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From abolitionists to fundamentalists: the transformation of the Wesleyan Methodists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries

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This article analyzes the cultural trajectory of a small, but influential denomination that formed in 1843. Wesleyan Methodism first emerged as an abolitionist protest against the Methodist compromise with slavery. The new church drew in members who championed a range of antebellum social reforms, including abolitionism, pacifism, women's rights, and temperance. By the early twentieth century, Wesleyans would become closely identified with fundamentalism, waging war against modernism, championing personal holiness, and maintaining a militant brand of protestant orthodoxy. This article places Wesleyans within a larger religious and cultural context of the Civil War era and the late nineteenth-century disenchantment of the Gilded Age and Progressive Eras. It also traces the reasons for the Wesleyans shifting focus away from social reform and toward matters of personal holiness.

Keywords: Abolitionism; fundamentalism; holiness movement; Wesleyan Methodist Connection; religion and the Civil War

From the early 1840s and until the outbreak of the Civil War, the newly formed Wesleyan Methodist Connection, an abolitionist church, was at the vanguard of socially and politically charged evangelicalism. Members fused theological and social perfectionism, while protesting against Methodism's accommodation with slavery. The denomination won praise from the likes of abolitionist firebrand William Lloyd Garrison, who inspired its members. Other Yankees, in the burned-over district and beyond, cheered the new sect onward. The radicals at Oberlin College in Ohio, a hotbed of every kind of antebellum reform, recognized the Wesleyans as kindred spirits. Oberlin had already set itself apart as the first American college to admit blacks and women into its program in 1833. In 1844, the editor of the *Oberlin Evangelist* praised the Wesleyan's "open and fearless advocacy of the claims of truth, justice, and downtrodden humanity, [which have] endeared them to the hearts of all true philanthropists."¹ In Rochester, Frederick Douglass came in contact with the Wesleyans and spoke in their church, observing in 1848 that while there were many "pro-slavery congregations of this city," the Wesleyans had distinguished themselves as "a small band of men and

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women [who] meet to hear the Gospel of Freedom and Love *for all*.”² Throughout the North, new communities of “True Wesleyans” sprang up, advocating pacifism, denouncing secret societies and drink, and championing women’s rights. By 1848, the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Seneca Falls, New York, gained a significant reputation as a center for social reform. In that year it hosted the first major women’s rights gathering in the USA. It is little wonder, then, that, along with Quakers, Wesleyan Methodists vigorously worked with the underground railroad.³

One hundred years later the Wesleyan Methodist Connection had become a conservative, quasi-fundamentalist church, at war with liberal protestantism, and on the defensive against the encroachments of modernism. By then Wesleyans had moved westward with the American population; their greatest geographic strength by that time was on the Plains and upper Midwest.⁴ This turn of events is fascinating in part because in the estimation of some historians, modern fundamentalism marked a significant departure from or bore little resemblance to abolitionism. For instance, the historian of nineteenth-century America and anti-slavery James Brewer Stewart finds fundamentalist pessimism, notions of the role of politics and government, among other things, at odds with abolitionist ideas. Says Stewart:

contemporary fundamentalists ought to think again, hard, before claiming the abolitionists as their historical ancestors. Standards of historical accuracy confirm such claims as specious. Second, today’s religious right finds political agency a straightforward exercise. For abolitionists it was not. Obedient to established authority, fundamentalist activists today embrace prevailing governance in order to conform it to God’s will by mobilizing voters, winning elections, discouraging dissent, and passing laws.⁵

Abolitionists’ anti-establishment politics and their notions of the greater good, Stewart finds, make them an unlikely match for modern, politicized fundamentalists. Modern believers, especially since the 1970s, have been an integral part of the right-wing political establishment. Simultaneously, fundamentalists have had a strong sense of embattlement.

How, then, would Wesleyans make the pilgrimage from an anti-slavery church to a fundamentalist one? Social pressures, a new theological identity, and the changing nature of its membership would eventually lead the denomination to embrace a socially disengaged brand of evangelical conservatism. But in so doing, they conformed to larger trends. As historian George Marsden explains it, the shift among evangelicals took place “from about 1900 to about 1930, when all progressive social concern, whether political or private, became suspect among revivalist evangelicals and was relegated to a very minor role.”⁶ Yet for Wesleyans that transition was far greater and already underway in the years immediately after the Civil War. Donald W. Dayton, a prominent religious historian with roots in the church, comments that “Of all the major Holiness churches ... it was the Wesleyan Church that fell most under the influence of fundamentalism”⁷ That transition occurred well before the Scopes Trial, H. L. Mencken, or Billy Sunday drew the nation’s attention to the biblical literalism, social conservatism, and the millennialism of modern fundamentalism. It all meant that by the early decades of the twentieth century Wesleyans

sought less to transform the larger society than to preserve what they considered to be pillars of their faith and to rescue lost souls from an irredeemable world.

Still, one might ask: Can the religious and social concerns of one era be compared to those of another? Such questions were foremost in the mind of the historian C. Vann Woodward in 1962 when he admonished Richard Hofstadter about the term “fundamentalist,” which did not enter common usage until the 1920s. Said Woodward: “if you mean by fundamentalists those addicted to literal scanning of Scripture you take in a hell of the proportion of the population from the seventeenth down through the nineteenth-centuries...”⁸ Certainly, conclusions drawn from social or religious changes that took place over a 50- or 100-year period need to avoid anachronism. However, the transformation of the Wesleyan Methodist Church even in its first 30 or 40 years reveals a major turn away from many of its original guiding principles. More importantly, church officials and laity would amend, reject, or choose to ignore much that had made the organization distinctive in its early years.

This article, then, will briefly survey the history of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection, paying special attention to the cultural and religious changes members underwent following the Civil War and into the next century. It will also trace the causes of that changing identity. Finally, a discussion of the denomination’s remote educational outpost on the Kansas prairie, Miltonvale Wesleyan College, will help illustrate the transformation from abolitionism to fundamentalism.

In the 1830s and 1840s, those reformers who would found the denomination’s first colleges drew the ire of critics, often for espousing Wesleyan perfectionism. Southern Presbyterian divine James Henley Thornwell lumped such reformers along with “atheists, socialists, communists, red republicans, [and] jacobins,” while calling his fellow slave owners “the friends of order and regulated freedom.”⁹ Irksome to such proslavery ideologues, perfectionist reformers preached that one might be holy, or live above willful sin, while they also claimed that slavery was the foulest of transgressions. Following John Wesley’s notions of social holiness, they turned their attentions to remaking society. In an instant, such antebellum perfectionists claimed, God could cleanse believers from all unrighteousness and crush slavery.¹⁰

Other northerners of this age, even those from the Unitarian end of the spectrum, linked perfectionism with politics. New England’s transcendentalists Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau drew on that spirit of the age. A transcendentalist, said Emerson, elevated

the perpetual openness of the human mind to new influx of light and power; he believes in inspiration, and in ecstasy. He wishes that the spiritual principle should be suffered to demonstrate itself to the end, in all possible applications to the state of man, without the admission of anything unspiritual.

It was an age pregnant with hope and possibility. Other notables across the ideological range – including Horace Bushnell, Phoebe Palmer, Catherine and Edward Beecher, John Humphrey Noyes, and Charles Finney – also took up the perfectionist cause in one form or another.¹¹

The historian Douglas Strong notes that for perfectionists in Upstate New York, “the aggregation of personal holiness would result in a perfected society, a concept that was similar to the vision of a millennial society.” A great deal of reform work and social uplift needed to be accomplished, observes Strong, but “there was an exuberance and certainty that it would be accomplished, because it was God’s work.”¹² This reformist, perfectionist ferment applied to New England as well. The zeal for social improvement inspired Emerson’s famous October 1840 letter across the Atlantic to Thomas Carlyle:

We are all a little wild here with numberless projects of social reform. Not a reading man but has a draft of a new Community in his waistcoat pocket. I am gently mad myself, and am resolved to live cleanly. George Ripley is talking up a colony of agriculturists and scholars, with whom he threatens to take the field and the book. One man renounces the use of animal food; and another of coin; and another of domestic hired service; and another of the State; and on the whole we have a commendable share of reason and hope.¹³

As the fight over the nature of society and the individual spread into America’s churches, ministers and laypeople, many applying the social logic of perfectionism, battled over official policy on the peculiar institution. Tens of thousands of believers left their denominations in the two decades leading up to the Civil War in protest over compromises with slavery. Methodists in the burned-over district of Upstate New York and throughout New England bristled at the thought of being united in one church with slavers. One of those critics, the Rev. Orange Scott, came under the influence of William Lloyd Garrison and acted as an agent for Garrison’s radical paper *The Liberator*. In the late 1830s and early 1840s, other Methodists followed Scott’s lead, calling for the church to officially denounce slavery and even to bar slave owners from church offices and membership. Methodists in the East, South, and West squared off over the increasingly divisive issue. Was it right for church officials to own slaves, as did the Georgia Bishop James O. Andrew, asked a growing number of Methodists. Peter Cartwright, the Illinois Methodist itinerant and one-time political opponent of Abraham Lincoln, considered slavery morally repugnant. He classed it with a “trinity of devils,” the other two being whiskey and extravagant clothing. And, still, he reasoned, “I have never seen a rabid abolition [ist] of free-soil society that I could join, because they resort to unjustifiable agitation, and the means they employ are generally unchristian.” Radicals infuriated him. Cartwright laid the blame squarely on Orange Scott, who he referred to disdainfully as “a disciple of Garrison.” That these ultras would stake the future unity of the church on the issue of slavery seemed outrageous.¹⁴

In response to critics, Scott and allied Methodists pointed to their church’s founder. John Wesley and the first generation of Methodist leaders in America tended to oppose slavery and the slave trade. In his *Thoughts Upon Slavery* (1774) Wesley, influenced by American Quaker John Woolman, challenged the system for its brutality and incompatibility with scripture. Shortly before Wesley’s death in 1791 he wrote a letter of encouragement to William Wilberforce, leader of the fight against the slave trade in Britain.¹⁵ Fellow radicals eagerly called on Wesley’s

example. In 1840, the *Oberlin Evangelist* reported on the General Conference of the Methodists, which had met in Baltimore, a city with a slave population of 19%. The Oberlin editor singled out Orange Scott and others for waging a good fight. "The leaven of abolition is at work in that denomination," noted the report:

The principles of Wesley have not yet been entirely forgotten. We know that many of the members of that Church will be deeply grieved at the course of their ministers, and will mourn over what they have no power to prevent.¹⁶

Indeed, in the words of religious historian Donald G. Mathews, Orange Scott was the embodiment of the "Methodist evangelist as revolutionary."¹⁷

During the early nineteenth-century, American Methodism reversed its stance, bowing to the pressures of church unity and to slavery's extraordinary profitability.¹⁸ The shift on the slave issue took place as the Methodists faced the question of whether to identify as a united, national church or maintain a longstanding discipline on slavery. Church leadership chose the former. For instance, Methodist Bishop Elijah Hedding, when confronted about slavery in the late 1830s, declared that owning slaves was lawful and not in conflict with church doctrine. Claimed Hedding, "I am not authorized to be the instrument of passing various resolutions which even imply that [slave owners] are all sinners."¹⁹ At the same time, Bishop Waugh of New England refused to accept an anti-slavery motion at a conference meeting.²⁰ Slavery disrupted other denominations as well, including Baptist and Presbyterian. But the Methodist Episcopal Church underwent the greatest upheaval, finally splitting into northern and southern branches in 1844. Several prominent churchmen who would become Wesleyans faced church tribunals over their abolitionist pursuits or were ousted from their conferences.²¹

Two years before the 1844 division, the Wesleyan Methodist Connection was formed in direct response to the Methodist Episcopal Church's accommodationist stance. The Connection represented a protest against slavery and Methodist episcopacy. This then led to an exodus of approximately 6000 laymen and 200 ministers who joined together to form the breakaway fellowship. In 1842, in a new periodical titled the *True Wesleyan*, the ministers Orange Scott, Jotham Horton, and LaRoy Sunderland announced their break. In two following issues, Luther Lee and Lucius Matlack announced their withdrawals as well.²²

The Wesleyans officially formed at a convention held at Utica, New York, in late May and early June 1843. The use of the term "Connection" in the denomination's name indicated its more loose organization. But Wesleyans would also break with Garrison, denouncing the Boston leader's anti-government and anti-clerical views.²³ In Scott's estimation Garrisonianism had become something of an antinomian parody, "the quintessence of transcendental nonsense." Early Wesleyans hitched their perfectionism to politics without reservation. The Liberty Party in Vermont received their strong support. Meanwhile, Wesleyans set up their individual churches with more autonomy and democratic rule than the Methodists allowed. In a sense they shunned supposed Garrisonian anarchism while also guarding against the Methodist authoritarianism that so stung abolitionists in that church.²⁴

The breakoff group early distinguished itself as radical on reform and pious in theology and practice. Churches, states, and communities in the North, argued stalwarts, were responsible for the continuation of slavery. This view of corporate responsibility was a hallmark of such perfectionistic social holiness. In an 1845 letter of instruction for the new church, Scott laid out its principles clearly:

We are organized ... on the same common principles—principles that require us to stand out prominently before the world as a class of moral and religious reformers. And now if we believe, as we doubtless do, that the Lord’s design in raising us up is to *reform the nation and spread scriptural holiness over these lands*, we should study to be patterns of piety, and examples of good work.²⁵

The new denomination claimed 15,000 members within the first year of its existence. Men and women, black and white, made up its ranks. Many of these were tradesmen, farmers, ministers, manufacturers, and artisans.²⁶ The Wesleyan Methodists saw themselves as beacons in a darkened world. They were closely allied with the most radical reformers of their day. From the outset, they preached Christian perfection. Looking to Wesley as their model, they stressed what they called “perfect love.” Accordingly, the believer claimed to experience a “second work of grace,” “entire sanctification,” or, a cleansing from all sin. They were, in fact, the first religious organization to include a statement on this brand of perfectionism in their *Discipline*?²⁷

The church’s perfectionism and early numerical success along with an enthusiastic pursuit of social reform owed something to adherents’ millennialism. Like other enthusiasts they were buoyed by an expectant, optimistic postmillennialism.²⁸ According to this view, Christ would return to earth after one thousand years of peace and human betterment. Postmillennialism summed up northern evangelicals’ positive, confident beliefs about the progress of civilization.²⁹ One denominational historian said the founding generation “prided themselves in being radical, liberal, the vanguard of the righteous host which would soon bring in the millennial reign of Christ on earth.”³⁰ With such assurance the Wesleyans sent missionaries into North Carolina and Virginia in the 1850s. They founded perfectionist schools like Wheaton College in Illinois in 1853 and Adrian College in Michigan in 1859, while remaining active supporters of Oberlin College.

The Wesleyan’s perfectionism and millennial expectancy also tied directly into their staunch abolitionism. A typical Wesleyan Methodist anti-slavery hymn from their early years asked, “Why is the grace so long delay’d?” for those in bondage. But, with millennial expectation, the song ended triumphantly:

As lightning launch’d from east to west,
The coming of thy kingdom be’
To thee, by angels hosts contest.
Bow every soul and every knee:
Thy glory let all flesh behold!
And then fill up thy heavenly fold.³¹

Millennial hopes inspired Wesleyans’ support for women’s rights too. The eventual triumphant return of Christ, they thought, was making a new social order possible. In

1853 Wesleyan minister Luther Lee preached the ordination sermon for Antoinette Brown at Oberlin. Following that milestone, the first such ordination in America, the denomination's editor wrote confidently: "Woman is our equal in all respects We concede her right to free thought, free speech, freedom of the platform, forum, pulpit, bar, and ballot-box."³²

Wesleyans' defiant stand against the prevailing social order led them to denounce the sale and use of alcohol, oppose secret societies, and support pacifism.³³ Just three years before Confederate canons fired on Fort Sumter the denomination included the following item in its *Discipline* under the heading "Peace":

We believe the gospel of Christ to be [in] every way opposed to the practice of war, in all its forms; and those customs which tend to foster and perpetuate the war spirit, to be inconsistent with the benevolent designs the Christian religion.³⁴

That did not mean, though, that Wesleyans always shunned violence. For instance, following John Brown's raid on Harper's Ferry in October 1859, the Wesleyans of Leesburg, Ohio, adopted a resolution. The statement, which was made public to newspapers, lauded Old Brown of Kansas, who "was only carrying out the principles of the Declaration of Independence, which declares that all men are created with certain 'inalienable rights, among which are life liberty and the pursuit of happiness . . .'"³⁵ For many in the doggedly abolitionist denomination it was not a major leap to move on from this logic to support of war with the South.

With the outbreak of war the Wesleyans *did* pledge their full support to the Union and would change their discipline statement to reflect that. Their opposition to slavery and commitment to cleansing society of the evils of "man-stealing" overshadowed what remained of their pacifism. A number of leading churchmen served in the Northern cause, as chaplains, soldiers, and homefront participants.³⁶ If anything they tended to think the war was not being waged to its full extent. In an official letter to Lincoln following the Emancipation Proclamation, church officials at Adrian College in Michigan thanked the president in the name of the "millions of the oppressed of our land." As Union troops quartered on campus, Lincoln issued his proclamation. The Wesleyans had been calling for emancipation for years. But Wesleyan divines also chided Lincoln, noting that they "often felt grieved and disappointed at the apparent reluctance exhibited in adopting such measures as would ere now have struck a fatal blow at the very heart of rebellion." They regretted, too, that the proclamation did not go far enough and did not target slaveholders and their sympathizers in treasonous border states.³⁷

By the end of the war, Wesleyans claimed around 25,000 members.³⁸ Along with that growth the church would soon undergo dramatic changes, altering its course substantially. The denomination had already suffered some significant losses. Orange Scott, overworked and in poor health, had died suddenly of tuberculosis in 1847. With slavery abolished and the principal Wesleyan cause swept away, other key figures – Jotham Horton, Luther Lee, Lucius Matlack, and publishing agent Cyrus Prindle among them – returned to the Methodist fold. A few made the leap into unorthodox communities, like LaRoy Sunderland, who joined the Spiritualists.³⁹ Likely hundreds of others left in the years after the war. Many of those were the

most committed reformers. Looking back nearly 40 years after the war, one observer within the denomination blamed the loss of influential members on a lack of cohesiveness. “This is in part a heritage from the founders of the connection,” he lamented. “They were independent men and could not brook any interference with their liberties, and were not disposed to make a sacrifice of themselves for the good of an organization.”⁴⁰

At roughly the same time another shakeup depleted the denomination’s ranks and wreaked havoc on morale. Leading figures in the Wesleyan Methodist Connection proposed a merger with the Methodist Protestant Church, which claimed 35,000 and had a congregational governance quite like that of the Wesleyans. In 1865, delegates from these two denominations, along with others from the Free Methodist, Independent Methodists, and Union Chapel, met in Cleveland, Ohio, to discuss a union. Here, just months after the war ended, the combined delegates issued a proclamation on African American suffrage that was unanimously supported. Should not these men, they asked, who fought valiantly for their country, be allowed to have full citizenship rights? Freed slaves should now

bear arms, own real estate, acquire education, pay taxes, command ships, plead in our courts, edit papers, and preside over banks, benevolent institutions and colleges – shall be invested also with that most indispensable and most sacred right of freedom – the right of the exercise of the elective franchise.⁴¹

The heated talks about freedman and how to form a new, united church here and at subsequent gatherings failed to make headway. The majority of Wesleyans officially opposed the merger. That decision came with enormous consequences. A minority of influential founders left the denomination as a result of the acrimonious union affair and other nettlesome issues. Feuds played out in the pages of the church paper. One of the church’s chroniclers reported on the grievous results of “these brethren [who tried] to destroy the Church they had helped to establish . . .”⁴² But the change in denominational identity was not solely a story of the exodus or the death of stalwarts.

A storm of frustration, disappointment, and institutional anxiety shaped the church for decades to come. There were numerous unforeseen effects of the “War of Rebellion.” That was the case for religious communities across the nation as well. Whites in Kentucky during and immediately after the war bitterly opposed abolitionist religion, what they perceived as wild unorthodoxy, and stood firm against the political ambitions of African Americans.⁴³ The largest denominations in the land had and would remain divided into northern and southern branches as a result of the controversies over slavery – including the Presbyterians (1838), Methodists (1844), and Baptists (1845). It was not until 1939 that the Methodist reunited. The Baptists never did. Clergy could not have imagined the strife, disruption, and chaos that the war would bring with it. Northern evangelicals who expected the bright dawn of a new millennium were severely disappointed. As Allen Guelzo observes, “The uncertain notes on which the war ended looked like anything but a preparation for the return of Jesus Christ to earth.”⁴⁴ The Civil War and its death toll, which a recent historical demographer places at between 752,000 and 850,000, continued to influence churches

and believers for decades to come.⁴⁵ Bitter disagreements were difficult if not impossible to set aside. Hence, the 1867 minutes of the Wesleyan General Conference meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, took stock of the dire post-war situation. The pressures and dislocations of the conflict, observed a churchman, “produced internal frictions and feuds, alienated affections, produced despondency, savored of restless instability, if not of weakness, rendered us less cohesive and subject to disintegration, and directed attention and effort from the great work of self-edification . . .” The breathless account concluded with a heavy dose of hyperbole: “No religious body, for centuries, has been subject to even a moiety of trials and perils through which we have been led.”⁴⁶

Exaggerations aside, the war and its aftermath marked a significant turning point for the church, as it did for so many other Christian communities. With the silencing of guns and cannons, Wesleyans developed a new identity. In that sense, they were much like other believers who embraced abolitionism and later adopted or allied with fundamentalism. These included the Free Methodists, United Brethren, United Presbyterians, and Reformed Presbyterians.⁴⁷ An 1866 report at the Wesleyans’ Illinois Conference observed that even though slavery was defeated, the sinful human heart remained. All human, external reforms, the report summed up, could never effect real change, a truly godly transformation.⁴⁸ Such religious uncertainty that resulted from an inconclusive war and the decline in heady millennialism, coupled with the failures of Reconstruction, added to the radical evangelical identity crisis. The historian Edward Blum contends that a fading of providential confidence marked the age.⁴⁹ Accordingly Samuel S. Hill, the dean of southern religious history, argues that the war “represented a horrendous national loss and was such a distressful waste.” Certain believers like the evangelicals stressed “the need for human redemption, one convert at a time. Nothing short of the supernaturalization of humankind,” Hill concludes, “could call down God’s forgiving and healing and prevent a recurrence of such destruction.”⁵⁰ At the same time, Congregationalists, northern Baptists, Episcopalians, and others took up the mantle of the Social Gospel, advocating social reforms, labor unionism, and the redemption of institutions.

What else accounted for the shifting religious and political emphases of evangelicalism in these crucial years during and after the Civil War? One key to that question has to do with white-hot protestant fights over slavery and the centrality of such arguments. The historian Mark Noll observes that one of the chief features of protestantism in the 1860s, which would indelibly shape the post-war era, was “the restriction of serious theological analysis to slavery alone . . .” The intensity of this focus was not matched in later years with equal attention to other pressing social concerns, the devastating results of industrial capitalism, or the plight of laborers and immigrants among those. “Protestants who had once guided national life,” writes Noll, “retreated from efforts at shaping society in order to cultivate private gardens of inward spiritual development; and when potentially innovative religious convictions (Catholic, Lutheran, Jewish) were only inching toward broad public commentary on economic issues.” Indeed, a new generation of Wesleyans in the post-war years turned away from the lofty idealism and the controversies of the antebellum and war years. Education, worship, and evangelism overshadowed the liberal social reform of the early years.⁵¹ They also embraced the new civil religion, so potent a force in post-war

America. The church amended its *Discipline* late in the century, championing Bible reading in public schools, support for military chaplains, Sabbath observance laws, and Christian nationalism.⁵² Such efforts put them squarely in the larger stream of American Christianity. As Harry S. Stout remarks, "Patriotism itself became sacralized to the point that it enjoyed coequal or even superior status to conventional denominational faiths." The Civil War, he continues, "was generating through sheer quantity of blood sacrifice a living and vibrant civil religion. . . ." Ironically, "America's civil religion would not include the very freedmen and women so many thousands died to liberate."⁵³

Following the war the Wesleyans did still maintain some of their antebellum reform work, related in certain ways to their original abolitionist vision. They sent missionaries into Tennessee and North Carolina. These southern outposts, along with northern congregations, tried to maintain integrated churches. Wesleyan general conferences had disparaged "caste" in all its forms. They decried the mistreatment of Sioux Indians in the Black Hills of Dakota and questioned the rightness of Chinese exclusion laws.⁵⁴ In later years denominational workers in Alabama noted with horror the public display of the stars and bars and the exclusion of blacks from white passenger cars on trains. "I saw some drunken men enter the car where I was," one northern preacher observed, "and use language unfit for any mortal to use with no one to interfere. You see HE WAS WHITE." He then concluded sarcastically: "Surely this is a land of liberty and equal rights."⁵⁵ The African American female preacher Julia Foote maintained close ties with the Wesleyan Methodist Church and denominational editor T.K. Doty. Likewise, other holiness groups and churches maintained some degree of interracialism in these years as well.⁵⁶ Yet much of what was left of the spirit of abolitionism eventually gave way to segregationist pressures. By the 1890s the Wesleyans set up a separate conference for African Americans in Ohio.⁵⁷ It may be, as one historian has suggested, that since Wesleyans lived in areas with small African American populations the problems surrounding race and racism became remote to them. By the early 1930s, one prominent Wesleyan reckoned that:

the negro could and would rehabilitate himself faster if he were allowed to work in conjunction with his own race, rather than if he were too closely associated with whites. . . . Today the negro has his own churches, schools, colleges, and other factors for betterment.⁵⁸

Others followed that Jim Crow pattern.

With an identity in flux and change in its ranks the denomination aligned itself with the post-Civil War holiness movement, a mass revival that tended to stress personal rather than social holiness, emphasized healing and additional works of the spirit, and espoused an apocalyptic theology.⁵⁹ Advocates organized camp meetings across the country that were devoted to "perfect love." The Wesleyans, in keeping with Victorian ideas of the sacredness of hearth and home, encouraged families to hold their own religious services and set up private family altars for prayer. Holiness organizations, newspapers, and books spread word of an expectant revival further.

One well-known holiness evangelist proclaimed: “greater miracles will attend the second coming of Christ (for which we are constantly on the lookout) than bygone generations have ever witnessed.”⁶⁰

As with others in the holiness movement, post-war Wesleyans longed for a miraculous, old-time, unadorned faith, free from worldliness and corruption. Already in 1858, amid the fires of a national revival, one churchman called on fellow Wesleyans to place greater emphasis on personal holiness. “And here let me express my own convictions,” wrote H. Gregory from the Utica Convention, “that we have relied too much upon our correct reformatory principles, to the neglect somewhat of personal holiness.”⁶¹ Such thinking was dominant at the end of the century. At its 1899 General Conference meeting, the Wesleyans noted that the church had changed its reform emphasis to reflect its conservative outlook and its spiritual emphases. At roughly the same time the church placed an even greater stress on entire sanctification, which they believed would eradicate sinful worldliness in those who were already saved. Their 1896 *Discipline* described the so-called second work of grace as “that work of the Holy Spirit by which the child of God is cleansed from all inbred sin through faith in Jesus Christ.” The believer would be “enabled through grace to love God with all the heart and to walk in His holy commandments blameless.”⁶²

The blameless would target ecclesiastical and personal sins with a single-minded purpose. Fiercely opposed to any high-church worship, holiness people objected to paid choirs and professional organists, pew rentals, and the seeming pretensions of uptown Methodists. They also reacted intensely to the materialist fripperies of main-line protestantism’s social climbers.⁶³ The religious historian Charles Edwin Jones summed up the social protests mounted by such believers, who identified with “ideas and customs then past or passing, rejecting as ‘modern,’ worldly, and un-Christian much of their present environment.”⁶⁴ Similarly Phillip Shaw Paludan, writing on the changes wrought by war, remarks: “The story of religion in the Civil War era takes place in the context of a larger story.” Paludan observes:

That is the story of the transition of the United States from an agrarian society into a market-driven and more industrialized society, which linked together the lives and fortunes of strangers miles away from each other who began to experience events and trends that were increasingly beyond their control. And while many people benefited from the growth in wealth that this economic change brought, there came also in its wake protest from both North and South that the nation was losing its soul in search for wealth.⁶⁵

The Wesleyans’ world – so permanently changed by the war, urbanization, and a new consumerist society – cried out for order and the earnest reforms of the self. As a result new intellectual trends and fashions, from biblical criticism and evolution to flouncy dresses and tight corsets, came under intense scrutiny.⁶⁶

Novelist Harold Frederic’s classic gothic tale of religious provincialism, set in upstate New York, *The Damnation of Theron Ware* (1896), well illustrates the moral calculus of holiness-style religion. When the protagonist minister meets with the three dour trustees of his Methodist appointment, one of them harangues the new preacher. Writes Frederic:

“We are a plain sort o’ folks up in these parts,” said brother Pierce, after a slight further pause. . . . “We walk here,” he went on, eyeing the minister with a sour regard, “in a meek an’ humble spirit, in the straight an’ narrow way which leadeth unto life. We ain’t gone traipsin’ after strange gods, like some people that call themselves Methodists in other places. We stick by the Discipline an’ the ways of our fathers in Israel. No new-fangled notions can go down here. Your wife’d better take them flowers out of her bunnit afore next Sunday. . . . Everybody can shout ‘Amen!’ as loud and as long as the Spirit moves him, with us. Some one was sayin’ you thought we ought to have a choir and an organ. No, sirree! No such tom-foolery for us! You’ll only stir up feelin’ agin yourself by hintin’ at such things.”⁶⁷

In many ways the holiness movement – which the Wesleyan Methodists identified so closely with and that peaked at the same time that Populism inspired southern and Midwestern farmers – was a vocal reaction against consumerism, conspicuous consumption, and the professionalization of the ministry. Devotees aimed their sights at all manner of amusements, church practices, and behaviors they found wanting. Male and female preachers, from the pages of their magazines and pamphlets and from their pulpits, practiced their jeremiads with delight. They berated lax preachers, smoking and drinking, Sunday newspaper reading, extravagant clothes and the elaborate fashions of Victorian interiors, and fundraising oyster suppers, as well as theater and circus attendance. Some of the more radical holiness groups prohibited drinking Coca-Cola, eating pork, and even the wearing of neckties.⁶⁸ The details of their lives were arranged according to their singular calling. In the same year that Harold Frederic sent up grim shouting Methodists in *The Damnation of Theron Ware*, one holiness convert from Texas asked fellow believers, “Do you wear your ties for the glory of God? Would Jesus wear a tie if he were on earth now?”⁶⁹ In the 1890s it is likely that thousands of holiness dissenters were once again leaving the Methodist fold to join up with churches such as the Free Methodist and the Wesleyan Methodist Connection. These exiles called themselves come-outers.⁷⁰

The Wesleyans still advocated reform in the post-war years. But now the focus shifted heavily to temperance, anti-tobacco crusading, and anti-secrecy activism.⁷¹ Adam Crooks, the post-war editor of the denomination’s newspaper, served as a Wesleyan abolitionist minister in North Carolina in the 1850s. After the war he helped align the church closely with the holiness cause. He also pushed Wesleyans to take an even greater stand against lodges, the sum of all villainies, in his view. Crooks considered masonry a “devil fifty times greater” than slavery. Churchmen deplored the Ku Klux Klan in the 1870s and 1920s largely because it was a vile secret society.⁷² Like Crooks, the Presbyterian-turned-Congregationalist Jonathan Blanchard, the president of Wheaton College, also once fought fearlessly against slavery and after the war devoted greater and greater attention to the anti-secrecy crusade. (Wheaton, a school founded by Wesleyan Methodists, would eventually become a bulwark of fundamentalism. A similarly anti-slavery, reform school, Oberlin College, took a different course and associated closely with the Social Gospel movement.)⁷³ Anything that appeared to fit the mold of a secret society, including labor unions, warranted a harsh reprimand. Conservative evangelicals

such as Blanchard, who had been abolitionists, as one historian puts it, “were unable to translate their unyielding opposition to slavery into an equally zealous concern for the freedman’s welfare; likewise, they had little appreciation for moral issues at stake in the development of industrial capitalism.”⁷⁴ After the war, Wesleyans worked closely with Blanchard and joined him in the National Christian Association Opposed to Secret Societies.⁷⁵

As Wesleyans turned inward, focusing on matters of private belief and Victorian propriety, they became proto-fundamentalists. Late in the century members shifted more attention from social reform to evangelism, to revivals, and to the behavioral codes of the holiness movement. The church’s General Conference sessions and items in the denominational paper increasingly featured news from evangelistic campaigns and revival reports.⁷⁶

They closed ranks in the 1890s and the first decades of the new century, warning against higher criticism of the Bible and the threats posed by progressive protestantism. Ministers also cautioned against the infidelities of evolutionary science and liberal biblical scholarship in the denomination’s newspaper.⁷⁷ Its editor put it succinctly in 1890:

This is the fatal tendency of these liberal times. Many men of excellent minds, once useful in the advocacy of truth ... have not only cut away from the great essentials of salvation truth, but opened their “liberal” minds and arms to the ... most dangerous and destructive errors.

In the 1920s, the denomination’s paper lent its support to William Jennings Bryan and his fight against evolutionary science. The paper also advertised Bryan’s books, proclaiming “Bryan Answers Darwin!”⁷⁸ Already by the last decades of the nineteenth-century, Wesleyan churchmen registered alarm over ministers and scholars who questioned the historicity of scripture and who accepted other faiths as roads to truth. Hence, church leaders reacted strongly against the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair and its Parliament of Religions. Besides the fair being a waste of useful time better spent on godly pursuits, the religious displays it held seemed to be saying that all religions were legitimate paths to glory.⁷⁹

In part the Wesleyans’ response to intellectual innovations and liberal, pluralist values revealed certain sociological and theological divisions at play. Such evangelicals, including the Wesleyans, were not represented at institutions like Union Theological Seminary or universities such as Harvard, Yale, or Chicago. Like others in the evangelical fold, Wesleyans would slowly come to view such schools as hopelessly lost. The historian George Marsden sheds light on this division with reference to the Social Gospel. “To understand the fundamentalists’ strong reaction against anything that even looked like the Social Gospel, it is necessary to distinguish the liberal Social Gospel from ... evangelical social concern,” observes Marsden. For conservative evangelicals “public or private social programs [needed to] be understood as complementary outgrowths of the regenerating work of Christ which saved souls for all eternity.”⁸⁰ Broadly speaking, ecclesiastical abolitionism gave birth to two later movements: the conservative evangelical holiness revival (which included a proto-

fundamentalist component) and the left-leaning Social Gospel movement.⁸¹ This post-Civil War divergence has not always been acknowledged. For example, in his mammoth *Religious History of the American People* the eminent scholar Sydney E. Ahlstrom classed the Social Gospel as the true heir of abolitionism. In his view, holiness and fundamentalism had little relation to the anti-slavery crusade. Wrote Ahlstrom: "Abolitionism, with its hymns, slogans, and prophetic zeal, was a real decisive prelude to the Social Gospel."⁸² Yet for quite a few in the holiness movement the same was true.

The historian Molly Oshatz sees these two strands both developing out of anti-slavery agitation. Following the war, Oshatz observes, "Christian abolitionists who relied on weak exegesis to insist that the Bible proved slavery to be a sin continued to hold tight to biblical infallibility." They reacted strongly against the latest developments in scholarship. For instance Jonathan Blanchard, George Cheever, and leading Wesleyan divines such as Arthur T. Jennings condemned historical criticism of the Bible. Says Oshatz: "Fundamentalists shared the Christian immediatists' sense of prophetic purpose and opposition to scholarly moderation and mediation." Other former abolitionists – Theodore Parker, Theodore Dwight Weld, Gerrit Smith, and James Birney among them – took a different path away from the church, creedalism, and the Bible and toward what Oshatz calls "free religion."⁸³

Wesleyans' zealous pursuit of orthodoxy, combined with their extravagant millennial expectations, would lead some in the fold to seek out additional works of the spirit, beyond salvation and sanctification. For such individuals these last days, though hopeless in many ways, also marked a time of miraculous spiritual abundance. Harvard philosopher and psychologist William James reflected on the popularity of "mind-cure" and healing – which so captured the attention of Wesleyans in these years – in his groundbreaking *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902). What accounted for its current popularity? he asked. For him,

the most characteristic feature of the mind-cure movement is an inspiration much more direct. The leaders in this faith have had an intuitive belief in the all-saving power of healthy-minded attitudes as such, in the conquering efficacy of courage, hope, and trust, and a correlative contempt for doubt, fear, worry, and all nervously precautionary states of mind.⁸⁴

Wesleyans and holiness adherents who stressed divine healing certainly held out such hope. From the late 1890s to the 1920s hundreds if not thousands left the Wesleyan church to join up with more radical groups and tongues-speaking pentecostals.⁸⁵ But for those who remained in the denomination and those who left, the same ominous signs of the times seemed to point to Armageddon. Summarizing the trends of the post-war age, Allen C. Guelzo remarks, "Evangelical Protestantism, which had acquired so massive a grip on public culture, now began a Napoleonic retreat to the fringes of that culture, abandoning all hope for transforming a world that had somehow gone beyond hope."⁸⁶

These baroque evangelicals were not alone. A growing number of Americans in the 1880s and 1890s decided that the utopian schemes and confident reformism of the

prewar and reconstruction years were no longer viable. Whereas first-generation Wesleyans were lifted by hopes of reform and the prospect of Christ's kingdom on earth, 50 years later, those in the church were giving up on the idea that the world could be fundamentally reordered by the cross and through human effort.⁸⁷

This bleak, late-century view could manifest itself in a host of other ways and for a variety of other reasons.⁸⁸ For African Americans the fragile political and social freedoms gained for a short time faded as disfranchisement, segregation, and racial violence became the order of the day. Reflecting on the tragedy of reconstruction from the vantage of 1935, W.E.B. DuBois summed up an era defined by the "triumph of men who in their effort to replace equality with caste and to build inordinate wealth on the foundation of abject poverty have succeeded in killing democracy, art and religion."⁸⁹

It was an age of disappointment and desperation in many other ways too. The crippling 1893 depression, following which unemployment rates in the USA averaged between 8.4% and 15.2%, thrust millions into abject poverty.⁹⁰ Even as Anglo-Saxon triumphalism, evolutionary optimism, and the Spencerian secular religion of progress thrived, pessimism about social change grew just as men and women across the nation turned away from reform and the plight of African Americans.

One such skeptic was Henry Adams, social critic, historian, and son of one of America's most famous dynasties. As editor of the *North American Review* (1870–1876), he had once pushed for political change and used his pen to fight corruption. In the next decade he gave up on such causes. He now pointed out the colossal failures of political reform and the impossible challenges of social disorder, which arrived on American shores with new immigrants and labor unrest. Progressives and hopeful evolutionary theorists were equally deluded, in Adams's view.⁹¹ For other critics, such as Thorstein Veblen, over-civilization and the sybaritic wastefulness of consumerism endangered the republic. In 1894, the *Century* magazine even called on a medical expert to diagnose the troubles of the age. "The rich become effeminate, weak, and immoral," observed Dr James Weir, "and the lower classes, taking advantage of this moral lassitude, and led on by their savage inclinations, undertake strikes, mobs, boycotts, and riots."⁹² Added to all this *fin de siècle* gloom were new concerns about the end of the American frontier and the threat of race suicide, laid out so alarmingly by politicians and social scientists. It is little wonder that this was an age of health complaints, including the catchall neurasthenia, a malady that had afflicted Veblen, William James, Theodore Roosevelt, Charles Beard, and Edith Wharton.⁹³

Reading the signs of these "end times," most Wesleyans were convinced that the world was doomed. Some looked back on the church's roots to make sense of its current state. Arthur T. Jennings penned an official, institutional history of the denomination in 1902. While he acknowledged the church's origins lay in the fight against slavery, he now, nearly 60 years later, saw other, new menacing forces on the horizon. The church had turned much of its attention to fighting the personal sins of drinking and participation in secret societies, while championing Sabbath observance. Now there was little to no mention of pacifism, poor relief, aid to African Americans, or women's rights. In the years 1879–1891, the church stopped its ordination of women, though they still were allowed to preach. After 1891 the

Wesleyans permitted ordination on the approval of individual conferences.⁹⁴ The commitment to women ministers did remain strong through much of the early twentieth century. In fact, during the period from 1930 to 1950 the church ordained its largest number of women preachers. After that era, write two observers within the modern church, a conservative alignment with evangelicals who opposed women ministers, along with other developments, meant that fewer and fewer women entered the field just as opportunities for service shrank.⁹⁵

Though the conservative turn took longer in some areas than others, the eventual transformation of the denomination fit into a greater religious pattern. In the last two decades of the century, American protestantism began to fracture along conservative and liberal lines. The former, persuaded by America's most famous preacher Dwight Moody, held to personal ideas of sin, adopted an apocalyptic outlook, and turned inward. The latter embraced the Social Gospel and the burgeoning theological liberalism of Washington Gladden, Richard Ely, and later Walter Rauschenbusch, whose outreach ministry in Hell's Kitchen in New York City's Bowery gained wide attention. Wesleyans would have disagreed sharply with Rauschenbusch, who claimed that the individualistic gospel of personal sin and salvation was inadequate. "The Social Gospel," he announced, "seeks to bring men under repentance for their collective sins and to create a more sensitive and more modern conscience."⁹⁶ If first-generation Wesleyans looked to Charles Finney, William Lloyd Garrison, and Elijah Lovejoy for inspiration, their late-Victorian progeny now turned to Billy Sunday, William Jennings Bryan, and Dwight Moody.⁹⁷

Following Moody, Wesleyans came to believe that they could do little but guard against the wiles of Satan, preach God's word at home and abroad, and tarry for the second coming of Jesus. Though the denomination did not officially adopt premillennial theology, many within the church became ardent premillennialists.⁹⁸ Following the writings of American and British divines, they came to believe that Christ would return to a fallen, hopeless world before the millennium, rapturing the saints into heaven, leaving reprobates to suffer unimaginable tribulations.⁹⁹ Premillennialism had once been a very marginal theology, embraced by the so-called Millerites in America and Plymouth Brethren in England. Yet now, because of the pressures of the day and a growing interest in the signs of the end, it gained more and more adherents. In the words of one historian, for those who adopted it "[o]nly the supernatural return of Christ on the clouds of glory would arrest the growing corruption of human history, hold its downward spiral, and inaugurate the kingdom of God on earth."¹⁰⁰

For Wesleyans this meant that the kind of social holiness that dominated in the pre-Civil War era now looked irrelevant or utterly deluded. One prominent holiness preacher summed up the rejection of optimistic postmillennialism, a theology that certainly did not seem to square with dark realities. He had been taught that the "Church was gradually to overspread the earth with salvation until all mankind were saved, and that then the millennium would come ..." By the 1890s, however, he "plainly saw that such was not being done."¹⁰¹ Nothing could ultimately set the world right. Wesleyans would have likely agreed with Moody about the desperate need for evangelism in these last days. Moody famously summed up this apocalyptic view:

I have felt like working three times as hard ever since I came to understand that my Lord was coming back again. I look on this world as a wrecked vessel. God has given me a life-boat, and said to me "Moody, save all you can." This world is getting darker and darker; its ruin is drawing nearer and nearer ...

The prophetic books of the Bible, then, were pieces of an end-times puzzle, waiting to be assembled.¹⁰²

Wesleyans, working in a dying world they thought darkened by sin, urgently established urban rescue missions, orphanages, and academies and colleges to train up their youth in the ways of holiness. One of those institutions, Miltonvale Wesleyan College, situated on the rolling grasslands of north central Kansas, reveals something about the sacroscape of the denomination's proto-fundamentalism. Removed from the evils of urban America, the college adopted a defensive posture.¹⁰³ It was just the kind of religious school H.L. Mencken pilloried so mercilessly: "But what a college! You will find one in every mountain valley of the land, with its single building in its bare pasture lot, and its faculty of half-idiot pedagogues and broken-down preachers." To these accusations of narrowness or bigotry one of the school's early presidents had a ready response. "After all," scoffed H.W. McDowell, "there are several people who are going this same *narrow* way and we shall have some splendid company."¹⁰⁴

The school served as, in the words of its founders, a kind "fortress of righteousness" on the treeless plains. In 1909 the institution's creators deliberately located the college far removed from the vices and temptations of the big city. Topeka was over 100 miles to the east, and the bustling metropolis of Kansas City – with its hundreds of brothels, gambling dens, and saloons – was nearly 200 miles distant. The village of Miltonvale, with fewer than 1000 inhabitants, was an ideal, sober Victorian setting. The first president of the school, Silas Bond, boasted that the community's "council prohibits every form of drinking place, gambling den, pool hall, and billiard table."¹⁰⁵ Miltonvale's watchful residents had fought hard for that level of purity. In September 1898 residents responded to a prohibitionist revival service by raiding a local saloon, hatchets in hand. One crusader was shot in the face by a bartender.¹⁰⁶

Students embraced the ardent teetotalism and anti-vice efforts of the village. And they joined millions of other protestants, evangelical and non-evangelical, in their fight against "demon rum." But unlike those other teetotalers, Wesleyans policed their borders against sin with greater intensity.¹⁰⁷ In 1914 one of Miltonvale Wesleyan's students delivered a public oration, in flowery, late-Victorian prose, proclaiming that, "Like a never dying leech, the legalized saloon is sucking the very life blood from this nation, undermining our civilization, degenerating our progeny, laying low ... and rapidly working our ultimate downfall."¹⁰⁸ In a similar fashion, another student remarked with satisfaction that:

Here [in Miltonvale] the smoking and chewing of tobacco, swearing and ribaldry, which are common to many schools of our lands are marked because of their absence. There are no poolrooms or other coarse places of amusement such as you will find in most towns of our size. You will not find the stores of our town blackened by tobacco smoke, nor find a gang of loafers seated around the stove, spitting at the legs of the ... stove, making the store an undesirable place for ladies.¹⁰⁹

Miltonvale's Wesleyans stood firm against what they considered lapses in morality *and* theology. They denounced theological modernism as defined by scholars such as Shailer Mathews, Dean of the University of Chicago Divinity School from 1908 to 1933. In 1925, as the Scopes Trial made international headlines, Mathews described modernism as "the use of methods of modern science to ... [meet] the needs of [the] modern world. ... Modernists endeavor to reach beliefs and their application in the same way that chemists or historians reach and apply their conclusions."¹¹⁰

The denomination's colleges aligned themselves with fundamentalism in direct and indirect ways. In 1930 Houghton College in western New York affiliated itself with the World's Christian Fundamentals Association (WCFA), a group founded in 1919 as the first interdenominational organization of fundamentalists. The WCFA promoted biblical inerrancy, a belief that the Bible was free of error, along with conservative doctrine and opposition to modernism. The association also called on William Jennings Bryan to aid the prosecution in the legendary Scopes Trial of 1925. It also funded the revered figure for his efforts.¹¹¹

In 1919, after America's Red Summer and amid growing social upheaval, Miltonvale's president drafted a list of "Fundamentals," meant to insure the school's orthodoxy. Among these he included: "I believe in a personal devil, hell, and the eternal punishment of the unregenerate." And "I believe in the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures."¹¹² In the same year, in a special section of the denomination's paper, representatives from the Kansas college advised readers on the "rapid spread of the 'new' or 'liberal' theology." Such views came from depraved, sinful men. It was no wonder, the author wrote from the Plains, that the allied evolutionary theory "leaves no possible place for the fall of man and consequently no place for a supernatural Redeemer nor a vicarious atonement." Consequently, the school safeguarded itself by employing teachers and using textbooks that were "positively committed to the fundamentals of Christian doctrine and belief."¹¹³ Such fundamentals, when applied, could take on a very contemporary tone.

The future democratic presidential candidate George McGovern, whose father was a Wesleyan Methodist pastor, grew up in Miltonvale Wesleyan College's prime recruiting area of the upper Midwest. The college's male quartets passed through his church, inspiring the youngster with their close harmonies. "Movies were off-limits to good Wesleyan Methodists," he recalled years later, "as were dancing, card-playing, smoking or drinking. I had no trouble forgoing any of these, except movies."¹¹⁴ Almost as soon as motion pictures became a popular mass entertainment in the United States, the official Wesleyan magazine condemned the movie houses that were cropping up in "practically every city, village, and hamlet in America conducting a business that trains in lust, vice and crime ..."¹¹⁵ Miltonvale was the first Wesleyan college to issue a rule against motion pictures, banning students from attending them in 1917. Additionally, attendance at other places that promoted "depravity," such as bowling alleys, dance halls, and roller rinks, was also prohibited. The Wesleyans at Miltonvale, focusing greater and greater attention on personal morality and Victorian decency, would have agreed with the denomination's leaders, who denounced dancing as "a worldly, sensuous affair, which belongs to the kingdom of Satan ..."¹¹⁶

The core values of Miltonvale's students and staff reflected the larger transition from the public social holiness and radicalism of the denomination's antebellum years to more private, individualistic ideas of sin and purity. In the school's first years, students enthusiastically joined the moral crusade. In the early twentieth century, Miltonvale championed prohibitionism with a determined intensity. The Intercollegiate Prohibition League (IPA) flourished on campus and the school's chapter registered some of the largest turnouts at intercollegiate oratory competitions. In the 1914–1915 school year, Miltonvale, with an enrollment of less than 200, boasted 115 students in the IPA.¹¹⁷

After the prohibition amendment, the Anti-Tobacco League replaced the IPA in prominence with about as heavy a student participation rate as the IPA had achieved. Miltonvale's Anti-Tobacco League announced that tobacco was the "next great evil to be fought and trodden under foot."¹¹⁸ In orations delivered against the "sinful weed" the polemics were as vitriolic as those geared against liquor. One such orator declared that "The use of tobacco results in complete moral and religious degeneracy."¹¹⁹ Amid this flurry of crusading for personal holiness some Wesleyans did try to link their efforts back to those of the denomination's founders. A Swedish student at Miltonvale harkened back to the reform principles of the earliest Wesleyans, stressing a renewed need for political action against drink. He asked if "God raised up men to unshackle the black man in America," then will God not, "again bring forth heroes to work out another freedom, to burst another bondage that threatens all men, black and white?"¹²⁰

In the end the college, though fired by the zeal of students, boosters, and its staff, could not be sustained. Miltonvale endured decades of hardship, including the Dust Bowl, when clouds of topsoil loomed over its campus. In the midst of the Great Depression the college's theology students frequently discussed, as one student put it, "the Lord's return to earth again." They thought that, "surely the time is at hand, even at the door."¹²¹ Not surprisingly, the college's isolated setting, along with year after year of declining enrollment, led it to close its doors in 1972, when it merged with another Wesleyan college in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. By then, many in the denomination had forgotten or chosen to ignore the anti-slavery and radical roots of their church.¹²²

That kind of denominational amnesia had been underway for decades. The causes of the denomination's first generation looked more and more removed from current moral dilemmas. Should the church involve itself in humanitarian efforts, asked its leaders in the decade when the Scopes Trial made "fundamentalism" a household term. A writer in the denomination's paper answered "no" in 1923. "In these humanitarian works the state must be the leader." The church's primary mission was to win lost souls.¹²³

Twenty years later the Wesleyans marked their 100th anniversary in 1942 and 1943, giving church leaders the chance to reflect on the denomination's roots and the course it had taken. Commemorative issues of the denomination's paper marked the centenary. Contributors mentioned abolitionism only in passing. Wesleyan Methodism's flame keepers said nothing of other reforms, including pacifism, civil rights for African Americans, or women's rights. In their tributes officials seem

almost embarrassed by the zealous activism of Orange Scott and other leading lights of the early denomination. Rumors even circulated among the faithful that Scott, on his deathbed in 1847, denounced his “worldly” reform efforts. The author of a centennial history of the Michigan Conference put the matter somewhat cryptically, noting that, “Correct attitude toward reform measures and doctrine does not always mean that a person may be in the warmth of a close personal walk with God.” He went on to observe that even though the Wesleyan Methodist Connection traced its roots to a reform body, “it is interesting to know that its growth was largely by means of evangelism.”¹²⁴ Thinking back on 100 years of Wesleyan Methodism, another minister also acknowledged the “definite anti-slavery position on the part of the church.” But his denomination had moved on to more important matters in the intervening decades. Seventy-five years before, he observed, his church had fought secret societies with all its might. “Fifty years ago,” he went on,

the records show an uncompromising testimony against the liquor traffic in favor of prohibition. Twenty-five years ago, or thereabouts, the Connection was considering the tobacco amendment . . . In more recent days the burden of emphasis seems to have been a general crying out against worldly conformity of every kind.

The latter meant a stand against popular entertainment and culture as well as a bitter reaction to the activism of the liberal protestant mainline and the reformism of the Social Gospel. Wesleyans, he went on to warn, “need to observe the peculiar danger of the reformer.” Too strong an emphasis on that matter overshadowed, as he put it, “the whole field of religious and spiritual truth.”¹²⁵ In the following decade the Wesleyans adopted a strict inerrantist view of the Bible. The error-free word of God, so they thought, was under assault from dangerous forces.¹²⁶

For some decades now scholars have been charting this evangelical transformation from socially active, reformism to a more isolated, defensive kind of fundamentalism. Some have labeled it the “Great Reversal.” Others have called this the “Great Split,” after which “Public Christians” and “Private Christians,” or modernists and fundamentalists, went their separate ways. Guided by the work of the historian Timothy L. Smith and the sociologist David Moberg, scholars in the 1970s and 1980s traced the origins of this religious division.¹²⁷ While many northern evangelical protestants were on a quest to Christianize the nation in the antebellum years, by the early twentieth century a growing number hoped only to man the battlements against an onslaught of sin: liberalism, evolution, higher criticism, drink, tobacco, profanity, and corrosive mass culture. This turn of events might beg the question, as the historian Steven Miller recently put it: “What had happened to the abolitionist Legacy of Charles Finney, the Tappan brothers, and the early administrators of Oberlin and Wheaton Colleges?”¹²⁸

In the case of the Wesleyan Methodists several factors clearly contributed to the transformation from an abolitionist church to a quasi-fundamentalist one. Surely, the exodus of radical leaders immediately after the Civil War played a part. The war itself disrupted the denomination, sowed chaos and disappointment, and created extensive problems for the church, much as it did in other religious bodies in the North and South. Related to that the denomination’s loose organization, or

“connection,” in part a response to the rigid episcopal government of the Methodists, weakened the church and made it less theologically coherent in subsequent years. In the decades after the war the Wesleyans, in search of a new identity following emancipation, joined the holiness movement and members embraced premillennialism. They then turned much of their attention to issues of personal morality and private piety. That change mirrored the growing disenchantment of millions of other Americans during the Gilded Age and Progressive Eras. The Wesleyans’ growing pessimism about social reform made them far less likely to take part in poverty relief or urban outreach that so enlivened advocates of the Social Gospel. In an interesting reversal Methodism, which had been too conservative on the slave issue for the first generation of Wesleyans, eventually adopted the social reforms Wesleyans now rejected. For this reason George McGovern, when he came of age, left the Wesleyans to join the United Methodists, a denomination that had turned to the Social Gospel in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While attending university the future presidential nominee discovered, as he put it, that “Religion was more than a search for personal salvation, more than an instantaneous expression of God’s grace; it could be the essential moral underpinning for a life devoted to the service of one’s time.”¹²⁹ Those who remained in the church he grew up attending were skeptical of that brand of social activism. It looked too human-inspired, devoid of God. It drew attention away from evangelism, holiness, and worship. So extensive was the Wesleyan transformation that 100 years after the denomination formed, its laity and leadership either chose to ignore or downplay their church’s abolitionist roots. By then, most sympathized with, or fully embraced, fundamentalism.

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Notes

1. “The True Wesleyan,” *Oberlin Evangelist*, January 17, 1844, 15. See also, “The True Wesleyan,” *Voice of Freedom* (Brandon, Vermont), January 11, 1844, 114; Gallien, “The ‘Double-Conscious’ Nature,” 522–5. As of 2007 the Wesleyans’ membership totaled 138,164, with 1626 churches. Mead, Hill, and Atwood, *Handbook of Denominations*.
2. Douglass called their congregation “an oasis in a desert.” “The Meeting on Main Street,” *North Star*, January 14, 1848, 2. See also, Sernett, *North Star Country*, 83–5, 115.
3. “Sound Conference Testimonies,” *The Liberator*, March 30, 1849, 1; Siebert, *The Underground Railroad*, 32, 50, 95, 235; Strong, *Perfectionist Politics*, 129.

4. J. M. Snyder, "Western Migration in the Wesleyan Methodist Church," *American Wesleyan*, July 24, 1867, 115; McLeister and Nicholson, *History*, 65, 147, 431–447, 540.
5. Stewart, "Reconsidering the Abolitionists," 7; Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin*, 129–44; Balmer, *Mine Eyes Have Seen the Glory*, 349–50.
6. Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 86.
7. Dayton, "An Autobiographical Response," 387.
8. See "Fundamentalism" in Google Ngram; Woodward to Hofstadter, 227.
9. Thornwell, *The Rights and the Duties of Masters*, 14.
10. Wesley, entry for February 12, 1772, *The Works of John Wesley*, 453; Strong, *Perfectionist Politics*, 4, 7–8, 2.
11. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 113; Walters, *American Reformers*; Veysey, "Introduction," 10–11; Moorhead, "The Quest for Holiness," 365–79; Emerson, *Essays*, 275; Finney, "Systematic Theology," 47.
12. Strong, *Perfectionist Politics*, 30. For a counter to the perfectionism thesis see Cumbler, *From Abolition to Rights for All*, 9.
13. Emerson to Carlyle, 164.
14. Cartwright, *The Backwoods Preacher*, 36, 51; Bray, *Peter Cartwright*, 162.
15. Haddal, *John Wesley*, 159.
16. Phillips, *Freedom's Port*, 15; "General Conference of the Methodist Church," *Oberlin Evangelist*, July 15, 1840, 117. On the evangelical underpinnings of antislavery agitation, see Stewart, *Abolitionist Politics*, 6, 53, 79; and Stewart, *Holy Warriors*, 13–16.
17. Mathews, "Orange Scott," 101.
18. Haines, "Radical Reform," 33.
19. Bishop Hedding quoted in Buckley, *A History of Methodism*, 6.
20. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage*, 74; Jennings, *History of American Wesleyan Methodism*, 23.
21. Mathews, *Slavery and Methodism*, 114.
22. Haines, "Radical Reform," 41–2.
23. Jennings, *History of American Wesleyan Methodism*, 25; McKivigan, "The Antislavery 'Comeouter' Sects," 142–60.
24. In 1840 the Garrisonians took hold of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Orange Scott joined Arthur and Lewis Tappan along with James G. Birney in leadership of the American Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Mathews, "Orange Scott," 79–80; *True Wesleyan* quoted in McKivigan, *The War Against Proslavery Religion*, 99; Strong, *Perfectionist Politics*, 101–3; Padgett, "Hearing the Anti-Slavery Rank-and-File," 63–84.
25. Scott quoted by Matlack, *The Life of Rev. Orange Scott*, 245. See also Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage*, 78.
26. Jennings, *History of American Wesleyan Methodism*, 106. On early demographics, see Padgett, "Hearing the Anti-Slavery Rank-and-File," 74–5. See also comments on the historiographical turn to these non-elites in Varon, *Disunion!* 61.
27. See "XIII. Of Sanctification," in *Discipline* (1858), 14–15; Dieter, *The Holiness Revival*, 21–2; Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 60.
28. Strong, *Perfectionist Politics*, 30–31.
29. Moorhead, "The Erosion of Postmillennialism," 62; Sandeen, *The Roots of Fundamentalism*, 42–9.
30. Haines, "The Grand Nobler Work," 118.
31. "Anti-Slavery: Hymn 605," 379–80; Lay, "Holiness Denominational Family," 1014–15.
32. *Wesleyan*, October 27, 1853, 170.
33. Haines, "Radical Reform," 47–61.
34. "On Peace," *Discipline* (1858), 86–7.
35. Dempster, Chairman, Leesburg, OH, December 1859, quoted in, "Antislavery Meeting," *Anti-slavery Bugle* (New-Lisbon, OH), January 7, 1860, 2. See also, Crane and Hawkswell, *The Autobiography*, 131–2.

36. "Section XXI: On Peace," *Discipline* (1867), 124; Haines, "Radical Reform," 55.
37. Lee and McEldowney, "To His Excellency Abraham Lincoln," 547.
38. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 20.
39. McKivigan, *The War Against Proslavery Religion*, 96–7. Of the five first editors of the denominations paper four had either died or left the church by 1866. McLeister, "The Wesleyan Centennial." *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 6, 1943, 5. On the acrimony of the departures of Wesleyans, see Martin, *The Wesleyan Manual*, 152–7.
40. Jennings, *History of American Wesleyan Methodism*, 191.
41. The Cleveland proclamation quoted in, "Declaration for Negro Suffrage," *Pomeroy Weekly Telegraph* (Pomeroy, OH), July 20, 1865, 1.
42. Bassett, *A Concise History*, 206–15; and McLeister, *History*, 76–82, quote on page 81.
43. Harlow, *Religion, Race, and the Making*, 158–9, 185.
44. Guelzo, *Fateful Lightning*, quote on 415; for a general take on the religious disruption, see 409–17. For a good summary of church and religious tensions at the end of and following the war, see Wesley, *The Politics of Faith*, 194–201; Sutton, *American Apocalypse*, 10–16; Rable, *God's Almost Chosen People*, 394–6; and Miller, *Both Prayed to the Same God*, 177–84.
45. Hacker, "A Census-based Count," 307, 338, 339.
46. "State of the Connection," 1867, quoted in Martin, *The Wesleyan Manual*, 168–9.
47. Taylor, "Beyond Immediate Emancipation," 273.
48. Haines, "Radical Reform," 103.
49. Blum, "To Doubt This Would Be to Doubt God," 229–31.
50. Hill, "Religion and the Results," 371.
51. Noll, *The Civil War*, 53; Haines, "The Grander Nobler Work," 119.
52. Jennings, *History of American*, 67–8; "National Reform," in *Discipline* (1896), 142–143.
53. Stout, *Upon the Altar of the Nation*, xviii, xxii.
54. *American Wesleyan*, July 26, 1876, 1, 4; *American Wesleyan*, December 20, 1876, 4.
55. W. H. K., "Our Southern Field," *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 4, 1893, 11.
56. "African Americans," 2–3.
57. Haines, "The Grander Nobler Work," 125–6; "The Race Question," *Wesleyan Methodist*, April 22, 1903, 1.
58. Hill, "Religion and the Results," 377; Nicholson, *Wesleyan Methodism in the South*, 125–6.
59. Rev. E. P. Marvin, "Social Purity," *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 11, 1893, 8. On divine healing, see, Maggie Young, "Saved Body and Soul," *Wesleyan Methodist*, May 28, 1890, 2; and "Section IX: Officers of the Connection, Mode of Appointing, and Their Duty," in *Discipline* (1896), 77–8.
60. Haines, "Radical Reform," 102; Godbey, *Spiritual Gifts and Graces*, 10.
61. H. Gregory quoted in Haines, "Radical Reform," quote on 102, 103.
62. Haines, "The Grander Nobler Work," 118–19; "XIV. Entire Sanctification," in *Discipline* (1896), 13. The 1858 version of the discipline does not include the word "Entire" before "Sanctification." "XIII. Of Sanctification," *Discipline* (1858), 14.
63. Haines, "The Grander Nobler Work," 118–20.
64. Jones, *Perfectionist Persuasion*, 83–4, 86–8, quote on 85.
65. Paludan, "Religion and the American Civil War," 21.
66. For an overview of the Wesleyan transformation, see Hill, "Religion and the Results," 375–8. For a Wesleyan take on church entertainments, see Crane with Hawkswell, *The Autobiography*, 262–5.
67. Frederic, *The Damnation of Theron Ware*, 28, 29. Wesleyans were debating the issue of instrumental music in church services in the 1890s: J. B. Teter, "Instrumental Music in Churches," *Wesleyan Methodist*, June 1, 1892, 1; Clara Tear, "Instrumental Music in Churches," *Wesleyan Methodist*, June 29, 1892, 1; and "We recommend churches to dispense with instrumental music," *Discipline* (1896), 115.

68. Wesche, *Henry Clay Morrison*, 39; Synan, *Old Time Power*, 56; Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Tradition*, 58; Pickett and Smith, *The Pickett-Smith Debate*, 101; "Donations, Oyster Suppers, and Other Things," *Wesleyan Methodist*, April 13, 1892, 4; Cary, *The Evils of Theater-Going*, 5; P. B. Campbell, "Is It Wrong to Wear a Necktie?" *Wesleyan Methodist*, April 22, 1903, 2.
69. W. D. McGraw, "A Testimony from Texas," *The Way of Faith*, 21 October 1896, 5.
70. Hilson, *History of the South Carolina Conference*, 25.
71. Eva B. Perkins, "Temperance: I Am a Drunkard's Child," *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 22, 1890, 7; "Temperance: The Cider Web," *Wesleyan Methodist*, February 19, 1890, 5; "Masonry Killed," *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 29, 1890, 4. On the extent of anti-masonry, see, "Rev G.P. Riley of Marion, Ind.," *Springfield Republican* (Springfield, MA), December 31, 1891, 4. See also, "Reform Notes," and "Reforms of the Day" in *Wesleyan Methodist* through the 1890s; "The Religion of Masonry," *Wesleyan Methodist*, February 14, 1917, 9.
72. Adam Crooks quoted in the *American Wesleyan*, June 27, 1883, 3; Haines, "The Grander Nobler Work," 124; and Black, "Becoming a Church," 208. In 1923, a Wesleyan editor declared: "The fact that the Ku Klux Klan professes laudable and even exalted principles should be no excuse for taking the methods they use to secure the ends they desire." Chief among those disreputable "methods" was secrecy. "Ku Klux Klan," *Wesleyan Methodist*, February 14, 1923, 8.
73. Luker, *The Social Gospel in Black and White*, 83, 173–4, 247, 249.
74. Taylor, "Beyond Immediate Emancipation," 270.
75. Haines, "The Grander Nobler Work," 121–2.
76. Smith, "The History of Church Controlled Colleges," 13–14.
77. Black, "Becoming a Church," 202. On higher criticism, see A. T. Jennings in the *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 18, 1899, 3; "Homiletics: The Accord of Science with the Bible," *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 7, 1903, 7; and S. A. Gilley, "Progressive Theology," *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 15, 1890, 1. For a later, official church reiteration of this fundamentalism, see McLeister and Nicholson, *History*, 475–8. "The Bible," *Wesleyan Methodist*, May 25, 1892, 1. See also "Tragedies of Higher Criticism: What One Christian Woman Has Seen," *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 10, 1923, 7.
78. Numbers, *Darwinism Comes to America*, 199–200. On Bryan, see "The Modernistic Invasion," *Wesleyan Methodist*, May 23, 1928, 2; and "Bryan Answers Darwin!" *Wesleyan Methodist*, February 14, 1923, 15. See also the advertisement for the music of Homer Rodeheaver, Billy Sunday's chorister, "Rainbow Records," *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 10, 1923, 15; and an advertisement for the publisher Fleming H. Revell, a leading force in the fundamentalist movement in the 1920s and beyond, "Books Suitable for Gifts," February 21, 1923.
79. "A Word of Caution," *Wesleyan Methodist*, February 19, 1890, 4; "The Bible," *Wesleyan Methodist*, May 25, 1892, 1; Black, "Becoming a Church," 202.
80. Thanks to Tom Packer for pointing me to the educational differences. See Bowman, *The Urban Pulpit*, 16–17; and Marsden, *The Soul of the American University*, 17–20; Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 91.
81. Strong, *Perfectionist Politics*, 166.
82. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History*, quote on 787, see also, 806, 817–18.
83. Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin*, 121–2; quotes on 123 and 124.
84. James, *The Varieties*, 94.
85. See the comments of a leading Church of God (Cleveland, Tennessee) author in "History of Pentecost: The Shout Heard Round the World," *The Faithful Standard*, October 1922, 9. For the broader dimensions of conservative evangelical uneasiness in the late nineteenth century, see Frank, *Less Than Conquerors*, 32–59.
86. Guelzo, *Fateful Lightning*, 524.
87. Dieter, "The Post Civil War Holiness Revival," 177–8.

88. The historian Leslie Butler sums up this anxious, bleak outlook that gained greater acceptance on both sides of the Atlantic: "The 1890s bred a mood of greater pessimism than ever before, in large part because of an Anglo Saxonism that sanctioned racialism, cultivated a martial spirit, and sought dominance through the illiberal office of empire." In her telling the liberals of the antebellum and postbellum eras ended their days with a particularly gloomy view. Butler, *Critical Americans*, 220. On how this dismal view even shaped prison reform, see Currie, "Crime," 214.
89. DuBois, *Black Reconstruction*, 707. Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 1–2.
90. Boyer, "Unemployment," 147.
91. Cotkin, *Reluctant Modernism*, 132–3. See, for example, Adams, "The New York Gold Conspiracy," 411–36; Adams, "Civil Service Reform," 443–76; Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 20–5. Wesleyans responded to the new immigration with a flurry of anti-Catholicism in the 1890s: *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 4, 1893, 1; G. W. Newman, "The Danger to the United States from Romanism," *Wesleyan Methodist*, May 17, 1893, 7; S. J. Young, "Shall Christians as Individuals Arm Against Catholics?" *Wesleyan Methodist*, June 7, 1893, 2; "Reckless Reformers," *Wesleyan Methodist*, June 14, 1893; "Immigrants," *Wesleyan Methodist*, February 25, 1903, 1; and an advertisement for Rev. O. M. Owen's *No Pope, No Priest: The School Plot Unmasked* in *Wesleyan Methodist*, published by the denomination's publishing house, in *Wesleyan Methodist*, June 14, 1893, 13.
92. Weir, "The Methods of the Rioting Striker," 952–3. See also, Painter, *Standing at Armageddon*, 39–71.
93. Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier," 79–112; Ross, "The Causes of Race Suicide," 67–89; "A Letter from President Roosevelt," 551; Carlton, "Broad Aspects of Race-Suicide," 610; and Beard, *American Nervousness*. See also, Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization*, 199–206; Lears, *No Place of Grace*, 28–32; and Wiebe, *The Search for Order*, 76, 105–10. "Strife," 195–257.
94. Jennings, *History of American Wesleyan Methodism*, 61–67. Rev. E. P. Martin, "Social Purity, Part I," *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 11, 1893, 3; and Rev. E. P. Martin, "Social Purity, Part II," *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 18, 1893, 3. Attention to social reform in the 1890s was more the exception than the rule, as in, "Chicago Sweat Shops," *Wesleyan Methodist*, May 24, 1893, 7. See, for example, the presentation titles for a program marking the 50th anniversary of the denomination in Seneca Falls and the absence of any reference to Orange Scott, abolitionism, or the church's radical origins: "Semi-Centennial," *Wesleyan Methodist*, May 31, 1893, 8. Black, "Becoming a Church," 207.
95. Haines and Haines, *Celebrate Our Daughters*, 259, 325–6, 355–6. For a relatively common mid-20th century view, see Charles Stephen Rennells: "bringing women into politics has not helped in any moral reform, but has been detrimental to the women themselves. We are of the opinion that government should be in the hands of men." Rennells, *History of the Michigan Conference*, 64.
96. Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, 5. Robins, A. J. Tomlinson, 14–25.
97. Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage*, 74–5, 81. Dieter, "The Post Civil War Holiness Revival," 177–8; "Poll of the Religious Press on Billy Sunday," *Literary Digest*, June 12, 1915, 1425; see advertisement: "Bryan Answers Darwin!" *Wesleyan Methodist*, February 14, 1923, 15.
98. "He Will Come," *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 25, 1893. See the 1908 resolution of the Michigan Conference of the Wesleyan Methodists: "That we as a Conference in view of our grave responsibility as to the light and knowledge we have, by prayer of consecration and renewed evangelistic effort will make the coming year the most aggressive of our history along pre-millennial lines of doctrines, as opposed to the post-millennial view entertained in the popular Churches of the day." *Minutes*, 25. The Michigan representatives likely meant this as a response to denominations that had embraced the decidedly postmillennial Social Gospel. L.L. Pickett, "A Question," *Wesleyan Methodist*, January

- 21, 1903, 9. See also the premillennial material in the ministerial "Course of Study," *Discipline* (1939), 188.
99. Boyer, *When Time Shall Be No More*, 86–90; Weber, "Premillennialism," 6.
 100. Moorhead, "The Quest for Holiness," 372.
 101. Haynes, *Tempest Tossed*, 73.
 102. Moody quoted in Williams, *Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody*, 149; Evensen, *God's Man for the Gilded Age*, 69–71. On premillennial evangelicalism and a sense of both urgency and resignation, see Marsden, *Fundamentalism*, 68, 70; J. I. Bush, "The Signs of the Times, I," *Wesleyan Methodist*, June 21, 1893, 2; and J. I. Bush, "The Signs of the Times, III," *Wesleyan Methodist*, July 5, 1893, 2; "Second Coming of Christ," *Wesleyan Methodist*, May 16, 1917, 8; and Rev. Sam S. Holcomb, "Are We 'Nearing the End?'" *Wesleyan Methodist*, May 23, 1917, 3.
 103. Bader, *Hayseeds, Moralizers, and Methodists*, 30; Black, "Becoming a Church," 201–5. For similar developments in a sister denomination, see Paul Merritt Bassett, "Fundamentalist," 65–91.
 104. Mencken, "The Collapse of Protestantism," 79; "Miltonvale College," *The Wesleyan Methodist*, October 1, 1919, 4.
 105. Clifford, "Queering the Inferno," 233–5; Bond, "The Miltonvale Wesleyan College," 41.
 106. Palmer, "Miltonvale," 35.
 107. Okrent, *Last Call*, 96–7; Szymanski, *Pathways to Prohibition*, 182–6.
 108. Dietrich, "The National Sin," 36.
 109. Betzer, "The Influence of MWC," 39.
 110. Mathews, *The Faith of Modernism*, 23.
 111. Hassey, *No Time for Silence*, 55; Larson, *Summer of the Gods*, 97–9. On the fundamentalist turn of the Wesleyans, Nazarenes, and others in the holiness camp, see Marsden, *Understanding Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism*, 70; and Dorrien, *The Remaking of Evangelical Theology*, 164. On Miltonvale's fundamentalist theology and biblical curriculum, see *Annual Catalogue*, 58–9.
 112. "Miltonvale College," *Wesleyan Methodist*, October 1, 1919, 5. For a similar statement on the "fundamentals of the faith," see, "Report of the Committee on Education," 80; and for a similar defense against infidelity and "Higher Criticism," see Betzer, "The Influence of M.W.C.," 39; and "Theology," n.p.
 113. "The Faith," *Wesleyan Methodist*, October 1, 1919, 4.
 114. McGovern, *Grassroots*, quote on 13; on holiness religion, see 4 and 6; and on Miltonvale Wesleyan, see 14 and 15.
 115. "The Movies: A Menace to Morals," *Wesleyan Methodist*, February 8, 1928, 2. See also, "Harmful Effects of Moving Pictures," *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 2, 1918, 8.
 116. Alfred C. Spencer, "Is It Wrong to Dance?" *Wesleyan Methodist*, May 22, 1929, 4. See similar, though less persistent, trends on other college campuses in the nineteen-teens and twenties in Brandt, *The Cigarette Century*, 61–5. See a detailed list concerning the sins of "social impurity," E. P. Marvin, "Social Purity, Part II," *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 18, 1893, 3.
 117. "I.P.A. Officers," 29. See also, "Making the Nation 'Dry,'" *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 9, 1918, 8; "One Hundred Arguments against the Liquor Business," *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 23, 1918, 1.
 118. "Anti-Tobacco League," 41.
 119. Bond, "Tobacco Indicted," 35
 120. L.A. Johnson, "The Way Out," 31.
 121. Quote from *Miltonvale Record*, October 29, 1931. See also "In Room Four," *Miltonvale Record*, October 15, 1931; E. J. Mills, "His Coming Draweth Nigh," *Wesleyan Methodist*, May 4, 1932, 6. Schruben, *Kansas In Turmoil*, 47–8.
 122. Smith, "The History of Church Controlled Colleges," 177, 209, 240, 244; Stephens, "A 'Fortress of Righteousness.'"

123. By the early 1920s the church claimed a little more than 20,000 members, a drop from the immediate post-Civil War era. Watson, ed., *Year Book of the Churches*, 360. A piece from the *Christian Sun* selected in the *Wesleyan Methodist*, June 27, 1923, 1. See also, "Separation from the World," *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 3, 1923, 1.
124. On the Scott rumors, see Dayton, *Discovering an Evangelical Heritage*, 79. On the glossing over or absence of any mention of the church's social perfectionist roots or abolitionism, see, "A Century of Service," *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 6, 1943, 1; I. F. McLeister, "The Wesleyan Centennial," *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 6, 1943, 1-7; I. F. McLeister, "The Church and Its Leaders," *Wesleyan Methodist*, January 6, 1943, 7-12. See also the scant attention paid to slavery in "Origin and Character," in *Discipline* (1939), 5-7. On Wesleyan schools as a counter to "worldly" and "secular" institutions, see "Wesleyan Methodism and Education," *Wesleyan Methodist*, February 20, 1946, 1; Rennells, *History of the Michigan*, 150.
125. Rev. Leslie D. Wilcox, "The Origin and History of Wesleyan Methodism," *Wesleyan Methodist*, May 20, 1942, 4.
126. For a comparison of Wesleyans with other, less fundamentalist holiness groups, see Ingersol, *Past and Prospect*, 76.
127. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform*, 20; and Moberg, *The Great Reversal*. Sweet, "The Evangelical Tradition," 71-3. For an excellent study on how this evangelical split took place in Boston from the 1890s onward, see Hartley, *Evangelicals at a Crossroads*, 117-35. For a summary of the renewal of an evangelical social conscience, see Linder, "The Resurgence of Evangelical Social Concern," 209-30.
128. Miller, *The Age of Evangelicalism*, 36; and Worthen, *Apostles of Reason*, 178-179.
129. Tooley, "Methodists," 1354; Hartley, *Evangelicals at a Crossroads*, 173-4; McGovern, *Grassroots*, 34; Lempke, "A Caucus of Prophets."

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