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THE ANTEBELLUM SOUTHERN EVANGELICAL AND STATE-SUPPORTED COLLEGES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

A Dissertation

Presented for the

Doctor of Education

Degree

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation will examine the development and evolution of the evangelical perspective on higher education from the end of the American Revolution until the beginning of the Civil War and the distinctive characteristics of the colleges founded by the evangelicals (Methodists, Baptists, and revival-Presbyterians) during this era in selected areas of the South. The geographical focus of the effort will concentrate in Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia.

In their attempt to defeat the forces of evil, win souls for the Lord, and spread their morality, the evangelicals designed their colleges in a unique manner. Evangelical higher education was more concerned with the production of the moral man than the learned man. Great care was taken to avoid the ever possible conflict between learning and morality--precautions most evangelicals believed had not been taken in the post-Revolutionary period and many contended were neglected in the secular colleges of the pre-Civil War nineteenth century. With the wave of evangelical college foundings of the 1830's and 1840's a miraculous fusion was achieved; knowledge and academic perspectives were inculcated and fitted into the metaphysical framework of a basically anti-intellectual, emotion-based religion. Such an incongruous combination was not arrived upon without much disagreement. The nature of that revealing debate, its origin, participants, and outcome will elicit significant attention in this study.

The dissertation will compare this new type of evangelical college education with selected public institutions of higher education of the period. Because of the evangelization of American society during the era, the distinction between the evangelical and the non-evangelical institutions tended to be blurred. While, therefore, many similarities did exist, this study will attempt to delineate those areas where the institutions differed. The question will be asked, did the religious dogma supporting the educational institutions make any difference in educational practice, and if so, specifically how did it. The basis for deciding this question of educational practice will revolve around curriculum, student behavior, faculty and administrative roles, goals, and attitudes, objectives of college supporters, religious instruction, teaching methodologies, political perspectives, methods of tuition payment, and other questions. For purpose of clarity East Tennessee University, representative of public institutions of the period, will be examined quite extensively, as will Emory and Henry College, representative of the evangelical institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

Prior to the 1960's the history of education was like an unwanted child. Shunned by a cadre of condescending professional historians and out of place in methodologically-oriented colleges of education, the field was without a home. Simplified for students and, too often, professors without an historical or socio-cultural background and taught to inspire prospective pedagogues with moving stories of the triumphs of the previous generations of American teachers, the field was viewed as a traditional but impractical portion of a teacher training curriculum. The common portrait of the American educational heritage was a schoolhouse standing alone, somehow remaining aloof from the social, cultural, political, economic, and religious currents molding and changing the nation which spawned it.

In 1960 professional historian Bernard Bailyn attacked the narrow focus of educational history, urging students of the topic to view education not only as "formal pedagogy but as the entire process by which a culture transmits itself across the generations."[1] Bailyn's observations were directed to his peers, professional historians, but were influential in educational circles as well. Educational historian Lawrence Cremin, influenced by Bailyn's book, attempted in a number of works in the early 1960's to interpret educational implications of the Bailyn thesis. In 1964 Cremin urged educators and educational historians to widen their

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[1]Bernard Bailyn, Education in the Forming of American Society (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1960).

focus in order to determine what educational agencies, both formal (schools) and informal (non-school), had contributed to the historical formation of the American character. Cremin exhorted his colleagues to examine the relationships between the schools, the informal educational agencies, and the culture which gave them life. Educational historians should play an important role, he argued, in formulating and influencing educational policy. If their voice is to be valuable, however, the historians must avoid the pitfalls of past policy makers who faltered because they equated education with schooling and viewed it in a social and cultural vacuum. In order to retain the integrity of educational history and underscore its value for those who choose teaching as a vocation, Cremin refined Bailyn's definition of education. For the educational historian, he contended, education should be viewed as the deliberato attempt to transmit culture from one generation to another. Given this definition the historian of education can concentrate his efforts to the study of the impact of formal education on society and conversely the effect of society on schooling.[2]

This dissertation emerged from this broader view of education. Religion is merely one of many social factors which has determined the essence of our formal agencies of education, but unfortunately it is an influence often neglected by educational historians. This study will question the impact of a specific form of religion, Protestant evangelicalism, on specific educational institutions, the evangelical colleges of

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[2]Lawrence Cremin, The Wonderful World of Ellwood Patterson Cubberly (New York, 1964); Lawrence Cremin, The Genius of American Education (New York, 1965); Lawrence Cremin, American Education: The Colonial Experience, 1607-1783 (New York, 1970).

the Old South. In order to clarify that influence, previous attempts of religious groups to educate at the college level will be studied, evangelical attitudes toward education will be examined in detail, and the evangelical college will be compared with the state-supported institution. The central question of the essay will be what difference did evangelical religion make on the educational practice of the schools in question. The question elicits no simple answer, for the evangelicals exerted such a dramatic impact on the culture in general that distinct differences between evangelical and non-evangelical institutions were clouded.

In order to understand evangelical and public higher education in the South during the ante-bellum period, one must be familiar with the social, cultural, and theological climate which nurtured the religious and secular colleges. Numerous secondary works contributed to an understanding of the development of that atmosphere--far too many to list each one specifically. A brief survey of the most influential must suffice. Invaluable in explaining the theological background were Paulus Scharpff, History of Evangelism, F. Ernest Stoeffler, The Rise of Evangelical Pietism, Sidney Mead, The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America, and extremely important in illustrating the connection between pre-Second Great Awakening religious thought and its impact on the unique religious expression of the nineteenth century was Arthur Wilford Nagler, Pietism and Methodism.

The social and cultural setting was best interpreted by Perry Miller, The Life of the Mind in America, Daniel Boorstin, The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson, Richard Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life, and Alexis De Tocqueville's timeless Democracy in America.

Best capturing the currents of educational thought which set the stage for the Southern colleges of the ante-bellum period were Richard Hofstadter and C. DeWitt Hardy, The Development and Scope of Higher Education in the United States, a surprisingly good chapter on the basis of educational thought in the ante-bellum period in Edward J. Power, A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States, and most importantly Howard Miller's excellent interpretation of American higher education in social and cultural perspective, The Revolutionary College: American Presbyterian Higher Education, 1707-1837.

Numerous books on specific institutions have been written in the last century. Many of these works, though there are important exceptions, have become valuable as primary sources because of their innocence relative to the underlying assumptions, the values, and the prejudices of the author as he views subjects with whom he closely identifies. The purpose of these authors, many of whom were not professional historians, was to pay an uncritical tribute to the educational efforts of a particular denomination or to celebrate the history of an institution. In their attempt to glorify their church or school, the authors provided invaluable insight into the character of those who supported certain types of colleges.

While much literature exists on the social, cultural, and theological setting for Southern higher education in the ante-bellum period and numerous books and articles have been written on the colleges themselves, relatively few attempts exist to examine the Southern evangelical and public colleges in a social and cultural context. Few students of the history of higher education have asked how educational policy was affected by evangelical doctrine. Little work has been undertaken to

determine the differences between the evangelical and state-supported college of the period. Historians have also neglected to examine the process by which evangelicals came to support institutions of higher learning or the revealing debates about the topic within their ranks. Only one historian has explicitly examined the relationship between the evangelical and public colleges of the era and that was Albea Godbold in The Church College of the Old South, written in 1944. Even Godbold's examination was cursory, as he neglected to take into account the impact of various historical themes and social factors influencing college policy. Neither did the author explore the implications of the college programs as a means to better understand the social and cultural subtleties of the period in question.

Treating various in-house denominational and institutional histories as primary sources granted significant knowledge of the goals, curricula, conflicts, student behavior, disciplinary practices, religious nature, and methods of instruction of many of the ante-bellum Southern Colleges. A method of testing generalizations derived from this survey was needed. Therefore, two detailed case studies were undertaken using East Tennessee University (The University of Tennessee after 1879) as an example of a secular school and Emory and Henry College as representative of an evangelical institution. Mindful of comparisons with other state and evangelical schools, documents in Special Collections of the University of Tennessee Library and the office of the university president and in the Holston Conference Archives of Emory and Henry College were utilized. Student and professorial diaries, minutes of faculties and boards of trustees, student publications, presidential speeches and reports, autobiographies of faculty members, student and faculty

correspondences, and college regulations and constitutions, found in the college collections were essential to the study. Stanley Folmsbee's Blount College and East Tennessee College and East Tennessee University 1840-1879 and George Stevenson's Increase in Excellence: A History of Emory and Henry College served as indispensible guides to some of the material available at The University of Tennessee and Emory and Henry College archives.

Other primary sources were employed in the study: diaries and autobiographies of ministers and educators of the period, religious publications, denominational records, local newspapers, church histories written at the time, correspondences of educational leaders, and other documents.

The body of the dissertation, not including this Introduction, is divided into six chapters. They are:

I. Evangelical Religion in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries. This chapter lays the foundation for the understanding of evangelical religion and those who embraced it during the period in question. The development of the evangelical perspective is examined and attention is given to the proselytical tools of the evangelicals which were so essential to its survival, dispersion, and tone. This information is essential to the understanding of the evangelicals' later educational goals and objectives.

II. State-Supported and Denominational Higher Education Before the Second Great Awakening. In order to better understand the evangelical perspective on higher education it must be viewed in its proper context. The history of higher education in America before 1783 was a history of church-directed colleges. Even those institutions which

called themselves "secular" could not, from a twentieth century perspective, support that claim in fact. A fundamental article of faith among the founders of the first institutions of higher education in America was the desire for the continuation of the Christian tradition in the New World. Other factors were extremely important, but in one way or another all motivations for college foundings eventually traced their origin to this desire for religious continuity. The first portion of this chapter discusses the religious uses of higher education in the era preceding this study and raises the question, how was the post-Second Great Awakening evangelical educational endeavor different from previous church-sponsored higher education.

III. The Debate: Evangelical Acceptance of Higher Education. The first portion of this chapter examines evangelical higher education in the unique period which fell between the end of the American Revolution in 1783 and the beginning of the Second Great Awakening in the late 1790's. Even the other-worldly evangelical sects were infected by the wave of post-Revolutionary optimism and excitement and, as a result, entered higher educational endeavor closely tied to the social and cultural trends of the era. With the coming of the Second Great Awakening the evangelicals severed their ties with many of the post-Revolutionary social currents and began to reexamine their commitment to higher education. To understand the ante-bellum evangelical perspective on higher education an examination of this volatile period immediately following the Revolution is necessary.

The ante-bellum wave of evangelical college foundings displayed a magnificent fusion--knowledge and academic perspectives were inculcated and fitted into the metaphysical framework of an often anti-intellectual

and always emotional religion. This fusion did not take place, however, without years of turmoil and conflict within the evangelical community.

The next section of this chapter studies the conflict within the evangelical community and the eventual victory of the friends of learning over the anti-intellectual elements of the movement. Anti-intellectualism has been a consistent current in the radical evangelical tradition. Education, it was believed, could detract from a preacher's ability to save souls. Early nineteenth century evangelical effort was often concentrated in the rural and thinly settled areas of America which were usually populated by less educated individuals. Educated ministers found little success with these people. Learned missionaries were ridiculed for their affected manners and their long, laborious sermons. Often they were not trusted, for it was claimed that education dulled the moral sensibilities. Intellectual pursuits tended to inhibit one's ability to distinguish the difference between right and wrong. Thus, by promoting an uneducated ministry the early evangelicals, in the eyes of the majority of their constituency, provided a greater spiritual service to the country than the more established sects.

In order for the evangelicals to accept the value of higher education and to assume a personal role in the promotion of such enterprise great changes had to take place. The last portion of this chapter deals with the societal changes which altered the evangelical perspective in education and the laborious efforts of evangelical educational promoters to win denominational approval of educational endeavor. They were forced to restrain their arguments from about 1795 to 1815 while a reaction to Enlightenment-based, post-Revolutionary educational efforts raged. Even when the intensity of the reaction to the skepticism of the post-war era

had subsided, those who favored evangelically-sponsored education would face great opposition.

In 1820 the disillusionment of the educational ventures of the post-Revolutionary period began to fade among the evangelicals and the public at large. Institutions of higher learning had retreated from their more idealistic goals and had returned to a more conservative curriculum. Efforts made to keep Enlightenment ideas out of the schools met with great success, as administrators kept a close eye on both their faculties and student bodies. The changes in higher education seemed to prove to many evangelicals that college training did not necessarily foster atheism. Many of their fears of college training relieved, the public and the evangelicals especially displayed a new interest in higher education by 1820. Once freed from the bonds of their fear, the evangelicals embraced higher education.

IV. Mutual Perceptions. The perceived differences between the two models of higher education often influenced actual educational practice. A good example is the case of social class differentiation between the schools. The public colleges, the evangelicals argued, were open mainly to the rich and well-to-do. One of the reasons friends of education argued that their evangelical sects should sponsor higher education was to extend learning opportunities to the common man.

The University of Georgia, the University of North Carolina, and the University of South Carolina were often used by the evangelicals as examples of colleges for rich boys. While the sons of the middle class and some poor boys did attend, it was the boys of the planters who were most conspicuous on campus and set a tone for outside perceptions of the school. Even the less than aristocratic East Tennessee University came

under evangelical attack. While the sons of the planter class did not attend the university, the evangelicals claimed that the public was supporting a school which catered to only the "privileged" members of Southern highlands society. In order to avoid the immorality of ostentation observable at the secular colleges, the evangelicals initiated programs of manual labor at most of their schools. Also, the evangelicals reasoned, manual labor programs, which allowed students to work at college farms in order to help pay tuition, would bring people to college who never before could afford it. The educators were quite saddened by the failure of the manual labor programs, for they had placed great faith in the system's ability to cultivate morality, erase the popular perception of the effeminate nature of higher education, and offer an alternative to the class-biased public institutions.

Other perceived differences between denominational and public colleges involved evangelical accusations of public college immorality and infidelity. The Methodists and Baptists expressed great fear that students sent to the public colleges might lose their religion. It was their opinion that many of the public colleges offered sanctuary for the atheistic holdovers from the post-Revolutionary period and, as a result, they often tried to remove these people from their college positions.

Evangelicals feared the effects of what they viewed as student immorality at the state schools. Students at the state universities were characterized as profligates who smoked, drank, cursed, swore, played cards, danced, kept game-cocks, and participated in other immoral practices. It was inconceivable to evangelical leaders how any Christian parent, knowing the practices of the secular students, could send their son to such an institution. Their intensity of feeling on the matter

contributed to their desire to expand their system of higher education and, in order to attract students away from the state colleges, to improve its quality.

Generally, the public universities were blessed with greater financial support and, as a result, possessed better facilities than their evangelical counterparts. This superiority of resources often translated as an assumed superiority of educational quality, as the public college supporters commonly looked condescendingly upon evangelical efforts in higher education. The evangelical colleges were often viewed as havens for the dogmatic and students were seen as sheltered from the intellectual diversity characteristic of the non-academic world and thus unprepared to deal with it.

V. Evangelical and Public Higher Education in Practice. The evangelicals evaluated their educational institutions on the basis of the religious fidelity of their students. The frequency of revivals and the number of souls finding salvation at them served as a barometer for measuring the success of the evangelical schools. Every emotion-based denominational college was overpowered by revivals at one time or another. Hundreds of students were saved and classes were sometimes dismissed for as long as two weeks when revival fires swept through campus. While the public colleges did experience revivals, one of the main differences between these schools and the evangelical colleges was the frequency of emotional religious outbursts and the attitude of the faculty and administration toward them. Revivals occurred far more often in the evangelical college because they were encouraged by the faculty. The college never did more to achieve its goals than when its staff

promoted the salvation of large numbers of students by encouraging a campus revival.

While this chapter examines the numerous differences involving religious zeal and student behavior that existed between the sectarian and the public colleges, the surprising degree of similarity between the two types of institutions will also be examined. While goals differed substantially, curricula remained virtually the same. Classical studies prevailed in both institutions, as students plodded through four years of Latin and Greek. Course descriptions were very similar as were training and methods of instruction. Few evangelical colleges offered any course in the Bible during the first half of the nineteenth century, choosing to provide religious training not through the formal curriculum but by the informal ministry of their pious faculties. The degree of similarity between the evangelical and secular colleges of the period was testimony to the power of the evangelical sects in all areas of American life. The evangelicals exerted such a powerful cultural impact that the distinctions between the two types of institutions was quite blurred, thus complicating the historian's attempt to uncover the peculiar contributions of the evangelical perspective to American colleges and universities. Higher education was one of a number of American institutions transformed by the power of emotional religion.

CHAPTER I

THE SETTING: THE EVOLUTION OF EVANGELICALISM IN AMERICA

The argument has often been made that evangelical religion is a peculiarly American phenomenon. While it may be true that evangelicalism has enjoyed far greater popularity in America than anywhere else, this does not mean that the movement was generated spontaneously in this country or peculiar only to American soil. This chapter will examine the development of the evangelical tradition in Europe and its American transplantation through the First Great Awakening and the emotional excitement of the Second Great Awakening. The effect of the evangelical influence was quite profound on the development of American customs and institutions. The power of the tradition has helped shape American politics, denominational history, folklore, values, and most important to this essay, education. It is in the social, cultural, and emotional climate produced by the most long-lived and intense expression of evangelicalism, the Second Great Awakening of the early nineteenth century, that the Southern colleges of the antebellum period were born and nurtured. An understanding of these educational institutions is impossible without an appreciation of the religious mentality which spawned most of them and contributed in various ways to the development of all colleges of the period.

This chapter will concern itself with expressions of evangelicalism and revivalism. Evangelicalism has been characterized by a belief

in the infallibility of the Scriptures, the sovereignty of God, the depravity of man, and the importance of the conversion experience. Evangelicals have also accepted the acquisition of salvation only through the grace of God, the value of preaching, the death of Jesus for our sins, the supremacy of faith in the attainment of salvation, and the ethical content of Christian living as presented in the New Testament. A persistent radical strain of the evangelical movement has often embraced an emotion-based, revival-oriented religion suspicious of formal creeds and rituals. This radical tradition has often fought with more conservative evangelicals over questions involving theological intellectualism and the acceptance of scientific learning.

Revivalism is a proselytical tool of evangelicalism. It is a means of evangelism or the spreading of the evangelical faith for the primary purpose of saving sinners from eternal damnation. Because of the evangelical sense of mission to the unsaved, revivalism has become invaluable to and inseparable from the evangelistic tradition. To illustrate the intimate connection between the two concepts, I have chosen to use the term evangelical revivalism to describe the theological tradition examined in this essay.[1]

For the first one hundred years of the American experience the transplanted religious sects from Europe remained virtually unmodified. It was only after a quarter of the eighteenth century had passed and a European "awakening" had begun that religion in America experienced

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[1]Paulus Scharpff, History of Evangelism (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1964), 3-4; Richard J. Coleman, Issues of Theological Warfare: Evangelicals and Liberals (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1972), 27-29; Donald G. Bloesch, The Evangelical Renaissance (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1973), 48-77; Richard Quebedeaux, The Worldly Evangelicals (San Francisco, 1978), 52-53.

substantial change. While this change may have been more intense and far more pervasive in America, it is important to view the phenomenon in its European historical context and in comparison with the concurrent evangelical movement on the continent. Understanding of the American experience can only be obscured when the American and European movements are viewed as separate entities.[2]

Forerunners of evangelical revivalism can be traced back to the Middle Ages. Peter Waldo of France, St. Francis of Assisi, Dominicus of Spain, Berthold von Regensburg, John Wycliffe of England, and Geert Groote of the Netherlands all preached and converted thousands of people in the twelfth through the fifteenth centuries. In fourteenth and fifteenth century Italy and Germany priests of repentance were common. These itinerants traveled the countryside seeking to change the evil ways of the masses. When affected by the emotionalism engendered by the revivalistic preachers, the assembled multitudes would cry out for mercy. In order to extract a concrete symbol for the inner change brought about by repentance, the medieval evangelists often collected such items as cards, musical instruments, chess games, and paintings of women and publicly burned them. The subsequent emotional outpouring possibly found its source as much in sadness for the loss of recreation as in the joy of repentance. While these priests did seek converts, their message was not as much for salvation as it was an appeal for moral atonement. Many years would pass and many theological changes would have to take place

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[2]William Warren Sweet, Revivalism in America (New York, 1944), 1.

before evangelists could call for an individual to determine his own spiritual fate.[3]

Another essential step in the evolution of evangelical revivalism was taken with Martin Luther and the beginnings of the Protestant Reformation. While he described himself as an evangelist, even Luther was quite different from American evangelicals of a later era. Nevertheless, it was Luther who set events in motion and prepared the setting in which later evangelicalism could function. He helped loosen the shackles imposed on the common man by the established church which served to remove an individual's choice of personal salvation. Before American evangelicalism could flourish, a belief in personal responsibility for one's own soul had to find widespread acceptance in the society.

In the first decades following Luther's reformation, the Anabaptists worked to create a new form of evangelicalism closer in concept to the modern variety. Even though they were subjected to horrible persecutions, the Anabaptists traveled all over Europe spreading their belief in the power of the Holy Spirit. This faith in the Holy Ghost combined with a reliance upon the Scriptures established the Anabaptists as an important link between Luther and modern evangelicalism. Thousands of the people were converted by the sect, as they changed the face of European Protestantism.[4]

Anabaptism was the culmination of the Reformation, and thus the fulfillment of Martin Luther's vision of the church. Through the conversion experience the Anabaptists hoped to bring together all the

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[3]Scharpff, History of Evangelism, 3-8.

[4]Ibid., 10-17.

believers from the decaying national churches into a true Christian church. The movement was very important to the establishment of the tradition of evangelical revivalism, for it contributed to the respectability of the evangelical desire to recreate without qualification the original New Testament church--the vision of Jesus and his Apostles.[5]

Another tradition quite similar to Anabaptism and at least as important an influence on modern evangelicalism was German Pietism. The attempt to produce an acceptable definition for Pietism has been extremely difficult, thus complicating the effort to distinguish the fine lines of theological distinction between Pietism and Anabaptism.[6] For centuries debates have taken place between theological scholars over the boundaries and nature of the Pietistic movement. The differences of opinion are attributable to the facts that no formal statement of doctrine was ever produced, the movement was markedly different as it

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[5]Harold S. Bender, "The Anabaptist Vision," The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision, ed. Guy F. Hershberger (Scottdale, Pennsylvania, 1957), 37.

[6]Anabaptism and Pietism both placed great emphasis on the conversion experience. Both groups accepted the need for each man to be born again and to be inwardly transformed by such a rebirth. Differences between these early evangelicals involved their view of the nature of God. The Anabaptists envisioned a strict Deity who ruled by fear, while the Pietists placed their faith in a more tranquil Supreme Being who valued blissful worship experiences. Another difference involved the role of the saved after the conversion experience. The Anabaptists believed that after rebirth the pilgrim embarked on a strenuous road of discipleship with the Kingdom of God as his final destination. The Pietists saw salvation as an experience which provided the freedom for the saved individual to enjoy his new life without fear of struggle or hardship. Ernst Crous, "Anabaptism, Pietism, Rationalism and German Mennonites," ibid., 240-41.

evolved from one era to another; and the multitude of vantage points from which writers have viewed the movement has precluded the possibility of a common definition.

The definition which would possibly elicit the least reaction from students of the movement regards Pietism as an experiential religion. It was a religion of the heart and not the head. Emotion and moral reform were emphasized at the same time intellectual consistency was neglected. Thus, Pietism like Anabaptism serves as a vital connection between the Medieval experiential (religion of personal experience) tradition and modern evangelicalism.[7]

Thus, three main European religious traditions converge to form the American evangelical heritage: Pietism of Germany, Anabaptism as expressed in evangelism of the German dissenting sects, and Wesleyan Methodism in England. Some scholars argue that these traditions are merely separate branches of one general, worldwide movement which has often been referred to simply as Pietism.[8] An examination of each tradition and its direct effect upon American institutions is in order.

Certainly, it is obvious that Pietism was extremely important in the evolution of the evangelical tradition. Philipp Jakob Spener of Frankfort is sometimes credited with the founding of the movement. The term, Pietist, was first employed in 1674 as a description of Spener and

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[7]Arthur Wilford Nagler, Pietism and Methodism (Nashville, 1918), 10-11; F. Ernest Stoeffler, The Rise of Evangelical Pietism (Leiden, Netherlands, 1971), 6-9.

[8]Charles Hartshorn Maxson, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1920), 1-41.

his followers.[9] The movement began with the establishment of change-oriented devotional societies within the Lutheran Church. Spener's reputation grew in Germany and soon he found himself in a sufficiently powerful position to dictate the appointment of Pietistic professors at the new University of Halle. In a short period of time Halle became the hub of Pietistic evangelicalism and helped disseminate its ideas throughout the countryside.[10]

By 1705 Spener was dead, and the leadership of the movement had been assumed by A. H. Franke. This activist established various educational institutions in Germany which further expanded the influence of the cause. Under Franke's direction the movement continued to serve as a powerful dissenting influence upon German Lutheranism.[11]

The student of Pietism and its influence on subsequent experiential religions must be careful not to overstate his case. The early Pietism of Spener, Franke, and their followers was not the sensational, emotional revivalism of a later era. While they laid a foundation for it, the early Pietists did not advocate a religion of emotional enjoyment. In general the Pietists were rational men with an evolving interest in the reformation of morals. The areas in which the

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[9]Some historians trace the founding of the movement back to the beginning of the seventeenth century and the preaching of John Arndt. This reformer emphasized a religion of the heart and not the head throughout early seventeenth century Germany. If he was not the first Pietist, he certainly effected a powerful influence on Spener and the direction of the movement. Stoeffler, The Rise of Evangelical Pietism, 202-05.

[10]Maxson, The Great Awakening, 3-4; F. Ernest Stoeffler, "Introduction," Continental Pietism and Early American Christianity, ed. F. Ernest Stoeffler (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1976), 8.

[11]Maxson, The Great Awakening, 4.

Pietists broke new ground was in their belief in the sanctity of the Bible and the methodology for utilizing it. Use of the Bible did not automatically guarantee the intervention of God. The Scriptures could only be applied and understood when the Holy Spirit worked through them.

Their most significant contribution was in the realm of doctrines rooted in personal experience. In this area the Pietists helped remove barriers to the emergence of future emotion-based religions. The concept of personal salvation, so important to the evangelical tradition, took on a new meaning to the Pietists. Repentance opened the door to salvation, and while the early Pietists did not find pain and anguish to be essential to the experience, they did not object to such feelings. As Pietism slowly evolved, the process of repentance assumed standard features and a new importance. During this phase of the search for salvation the seeker was vulnerable to extreme emotional states characterized by visions, spectacular revelations, and physical manifestations of the spirit. This was willed directly to the American evangelicals who exaggerated its intensity and made it the epicenter from which their system of beliefs emanated.[12]

There are two main roads by which this experimentalism found its way to America--one direct, the other by way of England. Doctrines embracing the important role of salvation had spread throughout Germany, and when large-scale German emigration to America began in the early eighteenth century, such religious thought was an intricate portion of the German cultural baggage. The German sectarian bodies were the most

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[12]Stoeffler, The Rise of Evangelical Pietism, 202-05; Nagler, Pietism and Methodism, 32-34; Sidney Mead, The Lively Experiment: The Shaping of Christianity in America (New York, 1963), 29.

included the Mennonites, the Schwenkfelders, the Dunkers or the German Baptist Brethren, and the Moravians--all descendants of the Anabaptists. The other avenue by which experimentalism reached America was through its profound influence on the English Methodists. The impact of Anabaptist and Pietist doctrines on Methodism, and Methodism's subsequent contributions to American evangelical revivalism will be examined later in this chapter.[13]

First, an analysis of the influence of the Pietistic and Anabaptist systems of thought as embodied in the theology of the German sectarian bodies is necessary. Beginning in 1683 and continuing on through the 1700's, various German religious sects emigrated to America. All of these groups, heavily influenced by experimentalism, embraced a religion characterized by frequent revivals. The theological expressions of the Mennonites, the earliest and largest group to emigrate, came very close to the beliefs and actions of those associated with America's First and Second Great Awakenings. In fact, it can be argued that the initial excitement of the First Great Awakening began with the Mennonite revivals in Pennsylvania during the early 1720's.[14]

When the influences of the other German sects are added to that of the Mennonites, the student of European influences on the American evangelical tradition can clearly see the impact of these groups. As the Schwenkfelders, the Dunkers, and the Moravians filtered into America between 1700 and 1740, the number of people exposed to revivals

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[13]Maxson, The Great Awakening, 4.

[14]Martin H. Schrag, "Impact of Pietism Upon the Mennonites in Early American Christianity," Continental Pietism, 74-121; Maxson, The Great Awakening, 4-10.

emphasizing emotional religion, the right of the common man to determine his own spiritual destiny, and other doctrines including such phenomena as love feasts, camp meetings, foot washing, and extreme manifestations of emotionalism, steadily increased. Gradually the institutionalization of evangelical revivalism in America moved closer to becoming reality.[15]

As previously mentioned, American religious organizations generally remained doctrinally unchanged for the first one hundred years of the American experience. The First Great Awakening must serve as the event which marks the beginning of the evangelical movement in America. The character and spirit of nineteenth and even twentieth century evangelicalism is easily recognized in the emotional and theological manifestations of the First Great Awakening. With this in mind, it is important to note that the influence of the Pietism and Anabaptism of the dissenting German sects set the stage and contributed to the effectuation of the First Great Awakening.

Building on the evangelical foundation laid by the German sects, the evangelists of the Dutch Reformed Church made a significant contribution to the coming of the Great Awakening and thus to evangelical revivalism. Theodore J. Frelinghuysen, an immigrant minister in the Dutch Reformed Church, was the originator of the revival within this sect. It has often been claimed, erroneously, that the Great Awakening began with Frelinghuysen's revival in 1726.[16] This cannot be accepted,

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[15]John R. Weinlick, "Moravianism in the American Colonies," Continental Pietism, 123-47; Maxson, The Great Awakening, 4-5.

[16]For a well documented discussion of Frelinghuysen's role in the Great Awakening see Henry Harmelink, "Another Look at Frelinghuysen and His 'Awakening'," Church History, XXXVII (December, 1968), 423-28.

for to view Frelinghuysen as the originator of the Awakening neglects the earlier revivalism of the German Pietists. Nevertheless, Frelinghuysen played an important role in moving America closer to the emotional ourpouring of the First Great Awakening.

Like other evangelicals of his time and especially those following him, Frelinghuysen's most important desire was to initiate conversion experiences within his congregations. Born in Germany near the Dutch border, Frelinghuysen saw himself as an evangelist early in his life and enjoyed a reputation as an evangelist until his death.[17] The fiery preacher consistently emphasized the need for an individual, emotion-based religious experience. In his sermons he chose his words to elicit such an occurrence. The following passage illustrates the manner in which Frelinghuysen exhorted his parishioners. Our familiarity with this type of harangue may illustrate the importance of Frelinghuysen for such rhetoric was used by generations of subsequent preachers and in a somewhat modified form by evangelical revivalists of our own day:

> Come hither, ye careless, at ease with sin, ye carnal and earthly minded, ye unchaste whoremongers, adulterers, ye proud, haughty men and women, ye devotees of pleasure, drunkards, gamblers, ye disobedient, ye wicked rejectors of the Gospel, ye hypocrites and dissemblers, how suppose ye it will go with you? The period of grace is concluded. All earthly satisfaction ceaseth. Your agonies and pains as to soul and body have no end, for ye shall be cast into that lake which burns with fire and brimstone, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth, where your worm dieth not and your fire is not quenched.....Be filled with terror, ye impure swine, adulterers and whoremongers, and consider that without true repentance, ye

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[17] Alan Heimert and Perry Miller (eds.), The Great Awakening: Documents Illustrating the Crisis and Its Consequences (Indianapolis, 1967), xxii; Edwin Scott Gaustad, The Great Awakening in New England (Gloucester, Massachusetts, 1965), 24; Sweet, Revivalism in America, 44-48.

> shall soon be with the impure devils; for I announce a fire hotter than that of Sodom and Gomorrah to all that burn in their lusts.[18]

Undoubtedly, Frelinghuysen played an important role in the Great Awakening. The revival fires fanned by the minister spread to other groups who carried religious excitement throughout the colonies. One group in particular was the Scots-Irish Presbyterians. Given a pulpit and financially supported by Frelinghuysen, Gilbert Tennent began his revivalistic work in America which spread throughout the Scots-Irish Presbyterian Church in the colonies. By way of the Scots-Irish the legacy of Tennent was carried from north to south and far out onto the frontier. Through the establishment of his Log College many preachers were trained in the evangelical tradition. Thus, the Scots-Irish revival was a significant part of the Great Awakening and the evangelizing of America.[19]

The role of the new Methodist Church and the Methodist revivalists in the Great Awakening and the institutionalization of evangelical revivalism in America is without parallel. Under the leadership of the Methodists the colonial religious community witnessed the consolidation of a number of European and original American evangelical influences. As the Methodists consolidated these various strains, they added their own unique touches to the quickening revival and fanned the fires of excitement in the colonies. In addition to this vitalization, the Methodists provided leadership for the movement and set up an intricate network through which the revival was institutionalized.

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[18] Abraham Messler, Memorial Sermons and Historical Notes as quoted in Sweet, Revivalism in America, 49.

[19] Maxson, The Great Awakening, 16-17, 21-25; Sweet, Revivalism in America, 49.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was deeply indebted to Pietism and Anabaptism for the foundations of his new religion. In his Journals Wesley made many references to the doctrines of Spener, Franke, and other important Pietists. He wrote at length of their influences upon his system of beliefs. Students of Methodism are not sure of the exact time Wesley read the works of the Pietists, but he was undoubtedly familiar with them before his conversion to Methodism. The similarities between Pietism and Methodism are numerous and have been recognized ever since the early development of Wesley's movement.[20]

One of the dissenting German sects, the Moravians, exerted a deep influence on Wesley which caused him to question his beliefs and led eventually to the birth of Methodism. On his way from England to Georgia to fill an Anglican pulpit, the young Wesley was faced with a rough, stormy journey on a small, precarious ship. Wesley found himself quite scared and afraid to face death. A group of Moravians on board, however, were without fear even during the most frightful moments. Their indifference to death impressed Wesley and convinced him that his Anglican theology was not enough--something was missing. The period following this event was one of great uncertainty for the minister, and in a short time Methodism was developed.[21]

The relationship of Methodism to the development of evangelicalism in America is quite complex. Methodism served as a popularizer of German experimentalism, as it borrowed many of its

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[20]Nagler, Pietism and Methodism, 142-48.

[21]Edward Langton, History of the Moravian Church (London, 1956), 98-99; William Warren Sweet, Methodism in American History (New York, 1933), 32-33.

doctrines from this source. It also served to integrate and inspire the various Pietistically-oriented sects at work in America during the 1720's and the 1730's. One personality in particular was responsible for this latter function of Methodism--George Whitefield.

Coming out of the English revival, Whitefield sailed to America in 1739. After his arrival America would never be the same, as congregations were electrified from New England to Georgia by this evangelist with the great voice and the consuming desire to save souls. Imbued with evangelical principles, Whitefield held open-air meetings throughout the colonies, attracting thousands of potential converts. Emotional response to Whitefield's preaching was intense and not restricted to one religious group, for Methodists as well as Anglicans, Quakers, Presbyterians, and German sects were emotionalized and re-emotionalized by the orator.[22]

While a firm foundation for Methodism in America was laid in the events leading up to the First Great Awakening, other groups and individuals carried the momentum of the movement. In every portion of the colonies, whether with the Dutch Reformed and Presbyterians in the middle colonies, the Congregationalists in New England, or the Anglicans in the South, the pietistic leaders of the Awakening fought direct battles with the established, traditional, authoritarian defenders of Protestant doctrine and policy. Jonathan Edwards, in New England Congregationalism, Gilbert Tennent, in the Pennsylvania Presbyterian churches, and men such as Samuel Davies, Devereux Jarratt, and Archibald McRoberts in Southern Presbyterian and Anglican constituencies, all

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[22]Maxson, The Great Awakening, 40-53, 57-61; Albert D. Belden, George Whitefield--The Awakener (Nashville, 1930), 239-51.

fought against anti-revivalistic forces. The "Old Lights" or traditional Protestants correctly assumed that the friends of the revival valued quantitative measurements of success (conversions) far more than orthodoxy of faith, fidelity to creed, or reverence to tradition. In the long run, the anti-revival forces reasoned, such attitudes could radically change the face of American Protestantism.[23]

While some members of all denominations fought the revivalistic fight, the Methodists and their rise to prominence in America are especially important to this paper. The denomination, outside of Whitefield who was only associated with the group, played little direct role in the First Great Awakening. The path cleared by the Awakening, however, enabled the Methodists to take a leading role in evangelical revivalism in America and to weave a distinct pattern on America's social fabric in the nineteenth century.

The Methodists actually began to make their influence felt just as the fires of the First Great Awakening began to die down in the mid-1750's after burning brightly for about fifteen years. Without the feeling for a religion of personal experience provided by the Pietistic Great Awakening, the Methodists would have had extreme difficulty in America. The genius of Methodism lay not in its message but in its organization. The sect was able to effect changes and become a dynamic social force in America not simply because it embraced a theology well tailored to the new nation, but because it made use of itinerant preachers who often ventured into virgin territory and lay personnel who

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[23]Clifton E. Olmstead, History of Religion in the United States (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1960), 155-74; Mead, The Lively Experiment, 27-31.

carried on the crusade when the overworked ordained preacher was absent.[24]

Many movements and theological themes emerged from the First Great Awakening of the mid-eighteenth century. The movement had focused theological attention on man and his salvation, but it had opened debate on a number of other questions. The Methodists and the revival factions of other groups could agree on the importance of salvation, but commonality escaped when the meanings of sin, atonement, divine decree, and free will were discussed. As the Methodists worked to make a place for themselves in the colonies and most other churches engaged in doctrinal polemic, an extremely important philosophical force was achieving widespread respectability. It is impossible to understand the development of nineteenth century evangelical revivalism without an examination of Enlightenment rationalism in latter eighteenth century America.[25]

Enlightenment rationalism found its theological expression in Deism. The Deists had been greatly influenced by such Enlightenment figures as Newton, Locke, Spinoza, Rousseau, and Descartes who had embraced universal natural law, the innate ethical capacity of man, and reason. This translated theologically to a greater suspicion of the supernatural in religion, greater emphasis on the primacy of man's reason, and a greater faith in man's ability to live a good and pious life without the guidance of religious doctrine. These ideas found

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[24]William A. Clebsch, From Sacred to Profane America: The Role of Religion in American History (New York, 1968), 32.

[25]Emory S. Bucke, (ed.), The History of American Methodism, I (New York, 1964), 74-110; Mead, The Lively Experiment, 38.

initial reception warmest in American colleges and from this base filtered into American society at large.[26]

The Deistic doctrine, which declared God's manifest presence in nature and man's basic goodness, appealed to a great number of colonial Americans. These same people also found the spiritually and intellectually liberating qualities of Deism quite attractive. Thousands of Americans escaped parochial constraints by their association with Deism. Often embraced by intellectuals and anti-revivalists, the Deists could often substitute reason for religious enthusiasm. Since the foundation of the revival transcended reason, the children of the Enlightenment were often at odds with the evangelicals. This antagonism triggered a series of reactions which exerted and possibly still exert an influence on the meaning of the religious and intellectual life of Americans.[27]

There were many reasons for the antagonism between the rationalists and the evangelicals. First there was a difference of social class, especially during the pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary era. The rationalists were likely to be men of breeding and wealth with a cultivated sense of "noblesse oblige." Through their formal education they often displayed a concern, perceived by the "middling sort" as quite impractical and peculiar, for various intellectual issues. These men of birth were often guilty of great condescension toward their

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[26]Daniel Boorstin, The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson (Boston, 1948), 151-66; Daniel Boorstin, The Americans: The Colonial Experience (New York, 1958), 152-63.

[27]G. Adolph Koch, Republican Religion: The American Revolution and the Cult of Reason (New York, 1933), 14-27; Olmstead, History of Religion in the United States, 191.

socio-economic inferiors and felt no compulsion to share their rational theology with the masses. The middle and lower classes, they contended, consisted of weak and ignorant individuals who required an emotional, retributive theology to constrain their predilection for vice. Obviously, religion was in a way a means of social control or, to use another metaphor, an opiate.[28]

To illustrate this aristocratic perspective the case of Thomas Paine is apropos. The greatest crime of Paine, in the eyes of the emotionally religious, was his rationalistic system of beliefs, which they zealously believed led to atheism. From the vantage point of the rational aristocrat the pamphleteer's greatest offense was the popularization of his tenets, thus betraying his class and threatening the stability of the social order. Evangelicals feared and hated this child of the Enlightenment and villified him for decades, because he carried his heretical and pernicious doctrines to the people.[29] The rationalists resented him for spreading a system of beliefs which threatened the permanence of their privileged position.[30]

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[28]Thomas C. Hall, The Religious Background of American Culture (Boston, 1930), 172.

[29]Samuel Gaillard Stoney, "The Autobiography of William John Grayson," South Carolina Historical and Genealogical Magazine, XLIX (April, 1948), 89; James Gallaher, The Western Sketch Book (Boston, 1850), 29. An excellent introduction to those beliefs of Paine which elicited decades of condemnation from the evangelicals can be found in Thomas Paine, Age of Reason: Being an Investigation of a True and Fabulous Theology (Boston, 1794); On the Methodistic response to Paine see Nathan Bangs, A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, II (New York, 1845), 21.

[30]Herbert M. Morais, Deism in Eighteenth Century America (New York, 1934), 13; Mead, The Lively Experiment, 44.

The theological differences between the rationalists and the evangelicals were more important than the sociological. The emotion-based theologians believed that truth was found only through revelation in the scriptures, while the children of the Enlightenment argued that through observation of nature human reason could reveal the God of creation. Even though the differences between the two groups were obvious and hostility lurked under the surface, it would take two major political events to bring the conflict into the open--the American and French Revolutions.

The American Revolution[31] exerted a profound if somewhat indirect effect on the development of evangelical revivalism in America. The Revolution imbued evangelical leaders with an initial sense of optimism and led them to view support for nationhood and evangelicalism as components of God's Kingdom on earth. The evangelicals envisioned a democratic nation founded on the principles of morality and piety as taught by the revivalists.[32] For a brief period during the war the evangelicals found themselves in alliance with the republican patriots. The Methodists were forced to play a somewhat minor role in this alliance because of the suspicion engendered by Wesley's pronouncements on the Revolution. In his "Calm Address to Our American Colonies," Wesley called upon the rebels to cease their tyranny and lay down their arms. Not surprisingly such advice gave Methodists a great deal of trouble, as

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[31]The direct impact of the American Revolution on higher education will be discussed in detail in Chapter II.

[32]Howard Miller, The Revolutionary College: American Presbyterian Higher Education, 1707-1837 (New York, 1976), 126, 154; Bucke, The History of American Methodism, I, 265-72; Philip Greven, The Protestant Temperament (New York, 1977), 354-55.

it subjected them to a significant amount of political persecution. Even with such attitudes held and expressed by their leaders, the majority of the denomination was supportive of the Revolution and was able to convince their republican brethren of Methodist support.[33]

The cadre of evangelicals looked forward to a great future. An evangelical republic, freed from the corruption of the ancient monarchical order, would be led by regenerated adherents to the gospel. Such a future was the fulfillment of America's destiny, revealed early in our national life by the successful pilgrimages of the religiously persecuted to our fertile soil. But independence in 1783 did not bring the virtuous republic so dear to the evangelicals. The trials of establishing constitutions and new vehicles of government in the various states in the immediate post-war period alerted a sizeable portion of the population to the painful steps involved in securing liberty and the quixotic illusion of creating an evangelical republic. The reality of self-government did not meet the religious dream, and as a result the evangelicals experienced great disillusionment.

As the saints looked around them, they began to see their former political allies, the rationalists, from a new vantage point. The evangelicals became convinced that there was a direct causal relationship between rationalism and atheism. With the advent of the French Revolution the cause-effect relationship became, in the eyes of the

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[33]G. Adolph Koch, Religion of the American Enlightenment (New York, 1968), 12; Philip Greven, The Protestant Temperament, 354; Bucke, History of American Methodism, I, 162-67; Gordon Wood, The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787 (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1969), 91-124.

evangelicals, extremely clear and sufficiently serious to evoke an unrelentless attack on the rationalistic villians.[34]

The fact that large numbers of American rationalists were unwilling to condemn the open hostility to religion of the French Revolutionaries prompted evangelical action. As the men of reason, inspired by the early stages of the French movement, began to publish large quantities of literature attacking churches as obstacles to progress, conservatives and especially evangelicals countered with literature of their own. The evangelicals took to the pulpit to condemn the Revolution and those supporting it for their atheistic inclinations. The saints strongly believed that if zealous measures to combat the movement were not initiated, America would be swept away by a "volcano" of French infidelity. They saw "proof" of their fears in the colleges, as Deism and sympathy for the Revolution were commonly expressed by students. Even the leader of the republican political faction, Thomas Jefferson, was a Francophile and, in evangelical eyes, held suspicious contentions concerning religion.[35]

Along with Thomas Paine, Jefferson became a target for evangelical harranges. The emotionally religious fought for decades and in isolated areas continue to fight some of the basic philosophical and

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[34]Greven, The Protestant Temperament, 358-61; William Warren Sweet, Religion in the Development of American Culture, 1765-1840 (New York, 1952), 53; Winthrope S. Hudson, Religion in America (New York, 1965), 131-32; Morais, Deism in Eighteenth Century America, 159.

[35]Hudson, Religion in America, 132; Charles Downer Hazen, Contemporary American Opinion of the French Revolution (Baltimore, 1897), 266-72; Martin E. Marty, Righteous Empire: The Protestant Experience in America (New York, 1970), 19, 42.

theological tenets which Jefferson and his intellectual progeny embraced and still espouse. Jefferson easily fit the classification of intellectual--vintage eighteenth century. He saw himself as a man of reason from the Age of Reason. Unlike some of his evangelized contemporaries, Jefferson claimed to contemplate theological matters with the same rational attitude he employed in his study of botany or geology. The framework for his rational outlook was forged during his stay at William and Mary College. Like so many other sons of the well-to-do of the pre-Revolutionary period, Jefferson was granted access to Enlightenment ideas at college. William Small, a mathematics and science professor, befriended the young scholar and introduced him to Governor Francis Fauquier and George Wythe. All three were religious "latitudinarians," and each played a significant role in the education of Jefferson. Governor Fauquier introduced Jefferson to Bolingbroke's Philosophical Works, which opened the eyes of the student to a religious world beyond the Anglican orthodoxy with which he was acquainted. From his study of Bolingbroke, Jefferson concluded that religious truth was revealed through the wonders of nature and the application of reason, not via the Bible. Such a belief was considered a serious heresy by the evangelicals, who, holding to the infallibility of the scriptures, saw the position as a danger to their basis for faith.[36]

Jefferson made frequent reference to the importance of free inquiry and reason in matters of religion. In his Notes on the State of Virginia Jefferson maintained that rational examination of religious

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[36]Henry Wilder Foote, The Religion of Thomas Jefferson (Boston, 1947), 11-12; Fred C. Luebke, "The Origins of Thomas Jefferson's Anti-Clericalism," Church History, XXXII (September, 1963), 344-45.

doctrines "will support the true religion by bringing false ones to their tribunal."[37] A few years later, in a letter to Peter Carr, a self-confident Jefferson urged his young nephew to make use of reason and question every religious opinion "even the existence of god." In a style representative of so many rationalists of this era, Jefferson asserted that if there was a Divinity He would approve of rational inquiry as to His existence. Jefferson pressured young Carr to read the Bible "as you would Livy or Tacitus." When the scriptures contradict the laws of nature he recommended the exercise of extreme caution. Jefferson admonished Carr not to be frightened by the possible conclusions presented by an inquiry of this nature. If it led to an atheistic position, Jefferson assured Carr that "you will find incitements to virtue in the comfort and pleasantness you feel in its exercise, and the love which it will procure you." If Carr found that a God did exist, he could rejoice in such knowledge and anticipate a blissful existence in a future state. The mere exercise of human reasoning, not the ethical benefits of the conclusion ultimately reached, warranted the merit of such an investigation for Jefferson.[38]

When they knew about them, the evangelicals reacted to such pronouncements vehemently. Because of the threat such doctrines presented to the evangelical cosmos, Jefferson the politician labored to keep his beliefs under cover. In the theological advice granted to his

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[37]Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, as found in Andrew A. Lipscomb and Albert Ellery Bergh (eds.), The Writings of Thomas Jefferson (Washington, 1903), II, 221. Hereafter referred to as LB.

[38]Jefferson to Peter Carr, August 10, 1787, Paul L. Ford (ed.), The Works of Thomas Jefferson (New York, 1905), V, 324-26. Hereafter referred to as Ford.

nephew, he had once again struck at the heart of evangelicalism. He had rejected faith--a concept central to a religion of the heart. Reason, the evangelicals agreed, could lead to atheism, and thus must be bridled. Unrestricted reason would become a target for evangelical attack in the first half of the nineteenth century, and Jefferson was the quintessential advocate of such blasphemy.

Given the conditions of the "secularization" produced by the American Revolution, the atheism of the French Revolution, the questioning and loss of faith engendered by the Enlightenment, and the perceived state of immorality running rampant in all sections of the country, the evangelical leadership perceived a state of crisis in the late 1790's.[39] The colleges were full of students bent on raising hell with faculties and praising the great Enlightenment thinkers. Denominational leaders reported decline in both church attendance and membership. The trans-Appalachian West had opened to settlement and churchmen were convinced that the pioneers, far removed from the civilizing qualities of Christianity, would revert to immorality and barbarism.[40]

The time had come for urgent evangelical action. The Methodists with their ingenious system of organization were ready. Although other denominations such as the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists

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[39]J. Manning Potts (ed.), The Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury (Nashville, 1958), journal entry for March 26, 1797, II, 125, and entry for October 13, 1800, II, 254.

[40]Hudson, Religion in America, 132-35; Olmstead, History of Religion in the United States, 257; Morais, Deism in Eighteenth Century America, 159; Sweet, Religion in the Development of American Culture, 93; Koch, Religion of the American Enlightenment, 242; Oliver Wendall Elsbree, The Rise of the Missionary Spirit in America, 1790-1815 (Williamsport, Pennsylvania, 1928), 26; Catherine C. Cleveland, The Great Revival in the West, 1797-1805 (Chicago, 1916), 8-9, 30-33.

were trying to counteract the irreligious influences, it was the Methodists who would emerge from the coming emotional upheaval as the leaders of evangelical revivalism in America. Seeing a Deist in every bed, secret atheistic conspirators ready to overthrow the government, and, more realistically, a simple religious malaise,[41] the Methodists along with other denominations designated the first Friday in March, 1796 "as a most solemn day of fasting, humiliation, prayer, and supplication." They went on to pray for a general revival that would "stop the growing infidelity of this age" and would call "out men who shall preach and live the gospel."[42]

The saints felt that their prayers had been answered; for within months of the "prayer-Friday" religious interest began to increase perceptibly. The United States was preparing to enter into the greatest revival of religion of modern history--the Second Great Awakening. The forces of reason would be defeated, and the people would turn away from the dangerous religious doctrines of the Paines and the Jeffersons. As the early nineteenth century historian of Methodism described the situation:

> Had those principles of infidelity with which the minds of many of the leading men of our nation had been infected, and which, at one time, were descending with fearful rapidity to the lower ranks of society, been permitted to operate unchecked by any other barrier than a mere lifeless form of Christianity, or those restraints which a secular and civil education might interpose, is there not reason to apprehend that such streams of moral and intellectual, as well as political pollution, would have poured their poisonous waters over the land, as must have washed our civil and religious institutions

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[41] Devereux Jarratt, The Life of the Reverend Devereux Jarratt (Baltimore, 1806), 128; John B. Boles, The Great Revival, 1787-1805 (Lexington, Kentucky, 1972), 12-15.

[42] Koch, Religion of the American Enlightenment, 276; Cleveland, The Great Revival, 32.

> into a whirlpool of destruction? . . . the labor of the itinerating Methodist preachers tended mightily to purify the corrupt mass of mind, and to awaken attention to spiritual and divine things, and to call off the attention of the people from mere secular and political affairs, to the momentous concerns of eternity.[43]

The nation and its soul were saved by the Methodist preachers on horseback. Pietism had found a home.

Out of adversity victory would emerge, so proclaimed religious leaders prior to the awakening. Years of pastoral and circular letters, sermons, and calls to repentance finally began to pay off, as revival fever began to sweep through the nation. It is impossible to designate exactly where the Second Great Awakening began, for it appeared in a number of places simultaneously. Methodist entry into New England in the early 1790's prepared that area for religious excitement, and numerous local awakenings took place prior to the more general excitement after 1800. Colleges such as Yale, Amherst, Dartmouth, and Williams experienced emotional revivals around 1790 and sent scores of revival-oriented Presbyterians into the South during the last decade of the century. These emotional, revival Presbyterians were joined in their labors by maybe the single most important figure of the Second Great Awakening, James McGready.[44]

Known as "Son of Thunder" to his parishioners in Orange County, North Carolina, McGready began to make his presence felt in the mid-1790's. Much of the population in the rough Carolina back country came

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[43] Bangs, A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I, 146.

[44] Olmstead, History of Religion in the United States, 256-57; Perry Miller, The Life of the Mind in America (New York, 1965), 5-7; Hudson, Religion in America, 134-35; Sidney Mead, The Nation With the Soul of a Church (New York, 1975), 122-23; Boles, The Great Revival, 32-33.

to resent his "pious" interference in their lives. McGready was unwilling to let the backwoodsmen enjoy their "sinful diversions" in peace. In 1797 he accepted an invitation to move to Logan County, Kentucky, where he was better accepted and much more successful in his efforts to stimulate religious enthusiasm.[45] By the summer of 1800 McGready's congregations were emotionally prepared to participate in a spiritual outburst which would affect American religious institutions indefinitely.[46]

On the third Sunday in June, 1800, McGready conducted services at his Red River congregation, one of a number of appointments for the traveling preacher. News of the emotional outpouring of this meeting spread across the country like wildfire.[47] Impressed by the results of the Red River service, McGready issued invitations to another meeting scheduled for the fourth week of July at another one of his congregations at Gasper River.[48] At this gathering, often referred to by historians as the original camp meeting, people congregated in unprecedented numbers. Families traveled hundreds of miles to observe or participate in the curious religious manifestations about which they had

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[45]John Opie, Jr., "James McGready: Theologian of Frontier Revivalism," Church History, XXXIV (December, 1965), 446; Cleveland, The Great Revival in the West, 37-39; Boles, The Great Revival, 52-57.

[46]James McGready, "A Short Narrative of the Revival of Religion in Logan County, State of Kentucky from May 1797 until September 1800," New York Missionary Magazine and Repository of Religious Intelligence, IV (1803), 151-52.

[47]Ibid., 154.

[48]Peter Cartwright, The Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, ed. W. P. Strickland (Freeport, New York, 1972), 36-37.

heard.[49] Peter Cartwright, a famous Methodist itinerant minister and successful camp meeting leader, described the spectacle:

> The Church would not hold the tenth part of the congregation. Accordingly, the officers of the church erected a stand in a contiguous shady grove, and prepared seats for a large congregation.
>
> The people crowded to this meeting from far and near. They came in large wagons, with victuals mostly prepared. The women slept in wagons, and the men under them. Many stayed on the ground night and day for a number of nights and days together.[50]

Even McGready was surprised by the overwhelming success of this meeting and never really realized the dramatic nationwide impact of the gathering. Scores of men, women, and children were "brought to Christ." Throughout the congregation former sinners lay on the ground screaming for redemption of their sins and shouting praises for their newfound religion. As McGready gazed over the camp ground he heard men crying out:

> I have been a sober professor; I have been a communicant; Oh! I have been deceived, I have no religion--Oh! I see that religion is a sensible thing . . . . Believe what the ministers tell you--religion is a sensible thing . . . . I feel the pains of hell in my soul and body![51]

The people who traveled many miles to witness the meeting carried great enthusiasm back home with them. One group of young laymen were so excited by the Gasper River services that they held an all night meeting the first day of their return to Sumner County, Tennessee.[52] The

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[49]James McGready, The Posthumous Works of the Reverend and Pious James McGready, ed. James Smith (Nashville, 1837), ix; B. W. McDonnold, History of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church (Nashville, 1899), 13.

[50]Cartwright, Autobiography, 37.

[51]McGready, "A Short Narrative of the Revival of Religion in Logan County," in New York Missionary Magazine, 193.

[52]Cleveland, The Great Revival in the West, 68.

evangelical successes in Kentucky intensified similar concerns in East Tennessee. Gideon Blackburn, a Presbyterian minister from Blount County, found that during the summer of 1800 the rekindled religious flame forced him to work harder than ever before to satisfy the spiritual needs of his parishioners.[53]

Religious awakening was not limited to Kentucky and Tennessee. Before the summer of 1800 had ended, the emotionalism of this initial phase of the Second Great Awakening had spread into North and South Carolina, western Virginia, western Pennsylvania, and the Old Northwest. Depressed by what they perceived as days of infidelity and religious apathy, the evangelicals saw these Kentucky meetings with stolons reaching throughout the young nation as proof of miraculous divine intervention.[54]

Excited by the extent and power of their revival, the evangelicals found their awakening to be an event with few parallels in religious history. It is with the beginning of this excitement that the Puritan era of American religious history ended and the Pietistic era began. The second period of revivalism was unique in that it was founded upon an informal Arminianism. Unlike Calvinism which emphasized a corps of predestined "elect" or people that would gain salvation, Arminianism stressed the infinite love of God for all sinful men. The doctrine formed the basis of the Methodist system of beliefs, provoked splits in

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[53] R. N. Price, Holston Methodism, I (Nashville, 1904), 337; Extract of a letter from the Reverend Gideon Blackburn, Blount County (Tennessee), September 29, 1800, in New York Missionary Magazine, II (1801), 238-39.

[54] Cleveland, The Great Revival in the West, 67-68; Boles, The Great Revival, 61; T. C. Anderson, Life of George Donnell (Nashville, 1858), 92-96.

all of the established churches, and motivated the formation of a number of new denominations. There were also some important social implications of Arminianism. If salvation could be obtained universally, then was it not the role of the church to extend to everyone the opportunity to accept it? While most revivalists rejected the worth of college-educated, theologically well-read preachers, the value of an education sufficient to enable one to read the Bible was placed at a high premium. Arminianism was certainly an important factor in the American acceptance of universal elementary education.[55]

The new revival was also different in that ministers of the Second Great Awakening provoked the emotions of the people. In the First Great Awakening, for example, Christians waited for the revival to come, in the words of Calvin Colton, "as men are wont to wait for showers of rain, without imagining that any duty was incumbent upon them as instruments."[56] Since the emotions had to be kindled, revivalists developed and perfected techniques to instigate excitement. Of these techniques the premier tool was the camp meeting.

James McGready not only helped to initiate and propagate the Second Great Awakening, but he was instrumental in using the camp meeting as a special proselytical tool to provoke religious excitement. By the

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[55]Mead, The Lively Experiment, 55; Robert Ellis Thompson, A History of Presbyterian Churches in the United States (New York, 1895), 34; Bucke, History of American Methodism, I, 356; Olmstead, History of Religion in the United States, 265; In a Methodist sermon delivered in Connecticut, a minister declared "What I insist upon, my brethren and sisters, is this: larnin isn't religion, and eddication don't give a man the power of the spirit. It is grace and gifts that furnish the real live coals from off the altar." S. G. Goodrich, Recollections of a Lifetime, or Men and Things I Have Seen, I (New York, 1857), 196.

[56]Calvin Colton, History and Character of American Revivals of Religion, as quoted in Hudson, Religion in America, 136.

summer of 1801 the emotions from the Gasper River meeting of a year earlier had yet to reach their zenith. From this camp meeting word had spread throughout American revivalistic communities concerning the power of the assemblages. Emotion-laden gatherings were held from Pennsylvania to South Carolina in 1800 and 1801, but one assemblage stands above all others in attendance and passionate expression. The Cane Ridge, Kentucky meeting from August 6 through August 12, 1801, established the camp meeting as a unique expression of American life.[57]

Differing estimates have been made of the number in attendance at this meeting planned by McGready and his associates, but no exact figure exists. It would be safe to conclude, however, that twelve to twenty-five thousand people were present during the six days the meeting continued. The assemblage was so large that many times during the week as many as seven different preachers were speaking at the same time to separate audiences.[58] As Reverend James B. Finley looked over the Cane Ridge multitudes, he saw that

> some of the people were singing, others praying, some crying for mercy in the most piteous accents, while others were shouting most vociferously. . . . At one time . . . at least five hundred were swept down in a moment, as if a battery of a thousand guns had been opened upon them . . . .[59]

As Marshall McLuan has observed about mass communications of the present era, the medium is the message. The same observation is

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[57]Charles A. Johnson, The Frontier Camp Meeting (Dallas, 1955) is the definitive work on the camp meeting and its social impact.

[58]James B. Finley, Autobiography of Rev. James B. Finley, ed. W. P. Strickland (Cincinnati, 1855), 166; Cartwright, Autobiography, 31.

[59]Finley, Autobiography, 166-67.

applicable to the camp meetings of the Second Great Awakening. The form in which the evangelical message was packaged often became more important than the message itself. The passion to save souls in the Methodist and other evangelical churches sometimes strangled the traditional passion for religious truth. As Henry Steele Commager has sagaciously observed, "During the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, religion prospered while theology went bankrupt."[60]

The Pietistic doctrine sold at the camp meeting was more appealing for what it ignored theologically than for what it upheld. It had a special attraction for the self-conscious American of the early national period. As opposed to the Calvinistic doctrines of predestination and election, camp meeting Pietism stressed the importance of the individual in attaining salvation. The emerging "common man" could appreciate a simplistic, action-oriented, emotionally-based religion far better than the more rational, intellectually complex Presbyterian theology. While Methodism increased its numbers all over the country, the growth of the Holston Conference, which included East Tennessee, Southwestern Virginia, and small parts of western North Carolina, northern Georgia, and northwestern South Carolina, illustrates the power of the camp meeting to increase church membership. Since ministerial success was gauged in quantitative terms, the gatherings became even more important to the denominational leadership. From 1792 to 1800 church membership increased by a mere 228. With introduction of the camp meeting into that area around 1801, Methodist churches

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[60]Mead, The Lively Experiment, 55; Henry Steele Commager, The American Mind, an Interpretation of American Thought and Character Since the 1880's (New Haven, 1950), 165.

experienced an increase of 2,058 members by 1808.[61] Other denominations in the area who made use of the forest encampments also found great prosperity. The revival-Presbyterians who refused to abandon the technique in spite of denominational orders obtained far more new members during the period than their more rationalistic brethren.[62]

The camp meeting promoter was far more concerned with the size of the crowds than with the substance of the programs, for success was measured quantitatively. The leaders of the assemblages displayed great psychological intuition in their understanding of the importance of large crowds. Many decades would pass before the emerging disciplines of sociology and psychology would attempt to explain the "crowd" phenomenon. Their analyses would be little more than a categorization of the fundamental knowledge that the leaders of the meetings possessed early in the nineteenth century.

The responses that a "crowd atmosphere" can produce are profound, and in no other circumstances will human behavior take on the same characteristics. The individual at the camp meeting was overwhelmed by mere numbers and, in the process, lost his rational view of the situation. In a partisan meeting of any kind, and especially in an intensely emotional gathering like a religious service, there is a tendency for the individual to repress his own feelings on various issues

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[61] Price, Holston Methodism, I, 364-65.

[62] J. W. M. Breazeale, Life As It Is; or Matters and Things in General (Knoxville, 1842), 247-50; Letter of Reverend Gideon Blackburn to a friend in Philadelphia, Maryville, Tennessee, January 20, 1804, quoted in Price, Holston Methodism, I, 351-52.

and to merge with the prevailing sentiment of the crowd regardless of how irrational the multitude's behavior may be.[63]

The effective crowd leader can be described as a sort of hypnotist, taking the spirit of the crowd and molding it to his will. He makes use of the crowd's close physical proximity but does not expect a desired emotional response immediately. The crowd atmosphere takes time to develop, and the longer a group remains together, the more intense its emotional response.[64]

Thus, the religious leaders made use of all possible tools to provoke an emotional response. Mere mention of the hereafter of God's eternal punishment served to arouse the interest of the assemblage. Unique and vivid descriptions of the nature of this future punishment often stirred an audience to an emotional frenzy. An individual, extremely frightened by visual images of the terrible suffering of hell-fire, was a promising candidate for conversion. Since the purpose of the camp meeting was to convert as many sinners as possible, the frightening descriptions of hell became a refined art among the evangelists. If a camp meeting leader could scare the sinner, conversion was just around the corner.

Various ministers achieved notoriety with their descriptions of the suffering of hell. William S. Manson, a camp meeting leader in East Tennessee, was known throughout the region for his expertise in this area. One writer, recalling his memories of several Methodist preachers,

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[63]W. J. H. Sprott, Social Psychology (London, 1952), 57-69; Gustave Le Bon, The Crowd (Dunwoody, Georgia, 1968), 95-97; Frederick Davenport, Primitive Traits in Religious Revivals (New York, 1905), 25-27.

[64]Edward A. Ross, Social Psychology (New York, 1920), 49.

described Manson in the following manner:

> His great forte . . . was the camp-meeting, where he was generally put forward in a crisis to preach or exhort. Upon such occasions he would dwell largely upon the terrors of the law, and what with his fierce denunciations of sin and delineations of its God-provoking and soul-destroying character, the awful picture he gave of its fearful retributions, in his strong, clear voice, and with his animated manner, the effect upon his vast audiences was startling. I recollect one occasion at a camp meeting, when at the conclusion of such an exhortation at night, the mass of people actually seemed affrightened, and rushed to the altar, as for safety, until it was filled, and then they crowded around in great numbers, screaming and pleading for mercy.[65]

Within a few years the camp meeting was a familiar sight in all parts of America. In practically every region the evangelists elicited an extreme emotional response and swelled their increased numbers by using the assemblages. With natural ups and downs in popularity, the gatherings would enjoy importance and vitality for about the first three decades of the nineteenth century. Significantly, however, as the institution persisted it lost a dimension of spontaneity and developed a stagnate predictability. Virtually every aspect of the meeting came to be planned in advance, and the leaders developed a catalogue of techniques for the elicitation of desired responses. This growing formalization was a major factor in the decline of the institution in the last seventy years of the nineteenth century.

America had become, by way of the camp meeting and the revival, an evangelical society. Almost every thread of the social fabric was touched by the evangelical mentality. With the extension of voting rights in the 1820's and 1830's the common man achieved a new status in American politics. Like the religious leaders who stressed the

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[65]W. Garrett, "Recollections of Methodism in East Tennessee" quoted in John B. M'Ferrin, History of Methodism in Tennessee, II (Nashville, 1869-1873), 507.

importance and worth of the common man, politicians now began to court and flatter these neglected members of society. Evangelical camp meeting techniques were custom-made for the new American politician of the Jacksonian period. Copying the mold of the religious assemblage, the political leaders of the 1830's and 1840's devised the political camp meeting complete with much of the provoked emotionalism of its religious model.

Not only has the evangelical revivalistic tradition helped to mold American theology and politics, but, most important to this dissertation, it has played a significant role in the development of American education. The camp meeting not only succeeded in dispersing evangelical religion to every corner of America, but it also fostered a mentality adopted by many Americans. The camp meeting's paucity of intellectual or doctrinal questioning spilled over into society at large and, of course, into American education. Certain beliefs were beyond discussion in most American classrooms--college, secondary, or elementary. Enlightenment figures such as Franklin, Jefferson, or Doctor Rush would have felt quite out of place in post-Second Great Awakening, evangelized America. Their emphasis on discussion, questioning, and reason would not have fit the spirit of the evangelical age. As Alexis De Tocqueville observed in the 1830's:

> Christianity has . . . retained a strong hold on the public mind in America; and I would more particularly remark that its sway is not only that of a philosophical doctrine which has been adopted upon inquiry, but of a religion which is believed without discussion. In the United States, Christian sects are infinitely diversified and perpetually modified; but Christianity itself is an established and irresistible fact, which no one undertakes either to attack or to defend. The Americans, having admitted the principle doctrines of the Christian religion without inquiry, are obliged to accept in like manner a great number of moral truths originating in it and connected with it. Hence the activity of individual analysis is

> restrained within narrow limits, and many of the most important human opinions are removed from its influence.[66]

It really did not matter then what political party one joined, what church one frequented, in what section of the country one lived, or whether the college one attended was supported by the state or by the evangelicals themselves; every segment of American society from the Second Great Awakening to at least the Civil War was influenced to some degree by the evangelized climate. While the degree most definitely differed, the power of the proselytical tools utilized by religious leaders blurred the distinction between evangelical and non-evangelical.

Thus, the social and cultural basis of America has been in large part formed by the evangelical revivalistic tradition. To understand any American institution of the nineteenth century one must understand this religious theme. Experiential religion is as old as Christianity itself, but due to a multitude of inhibiting factors it never reached fruition until it sunk its roots in American soil. Borrowing from the medieval emotion-based theological positions, the tenets of the Reformation, the profound impact of German Pietism, and carried hither and yon by the ingenious Methodist popularizers, American evangelicalism flourished and shaped a new society. The growth proceeded at such a fantastic rate that many Americans saw the movement as a uniquely American phenomenon, independent of forerunners and a foreign tradition. Though the self-conscious patriots of the young nation could not see it, the evangelical movement subtly tied America and her institutions to an extensive Old World heritage.

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[66]Alexis De Tocqueville, Democracy in America, II (New York, 1945), 6-7.

The stage, therefore, was set for the expansion of higher education in the nineteenth century. Coming off of such a dramatic and emotional event as the Second Great Awakening, it would take the evangelicals a couple of decades to agree as to the nature and purpose of their educational enterprise. Once they reconciled evangelicalism and education in the 1820's, the revivalistic sects, led by the Methodists, would initiate a series of college foundings unequaled before or since that period. Before that era of college foundings is examined, it is important to distinguish the differences between pre-Second Great Awakening and post-Second Great Awakening higher education, so as to place in clearer perspective the impact of the ubiquitous Pietism of the antebellum period on college education.

CHAPTER II

STATE-SUPPORTED AND DENOMINATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION BEFORE THE SECOND GREAT AWAKENING

To write about higher education before 1800 in America is to write about denominational colleges, for American schools of the colonial, revolutionary, and early national period were almost the exclusive province of the churches. Even before the Second Great Awakening had evangelized the society, theological interests had dominated college learning and had used the institutions for specific religious purposes. Even those schools which called themselves secular could not, from the perspective of the twentieth century, support that claim. The most important objective of the founders of the first institutions of higher education in America was for the continuation of the Christian tradition in the New World. Other factors were extremely important, but in one way or another most motivations for college foundings eventually traced their origin to this desire for religious continuity.

An examination of the aims of America's first colleges is quite relevant to this study, for it was the graduates of these schools who carried the idea of a college education, and the form it would take, to the rest of the country. Illustrative of the point is the fact that of the seventy-five colleges in operation before 1840, presidents of thirty-six of them were graduates of Yale, twenty-two were from Princeton, Dartmouth had nine, and eight had attended Harvard. In

Georgia Abraham Baldwin, a graduate of Yale, practically copied the charter of his alma mater for the University of Georgia, and as president of the new institution tried to make the Southern college as close a model of Yale as possible. A similar situation existed at the University of North Carolina where William R. Davie patterned his university after his alma mater, Princeton. It was, therefore, the founders of America's sectarian colleges of the colonial period who laid the foundation on which subsequent higher education, both denominational and state-supported, would rest.[1]

The first college to be founded on North American soil was Harvard in 1636. Early seventeenth century New England was a religion-based society, and any institution which emerged from such conditions could not escape its values and assumptions. Such was the case with Harvard. Though the founders' first and foremost stated reason for establishing a college may have been "to advance learning and perpetuate it to posterity," this motive must be viewed in its religious context. While the college may have been dedicated to learning, the ultimate value of learning was its role in the process of salvation. Since the early Massachusetts community was so uniformly Puritan, there was little debate over what constituted salvation. Without such homogeneity a college such as Harvard could not have existed, for there could never

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[1]George P. Schmidt, "Intellectual Crosscurrents in American Colleges," American Historical Review, XLII (October, 1936), 49; Evarts B. Greene, "A Puritan Counter-Reformation," Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society, XLII (1932), 39-41; George P. Schmidt, The Old Time College President (New York, 1930), 97; E. Merton Coulter, College Life in the Old South (New York, 1928), 6-7; Kemp P. Battle, History of the University of North Carolina, I (Raleigh, North Carolina, 1907), 98.

have been agreement on the fundamental aims of the school. This concept of like-mindedness is important to an understanding of sectarian and evangelical colleges in this country. Most college foundings before or after the Second Great Awakening required a group of zealous believers with a somewhat single-minded purpose for their institution of learning. The desire of the residents of early New England to build a "city on a hill" and the dream of the evangelicals of the nineteenth century to achieve worldwide salvation, provided the sense of mission needed for both eras of higher education. Thus, when the pronouncements of Harvard's founders are examined critically, learning was merely another means by which a specific Christian tradition would be perpetuated in the New World.[2]

Although some historians have argued that the early Harvard was a divinity school, many scholars accept Samuel Eliot Morison's contention that, while one of the main goals of the institution was to avoid leaving "an illiterate Ministry to the Churches," Harvard did not exist to produce ministers. The divinity school interpretation, Morison argued, oversimplifies and eclipses understanding of the institution's very complex social role. Almost one-half of Harvard's graduates in the seventeenth century did not choose clerical occupations, he contends, and cites countless examples of college administrators proclaiming the value of learning per se. The charter of 1650 never mentioned the

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[2]Richard Hofstadter and C. DeWitt Hardy, The Development and Scope of Higher Education in the United States (New York, 1952), 3, 5; Alexander Rippa, Education in a Free Society: An American History (New York, 1971), 77; Samuel Eliot Morison, The Founding of Harvard College (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1935), 247; John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy, Higher Education in Transition: An American History, 1636-1956 (New York, 1958), 9.

training of ministers and was content to view the purposes of Harvard College as "the advancement of all good literature artes and sciences" and the development of "all other necessary provisions that may conduce to the education of the English and Indian Youth of this country in knowledge and godliness."[3] The omnipresent fear of a reversion to barbarism by the new settlers must be considered when viewing the founding of Harvard. Men imbued with the classical knowledge of their forefathers would serve the "city on the hill" by standing as a wall between barbarism and civilization.[4]

Harvard, of course, was merely the first of a series of religious colleges founded in the early colonies. The charter of William and Mary established by Anglican clergymen in 1693 reads much like that of Harvard written forty-three years earlier. The Anglicans hoped the college would provide the church of Virginia with an ample supply of ministers and "that youth may be piously educated in good letters and manners, and that the Christian faith may be propagated amongst the Western Indians to the glory of Almighty God."[5] The third American college, Yale, continued this theme established by Harvard and William and Mary. Alarmed by the unorthodox brand of Congregationalism being taught at Harvard, Connecticut Congregationalists in 1701 founded an institution to combat

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[3]Samuel Eliot Morison, Three Centuries of Harvard (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1946), 22-23.

[4]Hofstadter and Hardy, Development and Scope of Higher Education, 3; Edward J. Power, A History of Catholic Higher Education in the United States (Milwaukee, 1958), 13; Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University (New York, 1962), 6.

[5]Edgar W. Knight, A Documentary History of Education in the South Before 1860, I (Chapel Hill, North Carolina, 1949), 401.

the heresy. In the words of a charter curiously similar to its rival, Yale was to be an institution where "youth may be instructed in the arts and sciences who through the blessings of Almighty God may be fitted for public employment both in Church and civil service."[6]

If the charters of the other colleges founded in the colonial era are examined, the same wordings and concerns appear and reappear. Princeton was founded by Presbyterians in 1746, Columbia in 1754 by Episcopalians, Brown by the Baptists ten years later, Rutgers in 1766 by the Dutch Reformed Church, and Dartmouth in 1769 by Congregationalists. If the era of college founding is extended from 1636 all the way to the Civil War, statistics indicate that of the 182 permanent colleges established during this era 175 were under religious control.[7]

The student of colonial higher education must be careful with use of the term "secular." The twentieth century connotation of the word is inapplicable to its use in the period under examination. From the modern perspective no college existed before 1800 which was free from denominational influences. An examination of the only secular university founded in the colonial period, the University of Pennsylvania in 1755, reveals that it was certainly not free from denominational influences. While there may have been differences between the secular and the

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[6]Franklin B. Dexler, Documentary History of Yale University (New Haven, 1916), 21.

[7]Hofstadter and Hardy, Development and Scope of Higher Education, 4; Donald Tewksbury, The Founding of American Colleges and Universities Before the Civil War (New York, 1932), 90; Joseph P. O'Grady, "Control of Church-Related Institutions of Higher Learning," Journal of Higher Education, XL (February, 1969), 108-11; Christian Gauss (ed.), The Teaching of Religion in American Higher Education (New York, 1951), 3; Beverly McAnear, "College Founding in the American Colonies, 1745-1775," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLII (June, 1955), 24.

religious university, they are difficult to catalogue. Minor changes of emphases in the curriculum resulted from the secular orientation. The University of Pennsylvania paid somewhat more attention to mathematics and physical and natural science than did its sectarian contemporaries. The vast portion, however, of the secular and the denominational college curricula were identical: Both institutions emphasized classical studies in the ancient languages and the traditional methods of inculcating such knowledge. Also, it can be argued that there was a more intense feeling of incipient Americanism in the secular school and that such ideas were better cultivated in a non-denominational atmosphere; but there were considerable nationalistic interests working simultaneously at the religious institutions.[8]

The definition of secular in the eighteenth century seemed to imply freedom from the control of one denomination rather than freedom from religious control. For decades Episcopals and Presbyterians fought for control of the University of Pennsylvania. By the requirement of law the board of trustees consisted of the leading clergymen of the principal denominations. By the end of the colonial period the board, in addition to the ubiquitous Episcopalians and Presbyterians, had chairs for two branches of Lutheranism and Roman Catholics. This was quite a change from 1756, when an Anglican priest had boasted of the overwhelming Anglican control of the board's twenty-four members. The clergyman went

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[8]Edward Potts Cheyney, History of the University of Pennsylvania, 1740-1940 (Philadelphia, 1940), 85, 115-17; Walter C. Bronson, History of Brown University, 1764-1914 (Providence, 1914), 64-65.

on to claim that every day the Anglicans became more and more influential in directing the affairs of the college.[9]

The life of the "secular" college revolved around religious concerns, as most of the college activities were couched in an Anglican framework. The college workday began and ended with prayers, students were required to learn the catechisms of the Church, and college functions and ceremonies were blessed by Episcopal church services. In fact, when one examines the occupations of the school's graduates, the percentage that entered the ministry is very similar to that of the denominational schools.[10]

The second secular college to be founded, the University of Georgia in 1785, also found itself in the throes of denominational struggles for control. While Pennsylvania was subjected to the power plays of the Anglicans and Presbyterians, Georgia saw Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Baptists fight a three-cornered battle for domination. In an institution which claimed to be free from religious influences, Georgia students were required to welcome dawn and watch the sun set with a prayer.[11]

Historians of higher education have not agreed upon the precise motivation for religious involvement in college formation. Very few would dispute the broad desire of the churches to perpetuate the

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[9]Cheyney, History of the University of Pennsylvania, 122-23, 130.

[10]Ibid., 130, 90.

[11]Robert P. Thompson, "Colleges in the Revolutionary South: The Shaping of a Tradition," History of Education Quarterly, X (Winter, 1970), 404-05; Power, History of Catholic Higher Education, 12; Coulter, College Life in the Old South, 61-62.

Christian tradition, but this answer does not satisfy the scholar searching for specific social and cultural themes in higher education. Accepting that all groups supported the perpetuation of the Christian tradition, four specific motivations emerge for the establishment of religious colleges: a missionary zeal to convert the heathen, a desire to extend learning and culture, a means to obtain social power and to exert social control, and a way to promote specific religious doctrines. The question is not which one of these factors was the reason for church-supported higher education; the point is that at one time or another all of these elements played a role in the process.

Leaders of all denominations saw their schools as missions and their teachers as missionaries. It would be foolish, Jonathan Edwards speculated, for the schools to neglect the opportunity presented for the "conversion" and development of the "vital piety" of their students. Edwards was not alone in his sentiments, as the frequent outbreaks of emotion-laden revivals at colonial colleges and the encouragement of such activity by the school administrators indicated.[12]

The founders of the institutions undoubtedly possessed a genuine respect for learning. The fathers of Harvard were concerned with the advancement of learning and the expansion of "the world's stock of knowledge." According to Samuel Eliot Morison, this desire to extend man's storehouse of information has been an element constantly present in Harvard's history.[13] Morison's critics would not contend that learning

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[12]Merle Curti, Social Ideas of American Educators (Patterson, New Jersey, 1959), 10-11.

[13]Morison, Three Centuries of Harvard, 23-24; Morison, Founding of Harvard College, 8.

was irrelevant to the founders of Harvard, just that he romanticized and thus exaggerated their devotion to it. Other factors, they argue, were more important to most colonial college leaders than learning, and Harvard was no exception. According to Charles Thwing, colonial society had little desire for secular knowledge. Harvard and all of the other colonial colleges were founded for religious purposes, not to advance learning. Referring to the Bay Colony, Thwing proclaimed "the glory of Plymouth is the glory of conscious not intellect."[14]

One of the most important factors influencing the formation of colleges was the desire to dominate the social and political life of the young colonies. An element of class bias existed in this situation, as upper class leaders found that their educational endeavors strengthened their established positions in society. In New England society those with sufficient social status to merit the title "Mister" were always ready to support the church-sponsored schools and colleges. A knowledge of laws and civic and moral duties, which was an everyday portion of church-related education, could be quite valuable to the rich and the powerful. The Christian college's inculcation of moral principles could make the restless lower classes more tractable, more industrious, and with Christianity's emphasis on the other worldly, more content with their place in society. Some college administrators were actually "colonial social reconstructionalists," as they envisioned the reform of society starting within the colleges. After the Great Awakening of

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[14]Tewksbury, Founding of American Colleges, 81; Charles F. Thwing, A History of Higher Education in America (New York, 1906, 3-8; Manning M. Pattillo, Jr., and Donald M. MacKenzie, Church-Sponsored Higher Education in the United States (Washington, D.C., 1966), 2.

the 1740's many members of the Presbyterian Church desired to begin the formation of their social utopia founded upon evangelical religion within the walls of their institutions for higher learning.[15]

At one time or another almost all of the colonial colleges attempted to promote sets of religious beliefs. When schisms developed within denominations, the ensuing scramble for power within the colleges was intense and quite revealing. The struggles illustrate the importance every sect placed upon the power of the college and the college-trained to mold and influence opinion in the colonies. In the conflicts initiated by the First Great Awakening, one can observe numerous examples of struggles to convert a college and thus society to one side or another. Princeton, founded in the middle of the excitement of the Great Awakening, unabashedly attempted to spread the convictions of the New Lights, who believed that in order to find salvation one had to experience an emotional conversion. While they allowed young men from every religious denomination to enter the college in hopes of converting them, the fathers kept a tight control on the board of trustees. Only New Light Presbyterians could occupy positions from which the policies and philosophical directions of the institution could be directed.[16]

Obviously, many factors motivated the churchmen to found their colleges. It is impossible to neatly determine the most important, for at various times and locations different motivations took precedence.

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[15]Curti, Social Ideas of American Educators, 6-9; Miller, The Revolutionary College, 60-69.

[16]Thomas Jefferson Wertenbaker, Princeton, 1746-1896 (Princeton, New Jersey, 1946), 17-19; Rudolph, The American College and University, 10-11.

Any student of Colonial America knows that the social and cultural climate of 1636 was quite different from that of the Revolutionary period. These changes in the Zeitgeist produced many variations in the nature and goals of higher education.

Richard Hofstadter argued that the dominant theme of American higher education is its unalterable and consistent drift toward secularism. In the latter seventeenth and especially in the early eighteenth centuries the society itself moved away from the theocracy envisioned by the early Puritans. Material comfort extracted from the earnings of a rising merchant class possessed great appeal to the once ascetic colonists. Thus, in the pursuit of riches the colonists tended to neglect spiritual concerns. Such moves toward secularism are exhibited in a number of ways. One of the most interesting means of ascertaining the changing mood is an examination of the concerns of the student literary societies. By the mid-eighteenth century debate topics in the societies had begun to include political and social themes in addition to the religious. For example, the typical topic had moved from "whether, by the sin of Adam his Posterity could be brought into a state worse than non-existence," to "Civil Liberty is necessary to give birth to the arts and sciences." Or from "whether by the death of Christ all Men are brought into a saluable estate? or whether all men can be saved," to "the non-importation agreement reflects a glory on the American merchants, and was a noble exertion of self-denial and public spirit."[17]

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[17]David Potter, Debating in the Colonial Chartered Colleges (New York, 1944), 44-45.

Such societal trends exerted an effect on the colleges. As the colonies became more secular, the colleges were forced to offer more practical courses to meet the needs of those students not attracted to the clergy. The secularization of society, however, had also an opposite effect on higher education. Sensing a loss of influence in the society, clerical leaders turned to denominational colleges, their bastions of power, to check the secular trend and to fortify the influence of the church. Thus, within the colleges of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries one sees, in addition to the secularization, a defensiveness which exhibited itself in a zeal to maintain the power of the church.[18]

Other movements within society had their effect on education. The impact of the Great Awakening and the European Enlightenment is quite complex and difficult to trace but very important in the evolution of higher education. The Great Awakening of the 1740's had a profound but uneven impact on all phases of American higher education. At Yale, for example, the revival was condemned as heresy. Conservative in their acceptance of a strict Calvinist theology, the leaders of Yale viewed the enthusiastic emotionalism of the revival as a threat to their power. Some of the leaders insinuated that ministers of the old Calvinist type were unneeded. A man blessed with the implied "free will" of the revivalists could determine his own spiritual destiny and interpret the Bible on his own terms without the aid of the Calvinist minister. As a result of this threat, students at Yale were forced to memorize the basic

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[18]Hofstadter and Hardy, The Development and Scope of Higher Education, 3-7; David Potter, Debating in the Colonial Chartered Colleges (New York, 1944), 44-45.

tenets of Calvinism. The faculty was instructed to shield students from any doctrines not conforming to basic Calvinism, and everyone employed by the college was required to publicly subscribe to the orthodox foundations of the faith. In some ways, therefore, the Awakening served to intensify the defensiveness of the colleges of the era.[19]

On the other hand, the Great Awakening stimulated a desire to found colleges in order to consolidate and extend the effect of the revival. For decades the evangelical groups coming out of the Great Awakening have been accused of an anti-intellectualism and a rejection of learning. Undoubtedly, there were elements of anti-intellectualism present. On the fringes of the movement there were those who rejected learning altogether, but they do not represent the mainstream. Most converts could separate their disdain for a scholarly, reason-based religion from a general rejection of schooling. Religion was an experience of the emotions; education was a function of reason and thus could not be judged by the same criteria.[20]

It is essential to remember the differences between the revivalism of the First and Second Great Awakenings. As discussed in the preceding chapter, many of the leaders of the First Great Awakening were innovative Calvinists who were unafraid of emotional outpourings. The nineteenth century awakening should not be confused with the first period of excitement, as it marked the end of Calvinistic domination of American popular theology and the beginning of the Pietistic era. The educational

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[19]Morison, Three Centuries of Harvard, 84-89.

[20]Maxson, The Great Awakening in the Middle Colonies, 95; C. C. Goen, Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-1800 (New Haven, 1962), 62-63, 175-76.

expressions of the two periods were quite different; the vast majority of the earlier emotionalists held no fear of higher learning, but the revivalists of the nineteenth century had numerous suspicions of educational institutions. It is important to note that the later-day evangelicals often saw education as an impediment to their goal of universal salvation.[21]

As a direct result of the enthusiasm engendered by the First Great Awakening a number of colleges were founded: Princeton by the revival-oriented (New Light) Presbyterians, Dartmouth by the evangelized Congregationalists, Brown by the proselytizing Baptists, Rutgers by the Dutch Reformed Church, and the University of Pennsylvania by the effect of the efforts of the great evangelist, George Whitefield.[22]

The First Great Awakening was not the only social and cultural movement to affect the course of American higher education. The European Enlightenment exercised a profound impact on the colleges, which manifested itself in numerous ways. Much of the history of American higher education, for example, immediately following the opening of the nineteenth century was a direct reaction to the Enlightenment and its effects.[23]

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[21]See the discussion of the First and Second Great Awakenings in the preceding chapter. Also, Mead, The Lively Experiment, 55; Thompson, A History of the Presbyterian Churches in the United States, 34; Olmstead, History of Religion in the United States, 265; Goodrich, Recollections of a Lifetime, I, 196; Hudson, Religion in America, 136.

[22]Sweet, Revivalism in America, 145-51; Maxson, The Great Awakening, 99-103; Cheyney, History of the University of Pennsylvania, 17-45; William H. S. Demarest, A History of Rutgers College, 1766-1924 (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1924), 1.

[23]Miller, The Revolutionary College, 260, 267, 272-73.

Around the middle of the eighteenth century Enlightenment ideas began to influence the colonial schools. The institutions had to come to grips with the movement's faith in reason. Often the emphasis on truth, science, and rationality were quite at odds with the prevailing spirit of the times. Truth, the philosophers claimed, could be discovered only by knowledge not by divine revelation. Thoughts like this did not enamor the leaders of institutions such as Yale, Princeton, and Brown.

As the Enlightenment became more established on the American scene, it began to be interpreted in a uniquely American way. There emerged from the ideas an appreciation of and a need for utility. The goal of education was not to produce refined and well-bred men, but to mold useful men who were capable of conquering obstacles to progress. The curricula of the colleges did not meet the standards of the Enlightenment philosophers--the study of classical languages was antithetical to their pragmatic spirit. In their desire for a useful as opposed to ornamental education, the thinkers called for profound curricular changes. During the last half of the eighteenth century, many of the colleges responded to their voices, as more and more "practical" courses were added to the curricula.[24]

Before the Enlightenment ideas affected American thought, the college curriculum was based upon the classics. The course of study was rigid and unyielding and rested on the assumption that there were certain facts that every educated man should know. The role of the teacher was to inculcate this essential information, and little attention was given

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[24]Boorstin, The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson, 135-36, 213-21, 244-46; Hofstadter and Hardy, The Development and Scope of Higher Education, 5.

to anything beyond this task. The man who mastered the classics was imbued with knowledge that would provide sufficient example to make him a pious individual.

The classical curriculum included a detailed examination of Greek and Latin and sometimes Hebrew, all of which were studied with constant attention to religious considerations. In addition to the languages, the student was required to take courses in mathematics and philosophy. The philosophical studies included knowledge of logic, physics, ethics, and politics. All of these branches of philosophy were examined for the specific purpose of moral cultivation.[25]

With the growing secularization of society and the influence of the Enlightenment, a change in curriculum began to take place in American colleges in the last half of the eighteenth century. The request for practical courses was heard in every American institution of higher learning. As American trade and commerce increased, American products, especially agricultural, forest, and fur commodities, became more and more popular. These economic changes further intensified the desire for practical offerings, as an increasing percentage of students entered business rather than clerical occupations.

The more practical curriculum of the latter eighteenth century involved the entry of law, government, modern history and languages, anatomy, medicine, and fine arts. At religiously-dominated Princeton the classical curricular proponents were shocked at the introduction of

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[25]Louis Franklin Snow, The College Curriculum in the United States (New York, 1907), 18-19, 31; R. Freeman Butts, The College Charts Its Course (New York, 1939), 48-49; Hofstadter and Hardy, The Development and Scope of Higher Education, 10-11.

courses in navigation, surveying, and scientific agriculture offered next to the standard studies of Greek and Latin. Princeton did not stand alone, for in every college there were changes in this direction.[26]

One of the most dramatic factors effecting these modifications was the advent of the Revolution. To endorse the Revolution and independent nationhood was to support the extension of education in general and the widening of the college curriculum. In the eyes of the Revolutionary leaders the success of the new country depended upon its educational institutions; thus higher education was more vulnerable than ever before to redesign and alteration.

Religious leaders of the turbulent period experienced great waves of optimistic idealism. Here was an opportunity to build a new society based on a citizenry blessed with a religious education. The new society would embody elements of freedom and political liberty as well as the morality and piety taught in the schools. Some Revolutionary leaders were so enthusiastic concerning the power of higher education that they advocated a mass building of colleges in every court town. In this way students could learn morality and patriotism in both a theoretical academic setting and a pragmatic courtroom environment.[27]

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[26]Butts, The College Charts Its Course, 59, 89; Boorstin, The Lost World of Thomas Jefferson, 217-20; Miller, The Revolutionary College, 180.

[27]Benjamin Rush, Essays, Literary, Moral and Philosophical (2nd ed.; Philadelphia, 1806), 6-20; Thomas Jefferson to Joseph Priestly, January 18, 1800, LB, IX, 95-99; Algo D. Henderson, Policies and Practices in Higher Education (New York, 1960), 85; Miller, The Revolutionary College, 179-80, 272; Allen Oscar Hansen, Liberalism and American Education (New York, 1926), 52-54.

The excitement of the Revolution also had other effects. Throughout society and among college students especially the social upheaval engendered feelings of uncertainty which contributed to an erosion of traditional respect for authority. Religious and educational leaders were shocked to learn that democratic enthusiasm and idealism were not accompanied by religious zeal. The dream of a social utopia based upon a democratic and religious citizenry did not fit with the spirit of the era. Instead of initiating a wave of religious enthusiasm the Revolution and the events surrounding it often created a mood sympathetic to religious skepticism.[28]

It would be easy to exaggerate the degree of skepticism in American colleges of the Revolutionary and post-Revolutionary period, but it is true that the number of students indifferent to the prevailing orthodoxy was higher than ever before. The French Revolution served to further the liberal tendencies set in motion by the American Revolution, so by the 1790's religious leaders felt that Deism, if not infidelity, had become institutionalized in their colleges. Students were knowledgeable of the writings of "infidels" such as Voltaire, Rousseau, and D'Alembert; and Thomas Paine was quite popular in most schools. Student behavior was a source of great consternation to college administrators, as rebellions, pranks, and rowdiness became widespread.[29]

In practically every college in existence at the time, a spirit of lawlessness pervaded a significant portion of the student body. From

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[28]Tewksbury, Founding of American Colleges, 60-61; Morison, Three Centuries of Harvard, 175-77.

[29]Curti, Social Ideas of American Educators, 13; Koch, Republican Religion, 14-27; Tewksbury, Founding of American Colleges, 60-61.

Dartmouth to North Carolina, students challenged the authority of the faculty in remarkably similar ways. As faculties recoiled from their post-Revolutionary idealistic positions, they attempted to restrain the liberal tendencies of the students. Such efforts usually exacerbated disciplinary problems, for students accustomed to some degree of intellectual freedom were quick to assert their independence.[30]

This is not to imply that there were few collegiate disturbances before the 1790's and early 1800's. Records of student misbehavior are available far back into the colonial period, but the zeal of rebellion was unmatched before the post-Revolutionary period. Many of the problems of the period were common irrational acts of violence, but a number of the episodes were perpetrated by students with a cause around which to rally--freedom, moral and intellectual, unencumbered by a reactionary, paternalistic faculty or administration.[31] This spirit of student liberty is well illustrated in a letter from Isaac A. Coles, a student at William and Mary, to a friend:

> The spirit of skepticism which so much prevailed and which every student acquired as soon as he touched the threshold of the college is certainly the first step towards knowledge; it puts the mind in a

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[30]Morais, Deism in the Eighteenth Century, 159-63; Lyman Beecher, The Autobiography of Lyman Beecher, edited by Barbara M. Cross, I (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1961), 27; Thwing, A History of Higher Education in America, 380-82; Frederick Chase, A History of Dartmouth College (Brattleboro, Vermont, 1928), 616-17; Winfield Scott, Memoirs of Lieut.-General Scott, I (New York, 1864), 8-10; Varnum L. Collins, President Witherspoon: A Biography, II (Princeton, New Jersey, 1925), 197-99.

[31]William H. Cowley, "History of Student Residential Housing," School and Society, XL (December, 1934), 709-10; Rudolph, American College and University, 38-39; Battle, History of the University of North Carolina, I, 200-01; Miller, The Revolutionary College, 262-63; Andrew P. Peabody, Harvard Reminiscences (Boston, 1888), 84-85; Morison, Three Centuries of Harvard, 185.

> proper state not only to receive, but to receive correctly. That it leads to Deism, atheism, and etc. I will acknowledge, but on the same grounds we may object to reason. Skepticism indeed only gives it the reins.[32]

William and Mary experienced its share of trouble during the period. "The dissipation here is intolerable," wrote a pupil, "I am disgusted with the irregularity of the students." The "irregularity" involved a student protest over the expulsion of two of their fellows for duelling--a practice quite common in the schools of the era. College business was halted, and many students withdrew from the institution during the winter of 1802 because of the arbitrary handling of the matter by the professors. Some of the boys vandalized college property and destroyed the belongings of school employees to express their disgust. A young lady friend of a student who had chosen to leave the college defended the boy's actions in a letter to his mother. It would be sagacious to leave, she argued, because "the conduct of some of the students has surpassed anything I ever heard of." The acts of violence were labeled "wicked and sacrilegious," and were of such depravity that, in the lady's opinion, withdrawal from college was the only honorable alternative.[33]

At Princeton a group of students with "Jacobinic and anti-religious principles," who, according to the faculty, made hostility to religion a foundation of their philosophy, broke into the Presbyterian

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[32]Isaac A. Coles to Henry St. George Tucker, July 20, 1799, as quoted in "Glimpses of Old College Life," William and Mary College Quarterly, VIII (January, 1900), 159.

[33]Thomas L. Preston to Andrew Reid, Jr., January 7, 1802, same to same, February 22, 1802; Miss Charlotte Balfour to Mrs. Whiting, February 23, 1802, all as quoted in "Glimpses of Old College Life," William and Mary College Quarterly, VIII (April, 1900), 216-17.

church, stole the Bible and burnt it. Students at the New Jersey college became opposed to the early morning chapel services. To protest the compulsory gatherings, the students joined together to make noise throughout their duration. The faculty called three of the culprits to the president's office and suspended them for their disruptions. The students felt that the penalty was too severe for such a trivial offense and let the faculty know their sentiments by organizing a riot in the dormitory. They fired pistols, crashed brickbats against the walls and doors, and threw rocks in the hallways. The disturbance continued intermittently for weeks.[34]

The University of North Carolina experienced similar disturbances. After a series of duels, mass intoxications, stabbings, and brawls, the Board of Trustees in 1805 adopted a set of severely strict laws for the students. The majority of the students refused to submit to the regulations and withdrew from college. Even when the code of administrative authority was repealed, most of the seceders refused to return to the college. For years the school floundered on the brink of failure because of the loss of financial support engendered by the student secessions.[35]

Students at Harvard filled with a spirit of liberty and determination of their own destiny initiated a number of "bread and butter rebellions." These disturbances revolved around student protest of unpleasant conditions on campus. In an 1805 rebellion half of the college was suspended for defying faculty authority. The suspension

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[34]Wertenbaker, Princeton, 136-37.

[35]Battle, History of the University of North Carolina, I, 197-219.

evoked a debate within the Massachusetts government between the Federalists who supported the dismissals and the Republicans who favored pardoning the offenders. The debate continued for years over the rights of the college students and their proper treatment.[36]

As in the other colleges of the period, students at Brown were caught with the spirit of rebellion. Many refused to attend the required "public worship" services, and those who did often behaved with "great indecency." Tutors had to be appointed to maintain order during church. Rebellions took place in the post-Revolutionary years that were practically indistinguishable from those at Harvard and Princeton. An uprising in 1800 elicited the following comments from one student:

> We have had shocking times such as Brown never experienced before. . . . No study! No prayers! Nothing but riot and confusion! No regard paid to superiors. Indeed, sir, the spirit of '75 was displayed in its brightest colors. . . . The Steward's inattention to his duty and the long enmity that has existed between him and the students became intolerable. . . . At length 13 of March, the memorable 13 of March--we inconsiderately carried headlong by passion framed an instrument which contained all the names of those who boarded in commons with this Declaration. We Solemnly Swear that we will not attend to any duties of the said College till the Steward is removed from his Office!!! . . . They were in the Chapel when the President came to beseech the Lord! They began to retire. He found it in vain to command.[37]

College faculties and administrations filled with the spirit of the Revolution had contended that college students would act virtuously if justice was granted fairly and rationally. When the students justified acts of violence and disruptive behavior in terms of liberty and republicanism, the college authorities found themselves in retreat.

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[36]Peabody, Harvard Reminiscences, 84-85; Morison, Three Centuries of Harvard, 211-13.

[37]Bronson, History of Brown University, 149-53.

Admitting their prior naivete, educators proclaimed that their religious republic had been dastardly changed to a licentious anarchy by the college students of the era. Cynical and disillusioned, the educators at the sectarian and state-supported institutions of the period vowed to make their colleges well-disciplined, well-ordered, moral communities. The Second Great Awakening could not have occurred at a more propitious time for men with such concerns. Religion granted administrators a new tool for control which, when used cleverly, would enhance their positions of authority.[38]

College presidents throughout the country began to turn to religion and budding religious interest to stem the tide of student disturbances. Religious tracts were passed out to students, skeptical discourses on religion were banned and condemned, and college administrators preached long, emotional sermons on the necessity of religion in daily life. No college president labored harder during the period to Christianize students than Timothy Dwight, president of Yale. Dwight aimed his energies at Deism and infidelity in an attempt to make skepticism disreputable at the Connecticut college. No college leader was quite as successful, as Yale students who had championed the Deistic cause began to form prayer societies in order to ensure salvation of their souls.[39] During his conviction (the struggle for his soul) a young college student at Yale, Lyman Beecher, found President Dwight a

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[38]Charles E. Cunningham, Timothy Dwight, 1752-1817: A Biography (New York, 1942), 123-25, 178-79, 218; Miller, The Revolutionary College, 261; Hansen, Liberalism and American Education, 206.

[39]Schmidt, The Old Time College President, 188-89; Morais, Deism in Eighteenth Century America, 159-63; Cunningham, Timothy Dwight, 258-59.

significant influence in his acceptance of Christianity. The following passage reveals the powerful imprint which the religious college leader was leaving on his students:

> "Well," I thought, "it's all over for me. I'm gone. There's no hope for such a sinner." Despair followed the inward revelation of what I had read, but never felt. I had never had any feeling of love to God, and all my affections were selfish and worldly.
> . . . . . .
> During all this struggle I had no guidance but the sermons of Dr. Dwight. When I heard him preach on "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved," a whole avalanche rolled down on my mind. I went home weeping every step.[40]

By the end of the first decade of the nineteenth century some colleges had made expedient use of religion and had reduced disturbances to some extent. Boyish pranks and wanton acts of violence and rebellion continued and would continue especially after the heat of the Second Great Awakening cooled until after the Civil War. Acts of ideological defiance or rebellions predicated on political doctrines did decrease due as much to the changing social climate in general as to the specific attempts of college leaders to utilize religion as preventative discipline.[41]

The college leaders also used a number of other methods to secure order in their institutions. Princeton hired guards to keep an eye on students during all campus gatherings. State-supported or sectarian, it mattered not, for at the University of North Carolina student monitors or spies were appointed to report misconduct. The student monitors could be chosen for the position without their consent and then be expelled if

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[40] Beecher, Autobiography, 28-29.

[41] Cunningham, Timothy Dwight, 258-59; Miller, The Revolutionary College, 261.

they did not fulfill their required duties. Each week the monitor was required to make a report specifically detailing all violations of the laws, all immorality, any indecent behavior by any student, and the names of any offenders. Any damage to university property was a major offense and merited the special attention of the monitor.[42]

Before any student could enter a college of the period, he was required to produce a certificate assuring officials of his good moral character. At Hampden-Sidney the professors could deny entry to any prospective student who did not assure to their "satisfaction" that he would submit to the college code. Another means of discipline which illustrates the ubiquitous concern with control was the policy of blacklisting. Names of expelled students from one institution would be sent to all other colleges in order to keep the troublemakers out of higher education.[43] At the University of North Carolina a blacklisting ordinance was passed in 1807, which read as follows:

1. Refusal to admit into the University of North Carolina any student expelled from any university or college, or who has deserted therefrom to avoid trial for offences.
2. Requiring of all applicants for admission a declaration that they have not been expelled and have not so deserted another institution.
3. That the names, ages, and residences of all such expelled students and deserters shall be transmitted to all other institutions and also recorded in the journals of the Faculty and of the Board. Similar lists transmitted from other institutions shall be recorded.[44]

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[42]Miller, The Revolutionary College, 268-69.

[43]Miller, The Revolutionary College, 268-69; Battle, History of the University of North Carolina, I, 204-05, 213-15.

[44]"An Ordinance to Prevent the Admission into the University of North Carolina of Improper Persons as Students," as quoted in Battle, History of the University of North Carolina, I, 215.

It was obvious, in the eyes of college educators and a sizeable portion of the public, that most of the student unrest and violence was a direct result of their exposure to the ideas of the Enlightenment and the resulting liberalized curricula of the latter portion of the eighteenth century. The association of moral breakdown with curriculum became quite pervasive throughout educational circles. As many students of the era have observed, the college educators and large segments of the religious community came to fear learning. More specifically, many of the leaders of the established institutions of higher education had come to fear unrestrained learning and the effects of liberty on education.

Noah Webster serves as an excellent example of the changes in society's perspective on education during the period. Before 1800 Webster was a staunch advocate of openminded investigation and various forms of experimentation. He was somewhat relativistic concerning morality and was quite critical of religion. He viewed education as a means of achieving a virtuous republic and accepted unquestioningly the ameliorative effect of college-evoked skepticism. During the 1790's, as is true with so many educational thinkers and innovators of the period, the violence of the French Revolution and the fervor of the religious revivals forced Webster to retrace his steps and retreat to the safety of a more conservative position. He had lost faith in the wisdom of popular councils and questioning dispositions. Education in a democracy, he finally concluded, must not be relativistic but must inculcate a body of absolute truths about democratic living. Education had become not a

means of liberation, but a means to control citizens from unbridled passions in a dangerous democratic state.[45]

As a result of such apprehensions, leaders of higher education called for an academic retreat. The conservative educators advocated a reemphasis of classical study and a rejection of new courses in the curriculum. The Revolutionary period of American higher education was over, and it would take almost a century before many of the innovations of the era would be reinstituted.

When the conservative reaction of educators to the social upheavals of the latter eighteenth century were combined with the effect of the rebirth of religious excitement of the Second Great Awakening, American higher education was prepared for serious changes. Indeed, educators had come to fear unrestrained learning, and the more radically evangelical the man, the more he feared such knowledge. In the minds of ever-increasing numbers of the emotionally religious, higher education had become associated with skepticism and infidelity. The debate over how the evangelicals could use college learning, if at all, for their goal of universal salvation would be debated for decades. That debate is the subject of the next chapter.

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[45]Hansen, Liberalism and American Education, 200-28.

CHAPTER III

THE DEBATE: EVANGELICAL ACCEPTANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

The radical evangelicals[1], who would initiate and perpetuate the Second Great Awakening, were infected as much as any other group by the wave of post-Revolutionary idealism. They too recognized the possibilities presented by a Christian and republican system of higher education. A virtuous republic was, in the eyes of the evangelical revivalists, a giant step toward the millenium, and they would do anything in their power to make it a reality.

Between 1784 and 1797 the Methodists with very limited resources labored to establish educational institutions of all kinds including colleges. In 1789 the church agreed to build a college in Georgia but failed because of insufficient funding. In the same year Kentucky Methodists established a college in that state, but a few years later the school was removed from Methodist control. Other impermanent colleges were founded, but the most important evangelical institution of the era was Cokesbury College. No college received more support or was as important to future evangelical endeavor. Cokesbury best

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[1]The radical evangelicals would include the Methodists, Baptists, and revival-Presbyterians. The Methodists were the most important radical evangelical sect during the era. The Baptists, along with the Methodists, helped initiate the Second Great Awakening, and the revival-Presbyterians emerged as a result of that movement.

illustrates the post-Revolutionary evangelical faith in education and, eventually, the loss of that faith.[2]

When Thomas Coke arrived from England in 1784 to assume the duty of bishop, he conferred with Bishop Francis Asbury about the establishment of a Methodist college. Asbury had been contemplating the founding of a Methodist school of some form for three or four years. In the tradition of the founder of Methodism, John Wesley, and consistent with the spirit of the times, the two leaders sought support for such an institution. The plans for the college were accepted at the famous Christmas Conference of 1784. The school was named for the first two bishops of American Methodism, Coke and Asbury; and immediately after the conference adjourned in early January, Coke set out to procure materials for the building of the college. By the spring of 1785 work on the college had begun, and after more than two years of construction the college opened with twenty-five students on December 6, 1787.[3]

The college was located at Abingdon, Maryland, on the shores of Chesapeake Bay. There was only one building on the campus and it was small, measuring 108 feet in length and 40 in width. The first floor was a large hall used for chapel, the second was divided into two

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[2]Sylvanus M. Duvall, The Methodist Episcopal Church and Education up to 1869 (New York, 1928), 27-30; Even the Baptists attempted to found a college in Virginia during this period. Robert Semple, History of the Rise and Progress of the Baptists in Virginia (Richmond, Virginia, 1810), 104, 113.

[3]A. W. Cummings, Early Schools of Methodism (New York, 1886), 21; Jesse Lee, A Short History of the Methodists (Baltimore, 1810), 108-09; Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I, 229; John Owen Gross, Cokesbury College, pamphlet (Nashville, 1947), 5-10.

classrooms, and the top floor consisted of bed chambers.[4] The original faculty consisted of three teachers, one of which was the president of the college, a Mr. Heath. John Wesley, a strong supporter of Heath, outlined in detail a plan for him that would make students critical scholars in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew in the shortest possible time. Much to the consternation of the Methodist leadership Heath did not utilize Wesley's curriculum and, as a result, was quickly terminated by Asbury for "inefficiency." The "inefficiency" apparently involved his ineptitude or lack of interest in teaching the classics.[5]

The Methodists founded Cokesbury for a number of reasons, but like Christians of previous periods one reason stood far above all others--the perpetuation of the founders' conception of true Christianity. "Our first object shall be," the Methodist evangelicals proclaimed, "to answer the design of Christian education, by forming the minds of youth, through divine aid, to wisdom and holiness."[6] Pragmatic concerns motivated the Methodists also, as the itinerant Methodist ministers sought to relieve their wives of the duty of raising boys whose fathers were often traveling by making provisions for their sons at Cokesbury. This concern was directly addressed in the original plan for the college submitted to the Methodist leadership.

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[4]James Edward Armstrong, History of the Old Baltimore Conference from the Planting of Methodism in 1773 to the Division of the Conference in 1857 (Baltimore, 1907), 89-91; Gross, Cokesbury College, 10.

[5]Gross, Cokesbury College, 10-11; Cummings, Early Schools of Methodism, 30.

[6]Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I, 230-33; Gerald O. McCulloch, "Cokesbury College, An Eighteenth Century Experimental Model," Methodist History, VII (July, 1969), 6.

> Yet one considerable difficulty lies on those that have boys, when they grow too big to be under their mother's direction. Having no father to govern and instruct them, they are exposed to a thousand temptations. To remedy this is one motive that induces us to lay before our friends the intent of the college, that these little ones may have all the instruction they are capable of, together with all things necessary for the body.[7]

The evangelicals were also moved by philanthropic concerns. Always near the top of the list of justifications for the existence of Cokesbury was the education and Christianizing of poor orphans. This objective was always emphasized when college leaders were soliciting for funds. The appeal of charity seemed consistently to strike a responsive chord with the Methodists of the period.[8]

Filled with the spirit of American nationalism, the founders of Cokesbury designed their college with a concern for strengthening the virtuous republic. Coke and Asbury even praised the genius of Locke and Rousseau, although not without qualifications concerning the philosophers' misguided systems of religion. Evangelical praise of these two heroes of American Revolutionaries was possible only during the brief post-war period. By the 1790's no such praise, qualified or not, was to be heard. The classical curriculum was the foundation of evangelical higher education, but the willingness to serve the new nation was sufficiently important to induce the incorporation of practical arts in Cokesbury's curriculum. Faithful to the classical tradition the college required Latin and Greek, but it added geography, natural

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[7]"Plan for Erecting a College," as quoted in Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I, 231.

[8]Asbury and Coke to the friends and members of the Methodist Church, January 3, 1785, III, 43-45, same to same, May 29, 1789, III, 72-73, both in Journal of Asbury; Lee, A Short History of the Methodists, 111.

philosophy and astronomy. The employments chosen for the recreation of students were for "the greatest public utility"--agriculture, woodworking and architecture. This policy was consistent with Cokesbury's more general goal of all time being spent in useful pursuits. "We prohibit play in the strongest terms," Asbury proclaimed, though he did not want to turn the "diversions" of agriculture, woodworking, and architecture into "drudgery or slavery but into pleasing recreations for the mind and body."[9]

In their attempt to contribute to the formation of the virtuous republic, the evangelicals were more concerned with virtue than with nationalism. Cokesbury, the Methodists argued, should be a haven, a retreat where young minds could be gradually formed "through divine blessing . . . to holiness and heavenly wisdom as well as human learning." Students would be shielded from the evil of society in this holy academic sanctuary. "All who shall be educated in our college will be kept at the utmost distance . . . from vice in general," and to guarantee such a policy the administrators formulated a regimen so structured that students had no free time. Students rose at five o'clock, prayers ended at seven, and all further activities of the day were supervised until nine o'clock in the evening when they were required to go to bed.[10] Even the admissions policy at Cokesbury was devised with the idea of the Christian retreat in mind:

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[9] Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I, 232; Gross, Cokesbury College, 28; Asbury and Coke, "An Address to the Annual Subscribers for the Support of Cokesbury College," May 18, 1787, Journal of Asbury, III, 56.

[10] McCulloch, "Cokesbury College," 6; Bangs, A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I, 233-35.

> . . . this is one principal reason why we do not admit students indiscriminately into our college. For we are persuaded that the promiscuous admission of all sorts of youth into a seminary of learning is pregnant with bad consequences. For are the students likely (suppose they possessed it) to retain much religion in a college where all that offer are admitted, however corrupted already in principle as well as practice? And what wonder, when (as to frequently it happens) the parents themselves have no more religion than their offspring?[11]

In the "Rules for the Economy of the College and Students," some interesting concerns were expressed. The college leaders in their desire for piety and an atmosphere free from sin granted the historian an unusually clear glimpse of the late eighteenth century evangelical moral outlook. The sexual fears of the saints presented themselves to view. Bathing, for example, seemed to offer a special opportunity for licentiousness. No student was allowed to bathe privately, as all bathes were to be "without doors." "A master, or some proper person by him appointed, shall always be present at the time of bathing," and the rules explicitly forbade more than one pupil in the bath at a time. No boy could stay in the bath for more than one minute and river bathing was strictly forbidden. Students were not allowed to sleep together, and no feather beds were permitted. Many proponents of purity in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries warned of the sensuality of the feather bed. Apparently fears of adolescent and post-adolescent homosexual experimentation and the threat of masturbation moved the college officials to deny the students any hint of privacy. Such constant supervision combined with an unrelenting and monotonous work schedule surely made life at Cokesbury quite unpleasant for the student.[12]

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[11]Asbury and Coke, "An Address to the Annual Subscribers for the Support of Cokesbury College," May 18, 1787, Journal of Asbury, III, 55.

[12]Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I, 237-39.

The strict rules and regulations were insufficient cause for those filled with the spirit of republicanism to deny support to the new college. Although institutions led by zealous republicans advocated more freedom and self-sufficiency for students, supporters of these institutions encouraged the work at Cokesbury. The college attracted the attention of Revolutionary leaders such as John Dickinson, often called the "Penman of the Revolution." He helped found republican-oriented Dickinson College, which was named for him, and was instrumental in the movement to utilize higher education as a vehicle for the promotion of the new republican social order. Dickinson understood the potential benefits for his cause offered by the entrance of the evangelical sects into higher education. The evangelicals, he thought, would teach American patriotism to a new audience prone to enthusiasm. Hoping to expose more people to the nationalistic fever through their missionary zeal, Dickinson offered aid to Cokesbury. Although his aims were more modest than those of Dickinson, evidence indicates that George Washington also contributed to Cokesbury. Washington, who was a friend and admirer of Asbury, was quite concerned with the instruction of strict morality as well as nationalism in the American college. Cokesbury's program was probably quite attractive to him.[13]

Undoubtedly, there was a split within the Methodist Church concerning education as early as the time of Cokesbury College. Asbury, himself, was not quite sure of the role of the church in higher

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[13]Asbury to John Dickinson, December 10, 1786, III, 47-48, Asbury and Coke, "An Address to the Annual Subscribers for the Support of Cokesbury College," May 18, 1787, III, 54-57, both in Journal of Asbury; Reginald C. McGrane, "George Washington: An Anglo-American Hero," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LXIII (January, 1955), 10.

education, though he supported the college with his labor during its existence. Still, the Bishop fretted throughout the short history of the school over whether or not he should give it his enthusiastic endorsement. Many of the Methodist ministers and laymen did not understand the mixed feelings of their leader and saw schooling in a very negative light. Asbury was frustrated by the attacks on evangelical entry into higher education by his ministers.[14] The only time the Bishop came to the defense of the college was during these denunciations:

> If it were not for the suspicions of some, and the pride and ignorance of others, I am of the opinion I could make provision by collections, profits on books, and donations in land, to take two thousand children under the best plan of education ever known in this country. The Lord begins to smile on our Kingswood[15] Cokesbury College school.
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> . . . . . .
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> None so healthy and orderly as our children; and some promise great talents for learning. The obstinate and ignorant oppose among preachers and people; while the judicious for good sense and piety, in church and state, admire and applaud.[16]

With so many Methodists opposed to the labors at Cokesbury, the friends of learning within the denomination worked hard to prove the value of the venture. Usually their efforts to display Cokesbury's success revolved around the proselytical aspect of the institution. "One promising young man is gone forth, another is ready; and several have been under awakenings," Bishop Asbury exclaimed in an effort to convince the "obstinate and ignorant" around him. Revivals swept the campus and were immediately publicized throughout Methodist circles. To allay the

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[14]Gross, "Cokesbury College," 16; Armstrong, History of the Old Baltimore Conference, 93; Lee, A Short History of the Methodists, 113; Cummings, Early Schools of Methodism, 29-32.

[15]The reference to Kingswood is to the English Methodist institution, after which Cokesbury was patterned.

[16]Asbury to Coke, February 12, 1791, Journal of Asbury, III, 93.

fears of those unimpressed by the moral effect of higher education, college officials promised that students learning the ancient languages would be asked to read only "those authors . . . who join together the purity, the strength, and the elegance of their several tongues." Nothing "immodest," they protested, would be found in any books at Cokesbury. The books would not only be inoffensive but morally useful. They would contain "much strong sense, and as much genuine morality as possible." The friends of learning wanted to convince the skeptics that students would not only emerge from Cokesbury College more knowledgeable, but more pious and more firm in their Methodism as well.[17]

Their plans suffered a severe setback in December of 1795 when fire consumed the entire college. Arson was suspected, and the governor of Maryland offered a reward of one thousand dollars for information leading to the arrest of the culprit. Suspicions were fanned by the consistent opposition to the school and by previous unsuccessful attempts to burn the college. In 1788 students had extinguished a fire deliberately set in one of the closets on the third floor. No arsonist was arrested in 1788 or after the "successful" fire in 1795.[18]

After the conflagration of 1795, Coke obtained the funds to rebuild the college. The school was moved into a large dance hall in Baltimore and functioned until December of 1796, when almost a year to the day of the previous fire it was consumed by flames once again. The

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[17]Cummings, Early Schools of Methodism, 31; Asbury to Coke, February 12, 1791, Journal of Asbury, III, 93; Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I, 235.

[18]Armstrong, History of the Old Baltimore Conference, 93; Gross, "Cokesbury College," 20-21; Journal entry for January 5, 1796, II, 75, Asbury to Thomas Haskins, January 11, 1796, III, 137-38, both in Journal of Asbury.

fires were interpreted by the Methodists throughout the country as Divine signs against their support of higher education. The fact that the denomination had lost between seventy-five and one hundred thousand dollars in the two fires cooled the zeal of the most fervent supporters of education.[19]

The fires at Cokesbury coincided with the rising tide of skepticism in American colleges, and the association of infidelity and atheism with higher education in the minds of evangelicals. It was not surprising, therefore, to hear Francis Asbury calling for a purge of the infidel curriculum at Cokesbury less than a month before the first fire. The Bishop cautioned church leaders "against corrupt Latin authors being taught in the college." It was teachings such as the profane Latin poets, he charged, "that filleth the minds of youth with infidelity and lust."[20] Upon hearing of the fire, Asbury seemed a bit relieved. "Its enemies may rejoice, and its friends need not mourn,"[21] he wrote. If anyone would give him ten thousand pounds per year to suffer through another college, he would not do it.

The Bishop had concluded, along with scores of other moderates on the subject of church-sponsored higher education, that the Lord had not called the Methodists to build colleges. Maybe now, he prayed, the church would return to its divinely sanctioned role of saving souls. The fact that colleges often lost sight of the church's proper role was

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[19]John Tillett, The Iron Duke of the Methodist Itinerancy (Nashville, 1925), 28; Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I, 241; Gross, "Cokesbury College," 21.

[20]Asbury to Nelson Reed, November 13, 1793, Journal of Asbury, III, 135-36.

[21]Journal entry for January 5, 1796, ibid., II, 75.

probably the reason for Cokesbury's destruction. "I wished and prayed," the Bishop confided, "that if it /Cokesbury/ was not for God's glory it might be destroyed." The school has "taken up my time, consumed my spirits and would have eventually rendered me useless if I had not given it up."[22] Thus, the two fires at Cokesbury reaffirmed the opponents of schooling and convinced the moderates that higher education led to infidelity and skepticism and was not a concern of the church. The student protestations of infidelity and their ubiquitous rebellions fueled the arguments of the evangelical opponents of sectarian higher education. For the last few years of the eighteenth century and most of the first two decades of the nineteenth no evangelical sect would found a college. The foes of higher education would control the period.[23]

The stage for the triumph of anti-intellectualism during this era was set by a number of factors. Secularization produced by the American Revolution, the atheism of the French Revolution, the loss of faith and emphasis on a questioning rationality characteristic of the Enlightenment, student rebellion in the nation's colleges, and the success of the emotion-based revival of the Second Great Awakening all contributed to a retrenchment, a reassessment of evangelical goals for the society.

The evangelicals could not envision a role for higher education in their vision of America's future. Between 1796 and 1816 no mention of college founding or even education in general was made in the

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[22]Asbury to Thomas Haskins, January 11, 1796, ibid., III, 137-38.

[23]Bucke, History of American Methodism, I, 272.

journals of the General Conference of the Methodist Church. Other evangelical sects were equally as uninterested in educational pursuits.[24]

The colleges were bastions of immorality, infidelity, and atheism, which would, the evangelicals of the period claimed, lead impressionable youth down the path to hell. The Enlightenment thinkers with whom the universities of the period were intimately associated lead students and even ministerial candidates away from "a belief in the supernatural." The rationalistic, Jacobinic supporters of French Revolutionary atheism captured the unsuspecting student and filled his mind with rationalism, a word used simply as an euphemism for infidelity.[25] William John Grayson, a Christian educator from South Carolina, expressed many of the evangelical concerns with late eighteenth and early nineteenth century education. If the end of higher education is to improve "the manners, morals, and mind of the student" then it was failing miserably. In order to accomplish these objectives the student, he said, is

> taken from the guidance and restraints of home and placed in rude barracks, with boys his own age, removed from the checks imposed by female society and by older persons of his own sex and left entirely to their boyish devices. He sees his professors for an hour or two only every day. There is no social relation between them.
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> The raw freshman is subjected to the influence of companions a little older than himself. He is ambitious to emulate the high spirited example of his senior. He makes rapid advances in smoking,

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[24]Albea Godbold, The Church College of the Old South (Durham, North Carolina, 1944), 32.

[25]"Thoughts on the Infidelity of the Nineteenth Century," IV (January, 1850), 186, "Theological Works of Thomas Paine," VIII (July, 1854), 482-83, "Classical Learning Not an Essential Prerequisite to a Christian Ministry," I (July, 1847), 351, all in The Quarterly Review of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South; "Locke's Philosophy, XXV (October, 1843), 611-12, "Thomas Carlyle," XXI (April, 1849), 223, both in Methodist Quarterly Review; Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, III, 106; Gallaher, The Western Sketch Book, 195.

> chewing, playing billiards; concocting sherry cobblers, gin slings and mint juleps; becomes adept at whist and "Old Sledge"; in champaigne and hot suppers; to say nothing of more questionable matters. . . .[26]

Those evangelicals who rejected the value of college training were not of a uniform opinion concerning learning per se. The more extreme opponents rejected the value of secular learning in general, while many saints merely rejected schooling. Some opponents of church-sponsored higher education only discarded college training but accepted the virtue of elementary and even secondary schooling.[27]

Many of the early Methodists claimed that their preachers were educated but unschooled, thus uncorrupted by the artificial philosophy inflicted on the students at the colleges. Many of the preachers boasted of their self-education, and the superiority of such a process to non-evangelical seminarians. A number of methods were designed by the church leaders to train their new preachers without schooling. A younger man or "junior preacher" was placed with an older preacher, thus allowing the young minister a period of grace wherein he could learn to avoid mistakes by the example of the experienced minister. A list of suggested books was passed along to the potential ministers which included not only the Bible but numerous theological, historical, and scientific works. It has become Methodist legend that Bishop Asbury was always reading as he rode from appointment to appointment. Stung by numerous attacks on their ignorance, the early Methodists may have over-emphasized

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[26]Stoney, "Autobiography of William John Grayson," 91-92.

[27]Letter to the Brethren in the United Societies of the Methodist Episcopal Church, September 16, 1791, Journal of Asbury, III, 102-03; Gross, "Cokesbury College," 17; D. R. McAnally, Life and Times of Dr. S. Patton (St. Louis, 1859), 171-72.

the voracity of the reading of their early itinerants. Also, while combating with the more extreme anti-intellectuals, the friends of education tended to accentuate the degree to which learning was encouraged and practiced by early preachers.[28]

One of the early supporters and leaders of Emory and Henry College, a Methodist institution in southwestern Virginia, agreed that ministerial training was necessary but questioned the "time, the place and the mode" of such training. "The Methodist itineracy," Thomas K. Catlett argued, "has proved an excellent school" for training young ministers. While the candidates for the ministry in other denominations were wasting their time in seminaries, he said, the Methodist method was performing "double work." It provided both "the necessary training in theology and at the same time the winning of souls for Christ."[29]

The same views were echoed throughout the early portion of the nineteenth century. The Methodists had believed that the denomination who controls the schools dominates the country, but their own experience in America was proving the axiom wrong. Though the Presbyterians controlled higher education, it was the Methodists who were experiencing a spectacular growth of numbers and social power. Methodism with its itinerant system was providing a "counter influence" to the Calvinistic control of the colleges and proving that "men may be educated out of

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[28]Frederick V. Mills, Sr., "Mentors of Methodism, 1784-1844," Methodist History, XII (October, 1973), 52-53; I. P. Martin Papers, Holston Conference Archives at Emory and Henry College, "The University on Horseback," hereafter referred to as HCA at EHC; Margaret Ann Hites, "Peter Doub, 1796-1869, His Contribution to the Religious and Educational Development of North Carolina," Methodist History, XI (July, 1973), 44; Nathan Bangs, Vindication of Methodist Episcopacy (New York, 1820), 112.

[29]Thomas K. Catlett papers, HCA at EHC, "Theological Training."

schools, as well as in schools." As early Methodist historian D. R. McAnally put it:

> while the Presbyterians were lawfully and laudably educating hundreds in schools, the Methodists were educating thousands out of schools, and these thousands were scattered throughout the entire country, and included persons of all ages, ranks and conditions. The system of itinerating carried the preachers along the highways and along the byways--among men of easy circumstances, and among the poor and obscure. They had access to all, and upon the minds of all left the impress of their doctrines.[30]

Some members of the church could not agree with McAnally's opinion. They were far too suspicious of learning in general to speak of educating the masses by agencies other than schooling. The early chroniclers of Methodism such as McAnally, Bangs, and Jesse Lee were by the nature of their calling predisposed to be friends of learning and thus presented a somewhat biased view of the debate over education. Because of their anti-learning position the anti-intellectuals did not produce many writers to record the debate from their perspective.

Peter Cartwright was one of the few critics of denominational educational activity who did write about the debate. Egocentric, flamboyant, opinionated, and entertaining, Cartwright warned against the dangers of education in general and of colleges specifically. College training, he proclaimed, turns the minds of men away from the spiritual and secularizes them. Ministers, he continued, trained in seminaries not only lose time they could have spent with sinners, but lose sight of their true calling--to preach the Gospel to a dying world." Cartwright looked forward to the day when the Methodist Church would tend to its real mission to sinners. That time would come when all of the church's college presidents, professors, book editors, and book agents would

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[30]McAnally, Life and Times of Dr. S. Patton, 173.

answer simply to the name layman and forsake their worthless pursuits. Not only did education secularize and misdirect the church's efforts, but it also "blunted moral sensibilities." Graduates of colleges become more concerned with making money than with spreading the "preaching of Jesus to dying sinners." This is why, Cartwright insisted, that the Presbyterian and the Congregational Churches were morally bankrupt--they had insisted on a college-trained ministry.[31]

Even Asbury saw danger in learning. Preachers who studied more than he felt necessary were rebuked on the basis that "excessive reasoning" relative to theology was not only unsatisfactory but "evil." College philosophy, it was widely believed by the evangelicals, could lead students down the road to skepticism without them ever realizing the danger. Such speculations served no good and exposed students to the danger of "fanaticism" in religious beliefs. It was "folly," one Methodist educational critic contended, to mingle the theory and truth of Christianity with philosophical speculation.[32]

The nature of the evangelical spirit was not given to learning. The camp meeting, the symbol of that spirit, moved the evangelicals farther and farther away from the need for an educated ministry. Theology played a small role at the emotional gatherings, which often emphasized the irrational and the bizarre to achieve their desired

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[31] Cartwright, Autobiography, 81-82.

[32] Duvall, The Methodist Church and Education, 17-18; "Locke's Philosophy," Methodist Quarterly Review, XXV (October, 1843), 613; "Classical Learning Not an Essential Prerequisite to a Christian Ministry," Quarterly Review of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, I (July, 1847), 349.

effects.[33] Besides, the church in the early nineteenth century had no time for learning. To understand the triumph of the anti-intellectual evangelicals, one must grasp the sense of immediacy or urgency which they felt.

The world was so evil and engulfed in infidelity that the evangelicals had no time to lose. Precious souls were going to hell every day, and in light of this fact it was simply a sinful waste of time to try to educate evangelical ministers and the masses. In addition, the emotional congregations were growing so quickly that the Methodists or Baptists could not have educated evangelical ministers fast enough to keep up with the movement.[34] Given their perspective, how could the evangelicals advocate a college education for their followers when their world was being inundated by a rationalistic, French-inspired wave of atheism that

> ploughed its way, like the Gulf Stream through the Atlantic, and heaved its huge surges on the American shore. The valleys were flooded; the swelling waves rose and buried the hills; upward the awful deluge prevailed, and rolled its black billows above the tops of the tallest mountains . . . . So rare were religious privileges, that it was extremely difficult to find material sufficient to construct an ark, in which one entire family might be saved.[35]

There was nowhere for the evangelicals to turn as America became "flooded" by evil. They certainly could not look to any established American institutions for help in their holy battle. The government had been captured by infidels. "Most of our enlightened statesmen were

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[33]Richard Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism in American Life (New York, 1962), 95-96.

[34]Catlett, "Theological Training"; Martin, "The University on Horseback"; Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism, 97; Duvall, The Methodist Episcopal Church and Education, 18.

[35]Gallaher, The Western Sketch Book, 28.

following the example of Thomas Jefferson," who had in the eyes of many evangelicals "rejected the gospel and adopted the infidelity of France."[36] They could not depend on education, for the infidels were to be "found in every literary institution, from the abecedarian school to the academy of sciences." They could not trust books to reveal the truth, as elements of evil "controlled their publication, sale and . . . character." Indeed, the evangelicals felt a sense of alienation from the society and, as a result, forsook old allegiances to its various institutions--one of which was, of course, education.[37]

Not only was education a threat to faith, time consuming, and controlled by infidels, but also, based on evangelical criteria, it simply did not make ministers more effective. The theology was simple and easy to practice, and the evangelicals saw no reason to endure the dangers of education for no practical benefits. The Methodists often reminded themselves that the Apostles were unlearned men, and labored to illustrate the parallel between their itineracy and the original followers of Christ.[38] Referring to the world at the beginning of the Christian era, one nineteenth century writer stated that

> it was in the midst of this boiling chaos of society, this fermentation of the world's mind, that the first disciples of Christ were thrown to begin their spiritual conflict. We may find in the state of things around them reason enough why illiterate men, so called, were chosen . . . with not only the Greek but the whole world agape after "wisdom," they were set down simply to preach the gospel. It was a miracle that they preached it, that they did not

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[36] Ibid., 29.

[37] Ibid., 23.

[38] Walter Brownlow Posey, Methodism in the Old Southwest (Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1933), 64-65; Cartwright, Autobiography, 78-79; William Wightman, Life of William Capers (Nashville, 1896), 304.

> instantly on the death of Christ, set up a school of philosophy.[39]

The disciples were praised as simple men, "determined to know nothing among men, save Christ and him crucified." Because they were illiterate and uneducated, the doctrines of Christianity were put forth in "simplicity and freshness," thus offering the world "a wonderful spectacle . . . a light amidst darkness." It was a "sublime sight," the author contended, to see those twelve men "going about like little children . . . talking truth as simple as the daylight." They were easily understood despite the "hubbub of pretensions and noises" made by the learned, who had issued "babbling novelties of error" based upon their dedication to education. Just as the original disciples had faced opposition from the false theologies and philosophies of the learned, so had the true disciples of the early nineteenth century. When Methodism arose and began to assert its moralizing influence throughout the nation, "the very existence of the Christian Church was threatened by spurious theology, based upon spurious philosophy." In God's eyes, it was claimed, a new class of men had to be found "to introduce and spread a purer theology." By necessity these men had to be uncorrupted by schooling--many Methodists felt that they had heard a divine call to action.[40]

When one examines the audience the early evangelicals served, it is obvious that they could have seen education in no other light. In the latter eighteenth and the early nineteenth centuries, as in most eras,

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[39]"Classical Learning Not an Essential Prerequisite to the Christian Ministry," (July, 1847), 349.

[40]Ibid., 350-51.

the emotionally religious found their greatest support among the poorer and less educated people. Francis Asbury was offended by Yale scholars because they were "very genteel," and he even viewed the Quakers as too "respectable." "Ah, there is death in that word," the Bishop confided. In their attempt to avoid the glimmer of respectibility in the early nineteenth century, the Methodists wondered if they had not confined themselves to the remote country districts to the neglect of the thriving villages. Debates ensued over whether or not they had lost their chance for financial stability by avoiding the prosperous settled sections. When the sect ventured into the more established areas during this early period, they often found great hostility to their simplistic theology. The evangelical message appealed primarily to one audience before the 1820's and 1830's, and it was composed of uneducated folk who demanded a call for salvation devoid of theological speculation.[41]

As the anti-intellectuals enjoyed their victory, a number of important influences were at work in the society that would eventually undermine their position. As the leaders of existing institutions worked to erase liberal republican impulses from their halls and reestablish their moral authority, the public began to modify its view of higher education.[42] No longer did the public at large identify higher education with infidelity and atheism. Also, a developing sense of national

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[41]Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism, 97; Goodrich, Recollection of a Lifetime, I, 197; Duvall, The Methodist Episcopal Church and Education, 20; Charles Coleman Sellers, Lorenzo Dow: The Bearer of the Word (New York, 1928), 92-93; Edward Channing, A History of the United States, V (New York, 1921), 232.

[42]Cunningham, Timothy Dwight, 123-25; 178-79, 218; Miller, The Revolutionary College, 261; Hansen, Liberalism and American Education, 206; Schmidt, The Old Time College President, 188-89; Morais, Deism in Eighteenth Century America, 159-63.

literary and scientific inferiority moved the people to call for a better educated citizenry. Reassured of the value of college training, the public was displaying a new interest in higher education by 1820.[43]

The evangelicals remained divided over the subject, but most of them were sensitive to the changing public mood. The friends of learning would have to overcome great obstacles to convince their peers of the value of education. They had been forced for almost two decades to restrain their arguments while the reaction to the Enlightenment-based, post-Revolutionary educational efforts raged. Even when the intensity of the reaction had finally subsided, those who favored evangelically sponsored education would still face great opposition. Their task was monumental; in order to convince the sects of the benefits offered by denominational colleges, they would have to persuade the largest evangelical audience--the emotionally religious, anti-intellectual common folk--of the soundness of their position. For a number of reasons they were able to accomplish their goals. In a relatively few years the evangelicals would begin a period of college foundings unparalleled in American educational history.

Memories of the post-Revolutionary disillusionment with education were becoming part of a past era by 1820. As these recollections faded, the composition of the evangelical audience began also to change. More

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[43]Pauline Maier, "Popular Uprisings and Civil Authority in Eighteenth Century America," William and Mary Quarterly, XXVII (January, 1970), 3-35; Miller, The Revolutionary College, 261-65; Battle, History of the University of North Carolina, I, 204; For an illustrative comparison between the college atmosphere of 1800 and that of 1820 see Aubrey Lee Brooks, "David Caldwell and His Log College," North Carolina Historical Review, XXVIII (October, 1951), 404-05; and Max R. Williams, "The Education of William A. Graham," North Carolina Historical Review, XL (January, 1963), 9-10.

socially respectable, wealthy people were being attracted by the evangelical sects, thus bringing individuals into the churches with a more accepting attitude toward college training. These people were not satisfied with the intellectual background of the Methodist, Baptist, and revival-Presbyterian preachers, especially when the clergymen found themselves in debate with ministers of the non-evangelical organizations outside of the rural areas. The rural South and the western frontier had provided the evangelicals with an untapped reservoir of potential converts. It was when the saints attempted to move into the more barren evangelical soils of the settled eastern seaboard that their increased contacts with the established sects displayed their neglected educational backgrounds. The debates with the established sects alarmed many of the evangelical congregations and moved them to action. If they were going to compete with the Episcopalians, Congregationalists, and especially the mainline Presbyterians, the revivalists would have to fight on their opponents' terms. The battles could only be won with the armor that education could provide.[44]

By 1820 the General Conference of the Methodist Church, after nearly twenty years of silence, had issued statements deploring the lack of education among Methodist ministers. "Many sincere friends of Methodism have long realized the great deficiency in the method and means" of American colleges, wrote a Methodist in 1818. The time had come for Methodist sponsorship of "specially directed" colleges intimately connected with the religious community in their locale. Times

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[44]Leroy M. Lee, The Life and Times of the Reverend Jesse Lee (Louisville, Kentucky, 1848), 294; Duvall, The Methodist Episcopal Church and Education, 22.

were certainly changing when Methodist publications in 1819 argued that "theology is a science and must be studied to be understood." The church, they continued, must in the future guard against ignorant young ministers who "rush, raw and undisciplined from the rostrum to the pulpit and vent wild and indigested harranges, to their own discredit" and to the embarrassment of the denomination.[45]

The Baptist Church, too, had by 1820 seen the friends of education beginning to win struggles against anti-intellectual elements of the sect. Within another decade they would convince a majority of their fellows of the value of Baptist sponsored higher education. Faced with the renewed public interest in education, the church leaders recognized that many Baptist and Methodist parents were going to send their children to college. Since the only institutions available were the Presbyterian dominated secular universities and the non-evangelical denominational schools, the evangelicals argued that to preserve their influence they must establish their own colleges. With the development of church book concerns and a church press to spread ideas heavily biased in favor of education, substantial numbers of evangelicals throughout the nation were convinced of the need for denominational colleges.[46]

While the friends of education began to win support for their cause around 1820, this does by no means imply that by that time the issue was settled. Though the Methodists, Baptists, and revival-Presbyterians built hundreds of colleges in the 1830's, 1840's and

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[45]"Asbury College," (March, 1818), 109, and "Divinity," (May, 1819), 21, both in Methodist Magazine.

[46]George Stevenson, Increase in Excellence: A History of Emory and Henry College (New York, 1963), 25-27; Godbold, The Church College, 18-21.

1850's, the debate between the supporters and opponents of higher education continued well past the Civil War and in a much milder form into the twentieth century. The arguments used to win support for higher education are quite revealing and relevant to this study. As would be expected, one of the most important reasons offered for church-supported colleges was the need for educated ministers. The supporters of education perceived a change in the nation and maintained that the evangelicals needed men who could address not only the emotional but the rational mind. One committee appointed by the General Conference of the Methodist Church of the South reported "that the vastly improved intellectual condition of society called for a corresponding intellectual cultivation in the ministry of our Church." Opponents of schools on this committee, however, still maintained that even in light of the changes that schools were dangerous and recommended that the "corresponding intellectual cultivation" of ministers take place outside of colleges. As other conferences and localities turned to the school as a means of ministerial preparation,[47] Peter Cartwright was moved to exclaim:

> I awfully fear for our beloved Methodism. Multiply colleges, universities, seminaries, and academies; multiply our agencies, and editorships, and fill them with our best and most efficient preachers, and you localize the ministry and secularize them too; then farewell to itineracy; and when this fails we plunge right into itinerancy, and stop precisely where all other denominations started.[48]

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[47]Henry Kirk White, "Importance of Study to a Candidate for the Ministry," Methodist Magazine (June, 1821), 220-22; George Washington Paschal, History of Wake Forest College (Wake Forest, North Carolina, 1935), 20-29, 617; "Report of Committee on Education," Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (May, 1858), 552-53.

[48]Cartwright, Autobiography, 81.

Cartwright saw, with the establishment of Methodist schools for ministerial training, the loss of the greatest asset of the denomination, the itineracy. Every man who fills a job at a university and "retains a membership in the traveling connection," he protested, "is a clog to the itinerant wheels, and must . . . stop the traveling car." When this happens, he said, "farewell to Methodism."[49]

In response to Cartwright and his anti-college faction, advocates of the schools asked, "How is it possible for a man to teach those already better taught than himself?" The unpleasant realization that educated people would not listen to those considered less educated struck a responsive chord with the evangelicals and convinced many of them that the time for a change of attitude had arrived.[50]

As the post-Revolutionary disillusionment faded farther and farther into the past, many church leaders began to view education as a proper function of religion. The evangelicals realized that religion must take responsibility for the learning of youth, because in the "new society" of the nineteenth century the young were going to be exposed to a variety of influences--not all of them Christian.[51] The orator at the 1857 commencement at Emory University put it this way:

> We believe it unsafe to commit our children to the tuition of irreligious teachers. However pure his own morals, and however assiduously he may labor to inculcate moral lessons on his pupils,

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[49] Ibid.

[50] Bucke, The History of American Methodism, I, 561; Godbold, The Church College, 49; Hofstadter, Anti-Intellectualism, 100-06.

[51] Minutes of the Holston Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (1840-1841), 14-15; Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (May, 1858), 535; "Education," Methodist Quarterly (April, 1831), 160; Gallaher, Western Sketch Book, 25-29.

> yet so long as the teacher withholds his heart from God, and fails to identify himself with the Church, he must of necessity stand between his pupils and the cross of Christ. If our schools and colleges ever fulfill their mission to the Church and the world, they must be in the hands of men who fear God and keep his commandments.[52]

The educational promoters believed that a natural relationship existed between religion and education. It was dangerous, they contended, to train the intellect without the presence of religion to incorporate the acquired knowledge into a proper moral context. Returning to the rejection of education in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the friends of education cited Revolutionary France as an example of what could happen when education was not directed by religion. No country, they argued, had produced more great minds in the late 1700's and early 1800's than France. Her worship of education and the "Goddess of Reason" was an insult to God and Christians around the world. This blasphemous "mockery" known to the French as "science and intellectual refinement" seemed to be divinely inspired, so as "to teach the world how impotent for good is human wisdom, when divorced from the reverence and love of God."[53]

As the post-Revolutionary disappointments were viewed more dispassionately, many evangelicals agreed that there were many lessons to be learned from the "failure" of higher education. French infidelity was felt deep in Virginia, wrote the Reverend John Holt Rice. At one point he had actually feared the destruction of human morality and religion, but he came to realize that the "great experiment on human nature . . .

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[52]Charles F. Deems (ed.), Annals of Southern Methodism for 1857 (Nashville, 1858), 213.

[53]"Education in the Methodist Church," Methodist Quarterly Review, XXIV (October, 1842), 536.

has had on the whole a happy effect among us." Without the wholesome influence of Christianity, Rice continued, "neither peace, nor order, nor liberty, nor any civil or political institution can be preserved." Rice is just one of countless religious educators who had, after recovering from the shock of perceived rampant collegiate infidelity, come to see education as the province of religion. It was the duty of the church to found colleges that would produce the learned but moral man.[54]

The evangelicals also began to realize the potential of higher education for intensifying feelings of denominational loyalty. The church leaders reasoned that young people schooled in denominationally supported colleges would feel a greater sense of devotion to their church than those who went to secular or non-evangelical schools. Also, those educated outside the auspices of their own denomination might fall victim to the alien influences and never return to their original fold. Thomas Crocker, an employee of Wake Forest College, was greatly surprised when Baptist parents sent their children to the University of North Carolina or to the colleges of other denominations, thus subjecting them to anti-Baptist influences. The purpose of Baptist higher education was obvious to Crocker--to make college students loyal and pious Baptists.[55]

Rivalry between the denominations must also be viewed as an important motivation for evangelical entry into higher education. Oftentimes church leaders were far more concerned with "defeating" another

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[54]John Holt Rice to Thomas Chalmers, July 25, 1817, as quoted in Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LXVII (July, 1959), 310.

[55]Joshua Soule, "Pastoral Address," Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (May, 1846), 114-15; Minutes of the Board of Trustees at Wake Forest College, June, 1846, as quoted in Paschal, History of Wake Forest College, 254.

denomination in the struggle for converts than with the practicality of establishing a college in a certain location. The result of such impetuous college foundings were usually financially disastrous for the churches, as many schools were abandoned after only a few years of limited use. The fervor of the "battles" between the denominations was quite intense, and interdenominational conflict was common throughout the nation.[56] The intensity of the struggles was well-illustrated by the passion of the rhetoric used by ministers on all sides of the combat. William G. "Parson" Brownlow, a Methodist minister and political celebrity in mid-nineteenth century Tennessee, preached a sermon in Maryville, Tennessee within sight of Maryville College, a Presbyterian institution he described as a seminary

> where Christian morality tours aloft in grandure /sic/ and sublimity--when error and superstition repose in all their romantic beauty--and where Calvinism, in its multifareous /sic/ forms, propels its poisons through its diversified channels.[57]

Competition between the evangelicals and the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Episcopalians was intense, but fear of Catholic influence, small as it was in areas such as the South, moved the evangelicals to intense action. To avoid the horrible possibility that Methodist, Baptist, or revival-Presbyterian children would seek education at a Roman college, the denominations reasserted their commitment to higher education. The evangelicals granted the Catholics a great deal of credit for the popular appeal of their message and the power of their

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[56]"Report of Committee on Education," (May, 1854), 312; Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (May, 1858), 551; Tewksbury, The Founding of American Colleges, 25.

[57]William G. Brownlow, "Our Late Tour of the South," Jonesborough Monthly Review, II (1848), 92.

schools to convert the unwary. Tracts were printed and sermons delivered specifically to counteract the influence of the Catholics. Students at Methodist colleges were warned of the dangers of Romanism. "Roman Catholicism," proclaimed Emory and Henry President Charles Collins in a speech to students, "is Christianity without the Bible." The Gospel, he exclaimed, "even in the very limited circulation of it which is . . . allowed, is emasculated of its power, and forced into an unholy alliance with error and superstition."[58] The chairman of the committee on education at the Southern Methodist Conference of 1854, specifically addressed the dangers of Catholic education before he exhorted his fellows to intensify their commitment to higher education:

> The practice so common among many of our Church members, of sending their children to Roman Catholic Schools, was considered by the committee. Education is one of the principal means which Romanism adopts to counterwork Protestantism in America, and so effect its nefarious purposes. In nothing is it more delusive and dangerous. Numberless are the melancholy instances in which Protestant youth have been decoyed and entrapped without being conscious of the snare. We would, consequently, warn all under our influence not to patronize such institutions.[59]

In the first decades of the nineteenth century evangelical leaders had realized that "untamed" areas of America's frontier had been subdued by the advance of Christianity. They had also recognized the use of religion by college leaders in the early part of the century to quell student disturbances and quiet the campuses. Not unlike their colonial predecessors, the evangelicals saw education as a means for moving

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[58]Ray Allen Billington, "Anti-Catholic Propaganda and the Home Missionary Movement, 1800-1860," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXII (December, 1935), 377, 380-81; Charles Collins, An Address Delivered Before the Calliopean and Hermesian Societies of Emory and Henry College, January 10, 1849, pamphlet (Philadelphia, 1849), 25.

[59]"Report of the Committee on Education," (May, 1854), 312-13.

society in a direction compatible with their interests.[60] Church involvement in higher education could grant the saints a measure of social control. Religion for social domination, the evangelicals claimed, worked at Asbury College, the first evangelical institution founded after Cokesbury, as students were "trained . . . in the love of order, the love of science, and submission to the laws." If it worked in the college microcosm, there was no reason to believe it would not work in the society at large.[61]

Evangelical schools, therefore, had to bring higher education to the masses, for only then could the ignobile vulgus be exposed to the civilizing influences of learning.[62] The evangelicals would devise numerous schemes in the antebellum period to widen the economic range of those who could afford higher education.[63] If the common man could experience the moralizing influence of college training, he would not be so disposed to violence and disorder. Poverty, which was deemed the result of "ignorance, vicious indulgence or indolence," precipitated offences too vulgar for public discussion. If something was not done these miserable poor wretches, the emerging middle to upper economic class evangelicals believed, would continue to plot crimes against the society of a most savage nature. The friends of learning within the evangelical churches used this portrait of the poor

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[60] Curti, Social Ideas of American Educators, 6-9

[61] "Asbury College," (March, 1818), 112-13.

[62] Charles Deems (ed.), Annals of Southern Methodism for 1856 (Nashville, 1857), 127.

[63] Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, 4, 32, 73-75; Paschal, History of Wake Forest College, II. This topic will merit further discussion in the next chapter.

for their own end--the expansion of the sectarian educational enterprise.[64]

The churches had to act quickly and provide "sedatives not stimulants" to these dangerous human passions. "The world itself," they wrote, "is a school of excitement." It became the duty of the evangelicals, therefore, to build colleges that offered "calm and salutary discipline." If no other reason existed for college founding, they ventured, "their influence in counteracting the tendencies of the age to extravagance would be sufficient." The effect of college training is "stability of the mind," and though the regimen may be "dry" and unexciting, it "restrains the madness of unbridled passions" to produce "the most useful and permanent results" afforded higher education. A cardinal purpose of evangelical higher education, then, was to evoke a lasting sense of restraint in all students, especially the pupils from the lower economic classes, who entered the institutions. In a world, a Methodist educator maintained, "where passions are ready to blaze out into crime, where the principles of truth are obscure, and the laws of rectitude may be transgressed with apparent impunity," there is a need for the conservative power of conscience. In other words, the evangelicals could use their literary institutions to promote a sense of personal guilt which could serve as a permanent means of social control.[65] Consistent with this line of thought, the Methodist leader

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[64]Clifford S. Griffin, "Religious Benevolence as Social Control, 1815-1860," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLIV (December, 1957), 436-47; Lois W. Banner, "Religious Benevolence as Social Control: A Critique of an Interpretation," Journal of American History, LX (June, 1973), 31-32; "Literary Institutions," Methodist Quarterly Review (April, 1841), 255-56.

[65]"Education in the Methodist Church," (October, 1842), 535-37.

contended that

> conscience asserts a claim to supremacy, and, with authority, lifts a warning against unsanctified propensities. The correct education of the conscience should be a first consideration in every system of mental discipline . . . when truth has secured for itself an abode in the moral citadel of the soul, at once hope springs up and prevails that there will be a consistent prosecution of worthy objects, a steady resistance of every unholy demand of passion and every unjust claim of self-interest.[66]

The period in which the evangelicals entered higher education and established their greatest number of colleges in the South, 1830-1860, was also the period of an awakening southern nationalism. While sectional interests were certainly not the most important purpose for evangelical college foundings, the church leaders often spoke of the need for a southern Christian education. "Hitherto," Joshua Soule proclaimed in an address to his fellow southern Methodists, "the South has been unjust to itself with regard to its literature." The minister charged that the South had convinced the world that "we are incapable of sustaining literary institutions." In the opinion of most evangelicals it was high time for the South to forsake its reliance upon northern schools for the education of its youth.[67]

Many religious educators noticed a marked tendency for young people educated outside of the South to return home infected with northern "propaganda." According to the southern evangelical educators, the northern propaganda involved the questioning of the virtue of "southern institutions and southern sensitivity," i.e., slavery. In order to keep such northern poison out of the southern system of higher education, evangelicals sometimes insisted that only southern professors

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[66] Ibid., 537.

[67] Soule, "Pastoral Address," (May, 1846), 114-15.

be employed and northern textbooks be censored. In some institutions professors with unpopular sentiments were harassed until they finally left.[68] Often when soliciting for contributions to denominational colleges, churchmen appealed to the emerging sense of southern nationalism and boasted of their school's untainted southern purity.[69]

While ministerial education, religious control of educational enterprise, denominational loyalty, denominational rivalry, social control, a desire to bring higher education to the common man, and sectional interests all contributed to the church's embrace of education, the most important motivation for the founding of evangelical colleges was that it provided an excellent means of spreading God's word. Asbury had realized the excellent opportunity presented by higher education for proselytizing before the disillusionment and had opened Cokesbury College with several days of religious services. After the reacceptance of education in the 1820's concerted efforts were made to initiate revivals at the opening of evangelical colleges and to continue the enthusiasm after classes had commenced.[70]

The founders of Emory University felt that their primary goal was to encourage religious enthusiasm among the students. The university took great pride in the fact that numerous alumni looked to their college days as the time when their lives were "turned around" due to the

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[68]Godbold, The Church College, 72-75.

[69]Minutes of meeting of May 21, 1846, Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (May, 1846), 83-84; Wayne Flynt, "Southern Higher Education and the Civil War," Civil War History, XIV (September, 1968), 211.

[70]Entry for December 6, 1787, Journal of Asbury, I, 555; Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (May, 1858), 536-57.

influence of Christianity. Emory was not an isolated case, for evangelicals throughout the South and the rest of the nation found great success utilizing their colleges as vehicles for the "cultivation of youthful piety."[71] One Methodist writer in 1842 expressed the sentiments of the friends of learning relative to the evangelical role of the college when he said

> The old objection, that a few terms in school will destroy the piety of a young man and fill him with pride, is dying away before the evidence which facts are believed to present, that fewer, comparatively, lose their piety in school than in other situations; while the manifest favor with which Heaven has regarded these institutions has created the belief . . . that they are among the most efficient means for the conversion of the young. Nowhere have revivals of religion been more frequent . . . nowhere have conversions been more sound, than in the literary institutions . . . .[72]

While great diversity still existed within the evangelical sects, the friends of learning had by the 1830's won the debate over education. Using the revival, the camp meeting, and their colleges, the emotionally religious did such a good job of spreading the Gospel that America between 1800 and 1860 must be described as an "evangelized society." Every institution had been indelibly marked by the perspectives and concerns of the saints.[73] Alexis de Toqueville, cataloging his observations of American society in the 1830's, recognized this religious domination of the culture:

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[71]Henry Morton Bullock, A History of Emory University (Nashville, 1936), 143; Thomas M. Finney, The Life and Labors of Enoch Mather Martin (St. Louis, 1880), 283; "Literary Institutions," (April, 1841), 255.

[72]"Education in the Methodist Church," (October, 1842), 532-33.

[73]William G. McLoughlin (ed.), The American Evangelicals, 1800-1900: An Anthology (New York, 1968), 1; Charles C. Cole, Jr., The Social Ideas of the Northern Educators (New York, 1954), 3.

> In the United States the sovereign authority is religious . . . there is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America. . . . In the United States religion exercises but little influence upon the laws and upon the details of public opinions; but it directs the customs of the community, and, by regulating domestic life, it regulates the state.[74]

What difference did the victory of the evangelical supporters of education make in American higher education? Was there a distinct difference between the evangelical schools and the secular or state supported institutions? Obviously, the state supported schools of the era were not unaffected by the general evangelization of the society. These colleges, while proclaiming their freedom from religious control, were usually in the hands of the non-evangelical denominations. There were definite differences between the state colleges and the schools founded by the evangelical sects, but the modern observer cannot suppress a sense of surprise at the numerous similarities. Certainly, the ubiquity of the evangelical influence had blurred the distinctions between the institutions.

When assessing the impact of evangelicalism on the history of American higher education, an examination of the mutual perceptions of the leaders of the evangelical and the secular colleges is quite revealing. The perception of dissimilarity often profoundly influenced actual practice and stimulated differences where little diversity had existed. These perceptions are the subject of the next chapter.

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[74]Tocqueville, Democracy in America, I, 314-15.

CHAPTER IV

MUTUAL PERCEPTIONS

Differences certainly existed between the evangelical and state-supported colleges of the first half of the nineteenth century, but often the mere perception of dissimilarity outweighed the reality of difference and played a significant role in determining actual educational practice. In other words, mutual perceptions between the two groups created their own reality and set the course that American higher education would take in the antebellum period.

One of the main arguments used by the friends of education to convince their evangelical peers to enter higher education was the need for the extension of college training to the common man. The non-evangelical denominational colleges and the state-supported colleges, they argued, were open only to the rich and well-to-do.[1] When the backgrounds of graduates of state universities before the Civil War are examined, one finds that a majority come from well-known, wealthy, and influential families. Though the state universities did serve the sons of the rich, most schools offered free tuition and work programs for a number of lower economic class students. Thus, while state-supported colleges were not the exclusive province of the wealthy, the evangelical

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[1]Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, 4; Coulter, College Life in the Old South, vii, 223; Bullock, A History of Emory University, 51; Charles Collins, "Education, the Place and Aims of the College," Quarterly Review of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, V (April, 1851), 239.

perception of their social class bias held a great degree of truth.[2]

The University of Georgia was often used by the evangelicals as an example of a college for rich boys. As in other state-supported institutions sons of the middle class and the poor did attend, but it was the progeny of the planter class who were most conspicuous on campus and set the tone for outside perceptions of the school. Evangelical resentment of state universities was fanned by such events as the Commencement Ball at the University of North Carolina. College approval of the social and moral benefits of dancing moved the evangelicals to characterize state university students and faculties as profligates.[3] The following request for permission to hold a Commencement Ball by North Carolina students was proof to the evangelicals of the upper class orientation of the state school:

> Since on this retired Hill of Science, we are precluded from the improvement of Society, we feel an inevitable drawback upon our literary acquirements. As balls greatly promote gentility, acquiescence in the petition is earnestly asked for. Waiving all personal concern, we strenuously advocate its principles as promoting the best interests of the institution, as enhancing the splendors of our Commencements, and as contributing much, very much, to the gratification and pleasure of the adored Fair, who honor us with their company on that universal jubilee.[4]

As the Second Great Awakening swept across the South in the decades following 1800, promoting a larger evangelical percentage of the population, popular resentment of state-backed colleges became quite common. Blount College, later East Tennessee College and eventually

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[2]Godbold, The Church College, 151-52.

[3]Coulter, College Life in the Old South, 130; Battle, History of the University of North Carolina, I, 348-49.

[4]Battle, History of the University of North Carolina, I, 349.

The University of Tennessee, struggled financially for years, for it was extremely difficult to raise money in light of the popular prejudices against supporting seminaries of learning for rich men's sons.[5] The resentments continued for decades, as examples of popular disdain of aristocratic higher education can be found well beyond the Civil War. In an article supporting the common school crusade, Parson Brownlow in 1849 reiterated this traditional accusation.

> While the opulent portion of the community can avail themselves of the manifest advantages of the higher seats of learning; the poor and indigent must be content with the less ostensible facilities of the common school.
>
> There is an odious notion fostered by some people; that the high schools, colleges, and universities are the only places where their children can be sent to set the polish of learning.
>
> They think their sons must be educated at some fine city of some gorgeous ediface which seem to dazzle in affluence and splendor. Hence many of these people withhold aid from the common schools, because they are able to patronize the more pompous and splendid institutions.[6]

In order to accomplish their goal of Christian higher education for the common man, the evangelicals initiated a system of mandatory manual labor. They believed that the existing system was undemocratic because the price of education exceeded the common man's ability to pay. Under the manual labor system all students would work on college farms for about four or five cents an hour for the purposes of paying their tuition and raising funds for the school.[7] Not only could the colleges

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[5]Stanley J. Folmsbee Papers, University of Tennessee Special Collections (hereafter referred to as UTSC), unpublished paper "Blount College, 1794-1808."

[6]Brownlow's Knoxville Whig and Independent Journal, December 22, 1849.

[7]Edgar W. Knight, "Manual Labor Schools in the South," South Atlantic Quarterly, XVI (1917), 209; John A. Kelly papers, HCA at EHC, "Autobiographical Notes"; Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, 4; Bullock, A History of Emory University, 39.

support themselves by selling the agricultural products, but they could turn out students with better health, sounder morals, and more "manly qualities."

President of Emory and Henry, Charles Collins, argued in his inaugural address at the opening of the college that a manual labor system was far more valuable than merely a means of lowering the cost of higher education. In most colleges "no systematic discipline is employed to cultivate and strengthen the body." Manual labor will provide "systematic out-of-door manual exercise, "which will make the scholars stronger, prone to greater longevity, and more resistant to disease." A consistent crusader for evangelical higher education, Collins never failed to exploit an opportunity to address the anti-intellectuals, as he answered their charges concerning the immoral influence of colleges. Manual labor, he contended, contributed to "the formation of the habits of industry, and the consequent rescue from much of the vice and dissipation, to which students are more especially exposed."[8] Convinced of manual labor's power to moralize the students, Collins maintained:

> It is a homely adage that an idle man's brain is the devil's workshop. So much truth does this maxim contain, that it may well be questioned whether moral integrity can long exist without some regular and wholesome occupation. So intimate, indeed is their connexion, that virtuous occupation seems to be an essential condition of a virtuous life. The student must have, and will have, his hours of relaxation from study, and the only conservative principle at such times adequate to his temptations, is a regular supply of useful and salutory labor.[9]

The idea for manual labor had come from Europe, where it was utilized with some success, but the evangelical educators adopted the

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[8]Charles Collins, An Inaugural Address Delivered at the Opening of Emory and Henry College, pamphlet (Abingdon, Virginia, 1838), 22-23.

[9]Ibid., 23-24.

plan so quickly that most people saw the system as a religious innovation. The founders of Emory and Henry regarded manual labor as the foundation to their system of education. "The population of this part of the state /Southwestern Virginia/ is eminently a working population," wrote Charles Collins, "and the young men now connected with the school have generally been trained to habits of labor." The faculty, the board of trustees, and the community were convinced of the success of the manual labor plan at Emory and Henry, but the actual workings of the system did not meet the early optimism.[10]

At five o'clock each morning the college bell rang for the young students to arise. After nine hours of closely supervised activity, students assembled at the six hundred acre college farm for two hours of manual labor. The men were divided into squads of eight or ten according to age, strength, and skill and placed under the supervision of a leader. Some worked in the carpenter's shop, some cleared the land and cut wood, and a number tilled the soil and worked with crops. The squad leaders monitored the work activity, kept timetables, and recorded the quality of work performed by each student. If a worker did not meet the monitor's criteria his wage could be reduced from four or five cents to a mere penny an hour. One can imagine the difficulties that might emerge from such a situation.[11]

Many of the students had not been taught to labor on farms, being sons of men engaged in other vocations. While the evangelicals claimed

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[10]Godbold, The Church College, 57; Charles Collins to William Fisk, May 30, 1838, Collins papers, HCA at EHC.

[11]James A. Davis papers, HCA at EHC, "Then and Now, an Autobiographical Sketch."

to open higher education to the common man this did not include the poorer farmers of the society. Contemporary observers maintained that it was the sons of slaveholders unaccustomed to the ways of agriculture that led to the downfall of the system.[12] "The labor of many," argued Emory and Henry student James A. Davis,

> was not merely worthless but it destroyed more than it produced. Imagine the trials of a farmer in charge of 600 acres of land having 100 raw hands, boys from 10 to 20 years old, turned loose upon him every day at 2 P.M. without proper implements and without skill, not disposed to work . . . . At a critical season the crop is lost for lack of timely labor; at another time the harvest is ready and the students are away in vacation. And at best, he can scarcely get his hands to work before the working hours close.[13]

In every college where manual labor was instituted, it failed miserably.[14] Students from the homes of middle class families who sent their boys to evangelical schools predisposed to take their manual labor seriously. Stories abound of student disruptions of the orderly workings of the systems, and termination of manual labor meet with great celebration from students and great relief from faculty members.[15]

At Emory and Henry due to the inefficiency of student enterprise manual labor became such a financial burden that the administration had to hire as many regular farm hands, mainly slaves, to work the college farm as it would have needed if no students had worked. Both the students and the farm labor had to be paid, thus the college debt accumulated. As a result of the manual labor system, the school was

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[12] Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, 75; Davis, "Then and Now."

[13] Davis, "Then and Now."

[14] Godbold, The Church College, 58.

[15] Godbold, The Church College, 56-60; Bullock, A History of Emory University, 32-49.

almost forced to close but managed to survive as the result of loans from the Literary Fund of the State of Virginia.[16]

The leaders of the state-supported colleges were upset by the public perception of evangelical colleges as schools for the common man and secular colleges as havens for the elite. As a result many state schools initiated public relations campaigns to change their elite image to one more concerned with all segments of the society, rich and poor alike. After years of accusations concerning the social class bias of East Tennessee College, the faculty and trustees of that institution agreed to admit poor but worthy individuals into the school without tuition. In 1829 the trustees expanded the campaign and for maximum public visibility passed a resolution to admit "two indigent students from each county in East Tennessee of good moral character."[17]

After a new round of attacks concerning the elitism of East Tennessee University[18] in the 1840's, the faculty and trustees endorsed a proposal for student uniforms. The main purpose was to provide a very plain and simple mode of dress for the students, which would hopefully convince the community of the unpretentious and common qualities of those who attended the institution. The faculty was quite specific as to the need for thrift in the uniform adopted. The college catalogue had stated that students were forbidden to wear cloth costing over two dollars and fifty cents a yard, vests and "trimmings" not over

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[16]Davis, "Then and Now."

[17]Coulter, College Life in the Old South, 130; Minutes of the Proceedings of the Board of Trustees of East Tennessee College (Office of the President, University of Tennessee), October 11, 1821, October 3, 1829.

[18]East Tennessee College became East Tennessee University in 1840.

two dollars, hats not more than five dollars in the winter and one dollar in the summer, and shoes and boots not over four dollars in the winter and two dollars and fifty cents in the summer. The faculty agreed to wear inexpensive uniforms in 1844 "with a view to set a proper example before the students of the university and thus lead them to the practice of economy in dress," but the idea was forgotten when the desired cloth proved to be not readily available. Students who did not conform to dress code were punished, and eventually a rule and methods of enforcing it were passed which required the students to wear their uniforms both on and off campus during the term. Students did not always abide by the code, for young men were periodically punished for "extravagance in dress" throughout the antebellum period. With their zeal in dealing with the offenders, the East Tennessee University faculty proved their desire for acceptance by the common folk of the region.[19]

No matter how hard they tried, the leaders of the secular colleges could not convince the evangelicals of their freedom from class bias. At the University of Georgia, attacked by evangelicals for decades as the citadel of the rich, students provided the saints with sound evidence for their indictments. Sons of wealthy planters spent their money around Athens with little restraint and with great ostentation, much to the consternation of the administration. After consideration the leaders of the university admitted that too many students at the school had become ungovernable due to their wealth.

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[19]Stanley J. Folmsbee, "Campus Life at the University of Tennessee, 1794-1879," East Tennessee Historical Society Publications, XLV (1973), 26-27; Minutes of the Board of Trustees, ETU, December 29, 1843; Record of the Faculty of East Tennessee University, UTSC, February 17, November 8, 15, 1844, May 1, 11, 1846, December 17, 1849.

They could pay fines without pain and purchase entertainment whenever and wherever they wanted it. In 1836 the trustees of the college ordered an investigation "to enquire into the nature and extent of the evils arising to the college from the extravagant expenditure of its students through large allowances of money to them by parents and guardians." The faculty added that "almost all the misconduct of students at college, may be traced either directly or indirectly to the imprudent use of money." Such admissions merely reinforced the self-righteousness of the evangelical revivalists and bolstered their desire to provide an alternative system of higher education steeped in Christian morality.[20]

Other state universities also provided the evangelicals fuel for their accusation that non-evangelical colleges were homes for extravagance, debauchery, and immorality. The Commencement Ball at the University of North Carolina in 1818 must have offended evangelical sensibilities and biased their attitudes toward the institution for decades. Students were not admitted to the formal affair without "proper" attire. Gentlemen with boots or even a frock coat were turned away and dancing "without gloves was simply vulgar." The typical dress for the occasion was a coat of "broadcloth of sea-green color, high velvet collar to match, swallow-tail, pockets outside with lapels, and large silver-plated buttons." The description continued:

> a white satin damask vest, showing the edge of a blue under-vest; a wide opening for bosom ruffles, and no shirt collar. The neck was dressed with a layer of four or five three-cornered cravats, artistically laid and surmounted with a cambric stock, pleated and buckled behind . . . pantaloons were white canton crape, lined with pink muslin, and showed a peach-blossom tint. They were rather short in order to display flesh-colored silk stockings, and this

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[20]Coulter, College Life in the Old South, 130-31.

> exposure was increased by very low cut pumps with shiny buckles.[21]

Within a decade such extravagant dress would be quite unpopular, as the perceptions in the Jacksonian era of the emergence of the common man and the fall of the aristocracy and their manners would make such behavior seem old-fashioned and quaint. Nevertheless, the image had been etched on the mind of the evangelicals, and no doubt existed as to who the enemy was and where he could be found.

The evangelicals often used ostentatious dress as one of the great "warning signs" for those on their way to hell. So conscious were they of possible over dressing that some Methodist conferences passed strict regulations concerning the attire of their ministers. All conference ministers were instructed by their bishops to dress alike in a very simple manner to avoid any possibility of ostentation.[22] When Methodist preacher Peter Cartwright saw a member of his congregation dressed in a fashionable way, he knew that person's days as a sincere Christian were numbered. One of the first actions urged upon a newly-converted, well-dressed member of his congregation was the destruction of the new saint's "fancy" wardrobe. One wealthy gentleman who "got religion" at a camp meeting in West Tennessee stood before the congregation and tore the ruffles from his expensive shirt to symbolize his conversion. A fashionable lady obtaining religion at another gathering conducted by Cartwright discovered that she did not own a

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[21] Battle, History of the University of North Carolina, I, 268-69.

[22] David Lewis, Recollections of a Superannuate (Cincinnati, 1857), 227; A. H. Redford, Western Cavaliers (Nashville, 1876), 85.

"plain" dress. She found her most easily altered dress and immediately "trimmed it and fixed it tolerably plain." Only then did she feel presentable before her fellow evangelicals. Before one could enter into the community of the saved, he or she was required to shed all outward appearances which could be perceived as formal or pretentious. As Cartwright phrased it, "fashionable frivolities are contrary to the humble spirit of our Saviour."[23]

It was inconceivable to many of the evangelicals how good Christian parents could send their boys to these state-supported dens of iniquity. "We feel charged with astonishment," wrote Baptist minister Thomas Crocker, "when we see Baptists sending their sons by Wake Forest to Chapel Hill." Wake Forest, he argued, "has claims on the community at large on account of its morality." It is a sad fact, the Reverend remembered, that until the Baptist college was founded, Christians "could not give their sons or ward an education without spoiling their morals." At Wake Forest the morality of students was preserved and improved, and "every method is adopted and every means used to prevent immorality and dissipation."[24]

At Emory and Henry, President Collins pleaded for Methodists to avoid the state universities and referred specifically to the immorality at the Universities of North Carolina and Virginia. At North Carolina the founder had constructed the school on the "principle of excluding all Christian instruction from the youthful mind." In Virginia, he claimed that Thomas Jefferson had erected his university for the same

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[23]Cartwright, Autobiography, 49, 74-78.

[24]Paschal, History of Wake Forest College, 254.

purpose, but pressure from the evangelicals had "succeeded in defeating the intentions of its founder."[25]

The intense feelings resulting from these perceptions motivated the evangelicals to accept a role in higher education and to build colleges throughout the nation. After 1830 the inclination was to overbuild, as scores of colleges were founded in areas that simply could not attract sufficient numbers of students. As a result numerous evangelical colleges failed to survive. The perception of secular college infidelity also moved the saints to improve the educational quality of those institutions which weathered their financial storms. Methodists, Baptists, and evangelical Presbyterians grew quite sensitive to state college attacks on the quality of instruction provided at their colleges.[26]

The friends of state-supported colleges often viewed the evangelical schools with great condescension. The dogmatic religious nature of the evangelical college engendered the greatest criticism, as critics accused the schools of narrowness and a dearth of intellectual diversity. A South Carolina minister who had graduated from his state's university claimed that students in evangelical colleges suffered academically, for they were separated "from all who may entertain opposite opinions" from the prevailing denominational orthodoxy. Students were protected from the harshness of reality, for denominational zealots feared to expose them to the "true light of science." Thus, secular educators argued, the graduate of the evangelical college was

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[25]Collins, "Education, the Place and Aims of the College," 245.

[26]Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, 26-27; Duvall, The Methodist Episcopal Church and Education, 62-67.

ill-prepared to cope with the real world. Methodists and Baptists never grew numb to attacks on their narrow and uneducated manners, and over the years great resentments developed between the evangelicals and their critics.[27]

In 1850 a friend of East Tennessee University, at that time engaged in a serious controversy with the local evangelicals, outlined a common attack on evangelical education in the pages of the Knoxville Register. We all agree, he argued, that it is our Christian duty to make other people religious, but is it not also a part of the "Christianizing process to give men knowledge?" A major segment of a Christian education is to expose young men to various influences, "to stir up the mind," and "continually exercise and invigorate /its/ awakened faculties."[28] Evangelical education, the author implied, does not stimulate the mind. "It is at best," he continued,

> a very defective form of Christianity which does not set men to thinking, which does not make their minds busy and eager to gather all kinds of knowledge. The gospel in its narrowest acceptation is an awakening voice; it is a mightily developing and cultivating power for the intellect and the heart--sent from God to "leaven" the whole mass.[29]

Supporters of state-supported schools harbored numerous suspicions against evangelical education. "Sectarianism, priestly intrigue, church bigotry" were all terms used by the enemies of

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[27]Diary of Hugh Blair Grigsby, entry for November 22, 1866 as found in Fitzgerald Flournoy, "Hugh Blair Grigsby: A Virginia Boy During the War of 1812," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LXVI (October, 1958), 428-29; William M. Meigs, Life of Josiah Meigs (Philadelphia, 1887), 56-57; Coulter, College Life in the Old South, 209; Godbold, The Church College, 159.

[28]Knoxville Register, March 30, 1850.

[29]Ibid.

denominational colleges. It was not uncommon for detractors to charge the saints with using their colleges for subversive action against the nation. In 1804 when Henry Holcomb, a Baptist minister from Georgia, petitioned the General Assembly to incorporate his seminary, he was refused. A majority of the legislators believed that if the Baptists could direct a college, they would gain influence and support that would be dangerous to the religious liberties of the state.[30] This was a view shared by a number of the more "rationalistic" leaders of the nation in the early nineteenth century. The priests of every sect in America, Thomas Jefferson observed, hoped to impose their peculiar form of Christianity on the citizens of the country. Those who opposed their efforts were subjected to "various batteries of pious whining, hypocritical canting, lying and slandering" or any other abuse imaginable. Some Christian sects, he continued, were so obvious in their attempt to establish a theocracy in America that they served to unite the rest of the country against their efforts.[31]

Jefferson experienced a number of vicious encounters with preachers, but no one incident annoyed him more than his fight with the clergy over the establishment of the University of Virginia. He had always claimed that ministers had viewed "the advance of science as witches do the approach of daylight," and their action in opposition to the university gave him no reason to change his opinion. Jefferson's

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[30]George White, Historical Collections of Georgia (New York, 1855), 370.

[31]George G. Smith, The Life and Times of George Foster Pierce (Sparta, Georgia, 1888), 170-71; Jefferson to Benjamin Rush, September 23, 1800, X, 175, Jefferson to Thomas Cooper, August 14, 1820, XV, 265-66, both in LB; Jefferson to Horatio Gates Spafford, January 10, 1816, Ford, XI, 507.

decision not to institute a professorship in religion incensed vast portions of the religious community and spawned vicious charges of atheism, such as those by Emory and Henry's President Charles Collins, against him and his institution.[32]

Jefferson's friend Thomas Cooper experienced his share of evangelical narrowness and vindictiveness. As the second president of South Carolina College, Cooper found himself under constant attack from the evangelical and non-evangelical denominations alike. Cooper was a holdover from the Age of Reason; a man with a passion for reason and skepticism, who was unafraid to have his say in the public arena. Because of his controversial pronouncements, he was identified by religious leaders as a pawn of the devil. Time after time during his presidency, the legislature on the insistence of the various denominations in South Carolina investigated his "anti-religious" activities. Ultimately religious attacks would force him to resign.[33]

Cooper argued that denominational religion and higher education should be totally divorced. He was afraid of the influence of evangelical zeal on higher education, but because of the power of Presbyterians in American state colleges, he saw the Calvinists as an even greater threat to academic freedom. They, he argued, wanted to gain

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[32]Jefferson to Jose Correa de Serra, April 11, 1820, as quoted in O.I.A. Roche (ed.), The Jefferson Bible (New York, 1964), 378; Jefferson to William Short, April 13, 1820, XV, 246-47, Jefferson to Thomas Cooper, November 2, 1822, XV, 405-06, both in LB; Collins, "Education, the Place and Aims of the College," 243.

[33]Daniel Walker Hollis, University of South Carolina, I (Columbia, South Carolina, 1951), 97-115; Merle Borrowman, "The False Dawn of the State University," History of Education Quarterly, I (June, 1961), 12-13; Dumas Malone, The Public Life of Thomas Cooper (Columbia, South Carolina, 1961), 263-65.

control of higher education as a step in their attempt to form a Calvinist theocracy.[34] Cooper believed that the Presbyterians' fanaticism could be defeated by the spread of education, but was quite pessimistic about the Methodists. The light of reason he thought "would gradually eat out the more ignorant fanatics except the Methodists." They would retain their hold on the multitudes by fanning the fires of sexual passions through the erotic rhetoric of their devotional poetry designed especially for women.[35] This was not an uncommon view, for many people criticized the Methodists during the first half of the nineteenth century for their sexual exploitation of women. Benjamin H. Latrobe, an unsympathetic observer of Methodism, fearing that the licentious Methodists might influence his wife, wrote:

> I have always endeavored to prevent my wife from being led by her curiosity to attend the meetings of the Methodists . . . she joins a warmth of imagination which might receive a shock if not an impression from the incantations which form the business of their assemblies.[36]

Oftentimes professors at sectarian colleges left their positions to accept new roles in the state universities. Status and increased salary were certainly factors which prompted the moves, but the need to escape the evangelical college's obsession with doctrine and the conflicts surrounding it were also common justifications for leaving the religious institutions. The presence of such men on the faculties of state colleges served to exacerbate the hostility and condescension of

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[34]Borrowman, "The False Dawn of the State University," 12-15; Malone, The Public Life of Thomas Cooper, 262-63.

[35]Cooper to Jefferson, November 22, 1822, quoted in Malone, The Public Life of Thomas Cooper, 262.

[36]Benjamin H. Latrobe, The Journal of Latrobe (New York, 1905), entry for August 8, 1809, 250.

the state school toward their sectarian counterparts. Contemptuous of narrow denominational conflict, Professor Elisha E. Mitchell found that after accepting a professorship at the University of North Carolina he could deal with a variety of religious doctrines while student religious needs were "left to be fashioned by those persons whom their parents might point out as suitable guides in spiritual things." Mitchell claimed that professors avoided religious indoctrination at all cost at the state universities and that he had "never known an instance when a young man had forsaken the creed of his fathers" during his residence at the University of North Carolina. The state school was built on the foundation of Christianity, but no particular denomination dominated the religious life of the campus, the Presbyterian Mitchell observed.[37] Another professor at North Carolina, Henry Harrisse, echoed Mitchell's sentiments thirty years later:

> Let the Bible then be taught and expounded within the walls of our college; let its truths and sublime precepts in all their lofty simplicity be inculcated on the youthful mind of our pupils . . . but let us beware of dogmatic teachings, lest we should entail a continuance of religious intolerance, and weaken the cause of Protestantism in perpetuating the strife of sects.
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> Our institution, therefore, is not denominational. Clergymen of different denominations, taken from among the faculty and ministers in the neighborhood, are invited to preach by turns to the students.[38]

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[37]Professor Elisha E. Mitchell to Reverend John Ravenscroft, February 8, 1825, as quoted in John Bowen Hamilton (ed.), "Diary of Thomas M. Garrett at the University of North Carolina, 1849," North Carolina Historical Review, XXXVIII (October, 1961), 561-62.

[38]Henry Harrisse, "An Essay on the Organization, Regulation and Management of a Literary Institution Best Adapted to the Wants and Interests of North Carolina," quoted in Edgar W. Knight, (ed.), "Henry Harrisse on Collegiate Education," ibid., XXIV (January, 1947), 108.

A large number of Methodists and Baptists in North Carolina begged to disagree with the professors' assessments of the interdenominational participation and denominational toleration at the university.

Undoubtedly, Presbyterians dominated the state universities of the South. The situation existed because Presbyterians had originally possessed a greater interest in higher education than the evangelicals and as a result had placed a number of trained ministers on state college faculties. The Calvinists had gained a virtual monopoly of professorships, and as a result Methodists, Baptists, and revival-Presbyterians were excluded. Such a situation set the stage for great antagonism and power struggles between the Presbyterian-oriented state colleges and the evangelical institutions.[39]

The resentments and suspicions between the two groups were increased by the evangelical penchant for martyrdom. So often the evangelicals compared themselves to the early Christians, for just as the original followers of Jesus they, too, faced powerful enemies bent on the destruction of their holy cause. The evangelicals were certain that God was on their side, as they forged an education to enlighten the mind and save the soul. This confident, self-righteous spirit made for dogmatism and fanaticism in the true believers. Such an attitude served to unite and intensify the opposition of non-evangelicals, thus exacerbating the feelings of persecution of the emotionally religious.[40]

The evangelicals were incensed by the Presbyterian domination of every state-supported college in the early nineteenth century and in a

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[39]Godbold, The Church College, 154-55.

[40]McAnally, The Life and Times of Dr. S. Patton, 256.

majority of cases for most of the antebellum period.[41] The precursors of The University of Tennessee, Blount College, East Tennessee College, and East Tennessee University offer good examples of this Presbyterian hegemony. Like its two collegiate predecessors in Tennessee, Greeneville College (now Tusculum) and Washington College, Blount College was led by Presbyterians. Though it claimed to be a state-supported, non-denominational school, evidence indicates that the institution was firmly in the hands of the Presbyterian Church.[42]

In 1803 the Presbyterians almost withdrew their support for the college when they were offered a chance to sponsor a Presbyterian college in Greeneville. Greeneville College, chartered one week before Blount College in 1796, was finally able to open its doors in 1802. At that time many Presbyterians urged their brethren to support a school calling itself a Presbyterian college. Blount College, while receiving some state aid, was so dependent upon the Calvinists that leaders of the school feared it would have to close its doors when it was thought that local Presbyterians had decided to concentrate their educational support for Greeneville College. At a called board of trustees meeting, Blount College President Samuel Carrick and Tennessee Governor Archibald Roane

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[41]Charles Grier Sellers, Jr., "Jim Polk Goes to Chapel Hill," North Carolina Historical Review, XXIX (April, 1952), 191-92; Francis Leigh Williams, "The Heritage and Preparation of a Statesman, John Young Mason, 1799-1859," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LXXV (July, 1967), 315-16; Coulter, College Life in the Old South, 196-97; Margaret Coffin, Life of Charles Coffin, D.D., 1775-1853, pamphlet (Knoxville, 1937), 11.

[42]Stanley J. Folmsbee, Blount College and East Tennessee College, 1794-1840 (Knoxville, 1946), 22-23; H. M. Doak, "The Development of Education in Tennessee," American Historical Magazine, VIII (January, 1903), 70.

convinced the Presbyterians not to abandon their support of the college and thus the struggling institution endured.[43]

The Presbyterian domination of the school did not diminish for decades, nor did attacks on such control by the evangelicals. When the letters of those responsible for hiring new professors are examined, it becomes obvious that Calvinism was an essential criterion for employment. Most professorial candidates were Presbyterian ministers or at least contributing and faithful members of the Presbyterian church. So dominant was the church that when the faculty referred merely to the "faith," they were speaking of Old School Presbyterianism.[44] In a letter outlining his qualifications for a teaching position at East Tennessee University, the Reverend J. O. Stedman made an appeal for employment by stressing that all of his duties since college graduation had been confined to the ministry. "On all suitable occasions I hold myself in readiness," he wrote, "to contribute of my ability to the promotion of the interests of sound education, and, in connection with it, of <u>good, old fashioned Presbyterianism</u>."[45] In a letter to David A. Deaderick, R. H. McEwen recommended Richard O. Currey as a professor at the college. Again a personal quality of great importance was the candidate's fidelity to the Presbyterian church:

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[43]Stanley J. Folmsbee Papers, UTSC, unpublished paper "The Early History of the University of Tennessee: An Address in Commemoration of Its 175th Anniversary."

[44]Record of the Faculty, ETU, June 17, 1842; W. A. Scott to David A. Deaderick, October 27, 1840; James H. Dinsmore to David A. Deaderick, March 5, 1844; A. Church to R. B. McMullen, January 2, 1846; Daniel Baker to Joseph Estabrook, December 3, 1846, all found in UTSC; William Mack, <u>A Discourse Delivered Before the Senior Class of the University of East Tennessee</u>, pamphlet (Knoxville, 1841), 3-6.

[45]J. O. Stedman to David A. Deaderick, October 29, 1840, UTSC.

> Dr. Currey has ever lived among us, and he was a Sunday School scholar of mine, when a boy--for a great many years--a more amiable deserving boy and man I never met with, his character is unsulied--he is an Elder in the First Presbyterian Church of this /Nashville/ city, we have not a more active member in the Church--a great friend to Sabbath schools--to the cause of Temperance. He is always going about doing good. I know him intimately. He would be an acquisition to any place, he is both the gentleman and Christian--he has a most amiable wife, who is also a member of our church.[46]

As the Methodist, Baptist, and evangelical Presbyterian population of Tennessee increased throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, their demands for a voice in the workings of the university and their resentment of the blatant Presbyterian control also increased. Examples of the controversy exist as early as the 1820's when Methodists began to alert the evangelical community to the Presbyterian domination of a public-supported college. "Behold that great rotunda--that monument of folly, the College," proclaimed a candidate for the legislature in 1829; it is a "building for the rich man's sons . . . which closes its doors against the poor man's child." The candidate, Dr. John C. Gunn, blasted the expenditure of public money for the education of less than forty rich men's sons and the luxurious support of the Presbyterian president of the college, Charles Coffin.[47]

The supporters of the school had become quite sensitive to evangelical attacks on the elite and Calvinistic qualities of the institution. With the increasing criticism during the 1820's the board of trustees launched a public relations campaign in which the professors at the college were eulogized, the facilities were praised, and the public was assured "that no sectarian doctrines" would be taught. In a

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[46]Currey Papers, UTSC, R. H. McEwen to David A. Deaderick, 1846.

[47]Moses White, Early History of the University of Tennessee (Knoxville, 1879), 26-28.

letter urging Charles Coffin to accept the presidency in 1826, trustee Pryor Lea attempted to allay Coffin's fear of evangelical attack.[48] It would not be proper, Lea wrote,

> to leave you under the impression that the same extent of prejudice now exists against you that once did; far from it; and much less since you have declined preaching. If you would be unacceptable to the people here, you ought not to come, nor would I agree to it; but I have no such impression, and feel prepared to support this project to the extent of my power.[49]

The controversy would not die. It would periodically manifest itself for decades with outbreaks common well past the Civil War. In 1841, with the president and two of the five professors ministers in the Presbyterian Church, the evangelicals increased the tempo of their offensive. The books used for theological study at the institution were attacked for their Presbyterian bias, and the evangelicals charged that the "usefulness" of the university had been destroyed by excessive Presbyterian influence. Since East Tennessee University was a state school and should have been responsive to public opinion, the Methodists and Baptists claimed that with their increased numbers they deserved a greater role in the direction of the school. A motion at a board of trustees meeting in 1841 called for the immediate dismissal of all professors who were Presbyterian clergymen and their replacement with a Methodist and a Baptist, neither of which were to be ministers of the gospel.[50]

This motion failed, but the evangelical pressure soon began to have an effect. Early in 1842 one of the professors who was also a

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[48] Folmsbee, Blount College and East Tennessee College, 40-41; Pryor Lea to Charles Coffin, October 30, 1826, UTSC.

[49] Pryor Lea to Charles Coffin, October 30, 1826, UTSC.

[50] Minutes of the Board of Trustees, ETU, August 9, 1841.

Presbyterian minister resigned his chair. Professor R. B. McMullen, in his letter of resignation, told the board of trustees that he had decided months before to leave the college on the basis of his belief that "it was not proper for a minister of the gospel to be incumbered with any other business than that which properly appertained to his office." McMullen stated that his health and happiness had been injured by the controversy surrounding his role as minister and professor, and he could continue no longer under existing conditions.[51]

In 1847 the fires of the controversy were fanned again when the Reverend A. Alexander Doak, Presbyterian minister, was elected professor of languages. During the next three years emotions would reach their highest level and the dispute would achieve the apex of its intensity. In August of 1847, Darius Lyman was appointed professor of ancient languages, but a month later he resigned. Unable to find a competent professor of Greek and Latin, the board of trustees had little choice but to hire Doak, the grandson of one of the first Presbyterian ministers in Tennessee, Samuel Doak. The decision created discord within the faculty and the board of trustees which soon spread into the community, where it manifested itself as a bitter controversy between the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches.[52]

The most extreme form of the controversy can be illustrated by the debate between Presbyterian minister, Frederick A. Ross and Methodist preacher, William G. "Parson" Brownlow. Ross had written tracts and preached sermons against the Methodists since the 1820's, but he

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[51] Ibid., March 21, 1842.

[52] Folmsbee, Blount College and East Tennessee College, 18; Minutes of the Board of Trustees, ETU, August 3, 1848.

intensified his efforts in the 1840's when the Methodists were charging the Presbyterians with a plot to unite church and state. The Presbyterian minister made a great mistake when he escalated his assault on Methodism, for he evoked the wrath of the master of invective, Parson Brownlow. The Parson saved his best for Ross and unleashed a barrage of charges which attracted the attention of Protestants throughout the region. The debate between the two men not only reflected but exacerbated the conflict at East Tennessee University.[53]

Much of Ross's attack on the Methodist Church revolved around simple doctrinal points such as the doctrine of direct witness. This debate involved the metaphysical question, from where does man's moral voice emanate. Ross implied that Methodists were a mystical sect, predisposed to a belief in witchcraft and modern miracles. The product of Wesleyianism was fanaticism, emotional intoxication, and an acceptance of Romanism--the latter quite a serious charge in the eyes of Brownlow and his fellow Methodists.

It is hard to believe that such charges elicited such an extreme response; hard to believe only if one is unfamiliar with Brownlow. Brownlow's articles on Ross provide a flavor of the type and intensity of attack the minister-editor delivered. "We hope to show," Brownlow began, "that the Anglo-Saxons are much better fighters than the braggadocio mongrel race, at present conducting this 'war of conquest'

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[53]Minutes of the Board of Trustees, ETU, August 3, 1848; E. Merton Coulter, William G. Brownlow: Fighting Parson of the Southern Highlands (Chapel Hill, 1937), 54-55.

against the Methodist Episcopal Church."[54] Under a picture of a black woman in the Jonesborough Quarterly Review, Brownlow wrote:

> The above cut represents the Mother of the Rev. F. A. Ross, the present leader of the New School Presbyterian Church, in East Tennessee, and Western Virginia. In her early days, and during her courtship with David Ross, she was the slave of Ex-Gov. Page, of Virginia, as we are informed and believe. In the days of her youth, she is said to have been a beautiful negro girl, and as sensible as slaves usually are, who, like herself, are uneducated, and are brought up in common negro quarters. In after life, she became corpulent, and rather on the gross order. We shall not enter into a detailed account of the ups and downs, in life, of this Virginia Lady . . . .[55]

Brownlow pulled no punches. Ross had referred to the emotionalism of the Methodist camp meeting and the sexual implications of such excitement--allusions commonly made during the era. In response to such innuendo Brownlow charged that Ross was a "little familiar with female society" himself. Ross has been, the Parson continued, "a most passionate lover, seeking secret interviews with females, irrespective of color!" He had always "followed, flattered and caressed, certain women of the baser sort" and had become a "successful practitioner, in a certain unmentionable art." Since he had commenced his crusade against the Methodists, Brownlow claimed that Ross had attempted to rape one of his maids at his home in Kingsport, Tennessee. The poor, young working girl was alone in a bedroom, Brownlow claimed, when "his African highness" burst in and tried to initiate sexual relations. The incident became the talk of upper East Tennessee, the preacher claimed, and subjected Ross's family and friends to great humiliation. It could be

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[54]William G. Brownlow, Jonesborough Quarterly Review, I (1847), 45-47, 41. Brownlow had this volume of the Review bound and distributed as a book throughout the region.

[55]Ibid., 73.

concluded, Brownlow maintained, that the Presbyterian liar was nothing more than a common adulterer who had "polluted the marriage bed with the refuse of the common stew."[56]

It is impossible to illustrate comprehensively the degree of Brownlow's attacks on Ross in this limited space, for the Parson wrote hundreds of pages of exaggerated rubbish during the years of the debate. The following passage may be the most concise but complete statement of charges against Ross written by Brownlow:

> He is the illegitimate son of an old Virginia Negro Wench, he is the bastard son of an old Tory, who was tried for his Toryism and dishonesty, in the Revolutionary War, before the General Assembly of Virginia;--he is a proud, arrogant Free Negro, who in violation of the laws of Tennessee, was married to a white woman, in this town, twenty odd years ago;--he is a designing hypocrite, who, in order to get into decent society and marry his mulatto children to white persons, crept into the Presbyterian Ministry;--he is a bankrupt in fortunes, whose pride and extravagance, have led him to make way with his ill-gotten gains, which his Tory Father filched from European Capitalists;--and he is the war-horse of New School Presbyterianism, who is about to find his own degraded level, after an adulterous and slanderous career of twenty odd years![57]

Caught in the middle of the controversy in August of 1848, the board of trustees decided to act. The university, they lamented in a statement to the community, was being torn apart by sectarian strife, and the faculty in particular had been divided by religious dissention and jealousy. The evangelicals had gained power in both the board of trustees and the faculty and had begun to demand a louder voice in the affairs of the institution. Such efforts did not rest well with the Presbyterian majority, long accustomed to domination of the school. The

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[56]The Jonesborough Whig, October 13, 1847; Brownlow, Jonesborough Quarterly Review, I (1847), 58-61; Brownlow, Jonesborough Quarterly Review, III (1849), i.

[57]Brownlow, Jonesborough Quarterly Review, I (1847), 57.

trustees appealed to the faculty and to themselves "to unite in the effort to restore amity and quiet to our rent and distracted community." They also called for the suppression of strife among the faculty and the board members themselves. The students at the university, they regretted, were adversely affected by the conflict, as the young men were becoming cynical and embittered about college education. The trustees went on to declare that students

> educated to manhood in an atmosphere filled with jealousies and contentions, in which they are sure to participate, it is impossible that they should be fitted for fulfilling, their true mission in the world wisely and well. For their sakes therefore as well as our own be it
>
> Resolved, that this Board deeply regrets the existing dissentions in the community, growing as it believes, out of the ecclesiastical divisions in our midst, and the disposition on the part of the different religious denominations to exert, each for itself, what it considers its just and equitable share of influence in the education of the youth of the country.[58]

The appeal fell on deaf ears, for not only did the controversy continue after the summer of 1848 but it intensified. Numerous charges were made by the evangelicals against the Presbyterian-dominated school from a lack of student discipline to mismanagement of funds. Brownlow and Samuel Patton, editor of the Methodist Episcopalian, insinuated that a coverup existed within the college regarding the misuse of surplus funds amounting to forty-five thousand dollars. The money was not being used to improve the college but was being loaned to the trustees, Brownlow claimed. The evangelicals were convinced that Trustee Reverend Humes was attempting to hide the truth when he offered an amendment exempting East Tennessee University from a resolution made at a meeting of the East Tennessee Educational Association requiring all state endowed

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[58]Minutes of the Board of Trustees, ETU, August 3, 1848.

schools to make a biennial report to the legislature. Why, Brownlow asked, "would an innocent group" refuse to make the report?[59]

Charges concerning fiscal misconduct caught the attention of a number of people, including the state legislature. "The Legislature is of our opinion," the Methodists wrote, and as a result passed a regulation requiring more trustees and an act demanding regular reports on the condition of the university.[60] The controversy continued, however, and because of the obvious dissention in the university community, enrollments declined[61] to a point where operations of the college had to be suspended for a couple of terms during the 1850's. Teachers were reluctant to come to the school out of a fear of sectarian attack. After a reorganization of the board of trustees and faculty in 1850 numerous professors were offered positions at the college. The trustees found so few teachers willing to accept their offers that they turned to some of the old controversial characters in the sectarian battle. After receiving a new invitation to teach at East Tennessee University, A. Alexander Doak replied that he should "be furnished with a decent house" and be guaranteed "that there shall be no sectarian wrangling about my appointment." He was so "disgruntled with sectarian squabbling" that he had prepared himself for the bar, but the Minister was willing to return to higher education if his conditions were met by

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[59] Brownlow's Knoxville Whig, November 17, December 1, 1849; Knoxville Register, January 20, 1847.

[60] Brownlow's Knoxville Whig, January 5, February 23, April 13, 1850.

[61] Not only was the university faced with the sectarian conflict, but financial problems stemming from reduced state funding and competition from numerous small colleges contributed to the decline of enrollments and morale. Folmsbee, East Tennessee University, 1840-1879, 16.

the trustees. Doak was never rehired for the college could not stop the sectarian controversy, which would continue until the Civil War turned the participants' attention to more dramatic affairs.[62]

The battles between the friends of state colleges and the evangelicals often became quite vicious. The emotions of the debates contributed to the perception of difference between the state-supported colleges and the evangelical institutions which was of more importance than the reality of dissimilarity. This perception of difference did, however, influence actual practice, for differences, sometimes profound but more often only in degree, did exist between the two types of colleges.

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[62]Methodist Episcopalian, April 30, 1850; Brownlow's Knoxville Whig, January 5, 1850; Knoxville Register, July 11, 1849, January 12, 1850; A. Alexander Doak to Thomas C. Lyon, August 17, 1850, UTSC; Minutes of the Board of Trustees, ETU, August 3, 1848-July 21, 1860.

CHAPTER V

EVANGELICAL AND PUBLIC HIGHER EDUCATION IN PRACTICE

The evangelical colleges more than their public counterparts valued the cultivation of the moral man over the learned man. Like the denominational colleges of the colonial era, the evangelical institutions of the antebellum South were dominated by religious interests and were used to produce specific religious outcomes. Educators within the evangelical churches repeatedly admonished their fellows not to neglect the training of moral sensibilities in their attempt to discipline the student's mind.[1] "There is constant danger," the evangelicals wrote, that the higher value of education, "the preaching of the gospel," will be "subordinated to the lower-mental culture." Academic training, they argued, has the world's countenance as it "caters to the pride of the human heart." Colleges, therefore, were "in danger of seeking mental culture as an end, rather than a means to accomplish the great object" of the Church's heavenly calling. To escape this danger, the evangelicals concluded, "all our schools should be conducted in the most Christian manner, giving a prominence to spiritual religion."[2]

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[1] Bangs, A History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, III, 268; Robertson Gannaway, Sketches of Former Days (Hendersonville, North Carolina, 1859), 62; Finney, Life and Labors of Enoch Mather Martin, 283.

[2] Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, (May, 1858), 536.

For decades the evangelicals continued to write lengthy treatises on the supreme importance of pure morality as a goal of higher education. "The cultivation of the moral nature of man demands our notice," they proclaimed. "Our literary institutions are designed to pay no less regard to this department of education than to that of the intellect."[3] In 1841 a Methodist argued in the same tradition that education "includes all that moral, as well as intellectual . . . training, necessary to the development of man." College training, he proceeded, teaches "the soul what to love and what to hate. The chastened mind feels all the heaven of virtue and the hell of vice."[4] The Constitution of Emory and Henry College, written in 1836, reflected these evangelical sentiments:

> As to morals and religion--the purest principles of morality ought to be instilled into the minds of the scholars so that on their entrance into active life they may from inclination of habit evince benevolence towards their fellow creatures and a love of truth, sobriety, and industry.[5]

Since the state-supported colleges were usually under the control of Presbyterian divines, the subject of morality was rarely omitted when friends of the schools referred to their grandiose goals. The difference between the two institutions revolved around the public schools' often Calvinistically inspired faith in the value of academic training. The evangelical revivalists were far too suspicious of the ultimate benefits and effects of mental exercise to support it without reminding themselves and their audience of its secondary importance to the inculcation of Christian morality.

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[3]"Education in the Methodist Church," (October, 1842), 536.

[4]"Literary Institutions," (April, 1841), 255-56.

[5]Constitution of Emory and Henry College, HCA at EHC.

When the friends of the public institutions addressed the rationale for the existence of their colleges, they often maintained that their purpose was to illuminate the darkness of society and to expose and destroy ignorance. Unlike the evangelicals who saw the development of the moral man and the educated man as two separate endeavors, the public educators possessed enough faith in academics to contend that once an individual gained knowledge his moral dimension would be consequently enlightened.[6]

In an issue of The University Magazine, published by the students and faculty of East Tennessee University, an author addressed the question of university goals and their relationship to the training of the moral and learned man. College training, he argued in the style of his brethren in other Presbyterian-oriented public colleges, "is a natural attendant and, indeed, the very handmaiden of virtue, and promoter of true morals." Consequently, he continued, "as man advances intellectually, he also advances morally." It would be an absurdity, he argued much to the consternation of the evangelicals, "to expect any very great advancement in moral and religious truth, without some previous improvement of the mind." The uneducated mind "would not be capable of comprehending the character of the Creator, as manifested, either in his works or revelation." The uneducated man could not understand the divine system of moral truth given to man as his guide, and would thus make

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[6]John H. Hobart to Joseph Caldwell, as quoted in R. D. W. Conner, "The Genesis of Higher Education in North Carolina," North Carolina Historical Review, XXVIII (January, 1951), 12-13; Thomas W. Humes, Address Delivered Before the Alumni of East Tennessee College, October 5, 1836, pamphlet (Knoxville, 1836), 8; Battle, History of the University of North Carolina, I, 6.

little progress in the elevation of his moral state.[7] Addressing the evangelical objection that the highest order of intellectuals have often been "atheists, deists, or infidels," the author admitted that this sad fact was sometimes true, but asked his adversaries not to generalize:

> Are we to condemn an institution, because some have abused it? Are we to reject mental culture as deleterious to morals, because some have applied their powers against morality and virtue, in the cause of vice and the baser passions? Or should we not rather regard this only as a proof that some will not be influenced by moral truth; and that, though their minds have been enlightened in a measure, by the human sciences, yet they are but few exceptions to the general and almost unversal rule, that the advancement of literature and spread of civilization are favorable to morals and Christianity; and, consequently, that it is no argument upon which those may rely with any hope of success, who advocate the doctrine, the dangerous doctrine, that ignorance is the true nursery of piety?[8]

In order to influence the moral dimension of the student the evangelicals turned to their most potent weapons--the revival and the camp meeting. The evangelical schools owed their existence to the desire of the evangelical sects for another means of converting the young. As a result, most of the faculties and administrations of the religious colleges actively promoted student salvation through revivalistic enterprise. Numerous examples exist at every evangelical college of the period of faculty encouragement of religious excitement.[9]

At Emory and Henry revivals were an integral part of campus life. As a freshman in 1839, James Davis arrived at the college a few days

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[7]"Civilization Favorable to Christianity," The University Magazine /East Tennessee University/, (May, 1843), 227-28.

[8]Ibid., 228.

[9]R. H. Rivers, Life of Robert Paine (Nashville, 1916), 40-41; Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, IV, 69; Bullock, A History of Emory University, 140-41; Smith, Life and Times of George Foster Pierce, 162, 172; Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (May, 1858), 536; Paschal, History of Wake Forest College, 160-64.

after the session had begun only to find the campus deserted. He soon found out that the faculty had taken the students to a camp meeting at Lebanon, Virginia, a small town several miles from campus. For years afterwards the fall term began with the entire student body retreating to the Lebanon campground.[10] President Charles Collins sensed that he shouldered a solemn responsibility to moralize and evangelize the students. His diary contains numerous prayers asking God to help him convert every student on campus. "May the Great Head of the Church," he prayed, "call many of these precious young men to labor in his vineyard." Collins' successor as president of the college, Ephraim E. Wiley, continued his predecessor's tradition, as he took students to area revivals and promoted emotional meetings among the students.[11]

Other Southern evangelical colleges hired and evaluated their presidents on the basis of their revivalistic skill and moral fidelity. Stephen Olin was appointed president of Randolph-Macon in Virginia because of his "deep piety." Robert Paine, the first president of La Grange College in Alabama, was deemed a great educator because he brought the Holy Spirit to the north Alabama school. "Deeply emotional, full of zeal, conscientious, earnest, often powerful in prayer, and apt to teach," Paine was reported to have made his college a "Bethel--a very house of God," to the young men of La Grange. President A. B. Longstreet of Emory College in Georgia touched the prevailing evangelical sentiment when he suggested that a college president should be a man "whose

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[10]Davis, "Then and Now."

[11]Entries for September 16, 1843, December 22, 1849, and September 22, 1851, Diary of Collins, HCA at EHC; Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, 87.

textbook in morals is the Bible, and whose lessons in physics all begin and end with its author."[12]

Undoubtedly all concerned with the evangelical colleges from the president to the maintenance workers were asked to help initiate religious enthusiasm. Most faculty members at the schools saw evangelism as a significant portion of their job description and thus spent as much time exhorting their students to accept evangelical Christianity as they did teaching.[13] Despite their sensitivity to state college criticisms concerning religious indoctrination and their own protestations of denominational neutrality, evidence exists that many students were converted at evangelical colleges and much to their parents' objections joined the denomination which supported the college they attended. "Every teacher in the college employed for the instruction of whatever branch," the Constitution of Emory and Henry College read, "shall also promote as far as depends upon him, the moral and religious education of the scholars." In such a planned atmosphere revivals and emotional religious excitement were inevitable.[14]

Numerous descriptions of college revivals exist. Participants remembered the events as wild, impassioned affairs with faculty members, college presidents, and students praying, shouting, and crying for mercy alongside each other for sometimes days at a time. When revivals broke

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[12]Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, IV, 69; Rivers, Life of Robert Paine, 41; Bullock, A History of Emory University, 143.

[13]Smith, Life and Times of George Foster Pierce, 172; Godbold, The Church College, 129; Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, 87.

[14]Samuel S. Grant, "Biographical Notes," HCA at EHC; Constitution of Emory and Henry College.

out, classes were cancelled and other college routines were upset for as long as two weeks. Revivals at Wake Forest were often initiated by one zealous faculty member or one emotional student. In 1835 a wave of revivalism was precipitated by some students who had just found salvation at a local camp meeting. Shortly after their return to the college they went into seclusion--each deeply convicted and crying for mercy. Such actions seemed to have a great effect on their fellow students, for soon some of the most obstinate students on campus were experiencing conversion and others were finding the Lord while preparing their lessons. Over forty souls were won for the Baptists--a significant portion of the student body. In August of 1858 a Professor John Armstrong had preached "powerful evangelistic sermons" all month long, when on August 28 a powerful revival began. A number of professors "softened" the students' hearts with a series of sermons, after which several of the previously converted students went to the non-professing pupils and prayed, sang, and exhorted them to accept Jesus. The activity went on for days at the North Carolina college, and many students were saved.[15]

Robertson Gannaway, the steward[16] of Emory and Henry College during the 1840's, participated in and helped initiate many of the revivals at that school during the antebellum period. Gannaway recalled

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[15]Godbold, The Church College, 130; Paschal, History of Wake Forest College, 159-62.

[16]The steward was required to maintain the campus by supervising all buildings, making fires in the recitation rooms and the chapel, sweeping buildings, removing ashes, looking for damage, cleaning, procuring fuel, cutting wood, and other similar jobs. The college leaders felt it necessary that the steward be an ordained minister of the Methodist Church. Minutes of the Board of Trustees of Emory and Henry College, January 6, 1838, HCA at EHC.

a time when a couple of students had returned to the college from a camp meeting stung by conviction and in need of spiritual guidance, and President Collins sent Gannaway to pray with and exhort the young men. He complied with the president's wishes and conducted a short, unproductive prayer meeting with the students at their dormitory. As the meeting ended and the students were leaving the room, the steward felt the need to continue his exhortation. He cried out to a relative of his who had entered the room just as the two students were about to leave, "I feel very sorry to think that Satan must get some of my kinfolks, I can't give it up." Immediately, the Holy Spirit descended upon the men. A number of students in the dormitory were infected with the power of the Spirit and ran into the woods or the college farm for secret prayer. The two students who had returned from the camp meeting ran to the chapel to settle their conviction and upon resolution began to praise the Lord and attract attention all around the campus with their loud happiness. The students in the woods and fields along with a number of students and faculty members scattered around campus converged on the chapel "and got in a high way. Some were pleading for mercy, with a loud voice and some shouted for joy." Soon many faculty members and their wives, President Collins, and a number of students were all together rejoicing in the Lord. "In an hour or two," Gannaway remembered, "five of the students and a colored man we had hired got religion."[17]

The evangelicals were the experts when it came to eliciting an emotional religious response. As often as they could, the saintly educators led their students toward their ultimate proselytical tool--

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[17]Gannaway, Sketches of Former Days, 63.

the camp meeting. Most camp meetings were held in late summer or early fall and lasted for at least four and sometimes as many as nine days. Preaching would begin at the gatherings around noon on the first day and last all afternoon. There would be a break for supper, and then the evening services would begin. The meetings must have been especially impressive at night with candles and torches reflecting off of the trees producing an unearthly glow around the campground.[18] Julia A. Trevis described the scene at a gathering in Smyth County, Virginia, a rural county about twenty miles from Emory and Henry, in September 1823:

> My first night at the encampment was full of beauty. At each of the four corners of the campground was left the stump of a large tree, four or five feet high, the tops of which were rendered fireproof by a layer of brick and mortar, and upon these blazed burning pine knots, lighting up all the surroundings with their tall flames. Along the dark green foliage glittered the flickering lights of numerous lamps attached to trees; beautiful white vapors floated in the starlit sky, now resting an instant then glancing onward . . . .[19]

A loud horn would sound at the beginning of the first full day at the campground to remind everyone to get up and get ready for the day's events. When the horn blew a second time it usually meant that a pre-breakfast prayer service was beginning. At the end of this solemn service the congregation would retire to their tents, and while preparing breakfast, would sing the verses of familiar hymns over and over.[20]

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[18] D. Sullins, Recollections of an Old Man (Bristol, Tennessee, 1910), 35; James Flint, Letters from America in Reuben G. Thwaites (ed.), Early Western Travels, 1748-1846, IX (Cleveland, 1904), 261-62.

[19] Mrs. Julia A. Trevis, "Sixty Years in a Schoolroom," as quoted in Thomas W. Preston, Historical Sketches of the Holston Valleys (Kingsport, Tennessee, 1926), 168.

[20] Sullins, Recollections, 35; C. C. Sellers, Lorenzo Dow: The Bearer of the Word (New York, 1928), 21; James Hall, Legends of the West (Philadelphia, 1832), 9-10.

Around ten o'clock the first worship service of the day commenced. This ceremony would last until the preachers chose to break for lunch. A second worship service was held from three o'clock until the supper break. Then, like the first night, the emotionally stimulating nighttime or candle lighting service would begin. If the conditions were favorable, this service could last all night, ending finally with the crack of dawn. "I have seen more than one man converted at day break . . . after an all night's wrestle with the angel," wrote an old East Tennessean recollecting memories of camp meetings in the area.[21]

The impact of the camp meeting on young college boys was profound. Away from his family and friends, lonely, and homesick, a young man was quite susceptible to an emotional religious appeal. The leaders of the evangelical colleges were aware of the student's vulnerability and in order to exploit the situation planned student trips to camp meetings at the beginning of the school year.[22] In a letter to his parents, S. E. H. Dance wrote of the early year religious sensitivity of his fellow students at Emory and Henry. At the beginning of the collegiate year, he maintained, the students' minds seem

> to be more easily impressed with the necessity of becoming religious for they have just left their homes and they feel that their friends are far away from them and they think that they can find a friend who will be near to them wherever they may be if they will only seek the Lord and obtain the forgiveness of their sins. Sure enough they do find a friend who will ne'er forsake them neither in sickness nor in health. Oh that we all might better appreciate the many favors which the good Being daily yea every moment showers down upon us.[23]

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[21]Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I, 266-68; Sullins, Recollections, 37.

[22]Davis, "Then and Now"; S. E. H. Dance to his parents, May 23, 1852, same to same, April 26, 1853, HCA at EHC.

[23]S. E. H. Dance to his parents, April 26, 1853.

One of the most important aspects of the camp meeting was its use of music to elicit emotional response. Nathan Bangs declared that music "served to excite the feelings of devotion, and keep alive that spirit of excitement which characterized" the camp meeting. Bishop Asbury, who always recognized the value of music in a worship service, worked throughout his life to provide songbooks for Methodists all over the world. Other evangelical denominations also used group singing in their camp meetings. Leaders of the Baptist Church in North Carolina declared that "nothing seemed to engage the attention of the people more" than music. The preachers realized that congregations could be prepared for evangelical preaching with just a little singing. In order to ensure a large number of conversions, spirituals were often sung as the preacher issued his invitation for sinners to come forward to seek salvation.[24]

Borrowing from their camp meeting the evangelical educators used music to excite emotions at their educational institutions. In an attempt in 1858 to initiate even more revivals at their colleges than occurred normally, a committee on higher education of the General Conference of the Methodist Church, South called for more music on campus. Music, the preachers argued, "has a moral character, aside from the words or sentiment which it accompanies." When suitable lyrics are added to emotional music, "the heart is carried more readily than by almost any other means." The committee urged the church to publish

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[24]Joseph J. Tigert (ed.), The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (Nashville, 1894), 100; Asbury's Preface to the Pocket Hymn Book quoted in Journal of Asbury, III, 398; Bangs, History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, I, 105; Joseph Biggs, A Concise History of the Kehukee Baptist Association (Tarborough, North Carolina, 1834), 114-15.

sacred music in great quantities so that all college students could come under its profound effect.[25] Music is so powerful, they argued, that

> great revolutions, if they have not commenced, have been marvellously assisted by the power of song; and grave legislative bodies have felt bound to make enactments against so powerful an agency.
> . . . . . .
> Surely there is no poetry more beautiful or sublime than sacred poetry; no music better calculated to move the heart than sacred music . . . . We would earnestly urge all who have these educational interests under their control, to look well into this matter.[26]

The administrations and faculties of the state-supported institutions were not as enthusiastic about revivals as their evangelical counterparts. In fact, some of the teachers and administrators at public colleges were opposed to the revivals, especially those on campus. Revivals, however, did occur at state-supported colleges, many times against the will of the leaders of the institutions. Most public college presidents, recognizing the political realities of operating their schools in an evangelized society, refused to crusade against the revivals and chose to let them run their course through a policy of benign neglect.

At East Tennessee University, while not encouraging student participation in a Methodist revival during the fall of 1852, the president and his faculty excused from class all students who wanted to participate in it. The Methodists in Chapel Hill initiated revivals at the University of North Carolina on several occasions. A revival in 1858 brought great excitement to the North Carolina campus and salvation to

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[25] Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (May, 1858), 536-37; Paschal, History of Wake Forest College, 162.

[26] Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (May, 1858), 536-37.

over one hundred souls. A majority of the faculty at Chapel Hill objected to student participation in the revival, however, and spoke specifically of the unhealthy emotionalism engendered by the young Methodist preachers. Revivals became quite common at the University of Georgia after 1826, when a powerful meeting swept the campus. During the emotional outpouring, however, classes continued on schedule, and students engaged in the singing, praying, and praising only after they had taken care of their regular college duties. In 1830 the university finally granted a two day vacation for those students who attended the camp meeting, but fined a number of students who remained longer than the designated period. In 1832 a student petitioned the faculty for a leave from classes so that he could attend a local camp meeting. Illustrating the difference between themselves and the evangelical educators, the Georgia faculty denied the student permission to go to the meeting. When he sent to the meeting anyway, the educators, "considering this zeal out of all proportion to reason," expelled him.[27]

Students at the state universities often did not grant the camp meeting the same degree of reverence and respect given by their evangelical peers. Ruffin Wirt Tomlinson, a student at the University of North Carolina, described a trip to a woodland gathering in his journal in October of 1841. Before leaving for the meeting, Tomlinson and another young man and lady "drank a tickler of brandy." After arriving at the assemblage, the student left to examine a friend's cotton, only to return to look for pretty girls. Finding no attractive women, Tomlinson amused himself "with the young fellows by talking about fox hunting and

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[27]Record of the Faculty of ETU, November 5, 1852; Godbold, The Church College, 182-84; Coulter, College Life in the Old South, 211-12.

the girls." In a less than zealous spirit, Tomlinson continued his description of the religious service:

> Talked with some old fellows about the price of cotton and the scarcity of money and hard times . . . . In the evening I went home with Brother James and took supper with him and returned. That night we had one or two converts some shouting the weather was rather cold--not very many people.[28]

Undoubtedly, students and faculties at the evangelical colleges were more zealous in their religious pursuits than those at the public colleges. Religion at the sectarian schools was an omnipresent concern, rarely overlooked by anyone involved with the institution. At the public schools faculty members sometimes worked to free themselves from religious constraints, while students often emphasized the lack of religious concern among the majority of their peers. One must be careful with generalizations about the colleges, however, for irreligious activity at the religious schools and outbreaks of evangelical religion at the state-supported colleges defy any neat catagorization.

Evangelical colleges usually seemed to attract a more pious, protected, and naive student than did the state institutions. Parents who sent their sons to the sectarian colleges were usually of strong religious convictions and were supportive of the spiritual emphasis of the schools. It was common for students at the evangelical schools to keep their parents informed of their religious growth. In a letter to his parents in 1852, S. E. H. Dance told of his "spiritual learning" at Emory and Henry College. "I trust I am making a little progress in the divine life," he wrote. "I am somewhat cold now to what I have been," he

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[28]Journal entry for October 23, 1841, as quoted in John L. Sanders (ed.), "The Journal of Ruffin Wirt Tomlinson: The University of North Carolina, 1841-1842," North Carolina Historical Review, XXX (January, 1953), 112-13.

lamented, "but by no means desirous of turning back to the world."[29] In letters typical of evangelical students during the antebellum period, Dance described his struggle to become a better Christian:

> I cannot say that I enjoy much of the love of God now as it is my privilege to enjoy but still I am trying in my weak manner to serve my heavenly father. I have many weaknesses. Even when I would bow down in prayer to my heavenly father I feel sometimes that I have sinned. For my mind is often led off from God. This week I think I am doing better than I have for two or three weeks past. I am determined to try and overcome this enimy /sic/. I know that I can do nothing of myself but if I will only perform any part I feel confident that the Lord will perform his. I want you to assist me by your prayers.[30]

Robertson Gannaway, the steward at Emory and Henry, recalled an incident involving an Emory and Henry student and his sister then attending Asheville Institute, a Methodist school for girls. Both young people professed religion and were members of the Methodist Church. In a manner characteristic of the leaders of evangelical schools, Gannaway became quite alarmed when the brother and sister along with a number of friends who had joined them for the evening played a game that caused them to laugh a great deal and talk very loudly. Gannaway was offended by the actions and "thought in all the honesty of /his/ heart, that it was wrong for professors of religion to be so wild." Such action would tend, he thought, "to dissipate the mind and turn it from better things." The pious steward felt it his obligation to stop such debauchery and after a moment's thought commenced singing a spiritual:

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[29] J. C. Patton to George Patton, May 14, 1850, HCA at EHC; S. E. H. Dance to parents, May 23, 1852.

[30] S. E. H. Dance to parents, April 26, 1853.

Shout along, and pray along, ye heaven born soldiers
Shout along, and pray along, and pray by the way,
Pray on Christians, don't get weary,
Never get tired of serving the Lord.[31]

The effect was immediate, as all the noise was abruptly halted. Before long the young people were engaged in earnest prayer. A few moments later all involved were in bed for the evening, and Gannaway had no doubt that the student minds were all spiritually exercised before they went to sleep. Brethren of the Methodist Church, Gannaway exhorted, "you are commanded to reprove sin and not in anywise neglect it." With administrative attitudes such as these it is not surprising that the evangelical colleges attracted their share of the pious and protected.[32]

Students at the public colleges simply did not concern themselves with religion to the same degree as the evangelical student. John Donelson Coffee, a student at the University of Nashville, expressed a sentiment typical of young men attending non-evangelical institutions when he lamented the fact that attendance of church was required. At East Tennessee University faculty members were plagued for years by inattentive and irreverent students who found great pleasure in disrupting church and prayer services at the college. In May of 1844 disturbances had become so prevalent at morning prayers that the frustrated faculty ordered that students remain standing throughout the services. Nothing seemed to solve the problem for the disruptions continued for years. In 1847, the future historian of the university,

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[31]Gannaway, Sketches of Former Days, 108-09.

[32]Ibid., 109.

Moses White, was reprimanded by the faculty for "bringing the idiot Norman into the chapel at evening prayers for the purpose of creating disorder."[33]

Ruffin Wirt Tomlinson was quite candid about the lack of religious concern among the students at the University of North Carolina. After attending a meeting in which a local minister called for the establishment of a Bible society on campus that would purchase Bibles for poor nations, Tomlinson proclaimed that he did "not see the use of giving the Bible to a man who cannot read." Students at North Carolina "are all Heatherns . . . for the Bible is scarcely ever read by any man in the college. The people in the Sandwich Islands read the Bible more than" do the students at North Carolina, and, he continued, the preachers who asked for contributions to such impractical schemes were nothing more than "damned loafers" who take advantage of the liberality of some students. A few months later Tomlinson confided to his journal that the boys at North Carolina were paying for their indiscretion and moral infidelity, as the college was tormented by the clap.[34]

While the evangelical colleges did attract more pious, religiously obsessed young men than did the state university, the leaders of the sectarian colleges consistently exaggerated the dominance of this type of student on their campuses. Students filled with religious spirit undoubtedly posed fewer disciplinary problems for their professors, but

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[33]John Donelson Coffee to his mother, January 31, 1831, quoted in Aaron M. Boom (ed.), "A Student at the University of Nashville: Correspondence of John Donelson Coffee, 1830-33," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XVI (June, 1957), 149-50; Record of the Faculty, ETU, February 9, May 3, November 1, 1844, July 6, 1847.

[34]Journal entries for January 17 and May 21, 1842, Sanders, "The Journal of Ruffin Wirt Tomlinson," 238, 253.

the evangelicals had their share of young rowdies bent on upsetting the cherished routine of a staid professor. Indeed, the evangelical schools had numerous student disturbances, but in general the sectarian campus was somewhat more placid and controlled than the public college.[35]

Disturbances and outbreaks of violence were bound to occur in an atmosphere as tightly regulated as antebellum college life. Both the evangelical and the state-supported schools filled the student's entire day with structured, well-supervised activities. At both the public and evangelical colleges the school day began at sunrise when the bellman rang the college bell. About thirty minutes later students would assemble at the college chapel for morning prayers, and upon completion of the short ceremony return to their rooms for morning study. After breakfast classes began and with slight variations between schools would usually continue until five o'clock. At this time, depending on the institution, students either performed chores for the college, went to evening prayers, or retired to their rooms for study. After supper two hours, usually seven to nine o'clock, were set aside for supervised evening study. At no antebellum public or evangelical college did candles burn past nine o'clock.[36]

In an attempt to break the monotony of their existence and to challenge the authority of those who exercised control over their lives, students at the institutions struck back at faculties and administration. The boys at East Tennessee University, perpetually frustrated by the

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[35]Godbold, The Church College, 118; Bucke, The History of American Methodism, 563.

[36]Davis, "Then and Now," 5-7, 12; Folmsbee, "Campus Life at the University of Tennesse, 1794-1879," 29-30; Williams, "The Education of William A. Graham," 9-10.

collegiate routine were always ready to challenge the authority of the educators. The young men fought, somtimes with guns and knives, drank to excess, gambled, skipped campus, consorted with "profligate women," and sometimes indecently exposed themselves to the people of Knoxville, all to the consternation of the faculty and administration. In an incident typical of East Tennessee University, the faculty in March of 1843 met to investigate who was responsible for a rock throwing incident at the dormitories. As was the common practice, the faculty asked several members of the student body to testify as to their observations of and role in the debacle. During the testimony it became apparent that liquor was involved in the disturbance, and it was finally discovered through examination of a number of students who brought the liquor into the dormitory. The guilty student was called before the faculty and promptly suspended.[37]

The University of North Carolina witnessed scores of incidents similar to those at East Tennessee University. Student misbehavior encompassed more violent dimensions at North Carolina, however, as gun fights and duels were not uncommon occurrences. Thomas M. Garrett, a rather mild-mannered student at the university in the antebellum era, wrote of his involvement in a campus gun fight in 1849. While attending a Saturday night meeting of his literary society a student became incensed at Garrett during a debate and pulled a gun on the young man. The gun-wielding student was restrained, but a resolution to the conflict was not reached. Feeling endangered, Garrett with many reservations

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[37]Lenoir Papers, UTSC, Walter Franklin Lenoir to W. B. Lenoir, October 2, 1836; Record of the Faculty, ETU, December 4, 1840, June 7, October 22, December 27, 1841, March 18, December 12, 1843, November 25, 1844, January 23, February 13, October 23, 1846.

carried a gun to church the next morning, but luckily his adversary did not appear. Early Monday morning Garrett was ambushed by the young man while still in the dormitory. With little hesitation, Garrett pulled the gun out of his coat and fired point-blank at his enemy. The gun misfired and the two students were separated, never to fight again. Rationality and fear had overcome honor and courage, for the students realized how close they had come to serious injury or death. No student reported the incident to the faculty and neither Garrett nor his "friend" were ever punished.[38]

The University of Virginia experienced more student riots and disturbances than any other college in the antebellum period. Jefferson's university withstood all student offenses, from the ubiquitous drunkenness, fighting, and gambling to the more serious rioting, vandalizing, and shooting. Riots became periodic events at the school in the 1820's and 1830's, and professors who intervened in the riots were stoned and beaten with weapons. Soon they learned to stay home when students threatened campus violence.

In 1836 after defying a faculty edict to disband their military company, students marched to the Rotunda, raised their flag to the top of its pole and shot it to shreds. That night was filled with great disorder, as students broke the windows of pavillions, shot holes in the various buildings around campus, and threatened professors and their families with personal harm. The violence started on a Saturday night, continued all day Sunday, and intensified on Sunday night. The faculty

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[38]Entries for July 1, August 23, September 12, 29, 30, October 1, November 3, 4, 1849, as quoted in Hamilton (ed.), "Diary of Thomas Miles Garrett at the University of North Carolina," 241, 384-85, 390-91, 395-97, 404-05.

began to arm themselves, fearing the students' claim that they would kill professors. No one was shot, but the riot continued well into Tuesday when finally magistrates, the sheriff, and a military guard were placed in control of the campus. Such action did not end the rioting at the college, for in the following years rebellions of equal or greater intensity rocked the campus. In 1840 during a riot to celebrate the student violence of 1836, a professor attempting to pull the mask off of a young rioter was fatally shot. The murderer was apprehended and testified that he held no grudge against the deceased professor, but simply that he had intended to shoot the first faculty member who tried to remove his disguise during a riot.[39]

Emory and Henry seemed quite placid compared to its fellow Virginia college at Charlottesville. The extent of the trouble at Emory and Henry involved a wave of obscene graffiti on the walls of the college chapel and the discovery of some students hiding weapons in their rooms.[40] As one historian of evangelical education has observed, "Moral standards were high, discipline strict, and expulsion for breach of ethical and religious regulations carefully observed." Such practice combined with the sanctified students the institutions tended to attract, "led to a prudishness of behavior" on evangelical campuses.[41]

One Methodist school served as the exception to the historian's generalization concerning the behavior of evangelical college students.

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[39]Bruce, History of the University of Virginia, 298-311.

[40]Minutes of the Board of Trustees, EHC, February 9, 1838 to March 12, 1859; Entries from January 18, 1843 to September 22, 1851, Diary of Collins; Davis, "Then and Now."

[41]Bucke, History of American Methodism, 563.

In the spring of 1837 a student quarrel at La Grange College in northern Alabama turned into a knife fight that ended when a young man fatally stabbed a fellow student in the heart. The campus divided into two camps, one siding with the victim and the other with the winner of the fight. Tensions continued through the summer into the fall when friends of the killer rebelled against what they considered the unfair treatment of the president and faculty. A number of these students were suspended but subsequently armed themselves and refused to leave the campus. Along with the majority of students still enrolled in the college, they threatened to burn and destroy the college and kill faculty members in retaliation for the unfair treatment of their knife-wielding friend. During the crisis one youth confronted the president of the college with a pistol and aimed it at his heart. The president's biographer recounted the scene:

> All of the manhood of President Paine was aroused. Rising to his full height, without the quailing of a nerve and with the authority of "might which makes right," he said, "Put down that pistol!" The pistol dropped, and the defiant hand hung limp and powerless by the side of the intimidated and trembling youth.[42]

Granting total credit to President Paine for eventually quelling the riot, the latter day Boswell described his model as a loving Christian educator who understood the manly art of discipline. He possessed traits of character

> which would have fitted him to command an army. He had the highest courage. He never lost his presence of mind in the midst of danger. He was the stuff of which martyrs are made. Moral courage, as free from rashness on one hand as from cowardice on the other, was one of the great features of his exalted character.[43]

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[42]Rivers, Life of Robert Paine, 50-53.

[43]Ibid., 54.

Strict lines of difference cannot be drawn between the disciplinary methods used by the evangelical and public colleges. Often more differences in disciplinary technique were found among the various public institutions than between the public and sectarian schools in general. When differences did exist between the state-supported and the evangelical, they concerned the degree of reliance on religion as a disciplinary tool.

Since the Second Great Awakening all schools had utilized religion as a method of student control to some degree.[44] In most colleges, especially state-supported, the post-Revolutionary wave of student ideological rebellion and the ubiquitous non-ideological rebellions which ensued after ideological concerns had faded created great fears among educators. College leaders in the antebellum period may be described as harboring an obsession with order in their schools. A substantial majority of their time was devoted to implementing plans that they thought would make for a more orderly campus.[45]

Virtually every state-supported Southern college burdened their faculties with unpleasant disciplinary chores. At East Tennessee University professors were required to check student rooms at least once a day for "irregularities." The professor who observed a violation of the law was to reprove the offender and report the circumstance to the next faculty meeting. Judging from the preoccupation of faculty meetings

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[44]David F. Allmendinger, Jr., "The Dangers of Ante-Bellum Student Life," Journal of Social History, VII (Fall, 1973), 75-85.

[45]Cunningham, Timothy Dwight, 123-25, 178-79, 218; Miller, The Revolutionary College, 261; Hansen, Liberalism and American Education, 206; Schmidt, The Old Time College President, 188-89; Beecher, Autobiography, 28-29.

with minor student offenses, the professors seemed to be faithful to their duties.[46]

The faculty demanded total deference from the students and incorporated such desires into their codes of discipline. The rules and regulations for students at East Tennessee College were quite similar to the codes at other state colleges. Every student was required to sign the following pledge:

> On condition of being admitted to East Tennessee College I promise, on my faith and honor, to observe all the laws and regulations of this college; particularly that I will faithfully avoid using profane language, gaming, and all indecent disorderly behavior and disrespectful conduct to the faculty of the same.[47]

A wide range of requirements and prohibitions were covered under the college laws. The faculty stood firmly in loco parentis and treated the students accordingly. Every student from outside of Knoxville was placed under the care of a local townsperson approved by the faculty. The patron was to facilitate the professors in their fatherly role, keeping a watchful eye on a student's behavior and financial concerns. The failure of a student to report a major financial transaction to the patron could result in the young man's dismissal from the college.

In an attempt to force students to defer to the faculty, the trustees passed a series of laws regulating student behavior around their professors. When any faculty member was present in the college hall, students were required to remove their headwear and immediately sit down and attend to their studies in silence. When a faculty member entered a

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[46]E. Merton Coulter, "Why John and Joseph LeConte Left the University of Georgia, 1855-56," Georgia Historical Quarterly, LIII (March, 1969), 27-28; Record of the Faculty, ETU, October 21, 1842 and March 15, 1844.

[47]Minutes of the Board of Trustees, ETC, October 11, 1821.

room where students were assembled, they were to rise and receive the professor with respect. The same procedure was to be followed at the "entrance and departure of any respectable stranger in the course of the day." The rules further required that when a class was instructed to recite, the students were to sit down together, and when called to recite his part each student was to "stand upright and answer respectfully."[48]

Hoping to enhance their position by cultivating a religious atmosphere, the professors at East Tennessee University laid down strict religious regulations. "It shall be the duty of the faculty," the laws read, "diligently to inspect and watch over the manners and behaviors of the students and . . . to recommend to them . . . a diligent attention to the public and private duties of religion."[49] The president was required to pray with the students and read them a portion of the scriptures at mandatory morning and evening services. He was also required to speak frequently at assemblies of the entire student body "on such religious and moral . . . subjects as he shall judge proper for the instruction of the college."[50]

The college laws contained religious requirements for students as well as the president and faculty. The Lord's day was to be kept holy by all students. If a student was to profane the "said day by making indecent noise or disturbance" or if he were to behave "profanely at the time of public worship or prayers at the college," he was to be punished. An examination of the faculty records at East Tennessee University indicates that students were less than intimidated by such admonitions,

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[48]Ibid. [49]Ibid. [50]Ibid.

for disturbances at worship services were constant in the antebellum period.[51]

A student convicted of blasphemy, robbery, fornication, theft, forgery, duelling or any other crime against state law was to be expelled immediately. If a student was found guilty of fighting, striking, quarrelling, challenging, turbulent words or behavior, fraud, lying, defamation, or wearing women's apparel, he was to be punished relative to the nature of the crime. There seemed to be a problem with students desiring to don women's apparel, for not only did the trustees feel the need to prohibit such activity in the college rules, but almost twenty years later they thought it necessary to prohibit the presentation of plays with female characters.[52]

Billiards, dice, or backgammon were strictly forbidden by the trustees, and if a student was caught with playing cards more than once he was to be expelled. The trustees seemed unable to make up their minds about dancing at East Tennessee University. In 1827 the board ruled that no student should attend a "dancing party, or any festive entertainment in the town of Knoxville or its vicinity."[53] In 1831 the board repealed its decision, only to pass further anti-dancing regulations in 1840.[54] No evangelical college would have experienced such indecision on the prohibition of dancing.

The board of trustees and the faculty took their role as guardians of student morals very seriously. Entire faculty meetings were

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[51]Ibid. [52]Ibid., October 11, 1821 and December 18, 1839.

[53]Ibid., May 12, 1827.

[54]Ibid., April 7, 1831 and October 7, 1840.

devoted to discussions of how to handle students who had been playing marbles, keeping untidy rooms, stealing chairs, engaging in public profanity, threatening physical harm to townspeople, or bringing black women to their dorms at night.[55] A letter drafted during a faculty meeting in 1849 to a concerned father of a student at East Tennessee University illustrates the role that antebellum college faculties, be they evangelical or public supported, felt compelled to play. Order was their goal, and they stood ready to walk the extra mile to achieve it:

> Dear Sir, your letter . . . requesting a statement of your son, George's habits of study and moral deportment . . . was received and laid before the faculty.
>
> I am instructed to say in reply that your son's application and attainments in study were certainly satisfactory. But is due to your polite request candidly to inform you that George had unfortunately indulged in habits of intemperance; and that, he openly associated in town, particularly after his withdrawal from the college, with persons notorious for the practice of gaming. In view of these facts the faculty regrets to say, the laws of the institution do not authorize them to grant him an honorable dismission.[56]

There were educators in state colleges who rejected this rigid disciplinary tradition and advocated a more flexible relationship between faculty and student. During the Revolutionary period many college administrators filled with the republican spirit had advocated a more liberal means of securing order in the college. Faculties were required to dispense with rigid regulations and replace them with a less codified system that appealed to the common sense and reasonability of the student. As discussed in a preceding chapter, when Revolutionary ardor waned so did professorial allegiance to this reason-based "science of

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[55]Record of the Faculty at ETU, November 10, 1843, March 15, April 12, October 24, November 25, 1844, March 28, July 14, 1845, October 23, 1846.

[56]Ibid., April 20, 1849.

discipline."[57] During the antebellum period such liberal methods of control were echoed only by the aging Enlightenment-inspired, Revolutionary generation or their atavistic supporters.

Jefferson's vision of the University of Virginia offers the best example of a college conceived upon the liberal "science of discipline." The Sage of Monticello had advocated a system of student control which would avoid the use of fear as its foundation. Students should be guided, not controlled, by an appeal to their best instincts, with the hope of cultivating those numerous qualities which he defined as "erect character." It was inconsistent with the spirit of republicanism, Jefferson argued, that college students "should be hardened to disgrace, to corporal punishment, and to servile humiliations."[58] Under Jefferson's direction, the board of visitors adopted the guiding principle that excessive student regulation should be avoided. As the historian of the University of Virginia has suggested, "In short, it was the University of Adolescent Freedom which Jefferson had in view, and not the College of Juvenile Discipline."[59]

For the first month of university operations the students conducted themselves in a manner which strengthened Jefferson's hope that "self government might be trusted to the discretion of the students," but their actions on the night of October 1, 1825, brought a change of perspective to the former president. A group of drunken students had donned masks and set out in the early morning hours to disturb the

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[57]Miller, The Revolutionary College, 174-77, 261.

[58]Bruce, History of the University of Virginia, 258; Jefferson to Joseph Coolidge, Jr., October 13, 1825, LB, XVIII, 343.

[59]Bruce, History of the University of Virginia, 258-59.

professors. The members of the faculty who attempted to quiet the students were verbally abused and stoned by the inebriated students.[60] No offense was punished, for the faculty was waiting for the student governing body, the board of censors, to act. The students on the board refused to meet for the purpose of disciplining their peers, proclaiming that they would not be judges and spies. After the student refusals, the faculty, in deference to Jefferson's vision of the school, refused to assume disciplinary duties, and the institution fell into a state of "insubordination, lawlessness, and riot."[61]

The problems moved the faculty and administration at the University of Virginia to view their roles from a new perspective.[62] A disillusioned Jefferson reluctantly wrote in June of 1826 that "occasional instances of insubordination have obliged us . . . to strengthen our regulations." The best method of control, he lamented, was the civil authority. With a perspective quite dissimilar to his attitude before the opening of the institution, he wrote, "the terrors of indictment, fine, and imprisonment . . . have the most powerful effect."[63]

Within just a few months after Jefferson's death in July of 1826, the code of discipline at the University of Virginia was as severe as any

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[60]Jefferson to Joseph Coolidge, Jr., October 13, 1825, LB, XVIII, 343.

[61]Minutes of the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia, October 3, 1825, LB, XIX, 468-69; Bruce, History of the University of Virginia, 263.

[62]Minutes of the Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia, October 6 and 7, 1825, LB, XIX, 477, 484.

[63]Jefferson to Joseph Coolidge, Jr., June 4, 1826, ibid., XVIII, 356.

public college in the region. As Phillip A. Bruce, the historian of the university, described the retrenchment:

> The code of regulation grew too plethoric; it went down too deeply and too intimately into the social life of the students; it encouraged an espionage too petty and too unremitting to be consonant with the spirit of a seat of learning that justly claimed to be modeled on the standards of a great university. The system now adopted was the system of the strait-jacket.[64]

Jefferson was not the only educational thinker to question the philosophical foundations of collegiate discipline in the antebellum South, although he was the only one who had even a brief chance to implement his vision. At the University of Georgia in the 1840's and 1850's two brothers, John and Joseph LeConte, clamored for professional freedom from the duties of visiting rooms and spying on students. President Alonzo Church, an advocate of strict discipline, was offended by the LeContes' mere suggestion that faculty duties should be relaxed, and, as a result, a bitter controversy on the subject erupted which spilled over into the Georgia newspapers.[65] "With our small faculty," Church told the board of trustees, "we need men who are willing to labor--and who will submit to the drudgery of instruction, and to the disagreeable service of sustaining the discipline of the institution."[66]

While disciplinary methods did not greatly differ between the evangelical and state-supported college, the sectarian institutions did rely more heavily on religion and revivalistic crowd control techniques

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[64]Bruce, History of the University of Virginia, 265.

[65]Coulter, "Why John and Joseph LeConte Left the University of Georgia," 27-28; Thomas J. Diener, "A Junior College Idea at the University of Georgia," Georgia Historical Quarterly, LVI (Spring, 1972), 83; Coulter, College Life in the Old South, 252-55.

[66]Minutes of the Board of Trustees, July 31, 1854, University of Georgia, as quoted in Coulter, College Life in the Old South, 253.

to keep students in line. Just as the evangelical revivalists took their congregations and elicited a desired response, the evangelical educators exploited student fears of a vengeful God and His eternal punishment of sinners. This evangelical preoccupation with eternity served well the purposes of discipline, for students at evangelical colleges were never allowed to feel very far removed from the reality of their morality. Leaders were aware of the impact that death could make on the emotional climate of a campus and worked hard to promote religious revivals after the loss of a student or community member. Educators initiated powerful revivals lasting for days after the deaths of students at Mercer, Randolph-Macon, and Emory and Henry.[67] After experiencing the "presence of Christ" at a deathbed service in September of 1843, Emory and Henry President Charles Collins described the college chapel service that evening:

> I have just now returned from the Sunday night prayer meeting and God was there also. The death of William Henderson seems to have made a deep impression on many. God grant that the work begun may spread until every student in college is converted. Four offered themselves for prayers and professed their solemn resolution to seek religion. Heavenly Father pity them and lead them on by the influence of the spirit. Suffer them not to fall back, but make them burning and shining lights in Thy cause. May this be the beginning of good days. O may my own soul be converted anew--baptized anew and filled with glory and God.[68]

The evangelicals held that the most important elements in college discipline were a Christianized student body and a pious, proselytizing faculty. It was essential that the faculty of an evangelical school be of the highest moral character, for it was by their example that the sectarians hoped to accomplish their goal of a sanctified and orderly

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[67] Godbold, The Church College, 130-37.

[68] Entry for September 16, 1843, Diary of Collins.

student body.[69] The influence of the professors at Emory and Henry, wrote James Davis almost sixty years after his graduation, "upon my life and character was greater than that of any other men." Davis observed that their consistent temperance and uniformity of habit allowed the professors to teach as "much by example as by precept." Evangelical leaders served as public relations agents for their college faculties and tried to present them to students and the public as latter day saints, full of knowledge and sanctity far beyond human capacity. "As a Christian," Davis wrote, students at Emory and Henry believed that President Charles Collins walked "near to God." Another professor and president of Emory and Henry subsequent to Collins, E. E. Wiley, was said to possess "but one side to his character and that was the bright side."[70] In a biography typical of scores of books written about evangelical educators, Methodist minister R. H. Rivers depicted the president of La Grange College, Robert Paine, as a man of epic stature:

> He was then /1833/ in the prime of his manhood, just thirty-four years old. His movements were the perfection of ease and grace. His form was so faultless that it would have served as a model for the Apollo Belvedere. He was in perfect health. His ample forehead, broad and high, and then without a wrinkle, indicated the placidity of his temper and the might and energy of his powerful brain. His large dark eyes expressed so much of genius, intelligence, and principle as to impress most deeply even the most casual observer. His mouth indicated firmness, and the whole contour of his features impressed me that I was in the presence of a man of exalted character.[71]

While the evangelicals tried to portray their professors as unique and saintly, the subject matter they taught was little different

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[69] Constitution of Emory and Henry College.

[70] Davis, "Then and Now."

[71] Rivers, Life of Robert Paine, 43.

from their secular counterparts. Both the sectarian and public colleges in the antebellum period adhered to the traditional classical curriculum. The typical college of the era forced students to spend one-half of their time as freshmen and sophomores studying Greek and Latin and one-third of their junior and senior years in such pursuit. Freshmen often studied Livy, Xenophon, Herodotus, Thucydides, algebra, geography and grammar; sophomores' time was filled by Horace, Demosthenes, Xenophon, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Euclid, geometry, trigonometry, and rhetoric; juniors were expected to master Cicero, Homer, Tacitus, spherical trigonometry, natural philosophy, astronomy, a text on history, and Hebrew (at some schools); seniors concerned themselves with Paley's moral philosophy, natural theology, evidences of Christianity, Stewart's Philosophy of the Mind, rhetoric, logic, Locke's Essays, chemistry, mineralogy, geology, and natural philosophy.[72]

Even when it came to teaching the Bible, the state and sectarian colleges differed very little. Evangelical colleges were so torn by disagreement on whether or not to use the Bible as a textbook or to introduce courses in the Bible that very few of them used the book in their curricula until after the Civil War.[73] The opponents of teaching with or about the Bible argued that its use in the classroom would degrade it "to a level with the common test-books of science." Such an

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[72]Folmsbee, East Tennessee University, 1840-1879, 11-13; Duvall, The Methodist Episcopal Church and Education, 101; Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, 150-51; Hofstadter and Hardy, The Development and Scope of Higher Education in America, 11.

[73]Bucke, History of American Methodism, I, 563; Duvall, The Methodist Episcopal Church and Education, 81; Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (May, 1854), 312; Godbold, The Church College, 81.

action, they argued, would be as destructive to our purposes of universal salvation, "as it would be irreverent toward /the Bible's/ divine Author."[74]

Proponents countered with the argument that the Bible should be used in every school at every grade level, for "with this Divine volume familiarity can never breed contempt. Like the nobelest characters on earth," they continued, "the more intimate our association with it, the deeper will be our reverence."[75] Such arguments finally won and chairs of Biblical literature were established in most evangelical colleges by the 1870's and 1880's.

Educators in both the public and religious colleges placed great faith in the value of a classical education. Ubiquitous acceptance of faculty psychology mandated the study of the classics, for no curriculum was better suited for the exercise of the "faculties" of memory, critical discrimination, and attention. Charles Collins, a respected proponent of classical study, echoed the "mental exercise" arguments in his inaugural address at Emory and Henry, and went on to offer further justifications for such a curriculum. "Considered simply as the source of a critical knowledge of our language, they /the classics/ are worthy of attention," he argued. "Language is power, and he who can wield it in the most efficient manner, possesses a means of influence over his fellow men." If this was not enough, Collins continued, Greek and Latin are also the languages "in which the sublime truths of Christianity were first

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[74]"Education in the Methodist Church," (October, 1842), 538.

[75]Journal of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (May, 1858), 536.

published," and by studying them we can gain a better understanding of our faith.[76]

The only substantial difference between the curricula of the state and evangelical colleges was the secular emphasis on physical science. Sometimes even this difference was not a matter of philosophical preference but of mere economic reality, as state-supported schools often had more fiscal resources to purchase scientific apparatus.[77] East Tennessee University worked hard to establish a respectable physical science program in the 1840's and 1850's when the faculty, under the direction of President Joseph Estabrook, advertised courses equal to any northern college in chemistry (taught "not only theoretically," but with laboratory experiments demonstrating its relationship with mineralogy, geology, and agriculture), botony, pneumatics, acoustics, optics, electricity, galvinism, astronomy, comparative anatomy, and physiology.[78] While the Knoxville university with its total of five faculty members was pushing full throttle to convince the public of its scientific respectability, Emory and Henry's natural science program "occupied a second place." Unlike the faculty in many evangelical schools, the three or four professors at Emory and Henry did teach courses in the natural sciences and by the Civil War had an excellent set of laboratory apparatus for a small evangelical college.[79]

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[76]Collins, An Inaugural Address, 18.

[77]Godbold, The Church College, 165.

[78]Knoxville Register, February 17, 1847; Folmsbee, East Tennessee University, 12.

[79]Folmsbee, East Tennessee University, 23; Stevenson, Increase in Excellence, 71, 151-52.

Several debates concerning curriculum can be traced in the antebellum period. As with curriculum debates in the present era, educators holding vastly different political, social, or philosophical perspectives can often find agreement concerning what constitutes a proper course of study. One controversy, exhibited both before and after the antebellum era, involved the respective merits of classical and utilitarian study. As previously discussed, the Revolution-inspired wave of idealism ushered in a series of educational changes, including a disenchantment with the omnipresent classical curriculum.[80] Educators in the grip of Revolutionary zeal often called for the end of the impractical study of the dead languages and in their place a dedication to the study of, in the words of Benjamin Rush, those practical subjects that

> increase the convenience of life, lessen human misery, improve our country, promote population, exalt the human understanding, and establish domestic, social, and political happiness.[81]

Of course, the innovations in curriculum were swept away by the disillusionment of the post-Revolutionary period--swept away, that is, in most places. By the 1820's Charlottesville, still influenced by the aged Jefferson, remained a bastion of Revolutionary and Enlightenment thought. Just as with the anachronistic science of discipline, Jefferson again envisioned the University of Viringia as a unique institution dedicated to the Revolutionary and Enlightenment ideal of practical learning. As a result, Jefferson demanded that no portion of a student's time be occupied in rote recitation of Greek and Latin. The classics would merit

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[80] Miller, The Revolutionary College, 169-74.

[81] Benjamin Rush to James Muir, August 24, 1791, Lyman H. Butterfield (ed.), Letters of Benjamin Rush, I (Princeton, New Jersey, 1951), 604.

no special status and would be regarded as merely one of many departments within the university. Modern language, so neglected by many colleges, would occupy a position equal to the ancient languages--a revolutionary concept in 1825. Physical science was regarded by Jefferson as extremely practical and consequently was relegated high status in the university. As a result of the former president's interest in scientific study, the University of Virginia was responsible for many innovations in the teaching of physical science during the antebellum era.[82]

Evangelical educators shared the Jeffersonian disdain for the impractical or ornamental curriculum. Obviously, their similar attitudes were motivated by divergent concerns and led to quite different educational practices. Given the history of evangelical acceptance of their educational role, the religious educators were careful to guard against accusations by their peers of genteel education. Evangelical educators had to prove to the critics of their colleges who sat inside the evangelical churches that their curriculum was one which would produce practical men more capable than when they entered college of spreading the word of God.[83] After a lengthy discussion of classical education in his inaugural address at Emory and Henry, Charles Collins reminded his listeners that "the great object of study, however, is to make practical and useful men. The condition of the country," he continued, "as well as the spirit of the age requires this."[84]

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[82]Bruce, History of the University of Virginia, 81-82, 89, 90, 96.

[83]Collins, An Inaugural Address, 17-19, McAnally, Life of S. Patton, 169-72.

[84]Collins, An Inaugural Address, 19

An inconsistency was apparent in the evangelical pronouncements on the proper nature of the curriculum. While evangelical leaders made grandiose statements on the necessity of a practical curriculum, evangelical colleges of the era rarely veered from a strict adherence to the classics. In fact, most evangelical schools could not generate sufficient faculty support to initiate coursework in English literature. While scores of evangelicals were condemning the Presbyterians for their colleges' obsession with the impractical dead languages, the evangelical colleges remained more dedicated to the classical curriculum than most educational institutions in the country.[85] In 1859, D. R. McAnally, in an attack on the Presbyterian emphasis of classical learning, argued that the people were beginning to realize

> that learning consists of the acquisition of ideas, and that some knowledge might be acquired of the so-called dead languages while the same man might, to a very great extent, be destitute of a store of those practical and useful ideas necessary to the various avocations of life . . . . At the same time, there were men all around, who did not claim to be "versed in classic lore," yet possessed minds well stored with a large fund of useful knowledge, which they could easily bring to bear upon the every-day occurrences . . . .[86]

While the evangelicals were attacking the Presbyterians for educating classically proficient but impractical men, the Presbyterian-dominated faculty and trustees of East Tennessee University were engaged in a serious debate over the relative value of classical study and modern English. In a treatise written in 1848 the trustees justified the need

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[85]"Asbury College," (March, 1818), 113; "Southern Standard of Education," Quarterly Review of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South (October, 1860), 573; Godbold, The Church College, 163-64; Duvall, The Methodist Episcopal Church and Education, 100-05.

[86]McAnally, Life of S. Patton, 171.

for more study of modern English and initiated a profound curricular change at the school.

When we examine, the trustees observed, the various operations in which English speaking peoples are engaged and the political, social, and religious impact they have made all over the world, the need for more detailed study of the language becomes apparent. There is no doubt, they continued, that in most institutions of higher education too much attention has been bestowed upon classical education, to the neglect of our native tongue. East Tennessee University was no exception and the trustees concluded that "instruction in the English language and literature is insufficient and defective and ought to be remedied." Immediate steps were taken to improve the teaching of English composition, elocution, and rhetoric and more emphasis was to be placed on the study of English literature. Similar changes would not take place in most evangelical institutions until after the Civil War.[87]

Very little difference in teaching methodology existed between the evangelical and the public colleges. Two of the main purposes of academic training, accepted by most antebellum educators, were enhancing the power of the mind and packing it with information. This general acceptance of faculty psychology mandated a dry, repetitive, often vicious daily course of study in the colleges of the era marked by endless student recitation.[88]

At Emory and Henry students recalled professorial adherence to their textbooks and a heavy emphasis on the repetition of translation

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[87]Minutes of the Board of Trustees, ETU, August 10, 1848.

[88]Collins, An Inaugural Address, 18; Hofstadter and Hardy, The Development and Scope of Higher Education, 15-17.

exercises. In reference to President Collins, James Davis wrote, "his pupils became fluent translators of the texts because their chief work was translating." Every day an "extensive advance lesson was assigned" in addition to a review of the lesson for the previous day. Every Monday students were forced to repeat all the translations of the previous week.[89] At Emory College in Georgia the same form of instruction was utilized. President G. F. Pierce justified such methods, sometimes labeled "memory marathons," in the Emory Catalogue of 1853:

> The chief object . . . is to have each student, without the usual form of questions, to give a minute analysis of each recitation, in his own language, as this mode, by throwing the student more exclusively upon his own resources, is believed to be best adapted to the right development of the intellectual powers, and to secure the most thorough knowledge of the subjects.[90]

The same pattern of drill and recitation was practiced at East Tennessee University during the era. Professors stayed close to their texts and demanded frequent composition and recitation from their students. Once a week the young men were required to declaim publically in the chapel, usually Latin translations of their compositions.[91]

Again, Jefferson's University of Virginia served as the exception to the general method of instruction. Jefferson rejected the pervasive adherence to the textbook, and argued that the lecture method would be more conducive to the cultivation of independent thought and discouragement of degrading rote memorization. Typical of Jefferson's educational proposals, the lecture plan encountered serious hostility

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[89]Davis, "Then and Now."

[90]Emory College Catalogue (1853), as quoted in Bullock, History of Emory University, 107-08.

[91]Folmsbee, Blount College and East Tennessee College, 47-48; Record of the Faculty, ETU, October 21, 1842.

among professors uncomfortable with such a technique. So unpopular was the new methodology that administrators had to supervise the faculty in order to assure they lectured as often as required.[92]

Undoubtedly, the antebellum college routine was not enlivened by professorial teaching methods. Only rarely did classical study transcend mere rote memorization in linguistics and emphasize the grand themes and spirit of classical culture. Just as medicine, it is believed, must taste bad to be effective, antebellum educators believed that learning had to be tedious before it could be valuable.[93] As an evangelical put it:

> Yet there is a pleasure, great and indescribable pleasure, in sanctified study: the more wearisome the toil, the sweeter will it be to those who sit down with a subdued and patient spirit, content to undergo much tedium and fatigue . . . . Reading, however dry, soon becomes interesting, if we pursue it with a resolute spirit of investigation, and a determinate purpose of thoroughly mastering what we are about. You cannot take up the most tiresome book, on the most tiresome subject, and read it accurately and thoroughly, and never pass over anything, however minute, which you do not quite comprehend. This is the only way to become really learned, and to make your studies satisfactory and productive.[94]

It is not surprising that students not subdued by the power of evangelical religion rioted, vandalized, and rebelled. Faced with a group of educators who valued the pain of academic drudgery as a virtue, adolescents in the colleges of the era experienced anxieties and frustrations difficult for modern observers to comprehend. That such a system of higher education lasted as long as it did testifies to the powerlessness of the adolescent role in antebellum American society.

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[92]Bruce, History of the University of Virginia, 128-32

[93]Hofstadter and Hardy, The Development and Scope of Higher Education, 17.

[94]Methodist Magazine (June, 1821), 221.

No matter what their social, cultural, and religious differences the college educators of the period rarely questioned the nature of the curriculum or the method by which it should be taught. In most cases educators at the colleges placed great faith in the value of classical study and the practicality of the recitation method of instruction. Confidence in the worth of such knowledge and such a method of teaching it seemed so embedded in the social thought of the first six decades of the nineteenth century that it transcended most other concerns. Americans were comfortable with their definition of what constituted an educated man.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Marshall McLuhan has observed in the twentieth century that the medium has become the message in contemporary mass communications; such was the case with evangelical religion during and after the Second Great Awakening of the early nineteenth century. The "message" of the emotion-based religions could not be separated from their proselytical tools--the camp meeting and the revival. This evangelical influence has helped to shape American customs and institutions. American politics, for example, has harbored a unique relationship with evangelical religion from the early nineteenth century until the present. The rhetoric, the emotional appeal, and the mass rally of the American political arena all trace their roots to evangelicalism. Politics constitutes merely one dimension of the evangelical influence; this work has been devoted to the impact of evangelicalism on American higher education, an area too often neglected when scholars have examined the social and cultural effects of religion.

Southern colleges of the antebellum were born and nurtured in the social and cultural atmosphere of the Second Great Awakening. Numerous European and colonial American influences prefaced the emotional outpouring of the early nineteenth century, with each event in one way or another enhancing the importance of the common man and fostering more faith in the individual's ability to shoulder responsibility for his own salvation.

The First Great Awakening of the 1730's and 1740's had institutionalized the theology of Pietism in the American colonies and thus had focused theological attention on man and his salvation. The Enlightenment with its emphasis on reason offered a direct challenge to the evangelicals, and when revolutions in France and America popularized Enlightenment thought in the young American nation, the emotionally religious were moved to action. Enlightenment rationality, the evangelicals argued, led directly to atheism and had to be stopped. Conveniently, for the evangelicals, it was at this time, 1800, that an unprecedented religious awakening broke out on the American frontier and rapidly spread to all areas of the country. Once touched by this powerful emotional outpouring, communities across America would never be the same. Whether one was a zealous participant or a dispassionate observer of the Awakening, Americans had discovered a new way to view religion and a novel set of techniques to elicit desired responses from large groups of people. Within a few years America would become an evangelized society.

The use of higher education for religious purposes was nothing new. During the colonial period most colleges were founded upon the desire to perpetuate the Christian tradition in the New World. The justifications for college foundings offered by colonial religious leaders were no different than their nineteenth century evangelical progeny. Both groups possessed a missionary zeal to convert the heathen, a desire to extend learning and culture, an ambition to obtain social power and to exert social control, and a need to promote specific religious doctrines. The difference rested in the theological changes that took place between the First and Second Great Awakenings. The

nineteenth century revival was founded upon an informal Arminianism. Where the Calvinistic First Great Awakening had emphasized the existence of an "elect" corps of individuals predestined for salvation, Arminianism stressed the love of God for all sinful men. Whereas the leaders of the eighteenth century revival had waited for a display of emotional religion, the evangelists of the Second Great Awakening provoked the emotions of the people. The colleges eventually founded by children of the new awakening would be more concerned with the creation of a climate conducive to emotional religious experience than the schools of their Calvinistic ancestors.

Before the religious leaders of the Second Great Awakening could resolve their feelings toward higher education, they would be confronted with a number of social upheavals. Immediately following the Revolution religious leaders from all denominations experienced great optimism, for an opportunity had been presented to build a new society founded upon a citizenry blessed with a religious education. The new social order would combine elements of republicanism and liberty with the piety taught in the schools. John Winthope's "city on the hill" was alive and well, and America prepared to demonstrate to the rest of the world the superiority of a nation conceived in liberty and piety.

The optimism of the early Revolutionary period also excited some unanticipated social effects. Much to the consternation of religious leaders, college students in the spirit of the Enlightenment and the Revolution entertained feelings of skepticism which fueled a questioning of authority. Religious and educational leaders were disappointed to learn that the new republicanism was not accompanied by religious zeal. The city on the hill had been just a fleeting dream, for instead of

paving the way to a new religious order the Revolution and the ideas associated with it had precipitated a climate sympathetic to religious skepticism. The colleges were rocked with numerous student riots and rebellions, all of which, in the eyes of religious leaders, educators, and much of the public, were attributable to the young men's exposure to the ideas of the Enlightenment and the liberalized curricula patterned after the intellectual movement. Higher education was under suspicion; in the eyes of the evangelicals it had come to be associated with skepticism and atheism. The evangelicals, thus, entered a debate over what role higher education would play in their plan for universal salvation. The debate would continue at various stages of intensity for decades.

During the most intense phase of the Second Great Awakening in the first decades of the nineteenth century, the majority of evangelicals classified colleges as bastions of immorality, infidelity, and atheism. The rationalistic philosophers, full of support for the atheistic French Revolution, could capture the raw young college student and fill his mind with infidel logic. The only route for evangelicals, they argued, was the complete abandonment of higher education. From the latter portion of the 1790's until approximately 1820, evangelicals avoided the subject of church-sponsored college education. Those evangelicals who supported a church role in higher education would have to remain silent until the social climate was more favorable to their position.

The decades of the 1820's witnessed an evangelical change of attitude toward college learning. Old antagonisms slipped into the recesses of memory as evangelical leaders realized a new public support for higher education. Baptist and Methodist parents were going to send

their children to college, and since the only institutions available were the Presbyterian-dominated secular universities and the non-evangelical denominational schools, the evangelicals stood to lose much of their influence over these young people.

Friends of education within the evangelical denominations offered numerous reasons for their support of higher education. Challenged constantly by opponents of evangelical-supported colleges, the friends of learning argued that America's new interest in education during the 1820's and 1830's mandated the need for evangelicals trained to appeal to not only the emotional but the rational mind. As the post-Revolutionary disillusionment with education faded farther into the past, many evangelical leaders argued that education was the proper function of religion. Without the constraints of religion education can become quite dangerous and stand contrary to the desires of Christ. Higher education, the friends of learning continued, would make for better Christians, as it could be used to intensify feelings of denominational loyalty. It could also serve to enhance a certain denomination's position relative to that of other sects. Rivalry between Protestant denominations was intense and led to the establishment of scores of colleges designed to enhance a group's status in a certain geographical area. College education could also serve as a means of social control, exposing the <u>ignobile vulgus</u> to the moralizing effects of Christian training. Most importantly, however, evangelical higher education provided an excellent means of spreading the word of God. The church college took its place with the camp meeting and the revival as one of the major proselytical tools of evangelical Christianity in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Although the friends of learning had won the debate over church sponsored education and evangelicals had opened scores of colleges between 1830 and the Civil War, that by no means meant that the debate had ended. Throughout the period evangelical educators, faced with opposition from within their churches, constantly strove to prove to their detractors that their education served practical goals--that it contributed to the building of the Kingdom of God on earth. As one evangelical writer put it, our colleges "are among the most efficient means for the conversion of the young. Nowhere have revivals of religion been more frequent, . . . nowhere have conversions been more sound . . . ."[1]

Charles Collins, President of Emory and Henry College, while traveling on the James River bound for Lynchburg, Virginia, met an exiled Pole, about whom he wrote a story revealing many antebellum evangelical attitudes concerning the goals of education. The captain of the riverboat, spotting "a man of genteel aspect, though poorly clad" plodding with a heavy pack on his shoulders and a ragged wife and two small children, invited them all aboard. Though poor, there was an air of "intelligence and refinement" about the Pole which indicated that he had witnessed better days.

Collins initiated a conversation with the stranger and soon learned of a life plagued with cruel suffering, painful reverses, and disappointments. The young college president listened patiently to the emigrant's story and displayed sympathy for his plight. This touched the emigrant's emotions and he began to weep "like a child." At length he

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[1]"Education in the Methodist Church," (October, 1842), 533.

hesitated, and wiping the tears from his face proclaimed, "But I find consolation for my troubles in philosophy." Without my philosophy, he claimed, "it seems impossible that I could bear up under the load of sorrow and misfortune which so long has hung like a millstone to my neck!"[2]

The man was one of the most "miserable specimens of wretched humanity" that Collins had ever seen, yet he talked of the consolations of philosophy. Collins curiously inquired as to what philosophy the man turned for solace. "The philosophy of Rousseau and Voltaire," replied the Pole. "Are you not familiar with their sublime sentiments?" At the mention "of these masters of infidelity . . . an involuntary shudder" came over Collins. When the evangelical leader told the exile that the comforts offered by the infidel philosophers were very poor in comparison to those of Jesus Christ, the poor man dismissed the power of the Saviour as mere superstition. Within minutes after denouncing Christianity as "ridiculous cant," Collins reported that the man told of his inability to handle his degrading existence and his decision to kill himself. My wife and children, he speculated, would be better off without me.

Not only did Collins use the story to warn of the dangers of infidel philosophy, but he also spoke through the experience to the evangelical critics of the church's role in the educational enterprise. The Polish emigrant had been educated in a Roman Catholic school, and "with a mind too strong to be satisfied with the mummeries of that corrupt and corrupting hierarchy," he had rejected Christianity as a

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[2]Collins Papers, "Infidel Philosophy--The Exiled Pole," HCA at EHC.

"cruel imposture," and viewed the Bible as a "cunningly devised tale." If the evangelicals failed to view college education as part of their responsibility, no one could know how many more souls would be lost through artificial collegiate training. Education, Collins hoped the story would illustrate, was the proper function of the church. It must be a practical education, always mindful of its cardinal objective--the universal dispersion of the Gospel of Jesus.[3]

Even with the evangelicals' zealous intention to use their colleges as proselytical devices, the difference between evangelical colleges and their secular counterparts was more perceived than real. Nevertheless, the perceived dissimilarities influenced actual practice. The evangelicals viewed state-supported schools as havens for the elite, and fancied their colleges as agencies which extended higher education to the common man. The evangelicals did extend educational opportunities to many Americans, but contrary to their claims the sectarian colleges served not the poor but the children of the aspiring middle and upper middle classes.

The evangelicals portrayed the state colleges as homes for immorality and infidelity. Send your children to the colleges sponsored by your denominations, the evangelicals told their congregations. The state institutions will expose your sons to smoking, drinking, cursing, gaming, dancing, and God knows what other immorality. As a result of such perceptions, the evangelicals labored to expand their system of higher education and, in order to keep students away from the state colleges, improve its quality.

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[3]Ibid.

The public-supported schools viewed the evangelical schools with suspicion and usually with condescension. Students attending evangelical schools suffered from evangelical dogmatism and indoctrination, they claimed. Sectarian students were not exposed to a wide variety of opinions and therefore were not challenged to exercise their capacity for complex independent thought. Inculcated with only the denominational orthodoxy, evangelical students left college with very naive notions as to the nature of reality.

Though they were generally bitter enemies, the evangelicals joined with Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Cooper, and other holdovers from the Age of Reason in attacking the Presbyterian dominaton of early nineteenth century higher education. Cooper, Jefferson, and the evangelicals believed that the Calvinists were conspiring to gain control of the public colleges as a part of their plan to form a Calvinistic theocracy.[4] It was therefore imperative, Cooper and Jefferson reasoned, to destroy the conspiracy by alerting the public to the dastardly scheme. They would emphasize the subversive aspect of the plot and appeal to the public's love of freedom.

The evangelicals, on the other hand, attacked Calvinism and its domination of higher education on theological grounds. Vicious verbal battles between evangelicals and Calvinists broke out throughout the South in the decades before the Civil War. Some of the debates, the

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[4]Jefferson to Benjamin Rush, September 23, 1800, LB, X, 175; Jefferson to Horatio Gates Stafford, January 10, 1816, Ford, XI, 507; Jefferson to Cooper, August 14, 1820, LB, XV, 265-66; Cooper to Jefferson, November 22, 1822, quoted in Malone, The Public Life of Thomas Cooper, 263-65; D. R. McAnally, Life and Times of S. Patton, 174-75.

Brownlow-Ross affair for example, were ludicrous character assassinations, others merely trite recountings of theological cliches.

Typical of the evangelical attack on Calvinistic theology was the Reverend Creed Fulton's polemic entitled Foreknowledge, Predestination and Election. Fulton, a Methodist minister and one of the founders of Emory and Henry College, argued that Calvinism blamed God for the creation of sin. The Calvinist will be unable to distinguish right from wrong, Fulton claimed, and if true to Calvin's principles will be ultimately led to atheism.[5] In an attempt to evoke the wrath of the evangelicals and move them to anti-Calvinistic action, Fulton claimed that Presbyterians had called evangelical free will

> a cursed doctrine--the most God-dishonoring and soul-destroying doctrine of the day--one of the prominent features of the beast--the enemy of God--the offspring of the wicked one--the insolent brat of hell.[6]

Not surprisingly, the evangelicals placed more emphasis on the education of the moral man than did the public educators. The evangelical colleges were designed by religious leaders to produce specific religious outcomes--the salvation of those who attended them. The state colleges, usually under control of Presbyterian clergymen, also valued the cultivation of the moral man, but approached the task from a different perspective. Possessing great faith in the power of academic training, the public supported educators maintained that once minds were enlightened and ignorance was destroyed, the moral dimension would take

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[5]Creed Fulton, Foreknowledge, Predestination, and Election (Knoxville, 1843), 34.

[6]Ibid., 34-35.

care of itself. Pure morality would rush to fill in the vacuum left by the retreat of ignorance.

In order to train their "moral man" the evangelicals invoked their ultimate weapons--the revival and the camp meeting. Faculties and administrations promoted student piety through the revivalistic enterprise, and from their perspective were quite successful, bringing scores of students into the fold. While revivals did sometimes occur at the secular schools, they were often serendipitous and were discouraged by faculties and administrations. Indeed, state-supported educators often mandated daily chapel and weekly church attendance.[7] The salient point, however, is that emotional religious expression at the evangelical colleges was actively promoted, while at the state colleges it was merely tolerated, if not sometimes overtly criticized.

Interestingly, the dissimilar religious goals of the institutions produced few differences in their curricula. Both the sectarian and secular colleges of the antebellum period emphasized a traditional, classical course of study. Typically, one-half of a student's freshman and sophomore and one-third of his junior and senior years was devoted to the study of Greek and Latin. Neither the state-supported or evangelical schools of the era offered courses in the Bible, the secular college refraining from a fear of public identification with a specific denomination, invariably Presbyterianism, and the evangelicals out of a fear of vulgarizing or degrading the Holy Word. The only real curricular difference involved the secular emphasis on physical science, and even this contrast was sometimes more attributable to the state school's

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[7]Minutes of the Board of Trustees, ETU, October 11, 1821.

financial ability to purchase laboratory apparatus than evangelical rejection of its importance in the curriculum.

Curricula may have been similar, but differences, although subtle, did exist in student behavior at the state-supported and evangelical colleges. In an atmosphere as regimented as the antebellum colleges, students felt compelled to strike back at their captors and challenge the authority of the omnipotent faculties and administrations. While the evangelical student was not the saint portrayed by the college publicity agents, the evangelical college did witness far fewer disturbances than its secular counterpart. The state colleges of the era were virtually obsessed with student control, as their pupils rioted, vandalized, fought, and occasionally killed each other or their professors.

Some observers attributed the disciplinary problems of the state-supported schools to the upper class, slaveholding backgrounds of the students. The "free life of the plantation" created a vehement dislike of restrictions by the sons of slaveholders and their upper middle class imitators.[8] The children of the plantation were said to be chafed by the regimentation and supervision of the secular college faculty. Unaccustomed to such a restrictive lifestyle and the exacting and mundane routines of antebellum academia, the young elite declared war on college administrators. Many were the days state college faculty would have

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[8]David E. Swift, "Yankee at Virginia: James Marsh at Hampden-Sydney, 1823-1826," The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LXXX (July, 1972), 326.

gladly waved the white flag of surrender and declared the students victors in their battles for collegiate control.[9]

The South's "peculiar institution" and the social system which accompanied it provided a unique flavor, quite bitter to the modern observer, to the antebellum state college. A common pasttime for the men of the secular school involved capturing the slave of some local owner and beating him, sometimes to the point of serious injury.[10] Other problems resulted from student abuse of black slaves. Pupils often forced slaves to bring liquor and tobacco to their rooms, and many young men were caught with female slaves in their rooms for sexual purposes. The faculty at East Tennessee University spent several faculty meetings discussing ways to solve the "Negro problem." They were apparently unsuccessful for every few years they would pass another resolution to take more diligent measures "to keep Negroes off the Hill at night," to forbid "black women from the Hill," to deny blacks entrance to the college after dark "for any purpose whatever."[11]

That the evangelical college attracted a more innocent, pious, religiously obsessed young man than did the state institution there is

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[9]Swift, "Yankee at Virginia: James Marsh at Hampden-Sydney, 1823-1826," 326; At the University of South Carolina, for example, students generally came from those districts with a heavy slave population. In counties where whites outnumbered blacks, few students were sent to the university. In other words, a substantial portion of South Carolina's enrollment consisted of sons of slaveholders. Hollis, University of South Carolina, I, 263-64.

[10]Journal entry of John Donelson Coffee, October 5, 1831, in Boom (ed.), "A Student at the University of Nashville: Correspondence of John Donelson Coffee, 1830-1833," 154; see also Coulter, College Life in the Old South, 106-07, for a description of the cruelties committed by students against blacks at the University of Georgia.

[11]Record of the Faculty, ETU, November 10, 1843, May 13, October 25, 1844.

little doubt. James A. Davis's description of the daily routine at Emory and Henry indicated a naivete and simplicity not found on the secular campuses of the era. Prayers, he remembered, were held in the chapel immediately after the evening meal in the summer, thus allowing time for a stroll before nightfall over the farm. "Each student would select his favorite companion and they would be seen moving in all directions, almost invariably," he recollected unabashedly, "in pairs of two each with an arm over the shoulder of his companion."[12]

With a large number of religiously inclined, naive students, the evangelical faculty possessed an advantage over their secular brethren. The sectarian professors could exploit student guilt as a means of discipline. Evangelical leaders called on their college administrators to use guilt, while not using the term specifically. In an era, a Methodist writer contended, when unbridled passions are ever ready to break out into defiant and immoral acts, "it is well that there is in the nature of man one conservative power." Exhorting educators to train the "conscience," the evangelical argued that the best system of higher education puts first the cultivation of the student conscience. Such training "asserts a claim to supremacy and, with authority, lifts a warning against impulses of unsanctified propensities."[13] The properly trained conscience, he argued,

> sways a majestic control, and, unlike the impulses of passion, which come and go as the fitful gusts of the storm, she prompts, by a permanent and a steady impulse, to the highest resolves and the noblest labors. There is no prior obligation bearing upon those who have influence over expanding minds, than to inculcate a sacred regard for the decisions of a well-instructed conscience. And there

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[12]Davis, "Then and Now."

[13]"Education in the Methodist Church," (October, 1842), 537.

> is no more stable security to the church for the efficient usefulness of her members, than such a reverence for the voice of this inward moral dictator.[14]

In practice, professorial exploitation of the Protestant guilt of their students often elicited the desired behavioral outcomes. President Robert Paine of La Grange College was reputed to abhor every known form of vice and used "the power of his great character" to suppress all student manifestations of iniquity. He punished students by using "severe irony" which invariably caused "the guilty boy to writhe in agony." Once confronted by the righteous president the student's guilt would produce feelings of "shame, remorse, anger /or/ pride, and one or the other would compel confession." President Paine was seeking a repentance and reformation, and "to this end his versatile powers were all employed."[15]

Students wrestled with guilty consciences and in their diaries, annuals, and letters often wrote at length on the degraded states in which they found themselves.[16] I long for the blessing of God, one student wrote, "however I am too wicked even to hope for it. I am certainly a very wicked creature, though I may not appear so to the world." Obviously affected by professorial admonition to direct his attention to the serious nature of his studies, the young student wrote:

> Serious reflection is a friend whose company should be courted instead of shunned. When a serious thought enters our minds we should by no means attempt to bannish it by inviting others on frivolous or licentious subjects . . . . The secret recesses of the heart should be examined, and every lurking place of bad passions thoroughly scrutinized, and cleaned of its hateful tenants. This

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[14] Ibid., 537-38.

[15] Rivers, Life of Robert Paine, 45.

[16] S. E. H. Dance to parents, May 23, 1852 and April 26, 1853.

> is the way to prepare ourselves for the enjoyment of another and better world--for the society of holy men and angels.[17]

It would be easy to assume that professors exploited student guilt quite cynically and hypocritically, but such was rarely the case. Evangelical educators experienced the same pains of conscience as their pupils. Charles Collins, one of the most highly respected of the evangelical educators, fought with guilt throughout his life and rarely did he win. "Why am I cast down and my soul disquieted within me?" the evangelical leader asked. "O show me the cause, some cursed root of sin I know is yet lingering within me." Collins asked God to humble him and show him all his "vileness." Guilty of uncountable offenses in his own eyes, Collins prayed that the Deity might let him see himself in all his iniquity:

> forbid that I should cover up any of my sins . . . . O come, thou only Savior, come cleanse and sanctify my soul. Why do I groan in this bondage? Thou could set me free--could cleanse and make me wholly clean. Like poor blind Bartemius, I cry, Jesus thou Son of David have mercy upon me.[18]

Whatever their differences with the goals and methods of the secular schools, the majority of evangelicals by 1860 had accepted both the value of higher education and the legitimate role of the state in supporting it. By mid-century most Americans had come to believe that Americanism and Protestantism were natural allies and parts of the same entity. Such a sentiment not only set the stage for the victory of the common school movement but led to the eventual evangelical support of the public colleges. In other words, evangelicals began to realize their

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[17]Journal entry for February 3, 1842, Diary of Jethro Gatlin as quoted in Enoch L. Mitchell, "College Life in Ante-Bellum Tennessee," West Tennessee Historical Society Papers, XII (1958), 9-10.

[18]Entry for January 15, 1843, Diary of Charles Collins.

political power. No longer a minority voice, especially in the South, the Methodists, Baptists, and other evangelical sects came to understand that they had transformed the society, leading it by way of their camp meetings and revivals to a heightened religious consciousness.[19]

The perception of secular colleges as havens for the elite was slow to fade, with remanents of the viewpoint persisting into the present era. With their newly discovered political leverage the evangelicals by the 1850's began to wage battles for control of the secular colleges. At East Tennessee University a politically active Methodist Church initiated legislation against the Presbyterian-dominated institution, forcing it to appoint additional trustees representing the various evangelical denominations. The Methodists promised to support the modified university and predicted that it would prosper once it received backing from more than one segment of society.[20] In no way did their amplified voice in the control of the secular college preclude the evangelical commitment to their own schools. Support of public colleges was merely another step in their attempt to accomplish specific religious objectives, for in the latter nineteenth century existing evangelical schools grew and new ones were founded. As evangelical denominations gained social respectability, they attracted more and more wealthy people who contributed to the expansion of evangelical higher education.[21]

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[19]Timothy L. Smith, "Protestant Schooling and American Nationality, 1800-1850," Journal of American History, LIII (March, 1967), 679-80.

[20]Folmsbee, East Tennessee University, 1840-1879, 22; Brownlow's Knoxville Whig, February 23 and April 13, 1850.

[21]Duvall, The Methodist Episcopal Church and Education, 119-22; Bucke, History of American Methodism, I, 551.

With an ever increasing number of well-to-do members and the gradual but inevitable fading of the ardor of the Second Great Awakening, the evangelicals began to lose much of their insularity around the time of the Civil War. While not in complete agreement, more evangelicals than ever before accepted the secularization of higher education that reflected the increasing geographical mobility, industrialization, and urbanization of the last half of the nineteenth century. Although vast improvements were taking place in higher education with expanding curricula, better trained faculties, and far more enlightened disciplinary policies, the evangelical community still could not agree on the value of college training.[22]

An evangelical writing on the eve of the Civil War referred to what he considered the lamentable state of education in the South. Educators have seemed to assume, he contended, that an educated man is one who can "read and translate correctly a Latin or Greek sentence."[23] But education in the South was not shallow simply because of an emphasis on the classical curriculum. Southerners were plagued by an obsession for money, the evangelical claimed, and this weakness eclipsed any possible benefit higher education could contribute to the society.

> It is stamped upon the minds of our children at an early age that they must make money; that to make money, they must select an avocation; and that to succeed, they must be educated with a view to that avocation alone . . . . We fail to teach that /knowledge/ purifies and elevates the thoughts, raises the mind above every sordid consideration to the contemplation of higher and nobler objects; that when the human soul shall burst forth from its mortal

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[22]Hofstadter and Hardy, The Development and Scope of Higher Education, 22-33; Allmendinger, "The Dangers of Ante-Bellum Student Life," 82.

[23]"Southern Standard of Education," (October, 1860), 572-74.

> confinement, the great, eternal principles and truths of science, now but in embryo, shall be developed to their utmost extent.[24]

The educated portion of Southern society, the author continued, is in a deplorable state. These "educated" men prefer the "dangerous vulgarity" of Don Juan and Aeneas to writings designed to purify the heart and elevate the human spirit. Newspapers to gain popularity publish "the most thrilling love and murder stories," and novels "of the very lowest character, and of the most pernicious tendency," are the most widely read. Something was definitely wrong with Southern higher education, he thought, because our college graduates more than any other segment of the society are obsessed with expressions of immorality.

Like the evangelical critics of higher education of the early nineteenth century, the author pointed to the danger college presented to sound morality and religious belief. In spite of all the attempts of evangelicals to make their colleges conducive to salvation and the cultivation of piety, critics still charged college training with harboring atheistic tendencies. The college student, the critics claimed, has returned from college with "a shattered constitution, a prostrated intellect, a mind in ruins, and a soul dragged down into the darkest depths of vice."[25] Evangelical educators were caught between two factions within their ranks: One called for an expansion and modernization of denominational higher education to meet the demands of the industrializing and urbanizing social order. The other warned of the ubiquitous infidelity of academia. The debate would continue for decades, eventually resulting in a division in the "old evangelical"

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[24] Ibid., 575-76.

[25] Ibid., 577-80.

community. The fundamental movement of the early twentieth century would carry the torch of hard line evangelicalism into the modern era. This movement would establish schools to offer college-bound young people pious protection from the skepticism and immorality of the public universities and the moderate evangelical colleges established almost a century earlier. Thus, the cycle would begin anew.

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