decades of Church rejuvenation from 1810 to 1830. Adiel Sherwood, a leading advocate of education and temperance among the Baptists of Georgia, was a native of New York, graduate of Union College, and had attended Andover Seminary for one year. Philip Lindsley, who accepted the presidency of Cumberland College in 1825 after having turned down similar offers from Transylvania, Princeton,
Dickinson, Washington (Virginia), Alabama, and University of Pennsylvania, was a New Jerseyite and Princeton graduate. Abiel Carter of Christ Church (Episcopal), Savannah, was a Dartmouth graduate from New Hampshire; Sylvester Larned and Theodore Clapp, Presbyterian clergymen at New Orleans, were Massachusetts natives and had both attended Andover. The former was a Middlebury graduate, the latter, a matriculant of Yale.

Salmon Giddings, Presbyterian minister and reformer of St. Louis, came from New England, a graduate of Williams and Andover. Joseph G. Bend of St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Baltimore, a High Churchman but an active leader in local charities, was a New York native who grew up in Barbados and officiated in a Philadelphia parish before removing to Maryland. Eliphalet W. Gilbert, Presbyterian reform leader in Wilmington, graduated from Union College. Of the men who founded the Episcopal Seminary in Alexandria and breathed new life into the dioceses of Virginia and Maryland: Bishop Moore was a New Yorker; J. P. K. Henshaw, a Connecticut native and graduate of Middlebury; E. R. Lippit, a Rhode Islander who attended Brown; Reuel Keith, a Vermonter and a Middlebury and Andover graduate.14

Native Southern clergymen who were leaders of organized societies were in many cases graduates of Northern colleges: John Holt Rice, William Meade, and John Breckinridge were Princeton graduates; C. E. Gadsden attended Yale.

Nurtured in a more thoroughly literate society, Northern clergymen were quite naturally responsible for many of the religious periodicals which played a crucial role in reform society expansion. Benjamin Allen, Jr., editor of the Episcopal Layman's Magazine in Virginia, was a New York native and convert from Presbyterianism; Andrew Fowler, editor of The Episcopal Visitant (Charleston, Episcopal, 1818-20), was of Presbyterian-Congregational background, born in Connecticut and a graduate of Yale. Benjamin Gildersleeve, editor of The Missionary (Mt. Zion, Georgia) and the Christian Observer (Charleston, 1826-45), was a Middlebury graduate from Connecticut. Charles Goddard, editor of the Family Visitor (Richmond, 1822- ), was a native of Massachusetts and a Williams graduate; John K. and Amasa Converse of the Southern Religious Telegraph and the Literary and Evangelical Magazine (Richmond) were Dartmouth graduates from New Hampshire. Nathan S. S. Beeman, editor of The Missionary (Mt. Zion, Georgia), hailed from New York state and was a Middlebury graduate.

A significant number of the laymen most active in promoting reform activity seem to have been influenced
by the same Northern origins and contacts. Willard Hall, congressman, judicial leader, and the most influential advocate of organized reforms in Delaware, was a New Englander and Harvard graduate. Amos Kendall, who briefly published the *Religious Intelligencer* (Georgetown, Ky.) before entering the stormy arena of Jacksonian politics, a staunch participant in reform society efforts, was a Dartmouth graduate of strict Massachusetts Congregational upbringing. Alfred Hennen, for years an almost single-handed proponent of Bible and tract efforts in godless New Orleans, was a Yale graduate. Horace Utley, a ship captain and one of the most active participants in poor relief and seamen's societies of Charleston, was from Connecticut, a Dartmouth graduate. Margretta Mason Brown, wife of Kentucky's senator and leading figure in female benevolences in Frankfort, was a New Yorker, sister of Rev. Mr. John M. Mason who was an active leader in the founding of most of New York City's early charitable societies. William Maxwell of Virginia had attended Yale; Joseph H. Lumkin of Georgia was a Princeton graduate. Both men maintained personal contacts with religious reformers in the North throughout their lives. The prominence of these residents with Northern backgrounds and connections, combined with the several hundred lesser individuals of Northern origins, the missionaries, agents, and the visiting clergymen, gave the entire reform society
movement a distinct alien cast which was a potential threat to its effectiveness and credibility.  

The preponderance of Northerners in reform society leadership, particularly of New Englanders with their distinctiveness of speech and manner, was not lost upon Southerners, as occasional expressions of sectional jealousy attest. Hostility among Southern Calvinists to Samuel Hopkins' theology of "divine benevolence," identified almost exclusively with clergymen of New England Congregational training, was largely sectional rather than ideological in motivation.

In 1817, Rev. Mr. R. Bell of the independent Charleston Presbytery, in the sort of attack upon the General Assembly's resolutions on slavery which would be repeated more and more frequently, urged that "president Kirkland and the Trustees of Cambridge College, would keep their Andover notions to themselves, and not export any more of them into this part of the world." The tragedy

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15 Close examination of biographical data on Northern missionaries and educators who went south indicates that a high percentage were motivated by reasons of health. Travel and a mild climate were believed to be an effective cure for many of the ailments, from respiratory diseases to weakened eyesight, which were seen to be the result of overwork in college and seminary.


17 R. Bell, The Veil Withdrawn; or Presbyterianism Vindicated, and the Character and Intolerance of Its Enemies Exposed, in a Letter to a Rev'nd Gentleman (Charleston, S.C., 1817).
of sectional antagonisms was that mistrust and rejection of Northerners carried over to the intellectual framework which they alone, because of their intellectual training, were capable of bringing to the reform effort. To the vast majority of Southerners, who did not have many direct contacts with European ideas, evangelicalism at its highest intellectual level was a product of the North, something to be as wary of as the men who promoted it.

The alien origins of many of the reform leaders in the face of growing sectional sensitivities in national politics was significant, but it was only an element of a larger problem. Southern society simply lacked the institutional vehicles and the overlapping web of cultural threads which enabled its citizens to understand and themselves promote deep-seated change. The South, far more than the rest of the country, had little control of its own destiny. It was at the mercy of outside influences, grudgingly forced to accommodate to them, to move with the times, but the section was constitutionally almost incapable of taking change to heart, of making it part of its own being and growing upon this larger foundation.

Towns provided the one environment in the South conducive to real cultural endeavor and social experimentation. The logical place of settlement for immigrants, including most of the Northern clergymen and evangelical laymen mentioned in this chapter, they made possible social mobility based strictly on ability, hard work, and financial success.
There developed a basic profile of charitable action essentially common to all Southern towns and cities. The driving energy behind organized efforts was usually provided by those clergymen of the socially prestigious churches who took a personal interest in reform activities. In most cases they were Presbyterians or Episcopalians but might be Baptists or Lutherans as well; they were more likely than not to be Northerners by birth and education. They were active in denominational affairs on the national as well as state level, attended conventions, subscribed to periodicals which gave them a national vision of religious problems, and were the men who traveling agents of the benevolent societies would first visit with letters of introduction.

Clergymen native to the South and well-connected socially, William Meade, John Holt Rice, C. E. Gadsden, and a few others, could, by their own approval, virtually guarantee acceptance of a reform effort by the general community. But native clerics of such stature were few. For ministers of lesser social origins and those from other sections of the country, it was essential to enlist the support of influential laymen.

In every Southern town and city, reform organization success was dependent on the approbation of a varied popular constituency. There were the social leaders, the

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18 See biographical sketches in Appendix A.
men of national political stature, the heads of families whose dominant influence preceded American independence, the military heroes whose very numerical infrequency on the rolls of charitable societies made them all the more important in providing a legitimacy to such efforts.

For men of prominence, active participation in reform activity was almost always a carry over from the support they gave organized religion. Some, like Charles Cotesworth Pinckney or Bushrod Washington, were active church members in the paternalistic tradition of the colonial period. They allowed their time and their names to be used in support of religious and charitable activities throughout their lives, knowing that they gave such efforts a social respectability in spite of the fact they personally seem not to have shared the fervent evangelical piety which was generating church and reform society growth. Others, like John Marshall of Richmond, were not even church members, but they believed in the utility of religion, they actively served as Episcopal vestrymen or Presbyterian elders of the new urban churches, they attended Church conventions, and they gave crucial support and faithful attendance to meetings of the reform societies.\footnote{According to his daughter, Mary Harvey, John Marshall never joined the Episcopal Church because "he believed in the truth of Christian revelation, but not in the divinity of Christ." He was, however, a delegate to the Episcopal Conventions of Virginia, he attended church frequently, and he actively supported benevolent societies. See catalogue description of a letter from Marshall to Samuel Farmar Jarvis, Richmond, March 26, 1820, The Scriptorum, cat. no. 3 (Oct., 1974).}
Increasingly, as the churches gained a strengthened hold on urban society and as revivals began to reap their rewards, these somewhat secular supporters of reform came to be outnumbered by social leaders who had experienced personal conversion and whose devotion to religious advancement and reform activity was a primary interest. Willard Hall of Delaware, Joseph Nourse of Washington, and Francis Scott Key of Georgetown, William Maxwell and John Hartwell Cocke of Virginia, Duncan Cameron of North Carolina, Thomas S. Grimke of Charleston, and Alfred Hennen of New Orleans are leading examples. The interest shown by these social leaders served as a catalyst, attracting commitments of time and money from the countless lesser individuals who supplied needed popular support. Reform societies provided an opportunity for contact with social leaders. They served as vehicles for gaining social respectability through philanthropy and good works which was played to advantage by all parties. The social lions received adulation and the satisfaction that their influence was being excited for worthy ends. The aspirants were provided an opening to a society previously closed to them. The reform organizations obtained the moral support and financial backing of both. The cities were full of self-made men, merchants and professionals who had worked their way up from poverty, immigrants from rural areas, other parts of the country, and abroad, who grasped at the opportunities which organized religion and reform
offered for adding a touch of at least seeming concern for their fellow men to their otherwise materialistic lives. Their commitment, in turn, influenced the behavior of their clerks and apprentices, establishing new ideals not only of hard work and moderate living habits, but religious piety and active charitable endeavor to which aspiring capitalists expecting preferment had to adopt. Charitable societies, in conjunction with organized religion, played a significant role in ushering in Victorian respectability.

The societies and the various pressures which produced them in fact produced a personality type new to the South—the "professional" public-spirited citizen. Luke Tierman, Alexander Fridge, John Brice, Edward J. Coale, David Williamson, Thomas Kelso, and David Hoffman of Baltimore; William Crane, James C. Crane, David J. Burr, Willis Cowling and James Caskie of Richmond; Thomas Napier, Jaspar Corning, Thomas Fleming, Horatio Leavitt, Horace Utley, and Solomon Legare of Charleston; these and many men like them, mostly merchants whose names unfairly have been long forgotten, involved themselves in four and five organizations simultaneously, devoting much of their later lives to charitable action.

Biographical data on Southern merchants is far more difficult to find than is the case with Northerners because the urban histories and collective biographical volumes simply do not exist in great profusion. For one of the few individual biographies of a pious Southern merchant, see: J. L. Burrows, A Christian Merchant. A
For women, the social pressures enveloping reform activity were similar to that for men. Because they were more likely to be church members, enjoyed more free time than their husbands, and were being given their first opportunity for organized social action, females displayed even greater enthusiasm. Wives of clergymen and community leaders, daughters of prominent families, exercised official leadership; younger women and those of deep piety and lesser social standing performed the labor.

The irony of the situation was that the very characteristics of urban society which made significant reform possible, the higher level of education, the greater number of foreigners, and the mercantile economy made it almost impossible for the societies to effectively influence the South as a whole. Cities exerted a cultural influence on the rural areas, but they were not the ideal of Southern civilization. The ways of urban society were neither understood nor liked by the average Southerner and many of their lessons were simply lost on an unsocial, unthinking hinterland which differed markedly from community-oriented rural sections of Pennsylvania, New England, New York, and the Middle West.

Even within the environment of urban reform, there was a dangerous flaw. The whole pyramid of social relation-

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*Memoir of James C. Crane* (Charleston, S.C., 1858). He was Baptist and a leader in Sunday school, mission, and tract society work in Richmond.
ships upon which the societies functioned was based on popular persuasion and appeal. Apprentices fit behavioral molds cast by their employers. Merchants and their wives aped their social betters. Rural areas copied cities. Public opinion was the single source of energy, capable of accomplishing wonders when it was excited in a positive manner. But it was potentially able to transmit negative impulses and give them the same instantaneous acceptance. While there was a newness, a momentum, an excitement without the haunting shadow of realities dimming its luster, organized reform could indeed transform the intellectual foundations of society with startling swiftness and efficiency. But the chain by which the currents of change were transmitted was fragile, especially in the South. A setback of any sort could reverse the current and short-circuit the entire system.

The framework of national reform organization maximized the potential for sectional resentment. The headquarters for all the major societies except the American Colonization Society, the African Education Society, and briefly, the Baptist General Tract Society, were in Northern cities. Southerners were appointed to vice presidencies, and in the 1830s and 1840s even presidencies, but the offices were essentially honorary; real power rested in the hands of the directors and the secretaries who were, of course, Northern residents. Efforts were made at every annual meeting to give the
appearances of broad geographical participation. But pre-planned resolutions introduced by a delegate of one area, seconded by a man from another area, were clearly public relations efforts to suggest and encourage a unanimity which did not in fact exist. As the whole reform society movement developed efficiency and national direction, as the perfection of the agency system brought increasing numbers of young Northern clergymen to all sections of the country, the peculiar interests of the South were indeed subsumed to a greater purpose which was of Northern definition. No matter how careful it might be, the national reform leadership was incapable of fully appreciating the nature of Southern sensitivities. The growing crescendo of reform campaigns in the 1820s exaggerated the visibility of all the features of the societies which seemed to threaten the South.

III. Reform versus Slavery

A "clash" between militant evangelical reform and the realities of the Southern way of life inevitably arose over slavery. It occurred, not through an obvious pitched battle, but in a long series of bloodless skirmishes by which the pro-slavery majority displayed its power and the evangelicals, their facility for prudent retreat. Without publicity, almost without comprehending the significance of their actions, the Southern reformers, by giving in to irresistible pressure, compromised the very basis of the reform impulse itself.
The major events in American history between the Revolution and the Civil War, those which were marked by the obvious political and military actions appearing in the textbooks, in many ways present a misleading picture of the underlying forces which actually carried the nation on the road from unity to dissolution. The Southern reactions to so many of the incidents which stand out, the Nullification Crisis, the Wilmot Proviso, all of the tortured confrontations of the 1850s, were evidence of intellectual compromises which had already been effected below the Mason and Dixon line.

The South of 1830, economically, culturally, and intellectually, except that it lacked a firm impulse toward secession itself, was in all important respects the identical entity which would go to war thirty years later. Although the political events which would determine the radical solution were to occur after this date, the essential ideological foundations upon which Southern actions would be based were fully matured.

Southerners, especially Southern evangelicals, were not, as the obvious historical record might indicate, guilty of ignoring or sidestepping "the central theme of Southern history." No intelligent, rational Southerner in the eight decades between 1775 and 1860 could ignore the fact of the Negro presence or the institution of slavery however little he might speak or write openly about the subject. But for the section as a whole, the
internal, personal debates took place far earlier than
the course of organized antislavery in the nation as a
whole would suggest. The necessity of tolerating the
peculiar institution was almost universally accepted
early in the nineteenth century and a willingness to
permit no outside interference was thoroughly accepted by
the 1830s.

Revolutionary liberalism did cause Southern intel­
lectuals to face squarely the disharmony of the concept
of universal personal freedom and Negro slavery. The
mental contortions and antislavery statements of Wash­ing­
ton, Jefferson, and many of their contemporaries, the
legislative debates over emancipation in the 1770s, 1780s
and 1790s were sincere enunciations of republican principle
and personal guilt over an institution which Enlighten­
ment thought condemned as an evil. But they were essentially
arguments in abstraction. From a practical point of view,
the mere existence of a large Negro population, the
question over how Blacks could be accommodated in a White
society which would not assimilate or accept them as
equals, the matter of protecting this White society
and all its prerogatives always blocked solution or even

\[21\]For a general picture of the antislavery impulse
generated by the Revolution, see: Dwight L. Dumond,
Antislavery, The Crusade for Freedom in America (Ann
Arbor, Mich., 1961), 26-52; Winthrop D. Jordan, White over
Black, American Attitudes toward the Negro (Chapel Hill,
N.C., 1968), 269-311; Mary S. Locke, Antislavery in
America, 1619-1808 (Boston, 1901. Radcliffe Monograph
No. 11).
thoroughly honest, open discussion of possible resolution. As Winthrop Jordan’s study *White Over Black* brilliantly demonstrates, it was a far easier solution for even the most rational minds to convince themselves that Negroes were inherently inferior than to accept the logical conclusions of racial equality. Almost no one in the South or the North questioned the assumption that slavery was and must be a problem for Whites to resolve. Until they came up with solutions amenable to their own society, slavery must exist as a necessary evil.

The ardent proponents of evangelical Christianity were by nature relegated to a somewhat equivocal ground with regard to slavery. Their humanitarian interests demanded that they confront the "problem" of the Negro presence and the inequalities of servitude. But their primary interest in the world of the Spirit rather than the world of men, their greater emphasis upon moral responsibility rather than human rights, their inability to find clear Biblical guidance on the subject, their reflexive antipathy to secular reform, which antislavery in its earliest political form was, greatly weakened their opposition to the institution of slavery in itself.

With almost no exceptions, evangelical leaders before the 1830s, at least privately, expressed sincere abhorrence of slavery itself. But to an even greater extent than those of the purely rational opponents, their

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antislavery arguments centered upon the ill-effects of Black slaves upon White society. Slavery was uneconomical; it encouraged pride, idleness, and tyranny; it introduced coarseness and immorality into the intimate family circle. In emphasizing the latter point, evangelicals were capable of exposing an aspect of slavery which more prudent voices never touched upon. An 1806 correspondent to the Virginia Religious Magazine, admitting that sexual relations between White males and female slaves was widespread, emphasized its corrupting influence on White morality. "Phoreo," in an 1823 letter to the Washington Theological Repository, noted that:

> It cannot be denied that the observation of chastity and the laws of matrimony are next to impossible. The constant transfer of property and distribution of estates renders permanent union impracticable; and the want of any character to support, and of the least power to resist the will of their superiors, delivers over one half of that unhappy race, an unresisting prey to lawless appetite -- thus introducing pollution into almost every family, and throwing constant temptation in the way of every young man within his fathers walls . . .

23 For examples of this sort of argument, see: Virginia Cary, Letters on Female Character Addressed to a Young Lady, on the Death of Her Mother (Richmond, Va., 1828), 172-80; C. Humphrey, Mentor, or Dialogues between a Parent and Children; On Some of the Duties, Amusements, Pursuits and Relations of Life (Lexington, Ky., 1828), 165-70.


Even when attacking the very institution itself, the weight of arguments emphasized the sinfulness which slavery imposed on White society. Virginia Presbyterian clergyman David Rice, in *Slavery Inconsistent with Justice and Good Policy* (Philadelphia and London, 1792), the most forthright rational attack on Negro servitude to come from a native Southern pen, stressed the point that "slavery naturally tends to sap the foundations of moral, and consequently of political virtue, and virtue is absolutely necessary for the happiness and prosperity of a free people." Even such radical opponents of slavery in the South as George Bourne or the Quakers of the North Carolina Manumission Society laid major emphasis upon the depravity of the slaveholders, portraying them as tyrants, as manstealers, and the like. By viewing slavery primarily as a barrier to the Christian and republican perfection of White society, opponents were guilty of what later pro-slavery defenders would accuse them—ignoring the true feelings and needs of Blacks in a quest for their

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own innocence. Post-Civil War segregation had, if any­thing, deeper roots in the history of evangelical anti­slavery than the ardent pro-slavery tradition which at least recognized the right of Blacks and Whites to inhabit the same society on however an unequal basis. The problem of what to do with a despised and unwanted Black popula­tion was for the evangelicals, because they did not view perpetual slavery as a permanent solution, an agonizing and more pressing problem than it was for pro-slavery men.

There were a few early efforts made by the organized Churches to meet the problem of slavery head-on. The annual meetings of Southern Quakers, following the lead of their Northern counterparts, effectively rooted slavery out of the denomination by means of disciplinary action. The millennial zeal engendered by the Methodist and Baptist revivals of the 1780s, pointing to the imminent arrival of the Glorious Day and influenced by the egalitarian republicanism of Revolutionary thought, brought about a wave of slave manumissions in Virginia and Mary­land. Francis Asbury’s personal convictions implanted a strong antislavery character within the Methodist Church from its organization. Persistent disavowal of slave­keeping was perpetuated in scattered Baptist congrega­tions, especially in Kentucky, well into the nineteenth century.28 The Presbyterian Synod of the Carolinas and

28See: Thomas E. Drake, Quakers and Slavery in America (New Haven, Ct., 1950); Mathews, Slavery and Methodism.
the Synod of Virginia both came out strongly in support of legislated gradual emancipation in 1799-1800.29

But to all practical purposes, the opportunity for organized religion to effect change in this area had already passed by 1800, if it really had ever existed at all. For between 1800 and 1831, slave revolts and plots, real or imagined, timed to do the greatest possible damage to the antislavery cause in the South, created a public hostility which made rational discussion, much less solution, impossible. The very real slave revolt of Santo Domingo (1791) had laid the groundwork by giving all rumors credibility. The Gabriel Plot of 1800, discovered at the very height of public turmoil engendered by the war with France and the election of 1800, brought the danger home. No matter how exaggerated accounts of the plot might have been, the emotional publicity given to them implanted a seed of popular fear throughout the South which would be continually nourished by appearances of such rumors over the next decades.30 In a despairing

29 Andrew E. Murray, Presbyterians and the Negro--A History (Phila., 1966); George Howe, History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina (Columbia, S.C., 1870, 1888; 2 vols.), vol. 1, 171-73; Presbyterian Church, Synod of Virginia, "Minutes (1800)," Ms. (on microfilm), vol. 2. Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Va.

30 There is real need for a comprehensive historical study of the dissemination of news about and the public reaction to the Santo Domingo Revolt, the Gabriel and Denmark Vesey Plots, and the Nat Turner Revolt. Their importance in creating public resistance to free discussion of slavery cannot be overestimated.
letter to the Philadelphia Antislavery Convention of 1801, James Wood, president of the Virginia Abolition Society, noted that "many, also who were once hearty in the cause of emancipation, taking a retrospect view of the recent plot which threatened our internal tranquility with a revolutionary convulsion, have now thought proper to abandon it as dangerous to the well-being of society." Manumissions among Methodists and Baptists virtually ceased. The resolutions of the Presbyterian Synods in Virginia and the Carolinas were indefinitely shelved.

Between 1800 and the decisive actions of Nat Turner in 1831, individual voices of sincere antislavery sentiment continued on occasion to be heard through the religious periodicals and pamphlet literature of the South. But they were devoid of confident assurance that the problem could be solved in the foreseeable future. Sensing the

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31 American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, 7th Convention (1801), 22.

hopelessness of the situation, many of the most dedicated opponents, Quakers, Presbyterians, Baptists, migrated individually or by entire congregations to Ohio in the early part of the nineteenth century, at least purging themselves of personal guilt.\textsuperscript{33} The judicial bodies of Churches with sizeable Southern memberships, although they continued to condemn slavery in the abstract and the evils connected with it, gave up in a series of compromises any thought of disciplinary interference with the existence of the institution itself. Under pressure from Southern constituents, the Methodist General Conference relinquished disciplinary control over slavery to the Annual Conferences which, in the South, accommodated themselves to intensifying pro-slavery public opinion.\textsuperscript{34} The Presbyterian General Assembly, at the time that it passed a resolution opposing slavery in principle (1816-18), demonstrated by its treatment of George Bourne and its removal of antislavery notes from its printed constitution that it was unwilling to force any real conformity on Southern judicial bodies.\textsuperscript{35}


\textsuperscript{33}See, for example; Howe, \textit{Presbyterian Church in South Carolina}, vol. 1, 621-35; vol. 2, 284-85.

\textsuperscript{34}Mathews, \textit{Slavery and Methodism}, 30-61.

\textsuperscript{35}See; Presbyterian Church, \textit{Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, from Its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive} (Phila., 1847), 629-30; Christie and Dumond,
Before the national reform societies had even come into existence then, the organized Churches which were to provide their support in the South had essentially absolved themselves of responsibility for ending Negro slavery itself. But a strong sense of guilt and anxiety remained which, for a time at least, found an outlet in the scheme of African colonization.

The American Colonization Society, founded in Washington in 1816, was in many ways the ideal humanitarian society. Historians have never successfully assigned it to a neat category in the annals of anti-slavery because it embodied a confusion of motives. Yet it successfully drew the support of widely divergent interests to a single purpose, and it worked, at least to a limited degree. In its foundation, it was very much a part of the evangelical national reform movement. Its first publication, describing its origins and purposes, began with the statement that "the present age witnesses numerous and unexpected changes" and referred to the "rising glory of the kingdom of Christ," to the fact that "there exists an unusual sensibility and desire to aid the cause of humanity and religion." Its permanent officers

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were trained in the same evangelical traditions as those of the other national benevolent organizations, and its popular financial support would always be derived primarily from church congregations. One of the roots upon which it was built was the missionary interest which had come to fruition in the Richmond Baptist African Mission Society (1815). The vision of Christianized American Negroes bringing the Gospel to the Dark Continent effectively appealed to ardent evangelicals.

From the start, however, because it was headquartered in the secular national Capitol, because its mission required federal support, and because it dealt with the inherently non-religious problem of slavery, the society drew a broad secular support which none of the other organizations enjoyed. Political figures who never darkened the door of a church, large slaveholders noted for dueling and gambling, served as national and local officers. The society captured a strange mélange of interest groups; ardent antislavery advocates who hoped that it would facilitate legal emancipation by eliminating the residual Black population which had been a stated impediment to its previous acceptance; Negroes and sympathetic Whites who viewed it as the only method of restoring Black dignity; pro-slavery men who saw it as a way to rid the nation of free Blacks whose very existence ridiculed all of the "humanitarian" excuses for perpetuating the institution.
The Colonization Society prospered in the South. Forty-four of fifty-seven auxiliaries in existence in 1826 were in the land of slavery. As other antislavery measures lost their credibility, all of the major Church groups, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Lutherans, even Methodists, began promoting the Society with Fourth of July collections and official statements of support. A related African Education Society, dedicated to preparing emigrating Blacks for freedom, was founded in 1829.

But the Colonization Society could not escape the influence of external events any more than did the orthodox antislavery movement. Within a decade and a half of its formation, in spite of superficial prosperity, the grand vision of this Society was anachronistic, as impossible of success as any other scheme for solving the problem of slavery. First of all, it rapidly became apparent that colonization in Africa was not an easy task. European powers and local tribes were hostile; transportation was expensive; diseases decimated the ranks of colonists once they had arrived. And it became increasingly obvious that the majority of Blacks themselves

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preferred "freedom" in the United States, with all its restrictions, to deportation to a foreign land.\textsuperscript{38}

Simultaneously, political events and social fears relentlessly began to tear apart the heterodoxical White constituency which had provided initial strength. The Missouri Debates of 1819-21, almost unnoticed by the public in their earliest stages, began to sink into the Southern consciousness in the latter part of 1820 and 1821, creating for the first time that universal feeling of betrayal over slavery which would grow with every political crisis thereafter.\textsuperscript{39} Symptomatic of the rising anger, Southern contributions to Northern agents of benevolent societies fell off temporarily.\textsuperscript{40} Immediately following the Debates, the city of Savannah refused to accept $10-12,000 fire relief money because it came with the stipulation that it be given out "without respect to colour."\textsuperscript{41} Then, in June, 1822, the authorities of

\textsuperscript{38}For an example of early Black hostility to colonization, see: "The Colonization Scheme," Niles Weekly Register, 17 (1818-19), 201-2.

\textsuperscript{39}The definitive study of the Missouri Compromise, which fully discusses not only the debates but public reaction as well, is Glover Moore's The Missouri Compromise, 1819-1821 (Lexington, Ky., 1953).


\textsuperscript{41}The Emancipator 1 (1820), 8.
Charleston, conditioned by resentment over the Missouri Question, discovered a grand plot by Denmark Vesey and a network of Black subordinates, free and slave, to annihilate the White population. A sensational public trial, every word of which was published as a warning to the South, resulted in sixty-seven convictions. Thirty-five Blacks were hung; the others, along with eleven declared innocent but considered dangerous, were transported from the state. For South Carolina and a growing area of the South, the time in which slavery could even be discussed, except favorably, was past.

In this atmosphere of escalating distrust, many Southerners, including all South Carolinians, withdrew support from even colonization efforts. Those who persisted were forced by public opinion to emphasize the role of the Society in ridding the South of free Blacks, and this, in turn, alienated those of humanitarian and religious motivation. The Nat Turner Rebellion and the rise of Garrisonian antislavery would of course finish the process, but the ideals of the colonization effort, and with them, the last real hopes for solving the slavery

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problem through voluntary action, were shattered by the late 1820s.

In their private correspondence, evangelical leaders began to express deep pessimism over the possibilities of ever solving the problem of slavery. Moses Waddel, beloved tutor of John C. Calhoun and many of the Deep South's leading statesmen, president of the University of Alabama and a central figure in the early Presbyterian efforts to effect gradual emancipation, confided to Jeremiah Evarts in 1822 that he did not believe that "religion in any form, certainly not in the Presbyterian form, can flourish in slave country. He does not believe that domestic slaves can ever generally be brought to receive religious education. They are generally much averse to attending family prayers and to any religious order . . . ." William Meade, who had enthusiastically served as the American Colonization Society's first national agent seven years before, turned down a similar position aimed at the Southern legislatures in September, 1826. He stated in a private letter to R. R. Gurley that he believed only a "political character of talents" could be effective, that a clergyman might arouse the interest of "the pious and philanthropic" but would only serve to alienate legislators as a whole. Thomas P. Hunt, a Presbyterian clergyman in Brunswick County, Virginia,

43 Jeremiah Evarts, Diary entry, April 26, 1822, in Tracy, Memoir of Jeremiah Evarts, 169-70.
turned down an agency of the Colonization Society in the same year, stating that his taking a public stand hinting at opposition to slavery would destroy his usefulness as a clergyman and force him to leave the state. Benjamin M. Palmer wrote in 1829 from Charleston that "ministers here have hardly ventured to mention the name of the Colonization Society." In a letter to William Maxwell of February, 1827, John Holt Rice unburdened his mind fully on the subject:

I am most fully convinced that slavery is the greatest evil in our country, except whiskey; and it is my most full belief that the deliverance is not to be accomplished by the combination of benevolent societies. The great body of persons composing such societies are too little accustomed to calculate consequences. They go directly at their measure, and have no means of accomplishing it but the producing, by means of speeches and addresses, a strong excitement. But on a subject of this delicate character, where much opposition is to be encountered, these very means give the adversary an advantage, which he will not fail to use to the injury, perhaps to the destruction of the Society...

The reason why I am so strenuously opposed to any movement by the church, or the ministers of religion on this subject, is simply this. I am convinced that any thing we can do will injure religion, and retard the march of public feeling in relation to slavery. I take the case to be just this: as slavery

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exists among us, the only possible chance of deliverance is by Making the People willing to get rid of it. At any rate, it is this or physical force. The problem to be solved is, to produce that state of public will, which will cause the people to move spontaneously to the eradication of the evil. Slaves are by law held as property. If the church or the minister of religion touches the subject, it is touching what are called the rights of property. The jealousy among our countrymen is such, that we cannot move a step in this way, without waking up the strongest opposition, and producing the most violent excitement. The whole mass of the community will be set in motion, and the great body of the church will be carried along . . . Where the movement might end, I could not pretend to conjecture.

But I tell you what I wish. While we go on minding our own business and endeavoring to make as many good Christians as possible among masters and servants, let the subject of slavery be discussed in the political papers, Reviews, etc., as a question of political economy. Keep it entirely free from all ecclesiastical connexions, and from all the politics of the general government; and treat it as a matter of State concernment. Examine its effects on the agriculture, commerce, and manufactures of the State. Compare the expense of free and slave labor . . . Considerations of this sort, combined with the benevolent feelings growing out of a gradual, uninterrupted progress of religion, will, I believe, set the people of their own accord to seek deliverance. They will foresee the necessity of a change; soon begin to prepare for it; and it will come about without violence or convulsion.45

Before the Missouri Debates and the Denmark Vesey
Plot, the evangelical religious community of the South had
made significant efforts to provide religious education for
the Negro population. From the time of the S.P.G. mis-
sionaries, from the time of Bacon, Whitefield, and Davies,
serious attempts had been made to Christianize slaves and
free Blacks. Such efforts received official sanction and
an element of systematization when the Churches had become
fully organized on the national level. A few individual
clergymen, John Holt Rice among them, accepted it as a
Christian duty of the greatest importance, and, in
lifetimes of ministry, they devoted sufficient time in a
sincere spirit of kindness so as to be of real spiritual
comfort to their Black flocks. William Meade took up
the subject in the earliest days of his ministry and
devoted a lifetime to encouraging religious instruction
of slaves. He republished Thomas Bacon's *Sermons to
Masters and Servants* in 1816 and distributed hundreds of
copies throughout the South. The abolition societies

46 There is a considerable literature on the religious
instruction of slaves in the South, although the major
emphasis is on the period after 1830. For the basic
source on the subject, see Charles C. Jones' *The Religious
Instruction of the Negroes in the United States* (Savannah,
Ga., 1842).

47 For Rice's work, see: Maxwell, Memoir of John H.
Rice and P. B. Price, *The Life of Reverend John Holt Rice,

48 William Meade, ed., *Sermons Addressed to Masters
and Servants, and Published in the Year 1743 [sic] by the
Rev. Thomas Bacon . . . Now Republished with Other Tracts
and Dialogues on the Same Subject, and Recommended to All
which arose in the upper South in the 1790s provided some schooling for free Blacks, and Negro children were welcomed in a surprising number of the Sunday schools which came into being after 1816. In a few cases, Negro and White children shared integrated classrooms, and here and there, Negro sabbath scholars were taught to read. 49

But the rising spirit of Southern militancy soon overwhelmed these efforts, particularly if they involved the encouragement of Negro literacy. In the trial of Denmark Vesey and his confederates, a great deal was made of the fact that several of the leaders were Methodists; that religious education had given them the ability to read the Missouri Debates and antislavery literature

Masters and Mistresses to be Used in their Families (Winchester, Va., 1813). For Meade's promotion of the religious education of slaves, see: David L. Holmes, "William Meade and the Church of Virginia, 1789-1829," (Ph.D. diss., Princeton University, 1971), 211; Protestant Episcopal Church. Diocese of Maryland, Journal (1816), 18; (1818), 21; William Meade to James Kemp: May 11, Sept. 10, and Sept. 30, 1816. Ms. letters. Maryland Diocesan Archives, housed at the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Md.

49 For efforts to teach Negroes to read, see: George Weller to James Kemp, 1817, Ms. letter. Maryland Diocesan Archives, housed at the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Md.; Protestant Episcopal Church. Diocese of Maryland, Journal (1824), 17; Presbyterian Church. Synod of the Carolinas, "Journal (1796)," 79-98. Ms. volume. Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian Church of the U.S., Montreat, N.C.; Male Sunday School of Baltimore, 1st and 2nd Reports (1820); Philadelphia Sunday and Adult School Union, Reports: 3rd (1819), 20-22; 4th (1821), 61-2, 67; 5th (1822), 53-54, 58; 6th (1823), 45-46, 48; 7th (1824), 48-49, 51-53; DesChamps, "The Presbyterian Church in the South Atlantic States," 57-59; Tracy, Memoir of Jeremiah Evarts, 117; Eleazar Harris, The Christian's Remembrancer . . . (n.p., 1821), 93; Samuel M. Janney, Memoirs of Samuel M. Janney, A Minister in the Religious Society of Friends (Phila., 1881), 11;
from the North and to quote the Scripture in such a per-
verted way as "to prove that slavery was contrary to the
laws of God; that slaves were bound to attempt their eman-
cipation, however shocking and bloody might be the con-
sequences, and that such efforts would not only be pleas­
ing to the Almighty, but were absolutely enjoined, and their success predicted ...".50

E. C. Holland, in a sharp pro-slavery pamphlet published in 1822 in Charleston, lashed out against "the swarm of Missionaries, white and black, that are perpet­ually visiting us, who, with the Sacred Volume of God in one hand, breathing peace to the whole family of man, scatter, at the same time, with the other, the fire-brands of discord and destruction, and, secretly disperse among our Negro Population, the seeds of discontent and sedi­tion."51 Whitmarsh B. Seabrook, in a pamphlet published three years later, warned that in the North, "perverted tenets of the gospel are arranged against the existence of an established order of polity, which no power but that

John Burton, Lectures on Female Education and Manners (Baltimore, 1811; 4th ed.), 192.


of God, or the slow progress of time, can ever ameliorate, without bloodshed." The Southern public reacted to this escalation of rhetoric in the early twenties by forcibly closing Sunday schools for Black children; city councils and legislatures here and there passed laws against teaching Negroes to read.

The crisis had been reached. The churches, the clergy, and the benevolent societies of South Carolina as of 1822, by events beyond their control, had lost all power to affect the legal status of slavery except in a negative manner, and events quickly spread the hopelessness to the Upper South as well in the course of the decade. The Southern clergy and reform-minded laymen, those of Charleston in the lead, adopted the only course of action open.

A century before (1727), the Bishop of London, to facilitate religious instruction of slaves by S.P.G. missionaries, had issued a public letter giving assurances that Christianizing of slaves in no way threatened the

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52 Whitmarsh B. Seabrook, A Concise View of the Critical Situation, and Future Prospects of the Slaveholding States, in Relation to their Coloured Population . . . . (Charleston, S.C., 1825), 16-19.

53 For scattered references to the forced opposition to Negro literacy, see: Isaac Parker Cook, Early History of Methodist Sabbath Schools, in Baltimore City and Vicinity; and Other Interesting Facts Connected Therewith. Compiled by a Sabbath Scholar of 1817 (Baltimore, 1877), 42; Phila. Sunday and Adult School Union: 6th Report (1823), 54; 7th Report (1824), 59-59; "The following notification . . . .," Southern Evangelical Intelligencer, 2 (1820-21), 358-59; The Emancipator, 1 (1820), 82, 89-90.
legal property rights of masters. In effect, the Southern clergy were forced to make the same admission in the 1820s and 1830s. To refute charges that Negro Christianity was inherently revolutionary, they had to prove by example that it was not. They threw all their pious energy into a growing series of efforts to provide "safe" religious training for slaves, realizing that it was the only avenue left which would allow them to retain influence in a society which simply would not tolerate dissent. To gain the public confidence needed to permit them to intercede between masters and their human property, they had to align themselves with slavery's growing number of vocal defenders and, by every means possible, attest to their orthodoxy on the subject.

One by one, in the late thirties and forties by entire Church judicial bodies, Southern clergymen were absolutely forced to compromise on the issue of slavery. Many individuals had long since accepted all of the premises upon which the decision was based and had no difficulty adapting to the role of slavery's defenders. Even the most rigorously intellectual clergymen of Northern origins who occupied the leading urban pulpits were sufficiently softened by convictions of man's depravity, of the preeminence of the soul over bodies.

54 For a somewhat abbreviated copy of the text, see "Bishop of London's Letter to Masters and Mistresses," (May 19, 1727), in Peter G. Mode, Source Book and Bibliographical Guide for American Church History (Menasha, Wis., 1921), 549-51.
enchained in sin if not in iron, to accept prospects of vast multitudes of heathen converts as a prize worth the price exacted.

Here then, for the first time, was a distinctly Southern reform. Superficially, the educational efforts which were vigorously commenced in the twenties were similar to the earliest Negro sunday schools and to the continuing religious education of White children. But the rationale was different—consciously founded upon racial prejudice. Fittingly, it was South Carolinians, and Episcopalians at that, who, untainted by a hint of revolutionary fervor and possessing a social respectability which could not be questioned, initiated the new effort. Although approximately one-third of the Episcopal communicants in the state were Blacks, not one had been involved in the 1822 conspiracy. Bishop Francis Bowen, who had consistently shown an interest in this missionary work, launched a major effort in his Diocesan Report of 1823. Noting "that a large number of this class, both bond and free, have a decided preference for the worship of our Church," that "the system of our Church is eminently adapted to promote the spiritual welfare of the illiterate, and those who have dull minds," he urged that Negroes should be "brought up in that religion which teaches the servant to be obedient to his master according to the flesh, and contented in that state of life in which
it hath pleased God that he should be." A clergyman, believed to be the later historian of the diocese Frederick Dalcho, published *Practical Considerations founded on the Scriptures, Relative to the Slave Population of South Carolina* (1823) which expanded upon Bowen's arguments with brutal frankness. He went directly to the crucial point, the need "to improve their moral and spiritual condition, without deranging the existing order of society," and he advocated two expedients: 1) Religious instruction, which has always served to "restrain" man. The Episcopal service, based upon the Book of Common Prayer, was particularly suited because it contained nothing "to inflame the passions of the ignorant enthusiast." 2) Prohibition of Black attendance at any public services, July 4th orations, etc., where "sometimes more than is politically necessary, is said about personal liberty, which Negro auditors know not how to apply, except by running the parallel with their own condition. They, therefore, imbibe false notions of their personal rights, and give reality in their minds, to what has no real existence."  

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The other denominations soon joined in the promotion of pro-slavery religious education. Baptist Richard Furman published an *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists, Relative to the Coloured Population* in 1823 which spelled out all of the arguments which would become the standard clichés of clerical defenders of the institution in years to come: slavery and the discipline it entails is justified in the Bible; slaves, most of which were already in servitude in Africa, were generally obtained from outside merchants in a legal manner. What guilt there might have been rested with individuals long since dead; Negro slaves are far happier than many poor Whites in "free" society; the relationship of master and servant when ruled by Christian duty brings out the best in men. The governor of Georgia proclaimed a Day of Thanksgiving and Humiliation for the survival of society from the previous year's insurrection and recommended Furman's pamphlet as serving "to make our servants not only more contented with their lot, but more useful to their owners."⁵⁷ Recovering from their temporary embarrassment over Methodist involvement in the Denmark Vesey affair, the South Carolina Conference of 1824 proposed a missionary campaign aimed directly at Negroes. Five years later, they were invited by Charles Cotesworth

Pinckney, nephew of the recently deceased Revolutionary worthy, to establish a Christian plantation on his property, the plan of which he publicized as a model of disciplinary perfection and economic efficiency. 58

After momentarily faltering in the early twenties, Southern evangelicals revived their interest in Negro sunday schools. "New Methods" of teaching, adapted particularly to illiterate slaves, were devised which emphasized the Christian duties of hard work, personal morality and contentment with one's earthly lot. Beginning in the late 1820s, slave chapels became a not uncommon feature of large plantations; the thirties and forties brought forth catechisms and tracts specifically designed for use with slaves. 59

IV. The Price of Southern Evangelical Distinctiveness

The urban focus and Northern taint of organized reform activity, although no particular disability in the early years of euphoric excitement, meant that at best, the national societies rested upon a fragile base of public support. Only a distinct atypical minority of

58 Mathews, Methodism and Slavery, 62-87; Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, An Address on Religion, Slavery, the Plantation and the Planter and his People, delivered in Charleston, before the Agricultural Society of South Carolina, at its Anniversary Meeting, 18th Aug. 1829 (Charleston, S.C., 1829).

59 See: Jones, Religious Instruction of the Negroes, 68-89.
the population actively participated in reform efforts; the section's popular majority merely acquiesced.

The tragedy of growing sectionalism was that it gradually transformed public apathy into hostile awareness of things new and things foreign. It brought to an end the atmosphere of popular intellectual tolerance. Evangelicals were simply forced in the 1820s and 1830s to accommodate themselves to slavery. But in doing so, they paid a price. For in making such a compromise, they became self-conscious Southerners with loyalties to the "peculiarities" of Southern life which would invariably come before those to national organizations, whether they be national benevolent societies or national Churches. Minutes of Church judicial bodies, religious periodicals, and particularly private correspondence of Southern clergymen between themselves in the late 1820s shows a growing awareness of sectional distinctiveness, of the necessity to protect with a wall of silence an institution which could never be understood by outsiders.

In the abstract, there was no inherent incongruity between pro-slavery evangelicalism and national reform as it existed before the early 1830s. In principle, none of the national benevolent societies opposed slavery, and in practice national leaders made every attempt to avoid wounding Southern feelings on the delicate issue. Privately, however, most Northern evangelicals supported colonization of the antislavery variety; they were not
generally sympathetic to Southern political aspirations, and in sermons, conversation, and in Northern religious journals, their true feelings were made public.

The young Northern missionaries who had played such a crucial role in building national society support in the South were increasingly viewed as a threat. Perhaps some of them had expressed indiscreet personal views on slavery, but the record of such incidents is lacking. But ardent advocates of slavery, particularly those who had little use for organized religion anyway, were beyond the point of discrimination. Northern clergymen were stereotyped as being advocates of antislavery and, no matter what their true feelings, were unwelcome visitors. Partly because they could not afford to cross the political, social, and lay church leaders of their country of residence, partly no doubt because of guilt over their own nefarious bargain over slavery and a desire to hide from the personal inspection of Northern colleagues the degree to which they had compromised themselves, Southern clergymen went along. In his strongly-worded pro-slavery pamphlet of 1823, Rev. Frederick Dalcho objected to the "persons born and educated in all the prejudices of non-slave holding countries, and mere itinerants here for a few winter months" who, "full-fraught with speculative notions of personal liberty," had previously enjoyed free access to the impressionable minds of Negro slaves. 60

60A South-Carolinian, Practical Considerations, 4-6.
A committee of the Presbyterian Synod of South Carolina, appointed in 1826 to report on domestic missions within the state, urged employment only of "natives of our Southern States, on account of their being accustomed to the manners of our people—of their being reconciled to our domestic Institutions, and inured to our climate." 61

The founding and expansion of Southern theological seminaries took on new importance in all Southern denominations in the late twenties and thirties, and the broad opportunities for employment open a decade before to Northern seminary students, unless they were Southern natives, were no longer held out to them. In many ways, the basis for the sectional division of the Churches had come into being by the early 1830s, more than a decade before the actual breaks occurred.

Their increasing defensiveness with regard to slavery in no way limited Southern evangelicals' enthusiasm for the reforms themselves which captured the attention of America's religious community. If anything, the dismissal of slavery as an area of concern proper to clerical interference relieved the minds of men such as John Holt Rice of any feeling of guilt about their working at cross purposes with the society which provided them with their bread. They threw their full energies into Sabbath ob-

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61 Presbyterian Church. Synod of South Carolina, "Minutes (1826)," 15. Ms. volume. Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian Church of the U.S., Montreat, N.C.
servance, temperance, and missions, buoyed by the belief that they were entrusted with a special duty, and now the means to transform every plantation into a Christian family community. Giving full support to national reforms was not, however, synonymous with wholeheartedly approving of the national reform societies themselves. The American Temperance Society, dedicated to an ideal which in no way threatened Southern institutions and doing its work almost exclusively through indigenous branch organizations requiring little national direction, would continue to receive full support for years. In the case of the American Bible Society, the actual mission of distribution of the Scriptures was as acceptable as always, and the growing role assumed by state conventions and societies during the campaigns of 1826-30 served to restore a measure of the local control which had diminished with the growth of the agency system. The American Sunday School Union, in that it provided the necessary tools for local efforts, was as useful as it had ever been.

But for the Southern evangelical community as a whole, the complete dedication to reform in national terms was a thing of the past by the early 1830s. They dreamed the same visions of earthly and heavenly perfection which had inspired the reform societies in the first place; they longed for the same popular acceptance of Christian and moral behavior. But they no longer shared a complete faith that the national societies, with their Northern
officers and Northern agents, in countless ways imposing their personal prejudices upon otherwise pure Christian efforts, were the chosen vehicles of expression of God's will on earth.

At heart, they had also lost the absolute faith that the voluntary society was able to work the miracles which had once been expected of it; Southerners, in particular, had come to doubt their ability to transform public opinion. The harsh public criticism of the Society for the Melioration of the Condition of the Jews, however insignificant and mismanaged the effort had been, the strong popular opposition to campaigns against Sabbath travel and Sabbath mails, the political annihilation of efforts to Christianize the Civilized Tribes, took their toll by weakening evangelical confidence. The forced compromise over slavery, the full realization of which was effected in the deep South by the early 1820s, the upper South over the next decade, shattered all illusions of clerical power in solving sensitive social problems. Essentially, evangelicals were simply being forced, like everyone else, to face the realities of racism, ignorance, selfishness, and the limits of the power of persuasion. But reforms are not built on realities but on dreams. When the Southern evangelical reformers themselves lost confidence in their ability to accomplish the impossible, they were denying the very concept which had put life into the best of their efforts--the faith that social progress
was dependent only upon the scientific discovery of truth and, by means of rational argument and popularization through voluntary organization, public education.

The evangelicals were, by the thirties, willing to adapt their conceptions of truth to fit existing public opinion itself. In an editorial of April 10, 1830, the Charleston Observer concluded that religious progress could only be accomplished in a "peaceful and tranquil state." Evaluating the failure of the missionary efforts to the recently evicted Indians, to which the periodical itself had given strong support, the Northern-born editor (Benjamin Gildersleeve) concluded that "we are firmly of the opinion that had Ministers of the Gospel, and benevolent Laymen, and religious Editors, devoted their time and their talents to the cause of vital religion, instead of being engaged in creating an excitement, they would have acted more within their appropriate sphere, and rendered a far more essential service to the community . . . ." 62 This represented, as did John Holt Rice's letter on slavery and similar expressions by many other former leaders of the reform impulse, the abdication of leadership in Southern society to which they had once, through the voluntary societies, aspired to. Social reforms and societies would continue to serve an important function

62 "Causes that have operated, and that may still operate in preventing revivals of religion," Charleston Observer, 4 (1830), 58.
below the Mason and Dixon Line. Reform societies, in small ways, would occasionally rise above the conventional to search for truth. But the unshackled idealism, and with it, the essential moral strength which had briefly given voluntary reform societies an heroic quality, was gone, crushed by a march of events which propelled the Southern United States toward civil war.
CHAPTER 8

THE LEGACY OF ORGANIZED REFORM

Perhaps no other social phenomenon in early American history failed so miserably to effect its stated objects as did the religious reform society movement, yet, with very limited resources and popular participation, bequeath a more significant legacy of social change. For Southern society, characterized throughout its history more by resistance than acceptance of change, the effect of evangelical reform was proportionately greater than in the nation as a whole.

Setting the impossible goals of social and religious perfection, the reform societies as a whole were failures. They did not come close to creating a world of civilized moral Christians. They did not put Bibles or tracts in every human hand nor teach all men to read them. They neither put an end to vicious habits nor successfully chained the forces of human ambition, greed, and hatred.

The majority of the reform society efforts were aimed at "improving" the poor, yet the reformers rarely demonstrated a humane sensitivity toward the objects of their benevolence. Wedded to a pre-Marxian conception of society as but a composite of individuals, they exhibited
no compassion for the poor as a class. They simply lacked the vision of society as a whole to formulate comprehensive solutions to the problems of urbanization, industrialization, or for that matter, slavery.

The very qualities which gave the Protestant reform tradition a harshness, however, gave it a strength of purpose which secular reform could never muster. For if individualism made comprehensive reform unattainable, and if evangelical Protestantism made compromise difficult, these qualities generated an absolute faith in the concept of conversion, of radical human change. The ardent evangelicals possessed a sense of confidence and moral righteousness which caused them to dismiss the existence of obstacles, to dream the impossible, and fully believe that, as the instruments of God's will, they would achieve perfection. Evangelical reform, if it had any vitality at all, possessed a revolutionary spark, a visionary power, which secular contemporaries could never fully understand.

The evangelicals enjoyed only limited immediate success in their efforts to convert society to their own image. A gradual rise in church discipline and secular moral legislation undoubtedly improved public morality although statistics are not available to prove the point. Temperance sentiment, a real innovation in social behavior, gained wide popular support. Dueling, gambling, swearing, even dancing and the theatre, lost some of the attraction which they had once enjoyed. The
introduction of Sunday schools and expanded church activity, combined with the public pressure which active Christians exerted, brought about a noticeable quieting of the Southern Sabbath. But at best, these can be viewed as progress only in the negative sense.

Evangelical religion and the reform societies made positive social contributions as well. The missionary movement, promoting Christian visions which transcended political and ethnic loyalties, encouraged an internationalism among people who had never before looked beyond the local community. The picture of foreign lands which gained acceptance was smug and simplistic, but at least a minimal popular interest in world affairs, a basis for comparative social analysis, was kept alive in an otherwise isolationist period of American history. The Sunday school movement in conjunction with Bible distribution and the publication of a vast literature of tracts created the first popular interest in educational theory. Both successes and failures of public education through religious societies paved the way for general acceptance of universal public education as a governmental responsibility.

Although evangelicals argued that women's social responsibility was essentially domestic, their emphasis on the importance of child-rearing and infant education gave these activities a scientific dignity and vital national importance. Almost without exception, editors and correspondents of Southern religious periodicals
defended the inherent intellectual equality of the sexes and argued the importance of rigorous intellectual training of women. In promoting female participation in reform society work, the evangelical churches provided American women with their first opportunity for united social action and laid the foundations for the suffrage movement of the latter nineteenth century.

Without doubt, however, the most significant legacy of evangelical religion, particularly that sort embodied in the reform societies and their work, was intellectual. Almost alone, it created the dominant mentality and established the standards of deportment for polite society in the nineteenth century. The prohibitions of church discipline and moral reform, the concepts of personal responsibility, both presented in the garb of pious sentimentality which has come to be associated with Victorian romanticism, infused a moralistic tone into the Chesterfieldian concepts of polite eighteenth-century behavior. Through religious periodicals, pamphlets, books

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of etiquette, and moral tracts, stereotypes of the charitable merchant, the benevolent planter, the Christian wife, and the pious, dutiful child were branded on the early nineteenth-century mentality as character types worthy of emulation. Hard work, respect for inferiors, denial of the passions in their many forms, but particularly evangelical Christianity, were enthroned as the ideals of human behavior.²

Evangelical morality possessed a self-assured righteousness, partly because it was so intimately associated with Christian regeneration, but also because its proponents believed it to be founded upon reason. In the earliest stages of organized reform, the evangelicals had demonstrated a certain open-mindedness, a questioning and searching for rational justifications for their actions which, if it produced foregone conclusions, gave them a certainty of the rightness of their cause which was awesome. Temperance, Christian observance of the Sabbath, moral prohibitions of all sorts, were not merely desirable; they represented, to ardent believers, the only behavior acceptable to God and proven correct by reason and scientific proof.

What nineteenth-century evangelical religion really did was to define and establish the aspirations of the

²For an excellent example of a Christian guide to manners adapted to the land of slavery, see: Mrs. Virginia Cary, Letters on Female Character, Addressed to a Young Lady, On the Death of Her Mother, 2nd ed. (Richmond, Va., 1830).
rising middle class as the universal social norm. The aristocracy, with its extravagance and hedonistic enjoyment of luxury and leisure, was forced to moderate or at least hide its excesses behind a facade of pious respectability. The poor, on the other hand, were provided a route to respectability, an opportunity for personal advancement based solely on their willingness to adopt the rigid code of Christian deportment held out to them. In placing absolute emphasis upon behavior and good works and demonstrating a disdain for tradition, in providing through churches and charitable societies a vehicle for popular expression of self-willed regeneration, nineteenth-century evangelical religion demonstrated that strange combination of revolutionary and conservative characteristics which has bedeviled historians of Protestantism since the publication of Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904-5, 1920). Men and women were forced to pay the price of ruthless conformity to a rather boring, unimaginative code of behavior. But, they were given an opportunity which human society has rarely offered—the opportunity to literally raise themselves from rags to riches if they had the personal strength to accomplish it. Religion and reform played a vital role in enabling the second generation (born between 1800 and 1830) of Americans born under the flag of the United States to justify and legitimize the remarkable economic gains born of opening frontiers, mercantile expansion, and the rise of manufacturing. These indi-
viduals, the impressionable children to whom much of the early tract and Sunday school efforts had been directed, were to become the self-made men idealized in the 1850s; they were the honored patriarchs of society in the latter part of the century (1870s-1890s) when church attendance and popular moral standards came as close to matching evangelical ideals as they ever would in American history.³

It is, of course, tempting to greatly overestimate the importance of the reform societies in the South. Overall participation in the societies themselves to 1830 involved only a few thousand persons in a population of millions. Many of the societies themselves were weak, momentary creations with little substance, dedicated to unrealistic goals of religious perfection in a predominantly secular society. Their successes in meeting larger goals were few. By today's standards of social action, they were insignificant. But this was a period of small to non-existent government, of poor communications, of few social institutions of any sort. There was none of the noise and confusion of voices competing for attention which cheapens all efforts and wearies the public audience of the present-day world. Judged in relative terms, the reform society efforts were significant, and they were

³For a particularly good example of biographical literature in praise of the self-made man which proliferated in the last half of the nineteenth century, see: John Livingston, Biographical Sketches of Distinguished Americans, Now Living (N.Y. and London, 1853). The volume is subtitled "Philosophy Teaching by Example."
able to command a popular attention which was being courted by few other institutions.

It could be argued persuasively that the test of civilized behavior is the ability of an individual or society to look beyond its own selfish desires. It is this capacity which sets human beings above their animal existence. It is this quality which gave the American Revolution, and has given all revolutions and ideologies whatever element of nobility they have possessed. In spite of basic differences, both the Federalist and Republican parties of the first decades of national existence embodied a sincere concern for the country's welfare above selfish ends which none of the national parties since that time have matched. Until sectarian and sectional loyalties pulled them apart in the 1830s, the reform societies as a whole also captured the loftiness of purpose, this concern for others and dedication to human progress. And unlike government, politics, or any other contemporary institutions, they effectively transmitted their idealism into positive social action. They were the first institutions to aim their messages and their offers of assistance to the public at large, the first to attempt to educate the people in these same principles of self-denial which they themselves proclaimed.

Realities of course rendered the abstract idealism of evangelical reform meaningless. The benevolent societies had to operate within existing society, and as
all American social movements have done, they became victims of the essential irony of democratic society. Efficient change could only have been purchased by denial of freedom, by forcing men and women under the pretext of the greater social good to deny their own personal interpretations of this ideal; preservation of the principles of democratic freedom and voluntary change required that the reforms themselves be watered down to a level which could obtain popular acceptance—a process which inevitably took the meaning and content out of the advocated changes. Dedicated to republicanism and yet certain that their goals could stand the tests of reason, the evangelical reformers had confidently embarked on a program of national conversion. Public opinion proved to be a temperamental animal which could not be caged, but the reformers' methods of bringing about change through motivating the individual human being were never proven wrong. Society, even then, was simply too large and too complex to allow reform organizations the opportunity to reach more than a fraction of its inhabitants. The reformers fared no worse than their counterparts of any era in dealing with problems of deep psychological and social complexity which the age (and no age yet) could not fully comprehend, much less solve.

By the 1830s, the character of slaveholding democratic society and the relentless march of time had destroyed the basis of confidence which had sparked the evangelical reform movement in the South. The era of
questioning, expectation, and innovation within the religious reform community was essentially over, replaced by moral certainties, religious fundamentalism, and futile attempts to legislate changes which persuasion could not effect. In their example and in the continuation of their work, however, the reformers left a quiet, positive legacy in the fields of public education, local charity, and professional social work which continues to play a vital role in modern society.

Perhaps all that can be expected of men in any age is that they try to put their dreams into effect, fight with honor, and at least in small ways attempt to improve the society in which they live and the world which they leave behind them. The South of the 1830s, for all its imperfections and foreboding tendencies, was a better place, a more civilized society, than it had been before the birth of organized reform activity.
APPENDIX A

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA ON PERSONS INVOLVED IN HUMANITARIAN AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY IN THE SOUTH

Addison, Walter Dulany (1769-1848). Member of a wealthy and prominent family of Maryland, Addison was educated in England under the exacting eye of Tory Jonathan Boucher, then Dr. Barrow of London (1784-89). On his return, he inherited 3,563 acre Addison Manor near Alexandria. Exceedingly pious, perhaps influenced by contact with British evangelicals, he was almost denied entrance into the Episcopal priesthood because of pronounced puritanical views. In 1793, he and Rev. Mr. J. Coleman introduced a pioneering canon against taverns and fashionable amusements. With little interest in theological matters, he was an uncompromising crusader for practical morality in all its public and private aspects. He had himself appointed an officer of the peace in Washington, D.C., and conducted a personal campaign against dueling. A strong believer in inter-denominational cooperation, he enjoyed close friendship with local clergymen of all faiths, Protestant and Catholic. He gave a lot and helped to raise funds for a colored Methodist Church, educated and freed his own slaves, and generally supported charitable activity of any sort. He would appear to have been a major influence in shaping the career of William Meade who studied with him in 1809. He was a vice president of the Education Society which created the theological seminary in Alexandria. Blindness forced him to retire from the ministry in 1830.1

Allen, Benjamin, Jr. (1789-1829). Native of Hudson, New York, brought up a Presbyterian, he later became an Episcopalian and moved to Charlestown, Virginia, between 1811 and 1815. Having published a volume of poems on moral and religious subjects (Hudson, New York, 1811), he became editor of the Layman's Magazine in 1815. As a layman, he became involved in religious instruction of Negroes in Charleston; he was admitted to the Episcopal priesthood in 1818. In 1821 he removed to Philadelphia and took charge of St. Paul's Parish, and in 1827 established a religious printing office.2
Allen, John (1793-1822). Born in England, an ardent Methodist class leader and Sunday school superintendent, he exemplified the lesser figures who supplied much of the real labor which made the benevolent societies work on the local level. Emigrating to Richmond in 1819, he immediately became a superintendent of one branch and secretary of the Sunday School Union, vice president of the Junior Bible Society, secretary of the Virginia Conference Missionary Society.3

Allen, John. A Presbyterian minister from Tennessee, he took great interest in efforts being made to Christianize seamen. While visiting London, he preached on the "floating chapel" on the Thames and brought the first Bethel Flag to America on his return.4

Anderson, David (d. 1812). A Scottish merchant in Petersburg, Virginia, he left over $10,000 for the education of poor White children. The money was applied to a Lancastrian School which opened in 1821.5

Armstrong, William J. (1796-1846). Born in New Jersey, graduate of Princeton and Princeton Seminary, he served as a missionary for the A.B.C.F.M. in Albemarle Co., Virginia, 1819-21. He replaced John H. Rice at the First Presbyterian Church, Richmond, in 1824 and became a leading figure in temperance, Sunday school, colonization societies and a strong advocate of home missions and Union Theological Seminary. His first wife (m. 1824) was a niece of Richard Stockton; his second wife (m. 1828), daughter of Samuel Pleasants, editor of the Virginia Argus.6

Asbury, Francis (1745-1816). Although his energies were primarily directed toward building the Methodist denomination, he was the major force behind antislavery sentiment in the denomination. He was directly responsible for turning the Methodist Female Friendly Association of Charleston, organized as a mutual aid society, into the city's first general society for poor relief (1811).7

Bachman, John (1790-1874). A Lutheran clergyman from New York State, he accepted a call to St. John's Church, Charleston, South Carolina, in 1815 and retained the pastorate for 57 years. He was a leader within his denomination in the advocacy of Sunday school, tract, missionary, and education societies and took particular interest in the education of Negroes. He was the primary founder of the seminary at Columbia in 1830. Apart from his clerical career, he was a world-famous botanist, a collaborator with Audubon on several publications.8

Bacon, Thomas (d. 1768). See Chapter 3.9
Bedell, Gregory T. (1793-1834). Although emotional almost to the point of mental illness, Bedell brought a strong sense of evangelical piety to a brief pastorate in Fayetteville, North Carolina (1817-1822), encouraged benevolent societies, and greatly contributed to the revival of the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina.

Beman, Nathan S.S. (1785-1871). A native of New York State, Middlebury graduate and ordained Congregational minister, he went South in 1812 for reasons of health. He organized a Presbyterian church and an academy in Mt. Zion, Georgia, and edited The Missionary, one of the finest religious periodicals in the South. After serving a year as president of Franklin College, Athens, Georgia, he returned to a forty-year pastorate in Troy, New York.

Bend, Joseph G.J. (1762-1812). Born in New York and brought up in Barbados, he was ordained an Episcopal priest in New York in 1787. After a brief pastorate in Philadelphia, he became rector of St. Paul's Church, Baltimore (1791-1812). Although a High Churchman in regard to ritual, he was actively involved in all of Baltimore's charitable organizations, a founder of the Dispensary and the Orphan Asylum.

Bethune, George W. (1805-1862). Son of Divie and Joanna Bethune, both leaders in the early organized charities of New York City, he served briefly as a city missionary in Savannah, Georgia (1826-27). He was a Princeton Seminary graduate. He later earned fame as a literary figure and bibliophile.

Bishop, Robert H. (1777-1855). Graduate of Edinburgh, he was induced to come to America by John M. Mason as a missionary of the Associate Reformed Church. He settled in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1803, taught at Transylvania, held a pastorate, and edited the Evangelical Record and Western Review. He paid particular attention to the religious education of Negroes and organized a Sunday school for them. He joined the Presbyterian Church in 1819 and later served as president of Miami University in Ohio.

Blackburn, Gideon (1772-1838). A Virginian, educated at Samuel Doak's Martin Academy, he was ordained a Presbyterian minister in 1792. He took particular interest in missions to the Indians, conducting mission schools for which he took a fund-raising tour in the North in 1807. He organized several churches in Tennessee, held a pastorate in Louisville, Kentucky (1823-27), was president of Centre College (1827-30). He was a leading advocate of temperance and opponent of dueling. He emancipated his good slaves (he sold two "bad" ones!) and supported colonization. In 1833 he moved to Illinois.
Blackburn, Samuel (1758-1835). A Bath Co., Virginia, lawyer, ardent Presbyterian, he took great interest in a number of the benevolent societies. He was the father of Virginia's anti-dueling law and at his death, freed all his slaves and sent them to Liberia. 

Blythe, James (1765-1842). Native of North Carolina, graduate of Hampden-Sydney College, he was a leader among the pioneer preachers (Presbyterian) of Kentucky. He taught at Transylvania, was a founder of the American Bible Society, and collaborated with Robert H. Bishop in the publication of the Evangelical Record and Western Review.

Boies, Artemas (1792-1844). Native of Massachusetts, graduate of Williams and Princeton Seminary, he served as the pastor of Presbyterian churches in Wilmington, North Carolina (1819-21) and Charleston, South Carolina (1821-23). A revival in the latter church served to create new enthusiasm for benevolent societies. He returned to New England in 1823, coming back to Charleston briefly, 1829-30, as an agent for the American Bible Society.

Botsford, Edmund (1745-1819). Born in England, he came to Charleston, South Carolina, in 1766, was baptized by Oliver Hart the following year, and was licensed as a Baptist preacher in 1771. He was the author of two widely popular tracts: The Spiritual Voyage and Sambo and Toney: A Dialogue between Two Servants.

Bowen, Nathaniel (1779-1838). Native of Connecticut, Harvard graduate, his father was a Congregational clergyman who took the Episcopal orders and accepted the charge of St. John's Colleton Parish in 1787, the year of his death. Nathaniel Bowen was raised by Dr. Robert Smith, rector of St. Philips and later Bishop of South Carolina. He studied theology in Virginia, Maryland, and Rhode Island, was deacon of Trinity Church, Boston (1800), and had temporary charge of St. John's Church, Providence, Rhode Island before returning to Charleston. He was chaplain of the Orphan House (1800-1802) and assistant rector of St. Michael's, and after eight years as rector of Grace Church, New York City (1809-17), he was elected Bishop of South Carolina. A man of great energy, his New York years gave him a lifelong interest in religious benevolent societies. He took special interest in the religious education of Negroes, encouraged Charleston's strong support of General Seminary, and put the full weight of his personal influence behind the anti-dueling society, religious publications, the Advancement Society, and sunday schools.
Breckinridge, John (1797-1841). A Kentuckian, son of Jefferson's Attorney General (who died in 1806), Breckinridge graduated from Princeton. Marriage to a daughter of Samuel Miller undoubtedly encouraged a far more religious outlook in the son than had been held by his deistical father. He was ordained a Presbyterian clergyman in New Jersey, 1822, and served the following year as chaplain of the U.S. House of Representatives. He briefly held a pastorate in Lexington, Kentucky, where he published the Western Luminary and gave strong opposition to Horace Holley, Unitarian president of Transylvania. He served as pastor of the evangelical Second Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, 1826-31, where he gave strong support to religious benevolent societies. He later served as secretary and president of the Presbyterian Board of Education, secretary and general agent for the Board of Foreign Missions, president of the American Colonization Society, and professor at Princeton Seminary. He was elected president of Oglethorpe University in the year of his death.21

Brice, Nicholas. Chief Justice, Baltimore City Court. A devoted member of St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Brice, actively interested in reform efforts, was the sought-after social leader of Baltimore's charitable societies by the late 1820s.22

Broom, Jacob (1752-1810). Business and political leader of Wilmington, Delaware, delegate to the Federal Constitutional Convention, Broom's bequests (although he was a Presbyterian himself) were largely responsible for the long success of the Female Benevolent Society (Quaker) in humanely meeting the needs of Wilmington's poor, Black and White.23

Brown, Joseph (1788-1833). Born in Massachusetts, graduate of Middlebury and Andover Seminary, he was ordained by the Congregational Association of Charleston, South Carolina in 1821. As-city missionary for the Ladies Benevolent Society and pastor of the Seaman's Chapel, Brown was largely responsible for the strength of local charitable efforts in Charleston, 1820-29. Because of ill health, he moved to New York in 1829 and served as secretary and general agent for the national Seamen's Friend Society until his death four years later.24

Brown, Margretta (1772-1838). Native of New York City, sister of reform leader Dr. John M. Mason, educated by Isabella Grahme, the saintly founder of the earliest female benevolence societies in the country, she married Sen. John Brown of Kentucky in 1799 and moved to Frankfort. Acknowledged social leader of the town, she devoted her life to furthering religious and humanitarian activities. She was instrumental in founding the
town's Presbyterian church, a Cent Society, a Female Education Society, and a Sunday school. She collected, published, and distributed tracts and catechisms, actively served as Sunday school superintendent and she aided agents of the national reform societies throughout her life.\textsuperscript{25}

Caldwell, Elias B. (1759-1825). One of the distinguished children of Rev. Mr. and Mrs. James Caldwell of New Jersey, both killed by the British during the Revolution, Caldwell was "adopted and educated as a ward of the venerated old revolutionary Congress." He was the Clerk of the U.S. Supreme Court and one of the principal leaders of the American Colonization Society in its first decade. Although never given a regular theological training, he was licensed by the Presbytery in Washington and frequently preached to the poor. He was a valued supporter of local and national benevolent societies.\textsuperscript{26}

Cameron, Duncan. Son of particularly strict Episcopal clergyman who had matriculated at Aberdeen and emigrated to Virginia in 1771, Duncan Cameron experienced a "change in his soul" while under the spiritual care of Dr. Gregory Bedell of Fayetteville, North Carolina (1817-22). A leading member of the North Carolina Bar and a state judge, he became a leading advocate of benevolent societies in the 1820s. Much like John Hartwell Cocke of Virginia, he attempted to create a rural Christian environment on his plantation, Stagtown, North Carolina, erecting a chapel and employing a missionary for his own slaves.\textsuperscript{27}

Capers, William (1790-1855). Born and raised in a strict Methodist family in South Carolina, Capers was himself strongly affected by a camp meeting in 1806, withdrew from South Carolina College because of the "infidelity" of the place and began to travel the Methodist circuits. He was greatly influenced by Henry Evans, the Black evangelist of North Carolina, and developed a lifelong interest in the religious education of Negroes and the poor. He preached at the Poor House in Charleston, 1810-12, ran a school, was missionary to the Creeks in Georgia, 1821-24, edited the Wesleyan Journal which gave strong support to Methodist reform and educational efforts. As president of the South Carolina Conference Missionary Society (1829), he was the leader in the denomination's efforts to evangelize Negroes.\textsuperscript{28}

Carter, Abiel (1791-1827). Native of New Hampshire, Dartmouth graduate, he gave firm support to organized benevolences as rector of Christ Church, Savannah, Georgia.\textsuperscript{29}
Cary, Lott (1780-1828). Born a slave in Charles City Co., Virginia, Cary adopted a moral behavior and joined the Baptist church in Richmond in 1807. He taught himself to read and write and purchased his own freedom and that of two children. Primarily as a result of his influence, the Richmond African Missionary Society was formed in 1815. He was accepted by the American Colonization Society as one of its first colonists and was appointed an African missionary by the Baptist General Board. Reaching Liberia in 1822, Cary founded a school and a Sunday school there.30

Clapp, Theodore (1792-1866). Massachusetts native and Yale graduate who attended Andover Seminary for one year, Clapp became pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in New Orleans in 1822. He gained a noteworthy reputation for devotion to his duty at the time of the numerous epidemics which swept the city, but the cosmopolitan atmosphere weakened his Calvinism. In 1834 he became a Unitarian.31

Clopton, Abner W. A leading Baptist clergyman of Virginia, Clopton was the founder of the Virginia Temperance Society.32

Cocke, John Hartwell (1780-1866). Graduate of William and Mary, general in the Virginia militia during the War of 1812 and a leading founder and supporter of the University of Virginia, Cocke developed a strong interest in religion at the time of his wife's death, c. 1817. He became a communicant of the Baptist church in the 1850s, but maintained an interdenominational evangelical attitude throughout his life and applied most of his pious energies to reform society activity. He took great interest in the American Colonization Society and the religious instruction of his own slaves. He was a leader in the temperance movement, a president of the American Temperance Society. He strongly supported the work of the A.B.C.F.M., the American Bible Society, and the American Tract Society. Like Duncan Cameron in North Carolina, but to an even greater extent, he attempted to create a Christian Utopia on his "Bremo" estate in Fluvanna Co., Virginia.33

Coffin, Charles (1775-1853). Born in Massachusetts, Harvard graduate, a teacher at Phillips Exeter Academy, Coffin was licensed a Congregational clergyman in 1799 and traveled south for reasons of health. He preached in Virginia and Tennessee and became an agent for Greenville College in 1803, returning to New England to solicit funds and for ordination. He became president of Greenville College in 1810, serving until 1827 when he accepted the presidency of East Tennessee University. Theologically a confirmed Hopkinsian, he
was personally opposed to slavery and a strong advocate of religious benevolences—Bible societies, missions, seminary education, etc.34

Converse, Amasa (1795-1872). Born in New Hampshire, graduate of Dartmouth and student at Princeton Seminary, Converse was ordained by Hanover Presbytery and served as a missionary in Virginia before becoming editor of the influential Southern Religious Telegraph and the Literary and Evangelical Magazine in Richmond. He moved to Philadelphia to edit the Christian Observer in 1839 but returned to Richmond at the outbreak of the Civil War.35

Converse, John K. (1801-1880). Brother of Amasa Converse, graduate of Dartmouth, he taught school in Virginia and joined his brother in editorial work in Richmond, 1827-29. He then attended Princeton Seminary and served as a clergyman in Northern pulpits and as a New England agent for the American Colonization Society (1868-80) until his death.36

Coram, Thomas (1756-1811). An obscure individual inspired by a strong personal sense of charitable duty, Coram gave annual donations and at death, his entire estate of over $5,000 to the Charleston Orphan House. It is probably more than coincidence that a man of the same name, a sailor who had been involved in the settlement of Georgia, had provided the bequest which established the famous Foundling Hospital in London in the eighteenth century.37

Corrie, James (d. 1805). One of the principal founders of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Baltimore, Corrie left one-fourth of his estate for "educating, clothing and feeding the poor children belonging to the congregation of St. Peter's Protestant Episcopal Church in the City of Baltimore." A very important school was founded with this as well as additional funds in 1806, although Corrie's bequest was successfully challenged by a trustee in 1817.38

Cushing, Jonathan P. (1795-1835). Native of New Hampshire and a Dartmouth graduate, Cushing served as president of Hampden-Sydney College from 1821-35. He gave great encouragement to the exertions of John Holt Rice, William Maxwell, and others to raise the literary and cultural standards of the Old Dominion. At his death, he liberated sixty slaves and had them transported to Liberia, and he left $40,000 for education in Albemarle County.39
Dashiell, George. A very important figure in the revival of the evangelical spirit in the Episcopal Diocese of Maryland, Dashiell has not received due credit. In 1801, Dashiell became the rector of St. Peter's Church, a new body formed by dissidents from conservative St. Paul's Church of Baltimore. For several decades, the congregation (St. Peter's) was the center of evangelical activity among Baltimore Episcopalians, supporting a variety of charitable and educational efforts. Dashiell's personality, however, greatly limited his overall effectiveness. His primary following was among, what a critic described as "a bevy of gossiping, idolizing females, as fond as they were foolish" and he appears to have been indiscreet in returning their affection. In 1798 he created a scandal by jumping into bed with a girl on a dare; two decades later he was accused of "scandalous, immoral, and obscene conduct." His greatest crime, however, was his refusal to recognize the authority of Bishop Kemp, and his opposition to all activities in which Kemp participated. Although he had been foremost in advocating reform activity, he charged that the Baltimore General Dispensary (of which Kemp was president) in 1814 with being a "public nuisance." He was dismissed in 1815 and established an independent Episcopal congregation.

Davis, Noah (1802-1830). A native of Maryland, Davis became a Baptist while working in Philadelphia. He studied for the ministry in Philadelphia and in Washington, and while in the latter city, he became actively involved in missionary and sunday school work. He preached in Accomac Co., Virginia, then Norfolk, where he organized a Seamen's Friend Society. His efforts led to the formation of the Baptist General Tract Society in Washington, 1824, and he served as the organization's general agent.

Dawson, Joshua. The Register's Office of the Treasury Department, in the early decades of the national Capitol's existence, was an island of piety in a very secular world. Dawson, a clerk, was a Warden in St. John's Episcopal Church from its founding, and he established a reputation for exceptional behavior and charity. He always gave over one-tenth of his income to charity, took over the support of the family of a dead friend, and supported faithfully charitable organizations.

Dehon, Theodore (1776-1817). Born in Boston, Dehon graduated with highest honors from Harvard and became rector of Trinity Church, Newport, Rhode Island, in 1798. In 1810, he became rector of St. Michael's Church, Charleston, South Carolina, and was elected Bishop of South Carolina two years later. With the active support of
his two successors, Nathaniel Bowen and Christopher Gadsden, Dehon instilled real vigor into the Diocese and impressed his own evangelical attitudes on South Carolina's Church which lived far beyond his ministry. He stressed family prayer, regular communion, catechistical instruction, clerical visitation. He always gave one-seventh of his own income to charity, and he encouraged liberality and support of religious societies.43

Duncan, John M. (1790-1851). Nephew and theological student of reform leader John M. Mason of New York, Duncan became pastor of the Associate Reformed church in Baltimore. Although liberal theological beliefs kept him out of the Presbyterian Church at the time of denominational union, he retained his pastorate within an independent Presbytery. He was involved in Baltimore's charitable societies and a leader of the Baltimore Society for the Prevention of Pauperism.44

Dwight, Louis (1793-1854). Born in Massachusetts, a Yale and Andover graduate, he devoted his career to employment by the national benevolent societies. He served as agent for the American Tract Society and the American Education Society, and while distributing Bibles, 1824, his observation of conditions in Southern prisons caused him to found the American Prison Discipline Society in 1825.45

Empie, Adam (1785-1860). A native of Schenectady and a graduate of Union College, Empie was ordained an Episcopal clergyman in 1809. He was rector of a church on Long Island for two years, in Wilmington, North Carolina, for three years (1811-14), chaplain at West Point for two years, and then rector in Wilmington, North Carolina (1816-1827). He was president of William and Mary (1827-36) and was rector of St. James Church, Richmond, Virginia, until 1853. Although a supporter of Bishop Ravenscroft's High Church attitudes and opponent of Bishop Meade's election, Empie was rivaled only by Gregory Bedell in his enthusiasm for the formation of religious benevolent societies in the Diocese of North Carolina. His Wilmington, North Carolina, congregation supported a Prayer Book and Missionary Society, a Female Working Society, a Bible society, a society for educating the poor, a Society for Promotion of Industry, sunday schools, Bible classes, a circulating library (1819-22) at a time when most parishes in North Carolina were without even clergymen.46

Flint, Timothy (1780-1840). Born in Massachusetts, Harvard graduate and Congregational minister, Flint served as a missionary in the Mississippi Valley, 1815-24. He conducted schools in Missouri and aroused some interest in benevolent societies. He later achieved fame as an editor and author.47
Fowler, Andrew (1760-1850). Of Congregational upbringing, Fowler attended Episcopal services during his under-graduate years at Yale. He was ordained a priest in 1790 and had churches in New York and New Jersey until removing to South Carolina in 1807. After four years as rector of St. Bartholomew's Parish, he served for over thirty years as a missionary in the diocese. He was the first missionary employed by the Advancement Society and the first Protestant missionary in Florida (1821-23). He edited The Sunday Visitant (Charleston, 1818-20).48

Gadsden, Christopher E. (1785-1852). Grandson of the Revolutionary leader of the same name, Gadsden enjoyed the same complete social acceptance as William Meade of Virginia, so rare among the leaders of the benevolent organizations. A graduate of Yale, he immediately entered the priesthood of the Episcopal Church and remained in Charleston throughout his life. He was made rector of St. Michael's in 1810, Bishop of South Carolina in 1840. He was a leader in the formation of the Advancement Society, he edited the Christian Messenger, and he took particular interest in the religious education of slaves.49

Giddings, Salmon (1782-1828). A native of Connecticut, graduate of Williams and Andover Seminary, Giddings settled in St. Louis as a missionary for the Connecticut Missionary Society in 1815. He made several tours to the Indian tribes of the Far West, conducted a school, and as pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, helped to create interest in benevolent societies.50

Gilbert, Eliphalet W. (1793-1853). Born in Lebanon, New York, a graduate of Union College and Princeton Seminary, Gilbert was ordained by New Castle Presbytery in 1818 and served as Presbyterian pastor in Wilmington, Delaware, until 1837. A strong supporter of benevolent organizations, he was perhaps the only evangelical Presbyterian clergyman in the slave states to actively participate in an antislavery society in the 1820s. He later served as president of the University of Delaware and held a pastorate in Philadelphia.51

Gildersleeve, Benjamin (1791-1875). Born in Connecticut, graduate of Middlebury and Princeton Seminary, Gildersleeve devoted most of his life to the editing of religious journals. He was editor of The Missionary (Mt. Zion, Ga., 1819), the Christian Observer (Charleston, 1826-45), the Watchman & Observer and the Central Presbyterian (Richmond, Va., 1845-60).52

Goddard, Charles (1790-1838). A native of Massachusetts and graduate of Williams, Goddard came to Virginia in 1818 as a tutor and caught the eye of John Holt Rice. With Rice's encouragement, he became editor of the
Family Visitor (1822). He later became a druggist in Richmond. He wrote a reply to Johnson's famous Sunday Mail Report which was published in the National Intelligencer and achieved some fame in religious, anti-Democratic circles.53

Gregorie, Mary C. (d. 1823). Mrs. Gregorie, like Isabella Grahme in New York, was portrayed as a saint-like figure in benevolent circles of Charleston, South Carolina, after her death. During the last ten years of her life, and after her death by bequest, she supplied funds so that one boy from the Orphan House could be educated yearly in the ministry of any Christian denomination.54

Gurley, Ralph R. (1797-1872). Presbyterian clergyman, Gurley served as secretary of the American Colonization Society in Washington, D.C.55

Hall, James (1744-1826). Born of Scotch-Irish parents in Pennsylvania, Hall moved to North Carolina in 1752. He graduated from Princeton in 1774 and after meritorious service as a cavalry commander in the Revolution, he had a remarkable career as a clergyman, missionary, and educator in North Carolina. He was a bachelor throughout his life, enabling him to attend meetings of all of the benevolent societies and Presbyterian judicial meetings. He attended the General Assembly sixteen times, was present at the founding of the American Bible Society, took fourteen extended and numerous short missionary tours to places as distant as Natchez, Mississippi (1800). His schools, "Clio's Nursery" and the "Academy of the Sciences," inculcated Witherspoon's moral philosophy and a superb basic education into hundreds of Southern minds, and they produced at least twenty individuals who became Presbyterian ministers in the South.56

Hall, Willard (1780-1875). The product of a strict Congregational upbringing in Massachusetts, a graduate of Harvard, Hall moved to Dover, Delaware, in 1803 and established a legal practice. He soon became a leading political figure in the state as well as an authority on Delaware law. He served in Congress, 1816-20, compiled the Digest of Delaware Statutes (1829). He was appointed a Federal District Judge in 1823 and removed to Wilmington. Always a man of complete discipline and moral rectitude, Hall was strongly affected by a revival in the mid-1820s and became a member of the very active Hanover Street Presbyterian Church. He taught Bible classes, took excursions to distribute religious tracts, and occasionally wrote unsolicited letters of moral advice in his later years. He was the founder of the
free school system in Delaware, president and leader of the Delaware Bible Society, leader in the Colonization Society, officer of the American Sunday School Union.57

Harris, Eleazar. A graduate of Transylvania, theological student of John M. Mason in New York, he published The Christian's Remembrancer (N.C., 1821) while he was preacher of the Associate Reformed and Presbyterian congregations at Ebenezer and Neely's Creek, York Dist., South Carolina, the profits to go to the "New College in N. Carolina"—presumably the proposed U. of Western North Carolina. Harris was a defender of slavery and an opponent of Hopkinsian theology, but his pamphlet is a strong, knowledgeable argument for interdenominational charitable activity.58

Hennen, Alfred (1786-1870). Born in Maryland, raised in Nashville, a member of the Presbyterian Church by the time he attended Yale (graduated 1806), he entered the legal profession and moved to New Orleans in 1809. A fine scholar and a devout Christian in an environment which put little value on either attribute, Hennen was the foremost Protestant layman of the city in the early decades. Before Rev. Mr. Daniel Smith reached the city in 1815-16, Hennen had been purchasing Protestant tracts in French from Europe and distributing them at his own expense. He was corresponding secretary of the Louisiana Bible Society, vestryman of the Episcopal church until 1828 when a Presbyterian congregation was permanently established. He became an elder in that church for life.59

Henry, T. Charlton (1790-1827). The son of a wealthy Philadelphian who became president of the American Sunday School Union, Henry attended Middlebury and Princeton Seminary. He was ordained a Presbyterian clergyman by Harmony Presbytery, 1818, and held pastorate in Columbia, South Carolina (1818-24) and Charleston (1825-27). He was corresponding secretary of the Missionary Society of the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia and a strong proponent of moral reforms, author of a work justifying Christian opposition to "popular amusements."60

Henshaw, John P.K. (1792-1852). A native of Connecticut who converted from Congregationalism to the Episcopal Church, Henshaw graduated from Middlebury at age sixteen and even before ordination had founded two congregations in Vermont. He was ordained in 1813 and was rector in Marblehead, Massachusetts, and Brooklyn, New York, before taking over St. Peter's Church in Baltimore in 1817. Although he was more of a High Churchman in outlook than many of his colleagues, his
association with St. Peter's (Dashiel's old church) and with the evangelicals of the D.C. area inspired his interest in religious societies within the Church. He strongly supported the school at St. Peter's; he was actively involved in the "Education Society" which created the seminary in Alexandria. He later became Bishop of Rhode Island.®1

Holcombe, Henry (1762-1824). Born in Virginia, Holcombe was raised in South Carolina and was a delegate to the Ratifying Convention in the state. He was baptized and licensed as a Baptist preacher in the 1780s and held churches at Pike Creek, Euhaw, and Beaufort before taking charge of the joint Presbyterian-Baptist congregation in Savannah in 1799. A man of remarkable energy and exceptional intellectual capacity, he was chief agent in founding the Savannah Female Asylum (1801), edited the Georgia Analytical Repository, crusaded for penal reform and a penitentiary, and waged a personal war against immorality in its various forms. In 1812 he accepted a call from a church in Philadelphia.®2

Hollingshead, William (1748-1817). Born in Philadelphia, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, he occupied a Presbyterian pulpit in New Jersey for ten years before accepting a call from the Congregational Church of Charleston in 1783. During a career of over thirty years, he was "appointed to a place in every institution, either literary or benevolent, in the city."®3

Keith, Isaac Stockton (1755-1813). Born in Pennsylvania, a graduate of Princeton, Keith was licensed by the Presbytery of Philadelphia in 1778 and was pastor in Alexandria, Virginia, 1780-88. As early as 1784, he drew up a constitution for an interdenominational society, although it seems never to have been put into effect. In 1788 he accepted a call to the Congregational church in Charleston which he served, with William Hollingshead, until his death. He was the real founder of the Charleston Bible Society, and like his colleague, participated in the activities of most of the organizations and charitable activities of the city.®4

Kelso, Thomas (1784-1878). Born to a Methodist family of Northern Ireland (John Wesley had preached in his house), he was orphaned at an early age and brought by a brother to the United States in 1791. He and two brothers established themselves as butchers in Baltimore. Gaining a reputation for strict honesty, they became the leading firm in the city. One brother retired in 1807 and died leaving an estate of $100,000; the other brother retired, and Thomas Kelso became the largest stock buyer in the state, later a director of
several banks, transportation lines, and an insurance company and a member of city council. Strictly moral from his early youth, he joined the Methodist Church in 1807 and became a class leader. He never conducted business on Sunday and never served liquor or wine in his home. His wife belonged to the Second Presbyterian Church, and their home became a weekly meeting place for ministers of all denominations. In spite of his great wealth, Kelso always maintained the character of an honest tradesman, actively participating in church and charitable activities.65

Kendall, Amos (1789-1869). Born in Massachusetts in a strict Congregational family, Kendall graduated from Dartmouth in 1811. Even as a college student, he actively opposed petty thievery, gambling and drunkenness. He moved to Kentucky in 1814 and briefly served as a tutor in the home of Henry Clay. He published the Religious Intelligencer (Georgetown, Kentucky) and even after taking on the editorship of the Argus and a political career, he included a heavy dose of religious and moral material in his publications. He participated in benevolent societies in his early years. Late in life, he became an ardent Baptist, a Sunday school teacher, etc.66

Key, Francis Scott (1780-1843). Born in Maryland, a graduate of St. John's College, he married the daughter of a governor of the state and practiced law in Frederick, then Georgetown. A deeply emotional, religious Episcopal layman, Key was a friend of Walter D. Addison and a dedicated Low Churchman. He seriously considered entering the ministry himself and even went so far as to illegally baptize a child at one point, to the embarrassment of his clerical friends (1818). He was a leader in the Education Society and great supporter of the Seminary. He owned slaves himself, but he took very seriously his duty to educate them by means of a Sunday school which he personally conducted. He was a founder and early leader of the American Colonization Society.67

King, Jonas (1792-1869). A native of Massachusetts, graduate of Williams and Andover Seminary, King was ordained by the Congregational Association in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1819. He served as missionary for the Female Domestic Missionary Society, Nov., 1819, to May, 1820, preaching to seamen, visiting Sunday schools, attempting to convert Jews, visiting the asylums and hospitals. He left for Greece in 1821 and served throughout his life as a missionary there.68
Kohne, Frederick (1757-1829). A native of Prussia, Kohne settled in Charleston in 1780 and before retiring in 1807, made a fortune in trade. Dividing his time between Philadelphia and Charleston, he left almost $400,000 to various societies associated with the Episcopal Church. The bulk went to General Seminary and the national societies, but sizeable bequests were made to the Bishop's Fund in South Carolina, the Advancement Society and the Female Missionary Society; $21,000 was left to the Charleston Orphan House.

Kurtz, Benjamin (1795-1865). Born in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, a nephew of Daniel Kurtz, he was pastor in Hagerstown, Maryland, 1815-31. He was an organizer of the General Synod; he visited Europe, 1826-28 and raised $10,000 for Gettysburg Seminary. A man of great personal energy and enthusiasm, "to his dying day he zealously advocated English preaching, Sunday school, protracted meetings, and temperance reform."

Kurtz, J. Daniel (1763-1856). Born in Germantown, a student of Dr. Henry E. Muhlenberg of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Kurtz was ordained in Philadelphia in 1784-85. He served as a missionary to Virginia, 1785, 1787, and finally settled in Baltimore. He was a founder of the Maryland Bible Society, a founder of the Lutheran Synod of Maryland and Virginia.

Lancaster, Joseph (1778-1838). A convert to Quakerism, he opened a school for poor children in London, 1798, and popularized his "Lancastrian System" of education. The plan was based on the idea that the key to education is arousing a spirit of emulation among students; its attraction was that by using student monitors, the Lancastrian school could ideally educate unlimited numbers of children at minimal expense. A poor businessman who was never able to profit from his fame, Lancaster immigrated to the United States and briefly lived in Baltimore before carrying his program to Canada and South America. The Lancastrian System, in conjunction with the rise of Sunday schools, provided a vital encouragement to public education in the South.

Larned, Sylvester (1776-1820). Born in Massachusetts, a graduate of Middlebury and a student at Andover and Princeton seminaries, Larned was encouraged to become a missionary in New Orleans by Elias Cornelius. He served as pastor of a short-lived Presbyterian congregation there, 1818 until his death two years later.

Laurie, James (1778-1853). Born in Edinburgh and educated at the university there, Laurie was recruited for missionary work in the United States for the Associate Reformed Church. He settled in Washington in 1802 and
formed a congregation the following year which met in the Treasury Department Building until 1807 (see Joseph Nourse). To supplement his income, he was a clerk in that Department. He was a director of the American Colonization Society and involved in the work of many of the charitable activities in the growing national Capitol.74

Lindsley, Philip (1786-1855). A native of New Jersey, Lindsley graduated from Princeton in 1804 and studied theology under Samuel Stanhope Smith. He served as tutor and librarian at Princeton and in 1822 as acting president. A man of obvious talent and great personal charm, he was offered the presidencies of more than half a dozen colleges (including Transylvania, Dickinson, Princeton, Washington, U. of Pennsylvania, U. of Alabama, College of Louisiana, South Alabama College). In 1824 he accepted the presidency of Cumberland College (Nashville, Tennessee). Thoroughly familiar with the latest currents of American and European thought, he introduced the principle of manual education which gained wide acceptance in Tennessee and Kentucky colleges and academies.73

Lumpkin, Joseph Henry (1799-1867). A native of Georgia, he attended Franklin College in Athens and graduated from Princeton in 1819. He became a leading member of the bar, in 1845, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Georgia, and served as professor of law at the University of Georgia until the Civil War. In 1828 he published an address favoring strict observance of the Sabbath, and Lumpkin was the leader of the temperance movement in the state.75

McDonogh, John (1779-1850). Born of Presbyterian parents in Baltimore, McDonogh removed to New Orleans as a mercantile agent in 1800 and, as an unscrupulous businessman, soon made a fortune and retired to a plantation at McDonoghville. In the 1820s he began paying his slaves wages, giving them an opportunity to purchase their freedom and to acquire an education. He sent shiploads of his ex-slaves to Liberia. He constructed a church for Negroes on his plantation. In 1830, he became a vice-president of the American Colonization Society. One of the first great philanthropists in American history, he left an estate of over two million dollars to the cities of New Orleans and Baltimore for educational purposes at his death in 1850.77

McGuire, Edward C. (1793-1858). A native of Fredericksburg, Virginia, McGuire experienced an "instantaneous" religious conversion while studying law. He studied theology under William Meade, William H. Wilmer, and George Dashiell, all men of decided evangelical leanings,
and became rector of the Episcopal congregation in Fredericksburg. A marriage to a daughter of Col. Fielding Lewis, combined with the fact that he was native to the town, gave him complete social acceptance. His church experienced several revivals and by the 1830s was one of the strongest Episcopal congregations in the Diocese. He strongly opposed the theater, horse racing, fashionable dress, and intemperance. He established a large Sunday school and a Bible class; he was a founder of the Education Society, later a trustee of the seminary in Alexandria, and a great advocate of home missions. He strongly supported the local branch of the American Colonization Society.78

Marshall, John (1755-1835). Although theologically a Deist at heart, Chief Justice Marshall was a devoutly religious man who believed that religious institutions were essential to national happiness. He attended several of the conventions of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia. In the 1820s, he actively supported the Richmond and Manchester Colonization Society and the Sabbath School Association of Richmond and Manchester.79

Maxwell, William (1784-1857). A native of Norfolk, Virginia, William Maxwell graduated from Yale in 1802 and took up the practice of law in Norfolk. He was a wonderful orator, a charming, well-educated man who maintained a lifelong interest in religion and reform, education, literature, and history. He published a volume of poetry soon after graduation and briefly served (1827) as literary editor of the New York Journal of Commerce. He served as an agent for the A.B.C.F.M. as early as 1813 and was an elder in the Presbyterian Church when it was founded. He was corresponding secretary of the Norfolk Bible Society, member of the American Education Society, vice president of the Virginia Colonization Society. A close friendship existed between Maxwell and John Holt Rice and he published a biography of the latter at his death. Maxwell was elected to the Virginia legislature in 1830, was elected president of Hampden-Sydney College (1838-44), and became the secretary of the Virginia Historical Society.80

Mead, Asa (1792-1831). Born in New Hampshire, a graduate of Dartmouth and Andover Seminary, Mead was employed by the Bible Society of the District of Columbia in 1821-22. He made a thorough, house-by-house survey of the poorer areas of the city, compiling a census of the educational attainments and needs of the population. He returned to Maine for ordination in 1822.81
Meade, William (1789-1862). Born in Frederick Co., Virginia, the son of an aide to Washington during the Revolution and of an aunt of John Randolph (Elizabeth Randolph), Meade was literally a cousin to many of the leading men of Virginia. He graduated from Princeton in 1808 and studied theology there and with Walter D. Addison in Alexandria. Puritanical in his personal life, he possessed a driving energy, a sense of duty and religious conviction which overpowered anyone who came into contact with him. After briefly serving Episcopal pulpits in Alexandria, Norfolk, and Petersburg, he removed to his estate, "Millwood," Frederick Co., and served as rector of the church in Winchester until his death. More than any single individual, Meade was responsible for the revival of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia in the post-War of 1812 period. Recognized leader of the Low Church party in the state, he made the restoration of clerical and lay discipline a personal campaign. He was instrumental in bringing about the election of Bishop Moore; he played an important part in the establishment of the seminary in Alexandria. Greatly interested in education, he conducted a school on his estate and launched a one-man campaign for the religious education of slaves. He founded Bible societies, tract societies, and Sunday schools, willingly cooperating with members of other denominations in such efforts. He was the first national agent of the American Colonization Society. In 1829, he was elected Assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia.82

Mercer, Charles Fenton (1778-1858). A Virginian of high social standing, Mercer graduated from Princeton in 1797 and enjoyed a long career in Congress, 1817-41. While in the Virginia legislature, 1810-17, he took particular interest in forwarding education legislation, and in 1826 he presented a series of lectures on popular education at Princeton. He was a strong advocate of internal improvements, a lifelong opponent of slavery, and a director of the American Colonization Society. He was an active Episcopal layman.83

Miller, Robert J. Miller was ordained a priest in 1794 and became rector of the White Haven Church, Lincoln Co., North Carolina. The Episcopal Diocese went out of existence in the first two decades, however, and Miller became an active member of the Lutheran Synod (1803-21). He and G. Shober, a convert from the Moravians, greatly encouraged Lutheran missionary efforts and Sunday schools. In 1821, he received Episcopal ordination and by his influence, briefly affected a union of the Episcopal Diocese and the Lutheran Synod (1822-23).84
Moore, Richard Channing (1762-1841). Son of a New York merchant, grandson of an English Bishop, Moore developed a seriousness in religious matters while studying medicine and decided to enter the priesthood. He served small churches on Staten Is., and in New York, and in 1814 was elected Bishop of Virginia. Moore was not a brilliant leader, but he had the necessary presence, energy, and attitude to revive the dying Church in Virginia. A proponent of "Evangelical" methods, prayer meetings, strong clerical and lay discipline, emphasis on preaching and visitation, he also demanded strict adherence to the regular liturgy of the Church. His mere presence around the Diocese, years after Bishop Madison had been able to effectively carry out his duties, helped to revive churches. He gave full support to the founding of a seminary and diocesan missionary and prayer book societies. He served as president of the Virginia Bible Society.

Mullanphy, John. An early millionaire of St. Louis who made his money in real estate and cotton speculation, a man who H. H. Brackenridge described as "a large, coarse-looking man, with a rough, red face, a carbuncled nose, showing his habits of life to incline more to the liquids than the solids," Mullanphy built a hospital in 1828 which was placed under the care of the Catholic Sisters of Charity.

Munford, William (1773-1825). Graduate of William and Mary, a lawyer and member of the Virginia House of Delegates and Senate, he served for years as clerk of the House of Delegates. Although he had questioned the idea of Christian Revelation as a young man, he became a thorough Christian and instituted a regular system of family worship. He became a member and an elder in the Presbyterian church on Shockoe Hill, Richmond, when it was founded. He was recording secretary of the Virginia Bible Society, president of the United Domestic Missionary Society and of the Sunday School Union, and "had an agency in establishing, and directing several other benevolent institutions."

Napier, Thomas. Apparently a merchant, Thomas Napier became a leading figure in the reform societies of Charleston in the 1820s. (Lydia Maria Child, hardly an unbiased witness, claimed in an 1838 letter to Theodore Weld that Napier was both a rice merchant and a slave auctioneer). He was an elder in William McDowell's Third Presbyterian Church, and president or director in almost all of the local charitable efforts. He was a vice president of the American Seamen's Friend Society.
Nash, Frederick (1781-1858). Son of the Governor of North Carolina (who d. in 1786) and stepson of a son of President Witherspoon, Nash attended Princeton. He married a sister of Rev. Mr. Shepard Kollock, moved to Hillsboro, and became a leading state judge, a trustee of the University of North Carolina, and an elder in the Presbyterian church. In 1815, he introduced a law against dueling in the legislature. He gave support to a number of charitable and religious societies.

Norris, Oliver (1786-1825). A native of Baltimore of Quaker background, Norris was converted under Rev. Mr. Dashiell. Ordained in Maryland, he became rector of Christ Church, Alexandria, Virginia, in 1813. He took an active part in establishing the seminary and served as a professor there before his untimely death.

Nourse, Joseph (1754-1841). Born in London, Nourse accompanied his parents to Virginia in 1769. He served as secretary to Charles Lee in 1776, paymaster of the Board of War, 1777-81, assistant auditor-general and then register of the United States Treasury, 1781-1829. He was an ardent member of the Associate Reformed Church, active in its national denominational affairs. He was a vice president of the American Bible Society, an officer in the United Foreign Missionary Society and in general a firm supporter of organized benevolence and religion.

O'Fallon, John (1791-1865). Born in Kentucky and orphaned at an early age, O'Fallon was brought up by his uncles, William Clark and Major Croghan. He participated in the Battle of Tippecanoe, then served in the army and as a contractor in St. Louis. In a funeral oration, Bishop Hawks mentioned that "of his childhood, we learn that he was never known to possess even one bad habit. He never made use of an oath in his life. He never went to bed without prayers, nor rose without them . . ." When the Methodists established the first Protestant church in St. Louis in 1820, O'Fallon became the superintendent of the sunday school. He was president of the branch Bank of the United States and leader in all civic improvements in the city. In his lifetime, he gave over a million dollars in charity--land for the Methodist church, for St. Louis and Washington Universities, for schools and the Home of the Friendless. He built the dispensary and the medical college. He became an Episcopalian in later life, but commanded the respect of all denominations.

Oliver, John (d. 1823). An Irish immigrant who acquired wealth as a merchant in Baltimore, Oliver left $20,000 at his death in 1823 for the creation of a free school to be administered by the Hibernian Society. Half of the students were to be of Irish immigrant parents.
Palmer, Benjamin M. (1781-1847). Grandson of a New England minister, Palmer was born in Philadelphia while his parents were refugees from British-held Charleston. He was educated at Charleston College and Princeton, and took charge of a church at Beaufort, South Carolina, until called to the Circular Church (Congregational) in Charleston at the death of Dr. Keith. Until his retirement for reasons of health in 1835, Palmer was actively involved in most of the religious reform societies of Charleston.94

Parsons, Samuel B. Parsons was the leading penologist of the South in the 1820s, actively involved in running a penitentiary. Appointed superintendent of the Virginia Penitentiary, he introduced many of the reforms advocated by Louis Dwight's American Prison Discipline Society—strict discipline, solitary confinement, moral education. He was the apparent author of An Exposition of the Penitentiary System (Richmond, 1821. The copy in the Library Co. of Phila. collection was presented by Parsons to Robert Vaux), and the reports to the Virginia legislature of 1827 and 1829 as well as a contributor to Dwight's American Prison Discipline Society Reports.95

Peck, John Mason (1789-1858). Born in Connecticut, Peck removed to New York State in 1811 and joined a Baptist Church. He was licensed as a preacher the same year, ordained in 1813, and in 1817 was sent by the General Convention as a missionary to St. Louis. The plan for western missionary efforts which he brought East in 1826, although turned down by the Baptist Convention, largely influenced the Valley Campaign of the American Home Missionary Society. In his career, he founded dozens of Baptist churches, helped to establish a number of schools and colleges, and edited several religious periodicals.96

Percy, William (1744-1819). A graduate of Oxford, Percy became a chaplain to Lady Salina Huntingdon and was sent to America in 1772 to take over Whitefield's Orphan House at Bethesda. He returned to England after the Revolution, but served as an Episcopal clergyman in South Carolina, 1805-19. He was a vice president of the Bible Society in Charleston.97

Perijo, Rachel. Mrs. Perijo became Matron of the Female Department of the Baltimore Penitentiary, Feb., 1822, and instituted one of the first effective and humane programs of discipline for women prisoners in the country. She improved living conditions. She instituted a thorough program of education; all but two senile female prisoners were taught to read a spelling book, fifteen progressed to the point where they could read the
Scriptures. Knitting, sewing, and spinning were introduced as an educational, recreational, and profit-seeking activity. Sunday school was held in both the morning and the afternoon, resulting in considerable interest in religion. In the first three years, only seven female prisoners had been recommitted, a remarkable improvement.

Pinckney, Charles Cotesworth (1746-1825). Although accused at the time of the election of 1800, probably with truth, of entertaining deistical sentiments, Pinckney was a lifelong supporter of the Episcopal Church and of Charleston's benevolent societies. He was a member and vestryman at St. Philip's Church, and he regularly set aside a percentage of his yearly income for charitable purposes. He was elected a member of the Society for the Relief of the Widows and Orphans of the Clergy of the Church of England in 1772 and maintained an interest in it until his death, attending meetings and serving as president. He was president of the Bible Society in Charleston from its formation until his death, a contributor and honorary vice president of the American Society for the Education of Pious Youth, a founder of the Charleston Anti-Duelling Association.

Plumer, William S. (1802-1880). Born in Pennsylvania, Plumer graduated from Washington College, Lexington, Virginia, and Princeton Seminary. He was ordained by the Presbytery of Orange (North Carolina) and served as a missionary in Virginia and North Carolina, 1826-29, pastor of Presbyterian churches in Petersburg, Richmond, and Baltimore (1830-54), before moving to Pittsburg. From the beginning, he was a man of remarkable energy; he reported to the Presbyterian Board of Missions in 1829 that on a six-month tour in Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina, he had "travelled more than eight hundred miles--distributed between two and three thousand pages of tracts--several hundred of Beecher's Sermons and Kittridge's Address on Intemperance--three thousand copies of the Christian Almanack--fifteen copies of Doddridge's Rise and Progress, and fifty Village Hymns--formed one Sabbath school, and one Congregational library--preached several charity sermons and taken up collections for educational and missionary purposes--obtained between two and three hundred subscribers for religious papers--reorganized an Education Society, which soon after received a donation of $500 from an individual, and other smaller donations, and is now prepared to take up seven young men. Mr. P. has generally preached from four to eight times every week, and not less than fifteen have been hopefully converted by his instrumentality." He founded an asylum for the deaf, dumb, and blind in Staunton, Virginia, in 1838 and edited a religious periodical, Watchman of the South (Richmond, 1838-46).
Pringle, James B. (d. 1818). Born in Pennsylvania, a graduate of Dickinson College and theological student with John M. Mason in New York, Pringle became pastor of a united congregation in Mecklenburg Co., North Carolina. In a brief career, Pringle devoted great energy to organized reform. He founded three interdenominational societies (Female Beneficent Society, Steel Creek; Beneficent Society of Bethany; Benevolent Society of York District), he encouraged Sunday schools and tract distribution, and formed a Sunday school in which he taught Negroes to read.101

Ramsay, Martha L. (1759-1811). Daughter of Henry Laurens, Martha wrote out a covenant with God at age fourteen. While in England during the Revolution, she became acquainted with the Countess of Huntingdon and demonstrated a deep piety throughout life. Her father gave her 500 guineas in Paris, after he was released from prison, and she spent most of it on testaments which she distributed. Until her death, she made a practice of giving out Bibles and copies of Doddridge's Rise and Progress. In 1787 she married the historian David Ramsay, and she followed a strict system of child care, based on Locke, Witherspoon, and the Bible. Daily prayers, Sunday reading, catechistical instruction to Blacks and Whites were a regular part of her family schedule. She was a Presbyterian, involved in what charitable activities existed before her death.102

Rice, John Holt (1777-1831). Born in Bedford Co., Virginia, of a strict but poor Presbyterian family, Rice was educated at Liberty Hall Academy and elsewhere and became a tutor at Hampden-Sydney College (1796) and a school teacher. He studied theology with Archibald Alexander and was ordained in 1804, was pastor of Cub Creek Church and teacher until his removal to Richmond in 1812. By ceaseless energy and intellectual brilliance, Rice became the unrivaled leader of Presbyterianism in Virginia. In Richmond, he edited The Christian Monitor and the Virginia Evangelical and Literary Magazine, outstanding examples of religious journalism which promoted reform societies of all sorts. He was the leading force in the Virginia Bible Society and a founder of the American Bible Society. He was the one Southern vice president of the United Domestic Missionary Society and an influential member of most of the national reform societies, the meetings of which he frequently attended in conjunction with the Presbyterian General Assembly. He always took particular interest in education, pressing for the adoption of free schools, Sunday schools, and promoting colleges. He was instrumental in the creation of Union Seminary (at Hampden-Sydney) and served as a professor there in the last five years of his life. He always took an interest in local benevolent societies.103
Schaeffer, David F. (1787-1837). Born in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, he was ordained a Lutheran minister and became pastor of the church in Frederick, Maryland. He was a founder of the Frederick Co. Bible Society and of Gettysburg Seminary. As editor of the denomination's first periodical, the Lutheran Intelligencer (1826-31), he played a major role in bringing the English-speaking segment of the Lutheran Church into the mainstream of American Protestantism, popularizing Sunday schools, temperance (sadly, he developed a drinking problem himself late in life), etc. 104

Semple, Robert B. (1769-1831). Born in King and Queen Co., Virginia, Semple was converted to the Baptist faith from Episcopalianism, became a clergyman and a school teacher in his native county. He published a catechism in 1809 and a history of the Baptists in Virginia in 1810. A widely respected man of real intellect, Semple did much to broaden the vision of Virginia Baptists in the early nineteenth century. He was constantly promoting missions, a leader in the Richmond Foreign and Domestic Missionary Society. He was a strong advocate of colonization. In the last four years of his life, he was in Washington, aiding with the financial affairs of Columbian College. He turned down the presidency of Transylvania in 1805 and D.D.'s from Brown and William and Mary. 105

Sherwood, Adiel (1791-1879). Born in New York state, graduate of Union College and a student at Andover Seminary, Sherwood moved because of health reasons to Georgia where he was ordained a Baptist minister. He was a leader in the temperance movement in the state and a promoter of education at all levels. He headed a school in Edenton, Georgia, later taught in various Baptist colleges. He was a frequent contributor to periodicals and wrote a Gazetteer of Georgia. 106

Shirras, Alexander. A Scottish immigrant, Shirras left his property to be administered by the president of the Medical Society of South Carolina, the president of the St. Andrews Society, and the mayor for a Dispensary in Charleston, South Carolina. This was opened in 1814 as the Shirras Dispensary. 107

Shober, Gottlieb. Although a Moravian in upbringing, Shober was a minister in Lutheran churches and even president of the North Carolina Synod. Thoroughly dedicated to interdenominational cooperation, he noted in his life of Luther that he believed that there was "nothing of importance" standing between Lutherans, Presbyterians, Baptists, and Methodists. In the
same work, he described himself as "a speckled bird among my calvinist brethren," as "like the jay in the fable, I have been beholden to most of the birds in the air for a feather or two. Church and meeting, Methodist and Moravian may all perceive something in my coat taken from them; but then why could I not be content with their color, without going amongst other flocks and coveys to make myself such a motly figure? Let them be angry; if I have culled the best feathers from all, then surely I am the finest bird." He was a leader in the forming of the Lutheran General Synod and, with Robert J. Miller, responsible for the brief union of the North Carolina Episcopalians and Lutherans. He firmly supported organized societies.108

Smith, Daniel (1789-1823). Born in Vermont, a graduate of Middlebury and Andover Seminary, Smith was ordained in Ipswich, Massachusetts, 1815. He had joined Samuel J. Mills in the second exploratory mission to the trans-Allegheny region, 1814-15, and he served as a home missionary in the South, 1815-19. He organized the Female Orphan Society in Natchez in 1815 and became pastor of a church there, 1819-22. He held a church in Louisville, Kentucky from 1822 until his death.109

Smith, Eliza Blair (1795-1824). A niece of Samuel Stanhope Smith, resident of Wilmington, Delaware, she is an excellent example of the younger women who brought so much enthusiasm to the religious reform societies. Strongly affected by a revival which swept the town in 1814, she became a leader in the Female Sabbath School, an education society, the Hospitable Society, a Jews' Society, and the Harmony Society. She was struck by lightening (fortunately this was not interpreted as evidence of God's opinion of reform societies) and died in 1824.110

Speece, Conrad (1776-1836). Graduate at Liberty Hall, Virginia, tutor at Hampden-Sydney College, he became licensed as a Presbyterian clergyman in 1801 after briefly showing an interest in the Baptists at the beginning of the 1800 Revival. He served as a missionary and regular pastor in Virginia and Maryland, finally settling at Augusta Church, Virginia, for the last twenty years of his career. He actively supported Bible, colonization and temperance society work. He was a close friend of John Holt Rice and in a relatively short career, produced over 150 publications. In spite of his other reform interests, Speece constantly chewed tobacco (he even kept tobacco in his mouth when he slept!).111
Staughton, William (1770-1829). An English Baptist clergy­
man, Staughton came to Georgetown, South Carolina, at
the urging of Richard Furman. Although he married
there, he left two years later because of his dislike
of the climate and of slavery. He held pastorates in
New Jersey and Philadelphia, was an organizer of the
Philadelphia Bible Society, and sunday schools. Elected
first president of Columbian University, he resided in
Washington, D.C., 1823-27, and was involved in various
societies. He was elected first president of a Literary
and Theological Institution, Georgetown, Kentucky,
but died before taking charge.112

Tiernan, Luke (1757-1839). A native of Co. Meath, Ireland,
Tiernan immigrated to Hagerstown, Maryland, in 1787,
Baltimore in 1795. He built up a very successful
drygoods business and became the city's first shipper
in the direct Baltimore-Liverpool trade. He was a
Jeffersonian, then a Whig, president of the Screw Dock
Co. and founder of the B. & O. Railroad. Baltimore was
the one city in the United States where Catholics took
a fairly active part in some of the humanitarian reforms
in conjunction with Protestants. Luke Tiernan was the
leading Catholic layman involved in these societies.
He was president of the Hibernian Society and the Irish
Emancipation Society (1828) and a leading benefactor
of the Catholic Cathedral. He was also president of
the Oliver Hibernian Free School, one of the incorpora­
tors of St. Mary's Orphanlike Female School (1819),
president of the Baltimore General Dispensary (1824-37).113

Utley, Horace (b. 1785). Born in Hartford, Connecticut,
a graduate of Dartmouth, Utley was a captain of packet
boats, later steamboats, from Charleston to New York.
In the 1820s his primary residence was Charleston, and
he was an untiring worker in all of the seamen's
societies and relief organizations. He later moved to
Buffalo, New York, and Cleveland, Ohio.114

Washington, Bushrod (1762-1829). Due more to his associa­
tion with his uncle than his natural interest or ability,
Bushrod Washington was an important figurehead in the
Episcopal Church and in the American Colonization
Society. He was a supporter of the seminary in Alex­
andria and he was a delegate to conventions of the
Virginia Diocese. He was the first president of the
Colonization Society, but this fact did not stop him
from selling a group of his own slaves to be transported
in chains to the deep South, nor cause him to see any­
thing inconsistent in his action.115

Weems, Mason Locke (1759-1825). Although his actions made
it difficult to take him very seriously, Mason
Locke Weems was an important figure in the evangelical
reform movement of the South. Born in Maryland, the youngest of nineteen children, Weems apparently studied medicine in England, 1777-79 and the ministry in the early 1780s. He was ordained a priest by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1784, was an Episcopal rector in Maryland, 1784-89. He had no permanent church after 1793. Apparently influenced by the cheap tracts of the early British evangelicals, he began reprinting, then writing, short pamphlets and books in the 1790s. He reprinted sermons by Robert Russel and Hugh Blair, Hannah More's *Religion of the Fashionable World*, and *Onania* (a pamphlet against masturbation). He achieved widespread fame with his moral (and entertaining) biographies of Washington, Marion, Franklin, and Penn, and then found a ready market for works directed against particular sins: *Hymen's Recruiting Sergeant, God's Revenge Against Murder, . . . Gambling, . . . Adultery, . . . Dueling: The Drunkard's Looking Glass* and *The Bad Wife's Looking Glass*. He traveled throughout the South selling his books, most of which were laced with somewhat embroidered accounts of real events in the section. Bishop Meade reported that Weems (although an Episcopal minister) was once spotted on a Virginia Court day, selling a copy of Paine's *Age of Reason*. When challenged, Weems pulled out a copy of Watson's reply and defended himself on the grounds that he was also selling the antidote! In spite of his love of profit and humor, Weems was a forerunner of the tract agents from the national benevolent societies. It is entirely probable that his publications, presenting their messages in a more digestible form, had a far more lasting moral effect than did the more pious tracts.116

Wharey, James (1789-1842). Born in North Carolina, a student of theology with Dr. Hoge at Hampden-Sidney, Wharey was licensed as a Presbyterian minister in 1818. He preached and taught in Amherst Co., Virginia. He married a sister of John Holt Rice and conducted a one-man tract business in conjunction with his preaching. He was missionary for the Young Men's Missionary Society of Richmond, c. 1820.117

Williams, Stephen (d. 1866). Born in England, Williams came to Baltimore as a young man. He never attended college and although licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Baltimore in 1824, he was never ordained. His mother had been involved in the founding of the first Presbyterian sunday school in 1817, and Williams devoted his life to working as a benevolent society agent with the poor. He was chaplain of the Mariner's Church, agent for the Seamen's Friend Society, later city missionary.118
Wilmer, William H. (1782-1827). Born in Maryland, a graduate of Washington College (Maryland), he was ordained an Episcopalian priest in 1808. From 1812 to 1826 he was rector of St. Paul's Church, Alexandria, and served for one year as president of William and Mary before his death. A strong evangelical, Wilmer was a leader of the Education Society and the Seminary itself. He was editor of the Washington Theological Repertory.119

Yellot, Jeremiah (d. 1805). Yellot, in spite of the fact that there are indications that he was nearly involved in a duel in 1798, was a principal founder of St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Baltimore. In 1798 he gave the city a lot for the Maryland Hospital for the Insane; at his death, he left $500 to the Benevolent Society (at St. Paul's) and $10,000 for "educating the poor generally" which was applied toward the charity school at St. Peter's, opened in 1806.120
FOOTNOTES, APPENDIX A (Biographies)


2John Howard Brown, ed., The Cyclopaedia of American Biographies. Comprising The Men and Women of the United States Who have been Identified with the Growth of the Nation (Boston, 1897-1903; 7 vols.), vol. 1, 160-61; Osander, Miscellaneous Poems, on Moral and Religious Subjects (Hudson, N.Y., 1811); Thomas G. Allen, Memoir of the Rev. Benjamin Allen . . . To Which is Added, the Funeral Sermon delivered in St. Paul's Church, for the Improvement of the Death of Mr. Allen, by the Rev. Gregory T. Bedell, D.D. Also, the History of the Bible Classes of St. Paul's Church, Which Was Written by Mr. Allen (Phila., 1832).


8S. T. Hallman, History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of South Carolina, 1824-1924 (Columbia, S.C., 1924), 123-25, 247-48; Evangelical Lutheran Church. Synod of South Carolina, Minutes (1825-26); (1828), 8, 17-23.
Thomas Bacon, A Sermon Preached at the Parish Church of St. Peter's in Talbot County, Maryland on Sunday the 14th of October, 1750. For the Benefit of a Charity Working School to be Set Up in the Said Parish, for the Maintenance and Education of Orphans and Other Poor Children, and Negroes . . . To Which is Added, Copies of the Proposals, Rules, Subscription-Roll, and Other Matters, and Proceedings Relating to the Said School. To Be Sold for the Benefit of the Said Charity School (London, 1751); William Meade, ed., Sermons Addressed to Masters and Servants, and Published in the Year 1743 [sic] by the Rev. Thomas Bacon . . . Now Republished with Other Tracts and Dialogues on the Same Subject, and Recommended to All Masters and Mistresses to be Used in their Families (Winchester, Va., 1813); Nelson W. Rightmyer, Maryland's Established Church (Austin, Tex., 1957), 158.


Henry Howe, Historical Collections of Virginia (Charleston, S.C., 1845), 186.


36. Ibid., p. 235.


38. J. P. K. Henshaw, Address to the Trustees of St. Peter's School, to the Congregation of St. Peter's Church and to the Public (Baltimore, 1822).


40. George Dashiell, Address of the Vestry to the Members of the Protestant Episcopal Church of St. Peter, in the City of Baltimore (Balt., 1806); Dashiell, An Address to the Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland (Balt., 1816); Francis Hollingsworth, Explanation of the Reasons and Motives for the Advice Given on a Late Occasion (Balt., 1815); Charles Worthington, Reply to the Circular of the Vestry of St. Peter's Church (Baltimore, 1815); One Hundred Years of History of the Baltimore General Dispensary (Balt., 1901); Joseph G. Bend to William Duke, Baltimore, Dec. 27, 1798, Ms., Maryland Diocesan Archives.


43 Thomas, Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, 1820-1957, 14-15; Christopher E. Gadsden, A Discourse, Preached and Published by Request of the Vestry and Wardens of St. Michael's Church . . . on the Death of Bishop Dehon (Charleston, 1817).


48 E. Clowes Chorley, "The Reverend Andrew Fowler," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, 3 (1939), 270-79.

49 Thomas, Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina, 1820-1957, 32-48, 657, 705-6.

50 Calvin Durfee, Williams Biographical Annals (Boston, 1871), 322.


52 Wiley, Officers and Students of Middlebury College, 35.


63 Ibid., vol. 2, 58-60.


65 The Biographical Cyclopaedia of Representative Men of Maryland and the District of Columbia (Baltimore, 1879), 570-72.


67 Lawrence C. Wroth, "Francis Scott Key as a Churchman," Maryland Historical Magazine, 4 (1909), 154-70; Francis Scott Key to James Kemp, Georgetown: April 4, 28, 1814; Oct. 17, 22, 1818; James Kemp to Francis Scott Key, Baltimore, Oct. 12, 1818; Francis Scott Key to Robert H. Goldsborough, Georgetown, May 16, 1830. Ms. letters in the Maryland Diocesan Archives.


70 A. R. Wentz, History of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland of the United Lutheran Church in America, 1820-1920 . . . (Harrisburg, Pa., 1920), 64-66.

71 Ibid., 53, 57-60.


Ibid., vol. 4, 465-68.


Carrol H. Quenzel, *The History and Background of St. George's Episcopal Church, Fredericksburg, Virginia* (Richmond, Va., 1951), 27-33.


86 John Thomas Scharf, History of St. Louis City and County, from the Earliest Periods to the Present Day: Including Biographical Sketches of Representative Men, 2 vols. (Phila., 1883), 188.


95 Beccaria, An Exposition of the Penitentiary System of Punishment . . . (Richmond, Va., 1821); Virginia General Assembly, Report of the Joint Committee Appointed
to Examine into the State of the Penitentiary Institution (Richmond, Va., 1827). See also reports on Virginia in the American Prison Discipline Society Annual Reports.

96 Austin K. BeBlois and Lemuel C. Barnes, John Mason Peck and One Hundred Years of Home Missions, 1817-1917 (N.Y., 1917).

97 Frederick Dalcho, An Historical Account of the Protestant Episcopal Church in South Carolina (Charleston, S.C., 1820), 236-41.


104 Wentz, Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland, 61-62.


Carpenter, *General Catalogue...* Andover, 39.


*Biographical Cyclopaedia of Representative Men of Maryland*, 497.


APPENDIX B

REFORM SOCIETIES IN THE SOUTH TO 1830

In this Appendix, an effort has been made to provide a far more complete list of Southern benevolent societies than has existed heretofore. The compilation includes: national societies which were to some degree active in the South, either directly or through auxiliary or branch societies; independent local organizations. Except in the case of the more important denominational missionary and tract societies, auxiliary bodies are not included. Many of the organizations which were of independent foundation, however, later affiliated with the national societies.

The list is based upon a comprehensive survey of manuscript records, American imprints to 1830, religious journals published in the South and by the national benevolent societies, denominational records, state legislative acts of incorporation, gazetteers and city guides, and local historical sources. Unfortunately, local sources are not as complete for the South as they are for the rest of the nation. Religious periodicals are particularly useful sources of information, but they do not exist for every year even in the major cities.
I. NATIONAL SOCIETIES

American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. (1810) Boston.
American Baptist Board of Foreign Missions. (1814) Philadelphia.
Tract Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. (1817).
Missionary and Bible Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church (1819). New York.
American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews. (1820) New York.
American Society for Promoting the Civilization and General Improvement of the Indian Tribes Within the United States. (1822) Washington.
Prison Discipline Society. (1825) Boston.
Sunday-School Union of the Methodist Episcopal Church. (1827).

II. ANTI-DUELING SOCIETIES

Charleston Anti-Duelling Association. (1826) Charleston, S.C.2
Anti-Duelling Society of Savannah. (1827) Savannah, Georgia.3
Anti-Duelling Association in Georgetown. (1827) Georgetown, S.C.4

III. ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETIES5

Delaware Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery and for the Relief and Protection of Free Blacks and People of Colour Unlawfully Held in Bondage. (1788) Wilmington, Del.
Choptank Abolition Society. (1790) Maryland.
Virginia Abolition Society. (1791) Richmond, Va.
Chester-town Abolition Society. (by 1794) Chestertown, Md.
Kentucky Abolition Society. (by 1787).
Winchester Abolition Society. (by 1797) Winchester, Va.
Delaware Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, and for the Relief and Protection of Blacks and People of Colour Unlawfully Held in Bondage or otherwise Oppressed. (1800) Wilmington, Del.
Kentucky Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery. (about 1811).
Manumission Society of Tennessee. (1815).
Manumission Society of North-Carolina. (1816) Greensborough, N.C.
Kent County, Delaware, Abolition Society. (1817) Dover and Camden, Del.
Philanthropic Society of Easton. (by 1817) Easton, Md.
Protection Society. (1817) Baltimore, Md.
Centerville, Maryland, Abolition Society. (by 1818) Centerville, Md.
Anti-Slavery Society of Maryland. (1825) Baltimore, Md.
Manumission and Emigration Society of Loudon, Virginia.
(by 1826).
Society for the Encouragement of Free Labor. (1826)
Wilmington, Del.
Washington Anti-Slavery Society. (1826-27) Washington,
D.C.
Benevolent Society of Alexandria for Improving the
Condition of the People of Color. (1826-27)
Alexandria, Va.
National Anti-Slavery Tract Society. (1827) Baltimore, Md.
Virginia Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery.
(by 1827).
Baltimore Society for the Protection of Free People of
Color. (1827).

IV. BIBLE SOCIETIES

Kentucky Bible Society. (Sept., 1809; reorganized, 1812)
Lexington, Ky. 6
Beaufort Bible Society. (March, 1810) Beaufort, S.C.
Bible Society of Charleston. (June, 1810) Charleston, S.C. 7
Georgia Bible Society. (July, 1810) Savannah, Ga. 8
Bible Society of Baltimore. (Sept., 1810) Baltimore, Md. 9
Bible Society of the District of Columbia. (Jan., 1813)
Washington, D.C. 10
Nashville Bible Society. (Jan., 1813) Nashville, Tenn.
Bible Society of Virginia. (June, 1813) Richmond, Va.
Louisiana Bible Society. (March, 1813) New Orleans, La. 11
Mississippi Bible Society. (March, 1813).
Delaware Bible Society. (Nov., 1813). 12
Bible Society of North Carolina. (Dec., 1813) Raleigh,
N.C. 13
Bible Society of Berkley County. (1814) Martinsburgh, Va.
Bible Society of Jefferson County. (1814) Shepherdstown,
Va.
Bible Society of Frederick. (1814) Millwood, Va.
Bible Society of Fredericksburg. (1814) Fredericksburg,
Va.
Bible Society of Prince George's County. (1814) Maryland.
Female Auxiliary Bible Society of Manchester. (1814) Manchester Organization: Auxiliary to Bible Society of Virginia.
New Providence Bible Society. (1814) Rockbridge County, Va.
Staunton Bible Society. (1814) Staunton, Va.
Amite and West-Florida Bible Society. (by 1816) West Florida.
Columbia Bible Society. (1816) Columbia, S.C.
Hagerstown Bible Society. (by 1816) Hagerstown, Md.
St. Louis Bible Society. (by 1816) St. Louis, Mo.
Loudon Bible Society. (by 1816) Leesburg, Va.
East Tennessee Bible Society. (by 1816) Sumner County, Tenn.
Bible Society in the Interior of Georgia. (by 1816).
Bible Society of Winchester. (by 1816) Winchester, Va.

V. CHARITY SCHOOL SOCIETIES

Charity Working School. (1750) Talbot County, Md.
Winyah Indico Society. (1755) Prince George, Winyah, S.C. (Georgetown).
Mount Zion Society. (1777) Charleston, S.C.
Saint David's Society. (1777) Cheraw District, S.C.
Catholic Society. (1778) Catholic, South Carolina.
Salem Society. (1778) Ninety-Six District, S.C.
John's Island Society. (1779) John's Is., S.C.
Beaufort Society. (1786) Beaufort, S.C.
St. Helena Society. (1786) St. Helena, S.C.
Camden Orphan Society. (1787) Camden, S.C.
Claremont Society. (1789) High-hills of Santee, S.C.
Beaufort Society for Promoting and Encouraging the Education of Children, and Assisting and Establishing Schools in that District. (1792) Beaufort District, S.C. 27

Upper Long Cane Society. (1793) Abbeville District, S.C. 28

Male Charity School. (1795) Fredericksburg, Va. 29

Male Free School of Baltimore. (1802) Baltimore, Md. 30

Female Charity School. (1802) Fredericksburg, Va. 31

St. Peter's Charity School. (1805) Baltimore, Md. 32

M'Donough Charity Schools. (1807) Charles Co., Md. 33

Beaufort District Society. (1810) Beaufort District, S.C. 34

Wadsworthville Poor School. (1809) Laurens District, S.C. 35

Washington Society Charity School. (1810) Baltimore, Md. 36

Humane Impartial Society. (1811) Baltimore, Md. 37

Female Harmony Society of Wilmington (or, Union Female Harmony School). (1814) Wilmington, Del. 38

Charity School Society. (1815) Natchez, Miss. 39

Benevolent Society of the Parish of St. Andrews. (1816) Jefferson County, W. Va. 40

Richmond Lancastrian Society. (Nov., 1816) Richmond, Va. 41

Savannah Free School Society. (Dec., 1816) Savannah, Ga. 42

Male Free School of St. Peter's Church. (1817) Baltimore, Md. 43

Newcastle Female Benevolent Society. (1817) Newcastle, Del. 44

Female Union Society of Smyrna. (1818) Smyrna, Del. 45

Hager's-Town Female Society for the Instruction of Poor Children. (1819) Hagerstown, Md. 46

Charity School. (1821) Warrenton, N.C. 47

Charity School, Eastern Shore. 48

Augusta Georgia Free School Society. (1828) Augusta, Ga. 49

Female Humane Association (and, 1807, Orphaline Charity School). (1798) Baltimore, Md.

Benevolent Society of the City and County of Baltimore. (1799) Baltimore, Md.

Ladies Society Charity School. (1805) Charleston, S.C.

Female School of Industry. (1827) Washington, D.C.
Schools associated with societies and documented in the list of "Mutual Aid Societies."

St. Andrews Society. (1729) Charleston, S.C.
Union Society. (1750) Savannah, Ga.
Fellowship Society. (1762) Charleston, S.C.
German Friendly Society. (1766) Charleston, S.C.
Benevolent Hibernian Society. (became in 1818, Hibernian Society of Baltimore).

VI. EDUCATION SOCIETIES

Salem Auxiliary Union Society. (1810) South Carolina-Georgia.50
Congregational and Presbyterian Union Female Association for Assisting in the Education of Pious Youth for the Gospel Ministry (1815) Charleston, S.C.51
The Benevolent Society of York District. (by 1818) South Carolina.52
Society for the Education of Pious Young Men for the Ministry of the Protestant Episcopal Church. (1818) Alexandria, Va.53
Female Education Society. (1820) Wilmington, Del.54
Education Society of North Carolina. (1822) North Carolina.55
Georgia Education Society. (1823) Georgia (meet with Presbytery of Hopewell).56
Female Lutheran Society of Charleston. South Carolina. (1825 or 1826) Charleston, S.C.57
Claremont Theological Scholarship Society. (1826) Charleston, S.C.58
South Carolina Education Society. (1827) Charleston (meet with Charleston Union Presbytery).59
Parent Domestic Missionary and Education Society of the Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Maryland and Virginia. (1828).60

VII. HUMANE SOCIETIES AND MEDICAL CHARITIES

Humane Society. (1790) Baltimore.61
Dispensary. (1801) Charleston, S.C.62
Baltimore General Dispensary. (1801) Baltimore, Md.63
Humane Society. (1804) Baltimore. 64
Humane Society of Wilmington. (1812) Wilmington, Del. 65
Shirras Dispensary. (1813) Charleston, S.C. 66
Second Baltimore Dispensary. (1816) Baltimore, Md. 67
Baltimore Infirmary. (1830) Baltimore, Md. 68
St. Louis Mullanphy Hospital. (1828) St. Louis, Mo. 69

VIII. INFANT SCHOOL SOCIETIES

Infant School Society. (1829) Norfolk, Va. 70
Infant School Society. (1829) Savannah, Ga. 71
Charleston Infant School Society. (Jan., 1829) Charleston, S.C. 72
Infant School Society of St. Louis. (1830) St. Louis, Mo. 73

IX. MISSIONARY SOCIETIES

Society for Promoting Christianity among the Indians. (1758) Hanover Presbytery. 74
Congregational Society of the State of South-Carolina, for Promoting the Interests of Religion. (1802) Independent Church, Charleston, S.C. 75
Lexington Missionary Society. (1804) Lexington Presbytery, Virginia. 76
Protestant Episcopal Society for the Advancement of Christianity in South Carolina. (1810) Charleston. 77
Union Missionary Society. (1811) Charleston, S.C., and Savannah, Ga. 78
East Tennessee Missionary Society. (1812) Maryville, Tenn. 79
Richmond Baptist Foreign and Domestic Mission Society. (1812-13) Richmond, Va. 80
Baptist Mission Society of Virginia. (by 1814) Richmond, Va. 81
Delaware Branch Society for Foreign Missions. (by 1814) Wilmington, Del. 82
North Carolina Mission Society. (1814) North Carolina. 83
Wadmalaw and Edisto Female Mite Society. (by 1814) Charleston, S.C. 84
Richmond Baptist African Mission Society. (1815) Richmond, Va. 85
Episcopal Missionary Society of Delaware. (1816) Wilmington, Del.86

Sarepta Mission Society. (1816) Georgia. (Sarepta Assoc., Baptists)87

Auxiliary Missionary Society of New-Castle Presbytery. (1817) Newcastle Presbytery.88

Delaware Society for Domestic Missions. (1817) Delaware.89

Missionary Society of the Diocese of North Carolina. (1817) North Carolina.90

Montgomery Domestic Missionary Society. (1818) Rockville, Md.91

Society for the Advancement of Christianity in the Diocese of Maryland. (1818) Baltimore, Md.92

Baptist Foreign Mission Society. (by 1819) Charleston, S.C.93

Congregational and Presbyterian Society for Promoting the Interests of Religion. (After 1819, Cong. and Presb. Missionary Society of South Carolina) (by 1818) Charleston, S.C.94

Elliot Society. (1819) Charleston, S.C.95

Female Domestic Missionary Society. (1819 or 1820) Baltimore, Md.96

Methodist Missionary Society of Charleston. (1819) Charleston, S.C.97

Missionary Society of the Synod of South Carolina and Georgia. (1819) Synod of S.C. and Ga.98

Protestant Episcopal Missionary Society in Charleston, South-Carolina, Composed of Young Men and Others. (1819) Charleston, S.C.99

Savannah Missionary Society. (1819) Savannah, Georgia.100


Young Ladies' Missionary Society of Richmond and Manchester. (1819) Richmond, Va.102

Young Men's Missionary Society of Richmond. (1819) Richmond, Va.103

Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church. (1820) Columbia, S.C.104

Virginia Conference Missionary Society. (1820) Richmond, Va.105

Young Men's Missionary Society, Petersburg, Va. (1820) Petersburg, Va.106
Young Men's Missionary Society of South Carolina. (1820) Charleston, S.C. 107
Domestic Missionary Society of Wilmington. (1821) Wilmington, Del. 108
Missionary Society of the South Carolina Conference. (1821) South Carolina. 109
Presbyterian Missionary Society of North Carolina. (by 1821) North Carolina. 110
Protestant Episcopal Female Domestic Missionary Society (or, Ladies' Domestic Missionary Society). (1821) Charleston, S.C. 111
Young Men's Missionary Society of Savannah. (1821) Savannah, Ga. 112
Augusta Domestic Missionary Society. (1822) Augusta, Ga. 113
Juvenile Finleyan Missionary Mite Society of Baltimore. (1822) Baltimore, Md. 114
Missionary Society of the Diocese of Maryland. (1822) Maryland. 115
Richmond and Manchester Female Missionary Society. (1822) Richmond, Va. 116
Missionary Society of the Diocese of Delaware. (1823) Delaware. 117
Richmond Female Judson Society. (1823) Richmond, Va. 118
United Auxiliary Missionary Society. (1823) Richmond, Va. 119
Protestant Episcopal Society for the General Advancement of Christianity in the State of Georgia. (1823) Georgia. 120
Society for Inquiry upon the Subject of Missions. (1824) Virginia Seminary, Alexandria, Va. 121
Georgia Domestic Missionary Society. (1825) Mt. Zion, Ga. 122
Juvenile Missionary Society. (1825) Charleston, S.C. 123
South Carolina Domestic Missionary Society. (1825) Charleston Union Presbytery. 124
Charleston Society in Aid of Missions to the Heathen. (1826) Charleston, S.C. 125
Female Domestic Missionary Society of Charleston. (by 1826) Charleston, S.C. 126
Young Men's Missionary Society within the Bounds of the Concord Presbytery. (1826) Concord Presbytery, N.C. 127
Evangelical Lutheran Missionary Society of North-Carolina, and Adjacent States. (1828) North Carolina.128

Petersburg African Missionary Society. (by 1828) Petersburg, Va.129

Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Kentucky. (1829) Kentucky.130

Protestant Episcopal Missionary Society of the Diocese of Virginia. (1829) Kentucky.131

Lutheran Society for the Promotion of Religion in South-Carolina and Georgia (Society for Promoting of Religion in South-Carolina and Georgia according to the Forms of the Lutheran Church). (by 1829) Charleston, S.C.132

X. MORAL SOCIETIES

Society for the Reformation of Manners. (1705-6) Kent Co., Del.133

Society for Reformation of Manners, and Punishing Vice, Prophaneness and Immorality. (1763) Queen Anne's Co., Md.134

Moral Society. (c. 1817) Pendleton District, S.C.135


Moral and Literary Society of the Cherokee Nation. (Nov., 1824) Newtown.137

XI. MUTUAL AID SOCIETIES


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Fellowship Society. (1762) Charleston, S.C.143

Society for the Relief of the Widows and Orphans of the Clergy Of the Church of England in the Province of South Carolina. (1762) Charleston, S.C.144

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St. Patrick's Club. (1773-76) Charleston, S.C.146

German Society of Maryland. (1783) Baltimore, Md.147

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Corporation for the Relief of the Widows and Children of the Clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Maryland. (1785) Maryland.

Master Taylor's Society. (1786) Charleston, S.C.

Society for the Benefit of Decayed Pilots, Their Widows and Children. (1788) Philadelphia, Pa. (Included pilots of Cape Henlopen, Del.)

Society for the Relief of Elderly and Disabled Ministers, and the Widows and Orphans of the Clergy of the Independent or Congregational Church in the State of South Carolina. (1789) Charleston, S.C.

Presbytery of Charleston. (1790) Charleston, S.C.

Society for the Relief of Distressed Widows and Orphans of Clergymen of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the State of Virginia. (1792) Virginia.


Charleston Mechanic Society. (1794) Charleston, S.C.

Charitable Marine Society. (1797) Baltimore, Md.

Hibernian Society of Charleston, South Carolina. (1799) Charleston, S.C.

Society of St. George in Maryland. (1799) Baltimore, Md.

French Benevolent Society. (1780?) Charleston, S.C.

Benevolent Hibernian Society (became in 1818, Hibernian Society of Baltimore). (1803) Baltimore, Md.

St. Andrews Society. (1806) Baltimore, Md.

Fund for Special Relief. (South Carolina Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church). (1807) South Carolina Conference.

Hibernian Society. (1812) Savannah, Ga.

Asbury Mite Society, for the Relief of Widows and Orphans of Methodist Ministers. (by 1819) Charleston, S.C.


Baltimore Society for the Encouragement of Industry. (1822) Baltimore, Md.

Benevolent Society. (1822) Wilmington, Del.

Union School Society of the South Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. (1822) South Carolina.

Benevolent Society of the United Brethren in Christ. (1822) Hagerstown, Md.
Petersburg Benevolent Mechanics Association. (1825) Petersburg, Va.171

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Methodist Preachers' Aid Society of Baltimore. (1827) Baltimore, Md.173

Society for the Relief of Aged and Infirm Ministers. (1828) Maryland.174

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Hebrew Orphan Asylum. (1801) Charleston, S.C.180

Savannah Female Asylum. (1801) Savannah, Ga.181

Female Orphan Society. (1804) Norfolk, Va.182

Petersburg Female Asylum. (1812) Petersburg, Va.183

Female Orphan Asylum Society of Fayetteville. (1813) Fayetteville, N.C.184

Female Humane Association. (1815) Richmond, Va.185

Washington Female Orphan Asylum Society. (became, 1828, the Washington City Orphan Asylum Society). (1815) Washington, D.C.186

Female Orphan Asylum of Georgetown. (1816) Georgetown, D.C.187

Female Charitable Society. (1819) Natchez, Miss.188

Augusta Female Orphan Asylum. (by 1823) Augusta, Ga.189

La Fayette Asylum for Poor Widows and Orphan Children. (1824) Wilmington, Del.190

St. Vincent Free School and Orphan Asylum. (1825) Washington, D.C.191

Ladies of the Sacred Heart Orphan School. (1827) St. Louis, Mo.192

Female Orphans' Society of Annapolis. (1830) Annapolis, Md.193
Oblates' Colored Boarding School. (c. 1830) Baltimore, Md. 194

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XIII. SOCIETIES FOR THE RELIEF AND PREVENTION OF POVERTY

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Baltimore Female Association for the Relief of Distressed Objects. 203

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Charitable Society of the City of Annapolis. (1811) Annapolis, Md. 206

Indian Town Society for the Promotion of Honesty and Industry. (dissolved 1812) Indian Town, S.C. 207

Female Benevolent Society of Georgetown. (1813) Georgetown, D.C. 208

Ladies Benevolent Society. (1813) Charleston, S.C. 209

Society for the Relief of the Poor. (1813-14) Wilmington, Del. 210

Charitable Society of Easton. (1814) Easton, Md. 211

Female Distributing Society for the Relief of the Poor. (1814) Wilmington, Del. 212

Resolute Beneficial Society. (c. 1815-20) Washington, D.C. 213

Society for the Relief of the Poor of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the City and Precincts of Baltimore. (Jan., 1815) Baltimore, Md. 214

Richmond Charitable Association of Young Men. (1817) Richmond, Va.

Sisters of Charity. (1817) Charleston, S.C.

Dorcas Society. (1818) Wilmington, Del.

Female Domestic Missionary Society. (1818) Charleston, S.C.

Juvenile Female Benevolent Society of Columbia. (1818) Columbia, S.C.

Female Hospitable Society. (Nov., 1819) Wilmington, Del.

Baltimore Economical Soup Society. (Nov., 1819) Baltimore, Md.

Washington Female Charitable Society. (going, 1819-20) Washington, D.C.

Society for the Encouragement of Industry. (1820) Charleston, S.C.

United Female Benevolent Society of North Carolina. (by 1820) Fayetteville, N.C.

Society for the Prevention of Pauperism in the City of Baltimore. (March, 1820) Baltimore, Md.

Female Benevolent Society. (1821-22) Newbern, N.C.


Soup Society. (1822) Washington, D.C.

Ladies' Society of Columbia, for the Female Poor, and Especially for the Relief of Poor Widows with Small Children. (1823) Columbia, S.C.

Female Benevolent Society. (before 1824) Raleigh, N.C.

Female Benevolent Society. (by 1824) Winchester, Va.

Female Charitable Society. (1824) St. Louis, Mo.

Female Charitable Association, for the Relief of the Sick Poor of Charleston Neck. (July, 1824) Charleston, S.C.

Female Charitable Society. (by 1824) Wilmington, Del.

Society for the Relief of the Indigent Sick. (1824) Baltimore, Md.

Howard Society. (Jan., 1825) Washington, D.C.

Charleston Benevolent Society. (1827) Charleston, S.C.

Female School of Industry. (1827) Washington, D.C.

Richmond Dorcas Society. (1827) Richmond, Va.

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Savannah Sabbath School Teachers' Society. (by 1822) Savannah, Georgia.\textsuperscript{268}

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Society for the Suppression of Intemperance, within the Bounds of the Orange Presbytery. (Oct., 1826) North Carolina.\textsuperscript{272}

South Carolina Anti-Intemperance Society (meet with Charleston Baptist Association). (1826) South Carolina.\textsuperscript{273}

Temperance Society of Wilmington. (1827) Wilmington, Del.\textsuperscript{274}

Georgia Temperance Society. (1828) Georgia.\textsuperscript{275}

Washington County Temperance Association. (1828) Washington Co., Md.\textsuperscript{276}

Baltimore Temperance Society. (Oct., 1829) Baltimore, Md.\textsuperscript{277}

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\textbf{XVII. SOCIETIES FOR DISTRIBUTING TRACTS AND RELIGIOUS LITERATURE}

The Society for Confirming and Extending the Interests of the Christian Religion in General, and of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Particular. (1807) Maryland (meet with the Annual Convention).\textsuperscript{280}

Virginia Religious Tract Society. (1812).\textsuperscript{281}

Protestant Episcopal Female Society of Baltimore, for the Dissemination of Religious Knowledge. (1815) Baltimore, Md.\textsuperscript{282}

Religious Tract Society of Charleston, South Carolina. (1815) Charleston, S.C.\textsuperscript{283}

Augusta Religious Tract Society. (1816) Augusta, Ga.\textsuperscript{284}
Common Prayer-Book And Tract Society of the Diocese of Virginia. (1816) (meet with the Annual Convention).

Female Tract Society at Raleigh, North Carolina. (1816) Raleigh, N.C.

Religious Tract Society of Baltimore. (1816) Baltimore, Md.

Baltimore Association of Friends, for Publishing and Distributing Tracts on Moral and Religious Subjects. (1817) Baltimore, Md.

Protestant Episcopal Female Tract Society of Baltimore. (1817) Baltimore, Md.


Maryland Prayer Book and Homily Society. (1818) Baltimore, Md.


East Tennessee Tract Society. (1819) Knoxville, Tenn.


Charleston Unitarian Book Society. (1821) Charleston, S.C.

Charleston Catholic Book Society. (1822) Charleston, S.C.

Protestant Episcopal Society, for the Promotion of Piety and Christian Knowledge, in North-Carolina. (1822).

Lexington Female Union Tract Society. (1823) Lexington, Ky.


Sun Tract Society of Wilmington. (1824) Wilmington, Del.

South Carolina Branch of the American Tract Society. (1825) Charleston, S.C.

Missouri and Illinois Tract Society. (1826) St. Louis, Mo.

Tract Society of Richmond. (1826) Richmond, Va.

Episcopal Bible, Prayer Book and Tract Society of South Carolina. (1827).

Protestant Episcopal Society for the Advancement of Christianity in Mississippi. (1827).

XVIII. MISCELLANEOUS SOCIETIES

Female Penitents Refuge Society. (1823) Baltimore, Md.  
Richmond Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews. (1823) Richmond, Va.  
Savannah Union for Promoting the Observance of the Sabbath. (1828) Savannah, Ga.
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1. The activities of all of the independent national societies are documented in regular annual reports (the 1st report, covering the first year of operations, was published in the second year of a society's existence, and so on) listed in the Shaw and Shoemaker imprint guides and library catalogues under the name of the society. The denominational societies were less regular in publishing reports in pamphlet form, but references are usually found in religious periodicals and in the records of Church judicial bodies. In addition to published Annual Reports, see: "Tract Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church," Wesleyan Journal, 1 (1825-26), 58; 2 (1826-27), 63; "Sunday School Union," in Matthew Simpson, ed., Cyclopaedia of Methodism (Phila., 1882), 840-41; "A Society," Southern Evangelical Intelligencer, 1 (1819-20), 294.


5. All of these antislavery societies are mentioned in the published reports of the American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery, conveniently photocopied and published in their entirety by Bergman Publishers: The American Convention for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery and Improving the Condition of the African Race (N.Y., 1969; 3 vols. covering 1794-1829). Unless otherwise noted, see the 8th Annual Report (1816), pp. 50-51, for the names, officers, and founding dates of these Bible societies.


8 "Eleventh Annual Report . . . ," The Missionary, 3 (1821-22), 49.

9 See regularly published Annual Reports and Bernard C. Steiner's One Hundred and Ten Years of Bible Society Work in Maryland, 1810-1920 (Baltimore, 1921).


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In the course of four years of research and travel to forty-four different university, historical society, and theological seminary libraries, the author consulted most of the source materials which exist for the study of organized benevolence in the Southern United States to 1830. Secondary works were identified by a systematic search of Writings in American History (and for the gaps, publication notices in the American Historical Review and the Journal of Southern History), dissertation guides, and specialized bibliographies. Early books and pamphlets were identified through a page-by-page search of the Evans and the Shaw and Shoemaker guides to early American imprints, and approximately ninety percent of those of possible value were located and consulted. Southern religious periodicals were identified in the bibliographies of Gaylord P. Albaugh (Presbyterian periodicals, 1752-1830) and Henry S. Stroupe (Religious press in the South Atlantic States to 1865) as well as the Union Catalogue and most of them read, cover to cover. Manuscripts were located through existing guides and through on-the-spot searching of collections in historical libraries. A particular effort was made to read the minutes of all of the regional Church judicial bodies (manuscript and printed) and many local church records as well. Local history records and state and municipal laws were consulted at the appropriate historical societies and public libraries.

Fortunately, there was a remarkable unity in the thinking and approach of the evangelical reformers. The sources used in this dissertation, the quotations presented, are representative of an even greater quantity of material which was not included, but they do faithfully represent the mentality which pervaded the reform society movement. Out of kindness to typist, readers, and author, the bibliography has been restricted to only those sources actually cited in the dissertation. For references to specific annual reports of societies, see Appendix B; for notices and essays in contemporary religious periodicals, see footnotes accompanying the text.

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