Madness, Medicine, and Religious Identity in the Nineteenth-Century Atlantic World



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"THE DEVICE IS AGAINST BABYLON"—
EVERY BABYLON.

The Figure represents the purpose of the Almighty,—*Thorough Reformation* over the whole earth. The Bow in His hand is *His Church:* one half the Arminian, the other the Calvinistic; between them is "the Brotherly Covenant," uniting and strengthening them. The String is *Faith*, attached to it at one end by Hope, at the other by Perseverance. The Arrow is *Desire;* the Shaft the *Word of God;* the Point the *Holy Spirit;* the Feather *Prayer;* and it is in the hand of the ALMIGHTY.

The first object is one's own Heart, next the Family Circle, next that of our Church Communion, next of our Friends and Neighbours, and thence to the utmost limits of our horizon.

1827-8.

Abstract

The ghost of Foucault still hovers over the history of madness in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Despite a number of scholarly explorations of aspects of religious belief and observance in nineteenth-century psychiatry, the meta-narrative of a secularising transition in this period remains. This perspective overlooks the ongoing significance of religion to the worldviews and therapeutic regimens of British and American physicians and asylum doctors in the nineteenth century, and has encouraged a neglect of the multiple ways in which theological and medical thought interrelated both within therapeutic contexts and in the wider society. This thesis brings these interrelationships to the forefront by looking at the self-understandings of people who were considered insane specifically for their religious beliefs and behaviours. Given the associations in this period between evangelical revivalism, 'enthusiasm' and insanity—and the large number of evangelicals on both sides of the Atlantic who were confined to insane asylums—the study focuses on evangelical communities in particular. It analyses experiences of spiritual perception, psychological suffering, social alienation and caregiving as they were represented within published autobiographies and asylum exposés, as well as in unpublished diaries and letters. In addition to being treated as prisms through which to explore the medical and religious cultures of the Atlantic world from which they emerged, these sources are analysed as theatres of interaction between theological, medical and scientific forms of reasoning. This analysis demonstrates the complex ways in which elite discourses and lived experience cross-fertilized within models of religious identity and selfhood. It further contrasts the values and objectives that underpinned pastoral and institutional forms of care, and expounds the ways in which people who were considered religiously insane combined theological and medical languages and epistemologies in their efforts to interpret their identities

and experiences. In so doing, they dissolved the binaries between the physical and the spiritual, and thus complicated and subverted the theoretical categories of an emergent psychiatric profession.

Long Abstract

The ghost of Foucault still hovers over the history of madness in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Despite a number of scholarly explorations of aspects of religious belief and observance in nineteenth-century psychiatry, the meta-narrative of a secularising transition in this period remains. This perspective overlooks the ongoing significance of religion to the worldviews and therapeutic regimens of British and American physicians and asylum doctors in the nineteenth century, and has encouraged a neglect of the multiple ways in which theological and medical thought interrelated both within therapeutic contexts and in the wider society. This thesis brings these interrelationships to the forefront by looking at the self-understandings of people who were considered insane specifically for their religious beliefs and behaviours. Given the associations in this period between evangelical revivalism, 'enthusiasm' and insanity—and the large number of evangelicals on both sides of the Atlantic who were confined to insane asylums—the study focuses on evangelical communities in particular. It analyses experiences of spiritual perception, psychological suffering, social alienation and caregiving as they were represented within published autobiographies and asylum exposés, as well as in unpublished diaries and letters. In addition to being treated as prisms through which to explore the medical and religious cultures of the Atlantic world from which they emerged, these sources are analysed as theatres of interaction between theological, medical and scientific forms of reasoning. This analysis demonstrates the complex ways in which elite discourses and lived experience cross-fertilized within models of religious identity and selfhood. It further contrasts the values and objectives that underpinned pastoral and institutional forms of care, and expounds the ways in which people who were considered religiously insane combined theological and medical languages and epistemologies in their efforts to interpret their identities

and experiences. In so doing, they dissolved the binaries between the physical and the spiritual, and thus complicated and subverted the theoretical categories of an emergent psychiatric profession.

The case studies in this thesis span roughly the first three quarters of the nineteenth century, a period that saw interrelated developments in the religious and medical worlds of Britain and America. Evangelical revivalism in various forms swept both sides of the Atlantic in this period, drawing in common from the theological and devotional legacy of the transatlantic revivalism of the previous century, and evincing cooperation between British and American evangelicals in a shared vision of global awakening. At the same time, differences between evangelical groups continued to harden along denominational and theological lines, distinguishing evangelicals from each other within—while also linking them across—geographical boundaries. These sectarian divisions themselves became a problem for many evangelicals as new groups such as the Christian Connexion emerged in the early nineteenth century with the goal of uniting true Christians by dissolving denominational and doctrinal divisions. And in the 1830s and 1840s, various apocalyptic groups such as the Millerites in America and the Irvingites in Britain rose up to become global missionary movements and, eventually, entrenched denominations. Over the same period, insane asylums proliferated in Britain and America as an institutional recourse for the families and friends of people whose behaviours put them in tension with the rapid economic and social transformations of the period; and the superintendents of these institutions cooperated in a medical project that spanned Europe, Britain and America and gave rise to professional associations and journals. Outside the asylum, too, scientific thinking was linked across the Anglosphere, as theorists of the mind such as phrenologists and mesmerists corresponded with and visited their transatlantic counterparts.

These religious and medical worlds were themselves interconnected in various ways. People who had become agitated or distressed in revivalist contexts were frequently confined to insane asylums, where they were diagnosed with conditions such as ‘religious insanity’ and ‘religious monomania’. And the psychic abnormalities that were often experienced during revivals—including trance states, convulsions and tongues-speaking—were subjected to scientific analysis, as phrenologists attributed them to the physical faculties of the brain and mesmerists explained them with reference to a magnetic fluid in the body. Evangelicals were by no means entirely opposed to these developments. Many embraced the asylum as a therapeutic recourse for their more unhinged and distressed co-religionists, and drew from the insights of pathologists and physiologists to explain spiritual suffering and religious eccentricity. Moreover, evangelical beliefs and sympathies could be found among the elites of mental medicine and the mind sciences, evincing the ubiquity of evangelicalism in this period in all classes and across professions.

This thesis maps the complexity of these various interconnections within the self-representations of people who were deemed insane. It considers national and regional contexts alongside numerous other factors—including gender, class, denomination and theological stance—that inflected, but by no means determined, the self-understandings and worldviews of these people. This transatlantic framework permits a deep analysis of the complexity of religious subjectivities that were shaped by forces that transcended geographical boundaries and national ideologies. Thus, in addition to bringing the historiographies of medicine and religion together in a fresh way, this study contributes to the recent transnational turn in each field.

The thesis is divided into three parts. Part I analyses representations of ‘enthusiasm’, defined broadly to encompass religious behaviours and identities that

made individuals marginal in relation to their families and religious communities. It looks comparatively at autobiographies written by people who had been confined to insane asylums, relating the social factors that underpinned their marginalisation as religious lunatics to the ways in which they represented their own spiritual identities. Part II explores therapeutic contexts, including spiritual care within religious communities and medical treatment within insane asylums. It contrasts the efforts of evangelical ministers to integrate medicine and theology as a means of preserving the emotional and psychological features of Puritan interiority with therapeutic methods in the asylum which sought to negate these experiences. Part III looks at how medical and theological ideas converged within the self-representations of alleged religious lunatics. It expounds the ways in which these authors subverted the discourses of professional medicine and psychiatry by rejecting the binaries between the physical and the spiritual that underpinned them.

Chapter 1 interrelates the letters and spiritual autobiography of a woman lay preacher, Louisa Perina Courtauld Clemens (1791–1883), whose religious activism took her around Britain and America. It uses these sources both as lenses through which to explore the distinct cultures of evangelical 'enthusiasm' on either side of the Atlantic, and as an entry point into the themes of religious identity, spiritual experience and medicalisation that emerge throughout this thesis. Clemens's prophetic activities provoked controversy in both Britain and America—particularly in the former, where she faced a recurring threat of madhouse confinement from members of her own family. Her letters from the period of her residency in Britain reflect her own doubts about her sanity in that period, yet in her autobiography she reconstituted her 'mad' psychological states as aspects of a 'prophetic' philosophy of mind. The gradual consolidation of this new outlook is evinced in her letters from the period of her

residency in America, where she used the new theological beliefs that emerged during the Second Great Awakening to reconstitute her madness as something spiritual and prophetic, rather than medical, in nature.

Chapter 2 compares the autobiographical writings of two people, John Thomas Perceval (1803–1876) in the British context and Elizabeth T. Stone (b. 1811) in the American, who were both confined by their families to insane asylums and denounced by their wider communities as religious lunatics. Both characterised evangelical conversion as having instilled in them new values and principles of identity which put them in tension with their families and wider religious communities and thus set them on the course towards confinement. Whilst highlighting the ways in which their experiences and identities were inflected by the distinct cultures of religious enthusiasm on either side of the Atlantic, this chapter also notes the striking convergences in their writings in terms of the shape of evangelical interiority and its social implications in either context. This comparison is suggestive of the influence of evangelicalism more broadly as a transatlantic movement that generated common patterns of identity and experience that had a subversive potential within different cultural contexts.

Chapter 3 opens Part II of this thesis by exploring spiritual care within evangelical Calvinist communities in Scotland and New England. The pastoral philosophies that are analysed in each context were developed within the same intellectual milieu: an apologetic space within which the psychological and emotional states associated with Puritan interiority were consciously medicalised as a means of safeguarding evangelical Calvinism against claims that it caused derangement. The implication of this intellectual milieu for spiritual care was to elevate the role of the minister as one whose pastoral agency played a crucial role in managing the psychological states of the spiritual ‘patient’ and helping to sustain their religious

identity. These case studies indicate the therapeutic interplay of approaches—the skilful incorporation and deployment of theological and medical ideas—that was deemed necessary on the part of the minister in order to preserve Puritan interiority both against partisan criticism from the outside and against the psychological perils with which it was associated within these communities themselves.

Chapter 4 looks at the alternative to models of spiritual care that was being developed in the asylum. The development of a professional psychiatric discourse meant that asylum doctors of divergent theological and philosophical persuasions could contribute to a shared set of theories and methodologies. Yet the implication was to subsume religion within medicine as a tool of therapy; and thus, even alienists with evangelical sympathies sought with their treatments to negate the 'perilous' elements of evangelical interiority which exponents of spiritual care had sought to preserve. This chapter returns to the cases of Elizabeth Stone and John Perceval, exploring their responses to the negation of their religious identities in the asylum. Both authors characterised the asylum as an institutional microcosm of the social and religious problems in the wider society that had led to their marginalisation as lunatics. Moreover, they contrasted the therapeutic negation they experienced in the asylum to ideals of spiritual care that would have supported their 'true' identities, as well as supporting, by extension, religious worldviews which they characterised as having been threatened by the values represented by the rising psychiatric profession.

Part III contains the concluding chapter of the thesis, which looks at how alleged religious lunatics responded to the authority of medicine as a source of self-interpretation. Whilst the rising professional discourses of medicine and the mind sciences represented a challenge to their religious identities and to their civil liberties, medical ideas and methodologies nevertheless allowed them to theorise their own

spiritual experiences in ways that subverted the underlying premises of professional psychiatry. The accessibility and popularity of mind sciences such as animal magnetism and phrenology in the 1830s and 1840s, for instance, allowed Elizabeth Stone to theorise her own psychological and spiritual experiences in ways that undercut the hermeneutic hegemony that alienists and physicians were attempting to assert.

Yet it was crucial for these people to find a credible way to assert the irreducibly spiritual nature of their experiences. Theology served the anti-institutional agendas of alleged religious lunatics in two key ways. Firstly, it provided them with precise languages with which to articulate the social and emotional impact of institutional therapies that were designed to ignore and negate the religious interiority of patients. And secondly, it allowed them to subvert the professional discourses and methodologies of psychiatry, for theology elevated the meanings of the emotions and the psyche above the naturalistic domain of medical expertise. By fusing theological and medical categories, and by thus dissolving binary perspectives on the physical and the spiritual, these people asserted religious identities that were shaped by, but also subverted, pivotal medical developments in the nineteenth-century Atlantic world.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements 3

Abbreviations 5

Introduction 6

Religion and Psychological Medicine in the Nineteenth Century 10

Transatlantic Connections and Controversies 13

Religious Madness 19

Critical Issues and Frameworks 26

Analysing Experiences of Madness in History 26

The Transatlantic Framework 30

The Emotions 35

Enthusiasm 40

The Structure of the Thesis 44

Part One: Enthusiasm and Identity 49

1. The Formation of a Prophet 50

Devotional Solitude and Insanity 56

Britain, the Covenant, and the Church 64

The Covenant and the Redemption of Madness 65

America, Unity, and the Churches 79

The Revivalist Ideology 81

Reconstituting Madness 88

2. Enthusiasm and Exclusion 95

John Thomas Perceval 98

Enthusiasm and Identity 106

Enthusiasm and Exclusion 113

Elizabeth T. Stone 122

Conversion and Community 132

Perfection and Exclusion 140

Part Two: Care and Control **154**

3. Melancholy, Medicine, and Spiritual Care **155**

The Pastoral Imagination of John MacFarlane 159

The Suicide of Benjamin Noyes 170

The Progress of a Hypocrite 172

Despondency, Derangement, and Models of Spiritual Care 180

4. Religious Insanity in the Asylum **189**

The Alienist Perspective 197

The Perspectives of Patients 202

John Perceval and the Radicalism of the Psychiatric Profession 204

Elizabeth Stone and the Inquisition House 215

Part Three: Medicine and Identity **233**

5. Religious Madness, the Body, and the Authority of Medicine **234**

Evangelical Conversion and the Authority of Medicine 238

Melancholy and the Body 246

‘The unmanageable vessel’: The Melancholy of William Walford 248

Melancholy, Mind, and Matter in Elizabeth Stone’s Self-Diagnosis 255

Enthusiasm and the Body 265

‘The rules of an obsolete science’: Perceval on the Spiritual Mind 266

Louisa Clemens’s Philosophy of the Prophetic Mind 278

Conclusion **284**

Bibliography 287

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Abbreviations

AAS	American Antiquarian Society
BL	British Library
MHS	Massachusetts Historical Society
NCHS	New Canaan Historical Society

Introduction

> My work has always been harder in Great Britain than in America. I seemed to walk with a looser and longer rein there than in this country, under the Government of a broken national League and Covenant, here I seemed to have no rest.[1]

This was how Louisa Perina Courtauld Clemens (1791–1883) distinguished as a near-octogenarian between the various regions of the Anglosphere to which her life as an evangelical lay preacher and activist had taken her. Itineracy was for her something of a family trait. Her paternal grandparents, the London silverware merchants Louisa Perina Courtauld (née Ogier, 1729–1807) and Samuel Courtauld, were the children of French Huguenot refugees who had fled to England in the late seventeenth century. When she was a young girl, her father, George Courtauld (1761–1823)—a prosperous silk merchant who owned property in Ohio—moved his family from America, where Clemens was born, to Essex, and she remained there until leaving England for Edinburgh at the age of twenty-three to work as a governess. Seven years later, she moved to Cork, Ireland for work in the same occupation, and after intervening residencies in England and the Netherlands, crossed the Atlantic to North America, where she spent twenty-four years as a teacher and itinerant preacher before finally returning to Britain in 1857. Her spiritual autobiography, *Narrative of a Pilgrim and Sojourner on Earth, from 1791 to the Present year, 1870*, was indeed aptly titled.[2]

Residing once again in Edinburgh when she wrote the autobiography, her stated purpose was to fulfil 'a debt to the public' by narrating a life characterised by

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[1] L.P.C. Clemens, *Narrative of a Pilgrim and Sojourner on Earth, from 1791 to the Present year, 1870* (Edinburgh, 1870), p. 108.

[2] This self-portrayal as a 'pilgrim and sojourner' reflects in particular her itineracy in America, where female preachers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries referred to themselves as 'strangers and pilgrims on the earth'. See C.A. Brekus, *Female Preaching in America: Strangers & Pilgrims, 1740–1845* (Chapel Hill, 1998), p. 4.

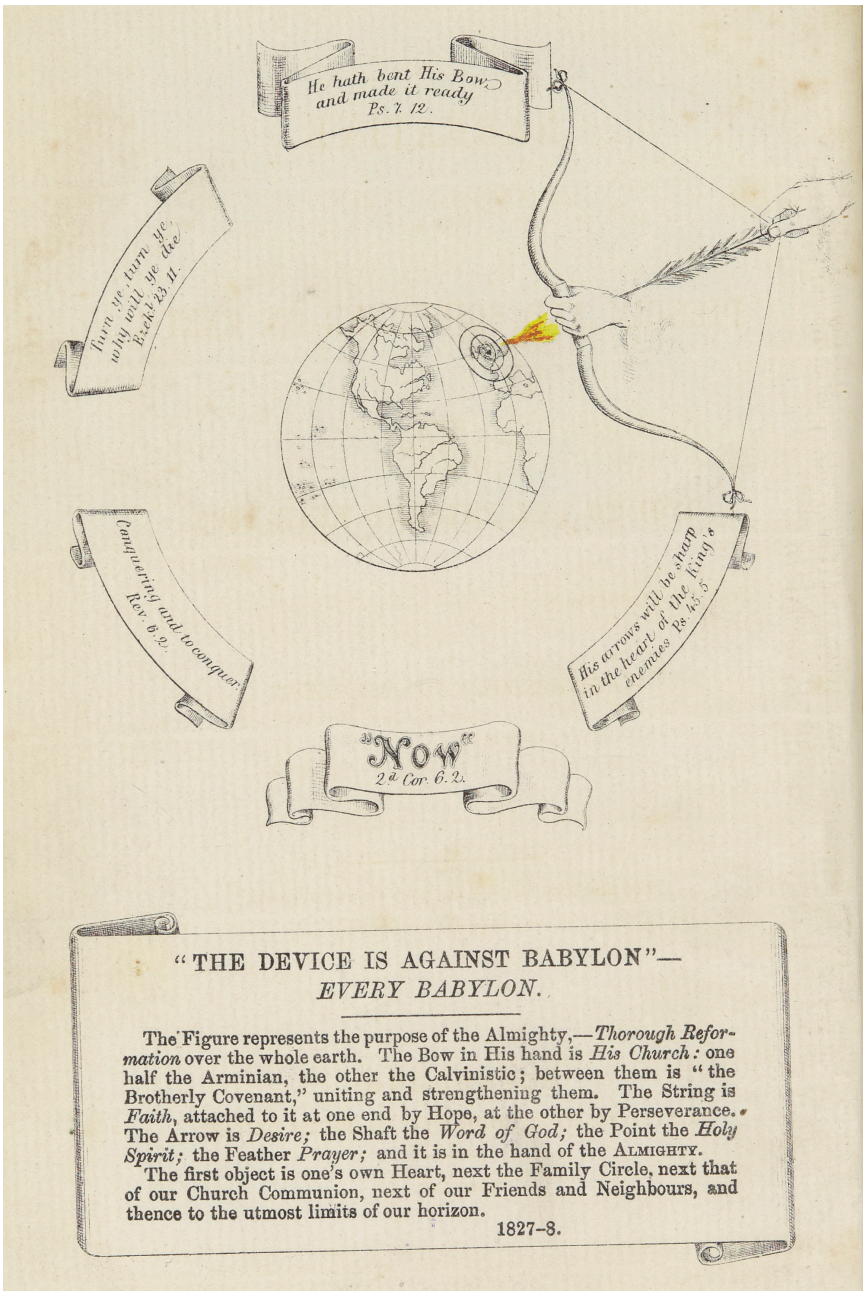
'Remarkable Providences'.[3] Yet it was conceived as more than just the story of one woman's life. The frontispiece is an image which captures well its cosmic dimensionality. In the centre is a globe, surrounded by banners upon which are inscribed biblical references urging repentance and heralding the coming judgment. Elevated above the globe to the right are two hands drawing back a bowstring fitted with a fiery arrow. The target, enclosed by concentric circles, is Great Britain, with a shaded heart at its centre. Directly beneath is the word 'Now' in big print, and a biblical reference, 2 Corinthians 6:2 ('now is the day of salvation'). An explanation of the image is inscribed in a banner on the bottom of the page: the hands are God's, the bow is the Church, the arrow is 'Desire', the arrow's shaft is scripture, and its point is the Holy Spirit. The design of the weapon, we are told, is to pierce 'every Babylon',[4] the conceptual limits of which correspond to the encirclements pulsing outward from the 'heart' of Britain: 'the first object is one's own Heart, next the Family Circle, next that of our Church Communion, next of our Friends and Neighbours, and thence to the utmost limits of our horizon'.[5]

Perhaps not coincidentally, Britain does not occupy the centre of the globe. Pride of place is given instead to North and South America—the domain where Clemens's own heart, although first pierced in Britain at the time of her religious conversion, would exert its most profound influences. It was in Ohio that she managed, at the peak of her evangelical activism, to lead a religious service that combined her ideal ecclesiastical types of Quaker charisma and Presbyterian liturgy, while simultaneously bridging racial and denominational divides—a success that evinced the looseness and length of her spiritual 'rein' in that country. The 'Babylons' of Britain,

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[3] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 5.
[4] This is a reference to Jer. li. 11.
[5] Clemens, *Narrative*, frontispiece.

by contrast, proved rather impenetrable. In Scotland, she found that '[t]he Presbyterians seem so afraid of delusion and superstition that they fear to follow freely the movings of the Holy Spirit'.[6] In their fellowship, she had internalised this communal neurosis, worrying that her inward experiences of divine influence amounted to self-delusion. And in England she was alleged to be a religious lunatic, and faced a recurring threat of asylum confinement from her friends and relatives.[7]



[6] Ibid., p. 35.
[7] Ibid., pp. 67-68, 89-90.

Her narrative thus encompassed many of the central themes of this thesis: the belief—shared by many people in the nineteenth century—that the individual might experience or embody divine power; the evangelical commitment to religious activism; the medicalisation of spiritual experience, reflected in Clemens's concerns about self-delusion; the proliferation and growing popularity of the insane asylum as an institutional recourse for the concerned families and friends of religious eccentrics; and the distinctions between religious cultures in the Atlantic world which were nevertheless deeply interconnected. Clemens's narrative was a sophisticated intervention within this complex reality. It confidently asserted the possibility of divine inspiration, rejecting a medical critique of her experience as a form of 'mental derangement', whilst nevertheless characterising spiritual perception as a corporeal phenomenon that breathed more freely in American society than in British.

This thesis explores the writings of Clemens and others who were deemed insane for their religious beliefs and behaviours. It focuses on a period spanning the first two thirds of the nineteenth century, throughout which new medical and scientific modes of thought were increasingly encroaching upon the domain of religious experience and identity, even as individuals and communities across the Atlantic continued to construe themselves and their experiences in theological terms. Given the associations in this period between evangelical revivalism and insanity—and the large number of evangelicals on both sides of the Atlantic who were confined to asylums—the study focuses on evangelical communities in particular. It analyses experiences of spiritual perception, psychological suffering, social alienation and caregiving as they were represented within published autobiographies and asylum exposés, as well as in unpublished diaries and letters. In addition to being treated as prisms through which to explore the medical and religious cultures of the Atlantic world from which they

emerged, these sources are analysed as theatres of interaction between theological, medical and scientific perspectives and forms of reasoning. This analysis demonstrates the complex ways in which elite discourses and lived experience cross-fertilized within models of religious identity and selfhood. It further contrasts the values and objectives that underpinned pastoral and institutional forms of care, and expounds the ways in which people who were considered religiously insane used theological and medical forms of reasoning to subvert the discourses of an emergent psychiatric profession.

Religion and Psychological Medicine in the Nineteenth Century

Although aspects of religious belief and observance in nineteenth-century psychiatry have been explored,[8] broader characterisations of the history of madness have continued to recapitulate Foucauldian meta-narratives within which religious perspectives were supplanted over the course of the long eighteenth century (roughly 1660 to 1800) by Enlightenment paradigms of reason and unreason. In a general sense, the historiography of madness has yet to absorb important critiques of the concept of the Enlightenment as a single, secularising process.[9] Moreover, Andrew Scull's *Madness in Civilization* (2015) has illustrated the extent to which Foucauldian assumptions have remained deeply entrenched within the scholarly conversation,

[8] See, for instance, T. Taubes,'"Healthy Avenues of the Mind": Psychological Theory Building and the Influence of Religion During the Era of Moral Treatment', *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 155/8 (1998), pp. 1001-1008; H.H. Vacek, *Madness: American Protestant Responses to Mental Illness* (Waco, TX, 2015); N. Tomes, A Generous Confidence: Thomas Story Kirkbride and the Art of Asylum-Keeping, 1840–1883 (Cambridge, 1984).

[9] Note the following scholarly critiques of the concept of the Enlightenment as a single event and as a secularising process: B.W. Young, *Religion and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century England: Theological Debate from Locke to Burke* (Oxford, 1998); J. Morris, 'Secularization and Religious Experience: Arguments in the Historiography of Modern British Religion', *The Historical Journal*, 55/1 (2012), pp. 195-219; C. Kidd, 'The Fergusson affair: Calvinism and dissimulation in the Scottish Enlightenment', *Intellectual History Review*, 26/3 (2016), pp. 339-54; P. Mack, *Heart Religion in the British Enlightenment: Gender and Emotion in Early Methodism* (Cambridge, 2008); L. Laborie, *Enlightening Enthusiasm: Prophecy and Religious Experience in Early Eighteenth-Century England* (Manchester, 2015); P. Wood (ed.), *The Scottish Enlightenment: Essays in Reinterpretation* (Rochester, 2000).

despite Scull's own reputation as one of Foucault's strongest critics.[10] Those micro-studies that have explored intersections of religion, madness and asylum treatment in the nineteenth century—including, most notably, doctoral theses by Teresa Lynne Hill (1991) and Loren A. Broc (2013)—have focused exclusively on the American context, whilst the British debate continues to lie in the shade of historians such as Roy Porter and Michael MacDonald who emphasised processes of secularisation and medicalisation in the long eighteenth century.[11]

The persistence of this overarching paradigm has had important historiographical and theoretical implications. It has discouraged the full incorporation of religion into understandings of the worldviews and debates that shaped the experience, interpretation and treatment of madness in the nineteenth century, notwithstanding the important contributions of Broc, Hill and others. Moreover, it has implied that there was (and is) an inherent link between medicalisation and secularisation, which has in turn discouraged nuanced investigations of the interrelationships between themes of disenchantment, medical professionalisation, and religious experience and identity.

This project seeks to address these historiographical and theoretical challenges by both asserting the importance of religion to cultures of madness and medicine in the nineteenth-century Atlantic world, and teasing out the implications of medical development for the self-identities of alleged religious lunatics. The period of this

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[10] Note Louis Sass's critique of Scull's book in L. Sass, 'Cruel Reason: Confinement, chemicals, couches—a new and wide-ranging history of responses to madness', *Times Literary Supplement* (2015), pp. 3-5. See A.T. Scull, *Madness in Civilization: A Cultural History of Insanity from the Bible to Freud, from the Madhouse to Modern Medicine* (London, 2015) and M. Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, trans. R. Howard (1964; New York, 1988).

[11] T.L. Hill, 'Religion, Madness, and the Asylum: A Study of Medicine and Culture in New England, 1820–1840' (Ph.D. Thesis, Brown University, 1991); L.A. Broc, 'Religion and Insanity from Colonial Times to 1900' (PhD Thesis, University of Rochester, 2013); M. MacDonald, 'Religion, Social Change and Psychological Healing in England, 1600–1800', in *The Church and Healing*, ed. W.J. Sheils (Oxford, 1982), pp. 101-25; R. Porter, *Mind-Forg'd Manacles: A History of Madness in England from the Restoration to the Regency* (Cambridge, 1987), p. 222.

analysis—roughly, 1810 to 1870—has been selected specifically for the convergence of—and relative fluidity between—religious and medical beliefs and ideas over this time within popular and elite contexts. The earliest case study begins in a period that precedes the dramatic rise in medical publications on madness and religious experience from around the year 1815—a print phenomenon that Andrew Scull has attributed to the efforts of physicians to assert their professional expertise over against competition from medical lay people who deployed strictly moral (psychological) methods of treatment.[12] This case study thus permits an exploration of transformations of spiritual care that attended the sharp rise in the proliferation of medical ideas in print culture. The end point of the thesis precedes (and its subject matter in some indirect respects anticipates) pivotal developments in the scientific study of the psyche, such as the emergence of physiological psychology in Britain in the 1870s, and of associations such as the Society for Psychical Research (SPR) in 1882, which marked a distinct shift towards a new form of professional hegemony with respect to the meanings of spiritual experience.[13]

Most of the case studies in this thesis are located between these two moments—a period in which there was a growing popular interest in medicine and the mind sciences, yet also one that witnessed the early stages of professionalization in psychiatry as insane asylums proliferated across the Anglosphere and as the first professional associations and journals devoted to mental medicine were founded. The combination in this period of popular engagement with medical ideas, the emergence of professional psychiatry, and the continued prevalence of religious observance across social, economic and occupational divides, permits comparative analysis of how

[12] A.T. Scull, 'From Madness to Mental Illness: Medical Men as Moral Entrepreneurs', *European Journal of Sociology*, 16/2 (1975), p. 241.
[13] See R. Hayward, *The Transformation of the Psyche in British Primary Care, 1870–1970* (London, 2014), pp. 14-15.

medicine was responded to and appropriated by individuals and communities both within and outside contexts of professional theorising and therapy. This, in turn, permits consideration of the ways in which medical concepts themselves related to aspects of religious belief and identity.

Transatlantic Connections and Controversies

Britain and America were linked throughout the period of this thesis by interrelated developments in the religious and medical worlds of each. A transatlantic consciousness goes back to the beginning of the evangelical movement—to John Wesley's (1703–1791) life-changing journey in 1735 to Savannah, Georgia among Moravians whose pietistic spirituality was such a crucial influence leading to the 'heart-warming' experience at Aldersgate that largely consolidated Wesley's evangelical identity in 1738.[14] His fellow Anglican itinerant George Whitefield's (1714–1770) seven journeys to America over the course of his career further enhanced the sense that this work of the Spirit was a transatlantic one.[15] Eighteenth-century evangelicals both drew from and contributed to an intellectual and devotional heritage that continued to shape evangelical communities in the nineteenth century, which were likewise linked transatlantically by the events of the Second Great Awakening. Cooperating in a mutual vision of global revival, British and American ministers in this period visited each

[14] Also note, however, tensions between Wesley and the Moravians, discussed in G. Hammond, 'Versions of Primitive Christianity: John Wesley's Relations with the Moravians in Georgia, 1735–1737', *Journal of Moravian History*, 6 (2009), pp. 31-60.

[15] For important studies of the transatlantic connectivity of the evangelical movement in the eighteenth century, see S. O'Brien, 'A Transatlantic Community of Saints: The Great Awakening and the First Evangelical Network', *The American Historical Review*, 91/4 (1986), pp. 811-32; M. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace: Colonial New England's Revival Tradition in its British Context* (New York, 1991); F. Lambert, *Inventing the "Great Awakening"* (Princeton, 1999); D.C. Jones, *A Glorious Work in the World: Welsh Methodism and the International Evangelical Revival, 1735–1750* (Cardiff, 2004).

other, preached in each other's parishes, and shared new approaches to stimulating conversion among their respective flocks.[16]

Religious communities in each place were also involved in interrelated partisan controversies, as debates between evangelicals and non-evangelicals—and differences between and within evangelical groups themselves—continued to harden along denominational and doctrinal lines that transcended national boundaries. On both sides of the Atlantic, evangelicals both permeated and faced challenges from the Anglican and Congregational mainstream, whilst at the same time combating a growing heterodox threat from deists, Unitarians, Transcendentalists and others. Meanwhile, the Calvinist-Arminian fault-line united evangelical Presbyterians, at least in principle, against the Methodist 'empire of the Spirit' that was rapidly gaining ground in Britain and America throughout this period,[17] even as the Presbyterian communions in each nation splintered in the 1830s and 1840s over matters of doctrine and polity.[18] The problem of sectarian division was itself absorbed into the ethos of American revivalism, as movements such as the 'Christian Church' emerged from the Presbyterian revivalism in North Carolina and Kentucky in the 1790s and early 1800s with the goal of uniting true Christians by dissolving denominational and doctrinal divisions.[19]

Whilst these theological controversies made a distinct mark on the identities of the 'mad-persons' whom this thesis explores, they also influenced the medical worlds

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[16] See Richard Carwardine's seminal study of these connections in *Transatlantic Revivalism: Popular Evangelicalism in Britain and America, 1790–1865* (Westport, 1978). For more recent studies which explore these connections in the Canadian context, see Richard Vaudry's chapter on transatlantic evangelicalism in R.W. Vaudry, *Anglicans and the Atlantic World: High Churchmen, Evangelicals and the Quebec Connection* (Ithaca, 2003), 134-67 and T. Webb, *Transatlantic Methodists: British Wesleyanism and the Formation of an Evangelical Culture in Nineteenth-Century Ontario and Quebec* (Montreal and Kingston, 2013).
[17] This is David Hempton's phrase in D. Hempton, *Methodism: Empire of the Spirit* (New Haven, 2005).
[18] B.J. Longfield, *Presbyterians and American Culture: A History* (Louisville, KY, 2013); 'Free Church of Scotland', *Encyclopædia Britannica Online Academic Edition*, accessed 03 Aug 2018, at https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:4663/levels/collegiate/article/Free-Church-of-Scotland/35279.
[19] D.N. Williams, D.A. Foster and P.M. Blowers (eds), *The Stone-Campbell Movement: A Global History* (St. Louis, 2013), pp. 9-29.

of Britain and America, which were themselves deeply interconnected. Throughout the nineteenth century, each area witnessed the founding of numerous insane asylums, and, by the mid-1840s, the establishment of psychiatric associations and journals which bound American and British alienists to a collective professional identity.[20] This coterie extended to continental European medical culture as well: prominent alienists such as the New Englander Pliny Earle (1809–1892) and the Scottish physician W. A. F. Browne (1805–1885), for instance, both studied in Paris.[21] Yet language and cultural commonalities formed particularly tight connections across the Anglosphere—a pattern that also pertained to medical fields outside asylum therapy. Phrenology, for instance—after its initial migration from Europe in textual translation[22]—became a shared enterprise among British and American physicians and alienists, mediated in great measure by the Scottish phrenologist George Combe's (1788–1858) visit to New England to lecture on the subject in the late 1830s.[23] These medical networks, like the networks of evangelical revivalists described above, evinced many features of what the political theorist Peter Haas has referred to as epistemic communities—transnational groups which share a set of values and beliefs that motivate a common programme of social action.[24]

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[20] Scull, *Madness in Civilization*, pp. 218-20.
[21] See W.A. Frosch and D. Richardson, 'Pliny Earle, M.D., 1809–1892', *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 161/11 (2004), p. 1989 and A.T. Scull, 'Browne, William Alexander Francis (1805–1885)', *ODNB*. For more on developments in the professionalisation of psychiatry on the European continent, see Scull, *Madness in Civilization*, pp. 220-22.
[22] G.N. Cantor, 'The Edinburgh Phrenology Debate: 1803–1828', *Annals of Science*, 32/3 (1975), pp. 197-98.
[23] E.T. Carlson, 'The Influence of Phrenology on Early American Psychiatric Thought', *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 115/6 (1958), pp. 535-38; D. Bakan, 'The Influence of Phrenology on American Psychology', *Journal of the History of the Behavioural Sciences*, 2/3 (1966), pp. 200-20; R.J. Cooter, 'Phrenology and British Alienists, c. 1825–1845. Part I: Converts to a Doctrine', *Medical History*, 20/1 (1976), p. 6. Also see G. Makari, *Soul Machine: The Invention of the Modern Mind* (New York, 2015), p. 501.
[24] P. Haas, 'Introduction: Epistemic Communities and International Policy Co-ordination', *International Organization*, 46/1 (1992), pp. 1-35. Also see Patricia Clavin's discussion of epistemic communities in the broader framework of transnational European networks in P. Clavin, 'Defining Transnationalism', *Contemporary European History*, 14/4 (2005), pp. 427-29.

There were no clear boundaries between medical and religious groups and values in this period. Many alienists, for instance, were religiously devout,[25] and some had clear evangelical sympathies, if not convictions.[26] Religious sentiment within the medical professions more broadly placed certain boundaries around medical discourse itself, as the American alienist Amariah Brigham (1798–1849) learned after the publication of his *Observations on the Influence of Religion upon the Health and Physical Welfare of Mankind* (1835). In it, he listed evangelical revivalist activity among the religious phenomena that could harm the body and the mind, and undermined in a more general sense the evangelical expectation of God's special interventions within the experience of the individual.[27]

Tellingly, condemnation of Brigham's anti-evangelical perspective came from other medical professionals. A reviewer for the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* concluded that Brigham's book 'has not a single redeeming quality on the score of its medical character', and condemned it for the disciplinary trespass of bringing medical methodologies to bear upon religious ideas and practices. 'The philosophy of medicine requires no intermeddling with the laws of the church', the reviewer asserted, 'nor should it presume to contradict what it was never designed to embrace or to understand'.[28] Damning as this judgment was, most of the critic's bile had already been

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[25] Taubes, 'Health Avenues of the Mind', p. 1003. The deep piety of the American alienist Samuel Woodward (1787–1850), for instance, is reflected in the numerous prayers (including prayers for his patients) that he recorded in his diary. See AAS, Woodward Family Papers, 1799–1880; 1930, Box 2 Folder 2: Prayers.

[26] Notable examples include the British asylum proprietor Joseph Mason Cox (1762–1822) and the American alienist John Butler (1803–1890). A reviewer of Cox's *Practical Observations on Insanity* (1804) criticized Cox for having been too 'gentle' in his criticisms of preachers who mistook lunacy for conversion. See *The Edinburgh Medical and Surgical Journal: Exhibiting a Concise View of the Latest and Most Important Discoveries in Medicine, Surgery, and Pharmacy*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1805), p. 232. Also note Loren Broc's discussion of Butler's religious sensitivies in Broc, 'Religion and Insanity in America', p. 366.

[27] A. Brigham, *Observations on the Influence of Religion upon the Health and Physical Welfare of Mankind* (Boston, 1835), pp. 187-88.

[28] *The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, 13/18 (1835), p. 291.

expended on a previous review of Brigham's book in the same journal, which had emphasised the book's 'radicalism and decidedly pernicious tendency, carrying as it does both spleen and spite in a gauze wrapper of infidel philosophy'.[29] The persistent 'sneer of the author'—the 'cogitations … of an envious man, soured against the world for not appreciating his merits'—would transform incautious readers into sceptics.[30] But its effect upon the more astute would differ markedly:

> Doubtless the author will by some be numbered among the insane, as the only charitable means of accounting for the violence and boldness of his thrusts against the churches, in this unique, equivocal essay, under the pretence of inquiring into the effects of religious excitement on the constitution, health, and worldly happiness of its subjects.[31]

Madness, for this reviewer, was to be found not in the revivalism Brigham attacked, but in the very attack itself. A more substantive response to Brigham's treatise would have to wait several months for a nearly two-hundred-page rebuttal, entitled *Phrenology Known by its Fruits* (1836), by the New York physician David Meredith Reese (1800–1861).[32] Reese was most concerned about Brigham's use of his medical credentials to peddle his radical doctrines. He cited the concerns of his 'judicious friends' that Brigham's book would prejudice 'the young and rising generation … against religion' because it came 'from a regularly educated physician', and so would be 'shielded from suspicion by the pretext of being dictated by philosophy and science, and under the imposing guise of a "profound respect" for religion'. It was thus incumbent upon Reese—no mere dilettante, but, like Brigham himself, an educated physician—to

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[29] This was the author's summary (in his second review) of his first review of Brigham's book from the previous month. See *The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, 13/18 (1835), p. 291.
[30] *The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, 13/13 (1835), pp. 208-209.
[31] Ibid., p. 208.
[32] Reese's emphasis in this book upon Brigham's debt to phrenological ideas contrasts the claim of the reviewer for the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* that '[E]ven the phrenologists, that sneered-at race of modern philosophers, who discover multiplied evidences of the truth of their science in the very oppugnation of a half developed world, have nothing comforting prepared for them here'. See *The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*, 13/13 (1835), p. 208.

respond.[33] Brigham's reaction to all of this, significantly, was not stubbornly to assert his medical authority on these matters, but to defend himself as a Christian.[34]

The association Reese made between Brigham's views and the doctrines of phrenology was itself part of the attack, a rhetorical strategy which stands out all the more for the fact that phrenology only featured tangentially in Brigham's treatise. The phrenological project of linking mental processes and aspects of individual character to the physical features of the brain was deemed by many to undermine the traditional Christian notions of the mind and the soul;[35] and such concerns were not entirely unwarranted. Among the proponents of this view were political radicals and atheists such as the Scottish alienist William A. F. Browne, who scandalised the Plinian Natural History Society in Edinburgh on 27 March 1827 when he gave a paper arguing that 'mind as far as one individual sense, & consciousness are concerned, is material'.[36] The argument proved controversial enough that a censor subsequently struck the account of the presentation from the minutes of the meeting, as well as the notification in the minutes of the previous week's meeting that the presentation was even to take place.[37] Browne's own response was to take refuge in a Cartesian distinction between the immaterial 'mind' upon whose existence and incorruptibility the religious elites insisted, and the 'matter' with which his own profession was directly concerned. He

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[33] D.M. Reese, *Phrenology Known by its Fruits, Being a Brief Review of Doctor Brigham's Late Work* (New York, 1836), pp. 5-6. See Loren Broc's discussion of Brigham's book and subsequent controversies, including rebuttals in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* and in Reese's treatise, in Broc, 'Religion and Insanity in America', pp. 437-51.
[34] See W.S. Bainbridge, 'Religious Insanity in America: The Official Nineteenth-Century Theory', *Sociological Analysis*, 45/3 (1984), pp. 233, 235 and N. Dain, *Concepts of Insanity in the United States, 1789-1865* (New Brunswick, NJ, 1964), pp. 187-88.
[35] Cantor, 'The Edinburgh Phrenology Debate', pp. 203-204.
[36] Quoted in M.A. Flannery, *Nature's Prophet: Alfred Russel Wallace and his Evolution from Natural Selection to Natural Theology* (Tuscaloosa, AL, 2018), p. 211. The argument is reminiscent of the French physician and revolutionary Pierre Jean George Cabanis's (1757–1808) claim that 'the brain secretes thought as the liver secretes bile'. The latter is quoted in Scull, *Madness in Civilization*, p. 211.
[37] B. Jenkins, 'Henry H. Cheek and Transformism: New Light on Charles Darwin's Edinburgh Background,' *Notes and Records of the Royal Society*, 69/2 (2015), p. 159.

thus argued, ten years later, that 'derangement is no longer considered a disease of the understanding, but of the centre of the nervous system, upon the unimpaired condition of which the exercise of the understanding depends'.[38] In one sense, this dualistic compromise served Browne's professional interests perfectly, for it rendered the immaterial Christian soul irrelevant to the analysis and treatment of the physical structures that were alone deemed responsible for derangement. And yet, even if it buffered the practice of phrenology from the interference of orthodoxy, his claim that '[t]he brain is at fault, and not the mind' ultimately showed that scientific theorising in this period was bounded in important ways by the prevalence of religious belief both within and outside the medical profession.[39]

Religious Madness

Associations with madness had beleaguered evangelical revivalism since the eighteenth century. Ron Numbers and Janet Numbers have noted that in Britain, for instance, ninety people were admitted as patients at Bethlem Hospital between 1772 and 1795 for 'religion and Methodism', and that John Wesley reported a preponderance of madness among converts to his ministry.[40] Similar associations were encouraged in the American context when, in 1735, a wave of suicides among despairing penitents brought Jonathan Edwards's (1703–1758) revivalist efforts to a halt in New England,[41] and when, eight years later, the itinerant preacher James Davenport (1716–1757)

[38] Quoted in Scull, *Madness in Civilization*, p. 212.
[39] Quoted in Ibid.
[40] R.L. Numbers and J.S. Numbers, 'Millerism and Madness: A Study of 'Religious Insanity' in Nineteenth-Century America,' in Ronald L. Numbers and Jonathan M. Butler (eds), *The Disappointed: Millerism and Millenarianism in the Nineteenth Century* (Bloomington, 1987), p. 95. Wesley and Whitefield both released numerous Methodists confined to Bedlam for insanity. See MacDonald, 'Religion, Social Change and Psychological Healing in England', p. 124.
[41] See G.M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, 2003), p. 168.

removed his trousers in the presence of his bemused followers and threw them into a bonfire as a sign of his divine mandate.[42]

Contemporary critics of these behaviours adopted the rhetorical strategy with which Anglicans of the previous century such as Méric Casaubon (1599–1671) and Henry More (1614–1687) had dispatched the religious deviants of their own time. Reacting against what they saw as the destabilisation of English society by mid-century radicals of various stripes who had attributed their political ambitions to divine inspiration, Casaubon and More had argued that such claims were indicative of 'enthusiasm', the false belief that one was experiencing direct intercourse with God.[43] This strategy proved effective to eighteenth-century clergymen on both sides of the Atlantic as a means of policing the boundaries of religion. The English bishop George Lavington (1684–1762) thus invoked enthusiasm to characterise the supposed errors of Methodism and Catholicism, and the American Congregational minister Charles Chauncy (1705–1787) used it to denounce the excesses of James Davenport and his ilk.[44]

Yet evangelicals themselves incorporated the critique of enthusiasm into their own articulations of true religion and its various corruptions. Adopting a broad definition of enthusiasm as spiritual self-deception, John Wesley argued that its errors encompassed formalists—people (like Lavington and Chauncy) who possessed the

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[42] This incident was recorded by the Congregational minister Charles Chauncy (1705–1787) as well as in the local Boston press. See C. Chauncy, *Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England* (Boston, 1743), pp. 220-23; *Boston Weekly Post-Boy*, 28 Mar. 1743; *Boston Evening-Post*, 11 Apr. 1743. Also see T. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven, 2007), p. 153-55 and S. Lewis, 'Early Anti-Methodism as an Aspect of Theological Controversy in England, c.1738–c.1770' (DPhil Thesis, University of Oxford, 2017), p. 127.

[43] See H. More, *Enthusiasmus Triumphatus* (London, 1656); M. Casaubon, *A Treatise Concerning Enthusiasme: As it is an Effect of Nature: but is Mistaken by Many for Either Divine Inspiration, or Diabolicall Possession* (London, 1655).

[44] G. Lavington, *The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists, Compar'd* (London, 1751); C. Chauncy, *Enthusiasm Described and Caution'd Against: A Sermon Preach'd at the Old Brick Meeting-House in Boston, the Lord's Day after the Commencement, 1742: With a Letter to the Reverend Mr. James Davenport* (Boston, 1742).

form, but not the heart, of religion—as much as it did unhinged revivalists, for the former 'imagine they have the *grace* which they have not'.[45] Jonathan Edwards's *Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746) in turn developed a sophisticated theological framework that permitted nuanced distinctions between the moral and spiritual transformations that could be viewed as signs of gracious interposition, and the psychological and psychical experiences that could not.[46] As Ann Taves has observed, Edwards's paradigm conceded considerable explanatory territory to those who sought a strictly naturalistic account of mental phenomena.[47] Yet the inverse was also true: it protected evangelical belief from efforts to reduce the experiences of revivalists to the natural processes they inevitably involved. It thus took the sting out of Amariah Brigham's attempt, a century later, to undermine evangelicalism by comparing the dramatic influences of revivalist preaching to the psychical effects produced by Franz Mesmer and his student, Charles Deslon (1750–1786), within the overtly naturalistic paradigm of animal magnetism.[48] Such comparisons were no threat to minds that had been educated to apprehend God only in St. Paul's fruit of the Spirit,[49] and to invoke nature to explain everything else.

Nevertheless, evangelical erudition on such matters by no means spared the revivalism of the nineteenth century of ongoing association with madness, which continued to taint its public image. Ron Numbers and Janet Numbers have shown that surges of revivalism in Connecticut and Massachusetts were attended with corresponding increases in the number of people admitted to insane asylums for

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[45] J. Wesley, *The Nature of Enthusiasm. A Sermon on Acts xxvi. 24. By John Wesley, M. A. Late Fellow of Lincoln-College, Oxford* (London, 1789), p. 9; original emphasis.
[46] J. Edwards, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections, in Three Parts* (Boston, 1746).
[47] A. Taves, *Fits, Trances, & Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton, 1999), pp. 40-41.
[48] Brigham, *Observations*, pp. 248-53. See G. Powers, *Essay Upon the Influence of the Imagination on the Nervous System, Contributing to a False Hope in Religion* (Andover, 1828), pp. 15-20.
[49] See Gal. v. 22-23.

religious forms of insanity.[50] This statistical data corresponds to anxieties about revivalism expressed by American alienists in treatises, articles for the *American Journal of Insanity*, and their own private case notes. A case cited in the journal's first issue (July 1844) of a patient confined for 'anxiety and excitement of mind on the subject of religion during a protracted meeting' was typical in this respect.[51] The journal's founding editor was Amariah Brigham, who had linked insanity to the night meetings, camp meetings and protracted meetings held by Baptists, Methodists and other groups throughout New England and 'the Northern and Middle States'. These meetings, he argued, placed inordinate demands upon the nervous systems of participants. Rising early day after day to spend hour upon hour praying, singing hymns and absorbing intense preaching was simply too much for most constitutions. It was thus little wonder that so many evangelical penitents had found their way into his own asylum in New York.[52]

Evangelical revivalism was generally less intense in the British context than in the American. Richard Carwardine has observed that despite the considerable cooperation between British and American evangelical leaders, the 'new measures' used by American revivalist preachers to stimulate conversion—including the 'anxious seat', in which individuals deemed to be close to repentance were seated on a special pew at the front of the church and subjected to focused social and psychological pressures—were only introduced piecemeal, and with considerable caution, by British evangelicals.[53] Moreover, the camp meetings and protracted meetings that were so

[50] Numbers and Numbers, 'Millerism and Madness', pp. 95-96.
[51] *American Journal of Insanity*, Vol. 1 (1844–45), p. 57.
[52] Brigham, *Observations*, pp. 143, 171-72.
[53] Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism*, pp. 152-53.

central to American revivalism and so problematic to American alienists had less of a presence in Britain.[54]

Nevertheless, Britain, too, had its share of religious deviants and melancholics in the nineteenth century. In a treatise discussing his treatment of insane patients (1828), the Scottish alienist Alexander Morison (1779–1866)—who was an inspecting physician of asylums in Surrey in the 1810s and chief physician to Bethlem Hospital in the 1830s—included a table comprising details of 274 of his patients, 19 of whom he had diagnosed with religious forms of madness.[55] His countryman, William A. F. Browne, wrote at length about the characteristic 'agitation[s] of the muscular system' and 'convulsive movements', and the sudden emotional swings 'from the lowest depths of sorrow and distress to the highest pitch of joy and happiness', that had attended the revivalism in Cambuslang, Scotland in 1742.[56] These revivalists joined the followers of John Wesley as antecedents of the evangelical eccentrics of Browne's own time—the tongues-speaking followers of John McLeod Campbell (1800–1872) in Scotland and Edward Irving (1792–1834) in England. Deploying a phrenological analysis of these 'fanatics' that paralleled Brigham's view of American revivalists, Browne attributed their Pentecostal agitations to the overstimulation of the physical faculties of the brain—in particular, the cranial regions associated with 'Hope, Wonder, Self-esteem, and misdirected Intellect'.[57]

Within British and American asylums, phrases such as 'religious insanity' and 'religious monomania' were used to encompass these revivalist phenomena. Ann

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[54] Carwardine does, however, note examples of such meetings in Wales, Scotland and England in Ibid., pp. 87, 97, 106-107.
[55] A. Morison, Cases *of Mental Disease with Practical Observations on the Medical Treatment* (London, 1828), pp. 159-61.
[56] W.A.F. Browne, 'Observations on Religious Fanaticism; Illustrated by a Comparison of the Belief and Conduct of Noted Religious Enthusiasts with Those of Patients in the Montrose Lunatic Asylum', *The Phrenological Journal and Miscellany*, 47 (Edinburgh, 1836), pp. 577-79.
[57] Ibid., p. 600.

Goldberg has argued that in the German context in this period, the category of 'religious madness' was used by alienists to pathologise the religious beliefs of the lower classes as part of a state-building project that aimed to re-socialise them into bourgeois values.[58] In the Anglo-American cultures discussed here, the intellectual and socio-political contexts were more complex. Alienists did not simply impose bourgeois values upon lower-class patients in a straightforward way. Rather, alienists and patients were engaged in the same theological negotiations that pervaded the world outside the asylum.

The conceptual porousness between medical interventions within the asylum and religious cultures without is reflected particularly clearly in the American alienist John Butler's (1803–1890) discussion of religious madness in the twenty-second annual report of the Connecticut Retreat for the Insane (1846). Probably an evangelical himself,[59] Butler gave a psychiatric inflection to the classic distinction between true and false religion. 'True religious anxiety', he observed, often followed healthily from 'an honest and careful searching after the truth, as it is revealed to us in the scriptures'. Nevertheless, 'among the more frequent and most afflictive forms' of madness was that produced by 'undue religious anxiety', in which the patient's 'desponding views of his spiritual condition' were entirely unwarranted.[60]

By distinguishing, in line with Jonathan Edwards's theological framework, between the spiritual character of true religion and the physical nature of mental

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[58] A. Goldberg, *Sex, Religion, and the Making of Modern Madness: The Eberbach Asylum and German Society, 1815–1849* (New York, 1999), pp. 35-82.

[59] Teresa Hill characterises Butler as 'a churchman raised in the "Jonathan Edwards School of Orthodoxy"' in Hill, 'Religion, Madness, and the Asylum', p. 178. The evangelical flavour of Butler's piety is evidenced in a letter he wrote to fellow alienist Samuel B. Woodward: 'I seek to trust to Him, to obey his holy commandments, trusting that the Holy Spirit of which he spoke and which he promised has shed its influence upon my heart'. See AAS, Woodward Family Papers, 1799–1880, 1930, Box 1, Folder 4: John Butler to Samuel B. Woodward, 28 Jan. 1840.

[60] [J.S. Butler], 'The Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Physician and Superintendent of the Retreat for the Insane, for the year ending March 31, 1846', *The Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Officers of the Retreat for the Insane, at Hartford, Conn.* (Hartford, 1846), p. 21-22.

pathology, Butler's paradigm did for evangelicals something akin to what William A. F. Browne's Cartesian framework did for materialists. Just as Browne's formulation freed him as a materialist from the constraints of orthodoxy to analyse the physical structures of reason and madness, Butler's allowed him as an evangelical to navigate the world of mental medicine without scandalising either his faith or his profession. Crucially, the implication was to make the psychiatric interventions of evangelical and materialist alienists virtually indistinguishable from each other. For even within the evangelical formulation, once the physical nature of the patient's condition had been established, her or his spiritual perspective was simply negated.

This point highlights the chief tension in the period of this thesis between dominant patterns of theological and medical reasoning among the cultural elites, and the ways in which people who were deemed religiously insane engaged with these discourses to interpret their own experiences and identities. For many of these people, falling foul of the medical world meant falling foul, more deeply, of the fundamental binaries that supported it. Thus, the theories of mind, selfhood and spiritual experience that they elaborated in their writings frequently evinced a rejection of dualisms between the mind and the body, and between the physical and the spiritual. This thesis teases out the various factors—social, psychological and religious—which constituted the 'otherness' of these individuals in the first place, and which led them variously to embrace, neglect or reject medical and scientific discourses as fruitful sources of self-interpretation, and in so doing to construct perspectives on the world which were both more complex and discursively more unstable.

Critical Issues and Frameworks

Analysing Experiences of Madness in History

I have chosen 'madness' as an overarching category of analysis both for its breadth and for its relative neutrality. It encapsulates the various forms of behaviour, experience and self-identity that this thesis explores, yet without imposing upon them a specific interpretive framework. The meanings of spiritual and psychological experience—and the nature of the human mind more generally—were highly contested in the nineteenth century. Physicians and alienists were developing medical categories such as 'religious monomania' and 'demonomania' to characterise forms of psychological suffering which certain religious communities continued to view in spiritual terms as religious despondency or demonic possession.[61] To adopt late-modern categories such as mental illness or psychopathology in the analysis would be implicitly to privilege the former perspective over the latter, and to vitiate the interpretive framework itself with the assumptions and biases that form our own, largely psychiatric frame of reference. The purpose of this study is not to adjudicate between the many perspectives that formed the nineteenth-century interpretive milieu, but to expound the unique interventions within this milieu of people who were considered religiously insane.

This research aim can be illuminated by looking briefly at an example of a psychoanalytical interpretation of one of the central case studies in this thesis, John Thomas Perceval (1803–1876), in which the interpretive framework inappropriately elided the theological and social meanings contained within Perceval's own self-analysis. The son of the assassinated prime minister Spencer Perceval (1762–1812), John Perceval wrote two books recounting a descent into madness which involved aural

[61] See Alexander Morison's discussion of his treatment of these conditions in Morison, Cases *of Mental Disease*, pp. 69-77.

and visual apprehensions of disembodied spirits and led to a three-year confinement (1831–34) in private madhouses in Bristol and Sussex. In a biographical essay that opens an edited volume of Perceval's writings (1962), the English anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1904–1980) argued that Perceval was a 'schizophrenic'; that his madness was 'psychosis'; that his spiritual visions and voices were 'hallucinations'; and that his anxieties about social exclusion were 'probably instilled by the behavior of his parents and siblings early on'. Moral evaluations and prescriptions pervade Bateson's analysis. Thus, we are told that Perceval's 'delusions contain, in an inverted or concealed form, the very doubts he is afraid to entertain in a more conscious shape', and that although he 'brand[ed] his [religious] doubt as "guilty"', he instead 'should have accepted doubt as a function of the individual mind to be responsibly exercised'. We are also informed of the precise therapeutic error of his relatives and physicians. John's eldest brother, Spencer Perceval (1795–1859), 'should have given that acceptance which would have made the patient responsible for belief or doubt regarding the delusions'. The asylum staff should not have compounded his guilt and reduced him to 'self-repudiation' through their constant moral chastisements. And yet, despite the shortcomings of his caregivers, Perceval gradually recovered by means of a solitary process of psychic self-exploration, thus exhibiting the 'curative properties' inherent within the schizophrenic condition.[62]

Ironically, Bateson's analysis assumed the objective truth of a model of the psyche which is overtly contested within the very evidence he was seeking to interpret. In a six-chapter section with which he closed his second book, Perceval elaborated a nuanced theory of his visions and voices which attributed them to a 'faculty … inherent

[62] G. Bateson (ed.), *Perceval's Narrative: A Patient's Account of his Psychosis, 1830–1832* (London, 1962), pp. viii-xx.

in man' whose paranormal deliverances were 'only preternatural and yet divine'.[63] This formulation evinces a distinct intervention within the nineteenth-century controversy and debate over the meanings of psychological and spiritual experience—a culture out of which the psychoanalytic perspective itself emerged as one of many possibilities.[64] Nevertheless, Bateson identified Perceval's mysterious 'faculty' as 'the Freudian Unconscious'—a structure which, of course, delivers nothing 'divine' at all—and praised Perceval for the 'discovery'.[65]

Although immensely popular in the middle decades of the twentieth century, psychobiography of this sort fell out of scholarly favour after the 1980s, not least because of the hermeneutical naivety with which its exponents have often approached autobiographical texts.[66] Bateson treated details of Perceval's account as if they had been described to him in a therapy session, and so ignored their literary function within narratives that were written to advance specific social and theological agendas. Above all, Perceval's books were asylum exposés that aimed to stimulate reform of the lunacy laws in Britain, but they also contained features of spiritual memoir and conversion narrative which gave distinct meanings to details of his self-representation. An attentiveness to issues of genre and convention has crucial implications for how seemingly straightforward statements of psychological and spiritual experience are

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[63] J.T. Perceval, *A Narrative of the Treatment Experienced by a Gentleman, During a State of Mental Derangement; Designed to Explain the Causes and the Nature of Insanity, and to Expose the Injudicious Conduct Pursued Towards Many Unfortunate Sufferers Under that Calamity* (London, 1840), pp. 260, 364.

[64] Rhodri Hayward has characterised the emergence of psychoanalysis as a conservative intellectual response to the destabilising possibilities represented by transcendent interpretations of psychical experience. See R. Hayward, *Resisting History: Religious Transcendence and the Invention of the Unconscious* (Manchester, 2007). Also note R. Hayward, *The Transformation of the Psyche in British Primary Care, 1870–1970* (London, 2014); L.L. Whyte, *The Unconscious Before Freud* (London, 1992); Taves, *Fits, Trances, & Visions*.

[65] Bateson, *Perceval's Narrative*, p. v-vi.

[66] Note, however, the more promising uses of psychoanalytical ideas in the work of Lyndal Roper, Barbara Taylor and others. See, in particular, L. Roper, *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Sexuality, and Religion in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1994) and S. Alexander and B. Taylor (eds), *History and Psyche: Culture, Psychoanalysis, and the Past* (New York, 2012).

interpreted.[67] In Perceval's case, such analysis shows that his account of spiritual perception as 'only preternatural and yet divine' served a conservative agenda that undermined the emerging cultural ascendancy of medical professionals and the forms of authority to which they laid claim. One can guess how he might have reacted had he known that his psyche would be subjected posthumously to the authority of Freud.

Perceval was among a number of alleged religious lunatics whose writings registered a challenge to the religious and medical worlds within which they emerged. Crucially, these people were not speculating about the nature of madness and spiritual experience from a vacuum. This thesis argues, rather, that the theoretical frameworks that they advanced were intellectual responses to the experience of being marginalised as the lunatic 'other'. By advancing theories of mind and selfhood that subverted binaries of mind and matter, and of the physical and the spiritual (the binaries which, as we have seen, constituted a discursive space that could accommodate medical elites of divergent philosophical and religious persuasions), these writers were subverting at a deeper level the intellectual structures of a society that had deprived them of their civil liberties. Theory was in this sense an extension of the experience of madness.

What, then, was the nature of the 'madness' from which these theories emerged? This thesis does not conceptualise 'religious madness' as a single entity, whether defined socially, theologically, psychologically, biologically or otherwise. To do so would be inappropriate given the vast range of behaviours, identities, psychical

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[67] Bruce Hindmarsh has made this precise point about the many biographies of the English poet William Cowper (1731–1800) which have failed to recognise features of his conversion narrative such as his fear of going mad and his temptations to suicide as common tropes within the genre of evangelical conversion narrative, and so have viewed them naively as symptoms of psychosis. See D.B. Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative: Spiritual Autobiography in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2005), p. 276. Also note Mary Wood's discussion of critical issues related to the authorship of middle-class American women's asylum autobiographies in Wood, *The Writing on the Wall*, pp. 4-6. And note Benjamin Reiss's discussion of similar issues in relation to a journal written and edited by the patients of Amariah Brigham's asylum at Utica in New York in B. Reiss, 'Letters from Asylumia: The "Opal" and the Cultural Work of the Lunatic Asylum, 1851–1860', *American Literary History*, 16/1 (2004), pp. 16-17.

experiences and emotional states that are represented within the writings which this study analyses. We are certainly not dealing with a condition that would be diagnosable today as something like schizophrenia. Moreover, even if certain aspects of, say, John Perceval's mental world *would* have been diagnosed as schizophrenic had he been born a hundred years later, what made him a madman in the minds of his friends and relatives was as much about the ways in which his religious imagination led him to flout the social etiquette associated with his class identity as it was about the fact that he heard voices. His madness encompassed more dimensions of selfhood than are represented by the clinical terms with which we are most familiar today.

At a deeper level, the impulse to classify these experiences as 'conditions' or to delimit them as mere social constructs reflects the kind of binary thinking to which these authors themselves objected. The goal of this thesis is to tease out the ways in which reductionisms of various sorts were challenged and subverted. The argument develops within three overarching frameworks that together permit an analysis of the experience and interpretation of religious madness which—through comparison—draws out both distinctions and commonalities between these experiences, and between the intellectual projects to which these experiences gave rise.

The Transatlantic Framework

Bernard Bailyn has suggested that 'Atlantic history is not additive; it is more than the sum of its parts'.[68] This is certainly true as it relates to the geographical parameters of this thesis. Comparisons across the Atlantic permit analysis of national identity and cultural difference alongside numerous other factors—including gender, class, denomination and theological stance—that inflected the experiences with which it is

[68] B. Bailyn, *Atlantic History: Concept and Contours* (London, 2005), p. 60.

concerned. Such analysis teases out the complexities of, and discontinuities between, individual case studies, yet in doing so it also brings the crucial affinities between representations of religious madness across the Atlantic world into bolder relief. It thus avoids the kind of reductionism which posits a distinct condition or pathology that people in various cultural contexts had in common, while nevertheless allowing the thesis to elucidate the striking parallels between forms of religious interiority that were shaped within the deeply interconnected world which these people inhabited.

These analytical advantages are illustrated by the various affinities and contrasts within and between case studies in the first two chapters of this thesis. Chapter 1 explores the autobiography of Louisa Clemens, which, as we have seen, opened with an image that depicted an essential unity within her own prophetic mission as it played out in different geographical and cultural contexts. Yet despite this representation of an inward coherence to her sense of self and her evangelical agency, her autobiography evinces many of the characteristic distinctions between the cultures of religious madness on either side of the Atlantic. In Britain, her activism had a political dimensionality that linked it to a broader prophetic idiom reflected in the thought worlds of individuals as diverse as the nonconformist visionaries, Richard Brothers (1757–1824) and Joanna Southcott (1750–1814), and sophisticated expositors of biblical prophecies such as the British Prime Minister Spencer Perceval (1762–1812) and the Scottish Presbyterian minister Edward Irving (1792–1834). In one way or another, the fate of the British state was central to the prophetic imaginations of each of these people.[69] In Clemens's autobiography, this political dimensionality featured as a

[69] J.C.F. Harrison has thus noted that for Brothers, Southcott and other millenarian prophets, the imminence of Christ's second coming entailed the impending doom of the political order. See J.F.C. Harrison, *The Second Coming: Popular Millenarianism, 1780–1850* (London, 1979), p. xvi. In a recent doctoral thesis, Edwards Hicks includes Spencer Perceval among numerous 'prophecy enthusiast[s]' of his generation, and explores in depth the shaping influence of biblical prophecy upon his worldview and political programme. See E. Hicks, '"Christianity Personified": Perceval and Pittism' (DPhil Thesis,

public fixation which had an inimical effect on her interior life. Her indignation about 'the Government of a broken national League and Covenant' had deprived her of any sense of inner stability and, as we shall see in the next chapter, influenced behaviours for which her relatives sought to confine her to a private madhouse.[70]

In America, Clemens's prophetic activities lacked this sort of political register, and instead reflected the characteristic concerns of revivalists in that country about partisan conflicts and sectarian divisions between religious communities—concerns which, as we have seen, gave rise in the early nineteenth century to a new denomination, the Christian Church. Her own efforts to bridge doctrinal and racial divides by organising a religious gathering that combined elements of Presbyterian and Quaker worship gave striking expression to the relatively democratic and voluntarist complexion of American religion in this period.[71] These achievements underpinned her characterisation of her prophetic career in America as having had its own distinct interiority, facilitating her ability to 'walk with a looser and longer rein'.[72]

Whilst these contrasts serve to reveal and reinforce important distinctions between evangelical cultures and the wider society in Britain and America, they reveal considerably less about the connections and continuities across national and geographical boundaries. After all, any continuities in this respect might simply be

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University of Oxford, 2016), p. 64-65 and passim. For more on Edward Irving's engagement with these ideas, see D.M. Bennett, *Edward Irving Reconsidered: The Man, His Controversies, and the Pentecostal Movement* (Eugene, OR, 2014), p. 114 and S.J. Brown, 'Irving, Edward (1792–1834)', *ODNB*. Also note Perceval's and Irving's published contributions to the subject of biblical prophecy in S. Perceval, *Observations Intended to Point Out the Application of a Prophecy in the Eleventh Chapter of the Book of Daniel to the French Power* (1800) and E. Irving, *Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed by God: A Discourse on the Prophecies of Daniel and the Apocalypse, Which Relate to these Latter Times, and Until the Second Advent*, 2 vols. (Glasgow, 1826).

[70] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 108.

[71] Cautioning in this respect against overdrawing the free market metaphor, David Hempton has noted the essential resonance between the democratic, capitalistic and voluntarist aspects of the new republic and the character of the religious traditions that emerged there. See D. Hempton, *The Church in the Long Eighteenth Century* (London, 2011), pp. 134-36.

[72] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 108.

attributed to the function of the narrative process itself—to the effort of the author to envisage a unified self and a coherent spiritual pilgrimage. This analytical limitation is addressed through comparisons that are drawn between different authors across the Atlantic. Chapter 2 thus teases out the remarkable parallels between two religious 'lunatics' whose social backgrounds were essentially opposed. One of these, Elizabeth T. Stone (b. 1811), was a working-class American woman and daughter of an impoverished mechanic; the other, John Perceval, was a wealthy male member of the English aristocracy. Yet despite these vast differences, both wrote in strikingly similar ways about having been compelled by an inward spiritual agency that overrode their 'inherited' identities, leading them on parallel journeys, through the distinct evangelical cultures of their American and British contexts, to protracted confinements in private asylums.

Numerous insights emerge as these case studies are interrelated within and across the Atlantic World. The fact that Elizabeth Stone was confined to a private asylum as a religious lunatic qualifies in an important way Louisa Clemens's opposing characterisations of Britain and America, respectively, as contexts of spiritual constraint and freedom. For all three of these authors, the threat of confinement came from their own relatives, and not from wider social pressures, whether in Britain or America.[73] As Roy Porter has observed, Joanna Southcott faced no threat to her civil liberty, despite the fact that she 'was often called crazy, not least for her blasphemy in proclaiming that she was about to give birth to Shiloh',[74] and despite the well-established presence,

[73] Foucault's claim that the long eighteenth century witnessed a great confinement of the insane across Europe has been contested by a number of historians, including Roy Porter in the British context and Erik Midelfort in the German. See Porter, *Mind-Forg'd Manacles*, pp. 7-8, 80; H.C.E. Midelfort, *A History of Madness in Sixteenth-Century German* (Stanford, 1999), p. 7-8; Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*.
[74] Porter, *Mind-Forg'd Manacles*, p. 80.

during the period of her prophetic career, of private madhouses throughout England.[75] In Clemens's case, her family members lived in England throughout the twenty-four-year period of her residency in America. Had the opposite been the case, she might well have decried the tightness of her rein in America instead. Whilst these observations by no means belie Richard Carwardine's insight that American revivalists were less constrained than their English counterparts by cultural moods of deference and class awareness,[76] they should certainly caution us against overstating the implications of this point. Religious eccentricity was neither fully embraced in America, nor fully policed in Britain.

At a deeper level, these comparisons evince similar patterns of 'interiority' in representations of religious madness—a structure of subjectivity which saw people on both sides of the Atlantic self-consciously confront social conventions associated with class, gender and cultural context in service of a religious vision of self and society. These parallels are particularly striking given the many differences that did pertain between social contexts and evangelical cultures in Britain and America. They attest to the broader ethos of the evangelical movement—a closely related set of attitudes towards self and society shaped throughout a century of transatlantic revivalism and global activism—which gave rise to specific forms of religious eccentricity. Indeed, despite the vast range of social, psychological and psychical experiences described in the writings this thesis explores, there is an important sense in which they had an affinity.

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[75] See W. Ll. Parry-Jones, *The Trade in Lunacy: A Study of Private Madhouses in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (London, 1971), pp. 1-2 and passim.
[76] Carwardine, *Transatlantic Revivalism*, pp. 60, 68-69, 80, 152-53.

The Emotions

This thesis is also concerned with the ways in which experiences of spiritual suffering prompted fresh thinking about the nature and meaning of the emotions. It explores the theological and apologetic factors and agendas that underscored the use of medical ideas to explain such experiences. These agendas, both within and outside evangelical communities, frequently supported binary understandings of the causation of psychological suffering which opposed physical and spiritual meanings. Yet as the analysis in this thesis shows, the experience of being marginalised from these communities and alienated from dominant discourses stimulated modes of reasoning which challenged these fundamental binaries.

Spiritual suffering was itself a form of alienation that had a subversive influence vis-à-vis dominant discourses. This point is reflected in the self-understanding of the eighteenth-century English poet, William Cowper (1731–1800), whose melancholy continued to be cited and debated in religious and medical contexts in the nineteenth century. In the face of the efforts of his Calvinist friends, Mary Unwin and the Anglican clergyman John Newton (1725–1807), to assure him otherwise, Cowper insisted that he had been condemned by God as a reprobate. His self-reflections revealed the power of this melancholic habit of mind—this impulse to characterise oneself as a spiritual 'Cast-Away'[77]—to reformulate existing discourses to accommodate a personal narrative of perdition. In his own case, this tendency entailed a subversion of Calvinist orthodoxy. In a letter to Newton in May of 1780, he thus insisted—in full acknowledgment of the aura of madness in his own words—that his salvation had been revoked:

> All that is Ænigmatical in my Case would Vanish, if you and Mrs. U. were able to avail Yourselves of the Solution I have so often given You. That a Calvinist in principle, should know himself to have been Elected, and yet believe that he

[77] This was how Cowper characterised himself in his last (extant) poem, 'The Cast-Away', which he wrote in 1799. See W. Cowper, *The Poems of William Cowper*, John D. Baird and Charles Ryskamp (eds), Vol. 3 (Oxford, 1980), p. 214-16.

> is lost, is indeed a Riddle, and so obscure that it Sounds like a Solecism in terms, and may well bring the assertor of it under the Suspicion of Insanity. But it is not so, and it will not be found so.[78]

After his death, the nature of Cowper's melancholy became a matter of partisan conflict. Arminian evangelicals blamed Calvinist doctrine for his sufferings, and non-evangelicals blamed evangelicalism more generally.[79] Within the Calvinist evangelical camp itself, interpretations of Cowper's condition were thus a matter of communal apologetics. In a funeral sermon for Cowper (1800), the Independent minister Samuel Greatheed (1759–1823) framed the issue as a matter of spiritual epistemology: Cowper's problem had been that he had privileged the authority of feeling over the authority of revelation. This had been the basis of his subversion of Calvinist orthodoxy, and had solidified the legacy of his melancholy, in Greatheed's mind, as a caution to the wider Calvinist community against 'adopting your *religious feelings* as your ground of hope and rule of conduct'.[80]

Yet rather than articulating a more sophisticated paradigm for a Calvinist integration of the authority of revelation and the evidence of the emotions, Greatheed turned to the discourse of medicine. In offering a means of explaining the causes of Cowper's melancholy in naturalistic terms and hence negating its spiritual associations, medical discourse safeguarded the truth of Calvinist orthodoxy both against the subversive content of Cowper's self-understanding and against the attacks of Arminians and non-evangelical Anglicans for whom Cowper's sufferings seemed to prove the destructive effects of his co-religionists' beliefs. The binary between physical and

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[78] W. Cowper, *The Letters and Prose Writings of William Cowper*, James King and Charles Ryskamp (eds), Vol. 1 (Oxford, 1983), p. 341.
[79] These debates are noted in L. Hartley, *William Cowper, the Continuing Revaluation: An Essay and a Bibliography of Cowperian Studies from 1895 to 1960* (Chapel Hill, 1960), pp. 17-18.
[80] S. Greatheed, *A Practical Improvement of the Divine Counsel and Conduct, Attempted in a Sermon, Occasioned by the Decease of William Cowper, Esq; Preached at Olney, 18 May 1800* (Newport-Pagnel, 1800), pp. 3, 11, 41; original emphasis.

spiritual meanings reflected in Greatheed's appeal to Cowper's 'natural diffidence, and depression of mind' was thus emphatically apologetic at its core, and emerged as a means of protecting a specific doctrinal system from the authority of feeling.[81]

The rapidly growing field of emotions history has proffered fresh ways of conceptualising these issues. William Reddy's pioneering work on 'emotional regimes', for instance, would encourage an analysis of how theological systems shaped concepts of normative and deviant emotion within evangelical communities. From this perspective, it could be argued that a particular system of Calvinist reasoning failed to extend sufficient latitude to Cowper to 'navigate' his feelings so that he subverted this system with his idiosyncratic self-representation; and that Greatheed's appeal to medical discourse—and the binary it assumed between physical and spiritual meanings—thus emerged as an apologetic consequence of the constraints that a certain expression of orthodoxy placed upon emotional expression.[82]

Such an analysis would certainly ring true—at least in part—to the dynamics of the evangelical Calvinist community in New England explored in Chapter 3 of this thesis. The norms and meanings of emotion within this community shifted in accordance with the rhythms of revival and decline. Whilst the boundaries around feeling were, in theory, equally strict in either season, it was during periods of revival that the pressures upon individuals to 'feel' correctly became most intense, and were most consistently self-policed through daily practices of self-examination. The demands of self-surveillance further exacerbated the problem. In a study of early medieval societies, Barbara Rosenwein has argued that rather than living in static 'emotional regimes', people regularly shifted between different 'emotional communities' which

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[81] Ibid., p. 10-11.
[82] See W. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 125 and passim.

each exhibited their own norms and boundaries of expression.[83] The analysis in Chapter 3 of this thesis would suggest that the theological paradigms of certain revivalist communities challenged and attempted to invalidate such navigation—at least in theory—by virtue of the demands of constant spiritual vigilance that were placed upon the individual. Conversely, other individuals whom this thesis explores navigated between evangelical denominations as part of an effort to experience an emotional and spiritual richness within the pale of orthodoxy. Analysis of these distinct cases yields fresh insight into how theological paradigms and expectations shaped understandings of the emotions in the nineteenth century, and granted them a richness of meaning which, as Thomas Dixon has argued, they were losing within contexts 'of systematic psychological theorising'.[84]

There is some daylight between the analysis of experiences of despondency and anxiety in this thesis and the sociologist Julius Rubin's Weberian interpretation of religious melancholy among American Protestants. Rubin characterised melancholy as a condition that emerged as '[a]sceticism escaped from the monastery and required that every believer live as a saint in the world'.[85] Yet the concern of this thesis is not to posit a macro-historical theory of how certain forms of religious psychology emerged. Instead, it is to expound interrelationships between theological and medical modes of reasoning as reflected in the efforts of individuals and communities to reconcile these discourses to the challenges raised by lived experience. To do this is of course to problematise the terms of some dominant macro-historical interpretative projects.

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[83] See B. Rosenwein, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY, 2006), passim.
[84] T. Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge, 2003), p. 2 and passim.
[85] J. Rubin, *Religious Melancholy and Protestant Experience in America* (New York, 1994), pp. 16-17 and passim.

The reaction of the community discussed above to a case of suicide by one of its own—an undergraduate student at Yale College named Benjamin Noyes (1796–1815), who interpreted his inner coldness and moral inadequacy as signs that he was a spiritual reprobate—reflected interpretive pattern that we observed in the response of William Cowper's Calvinist friends to his melancholy.[86] Thus, as evangelical Arminians took the opportunity to attack their theology, Noyes's co-religionists argued that his suicide evinced mental derangement, which they attributed to a physical malady. Yet, until this tragedy occurred, they had treated his experiences of anxiety and depression as if they had been consistent with the spiritual 'pilgrimage' of the evangelical penitent. His inner coldness and his concern that he was a reprobate were evidences of 'despondency', not symptoms of insanity. It was only after his suicide that the community shifted to the discourse of medicine as a means of both defending New Haven orthodoxy and preserving Noyes's status as one of the elect. This dualism between physical and spiritual meanings thus emerged once again as the response of a community to the contingency of its own theological formulations of emotional expression. In later decades, this conceptual problem was addressed by the Congregational minister Lyman Beecher (1775–1863) with his 'clinical theology', which sought to combine theological and medical ideas as a means of preserving a Puritan form of interiority that was being challenged in the wake of tragedies like Noyes's suicide.

In drawing together the different threads of the thesis, Chapter 5 explores another potent challenge to binary conceptualisations of the physical and the spiritual in the thought world of Elizabeth Stone, for whom the experience of being marginalised from society as a religious lunatic stimulated an effort to subvert dominant interpretive

[86] Noyes's case is one of those explored by Rubin in his chapter on the Second Great Awakening in Ibid., pp. 125-55.

patterns among cultural elites. As a religious melancholic, she was reasoning from the same existential milieu—the same sense of emotional alienation from dominant narratives and discourses—as Cowper and Noyes. Yet her encounter with medical and scientific communities, both during and after her confinement to an insane asylum, allowed her to draw from their methodologies and theories to construe her alienated condition in a way that challenged dichotomies between physical and spiritual meanings. Her case thus reflected a convergence of the subversive milieu of emotional alienation and the growing accessibility and acceptability, in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, of scientific and medical forms of epistemic authority.

Enthusiasm

The thesis addresses the ways in which individuals and communities interpreted experiences of divine inspiration and supernatural power. As we have seen, such experiences were labelled as 'enthusiasm' in the late seventeenth century—a term that linked notions of divine inspiration to self-delusion and insanity. Michael Heyd, Frank Manuel, Ann Taves, Lionel Laborie and others have traced the development of theoretical discourses which reconstituted these sorts of experiences as naturalistic phenomena, whether construed primarily in physiological, theological or psychological terms.[87] The 'medicalisation of the critique of enthusiasm', as Heyd refers to it, has been deemed to have fundamentally transformed the social and political meanings of prophecy and supernatural experience, largely denuding them of their subversive dimensionality.[88] This transformation has encouraged the emergence of new analytical uses of the term 'enthusiasm' that have allowed its legacy as something fundamentally

[87] M. Heyd, *'Be Sober and Reasonable': The Critique of Enthusiasm in the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries* (Leiden, 1995); F.E. Manuel, *The Eighteenth Century Confronts the Gods* (Cambridge, 1959); Taves, *Fits, Trances, & Visions*; Laborie, *Enlightening Enthusiasm*.
[88] Heyd, *'Be Sober and Reasonable'*, p. 10.

transgressive to be traced into the nineteenth century. Thus, in his study of enthusiasm among Romantic writers, Jon Mee has used the term in a broad and secularised sense to encompass 'kinds of social behaviour that placed one beyond the pale of the emergent bourgeois public sphere'.[89]

This turn in the scholarly conversation might suggest, misleadingly, that by the early nineteenth century, the older, religious symbols of enthusiasm that had characterised it in the seventeenth century had been thoroughly domesticated by medical and psychological discourses. However, historians have shown that the religious language of prophecy continued to exert a subversive power from the cultural margins in various contexts in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[90] Moreover, Mee's broad definition of enthusiasm would allow the category to encompass, among other things, the distinctly religious identities throughout this period which clashed with the so-called 'bourgeois identity', yet did not necessarily include ecstatic and prophetic elements. In a study of eighteenth-century Methodism, Misty Anderson has argued that Methodist conversion itself

> challenged the agency and autonomy of the modern self as a secular and autonomous enterprise … [for it] proposed an irruption of divine presence into historical time and into an individual consciousness that threatened both to reveal the self and yet, in the process, to change it.[91]

Relatedly, the comparative analysis of Elizabeth Stone and John Perceval in Chapter 2 of this thesis shows that both authors traced the stigma of their madness back to their conversions to evangelicalism. In Stone's case, the sequence from conversion to

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[89] J. Mee, *Romanticism, Enthusiasm, Regulation: Poetics and the Policing of Culture in the Romantic Period* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 3-5, 10-12.
[90] These subversive dimensions of prophetic language are explored by J.A.G. Roberts and Rhodri Hayward in the contexts of the Taiping Rebellion and the Welsh Revival of 1904–1905, respectively, in their contributions to B. Taithe and T. Thornton (eds), *Prophecy: The Power of Inspired Language in History, 1300–2000* (Phoenix Mill, 1997), pp. 11, 143-80.
[91] M.G. Anderson, *Imagining Methodism in Eighteenth-Century Britain: Enthusiasm, Belief, and the Borders of the Self* (Baltimore, 2012), pp. 4, 28 and passim.

confinement lacked overtly prophetic and ecstatic elements; and for Perceval, such elements only emerged several years after his conversion, and were characterised in his autobiography as developments of this initial transformation. Enthusiasm thus features in the writings of both authors first and foremost in the conversion event itself, through which their identities were held to have been transformed so as to put them in tension with their social and religious environments.

Nevertheless, the distinction between the social transformation that evangelical conversion entailed and the supernatural psychical phenomena traditionally associated with enthusiasm should not be overstated. This distinction is itself a product of elite discourses that sought to explain and thus contain perceived abnormality and deviance in various forms, and was not intrinsic to the experiences themselves.

Within the medical world, secular categories were being developed to tease apart the social and psychical aspects of deviance, the religious features of which were further relegated to distinct subcategories. The category of 'moral insanity' was thus coined to distinguish aspects of deviance that affected the character or personality of the individual from conditions such as 'monomania' and 'mania', which affected the intellect instead. The prominent English physician James Cowles Prichard's (1786–1848) characterisation of moral insanity evinced the 'diagnostic creep' of mental medicine into matters of social identity in this period:

> In cases of this description the moral and active principles of the mind are strangely perverted and depraved; the power of self-government is lost or greatly impaired; and the individual is found to be incapable, not of talking or reasoning upon any subject proposed to him, for this he will often do with great shrewdness and volubility, but of conducting himself with decency and propriety in the business of life.[92]

[92] J.C. Prichard, *A Treatise on Insanity and Other Disorders Affecting the Mind* (London, 1835), p. 4. Diagnostic creep refers to the gradual expansion of the criteria for which one might be deemed insane. See Scull, *Madness in Civilization*, p. 273.

This description would have encompassed, but would not have been limited to, the forms of religious transformation that Stone and Perceval described as having attended their conversions. The way in which Prichard concluded this description of the morally insane individual might have been applied directly to the 'change of heart' which Elizabeth Stone claimed had turned her family against her; or to the 'active principle' of evangelical doctrine that Perceval characterised as having gradually overthrown his own judgment:

> His wishes and inclinations, his attachments, his likings and dislikings have all undergone a morbid change, and this change appears to be the originating cause, or to lie at the foundation of any disturbance which the understanding itself may seem to have sustained, and even in some instances to form throughout the sole manifestation of the disease.[93]

Meanwhile, the category of monomania ('in which the illusion of the understanding is connected with some particular subject, and leaves the judgment comparatively clear in other respects') encompassed (yet was not limited to) the more traditional features of enthusiasm—such as divine inspiration and spiritual ecstasy—that were now being viewed in distinction from the shifts in character and social identity that moral insanity entailed. The Scottish alienist Alexander Morison thus described 'theomania', a subcategory of monomania, as a condition 'in which pride and vanity are united to religious hallucinations', noting that 'those who are thus afflicted conceive themselves to be God or Christ, or that they have intercourse with spirits'.[94]

The implication of these developments was to undermine the subversive potential of enthusiasm; for as its constituent social and psychical aspects were teased

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[93] Prichard, *A Treatise on Insanity*, pp. 4-5. See E.T. Stone, *A Sketch of the Life of Elizabeth T. Stone, and of Her Persecutions, with an Appendix of Her Treatment and Sufferings While in the Charlestown McLean Asylum, Where She was Confined Under the Pretence of Insanity* (Boston, 1842), p. 24; J.T. Perceval, *A Narrative of the Treatment Experienced by a Gentleman, During a State of Mental Derangement; Designed to Explain the Causes and the Nature of Insanity, and to Expose the Injudicious Conduct Pursued Towards Many Unfortunate Sufferers Under that Calamity* (London, 1838), p. 6.
[94] Morison, *Cases of Mental Disease*, p. 69.

apart and relegated to secular diagnostic categories, enthusiasm lost the social and political meanings that had attended it when these elements remained interconnected and irreducibly religious. This thesis is concerned with how 'enthusiasts' themselves represented the interrelationships between spiritual transformation, divine inspiration and society. More specifically, it is interested in how their perspectives on enthusiasm were developed and expressed in interaction with—or conscious resistance to—these medical developments. As we shall see, John Perceval's cautious appropriation of medical categories to explain his own enthusiasm served a social agenda that was ultimately conservative, yet which nevertheless subverted the epistemic monopoly claimed by medical professionals. In the final chapter of this thesis, Perceval's intellectual project is contrasted with that of Louisa Clemens, for whom an emphatic resistance towards medical forms of authority entailed a more socially- and politically-subversive enthusiasm.

The Structure of the Thesis

The thesis is divided into three parts. Part I analyses representations of 'enthusiasm', defined broadly to encompass religious behaviours and identities that made individuals marginal in relation to their families and religious communities. It looks comparatively at autobiographies by people who were confined to insane asylums, relating the social factors that underpinned their marginalisation as religious lunatics to the ways in which they represented their own spiritual identities. Part II explores therapeutic contexts, including spiritual care within religious communities and medical treatment within insane asylums. It contrasts the efforts of evangelical ministers to integrate medicine and theology as a means of preserving the emotional and psychological features of Puritan interiority with therapeutic methods in the asylum which sought to negate these

experiences. Part III looks at how medical and theological ideas converged within the self-representations of alleged religious lunatics. It expounds the ways in which these authors subverted the discourses of professional medicine and psychiatry by rejecting the binaries between the physical and the spiritual that underpinned them.

Chapter 1 explores the self-understanding of Louisa Clemens in depth, using her correspondence and her autobiography both as lenses through which to explore the distinct cultures of evangelical 'enthusiasm' on either side of the Atlantic and as an entry point into the themes of religious identity, spiritual experience and medicalisation that emerge throughout the thesis. Her letters from the period of her residency in Britain reflect her own doubts about her sanity in that period, yet in her autobiography she reconstituted her 'mad' psychological states as aspects of a 'prophetic' philosophy of mind. The gradual consolidation of this new outlook is evinced in her letters from the period of her residency in America, where she used the new theological beliefs that emerged during the Second Great Awakening to reconstitute her madness as something spiritual and prophetic, rather than medical, in nature.

Chapter 2 looks comparatively at the autobiographical writings of John Perceval and Elizabeth Stone. Both characterised evangelical conversion as having instilled in them new values and principles of identity which put them in tension with their families and wider religious communities and thus set them on the course towards confinement. Whilst highlighting the ways in which their experiences and identities were inflected by the distinct cultures of religious enthusiasm on either side of the Atlantic, this chapter also notes the striking convergence in their writings in terms of the shape of evangelical interiority and its social implications in either context. This comparison is suggestive of the influence of evangelicalism more broadly as a transatlantic movement that

generated common patterns of identity and experience that had a subversive potential within different cultural contexts.

Chapter 3 opens Part II of this thesis by exploring spiritual care in contexts of evangelical Calvinism in Scotland and New England. The pastoral philosophies that are analysed in each context were developed within the same intellectual milieu: an apologetic space within which the psychological and emotional states associated with Puritan interiority were consciously naturalised and medicalised as a means of safeguarding evangelical Calvinism against claims that it caused derangement. The implication of this intellectual milieu for spiritual care was to elevate the role of the minister as one whose pastoral agency played a crucial role in managing the psychological states of the spiritual 'patient' and helping to sustain their religious identity. These case studies indicate the therapeutic 'interdisciplinarity'—the skilful incorporation and deployment of theological and medical ideas—that was deemed necessary on the part of the minister in order to preserve spiritual interiority both against partisan criticism from the outside and against the psychological perils with which it was associated within these communities themselves.

Chapter 4 looks at the alternative to models of spiritual care that was being developed in the asylum. As we have seen, the development of a professional psychiatric discourse meant that asylum doctors of divergent theological and philosophical persuasions could contribute to a shared set of theories and methodologies. Yet the implication was to subsume religion within medicine as a tool of therapy; and thus, even alienists with evangelical sympathies sought with their treatments to negate the 'perilous' elements of evangelical interiority which exponents of spiritual care had sought to preserve. This chapter returns to the cases of Elizabeth Stone and John Perceval, exploring their responses to the negation of their religious

identities in the asylum. Both authors characterised the asylum as an institutional microcosm of the social and religious problems in the wider society that had led to their marginalisation as lunatics. Moreover, they contrasted the therapeutic negation which they experienced in the asylum to ideals of spiritual care that would have supported their 'true' identities, as well as supporting, by extension, religious worldviews which they characterised as having been threatened by the values represented by the rising psychiatric profession.

Part III contains the concluding chapter of the thesis, which looks at how alleged religious lunatics responded to the authority of medicine as a source of self-interpretation. Whilst the rising professional discourses of medicine and the mind sciences represented a threat to their religious identities and to their civil liberties, medical ideas and methodologies nevertheless allowed them to theorise their own spiritual experiences in ways that subverted the underlying premises of professional psychiatry. The accessibility and popularity of mind sciences such as animal magnetism and phrenology in the 1830s and 1840s, for instance, allowed Elizabeth Stone to theorise her own psychological and spiritual experiences in ways that undercut the hermeneutic hegemony that alienists and physicians were attempting to assert.

Yet it was also fundamental for these people to assert the irreducibly spiritual nature of their experiences. Theology served the anti-institutional agendas of alleged religious lunatics in two key ways. Firstly, it provided them with precise languages with which to articulate the social and emotional impact of institutional therapies that were designed to ignore and negate the religious interiority of patients. And secondly, it allowed them to subvert the professional discourses and methodologies of psychiatry, for theology elevated the meanings of the emotions and the psyche above the naturalistic domain of medical expertise. By fusing theological and medical categories,

and by thus dissolving binary perspectives on the physical and the spiritual, these people asserted religious identities that were shaped by, but also subverted, pivotal medical developments in the nineteenth-century Atlantic world.

Part I

Enthusiasm and Identity

Chapter 1

The Formation of a Prophet

On 16 February 1825, Catherine Taylor (née Courtauld; 1795–1885), wife of the silk merchant Peter Alfred Taylor (1790–1850), wrote from Essex to her sister, Sophia Courtauld (1799–1887), then living in Surrey, to inform her of a family crisis that been unfolding over the past two weeks. Their sister, Louisa—thirty-four years old at the time, and 'literally *penniless*'[1]—had suddenly decided that she must move to America, and, on 2 February, had left the home of a cousin with whom she had been visiting in London to travel to Essex, where, it was presumed, she planned to gather her belongings and bid farewell to her family.[2] Her siblings in Essex were startled, after her arrival, by the intensity of her religious habits. Taylor thus observed that throughout Louisa's visit at the family estate in Bocking, 'she ha[d] never taken breakfast, but fasted from tea time till 4 the next day', and that 'on Friday she fasts entirely'.[3] On Thursday the 10th, she worried the family further by leaving the Taylors' residence 'without our knowing any thing of it' and moving into the home of a Mrs. Bayne. Taylor initially refused Louisa's request to send on her 'writing desk & trunk', but relented after receiving her sister's assurances that she would join them at dinner the following Tuesday evening. In the interim, however, Taylor's husband discovered the disquieting use to which the writing desk was being put—a discovery that also appeared to explain Louisa's sudden resolve to cross the Atlantic. During a trip into town, Peter Taylor had thus been

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[1] *Courtauld Family Letters* (Cambridge, 1916), 3.1266: Catherine Taylor to Sophia Courtauld, 16 Feb. 1825; original emphasis.
[2] See *Courtauld Family Letters*, 3.1263: Wilhelmina Taylor to Sophia Courtauld, 7 Feb. 1825.
[3] *Courtauld Family Letters* (Cambridge, 1916), 3.1267: Catherine Taylor to Sophia Courtauld, 16 Feb. 1825. Their sister Elizabeth Ash (née Courtauld; 1797–1894) had likewise commented on this habit in a letter to Sophia during Louisa's initial visit to Coggeshall, Essex, from the 3 to 7 February. See *Courtauld Family Letters*, 3.1259: Elizabeth Ash to Sophia Courtauld, 3 Feb. 1825.

> shown several letters to various persons, to Dr. Morris principally, detailing [Louisa's] ideas on this 'solemn league & covenant' entered into by Charles 2nd, & her determination in consequence to flee from the impending storm.[4]

To Taylor—and to the other siblings—the solution to this problem had become clear: '[h]e gave it as decidedly his opinion that she ought to be placed under restraint & gave a certificate to that effect'. Their plans were frustrated, however, when, instead of fulfilling her promise to attend dinner on Tuesday the 15th, Louisa absconded to the home of another Essex family, the Breillats. On the 19th, her brother Samuel Courtauld wrote to Sophia to inform her that Louisa had been found and had agreed to go with him the next day 'to Monro's House (Brook House) at Clapton'—a private asylum in London run by one of the alienists who had tended to King George III, Thomas Monro (1759–1833).[5] However, she absconded yet again, this time to Dover, and by the time the family had reached her new location to cut off her retreat, she had made the journey to Calais.[6]

Louisa's behaviours rekindled a concern about her mental health that had troubled the family for several years. Her religious fervour had reached a similar crisis point four years earlier, when, occupied at the time as a governess in Edinburgh, she had decided to take a three-week retreat from her work, for the purposes of prayer and fasting, to a small fishing village north of Edinburgh.[7] When word of this behaviour had reached her brother Samuel, he brought her back to London to live with him and their mother, Ruth Courtauld (née Minton), who herself referred to Louisa's condition, in a letter she wrote at the time to her daughter Sophia, as a mental malady that had been

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[4] *Courtauld Family Letters* (Cambridge, 1916), 3.1265: Catherine Taylor to Sophia Courtauld, 16 Feb. 1825.
[5] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 3.1270: Samuel Courtauld to Sophia Courtauld, 19 Feb. 1825. Monro was also chief physician to Bethlem Hospital during this period. See A.T. Scull, *Museums of Madness: the Social Organization of Insanity in Nineteenth-Century England* (New York, 1979), pp. 74, 78, 136-39.
[6] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 3.1269: Catherine Taylor to Sophia Courtauld, 16 Feb. 1825. These later developments were included in a note added to the letter on 23 February, before it was posted.
[7] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 58.

developing progressively since Louisa had moved to Edinburgh in 1814: '[i]t appears that [Louisa's] disease, which from some unhappy conflict in her mind was gaining ground from the time we came to Clyde Street, came to a crisis at the time Sam went for her'.[8] Ruth nevertheless expressed optimism about her daughter's condition, noting that since her arrival in London she had become 'remarkably well in mind & body' and that her 'natural good constitution & good understanding [had thrown] off the load'. But as the months wore on, her habits of devotional solitude and fasting had returned with force, and the family finally took the decision a year later (1822) to have her confined at the physician Thomas Warburton's private asylum at Hackney.[9] And so, it was no surprise to the family when Louisa's religious fervour returned and grew to an even greater level of intensity three years later.

In 1870, Louisa herself published an autobiography in which she gave an account of these events as aspects of a prophetic vocation. The habit of devotional solitude that had scandalised her friends and siblings was, she argued in the narrative, part of her spiritual training for a 'special work'.[10] The letters she had written about the Solemn League and Covenant had in turn reflected the distinct outworking of this special work in Britain—a geographically-specific calling for which the counterpart in the American context, after her eventual move there in 1834, was encapsulated in her efforts to bridge racial and denominational divides within evangelical congregations. The autobiography asserted theological and spiritual meanings of these behaviours, which, at the time, had been construed by other people as forms of madness and

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[8] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 2.825: Ruth Courtauld to Sophia Courtauld, 19 Jun. 1821.
[9] The scandalous conditions to which patients were subjected at this asylum, as well as at Warburton's private asylum at Bethnal Green, were exposed in Parliamentary Select Committees in 1815-16 and 1827. See E. Murphy, 'The Mad-House Keepers of East London', *History Today*, 51/9 (2001), pp. 29-35. Also see *A Description of the Crimes and Horrors in the Interior of Warburton's Private Mad-House* (London, 1825) and London Metropolitan Archives, MJ/SP/1827/LC/8/11-12: *Inquiry into Mr Warburton's Private Madhouse, White House, Bethnal Green* (1827).
[10] Clemens, *Narrative*, pp. 44, 200.

deviance. It drew these behaviours—and her identity, more generally—into a narrative of the self which she framed as a spiritual pilgrimage.

And yet, as we shall see, Louisa's letters to family members at the time of the events themselves reflect some ambivalence about the meaning of her own behaviours and psychological states. After her escape from England in 1825, she even (guardedly) acknowledged, in a letter to her sister Sophia, that her conduct had evinced a form of mental derangement.[11] Her autobiography framed these self-doubts and anxieties about madness as a form of divine chastisement to which she had been subjected in that period for having failed to remain faithful to her spiritual commitments (more specifically, for having heeded the medical advice of her friends and relatives to curb her devotional habits).[12] The autobiography thus evinced the consolidation of a spiritual identity that was being articulated in a conscious rejection of a medical critique that had been directed at her by others, and that had been a part of her own psychological experience at the time of the events being described.

As we saw in the introduction to this thesis, the period between 1821, when Louisa Clemens's behaviours first drew suspicions that she was insane, and 1870, when she published her autobiography, had seen a sharp rise in medical publications on topics such as religious experience and the link between religion and insanity, as well as developments in mental medicine such as the proliferation of insane asylums across Britain and America, the emergence of psychiatric associations in both areas in the 1830s and 1840s, and the development of physiological psychology in the 1860s. Numerous historians have emphasised the ways in which these medical developments had the effect of pushing prophetic speech into the cultural margins,[13] whilst others

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[11] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 3.1278: Louisa Courtauld to Sophia Courtauld, 4 Apr. 1825.
[12] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 49
[13] Note, for instance, Laborie, *Enlightening Enthusiasm*, pp. 204-42.

have noted contexts in which prophecy continued to express a subversive political voice, into the early twentieth century.[14] This chapter contextualises Louisa Clemens's autobiography as a distinct intervention within this world of medical and theological development and interaction. It demonstrates the ways in which she responded to the threats to spiritual meaning that she perceived in certain medical and scientific forms of reasoning by advancing a sophisticated philosophy of mind, conceived in theological and spiritual terms.

This chapter is also concerned with the important differences between the cultures of 'enthusiasm' and prophecy in Britain and America, which were themselves significant to Clemens's cultivation of a prophetic identity. We saw in the introduction to this thesis that Clemens referred to her work, in her autobiography, as having 'always been harder in Great Britain than in America'.[15] In part this was due to the fact that in Britain, she had been in closer proximity to Unitarian family members who did not share her Calvinist convictions, and who had been alarmed by her religious fervour. The case studies in this thesis support the point that the threat of confinement for madness in the nineteenth century generally came from the families of the alleged insane, and not from a crackdown in the wider society on deviant religious behaviour.[16] As we shall see in this chapter, Clemens's strange behaviours during the 'crises' of 1821 and 1825 in fact exacerbated tensions within the family that had already been generated years earlier in her conversion to Presbyterianism.

Yet there was also an important sense in which revivalist cultures in the American context had empowered Clemens in a way that evangelical cultures in Britain

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[14] The work of J.A.G. Roberts and Rhodri Hayward in the latter respect has been noted in the thesis introduction. See Taithe and Thornton (eds), *Prophecy*, pp. 11, 143-80.
[15] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 108.
[16] Scholarly criticisms of Foucault's notion of a great confinement have been noted in the introduction to this thesis. See Porter, *Mind-Forg'd Manacles*, pp. 7-8, 80 and Midelfort, *A History of Madness*, p. 7-8.

had not. David Hempton has written about revivalist communities in the American context as having assumed 'a framework of interpretation that accepts as normal the operation of special providences and that human beings, regardless of gender, age, and social status, could be chosen instruments of divine empowerment'.[17] Clemens's autobiography and her letters from the period of her residency in America evince the relative liberty that this framework had afforded her as an evangelical activist. Moreover, they suggest a process within which she gradually appropriated the revivalist ideology in America as a means of reconstituting the experiences and behaviours that had been deemed insane among her relatives and friends in Britain as aspects of a prophetic identity and form of consciousness.

According to Clemens's autobiography, her prophetic career had been inaugurated with her habit of devotional solitude and fasting. Yet her friends and relatives had viewed this habit as evidence of a deranged mind, and as the basis of an unsociable disposition and an impaired judgment. This chapter opens by interrelating these opposed perspectives, contextualising them within broader debates in this period about the presumed links between solitude and enthusiasm. This discussion establishes the context for a more detailed exploration of Clemens's prophetic career as it played out, in turn, within the British and American contexts. Beyond registering important differences between cultures of enthusiasm and prophecy on either side of the Atlantic, this analysis evinces the process through which Clemens's understanding of her own psychological and temperamental proclivities was gradually transformed. In her correspondence during the period of her residency in Britain (c. 1814–1833), she thus expressed doubts about her sanity, which she articulated by using the language of medicine. By contrast, her correspondence from the period of her residency in America

[17] Hempton, *Empire of the Spirit*, p. 148.

(c. 1834–1857) reflected a process through which she reconstituted her compulsions and religious fixations within a prophetic philosophy of mind.

Devotional Solitude and Insanity

In her autobiography, Louisa Clemens characterised the period from her conversion to Presbyterianism in the mid-1810s to the 'crisis' of 1825 described above as one of spiritual preparation for a prophetic vocation. Her perspective as author is interrelated in this section with the medical critique of her experiences and behaviours, reflected both in the outlook of her family members and, to some extent, in her own self-interpretation and anxieties at the time of the events that her narrative recounted.

In an important respect, the intensity of Clemens's religious habits during the periods of her two crises exacerbated tensions that already existed within the family over her conversion to Presbyterianism in 1814 and her efforts, over the years that followed, to convert her Unitarian parents and siblings. Whilst her own letters to her father in this period are not extant, the letters he wrote to her in 1818 (around four years after her conversion), when George Courtauld (a devout Unitarian) was living apart from his family on his property in Ohio, suggest that they had been engaged for some time in debate over matters of doctrine, and that she had been expressing in vociferous terms the urgent need, given the eternal stakes involved, for his own conversion. On 4 December 1818, George thus wrote a letter to his wife that included notes to his daughters, Louisa (then 27 years old) and Sophia (then 19). Whilst the note to Sophia was brief and only addressed her personal health and her potential move to America, he used most of a page (a third of the letter) to continue his ongoing religious dialogue with Louisa. Expressing a polite gratitude for the 'affection' reflected in her insistence upon his conversion, he urged his daughter to focus upon the matters in which they

were in agreement, such as their mutual hope in 'the Mercy of GOD', 'the ground of this hope [in] *the Gospel*', their love for Christ as 'the willing Sacrifice for the Salvation of Mankind', and their reverence for the Bible 'as of infinite more value to us than *all other* Books whatever'. These commonalities, he hoped to persuade her, should lead her to soften her own tone in the debate:

> In dismiss^{g} this subject my d^{r} Lou will not fancy I feel at all hurt at her repeated attempts to press her own views of Xtianity. My only feeling is that of warm affect^{n} & high Esteem; & my only object in these pages is to show that the *differences* between us do not *warrant* that solicitude on her part which her Letters seem to evince.[18]

Clemens's religious exhortations in her letters to siblings reflect the kind of solicitude against which her father was reacting. Characteristic in this respect was the opening paragraph of a letter to her sisters Sophia and Elizabeth in January 1821, which cited Christ's warning in the Sermon on the Mount 'that in that awful day there will be some who shall say "Lord Lord have we not prophesied in thy name" to whom he will say "I never knew you"'.[19] And her epistolary anxieties about her siblings' spiritual wellbeing continued after her move to America in the 1830s. In 1840, for instance, she wrote to her brother George (1802–1861) to update him on business related to the family property in Ohio, and closed by inquiring

> about your *religious* feelings, principles, occupations, hopes and fears and of your family for if it is true and the Lord Jesus Christ has said it that in the great day of awards some will be surprised to find themselves shut out should we not seriously enquire—Lord is it I?[20]

Fourteen years later, she would mention in another letter to her brother the fact that he had 'generally regretted' the 'change in my religious views' decades earlier—an indication that her conversion had generated tensions with her siblings, as well, and not

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[18] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 2.454-58: George Courtauld to Ruth Courtauld, Louisa Courtauld and Sophia Courtauld, 4 Dec. 1818; original emphases.
[19] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 2.768: Louisa Courtauld to Sophia Courtauld and Elizabeth Courtauld, 26 Jan. 1821. This is a reference to Matt. vii. 21-23.
[20] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 6.2825: Louisa Courtauld to George Courtauld, 18 April 1840.

just with her father.[21] Yet, as with their father, the references to her religious identity and mental condition in the letters of her siblings register concerns not about her divergent doctrinal stance, but about the temperament that had attended it. This concern had indeed been the focal point of her brother Samuel's description of her condition in a letter to their father, written soon after he had conducted her back from Scotland and England during her first 'crisis' in 1821:

> Louisa continues pretty well; to a superficial observer perhaps she would appear perfectly well; I do not so far flatter myself. I should fail in describing the indications of precarious health, because I have no *clear* idea of them; however I occasionally observe a peculiar expression—I cannot describe it intelligibly—in her eyes, which I experience to be always connected with an increased irritability, under the smallest collision with sentiment; with a certain air of abstraction and an apparent desire to indulge in prolonged exercizes in the closet. Her remarkable inability to appreciate correctly the characters of individuals of marked religious sentiments, is also one trait of impaired mind. Miss C., a woman of singularly limited faculties, remarkably weak, is in L.'s opinion highly respectable in understanding—an interesting character. Our dear Lou is, to a considerable degree, aware of her misfortune, and sometimes expresses her consciousness of it with such meek humility and such submission as is most sadly pleasing; fatigue of body is evidently injurious, and her mind is easily wearied by the bustle of varied scenery, so as to manifest the weakness of its strength … On the whole my hopes of witnessing her ultimate restoration to perfect certainty of health of mind are not lessened; but it must probably be the work of some years.[22]

This description expressed, at bottom, a concern about a perceived anti-social tendency which manifested itself in aspects of her physiognomy and temperament, in her proclivity for solitude, and in her distorted judgment with respect to the religious character and 'understanding' of others. As we have seen, these habits continued over the months that followed, and finally led Louisa's siblings to have her confined in June 1822—albeit, for a period of only three days—at a private asylum in Hackney.

Both in her letters at the time and in her later autobiography, Louisa registered this focal point of her siblings' concerns about her mental health, but framed it in terms

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[21] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 8.3610: Louisa Clemens to George Courtauld, 3 Mar. 1854.
[22] Letter from Samuel Courtauld to George Courtauld, 23 Jun. 1821, in Samuel Courtauld, *The Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, Vol. 3 (London, 1967), pp. 30-31; original emphasis.

of her devotional imperative. In a letter to her brother George in August 1824, she thus objected to the 'indelicate methods' his siblings had used, three years earlier, to obtain 'knowledge of the most secret actions of my most retired moments'.[23] In her autobiography, she was even more explicit in her claim that her family members had considered her 'insane, *because* of my unusual mode of *ministerial recreation*—viz., to be *alone with God*'.[24] The narrative itself documented the numerous instances in which this concern had been expressed. Thus, during a brief period in which she had resided with her mother in 1820, Ruth Courtauld had 'insisted' that Louisa's practice of rising at 3:15 AM each morning to 'redeem time … *must be* injurious'.[25] (Clemens insisted, in the face of this, that 'my health and strength were very good in body and mind'.[26]) While living with a family in Edinburgh around the same time, she had begun to absent herself from the family's third meal ('tea, at seven') to pray for Scotland, and this had raised concerns both about her 'departure from duty' and the 'danger [this had posed] to health'. (Andrew Thomson—the 'kind and friendly minister' to whom the concern was registered—concurred.[27]) She had been conducted back to London from Edinburgh in the first place because of her decision to retire to the countryside for three weeks; and during her residency with her mother and brother in 1821, her friends and family concluded that the 'chief remedy' for her presumed ailment was to 'confine my times for private worship to morning and evening'.[28] She recounted that at the peak of her devotional rigour she would withdraw seven times per day for meditation.[29] Yet she

[23] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 3.1205: Louisa Courtauld to George Courtauld, 19 Aug. 1824.
[24] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 200; original emphases.
[25] Ibid., p. 44; original emphases.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Ibid., p. 49.
[28] Ibid., p. 62.
[29] Ibid., p. 48.

spurned their wisdom, and 'my habits of retirement continuing the same, it was considered desirable that I should be placed in a lunatic asylum for a while'.[30]

Her family members' medical concerns about her behaviours are juxtaposed in her autobiography with her own interpretation of her solitude as a '"*remarkable*" training … to prepare me for some "SPECIAL WORK"'.[31] She used the testimony of Thomas Monro, a physician who had assessed her at Warburton's asylum (and to whose own asylum Samuel had intended to send her before her escape to Calais in 1825), to validate this interpretation, strategically asserting the spiritual meaning of her religious habits by denying that they had any medical meaning. She thus noted that Monro had told Warburton, 'with some indignation, "This is no place for that lady"', and had later confided to her in private, 'Madam, I wish we were all as mad as you are'.[32]

Nevertheless, as Samuel Courtauld's letter to their father suggests, her family members perceived in her habits the signs of a deranged mind. Her 'prolonged exercizes in the closet' indicated an anti-social proclivity which manifested itself publicly in her distorted judgments of others.[33] 'Her remarkable inability to appreciate correctly the characters of individuals of marked religious sentiments'[34] might merely suggest that she was a particularly vocal exponent of the evangelical scorn in this period for 'formalists' who possessed the outward airs, but lacked the inward grace, of true religion. Her brother perceived in this attitude—and in her contrasting respect for

[30] Ibid., p. 67.
[31] Ibid., p. 44.
[32] Ibid., p. 68.
[33] Letter from Samuel Courtauld to George Courtauld, 23 Jun. 1821, in Courtauld, *The Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, Vol. 3, pp. 30-31.
[34] Ibid., p. 31.

the ‘understanding’ of a presumed simpleton, Miss C.—not an evangelical position that had its own theological rationale, but a symptom of an ‘impaired mind’.[35]

These opposed perspectives on Clemens’s solitude evoke long-standing debates in the British context about the interrelationships between solitude, sociability and enthusiasm. As Lawrence Klein has observed, the notion that the mind of the isolated enthusiast might become ‘lost in a maze of imaginings’ had been a concern since the early modern period. A citation particularly pertinent to Clemens’s case comes from one of Joseph Addison’s (1672–1719) essays for *The Spectator* (1711):

> When the Mind finds her self very much inflamed with her Devotions, she is too much inclined to think they are not of her own kindling, but blown up by something Divine within her. If she indulges this Thought too far, and humours the growing Passion, she at last flings her self into imaginary Raptures and Extasies; and when once she fancies her self under the Influence of a Divine Impulse, it is no wonder if she slights Human Ordinances, and refuses to comply with any established Form of Religion, as thinking her self directed by a much superior Guide.[36]

A half century later, Samuel Johnson (1709–1784) would use the story of a mad astronomer in his apologue, *Rasselas* (1759), to construe the perils of solitude in similar terms. In his travels, the hero of the story encountered an astronomer who, isolated from the world in his observatory, became prey to his instincts and desires. Preferring self-aggrandising fictions to the sobering truths of human finitude (and unchecked by a society that would insist on his contentment with the latter), the astronomer had been gradually confirmed in the delusion that he had power over the weather. And through the perverse interplay of ‘fancy and conscience’,[37] he internalised the responsibility for his godlike power, agonising over inequitable distributions of sunshine and rain, and

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[35] Ibid.
[36] *The Spectator*, 2/201 (1711), p. 289. Quoted in L.E. Klein, ‘Sociability, Solitude, and Enthusiasm’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 60/1/2 (1997), p. 165.
[37] Samuel Johnson, ‘Rasselas and Other Tales’, in *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, Gwin J. Kolb (ed.), Vol. 16 (New Haven, 1990), p. 162.

dreading that some error on his part would devastate entire economies. Seclusion thus begat fantasy, fantasy begat scruple, and scruple, despair.[38]

Johnson's astronomer served as a warning that, for those who sequester themselves too long from the truth-telling function of human society, 'fictions begin to operate as realities, false opinions fasten upon the mind, and life passes in dreams of rapture or of anguish'.[39] The perspective of Addison and Johnson continued to be rehearsed by nineteenth-century physicians in their discussions of the aetiology of mental derangement. Writing in 1843 about the madness of the Italian poet Torquato Tasso (1544–1595), whose paranoia famously fuelled a series of flights from Ferrara to evade an imagined threat of imprisonment by envious courtiers, a writer for *The Dublin University Magazine* supplemented the list of physical factors that gave rise to Tasso's religious scruples and illusions with commentary on the malignant mental effects of his self-seclusion:

> The solitude in which Tasso lived during years of poetical exertion, and long intervals of insanity, was of itself not unlikely to create habits of talking and thinking aloud, which rendered the conversation with the imagined spirit, one more easily sustained than, had his life been passed less with the creations of his own fancy, would have been conceivable.[40]

Such wisdom was embraced even within evangelical circles. The article in which this discussion appeared was a review of a series of essays by the Scottish physician John Cheyne (1777–1836). Seeking in these essays to defend evangelicalism against accusations that it caused insanity, Cheyne had argued that only 'an enlightened judgment' would prevent 'delusions both of hearing and sight' (including false impressions, like Tasso's, of supernatural visitations) from giving rise to insanity (a

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[38] Ibid., pp. 150-63.
[39] Ibid., pp. 152.
[40] 'The Late Dr. Cheyne and his Essays', *The Dublin University Magazine: A Literary and Political Journal*, 22 (1843), p. 495. Tasso's insanity was also the subject of a series of articles in *The British Journal of Psychiatry* in 1876 and 1877. See A.C.M., 'Torquato Tasso', *The British Journal of Psychiatry*, 22/99/100 (1876–77), pp. 389-406, 538-51.

belief in the reality of these delusions).[41] Cheyne's reviewer concurred, insisting that disenchantment held the key to effective treatment: 'How little hope, then, could there be for cure at a time when the medical theorist was, as it were, in league with the faithless servants of the mind—when angelic visits were looked for with impatience, both by the patient and his physician'.[42] This was a reference to an early modern mode of mad-doctoring reflected in the practice of the parson-physician Richard Napier (1559–1634), whose enchanted cosmos permitted him to countenance the role of witches and spirits, bedevilments and divine chastisements, among the factors that ailed his patients.[43] The argument of both Cheyne and his reviewer was that such a paradigm merely exacerbated the problem, confirming the lunatic in their delusions.

And yet, despite the sway that this disenchanted and medicalised perspective held over eighteenth- and nineteenth-century minds, there had also been a thread of resistance throughout this period to the notion that solitude bred an unhealthy enthusiasm. Klein and others have thus noted a literary effort, 'from Rousseau to Thoreau and beyond', to rehabilitate solitude as 'a reaction against emphatic sociability'—an effort which Klein links to 'a new kind of principled nonconformity, a rebellion against social oppression that was in turn built on a new reification of "society"'.[44] In a similar vein, Clemens's portrayal of her solitude in her autobiography as her preparation for a 'special work' functioned polemically as the principle of a critique of the forms of social oppression that she had perceived within the distinct cultures of the Atlantic world. As we shall see, it was the relative freedom she had

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[41] J. Cheyne, *Essays on Partial Derangement of the Mind in Supposed Connexion with Religion* (Dublin, 1843), p. 64.
[42] 'The Late Dr. Cheyne and his Essays', p. 495.
[43] See MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, passim.
[44] Klein, 'Sociability, Solitude, and Enthusiasm', p. 156. Also see Lionel Trilling, *Sincerity and Authenticity* (Cambridge, MA. 1971). William Van Reyk has noted a less radical model of solitude among eighteenth- and early-nineteenth century evangelicals in W. Van Reyk, 'Christian Ideals of Manliness in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *The Historical Journal*, 52/4 (2009), pp. 1053-73.

experienced as an activist and exhorter in the American context, and the radical theological beliefs that she had absorbed in the cultures of the Second Great Awakening, that ultimately permitted her to reconstitute her 'pathological' solitude—and the 'deranged' behaviours to which it had given rise—as a form of prophetic consciousness. This position was reached, however, in response to the frustrated outworking of her 'special work' in the British context.

Britain, the Covenant, and the Church

> And what has been and is my '*special work?*' I consider it threefold,—the solemn League and Covenant, the Jews, and the union of true believers. These three, but all pervaded by, promotive of, and accomplished in, the introduction of the Quaker element everywhere, *i.e.*, the free Spirit of The Lord, indwelling in every believer, and exercised in that liberty of speech and action, wherewith the Lord magnifies His own name and power in, and by, His own Body mystical.[45]

Thus Clemens summarised the primary fixations of her prophetic career, and the charismatic principle which stimulated and sustained them. As we saw in the introduction to this thesis, the frontispiece of the *Narrative* depicted these agendas as the distinct burdens of a heart that had been pierced by the arrow of divine desire—the compulsions of an interiority that had been shaped, as the narrative went on to claim, in practices of solitude. The 'madness' of her withdrawals from society was in this sense reconstituted in her narrative as the foundation of a critique of the madness of society itself.

The first and third elements of Clemens's tripartite vocation (her 'special work') are in broad terms geographically-specific in her *Narrative*, with the first (the Solemn League and Covenant) concerning the established Churches of Britain, and the third ('the union of true believers') encompassing her efforts to remedy the various divisions

[45] Clemens, *Narrative*, pp. 177-78; original emphases.

and hierarchies—racial, gendered and doctrinal—which, she argued, had corrupted the evangelical churches in Ohio and Kentucky.[46]

Yet at the time of the events themselves, the meanings of her religious behaviours—particularly in the British context—were contested both by her relatives and friends, who took them as evidence of her derangement. Moreover, in her letters, she entertained doubts about her own mental condition at the time of these events. This section contextualises her 'mad' behaviours in England within the broader framework of prophetic epistemologies in the British context. Throughout this section, Clemens's doubts about her own sanity in her letters at the time of the events themselves are contrasted with her recapitulation of her experiences and behaviours as the expressions of a prophetic form of consciousness. This is followed by a section which argues that it was the radical revivalist ideology of the American context that provided her with the theological and intellectual resources with which to reconstitute her madness in this way.

The Covenant and the Redemption of Madness

On 19 August 1824, about six months before the crisis that culminated with her flight from England, Louisa wrote to her brother George with instructions regarding a parcel, addressed to her, which the family in Essex had received from Mr. Breillat:

> Now what I wish you to do with it; to get it into *your own* hands, *immediately*, (putting all necessary expences to my acc^{t}) because it contains some papers I believe on Government business;—open it, & I wish *you* to read but *nobody else*.

After a digression in which she pleaded with George to keep the contents of these papers in confidence, she concluded her instructions thus:

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[46] The second element of her 'special work', her ministry to the Jewish people, features less prominently throughout the narrative. See Clemens, *Narrative*, pp. 150, 221-25.

> read the papers which are *unsealed & in my handwriting*, & then seal them all up again & send them to me directly directed for me at Mrs Falkner's, Syndey Place, Cork.[47]

Since 1822, Louisa had been employed as governess to a series of Protestant families in Cork, Ireland, the birthplace of her mother. According to her autobiography, it was during this period that, while reading David Hume's *History of England* (1754–61), she had first encountered the subject of the Solemn League and Covenant. As a moral and spiritual issue, it seemed cut and dried. In 1643, the English Parliamentarians had vowed to reform the Church of England and abolish the episcopacy, a pledge by which they had secured Scottish support against the growing threat of the Royalist army. Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658) failed, after consolidating his power, to honour the agreement—as did Charles II (1630–1685) after the Restoration—and the covenants were not subsequently renewed.[48] Clemens recounted in her narrative having been seized, at the time, by the conviction that Britain was 'under perjury before God' for having reneged on this centuries-old promise;[49] and as author, she construed her 'special work'—in the present, and not just the past—to be her role to call on the nation to renew it.[50]

In both her letter to her brother and in her narrative, Louisa explicitly defended the legitimacy of this prophetic calling in the face of questions about her mental health and sanity. In the part of the letter that is elided above, she thus cited the allegation that she was insane as the basis of her plea for George's confidence:

> Remember, my d[r] G., I confide in you: & I hope I may find again one of my own family & friends trust-worthy: others of them have been led from the

[47] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 3.1205-1206: Louisa Courtauld to George Courtauld, 19 Aug. 1824; original emphases.
[48] 'Solemn League and Covenant (1643)', *Encyclopædia Britannica Online Academic Edition*, accessed 15 Sep 2018, at https://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:4663/levels/collegiate/article/Solemn-League-and-Covenant/68577. Hume traces this history in D. Hume, *The History of Great Britain*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh, 1754), pp. 365-69 and D. Hume, *The History of Great Britain*, Vol. 2 (London, 1757), pp. 4-29, 142-51, 189-90.
[49] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 81.
[50] Ibid., p. 53.

> recollection of a *supposed* derangement of my mind three years ago, & that in a transient & slight degree, did it indeed exist at all? to betray my confidence reposed in them & to use indelicate methods of obtaining a knowledge of the most secret actions of my most retired moments.[51]

George had been living on the family property in Ohio during the period from June 1821 to June 1822 in which other siblings had taken action to curb her devotional fervour and ultimately to confine her. Thus, there was some hope that he might countenance her discovery about their nation's broken vow (undoubtedly the 'Government business' discussed in her handwritten papers), and not dismiss it as the effusion of a fevered mind. Importantly, her reasoning in the quotation above linked the issues of her alleged madness, her devotional solitude and her concern about the Solemn League and Covenant. Moreover, her own stance on the '*supposed* derangement of my mind' evinced some equivocation. Had there been a 'transient & slight degree' of derangement in her behaviours?

The following spring, Louisa addressed the same issues in a note to her sister Sophia that was included at the end of a letter from their mother, with whom Louisa was now living in Ostend. As Louisa's first effort to correspond with her siblings after her escape from England, the note drew a distinction between her mental condition when she had been with them two months earlier, and the truth underpinning her fixation upon the Solemn League and Covenant:

> You know that for the last few years it has been the opinion of friends that I suffered und^{r} some degree of mental derangement; when this was first intimated to me I hoped it was so, & thought it might be so for a little while, but was never convinced that it was the case.—I do now however feel assured that it has been so.

And yet, she insisted on the truth of her ecclesiological message, despite her unhinged delivery:

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[51] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 3:1205: Louisa Courtauld to George Courtauld, 19 Aug. 1824; original emphasis.

> the enclosed letter will explain some particulars which, if you feel any interest in the Question, you may judge of yourself, by reading Cruikshank's History of the Church of Scotland. Peter [their brother-in-law] gave it a hasty glance while I was in Bocking & brought forward some arguments to weigh ag[t] mine, but as I did [not] find myself then able to consider them duly, I did not attempt to refute; but am persuaded his statement of facts was mistaken.[52]

This was one of a few occasions in which Louisa had acknowledged her mental infirmities in her correspondence with Sophia. The latest extant example was in a letter she wrote in 1841, while living Ohio, in which she mentioned that, in addition to having recently suffered a temporary period of partial deafness (an affliction that she had in common with Sophia, and that would get worse as she aged), her 'mind [had been] a little touch'd'.[53]

As we shall see, Louisa reconstituted her own self-doubts and anxieties about madness in her autobiography as forms of divine chastisement. Yet, at a deeper level, she also sought in the narrative to account for a fundamental problem reflected in her letter to Sophia after her escape from England: namely, what was the relationship between the inward compulsions that had driven her to agitate for the renewal of the Solemn League and Covenant, and the theological truth of the matter which could be apprehended by third parties through the sober application of judgment? In her letter, the relationship between these phenomena was dichotomised by her appeal to the medical category of insanity: her claim was that whilst her fervour on the subject might evince mental derangement, her belief about it was nevertheless accurate. In the autobiography, however, her feelings and her judgment were harmonised within a philosophy of mind evinced in her discussions of multiple subjects and experiences, including the Solemn League and Covenant as well as her distinct prophetic fixations in the American context.

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[52] The note was included at the end of a letter from their mother to Sophia. See *Courtauld Family Letters*, 3.1278: Ruth Courtauld and Louisa Courtauld to Sophia Courtauld, 4 Apr. 1825.
[53] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 6:2897: Louisa Courtauld to Sophia Courtauld, 1 Oct. 1841.

This concept of a prophetic philosophy of mind is first introduced in Clemens's account of her conversion, in which her own consciousness is represented as having shifted from a Unitarian form of reasoning that was in conflict with her inner feelings to a consolidation of head and heart in her embrace of traditional orthodoxy. The process began around 1802, when she was eleven years old and boarding as a student in Dorset. She recounted that although the students were allowed to attend Sunday services at the local Unitarian, Episcopal and Independent churches, she herself 'never liked' the Unitarian services, 'and always preferred the company and the religious exercises of orthodox Christians'.[54] Nine years later, as a governess in Edinburgh, she had taken to avoiding the Unitarian fellowship in Edinburgh, for although she '*thought* the Unitarians were *right*, … I liked the other people best, and the other churches best'. Whilst she had 'expected some more than ordinary serious and spiritual feeling' at the Unitarian 'Communion Table', she had 'felt just as if I had been sitting down at our own breakfast table'.[55] She made sense of this contradiction between intellect and feeling thus:

> I was in Principle and by Head-work a Unitarian; but, however it may be with others, very often with me my heart and my spiritual *feelings* have been on the right side, while my reasoning powers and my judgment were wrong, how this was I cannot say, unless that I was brought up in the argumentative school, and to be exceedingly suspicious of poor outlawed *feeling*. I must *know* the why and wherefore of everything.[56]

The implication was that the Unitarian cast of her mind, trained from childhood to distrust feeling, had held her back from a truth that she had intuited long before she had rationally accepted it. Her eventual assent to Presbyterian doctrine, moreover, was attended in the narrative with a sense of spiritual release, as if 'body and soul and spirit

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[54] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 21.
[55] Ibid., pp. 27-28.
[56] Ibid., p. 27; original emphases.

[had become] so light that I seemed scarcely to tread the earth'.[57] Head and heart were finally consummated at her first communion under the ministry of the Presbyterian clergyman Andrew Thomson (1779–1831) at St. George's Church in 1814, when she 'truly melted in tears the whole day'.[58]

This interrelationship between head and heart was central to Clemens's concept of a prophetic consciousness, and functioned in the narrative as part of a theological and epistemological framework that bounded her own prophetic identity and message. Yet in the British context, it was attended with the distinct challenge of finding an ecclesial context that extended sufficient latitude to her to, in William Reddy's phrase, 'navigate feeling'.[59] Indeed, the Church of Scotland in the early nineteenth century has been viewed as a context of coldness and rigidity in both theological and spiritual terms. Alongside his characterisation of the Calvinism of the Kirk in this period as having 'hardened almost to the point of total sterility', Geddes McGregor has painted a particularly gloomy picture of Presbyterian worship in early-nineteenth-century Scotland:

> Instrumental music was rigorously forbidden; metrical psalms were sung dolefully and in an eccentric nasal fashion. The clergy commonly entered the church wearing their hats and gloves, a survival from pre-Reformation times remarkable in pulpits from which thundered hebdomadal denunciations of popery … The worshippers also tended to enter church covered; moreover, they stood, sat, sprawled on their stools, or leant against the wall, according to their inclination, and would spit into the puddles on the earthen floor out of which, due to a widespread neglect of church fabric, sometimes protruded the very bones of their own dead.[60]

McGregor thus interprets the outbreak of prophesies and tongues-speaking at the parishes of Row and Port Glasgow in south-western Scotland in the late 1820s, which

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[57] Ibid., p. 31.
[58] Ibid., p. 32.
[59] Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling*, passim.
[60] G. MacGregor, 'The Row Heresy', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 43/4 (1950), pp. 284-85.

spread to Edward Irving's congregation in London in the early 1830s, as a reaction against this dour reality.[61]

Clemens herself commented on the gloomy state of Scottish Presbyterian worship in the 1810s and 1820s, and construed her doubts about her own sanity in those years in part as an internalisation of the broader community's prejudices and doubts with respect to charismatic experience and expression. Her discovery of the inward principle of divine inspiration—what she referred to as the 'Quaker principle'—followed the same pattern as her conversion account earlier in the narrative. Her intuitions led the way in this case, too:

> The Presbyterians seem so afraid of delusion and superstition that they fear to follow freely the movings of The Holy Spirit. And so, in their Church rule and order, they entirely ignore the office of prophecy as distinct from that of the regular and stated 'pastor' and 'teacher'. … This shrinking from The Spirit, and the rigidity under human rule and order in social life as well as spiritual, I *felt* better than I could *understand*, for I had nobody to talk to about these things; but I remember saying that the Church in Scotland was like a Chinese lady, she walked in tight shoes.[62]

And so, she would add,

> when I did follow The Spirit's lead it was either disregarded or set down to illusion, delusion, and, at last, to insanity… But in nothing, while in Scotland, was my soul so tortured as by the struggle between the power of The Spirit and the fear of delusion.[63]

Her spiritual liberation only came about, she would note, after her move to Cork in 1822, where she encountered Methodists for the first time (at a Wesleyan Chapel near Hammond's Marsh) and finally experienced 'that gracious LIBERTY OF SPIRIT and tenderness of feeling towards the work of The Spirit'.[64]

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[61] Ibid., pp. 281-301.
[62] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 35; original emphases.
[63] Ibid., p. 36.
[64] Clemens, *Narrative*, pp. 35-36. For more on the Wesleyan Chapel near Hammond's Marsh, see A. O'Callaghan, *The Churches of Cork City: An Illustrated History* (Dublin, 2016), pp. 137-38.

Her autobiography thus described a process of navigating feeling within the bounds of evangelical orthodoxy, which made it a unique intervention within a broader intellectual and religious context of critique, in this period, of the coldness and rigidity of the Unitarian rationalism she had initially left behind.[65] Moreover, it distinguished her 'enthusiastic' identity in a crucial way from others such as the American poet Jones Very (1813–1880), who had followed a heterodox path in his abandonment of the spiritual rigidity of Unitarianism. As a Greek tutor at Harvard University in the late 1830s, Very's path had intersected with that of transcendentalists such as Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882) who were similarly reacting against Unitarian coldness, and who, as Benjamin Reiss has observed, valued 'eccentricity, intuition, and nonconformism as tools to liberate individuals from the powerful institutional structures that restricted their thought and behavior'.[66] For Very, the transcendentalist ideal of 'a self-consciousness of [one's] inhabitation by God' had culminated one evening (in 1838) with a prophetic crusade that took him, unannounced, to the homes of various transcendentalists and local Salem ministers, to whom he proclaimed his divine status.[67] Ultimately, Very's prophetic mission led to a period of confinement at McLean Asylum in Boston, with the support of Emerson (1803–1882) and other transcendentalists whose spiritual vision Very had presumptively exemplified.[68]

Clemens's navigation of feeling and intuition within the framework of traditional Christian orthodoxy distinguished her, in the narrative, from figures such as

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[65] The notion that Unitarian worship entirely neglected emotion in its fixation on rationality was contested by many Unitarians in the period. In the diary that he kept as a student at Harvard Divinity School in 1834, the American Unitarian minister Cyrus Bartol, for instance, wrote at length about the place of 'zeal' in Unitarian faith. See MHS, MS. N-1812: Cyrus A. Bartol Papers, 1834–1883.
[66] Reiss, *Theaters of Madness*, p. 104.
[67] Ibid., pp. 110-11.
[68] For Reiss, the transcendentalists' support for Very's confinement reflected an essential alignment between 'American literary romanticism and psychiatry' as movements which 'saw themselves as fortifying the individual against the threats of modernization and social atomization . See Reiss, *Theaters of Madness*, pp. 19, 103-41.

Very (who intuited that 'I am the Second Coming') and, in the British context, Joanna Southcott (to whom it was divinely revealed that she was pregnant with Shiloh, a second Messiah).[69] Her emphasis upon the Solemn League and Covenant as the focal point of her prophetic activism in Britain was significant in this respect. Throughout the narrative, the theme of covenant functioned as a theological boundary around both her prophetic identity and her prophetic message. It thus supported one of the main purposes of the autobiography, which was to give a rational account of behaviours for which she had been maligned as a lunatic.

The covenantal theme distinguished Clemens's prophetic message within the wider context of prophetic epistemologies in nineteenth-century Britain—a distinctiveness that is revealed in her portrayal of her encounter with Edward Irving in London in 1828. Irving's views on biblical prophecy first became public in 1825 in an address to the Continental Society in London which was subsequently expanded upon in a two-volume work entitled *Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed by God* (1826).[70] As was typical for prophecy enthusiasts of his time, Irving viewed the French Revolution as a crucial event in the unfolding of the biblical eschaton. France was the 'King of the North' of the sixteenth chapter of Revelation, and Napoleon's rise—and the corresponding decline of the Papal States—were marks of God's judgment upon the nations. Britain was meanwhile set apart as the 'sealed nation' prophesied in the book of Revelation, patterned after the biblical type of Israel as a light among nations; her role in the midst of Papal usurpation and French infidelity was to preserve gospel truth.[71]

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[69] See Reiss, *Theaters of Madness*, p. 112; Harrison, *The Second Coming*, p. 96-97.
[70] See Bennett, *Edward Irving Reconsidered*, p. 114; Brown, 'Irving, Edward (1792–1834)', *ODNB*.
[71] Irving, *Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed by God*, Vol. 2 (Glasgow, 1826), pp. 315-444. These interpretations were not original to Irving. As Edward Hicks notes, a similar prophetic schedule was advanced by Spencer Perceval in a pamphlet entitled *Observations Intended to Point Out the Application*

Irving's outlook emerged from the prophetic milieu of the 1780s and 1790s, a period that witnessed, alongside epochal developments in France and America, a current of political radicalism in Britain from the Gordon Riots (1780) to the Revolution Controversy (1789–1795). Visions of a complete transformation of the existing political order motivated messianic figures such as Richard Brothers and Joanna Southcott, as well as radical organisations, such as the London Corresponding Society (1792–1799), whose agitations lacked an explicitly religious underpinning. Irving's analysis of biblical prophecies was part and parcel of this broad current of British millenarianism, which 'was not directed to restoring the past, to going back', in the words of J.F.C. Harrison, but '[i]nstead … openly looked forward to a future which would be completely new'.[72]

For Irving, this hope for the emergence of something new hinged on Britain's vocational success as a modern Israel, which motivated a call for national repentance that reached Clemens in Ostend in 1828. Clemens recounted in her autobiography travelling to London to confer with him on the matter, but rejected his teachings when she learned that he considered the terms of the Solemn League and Covenant ('*perhaps*') obsolete.[73] This judgment highlighted the temporal orientation of Clemens's prophetic vision in the narrative. Distinct from the outlook of millenarian 'messiahs' and theorists, from Southcott to Irving, her own prophetic vision looked backwards before it looked forwards. Its starting-point was a past event—a broken national vow—which gave meaning to present woe and future expectation.

The covenantal framework of Clemens's prophetic imagination placed limitations not only upon the message, but also the messenger. Unlike Southcott, whose

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of a Prophecy in the Eleventh Chapter of the Book of Daniel to the French Power (1800). See Hicks, 'Christianity Personified', p. 65.

[72] This is how Harrison characterises millenarianism as a whole in Harrison, *The Second Coming*, p. xvi.

[73] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 110; original emphasis.

identity was unencumbered by the public forms of knowledge reflected in history and orthodoxy, Clemens's identity was bounded by a biblical anthropology. This difference is reflected in the distinct ways in which these women appropriated the image of the biblical figure Eve in their writings. Harrison sees within Southcott's self-identification with Eve in her own writings the basis of 'a kind of theological feminism':

> She saw herself as destined to fulfil the promise made to Eve, that her seed [i.e. Joanna] should bruise the serpent's [i.e. Satan's] head. By struggling with Satan, and defeating him, she would redeem woman from the guilt incurred at the Fall, and make woman the 'true helpmate'. A woman tempted man at first, so at the last she is to bring his deliverance. Finally, woman is to be saved through childbearing, her last and greatest glory.[74]

This fits neatly within the broader pattern of Southcott's enthusiasm. Eve functioned not as a theological type of the universal dilemma of women in which Southcott participated, but instead, as the historical site of a divine promise which was now, in the early nineteenth century, being fulfilled in events that effectively shattered past cycles of temptation and sin. Fittingly, early Southcottians ritualised the newness of this event in their adaptation of the Christian Eucharist. Thus, as Harrison observes, women—the first in history to be tempted—were also the first, in Southcottian services, to receive the wine of communion.[75] This shift in religious ritual finds a notable parallel in the practices of the Irvingites, whose (analogous) fixation upon imminent political change entailed a new configuration of the Church, and thus, within their own community, the implementation of a latter-day hierarchy of apostles, deacons and prophets.[76] In each case, a millenarian construal of divine influence entailed a radical break from what had come before.

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[74] Harrison, *The Second Coming*, p. 108.
[75] Ibid., pp. 111-12.
[76] For a detailed new study of the theology of Irving and those of his followers who formed the Catholic Apostolic Church, see T. Grass, *The Lord's Work: A History of the Catholic Apostolic Church* (Eugene, OR, 2017).

Contrasting with all of this, the biblical Eve recurs throughout Clemens's narrative as a theological type which oriented her own struggles with temptation, disobedience and disbelief. In general, her references to the temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden related to her own temptations to disobey or disbelieve the inner work of the Holy Spirit.[77] Two of the four (total) references refer to a particular act of disobedience on her part in 1820, towards the end of her residence in Edinburgh. In that period, her father had purchased property in Ohio, which would become her intermittent home throughout her residency in America many years later. Clemens had shared the view of her eldest brother and her mother that George Courtauld's dream of establishing a colony of English families in Ohio was 'impracticable' and a waste of money,[78] and she thus interpreted this purchase in her autobiography as a 'fatal departure from the counsel of Heaven'.[79] Correspondingly, when he invited all of his children to reside with him there, 'THE HOLY SPIRIT said to me: Not so, stay'. Countering this, '*Satan*, with his *first temptation*, whispered: "Yea, hath GOD said?" only your own fancy'. Nevertheless, 'like our mother [Eve], I listened; disbelieved The Divine Counsellor, broke up all, and went to England'.[80]

Clemens framed the disastrous transatlantic voyage that ensued in language that evoked the 'covenantal' framework of her prophetic idiom. She thus noted that her father had died of 'the burning ague'—a reference both to his literal contraction of a malarial disease (which indeed took his life in 1823) and to one of the punishments

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[77] These references are found in Clemens, *Narrative*, pp. 80, 130-31, 214 and 238-39.
[78] Quoted in W.E. Van Vugt, *British Buckeyes: The English, Scots, and Welsh in Ohio, 1700–1900* (Kent, OH, 2006), p. 65.
[79] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 130. For more on Courtauld's Ohio project, see Van Vugt, *British Buckeyes*, pp. 64-68 and *History of Hocking Valley, Ohio* (Chicago, 1883), pp. 414-15. George Courtauld laid out his vision of an English colony in America in a tract entitled *Address to Those Who May be Disposed to Remove to the United States of America, on the Advantages of Equitable Associations of Capital and Labour, in the Formation of Agricultural Establishments in the Interior Country* (Sudbury, OH, 1820).
[80] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 214; original emphases.

listed in Leviticus 26 (KJV) for Israel's infidelity.[81] Moreover, she recounted that the three sisters and two brothers who had joined him in Ohio barely escaped back to England with their lives.[82] And revealingly, she asserted a theological interpretation of the events that ultimately prevented her from making the journey from England to America in explicit opposition to the interpretive authority of medicine. Thus, her departure for Ohio was prevented by a near-fatal illness which baffled the physicians who treated her, indicating its character as a divine chastisement.[83] Within this entire sequence, the biblical figure of Eve emerged not as a foil for Clemens's own vocational uniqueness, but as the primordial type of human wilfulness and disbelief which gave meaning to her own pilgrimage through the purgative stages of disobedience, discipline and repentance.

Beyond putting boundaries around her own identity, these theological motifs linked her own experience, within the thought world of her narrative, to the condition and fate of the British nation as a whole. She thus used an experience of disobedience and repentance in her own past as a parable to illustrate the present conundrum of Britain as a 'nation under perjury before God'. In the process, she once again undermined the interpretive authority of medicine, associating it with a worldly infidelity which was itself the source of a kind of collective madness.

This parable referred back to the period of her employment as a governess in Edinburgh in 1820, when she had taken an oath to set aside the family's third meal for solitude and prayer. In an act of covenantal infidelity, she heeded the medical concerns of her friends and her minister (Andrew Thomson) that the practice would damage her

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[81] Lev. xxvi. 16. See S.L. Courtauld, *The Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, Vol. 2 (London, 1966), p. xx.
[82] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 53. As Stephen Courtauld (1883–1967) indeed noted in a biography of the family, [a]ll the family suffered severely from fever and ague, and from the fever of the country, which was of the type of yellow fever, though not so malignant'. See Courtauld, *The Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, II, p. xx.
[83] Ibid., p. 54. Also see Courtauld, *The Huguenot Family of Courtauld*, III, p. 19.

health, and thus broke the oath. Paradoxically, the consequence for having acted upon medical wisdom was a descent into a form of mental instability. For the next two years, her 'plans and procedure became vascillating and unstable', leading Thomson himself to remark that, '[i]t is not like yourself'. This was the closest Clemens came (in the autobiography) to the language of insanity in characterising her own thoughts and behaviours. And so, certain that 'there was something wrong somewhere, either *morally*, for which The Lord had a controversy with me, or *mentally*, and that my mind was shattered', she searched her private journals, and discovered 'the secret root of bitterness' in her infidelity to 'a covenant-making, a covenant-keeping, and a covenant-requiring God'. Duly chastened, she 'returned to my fidelity, the quarrel between the parties in covenant was taken up, and I was myself again'.[84]

Britain herself was 'mad', Clemens went on to assert, yet this was more than just a metaphorical reference to the nation's ignorance about its adverse spiritual condition. For Clemens, it was a literal (and apposite) punishment from on high for 'so prostituting His invaluable gift of reason, understanding, and judgment'—a punishment reflected at the individual level in the epidemic of insanity in the nation:

> Have, or have not, the judgments of the Almighty been signally manifested; especially, is it not true, that mental derangement has been awfully prevalent through the land, and is it not alarmingly on the increase?[85]

The implication was that the people of Britain were themselves accountable—and were thus individually stricken—for the infidelity of the nation as a whole, and indeed, Clemens did not spare herself from this national culpability ('if the oath was on the

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[84] Ibid., pp. 121-22; original emphases.

[85] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 78. The notion that madness was increasing in Britain was common among mad doctors in the Georgian and Victorian periods. Noting various examples of this view, Roy Porter has linked it to a wider '*fin-de-siècle* degenerationism' which was carried into the nineteenth century by alienists such as Alexander Morison (who argued that 'Insanity increases with civilization'). See Porter, *Mind-Forg'd Manacles*, pp. 160-61. Also see A. Morison, *Outlines of Mental Diseases, with Seventeen Illustrative Engravings*, 3rd edn (London, 1829), p. 74.

nation, it was on me as one').[86] But ultimately, she framed herself in the narrative as something like Nietzsche's madman, emerging from the presumptive 'nothingness' of solitude to proclaim a truth that the British nation knew, but had yet to accept.[87]

America, Unity, and the Churches

In Clemens's narrative, what chiefly distinguished her experiences in Britain and America was her lack of any reference to madness in the latter context, whether as an aspect of her self-understanding or as a social stigma that impeded her religious activism. Despite having experienced adversity in various forms (including the emotional abuse to which she was subjected by her husband, an Ohio man named Abraham Clemens, as well as the opposition she faced from certain ministers who objected to her religious leadership as a woman), the revivalist cultures of Ohio and Kentucky afforded her considerable latitude as a woman exhorter and evangelical activist.

Correspondingly, her letters in this period evince a process in which the prophetic identity articulated in her autobiography was gradually consolidated, and a spiritual self-understanding confidently asserted in explicit opposition to a medical one. In her letters to family members in the mid 1830s and 1840s she made occasional reference to her mental infirmities in a negative sense, but by the 1850s, references to her own peculiarities had been reconstituted within her letters as aspects of her prophetic identity, and she had begun a process of drawing her experiences over the previous half-century into the covenantal narrative that framed her life in the autobiography.

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[86] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 76.
[87] See F. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (1882; New York, 1974), pp. 181-82.

Things might well have been different in this respect. There were many American women and men who were confined to asylums for religious insanity in the period of her American residency (c. 1834–1857). Above, we noted the example of the poet Jones Very; and the next chapter explores the case of one of many adherents to the prophetic philosophy of the Baptist minister William Miller (1782–1849) who were confined for 'religious excitement' in the 1830s and 1840s.[88] In part, it was Clemens's separation from her family, as well as the income she received from her share in the family property in Ohio,[89] that permitted her to itinerate between the counties of Ohio and Kentucky, whilst agitating for a form of racial and denominational ecumenism, without facing any palpable threat to her civil liberty.

Yet there is also an important sense in which American revivalism offered her something that British evangelicalism did not. Claudia Stokes has written about how women authors of sentimental novels, poems and hymns used the 'new religious beliefs' of the Second Great Awakening to 'inveigh against the intrusive mediation of ecclesiastical power and assert instead that individuals are authorized for themselves to make sound interpretations of scripture'. While Stokes notes that this strategy allowed these authors to promote female religious leadership, she argues that it nevertheless served, first and foremost, 'the white, middle-class, Protestant, North Atlantic woman', and that this was frequently 'at the public expense of numerous vulnerable constituencies' (Catholics, Mormons, Calvinists and the lower classes of evangelicalism) whom these texts vilified as convenient foils for the egalitarian vision they promoted.[90]

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[88] Another well-documented example is Elizabeth Packard (1816–1897), whose case is also discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis.
[89] Details of her financial arrangements in Ohio are discussed in *Courtauld Family Letters, 1782–1900*, Vol. 1 (Cambridge, 1916), pp. xxvi-xxviii.
[90] C. Stokes, *The Altar at Home: Sentimental Literature and Nineteenth-Century American Religion* (Philadelphia, 2014), pp. 7, 20.

In her own use of these revivalist ideas, Clemens was reasoning from a different cultural milieu as a woman lay preacher who was immersed, on the ground, in revivalist activities. Moreover, she had the distinct objective not of bolstering a white middle-class identity, but of validating her 'special work', both in the British and in the American contexts. The radical ecumenism that emerged within certain pockets of the Second Great Awakening served this agenda well, for it assumed the reality of an invisible union of true Christians, whose spiritual status and authority were not determined by outward markers such as denominational affiliation, gender and race, but by the unseen workings of the Holy Spirit within the hearts and minds of individuals. This revivalist ideology validated her own activism and identity as a woman preacher and religious leader in the American context. Yet, at a deeper level, it also provided her with the intellectual and theological resources with which to redeem the behaviours that had been maligned in the British context as forms of derangement. Her letters throughout the period of her residency in America thus evince a process through which she reconstituted her madness as the form of prophetic consciousness and agency represented in the autobiography.

This process of identity formation is explored below, beginning with a discussion of the ways in which Clemens used the revivalist ideology to validate her own spiritual experience. This is followed by an exploration of the reconstitution of her madness in the American context, both in her letters and, ultimately, in her autobiography.

The Revivalist Ideology

The seed of a form of social radicalism had been present in the revivalism of the Second Great Awakening from its starting point in Kentucky in the late 1790s and its

spread in the early 1800s to counties in Ohio.[91] The first evangelical camp meeting had evolved out of a series of sacramental occasions held by the Presbyterian minister James McGready (1763–1817) in the three congregations he oversaw in Logan County (south-western Kentucky) in the 1790s.[92] These meetings took a turn towards the ecstatic in June 1800, when McGready had invited a charismatic Methodist minister named John McGee to assist him with the proceedings; and the next two meetings—held, successively, at Gaspar River and Muddy River in July and August 1800—attracted hundreds of people, many of whom travelled from distant areas in wagons provisioned for an extended camp-out.[93] These successes inspired subsequent ecumenical endeavours elsewhere, including a momentous camp meeting held in 1801 in Cane Ridge, northern Kentucky, in which the collaborative leadership of Presbyterian, Baptist and Methodist ministers stimulated a wave of conversions among the ten-to-twenty-thousand people in attendance. It was one of the Presbyterian leaders of this gathering, Barton W. Stone (1772–1844), who—already harbouring doubts about the niceties of Presbyterian doctrine, and inspired by the successes with which ecumenical collaboration had been attended at Cane Ridge—would go on to found the anti-denominational 'Christian Church' in 1804.[94]

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[91] Detailed descriptions of the earliest camp meetings in these areas are included in the accounts of Richard McNemar (1770–1839). See McNemar, *The Kentucky Revival*, pp. 19-28.

[92] An annual event in the Presbyterian religious calendar, a sacramental occasion could last up to a week, beginning with independent prayer and fasting, progressing into meetings in which the whole congregation heard sermons, sang hymns and prayed together, and culminating on Sunday with the Lord's Supper, wherein participation was restricted to those already converted and confirmed. See E. Eslinger, *Citizens of Zion: The Social Origins of Camp Meeting Revivalism* (Knoxville, TN, 1999), pp. 190-91.

[93] This account of the Revival of 1800 is drawn from summaries in Eslinger, *Citizens of Zion*, pp. 192-97 and L.E. Schmidt, *Holy Fairs: Scottish Communions and American Revivals in the Early Modern Period* (Princeton, 1989), pp. 59-68. As Paul Conkin has noted, the view that the Gasper River sacramental occasion was the first camp meeting is convincing, despite the fact that it is contested. See P.K. Conkin, *Cane Ridge: America's Pentecost* (Madison, WI, 1990), p. 61.

[94] Stone was also influenced in this endeavour by the Republican Methodists—a group led by the Methodist circuit rider James O'Kelly (1735–1826), who seceded from the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1792 and whose followers referred to themselves over the ensuing years simply as 'Christians'. See Conkin, *Cane Ridge*, p. 74-75 and L.G. McAlister and W.E. Tucker, *Journey in Faith: A History of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)* (St Louis, 1975), pp. 79-80.

The radical implications of these developments are suggested in the founding document of Stone's group. In 1803, fifteen congregations in Kentucky and Ohio joined Barton Stone's Springfield Presbytery, which Stone had formed after his secession from the Kentucky Presbytery in the same year. Almost immediately, however, Stone realised that 'we were as much a party as others, having assumed a party name', and he thus had representatives of the member congregations sign the *Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery* (1804), which dissolved the new presbytery and released these congregations to 'sink into union with the Body of Christ at large'. These congregations were given instructions, moreover, to select individuals in their midst to 'preach the simple Gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, without any mixture of philosophy, vain deceit, traditions of men, or the rudiments of the world'.[95]

For Clemens, as for other women, this revivalist ecumenism provided validation for her own activism as a woman religious leader. In her description, in a letter to Sophia, of a camp meeting she had attended in Ohio in 1841, the issue of gender featured as a central element of the spiritual egalitarianism practised among supporters of this awakening:

> Preaching, Prayer Meetings in which many engage alternately in prayer, *any* religious character being called upon by the Leader of the meeting considered to have a gift of prayer, whether more or less, equally irrespective of age or sex as of rank or wealth.[96]

For many prominent revivalists in this period, the implications of ecumenism touched the issue of race as well. Both in her letters and in her autobiography, Clemens approvingly cited two individuals whose anti-sectarian ideologies explicitly

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[95] B.W. Stone, *History of the Christian Church in the West* (1827; Lexington, 1956), p. 39. Williams et al also note that the decision to dissolve the Springfield Presbytery was motived in part by the belief that the millennium was imminent, and that they could help usher it in by promoting unity. See Williams et al (eds), *The Stone-Campbell Movement*, p. 14. Also see R. Marshall and J. Thompson, *A Brief Historical Account of Sundry Things in the Doctrines and State of the Christian, or, as it is Commonly Called, the Newlight Church* (Cincinnati, 1811), pp. 255-56.

[96] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 6:2897: Louisa Courtauld to Sophia Courtauld, 1 Oct. 1841.

encompassed racial issues as well as doctrinal: the politician Gerrit Smith (1797–1874) in New York, and the preacher John Gregg Fee (1816–1901) in Kentucky.[97] Both were abolitionists who had, like Barton Stone in an earlier generation, left the Presbyterian Church in the 1840s to help found non-denominational congregations in their respective states. Issues of racial division had been particularly central to Fee's ecumenism:

> Here those converted from the world, colored and white, together with those who once were Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists or Disciples, drop their denominational and divisive names, unite on Christ, and thus constitute the one church of the place.[98]

Clemens's letters during the period of her residency in America evince a process through which she drew together the elements of this radical ecumenical ideology into a framework that made sense of her distinct efforts and struggles as a woman exhorter and activist in the American context. Whilst these revivalist ideas undoubtedly shaped her agenda and outlook at the time of the events themselves, they were also gradually coalescing within her worldview to form a more comprehensive paradigm that she later read back into her past experiences as an autobiographer.

In her autobiographical narrative, she characterised this paradigm with reference to the biblical analogy of a lost coin, for which she had been searching since her conversion in Edinburgh in the 1810s, and which she had finally found during her itineracy in America: 'on one side is engraved with the pen of a diamond, "UNION:" on the reverse, PURITY'.[99] Each side presupposed the other, and both were crucial. The true church was thus constituted by a union of all true believers, yet by definition this union

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[97] Clemens, *Narrative*, pp. 209-11; *Courtauld Family Letters*, 8.3588: Louisa Clemens to Sophia Courtauld, 22 May 1853; *Courtauld Family Letters*, 8.3611: Louisa Clemens to George Courtauld, 3 Mar. 1854; *Courtauld Family Letters*, 8.3644: Louisa Clemens to Sophia Courtauld, 14 Sep. 1855.
[98] J.G. Fee, *Autobiography of John G. Fee, Berea, Kentucky* (Chicago, 1891), p. 185. Notably, the 'Disciples' cited in this quotation were members of the denomination (the Disciples of Christ) which formed out of Barton Stone's anti-sectarian movement when it merged with Alexander Campbell's (1788–1866) Reformist movement in 1832.
[99] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 211.

excluded the 'impurities' of heresy and sectarianism. This analogy gave a theological rationale for Clemens's 'prophetic' fixations in America, and legitimated aspects of her activism that had proved controversial. The 'truth' of Christian unity thus justified her own religious leadership as a woman, and explained her obsession with issues of ecumenism, both denominational and racial. The demand for Christian purity, in turn, legitimated her own side in her various conflicts with male ministers over matters of doctrine and social injustice.

In her correspondence, Clemens's earliest account of having exercised religious leadership in America was in 1836, when she described to her sister Sophia a prayer meeting she had led for women in Athens County, Ohio.[100] A year later, according to her autobiography, she had received a preaching license from the United Brethren Church, but after experiencing controversy with ministers of the denomination in Athens, she relocated to Circleville in 1841 and applied for a new license. A.W. Drury's *History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ* (1924) notes that Clemens's application went through two committees, neither of which could determine whether she 'was under the influence of the Holy Ghost either to preach, teach, or exhort', and so, she was refused a 'license or permit to exercise in either of the above-named callings'. Drury further cites a subsequent session at the Scioto (Country) conference, two years later, in which Clemens's (renewed?) request 'to be set apart by laying on of hands to the prophetical office or as a minister of the word of God in the United Brethren Church' was refused.[101]

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[100] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 6.2562-2563: Louisa Courtauld to Sophia Courtauld, 14 Oct. (?) 1836.
[101] These are direct quotations from the reports of the committees that considered Clemens's applications in each instance, quoted in A.W. Drury, *History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ* (Dayton, OH, 1924), p. 425. In his account of these two rulings at the Scioto conference (in 1841 and 1843), Drury refers to Clemens in the first case as Sister L. Courtland (a misspelling of Courtauld), and in the second as Sister L. P. Clemens (corresponding to her marital status in each year). Nevertheless, Drury does not make clear that he is referring to the same person, and so Catherine Brekus has (understandably) listed 'Courtland' and Clemens as separate female preachers (and records Clemens's given name as Laura) in Brekus, *Female Preaching in America*, pp. 224, 277, 343-44.

In her autobiography, Clemens framed these struggles as consequences of her prophetic opposition to heresy. Her initial choice to leave Athens County in 1841, she recounted, had come in the wake of her confrontation of one of the church's more prominent ministers (and future bishop of the denomination), David Edwards (1816–1876), on his interpretations of biblical prophecy. Edwards had been a Millerite at the time,[102] and, according to Clemens, had lent her a book that had argued that there were 'no unfulfilled prophecy respect[ing the Jewish people] as a *distinct people*'.[103] After she had opposed Edwards on what she deemed a specious doctrinal error, 'the church in that region of country' purportedly 'turned very stedfastly against women's public ministry',[104] hence her decision to 'withdr[a]w from their meetings' and apply for a preaching license elsewhere.[105]

Whilst this initial conflict was framed in the autobiography in terms of Clemens's commitment to doctrinal purity, the narrative characterised the subsequent denial of her request for a preaching license as an affront to the truth of Christian unity. She thus recounted having announced to the committee that had turned her away that '*I could not hold voluntary connection in church fellowship, when any acknowledged and worthy Christian would not be heard in The Master's name*'.[106] She noted that upon breaking fellowship with these ministers, she attempted to publish an essay 'on woman's call, according to Joel, "your *daughters* shall prophesy"' in two different

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[102] In a biography of David Edwards by another minister of the United Brethren Church, Lewis Davis, Edwards's (temporary) commitment to the Millerite 'delusion' was noted as one of a few instances in which he was 'led away from the more tangible securities of precedent and experience'. See L. Davis, *The Life of Rev. David Edwards, D.D., Late Bishop of the United Brethren in Christ* (Dayton, OH, 1883), 84.
[103] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 150; original emphases.
[104] Clemens's claims about Edwards's views on female preaching are perhaps corroborated by the fact that as a bishop of the denomination several years later (1859), he 'ruled that there was no authority for granting a woman license to preach'. See Drury, *History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ*, p. 426. Also see Davis, *The Life of Rev. David Edwards*, p. 301.
[105] Ibid., p. 153.
[106] Ibid.

periodicals.[107] The reference is to the Old Testament book of Joel, in which 'daughters' and 'handmaids' are among those promised the gift of prophecy in the outpouring of God's 'spirit upon all flesh' after the restoration of Israel to Zion.[108] As Catherine Brekus has shown, this text was frequently rehearsed by supporters of female exhortation in nineteenth-century America.[109] Its appropriation by St. Peter in his sermon to the crowd at Pentecost in Acts 2 was taken by many of these women—Clemens included—to support a dispensational paradigm which construed the practice of female preaching as something normative for the church in all times and places.[110]

Yet most of these women only took the revolutionary possibilities of this idea so far. In general, they did not agitate for female ordination. Brekus thus observes that 'their revolutionary vindication of women's right to preach was always secondary to their faith in biblical revelation', and so, rather than 'demanding the full power of priesthood, they resigned themselves to serving as men's helpmates or assistants'.[111] Clemens was different in this respect. Although she did acknowledge having often deferred to male leadership to avoid jeopardising the success of a given endeavour,[112] she nevertheless deployed the ecumenical ideology of her environment to undermine the right of ecclesiastical authorities to distinguish certain individuals as ministers. Thus, she defined 'minister' as '[a]ny one, whether prophet or prophetess, son or daughter, whom He has called with a *specialty* to *His service*, and to speak to the people in His name'.[113] The phrase evoked the theme in her narrative of her own

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[107] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 154; original emphasis. The first periodical was the *Religious Telescope*, a publication of the United Brethren in Christ which was printed in Circleville, Ohio. The second was the Presbyterian periodical *The Voice of Truth*, but she does not say whether it was accepted.
[108] Joel ii. 28-29.
[109] See Brekus, *Female Preaching in America*, pp. 137, 144, 182, 309
[110] Acts ii. 17. Relatedly, Brekus notes that a popular female preacher for the Christian Connection, Rebecca Miller, challenged her own readers to ponder the 'new dispensation' within which God's 'daughters shall prophesy'. See Brekus, *Female Preaching in America*, p. 144.
[111] Brekus, *Female Preaching in America*, pp. 6-7.
[112] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 162.
[113] Ibid., p. 200.

'special work', and thus drew her prerogative as a woman exhorter into the domain of the devotional solitude that had provoked concerns among her family members (and in her own mind) about her mental health. Within the autobiography, these aspects of her religious life found validation within a radical ecumenical framework that asserted an invisible domain of spiritual values and configurations of authority.

Reconstituting Madness

We have seen that in Clemens's autobiography, she posited a 'prophetic' philosophy of mind which reconstituted the dichotomy between her 'deranged' psychological states and the theological truth of the Solemn League and Covenant in terms of a harmonious interplay between feeling and judgment. Her letters from the period preceding her move to America entirely lacked the perspective of her autobiography, and her mental and psychological states remained, at that time, a medical problem to her, as they had been for her family. By contrast, her letters in the American context evince a process through which her psychological states were being reconstituted as something approximating the model that she elaborated in her autobiography. Writing to Sophia in 1837, she used the language of derangement in her characterisation of the odd social situations into which her efforts as an itinerant activist had frequently thrust her. She thus prefaced an account of a journey to Pittsburgh and a two-night stay with a Mr. Bakewell by noting that 'I am often placed in most awkward predicaments by this strange deficiency in my cerebral conformation'.[114] Either artlessly or with playful irony, Clemens was alluding

[114] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 6.2612-2613: Louisa Courtauld and Elizabeth Ash to Sophia Courtauld, 26 Jun. 1837. Cerebral conformation was a phrenological concept that referred to the correspondence between the contours of the skull and the shape of the brain. See J.P. Swazey, 'Action Propre and Action Commune: The Localization of Cerebral Function', *Journal of the History of Biology*, 3/2 (1970), p. 220. For nineteenth-century use of this concept in the context of criminality and free will, see J. George Davey, 'The Responsibility of Criminals. Cerebral Conformation', *The Lancet*, 37/968 (1842), pp. 850-52.

to a phrenological account of her social and temperamental proclivities which would in her past have been given a more pathological significance.

Sixteen years later (1853), she characterised the same proclivities in a letter to her mother in the prophetic idiom of her autobiography. At the time she had been living with a Baptist family, the Bridges, in Wilkesville, Ohio. In her autobiography, she would describe the home as 'the poorest place I ever lived in'.[115] In her letter, she recounted that when Mr Bridges had asked her what her friends would say if they were to find her living in a 'rude log cabin', she had responded: 'they would say "its just like Louisa'. She went on to reflect upon how her mother had referred to her in the past as 'a strange child', and added:

> I didn't understand you then, but now expect it was true for all thro' my life I have found myself doing strange things, not *knowing* or not *considering* at the time that they were such, but when done finding it was so.[116]

This was indeed the language of her autobiography, in which, as we have seen, she had found herself frequently compelled by her feelings towards actions and preferences—such as her compulsion towards Presbyterian doctrine and away from Unitarianism—which were only squared with her judgment after the fact. She continued the letter to her mother by drawing her 'strange' proclivities into a providential framework within which apparent coincidences functioned as signs of divine power. She thus recounted that upon settling into a house near Nelsonville, Ohio in the 1830s, she had begun a habit of writing scripture passages on a sign in front of the house, 'in honor of God's Word and for the benefit of passers-by'.[117] On one occasion, she recounted, two men on

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[115] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 207.
[116] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 8.3601: Louisa Clemens to Ruth Courtauld, 26 Nov. 1853; original emphases.
[117] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 8.3601: Louisa Clemens to Ruth Courtauld, 26 Nov. 1853. This practice was noted in her autobiography as well, in Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 131-32. The parallel to this practice in the British context was reflected in her efforts to 'speak to the public by the city press', usually the *North British Advertiser* and the *Caledonian Mercury*. Examples of the latter include the following notice in the *Bury Times* on 09 September 1865: 'AN OPPONENT OF SUNDAY TRAFFIC.—The recent commencement of Sunday traffic on the Edinburgh and Glasgow line has called forth the following advertisement in an

horseback had passed her house, had seen her inscription at the time ('The Stranger's Shield'), and had continued on into Nelsonville, where they had inquired about 'The Strange Child' whose disappearance, they had assumed, was being advertised on homes on the outskirts of the city. She concluded her reflections on the subject thus:

> I often smile when I think how my dear Mother's 'Strange Child' has been protected by Him Who is indeed 'The Stranger's Shield' to those who are content to wander at the bidding of Abraham's God.[118]

This quotation—like the title of her autobiography ('*Narrative of a Pilgrim and Sojourner on Earth*')—evokes the milieu of female preaching in antebellum America, within which, as Brekus observes, women preachers referred to themselves as 'strangers and pilgrims on the earth'.[119] These correspondences further suggest the influence of the revivalist culture in America upon the formation of Clemens's self-understanding—an influence which, in this case, had entailed the reconstitution of her 'strangeness' as an aspect of her identity as a prophetic wanderer.

Clemens's letter to her mother only hinted obliquely at the philosophy of mind that she later articulated in her autobiography. The formation of this prophetic philosophy of mind in her letters is most apparent in her discussions of the issue of race and abolitionism. Moreover, the most striking image of divine influence at work through the mediation of bodily feeling in the autobiography was presented in her account of the event that initiated her prophetic fixation upon the problems of racial

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Edinburgh paper:—"A loud alarm!—That the North British Railway Train shall, in bold defiance of the Law of God, commence to run between Edinburgh and Glasgow for traffic to-morrow, 'The Holy Sabbath,'—we own God to make bare His Almighty Arm, and, in mercy to our Land and People, arrest the wheels of its progress.—Louisa P. C. Clemens. Given on this our 'Solemn Fast Day' to avert impending judgment felt and feared for our sins as 'a People' bent to backslide.—Edinburgh, 24th of 8th Month, 1865."' Also note her advertisement of a lecture on spiritual reformation in the *Caledonian Mercury* on Saturday, 16 Sep. 1865. Also see Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 154-55.

[118] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 8.3602: Louisa Clemens to Ruth Courtauld, 26 Nov. 1853.

[119] Brekus, *Female Preaching in America*, p. 4.

segregation and support for slavery within the evangelical churches in both Ohio and Kentucky.[120]

Clemens thus described a particularly momentous day in the early 1840s in which she was conveyed by wagon from Bardstown to Springfield by an African American man named old George. It was a long journey that ended under starlight, the heels of the horses bloodied by their trudge over rocky hills and through icy creeks. Yet the greatest 'trial' that day was not the wintery treacherousness of the passage, but the 'air of caste, slavery, and oppression' that leered at the travelling companions 'from every house, … hovel and mansion'. Clemens described the transformative effect of the experience thus: 'That whole day I was receiving the baptism of The Holy Ghost to the anti-slavery cause'. And further, 'I felt as if my heart was just opened in twain from top to bottom, bleeding freely, and not to be stopped or bound up'.[121]

Within her autobiography, this account was emblematic of her general characterisation of how divine inspiration was experienced and enacted. Bodily feeling and emotion functioned in this anecdote, and elsewhere, as the seat of divine influence, giving rise to social action and intellectual conviction. Yet in her letters, her discussions of her fixation upon the issues of race and abolitionism expressed a less fluid interrelationship between feeling, rationality and social action. A particularly revealing example is seen in a dialogue on the issues of abolitionism and the presidency of Martin Van Buren (1782–1862), who had opposed the abolitionist movement on the basis of the threat it was presumed to have posed to national unity.[122] Responding to her

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[120] The Ohio Constitution of 1803 prohibited slavery, and Ohio was a hotbed of abolitionism in this period. See E.H. Roseboom and F.P. Weisenburger, *A History of Ohio* (Columbus, 1969), pp. 70, 150-57, 165-82. The African Methodist Episcopal Church, which formed in Pennsylvania in 1816 because of racial tensions within the American Methodist Episcopal Church, had a strong presence in Ohio in these years. See J.T. Campbell, *Songs of Zion: the African Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States and South Africa* (New York, 1995), pp. 33-34.

[121] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 139-40.

[122] W.G. Shade, '"The Most Delicate and Exciting Topics": Martin Van Buren, Slavery, and the Election of 1836', *Journal of the Early Republic*, 18/3 (1998), p. 471.

brother's admonition about 'the wrongfulness of irritating Public Opinion without a necessity', she framed her own, transgressive stance on these matters in terms of an opposition to the 'abstract' moralism of her Unitarian upbringing:

> but as you know my principles & theories are not laid up as pretty curiosities to talk about, but as responsible truths to be acted out, I have no doubt it will have its measure of influence in correcting the too abstract views of right & wrong of which I am conscious, & trace somewhat to our dear father's mode of inculcating virtue in early years.

She concluded her comments with a reference to the moral influence and authority of indignation and feeling, using imagery that prefigured her description in her autobiography, many years later, of the wound her heart had incurred in the presence of old George. Yet in this letter to her brother, rationality was characterised in a kind of tension, rather than a fundamental harmony, with the influence of feeling. The moral sense inculcated by her father, she thus wrote,

> has been nourish'd by the exceeding indignation I feel when I see the gross idolatry paid to this Tyrant Usurper [Van Buren] in a land so boasting of its Liberty & Independence—but I feel that I am verging toward that subject [slavery] which absorbs all *feeling* and frustrates all ratiocination—how can I coolly cut logic when the iron heel of oppression is on my breast & his bowie knife at my throat? Why who would expect it![123]

Logic and feeling were harmonised, in her autobiography, as interrelated aspects of a prophetic epistemology within which the apprehension of truth was ensured by a divine agency through the mediation of the emotions. The core ingredients of this formulation were present in Clemens's letter to her brother, but had yet to be explicitly integrated within a prophetic philosophy of mind.

Strikingly, however, Clemens would return to the language of mental derangement to characterise her compulsions (for the last time, in her extant letters) in in a letter to Sophia in 1853. After echoing a slogan she attributed to the abolitionist and

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[123] Mss. Letter, Courtauld Family Library, Pebmarsh, Essex: Louisa Clemens to Samuel Courtauld, 28 Feb. 1840; original emphasis. This handwritten letter is located at the residence of the Courtaulds in Essex.

suffragist William Lloyd Garrison (1805–1879) ('No Fellowship with Slavery either Politically or Ecclesiastically'), Clemens turned to the question of women's suffrage:

> Sophy what think *you* of women's right to Vote? I suppose you may be too modest to advocate it. I incline to it, but the so far more grievous oppression of the slave seems almost to absorb all my sympathies: perhaps I am getting into the monomania of one-idea-ism: well, when the ship is sinking I expect all on board would be in the same malady and have but one thought—how to save her.[124]

What is significant in this quotation is not Clemens's use of the language of monomania and mental malady to characterise her fixation on the abolitionist cause; she might well have been using these terms in a purely rhetorical sense. What is significant is the way in which she had qualified these terms as rational psychological states based upon the moral urgency of the matter at hand. Indeed, whether or not she truly wondered, in 1853, where she was 'mad' or 'monomaniacal', she had clearly come by this point to view her psychological and temperamental proclivities in a redemptive light.

Conclusion

Clemens's appropriation of the term 'monomania' in 1853 to characterise her obsession with the abolitionist cause reflects the important point that medical reasoning was not, in and of itself, a threat to the religious identities of evangelical enthusiasts in the nineteenth century. Indeed, despite the fact that Clemens herself ultimately chose to reject medical categories in her literary self-portrayal, her own letters suggest the possibility that even later in life she might well have been open, in principle, to the potential insights that mind sciences such as phrenology might have offered her into the nature of her own mental states and temperament. As we shall see in the chapters that follow, other alleged religious lunatics drew eagerly from the insights and

[124] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 8:3588: Louisa Clemens to Sophia Courtauld, 22 May 1853.

methodologies of medicine to interpret themselves and even to challenge the interpretive authority (on matters of the mind) claimed by nineteenth-century alienists.

Nevertheless, it is also significant that Clemens did choose, in her grand statement on her life, to characterise her mind and her emotions in an explicit rejection of medical categories. This choice indicated the genuine threat that the categories of medicine and madness had posed to both her religious identity and her civil liberty throughout her early adulthood in Britain. Moreover, it contributed an emphatically theological conceptualisation of the mind and selfhood to a late-nineteenth-century society within which medical perspectives were becoming more prevalent, and within which naturalistic models of the psyche were to become increasingly dominant. Ultimately, it had taken an immersion into the radical ecumenical ideology of the American revivalists—and her own relative success as a woman exhorter in this context—for her to find a way to reconstitute her perceived mental deficiency as a prophetic gift.

Chapter 2

Enthusiasm and Exclusion

In a summary volume of the 1860 U.S. census, the prominent American asylum physician Pliny Earle (1809–1892) identified 'religious excitement' as one of 'the most frequent generative agents of insanity in the United States'.[1] The word 'excitement' qualified this concept in an important way. It implied the causal necessity of the external factors which stimulated the condition of the religious 'lunatic', such as evangelical camp meetings, hellfire preaching and 'solitary reading and meditation upon religious subjects'.[2] Yet in Earle's formulation, these 'exciting' religious activities had an inward correlate which was just as important to the pathological equation—a 'religious sentiment', which exerted a 'dominant power over the character and the conduct of men', and could 'sway … the whole physical element of our being'.[3] It took both aspects of religious life—the environmental and the innate; nurture and nature—to produce the intractable despair of the religious melancholic or the unquenchable zeal of the 'theomaniac'.[4]

Earle's comments reflect a specifically diagnostic mode of analysis that was being applied in this period to certain religious experiences and identities. Yet in order for religious insanity to be analysed in this way, it had to emerge in the first place as a form of abnormality or extremeness vis-à-vis wider social and religious environments. This chapter explores the writings of two people, John Thomas Perceval (1803–1876) and Elizabeth T. Stone (b. 1811), who were confined to asylums for religious insanity

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[1] J.C.G. Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, Under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington, 1864), p. xc. Also see Bainbridge, 'Religious Insanity in America', p. 228.
[2] Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860*, p. xci.
[3] Ibid., p. xc.
[4] See Morison, *Cases of Mental Disease*, pp. 69-75.

in the 1830s and 1840s (the former in Britain and the latter in America). After their release, both sought to stimulate the reform of asylum medicine and the lunacy laws by writing exposés about the oppressive living conditions and treatment methods to which they had been subjected in the asylum. As Benjamin Reiss has noted, such exposés were met by the general public with considerable suspicion, fuelled by alienists' insinuations that they evinced a residual insanity in their authors.[5] And so, as people whose sanity would remain in doubt for many readers, the writings of Perceval and Stone were bound up with the problem of establishing the credibility of their claims,[6] a crucial aspect of which was the task of accounting for why they had been confined in the first place.

In narrating these developments, Perceval and Stone described in tremendous detail their involvement in the distinct cultures of religious enthusiasm in Britain and America. Their accounts reflect the key transatlantic differences that were highlighted in the previous chapter: Perceval's experience was bound up with the political dimensions of prophetic discourse and apocalyptic thought in Britain, and Stone's was focused on issues of sectarian division among evangelical groups in America. Whilst the religious cultures and movements of which they were a part were themselves associated with enthusiasm and madness in this period, both authors nevertheless wrote about how their own co-religionists became complicit in, or supportive of, their exclusion from society as the 'lunatic' other. In Pliny Earle's paradigm, their narratives depict the 'innate' aspects of religious identity that differentiated them as lunatics within their 'enthusiastic' environments.

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[5] See, in particular, the American alienist Isaac Ray's 'The Popular Feeling Towards Hospitals for the Insane,' *American Journal of Insanity*, Vol. 9 (1852-53), pp. 38-39. Also see Reiss, 'Letters from Asylumia', pp. 16-17.

[6] Note Mary Elene Wood's concerns about similar issues of authorial warrant in her study of asylum narratives by middle-class American women in Wood, *The Writing on the Wall*, p. 5 and passim.

In many ways, these authors were opposites. Perceval was a wealthy male member of the English aristocracy, and Stone was an employee of a New England textile factory and the daughter of a poor mechanic. Their accounts of enthusiasm, madness and exclusion were inflected in important ways by these distinct social identities. Perceval acknowledged in his writings that he had been insane, and characterised his descent into madness and gradual recovery in both gendered and class-based terms as the loss and recovery of his identity as an English gentleman. Gender and social status featured prominently in Stone's self-portrayal, as well, in her emphasis upon her vulnerability as a 'poor factory girl', and upon the dismissive attitudes of the ministers and alienists she encountered vis-à-vis the susceptibility of young women.

And yet, despite the ways in which the writings of Perceval and Stone were inflected distinctly by their own national and social contexts, their self-portrayals nevertheless also evince striking affinities. Most notably, they both depicted evangelical conversion as an event that marked them out (within their families and their religious communities) as lunatics and set them on a course towards confinement. For these writers, insanity was not merely a set of deviant beliefs and behaviours, but a process of inward transformation which put them necessarily in tension with their broader environments. Evangelical conversion in the eighteenth-century context has been explored in depth by scholars such as Bruce Hindmarsh and Misty Anderson, who have argued that conversion qualified or challenged emergent models of the modern self as an autonomous and secular entity.[7] The writings of Perceval and Stone show that conversion continued to be conceptualised and expressed in subversive ways in the

[7] Bruce Hindmarsh thus argues that eighteenth-century evangelical conversion narratives envisaged 'an alternative version of modern self-identity' that 'qualifies the notion of self-fashioning' in Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative*, p. 6. Anderson's position has been outlined in the introduction to this thesis. See Anderson, *Imagining Methodism*, pp. 4, 28 and passim.

nineteenth century; yet, by virtue of the rise and increasing prominence of insane asylums as a recourse for the families and co-religionists of those who were alleged to be insane, the stakes of evangelical subversiveness had been raised considerably.

JOHN THOMAS PERCEVAL

> In the year 1829, my conduct first became decided and extreme, through the active principle instilled by the doctrines I have named; and in the spring of the year 1830, influenced chiefly by this new principle of action, I obtained permission to sell my commission in the Guards.[8]

This passage from John Perceval's first book directly follows a rather elliptical account of his conversion to evangelicalism during his service as a captain with the Grenadiers in Ireland. Within the narrative, his 'decided and extreme' behaviours were linked explicitly to evangelical belief, which was itself portrayed as a threat to his identity and a chief factor in his descent into madness. His descriptions of an insanity that involved hearing voices and seeing spectres—including the spirit of his dead father, Spencer Perceval, who had been assassinated in the House of Commons when John was only nine years old—dramatized the presumptive descent of Britain itself from its prophetic role as a guarantor of spiritual truth among pagan nations.[9] Perceval's narrative was thus more than just an account of one man's experience of mental disorder. It expressed in vivid form a deep disillusionment with Britain's national significance as constituted within a fading prophetic vision.

Most of the details of Perceval's life and career come from his own pen, in the two books he wrote after his confinement for insanity. Beginning with the tragedy of his father's death and ending with the trauma of his confinement, his first book—

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[8] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, p. 6.

[9] The British press reported that one of Spencer's thirteen children—frequently speculated to have been John Perceval—was present at Parliament and saw his father's body soon afterwards. See H. Gault, *Living History: A Family's 19th Century* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 242.

published anonymously in 1838—narrated a decline in the powers of his own 'judgment' which corresponded to the decline he had witnessed first-hand, as an army officer, of the 'judgment' of the British nation. The basic structure of his biography, as he presented it, reflected the significance he attached to his conversion to evangelicalism as the event that set him on the course to the asylum. His commission in the army had been procured for him in 1822 by his well-connected family (he was descended from aristocrats on both sides), and his service began in a cavalry regiment before he was transferred to the First Regiment of Foot Guards (the Grenadiers) as a captain. Throughout this time he was stationed in Ireland twice (in 1822–1823 and 1828–1829), with tours of Spain and Portugal in between, and it was during the second period in Ireland that he embraced the doctrines of evangelicalism.[10]

In 1830, Perceval obtained permission to sell his commission in the army and enrolled at Magdalen Hall in Oxford with plans to pursue ordination. Mere months into his studies, however, he heard reports of an outbreak of healings, prophecies and tongues-speaking in south-western Scotland, and, in September 1830, he visited the parishes of Row (now spelled Rhu) and Port Glasgow to investigate. After a three-month immersion in these communities in which (as he recounted) he became increasingly deranged, he left Scotland for Dublin. His psychological struggle reached a crisis point after an evening in January 1831 when he employed the services of a prostitute. He either contracted syphilis, or was worried that he would, and so treated himself with mercury and took cold baths in the outdoors, despite the inclement winter weather. These efforts at self-medication failed, and a full-blown insanity soon set in, as disembodied voices began assailing him with irrational—and often contradictory—commands. This all came to a head while he was travelling in a boat with a friend, who

[10] Gault, *Living History*, pp. 242-43.

brought him to a hotel in Dublin and had him tied to bed for three days. Notified of his condition, his family took measures to have him moved to Brislington House, a private asylum in Bristol owned by Doctor Edward Long Fox (1761–1835), but chiefly run, in those years, by Fox's sons, Francis and Charles Fox. After fourteen months there, Perceval was transferred to another private madhouse, Ticehurst Asylum in Sussex,[11] where he remained for another two years before being released in 1834. Perceval was married soon after his release, and in 1845, partnered with the British civil servant and former asylum patient Richard Paternoster (1802–1892) to found the Alleged Lunatics' Friend Society (1845–1863), an advocacy group that sought the reform of the lunacy laws, the improved treatment of asylum patients, and the release of those confined under false allegations of insanity.[12]

The two books Perceval published after his release from the asylum (in 1838 and 1840) functioned as foundation documents for his new career as a social reformer. In the preface to this second book, Perceval claimed that he had been forced to write his first entirely from memory while living in Paris in 1835, for the private diaries he had kept during his confinement—as well as letters to and from relatives and magistrates relating to his efforts to secure his release from Ticehurst Asylum—had been in the possession of his solicitor in England. The first book narrates events from his childhood through to his transfer from Brislington House to Ticehurst Asylum in 1832, and, as well as exposing the abusive conduct of his caregivers, emphasises his own descent into madness and his subsequent recovery.[13] His second book consists largely of excerpts

[11] The history of Ticehurst as the private asylum of choice for many wealthy English families has been explored in depth in Charlotte MacKenzie, *Psychiatry for the Rich: A History of Ticehurst Private Asylum, 1792–1917* (London, 1992).
[12] See N. Hervey, 'Advocacy or Folly: The Alleged Lunatics' Friend Society, 1845–63', *Medical History*, 30/3 (1986), pp. 245-75.
[13] Perceval's first book was thus published anonymously by Effingham Wilson (1785–1868), a radical English publisher and bookseller who had also printed works by social reformers such as Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) and Robert Owen (1771–1858). Perceval's bid for anonymity was foiled, however, by a review in *The London and Paris Observer* which accurately attributed the book to 'the

from the diaries and letters he kept during his confinement, which he had since recovered. Beyond presenting a more documented iteration of some of his experiences in the asylum, these materials address in detail his efforts to secure his own freedom from Ticehurst Asylum, thus drawing his readers into empathetic engagement with the overwhelming predicament of those whom society had labelled insane.

The concern of his books, above all, was to expose the abuses to which patients were subjected in insane asylums. Yet the narrative backdrop of the presumed erosion of British national identity—a process paralleled in his own psychological decline—was crucial to this agenda. For his complaint about the inappropriateness of his own situation as an English gentleman who had been subjected to the absolute control of a man such as Edward Long Fox (a medical professional and a religious dissenter) amounted to a critique, more broadly, of a society whose chief pillars of state religion and class deference were crumbling.

It did not help Perceval's case that he admitted in his books to having been insane.[14] After his first book was criticised by reviewers for its 'occasional apparent incoherence' and its presumed reliance upon the fictive deliverances of 'that prolific storehouse, the imagination',[15] Perceval took greater pains to assert his sanity in his second book. Discussing the issue of his own credibility directly, he cited corroboration for his claims in the reports of other former asylum patients who had had similar experiences, including his future collaborator in lunacy reform, Richard Paternoster. As

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third son of the late Mr. Percival [sic], the Prime Minister, who was assassinated by Bellingham in the lobby of the House of Commons', and Perceval thus put his name to the second book, also published by Wilson. See 'Treatment of Insanity in England. "Narrative of the treatment of a gentleman during a state of mental derangement (from Tait's Magazine)". London, 1839', *The London and Paris Observer*, 755 (1839), p. 661. Examples of radical publications brought out by Wilson are noted in L. Worms, 'Wilson, Effingham (1785–1868)', *ODNB*.

[14] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. xv.

[15] See, respectively, 'Treatment of Insanity in England. "Narrative of the treatment of a gentleman during a state of mental derangement (from Tait's Magazine)". London, 1839', *The London and Paris Observer*, 755 (1839), p. 661 and *The Monthly Review for July*, 2 (1838), p. 381.

a patient at William Finch's private madhouse in Kensington in 1838, Paternoster had, in Perceval's words, 'suffered indignities, and witnessed barbarities as great as, and greater than those which are described in this narrative'.[16]

Yet the problem went deeper than this, for Perceval's arguments in each book placed the contested meanings of enthusiasm at the very centre; and his own position on the matter was by no means straightforward. He claimed in his second book that even as author, he was 'not without enthusiasm, or without religious passion', but that these phenomena now 'flow[ed] from different principles'.[17] He was distinguishing here between the motives and intuitions that had rendered his conduct 'decided and extreme' from the moment of his evangelical conversion, and a more 'rational' form of enthusiasm which he elaborated, with reference to medical and scientific categories, in a six-chapter section of his second book. The first variety of 'enthusiasm', his own experience had shown, had been entirely unregulated—a source of psychological and spiritual instability. The second was now properly regulated by the faculties of judgment and conscience.

For Perceval, this was not arbitrary theorising; it was a reckoning with an existential issue that went back to the moment of conversion itself. Enthusiasm had emerged in the first place (in his narrative) as a response to the problems of a perceived spiritual decadence in the religious world around him. His narrative reflected a broader milieu of disillusionment in this period with the theological grounding and spiritual condition of the established church—problems that were addressed in a variety of ways. The Oxford Movement emerged as one such response, inaugurated by John Keble's

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[16] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. iv. Paternoster's findings from Parliamentary reports, the testimony of other patients, and his own visits to various asylums were published in a series of articles for the *Satirist Newspaper* and later compiled and published in his *The Madhouse System* (London, 1841). Also see Hervey, 'Advocacy or Folly', pp. 250-51.
[17] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. xv.

(1792–1866) Assize Sermon on national apostasy in July 1833, and by the publication of the first of the *Tracts for the Times* in September of the same year—two years before Perceval wrote his own narrative. At this point, Anglican debate in Oxford became highly polarised and emotionally charged. Perceval himself recounted that during his time at Oxford in 1830, he was drawn to the teaching of Henry Bellenden Bulteel (1800–1866), one of the more prominent of the religious leaders of the period whom Timothy Stunt has aptly denoted 'pre-Tractarian radicals', and whose ultra-Calvinist preaching at St. Ebbe's Church drew large crowds.[18]

For his part, Perceval recounted having been perpetually scandalised, before his conversion, by 'the whirlpool of dissipation, and contradiction in society around me'.[19] And when he looked inward, he encountered the same hypocrisy that tainted his environment: 'Christian precepts did not regulate my moral conduct in private; in my deportment towards others I accused myself of insincerity'. 'Religion' he further added 'was not innate', but was merely 'a force, a constraint upon my nature'. The result of this discovery was an intense inner conflict: 'My whole mind was tortured, and I lived a life of perpetual agony, inward and uncommunicated'.[20] And his evangelical conversion—the point at which his 'inward suffering and perplexity' gave way to 'peace, and joy, and triumph'—marked a resolution of these conflicts.[21]

Yet Perceval lamented that his conversion did not ultimately mark an appropriate integration of piety and politeness, but had instead initiated a process through which his judgment was gradually overthrown by his feelings and intuitions. Rather than affording him an appropriate passion for 'the religion of my country',

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[18] T.C.F. Stunt, *From Awakening to Secession: Radical Evangelicals in Switzerland and Britain, 1815–35* (Edinburgh, 2000), p. 194-200. Also see P. Toon, *Evangelical Theology, 1833–1856: A Response to Tractarianism* (London, 1979), pp. 13-45.
[19] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, p. 5.
[20] Ibid., II, p. 35.
[21] Ibid., I, p. 5.

subordinated to a clear sense of his identity as a gentleman, the principles of evangelicalism 'excited' in him 'gratitude and fear: gratitude for the gift given me, and for that election; and fear of the wrath of God, if I disobeyed the end for which it was given'. These opposed emotions compelled him, from the point of his conversion, to 'preach to others, and to explain the doctrines, whereby I had been saved'.[22]

Perceval's first book described in detail the gradual erosion of his identity as an English gentleman caused by his internalisation of these evangelical principles. By marked contrast, his theory of a rational enthusiasm in his second book asserted a form of piety in which the head and the heart are held together by the faculty of conscience. Conscience in this respect acted as a kind of intermediary between self and society, ensuring that the head and the heart held together in a manner that appropriately reflected one's station in the world:

> It is evident, however, that a man may keep his attention upon his desires with the thought only of gratifying them; and such a man may be of sound mind according to the ordinary sense of the terms, and yet have no thought of his relative position in society, or in the creation. Here, then, conscience comes into play, to know whether the emotions of the heart are just, and how far they ought to be indulged, and reflection taken to allay them.[23]

Conscience was thus the centrepiece of a theoretical model of enthusiasm which sought to reassemble the components of religious character and class deference which Perceval construed as having been teased apart both within the society around him and in his own experience. Yet this project was itself problematic in terms of his bid for credibility with his readership. Was there truly a difference between these two forms of enthusiasm? Was he now, as author, a legitimate exponent of the gentlemanly enthusiasm he wanted to endorse?

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[22] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, pp. 4, 8. These descriptions evoke the prominent English alienist Joseph Mason Cox's (1762–1822) assertion that religion, like love, could cause madness 'by the action of opposing passions, such as hope and fear'. See J.M. Cox, *Practical Observations on Insanity* (1804; London, 1806), p. 20.

[23] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. 276.

The lines between the enthusiasm of the evangelical and that of the gentleman were not clear, either within his books or in evidence external to them. In the preface to his second book he thus observed (speaking of himself in the third person) that 'when he was composing his first volume, there remained a slight glow of the same fervent spirit' that had led to his confinement. He insisted that 'that feeling' had 'vanished before the work was brought to a close' and was now entirely 'gone', yet his contemporaries were given some reason to question this claim. Only a year earlier (1839)—and four years after he claimed to have completed his first book—the 'fervent' character of evangelical enthusiasm was on full display in a covering letter to Robert Peel (1788–1850) (then Leader of the Opposition to Lord Melbourne's Whig administration), to whom Perceval was sending a copy of his first book:

> That which is correct in it, I owe to the support and enlightening of God's Spirit, and my own honor, to say what I think, though I may be wrong; tho' I know that boldness is not all wisdom, but I have not, I am sorry to say, more understanding; or rather perhaps have not patience to practice it. For I have been very much terrified and broken down; but God is in me, who raises me up again, by his spirit, for his own honor, not for mine—for he has put me, & still puts me to shame and ridicule: and I deserve it—for I cannot obey him: and yet I am often very joyful, & very happy, because, though I know his terrors and his severity, yet I know also his beauty and his love.[24]

He concluded the letter in an entirely different register, quoting Tacitus' *Annals* in Latin, and adapting the passage to fit his own circumstances.[25] Clearly there was considerable literary control being exercised here.[26] Nevertheless, expressions of the

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[24] BL, Add MS 40426, fo. 355: John Perceval to Robert Peel, 10 May 1839.

[25] This passage reads: *quod si maxime continentia tua laudeteur non tamen sapienti viro decorum fuerit, unde fratria et sororibus et matri infamiam parat, inde gloriam sibi recipere*, which translates to, 'And, however much your abnegation may be praised, it will still be unworthy of a sage to derive credit from an act which sullies the fair fame of brothers and sisters and mothers'. Perceval substituted *fratria et sororibus et matri* ('brothers and sisters and mothers') for the original *amico* ('friend'), and the quotation is thus intended as a reference to his relatives' decision to have him confined. I am indebted to Claire Wotherspoon at the British Library for translating this passage and for identifying both the source and the alteration.

[26] As Suzanne Shumway has observed, Perceval's first book likewise oscillated between the registers of 'evangelical fervour' and classical erudition (among others), and should be taken as a sign of narrative control, not derangement. See S.R. Shumway, '*Perceval's Narrative*, Fifty Years Later', in Ilaria Natali

above sort would not have helped Perceval to clinch his case for having freed himself, years earlier, from the 'fervent spirit' of evangelical enthusiasm. Moreover, in his introduction to his theory of enthusiasm in his second book, he stated that he was about to 'make known spiritual or mental phenomena, which will hardly, I am afraid, find credit'.[27] The implication was that readers would doubt the legitimacy of enthusiasm in any shape, reasonable or otherwise; and this meant, in turn, that his claim to having retained a chastened form of enthusiasm in the present would lead readers to question his sanity even then. It is perhaps unsurprising, then, that a reviewer for *The Literary Gazette* esteemed even Perceval's second book 'a psychological curiosity' marked by 'a large quantity of madness'.[28]

Perceval's books were indeed about much more than just an effort to expose the evils of insane asylums. They were part of a process of reckoning with the problems of identity (both personal and, more broadly, national) which his madness had come to symbolise for him. Whilst reckoning with the meaning of enthusiasm in his books problematized his efforts to establish credibility as an author, it nevertheless also allowed his writings to assert a specific vision of social and religious renewal. We will turn now to look in greater depth at how he framed his evangelical enthusiasm as both an inward principle that eroded his social identity and led to his exclusion from society, and as something that nevertheless expressed a deep truth about human nature.

Enthusiasm and Identity

> I was born of parents powerful, honourable, and happy, till a cruel blow deprived my mother of a husband, and her family of a father. He was a minister of state; and my relations rank among the aristocracy and wealth of my country.

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and Annalisa Volpone (eds.), *Symptoms of Disorder: Reading Madness in British Literature, 1744–1845* (Amherst, NY, 2016), pp. 119-40.

[27] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. 252.

[28] *The Literary Gazette: and Journal of the Belles Lettres, Arts, Sciences, &c.*, 1229 (London, 1840), p. 515.

> I was educated in the bosom of peace and plenty, in principles of delicacy and decorum, in modest and temperate habits, and in the observance of, and real veneration for, the religion of my country.[29]

These words open the second chapter of Perceval's first book, and reveal the background identity from which he descends, in the narrative, after his conversion. His 'decided and extreme' behaviour in this period was reflected ultimately in his decision to leave his position in the military—a position which, within the narrative, functions as a marker of the identity proclaimed in the above passage. He thus observed that he 'owed both my commissions to the kindness of the Duke of York, and to the attention of his secretary, Sir Herbert Taylor, who were glad to show their respect for the memory of my father'. Moreover, he framed his entry into a military career as a passage into a stage of maturation towards the ideal of English gentility: 'I had been nursed in the lap of ease, and scrupulous morality; I now entered the school of polite and gentlemanly behaviour'.[30] Crucially, however, he did not portray his choice to leave the military simply as a matter of individual derangement; rather, it was a response both to the presumed hypocrisy of his fellow officers, and—more importantly still—to the perceived erosion of the British government's religious vocation in the world. The collapse of his own 'observance of, and real veneration for, the religion of my country', and his relinquishment of 'delicacy and decorum' and of 'modest and temperate habits', mirrored the presumed breakdown of these virtues within his immediate society, and within the British nation more widely.

The erosion of these values in Perceval's own behaviour began in the narrative before his departure from the military, in the basic shift of his priorities from those of an officer to those of an evangelical activist. He wrote that after his conversion he felt

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[29] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, 4.
[30] Ibid., pp. 4-5.

'better adapted to confute a Papist or an infidel … than to manœuvre a battalion', and thus 'read the service to a detachment I commanded' and 'procured religious and other books for the sick in hospital'. And he procured seats in a chapel of the established church for the soldiers of two battalions who had been unable to attend religious services ('through the neglect of the Chaplain and indifference of the commanding officers'). For these actions, he recounted, '[both] Colonel and Chaplains … charged me with having sent the men to a dissenting minister'. His circulation of religious books and his leadership of religious meetings likewise drew 'private animadversions'. In general, he found that as he 'spoke and acted in open confession of my faith', it was 'not very agreeable to the army'.[31]

In his own military career, then, Perceval had lost the ability to hold together the status and duties associated with his elevated position, and the religious passion that was meant to give his station a deeper purpose. This personal experience was presented as reflective of the broader erosion of Britain's religious purpose as a nation, to which Perceval attributed his decision finally to sell his commission and leave the military in 1830. The principal factor in Britain's decline, for Perceval, was the passing of the Catholic Relief Act 1829 (following the 1828 repeal of the Test Act 1672), and the repeal of penal laws targeting Roman Catholics and dissenters. These measures had allowed Catholics to sit as full members of British Parliament. At a pragmatic level, Perceval worried that a Protestant revolt over this issue would be met with a military response from the Tories, an eventuality that would put him on the wrong side.[32] But more deeply, these political concessions suggested that Britain had relinquished its national role as the guarantor of religious truth in the world. Perceval's disillusionment

[31] Ibid., pp. 8-9, 11.
[32] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, p. 12. See Gault, *Living History*, pp. 242-44.

was visceral: 'I had thought my country upright, noble, and generous, and [the Tory] party honest and honourable. I now despised the one, and began to hate and fear the other'.[33]

These anxieties are suggestive of the influence of his father's political and religious legacy on John Perceval's worldview in these years. In his second book, he directly linked the anxieties that had stimulated his evangelical conversion to his father's influence. It was to his upbringing 'by my father in the love of truth and honesty, and in a strict observance of religious duties' that he attributed his 'reflective and conscientious disposition' as a young man, which had itself been responsible for his psychological crisis in the face of the 'whirlpool of dissipation' around him.[34] His embrace of religious seriousness in conversion was articulated as an affirmation of his father's legacy.

So too was his indignation over the issue of Catholic emancipation. Spencer Perceval had become infamous for his fierce opposition to any legislative concessions to Roman Catholics, such as those proposed by the Grenville government in 1807.[35] After his assassination, the *Edinburgh Review* had memorialised him as 'an angry controversialist' whose 'religious feelings were mingled with so much bigotry, that he was quite incapable of viewing the claims of the Catholics with the eye of a statesman'. To this critic, only theological semantics distinguished Spencer's rigid anti-Catholicism from the fanaticism of the Irish religionists whom his policies aimed to disenfranchise.[36] Yet for Spencer, these theological distinctions were part of a religious worldview that was of inestimable importance. He had been among the many Britons in

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[33] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, p. 12.
[34] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. 34; Perceval, *Narrative*, I, p. 5.
[35] D. Gray, *Spencer Perceval: The Evangelical Prime Minister, 1762–1812* (Manchester, 1963), p. 19.
[36] 'Authentic Correspondence, and Documents relating to the Proceedings of the Marquis Wellesley, and of the Earl Moira, in the recent Negotiations for the Formation of an Administration. 5th Edition. Phillips, London', *The Edinburgh Review*, 39 (1812), pp. 29-30.

this period whose researches into biblical prophecy had led them to agree that Catholicism would play a crucial (and nefarious) role in the events of Armageddon, and that Britain's role in this picture was to preserve truth.[37]

John Perceval was well aware of his father's position on these matters. In a letter to the Irish author John Wilson Croker (1780–1857), written in the same year that his second book was published (1840), he attributed his father's anti-Catholic political philosophy to his interest in biblical prophecy: 'I have no doubt that his steadfast resistance to the Roman Catholic claims was very much owing to his mind being imbued with views of the Papacy obtained from the study of prophecy'.[38] It is thus significant that Perceval himself cited eschatological rationales for his indignation about—and 'decided and extreme' response to—Catholic emancipation. His claim to having believed in this period 'that the time of the end was at hand, and that God was about to visit the nations with his plagues'—and his reference to the scriptural edict to 'flee to the mountains' in the last days to characterise his departure from the military—all evoked the prophetic milieu represented in his father's political career.[39]

Given the centrality of his father's legacy to these developments, it is significant that John Perceval became so inclined towards evangelical nonconformity in the period following his conversion. Despite the biographer Denis Gray's well-known characterisation of Spencer Perceval as the 'evangelical Prime Minister', Edward Hicks has made a strong case for the 'Anglican Prime Minister' as a more apt label, showing that Spencer's political commitment to strengthening the established church—itself

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[37] See Perceval, *Observations* (1800); Hicks, '"Christianity Personified"', p. 65.
[38] L.J. Jennings (ed.), *The Croker Papers: The Correspondence and Diaries of the Late Right Honourable John Wilson Croker, LL.D., F.R.S., Secretary to the Admiralty from 1809 to 1830* (London, 1884), 2.373: John Thomas Perceval to John Wilson Croker, 6 Sep. 1840. Quoted in Hicks, 'Christianity Personified', p. 147.
[39] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, p. 12. This is a reference to Mk. xiii. 14, in which those in Judaea are commanded to 'flee to the mountains' upon the arrival of 'the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet'.

central to his understanding of Britain's prophetic significance—conflicted in some ways with characteristically evangelical priorities.[40] Spencer's 'hostility towards nonconformists', manifested in his refusal to countenance their claims to church status, was an important aspect of this prophetic outlook.[41] In the face of this, Perceval recounted having had a growing preference for 'Baptist and Independent meeting-houses' in the late 1820s and early 1830s.[42] Moreover, when he did prudently begin to attend an Anglican Church as a student at Oxford (the alternative would have been expulsion),[43] his choice was St. Ebbe's Church, whose controversial curate, Henry Bulteel, would himself abandon the established church for dissent a few years later.[44]

For John's part, it was the combination of his disillusionment with the empty 'form and ceremony' that had come to define the established church, and the religious passion that he had discovered among dissenters, that had led him to favour the latter.[45] He thus recounted that after his return from Dublin to England, but before his departure from the military, he had 'stood alone, amongst society, and amongst officers, gentlemanly and moderate, but indifferent to spiritual truths, and inclined to turn *religion* or too much religion into ridicule'.[46] By contrast, he had found that the evangelical form of religion practised in the dissenting chapels of England was akin to what he had encountered in Dublin at the time of his conversion. In Dublin, religion was '*the motive and end of their life*'; there, his 'mind and conduct', no longer mirroring the polite insincerity of English society, 'were for the first time consistent with each other'.[47] As we saw in the previous chapter, Louisa Clemens similarly

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[40] Hicks, 'Christianity Personified', pp. 2, 5, 151-205.
[41] Hicks also highlights Perceval's 'lukewarm attitude towards the Church of Scotland' as a factor here. See Hicks, 'Christianity Personified', pp. 5, 151-205. Also see Gray, *Spencer Perceval*, p. 19.
[42] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, pp. 15-16.
[43] See Stunt, *From Awakening to Secession*, pp. 190-91.
[44] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, p. 16. Also see T.C.F. Stunt, 'Bulteel, Henry Bellenden (1800–1866)', *ONDB*.
[45] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, p. 15.
[46] Ibid., p. 14.
[47] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

contrasted her own experiences of spiritual alienation within the established church in Scotland, and her spiritual liberation among Irish Methodists in Cork.[48]

Yet even if his head and heart—his Christian profession and action—held together among dissenters in way that they could not among Anglicans, this union was (from the point of view of his second book) at the expense of conscience: the faculty, as we have seen, that was responsible for regulating his religious passions in accordance with 'his relative position in society'.[49] For his proclivity for nonconformity ultimately put him in opposition to 'the religion of my country', to his father's legacy, and thus, to his 'true' identity.

As I have suggested, this tension in his own identity mirrored wider developments within the established church. Parallels in this respect between his experience and the career of Henry Bulteel—under whose preaching Perceval sat during his brief time at Oxford—are revealing. As curate of one of the two bastions of Anglican evangelicalism in the city, St. Ebbe's Church, Bulteel was a highly controversial and charismatic figure, remembered by fellow clergyman Thomas Byrth (1793–1849) for his 'ultra-Calvinism', and by John Perceval himself as a 'vehement' preacher of 'doctrines then almost peculiar to himself, and in the highest degree Calvinistic'.[50] As they did for Perceval, Bulteel's evangelical positions led to friction with the established church and an attraction to nonconformity. In February 1831, he preached a sermon condemning the Church for Erastianism, and subsequently set out with fellow clerical controversialist William Tiptaft (1803–1864) on a preaching tour of nonconformist chapels throughout western England. Upon returning to Oxford, his license was revoked, and so, with a following of loyal parishioners, he took charge of a

[48] See Clemens, *Narrative*, pp. 35-36.
[49] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. 276.
[50] Stunt, *From Awakening to Secession*, pp. 188-89, 196-97, 215; Perceval, *Narrative*, I, p. 16.

new dissenting chapel near Pembroke College. His doctrinal shifts in this period were also dramatic. Having heard of the outbreak of healings and tongues-speaking that had swept Edward Irving's church in London in the early 1830s, he abandoned predestinarianism for the Irvingite belief in general redemption, and his congregation witnessed healings of its own.[51]

Perceval's experience was attended with a similar mobility between theological positions and ecclesiastical commitments, yet the dramatization of this mobility in his narrative as part of a decline into madness provides a unique window into the importance of this cultural moment as one within which a certain worldview—and a corresponding social and religious identity—were swiftly eroding. The principal markers of his class identity—the military and the established church—no longer offered the robust convergence of national and religious purposes that they had represented to many in his father's generation; and his madness emerges in his narrative as both a reflection and consequence of this loss.

Enthusiasm and Exclusion

> I was denied, I understand, by the church at Row; and they said, I am told, that I was possessed by a devil.[52]

This statement summarised Perceval's experience among the tongues-speakers and prophesiers in south-western Scotland, whose charismatic revivalism began in 1829 and spread to Edward Irving's congregation in London—with which it is most commonly

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[51] J.S. Reynolds, *The Evangelicals at Oxford, 1735–1871* (Oxford, 1953), pp. 96-99; James Robinson, *Divine Healing: The Formative Years, 1830–1880: Theological Roots in the Transatlantic World* (Eugene, OR, 2011), pp. 18-19; Stunt, 'Bulteel, Henry Bellenden', *ONDB*. For Bulteel's accounts of miracles in his own congregation, see his *Doctrine of the Miraculous Interference of Jesus* (Oxford, 1832). Also see *The Unknown Tongues, or, the Rev. Edward Irving and the Rev. Nicholas Armstrong* (1832) for his defence of Irvingism.
[52] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. 359.

associated—in 1831.[53] Perceval would himself come to associate the Pentecostal practices of the people at Row and Port-Glasgow with the ill-regulated 'enthusiasm' of evangelical spirituality; yet, as the above quotation suggests, his own expression of enthusiasm was ultimately negated by this community as something 'other'.

The charismatic revivals in Row, Port-Glasgow and London were linked in terms of both theology and spiritual experience. Under the ministries of both the Presbyterian minister of the Row parish, John McLeod Campbell (1800–1872), and Edward Irving in London, tongues-speaking and prophecies emerged in the midst of controversies they had provoked with their teachings about Christology and the nature of the atonement. It had begun, for McLeod Campbell, with a formal investigation by the Scottish presbytery in 1829, provoked by his teaching that Christ had died for all of humanity (a teaching that had violated the doctrine of limited atonement as articulated in the Westminster standards, to which the presbytery required the assent of its ministers). McLeod Campbell narrowly escaped disciplinary action when the 1829 petition was withdrawn, but a subsequent appeal in the following year prompted a visit of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, a trial for heresy, and ultimately, McLeod Campbell's deposition from the ministry.[54] Throughout the controversy, however, his optimistic account of the atonement was attended with apparent miracles of healing, prophecy and tongues speaking.

Edward Irving had himself made a habit of courting controversy from his pulpit at Regent Square, where a church had been built specifically for his ministry in 1827.[55] His most contentious position was his view that Christ, although having been spared of the commission of any sins by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, had nevertheless

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[53] Grass, *The Lord's Work*, pp. 12-14; Robinson, *Divine Healing*, pp. 13-16.
[54] G. MacGregor, 'The Row Heresy', *The Harvard Theological Review*, 43/4 (1950), pp. 281-301.
[55] Brown, 'Irving, Edward,' *ODNB*.

taken upon himself the sinful nature of humankind. This, Irving argued, had been necessary in order for Christ to redeem sinful humanity, but it defied his critics' more conventional belief that Christ's nature was inherently sinless, and thus unmarred by even the capacity for sinfulness. Irving was accused of heresy in 1828 and formally charged in 1830 by the presbytery of London, from which he subsequently separated with the support of his kirk session in Scotland. In the wake of these events, he heard reports about the charismatic phenomena in McLeod Campbell's parish, and his initial scepticism was soon quelled as he began to urge his parishioners to pray for such manifestations in their own congregation. By April 1831, their wish had been granted, and the gift of tongues-speaking swept across the congregation at Regent Square.[56]

As we saw in the previous chapter, Irving's views about biblical prophecy converged in various ways with those of Spencer Perceval a generation earlier. Britain, he thought, had cosmic significance as a beacon of truth in the face of Napoleonic disorder and Catholic infidelity.[57] Yet, in radical opposition to Perceval's prophetic vision, the charismatic movement that emerged under Irving's ministry—one of various expressions of the general mood of critique and renewal in this period—came ultimately to represent the (hypothetical) dissolution of the Anglican regime and the enactment of a new church modelled after the New Testament precedent, complete with its own apostles, deacons and prophets.[58] It thus posed a direct theological threat to the ecclesiastical pillar of John Perceval's identity.

In the nineteenth century, the cultural implications of this mode of prophetic subversion were not what they had been in the mid-seventeenth century; the Irvingite movement was not at the centre of the wider political discourse, but instead operated in

[56] Brown, 'Irving, Edward,' *ODNB*; Robinson, *Divine Healing*, pp. 14-16.
[57] See Irving, *Babylon and Infidelity Foredoomed by God*, Vol. 2 (1826), pp. 315-444.
[58] See Grass, *The Lord's Work*, pp. 31-35.

relative isolation as one of a number of new sects to emerge in this period. Yet, as Perceval's narrative demonstrates, the threat it posed to the political and social order continued to operate in other, more subtle ways. This threat emerges in Perceval's account as a psychological and spiritual one. His immersion into the communities at Row and Port-Glasgow accelerated the process by which his judgment—and thus, his sense of true identity—were overthrown by his feelings and intuitions. And yet, despite his unequivocal censure of this subversion, he frequently recounted the relief that it had brought him to succumb to these inner feelings. In part, these admissions acted as justification for his own failure to sustain his judgement. At a deeper level, they formed part of the implicit critique in his narratives of the supposed fragmentation of head and heart in English society as a whole.

Perceval recounted having first heard about the charismatic revival at Row in the spring of 1830, soon after his arrival in Oxford. Given that this movement was one of the numerous expressions of the general mood of critique and renewal in this period—one whose Irvingite progeny would later gain a temporary adherence from Perceval's favourite minister at Oxford, Henry Bulteel, as well as the allegiance of John Perceval's eldest brother, Spencer (1795–1859), who was made an apostle of the movement—it is hardly surprising that it drew an 'enthusiastic' Perceval to south-western Scotland so quickly. Nevertheless, he recounted in his narrative that he first travelled to the area in September 1830 as a sceptic, whose chief goal was to learn the truth behind the reports he had heard of healings, prophecies and tongues-speaking. It would only take one encounter for his scepticism to melt away, and for the overthrow of his judgment to begin.

Perceval thus recounted that at a luncheon, a young woman 'pitted with the small pox' addressed him under the presumed influence of the Holy Spirit, alternating

between words of an 'unknown' tongue ('*Hola mi hastos, Hola mi hastos, disca capita crustos bustos*') and quotations from scripture.[59] Having initially felt conflicted about the spiritual authenticity of the woman's utterances, his suspicions were alleviated as he 'felt a spirit or a humour shedding its benign influence' within. He used the occasion to justify the erosion of his own discernment in a statement that asserted the psychological mechanisms (and insidiously powerful impact) of charismatic experience more generally:

> A mind so harassed, so tortured as mine had been for many years, may well be pardoned for being deceived, by so *sensible* a delusion; by a Pandora bringing in her box a medicine so suited apparently to my complaint, and so delightful.[60]

A second episode that Perceval recounted evinced the same psychological pattern, and brings the problematics of identity more explicitly to the fore. Perceval had by this point crossed the River Clyde from Row to Port Glasgow, the other hotbed of charismatic activity in the region. Months earlier, two brothers who ran a local shipping business, James and George MacDonald, had become dissatisfied with the preaching of their parish minister, James Barr, and had begun holding prayer meetings in their home. On occasion, they would travel across the river to hear John McLeod Campbell's sermons at Row, and in the spring of 1830, reports spread that their sister Margaret (1815–c. 1840) had been miraculously cured after having spent eighteen months bedridden with an illness.[61] The miracle initiated a wave of tongues-speaking and prophecy at Port Glasgow, exhibited first by the MacDonald brothers themselves and then by others in the parish.[62]

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[59] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, pp. 19-20.
[60] Ibid., p. 21.
[61] A young woman in John McLeod Campbell's parish, Mary Campbell (not related to McLeod Campbell), was likewise reported to have recovered miraculously from an illness around the same time. See Stunt, *Awakening*, pp. 231-32.
[62] Stunt, *Awakening*, pp. 231-32.

When Perceval arrived, this outpouring of spiritual gifts was in full swing. He recounted that his involvement in the MacDonalds' meetings was initially fraught with psychological travail. His inner conflict, he claimed, brought on a deep depression, yet this gave way one day to a spiritual exuberance which attended an act of self-surrender to the influence of the Holy Spirit. He described this event in vivid detail. After having left a meeting one evening, he retired to an inn, and ordered a glass of whisky in the travellers' room. There, he encountered a Scottish man who also ordered whisky ('with which, from his appearance, he was far better acquainted than myself'). In his description of their interaction, Perceval juxtaposed his natural attitude (his 'nature') with the influence of the evangelical agency which continued to unbalance his identity:

> This kind of frolicsome squire or laird I shrank from, having a most hearty dislike to riot and extravagance. The more, however, my nature shrank from him, the more need I imagined he had of Christian charity and instruction.[63]

Perceval's (inherited) identity continued to act as a principle of spiritual judgment in this interaction. It was the perceived distance between his own nature and the man's character that communicated to him the latter's need for 'charity and instruction'. Crucially, it was Perceval's appropriation of the charismatic 'mode' of his new community at Row that permitted him to make the shift from detached moraliser to empathetic minister:

> During my conversation, I was dwelling intently upon the means most likely to quicken him to a sense of shame and hope; and looking, though despondingly, to be guided by the Holy Spirit in my argument. I suffered a deep internal struggle—I seemed guided to I knew not what: at last, I flung myself back, as it were, in the arms of the Lord; and opening my mouth, I sang without premeditation, in beautiful tones, that affected my mind greatly, and in measure like to an anthem, 'kindred with Christ! bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh!'[64]

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[63] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, p. 23.
[64] Ibid., pp. 23-24.

Just as Perceval had been transformed by the woman's spiritual utterances at Row, the man to whom Perceval now ministered was 'greatly touched and awed into compunction' by Perceval's singing, and he promised 'to attend one of the meetings next day'.[65]

This encounter indicates the distinct shape that enthusiasm took in the communities at Row and Port-Glasgow. Its desired outcome was to promote the evangelical *ordo salutis*; the intended effect of Perceval's spiritual utterance was thus to stimulate in his interlocutor the same form of compunction that had attended his own conversion. Even the inspired utterance itself is suggestive in this respect. In 1833, an apostle of the Irvingite movement who oversaw the Irvingite communities in Oxfordshire, James Hinton (1793–1862), wrote numerous letters to John's eldest brother, Spencer, in which he described the means by which he had been testing the authenticity of utterances by individuals who claimed to speak by the power of the Holy Spirit. He would demand of the spirit 'a testimony to Jesus', and the expected response was any variant of the phrase, 'Jesus is at the right hand of God. He is flesh of your flesh and bone of your bone'.[66] This response was not arbitrary; it testified to the crucial teaching for which Edward Irving had been censured by the presbytery of London: that Jesus, in Irving's words, 'took upon himself a body like ours' and was born 'under accursed conditions'.[67] For the Irvingite communities under Hinton's leadership, the proclamation that Christ was 'flesh of your flesh and bone of your bone' gave a theological centre—and a practical boundary—to prophecy more generally. Although it was heterodox according to the Westminster standards, this theological stance served to regulate Irvingite enthusiasm as part of a communal practice, preventing prophecy from

[65] Ibid., p. 24.
[66] See, for instance, BL, Add MS 49192: James Hinton to Spencer Perceval, 10 Aug. 1833.
[67] Quoted in D.W. Dorries, *Edward Irving's Incarnational Christology* (Fairfax, VA, 2002), p. 301.

giving rise to fresh heresies and putting limitations on the identities of individual prophets.[68]

John McLeod Campbell had himself been the influence behind Irving's adoption of this Christological stance,[69] and Perceval's recollection of having used the paradigmatic phrase associated with this Christology might well reflect the practice of the communities at Row and Port-Glasgow. Alternatively, his memory of this encounter might have been shaped by subsequent conversations with his brother, Spencer, whose Irvingite commitments are mentioned in John Perceval's narratives.[70] Either way, it is significant that Perceval's writings gave a discernible theological structure to the enthusiasm he encountered at Row. In neither his writings, nor in the evidence external to them, does Irvingite enthusiasm emerge as something unregulated or 'insane'.

Nor did Perceval blame the people at Row for his own descent into madness. Whilst laying out his own theory of enthusiasm in his second book, Perceval insisted that 'I do not intentionally bear witness against the inspirations which came upon the godly men I knew at Row and Port Glasgow'.[71] Moreover, the last episode that he related from his time at Row indicated an awareness of a deeper rationality within their experiences to which he had himself failed to adjust whilst he had been with them. During a Sunday morning service, after the congregation had finished singing a hymn and before McLeod Campbell had begun his sermon, Perceval felt an inner prompting to break the silence in the sanctuary by singing a psalm. Initially he '*mistrusted the guidance*', but 'after inward conflict, whilst Mr. Campbell was actually preaching', he 'gained confidence to chant two verses of *another psalm*'. In this case, the nature of the

[68] For an example of Hinton rejecting the testimony of a spirit, see BL, Add MS 49192: James Hinton to Spencer Perceval, 10 Aug. 1833.
[69] Grass, *The Lord's Work*, p. 14.
[70] Perceval *Narrative*, II, p. xxvi.
[71] Ibid., p. 359.

experience and the evidence of his 'feelings' convinced him that 'the power was not mine' and must therefore be 'divine'. Yet McLeod Campbell purportedly rushed from the pulpit and begged him to stop singing, and after the service, Mary Campbell (a prominent member of the community, but not related to John McLeod Campbell) rebuked Perceval, citing Paul's instruction to the Corinthians to practise orderliness, rather than confusion, in the church.[72]

In his second narrative, Perceval wrote that 'no inference is to be drawn from me to [the people at Row]',[73] thus distinguishing between his own madness and the enthusiasm of this community, which, he insisted, was in some sense rational (if nevertheless misguided). For it operated according to specific rules within the community—a communal form of judgment reflected in the distinctions between true and false prophets to which James Hinton alluded in his letters to Perceval's Irvingite brother.

Nevertheless, the community emerges as a central player in his descent. For Perceval, the role of these Scottish communities in accelerating his descent into madness had to do with the conflict between judgment and feeling that attended his efforts to assimilate to their practices. He described the problem in terms of a dualism between 'the life of that Spirit' and 'the flesh'. As the former sought to make him 'a living instance of the Holy Ghost operating in man,—full of courage, confidence, peace, and rapture, like a glowing flame, but still and submissive', the latter made him perpetually 'anxious, lest I should be betrayed into error by a false zeal, or by false directions'.[74] This characterisation mapped directly onto the tension throughout his narrative between piety and politeness that had led him to embrace evangelical

[72] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, pp. 26-27. See 1 Cor. xiv. 26-40.
[73] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. 359.
[74] Ibid., I, p. 28.

enthusiasm in the first place. Rather than being taught, at Row, to incorporate reason and passion within a paradigm that properly reflected his social identity, he had been encouraged to surrender his judgment to the authority of feeling.

ELIZABETH T. STONE

> I was now happy; my earthly sorrows seemed to be nothing to what my happiness was. I now commenced a new life, and on my return home I told my parents of it, and brothers and sisters how I had dedicated myself to God and his Gospel, and then the vilest hatred of the family was brought down upon me.[75]

Elizabeth Stone wrote about her evangelical conversion experience in the first three of her four books. The above quotation, from her third (1859), tersely captures the direct causal link she perceived between the religious identity her conversion had inaugurated and her family's choice to have her confined to an asylum. It also illustrates the centrality of the affections to her understanding of authentic religious interiority.

This emphasis upon the affections, contrasting with Perceval's fixation on religious passion and intuition, marked the chief difference between the self-portrayals of the two authors, and reflected important differences between their social and religious contexts. Perceval's emphasis upon religious passion, as we have seen, reflected a broader pattern of disillusionment, among many British Anglicans in the 1820s and 1830s, with respect to the religious condition of church and state. He characterised his conversion in part as a reaction to this problem, yet one that led him to embrace passion at the expense of judgment; and as author, he had come to agree with his relatives that his evangelical enthusiasm had been a form of madness.

Stone's characterisation of her conversion, by contrast, reflected the ongoing influence of Jonathan Edwards's *Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746)

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[75] E.T. Stone, *Exposing the Modern Secret Way of Persecuting Christians in Order to Hush the Voice of Truth. Insane Hospitals are Inquisition Houses. All Heaven is interested in this Crime* (Boston, 1859), p. 4.

within the revivalist societies of antebellum America. Her conversion was presented as a solution to her emotional alienation from her family, and as her induction into a spiritual community marked by the affections of love for God and for one another. In the previous chapter, we saw that the thought world of Louisa Clemens's autobiography, too, was shaped in the American context by the notion of an invisible community of true Christians. This was a dominant theological trope among American evangelicals in the first half of the nineteenth century, and for Stone, it had formed the intellectual underpinning of a personal transformation that she represented as having distinguished her from her family members and having thus set them against her. Unlike Perceval, however, she remained committed, as author, to the truth of her 'enthusiasm', and she adamantly opposed the notion that she had been insane.

Yet beneath the distinct theological, cultural and personal inflections of their self-portrayals, there was a crucial affinity between the experiences of Stone and Perceval as they depicted them. Conversion, for both, had entailed the embrace of a form of religious sincerity—achieved by means of an infusion of divine power—in the face of a perceived formalism or religious inauthenticity in the society around them. Moreover, both characterised conversion in their writings as having formed identities that transgressed the mores of their distinct social and religious environments. Stone and Perceval were indeed both the progeny of a transatlantic religious movement that had been giving rise to subversive identities since the eighteenth century[76]—identities that were now, in the nineteenth century, being carved up, within the emergent psychiatric discourse, as a form of religious monomania with 'innate' and 'environmental' causes.[77] Thus, the comparison between Perceval and Stone is

[76] Hindmarsh, *The Evangelical Conversion Narrative*, pp. 6; Anderson, *Imagining Methodism*, pp. 4, 28.
[77] See Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860*, pp. xc-xci.

ultimately a contrast between varieties of a common transatlantic subjectivity—and one which, moreover, faced a common psychiatric response on both sides of the Atlantic.

Notwithstanding these important affinities that linked the experiences of Stone and Perceval, their personal backgrounds could not have been any more opposite to each other. Born to a poor family (the eighth of ten children) in the small town of Westford, Massachusetts, in 1811, Stone left home at the age of fifteen to work at a textile factory in Lowell, a nearby town that would become a major industrial hub of New England by the 1850s. She continued at Lowell for seven years, with a brief intervening period of study at Westford Academy, and in 1834, at the age of twenty-two, she enrolled at a seminary for women in New Hampton, New Hampshire. As a student she converted to evangelicalism, but withdrew from her studies after only a year due to financial necessity. Between 1835 and 1840, she continued to support herself by working in the factories of Lowell, and during that period became a Millerite and grew increasingly concerned about the problem of sectarianism reflected in American denominationalism. Her commitments to preaching the imminence of Christ's return and denouncing the evils of sectarianism led to a crisis point in June 1840, when she was excommunicated from the Baptist church in Lowell for having disavowed the distinguishing doctrines of the Baptist denomination in a private meeting with the church minister, Lemuel Porter. In the months that followed, as her fervour for the Millerite cause grew, she became convinced that her employment at the factory was preventing her from following her spiritual vocation. The problem came to a head in November of the same year, when she confined herself to her room at her boarding house in Lowell and refused to return to work. When reports of her mental state reached her siblings, they took measures to have her confined at McLean Asylum, a private

hospital at Charlestown (a neighbourhood of Boston). Stone was admitted as a patient on Wednesday, 25 November 1840, and released sixteen months later.[78]

Over subsequent years, Stone put out four books (all self-published), the first two in 1842 and 1843, and the others in 1859 and 1861. Her aim was to expose both the evil of the category of insanity as well as the alleged purpose of asylums as 'modern bastilles' designed to persecute true Christians. Her premise was consistent throughout the entire corpus: the asylum had spelt the death of her spiritual life. In her own words, the 'medicine they gave me [at the asylum] … racked and tortured and killed the spirit of Christ within me'.[79]

Her first book was published in the year of her release and had the straightforward purpose of exposing the asylum for having caused her own spiritual death. The next year she published another book, in which she rebutted the accusations of a Methodist preacher who had acted as a visiting preacher at the chapel of McLean Asylum, and had publicly denounced the claims of her first book about the abuses that patients faced there. After the publication of this book she took residence with a family in Roxbury, a municipality that has since become a neighbourhood of Boston; and later opened a milliner's shop in Boston. The rationale of her third book, published in 1859, was to warn the public about the broader threat that insane asylums posed as institutions that were designed to persecute Christians and eradicate true Christianity. Notably, the book also documented a spiritual vision that she had received in 1857, which marked her recovery from the melancholy that had afflicted her since her confinement. And in

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[78] Stone, *Sketch*, pp. 32, 34.
[79] Stone, *Sketch*, pp. 24. Also note examples in Stone, *Sketch*, 27, 38, 40, 42; Stone, *Remarks upon the statements made by H.B. Skinner: in the pulpit of the Hamilton chapel on Sunday afternoon, 18th of June, 1843; in reference to what she had stated concerning his being Chaplain in the Charlestown McLean asylum: and also a further relation of her sufferings, while confined in that place for 16 months and 20 days in the years 1841–42* (Boston, 1843), pp. 3-5; Stone, *Exposing*, pp. 26, 33; E.T. Stone, *The American Godhead, or, the Constitution of the United States Cast Down by Northern Slavery, or by the Power of Insane Hospitals* (Boston, 1861), pp. 9-11.

1861, she published her fourth and final book, which called for the reform of the lunacy laws.

Like Perceval, Stone showed an awareness in her writings that some readers would question her credibility as a former asylum patient. Whilst she simply stated in her first book that she was determined to publish 'whether it is believed or not', the controversy raised by the Methodist minister who had publicly refuted her claims led to a more rigorous effort in her second book to establish her own credibility and to undermine his.[80] It thus contains official proceedings of a meeting held at a local minister's house, the purpose of which had been to mediate the conflict between Stone and her accuser.[81] Perhaps seeking to avoid another controversy of this sort in subsequent publications, she provided readers of her third book a means of verifying its content first-hand: 'if any one doubts it, come and see me. I am at the present time at 669 Washington Street, Boston, Mass. I am willing to converse with all'.[82] And in her fourth, she included letters of support from women corroborating her identity and her claims about the sufferings she had experienced at McLean Asylum.[83]

More subtly, Stone asserted the truth of her claims by stamping her account with specific names and dates. Particularly noteworthy in this respect are her references in her first two books to the mesmerists, clairvoyants and phrenologists—including the famous somnambulist, Cynthia Gleason (b. 1799), and (likely) one of the Fowler brothers, either Orson Squire (1809–1887) or Lorenzo Niles (1811–1896)—who examined her after her release from McLean Asylum and confirmed that her brain had sustained damage as an effect of the asylum medicines.[84] In Chapter 5 of this thesis we

[80] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 3; Stone, *Remarks*, p. 8.
[81] Stone, *Remarks*, pp. 21-25.
[82] Stone, *Exposing*, p. 10.
[83] Stone, *The American Godhead*, pp. 15-20, 34-36.
[84] See Stone, *Sketch*, pp. 41-42 and Stone, *Remarks*, p. 4.

will look at how these medical consultations themselves—and the mind sciences underpinning them—functioned as a source of evidence both for the truth of her allegations against the asylum, and of her own spiritual condition. But in a general sense, her mention of her interactions with specific (and publicly known) individuals lent credibility to her claims by making them easily falsifiable.

Ultimately, however, Stone's writings were not aimed at a general and undefined public, but at the 'invisible' spiritual community of the converted. Indeed, they appealed to all those who had experienced a 'saving change'—a group which, at least in theory, formed a class of its own that transcended social and economic stratifications. This community was made partly visible in the testimonies from other women which she included in her fourth book. Each testimony echoed Stone's own rhetoric in her writings about the injustice of the lunacy laws, the spurious equivalence in the period between 'true religion' and insanity, the oppressive function of insane asylums as 'modern bastilles', and the harmful effects of asylum medicine. The testimonials functioned as the texts of a kind of prophetic school, the specific concerns and rhetorical strategies of which were formed as the communal response of the 'converted' to the experiences and insights of one of their own. The voice of 'enthusiasm' was one of these strategies, and was exhibited particularly clearly by a woman named Isabella Lang, whose testimony Stone described as an expression of 'the holy spirit in her soul'. Written in Boston in January 1861, it opens thus:

> Men and brothers hearken to the voice of God! It is time that you all knew for yourselves whether you are about your heavenly Father's business. Men, open your eyes, and see your land; learn where slime pits are insane hospitals. A person cannot hardly begin to breathe the sweet air of heaven, and speak forth in holy boldness the testimony of Jesus, like the freeborn sons of God of old, but what the cry immediately is raised: Insanity! you must be put into the insane hospital! They must be put into infidel doctor's hands, to be drugged and be experimented upon.[85]

[85] Stone, *American Godhead*, p. 34.

The testimony continues in this vein, asserting that Christ himself was 'put … to death as a madman, eighteen hundred and sixty years ago', and auguring, by way of conclusion, the downfall of insane asylums as the inevitable consequence of their being publicly exposed in prophecies of this sort.[86] The statement mimicked Stone's own voice in sections of her third and fourth books in which she claimed the divine consciousness as the source of her utterance. '[I]t is the holy God of heaven and earth', she thus wrote in her third book, 'which has moved me to speak to the inhabitants of the earth concerning this wickedness',[87] and her enthusiasm reached a fever pitch in her fourth book in the following appeal to her eldest brother to repent publicly for the role he had played in her confinement:

> Come, come, O come! my brother. God is a spirit; my whole soul, body, and spirit is charged with his awful power: it is sweet unto me, but it is awful torment to the evil doer. Come, my brother, come stand at my side![88]

Such exhortations reflect the function of the enthusiastic voice within Stone's 'prophetic' circle as a mode of discourse that both invoked and instantiated a spiritual sphere to which human society was accountable.

Another testimony in her fourth book, written by a woman from Roxbury with whose family Stone had boarded for several years after her release from McLean Asylum, further reveals the logic underpinning her spiritual community as one that transcended social and class differences. Moreover, it evinces a central theme throughout Stone's writings: the notion that an individual's sense of belonging to the community of the converted was indicated in their readiness to absorb the 'reproach' of the unconverted for the sake of the gospel. Stone's identity as one who had been incarcerated for her religious beliefs established her own spiritual credentials in this

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[86] Ibid.
[87] Stone, *Exposing*, p. 10.
[88] Stone, *American Godhead*, p. 38.

respect; yet it also functioned as a litmus test for the spiritual identities of those she had encountered, whose status vis-à-vis this invisible community was determined by their responses to her religious and economic plight both before and after her confinement. By extension, her readers were faced with the same test in their choice about how to respond to Stone's claims—with empathy and action, or with condemnation and disbelief.

Writing, like Isabella Lang, in January 1861, this woman, who signed as E.A. Andrews, opened with a diatribe against the evils of insane asylums and the exploitation of insanity as a category used to defame the godly, before giving an account of her relationship to Stone. This account opened with a statement which expresses the fundamental tension at the core of her testimony:

> as a Christian and respectable citizen should, I was endeavoring to fulfil every obligation arising out of the relations which I sustain as a wife, mother, and friend, doing good unto all, as I had opportunity, and especially to the household of faith, as a free-born citizen, in a peaceable, quiet way; making myself ready to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.[89]

This statement established Andrews's domestic credentials as a devoted wife and mother, yet as her testimony progresses, these aspects of her identity come into tension with her duties to a friend (Stone) and, relatedly, to the 'household of faith'. Initially, she managed to sustain an appropriate balance between each duty. When Stone (with whom Andrews had already been acquainted before her confinement) approached her after her release from McLean, Andrews 'felt it my duty, with the consent of my husband, to bid her welcome to our house'. For many years, her husband treated Stone well, but his attitude soured in the wake of an event that Andrews dated to the period after Stone's miraculous recovery from her melancholy in 1857. Andrews and one of her children had fallen gravely ill, and having refused medical treatment on the grounds

[89] Ibid., p. 16.

that it was ‘contrary to our faith to call upon an earthly power for help’, they were held to have been healed through simple trust in the divine physician and the spiritual ‘assistance of my friend, Miss Stone’. For Andrews’s husband, however, it was ‘just as though Miss Stone was to blame for what God had done, in afflicting me, and restoring me to health again’. He banned Stone from their home, and warned his wife that if she visited Stone at her milliner’s shop in Boston, ‘I should be put into the [insane] hospital’.[90]

In her response to Stone’s plight as a former asylum patient, and in her willingness to flout an aspect of her domestic duty (obedience to her husband) in support of her friend, Andrews had performed her spiritual identity as one of the converted. Conversely, by becoming ‘enraged against Miss Stone’ merely ‘for speaking the word of the Lord’, and by threatening his own wife with incarceration, Mr. Andrews had established his worldly enmity towards Christ and his ‘spiritual’ communion with Stone’s past persecutors.[91]

E.A. Andrews’s testimony is thus revealing on more than one level. It provides a window into the actual community of evangelical women who surrounded Stone in the years that followed her confinement, and who formed the ‘prophetic school’ which, as we have seen, deployed the voice of enthusiasm as a means of calling alienists and their institutions to account. And, relatedly, its themes and implicit assumptions—in particular, its stratification of society according to the individual’s orientation to a spiritual community of authentic Christians—are suggestive of a specific worldview to which Stone herself could appeal as author, and which transcended divisions of class and gender.

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[90] Ibid., pp. 16-18.
[91] Ibid., p. 18.

There is a revealing contrast in this respect between Stone's evangelical idiom and the rhetorical strategies adopted by a Unitarian woman, Elizabeth Packard (1816–1897), who likewise wrote asylum exposés based upon her experience of having been confined to an asylum for her religious beliefs.[92] Packard's case became well known in 1864 when she sued her husband, the Calvinist minister Theophilus Packard, for having had her confined for three years at the Jacksonville Insane Asylum in Illinois for her supposed deviance on matters of doctrine. As Mary Elene Wood's insightful study of Packard's autobiography has shown, Packard made use of various genres to establish the legitimacy and persuasiveness of her claims. The conventions of spiritual autobiography gave a divine authority to her claims, and the genre of slave narrative, 'in which personal experience provides grounds for argument against injustice', gave weight to the evidence of her first-hand experiences in the asylum. But perhaps most important was her use of the 'sentimental novel tradition, in which a virtuous woman is victimized by an unfeeling rake'. By depicting herself as the 'virtuous' female victim of the 'rakish' asylum doctor, and thus establishing her 'middle-class womanhood', Packard strategically clothed the subversive aspects of her project in the garb of an appropriately 'feminine' rationality. Taken together, then, her appeals through these genres to spiritual authority, the legitimacy of personal experience, and a domestic subjectivity both mitigated the scandal of her participation (as a woman) in the public discourse and strengthened her case regarding the injustice of the lunacy laws.[93]

By contrast, Stone's 'public' was defined in theological terms according to an essential division (between the converted and the unconverted) that bound her, as a working-class woman, to individuals whose social circumstances were quite different

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[92] See, especially, E.P.W. Packard, *The Prisoners' Hidden Life, or, Insane Asylums Unveiled: As Demonstrated by the Report of the Investigating Committee of the Legislature of Illinois. Together with Mrs. Packard's Coadjutors' Testimony* (Chicago, 1868).
[93] Wood, *The Writing on the Wall*, p. 27.

from hers, such as E.A. Andrews. In Chapter 1 we saw that Louisa Clemens described her 'special work' in the American context in terms of a similar division in society between 'true believers' and their ideological opponents, which, whilst underpinning her own distinct formulations of 'the other', also permitted her to bridge social divides between dominant and marginalised groups and identities. For both authors, this spiritual division of society—formed within the theological and cultural milieu of American revivalism—underpinned a class of their own, which possessed its own values and standards of assessing evidence and authorial warrant.[94]

This point distinguished Stone's narrative voice in a crucial way from that of John Perceval, who, as we have seen, was dealing directly with the contested meanings of 'enthusiasm' within the polite society to which he was writing. The challenge he had faced had been to articulate a convincing distinction between the evangelical enthusiasm of his (insane) past and the rational enthusiasm of his present. Stone was instead appealing to a readership which accepted as authentic the 'enthusiasm' for which she had been (scandalously) confined.

Conversion and Community

> I had always done for myself from the time that I was in my 15th year, and received no assistance from any one of the family, and had endeavored to support a good character, although I was called to walk in the humble walks of life, and had often met with the cold neglect of the rich and popular class of the world because I was a poor factory girl.[95]

This quotation from Stone's first book (1842) established the economic background of her struggle as an alleged religious lunatic. It characterised her natural condition in the

[94] To Perry Miller, such developments stood behind an entire consciousness which constituted a distinctly American form of nationalism, as well as constituting the dominant side of 'the basic division of the country' in the antebellum period between the supporters and detractors of revival. See P. Miller, *The Life of the Mind in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War* (New York, 1965), pp. 10-14.
[95] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 18.

world as an unhappy woman, alienated from her family and forced to sustain herself as a factory labourer in Lowell. Her identity was framed as a problem not only to her, but also to her brothers, who were seeking to move upwards in society and distance themselves from a class background of which their sister's situation at the factory served as a shameful reminder. Stone's conversion functioned in her narrative both as a solution to her own problems of alienation, unhappiness and a crippling self-reliance, and as something that exacerbated this growing class tension within her family by making her behaviours more public and more transgressive.

The two brothers Stone had held most responsible for her confinement, Ebenezer Whitten Stone (1802–1879) and Stephen S. Stone, had indeed risen up from their humble origins to become prominent citizens in the Boston area. In a distinguished military career, Ebenezer, her eldest brother, published two books on military law and tactics and, in 1851, was appointed Adjutant General of Massachusetts.[96] In the civil arena, he held positions as a representative to the Massachusetts General Court and as a councilman in Roxbury. Details about Stephen's life are less clear, but Elizabeth made frequent mention of his business dealings and claimed that he kept the Commercial Coffee House in Boston.[97] It was this brother in particular, and his wife Sophia, whose class prejudices were most emphasised in Elizabeth's narrative. She recounted that during a period in which she was employed in Great Falls, New Hampshire, Stephen posted items to her 'in a fictitious name, not wishing any one to know that he had a

[96] His books included *Digest of the Militia Laws of Massachusetts: and Extracts Relating to the Militia from the United States and State Constitutions and the Laws of the United States* (Boston, 1851) and *Compend of Instructions in Military Tactics, and the Manual of Percussion Arms, with Extracts from the U.S. Army Regulations* (Boston, 1857). Also see Stone, *American Godhead*, p. 37.
[97] Nineteenth-century records state that the coffee house was built in 1817 and changed ownership at least three times before ceasing to be a public house in 1848. However, Stephen Stone is not among those listed as proprietor in these records. See D.M. Balfour, 'The Taverns of Boston in Ye Olden Time', *The Bay State Monthly*, 2/2 (1884), pp. 106-20.

sister that worked in the factory'.[98] And while she was visiting them at their home in Boston, Sophia 'requested me not to let any one know that I worked in a factory'.[99]

From the perspective of Stone's narrative, this widening class division within the family is what had predisposed her brothers to take the action that they did in having her confined when her religious behaviours became a public scandal in 1840. Her conversion in this sense exacerbated pre-existing problems. Yet for Stone herself, conversion represented a profound solution to the problems of alienation and self-reliance bound up with her working-class identity.

Early in the narrative, she established the problem of alienation that had led her to the factory in the first place. Describing her father, Samuel Stone (1771–1850), as a poor, intemperate mechanic, she claimed that he had 'disowned' her 'as being his lawful child' and 'often ordered [her] away from the house in vile reproach'.[100] Her mother, Grace (Stoddard) Stone (1777–1849), was no better. When Elizabeth's brothers and sisters 'tantalized' her about having been mistreated by their father, her mother 'would never rebuke them for doing so'; and 'when she would find me crying alone by myself, she would scold me and hold me up in ridicule to them, and call me a weak-minded child for crying'.[101] In recounting these childhood traumas, she linked her social alienation to her emotional states, establishing the theme of conversion in her writings as a transformation of both the inward and the social affections. 'But my mother's affections', she thus wrote, 'were always alienated from me, and I always felt the want of a mother's love, and consequently became very unhappy'.[102]

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[98] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 18. This is the only reference in her writings to her employment at Great Falls, and the timing within her biography is unclear. The city (now Somersworth) was home to the Great Falls Manufacturing Company. See 'Brief History of Somersworth', accessed 30 April 2018, at http://www.somersworth.com/departments-services/library/brief-history-of-somersworth/.
[99] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 18.
[100] Stone, *Exposing*, p. 3.
[101] Ibid., p. 3.
[102] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 4.

Within her narrative, economic independence was represented as an initial solution to this issue of social alienation, yet one that generated its own problems by merely extending her emotional suffering and adding to it the crippling burden of self-reliance. Her conversion represented a solution to this entire scenario, an alternative identity that was defined in terms of its participation in a spiritual community of love and mutual support. As we shall see, these distinct models of identity came into tension in the religious crisis that immediately preceded her confinement. But initially, the sequence from one model to the other was represented in quite stark terms.

Stone thus framed her choice to move to Lowell in 1826 and work in the factories as a recourse, in the face of the 'unkind treatment' of her family, to a kind of masculine independence: 'I determined to seek my own living and share the same fate of the rest of the family by buffeting a cold unfeeling world'.[103] Her conversion experience was represented as a radical shift in her own identity from this mode of autonomy and emotional aloofness to one of inter-dependence and emotional engagement.

As the site of her conversion, the female seminary in New Hampton (the Academical and Theological Institution) emerges in Stone's writings as a place of warmth and hospitality, contrasting with the coldness and hostility of her family and of the world more broadly. When she enrolled at the seminary in May 1834, she was one of 160 students,[104] and is listed, along with most of her peers, as a member of the seminary's Young Ladies' Association in the annual reports for 1834 and 1835.[105]

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[103] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 4; Stone, *Exposing*, p. 3.

[104] Stone's name—as well as the names of the teachers and student she mentions in her first narrative—appear in the academy's 1834 and 1835 catalogues. See *A Catalogue of the Officers and Students of the Academical and Theological Institution, New-Hampton, N. H. for the Year Ending November 13, 1834* (Concord, 1834), p. 17; *Catalogue of the … Academical and Theological Institution* (Concord, 1835), p. 17.

[105] *The First Report of the Young Ladies' Association of the New-Hampton Female Seminary, For the Promotion of Literature and Missions; with the Constitution, etc., 1833–4* (Concord, 1835), p. 31; *Second*

Students received instruction in a variety of subjects, including English grammar, French, Latin, classics, mathematics, and the natural sciences, but were also required to attend Sunday services regularly and were encouraged to seek after 'a saving change' in their religious lives.[106]

Her experience at the seminary was marked by a shift from a cold self-reliance to warm inter-dependence in spiritual community. When she arrived at the seminary, the student community was in the throes of evangelical revival. All but three of the students discovered 'an interest in Christ' during her first term, and although she was one of the hold-outs, she recounted having immediately 'felt that God had often called after me and I had refused to obey him'. Initially, however, this feeling only 'increased the carnal state of my heart against religion', which manifested in her ascription of the spirituality she had encountered to a kind of group hysteria: 'I was determined not to get religion when there was much said about it, for I looked upon it as excitement, as many others foolishly call it'.[107] The shift in tenses at the end of this phrase connected her 'carnal' attitude in the past to the anti-evangelical prejudice of her contemporaries in the present, suggesting that she had once participated in the system that later locked her up for 'excitement'.[108]

Stone depicted the gradual erosion of her self-reliance using the characteristic evangelical trope of a 'legal humiliation', in which the pre-convert strives for perfection, falls short, and then succumbs to religious anxiety in the face of their moral inadequacy.[109] Thus, when Miss Hazeltine 'asked us to kneel down and join her in

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Annual Report of the Young Ladies' Association of the New-Hampton Female Seminary, For the Promotion of Literature and Missions; with the Constitution, etc. 1834–5 (Boston, 1836) p. 42.
[106] *First Report of the YLA, 1833–4*, pp. 16-17. Also see *Catalogue of the … Academical and Theological Institution* (1834), pp. 20, 23.
[107] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 4.
[108] As noted in the introduction to this thesis, 'religious excitement' was a common diagnosis in American asylums in this period. See Numbers and Numbers, 'Millerism and Madness', pp. 95-96.
[109] See Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJEO, Vol. 2, p. 96.

prayer' one Monday evening, Stone 'thought I was more hardened than ever; and felt ashamed that I was on my bended knees'.[110] Nevertheless, she persisted, for stated reasons that were bound up with her sense of self-possession before her conversion: 'wishing to act from principle and to prove whether there was any reality in what my teacher said about religion, I was determined to persevere on'. And as these efforts 'to know the real religion of Jesus Christ and live up to it' fell short, she 'began to think that I had grieved the Holy Spirit'.[111]

The spiritual community at the seminary played a crucial role in mediating the resolution of these fresh anxieties. While Stone was walking home one day, another student 'inquired what was the state of my feelings', and when Stone admitted to her struggles, the young woman told her about how she had spent three years 'seeking conviction when she ought to have sought forgiveness'. She thus urged Stone to 'seek for immediate forgiveness'. Stone proceeded to spend the afternoon reading the Bible and praying, 'but did not find any change in my feelings'. At tea, she joined the other students in the Hall, but quickly retired back to her room with the resolution 'not to eat, drink, or sleep, until I found forgiveness'. Yet forgiveness only came after resolutions of this sort gave way to a helpless surrender:

> I rose from the table and retired to my room and knelt down and asked God what I should do in order to be forgiven; then rose up and was sitting down by the table with my head upon my hand wondering what I should do, when something seemed to say to me, 'open the door of your heart and admit me'. I immediately thought I could not without I was better, but something said '*no*, *now*'. I thought the next day being Sunday, I would, after I had been to church; *but no*, the voice said *now*—that I said I would. If *Christ* would but receive me, I would *him* just as I was. I thought *I would*.[112]

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[110] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 5; Martha Hazeltine is listed as 'Principal of Female Seminary, and Teacher of Languages' in the annual reports of the institution for 1834 and 1835. Stone misspelled her named in the narrative as Haseltine.
[111] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 5.
[112] Ibid., p. 5; original emphases.

The experience was not fully consummated until Stone re-entered the community directly afterwards. While still alone, she was in a state of agitation: 'I rose and walked across the room, and was frightened to think what I had said; that I had entered into a covenant with God'. Another student, Mary Ann Burbank, then entered, and they left together with the intention of joining a prayer meeting that was being held that evening at the hall.[113] The communal effects of what had occurred in solitude—a new social harmony and an impulse to testify publicly to the experience of God's grace—emerged in this first interaction. Stone thus told Mary 'that I never was so happy in my life', and then qualified Mary's response that 'she was glad' by noting that Mary 'had been recently baptized'. Mary's own spiritual identity was the condition of her impulse to share in Stone's happiness. It was also the basis of the change in Stone's attitude towards her: 'I had before not liked her very well, but now I loved her with all my heart, because she had owned the Saviour before the world'. This theme of a social cohesion predicated on a shared spiritual identity and inflected by the communal affections of love and joy was then consolidated in the context of the wider group. Stone entered the hall to find her peers singing and praying, and when she knelt down herself, another student prayed for her. Contrasting her previous shame at being seen 'on my bended knees', she now 'longed to have her [the other student] close her prayer to tell them what God had done for me'. The narrative continues,

> As we rose I opened my mouth and words flowed faster than I could speak, I blessed and praised God and asked them all to forgive me for the opposition that I had manifested towards them for their entreating me to be reconciled to God. There was great rejoicing over me. Some wept, some prayed, and some sang.[114]

[113] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 5; Burbank is also listed among the students of the female seminary in the annual reports of the institution for 1834 and 1835.
[114] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 6.

And so, Stone had become a full participant in a community for which membership depended upon the individual experience of God's grace as an interior shift from the active self-sufficiency of the moral hero to the passive humility of the forgiven.

It was only in her first book that she offered an account of her conversion with this much detail. In the autobiographical sections of her second and third books, she abridged the event—and its aftermath—in such a way as to draw unambiguous links between the spiritual mediation of the community at New Hampton, the transformation of her affections, her discovery of a zeal for holiness and evangelical activism, and the attendant hostility of her family members. In her second book, she wrote that she had 'found true happiness by being brought to love God, and to a true knowledge of Christ Jesus, by the kind teaching and prayers of my instructors at New Hampton'. Her conversion was brought about 'through their instrumentality', and its direct effect was her resolution 'to spend all for Christ', and eventually, to take the Gospel 'to the poor heathen in a foreign land'. However, when she first travelled home to tell her parents about the change, 'I was called fanatical and crazy—a fool for spending my time and money to accomplish such a thing [i.e. traveling abroad as a missionary] with my own efforts'.[115]

If this account emphasised the progression from conversion to activism, her third book emphasised the emotional and moral aspects of the transformation. Thus, she had 'found a balm for my wounded heart, a joy for my grief', and this emotional change entailed a revolution in her moral character: 'My heart was changed from the love of pride and vanity to the love of holiness'. And yet, 'on my return home … the vilest

[115] Stone, *Remarks*, p. 5.

hatred of the family'—a contrast to the love she had experienced at the seminary—'was brought down upon me'.[116]

The sequence in both accounts from a brief description of Stone's transformation to the hostile response of her family communicated to her readers that it was her religious identity per se, established in her conversion at New Hampton in 1834, that had been denounced as a form of insanity. The concluding section of this case study will look in detail at the ways in which her evangelical identity exacerbated existing tensions within her family, as well as at her portrayal of her experience as one that exposed the complicity of evangelical groups and movements themselves with the 'worldly' attitude that had condemned her.

Perfection and Exclusion

> I felt that I had a new life to live and was determined to live it. I loved all the people of God, and my feelings soon began to be tried by seeing the divisions that were among them; but I was determined not to have any thing to do with it, but meant to keep the faith as it was once delivered to the Saints, that is, to keep the love previous to my conversion.[117]

These words immediately follow Stone's account of the celebration of her peers after her conversion in her first book. They register the central concern throughout her narrative with the problem of sectarianism in evangelical culture. She framed her incarceration at McLean Asylum in part as a consequence of her decision to live in consistency with the theological principle (the union of true Christians) that was implicit within the evangelical revivalist ideology. Her presumed fidelity on this point was symbolised in the public 'reproach' of her excommunication from the Baptist Church on Worthen Street in Lowell, and was further marked by a series of betrayals

[116] Stone, *Exposing*, p. 4.
[117] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 6.

from within the domain of evangelical revivalist enthusiasm, as leaders in the Millerite movement and the Christian denomination supported her confinement. From the perspectives of these leaders, Stone had become genuinely deranged. Within the thought world of her narrative, however, any complicity in (or support for) her confinement, whether from evangelicals or non-evangelicals, marked a betrayal of the spiritual union of all true believers—a point which applied as much to her readers as it did to the people who had surrounded her in the events that led to her confinement.

Stone's own description of these events evinces important social and economic factors that influenced her family's decision to have her confined. She recounted that after her excommunication in June 1840, she become increasingly troubled by a tension between her 'worldly' occupation as a factory worker and her spiritual vocation as an evangelical activist. This tension gave rise to a psychological crisis that November, in which she refused to return to work at the factory and was bedridden at the home at which she had been staying in Lowell. When her family was notified, her brother Stephen visited her bedside, convinced her to return with him to Boston, and then further convinced her to agree to a period of confinement at McLean Asylum.

Within this picture, it was Stone's inability (or refusal) to work that ultimately made her vulnerable to the threat of confinement. Like most of the women factory workers at Lowell in this period, Stone had been provided with accommodation by the company that employed her (in this case, the Boot Corporation).[118] In his study of the women factory workers in Lowell in this period, Thomas Dublin has shown that life in the boarding house was an extension of life at the mill, and that the boarding house keepers acted as 'surrogate parents' who were responsible for reporting 'unbecoming conduct' among their tenants to the mill agents. The textile firms in Lowell and

[118] Stone, *Sketch*, pp. 10-11.

Waltham (also in Massachusetts) shared with each other the names of women who had been dishonourably discharged, making it difficult for them to find work elsewhere. Stone's refusal to go to work was among the reasons one might be released to the world in this way (leaving 'without giving sufficient notice'), and would have nullified her tenancy at the boarding house.[119]

For her own part, Stone framed this crisis as an outcome of her faithfulness to a spiritual calling. Her refusal to go to work was an extension of a longer process that she narrated, through which she had learned to bear the condemnation of the world for the sake of true Christianity. She framed this process in the 'enthusiastic' idiom as the cultivation of a prophetic sensibility, which began when she realised that she had been in 'a back-slidden state' and 'had lost the liberty whereby Christ had made me free'. Remembering that she had 'found the Savior' in the first place 'by owning him before the world' at the seminary in New Hampton, she 'began to ask the Lord what he would have me to do, and thing after thing was given me'.[120] The cycle she established here—a sequence in which religious anxiety prompts supplication, which then leads to a divine call to exhortation—is repeated twice more in the events that follow. Taken as a whole, these experiences function in the narrative as a purgatorial event, the goal and effect of which was to liberate her from her sinful compliance with worldly structures of authority and division.

The first cycle in the narrative had ended in failure, when, out of fear that 'it was about to bring upon me reproach', she had denied any attachment to the Millerite movement. By the late-1840s, the Baptist preacher William Miller (1782–1849) had attracted thousands of adherents throughout New England with his predictions, based

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[119] T. Dublin, *Women at Work: The Transformation of Work and Community in Lowell, Massachusetts, 1826–1860* (New York, 1979), pp. 78-79.
[120] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 11.

upon his research into biblical prophecies, that Christ would return in 1843 or 1844 (one of his followers eventually settled on 22 October 1844). The movement was controversial for the excessive and 'enthusiastic' behaviour of some of its adherents, as reflected in the considerable numbers that were confined to insane asylums for religious insanity.[121] Stone acknowledged that in this period she 'had embraced the views that are agitated at the present day, that the world is soon to be destroyed, or what is called Miller's doctrine'.[122] Her denial of this fact evinced the ongoing influence of worldly pressures upon her religious life, and her anxiety over the issue activated the second 'purgatorial' cycle in the narrative. Thus, unable to 'rest day [or] night' for fear 'that I was not prepared to meet Him', she 'asked the Lord what He would have me to do' and, by way of divine response, was 'sent with message after message to the people of God'.[123]

It was in the third cycle that she re-introduced the theme of sectarianism into her narrative. She noted that during this period, 'the subject of the union of christians was much agitated',[124] and that since 'the divisions of them had been a source of grief to me

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[121] See Numbers and Numbers, 'Millerism and Madness', p. 95-96. Note, for instance, the concerns expressed by the American physician Joseph Bates in an address to the Medical Society of the County of Columbia that 'Mr. Miller's delusion' had swept the country like an ideological epidemic, filling the people 'with consternation by the daily expectation of beholding the Saviour of the world, and the conflagration of the universe'. See AAS, Earle Family, Papers, 1727–1892: J. Bates, 'Influence of Mind on Disease (Address delivered before the Medical Society of the County of Columbia)', p. 162.
[122] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 39.
[123] Ibid., p. 11.
[124] As we saw in Chapter 1, the so-called 'Christian denomination' emerged in North Carolina and Kentucky as an outgrowth of the revivalist activity in those areas in the 1790s and early 1800s. The ecclesiology that animated the movement—in particular, the idea that the church should abandon ecclesiastical and doctrinal systems to practise a faith modelled after the primitive church—was embraced independently in New England during the same period, first in Vermont by the Baptist preacher Elias Smith (1769–1846), and then by his convert to the cause, Abner Jones (1772–1841), who himself left the Baptist Church in 1801 to form independent 'Christian' congregations in Vermont and then in New Hampshire. The New England 'Christians' joined their counterparts in the southern states in 1810 to form the northern element of what was called the 'Christian Connexion', which at this point claimed a membership of approximately 20,000. By 1840, when Elizabeth Stone began to attend services of the Christian denomination in Lowell, there were dozens of these congregations throughout New England and in the surrounding regions to which the movement had spread, including Pennsylvania, New York and Canada. See W.E. Garrison, *An American Religious Movement: A Brief History of the Disciples of Christ* (St. Louis, 1945), pp. 44-47; Williams et al (eds), *The Stone-Campbell Movement*, pp. 9-29.

ever since I was converted', she 'asked the Lord what he would have me to do, and went to the Bible for instruction'. Her realisation that her own membership in the Baptist denomination made her complicit in Christian disunity entailed a fresh wave of religious anxiety, which she described in vivid detail: 'I told no one of my situation for I thought it was the Lord that was dealing with me and had got to have a trial of my faith'. And her fears were not misplaced, for this time the 'prophetic' response demanded of her was to 'go without the camp and bear reproach for Christ'. The reference to reproach linked this sequence to the first cycle, in which she had avoided reproach by denying that she was a Millerite. This time, she would instead accept reproach as the cost of obedience to divine authority. In application, this meant meeting with the Baptist minister, Lemuel Porter, at his home in Lowell and informing him of 'how the Lord was dealing with me':

> I told him how the Lord had shown me that articles of faith were a sin by the Bible and that I did not want any thing to do with parsuasions [sic]. I wanted to keep God's commandments, for I hated the very garment that was spotted with the flesh; I would have my name taken off the church books, but not off his heart, for I loved the people of God. I wanted to go to the communion table and still held to the ordinance of baptism; but I wanted to get out of sin.

Porter allegedly responded by warning her that if she failed to 'walk with the church in peace', he would excommunicate her. She began attending services at the Christian Church that Sunday, and by the time she saw Porter again, three weeks later, he had made good on his threat.[125]

Stone dated this controversy to around June 1840—five months before her confinement. In her own view, the controversy at the Baptist church was a baptism 'with fire', a purgatorial event that prepared her spiritually for her 'baptism with the Holy Ghost', which itself occurred at a meeting 'on the union of christians' in Groton,

[125] Stone, *Sketch*, pp. 11-12.

Massachusetts soon afterwards.[126] The allusion is to John the Baptist's claim in the Gospels that the water baptism he offered was merely a precursor to the baptism 'with the Holy Ghost, and with fire' which was in the gift of the coming Messiah.[127] The English divine John William Fletcher (1729–1785) had linked this gift to the doctrine of Christian perfection, which was espoused by John Wesley as a second work of grace through which the converted could be made sinless in this life, whether instantaneously or by means of a gradual process.[128] The connection between the baptism of the Holy Spirit and Wesleyan perfectionism was picked up in the nineteenth century by the New England Methodist Timothy Merritt (1775–1845), through whose influence it became more firmly established among Wesleyan Methodists and, later, in the Holiness movement.[129]

Stone did not discuss the source of her own belief in Christian perfection, but it is notable that the journal that helped catalyse the Holiness movement, *The Guide to Christian Perfection*, was founded in 1839, a year before the experience she narrated. Moreover, it was also in the mid-1830s that Phoebe Palmer (1807–1874), another central figure in the Holiness movement, founded the Tuesday Meeting for the Promotion of Holiness, a home group in New York City that was the site of Palmer's own supposed sanctification in 1837.[130]

Stone characterised this new belief as having combined with her Millerite convictions to induce a fresh wave of anxiety related to her occupation as a factory worker. How was she to 'labour entirely for the Lord'—to 'run as to obtain the prize in

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[126] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 12.
[127] See Matt. iii. 11.
[128] See John Wesley, *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (Bristol, 1766).
[129] E.B. Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven, 2003), p. 270.
[130] Holifield, *Theology in America*, p. 271; R.J. Stephens, 'The Holiness/Pentecostal/Charismatic Extension of the Wesleyan Tradition', in Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers (eds), *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley* (Cambridge, 2010), p. 266.

six years' (the period of time left before Christ's return)—when she was stuck most days to a loom?[131] Conversely, what would she 'do for a home' if she quit?[132] This was the conundrum with which Stone's prophetic vocation presented her. Her spiritual work, her earthly occupation and her boarding situation were each mutually dependent; her freedom to labour 'without the camp' was only as good as her capacity to return each day to the factory. Framing the issue as a moral problem in a conversation that she recounted having had at the time with 'a very pious lady' (to whom she confided that she had 'disobeyed the spirit'), she decided to entrust herself to the spiritual community of Lowell, which she hoped would 'do for me [i.e. support her financially] and not let me do wickedly [i.e. by continuing to work at the factory]'.[133]

Thus, the scandal of her truancy from the factory was reconstituted for her readers as a prophetic act through which she had entrusted herself, in the face of uncompromising social and economic realities, to the care of the invisible community of true believers. Her books extended this act of faith as she entrusted her prophetic legacy with her readers. Would they see within her actions their significance as signs of a deeper spiritual reality, or merely the symptoms of religious insanity?

During the events themselves, the latter perspective won the day. Stone characterised this as a spiritual battle, in which 'satan arrange[d] his host to take me'.[134] Chief among the devil's minions was the boarding house keeper, Eliza Lufkin. Having noted earlier in the narrative that Lufkin was a member of the Baptist Church, Stone attributed her hostility to Stone's involvement with the Christian denomination. Stone's account of their conflict on this point expresses the central dynamic of the drama that ensued:

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[131] Stone, *Sketch*, pp. 13, 39.
[132] Ibid., p. 13.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Ibid.

> She had opposed me in attending my appointed meetings, and thought that I might go to a meeting that was nearer; but I thought it was not right to go to any other than where I was received by relating my experience, and that I ought to be my own judge.[135]

Thus, as Stone's incapacitation at the boarding house continued, she was consistently denied the fellowship of those with whom she might 'relate' her experience. She asked to be visited by a Dr Sprague, who 'was knowing to my persecutions, and his wife was a dear sister to me in Christ Jesus' (by contrast, Dr Graves—the doctor favoured by her 'unconverted' oppressors—'knew nothing about me nor spirituality'), yet when Dr Sprague came to the house, he 'was not admitted'.[136] And when Stone asked her sister Nancy to send for the minister of the Christian Church, she replied that 'I should not see him nor any one of those people'.[137] Repeatedly, Stone recounted having felt the need of 'the people of God', who might 'take me and do for me', and repeatedly, her persecutors prevented their entry, thus confirming their diabolical identity.[138]

Whilst these examples suggest a sharp dichotomy in Stone's ideology between a spiritual community and an outside world that was overtly hostile to it, her books also made clear that this basic delineation even cut through the 'enthusiastic' systems and communities of Millerism and the Christian denomination. In terms of the former, she recounted that whilst bedridden she overheard a conversation between her sister Nancy and Dr Graves, in which the latter stated that Miller 'ought to be horsewhipped or put in prison'. Inferring from Graves's tone that 'my brother and sister had been telling him that I was one of [Miller's] converts', she went on to lament that her sister had done this despite the fact that she 'professes to be washed by the blood of the Lamb'.[139] The structure of this sequence is significant. Nancy's claim that her sister was a Millerite

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[135] Ibid., p. 14.
[136] Ibid., p. 15.
[137] Ibid., p. 14.
[138] Ibid., pp. 13-15.
[139] Ibid., pp. 14-15.

was, of course, accurate, but her invocation of this fact in a 'diagnostic' discussion with a doctor was taken to reflect her complicity with 'the world' in its persecution of the faithful. By deploying Millerism as a means of explaining her sister's illness, Nancy performed her true spiritual allegiance, and belied her professed membership in Stone's invisible community.

Developments in Stone's second and third books further suggested that these betrayals of true religion occurred within the Millerite movement and the Christian denomination as well. The conflict with the Methodist minister, Henry Burchstead Skinner (about which Stone wrote in her second book) is a case in point. Skinner was a zealous evangelist of the Millerite movement in this period. In 1842, he travelled to Canada to spread word of Christ's imminent return, and in the same year published a book whose stated goal was to provide 'a voice of comfort to the saints, and of warning to [God's] enemies' about the apocalyptic events that were soon to unfold.[140] Yet, despite the apparent fervency of Skinner's enthusiasm, he took the part of McLean Asylum against Stone, a fellow Millerite, in what became a vicious public dispute.

Stone provided a thorough account of the matter in her second book. She had given a hundred copies of her first book to a Mrs. Pratt, who brought some of them to a Second-Advent camp meeting at Littleton, Massachusetts in August 1842 in order to sell them.[141] Skinner encountered Stone's book there and began telling others who were present—including Mrs. Pratt and Dr. Sprague—that its claims against McLean Asylum were false; that he had been the chaplain of the asylum throughout the period

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[140] H.B. Skinner, *A Synopsis of the Views of Those Who Look for the Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in 1843* (Ashburnham, MA, 1842), p. iv. Also see R. Connors, *Anglo-American Millennialism, from Milton to the Millerites* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 185-86.

[141] The prominent Adventist Joseph Bates (1792–1872) described this meeting as one devoted to '[t]he subject of the prophecies connected with the second coming of our blessed Lord and Saviour', and noted that a mob had attempted to break it up. See J. Bates (ed.), *The Early Life and Later Experience and Labors of Elder Joseph Bates* (Battle Creek, MI, 1878), p. 273.

of Stone's confinement and could attest to the pleasant living conditions of the patients and the irreproachable character and piety of the asylum doctor and attendants. As Stone would point out, however, McLean Asylum had never employed a fixed chaplain, but instead, brought in different visiting ministers each week to conduct services.[142] Having had Skinner's allegations reported to her by both Pratt and Sprague, Stone confronted him during a gathering at Sprague's home in the autumn, and an ongoing dispute between the two was subsequently mediated in a formal meeting at the same location on Monday 19 June, 1843.[143]

The proceedings of the meeting, which were published in their entirety in Stone's second book, contain a detailed summary of the conflict from its genesis at Littleton to the climactic point during the meeting itself when Skinner, discovering that the room was against him, suddenly announced that he had 'a higher work than to attend to a *gal's story*' and stormed out.[144] Throughout the conflict, Stone's case against Skinner emphasised their mutual commitment to the Millerite doctrines, which in her view should have made them natural allies against the world's persecution of evangelical 'enthusiasts'. In their initial encounter at Dr. Sprague's house, Stone had thus told Skinner that '[s]he had suffered more than could be told, and all for her believing and speaking about Christ's Second coming; and a Second Advent Lecturer should plead for suffering humanity rather than party spirit'.[145] Her reference to 'party spirit' was significant, for Stone's book had impugned, by name, two female members of Skinner's then-congregation, the East Cambridge Methodist Church, who worked as

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[142] See L.V. Bell, 'Twentieth Annual Report of the Physician and Superintendent of the McLean Asylum for the Insane', *Annual Report to the Board of Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital, for the Year 1837* (Boston, 1838), p. 23.
[143] Stone, *Remarks*, pp. 18-21.
[144] Ibid., p. 24.
[145] Ibid., p. 23.

attendants at McLean Asylum.[146] Skinner's attack on Stone's book had been, at least in part, a defence of these 'good Methodists' ('the most holy women he ever saw'), and thus reflected his choice to favour his own 'party' over a persecuted 'other' who should have been recognised and embraced as a spiritual kinswoman, but was instead patronisingly dismissed as 'gal'.[147] Ironically, however, his entire case was predicated on the tenuous 'inside' discourse of his party. Thus, in his rebuttal of the accusation that he had lied about being chaplain of the asylum, Skinner claimed that the asylum attendants from his congregation had regularly announced his arrival at McLean by exclaiming, 'here is *our* minister'.[148] This anecdote was meant to indicate that he had only appropriated the title of 'chaplain' in a casual sense that faithfully reflected the spirit of the asylum community. To Stone, however, it added to his dishonesty an element of seediness. She thus delighted in pointing out the singularity of his definition of 'chaplain' as 'a *favorite among females*'.[149]

Beyond impugning his character as an individual, and his choice of party spirit and worldly status (his attachment to 'the honor of being chaplain') over his duty to the community of the Spirit, Stone's rebuttal of Skinner ultimately pointed to a problem that she deemed systemic to the office of church minister—a problem that was at the root of her own experiences of exclusion, from her past excommunication from the Baptist Church to her present controversy with a Millerite activist. This issue is reflected in her summary of Skinner's ultimate motivation for publicly denying her claims against McLean Asylum:

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[146] These women, whom Stone identifies as Mrs. Barber and Brigham, are indeed listed as attendants in the annual reports of McLean Asylum for these years.
[147] Stone, *Remarks*, pp. 19, 23.
[148] Ibid., pp. 20; original emphasis.
[149] Ibid., pp. 21-22; original emphases.

> They [readers] may ask what interest had Mr. Skinner in defending the hospital? Why, sustaining himself as an hireling priest; so if any one should dissent from his faith and practice he would denounce them as being deranged.[150]

The language of insanity and the institution of the asylum are characterised here as tools through which ministers ensured the compliance of the people. Yet Stone's use of the word 'hireling' to qualify this priesthood gave her case a broader resonance. Beyond highlighting the self-interestedness of the priest himself, it evoked a network of social, economic and doctrinal systems within which priestly self-interest was navigated. In this sense, the priestly office and the asylum both served the same master—a worldly regime which threatened dissenters and eccentrics with 'reproach'. As it would turn out, even the Christian denomination itself was implicated in this problem in Stone's second book. She thus wrote that,

> The christian church that I belonged to, as a church, have taken a stand against me, not so much as listening to my persecutions, wishing to keep it all in the dark, for fear of a little reproach being brought upon them.[151]

Her wording here is strikingly similar to Perceval's when he likewise lamented that the church at Row had denied him and considered him possessed.[152] Yet whereas Perceval merely hinted at Peter's denial of Christ in the passion narrative, Stone referenced it directly. Timothy Cole, she claimed, 'acted the part of Peter, who was willing to follow his Lord when all spoke well of him', yet who, when called to suffer with him, 'joined with the rabble, "*away with him, away with him*"'. Likewise, when Stone 'needed the minister of the church to stand by me', Elder Cole—notably, a Millerite in this period—'joined' her brothers in calling for her confinement.[153]

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[150] Ibid., pp. 25-26.
[151] Stone, *Remarks*, p. 17.
[152] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. 359.
[153] In his biography of William Miller, James Springer White (1821–1881), the founder of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, recounts that Cole, having heard of Miller's successes in Vermont, had invited him to visit his church in Lowell. White notes that upon Miller's visit in May of 1839, Cole was initially dismayed by the famous preacher's feeble constitution, observing a man 'shaking with the palsy' and more likely to dispense fanciful visions than sound biblical teaching. A mere fifteen minutes into the first sermon of Miller's visit, however, Cole gleaned from the aging preacher's predictions of Christ's

Conclusion

Despite the considerable differences between John Perceval and Elizabeth Stone, there was one key similarity that bound their self-portrayals together. Both depicted evangelical conversion as having entailed a radical shift in their values and priorities which put them in tension with their families, with their co-religionists, and even with themselves. Underpinning these commonalities was the legacy—and ongoing prevalence—of transatlantic revivalism, which, since the eighteenth century, had envisaged a transformation of the individual that would give rise to a new fervour for religious activism and for the conversion of others.[154] Perceval's and Stone's writings in this sense depicted a form of subjectivity which, despite its distinct cultural and theological inflections, ultimately transcended geographical and national boundaries. In Louisa Clemens's narrative, we saw representations of distinct cultures bound together by the efforts of one consciousness to assert a coherent identity and sense of vocation. In the comparison between Stone and Perceval, we have seen two different minds—shaped by distinct cultural and social contexts—nevertheless dramatizing the social and religious implications of evangelical transformation in strikingly similar ways. The experiences and identities of Clemens, Perceval and Stone were indeed all interconnected by a common transatlantic religious heritage and ethos.

The fact that all three faced allegations of derangement and insanity was by no means new to the nineteenth century. In the eighteenth century, too, many British

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glorious second coming 'nothing but the word of God'. Miller's visit lasted from 14 to 22 May, and he returned a week later for a second visit that lasted six days. The immediate yield of Miller's labours in Lowell was dramatic. By 25 July, Cole had baptised forty converts, with sixty in total joining his church, and many more besides now 'seeking the Lord'. Cole himself purportedly 'embraced [Miller's] views in full' and continued 'for six years a devoted advocate of them'. This timeframe encompasses the period of Elizabeth Stone's crisis and confinement from 1840 to 1842. See J.S. White, *Sketches of the Christian Life and Public Labors of William Miller* (Battle Creek, 1875), pp. 123-24.

[154] David Bebbington has highlighted 'activism' and 'conversionism' as two of the four main elements of evangelical relion. See D.W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London, 1989), p. 16.

converts to the evangelical movement had been sent to Bethlem Hospital for 'religion and Methodism', as we saw in the introduction to this thesis.[155] Yet in the nineteenth century, insane asylums were becoming a more prominent presence within both Britain and America, and a more common destination for people whose evangelical identities had become too extreme. The attendant rise and proliferation of psychiatric ideas and outlooks within the wider society meant that evangelical enthusiasts were inevitably faced with the challenge of confronting medical ideas and methodologies, some of which undermined aspects of their religious self-understanding. In Chapter 1, we saw that Louisa Clemens cultivated a prophetic identity as an explicit rejection of a medical critique of her behaviours as symptoms of 'mental derangement'. The closing chapter of this thesis returns to the case studies of John Perceval and Elizabeth Stone, and explores the ways in which they incorporated medical ideas and methodologies into their religious identities as part of an effort to subvert the psychiatric perspectives and therapeutic approaches of the alienists who had treated them.

[155] See Numbers and Numbers, 'Millerism and Madness', p. 95.

Part II

Care and Control

Chapter 3

Melancholy, Medicine, and Spiritual Care

> Indeed, for no other thing did he become more celebrated than for his power of imparting hope to the desponding; and it was those dark and doubting hours of his own early life, painful as they were, which furnished him with the necessary knowledge for the guidance of hundreds of sensitive and troubled spirits to the firm ground of a cheerful, intelligent religious hope.[1]

This is an excerpt from the author and abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe's (1811–1896) preface to the personal correspondence of her father, the Congregational minister Lyman Beecher (1775–1863), which was published (posthumously) together with his autobiography. In his own conversion narrative in the autobiography, Beecher recounted having experienced a protracted period of despair as he had been left alone to contend with his spiritual guilt with only Jonathan Edwards's writings and his own conscience as company. This experience, he claimed in the narrative itself, had given him the requisite knowledge to help others who similarly suffered from religious despondency. It had taught him the perils of solitary compunction, and the need of the tormented penitent for a skilful spiritual interlocutor. And so, he had cultivated from his own experience what he called a 'clinical theology'—an 'evangelical philosophy' with which he had since 'relieved people without number out of the sloughs of high Calvinism'.[2]

Beecher's concerns were not only personal and pastoral, but also apologetic. Commenting on his father's 'clinical theology', Charles Beecher (1815–1900), the editor of the autobiography, observed that '[h]is whole theology was curative', and that '[a]ll his doctrinal expositions of the Bible were designed to obviate the more common

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[1] H.B. Stowe, 'Prelude to Early Correspondence', in Charles Beecher (ed.), *Autobiography, Correspondence, Etc., of Lyman Beecher, D.D.*, Vol. 1 (New York, 1865), pp. 73-74.
[2] Lyman Beecher, 'Religious Awakening', in Beecher (ed.), *Autobiography*, Vol. 1, p. 47.

misapprehensions and misconceptions attending the Calvinistic system'.[3] One of the more common of these 'misconceptions' was that Calvinist belief caused madness or mental pathology—a criticism that had dogged it since the early modern period.[4] Medical discourse had long provided Puritans and evangelical Calvinists with a means of defending their theology against this charge, for it enabled them to explain experiences of melancholy in strictly physical terms.[5]

Yet for Beecher, medicine delivered more than just an abstract apologia; it provided him with a practical means of solving the perceived problems of Puritan interiority on the ground. Evangelical Calvinists were intent on preserving the evangelical *ordo salutis*, which assumed the centrality of experiences of compunction and anxiety to the process of Christian regeneration. As new medical ways of analysing psychological and emotional states grew in cultural visibility and prominence in the nineteenth century, the spiritual meanings of these experiences came increasingly to require different forms of justification. The next chapter of this thesis explores the therapeutic context of insane asylums, within which specific nuances of evangelical interiority were for various reasons negated. Such developments made it all the more important for ministers to develop forms of pastoral care that sustained their theological objectives.

Beecher's pastoral philosophy was an intervention within this complex intellectual reality. It appropriated current developments in medical discourse whilst

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[3] Beecher (ed.), *Autobiography*, Vol. 1, p. 74.

[4] M. MacDonald and T.R. Murphy, *Sleepless Souls: Suicide in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1990), p. 66. This criticism has since been extended in the historiography by scholars such John Strachniewski, who has argued that Calvinist theology contributed to a prevalent mood of despair in early modern England. See John Stachniewski, *The Persecutory Imagination: English Puritanism and the Literature of Religious Despair* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 60-61. See R.A. Houston, *Punishing the Dead? Suicide, Lordship, and Community in Britain, 1500–1830* (Oxford, 2010), p. 312.

[5] Note, for instance, the example of the seventeenth-century English Puritan divine Richard Baxter (1615–1691), who had comforted himself by positing an organic basis of his religious melancholy. See Porter, *Mind-Forg'd Manacles*, pp. 56-67.

also resisting their prevalently naturalistic associations. Indeed, by using medical ideas to manage the interiority of those he counselled, Beecher was both embracing the apologetic benefits of medicine and rejecting its de-spiritualising potential. His use of medical ideas in this respect qualifies interpretations which have characterised the medicalisation of melancholy in the nineteenth century in strictly negative terms as the transformation of Puritan interiority into a form of pathology.[6] For Beecher, the medicalisation of religious interiority bore as much promise as it did threat.

Beecher's 'clinical theology' brings into bold relief some of the general implications of a rising professional medical discourse for pastoral care in the nineteenth century. Even for those who were less consciously engaged than Beecher in reconciling medicine and theology, their perspectives on (and methods of) spiritual care were shaped in important ways by these developments. This chapter explores these implications in two case studies. It begins by analysing a model of pastoral care that was advanced by a minister for the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland, John MacFarlane (1807–1875), in his biography of his sister, Agnes MacFarlane (1811–1832). The biography recounts the hands-on approach that MacFarlane took in mediating his sister's conversion experience in the final weeks of her life when she was bedridden with an illness. Relating MacFarlane's pastoral interventions to a historiography that has emphasised disenchantment and the decline of psychomachia in Puritan care over the course of the long eighteenth century, this analysis teases out the implications of a growing recognition of naturalistic and physiological aspects of evangelical interiority as they played out in MacFarlane's representation of his own pastoral agency.

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[6] John Owen King, for instance, has characterised the nineteenth century as a period in which '[t]he Puritans' case of conscience … transformed itself into the Victorians' neurological "case"'. See J.O. King, *The Iron of Melancholy: Structures of Spiritual Conversion in America from the Puritan Conscience to Victorian Neurosis* (Middletown, CT, 1983), p. 10 and passim.

Chief among these implications was that MacFarlane presented himself in the biography as something like a spiritual psychologist, who skilfully managed his sister's psychological and emotional states throughout the process of her conversion. His pastoral philosophy was analogous in this respect to Lyman Beecher's, which, as we have seen, was developed explicitly as a response to the perceived problem that his own conversion, and the conversions of many others, had been vitiated by pathology.

The second case study contextualises the emergence of Beecher's 'clinical theology' in his New England context by exploring the diaries and letters of another student at Yale College of a later generation, Benjamin Noyes (1796–1815), who committed suicide while in a state of despair over his religious condition. Noyes's experience overlapped in many ways with Beecher's struggles as he described them in his conversion narrative, and his writings thus offer a window into the religious practices of solitude and self-surveillance that Beecher found so problematic. Moreover, the stark contrast between the spiritual counsel that Noyes's revivalist community offered him until the moment of his disappearance, and the community's subsequent appeals to mental pathology and derangement to explain his condition immediately after they had learned of his suicide, pointed up the (perceived) need for a mode of pastoral care that would aim, like both MacFarlane's and Beecher's, to contend with the natural as well as the spiritual and to mediate the interrelationships between them.

This transatlantic comparison reveals important differences between the distinct cultures that are explored, some of which were also observed in the previous chapter. In the early-nineteenth-century revivalist context of New Haven, Jonathan Edwards's influence reigned supreme, and played a central role both in Benjamin Noyes's struggle with despondency and in Lyman Beecher's effort to develop a clinical theology. In his

Scottish context, MacFarlane's pastoral environment was instead vivified by the pious literatures produced by British evangelicals such as the English Baptist Anne Steele (1717–1778) and the Scottish Presbyterian minister John Willison (1680–1750). Despite these differences, both case studies reveal a common pattern in which aspects of the spiritual life were medicalised in the nineteenth-century Atlantic world as part of a shared evangelical Calvinist concern both to preserve a form of religious interiority as a lived experience and to defend a broader theological system from outside attack.

The Pastoral Imagination of John MacFarlane

John MacFarlane opened his sister's memoir with an account of the death of their mother, Grace MacFarlane (1779–1816), which established both the theme of holy dying (a spiritual triumph that would be reiterated, in the end, in Agnes's experience) as well as the metaphysical framework of the mode of pastoral care he had extended to Agnes in the months preceding her own death. In his description of Grace's final moments, MacFarlane emphasised the relationship between her facial expressions—a window, for those who surrounded her deathbed, into her own interior processes—and the spiritual reality which she was herself perceiving. He thus noted that '[h]er features, but now pale and languid, assumed an unearthly beauty', and '[h]er eye, but now dull and heavy, was lighted up as from some invisible glory'. Her altered countenance was the outward sign of her perception of a spiritual reality that remained invisible to those around her:

> 'What do I see?' she exclaimed—'O, what do I see?'
> They looked upwards as she did, but *they* saw nothing.
> 'WINGS! WINGS! WINGS!' she added, with a most heavenly expression in every feature.
> They that were of the earth dared not yet to speak.
> 'FLY! FLY! FLY!' said the expiring conqueror: 'O why is his chariot so long in coming?—Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?'

> ‘Do you mean angels, Grace? Do you see them?’ inquired Dr Husband [Grace’s father].
> ‘Yes’, she replied: ‘angels to conduct me safely home!’
> Having thus spoken, *she was not;* for the Lord took her.[7]

MacFarlane went on to defend the nature of this experience as an authentic vision of the heavenly realm, linking it to other contemporary reports of ‘deathbed experiences of rapture’, grounding it in scriptural precedents such as Stephen’s vision of ‘the Son of man’ whilst he was being stoned,[8] and characterising it, ultimately, as a unique dispensation to the (dying) godly.[9] The last of these points is particularly significant given his emphasis on Agnes’s facial expressions throughout the memoir. Her countenance, too, was said to have been ‘strangely altered’ before her death, suggesting ‘her nearness to the spiritual world’ in those moments.[10] Yet his emphasis on the distinctiveness of this event as an authentically supernatural experience had the consequential effect of naturalising and systematically cataloguing his sister’s facial expressions—and attendant psychological states—throughout her illness. This point is further suggested in his discussion of their mother’s deathbed experience earlier in the memoir, in which he distinguished her heavenly rapture from the false visions that often occurred ‘after a season of prolonged affliction, where there is an extremely sensitive and nervous constitution’.[11] Whilst this distinction did not de-spiritualise his sister’s transports and despondencies throughout the process of her conversion, it did bracket them out from the metaphysical landscape within which they would have reflected an unwieldy transcendent reality. The effect was to empower MacFarlane as pastor, granting him the ability, through attention to aspects of his sister’s physiognomy and

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[7] J. MacFarlane, *The Night Lamp. A Narrative of The Means by Which Spiritual Darkness was Dispelled from the Death-Bed of Agnes Maxwell MacFarlane* (London, 1851), pp. 3-4.
[8] See Acts vii. 54-60.
[9] MacFarlane, *The Night Lamp*, pp. 4-19.
[10] Ibid., pp. 306-11.
[11] Ibid., p. 10.

verbal expression, to regulate her emotional states and prevent her despondencies from slipping into derangement.

Ultimately, the memoir was not a straightforward report of a pastoral encounter, but an idealised model of spiritual care that formed part of a broader corpus of pedagogical works by John MacFarlane, which also included various memoirs of prominent Scottish ministers and theologians,[12] as well as sermons and treatises on topics ranging from the importance of evangelical preaching and missionary activity to the nature of the celestial city and the didactic significance of the mountains in the bible.[13] Among these was a theological treatise entitled *The Hiding Place* (1853), which was intended as a companion piece for the memoir,[14] and purported to give readers 'a simple and comprehensive view of "the way to the Father by Jesus Christ"', as well as to show them 'the manner in which lost sinners are to be "delivered from the wrath to come"'.[15] The third edition of the memoir included twenty-five references to the treatise, allowing readers to deepen their understanding of the theological and biblical world that was navigated in a more psychological and pastoral register in the narrative.

Many of the details of John's and Agnes's biographical backgrounds are included in the memoir itself. Both were born in Dunfermline, Fifeshire, where their father, James MacFarlane (d. 1823), and their maternal grandfather, James Husband (d.

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[12] Note, for instance, his memoirs of the Scottish biblical scholar George Lawson (1749–1820) and the United Presbyterian Church minister Thomas Archer (1806–1864). See J. MacFarlane, *The Life and Times of George Lawson, D.D., with Glimpses of Scottish Character from 1720 to 1820* (Edinburgh, 1862); *Memoir of Thomas Archer, D.D.* (London, 1867).

[13] J. MacFarlane, *Altar-Zeal, or, Paul in the Pulpit* (London, 1862); *The Jubilee of the World: an Essay on Christian Missions to the Heathen* (Glasgow, 1842); *Glimpses of the Celestial City, and Guide to the Inheritance* (Edinburgh, 1867); *The Mountains of the Bible: Their Scenes and Their Lessons* (London, 1849).

[14] The preface to the third edition of *The Night Lamp* thus recommends the treatise to readers for the 'full and satisfactory explanations [it contained] of the subjects of the death-bed colloquies in this volume'. See J. MacFarlane, *The Night Lamp*, 3rd edn (Philadelphia, 1853), p. x.

[15] J. MacFarlane, *The Hiding Place: Or the Sinner Found in Christ* (London, 1853), p. vii. His stated purpose for the memoir, similarly, was 'to do good by this humble instrument to the souls of many, especially of the young and thoughtless, who, while they have a "name to live, are in reality dead"'. See MacFarlane, *The Night Lamp*, p. iv.

1821), worked together as ministers of the Secession Church on Queen Anne Street.[16] Their mother, Grace MacFarlane (née Husband), died in 1816, shortly after having given birth to her ninth child with James, and when the latter died seven years later, Agnes and John, forced to leave the manse in Dunfermline, were separated. Agnes, who was thirteen at the time, was initially sent to Edinburgh to continue her studies, and then came under the care of the daughters of the Secession minister John Brown (1754–1832) at the Longridge manse in southern Linlithgowshire. It was there that she first showed signs of a 'constitutional weakness', which necessitated her return to Dunfermline in 1827 to board with her uncle, Dr Andrew Dewar (1791–1870), the husband of her mother's sister, Isabel (1792–1840). Her health improved under Dewar's professional care, and in 1829 she entered Juliet White's Boarding School on Albany Street in Edinburgh. A relapse, however, forced her to return the next year to Dunfermline to live with her eldest brother, James (1802–1867). In this period, John was pursuing ordination in the neighbouring town of Kincardine, and the siblings were now reunited for the first time since their father's death. The next summer (1831), Agnes once again stayed with the Dewars, and her health permitted her to move to Edinburgh to live with another brother that winter.[17] However, in February 1832 she contracted a debilitating illness which took her life on 14 August, when she was only twenty-one years of age.

More than half of the memoir is dedicated to Agnes's psychological and spiritual transformation in the six-month period leading to her death, throughout which she was bedridden in Edinburgh. John assured his readers that despite the eighteen-year lapse between the events themselves (1832) and the book's publication (1851), the

[16] This was the first Secession Church in Dunfermline, and was established by Ralph Erskine (1685–1752) in 1741. See D.C. Lachman, 'Erskine, Ralph (1686–1752)', *ODNB*.
[17] Given the relative frequency with which he is mentioned throughout this period, this brother is likely to have been William Husband MacFarlane (1805–1851).

details of the account could be trusted, since they had been drawn 'almost *verbatim*' from the diary he had kept '[d]uring the long period of his Sister's illness'. Characterising his diary as having comprised the 'regular notes of what passed between them', he insisted that these memoranda were the substance of '[t]he reports of the death-bed exercises' in which the two were engaged in the memoir.[18]

Despite his vaunted journalistic precision, these pastoral encounters were framed within a paradigm that evinced the influence of wider medical and theological developments upon MacFarlane's thought world as a minister and author. The language with which he effectively naturalised the domain of spiritual care in the memoir in some respects evoked the apologetic outlook of authors such as the Scottish physician John Cheyne (1777–1836), whose *Essays on Partial Derangement of the Mind in Supposed Connexion with Religion* (1843) had sought to defend evangelical theology against accusations that it caused insanity by arguing that religious delusions and despondencies were usually the effect of 'those disordered states of the digestion which act upon the nervous system'.[19] MacFarlane's distinction, in the account of his mother's death at the beginning of the memoir, between her heavenly vision before her death and the 'morbid functions, either in the body or in the mind' that explained other religious emotions and visions, placed his pastoral relationship with his sister within the same apologetic space that Cheyne had carved out in his *Essays*.[20]

As Lyman Beecher had done with his 'clinical theology', MacFarlane incorporated this apologetic perspective into a model of spiritual care within which the naturalisation of the therapeutic space had crucial methodological implications. These implications, too, were established in his account of their mother's death. By

[18] MacFarlane, *The Night Lamp*, pp. iii-vi.
[19] Cheyne, *Essays on Partial Derangement of the Mind*, p. 71.
[20] MacFarlane, *The Night-Lamp*, p. 10.

emphasising her facial expressions during her final moments, he established the theme of pathognomy (the study of expressions) as a register of invisible psychic realities, which re-emerged frequently in his account of his interactions with his sister. Yet he explicitly distinguished the sorts of expressions with which he was dealing in his sister's case from those manifested by their mother. Agnes's face had indicated a domain of feelings and psychological states, not characterised, like their mother's, as an encounter with heavenly (or, for that matter, diabolical) beings. The effect was to distance MacFarlane's pastoral approach from the model of healing that Michael MacDonald elaborated in his study of early modern Puritan communities. MacDonald argued that the enchanted understanding of madness in these communities entailed a ritualistic approach to healing, within which practices of prayer and fasting ushered the community into a psychomachia—a cosmic contest between the forces of heaven and hell for the soul of the afflicted individual.[21] For MacFarlane, the practical implication of both naturalising the therapeutic space and making the physiognomy of the individual a register of this natural domain was to make his own role less like that of a ritualistic healer than a spiritual psychologist. Bible-reading and theological reasoning, rather than prayer and fasting—logos, rather than ritual—were the centrepieces of his pastoral interventions, deployed in accordance with his own skill in discerning his sister's psychological and emotional states by means of her facial expressions and verbal self-disclosures.

There is a suggestive parallel to this shift from ritual to logos in the context of mental medicine. Roy Porter discerned a transition from the vibrant metaphysical domain of early modern mad-doctoring to the secularised therapeutic space of the late eighteenth century, within which the physician's psychological mastery over the patient

[21] See MacDonald, 'Religion, Social Change and Psychological Healing in England', pp. 101-25.

was emphasised. Thus, whereas the early modern English physician Richard Napier (1559–1634) invoked a range of astrological, spiritual and physiological factors in his diagnosis and treatment of patients,[22] the eighteenth-century 'moral therapist' Francis Willis (1718–1807) would, in Porter's words, 'fix the attention of lunatics by the eye, to win control and submission'—a mode of psychological domination which he deployed most famously in his treatment of George III (1760–1820).[23]

According to such arguments, the collapse of a vibrant cosmology in which doctor and patient had once participated together entailed the emergence of a mode of therapy that emphasised the heroism and skill of the individual physician. This methodological outcome of disenchantment permitted the eventual emergence of the 'psychiatric power' that Foucault identified in the methods of late-nineteenth-century alienists such as Jean-Martin Charcot (1825–1893) and Emil Kraepelin (1856–1926).[24] For Foucault, Charcot's public demonstrations of hypnosis on hysterical patients at Salpêtrière, in particular, exemplified the role of the asylum physician in this period as

> both the one who can tell the truth of the disease through the knowledge [*savoir*] he has of it and the one who can produce the disease in its truth and subdue it in its reality, through the power that his will exerts on the patient himself.[25]

As we shall see, MacFarlane's own power and knowledge were framed by the broader theological world that his pastoral imagination inhabited. In a crucial sense, he did not master the spiritual disease in the way that Charcot would master hysteria. And yet, there is an analogy between Foucault's concept of psychiatric power and MacFarlane's self-portrayal as having managed his sister's psychological states—a process which, in

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[22] See Michael MacDonald's important study of Napier's case notes and the worldview they reflect in MacDonald, *Mystical Bedlam*, passim.
[23] Porter also includes William Pargeter (1760–1810) among the moral therapists of Willis's generation. See Porter, *Mind-Forg'd Manacles*, pp. 206-22.
[24] M. Foucault, 'Psychiatric Power', in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth: The Essential Works of Foucault* (New York, 1997), p. 43.
[25] Foucault, 'Psychiatric Power', p. 43.

the memoir, involved strategically inducing religious anxiety with a view to mediating her passage through the stage of conviction to the peace of forgiveness.

In seeking to 'produce the [spiritual] disease', MacFarlane was in one respect merely working within an established tradition of Puritan and evangelical preaching, the heart of which was reflected in the last four lines of the English poet Edward Young's (1683–1765) 'Night-Thoughts' (1745):

> The Sick in *Body* call for Aid; the Sick
> In *Mind* are covetous of more Disease;
> And, when at *worst*, they dream themselves quite *well*:
> To *know* ourselves diseas'd, is Half our Cure.[26]

The last of these four lines found its way into the treatises and sermons of numerous eighteenth- and nineteenth-century evangelical clergymen in both Britain and America, and was appropriated as an admonition not only to the unconverted, but also to the minister.[27] The American Episcopal bishop William Meade (1789–1862) thus used the line in his *Companion to the Font and Pulpit* (1846), in an appendix that was 'designed to show how the Preacher should address himself to the baptized, and all others, so as to be consistent with the word of God and the doctrines of the Church'. The minister who reinforced the 'deception' of those who told themselves 'peace, peace' when there was a 'plague' in their hearts was like the 'physician who treats his patient as being well, or only slightly indisposed, when a dangerous disease is in his body'. Both had a duty to exert a kind of therapeutic violence, one to the mind, and the other to the body of the 'patient'.[28]

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[26] E. Young, *The Consolation* (London, 1745), p. 3.
[27] Note, for instance, its use in the Scottish minister Patrick Fairbairn's (1805–1874) *The Revelation of Law in Scripture: Considered with Respect Both to its Own Nature, and to its Relative Place in Successive Dispensations* (Edinburgh, 1869), p. 290; and in the English minister Richard Cecil's (1748–1810) sermon on Rev. ii. 4, 'Loss of First Love', published in the English evangelical minister Josiah Pratt's (1768–1844) edition of *The Works of the Rev. Richard Cecil*, Vol. 1 (New York, 1845), p. 321.
[28] W. Meade, *Companion to the Font and the Pulpit* (Washington, 1846), pp. 107-108.

MacFarlane himself quoted Young's famous line in the companion piece to the memoir of his sister, *The Hiding Place*, in which he used the language of pathology to characterise the psychological trauma that ministers would inevitably inflict by fulfilling their evangelical duty to sinners. Expanding on Young's theme, he urged the worldly-minded to '[l]abour … to get your hard hearts broken', and correspondingly assured them that

> ere long, the awful sense of need shall come, the burning fever shall be felt, the stench of the putrifying sores shall be intolerable, and the agonising terrors of appalling dissolution shall then fling you down prostrate under despair, transfixing you with the arrows of compunctuous visitations![29]

Yet the pastoral model projected in the memoir was not one in which the preacher awakens sinners and leaves them to contend alone, before God, with their despair. In his interactions with Agnes, he instead represented himself as having managed the spiritual disease which he had initially induced, regulating her psychological states with timely pastoral admonitions and encouragements. This was indeed analogous, in a sense, to Foucault's characterisation of psychiatric power as a form of therapeutic control over the pathological symptoms. And yet (and crucially), MacFarlane's 'pastoral power' was qualified in the narrative by its deployment within a theological framework of tradition, piety and practice which ultimately transcended his own agency and authority. His thought world may not have been the vibrant cosmos of Richard Napier or the psychomachia of the early modern Puritans, but nor was it the strictly naturalistic, 'disenchanted', space within which medical professionals such as Charcot and Kraepelin enjoyed a quasi-divine status as masters of the mind. Rather, it was a narrative space in which he and his sister participated together as co-penitents—a common spiritual pilgrimage that was resourced and vivified by pious literatures,

[29] MacFarlane, *The Hiding Place*, p. 173.

devotional practices, and forms of authority external to MacFarlane's own specialised knowledge.

The principal form of authority in MacFarlane's pastoral imagination was indicated in the title of the memoir, *The Night Lamp*—a metaphor for the bible which captured its function as the resource that lit the way for both pastor and parishioner through a journey in which they were engaged together:

> Into many a dark and dismal passage did [Agnes] afterwards draw me while in combat with her unbelief and terrors; but as I made it a point ever to carry the bible with me, we had always light, and light that never led astray.[30]

The bible thus acted as the chief mediatory mechanism through which MacFarlane sought to manage his sister's feelings and psychological states in the narrative. Its precise usage was determined by MacFarlane himself in accordance with his understanding of his sister's spiritual condition vis-à-vis the evangelical *ordo salutis*. He thus recounted that before her conversion, he would guide her through meditations on biblical texts such as the fourth Servant song in Isaiah 53,[31] which permitted a sobering meditation on the graphic realities of the atonement. In one instance that he recounted in late June 1826, a week before her conversion, he read the twenty-third Psalm to her specifically for the purpose of confronting the shadowy vale of the fourth verse, and thus inducing a state of religious anxiety:

> when I entered 'the valley of the shadow of death', and discoursed of its rough and crooked path, its lonesome, cheerless region, and its many terrific visitations from the accusing conscience, the ensnaring fiends, and the dens of unbelief, she became uneasy—paler she could scarce be—and her eye was restless, and her expression painful.[32]

The success of this pastoral endeavour was confirmed, for MacFarlane, by his sister's pale features, restlessness and pained expression. After her conversion, when her

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[30] MacFarlane, *The Night Lamp*, pp. 141.
[31] See Ibid., p. 159.
[32] MacFarlane, *The Night Lamp*, p. 143. See Psalm xxiii. 4. MacFarlane wrote in this context that 'I purposely selected, for the sake of the *fourth* verse, the twenty-third Psalm'.

solicitudes took on new meaning within the evangelical pilgrimage as the pains of Christian growth, John consoled her with texts such as Paul's promise to the church in Philippi that 'he who hath begun the good work will perfect it unto the day of Christ'. In this case, he recounted, a 'smile passed over her countenance', indicating that 'the cloud had disappeared' and that his pastoral intervention had again succeeded.[33]

Beyond being directly mediated by practices of bible-reading, MacFarlane's pastoral interventions were delivered, in the memoir, within a broader framework of communal piety which was itself shaped by the legacy of eighteenth-century evangelical spirituality. He noted, for instance, that 'during the silent hours of suffering and solitary nights, when she was alone with the Father', Agnes would often recite the words of the English Baptist Anne Steele's 'Father, whate'er of earthly bliss' (1760).[34] Evangelical hymnody was further supplemented, in her devotional solitude, by the more expositional works of the Scottish Presbyterian minister John Willison, whose *Afflicted Man's Companion* (1737)—a work addressed to 'families and persons afflicted with sickness or any other distress', which went through numerous editions in the nineteenth century—undoubtedly stood behind Agnes's (reported) characterisation of Willison as 'one of the best of comforters'.[35]

MacFarlane's frequent references to Agnes's use of these pious literatures in her private devotion, as well as to communal practices in which her family members surrounded her bed to pray and sing hymns with her, were all suggestive of a wider framework of spiritual meaning and care within which her conversion and psychological stability were (respectively) mediated and sustained. Ultimately,

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[33] MacFarlane, *The Night Lamp*, p. 282. See Phil. i. 6. Her 'peace' was similarly restored when MacFarlane read her Isa. i. 18 in MacFarlane, *The Night Lamp*, p. 234.
[34] MacFarlane, *The Night Lamp*, p. 235.
[35] MacFarlane, *The Night Lamp*, pp. 224, 265; John Willison, *The Afflicted Man's Companion* (1737; Edinburgh, 1743). MacFarlane noted having given her 'an old edition of the works of Willison of Dundee, author of "The Afflicted Man's Companion"' in MacFarlane, *The Night Lamp*, p. 224.

MacFarlane's own pastoral agency was only one aspect of this phenomenon, and was itself framed, as we have seen, by his mediatory use of the bible. The full picture was one in which minister and 'patient' participated together in a spiritual narrative that transcended the pastoral relationship itself, and that was animated and embodied, both at the individual and communal levels, in practices of prayer and hymn-singing. The therapeutic space in MacFarlane's memoir provided the individual with a rich context of psychological and emotional meanings beyond those that were merely asserted and induced by the spiritual 'physician'.

The Suicide of Benjamin Noyes

Conceived (as we have seen) as a model of pastoral counsel, MacFarlane's memoir emphasised the positive role that had been played by the wider religious community—and its pious literatures—in helping to mediate his sister's conversion and sustain her religious identity. The diaries and letters of Benjamin Noyes, by contrast, evinced the first-person perspective of the solitary (and despondent) evangelical penitent, and thus represented his own religious community at Yale College in an opposite light. They are suggestive of communal beliefs and practices which drove him perpetually into isolation and, ultimately, into despair.

In a detailed study of Noyes's case, Julius Rubin highlights the role played by Taylorism. Named for Nathaniel William Taylor (1786–1858), who taught at Yale College from 1822 to 1858, Taylorism was a theological adaptation on Calvinism which emphasised the freedom of the individual to repent. Rubin argues that Noyes's psychological struggles were caused by the tensions implicit within Taylorism between the intense moral demands placed upon the individual, and the more traditionally Calvinistic emphasis upon self-surrender. Noyes's suicide, Rubin concludes, was an act

of rebellion against the whole (self-contradictory) system.[36] Rubin's analysis raises important questions about the ways in which Protestant minds were shaped by the theological shifts that attended the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century awakenings. Yet additional research dimensions are opened up by the sheer volume and quality of archival material in the Noyes Family Papers—particularly Benjamin Noyes's extensive diaries and correspondences, but also the letters and memoirs written by his family members and friends after his death. The focus of the case study in this chapter is distinct from Rubin's in its emphasis upon the pastoral, theological and theoretical issues that Noyes's sufferings raised for the community that surrounded him.

Lyman Beecher had developed his 'clinical theology' to address the problems raised by cases like Noyes's. Like MacFarlane's pastoral philosophy, Beecher's reflected anxieties about the prevalence of outside attacks upon evangelical Calvinism for supposedly causing melancholy or mental pathology. Yet even more fundamentally, it was conceived to address practical and conceptual problems that he perceived among his co-religionists, which his own experience of religious despondency as a student at Yale—like Noyes's experience a generation later—had exposed. The following section traces Noyes's dark spiritual trajectory as he articulated it in his diaries and letters, contextualising it within the broader practices of the revivalist community at Yale. This analysis establishes the contexts of theological belief and spiritual practice to which Beecher was responding with his own pastoral model. The perceived need for Beecher's 'clinical' approach is then further contextualised within discussions of the problematic mode of pastoral counsel which Noyes received in his correspondence with his father, and of the revivalist community's abrupt shift to a medical perspective in its response to Noyes's suicide.

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[36] Rubin, *Religious Melancholy and Protestant Experience in America*, pp. 125-55.

The Progress of a Hypocrite

> March 15th 1812 after having given myself in covenant to God.
> O Lord wilt thou deeply and lastingly impress my heart with the solemn transactions of this day. O wilt thou accept of thy unworthy servant. Grant that this Covenant may be kept in all respects. I am now thine O Lord. I humbly hope that thou art mine. Give me to serve thee in newness of life—to walk by thy statutes—to make thy word the man of my council and the guide of my days. Carry me through life: give me dilligently [sic] to improve my time and the talents which thou hast given me: Give me to be faithfull [sic] onto death and at last receive a crown of glory. amen.[37]

These words were meant to have inaugurated Benjamin Noyes's evangelical pilgrimage. In a letter to his father the next day, he cited as inspiration for this written commitment the English nonconformist Philip Doddridge's *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul* (1745), which encouraged readers to make a solemn covenant with God.[38] Yet his diary entries from that point evince a struggle to sustain a sense that his experience was consistent with that of the elect. Disclosing a habit of self-surveillance and self-doubt that had been shaped by his engagement with Jonathan Edwards's *Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1746) and encouraged by the wider revivalist community at Yale College, his diaries constituted, from one perspective, a powerful body of evidence which he used to infer his spiritual condition as a hypocrite who had been deceiving himself all along into believing he had been saved.

Lyman Beecher had himself implicated both the devotional habits promoted by the revivalist community at Yale and the writings of Jonathan Edwards in his account of his own struggles with religious despondency as a student:

> They gave me other books to read besides the Bible—a thing I have done practising long since. For cases like mine, Brainerd's Life is a most undesirable thing. It gave me a tinge for years. So Edwards on the Affections—a most overwhelming thing, and to common minds the most entangling. The

[37] NCHS, Box 43, Folder 5: Diary of Benjamin Noyes, 15 Mar. 1812.
[38] NCHS, Box 4, Folder 17: Benjamin Noyes to John Noyes, 16 Mar. 1812. As Bruce Hindmarsh has noted, Doddridge was among many early modern writers, including the Catholic bishop Francis de Sales (1567–1622) and the German Protestant clergyman Anthony Horneck (1641–1697), who advised making a solemn covenant with God. See D. Bruce Hindmarsh, *The Spirit of Early Evangelicalism: True Religion in a Modern World* (Oxford, 2018), pp. 18-19.

> impressions left by such books were not spiritual, but a state of permanent hypochondria—the horrors of a mind without guidance, motive, or ability to do any thing. They are a bad generation of books, on the whole. Divine sovereignty does the whole in spite of them. I was converted in spite of such books.[39]

As Beecher would have it, it was both the encouragement he had received to interrogate his soul in solitude and the choice of Edwards as a spiritual counsellor that had caused his evangelical compunction to devolve into mental pathology. Ironically, however, his solution to these problems—his clinical theology—was an expansion upon Edwards's own apologetic project. Edwards's *Religious Affections* had been conceived in the first place as a response to the charge that revivalism produced enthusiasm and derangement. His careful parsing of 'true religion' as something distinct from both the frenzied self-deception of 'enthusiasts' and the 'formalism' of hypocrites served the same apologetic purpose as Beecher's own effort to distinguish, in his daughter's words, 'between the phenomena resulting from a diseased state of the body and those resulting from the genuine operation of the Spirit'.[40] Both arguments served to safeguard Puritan interiority from theological and medical criticisms.

Indeed, for all his (stated) distaste for Edwards's writings, Beecher was clearly working within the intellectual tradition that Edwards had established. His problem, at bottom, was not with Edwards's theology, but with its practical implementation within the revivalist communities in his New England context; and Noyes's diaries and letters provide a window into precisely what he found problematic in this respect.

Edwards himself had answered the critics of the so-called First Great Awakening by grounding true religion in the affections, which he had distinguished from the faculty of 'perception and speculation' as 'the more vigorous and sensible

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[39] Beecher, 'Religious Awakening', pp. 46-47. The first reference is to Edwards's *Account of the Life of the Late Reverend Mr. David Brainerd* (Boston, 1749), which used the diaries of a Calvinist missionary to Native Americans in Delaware to rebut Arminian theology. See N. Pettit, 'Editor's Introduction', *The Life of David Brainer*, WJEO, Vol. 7, p. 5.

[40] Stowe, 'Prelude to Early Correspondence', pp. 72-73.

exercises of the inclination and will of the soul'.[41] True religion, he argued, consisted not merely in an intellectual assent to the propositions of the gospel; it entailed a radical transformation of the affections, a change in the deepest inclination of the will, evidenced inwardly by a 'love to Christ' and 'hatred of sin', and outwardly by a lifelong perseverance in 'Christian practice'.[42] This combination of inward and outward evidences was crucial. Neither the mere feeling of benevolence ('some sinners', Edwards observed, 'have pangs of affection, and give an account that they find a spirit of love to God') nor an outward compliance to Christian morality was enough to assure the honest self-examiner that her or his affections were 'truly gracious'.[43] Godly affect and godly performance were both critical; and the former gave rise to the latter by necessity.

Noyes's diaries and letters—particularly his correspondence with his father—indicate the paradigmatic importance that was assigned to Edwards's framework as the key to distinguishing an authentic evangelical pilgrimage from its counterfeits.[44] Yet they also evince a self-analytical (and pastoral) use of this framework that supported narratives of wilderness-wandering and religious hypocrisy as much as they did a narrative of spiritual progress. In John Noyes's favourable, yet measured, response to his son's report of having made a solemn covenant with God in 1812, he thus cautioned him to 'keep in mind that there is no such thing as perseverance without engagedness of heart in the ways of religion'.[45] Edwards's dialect was on full display in Benjamin's response that June: 'as far as I know in my heart I think I have a hatred to sin: because

[41] J. Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJEO, Vol. 2, p. 96.
[42] Ibid., pp. 94, 156, 383.
[43] Ibid., p. 147.
[44] Rubin notes the significance of Edwards's work to nineteenth-century revivalists for the 'prescriptive model of conversion and religious affections' it provided them. See Rubin, *Religious Melancholy and Protestant Experience in America*, pp. 128-29.
[45] NCHS, Box 4, Folder 18: John Noyes to Benjamin Noyes, 17 Apr. 1812.

it is in itself sinfull. I hope also I have a love to God because he is altogether lovely'. Yet he added, mournfully, that 'I have also dayly to lament my couldness of affection towards … God', and he characterised the problem in terms of a spiritual aimlessness: 'before I am aware I am roving like the fools [sic] eyes to the ends of the earth'.[46]

Ultimately, Benjamin used the evidence of his affections to plot the dark trajectory of the hypocrite. In his next letter to his father, dated 20 July 1812, he lamented that 'I don't always *feel alike*;[47] sometimes I think I have no ground to hope that I possess any thing more than what hypocricy could effect', and he continued with a complaint which further suggested his theological debt to Edwards: 'I feel a want of affection to my Savior, & hatred to sin'.[48] In another letter to his parents three months later (October 1812), he cited his use of Edwards's scheme as a compass with which he was attempting to plot his own spiritual trajectory: 'I think I can trace myself (in Edwards) as having acted under the black & hatefull mask of hypocricy'.[49] He went on to define his condition in the language of the affections; his problem was an inner 'hardness … mixed with fear', and a lack of sincere contrition for his sins.[50] Yet the sense of motion in the previous phrase suggests the deeper meaning he attached to these feelings as the landmarks of a spiritual journey. His 'hypocrisy', in this sense, entailed the entire sequence from his solemn covenant in March to his melancholic self-diagnosis in October.

The same basic pattern emerged in the months immediately preceding Noyes's suicide. His next reference to his own direct engagement with Edwards's *Religious*

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[46] NCHS, Box 4, Folder 19: John Noyes to Benjamin Noyes, 4 Jun. 1812.
[47] My emphasis. Noyes would similarly complain in his diary the next year that '[m]y feelings are very different at different times'. See NCHS, Box 43, Folder 5: Diary of Benjamin Noyes, 14 Jun. 1813.
[48] NCHS, Box 4, Folder 19: Benjamin Noyes to John Noyes, 20 Jul. 1812.
[49] NCHS, Box 4, Folder 21: Benjamin Noyes to John Noyes, 27 Oct. 1812. The parentheses around Edwards's name are original.
[50] NCHS, Box 4, Folder 21: Benjamin Noyes to John Noyes, 27 Oct. 1812.

Affections came in a diary entry in late February 1815.[51] In contrast to the single allusion (above) to a process through which he had 'traced' the hellish route his soul had taken, the diary entries between 25 February and 19 April provide a more intimate look at the navigational process itself. It began optimistically, in the first entry, with a stated intention of taking stock of his spiritual condition in the light of his wandering affections:

> During the past week, I think on the whole I have had more of a spirit of prayer than former weeks. I have done but little. I have sinned much. But God I desire to know my heart. I want it should be disclosed to my view. For this end I have recurred again to Edwards on the Affections. With a divine blessing I think I might now read that book to my spiritual advantage. It is no less important than it is difficult for me to know his own heart. It requires much search—much time—; yet it is a knowledge which should be possessed by every one who professes to be a child of God.[52]

His engagement with Edwards continued to emerge in subsequent entries, including a reference the next day to Edwards's claim that '[h]e that has but little religious affections has but little religion',[53] and by the end of the next week he was once again mired in the anxiety to which Edwards had guided him in 1812: 'I fear I have much reason to suspect my state; Oh how awful a thing will it be to see at the day of Judgment that I have been a hypocrite'.[54] Despite brief glimpses of spiritual comfort and hope after this point, his diaries leading up to his suicide seven weeks later evince a mind becoming gradually confirmed in this fear.

These developments in Noyes's devotional life were intertwined with developments within the wider community at Yale. The college emerges in Benjamin

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[51] Noyes did, however, mention having consulted Edwards' *Life of David Brainerd* in the intervening period (in July 1813), noting that he was 'in a good measure solemnized by it'. See NCHS, Box 43, Folder 5: Diary of Benjamin Noyes, 20 Jul. 1813.
[52] NCHS, Box 43, Folder 8: Diary of Benjamin Noyes, 25 Feb. 1815.
[53] NCHS, Box 43, Folder 8: Diary of Benjamin Noyes, 26 Feb. 1815. The actual quotation reads: 'they who have but little religious affection, have certainly but little religion'. See Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJEO, Vol. 2, p. 121.
[54] NCHS, Box 43, Folder 8: Diary of Benjamin Noyes, 3 Mar. 1815.

Noyes's diaries as an intensified microcosm of the broader world of the Second Great Awakening. Perry Miller has characterised the revivalist worldview of antebellum America (possessed, he argues, by 'the mass of the American democracy' in this period) in cyclical terms, marked by the perpetual expectation of corporate awakenings, and generating demands for a prayerful vigilance during intervening periods of 'declension'.[55] This outlook was institutionalised at Yale under the presidency of Timothy Dwight (1752–1817), the grandson of Jonathan Edwards. Dwight frequently opened the year with a sermon that urged students to reorient their priorities in accordance with the certainty of death.[56] The desired outcome of awakening—whether it merely occurred at the individual level, or indeed managed to reach the level of a full-blown student revival—was characterised, in turn, as a spiritual harvest, during which there was an increased responsibility for those whose consciences had been aroused to seek grace, and for those who believed they were among the elect to examine themselves for signs of hypocrisy and self-deception.

Conversely, during times of religious decline, students were implored to take individual responsibility for helping to stimulate revival in the college—a duty reflected in the prayers for awakening in Noyes's diary.[57] And whilst his diaries and letters comment frequently on revival activity in cities outside New Haven such as Hartford

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[55] See Miller, *The Life of the Mind in America*, p. 7.

[56] Playing off the Old Testament text in which Jeremiah confronted Hananiah for falsely claiming that he had received a revelation from God about the imminent doom of Babylon (Jeremiah xxviii. 16), the sermon urged students to internalise the grim oracle with which the prophet roundly vanquished his opponent: 'this year thou shalt die'. See T. Dwight, 'Sermon for the New Year, Jan. 1807', in T. Dwight, *Sermons: By Timothy Dwight, D.D. LL.D. Late President of Yale College. In Two Volumes*, Vol. 2 (New Haven, 1828), pp. 244-58. Noyes's letters and diaries noted Dwight's use of this sermon to ring in the years 1812 and 1814. See NCHS, Box 4, Folder 16: Benjamin Noyes to John Noyes, 4 Jan. 1812; NCHS, Box 43, Folder 7: Diary of Benjamin Noyes, 31 Dec. 1814.

[57] See, for instance, his diary for 17 Jul. 1813 in NCHS, Box 43, Folder 5. On 23 Dec. 1814, Noyes noted an address by a tutor of the college, Safford, in which he had '<u>All</u> the members of the church should labor as tho' it was depending on them individually whether there should be a revival of religion in this Semenary [sic]'. See NCHS, Box 43, Folder 7: Diary of Benjamin Noyes, 23 Dec. 1814.

and Wethersfield,[58] they generally register the spiritual state of Yale itself as one of decline. His complaint in a letter to his parents on 1 January 1814 was typical in this respect: 'our [religious] meetings are much more fully attended now than at the beginning of this term', but 'we are in a great degree stupid and dead'.[59]

This all began to change in mid-February 1815, when news reached Yale of an outbreak of revival among the students at Princeton College in New Jersey. On the 17th of that month, Noyes recorded in his diary the startling numbers that had been affected: '60 are awakened—30 of the have hopefully experienced a change of heart—the remaining 30 more or less deeply impressed'.[60] Within a month, Yale too was experiencing 'the presence of God's Holy Spirit … among the brethren',[61] and Noyes's diary entries in the final weeks of his life are replete with references to the 'solemnizing' conversations and the flights of religious transport that he was now witnessing first hand.[62] These developments stimulated reflection upon his own individual responsibility, in the midst of this awakening, as a presumed convert: 'such are the seasons to try our graces—to see if they are genuine—times for self-examination, for discovering our error if we are deceived with respect to our good estate—and for making advances in the divine life if we have been renewed in the spirit of our mind'.[63] His retreat into the closet in this period, Edwards's *Religious Affections* in hand, was in this sense a reflection of his distinct duty as a participant in the revivalist community.

The events that immediately preceded Noyes's suicide reflect this dynamic between the spiritual state of the community and the responsibility of the individual. On

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[58] See, for instance, NCHS, Box 5, Folder 6: Benjamin Noyes to John Noyes, 1 Jan. 1814.
[59] Ibid.
[60] NCHS, Box 43, Folder 8: Diary of Benjamin Noyes, 17 Feb. 1815.
[61] NCHS, Box 43, Folder 8: Diary of Benjamin Noyes, 10 Mar. 1815.
[62] See, for instance, NCHS, Box 43, Folder 8: Diary of Benjamin Noyes, 4 Apr. 1815.
[63] NCHS, Box 43, Folder 8: Diary of Benjamin Noyes, 10 Mar. 1815.

24 March, Timothy Dwight preached before the students on Jeremiah 8:20, 'The harvest is past, the summer is ended, & we are not saved!'[64] The version of the sermon published in 1828 compared the situation of Dwight's hearers to that of the people of Judea in the period of 'universal declension' before the Babylonian captivity. Flouting the witness of 'every prophet, from Moses to Jeremiah' regarding the people's exclusionary dependence on Jehovah, they responded to the Babylonian threat by forming an alliance with the Egyptians. The harvest ('the time when the inhabitants and the nations, by which that country [the kingdom of Judah] was surrounded, usually went to war') and then summer ('[t]his last hope') came and went, and the Egyptians failed to show up, leaving the unfaithful nation 'in the gloom of despair'. Dwight plotted the despair of the Judeans at distinct points within the revivalist liturgical calendar. Those who remained in their sins at the close of each year, in the wake of each revival, and on their deathbed would look back in horror upon the harvests they had squandered. To fail to repent during a period of revival incurred a unique curse—one that would have unnerved the intellectual disciples of Jonathan Edwards in Dwight's audience: 'At these seasons a man resists uncommon and most happy means of grace, provokes God in a peculiar manner, and hardens his own heart to a degree, and with a rapidity, which ought to fill him with alarm and terror'.[65]

In the weeks that followed, Noyes expressed a growing concern about the spiritual implications of his own inner coldness during the present harvest. The themes of hypocrisy and self-deception began to emerge in his diary as communal fixations, which Noyes characteristically brought with him into his interior world. Initially, however, he still expressed hope that he might be vindicated in self-examination. Thus,

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[64] NCHS, Box 43, Folder 8: Diary of Benjamin Noyes, 24 Mar. 1815.
[65] T. Dwight, 'The Harvest Past', in T. Dwight, *Sermons: By Timothy Dwight, D.D. LL.D. Late President of Yale College. In Two Volumes*, Vol. 2 (New Haven, 1828), pp. 401-21.

Dwight's discourse on the harvest, although 'one of the most solemn discourses that I ever heard the good man preach', led him back to his room to 'consecrate myself to God soul & body, time, talents & property, to be his for time & for eternity'.[66] Only two days later, however, Elias Cornelius's address to his peers on 'false hope & hypocrites' reawakened Noyes's anxieties ('I was very solemn—had some fears'), and he was again drawn immediately to his room to 'cast myself at the foot of the cross'.[67] Eventually, the communal chatter about hypocrisy and self-deception was drowning out all else. On 14 April, Lydia Stoddard (1766–1850) told him about a minister in North Milford, Connecticut, who 'is of the opinion that every hypocrite knows that he is such'.[68] The next day, Nathaniel Taylor—then-minister of the First Church in New Haven—'discoursed [at Yale] about hypocrites & deceived persons'. Noyes found these warnings 'solemn & exactly applicable to my case', yet rather than 'improving' them to his spiritual wellbeing in the closet that evening, he confessed himself unchanged (although not unmoved, for '[t]he effect of the whole was to swell my heart with burning fear: but not to break it'), and he closed the examen with one of the darkest reflections in his entire oeuvre: 'I must draw the conclusion the [sic] I am not a christian. Oh distressing thought to one that has a heart. But my heart could bear unmoved almost any present distress. But I shall feel in hell, if I don't feel here'.[69]

Despondency, Derangement, and Models of Spiritual Care

Lyman Beecher recounted that his own religious awakening during his time at Yale had been intensified when he had heard the same sermon by Timothy Dwight: 'When I heard him preach on "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved",

[66] NCHS, Box 43, Folder 8: Diary of Benjamin Noyes, 24 Mar. 1815.
[67] NCHS, Box 43, Folder 8: Diary of Benjamin Noyes, 26 Mar. 1815.
[68] NCHS, Box 43, Folder 8: Diary of Benjamin Noyes, 14 Apr. 1815.
[69] NCHS, Box 43, Folder 8: Diary of Benjamin Noyes, 15 Apr. 1815.

a whole avalanche rolled down on my mind'. Like Noyes, the next stop for Beecher after the assault of the pulpit had been the solitude of the closet. 'I went home weeping every step', he thus recounted, and there he had become a 'hypochondriac'—a process that he had attributed both to his consultation of books such as Edwards's *Religious Affections* and to the absence of skilful pastoral counsel.[70]

Noyes had not, in fact, lacked pastoral counsel throughout his own protracted 'awakening', nor did he represent his experience as having been one of unbroken despondency. His diaries frequently referred, for instance, to experiences of 'comfort' during (or after) periods of 'social prayer' and 'sweet intercourse' with others.[71] Moreover, as we have seen, he sustained a regular correspondence with his father, which Benjamin had himself described in favourable terms as a complement to the spiritual guidance he regularly received from the pulpit and the bible: 'there is some thing accompanying them [i.e. his father's pastoral insights] communicated by letter which has a very happy & good tendency'.[72] And yet, whilst John Noyes's pastoral counsel included cautions about the psychological perils of scrupulosity and devotional excess, it ultimately encouraged the kind of perpetual self-doubt and anxiety that Beecher had opposed.

Their correspondence on spiritual matters began in January 1812, when, upon hearing Timothy Dwight's New Year's sermon on Jeremiah 28:16 ('this year thou shalt die'), Benjamin wrote to his father to give him a detailed account of 'the state of my mind as it respects spiritual things' and to request instruction. Over the months that followed, his father attempted to guide him from afar through the psychological and spiritual aspects of the conversion process. Their correspondence throughout this period

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[70] Lyman Beecher, 'Religious Awakening', pp. 46-47.
[71] Note examples in NCHS, Box 43, Folder 8: Diary of Benjamin Noyes, 4 Mar. 1815 and NCHS, Box 43, Folder 8: Diary of Benjamin Noyes, 6 April 1815.
[72] NCHS, Box 4, Folder 16: Benjamin Noyes to John Noyes, 25 Jan. 1812.

reflects a particular concern with the challenge of regulating the affections in both the excitement of communal awakening and the tranquillity of the closet. In his initial letter in January, Benjamin disclosed his recent struggles in the latter context. Having immersed himself for the first time in Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul*, he was concerned that he had experienced too great a measure of its intended effect ('to awaken & arouse the feelings to those things which the Writer strives to enforce'):

> I was at one time so deeply engaged in it that I read it more than and [sic] at times when it was not perhaps expedient: to wit after studying most of the day and evening I read in it after retiring to my bedchamber so that by experience I found the agitation of my mind so great as to overcome the powers of the body: my nerves being not very strong and I find that there is discression [sic] to be used in this as in all other things lest on the one hand I should go to the excess: (as I am at a period of life when my constitution is changing) or on the other … [I should become] could [sic] and indifferent to those things which are of eternall [sic] importance.[73]

'Overmuch study' featured as one of the classic causes of distemper in Robert Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621),[74] and within two decades of Benjamin's own complaint on the matter, excessive reading on religious topics would be one of the most common symptoms cited by people who were having a family member confined to an asylum for insanity. In his response, John Noyes showed an awareness of the conventional wisdom on this matter, yet put more emphasis on the opposite peril: 'I am happy to find that while you are disposed to use discretion in your attentions to things of religion, so as to be guarded agst excess, you are aware of the danger of being "too cold and indifferent" to those things which are of eternal importance'.[75]

In August, Noyes wrote to his son again with a more detailed analysis of the issue, this time framing it in relation to the raptures of communal awakenings. Noting

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[73] Ibid.
[74] Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy*, I, p. 241.
[75] NCHS, Box 4, Folder 16: John Noyes to Benjamin Noyes, 26 Jan. 1812.

that 'the zeal of many is apt to outstrip their real growth of grace', he cautioned his son against assessing his spiritual condition according to the character or intensity of his religious affections, whether they happened to be elevated or depressed:

> There is danger of Christians overrating their own attainments when they estimate them by their rapturous flights of religious affection: which cannot in their nature be lasting—and, on the other hand of sinking too low afterwards in their own estimation of their spiritual state, when they find that they have not such raised affections as they have heretofore had.[76]

This caution was drawn straight from Edwards, for whom 'very high' religious affections came first among the various things 'which are no signs that affections are gracious, or that they are not'.[77] It suggested, positively, that a dullness of affect might have a place within the experience of the regenerate. John Noyes elaborated on this point in a subsequent letter in November 1812, in which he was responding to his son's complaints about the fact that he did not 'feel my sins as I ought'—that he lacked 'a deep humiliating sense of my sins & a truly broken heart'.[78] Assuring his son that one who is 'reconciled to God …. may be sensible of great hardness of heart still remaining in him', Noyes urged him, above all, to 'guard against a despairing frame'.[79]

Despair, in this context, was not the feeling of inner coldness itself, but a theological judgment about the self based upon the spiritual evidence that this feeling seemed to suggest. Benjamin's ultimate conclusion, nearly three years later, that he was a 'hypocrite' epitomised despair in this sense. Yet within the pastoral conventions of Noyes's revivalist community, the individual was prohibited from making this leap from the evidence of feeling to a final judgment about her or his spiritual state. Instead, she or he was held within a cycle of prayerful hope and sober self-examination which,

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[76] NCHS, Box 4, Folder 20: John Noyes to Benjamin Noyes, 19 Aug. 1812.
[77] Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJEO, Vol. 2, p. 127.
[78] NCHS, Box 4, Folder 22: Benjamin Noyes to John Noyes, 4 Nov. 1812.
[79] NCHS, Box 4, Folder 22: John Noyes to Benjamin Noyes, 4 Nov. 1812. Similar cautions had been expressed by the Congregational minister James Bowers in his *Sermon, on Religious Melancholy, Delivered in the Church of St. Andrew, Scituate, on Sunday, 1st October, 1810* (Boston, 1810), p. 9.

as we have seen, was attuned to the cycle of declension and awakening in the wider community. Hope and anxiety were interdependent aspects of the normative religious life in this system. Together they countered both the hubris of self-assuredness and the despair of self-condemnation; and both were sustained by the practices—'liturgical' and pastoral—of the revivalist community.

John Noyes's pastoral counsel thus ultimately reinforced the spiritual practices of the community more broadly. Its tendency was to keep the individual in a state of suspension and uncertainty—a posture that Lyman Beecher would later oppose with an approach to spiritual care that sought to move the individual through anxiety to grace as swiftly (and irreversibly) as possible. Where John Noyes's pastoral philosophy was cyclical in orientation and consonant with the revivalist rhythms of the community, Beecher's was essentially linear, and emphasised the progress of the individual.

Beecher's clinical theology was in this respect an indictment of a specific communal practice of evangelical piety. Moreover, it addressed an important conceptual problem that was exposed in the discrepancy between the revivalist community's theological interpretation of Benjamin Noyes's despondency before his suicide, and its apologetic appeal to derangement to explain his condition afterwards.

The apologetic response of the community emerged in the wake of controversy in the press over the presumed link between Noyes's suicide and the evangelical revivalism that had swept Yale, Princeton and Dartmouth colleges in the weeks preceding it. The editor of the *New-Hampshire Patriot* had thus featured the event as proof that the 'sudden changes or reformations' of revival were 'a great injury to genuine religion'.[80] If this report seemed to place the blame on revivalism, rather than

[80] See *New-Hampshire Patriot* (Concord, NH), 23 May 1815, p. 3. Quoted in Broc, 'Religion and Insanity in America', p. 403. Loren Broc notes the rapidity with which stories like this spread in newspapers across New England and the eastern seaboard. See Broc, 'Religion and Insanity in America', pp. 404-406.

on Noyes himself, other newspapers were less gracious, citing the knife wound in his throat as evidence that his suicide had been a premeditated, and thus sinful, act.[81]

A response to these claims in the *Connecticut Herald* on 27 June 1815 evinced the two key features of the Noyes family's defence of the departed Benjamin. It cited his diary and the testimony of friends as evidence of his 'distinguished piety', it denied that his body had been '*mutilated with a knife*, as at first represented', and it attributed his suicide to a form of mental derangement caused by an 'influenza'.[82] This apologetic strategy was subsequently rehearsed in the two memoirs that Benjamin's family commissioned after his death, one by Benjamin's uncle, Benjamin Silliman (1779–1864), who was a professor of chemistry and natural science at the college, and the other by Elias Cornelius (1794–1832), a friend of Noyes's and fellow undergraduate at Yale College who would go on to become an agent for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Cornelius's memoir, in particular, had been requested by Benjamin's father in November 1815 specifically as a bulwark against the claims of Arminians, who, he worried, 'would say that here is an instance of a Christian's falling from grace'.[83] Such claims implied both that Benjamin Noyes had indeed been a reprobate, and that his reprobation had proven Calvinist theology false.

Cornelius's thirteen-page memoir thus extended the case that had already been made in point form in the *Connecticut Herald* several months earlier. The first seven pages were devoted to proving that Noyes's piety—reflected in the many prayers, resolutions, and self-chastisements recorded in his diary from 1813 to 1815—was authentic, and indicative of his status as a child of God. In what remained, he tackled the problem that Noyes's suicide posed to this claim. How could one of God's elect

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[81] Broc, 'Religion and Insanity in America', pp. 404-406.
[82] Quoted in Ibid., p. 403.
[83] NCHS, Box 5, Folder 16: John Noyes to Elias Cornelius, 22 Nov. 1815.

commit what had traditionally been viewed as a mortal sin? Cornelius argued that Noyes had done so while in a state of insanity, during which he had ceased to be a 'moral agent'.[84] But his analysis drew a sharp line between Noyes's piety, as reflected in his diary, and the specific mental state in which he had committed suicide. According to Cornelius, his diary evinced a tender conscience, a 'hatred of all sin', and 'unusual circumspection'.[85] But the last few weeks of his life witnessed a sharp deviation from this pattern of spiritual health: the onset of a form of insanity that was ultimately rooted in a physical malady. Cornelius described the condition thus:

> About 4 or 5 weeks previous to his untimely end, he was seized with a severe influenza—which not only affected his body, but his mind—Under this state of mental and bodily depression he became the subject of religious gloom and melancholy. The consequence was he gave up the hope he had before indulged of being a child of God.[86]

In appealing to derangement, Cornelius was benefiting from established legal and medical precedents which, since the early modern period, had linked certain cases of suicide to insanity.[87] This was the obvious course for him to take in his defence of his friend's piety and theology; yet it nevertheless exposed a conceptual vacuum in the pastoral apparatus of the revivalist community.

Shortly after news of Benjamin's disappearance had spread, John Noyes wrote to Benjamin Silliman requesting any information as to his son's whereabouts. In his response on 24 April 1815, Silliman—himself ignorant on the matter—informed his half-brother that Benjamin had 'been afflicted with an influenza' for the past two or three weeks, and that he had spoken with him on three occasions between Tuesday the

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[84] NCHS, Box 43, Folder 3: Elias Cornelius, 'Memoir of Benjamin Noyes,' p. 10. Cornelius first asserted that Benjamin's insanity had deprived him of moral agency in a letter to John Noyes shortly after his son's death, and he expanded on this idea at length in his memoir. See NCHS, Box 5, Folder 14: Elias Cornelius to John Noyes, 10 May 1815.
[85] NCHS, Box 43, Folder 3: Elias Cornelius, 'Memoir of Benjamin Noyes', p. 4, 6.
[86] NCHS, Box 43, Folder 3: Elias Cornelius, 'Memoir of Benjamin Noyes', p. 10.
[87] See R.A. Houston's discussions of both contexts in Houston, *Punishing the Dead?*, pp. 36-44, 175-80, 313-17. Also see MacDonald and Murphy, *Sleepless Souls*, pp. 15-16, 232-33.

18th and Saturday the 22nd, in each case finding him deep in the throes of 'religious despondency'. Their third interview had lasted more than an hour, according to Silliman, yet by the end, Benjamin still 'would admit no hope & seemed to consider himself as almost a reprobate'. Crucially, however, Silliman assured Noyes that he had perceived 'no indication of a deranged mind' in his son; rather, he had merely observed an 'absence of mind and slowness of speech which I imputed to his despondency & to his loss of sleep'. Silliman had thus advised Benjamin to return home to Norfield immediately.[88]

This assessment of Noyes's condition indicated the community's lack of a language and methodology with which to distinguish between authentic forms of religious despondency and the 'derangement' which the community would subsequently invoke for apologetic reasons to explain Noyes's suicide. And so, whereas Silliman's pastoral imagination had led him to conceptualise Benjamin's influenza and his despondency as separate problems, the two things were subsequently fused in Elias Cornelius's apologetic imagination as a form of 'derangement'. Beecher's 'clinical theology' was devised as a model of spiritual care that was meant to solve this problem on the ground.

Conclusion

There were key differences between the models of spiritual care that John MacFarlane and Lyman Beecher each advocated, and the cultural and religious contexts within which they were delivered. MacFarlane represented his pastoral agency as one aspect of a wider framework of spiritual meanings and practices in his United Presbyterian community which had helped mediate his sister's conversion and religious identity. The

[88] NCHS, Box 5, Folder 13: Benjamin Silliman to John Noyes, 24 Apr. 1815.

pastoral landscape was vivified by the pious literatures of his British evangelical context, and reflected the privileged status assigned to the bible, in this Scottish Presbyterian context, as the centrepiece of pastoral counsel and personal devotion. Beecher framed his clinical theology, by contrast, as a solution to problems that he had perceived and experienced within the revivalist communities of New England—issues that were evinced with a dreadful clarity in Benjamin Noyes's sufferings and suicide.

Yet despite these differences, both ministers were ultimately concerned with the same issue. They both wanted to preserve a form of religious interiority that had long been deemed controversial for its associations with pathology and derangement. Their pastoral philosophies were developed within an apologetic milieu which, by systematising and even medicalising the psychological and emotional states associated with Puritan interiority, safeguarded it against criticisms that evangelical Calvinism caused derangement. The implication was to elevate the role of the minister as one whose pastoral agency played a crucial role in managing the psychological and emotional states of the spiritual 'patient' and helping to sustain their religious identity.

The therapeutic profile that this role entailed was that of a skilled practitioner who carefully balanced theological and medical aims and methodologies. As we shall see in the chapter that follows, asylum therapy in this period developed according to its own set of values and agendas. The conceptual appeal of institutional care hinged on its deliverability to large groups of patients; yet the implication of the economy of asylum therapy—and of its medical assumptions with respect to religious enthusiasm and excitement—was the utter negation of Puritan interiority. The next chapter returns to the cases of Elizabeth Stone and John Perceval, exploring how they each responded to the negation of their religious identities within the asylum.

Chapter 4

Religious Insanity in the Asylum

During his tenure as superintendent of the State Lunatic Asylum in Utica, New York, the prominent American alienist Amariah Brigham (1798–1849) founded a ten-volume journal called *The Opal* (1851–1860), which was written and edited by the patients of the asylum, and included essays, letters, poems and political commentary.[1] The fourth volume (1854) included a personal account by a woman which reads like an evangelical conversion narrative, except that her transformation was not from the darkness of sin to the light of grace, but from the 'blindness' of mental derangement to the 'enlightenment' of a medicalised self-understanding.[2] It thus projects an idealised depiction of the shift in the perspective of the asylum patient that was deemed necessary to recovery.

The woman's malady was the standard fare of religious melancholy. It began with a 'presentiment of some great evil which was to befall me'; and the 'dark cloud' to which this gave rise 'came near consigning me to the grave of a suicide'. A sense of dread followed her everywhere, alienating her from society and from her former acquaintances, who now repulsed her. Soon her waking hours were consumed with reading 'the Bible and Commentaries', but these texts compounded the problem, raising fresh fears about the eternal security of her parents, who were Universalists.[3]
Her parents' efforts to intervene were foiled, she recounted, because of the discontinuity between their perspectives on her condition and her own self-identity. To

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[1] This was among numerous such patient periodicals in this period. See E. Clark, 'Mad Literature: Insane Asylums in Nineteenth-Century America', *Arizona Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 4 (2015), pp. 42-65. Also see 'Progress of the Periodical Literature of Lunatic Asylums', *American Journal of Insanity*, 2/1 (1845), pp. 76-78.
[2] 'A Chapter from Real Life. By a Recovered Patient', *The Opal: A Monthly Periodical of the State Lunatic Asylum*, 4/2 (Utica, 1854), p. 48.
[3] Ibid., pp. 48-49.

them, her anxieties and fixations were meaningless—mere symptoms of mental pathology. To her, they were the lived experience of God's dealings with her soul. Rebuffing their interventions, she followed a divine prompting 'to leave father and mother' and 'go into groceries and bar-rooms, where wicked men congregate, warn them of their sins, and endure patiently their reproaches, for Christ's sake'. Her desire for holiness gave way to an extreme asceticism as she worried that dressing well was prideful, that eating well was self-indulgent. And her self-understanding changed accordingly: 'from being fit to preach, I suddenly became a fiend, who was the cause of all sickness, insanity, sorrow, wickedness and death'. She choked on food and convulsed when she drank water, and her consequent emaciation from food refusal at last made asylum confinement necessary.[4]

The treatment regimen at the asylum managed to succeed where her parents had failed. Although she initially brought her delusions with her into the asylum, the process of her recovery began several weeks into her confinement—at Thanksgiving dinner, precisely, when 'for the first time in months a gleam of hope shone in my heart'. This hope quickly faded, and the next day she was once again in dismay, weeping over her 'wickedness'. But that evening, a sudden transformation occurred:

> After dinner while sitting alone in my room with tears falling fast upon my work, came like light from heaven a change. The lightning's flash is not more brilliant or rapid than the revulsion of feelings which swept over me then. I sat for a few moments benumbed, paralyzed, breathless, then as if it were a sane self-speaking to an insane one, I reasoned thus 'You have been insane, very insane, your stories about yourself are all insane delusions, your fear of choaking [sic] will convince you of that, you were near death when you came here you are well or nearly so now'.[5]

[4] 'A Chapter from Real Life', pp. 48-49. Food refusal was commonly reported as a 'symptom' of religious melancholia in this period. See Rubin, *Religious Melancholy and Protestant Experience in America*, pp. 164-69.
[5] 'A Chapter from Real Life', p. 50.

The basis of this transformation was her realisation that her afflictions were somatic at bottom, not spiritual. Initiated in the solitude of her room, it reached full effect—much like Elizabeth Stone's evangelical conversion experience, which was explored in Chapter 2—when she returned to the broader community. She rushed out of her room to tell her favourite attendant, Miss P., about this 'wondrous transformation'. Her disposition towards others was entirely altered, and she now felt immense love for everyone—particularly for the physician and attendants of the asylum. Just as evangelical converts in this period frequently reported a fundamental alteration at the levels of the senses and the affections,[6] this patient noted that '[e]verything seemed brighter, better, and my pillow was often moistened with blissful tears'. And she closed her account with an old trope of evangelical hymnody: her transformation was a 'mysterious change from darkness to light', and one for which she could hazard no explanation, and thus opted to 'answer as did one of old, "I only know that whereas I was blind I now see"'.[7] A worthy endorsement of Amariah Brigham's asylum at Utica.

The provenance of the story as a sanctioned asylum document raises various questions. Was this in any way an authentic account of a patient's experience, or merely a literary conceit, produced as a writing assignment set by the asylum attendants?[8] Something in between is perhaps likely, but there are other possibilities as well. In a doctoral thesis that analyses *The Opal*, Maryrose Eannace has shown that its authors sometimes used coded language to protest against the asylum regime. Perhaps this account was intended as a satire of the totalising claim of the institution's medical

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[6] Note, in particular, the following quotation from Jonathan Edwards' personal narrative: 'The appearance of everything was altered: there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, or appearance of divine glory, in almost everything'. See J. Edwards, 'Personal Narrative', in *Letters and Personal Writings*, WJEO, Vol. 16, pp. 794-95.

[7] 'A Chapter from Real Life', p. 50.

[8] See B. Reiss, 'Letters from Asylumia: The "Opal" and the Cultural Work of the Lunatic Asylum, 1851–1860', *American Literary History*, 16/1 (2004), p. 23 and M. Eannace, 'Lunatic Literature: New York State's *The Opal*, 1850–1860' (PhD Thesis, State University of New York at Albany, 2001), p. 205.

narrative upon patients' identities.[9] Or perhaps the account was not even written by a patient, or was written under compromising conditions. It is not inconsequential in this respect that editorial control of the journal was a privilege extended to the patients by a regime which controlled their bodies (if not their minds as well), and which had an obvious interest in first-hand testimonials of dramatic healing.[10] Regardless of its true source and intention, the significance of the narrative rests upon the way in which it appropriates the *topoi* of evangelical conversion narrative to represent a shift from a 'lunatic' self-understanding to a medical one. In a kind of reverse-transfiguration, the joy of experiencing divine healing was now the delight of discovering that one was ill.

The dynamics of power in the background of this narrative are significant here as well. The account elevated the physician and the attendants of the asylum to the level of a medical clergy. This priesthood was represented as having played a crucial pastoral function throughout her illness, and thus received the lion's share of her affection after her 'conversion' ('I cannot describe the love I felt for all, nor the gratitude bordering on adoration for those who had watched over my weakness and rescued me from the grave').[11] More importantly, her discovery that her condition was physical in nature ('neuralgia, and a spinal affection') meant that the asylum superintendent, as a trained physician, was the appropriate mediator of the 'grace' she needed.[12] It is noteworthy in this respect that the end point of the account is not the woman's cure, but her acknowledgment of her illness and its basis in physical pathology. Her claim, indeed, was not that she was well, but only 'nearly so'. The narrative was structured to place her in an appropriate relation to the quasi-spiritual office of the asylum attendants,

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[9] Eannace, 'Lunatic Literature', p. 205. Also see Reiss, 'Letters from Asylumia', p. 3.
[10] In the fifth volume of *The Opal*, the editor claimed that 'its articles are all written by patients, and under no "supervision" or restraint'. See 'Editor's Table', *The Opal: A Monthly Periodical of the State Lunatic Asylum*, 5/6 (Utica, 1855), p. 188. Quoted in Reiss, 'Letters from Asylumia', p. 9.
[11] 'A Chapter from Real Life', p. 50.
[12] Ibid., p. 49.

whose role in administering the medical sacrament would now be embraced, and not resisted.

In the previous chapter we noted a parallel between the model of spiritual care projected in the United Presbyterian minister John MacFarlane's *The Night Lamp*, and the 'psychiatric power' of later-nineteenth-century alienists such as Charcot who, in Foucault's words, 'produce[d] the disease in its truth and subdue[d] it in its reality'.[13] In general, mid-century asylum therapy in the Anglosphere did not seek to regulate madness in this way, but simply negated it. Its methods and objectives reflected the philosophy of moral treatment, which was developed in the late eighteenth century by Philippe Pinel (1745–1826) in France and William Tuke (1732–1822) in England, and which continued to influence asylum therapy until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, even as it was combined over this period with what were to become more conventional medical approaches.[14] Drawing from the insights of Foucault, the sociologist Andrew Scull has emphasised the goal of moral treatment to inculcate (in patients) the values and ideals of bourgeois rationality through a regimen of re-socialisation, 'a system of rewards and punishment not essentially different from those used to teach a young child to obey the dictates of "civilized" morality'.[15] Within such a system, the institution of the asylum overshadowed the personality and skill of the physician, whose role was not to reconstitute madness within a paradigm that

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[13] Foucault, 'Psychiatric Power', p. 43.

[14] Porter, *Mind-Forg'd Manacles*, pp. 224-27; A.S. Luchins, 'The Cult of Curability and the Doctrine of Perfectibility: Social Context of the Nineteenth-Century American Asylum Movement', *History of Psychiatry*, 3/10 (1992), pp. 203-20. As Andrew Scull has argued, the integration of moral and medical forms of treatment in these years reflected dynamics of professionalization. See A.T. Scull, 'From Madness to Mental Illness: Medical Men as Moral Entrepreneurs', *European Journal of Sociology*, 16/2 (1975), pp. 218-61.

[15] A.T. Scull, 'Moral Treatment Reconsidered: Some Sociological Comments on an Episode in the History of British Psychiatry', *Psychological Medicine*, 9/3 (1979), pp. 428. The notion that madness was constructed in the modern period as the negative image of bourgeois rationality was Foucault's central claim in his *Madness and Civilization*. Both Roy Porter and Mary Jimenez have characterised moral treatment in terms of 'resocialization'. See Porter, *Mind-Forg'd Manacles*, pp. 227-28 and Jimenez, *Changing Faces of Madness*, pp. 122-23.

empowered him as the heroic 'master', but to deploy the methods at his disposal—including the use of medicines and restraints—to purge the therapeutic community of beliefs and behaviours that did not fit.[16] Unsurprisingly, then, attendants were represented almost as having been interchangeable with the superintendent in the asylum narratives which this chapter explores; for the asylum administration essentially functioned as one organism to deploy what Porter has aptly referred to as the '"behaviourist" techniques of rendering [mad] speech proper'.[17]

These aspects of the philosophy of moral treatment were captured in the patient narrative we have been discussing in an almost conspicuous succinctness, particularly in the author's depiction of her initial encounter with the asylum superintendent:

> I liked the face of Dr. B., the moment I saw it. I thought I had found a friend, and I fancied that when my parents were once gone he would believe me and allow me to go without eating. That I soon found myself mistaken, need not be told in regard to doing as I pleased, but I was wise enough to submit without any struggle, or even coaxing, much to his astonishment I am sure as it has since been to mine.[18]

As Scull has observed, kindness, as opposed to physical coercion, was deemed by moral therapists the most effective means of producing 'the necessary internalization of moral standards' among patients.[19] In this woman's case, Brigham's kindness underpinned her choice to cooperate with a system that denied the legitimacy of her religious fixation. Subsequent references to the asylum staff further suggested the therapeutic significance of the asylum environment itself—rather than the heroism of

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[16] The primacy of the asylum is reflected, in this respect, in the preoccupation of mid-nineteenth-century alienists with the relationship between the architectural design of the asylum—and related issues such as ventilation—with treatment. See, for instance, L.V. Bell, *The Practical Methods of Ventilating Buildings: Being the Annual Address Before the Massachusetts Medical Society, May 31, 1848: With an Appendix on Heating by Steam and Hot Water* (Boston, 1848). Elaine Showalter has characterised this fixation in terms of the 'moral architecture' of the asylum, through which 'structures of class and gender that were "moral," that is, "normal," by their own standards' were reproduced. See E. Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830–1980* (New York, 1985), p. 34.
[17] R. Porter, *A Social History of Madness: Stories of the Insane* (London, 1987), p. 34. Also see Reiss, 'Letters from Asylumia', p. 10.
[18] 'A Chapter from Real Life', p. 49.
[19] Scull, 'Moral Treatment Reconsidered', p. 425.

any one therapist—as having inculcated outward behaviours which necessarily preceded her inner transformation. 'I frankly told the attendants and patients what I was [i.e. the devil incarnate]', she wrote, 'but at the same time out of respect to the company I was in, I behaved as well as I knew how'. Soon, her public frankness about her spiritual identity, too, began to wane, which she characterised as an effect of the subtle interplay of incredulity and kindness in the attitudes of Brigham and the other physicians: 'I thought the Doctors fancied me a fool, but that their duties to patients compelled them to treat me politely, so I would not speak to them save in monosyllables, and in reply to questions'. And finally, she altogether 'ceased speaking of my delusions, save to [unskilled] attendants'. Her medical 'conversion'—her own inward negation of the spiritual meanings of her experience—promptly ensued.[20]

The period of this thesis witnessed the publication of a spate of narratives which, unlike the one described above, protested against the asylum system and its therapeutic methods. The narratives of John Perceval and Elizabeth Stone were among the more detailed and vociferous of these. Crucially, however, these authors did not depict their experiences in the asylum in terms of a conflict between the medical perspective of the institution and their own spiritual perspectives. Instead, they characterised the asylum as the location of a more fundamental clash between worldviews and theological perspectives.

The perspectives of Stone and Perceval are compared in this chapter with the 'alienist perspective' that was emerging in the 1830s and 1840s as part of the process of psychiatric professionalisation. In contrast to the pastoral approaches that we explored in the previous chapter (models of spiritual care which, as we saw, sought to preserve the moral and emotional dynamics of evangelical identity), asylum therapy in this

[20] 'A Chapter from Real Life', p. 49.

period aimed altogether to negate Puritan and evangelical interiorities, at least insofar as they were deemed to have taken a pathological or morbid turn. This was even the case, as we shall see, when the alienist in question had evangelical sympathies. The professionalisation of mental medicine in this sense implied the generation of a methodological uniformity among physicians of divergent religious viewpoints. The chapter begins by outlining this professional agenda and its implication for religious alienists.

This section is followed by detailed analyses of Perceval's and Stone's reactions to asylum therapy. The fact that both authors aimed their critiques at the religious beliefs and perspectives of the alienists who treated them is significant in two key ways. Firstly, it suggests that the professional goal, among many alienists, of a theoretical and methodological uniformity—of a therapeutic space that had been sanitised of religious partisanship—was, as yet, only partial and incomplete in this period. The religious perspectives of the alienists and attendants of the institution remained clear enough to many patients. Secondly, and more fundamentally, these religious critiques expressed in distinct—spiritually- and theologically-inflected ways—the problem of a psychiatric discourse and methodology which, by both economic necessity and therapeutic design, ignored crucial aspects of the patient's interiority.

These points were encapsulated both in their critiques of the religious perspectives of the alienists, and in the models of spiritual care that Perceval and Stone each upheld as the alternatives to asylum therapy that they had truly needed. Both authors characterised the asylum, ultimately, as a microcosm of the social and religious forces outside the asylum that had led them into confinement in the first place. By supporting, rather than negating, their 'true' identities, spiritual care supported an entire worldview which the rising psychiatric profession was deemed to be threatening.

The Alienist Perspective

The asylum was not a secular context, nor were alienists, as a whole, an irreligious group. Most were indeed religious themselves, and they frequently wrote about the value of religious observance as a means of extending comfort to, and fostering self-confidence within, the insane mind.[21] Representative in this respect was the American alienist William Maclay Awl's (1799–1876) assertion in the third annual report of the Ohio Lunatic Asylum (1843) of the 'value of religious exercises with the insane *as a special mean of grace*, well calculated to bring light and wisdom to the mind, relief and peace to the heart and conscience'.[22] Yet Awl, like many in his profession, assumed a connection between revivalist forms of religion and insanity, as indicated by the contrast he drew between the mental derangement induced by 'the awful realities of eternity and the immortality of the soul', and the 'genial influences' of 'pure and undefiled religion'. The latter, he argued, could 'have no … injurious effects upon the mind', for it tended only to 'shed peace and joy over the path of our existence, and light us with elevated hopes to the prospects of a happy eternity'.[23]

This particular iteration of the true-false religion dichotomy had the effect of undercutting the Puritan form of interiority which evangelical ministers were intent on preserving. As we saw in the previous chapter, the pastoral philosophies of John MacFarlane and Lyman Beecher had been designed to respond to the conceptual and practical problems reflected in experiences like that of Benjamin Noyes. Noyes's evangelical community had made a radical shift, after his suicide, from a religious

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[21] See, for instance, 'Religious Services in Lunatic Asylums—Duties of the Chaplain', *American Journal of Insanity*, 2/2 (1845), pp. 115-23.
[22] Quoted in [W.M. Awl], 'The Ohio Lunatic Asylum', *The Journal of Psychological Medicine and Mental Pathology*, 3 (London, 1850), p. 468. This idea caught the attention of the prominent American alienist Pliny Earle (1809–1892), who quoted it in a discussion of the use of 'religious worship' in asylums in P. Earle, *Visit to Thirteen Asylums for the Insane in Europe; to which are Added a Brief Notice of Similar institutions in Transatlantic Countries and in the United States, and an Essay on the Causes, Duration, Termination and Moral Treatment of Insanity* (Philadelphia, 1841), p. 139.
[23] Quoted in Awl, 'The Ohio Lunatic Asylum', p. 474.

narrative to a medical one to interpret his condition. He was suddenly transformed in the communal imagination from a despondent pilgrim into a lunatic. The models of spiritual care promoted by MacFarlane and Beecher addressed this issue by seeking to articulate distinctions between elements of piety and pathology within individual experiences. These distinctions gave a conceptual footing to their efforts to manage the psychological and emotional states of the individual, which in turn allowed them, as ministers, to preserve the central elements of Puritan interiority.

In the asylum, Puritan interiority was simply negated. Although William Maclay Awl did not directly impugn evangelical religion for its psychological hazards, there are others in his profession who did. In his *Observations on the Influence of Religion upon the Health and Physical Welfare of Mankind* (1835), Amariah Brigham took overt aim at the theological foundation of evangelical revivalism. The error of the revivalists, he argued, was the belief that the Holy Spirit was communicated 'specially' to certain individuals, while the rest—indeed, the majority—of humankind was abandoned to an eternity of hellfire.[24] Whilst this characterisation did not accurately represent the full range of theological perspectives within the revivalist world,[25] its effect was to undermine the general evangelical expectation that God would intervene supernaturally within the development of the individual.

This tension between evangelical belief and the emergent psychiatric profession has rightly been attributed to processes of medical professionalization, but for misleading reasons. Analysing the American context in particular, the sociologist William Bainbridge has thus argued that alienists, as representatives of a young and controversial occupation, '*sought to reduce their tension with the sociocultural*

[24] Brigham, *Observations*, pp. 187-88.
[25] Note the preacher and Shaker, Richard McNemar's (1770–1839) discussion of the various revivalists in the early nineteenth century who 'could not, dare not preach, that salvation was restricted to a certain definite number' in his *The Kentucky Revival*, p. 27.

environment'—an effort that was served by their criticism of the 'high-tension religion' of evangelical revivalists, since such criticism effectively aligned alienists with the 'low-tension' religious sensibilities of the cultural elites.[26] This outlook, however, overlooks the prevalence of so-called 'high-tension' religion within the upper echelons of American society. Moreover, it ignores a more fundamental tension between the values, agendas and forms of reasoning reflected in evangelical revivalism, on the one hand, and the objectives and exigencies of asylum therapy on the other.

Lyman Beecher's 'clinical theology' was devised as an effort to combine the evangelical agenda with forms of knowledge derived from the medical world. Yet this enterprise assumed a form of epistemological cross-fertilisation that was not readily apprehended within the wider culture. His son Charles Beecher's assessment of his pastoral philosophy was revealing in this respect:

> This peculiar shaping of doctrine for direct practical medicinal ends, taken in connection with his skillful observance of the laws of the physical and mental system, constituted that clinical theology, which was yet too closely dependent upon his own individual genius to be adequately preserved and transmitted as he earnestly desired.[27]

The peculiarity of Beecher's 'genius' had been his ability to draw together the distinct epistemologies and methodologies of theology and medicine. As his son observed, this syncretic model of care was too idiosyncratic to be taught, let alone institutionalized in a mode of therapy that could be delivered to an entire community of religious melancholics. Moreover, it had been developed in the first place as a means of preserving a controversial form of religious interiority which itself faced growing criticism from the medical world for its (presumed) pathological effects. For an emergent medical profession that was concerned with treating large groups of patients,

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[26] Bainbridge, 'Religious Insanity in America', pp. 234-37; original emphases.
[27] Beecher (ed.), *Autobiography*, Vol. 1, p. 74.

it was ultimately more expedient to medicalise the religious interiority of asylum patients altogether, rather than to customise therapies which sustained a careful balance of theological and medical perspectives as deemed appropriate in light of an individual patient's character and experience.

This was the case even for those alienists who were sympathetic to evangelical belief. Revealing in this respect is a discussion of religious insanity in the twenty-second annual report of the Connecticut Retreat for the Insane (1846), written by Brigham's evangelical-friendly successor as superintendent of the institution, John Butler (1803–1890). In this discussion, Butler distinguished, as had William Maclay Awl, between 'pure' religion and its corrupted forms. Yet in his analysis, Butler made conceptual room for the emotional disturbances ('true religious anxiety') that marked the evangelical way of grace, and distinguished these from the pathological effects of 'undue religious anxiety'.[28] Butler's discussion of a specific example in his own asylum highlights the significance of a religious mode of discourse to his diagnostic process in such cases:

> the gloom arising from physical disorder was thus mistaken for spiritual anxiety, in one whose religious character was beyond a reasonable doubt. Immediate repentance was urged, by night and by day, until the patient was driven to distraction, and became a patient of the Retreat—where for months she was a wretched and almost hopeless maniac.[29]

An assessment of the patient's religious character was thus taken here as a critical aspect of the diagnostic equation. Since this woman's piety was 'beyond a reasonable doubt', so was the somatic and a-religious nature of her condition. This was precisely the way in which Benjamin Noyes's community had determined (after the event) that he had been insane when he had committed suicide. As we saw in the previous chapter,

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[28] J.S. Butler, 'The Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Physician and Superintendent of the Retreat for the Insane, for the year ending March 31, 1846', *The Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Officers of the Retreat for the Insane, at Hartford, Conn.* (Hartford, 1846), p. 21-22.
[29] Butler, 'Twenty-Second Annual Report', pp. 21-22.

his friends and relatives cited his exemplary religious character as a means of determining that the morbid self-understanding that had led him to take his life—his belief that he was a 'hypocrite' and a 'reprobate'—was evidence of insanity.[30] Butler's diagnostic method in this sense reflected the logic of evangelical communities themselves.

Yet there was one key difference. As we saw in the previous chapter, Lyman Beecher's clinical theology had been devised in the first place because revivalist communities of the early nineteenth century had lacked a paradigm for distinguishing, on the ground, between the authentic anxiety of contrition and the pathology of the melancholic. Before Noyes's suicide, his relatives treated him as a despondent 'pilgrim', whose melancholy was continuous with the experience of the faithful. Afterwards, they argued that he had been insane. Now, twenty-nine years later, Butler was deploying the same criterion to justify the confinement and medical treatment of a woman whose 'wretchedness' clearly made her, in his view, a 'maniac'. The account itself hints at the combination of third-person perspectives that underpinned this diagnosis. The diagnoses of patients that are recorded in nineteenth-century insane asylum admissions lists generally reflect the testimony of the relatives, friends, legal guardians and public officials who had had them confined—a pattern that is suggested in Butler's account.[31] He would have depended on the word of the woman's relatives or friends to establish the facts about her 'religious character', as well as any history of

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[30] Note, for instance, fellow Yale undergraduate Elias Cornelius's (1794–1832) comment that Noyes's diaries showed that he was 'opposed equally to the sins of the heart & the life, and in this way manifested a sincere hatred of all sin' in NCHS, Box 43, Folder 3: Elias Cornelius, 'Memoir of Benjamin Noyes', p. 6. Also note his sister Mary Noyes's claim that the family found 'great satisfaction in reading his diary. There we can enter into the feelings of his heart. It concerned only himself & his God', and 'I think we cannot doubt of his being a real child of God'. See NCHS, Box 5, Folder 14: Mary Noyes to Charles Noyes, 12 May 1815.

[31] See Wood, *The Writing on the Wall*, p. 33 and Broc, 'Religion and Insanity in America', pp. 471-74. Relatedly, note Nancy Tomes's descriptions of the intimate involvement of the patients' families throughout the course of their treatment under Thomas Story Kirkbride at Pennsylvania Hospital in Tomes, *A Generous Confidence*, pp. 210-22, 227-28.

'physical disorder'. These external evidences were then used to justify her institutionalisation, which in turn underpinned the construction of a medical narrative within which the patient's despondency took on meanings that contradicted her own self-understanding.

Now reconstituted as a medical patient, the woman was subjected to interventions which sought 'the correction of the functional disease of the liver and stomach, and the restoration of the general healthy tone of the system'. Butler also employed 'moral' methods of treatment, 'diverting the [patient's] mind to other subjects of thought' and withdrawing 'all sympathy … in the terrific doom that she supposed awaited her in eternity'. These measures were intended to make clear to the patient herself 'the origin of all her difficulties … in a diseased state of physical health'. The treatment was said to have worked, and the patient recovered, but not without this presumed shift in her self-perception from that of an 'almost hopeless maniac' to one who recognised, like the medical 'convert' in *The Opal*, the somatic source of her despondency.[32]

The Perspectives of Patients

As we saw in Chapter 2, Elizabeth Stone and John Perceval were among many former patients who wrote exposés on the oppressive conditions of life in the asylum, yet their books reflected in a distinctive way the perspectives of people who had been confined specifically for religious forms of insanity. The asylum featured in these narratives as the context of a second transformation of the self, which had reversed the first transformation that had attended evangelical conversion. For Stone, the asylum marked the death of her evangelical self-identity. Her principal claim was that the asylum

[32] Butler, 'Twenty-Second Annual Report', pp. 21-22.

regimen—in particular, the medicines she had been given—had 'killed the spirit of Christ within me', leaving her with 'no idea of holiness or hatred to sin'.[33] This had been the thorough reversal of her conversion experience six years earlier, which she had characterised in the language of Jonathan Edwards as a transformation of the affections, issuing in a deep love for her co-religionists and an intense pursuit of Christian perfection. Perceval characterised his day-to-day experience in the asylum in similar terms as 'the repeated murder of my spiritual and moral nature'.[34] Yet he also represented the asylum as the context of his cultivation of a more 'mature', post-evangelical perspective, from which he looked back upon his evangelical 'madness' as an initial stage of spiritual naivety. He argued that the asylum had impeded his intellectual and spiritual development, and the rational and autonomous self he constructed in his narratives conformed in important ways with the bourgeois self which Andrew Scull, Ann Goldberg and others have identified as the principal aim of nineteenth-century asylum therapy.[35]

Both authors in this sense suggested that they had been transformed in ways that were consonant with the objectives of asylum therapy, for both had lost the principle of evangelical agency that had underpinned the beliefs and behaviours for which they had been confined. Stone was no longer the holy fool, driven to pursue Christian perfection at the expense of her physical and economic wellbeing. Perceval was no longer devoted to propagating the doctrines and charismatic gifts of Row at the expense of his social status and identity.

Yet for neither author did this transformation entail an embrace of a 'psychiatric' narrative of the self of the sort evinced in the article discussed above from

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[33] Stone, *Sketch*, pp. 24, 40.
[34] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, p. 265.
[35] See Scull, 'Moral Treatment Reconsidered', pp. 421-28 and Goldberg, *Sex, Religion, and the Making of Modern Madness*, p. 37-41.

The Opal. Both instead depicted these transformations as forms of spiritual loss. Their criticisms of the asylum provided a patient's perspective on the problem that Lyman Beecher was trying to solve with his clinical theology. Beecher's project represented an effort to draw together medical and theological perspectives as a means of preserving a specific form of religious identity. It offered spiritual 'patients', at least in principle, a form of therapy that was congruent with their religious identities, and that would ultimately satisfy their own deeply-held values. For Perceval and Stone, asylum therapy represented a violation of these identities and values. And along with registering their opposition to this mistreatment, they each also indicated their need in that period for forms of spiritual care that were consonant with their own religious identities.

Crucially, both authors attributed this problem not to a vague opposition between the medical outlook of the asylum and their own spiritual self-understandings, but instead, to the religious perspectives of the physicians that had treated them. For Perceval, it was Dr Edward Long Fox's (1761–1835) Quakerism that had made his treatment regimen oppressive. For Stone, the problem had been Dr Luther Bell's (1806–1862) religious formalism. By emphasising the religious perspectives of the physicians in this way, they each represented the asylum as a therapeutic microcosm of the social and religious tensions that had led in the first place to their confinement as religious lunatics.

John Perceval and the Radicalism of the Psychiatric Profession

Perceval recounted that when he first entered Brislington House (near Bristol) in early 1831, he was oblivious to his plight, for he was still in the throes of the psychomachy that had ensued from his rendezvous with a prostitute a few weeks earlier. Initially, the moral crisis had stimulated a night-long battle between Jesus and Satan for his soul,

throughout which he had been commanded by disembodied voices to maintain a specific physical position on the floor.[36] Despite the resolution of this initial drama when he was resurrected the next morning 'into a spiritual body',[37] the same pattern continued to repeat itself in the early months of his confinement. Now, however, the people around him were drawn into this drama as his divinely-elected helpers. Physicians, attendants and patients were identified by his voices—and sometimes visually transfigured—as spiritual beings or as members of his family, most frequently his deceased father and his eldest (and also deceased) sister, Jane Perceval (1791–1824). He even recounted having mistaken patients and attendants for members of the Trinity, and in some of his most ecstatic moments, having 'throw[n] myself forward, flat on my face, through the door, to fall at the feet' of an attendant whom he would then worship as 'God Almighty'.[38] Every person—and even the furniture within the asylum and the landscape without—'had been brought by the Almighty power, or infinite goodness of the Lord, and placed around me to quicken my feelings'.[39] Earthly realities had in this sense been subsumed by an evangelical reality within which 'I did not consider my dignity so much as my relationship to the Almighty … bound in gratitude, and from self-abasement, to exercise forbearance and humility'.[40]

Perceval's complaint about his confinements at Brislington House (from 1831 to 1832) and Ticehurst Asylum (from 1832 to 1834) was that the treatment regimens in each asylum had exacerbated his psychological and spiritual confusion, rather than dispelling it. His criticisms encompassed both the religious and professional dynamics of each institution, but especially at Brislington House. Edward Long Fox's upbringing

[36] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, pp. 35-41.
[37] Ibid., p. 37.
[38] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, p. 115. See other examples of such behaviour in Ibid., pp. 84, 100-101, 167-68.
[39] Ibid., pp. 88-89.
[40] Ibid., p. 175.

in religious nonconformity, he claimed, had given rise to a radical institutional environment that had reflected at a communal level Perceval's own inward confusion, which had itself been formed, as we saw in Chapter 2, within the milieu of evangelical enthusiasm and nonconformity. A related critique was that the asylum system had elevated a class of medical professionals who were granted an unprecedented degree of control over the minds, bodies and spirits of the people under their charge. The effect, Perceval claimed, had been to weaken his judgment even further by perpetuating the notion that he was under the influence of transcendent powers.

Despite Perceval's complaints about the democratic environment at Brislington House, Fox himself had emphasised class awareness as one of its distinguishing features. Opened by Fox in 1806, it included seven buildings, laid out symmetrically with a main house in the centre and three buildings on either side, those on one side allotted to female patients and on the other to male. Fox and his family lived in the centre house with the upper-class patients, who were themselves separated by gender. The buildings immediately adjacent to the centre house on either side were smaller than the rest, and were for those who had physical ailments in addition to mental. Outwards from there, the buildings housed 'second' and 'third class' patients, successively, with an eighteen-foot distance between each building to ensure that 'individuals of one class never see or have intercourse with those of another'.[41] An advertisement for the asylum published the year it opened provided the rationale for this arrangement:

> As the accommodations vary in proportion to the class, this arrangement prevents invidious comparisons. It is grateful by humouring the prejudices of men in respect to rank in society, and it is useful by preventing persons of rank and quality from an indiscriminate association with those of inferior manners and condition; which, otherwise, on their mutual recovery, might lead to inconvenient, if not detrimental, acquaintance.[42]

[41] Quoted in BRO, Ref 39801/F/29: 'Brislington House', p. 3. This description of the layout of Brislington House is drawn from Smith, 'A Gentleman's Mad-Doctor in Georgian England', pp. 170-71.
[42] Quoted in BRO, Ref 39801/F/29: 'Brislington House', p. 3.

Leonard Smith has noted the economic advantages that underpinned this rationale. An unequivocal assertion of the social decorum observed in the asylum—combined with its ideal location on '80 acres of land adjoining the main road from prosperous Bristol to fashionable Bath'—gave it a strong allure to 'the aristocracy, gentry and moneyed middle classes', who were happy to pay top rates for these advantages.[43] Its reputation was such that in 1815, an inspection committee of the House of Commons praised it for the supposed genius underpinning its gender and class segregations.[44] And a year earlier, the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, a friend of Fox's, had considered admitting himself at Brislington House to have his depression treated.[45]

Nevertheless, Perceval's chief complaint during his confinement at Brislington House was that he had been forced to keep company with 'the lunatic, the blasphemous, the indolent, the idle, and the profane! with vulgar persons below me in society, and with menials, to whose entire authority I was intrusted'.[46] Various factors give this claim some credence, despite its awkward relation to evidence external to his own writings. His own sister highlighted one of these in the letter she wrote to him soon after his transfer to Ticehurst Asylum in March of 1832:

> Of course the first class accommodation was engaged for you—but it was never said that that class did not admit persons of lower rank than grandsons of Earls or members of noble families in any degree, or even than the *élite* of the gentry. And as you know that in society you are liable to meet people by no means your equals in rank, and still less, perhaps, in cultivation and refinement of mind, whom yet you could have no possible right to object to meeting and receiving as gentlemen, so of course that distinction between the degrees of gentility and of refinement could still less be made in an establishment like Dr. Fox's, where the line can only be drawn between the higher, the lower, and the middle classes, and he could not refuse to admit as gentlemen, those whose friends were willing to pay for the accommodation of gentlemen.[47]

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[43] Smith, 'A Gentleman's Mad-Doctor in Georgian England', pp. 168-69.
[44] See BRO, Ref 39801/F/29: 'Brislington House', p. 5; Smith, 'A Gentleman's Mad-Doctor in Georgian England', p. 169.
[45] Smith, 'A Gentleman's Mad-Doctor in Georgian England', p. 168.
[46] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. 17.
[47] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, pp. 199-200. This is also quoted in Smith, 'A Gentleman's Mad-Doctor in Georgian England', p. 171.

Perceval himself attributed this problem to the economy of asylum therapy. The institutional approach to treatment meant delivering care to, in the case of Brislington House, around a hundred patients at a time. As a result, the asylum reduced every patient 'to one system as Procrustes did every traveller to one bed'.[48] What patients really needed, he argued, was a regimen tailored to 'their previous character' and 'the different stages and phenomena of their disorder'.[49] His concern about the class dynamics in the asylum was encompassed within this critique, for, as his sister observed, 'first class' was too broad a category to ensure that he would never cross paths, in the centre house, with patients who fell short of his own standards of gentility.[50]

Even more important was the fact that within the asylum his position was ultimately that of a subject, even to the 'menials' (the asylum attendants) who represented the lower classes, some of whom were appointed to upper-class patients as servants.[51] The social structure of the asylum, reflected in its architecture and patient segregations, projected a false appearance of class compliance in this respect. Asylum therapy in fact generated its own social hierarchy based upon the assumptions about mental health and pathology upon which it was predicated. Reason and unreason became their own social division, which, within the asylum, placed doctors above nobles, and servants above aristocrats.[52] This hierarchy was at least potentially implicit,

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[48] This was despite Fox's own assertion, in his testimony before the House of Commons in 1828, that '[n]ot only are the Classes of Society kept distinct, but the Classes of each Society are kept distinct according to the State of the Disease'. In the same interview, he estimated the average number of patients at the asylum at ninety. See 'Minutes of the Evidence taken before the Select Committee to whom were referred the Bill, intituled, "An Act to regulate the Care and Treatment of Insane Persons"', *Journal of the House of Lords*, 60 (1828), p. 711.
[49] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. 106. Also see Perceval, *Narrative*, I, p. 144.
[50] See Smith, 'A Gentleman's Mad-Doctor in Georgian England', p. 171.
[51] See BRO, Ref 35893/36/e_i: Edward Long Fox, 'An Account of the Establishment', p. 77.
[52] Gerold Sedlmayr, among others, has noted the significance in this respect of the madness of George III as an event which shifted public perceptions of the meaning of madness as something that could bring 'regular subjects up to the level of a king, and the king down to their level as everyday people'. See G.

and might have gone unnoticed if Perceval had either remained 'insane' or had entered the asylum in a condition of perfect 'sanity', as he himself defined these terms. For his ultimate subordination to the authority of menials was chiefly exposed in the measures they had taken to quell his 'mad' unruliness; and he recounted only having become aware of the inappropriateness of these measures as he began to recover a proper sense of self.[53]

This point is particularly significant in light of the disjunction between the idealised form of moral treatment towards which Dr Fox self-professedly strove and the harsh measures that had been taken to control and 'cure' Perceval in particular. Perceval recounted on multiple occasions having acted on the promptings of his voices to wrestle with and strike the attendants, to which they had sometimes responded in kind with physical beatings.[54] But more frequently they made use of the measures often associated with the regimens that preceded the rise of moral treatment—mechanical restraints, drugs and cold baths. 'For nearly eight months', he thus recounted, 'I was never out of a straight-waistcoat; I used to be tied up in it, in a recess the whole day, *on a wooden seat*, for months and months, with my feet manacled to the floor, and in the presence of fourteen other patients'.[55] And in addition to a few references to 'poisonous' or 'nauseous medicines' having been 'forced down my throat, or in the contrary direction',[56] he was frequently subjected by force to the shower bath and to 'the cheap and universal nostrum' of being 'ducked in the cold bath', which purportedly

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Sedlmayr, *The Discourse of Madness, 1790 – 1815: Medicine, Politics, Literature* (Trier, 2011), pp. 2-3. Also see See I. Macalpine and R.A. Hunter, *George III and the Mad-Business* (London, 1969), p. 291.

[53] See, in particular, Perceval, *Narrative*, I, pp. 130, 142-44.

[54] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, pp. 78, 90-91, 107, 116-18, 122-24, 136, 152-53, 158; Perceval, *Narrative*, II, pp. 24, 67-68, 267, 280-81. Most dramatically, Perceval recounted an occasion in which an attendant had struck him on the ear repeatedly for singing a psalm out loud, making a surgical procedure necessary to close the wound, and permanently disfiguring his ear. See Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. 18.

[55] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. 23; original emphases.

[56] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, pp. 98, 175-77; Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. 14. Perceval's generalised claims in some of these passages to having been force-fed medicines are in tension with another reference to having only been given medicine 'on two occasions'. See Perceval, *Narrative*, I, p. 155.

continued through 'the whole of the cold winter of 1831'.[57] The cold bath was the one form of physical treatment to which Fox—along with many other alienists of his generation—happily subscribed,[58] and Perceval might well have been subjected to it irrespective of his own behaviours. But in general, these harsh measures emerge in his narratives as part of an institutional response that was deemed necessary in light of his own violent and disruptive antics. It was in his failure to comply with the rationality of the asylum system—initially, a consequence of his delusions, and later, of his indignation—that his subaltern status within it was fully exposed.

For Perceval, these problems were all predicated upon Fox's identity as a religious dissenter. Although Fox was indeed brought up as a Quaker, he appears to have left their fellowship in early adulthood.[59] Nevertheless, this point neither diminishes the shaping influence that Quakerism undoubtedly had upon Fox's worldview, nor did it prevent Perceval from attributing the core flaw in Fox's treatment method to 'the spirit of the burlesque doctrines of that sect', which, he contended, had 'crept into his [therapeutic] system'.[60] For Perceval, the choice of his relatives to subject him to the authority of a nonconformist was especially unconscionable given that his insanity had taken a religious form:

> Had I been lunatic on any ordinary subject, it would have been their duty to have reflected, that in all probability my conscience was affected, and that I might require a friend and a clergyman, to whom to confide my troubles. But they knew that my mind was deranged by over study on religion. And they left me exposed to strangers, and what is still more humbling to human nature, and to the pride and religion of my country, they who stand in no mean situation for wealth, talents, rank, or morality—they who are not merely fashionable professors of religion, and many of whom are even zealous in evangelical opinions,—took so little thought, as to consign my soul and spirit, in the hour of

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[57] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, p. 155; Perceval, *Narrative*, II, pp. 19, 22-23.
[58] This point is noted in Smith, 'A Gentleman's Mad-Doctor in Georgian England', p. 179.
[59] The fact that Fox had 'been long separated' from the Society of Friends was pointed out by one of his critics in a footnote to a broadside ballad printed in a newspaper in the 1820s. An original copy is held at the Bristol Record Office, Reference 35893/36/e_i.
[60] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, p. 180.

> my utmost need, to the absolute control of a physician who was a sectarian, whilst my body was committed to his menials.[61]

His juxtaposition of Fox's 'sectarianism' with the main staples of his social identity—the 'religion of my country' and the 'wealth' and 'rank' of his family members—further reinforced the notion that his plight in the asylum was an irreducibly religious issue. What was implicit within the social structure of the asylum was born out in his personal interactions with Fox. In his second book, he thus included a letter that Fox had written to him on 30 January 1832, mere weeks before his transfer to Ticehurst Asylum, in which Fox, responding to Perceval's complaints about his social environment, appealed to his religious identity 'as a humble follower of Christ' and reminded him 'that God is no respecter of persons'. In answer to Perceval's particular distaste for Samuel Hobbs, one of the 'menials' whose authority Perceval had 'reviled', Fox added:

> Though owing to the accident of birth, the artificial state of society and the advantages of a more refined education, you may think yourself his superior, you must not forget that we shall all be called to give an account of the talents committed to us.[62]

The radical undertones of this statement are consonant with Fox's reputation among his contemporaries as a political subversive. Leonard Smith notes in this respect the importance of religious nonconformity as an underpinning of Fox's 'liberal humanitarian political principles', which emerged, among other ways, in his political activism in Bristol in the 1790s. Thus, in 1793, Fox headed a campaign on behalf of local Bristolians after eleven had been killed and forty-five injured by a militia that had fired on a crowd of rioters who were protesting the increase of bridge tolls in the city. His role in these agitations provoked accusations that he was a Jacobite who wanted to

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[61] Ibid.
[62] Ibid., II, pp. 75-76.

overthrow the government—a reputation that was further solidified two years later when he campaigned locally for a peace treaty with France.[63]

Whether or not Perceval knew about Fox's radical history, it is significant that he traced the starting point of his own recovery—his growing awareness of his class identity—to the period of the Bristol Riots of 1831. These riots broke out in late October after the House of Lords had rejected the Second Reform Bill, which would have dissolved numerous rotten boroughs and increased the representation of Bristol and other rising industrial towns in the House of Commons. The palace of the Bishop of Bristol and the gaol were among many of the private and public properties that were looted and damaged over the three days that the rioting continued. In Perceval's second book, he recounted that his fourth brother, Henry Perceval (1799–1885), visited him at Brislington House at 'about the time of the Bristol riots', which was also 'about the time that my delusions were breaking up, and I was beginning to feel a degree of antipathy and ill-will against my relations for their contempt of me'.[64] In his first book, he gave a more comprehensive structure to the link between the riots, his convalescence, and his relationship to the asylum community. He thus noted that 'about the time of the Bristol riots, … the speech of our servants [the attendants] became very licentious, and the threats of what was to be done to the gentry very wondrous, and yet alarming'. Whilst working in Fox's garden during this time, Perceval's 'anxiety' was awakened by their 'seditious conversation and tone', and by 'their accounts of the state of mind of the peasantry'. And when he observed one day the vulgar and undisciplined conduct of a troop of soldiers that was passing the asylum on horseback, he burst into tears and exclaimed, 'oh! my country, oh! my country'. If these responses augured the

[63] These details of Fox's political outlook and activity are summarised in Smith, 'A Gentleman's Mad-Doctor in Georgian England', pp. 167-68.
[64] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. 32.

recovery of the inward feelings appropriate to his 'rank' and 'station', another incident in the same period—Perceval's reprimand to Samuel Hobbs for having slandered the Duke of Wellington—further suggested the recovery of his judgment.[65]

These anecdotes evince the same pattern that emerges in Perceval's account of his convalescence at Ticehurst Asylum months later. There, it was by virtue of being given a private sitting-room to reflect upon his spiritual perceptions that he claimed to have managed finally to assert an intellectual mastery over them.[66] And in describing the above event at Brislington House, he opened by noting the beneficial effects that had accrued from the privacy of gardening.[67] In both cases, the process of recovery was linked to those moments of temporary retreat from the systems of surveillance and coercion that 'gave inlet to, and confirmed the delusion, that I was no longer a free agent, but under the control of beings superiorly enlightened'.[68]

It was in his discussion of his treatment at Ticehurst, in particular, that Perceval was most forthcoming about the form of spiritual care that he thought would have best served him as a gentleman lunatic. The opposite of such care was epitomised for him in the asylum proprietor, John Newington's practice of monitoring the content of his letters:

> What! Mr. Newington to be the keeper of my conscience—to be the meddler in secrets between my Maker and myself—which I might feel compelled to divulge and yet only confide with propriety to a minister of religion, or to relations, or to friends!

And further,

> By what authority do these men exercise this power—a power which even a clergyman, if he were a patient's guardian, would not be entitled to; on what grounds can they claim a confidence, which ties of kindred, or of friendship and respect, can alone confer?[69]

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[65] Ibid., I, pp. 217-19.
[66] Ibid., II, p. 311.
[67] Ibid., I, p. 218.
[68] Ibid., p. 177.
[69] Ibid., II, 176-77.

In view, here, were the core assumptions that drove the development and application of psychiatric knowledge. As a nascent profession, mental medicine claimed a kind of expert insight into the ways of the mind, which afforded alienists an inordinate level of authority over the lives and bodies of the insane. Perceval himself linked this problem to the issue of professionalization in a statement that evinced the distinctly Protestant character of his critique: 'Whence comes this besotted and worse than papist trust in the members of a profession so unworthy of it?'[70] This statement registered the sway of psychiatric power even beyond the walls of the asylum, where it claimed the confidence of magistrates (who 'surrender their own judgment of the inhumanity and impropriety of parts of [the alienist's] system, or the whole of it, to his opinions and assertions of its advantages') and of the relatives and friends of the insane.[71] Yet its intrusiveness into the agency and subjectivity of the patient was a uniquely heinous breach—a trespass that went beyond the remit even of clergymen.

The alternative that Perceval proposed to asylum treatment in his first book was revealing: 'The clergymen of the established church ought to have the superintendence of the mental wants and infirmities of the deranged members of their communion'. A 'respectable clergyman', he further insisted, 'would not presume to do by treachery or by compulsion, that which [alienists] do without any title'. Instead, such a caregiver would respect the fundamental sanctity of the relationship between the individual and her or his creator.[72] Whilst this argument was suggestive of a model of spiritual care marked by persuasion and empathy, rather than coercion and negation, it also evoked at a deeper level the national and class-based values that formed Perceval's perspective

[70] Ibid., p. 111.
[71] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. 6. In his second book, Perceval included excerpts from numerous letters he had written to magistrates—all to no avail—requesting that they intervene to release him from the asylum. See Ibid., II, p. 2.
[72] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, pp. 276-77.

and identity as author. These values had been directly violated both in his own experience as a madman, and in his treatment by a nonconformist, who had claimed the asylum as a space within which to perform and propagate his radicalism. His critique of psychiatry, indeed, was not a critique of medical meanings per se, but of their abuse by a rising class of medical professionals.

Elizabeth Stone and the Inquisition House

Elizabeth Stone's characterisation of the anti-spiritual function of asylums was rather more overt than Perceval's. Her critique followed the basic division within the American revivalist worldview between proponents and opponents of 'true religion'.[73] The asylum superintendent, Luther Bell, was a 'formalist' and his asylum was an 'Inquisition House', designed for the purpose of imprisoning and destroying true Christians. And yet, despite the evangelical simplicity of her worldview, her critique was gendered in a way that paralleled the class-based underpinning of Perceval's critique. She thus portrayed the asylum as a fundamentally masculine space, marked by a coldness and objectification of the other, which she contrasted in her writings with the warmth of the feminine mode of spiritual care which she had experienced both before and after her confinement, and for which she had longed as a patient.

Stone's narratives describe a regimen that was in some ways similar to what Perceval claimed to have experienced at Brislington House. McLean Asylum was only slightly bigger than Brislington House, accommodating roughly 115 patients at a time during Stone's residency.[74] And like Perceval, Stone was generally deprived of visitors,

[73] Cf. Miller, *The Life of the Mind in America*, pp. 10-14.
[74] L.V. Bell, 'Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Physician and Superintendent of the McLean Asylum for the Insane, to the Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital', *Annual Report to the Board of Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital, for the Year 1839* (Boston, 1840), p. 12.

receiving only two in her entire sixteen months at McLean Asylum,[75] and being told, when she would 'often plead with Dr. Bell to let me see some one, … that they did not wish to see me'.[76] Her experience also has some affinity with Perceval's in her description of the prison-like atmosphere at McLean Asylum—the '*grated windows*, *and locked door*' which, like Perceval's strait waistcoat and leg chains, prevented freedom of movement throughout the building and grounds.[77] For both, the asylum was a kind of bastille, despite its nominal pretension as a place of refuge.[78]

The main difference between their depictions of life in the asylum hinged on their characterisations of social and spiritual segregation within the institution. The issue of class, in particular, did not feature in Stone's writings, nor in the official literature of McLean Asylum, in the ways that it did in the writings of Perceval and his institutional guardians. For Bell, problems of class difference were irrelevant to the communal life of McLean Asylum because of its status as a private institution. Since the opening of McLean in 1818, two additional asylums had been founded in Massachusetts (one in Worcester and one in Boston) for the purpose of accommodating and treating, at public expense, a growing number of indigent lunatics. In the annual report of McLean Asylum for the year that Stone was admitted (1840), Bell noted that

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[75] These included a ten-minute visit from her eldest brother Ebenezer's wife, Catharine Louise Stone (née Whitcomb) in May of 1841 and a half-hour visit from Ebenezer himself about six months later. She did, however, receive a third visitor in mid-April of the following year from her brother William, who 'was much affected to hear of my suffering' and thus secured her release the next day, claiming that 'it had always been represented to him [falsely, he now understood] that I was a perfect deranged person'. See Stone, *Sketch*, pp. 30, 32 and Stone, *Remarks*, pp. 7-8.

[76] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 30.

[77] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 20; original emphases. Bell's annual report for 1840 included a lengthy discussion of the efforts of British asylum superintendents over the previous decade to abolish the harshest instruments of restraint such as straight waistcoats, hand-straps and leg-locks, of which, he noted, American asylums had never had to make use. In the previous year's report, he had observed that at McLean in particular, 'not one per cent. of our whole number is on average under any constraint, even that of confining the hands with the mittens'. See Bell, 'Twenty-Second Annual Report', p. 21 and Bell, 'Twenty-Third Annual Report', pp. 15-18.

[78] Perceval in particular wrote that 'I can no longer, after arriving at this period of my trials, call Dr. F—'s house by any other name than that it deserves, *mad-house*, for to call that, or any like that, an *asylum*, is cruel mockery and revolting duplicity!' in Perceval, *Narrative*, I, p. 91; original emphases.

the founding of these institutions had allowed McLean, a private asylum, to upgrade its own facilities to accommodate a more privileged clientele.[79] The asylum now prided itself on

> calculating provisions of comfort and even of some degree of luxury in its accommodations and appliances, for a class of patients who have been accustomed to a more expensive style of living and attendance than would have been just or fitting while this was the only institution for rich and poor, or would be expedient in an entirely public institution.

Bell nevertheless insisted that this neither meant that all of the patients at McLean were wealthy, nor that the wealthy patients were treated better than the poor:

> Yet this adaption of late years of the institution's accommodations, to those of more expensive habits and wishes, by the withdrawal of the less able patients to the other institutions, is not effected by more costly preparations for particular patients who pay a high rate, but in the general elevation of the means of comfort and enjoyment through the whole house.[80]

Its status as a private institution thus allowed McLean to function as a level community within which each patient was extended an equal degree of social and medical privilege. Unlike Perceval's writings, Stone's did not fundamentally challenge the institution's pretences on this count. Of course, she was vehement, as Perceval had been, in her condemnation of the asylum system as a 'trafic [sic] in human beings' designed for profit. Bell and his ilk, she insisted, were motivated not to cure, but to extend a patient's incarceration 'for life if they or their friends have money enough to pay for it'.[81] And when the money stopped, the patient 'must be removed to some other

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[79] These renovations included the completion in 1838 of a west wing to the asylum, called the Belknap Ward, which allowed the institution to increase its patient capacity to 150. See 'Report of the Board of Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital, Presented to the Corporation at their Annual Meeting, January 23, 1839', *Annual Report of the Board of Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital, for the Year 1838* (Boston, 1839), p. 6.

[80] Luther Bell, 'Twenty-Third Annual Report', p. 25.

[81] Stone, *Remarks*, pp. 9-10. Luther Bell himself criticised the system of private madhouses in England for enabling corruption, recounting in his annual report for 1840 the words of 'an eminent medical gentleman conversant with the subject, "if the keeper of a madhouse in which his whole property and living are invested, could watch with pleasure the speedy convalescence of a patient, who was paying a weekly fee of four or five guineas, he must be of that class of natural saints who are not numerous in any country"'. Three years earlier, Bell had denied that such an accusation could be levelled against McLean Asylum, since the detachment of the officers of McLean from 'the pecuniary interests of the institution'

place, for that institution is not a benevolent one—the price of board being from $3,00 to $25,00 per week'.[82]

Yet apart from this critique of the economics of private psychiatry—and Stone's attendant censure of her brothers for having needlessly haemorrhaged exorbitant sums that could have been better invested in supporting their impoverished parents[83]—she was otherwise silent with respect to economic issues as they touched on life in the asylum. Matters of economic difference at McLean were predictably subsumed within her characteristic division of society between the 'popular class' of religious formalists and iconoclasts, and the 'spiritual' class of true Christians—the division which was at the bottom of her claim that asylums were designed to eradicate true religion.

Nevertheless, the segregation of patients at McLean according to gender did feature in Stone's narratives both as an aspect of her experience in the asylum and, indirectly, as part of her critique of the particular scandal of the asylum regime in its treatment of women. As at Brislington House, the sexes were divided at McLean by a centre mansion into separate buildings on either side, which were 'subdivided into wards or halls with sleeping and day rooms', as well as 'a limited number of apartments in each wing [which] are furnished in a style of elegance, to suit the views of friends in peculiar cases'. Additionally, the asylum included 'separate edifices known as the

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ensured that 'they never have any motive to recommend a continuance of patients here'. See Bell, 'Twenty-Third Annual Report', p. 21 and Bell, 'Twentieth Annual Report', p. 15.

[82] Stone, *Remarks*, p. 10. The annual reports of McLean Asylum in this period cite as the minimum rate for citizens of Massachusetts $3 per week, and $4.50 for those out of state. Although she did not indicate what her brothers had paid to have her confined, they were likely charged the minimum rate, since Elizabeth was a resident of Lowell, Massachusetts at the time, and the brother who had had her confined was a resident of Boston. See Bell, 'Twenty-Third Annual Report', pp. 34-35. Robert Fuller, another former patient at McLean Asylum who wrote a protest narrative after his release, claimed to have been charged $15 per week as well as an additional $55.72 for having been discharged early. See R. Fuller, *An Account of the Imprisonment and Sufferings of Robert Fuller of Cambridge, Who, While Peaceably and Quietly and Rationally in Possession of His Own House, Was Seized and Detained in the McLean Asylum for the Insane, at Charlestown, Mass. 65 Days, from June 24th to August 28th, 1832. Together with Some Remarks on That Institution* (Boston, 1833), p. 25.

[83] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 19.

Lodge for the male, and the Cottage for the female patients', which were designed for those 'laboring under the most violent grade of diseased excitement'. Bell boasted in his annual reports that the vast premises of McLean permitted the division of patients of each sex into twelve or more 'families', based upon considerations such as the nature of the individual's ailment and the practicalities of managing a formidable patient population.[84] The thoroughness of these patient segregations is reflected both in Stone's silence with respect to any encounters with male patients and in her depictions of an almost entirely female environment in the asylum, including the women attendants but excluding the male physicians.

For Stone, issues of gender were represented throughout her narratives in terms of a contrast between a specifically feminine mode of spiritual care, and the betrayal of this ideal in female complicity with the asylum system. We saw in the previous chapter that Stone's spiritual community both before and after confinement—from the women's seminary at New Hampton to the community reflected in the letters of support that she included in her fourth book—was female in complexion. During the crisis that had preceded her confinement, she had insisted upon receiving the care of her female co-religionists—a mode of care which she would later extend to her friend, E.A. Andrews.[85] And in the asylum itself, one of her chief complaints was that she had been separated from 'my kind christian friends', including 'my loved friend Nancy Sanborn', with whom she had planned to travel West as a missionary.[86]

Female support for the asylum system represented, for Stone, a betrayal of the ideal of feminine spiritual care and community reflected in these examples. She highlighted the distinctiveness of this issue as one of gender by drawing a parallel

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[84] Bell, 'Twentieth Annual Report', pp. 21-22; Bell, 'Twenty-Second Annual Report', pp. 21-23; Bell, Twenty-Third Annual Report', p. 27.
[85] This episode is discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis. See Stone, *The American Godhead*, p. 18.
[86] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 23.

between her betrayal by members of her own sex and the failure of her brothers to practise an appropriate familial ethic:

> Females are engaged in this horrid crime, and do know that it can be done. Relief Barber, Mary Brigham and Esther Benton,[87] who are engaged in the service of that house, and my brother's wife, were knowing to it before I was carried there. Brothers Eben, Stephen, and James, are the ones that were concerned about my being carried there, and they are the ones that had ought to investigate my suffering… I speak of this to show that my brothers do not feel for me as brothers should feel for a sister.[88]

The parallelism in this quotation between the three women attendants and the three brothers that had conspired against her suggested the function of the asylum as the instrument of a worldly system which—in a way that perversely mirrored Christ's mission to bring 'a sword'[89]—severed natural ties of both gender and kinship. Yet whereas she had been alienated from her brothers since the age of sixteen, female community had been the bedrock of her spiritual life since her conversion. This point underpins her particular incredulity over the involvement of her brother Stephen's wife, Sophia, in the family's plot to have her confined: 'I could not believe that a female could be accessory to such a crime'.[90]

While these examples point up the betrayal of a feminine ideal of spiritual care, they also suggest, more implicitly, the specifically male character of asylum therapy. More explicit on this point were her descriptions of the female supervisor at McLean, Relief Barber, as 'a tall, black eyed, masculine looking female', and of the assistant physician and apothecary of the asylum, John Fox's scandalous 'conduct among the females' of the institution.[91] Stone's intention to portray asylum medicine as a

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[87] Two of these women (Barber and Brigham) were listed by Stone as members of H.B. Skinner's Methodist congregation in Charlestown who served as attendants at McLean Asylum in Stone, *Remarks*, p. 19. Miss Relief R. Barber is listed among the officers of McLean as the Female Supervisor in the annual reports of the institution for the years in which Stone was confined; see, for instance, Bell, 'Twenty-Third Annual Report', p. 43.
[88] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 34.
[89] Matt. x. 34-36.
[90] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 23.
[91] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 20; Stone, *Remarks*, p. 12. Also see Bell, 'Twenty-Third Annual Report', p. 43.

characteristically male enterprise was reflected in the parallel she drew between the 'liberties' Fox had taken with a sane female patient ('which are a reproach to any decent man') and the indecent procedures to which she was subjected, 'done more for medical experiment than for the gratification of men's passions'.[92] One first-hand experience that she recounted seems to have occupied a borderland between sexual assault and medical experiment. Eight months into her confinement, Miss Barber—playing the characteristic role of the physicians' female abettor—took Stone to a private room, where she blindfolded her, tied her to a bed, and then left. A group of people entered the room a half hour later, and 'my body was stripped and examined in the most obscene manner'. She withheld details of the encounter ('as it would not be proper to portray what they attempted to do'), but only asserted that '[m]en were in the room', and that 'under no circumstances could it be called a medical operation, without it was done to ascertain how far they had destroyed me'.[93]

This gendered representation of psychiatric practice had much in common with the challenges to 'traditional male scientific authority' reflected in the writings of the women asylum patients that Mary Elene Wood has analysed.[94] Yet despite Stone's cautions about the 'dreadful storm ahead' for 'young lad[ies] of delicate, chaste feelings',[95] the overall thrust of her books was less about the perils that the asylum represented for women than about its unique threat to the (religiously) faithful. Her books in this sense do not represent asylum therapy as having feminised madness, in the historian Elaine Showalter's phraseology, but as having Christianised it.[96] 'Holiness',

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[92] Stone, *Remarks*, p. 12.
[93] Ibid., p. 13.
[94] Wood, *The Writing on the Wall*, p. 48.
[95] Stone, *Remarks*, p. 12.
[96] Showalter, *The Female Malady*. Note Peter McCandless's critique of Showalter's thesis of the feminisation of madness in Victorian psychiatry in P. McCandless, 'A Female Malady? Women at the South Carolina Lunatic Asylum, 1828-1915', *Journal of the History of Medicine*, 54/4 (1999), pp. 543-71.

she repeatedly asserted, had been rendered 'disease' by these men of science, and their treatments had correspondingly caused her 'to lose all idea of holiness'.[97] Her writings evince crucial distinctions in this respect between the characteristically male nature of psychiatric practice, the scandal of female support for it, and the genderless domain of religious victimhood. Her warnings were thus aimed for the most part at the entire community of true Christians—not just women—and in the preface to her first book she attributed to John Fox the assertion 'that both *male and female christians have been destroyed there* [McLean Asylum] *before*'.[98]

Stone's framing of the plight of Christians in the asylum as a kind of scientific persecution was reflected first and foremost in her emphasis upon drugs. She established the significance of this motif in her account of her initial interview with Luther Bell when she had been brought to McLean Asylum on 25 November 1840. With Elizabeth's brother Stephen still present, Bell purportedly asked her 'to relate my Christian experience', and inquired as to how much time she spent reading her bible. Stone responded by querying 'in my usual manner … if he had a change of heart', to which he initially equivocated before finally admitting that 'he had not what the world called a change'.[99] Stone then refused to disclose details of her own spiritual life,

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[97] Stone, *Sketch*, pp. 23, 27.
[98] Ibid., p. 3; original emphases.
[99] Bell disclosed details of his religious stance in a document dated 11 April 1858, which he sent to his brother-in-law and executor, John Pinkerton, with instructions for it to be opened after his death. George Ellis, who published numerous extracts from the document in his memoir of Bell, chose to omit some of Bell's more sensitive intimations concerning his religious life, summarising them as having been characteristic of 'many devout yet thoroughly free-minded and deep-thinking men, whose reverent faith and allegiance were won to the essentials of Christian piety, but who were confounded by, and were conscious of dissenting from, the doctrinal standards and the recognized tests of sectarianism'. The small sample of this section of the document which Ellis did choose to publish reflects the combination of piety and non-partisanship that appears to have characterised Bell's spirituality: 'For myself, I can only say, in my inability to reach, after many and prayerful hours, days, months, and years, any full, clear, satisfactory views as to what manner of Christian I am … "Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief". I hope my friends will think of me with all charity as to my religious opinions. If it has not been in my power to accord my assent to any form of creed, I know nothing of pride, of conceit, of desire for eccentricity, to prevent my having done so'. See G.E. Ellis, *Memoir of Luther V. Bell* (Boston, 1863), p. 49.

arguing that as one of the 'unconverted' Bell would not understand it. Upon the repeated importunities of the doctor and her brother, however, she finally relented, divulging her experience from the period of her conversion to her present condition 'of being bound in the spirit' and feeling 'a bondage of soul'.[100] In a response that evinced both his animus for true Christianity and his scientific method for vanquishing it, Bell told her that 'he could give me something to relieve that bondage of soul and being bound in the spirit'.[101]

Undoubtedly such an interview did in fact take place. The 'Directions for the Admission of Patients' in the annual reports of the asylum for these years outlined distinct policies for the admission of 'recent cases' and 'cases of long standing'. The psychiatric wisdom in this period held that the probability of cure declined precipitously as the malady continued untreated.[102] The urgency of the matter dictated that recent cases could 'be brought to the Asylum without previous application except to the Committee for the approval of the bond', whereas the relatives or guardians of those who had long been insane were to apply in advance.[103] Despite Stone's claim that her relatives had viewed her as a madwoman since her conversion (six years before her confinement), it was only in the days immediately preceding her confinement that her religiosity had taken on the Millerite urgency that led to her debilitation and—crucially—her failure to sustain appropriate economic behaviours. All evidence thus suggests that she would have been treated as a recent case for whom an initial interview would have been crucial to the diagnostic process.

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[100] As we saw in the previous chapter, these were the phrases she used to describe her spiritual state during the crisis that immediately preceded her confinement.
[101] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 19.
[102] See Jimenez, *Changing Faces of Madness*, p. 85.
[103] Bell, 'Twenty-Third Annual Report', p. 35.

The same document included a list of 'queries' to which applicants responsible for long-standing cases were to respond, and these are revealing insofar as they both illuminate Bell's diagnostic perspective and corroborate Stone's perspective as a prospective patient. Alongside predictable inquiries related to the individual's biography, medical history and other cases of insanity in the family, the document included questions related to the individual's character, which encouraged the applicant to speculate on the link between long-term habits and the eventual emergence of illness:

> 14. Before the accession of insanity, what were any remarkable peculiarities or eccentricities in the patient's disposition, temper, deportment, habits, or pursuits? Mention, especially, predominant passions, religious impressions, any kind of habitual intemperance, as the use of ardent spirits, tobacco, &c.[104]

The logic of the query would have permitted Stone's brothers—and her doctor—to distinguish between the religious fervency that had attended her conversion in 1834 and the Millerite urgency that had initiated her confinement in 1840. Moreover, its particular mention of 'religious impressions' would seem to corroborate Stone's claim that Bell was concerned about her religious experience in particular. Since asylum superintendents depended for their initial diagnoses upon the testimony of the prospective patient's relatives and friends; and given the kind of answer her brothers would undoubtedly have given to the sixteenth query in this document ('What are considered, amongst friends and neighbors, to have been the causes of the derangement?'); and given alienists' general acceptance of 'religious insanity' as a diagnostic category in this period, there is something to be said for Stone's grievance that she had been imprisoned and 'drugged' for her particular form of religiosity.[105]

Some scepticism is warranted, however, with respect to Stone's claim about the centrality of drugs to the treatment regimen at McLean. Whilst the long tradition in

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[104] Ibid., p. 36.
[105] Ibid., p. 37.

mental medicine of using technological and pharmacological measures to stimulate or sedate patients had continued into the early nineteenth century with the administration of emetics, cathartics, and mechanical innovations such as the English alienist Joseph Mason Cox's (1763–1818) famous rotatory machine, Luther Bell was of the subsequent generation of alienists who sought wholly to abandon such measures in favour of strictly moral means of treatment.[106] In his annual report for the year 1841 (the entirety of which Stone spent in the asylum), he wrote that '[e]ach year that I have passed in this extensive field has served to diminish my confidence in an active medical treatment of almost every form of disease of the mind, and to increase my reliance upon moral means'. Although acknowledging the utility of sedatives for patients who were particularly disruptive or agitated, he insisted that '[t]he practice of bleedings, violent purgations, emetics, vesicatories and derivatives, has passed away before the light of experience'.[107] Correspondingly, the reports of the asylum's annual expenditures on medicine evince a sharp decline from $607.07 in 1836—a year in which Bell's immediate predecessor, Thomas G. Lee, had, according to Bell, 'placed most of the old and hopeless cases on the "opium treatment"'—to $217.52 in 1837, Bell's first year as superintendent.[108]

Such evidence is not easily reconcilable to Stone's claims to having had 'medicine … brought [to] me to take twice a day, pills and a little mug of mixture',

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[106] S.B. Sutton has noted the difference in this respect between Bell and his predecessor at McLean, Rufus Wyman (1778–1842), who, although himself a proponent of moral treatment and sceptical of medical approaches, sought to stimulate one patient in particular with a heavy dosage of 'strong cathartics and an emetic'. See S.B. Sutton, *Crossroads in Psychiatry: A History of McLean Hospital* (Washington, DC, 1986), p. 34.
[107] Bell, 'Twenty-Fourth Annual Report', p. 22.
[108] C. Tyler, 'Report of the Steward of the McLean Asylum for the Insane, For the Year 1836', *Annual Report to the Board of Trustees of the Massachusetts General Hospital, for the Year 1836* (Boston, 1837), p. 19; Tyler, 'Report of the Steward of McLean Asylum for the Insane, for the Year 1837', p. 11. Bell's comment about Lee's use of opium, which is derived from his unpublished history of McLean Asylum, 'McLean Asylum for the Insane' (1838), is quoted in Sutton, *Crossroads in Psychiatry*, p. 55.

which caused violent convulsions and, over time, a permanent flattening of affect.[109] Another former patient at McLean, Robert Fuller, wrote in his own asylum exposé (1833) about having been administered pills at the asylum, but his confinement had been eight years earlier than Stone's, and under the less medicinally-frugal programme of Rufus Wyman (1778–1842).[110] Nevertheless, S.B. Sutton has noted instances in which Bell experimented with medicines, such as his use of hashish that had been imported from Calcutta to treat five women patients in 1845. For Sutton, this had epitomised Bell's philosophy that the treatment of insanity was, in Bell's own words, 'peculiarly dependent upon experience and direct observation, and not upon theory or transmitted information'.[111] Perhaps something about Stone's distinct 'symptoms' had indicated to him her particular need for a creative pharmacological concoction.

The truth behind Stone's 'drugging' at McLean Asylum is less significant to this analysis than her incorporation of medicine into a broader critique of the institution as one that was particularly inimical to her evangelical spirituality. Her criticisms touched in this respect on the moral aspects of treatment just as much as the medical. She represented the social environment of the asylum community, from the moment of her arrival to her departure, as a microcosm of the kind of worldliness she had left behind in her conversion. Thus, when she joined the other women for tea on her first day and saw that 'there was a large table set with all kinds of refreshments', she 'drank a cup of tea and left the room, thinking it was no place for me, for I had longsince [sic] left balls and parties, and scenes of mirthfulness'.[112] In his first annual report (1837), Bell wrote that '[t]he usual means of amusing and interesting patients in similar Asylums, such as cards, chess, bowling, reading, writing, newspapers, music, &c. are constantly in

[109] Stone, *Sketch*, pp. 22, 24.
[110] Fuller, *Account*, p. 13.
[111] Bell, 'Twenty-Sixth Annual Report'. Quoted in Sutton, *Crossroads in Psychiatry*, p. 72.
[112] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 20.

use'.[113] Such entertainments were promoted by alienists as means of adapting patients to normal social intercourse and distracting them from their monomaniacal fixations. Stone's narratives, however, suggest the fundamental violence that was done to her own interiority for having been involuntarily immersed into such an environment:

> a table was spread with a number setting round it playing cards, while others are playing chequers, dice, &c. accompanied with the most profane and corrupt language that it is possible to imagine could come from the lips of a female … O what horror seizes a person of any kind of pure and elevated feelings, that has shunned such society through life, and now obliged to mingle with them, and no kindred spirit to speak to.[114]

The secularity and implicit masculinity of this sort of moral treatment were suggested in her assertion of its uniquely corrupting influence upon the women patients. In this sense, the social environment that was generated under the rubric of moral treatment reflected an expansion of the masculine space of scientific knowledge within which special drugs had been devised to 'kill the spirit of Christ'. These concerns underpinned her characterisation of the regimen at McLean as an 'infidel' course of treatment designed 'to bring me back into a state of feelings to engage in all the corruption of this world again'.[115]

The sanctioned form of religion in the asylum was, for Stone, no exception to this pattern. In addition to the weekly evening services led by visiting clergymen, roughly half the patients—female and male—congregated each evening in 'the large oval room of the mansion house' for religious services. Led by Luther Bell, the latter 'consist(ed) in reading a portion of the sacred writings, some proper religious reflections, [and] a prayer with the singing of two psalms or hymns'.[116] Stone's contention that 'the principle object [of these services] seems to be to see each other,

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[113] Bell, 'Twentieth Annual Report', p. 23.
[114] Stone, *Remarks*, pp. 10-11.
[115] Ibid., p. 18.
[116] Bell, 'Twenty-Second Annual Report', p. 24.

rather than the proper worship of God' aptly captured the fact that religious observance in the asylum was ultimately ancillary to the broader therapeutic goals of the institution.[117] For Bell, the religious services indeed served as 'a means of calling into action the self-respect and self-control of the alienated mind'. Since they were 'regarded as a privilege not readily to be forfeited', the threat of prohibiting attendance was a means of generating good behaviour throughout the day.[118] Similar therapeutic benefits accrued from the expedition of roughly a quarter of the patients to 'the various churches in the vicinity' on Sunday mornings, a practice which, for Bell, justified the decision of the officers of the institution not to employ a fixed chaplain:

> As the motives to self control and self respect are augmented by such a participation in society as public worship amongst the world affords, I believe the course pursued here … is superior for our class of patients, to having a specific chapel for the Insane.[119]

In the asylum, the parameters of acceptable religious behaviour and identity were set in accordance with this function of religion as part of a broader therapeutic programme. In view were the principles of self-control and self-respect, and an ability to conduct oneself with 'the perfect silence and decorum of deportment' that was expected in public worship.[120] Such traits were the antithesis of the kind of evangelical enthusiasm that had animated John Perceval's madness. Yet even Stone's Millerite fervency conflicted with these principles, and was subjected in the asylum, like Perceval's Pentecostal agency, to the emphatic negations that moral treatment prescribed. When she told the attendant Mary Brigham 'how I loved God, and said many things about sanctification', the latter thus 'made me no reply'; and Relief Barber's response to similar outbursts was that 'she did not want any silly fancies'.[121]

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[117] Stone, *Remarks*, p. 15.
[118] Bell, 'Twentieth Annual Report', pp. 23-24.
[119] Bell, 'Twenty-Second Annual Report', p. 24.
[120] Bell, 'Twentieth Annual Report', p. 23.
[121] Stone, *Sketch*, pp. 21-22.

The therapeutic reticence of the attendants did not mean that the physicians at McLean would never engage with a patient on matters of religious belief and anxiety. In a memoir of Luther Bell written by the Unitarian minister George Ellis (1814–1894), published a year after Bell's death, Ellis praised Bell's unique talent for ministering to the souls of those patients who struggled in particular with religious forms of madness. The ability gently to coax a religious monomaniac or melancholic back to health required the 'spiritual insight' of a 'professional divine'—one who had 'an appreciation of all that is healthful, as well as a discrimination of all that is morbid, in the workings of the religious element of human nature'. On the ground, this meant not a blanket negation of religious speech, but a skilful regulation of it. Thus, according to Ellis, Bell would confront patients' 'scruples' and 'diseased sensibilities', but was never 'harsh or unsympathetic'. He knew precisely to what extent he should allow patients to dwell upon their morbid impressions, and when these should be prohibited.[122]

Stone did not record any other interactions with Bell on matters of religion apart from her initial interview with him. She did, however, recount such a conversation with the assistant physician, John Fox, which purportedly occurred on her second day at the asylum. As she represented it, Fox aimed his intervention straight at the pneumatic principle that rendered uncertain the desired end of religious observance as a motive to stability and self-possession. Thus, when Stone told him that 'I had undergone a cleansing or purifying by being washed in the blood of the Lamb', Fox replied 'that I must not think I was so filled with the spirit; any minister would laugh at me'. Such a response would undoubtedly have earned him George Ellis's praise for its theological content, if not for its pastoral sensitivity. And the same could be said about Fox's cessationist insistence, in the face of Stone's appeal to Paul's exhortation to '[b]e ye

[122] Ellis, *Memoir of Luther V. Bell*, p. 73.

filled with the fullness of God',[123] that divine possession had been the exclusive privilege of those who had seen Jesus.[124] Both responses invalidated the central premise of evangelical enthusiasm, which was that salvation rested upon the supernatural work of an interventionist deity in the heart and mind of the individual. As we shall see in Chapter 5, this was the very assumption that John Perceval had abandoned in the asylum as he reclaimed the self-possession of an English gentleman. And for Stone, it was an interior principle that she believed she had once possessed but had now lost as a result of an institutional system with whose therapeutic aims it conflicted. In some sense, it was the indifference of the asylum system to matters of religious interiority that had made it so effective, for Stone had ceased to be the Millerite visionary that had incommoded her brothers.

Conclusion

Both Perceval and Stone suggested in their writings that there were forms of spiritual care that would have truly met their therapeutic needs in the periods of their confinement. The polite care of an Anglican clergyman would have helped Perceval to reclaim his true identity as an English gentleman by gently prompting him to re-establish his judgment over his spiritual impressions. Stone's religious community would have delivered a 'feminine' mode of care that would have helped her to sustain her love for God and her desire for holiness. Asylum therapy had failed to support their identities in these ways, and both authors identified as the root of this problem the distinct religious perspectives of the alienists that had treated them. From another perspective, however, the negations of identity that they experienced in the asylum

[123] See Eph. iii. 19.
[124] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 22.

reflected the emergence of a therapeutic ideology and practice that was methodologically indifferent, if not hostile, with respect to the nuances of religious identity and interiority. In part, this was a function of the economy of asylum treatment. Alienists and attendants were responsible for large patient populations—around 100 patients at a time, in the cases of both Brislington House and McLean Asylum—and such numbers would not have permitted the kind of customised attention to spiritual selfhood that Stone and Perceval would have liked.[125]

At a deeper level, the asylum system represented one response to the problem that Lyman Beecher had addressed in an entirely different way with his 'clinical theology'. Yet whereas Beecher had sought to hold medicine and theology together within a model of care whose purpose was to preserve a form of evangelical interiority, asylum therapy privileged other aspects of religion—more compatible with the medical regime—within a model that purposefully negated this interiority and its (presumed) pathological effects.

This chapter opened with a conversion account in which a woman patient at Amariah Brigham's asylum in Utica described an inward transformation from the 'false' self-understanding of a religious melancholic to the 'true' self-understanding of one who acknowledged the fact that she was ill. This transformation was credited in the account to the effectiveness of an institutional approach to treatment which emphasised kindness and empathy, whilst nevertheless unequivocally negating the false convictions of the patient. Although Stone and Perceval could not have been more vehement in their disagreement with this author's assessment of asylum therapy, they also did not entirely

[125] Historians have noted that as the nineteenth century wore on, asylums became increasingly custodial, rather than curative, as a result of rising patient populations and, in the American context in particular, a larger number of pauper and immigrant patients whose cultural values differed significantly from those of the superintendents and staff. See A.S. Luchins, 'The Rise and Decline of the American Asylum Movement in the 19th century', *The Journal of Psychology*, 122/5 (1988), pp. 475-76.

reject a medicalised self-understanding. Rather, they each embraced medical forms of reasoning in their efforts both to understand their own psychological and spiritual experiences and to challenge the monopolistic claims of the emergent psychiatric profession. The final chapter of this thesis looks at how Stone, Perceval and others responded to and incorporated the authority of medicine as a source of self-knowledge and as a means of ideological subversion.

Part III

Medicine and Identity

Chapter 5

Religious Madness, the Body, and the Authority of Medicine

The medicalisation of spiritual experience presented opportunities as well as threats to evangelicals in the nineteenth century. In Chapter 3, we saw that Benjamin Noyes's New England co-religionists appealed to medicine after his suicide as a means of preserving his status as one of the Christian elect. And to Lyman Beecher, the integration of medicine into a model of pastoral care permitted the preservation of aspects of Puritan interiority—in particular, the anxiety and compunction of evangelical penitence—which had become controversial in the wider society, and which asylum therapy sought entirely to negate.

Yet the medicalisation of enthusiasm also posed a threat to evangelical identity, for it suggested the possibility that the experiences associated with conversion, regeneration and prophecy had no spiritual meaning at all. In Chapter 1 we saw that Louisa Clemens articulated a prophetic identity in her autobiography that explicitly jettisoned the medical categories that her friends and relatives had used to negate the spiritual meanings of her religious habits and behaviours. Whilst her letters in the 1850s suggested her capacity to deploy the category of madness in a positive sense to signify a morally-justifiable form of psychological compulsion, her autobiography (which she wrote in the 1860s) was nevertheless unequivocal in its insistence that the psychological states that had motivated her evangelical activism in Britain and America had been fundamentally divine, and not deranged.

Nevertheless, Clemens's opposition to medical categories did not entail a corresponding opposition to the physicalisation of spiritual experience. On the contrary, her narrative represented spiritual experience as embodied phenomena, and in so doing, granted her a degree of interpretive (and practical) control over her own psychological

states and proclivities. Other alleged religious lunatics whom this thesis has explored drew explicitly from the authority of medicine for similar hermeneutical and practical purposes. For Elizabeth Stone, the mind sciences of phrenology and animal magnetism proffered a means of understanding her religious melancholy after her release from McLean Asylum; and medical categories offered John Perceval a means of claiming control over the spiritual intuitions which he had blamed for having overthrown his judgment.

Yet for all three authors, it was critical that these experiences were also irreducibly spiritual in character. Clemens's prophetic identity was predicated upon the conviction that bodily feelings could act as the seat of divine influence and inspiration. For Perceval and Stone, an insistence upon the essentially spiritual characteristics of their bodies and psychical experiences resourced a potent critique of the psychiatric forms of interpretive and therapeutic control to which they had been subjected.

The distinctiveness of the intellectual projects of these alleged religious lunatics is made especially clear as they are contrasted with characteristic ways in which nineteenth-century evangelicals theorised spiritual experience. As we saw in the introduction to this thesis, efforts to professionalise mental medicine and the mind sciences in this period gave rise in various contexts to binary conceptions of the physical and the spiritual, and of mind and matter. The same binaries were also present, as we saw in Chapter 3, in the apologetically-motivated efforts of Calvinist evangelicals to draw distinctions between piety and pathology. It was thus argued that certain experiences, by virtue of being merely physical, were also a-spiritual. By collapsing these binaries between the physical and the spiritual, Clemens, Stone and Perceval were thus both subverting the professionalising agendas of certain alienists and challenging the intellectual assumptions of many of their co-religionists.

In her study of the interplay between spiritual and naturalistic explanations of religious experience in American history, Ann Taves has characterised the psychologist William James (1842–1910) as a theorist who attempted, in the late nineteenth century, to chart a *via media* between these two theoretical poles.[1] This chapter is concerned with authors who charted a 'middle way' of this sort earlier in the century. Yet for these authors, this was not a matter of abstract psychologising, as it was for James in his academic environment at Harvard. Rather, it was part of a deeply personal response to their own marginalisation vis-à-vis professional developments in the mental medicine of their time.

The chapter opens with a case study which exemplifies the binary outlook that these writers challenged as it surfaced within the evangelical thought world of the mid-nineteenth century. In an account of his evangelical conversion, the English physician and missionary, Richard Williams (1815–1851), writing in 1847, described his experience of a life-threatening illness which had been attended with supernatural visions, a battle for his life between the forces of light and darkness, and a medical remedy that was communicated to him directly, in the eleventh hour, by the divine consciousness. Excerpts from the account were included in a memoir of Williams's life, written by the Scottish Presbyterian minister James Hamilton (1814–1867), throughout which Hamilton juxtaposed his own interpretation of the conversion experience with Williams's. Although their interpretations of the event (and their analytical uses of medical thought) differed in important ways, the interpretive stance of both writers was conditioned by the basic assumption of a dualistic relationship between its physical and spiritual aspects.

[1] Taves, *Fits, Trances, & Visions*, pp. 271-73.

Having established the interpretive issues that frequently emerged within evangelical efforts to theorise spiritual experience in this period, the chapter goes on to explore Elizabeth Stone's intellectual project after her release from McLean Asylum. In theorising her melancholic condition, Stone used medical forms of reasoning to integrate the body into her religious self-understanding. The distinctiveness of her intellectual project is brought into relief in a comparison with the memoir of an English Independent minister, William Walford (1773–1850), who used medical ideas in a more characteristically Puritan mode as a means of de-spiritualising his melancholy and preserving his sense of Christian identity. By contrast, Stone combined theological concepts from Edwards's *Religious Affections* with the methodologies of mesmerism and the anatomical model of phrenology to construe her melancholy as both a physical and spiritual condition. The convergence of theological and medical sources of knowledge in her project underpinned a potent critique of the philosophy and therapeutic approach of the emergent psychiatric profession.

The self-analyses of John Perceval and Louisa Clemens had the same effect, yet were focused more upon the physical experience and perception of divine influence than upon melancholy and the emotions. Theorising religious enthusiasm as an embodied phenomenon was, for both authors, part of a conservative effort to regulate spiritual perception in accordance with specific intellectual paradigms. Yet by also construing enthusiasm as an essentially spiritual phenomenon, these paradigms had the effect of elevating spiritual experience above the conceptual and methodological domain of the medical professions.

Nevertheless, their attitudes and postures towards medicine, in this endeavour, differed considerably. Clemens rejected the authority of medicine entirely, in part, as Chapter 1 of this thesis argued, because of the threat it had posed to her prophetic

identity. Perceval instead embraced insights from medicine as part of his effort to claim control over his spiritual intuitions and thus recover his identity as an English gentleman. By comparing these intellectual projects directly, this analysis is suggestive of the distinct social implications that were bound up with the use of medical reasoning as a means of interpreting and regulating enthusiasm. Whilst both paradigms ultimately subverted the increasingly dominant discourse of professional psychiatry, only Clemens's—the one that sustained an emphatic resistance towards the authority of medicine—had radical implications for the structure of society more broadly.

Evangelical Conversion and the Authority of Medicine

> Myself a medical man, and for many years accustomed to witness disease in every form, I have been able to explain, to some extent at least, almost every case; but for the cause of my own illness, and for the explanation of its strange symptoms, my knowledge and means of judging fall far short. But whether mere natural causes occasioned all the bodily sensations or not, scarcely signifies: the mental changes, I am fully assured, were altogether the work of God.[2]

This was Richard Williams's attempt to give an ontological account of the abnormal psychical phenomena that had attended his conversion a year earlier—an event that would lead him to abandon his medical practice in 1850 and join the Patagonian Mission (later renamed the South American Mission Society). A subsequent missionary expedition to Tierra del Fuego ended with the deaths of all nine who had made the journey, including Williams, after a delivery of fresh provisions failed to reach them on Picton Island in 1851.[3]

The conversion narrative itself recounted a life-threatening illness throughout which a bedridden Williams had been swept away in seemingly supernatural

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[2] J. Hamilton, *A Memoir of Richard Williams, Surgeon: Catechist to the Patagonian Missionary Society in Terra Del Fuego* (1854), pp. 13-14.
[3] R. Hitchman, *The Patagonian Mission: The Missionary Adventures of Captain Allen Gardiner, R.N. The Pioneer of the Patagonian Missionary Society. An Essay Read Before the Pembroke Society* (Liverpool, 1856), pp. 23-26.

impressions and visions. Initially, he felt 'an amazing weight on the chest, with difficulty of respiration', and 'a feeling as though torrents of air were rushing into my brain, and the head were itself expanding'. Then, 'darkness—thick, palpable darkness' overwhelmed him, as '[u]nnumbered sins sprang up before my astonished conscience'. As the illness progressed, he was thrown into 'tetanic spasms—a violent jerking of the upper part of the body from side to side, interrupted by quiet intervals, sometimes by a complete rigidity of the neck and spine'.[4] The symptoms continued for several days, and by the fourth, his eyes rolled up into their sockets and he could not speak and could barely breathe. Any attempt to drink water 'brought on spasms which threatened suffocation'.[5] His redemption came about in the midst of these traumas, yet even after his soul had been saved, his life still hung in the balance, and was only spared when 'the bodily presence of the Power of Darkness' was vanquished by 'the Power unto Salvation' in a flash of 'brilliant light' that had 'darted into the room, and filled me with astonishment'. He continued thus:

> Next minute the impression came over me that I was yet to live; and at the same time, inspired with the certainty of knowing what I ought to take, I told my assistant to bring me forty drops of the tincture of opium, and twenty drops of the muriated tincture of iron, and to repeat the dose every twenty minutes.[6]

And so, his life was saved, and he went on to become an evangelical exemplar of sacrificial activism. Williams's narrative was part of a genre of similar accounts in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in which individuals had written about having experienced redemption directly by means of a supernatural experience or vision. In a

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[4] Hamilton, *Memoir of Richard Williams*, pp. 16-18.
[5] Hamilton, *Memoir of Richard Williams*, p. 19. William noted that the medical attendants had suspected tetanus or hydrophobia, both of which were known to symptomize in violent and involuntary physical movements of this sort. See contemporary descriptions of the convulsive symptoms of hydrophobia and tetanus in B. Moseley, *On Hydrophobia, its Prevention, and Cure. With a Description of the Different Stages of Canine Madness* (London, 1808), p. 11 and J. Swan, *An Essay on Tetanus, Founded on Cases and Experiments* (London, 1825), p. 51. The inability to swallow liquids was likewise linked with tetanus and hydrophobia. See C.B. Parry, *Cases of Tetanus; and Rabies Contagiosa, or Canine Hydrophobia* (Bath, 1814), p. 1.
[6] Hamilton, *Memoir of Richard Williams*, pp. 20-21.

late-eighteenth-century example in the American context that parallels Williams's account closely, a man named Nathan Culver recounted having been 'smitten with a heavy blow on my breast, which laid me backward on my bed' and gave rise to a vision in which he was led by Christ on a guided tour of heaven and hell.[7] In his case, this vision had enacted a conversion from deism to Christian orthodoxy, yet, notably, it lacked the consciousness of a medical critique of such experiences which was so central to Williams's account. In this respect, Williams's account reflected a growing cultural awareness of the medical critique of spiritual experiences of this sort in the early-to-mid nineteenth century. Thus, whereas Culver was content with simply citing such an experience as evidence of a reality that contradicted his deism, Williams's account was involved directly in hermeneutical questions about the experience that were raised by medicine.

Williams's strategy was to use his own authority as a medical practitioner as a means of validating the experience as something unexplainable, and thus, authentically spiritual. He established his medical credentials and worldview (prior to his conversion) at the outset of the narrative. Before his conversion, '[s]cience, literature, and my profession, were my whole delight', and his assent to theological propositions was limited to the deliverances of 'natural religion': 'I knew myself to be a creature sprung from God; but I never dreamed that I was a creature accursed before him'. A firm believer in the power of 'intellectual enlightenment' to 'carry human nature to perfection', he spurned the tortured conscience of evangelical penitence and the

[7] N. Culver, *A Very Remarkable Account of the Vision of Nathan Culver. Late of Newtown, (New-York.) Shewing, his Deistical and Vicious Principles, and How He was Converted to the Truth, by an Extraordinary and Immediate Revelation, Jan. 10, 1791* (Boston, 1795), pp. 6-7 and passim. Also note nineteenth-century examples in the American context such as John Maffitt's report in his conversion narrative of a heavenly light that '*broke in dazzling splendour thro' the gloom*' in J.N. Maffitt, *Tears of Contrition; or Sketches of the Life of John N. Maffitt: with Religious and Moral Reflections. To Which are Appended Several Poetic Effusions* (New-London, CT, 1821), p. 50; original emphases.

diabolical hosts that surrounded and penetrated it.[8] These scientific biases against evangelical interiority and belief, like Nathan Culver's deism, had been overthrown by his illness and attendant visions, which had convinced him of the reality of an intervening God and his own need for redemption.

Yet the experience had raised crucial questions: how did his bodily illness, his supernatural impressions and his spiritual transformation relate to each other? Had his visions of the powers of Darkness and Salvation been authentic apprehensions of supernatural beings, or false impressions induced by his illness? If the latter, what was the connection between these 'strange symptoms' and the changes in belief and character that had attended them? And finally, if his visions had been naturalistic in origin, were they also therefore unspiritual (or a-spiritual) in character?

One point that neither Williams nor the editor of his memoir denied was that the conversion itself had been an authentically spiritual event. Their reasoning on this point reflected the standard evangelical outlook which had been established most systematically in Jonathan Edwards's *Religious Affections*. Both thus pointed to the moral outcome of the event—the permanent transformation of Williams's character and his subsequent fidelity to a religious vocation that would ultimately claim his life—as evidence that it had been an authentic spiritual transformation.[9]

Yet of the two interpreters of Williams's experience, only Williams himself remained agnostic on the question of the 'bodily sensations' and supernatural impressions that had attended this spiritual transformation. He used his own authority as a medical practitioner to problematise straightforwardly naturalistic interpretations. As we saw in the quotation that opened this case study, he claimed that although he had

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[8] Hamilton, *Memoir of Richard Williams*, pp. 14-15.
[9] For Edwards, '*a change of nature*' and a persistence in 'Christian practice … to the end of life' were among the signs that one had truly experienced a 'saving change'. See Jonathan Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJEO, Vol. 2, pp. 340, 383; original emphases.

been able to explain all manner of diseases and symptoms that he had encountered in his medical practice, his medical insight failed him when it came to his own experience. His own medical authority thus allowed him to register the inexplicability of the event as one that fell outside of the explanatory domain of the medical profession.

This inexplicability went beyond the vividness of the supernatural impressions themselves. Williams's account had indeed registered a profound consonance between his physical ailment, his mental impressions and his spiritual transformation. He noted, for instance, that throughout his illness he had only felt that he was suffering when he had resisted his convulsions and chest constrictions.[10] When he finally surrendered to them, he enjoyed 'perfect consciousness' and an absence of physical pain. This is what had in turn afforded his mind the requisite tranquillity to contemplate God's mercies and his own spiritual need, which had in turn permitted his conversion. At the very least, these events suggested a vaguely providential meaning ('this illness', he claimed unequivocally, 'was designed for my conversion').[11] But they also raised the possibility that his 'bodily sensations' were not caused naturally, but had been generated by the direct agency of supernatural entities.

Whilst Williams ultimately remained agnostic on this question, the editor of his memoir, James Hamilton, insisted on a naturalistic interpretation. His own speculation about the event itself reflected a growing medical and scientific fascination with reports like those in Williams's narrative. A decade earlier, for instance, John Perceval's accounts of spiritual visions and voices had been analysed by the English physician Arthur Wigan (1785–1847), to whom they served as evidence of his hypothesis that the two hemispheres of the brain (our nomenclature, not Wigan's) functioned

[10] Hamilton, *Memoir of Richard Williams*, p. 19.
[11] Ibid., p. 13.

independently.[12] Hamilton himself had noted the 'import' of Williams's narrative, too, 'as a contribution to spiritual pathology', and this assessment earned the concurrence of a reviewer for *Littell's Living Age* (an American magazine that published selections on various topics from British and American newspapers and journals), who asserted the scientific utility of Williams's personal account 'for future psychological analysis' and 'to all engaged in the study of medical-psychology'.[13]

Although a medical layman, Hamilton had long been an enthusiast of the natural sciences, and, according to a contemporary memoirist, had pondered a career in chemistry or botany before taking holy orders.[14] Nevertheless, he acknowledged his own disciplinary limitations, and characterised his analysis as a series of common sense inferences from Williams's self-reportage. He drew for his analysis from the rapidly growing medical literature in this period on religious and paranormal experiences of the sort which Williams had reported, emphasising in particular insights from the English physician George Moore's (1803–1880) *The Power of the Soul Over the Body* (1845) and the English antiquarian and geologist Samuel Hibbert's (1782–1848) *Sketches of the Philosophy of Apparitions* (1825).

From such sources, Hamilton surmised that some of Williams's peculiar symptoms had been caused by the fatigue that had attended his 'excessive application' in his medical practice in the days preceding his illness.[15] George Moore had observed, for instance, that the English minister and hymn-writer Isaac Watts (1674–1748), after a

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[12] A.L. Wigan, *A New View of Insanity: The Duality of the Mind Proved by the Structure, Functions and Diseases of the Brain* (London, 1844), p. 105. As Iain McGilchrist has observed, the dual structure of the brain was recognised by ancient Greek physicians, who theorised that the left hemisphere was responsible for understanding, and the right for perception. McGilchrist further notes Wigan's significance for having reintroduced the topic to his fellow moderns, but points out that he did not hypothesise distinct functions for each hemisphere, as his notion of consentaneity would suggest. See I. McGilchrist, *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* (New Haven, 2009), p. 16.
[13] Hamilton, *Memoir of Richard Williams*, p. 12; *Littell's Living Age*, 43 (1854), p. 66.
[14] See T. Thomson (ed.), *A Biographical Dictionary of Eminent Scotsmen*, Vol. 2 (London, 1870), p. 215.
[15] Hamilton, *Memoir of Richard Williams*, p. 23.

period of intense mental exertion, had 'thought his head too large to allow him to pass out at the study door'. And another (unnamed) individual, after having given a lecture for the College of Surgeons, 'said that his head felt as if it filled the room'.[16] To explain the bodily presences of Darkness and Salvation that had surrounded Williams's bed, Hamilton cited Samuel Hibbert's attribution of such things to 'highly-excited states of the sanguineous or melancholic temperaments, conspiring with great nervous irritability'.[17] The reference to sanguinity was not metaphorical; the state of the blood itself was implicated in cases of hallucination, as had been suggested by contemporary experiments with substances that affect the circulatory system. Hibbert had thus noted that these physiological states and attendant psychical effects had been induced by the Cornish chemist Humphry Davy (1778–1829) in his experiments with nitrous oxide. Such experiments suggested to Hamilton that Williams's visions, too, were produced by circulatory changes.[18]

As Williams's own self-analysis had suggested, however, it was not these impressions themselves that required an explanation, but their uncanny correspondence with what appeared to have been an authentic spiritual transformation. In sorting out these convergences, Hamilton pointed to the fact that unlike the 'light from heaven' that had blinded St. Paul and befuddled his companions on the road to Damascus, none of Williams's companions had seen the 'brilliant light' that had inaugurated his Christian pilgrimage: 'these manifestations', Hamilton thus concluded, 'were confined to the

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[16] G. Moore, *The Power of the Soul over the Body, Considered in Relation to the Health and Morals* (1845), pp. 207-208; Hamilton, *Memoir of Richard Williams*, p. 23.
[17] S. Hibbert, *Sketches of the Philosophy of Apparitions; Or, An Attempt to Trace Such Illusions to Their Physical Causes*, 2nd edn (1824; Edinburgh, 1825), p. 148.
[18] Ibid., pp. 67-69. Nitrous oxide continues to be studied for the 'neuropsychiatric symptoms' it can induce, including 'auditory hallucination, persecutory delusions and unstable emotions'. For a recent example, see T. Chen, N. Zhong, H. Jiang, M. Zhao, Z. Chen and H. Sun, 'Neuropsychiatric Symptoms Induced by Large Doses of Nitrous Oxide Inhalation: A Case Report', *Shanghai Archives of Psychiatry*, 30/1 (2018), pp. 56-59.

individual's own mind'.[19] Yet this conclusion did not invalidate the experience at a spiritual level. Once again he cited Samuel Hibbert on this point. Despite his rigorous cessationism, and his confidence that even a report of the most edifying vision of heavenly beings required, in the post-apostolic period, 'a medical rather than a theological investigation', Hibbert had himself acknowledged those occasions on which 'the quality of [a pious person's] waking visions has accidentally harmonized … with the prospect of those heavenly blessings, which are promised as the reward of a well-spent life'.[20] It was a concession of sorts, but not one that trespassed into the explanatory orbit of his naturalistic paradigm. Hamilton's thoughts about Williams's 'spectral illusions' echoed Hibbert's general view on the subject:

> Still these ideas were substantially correct. Disease might embody them in forms too material; and yet they were truths. It was true that sins unnumbered stood chargeable against one who had hitherto lived without God in the world. It was true that God was offended, and death was coming. It was true that boundless dismay and terror environed the Christless transgressor. The name of Jesus had no more effect in tranquillizing the conscience and kindling hope than that blessed name should ever have. And the instinct which shrank from the Power of Darkness and cried to Jesus for protection, was itself a token that a new life was dawning. There might be nervous excitement, but there was also a spiritual awakening. There might be morbid sensations; but the pervading conviction was scriptural, and the consequent change of thought and feeling was permanent.[21]

The permanence of its effects indeed seemed to prove the authenticity of the event as one in which Williams's character was spiritually transformed. And yet, its charismatic elements were mere 'ideas', ontologically distinct from the supernatural essences they signified.

Williams's and Hamilton's speculations evince distinct uses of the authority of medicine in their efforts to navigate conceptual problems related to certain forms of spiritual experience in the nineteenth century. Neither author issued a thoroughgoing

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[19] Hamilton, *Memoir of Richard Williams*, pp. 24-25. In fact, Paul's companions were reported only to have heard the voice of Christ, but not to have seen the light. See Acts ix. 3-7.
[20] Hibbert, *Sketches of the Philosophy of Apparitions*, pp. 137, 155.
[21] Hamilton, *Memoir of Richard Williams*, pp. 24-25.

challenge to the fundamental dualism between physical and spiritual meanings which was by this point deeply engrained within dominant theological and medical discourses. This binary perspective was overtly perpetuated in Hamilton's confident analysis, and implicitly assumed in Williams's analytical reticence.

We turn now to consider the ways in which Elizabeth Stone, John Perceval and Louisa Clemens each challenged the underlying assumptions that shaped the reasoning processes of both Williams and Hamilton.

Melancholy and the Body

A precedent for looking to the body, rather than the spirit, to explain experiences of religious melancholy had been set as early as the seventeenth century by Puritans such as Richard Baxter (1615–1691) in the British context and Cotton Mather (1663–1728) in the American.[22] Mary Ann Jimenez has thus noted the example of Cotton Mather's *Angel of Bethesda* (1722), which attributed the condition of melancholy to '*Flatulencies* in the region of the *Hypochondria*', and mania, to the inflammation of the 'Animal Spirits'. In Jimenez's view, this argument reflected a shift from the spiritualised emphasis of Mather's earlier writings, and thus opened a theoretical space for the development of a medical approach to insanity.[23]

The example of Richard Baxter reflected particularly clearly the apologetic concerns which underpinned this shift towards medical reasoning, and which gave rise to the binary relationship between physical and spiritual meanings that had become so engrained in evangelical thought by the nineteenth century. Baxter's example was cited in this respect in the nineteenth-century Scottish physician John Cheyne's apologetic

[22] See Porter, *Mind-Forg'd Manacles*, pp. 56-57; Jimenez, *Changing Faces of Madness*, pp. 20-21.
[23] Jimenez, *Changing Faces of Madness*, pp. 20-21. Also see C. Mather, *Angel of Bethesda* (New-London, CT, 1722).

work, *Essays on Partial Derangement of the Mind in Supposed Connexion with Religion* (1843). Cheyne noted that Baxter, taking solace in a physical explanation for his own melancholy, had argued that 'if you cure the melancholy (black bile), [Satan's] bed is taken away, and the advantage by which he worketh', for 'it is by means and humours, in us, that he worketh'.[24] Although not fully de-spiritualised, this outlook nevertheless gave considerable weight to the authority of medicine as a source of self-knowledge that qualified the authority of bodily feeling.

The previous chapter opened with an account in *The Opal*, written by an asylum patient, which, in the vein of Richard Baxter's medical reasoning, reconstituted the spiritual phenomena of mental suffering as symptoms of physical illness. The effect had been to relieve the author of the sense that her afflictions were signs of divine disfavour. The autobiography of the Independent minister William Walford, published in 1851, expressed similar apologetic concerns, and a similar use of medicine as both a source of self-knowledge and a narrative mechanism which redeemed his spiritual identity. The autobiography was published posthumously as a series of letters to the editor of the book, his fellow Nonconformist minister John Stoughton (1807–1897), who interacted throughout the memoir with Walford's own self-analysis. The medical reasoning of both ministers exemplified the tradition of Puritan reasoning on the problem of melancholy reflected in Richard Baxter's musings about his own struggles. Thus, in addition to evincing the same binary opposition between spiritual and physical meanings that had marked the editorial interaction between Hamilton and Williams, it evinced the overarching theological criteria with which evangelical Calvinists affirmed certain psychological and emotional experiences as signs of divine influence and intervention, and rejected others as symptoms of pathology.

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[24] Cheyne, *Essays*, p. 73.

Walford's project is contrasted in the following section with Elizabeth Stone's use of medical knowledge not to vindicate her spiritual identity, but to prove that she had lost her salvation. In enabling her to physicalise her spiritual condition in this way, medical reasoning afforded Stone a means of subverting the perceived abuses of medicine in asylum therapy. What is particularly significant in her analysis, moreover, is the way in which she drew from a range of medical ideas and methodologies to make her case. Her intellectual project is revealing in terms of the popular appeal of movements such as mesmerism and phrenology in early-1840s New England, the accessibility of these mind sciences to working-class women and men, and their potency as sources of self-knowledge that could be deployed, at the popular level, in syncretistic ways that subverted the paradigms of the emergent alienist profession.

'The unmanageable vessel': The Melancholy of William Walford

James Hamilton prefaced his analysis of Richard Williams's conversion with reference to Walford's autobiography, which had been published three years earlier, and which Hamilton described as an 'interesting volume … in which a Christian scholar recalls the workings of his mind during a long period of derangement'.[25] Walford had spent five years (late 1829 to early 1835) confined to his home in Hackney, where, in his own words, he 'was oppressed by unbroken darkness', and 'underwent horrors' of which he later found it 'impossible … to convey an adequate conception'.[26] Although he would recover and continue for some time as minister of a church in Uxbridge, the darkness returned in the final months of his life, and he died on 22 June 1850 at the age of

[25] Hamilton, *Memoir of Richard Williams*, p. 22.
[26] W. Walford, *Autobiography of the Rev. William Walford. Edited (with a continuation) by John Stoughton* (London, 1851), pp. 181, 178.

seventy-seven without having recovered the mental tranquillity he had sustained over the previous fourteen years.[27]

Walford wrote his autobiography before this tragic relapse. His own self-analysis in the narrative evinced a tension between his affirmation of divine intervention in the events of his conversion, and his denial of any spiritual meaning in his melancholy. In the former case, he asserted that 'an influence, immediately emanating from divine power and grace, was the cause of the change'.[28] His melancholy, he insisted, on the other hand, was strictly somatic in nature: a symptom of physical pathology. The challenge of sustaining this distinction in the narrative came down to the similar phenomenology of the experiences as he had described them. Both experiences were characterised in terms of an erosion of self-possession and a surrender to their emotional and psychical aspects. Thus, in his conversion, the 'delight that was diffused over my heart, by the emotions of hope and joy' had become 'so intense and continued, as, in several instances, to intercept my sleep, and keep me awake through the night'; and this 'ecstatic state' had continued for several days.[29] In a similar vein, his five-year period of melancholy had begun suddenly, one morning, when he woke at 5 A.M. to find himself 'environed by a dense and sulphureous fog or smoke, and … so overcome by horror as to exclaim aloud, that I was ruined and lost'.[30] He recounted that for the next five years, his waking life was dominated by these horrors: he would rise each day at noon, eat breakfast quickly while still standing, and then continue to pace until well after sundown, his mind 'revolving the past and the future' and lamenting his inevitable damnation.[31] In the night,

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[27] Ibid., passim.
[28] Ibid., p. 58.
[29] Ibid., p. 36.
[30] Ibid., pp. 174.
[31] Ibid., pp. 185-86.

> I was often roused to vigilance by convulsive startings, which no sooner ceased, than the most hideous appearances of monstrous face and shape would pass before me, to free myself from which, I was constrained to keep my eyes open, that the real objects about me might dispel those of my disordered imagination.[32]

The central hermeneutical task of Walford's autobiography was to assert the spiritual legitimacy of his conversion experience while simultaneously de-spiritualising his melancholy and its apparent meanings. Like Williams and Hamilton in their assessment of Williams's experience, he used the characteristic evangelical appeal to Christian perseverance as a means of validating his own conversion:

> If the change of which I write had consisted only in excited feeling, even stronger than that which I experienced, or in the production of partial and transient reformations, such as might have admitted of a return to former habits of life and manners, its origin would have been proven to hold no relation to the power which raises men, 'dead in trespasses and sins', and gives them life in Christ, and must have been classed among the delusions to which paroxysms of strong feeling and heated imagination may possibly give birth.[33]

His ultimate rejection of 'delusion' and 'heated imagination' as the basis of the experience was predicated upon his discovery, once the ecstasy had subsided, that he was 'possessed of a new character'.[34] This alteration in his affections and inclinations was reflected in the aversion he now felt towards the frivolous pursuits and irreverent companions of his past, in the 'ascendancy' his conscience had gained over his 'passions and appetites', and in the heavenward direction of his 'thoughts, desires, and propensities'.[35]

In Chapter 3 we saw that Benjamin Noyes's community in New Haven invoked his exemplary piety to determine that he had been insane when he had committed suicide.[36] And in Chapter 4, we noted the evangelical-friendly alienist, John Butler's

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[32] Ibid., pp. 186-87.
[33] Ibid., pp. 62-63.
[34] Ibid., pp. 62-63, 36.
[35] Ibid., p. 37.
[36] NCHS, Box 43, Folder 3: Elias Cornelius, 'Memoir of Benjamin Noyes', p. 10.

appeal to a woman's prior religious character (before her descent into melancholy) to diagnose her condition as a medical one.[37] These same criteria justified Walford's turn to the authority of medicine in his narrative to explain his own melancholy. The ontological truths underpinning both the conversion event and the suffering of melancholy were thus determined not by the phenomenology of the experiences themselves, but by their relation to a broader set of theological evidences, among which the religious and moral character of the affected individual were paramount.

Walford wove medical reasoning into his autobiography as part of its own, self-contained narrative, which began in childhood and consisted of a combination of psychological and physical factors. It had begun, he thought, with the negative 'mental habits' that had been instilled in him throughout his upbringing. He had been sent from home until the age of two to be nursed in the country near Bath because his father had detested having children in the house. Upon returning home, he had 'felt not affection for my parents', viewing them as strangers. This, as well as his father's volatile temper, had negatively affected his 'social sensibility' in the critical years of early childhood, and ultimately gave shape to a temperamental predisposition to the melancholy that would later afflict him.[38]

These environmental issues were compounded, he argued, by a physical disorder that went back to his early childhood. His reasoning on this point drew from past medical consultations with trained physicians, which informed his own theorising as a self-acknowledged medical layperson. His medical consultations had begun in his early twenties when, as a student training for the dissenting clergy at Homerton College

[37] Butler, 'Twenty-Second Annual Report', pp. 21-22.
[38] Walford, *Autobiography*, pp. 13-16. Samuel Greatheed had similarly cited psychological and social factors in Cowper's childhood to explain the poet's depression. See Greatheed, *A Practical Improvement of the Divine Counsel and Conduct*, pp. 10-11.

in London,[39] he had suffered 'an increasing discharge of fetid mucus' from his left nostril.[40] The London physician Henry Cline (1750–1827) had diagnosed an ulcer in his sinus and told him to apply mercury to the nostril, but this had only aggravated the condition, and Walford thus sought a second opinion from the renowned physician William Withering (1741–1799) during a visit to Birmingham. Withering had linked the condition to an injury that Walford had sustained as a two-year-old, which, the doctor thought, had produced a wound in the interior of the sinus. His prescription entailed the application of leeches for the pain and the use of snuff to stimulate the discharge of mucus and prevent it from forming into the 'purulent' mass that had been causing his headaches.[41]

Significantly, Walford recounted that Withering had told him that the wound, although it might recede, might never fully heal. This prognosis sanctioned his subsequent musings, as autobiographer, about the connection between his physical injury and his melancholy, which spun on the ancient medical concept of *metastasis*. A *Lancet* article for 8 May 1852 characterised the modern conception of *metastasis* as a combination of two ancient Greek ideas: μεταστάω, by which was meant, 'to designate the transposition of a disease, its nature remaining the same, from one organ to another', and διαδοχή, which denoted 'the transformation of a disease into an affection of a different nature, and occupying another organ'. Both senses were encapsulated in the nineteenth-century use of *metastasis* to denote 'a change, whether in the seat only, or at the same time both in the seat and in the character of [a] disease'.[42] In diagnosing his own melancholy, Walford used the term in the latter sense: 'a transference of the

[39] Homerton College in those years was a dissenting academy that trained nonconformist ministers.
[40] Walford, *Autobiography*, p. 196.
[41] Ibid., pp. 196-97.
[42] 'Medical Society of London. Saturday, May 8, 1852.—Mr. Bishop in the Chair', *The Lancet*, 59/1499 (1852), p. 495.

effects of the injury from the external sinus to the interior of the cranium', which had 'so affected the brain and the nervous system … as to produce the grievous sorrows of which I was for almost sixty years the subject'.[43] Nevertheless, Withering's speculation that the physical wound might someday 'wear down' had not been misguided, and Walford eventually recovered: 'My hope and confidence in God were restored, and all my dreary expectations of destroying myself or others were entirely forgotten'.[44]

Despite the theological and apologetic work that his medical account was meant to do, Walford nevertheless betrayed, in his autobiography, an overarching impetus to draw the experience of melancholy into a narrative of Christian redemption. In part, this issue was bound up with the theological criteria with which he had established the supernatural character of his conversion. He had known that the conversion was an authentic experience of 'immediate' divine influence because of its permanence as a moment of moral and religious change. Yet the changes in personality and psychic experience reflected in the melancholic condition presented a direct threat to this mode of reasoning. Among alienists, the category of moral insanity had been developed earlier in the century to account in medical terms for such changes. Asylum medicine in this sense had its own scripts that accounted for dark transformations of the sort that Walford had recounted.[45] Walford's own autobiography, however, evinced the characteristic evangelical inclination to draw the experience of melancholy into an overarching narrative of personal redemption. The Puritan metaphor of pilgrimage proved a potent one in this respect:

> I have had to pass through many a night of darkness that might be felt, and to struggle through many a slough of despond; but my struggles, like those of Bunyan's Pilgrim, have ever been to make an escape on the side opposite to the

[43] Walford, *Autobiography*, p. 198.
[44] Ibid., p. 193.
[45] The conventional wisdom in the profession—particularly earlier in the century—was that such conditions were readily curable if caught early, but were rendered hopeless if left untreated. See Jimenez, *Changing Face of Madness*, p. 84.

> city of Destruction. I am thus assured that the change [he had experienced in conversion] was from heaven, and not of men.[46]

By opposing the meanings of his melancholy and his conversion in this quotation, Walford reinforced the notion that it was the permanence of a moral or psychological change that gave it spiritual significance. He could be certain that his sense of divine disfavour had been a meaningless symptom of physical pathology because it had proven to be a passable slough, rather than a permanent destination.

Given that Walford had failed, in the final weeks of his life, to make the redemptive 'escape' of Bunyan's sojourner, John Stoughton—the editor of the autobiography—was forced to make a divergent case for the physical basis of his friend's melancholy. In this respect, maritime imagery proved more flexible than the metaphor of the pilgrim, permitting a redemptive account of Walford's despondent passage into eternity:

> Days and nights gloomily rolled on, so different from their 'tranquil gliding' which he frequently described in his letters and other papers; but it was the happy confidence of his friends, notwithstanding his own fears, that the angry billow, no less than the gentle wave, was wearing his weather-beaten bark to the better land. That land he reached on the 22d of June, 1850. The poor body looked truly like a wreck; but the eye of Christian faith could see the soul, which had often had such hard work to pilot the unmanageable vessel, safe beyond the reach of storms and the return of night, on the shores of the heavenly country'.[47]

Whilst it was only the eye of faith that could perceive the triumphant passage of the soul into glory, the justification for this outlook was provided in the medical evidence of the 'unmanageability' of the bodily 'vessel'. Stoughton included this evidence—a report of the surgeons who had conducted the post-mortem examination of Walford's

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[46] Walford, *Autobiography*, p. 38.

[47] Walford, *Autobiography*, pp. 286-87. The maritime metaphor had been established earlier in the autobiography by Walford when he compared his mental suffering as one 'tossed … from wave to wave of inexpressible distress' to the plight of the anguished mariner ventriloquized by William Cowper in his short poem, 'On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture out of Norfolk' (1790). Walford quoted the passage directly: 'Me howling winds drive devious, tempest toss'd, / Sails ript, seams opening wide, and compass lost; / And, day by day, some current's thwarting force / Sets me more distant from a prosperous course'. See Walford, *Autobiography*, p. 168. Also see Cowper, *Poems*, Vol. 3, p. 60.

body, along with some correspondence related to the report—in an appendix at the end of the autobiography. The examination was conducted on 27 June 1850, five days after Walford's death, and revealed various abnormalities on the surface of the brain. Two areas of the brain where the dura mater met the bone bore 'a green tinge, similar to long retained pus', and those regions had thickened, causing the bone to become depressed.[48] John Whiting, a physician and friend of Walford's who had examined the report, thought this might have been caused by the injury which Walford claimed to have sustained as an infant.[49] There was also evidence that the brain had been severely inflamed. The ventricles of the brain were full of water, with a 'serous effusion' over the whole surface, and there was an 'unnatural adhesion of the membranes' at numerous points. Much of this evidence suggested inflammation at some point in the past (Whiting speculated that it was Walford's five-year bout of melancholy at Homerton), but was also consistent with chronic inflammation, which would explain Walford's long-term psychological struggles and his eventual relapse.[50] And all of this supported the conclusion of one of the surgeons who had examined Walford's body, Daniel Macnamara, who wrote to Walford's son that 'extensive bodily disease had the effect of disturbing your father's just appreciation of his own condition, as regarded his dependence on the mercies of the Almighty'.[51]

Melancholy, Mind, and Matter in Elizabeth Stone's Self-Diagnosis

When Elizabeth Stone wrote about her experiences soon after her release from McLean Asylum in the spring of 1842, she was reasoning from the characteristic posture of the evangelical melancholic, who insists upon their eternal hopelessness. We saw in the

[48] Walford, *Autobiography*, pp. 357-58.
[49] Ibid., p. 360.
[50] Ibid., pp. 358-60.
[51] Ibid., pp. 361-62.

introduction to this thesis that this posture had a subversive tendency vis-à-vis broader systems of theological and philosophical reasoning. For William Cowper, it had underpinned an idiosyncratic subversion of Calvinist theology: his insistence, in his correspondence with Mary Unwin and John Newton, that he, alone, had been granted salvation only to have it subsequently revoked. For Stone, the voice of religious melancholy underpinned a critique of asylum medicine, which was resourced by theories and methodologies derived from the mind sciences that had swept popular culture in New England over the preceding years.

Stone's characterisation of her melancholy reflected the influence of Jonathan Edwards's paradigm of the religious affections. After her release, she lamented, she 'did not love God or this world' and 'had lost all idea of holiness'.[52] In Edwards's framework, love for God and growth in holiness were distinguishing marks of one's election, and so, the purported absence of these affections after her confinement was characterised as evidence that she had lost 'the spirit of Christ' and was once again 'guilty of the blood of the covenant'.[53]

The distinctiveness of her intellectual project was reflected in her use of medical reasoning not to de-spiritualise her melancholy in the apologetic mode of Puritan evangelicalism, but to physicalise her spiritual death. Her perspective was shaped by her encounter with medical and scientific discourses both within the asylum and—especially—in her consultations, after her release, with a series of animal magnetists and phrenologists. These two 'scientific' schools offered her, respectively, a methodology and an anatomical model with which to theorise her spiritual loss.

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[52] Stone, *Sketch*, pp. 27, 31, 37.
[53] Ibid., pp. 26-27.

Developed in the late eighteenth century by the German physician, Franz Mesmer (1734–1815), the doctrine of animal magnetism was predicated upon the postulation of a vital ('animal') fluid that coursed through human bodies, explaining physical and mental ailments and granting certain powers to experts (magnetists) who had the gift of manipulating the movement of this fluid through physical touch. Among these powers included the ability to heal various disorders by unblocking obstructions in the natural flow of this animal fluid; another was the capacity to induce a trance (i.e. hypnotic state) in individuals who were particularly susceptible to magnetic influence.[54]

It was the second of these two aspects of magnetism that had made it, for Stone, a 'means of exposing iniquity that is practised in secret [in the asylum]'.[55] Many believed that the trance induced by magnetists provided a gateway into a domain of perception that escaped the physical sense organs. Those who were 'magnetised' regularly in public demonstrations and medical consultations—called 'somnambulists', and generally women—had purportedly demonstrated the ability to perceive, for instance, the contents of a sealed envelope, the activities of individuals in distant places, or the inner thoughts of the magnetist.[56] Stone herself claimed along these lines that 'a person in a magnetic sleep is not regarded as a deranged person, but they see things as they really are'.[57] Most pertinent to her own situation was the supposed ability of some somnambulists to see into human bodies to detect disease or disorder.[58] Animal magnetism in this sense proffered a methodology through which the physical condition of her brain might be assessed whilst she was still living.

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[54] Scull, *Madness in Civilization*, pp. 180-87.
[55] Stone, *Remarks*, p. 4.
[56] S.O. Quinn, 'How Southern New England Became Magnetic North: the Acceptance of Animal Magnetism', *History of Psychology*, 10/3 (2007), p. 233.
[57] Stone, *Remarks*, p. 4.
[58] Quinn, 'Magnetic North', p. 233.

Stone recounted having been prompted by her friends to visit a somnambulist who was particularly famous in New England for the ability to detect internal pathologies. Cynthia Gleason (b. 1799), born in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, discovered her gift when she was experimented upon by the person often credited with introducing animal magnetism to the United States, the French physician Charles Poyen (c. 1815–1844). For nine years, Gleason had been treated unsuccessfully for a stomach ailment. When Poyen tended to her during his tour of New England (1837-38), he discovered an ideal mesmeric candidate—one for whom hypnosis could be readily induced, and whose somnambulistic clairvoyance was particularly lucid. In his *Progress of Animal Magnetism in New England* (1837), Poyen indeed noted that 'if a single lock of the hair of one of [Gleason's] patients is presented to her, even three or four weeks after the examination has taken place, she will describe the disease as though the person was present'.[59] This was the very method Stone described in her first of two examinations by Gleason. A phrenologist she identified as Mr. Fowler—possibly one of the famous Fowler brothers of New York, Orson Squire (1809–1887) and Lorenzo Niles (1811–1896), both of whom published works on the subject—gave a lock of Stone's hair to a somnambulant Gleason, who discovered that Stone 'had great distress in the back part of my head, my spinal marrow was dry; distress in my limbs; inclined to sit forwards; disagreeable feeling at my stomach; nervous temperament; needed kind treatment, &c.'[60] In her second visit, which Stone dated to 15 July 1842, Gleason was magnetised by a Mr. Butrick, and this time discovered that Stone's 'brain looked dark' and 'drawn together', a disorder she illustrated by clenching her hands together.[61] In her second book, Stone noted that she visited two additional somnambulists after Gleason, both of

[59] C. Poyen, *Progress of Animal Magnetism in New England* (Boston, 1837), p. 152.
[60] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 41.
[61] Ibid.

whom corroborated Gleason's reports of dry spinal marrow, distressed limbs, and a darkened brain. The second, a Mrs. Pease, even perceived that 'some powerful mineral medicine had been given me—said it was pills and liquids, that it had injured my brain in the back part of my head, [and] that there was not one in twenty that could bear it'.[62]

As a complement to the diagnostic methodology of animal magnetism, the anatomical model of phrenology permitted Stone to link her physical trauma to her inward, spiritual death, for it correlated mental faculties and character traits—including the capacities for spirituality and emotion—with the physical regions of the brain. It is notable in this respect that Gleason and Pease both purportedly cited 'the back part of [Stone's] head' as the precise location of the damage to her brain, particularly given the possible involvement of one of the famous Fowler brothers in the diagnostic process.[63] Orson Squire's major contribution to the subject, *Fowler's Practical Phrenology* (1840), was published two years before Stone's release from McLean Asylum, and included a head map that assigned the lower posterior of the skull to the 'domestic properties', which included philoprogenitiveness, adhesiveness, inhabitiveness, and—by far the largest of the group—amativeness.[64] Stone evinced an awareness of this particular phrenological model when, citing 'the science of Phrenology' ('as there is truth in it whether you believe it or not'), she asserted that '[i]n my case it is the brain that lays in the back part of my head that is destroyed, where the faculties of affection are located'.[65]

Her emphasis on the trauma to the back part of her head reflects the distinctly evangelical mode of her reasoning process. From the perspective of natural theology,

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[62] Stone, *Remarks*, p. 4.
[63] Stone, Sketch, p. 41; Stone, *Remarks*, p. 4.
[64] O.S. Fowler, *Fowler's Practical Phrenology: Giving A Concise Elementary View of Phrenology* (New York, 1840), p. 54. Also see O.S. Fowler, *Phrenology Proved, Illustrated, and Applied, Accompanied by a Chart* (New York, 1849), p. 46.
[65] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 39.

Fowler's model arguably provided a more apt physical seat for Stone's spiritual trauma in the 'frontal, portion of the upper part of the head', the domain of the 'moral and religious sentiments' (benevolence, hope, veneration, conscientious and marvellousness) which, in Fowler's words, 'create those moral duties and relations which exist between man and his Maker, and also between man and man'. Presumed injuries to the faculties of veneration ('[s]entiment of adoration and worship for the Supreme Being') and benevolence ('[d]esire for the happiness of others—sympathy, compassion—kindness, fellow-feeling, benignity') would have explained perfectly Stone's inability to love God and neighbour after her confinement.[66]

Whilst Stone's emphasis instead upon the domain of the domestic faculties could merely indicate an honest reckoning on her part with the insights of the somnambulists she had consulted, it is likely that it went deeper than this. The postulation of a bodily domain of moral and religious sentiments entailed that human beings were naturally endowed with physical properties that determined their capacity for, and the degree of their, religiosity. In Fowler's words, the faculty of veneration, in particular, was '*innate*', forming 'a constituent portion of the human mind'. Whilst reverence for 'parents, the aged, the talented, [and] the titled' were its '*incidental*' manifestations, its 'primary', 'legitimate' and 'chief object' was 'worship of a *Supreme Being*'.[67] Crucially, then, the quality of an individual's religious devotion was determined not by the supernatural interposition of divine grace, but by the size and health of a part of the brain.[68]

Such a scheme did not harmonise easily with Stone's characterisations of her supernatural transformation in her conversion in 1834 and her baptism in the Holy

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[66] Fowler, *Phrenology Proved*, pp. 48, 147, 153.
[67] Ibid., pp. 147-48; original emphases.
[68] Teresa Hill notes this implication of phrenology for evangelical theology Hill, 'Religion, Madness, and the Asylum', pp. 53-61.

Ghost six years later. Moreover, it would have been anathema to Jonathan Edwards himself, who had written his *Nature of True Virtue* (1765) to oppose the notion, popular among moral philosophers of his time, that human beings naturally possessed a benevolent moral sense that permitted the disinterested exercise of practical virtue. The Irish philosopher Francis Hutcheson (1694–1746) had argued, for instance, that parental love was a simple natural affection that one could 'extend … to all Mankind' in acts of public virtue towards neighbour and nation.[69] Against this, Edwards had insisted that even parental love itself was an expression of self-love, and therefore, so too were the apparent acts of disinterestedness to which the same basic trait of self-love gave public expression.[70]

Fowler's paradigm of human psychology was, of course, more differentiated than both Hutcheson's and Edwards's, for it relegated the 'domestic properties' of familial love and the 'moral sentiments' that issued in public virtue to different regions of the brain. Edwards and Hutcheson, by contrast, posited a single, basic impulse—whether towards self-love or benevolence—which could expand its immediate domain of the family to encompass the individual's relation to society and, ultimately, to the divine. For Edwards in particular, the whole scheme invalidated the very possibility of distinct mental properties which existed in a pristine and benevolent detachment from the domestic sphere of self-love. The 'moral and religious sentiments' simply did not exist. True religion could thus only emerge as the supernatural product of evangelical conversion, in which the natural affections, otherwise hopelessly mired in self-love, were transformed to become truly 'gracious' affections ('a love to divine things for the beauty and sweetness of their moral excellency', as Edwards characterised their issue in

[69] F. Hutcheson, *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (London, 1725), pp. 143-47.
[70] J. Edwards, 'The Nature of True Virtue', in *Ethical Writings*, WJEO, Vol. 8, pp. 584-611.

his famous treatise on the topic).[71] The entire process indeed occurred within the same psychological field, which Fowler's head map had relegated to the back part of the skull—the region of Elizabeth Stone's presumed trauma.

Stone's phrenological paradigm was in this respect distinctly evangelical in character, and thus carried spiritual implications that Fowler's did not. Despite what the conventional doctrines of phrenology seemed to suggest about the physical basis of the soul, phrenologists themselves generally affirmed its independence from the brain, as we saw in the introduction to this thesis. Characteristic in this respect were the speculations of the American physician John Redman Coxe (1773–1864) in an essay 'on Phrenology in Connexion with the Soul', which he presented before the Phrenological Society of Philadelphia in 1822. In it, he insisted that although the true nature of the soul and its connection to the body were veiled in mystery, its proper function was dependent upon the health and quality of its physical correlates:

> If … the soul can act (or render its actions sensible to man) only through the intermedium of material organization, … it follows necessarily, that its actions must be more or less perfect, exactly in the ratio of the greater or less perfection of those organs through which they are developed.[72]

And so, he would subsequently add, 'the soul' was 'secure in its existence' even in cases of 'madness, idiocy [and] … mental disease'—conditions which evinced not the derangement of the soul itself, but the 'absolute dependence of the soul, on the existing state of healthy or unhealthy material organization'.[73] The same dualistic assumption was implicit within John Stoughton's appeal to William Walford's physical lesions as the basis of his melancholy. Walford's soul had remained secure, Stoughton had

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[71] J. Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJEO, Vol. 2, p. 240.
[72] J.R. Coxe, *Considerations Respecting the Recognition of Friends in Another World; on the Affirmed Descent of Jesus Christ into Hell; on Phrenology in Connexion with the Soul, and on the Existence of a Soul in Brutes* (Philadelphia, 1845), p. 55.
[73] Ibid., p. 80.

assured his readers, even as his diseased brain had secreted psychic horrors that had disrupted his sense of spiritual peace.

By mapping Edwards's religious affections onto specific phrenological faculties, Stone had collapsed the dualism that would have spared her the spiritual implications of her lack of 'gracious' affect. In an important sense, this was a subversion of Edwards's paradigm, which had itself distinguished between the naturalistic effects of the body and the spiritual character of true religion. As Ann Taves has argued, this paradigm had conceded considerable theoretical space to those who wished to explain religious experience in strictly naturalistic terms. Crucially, it could thus be used to justify forms of therapy that purported to treat the body, whilst ignoring the mysteries of the spirit.[74] In Stone's formulation, body and spirit were inseparable, both conceptually and in (therapeutic) practice. She thus concluded her phrenological analysis in her first book by asserting that, as an effect of the asylum therapy,

> I have no idea of holiness or hatred to sin, and I have no idea of worship, for we worship what we supremely love and bring all our actions to bear upon that object on which our affections are set.—But the idea of love is gone from me, and my body is void of happiness, both carnal and spiritual.[75]

This claim was consistent with a phrenological application of Edwards's concept of the 'new spiritual sense' of the evangelical convert as 'a new foundation in the nature of the soul, for a new kind of exercise of the same faculty of understanding'.[76] If only one faculty was involved, then physical trauma to it would indeed affect everything, both carnal and spiritual. These connections emerged most strikingly in her attempt to give a scientific account of the effects of asylum medicine (a product, she asserted, of 'knowledge that man has obtained of chemistry') on the spirit of the Christian:

> By putting two substances together a third is produced unlike both. What the medicine is I know not, but I think I could tell it if I saw it.—Christian reader,

[74] Taves, *Fits, Trances, & Visions*, pp. 40-41.
[75] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 40.
[76] J. Edwards, *Religious Affections*, WJEO, Vol. 2, p. 206.

> you have never thought it to be very strange that a person could be poisoned to death. In that case it seperates [sic] spirit from matter; and in this case it seperates God's Holy Spirit from matter, for you know it is not only a belief, for the Devils believe and tremble. But it is having Jesus in you, the hope of glory, a praying spirit; and I wish you to understand it is that praying spirit that can be taken from you by medicine.[77]

This formulation evinces the combination of factors that informed Stone's reasoning process: the melancholic posture from which she insisted that she was spiritually lost; her agenda of exposing insane asylums as bastilles designed to eradicate true religion; and her encounter with scientific and medical discourses in the asylum and after her release. Each factor contributed to a distinct mode of reasoning from which she constituted the 'praying spirit' of the Christian as both a physical and a spiritual property.

This interpretive mode remained intact even after her sudden recovery in 1857. In her third book, she described this experience in the enthusiastic idiom: 'The Spirit of the Almighty God, in the power of the resurrection, came upon me' on the last day of January, preventing her from sleeping 'for seventeen days and seventeen nights', issuing in a series of angelic visions and a 'deep distress' which she uttered in 'a deep groan … that I could not suppress day or night', and finally ending on 18 February, when 'sleep returned to me again, and I was shown things by God that is not lawful for me to tell … [and] that will shortly come to pass'.[78] Her friend E.A. Andrews described this experience as one in which, 'by the miraculous power of God, happiness, by the spirit of God, was restored to her again'.[79] Yet in her fourth book, Stone herself resisted the appeal to miraculous intervention, instead incorporating her recovery into the same medical narrative that she had begun to compose with the assistance of mesmerists, somnambulists and phrenologists nearly two decades earlier:

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[77] Stone, *Sketch*, p. 39.
[78] Stone, *Exposing*, pp. 6-7.
[79] Stone, *The American Godhead*, p. 17.

> by putting substances [i.e. asylum medicines] into the stomach it changes the body; but when this is accomplished the mind is in darkness, and the soul can no longer hold spiritual communion with God, or communicate spiritual communication; the mind is in darkness until they live out the law which governs the substance, which produced the change. Then the other law takes possession of them again, or whatever spirit was in communion with them through the body, at that time.[80]

This analysis was predicated upon distinctions she drew in the same book between the three 'godheads' that had 'power to control mind and matter'. These included the holy Trinity ('the everlasting Godhead'), the principles of the new republic ('life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness'), and the medical faculty ('the Devil's Godhead'). Each operated according to established laws, but only the influences of the divine godhead were permanent, hence Stone's eventual recovery.[81] This paradigm contained a potent critique of what she saw as the anti-Christian function of psychiatric knowledge. But more generally, it was the culmination of a long-term intellectual project within which a former asylum patient, confined and medicated for religious 'enthusiasm', sought to account for personal experiences of spiritual suffering and healing.

Enthusiasm and the Body

Whilst scholars have emphasised the ways in which the medicalisation of enthusiasm had the effect of repressing certain behaviours and identities,[82] medicalisation had the opposite effect in Elizabeth Stone's thought world. For Stone, the physicalisation of spiritual experience permitted a form of intellectual and social subversion. In part, this was a consequence of the fact that she was reasoning from the posture of religious melancholy, in which the individual insisted upon their alienation from dominant discursive spaces. Yet this subversion went beyond a mere statement of her own

[80] Ibid., p. 11.
[81] Ibid., pp. 3-4.
[82] Note, especially, Heyd, *'Be Sober and Reasonable'*, p. 10.

spiritual alienation to encompass the assumptions and methodologies of asylum therapy. Her claim that the medicines at McLean Asylum had 'killed the spirit of Christ within me' was in this respect a distinctly evangelical inflection of a deeper critique of the 'behaviourist' methods of institutional therapy, which ignored—or even actively negated—aspects of the inner life of the patient.[83]

Within the thought worlds of John Perceval and Louisa Clemens, too, the medicalisation (or physicalisation) of spiritual experience functioned in subtle—and, to varying degrees, subversive—ways. On the one hand, it had the conservative function (as it did for Stone) of permitting them to claim a level of hermeneutical and practical control over spiritual experience and perception. On the other, by affirming, like Stone, the fundamentally spiritual character of their experiences, Perceval and Clemens subverted the hermeneutical hegemony that was sought by some physicians and alienists as part of an agenda of professionalisation.

'The rules of an obsolete science': Perceval on the Spiritual Mind

The Scottish alienist William A. F. Browne's phrenological analysis of Irvingite tongues-speaking in an article on religious fanaticism (1836) illustrates well the theoretical (and, relatedly, therapeutic) emphasis among phrenologists upon the third-person, physical and environmental aspects of 'deviant' experience, to the exclusion of the first-person perspective on these experiences—their 'interiority'. His analysis of the initial emergence of the charismatic gifts under Irving's ministry expressed a scathing critique of the movement, construing it as a religious refuge for uncultivated minds that had been disoriented by the relentlessness of their observances and by the feverish influence of the crowd:

[83] Stone, *Sketch*, pp. 24; Porter, *A Social History of Madness*, p. 34.

> they gave up day and night, soul and body, the duties and affections of life, as a sacrifice to the predominating feeling. The thrice repeated hebdomadal service, stimulating as it is reported to have been, was not enough; they assembled every morning at six o'clock, and passed the whole of the day in public or in private meetings, where energetic prayer and every other means were used to rouse and sustain the state of religious exaltation. All secular affairs … must have been suspended … The mind was not allowed a moment's repose. The night was dedicated to that rigid self-search and repentance which solitude and silence are supposed to favour.

This had continued in Irving's congregation for months, Browne noted, until at last,

> A female started up in the congregation, and, with a flushed face and wild gesticulation, pronounced some sentences of sounds which were unintelligible. From their unintelligibility,—from the character of the party,—and from the fiat of the pastor, or apostle as he was called, who was endowed with 'discernment',—these sounds were declared to belong to an unknown tongue, to be evidence of the working of the Holy Spirit—in plain terms, to be the voice of God. The enunciation was always attended by violent agitation of the muscles, and often succeeded by swooning or hysterics.[84]

Physical exhaustion and group excitement thus combined, in Browne's view, to induce intense states of mental agitation, and because of the religious context in which this had all played out, the outward symptoms of these agitations had been taken as evidence of the Holy Spirit's direct intervention. Those that the movement had attracted, moreover, were dupes and lowbrows who, 'unaccustomed either by education, or by habit, to examine or understand their own minds, … yielded implicitly to the imperious impulse which they conceived to be religious, because connected with and arising out of religion'.[85] The association of the female with wild unintelligibility and hysteria was itself telling.

Perceval himself had attributed his surrender to the 'imperious impulse' of evangelical enthusiasm (and to the charismatic practices of the people at Row) to his failure to understand his own mind—a failure which his theoretical project in his narratives had been written to redress. Yet throughout his writings, he had railed against

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[84] W.A.F. Browne, 'Observations on Religious Fanaticism', *The Phrenological Journal and Miscellany*, 47 (Edinburgh, 1836), p. 598-99.
[85] Ibid., p. 598.

the ignorance of alienists with respect to the inner workings of the mind, and to the meanings of spiritual experience. One of his chief complaints about his confinement—now well-documented by historians of psychiatry—was that he was treated as if he had been 'a piece of furniture, an image of wood, incapable of desire or will as well as of judgment'.[86] Browne's phrenological analysis is suggestive of the kinds of psychological theorising that would support a regimen of this sort. It depicted exhausted, agitated and unsophisticated minds, bubbling over (almost involuntarily) with vocal utterances that were subsequently misattributed, by those present, to the Holy Spirit. Such a condition would demand remedies that framed the mind as a passive entity that needed to be re-educated.

Yet Browne's analysis betrayed the imposition of his own theoretical perspective upon the phenomenology of Irvingite experience itself. It characterised the Irvingites as having passively vocalised their unintelligible phrases, and then having subsequently reflected upon them, in the mode of the psychological theorist, to declare them divine. Perceval insisted, by contrast, that there had been a truth to his visions and voices as spiritual experiences (as such). He recounted having refused to speak with a Dr Piel during his initial confinement to a hotel room in Dublin because, as a (supposed) Unitarian,[87] Piel was 'an infidel concerning the Holy Ghost', and it would have been 'impossible to make him credit the supernatural voices and agency under which I acted'.[88] In the same context, Perceval mentioned a visit from his brother, Spencer Perceval (who, as we have seen, would later go on to become an apostle of the Irvingite movement), from whom he had hoped—given Spencer's prior

[86] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, p. 265. This phrase is frequently quoted to exemplify patients' responses to moral treatment. See, for instance, Scull, *Madness in Civilization*, p. 240 and Porter, *Mind-Forg'd Manacles*, p. 227.
[87] Perceval mentioned having assumed this point without having been certain. See Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. 13.
[88] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. 13; Perceval, *Narrative*, I, p. 50.

acknowledgment that he believed in 'the Row miracles'—to receive an empathetic ear. His disappointment about his brother's dismissal of his claim that 'I am desired [by the Holy Spirit] to say so and so, … [and] to do this, or that' remained, for John, a problem in the present:

> Had my brother but said to himself, 'there is something strange here; I will try to understand it'—had he but pretended to give credit to what I said, and reasoned with me on the matter revealed to me, acknowledging the possibility, but denying or questioning the divine nature of my inspirations; I should, perhaps, have been soon rescued from my dreadful situation, and saved from ruin.[89]

The philosophy of mind that Perceval elaborated in his second book was an interpretation of these 'strange' phenomena. His narrative depicted a process of reconciling the phenomenology of spiritual perception as a form of lived experience with languages (medical and physiological) which reflected a theoretical abstraction from the experience itself. As Rick Rylance has noted, the 'first-person/third-person problem' of psychology reflected in Perceval's intellectual project was recognised as a scientific challenge among Victorian theorists such as Thomas Huxley (1825–1895) and George Henry Lewes (1817–1878), who sought to reconcile the 'objective' and 'scientific' languages of the nervous system and of the faculties with the subjective experiences which these languages sought to explain. Yet, as Rylance observes, this project had been, and remains, susceptible to the criticism that these perspectives 'express themselves incommensurably, articulating different interests, value systems, priorities, and estimates of consequences'.[90] Perceval's theoretical formulation of an innate (and natural) human faculty whose deliverances were nevertheless 'divine' encapsulated this crucial problem.[91] It was a solution that offered him a form of

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[89] Perceval, *Narrative*, I, pp. 73-74.
[90] R. Rylance, *Victorian Psychology and British Culture, 1850–1880* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 42, 44. Rylance notes the recent recognition of this problem among clinical neurologists such as V.S. Ramachandra. See V.S. Ramachandran and S. Blakeslee, *Phantoms in the Brain: Human Nature and the Architecture of the Mind* (London, 1998), p. 229.
[91] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, pp. 364.

interpretive (and practical) control over his spiritual intuitions, whilst also elevating them above the theoretical domain of alienists, phrenologists, and others who would use a claim to a specialised expertise in the mind to exert therapeutic control over him.

His theoretical stance aligned him more closely with the psychicists of the mind sciences than with somaticists such as William A. F. Browne. Akihito Suzuki has traced the emergence of psychological theories of madness in the final decades of the eighteenth century which sought to challenge the Cartesian dualism between body and mind that had, according to Suzuki, dominated mental medicine before 1760. The central disagreement was reflected in the mid-century debate between the chief physician to Bethlem Hospital, John Monro (1716–1791) and his counterpart at St. Luke's Hospital, William Battie (1703–1776). In a treatise that symbolically launched the professional print discourse in mental medicine, Battie defined madness as '*deluded imagination*', or, 'the perception of objects not really existing or not really corresponding to the senses'.[92] Objecting to the passive role this view assigned to the mind, Monro had defined madness instead as 'a *vitiated judgment*',[93] which he distinguished from the concept of deluded imagination with an analogy from visual perception. A 'violent blow on the eye', he observed, might produce 'the same idea of fire in the imagination, as a real fire would do', but to believe that one was actually seeing fire after being struck in the eye was an error of judgment, not of imagination. The imagination was truly perceiving fire, but the judgment should know better than to interpret it thus.[94] The implication of this view was to give the mind itself an active role

[92] W. Battie, *A Treatise on Madness. By William Battie M. D. Fellow of the College of Physicians in London, And Physician to St. Luke's Hospital*, (London, 1758), p. 5; original emphases. Also see A. Suzuki, 'Dualism and the Transformation of Psychiatric Language in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *History of Science*, 33/4 (1995), pp. 426-29.
[93] J. Monro, *Remarks on Dr Battie's Treatise on Madness, by John Monro, M.D. Fellow of the College of Physicians, London; and Physician to Bethlem-Hospital* ([London], 1758), p. 4; original emphases.
[94] Ibid., p. 21.

in the processes of derangement, which undermined the traditional Christian concern to preserve the mind from the possibility of corruption. Voltaire (1694–1778) thus embraced this view as support for a materialist philosophy of mind; and the French physician Sauvages (1706–1767), who defended the immortality of the soul whilst nevertheless asserting the role of judgment in madness, concluded that the soul itself could become deranged.[95]

A key figure in the British context who adopted a version of this new psychological account of madness was the Scottish physician William Cullen (1710–1790), with whose views Perceval's overlapped strikingly. Cullen, like Perceval, emphasised the physiological basis of insanity, 'mapp[ing] madness onto the brain', Suzuki observes, and construing hallucinations as 'disorders of the sense organs'.[96] Perceval similarly mapped his voices onto parts of his head and attributed his spectral impressions to 'a defective use of the visual organs'.[97] Yet for neither Cullen nor Perceval were these physical aspects of derangement enough to explain madness in itself. For Perceval, as I have argued, a purely somaticist account of madness represented the threat of his own disempowerment and his subjection to the medical authority of alienists. A psychological account of derangement which emphasised the role of judgment allowed him to assert his own agency and identity. However, Cullen's parallel emphasis upon judgment in his own theory of madness showed that the invocation of this faculty alone would not have been enough to buffer Perceval's mind from the control of medical authorities.

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[95] These debates and developments are traced in Suzuki, 'Dualism', pp. 426-29.
[96] Ibid., p. 431.
[97] Perceval, Narrative, II, p. 296. Note also his conclusion that the voices of 'contrition' were located 'on the left temple and forehead', and voices of 'joy and honour on the right temple and forehead' in Ibid., p. 297.

Suzuki thus notes that Cullen, influenced by David Hume's analysis of how the mind constructs causal relationships, characterised madness as a disorder in the process through which the faculty of judgment forms 'associations' between 'simple perceptions and their relations'.[98] Madness, in this analysis, was a disordered judgment which manifested as a deviation from custom—an impropriety of behaviour relative both to one's ordinary habit of mind and to the specificities of one's social environment. As we saw in Chapter 2 of this thesis, Perceval similarly characterised madness as deviation from habit and propriety. It was a definition that could well be used to prop up a professional class of arbiters of appropriate habit and behaviour, as Cullen's model shows. Summarising Cullen's view of the sane mind in terms of '[t]aste, politeness, propriety of conversation and adaptation of behaviour to the situation', Suzuki thus notes that this emphasis both demanded 'the observation of the mind of the patient' and elevated the physician 'as the guardian of moral behaviour'.[99] It provided an ideal theoretical substructure for a system of surveillance and control of the sort that Perceval had encountered at Brislington House and Ticehurst Asylum.

Perceval's solution was a tripartite philosophy of mind which posited a dynamic relationship between an innate, spiritual faculty, the faculty of 'conscience', and the faculty of judgment. In Chapter 2 of this thesis, we saw that Perceval had assigned a crucial role to conscience as the faculty that rightly oriented the individual's judgment and feelings in relation to their social identity.[100] His recognition of such a faculty aligned his philosophy in an important way with the therapeutic perspective of some alienists. Ann Goldberg has written insightfully in the German context about the efforts of alienists to inculcate Enlightenment values in their patients, noting relevant parallels

[98] W. Cullen, *The Works of William Cullen, M.D. Containing his Physiology, Nosology, and First Lines of the Practice of Physic*, Vol. 2 (Edinburgh, 1827), p. 510. Quoted in Suzuki, 'Dualism', p. 432.
[99] Suzuki, 'Dualism', p. 433.
[100] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. 276.

between the psychic structures alienists sought to cultivate in patients and the concept of the 'enlightened' conscience elaborated by the historian Heinz-Dieter Kittsteiner. Kittsteiner, as she notes, distinguished between the 'subsequent conscience' of Lutheran and Pietist tradition and the 'antecedent conscience' of the Enlightenment. Both were characterised by an internalisation of specific values and standards, yet whereas the subsequent conscience looked back upon the commission of sin with a view to attaining grace, the antecedent conscience looked ahead to the prevention of misdeeds, thus acting as 'an internalized, normative structure whose constant self-surveillance would provide the basis of a life of virtue, responsibility, and hence intellectual and civic freedom'.[101] This structure, as Goldberg observes, paralleled the Freudian super-ego ('the splitting off of one part of the self [ego] to monitor and control the other parts of the self'), yet Kittsteiner's insight served to undermine the universality of the antecedent conscience by historicising it as both the goal and product of Enlightenment values, promulgated through the disciplinary regimes and practices of the period.[102]

Perceval described his recovery in terms of the cultivation of something strikingly similar to this enlightened conscience. His characterisation of his own self-mastery is almost indistinguishable from the therapeutic outcome that the German alienist Maximilian Jacobi (1775–1858) sought with his treatment regimen; namely, a mode of self-awareness which was cultivated by 'exercising and strengthening the memory, attention, [and] the faculty of judgment'.[103]

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[101] Goldberg, *Sex, Religion, and the Making of Modern Madness*, p. 72. Kittsteiner's argument is laid out in his *Die Entstehung des modernen Gewissens* (Frankfurt, 1991) and 'From Grace to Virtue: Concerning a Change in the Presentation of the Parable of the Prodigal Son in the 18th and Early 19th Centuries', *Social Science Information*, 23/6 (1984), pp. 955-75.
[102] Goldberg, *Sex, Religion, and the Making of Modern Madness*, pp. 71-73.
[103] M. Jacobi, 'Irrenanstalten', *Encyclopädisches Wörterbuch der medicinischen Wissenschaften*, 19 (1839), pp. 70-73. Quoted in Goldberg, *Sex, Religion, and the Making of Modern Madness*, p. 71.

Nevertheless, as we saw in the previous chapter, one of Perceval's principal complaints was that the treatment regimens at both Brislington House and Ticehurst Asylum were designed to prevent the cultivation of these virtues. In part, his contention on this point reflected the class identity that was so central to his recovery. He thus complained about having been placed under the authority of people who were beneath him in social (and socio-religious) status. He identified in this respect a fundamental contradiction between his therapeutic need—to strengthen his 'faculty of judgment'—and a treatment regimen that demanded that he subordinate his judgment to the will of his social inferiors. At its core, he complained, the therapeutic system violated his conscience, for it denied conscience its chief role of situating the head and the heart in an appropriate relation to the wider society. The subjection of an upper-class gentleman to the authority of his social inferiors in the asylum was, within this framework, a violation of conscience, and thus countered the presumed aim of the alienist to restore an appropriate level of agency and self-possession in the patient.

Perceval's invocation of a specifically spiritual form of perception as yet another human faculty likewise served his agenda of resistance to psychiatric power. Whereas the faculty of conscience had a social function as mediator between self and society, the spiritual faculty had a psychological function as the link between sense perception and judgment. It acted as a knowledge-making device that suggested possible meanings of phenomena to the faculty of judgment, which was then responsible for distinguishing between these possibilities to determine a deeper truth. Perceval's paradoxical characterisation of this faculty as something natural, yet whose deliverances were 'divine',[104] was calculated both to grant him control over it (by virtue

[104] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. 364.

of its physiological rootedness) and simultaneously to elevate it above the discourses and methodologies of modern medicine.

In his narrative, Perceval's recovery was bound up with his discovery that his spiritual intuitions were self-generated. He recounted that whilst seated alone one day in a room in the Ticehurst Asylum and attending to a spiritual voice, his mind was 'suddenly directed to outward objects', and 'the sound remained but the voice was gone'. The sound, it turned out, was generated by an external object, whether 'from a neighbouring room or from a draft of air through the window or doorway'. When he ceased to focus on the external source of the sound, the voice returned, and, he realised, changed its 'style of address' in accordance with his own mood. As his investigations progressed, he realised that 'the breathing of my nostrils also, particularly when I was agitated, had been and was clothed with words and sentences'. Even after blocking his ears, these voices, 'which were often used to convey distinct words and sentences, and which at other times seemed to the fancy like the earnest cries, or confused debating, or expostulations of many spirits, still remained audible'. All this suggested to Perceval that these voices 'were really produced in the head or brain', despite seeming to come from somewhere 'high in the air':

> I recognised that all the voices I had heard *in* me, had been produced by the power of the Deity to give speech to sounds of this nature produced by the action of the pulses, or muscles, or humours, &c. in the body—and that in like manner all the voices I had been made to fancy outside of me, were either formed from or upon different casual sounds around me; or from and upon these internal sounds.[105]

This was a reformulation of Irvingite enthusiasm. No longer were his voices conceived or experienced as the transcendent interposition of a supernatural agency. Now, these meanings, superimposed upon sensory data received from both within and outside the

[105] Ibid., II, pp. 311-312; original emphasis.

body, were experienced and interpreted as something generated by the mind. God's causal role had shifted from that of direct source of these meanings to that of prime mover, the original instiller of a capacity that was in some sense 'natural', a 'faculty … inherent in man'.[106]

The implication of the natural and physiological basis of this faculty was to grant Perceval a power over it, which he claimed to have exerted by means of controlled respiration. Thus, having found that his mind was 'most disturbed' when his breathing had been 'violent' and 'rapid', he concluded that 'the health of the mind and the health of the body, particularly the operation of the lungs, and of the heart, and the state of the blood' were 'essentially connected'. 'Healthy respiration', he now knew, was necessary to promote 'a proper circulation and purification of the blood', and this, in turn, was necessary to promote a healthy mind. These discoveries underpinned his assertion of control over his spiritual perceptions, and hence, his recovery: 'the direction "*animum rege*" [rule of mind] has a physical as well as a spiritual sense; that is, … in controlling the spirit you must control your respirations'.[107]

Perceval acknowledged that even alienists demonstrated a dim apprehension of this truth when they subjected patients to 'the cold bath and shower bath'. These treatments caused 'such a violent panting—such a sudden and, I conceive, often even dangerous and improper action of the heart and of the lungs' that they could, however perilously, jumpstart the patient's 'mental machinery' and restore them to health.[108] Yet physicians only looked through a glass darkly at 'the rules of an obsolete science' to

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[106] Ibid., II, p. 260.
[107] Ibid., II, pp. 274-78.
[108] Ibid., II, p. 277. As noted in Chapter 4 of this thesis, the use of cold baths to treat insanity had a long historical precedent. For discussion of the practice by nineteenth-century asylum doctors, see Morison, *Cases of Mental Disease*, pp. 23; J.M. Cox, *Practical Observations on Insanity* (London, 1806), p. 158; and B. Rush, *Medical Inquiries and Observations, Upon Diseases of the Mind* (Philadelphia, 1812), pp. 353-54.

which ‘writers of all nations and all religions, from Moses and Homer almost to our own times’ had born witness.[109] To illustrate the presence of this spiritual faculty in sacred history, Perceval invoked St. Paul’s vision on the road to Damascus. But unlike James Hamilton, who contrasted the miraculous character of Paul’s vision to a pathological experience that had been ‘g [Richard Williams’s] own mind’,[110] Perceval incorporated Paul’s vision into the domain of natural experiences that were made possible by ‘the castigation of the stomach, with which the nerves of the brain are so intimately connected’.[111] (Perceval too had found himself particularly susceptible to delusions ‘whenever my stomach has been affected’.)[112] Likewise, he attributed the trance state within which St. Peter had received the vision that had released him from Torah law to a protracted period of fasting, which had weakened his body.[113] Perceval argued that in his own time, these men would have been confined to madhouses.[114] In theirs, they were the honoured exponents of a divine science.[115]

Although Perceval’s invocation of a spiritual faculty elevated the human mind above the naturalistic domain of medical inquiry and expertise, he nevertheless subjected it to the same paradigm of reason and unreason—of health and pathology—that underpinned the emerging psychiatric profession. Perceval and Cullen agreed in their definition of madness as a deviation from habit and custom, caused by the corruption of judgment. Perceval had come to accept the medical wisdom that construed evangelical enthusiasm as pathology. His project of grounding enthusiasm in

[109] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, pp. 259-60.
[110] Hamilton, *Memoir of Richard Williams*, pp. 24-25. See Acts ix. 3-7.
[111] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, pp. 316-17.
[112] Ibid., II, p. 316.
[113] See Acts x. 9-23.
[114] Thus, Newington had purportedly told him that were he to meet the prophet Ezekiel, he would ‘treat such a person as an insane patient’ in Perceval, *Narrative*, II, p. 317.
[115] Perceval, *Narrative*, II, pp. 259-60.

physiology granted him the physical means of controlling it, and served his goal of subjecting spiritual perception to the joint rule of judgment and conscience.

The ultimate impasse between the psychiatric perspective and his own is encompassed in his characterisation of the transformation in his interior relationship to the deliverances of spiritual perception. '[D]uring my illness', he recounted,

> I had obeyed these voices implicitly, however absurd or dangerous were their commands: but that I had found out that I had mistaken the spiritual instructions I had received; obeying commands literally, which were meant spiritually or metaphorically—and mistaking for sincerity, what was intended as humour. That being now conscious of my error I exercised my judgment, and did not feel obliged to obey these voices contrary to reason or to common sense.[116]

A cultivated judgment was one that recognised that 'in the operations of the human intellect, the Deity, if not always, yet often intimates his will by thus jesting … with his child'.[117] This phenomenon was lost on physicians and alienists, who discerned in their patients only the exterior of improper behaviour and deviation from custom, and not the interior relations between judgment, imagination and spirit which social performance manifested to those with eyes to see. Yet the implications of this model of an integrated, human-divine consciousness were, for Perceval, conservative in an important sense. In safeguarding him from the tyranny of medical expertise and reinstalling him above his former caregivers as their social superior, this corporeal enthusiasm served ultimately to legitimate the establishment, rather than to threaten it.

Louisa Clemens's Philosophy of the Prophetic Mind

Louisa Clemens's account, in her autobiography, of her investigations into Irvingite tongues-speaking in 1831 reflected many of same concerns about control and self-possession that were expressed in John Perceval's intellectual project. As we have seen,

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[116] Ibid., II, pp. 101-102.
[117] Ibid., II, pp. 289-90.

Perceval himself claimed to have been swept away within the experiences of tongues-speaking and prophecy that he had encountered at the parishes of Row and Port Glasgow; and the medicalisation of enthusiasm in his second book was part and parcel of his effort to reclaim control over these experiences.

Such concerns about asserting control over inward compulsions and intuitions had been just as critical for Clemens. We saw in Chapter 1 that she had struggled with the meaning of her own psychological and temperamental proclivities throughout the period of her residency in Britain in the 1820s. In 1825, she had admitted to her sister Sophia that although her intense fixation upon the Solemn League and Covenant had evinced 'some degree of mental derangement', her belief about the issue had nevertheless been correct.[118] Within this mode of reasoning, the language of derangement had effectively forced a wedge between the meanings of feeling and the deliverances of sound judgment.

As we saw, her autobiography resolved these doubts about her own sanity and about the meaning of the emotions by harmonising feeling and judgment within a theological framework that linked them to the divine consciousness and to the operations of providence. Importantly, this entailed, as it did for Perceval, an emphatic rejection of the radical interventionist model of spiritual experience posited by the Irvingites. What William A. F. Browne called the 'imperious impulse' of Irvingite enthusiasm was, within the theological model in Clemens's autobiography, the intrusion into consciousness of something nefarious and demonic. She represented this concept with the category of possession, which evoked, in contrast to her own ideal of an essential fluidity between human and divine consciousness (mediated by bodily

[118] The note was included at the end of a letter from their mother to Sophia; see *Courtauld Family Letters*, 3.1278: Ruth Courtauld and Louisa Courtauld to Sophia Courtauld, 4 Apr. 1825.

feeling), an experience that was radically discontinuous from physical and psychological processes.

Clemens recounted having been thorough in her investigations of the Irvingite phenomena when she had visited the London congregation in 1831. She attended Irvingite meetings six times daily, beginning at six o'clock each morning; she listened as Edward Irving sought to convince his hearers that their enthusiastic utterances were of '"the unknown tongue" spoken by the apostles'; and she interviewed zealous insiders directly, inquiring as to the precise nature of their intuitions. Her censure of the interventionist mode of their piety is evinced in particular in her account of an interview of two girls who had been converted under Irving's ministry. Recounting that their spiritual outbursts sounded like 'the barking of a dog', Clemens 'asked them if they could help speaking in that way if they tried'. They responded that they could no more help it 'than that table can help making a noise if you strike it'. Clemens concluded the account with a didactic digression:

> But that is not the way The Holy Spirit works. He does not *force* us, we may 'resist' Him, and even 'quench' Him. It is the devil that *drives* men, as that poor man among the tombs, whether they will or no.[119]

As we saw in Chapter 1, Clemens's own enthusiasm was bounded, in her narrative, by the theological category of covenant, which also informed her final assessment of Irvingism. We noted that she had already encountered Edward Irving in 1828, and had been disappointed to learn that he considered the provisions of the Solemn League and Covenant obsolete. Her disillusionment only increased when she later learned of the 'heresy' for which he had become better known in that period: that Christ had been born with a sinful nature, and had only been spared from the actual commission of sin

[119] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 117; original emphases.

by the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit.[120] And now, in addition to this breach of the Westminster standards, Irving had flouted Presbyterian policy by allowing unknown tongues to be spoken publicly at church meetings. Clemens recounted that these later transgressions on Irving's part had confirmed her conclusion about Irvingite tongues-speaking: 'The Holy Spirit will not enter the door opened by the key of a broken church vow'.[121]

In describing her encounter with the Irvingites, Clemens included, alongside this theological critique, an account of her own interior experience, which itself evinced the model of human-divine cognition that Irvingism (in her view) deviously mimicked. She thus recounted having '*felt strange*' when she attended Irving's meetings: 'I could feel no sympathy with the congregation, nor could I feel communion with God'. Even more suggestively, she 'could not *feel like myself* among them, nor for some minutes after I left the place'.[122]

Such references register a conservative element to the 'prophetic' philosophy of mind that Clemens developed in her autobiography. They are suggestive of a principled resistance to the models of psychic intrusion—and to the threats to individual identity and to society—reflected in Spiritualism, Irvingism and other related movements.[123] And yet, as we have seen, Clemens's 'feelings' functioned in her letters and in her autobiography as the basis for a radical form of social action which distinguished her philosophy of mind in an important way from John Perceval's formulation. In Chapter 1, we noted a letter that Clemens wrote to her brother Samuel in February 1840, in which she had addressed the issues of slavery and the presidency of the anti-abolitionist, Martin Van Buren. In this discussion, she sought to adjudicate between the

[120] Brown, 'Irving, Edward (1792–1834)', *ODNB*.
[121] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 112.
[122] Clemens, *Narrative*, p. 113; original emphases.
[123] See Hayward, *Resisting History*, passim.

conflicting demands of 'ratiocination' (reflected in her brother's admonition concerning 'the wrongfulness of irritating Public Opinion without a necessity') and 'feeling' ('the iron heel of oppression … on my breast' prompted her to social action).[124]

In her autobiography, this tension between judgment and emotion had been entirely dissolved, and her feelings had been released to guide her into social and religious confrontations, often at the expense of her own (apparent) self-interests. Importantly, the issues of race and abolitionism were ever at tension, in her letters, with the goal of increasing her own influence as a religious leader in the counties of Ohio; and her feelings in each case prompted her to favour the former. In her discussion (in a letter to her sister Sophia) of the first religious meeting she had led in 1836, she thus recounted that partway through the meeting she had been handed a petition for 'the abolition of Slavery in the District of Columbia' and had been asked to read it out and make an appeal for subscribers. Clemens recounted having agreed to do so, despite her concerns that she would lose religious influence in the area (since 'the Abolitionists ha[d] been mobb'd out of this place').[125] Moreover, in a letter to Sophia (1853) that was noted in Chapter 1, she subordinated her distinct social interests as a woman to the issue of abolitionism: 'the so far more grievous oppression of the slave seems to absorb all my sympathies', she had told her sister; and so, she had had too little feeling left over to agitate for 'women's right to Vote'.[126]

Indeed, despite the sense in which Clemens's prophetic philosophy of mind had been developed as a conservative response to the problem of her own inward compulsions (and as a form of spiritual validation for her religious peculiarities), it was ultimately conceived and enacted as something socially transformative that worked

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[124] Mss. Letter, Courtauld Family Library, Pebmarsh, Essex: Louisa Clemens to Samuel Courtauld, 28 Feb. 1840.
[125] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 6.2562: Louisa Courtauld to Sophia Courtauld, 14 Oct. (?) 1836.
[126] *Courtauld Family Letters*, 8:3588: Louisa Clemens to Sophia Courtauld, 22 May 1853.

against her apparent social interests. Crucially, the social implication of this philosophy of mind was inextricable from the process through which she had de-medicalised her psychological states and temperamental proclivities; for as long as the category of 'derangement' continued to function as a medical wedge between her feelings and her judgment, there was no good reason to act upon intuitions that defied a worldly 'logic'.[127]

Conclusion

For Louisa Clemens, Elizabeth Stone and John Perceval, the act of both physicalising the spiritual and spiritualising the physical had far-reaching social and intellectual implications. It served the conservative agenda of granting them a degree of hermeneutical and practical control over their psychical experiences and emotional states. Yet it also had the effect of elevating their minds and bodies above the theoretical and methodological domain of medical professions and discourses that had victimised them. The writings of these authors evince a milieu of psychological theorising, within which individuals who had been alienated in different ways by elite discourses drew creatively from the languages of theology and medicine to express forms of protest and to assert marginalised or embattled identities. Indeed, despite the vast social and cultural differences between Clemens, Perceval and Stone, they were, in an important sense, engaged in a common intellectual project.

[127] See Mss. Letter, Courtauld Family Library, Pebmarsh, Essex: Louisa Clemens to Samuel Courtauld, 28 Feb. 1840.

Conclusion

This study has explored the ways in which religious individuals and communities responded to medical theories and treatments of spiritual experience and suffering among alienists and physicians in the nineteenth-century Atlantic world. It has covered a period that saw pivotal developments in the professionalisation of psychiatry, as insane asylums proliferated across Britain and America from the 1810s onward and as psychiatric associations were formed in each context in the 1830s and 1840s. Yet this was also a period of fluidity between medical and theological perspectives, as religious people drew from medical ideas and methodologies to understand their own experiences of psychological suffering, and as physicians and alienists sought to incorporate religion into their treatment regimens. The analysis of case studies within this complex reality has challenged historiographical approaches which too straightforwardly link processes of medicalisation and secularisation. Ministers in the Puritan tradition were eager to incorporate medical insights into models of pastoral care as a means of preserving a form of religious interiority that had become controversial for its associations with mental pathology. And for people who suffered with religious melancholy, a medicalised self-understanding provided a viable means of sustaining a coherent sense of Christian identity.

The chief threat to certain religious identities in this period was not from medicine, per se, but from its deployment, within and outside the asylum, as a means of policing deviant behaviours and experiences. Categories of mental disease such as ‘derangement’, ‘insanity’ and ‘monomania’ were used to negate the underlying meanings of bodily feelings and behaviours that had put people in tension with their wider social and religious environments. This thesis opened by exploring the correspondence and spiritual autobiography of a woman for whom this had been the

case. In a striking subversion, however, this author cultivated an identity as a prophet through a process in which she negated the medical forms of reasoning that had undermined the meaning of her religious behaviours. By contrasting her experiences on either side of the Atlantic, this case study illustrated the potency of the revivalist worldview in the American context as one that allowed her to reconstitute her alleged madness as a form of divine inspiration.

The deployment of medical reasoning within the asylum was problematic for religious patients in two main respects, one economic and the other ideological. Firstly, the economy of asylum therapy entailed the treatment of dozens, and sometimes even hundreds of patients at a time. This meant devising communal forms of therapy which emphasised social, or behaviourist approaches and objectives, whilst ignoring the unique therapeutic needs of individual patients. Secondly, and more fundamentally, mental medicine cultivated a professional space which, by sanitising theory and therapy of partisan religious perspectives, accommodated physicians of various philosophical and religious outlooks. By implication, it gave rise to theories and therapies that ignored the religious subjectivity of patients. Even the use of religion in the asylum reflected this problem, for religion was subsumed within the behaviourist objectives of the institution, and thus took a one-dimensional form that failed to address the nuanced spiritual needs that were expressed and felt by many patients.

Revealingly, however, even former patients who viewed the asylum as a place of spiritual persecution found utility in medical ideas and methodologies as sources of knowledge about the physical and psychological trauma they had suffered in the asylum. Moreover, they used the authority of medicine as a means of subverting the professional discourses of psychiatry. The accessibility and popularity of mind sciences such as animal magnetism and phrenology in the 1830s and 1840s allowed ordinary

people to theorise their own psychological and spiritual experiences in ways that undercut the hermeneutic hegemony that alienists and physicians were attempting to assert.

Yet it was also crucial for these people to assert the irreducibly spiritual nature of their experiences. Theology served the anti-institutional agendas of former asylum patients in two key ways. Firstly, it provided them with precise languages with which to articulate the social and emotional impact of institutional therapies that were designed to ignore and negate the religious interiority of patients. And secondly, it allowed them to subvert the professional discourses and methodologies of psychiatry, for theology elevated the meanings of the emotions and the psyche above the naturalistic domain of medical expertise.

The central figures whom this thesis has explored—Louisa Clemens, Elizabeth Stone and John Perceval—were ultimately engaged in a common intellectual project. Their experiences of being marginalised by elite discourses and practices of mental medicine led them to theorise their minds and their religious and social identities in distinct and creative ways. Although their theoretical formulations were modulated differently in ways that were inflected by their own social and religious contexts and convictions, they were at one in their determination and capacity to think beyond the dualistic and the dialectical. Having seen beyond the parameters of what was deemed normal, they acquired the imaginative ability to open up fresh spiritual perspectives on the world.

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