A “Feminine” Heartbeat
in Evangelicalism and Fundamentalism

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Protestant fundamentalism has often been characterized as militant, rationalistic, paternalistic and even misogynist. This was particularly true of Baptist and Presbyterian fundamentalists who were Calvinists. Yet, evangelicalism and fundamentalism also had a feminine, mystical, Arminian expression which encouraged the active ministry of women and which had a profound impact upon the shaping of popular piety through devotional writings and mystical hymnology. This paper examines the “feminine” presence in popular fundamentalism and evangelicalism by examining this expression of religion from the standpoint of gender, left brain/right brain differences, and Calvinistic versus Arminian polarities.

The human personality is composed of both rational and emotional aspects, both of equal value. The dominance of either aspect reflects the favouring of a particular hemisphere of the brain. Males have traditionally emphasized the linear, rational left side of the brain over the intuitive, emotional right side. Females have tended to utilize the right side of the brain more, although some males are more right-brained and some females are more left-brained. Such differences may be genetic, hormonal or sociological. Brain researcher Marilyn Ferguson favours the sociological explanation and suggests a deliberate reorientation to the right side of the brain as means of transforming society away from confrontation to a state of peace. She sees the feminist movement accomplishing much of this transformation of society by emphasizing the right side of the brain.

When looking at the two dominant expressions of Protestantism –

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Calvinism and Methodism, we find what appears to be a left/right brain dichotomy. Calvinism often denied the emotional aspect of life and faith, seeing God as an austere deity. Its cold rationalism caused a Calvinistic church service to be described as “four bare walls and a sermon.” It was in response to that rigidity that many men and women turned to Arminianism, a more feminine theology that saw God as a loving deity. Arminianism was popularized by the Quakers and Wesleyans who borrowed from the Catholic mystics. These groups tended to offer a larger role for women in ministry.

The following pairs of dichotomies, based upon ideal types, appear to hold true.

Left brain | Right brain
---|---
masculine | feminine
scholastic | mystical
rational | emotional
linear | intuitive
male dominance | sexes equal
militant | passive
Calvinism | Arminianism
Presbyterian | Wesleyan
predestination | free will
fundamentalism | evangelicalism

Most women in the past were denied a formal education and formal theological training, yet they have had a considerable role in the shaping of popular piety, and this holds true especially in the development of evangelicalism and fundamentalism. Left to fend for themselves intellectually, women sometimes resorted to popular theologies whose origins were often in what Ronald Knox has called the “intellectual underworld” of early Christian and medieval heresies which had manichaean overtones in its mysticism. Manichaens were dualists, who rejected the body and matter as evil and emphasized the spiritual through asceticism. They had a heightened sense of the Devil. Manichaeism has been identified by Richard Hofstadter was one of the dominant traits of fundamentalism.

Because heresy was a form of rebellion against the status quo, it provided an avenue for the emancipation of women. And women, having
the major role in the nurturing of children, were able to transmit popular piety orally to their sons and especially to their daughters.\textsuperscript{9}

We begin with the ideas and influence of Madame Guyon and a number of her disciples who shaped popular piety in evangelicalism and fundamentalism. They include Susanna Moody, Catherine Booth, Hannah Whitall Smith, Jessie Penn-Lewis, Amy Carmichael, Christabel Pankhurst, and Aimee Semple McPherson who championed the ministry of women.

**Madame Guyon (1648-1717)**

The mystical side of evangelicalism and fundamentalism was influenced by the beliefs and activities of a seventeenth-century French-Catholic mystic, Jeanne Marie Bouvier de la Mothe Guyon. She was born into a wealthy, aristocratic French family whose ancestors had supported the cause of the Cathars, the medieval Manichaeans, in the enclave of Languedoc.\textsuperscript{10} She was an extremely talented but frustrated woman who was also emotionally troubled.

In her autobiography, Madame Guyon would have us believe that she had an emotionally-deprived childhood. She claimed that she was rejected by her mother and was shuffled from convent to convent. Her relationship with her half-siblings was also poor and she claimed that they physically abused her.\textsuperscript{11}

At the age of fifteen she was married, against her wishes, to a man twenty-two years her elder. Her marriage was exceedingly unhappy and she found solace in the mystical writings of St. Teresa of Ávila, Francis de Sales, Thomas A’Kempis and Ignatius Loyola; but she carried their ideas to extremes. Guyon’s thinking was very manichaean, seeing the flesh as evil. She may have been influenced in this regard by the mystics she had read, or she may also have come into direct contact with Albigensian or Cathar ideas which still persisted in the regions of south-eastern France where she lived and travelled.

As one reads Guyon’s autobiography one is struck by her excessive morbidity. As a child she had a strong death wish and hoped for martyrdom. After her marriage she tried to cut out her tongue. Everywhere she saw enemies and persecutors: her mother, her half-brothers and sisters, her husband, her mother-in-law, her maids and the priests. Her behaviour and comments make one suspect that she was a manic-depressive or a paranoid schizophrenic.
As Madame Guyon pursued her mysticism she came to believe that she could achieve union with God through “self-crucifixion” and by becoming “nothing.” She dispensed with her jewelry, neglected her hair, wore plain clothing, picked at facial scabs to make them worse, and gave away vast amounts of her wealth. Her belief in sanctification (being made holy) or union with the divine became so extreme that she believed that she personally would become the physical bride of Christ. While still married to Guyon, she composed a marriage contract with Christ. As she read her Bible she believed that the description of the “corner-stone of the New Jerusalem” referred to herself. She would be the Queen of Heaven.

After her husband died in 1676 Guyon travelled throughout France, Switzerland and Italy teaching her version of mysticism in various convents. She had been inspired by Marie de l’Incarnation who became famous in New France. In stepping out of the traditional role for women, Madame Guyon became part of the dévotes movement that was sweeping France.

Among Madame Guyon’s disciples were a Barnabite friar La Combe, Archbishop Fénelon (1651-1715), who was a distant relative, and Madame de Maintenon, the consort of Louis XIV. Guyon and her circle became known as Quietists because they believed the “still small voice of God” could be heard within them if they had “crucified self.” Because of her belief in divine union she dispensed with oral prayer; since she taught that one could arrive at a state of sinlessness – confession, and penance were also unnecessary. Her views were soon linked with those of a heretical Spanish priest, Molinos, who taught that if one sinned, one was not culpable because the temptation came from the Devil.

Louis XIV took steps to silence Guyon and her followers by having La Combe arrested. He was condemned as a heretic by the Inquisition and died in prison. Action was also taken against Fénelon who was banished to his diocese. Guyon’s writings were examined by Bishop Bossuet who condemned thirty of her propositions as heretical or inclined to be misleading. She was put in the Bastille for four years. In 1701 she was released but spent the rest of her life under house arrest.

While under house arrest Madame Guyon continued to have a great influence. Her autobiography and theological writings were translated and published by Protestants who regarded her as one of them, which she was not; she remained a member of the Catholic church until her death. Protestant pilgrims from France, England and Scotland flocked to her
house where she held court. Thus the ideas of Madame Guyon, Fénelon and Molinos were adopted by various Protestant groups. According to one historian of the Quakers, the works of Guyon, Fénelon and Molinos could be found in almost every Quaker library.  

Guyonese mysticism, with its emphasis on “death-to-self,” divine union with Christ, and divine guidance, became a major feature of the holiness movement, which is discussed below. As well, for many years, Moody Press, a leading fundamentalist publishing house in Chicago, published her autobiography. Her works became text books at Prairie Bible Institute at Three Hills, Alberta during this century while under the leadership of L.E. Maxwell. Guyon continues to attract attention with a recent evangelical biography of her being published in 1986. Her modern disciples have treated her neuroses as evidence of spirituality.

Susanna Wesley (1669-1742)

Guyonese mysticism passed into evangelicalism largely through the Wesleys. Susanna Wesley (née Annesley), the mother of John and Charles, was a theologian in her own right. When her Anglican minister husband Samuel was away, Susanna preached in his stead. Both Susanna and Samuel Wesley were quite familiar with the works of the Catholic mystics. Susanna tried to instill “death-to-self” in her children. John Wesley’s biographer has noted that Susanna ruled the family as a matriarch. Also dominated by his many female siblings, John had a decidedly feminine aspect to his personality. He rejected left-brained Calvinism for a right-brained “religion of the heart.” John Wesley read Molinos, Guyon and Fénelon in his search for holiness and included their writings in his “Christian Library.” Thus mysticism passed into Methodism which stressed perfectionism, the belief that one could completely eradicate sin from one’s life.

In the United States, Thomas C. Upham (1799-1872), a Congregational minister and philosophy professor in New England, found sanctification at a Methodist meeting. He began to promote Madame Guyon’s mysticism and became her biographer. His work, based on a loose translation of her writings, made her sound like a nineteenth-century evangelical. His biography of her is still in print.

Evangelicalism is generally associated with the movement which Wesley founded. An important psycho-historical study of evangelicalism
by Philip Greven suggests that gender identification problems were common in the evangelical movement. The “bride of Christ” theme was used by both females and males. Note the eroticism in the later evangelical gospel song, “I Come to the Garden Alone.” Evangelical mystics besides Henry Alline spoke of being “ravished by the Spirit.”

Although Greven fails to link death-to-self with the earlier Catholic mystics by pushing his study only as far back as the Puritans and Quakers, he notes that “the ideal evangelical . . . was self-less and feminine. Evangelicals believed that a truly gracious Christian was a person who was self-denying, will-less, subject and submissive, humble and meek, chaste and pure – all supposedly female attributes.”

This mystical emphasis led to the equality of the sexes in ministry; both the Quakers and early Methodists were known for their women preachers. Women preachers became quite common in the holiness tradition. Below we look at some who shaped evangelicalism and fundamentalism.

**Catherine Booth (1829-1890)**

Catherine Mumford Booth, who was well-read in Quaker and Methodist literature, was the theologian of the husband and wife team which launched the Salvation Army. Even before the Booths were married Catherine maintained the equality of the sexes. Later in her 1859 tract defending the ministry of women, she quoted the arguments of the Quaker theologian Joseph John Gurney and cited the examples of Madame Guyon, the Quaker Elizabeth Fry and prominent Methodist women preachers including Susanna Wesley, Mrs. Fletcher and Phoebe Palmer. It was over the controversy of the preaching of Phoebe Palmer in Britain that Catherine had written the tract and began to preach in her husband’s place in the pulpits of the Methodist New Connexion. When the Booths withdrew to form the Salvation Army they made sexual equality in ministry a cardinal tenet. The highest ranks were open to women.

The revivalistic methods and the confrontational tactics of the Salvationists served as models for the later fundamentalist movement. So did their manichaean theology which had an elevated concept of the devil. They saw themselves in a spiritual warfare, hence the military costumes and titles. Their popular gospel songs reflected and influenced the new hymnology which characterized fundamentalism.
America’s prominent fundamentalists, such as P.W. Philpott, Roland V. Bingham, Aimee Semple McPherson, and H.A. Ironside had their start in the Salvation Army.

The Booths continued the American Methodist holiness tradition which had been introduced to them by Phoebe Palmer. This contact was strengthened by another American holiness team: Robert and Hannah Whitall Smith when they held their holiness meeting at Brighton, England in 1875.34

**Hannah Whitall Smith (1832-1911)**

The quietistic mysticism of Madame Guyon passed into fundamentalism largely through the influence of Hannah Whitall Smith, an American Quaker whose devotional books sold in the millions of copies. Hannah and her husband Robert Pearsall Smith (1827-1898) were responsible for spreading the concepts of the Higher Christian Life (also known as the Deeper Christian Life). Although the Smith family is a very well-documented family, fundamentalist hagiography has overlooked the history of the Smiths and the theological implications of their ideas.

Hannah (née Whitall) was the more dominant and famous of the two. Both were birthright Quakers and came from prominent wealthy families in Philadelphia. Hannah was particularly inclined towards mysticism; by her teens she was an admirer of Madame Guyon.35 She wished she were a man so she could become a great preacher.36 Feeling that was impossible, she resigned herself to being the wife of a famous husband. She married Robert Pearsall Smith in 1851, but became a preacher in her own right. Her involvement with heretical ideas and her troubled marital relationship led her into strident feminism.

The Smiths did not find their brand of Orthodox Quakerism spiritually satisfying and began searching elsewhere.37 They were baptized by a Baptist minister in 1859 and for some time afterwards they came under the influence of the Plymouth Brethren. Then, in 1868, they became exposed to a Methodist Holiness group which taught sanctification through the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. While the Smiths sought sanctification, Robert achieved an ecstatic experience.38

Hannah tried prayer and fasting, but never experienced the “blessing” which Robert had received, one possible reason being that it may have had more to do with his emotional and mental state than with his spiritual-
ity. Robert had been suffering from manic-depressive illness which ran in his family and which was inherited by his children. In 1861 Hannah had written in her diary, “He [Robert] doesn’t sleep at night. His thinking is disordered. He takes endless walks up and down the beach, returning all dishevelled, with a wild look in his eyes.”

Hannah and Robert began to move in Methodist circles and were shunned by their Quaker families. Robert eventually became a Presbyterian and Hannah associated with the Plymouth Brethren.

Following the death of their son Frank, who died of typhoid while at Princeton University in 1872, Hannah began her career as an inspirational writer, by publishing a memorial of his life. Frank’s life was depicted as one of holiness.

Robert suffered another nervous breakdown after Frank’s death and went to a private hydropathic sanatorium at Clifton Springs, New York. While there Hannah and another woman were told by Robert’s “doctor” that sexual feelings and orgasms were manifestations of the Holy Spirit. In her manuscript, edited by her grand-daughter after her death and published variously as *Religious Fanaticism* or *Group Movements of the Past and Experiments in Guidance*, Hannah described in detail the surprising revelation from Dr. Foster.

. . . he found that whenever he prayed especially earnestly he had physical thrills which he thought belonged to earthly passions . . . he told us these ‘baptisms’ were really the fulfillment of the union between Christ and His people as the Bridegroom and the bride, described in Ephesians 5: 23-32, and typified in the Song of Solomon, and declared in many parts of Scripture, and that to reject it was to reject union with the Lord Himself. And he described this spiritual union as being so enrapturing and uplifting, and so full of the Lord’s actual presence, that at last we began to believe there must be something in it, and to long to know for ourselves the reality of this wonderful consecration. . . . We came to the conclusion that it must be what all the old mystics had known, and that it was the true inner meaning of that Union with Christ for which the saints of all ages had longed, and into the realization of which so many of them seemed to have entered. And we both began earnestly to seek to know it for ourselves. . . . now at last I had found the key that would open to me the door of this mystic region of divine union. As usual, when I was interested in anything, my friends had to become interested too, and to all with whom I dared to touch on such a sacred, yet delicate, subject, I tried to tell what Dr. R. had
Some of Hannah’s friends sought this “baptism of the Spirit” by engaging in lesbian and heterosexual activities. She came to believe that this new “truth” would help cure Robert’s illness. In 1873 she wrote to him: “There does seem to be a truth in it, and I feel as if it would be a great means of restoring health to thee if thee could get fully into it. Do try.”

Most of the hagiographies of Hannah Whitall Smith have overlooked Hannah’s involvement in this perversion, blaming it on Robert. But the evidence from her manuscript and personal letters clearly indicates that she actively promoted it.

How does one explain such antinomian behaviour? The answer seems to lie in the manichaean nature of mysticism that pervaded their lives; Quietists and Quakers sought to live plain lives. Things related to the material world and the senses were shunned as belonging to the world of the Devil. Yet, the physical drives were exceedingly strong and created great tension in the psyche. To solve this intellectual “schizophrenia” it was much easier to rationalize the sexual feelings as being of divine origin.

In 1873 Robert had another mental relapse and went to Europe for rest and treatment. Shortly afterwards Hannah learned that he was holding evangelistic meetings in England and receiving large crowds. His depression had disappeared. He was working with William E. Boardman and Dr. Cullis, a homeopathic healer from Boston.

Boardman, a Presbyterian minister from Illinois, had been influenced by the Wesleyan writings of Charles G. Finney and Asa Mahan, and T.C. Upham, the biographer of Madame Guyon. Boardman advocated a doctrine of sanctification or perfectionism in his book, The Higher Christian Life, which had been published in 1859. Central to his thought was the belief that, following conversion, there was a second work of grace by which one became filled by the Holy Spirit and it was possible to live a sinless life.

While on this campaign Robert sought to enlighten some of his female admirers in the ideas he had learned from Dr. Foster. Hannah encouraged him along that line, although she had not been able to experience personally such thrills. In a letter to Robert she wrote,

What thee tells me of the petting of thy young deaconness and thy enjoyment of it, is only another proof of the radical differences in our
natures; I could not endure it. There is not one person on the face of the earth whom I could bear to have tuck me up and fuss over me after I was in bed, not even my mother, dearly as I love her. And yet I can believe it is to thee a real pleasure.⁵⁰

In 1874 Hannah and the children travelled to England to join Robert who had become a religious celebrity. His evangelistic campaign was extended to Switzerland and Germany. The crowds bought over 8,000 photographs of him.⁵¹

Robert’s message was “Jesus saves me now” and the “Higher Christian Life.”⁵² This revivalistic message was quite different from traditional Methodist revivalism in that it offered a full and a present salvation, and dispensed with repentance and faith, and the gradual “growing in grace.”⁵³

Through her Quaker contacts and a reputation earned as a writer of inspirational literature, Hannah also became a popular public speaker among English evangelical women. Early in 1875 she had published a devotional book which became a best seller. It was composed of articles that she had written earlier for a religious periodical, The Christian’s Pathway of Power, which Robert edited. Her book, The Christian’s Secret of a Happy Life, emphasized the ideas of Madame Guyon and Fénelon. It called people to disregard the emotions and consider only the will. The emotions were not to be trusted. One was to put self “to death.”⁵⁴

Although she had by now rejected the ideas that she had learned from Dr. Foster, she now taught theological views which would have been regarded as heretical by most evangelicals. She had moved into Hicksitism, the most liberal branch of Quakerism, which rejected the idea of eternal Hell and believed that all people would be reconciled to God; she was a Universalist.⁵⁵ Few people knew of her real beliefs.

In June 1875 the Smiths were engaged in a large holiness conference at Brighton. This conference developed into the annual Keswick conferences on holiness which attracted Quakers, “Open” Brethren, Methodists, “Low” Anglicans, Baptists, and many others.

After the conference was over Hannah went to Switzerland for a holiday and then learned that Robert had suddenly gone to Paris after suffering another nervous breakdown. This breakdown was precipitated by a scandel (he had been found late at night in the bedroom of one of his young female admirers). He explained to Hannah that he had only been
imparting to the girl “the precious doctrine” he had picked up at Clifton Springs. He said, “I told her how Christ wanted us to feel thrills up and down our bodies because this would make us feel closer to Him.” The conference organizers were shocked at Smith’s behaviour, cancelled all future speaking engagements, and tried to cover up the scandal but the British press made much of it.

The Smiths left Europe in disgrace. A year later Hannah wrote to a friend that “it makes my heart ache to look at my dear husband and think of the blight that has fallen on him. . . . A more sensitive, tender-hearted, generous man never lived, and this blow has sorely crushed him in every tender spot . . . he has been wounded past healing.”

Their friend, Dr. Cullis, tried to resurrect Robert’s career by having him speak at some revivals he had organized in the United States. Robert found the experience quite boring, but he could still raise the emotions of his listeners. Hannah reported that one of the men became so caught up in the “baptism of the Spirit,” “the unmentionable kind,” that he tried to make love to her and another woman. Robert soon lost his faith; he became an agnostic and confidant of the libertine poet Walt Whitman.

Hannah carried on her career as a religious writer. In 1878 her commentary on the Old Testament was published by Dr. Cullis’ Willard Tract Repository. It contained a typological approach, with the events in the lives of the Hebrew patriarchs foreshadowing the theology of the New Testament. She had been influenced by the contradictory theories of progressive revelation taught by the Rev. Andrew Jukes and the divine plenary verbal inspiration theory of Scripture advocated by Louis Gaussen. She rejected a critical approach to understanding the Bible. “Doubts, are to be overcome not by reasoning, but by faith.” Furthermore, she said, “I will believe; I choose to believe.” Her faith was aided by a heavy dose of positive thinking.

Over the next year Hannah continued to search for an authentic “baptism of the Holy Spirit” and she personally investigated throughout the United States a multiplicity of cults that taught divine union, divine guidance and faith healing, including the free-love Oneida Community and the Mormons. She described these experiences in her *Religious Fanaticism*.

In 1879 Hannah met a Methodist minister who rented the house next door to them. He and his female disciples followed the Guyonese theology of “death-to-self” and divine guidance. For a while Hannah found their
views convincing.

The thing which interested me at first was the remarkable way in which they seemed to understand the guidance of the Holy Spirit in all the little daily affairs of life . . . their way of looking continually, moment by moment, to the Lord for His Guidance, and their perfect certainty that He did indeed, according to His promise to direct every step, seemed to invest them with an atmosphere of holiness and conscious presence of the Lord in such a way that made itself felt by everyone who came into their presence. They seemed literally to live and move and have their being in God. And to a soul, hungering as mine was to know the utmost possibilities of the life hid with Christ in God, it seemed that it ought to be almost like entering the very gates of Heaven to be in their presence, and I threw myself with intense eagerness into their teaching and their influence.\(^65\)

Hannah’s neighbours sought God’s guidance in everything they did. What pieces of clothes should they wear? Which sock to put on first? Hannah interpreted their neurosis as spirituality, but she could not make their system of divine guidance work for her.\(^66\)

To Hannah’s horror she learned that her neighbours were practising free-love. Nevertheless Hannah acquired a creedless type of pantheism from that cult: “the great thing in religion is to live and move and have our being in God. Not in experience, not in views, nor in doctrines, nor in anything of any kind, but simply in God alone.”\(^67\) By December 1879 Hannah ceased her search for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, but hung on to the pantheistic views which she had picked up from these friends and from the works of Fénelon.\(^68\)

From her quest for holiness Hannah turned to the women’s suffrage and the temperance campaigns, working with Susan B. Anthony and Frances Willard. Hannah soon became a radical feminist, calling for marriage contracts. After Robert took a mistress in 1883 Hannah was broken-hearted and became very bitter.\(^69\) She regarded marriage as “legal slavery.”\(^70\) Her experiences with the various free love cults had turned her completely off of sex. To a friend she wrote, “I do not want my daughters to marry at all. I think marriage is a frightful risk; and I do not like men.”\(^71\)

In 1885 the Smiths moved to England to be near their daughter Mary who had married Frank Costello who became a member of Parliament. Their children attracted to the family home in Sussex many of the Fabian circle and famous literati: the Webbs, Oscar Wilde, George Santayana,
H.G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw, Teneyson, Bernhard Berenson and Bertrand Russell. Robert found this group most congenial.

Hannah soon became president of the British Women’s Temperance Association. Because of her religious books she was constantly inundated by mail and visitors who wanted her counsel; she found the fawning evangelicals a bore.\(^{32}\)

In England Robert took another mistress and Hannah became increasingly bitter in her letters. “When I was 19 I got married, like the ignorant idiot I was.”\(^{73}\) “Daughters are wonderful luxuries! They are well worth a bad husband in my opinion; at least mine are. I would have stood any kind of husband for the sake of having you.”\(^{74}\) “It is hard for me to believe that any husband and wife are really happy together.”\(^{75}\) “All men should be castrated.”\(^{76}\) Hannah and Robert lived separate lives in the same house until his death in 1898.

While Hannah preached strident feminism to her children and granddaughters, she continued to write for the popular religious market. Her *Every-Day Religion or the Common-Sense Teaching of the Bible* (1893), was a confused mixture of positive thinking\(^{77}\) and passiveness. Instead of doing things “in your own strength . . . you must just trust Jesus to make you good.”\(^{78}\) Quoting Fénelon, she stated that struggling “with temptation only serves to augment them.” “We should simply turn away from evil and draw nearer to God.”\(^{79}\)

In 1895 Hannah wrote the introduction to the Fleming H. Revell reprint of *The Practice of the Presence of God* by the seventeenth-century Catholic mystic Brother Lawrence who had influenced both Madame Guyon and Fénelon. That work suggested that one could achieve personal union with the deity.\(^{80}\)

In 1903 Fleming H. Revell published Hannah’s religious autobiography, *The Unselfishness of God and How I Discovered It*. It stressed her Hicksite version of Quakerism with its belief in the “final restitution” of all or Universalism.\(^{81}\) In 1906 she wrote *Living in the Sunshine* which was later retitled *The God of All Comfort*. In it she downplayed mysticism and morbid self-examination, but continued to stress passivity and “death-to-self.”\(^{82}\) She also taught that God was both father and mother.\(^{83}\)

While readers of her books perceived Hannah as a saintly old woman, she was a very unhappy, angry, bitter person. She had little positive influence on her children who rejected most of her ideas and
values. Some of her bitterness appears to have had an adverse affect upon their attitudes towards marriage. They had also inherited their father’s manic-depressive illness. Mary (1864-1945) had a breakdown, abandoned her children, became the mistress and then wife of the famous art critic Bernard Berenson. As a libertine she had a string of lovers. Alys (1867-1951) was the first wife of philosopher Bertrand Russell and became a noted feminist but suffered from depression and suicidal feelings. Possibly blaming Hannah for the failure of his marriage to Alys, Russell described Hannah as “one of the wickedest people I had ever known.” He despised the way Hannah denigrated her husband and emasculated her son Logan. Logan (1865-1946), an atheist, who became a noted literary critic, was a neurotic homosexual; Russell described him as “almost manichaean.” Logan died in a state of insanity.

Hannah, however, had a better relationship with her granddaughters who she raised. Both became well-known in their fields of endeavour, but also rejected her religious views. Rachel (Ray) became the biographer of Frances Willard and wrote a history of feminism in Britain. She married into the Strachey family of the libertine Bloomsbury Group fame. Karin married the brother of Virginia Wolff, became a disciple of Freud, and practised as a psycho-analyst. Unfortunately, she inherited the family trait of manic-depressive illness and committed suicide.

Although Hannah Whitall Smith, after the scandal at Brighton in 1875, had little direct contact with the Keswick holiness movement, which she and her husband helped found, Hannah’s books were widely read by that group. Hannah Whitall Smith had introduced many to the mysticism of Madame Guyon and Fénelon which emphasized the “crucified life,” divine union, and divine guidance. She inspired many evangelical females involved in ministry and her ideas became a prominent part of the teaching at the annual Keswick conferences and in the writings of members of that group whose focus centred on victory over sin by “letting go and letting God” live your life.

Women had a strong representation in the Keswick movement and some of its feminine hymn writers such as Frances Ridley Havergal (“Take My Life and Let it Be”), Fanny Crosby (“Blessed Assurance”; “Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross”), Georgiana Taylor (“Oh to be Nothing”), and Charolette Elliott (“Just As I Am”) played an inordinate role in moulding the sentimental, passivity of that group. That message of spiritual passivity has been carried on in the popular devotional works of Catherine
Marshall who regarded Hannah Whitall Smith as her mentor. Women at L.E. Maxwell’s Prairie Bible Institute at Three Hills, Alberta tried to follow Hannah’s model of spirituality. Hannah’s books are still in print, endorsed by evangelical celebrities Dale Evans, Elizabeth Elliot, Marabel Morgan and Catherine Marshall and have sold millions of copies since first being published. Debra Campbell notes that Hannah’s early books have been adopted by fundamentalist women; they have largely ignored her later works which were stridently feminist.

Jessie Penn-Lewis (1861?-1927)

Jessie Penn-Lewis was another of Madame Guyon’s disciples who had a profound impact upon the emerging fundamentalist movement, particularly in its demonology. Her championing of sexual equality and the place of women in ministry also placed her in the vanguard of women’s liberation.

Jessie (née Jones) Penn-Lewis had been born into a middle-class family in Wales; her father was a civil and mining engineer who came from a Calvinistic-Methodist family. As a child she attended a Quaker school. In 1882, the year she married, she had a conversion experience. She sought to “crucify self” and devoured the mystical writings of Madame Guyon.

Little is known about Jessie Penn-Lewis’s married life. Her husband was an Anglican who was a descendant of William Penn, the Quaker who had founded Pennsylvania. It would appear that she either inherited considerable wealth or her husband was wealthy enough to afford her many trips abroad. She certainly exhibited a great deal of independence, travelling the globe on her own, preaching to women.

In 1892 Jessie Penn-Lewis began attending the Keswick holiness conferences and became one of its most noted women speakers. In 1896 she visited Stockholm on behalf of the Y.W.C.A. In 1897 she was in Russia, holding religious meetings among women of the nobility. Later she toured France, Switzerland, Finland, Denmark, and again Russia. In 1900 she was in Canada, speaking in Montreal, Toronto, Kingston and Ottawa. In 1903 Jessie Penn-Lewis toured India, Egypt in 1904, and from 1904 to 1905 she was one of the organizers of the famous Welsh revival led by Evan Roberts.

There was a marked manichaean flavour to Penn-Lewis’s thought.
In 1906 she wrote a short book, *Warfare with Satan*, in which she restated many of the medieval ideas on demonology that had been resurrected by the Plymouth Brethren writers George H. Pember and Sir Robert Anderson. In it and other books, such as *War on the Saints*, she painted a picture of a personal cosmic battle between Christ and Satan for the mind and soul of everyone. She taught that Christians could be demon possessed and that Satan could only be overpowered by the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Her definition of that appears to have been similar to that of the Pentecostals. By being linked with Pentecostalism, she lost favour among the Keswick group and formed her own organization, the Overcomer League in 1909 so that she could continue to propagate her distinctive views on the Holy Spirit, holiness and women’s role in ministry.

Jessie Penn-Lewis’s influence on popular fundamentalism was immense. Her books on demonology became the texts commonly cited by fundamentalists. She was also the only female contributor to the famous *Fundamentals*; her chapter dealt with “Satan and His Kingdom.” She was cited as an authority on Satan and demonology by the Anglican theologian W.H. Griffith Thomas of Wycliffe College, Toronto, when he delivered the L.P. Stone lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary.

Sometime later Penn-Lewis published, *Soul and Spirit: A Glimpse into Bible Psychology*. It was a further exposition of her manichaean beliefs on evil spirits, demons, the Devil and the Antichrist. Victory over such malevolent forces could only come through “crucifixion of the flesh.” She implied that mental illness was the result of evil spirits. At the same time she condemned psycho-analysis as a work of the devil.

In 1919 Jessie Penn-Lewis published the *Magna Charta of Woman* calling for the complete equality and full role of women in ministry. Relying on earlier works by Catherine Booth and Katharine Bushnell, M.D., Penn-Lewis argued that the New Testament and especially St. Paul proclaimed sexual equality for women, and that misogynist, Judaizing male translators had suppressed that liberating message. Since the Greek text did not contain punctuation, it was possible for the translators to interpolate quotations into the text and make interrogative and rhetorical questions appear as statements of fact. She tackled some of the problematic texts in the scriptures which dealt with women but some of her exegesis appears specious, for example when she claimed that Adam only and not Eve was expelled from the Garden of Eden. When dealing with the statement that “women should keep silent in the churches,” attributed to St. Paul, she
showed that it did not match reality, for Paul’s female associates Phoebe
and Priscilla enjoyed the full role of ministry in the apostolic church\textsuperscript{105} and
other passages by Paul referred positively to women praying and prophesy-
ing in the church.

Penn-Lewis was a dispensationalist and there was a strong element
of anti-Judaism present in her thought.\textsuperscript{106} She identified with Pentecos-
talism and taught that bodily healing was part of the atonement.\textsuperscript{107} She saw
the third-century “heretical” Montanists, who were proto-Pentecostals, as
champions of women’s place in ministry.\textsuperscript{108}

The works of Jessie Penn-Lewis on demonology and evangelical
feminism continue to be reprinted and are available in some Christian
bookstores and through the Christian Literature Crusade. Her publishers,
however, have expunged some of the excessive demonology from her \textit{War
on the Saints} because it went beyond scripture.\textsuperscript{109}

\textbf{Amy Wilson Carmichael (1867-1951)}

Another woman associated with the Keswick movement was Amy
Carmichael. She had been raised as a Presbyterian in Ireland. As a teenager
she had got involved with the Keswick movement and became the
housekeeper of Keswick co-founder Robert Wilson, a Quaker who was a
widower. Their relationship is unclear; Amy adopted his surname as her
second name.\textsuperscript{110}

Supported by the Keswick movement Carmichael went to Japan as
a missionary. Then, under the auspices of the China Inland Mission, a
Keswick organization, she went to China. Her independent streak led to
her break with the C.I.M.; without its permission she moved her activities
to Ceylon.\textsuperscript{111} She moved to India serving under the auspices of the Church
of England where she established an extended orphanage, the Dohnavur
Fellowship, for young girls she had rescued from temple prostitution. In
1925 her difficulty working with others including the later bishop Stephen
Neill, and her refusal to take orders from her superiors, led to her break
with the Church of England. She carried on her work as an independent,
adopting Quaker and Plymouth Brethren patterns in her religious
community.\textsuperscript{112}

Carmichael was a mystic with a martyr complex. She longed for “a
chance to die” for her faith.\textsuperscript{113} She was an avid reader of the Catholic and
Quaker mystics\textsuperscript{114} and she incorporated their thoughts into her many
Carmichael’s mysticism, with its emphasis on “death-to-self” promoted her version of feminism. Robert Wilson, her “guardian,” had wanted to marry Amy but she declined. She was reported to have said, “husbands are so much in the way – an obstruction and a nuisance.” She also insisted that her successor had to be a woman. Given the nature of her work which was rescuing girls from prostitution, her attitudes towards men is understandable. Her letters to other women, moreover, suggest that she was a lesbian; they were clearly love letters. Carmichael’s mystical writings continue to be read by many fundamentalist and evangelical women and influence their thinking.

Christabel Pankhurst (1880-1958)

Christabel Pankhurst was one of the most famous of the British suffragists. She also became a prominent fundamentalist. During the 1920s she travelled around North America preaching against higher criticism and the theory of evolution.


Aimee Semple McPherson (1890-1944)

The most newsworthy woman in the United States between 1920 until her death in 1944 was the female evangelist, Aimee Semple McPherson who had come from Canada. Raised in a dysfunctional family in Ontario, she was torn between her father’s Methodist faith and her mother’s role in the Salvation Army. Quitting high school she married a Pentecostal preacher, Robert Semple, and soon they went to China as missionaries. Robert died there and Aimee returned to North America. She married again but her marriage lasted only a couple of years. After hospitalization for what appears as manic-depressive illness, she set out across the continent on a revivalistic, faith-healing tour.

Aimee was ordained by both the Methodists and Baptists before she established her Four-Square Gospel Church. Aimee saw herself as a
fundamentalist and prominent fundamentalists such as William Jennings Bryan, W.L. Munhall, and Paul Rader worked with her. The Bible Institute of Los Angeles published her early books.

Aimee Semple McPherson’s theology was influenced by the holiness tradition via the Salvation Army, the works of A.B. Simpson, and the writings of Jessie Penn-Lewis, but her flamboyant lifestyle did not fit the holiness tradition. Nevertheless, Aimee’s dynamic ministry and her leadership of a religious empire became a model for many women in the Pentecostal movement.

Women’s ministry was a hotly contested issue in the fundamentalist movement. Prominent fundamentalists such as J.H. Brookes, Mark Matthews, T.T. Shields, A.C. Gaebelein, William Aberhart, and John R. Rice, who were left-brained, opposed the ministry of women. They were Calvinistic and in most cases influenced by the Plymouth Brethren. On the other hand, there were many proto-fundamentalists and fundamentalists, who had been influenced by the Methodist and Keswick holiness tradition, who welcomed the ministry of women. They tended to be right-brained in their approach.

A.B. Simpson, a Presbyterian minister from Canada, attended the holiness meetings of Robert Pearsall Smith, read the Quietist writers, and experienced faith-healing from Dr. Cullis. Simpson soon left the Presbyterian Church and founded the Christian and Missionary Alliance in New York City. One of Simpson’s innovations was the acceptance of women as elders. Women played a great role in his enterprises and within his theology there was the possibility for the ordination of women, but it does not appear to have been practised, although women worked as preachers, evangelists and missionaries in his organization. Simpson even adopted the idea of the motherhood of God. Prominent Christian feminists such as Frances Willard and Jessie Penn-Lewis spoke from his platforms. Simpson’s Bible college had a majority of women students who entered many facets of ministry including preaching.

Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and A.J. Gordon’s Boston Bible Training School, which were in the Keswick tradition, also played a prominent role in the training of women for ministry. Jessie Penn-Lewis and Christabel Pankhurst were welcomed speakers at Moody Bible Institute. Even William Bell Riley, one of the most militant of fundamentalists, trained women as pastors and evangelists at his Northwestern Bible and Training School in Minneapolis. Female students made
up the majority of the student body.134 Another prominent fundamentalist, John Roach Straton of New York City, actively supported the ministry of women. Christabel Pankhurst was welcomed to his pulpit.135 He also promoted the preaching of Uldine Utley, a fourteen-year-old former child actress, who had been converted by Aimee Semple McPherson. Utley became his associate pastor.136 Straton regarded Utley as “the Joan of Arc of the modern religious world.”137

Oswald J. Smiaw, a former Presbyterian minister, who worked with the Christian and Missionary Alliance before founding his own independent Peoples Church in Toronto, defended the ministry of women.138 He promoted the work of Aimee Semple McPherson,139 published articles by Jessie Penn-Lewis,140 and had Christabel Pankhurst in his pulpit.141

Watchman Nee, a Chinese fundamentalist, was another disciple of Madam Guyon.142 Writing in the Keswick tradition, his book *Love not the World* was thoroughly manichaean, being self-deprecatory and seeing the Devil everywhere.143

This paper has attempted to correlate a variety of issues associated with fundamentalism: gender, scholasticism versus mysticism, and Calvinism versus Arminianism. The conclusions are only tentative. Much ink has already been spilled on trying to define fundamentalism and evangelicalism.144 Gender may be a way of defining the differences. William McLoughlin and Richard Hofstadter long ago noted the “militant masculinity” of fundamentalism.145 This was especially true of Billy Sunday, T.T. Shields, William Aberhart, and John R. Rice. On the other hand, psycho-historian Philip Greven has noted the overall feminine orientation of evangelicalism. Could militant fundamentalism be seen as a masculine backlash? While the proto-fundamentalists who were associated with the early Keswick movement were open to women in ministry, most of the militant fundamentalists after World War One were not.

The Keswick holiness movement played a greater role in popular fundamentalism and evangelicalism than has been generally understood, but early in this century the Keswick tradition experienced a split. Due to antinomianism, which was becoming too common, the Keswick movement adopted a more masculine, Calvinistic model of sanctification which rejected perfectionism and sought victory over sin. Those influenced by the Plymouth Brethren appear to have dominated the American Keswick movement beginning in the teens of this century.
Virginia Brereton has noted that too much attention has been focused on the Calvinistic side of fundamentalism;\textsuperscript{146} even Betty DeBerg’s interesting book *Ungodly Women*, which pioneered the study of gender in fundamentalism, focussed almost exclusively on the Calvinists.

The Arminian/Wesleyan holiness influences continued through the work of Hannah Whitall Smith, the Salvation Army, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, and various pentecostal groups. These holiness groups continued to champion the cause of women’s ministry, while the Calvinistic Keswick group generally did not. However, these two movements paralleled each other and there was considerable cross-fertilization.

Both brands of holiness, but especially the Wesleyan version, through the mystical, devotional writings of Madame Guyon and her disciples, provided women in the fundamentalist movement with their own version of piety which informed their thinking, gave them a wider role in ministry, and helped sustain them during the often testy fundamentalist controversies carried on by their ministers and husbands.

This “feminine theology” tended to empower these women, but it was sometimes psychologically unhealthy, contributing to depression and encouraging passivity and passive/aggressive behaviour.\textsuperscript{147} Some of those, including men, who advocated this view of holiness suffered from manic-depressive illness and had been hospitalized for it: Robert Pearsall Smith, A.B. Simpson, Oswald J. Smith, Aimee Semple McPherson, and John Roach Straton.

H.A. Ironside, one of the leaders of American fundamentalism and the Keswick movement, justified his switch to Calvinistic holiness by pointing out the psychological dangers of the Arminian approach to holiness he had learned in the Salvation Army:

I reflect that thousands are yearly being disheartened and discouraged by their teaching; that hundreds yearly are ensnared into infidelity through the collapse of vain effort to attain the unattainable; that scores have actually lost their minds and are now inmates of asylums because of their mental grief and anguish resultant upon their bitter disappointment in the search for holiness.\textsuperscript{148}

Moreover, James I. Packer, an evangelical Anglican theologian, has even pointed out the dangers of the legalistic, Calvinistic, Keswick brand of
holiness; “. . . it will tend not to help you but to destroy you.”

These psychological dangers can be traced to manichaean thinking which was very strong in the holiness theology, especially in the works of Madame Guyon, Hannah Whitall Smith, Jessie Penn-Lewis, Amy Carmichael, Watchman Nee, and Catherine Marshall. The gospel songs of Fanny Crosby, Frances R. Havergal and others were also very manichaean.

This brand of “feminine” theology had a considerable impact on evangelicalism and fundamentalism. Some of the proto-fundamentalist males, such as William Booth, D.L. Moody, A.B. Simpson, A.J. Gordon, and fundamentalists such as P.W. Philpott, Roland V. Bingham, H.A. Ironside, L.E. Maxwell and Oswald J. Smith, who were influenced by the holiness tradition, tended to be less militant and less separatist in the fundamentalist controversies. Their movements were more successful and longer enduring, maybe because they won greater support from women because they were right-brained, accepted mysticism, and gave a greater role to women in ministry. Their organizations also came to reject the militant separatism commonly associated with fundamentalism and became part of the larger evangelical movement.

Endnotes

1. See Janette Hassey, No Time For Silence: Evangelical Women in Public Ministry Around the Turn of the Century (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986); and Betty A. DeBerg, Ungodly Women: Gender and the First Wave of American Fundamentalism (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990). DeBerg’s interesting study is limited in that it focuses mainly on the misogynist male fundamentalists who were primarily Calvinists.


3. Gender differences in personality and religious experience have long been known (see Henry C. McComas, The Psychology of Religious Sects: A Comparison of Types [New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1912]).

5. Edward McNall Burns, Robert E. Learner, Standish Meacham, *Western Civilizations*, 10th ed. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1984), p. 488. This characterization of Calvinism is in its classic, most extreme sense. There were less rigid forms of Calvinism which engaged in revivalism.


9. The role of oral transmission in the spread of heresy has been noted by Claus-Peter Clasen, “Medieval Heresies in the Reformation,” *Church History* 32 (December 1963): 392-414.


37. The Smith’s appear to have been raised in the Wilburite branch of Orthodox Quakerism, but moved into the Gurneyite branch which was aligned with the wider evangelical movement. Hannah and Robert appear to have been the instigators of the holiness branch of Quakerism which broke away from the Gurneyites (see Thomas D. Hamm, *The Transformation of American Quakerism: The Orthodox Friends, 1800-1907*).


42. The relationship with their parents was later restored.


44. Hannah disguised his name by calling him Dr. “R.” Barbara Strachey, who possesses the Smith Archives, has been able to identify him has Dr. Foster (see *Remarkable Relations*, p. 34, and Ray Strachey, ed. *Group Movements of the Past and Experiments in Guidance* [London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1934], pp. 168-171).


101, missed Hannah’s role in Robert’s “fall from grace.”


51. Smith, *Philadelphia Quaker*, p. 27.

52. For the content of his sermons see Smith and Smith, *Walking in the Light*.

53. For a further discussion, see Phyllis D. Airhart, “‘What Must I Do to Be Saved?’: Two Paths to Evangelical Conversion in Late Victorian Canada,” *Church History* 59, No. 3 (1990): 372-385.


60. L.P. Smith, *Unforgotten Years*, p. 63.


62. Ibid., p. 8.

63. Ibid., p. 10.


65. Ibid., p. 183.

66. Ibid., pp. 185-186.

67. Ibid., p. 267.

68. Ibid., p. 270.


70. Strachey, *Remarkable Relations*, pp. 80, 93.

71. Ibid., p. 82.


73. Ibid., p. 176.

74. Ibid, p. 205.


78. Ibid., p. 198.

79. Ibid., p. 240.


95. Ibid., pp. 34-35, 177, 291.

96. Ibid., p. 224.


102. Ibid., pp. 69-70.


104. Ibid., p. 17.

105. Ibid., pp. 89-90.

106. Ibid., pp. 21-23, 71, 73, 94-95, 100.


108. Ibid., p. 93.


115. The library of the Billy Graham Centre at Wheaton College lists forty-one of her books.


120. I have been able to examine only two of Pankhurst’s religious titles: *The World’s Unrest: Visions of the Dawn* (New York: Harper and Brothers, c. 1925), and *Seeing the Future* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1929).

121. See C. Mark Schinkel, “The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada: The Influence of Fundamentalism on Articles Appearing in the Pentecostal Testimony” (M. Rel. Thesis, Wycliffe College, 1990), p. 33, who refers to her article in the December 1922 issue of the Pentecostal Testimony. See also the *Toronto Globe* 10 October 1925, for an ad for Pankhurst’s articles in the *Sunday School Times*.

122. After a brief reconciliation Aimee and Harold McPherson split and were divorced. For her autobiography see Aimee Semple McPherson, *This is That: Personal Experiences, Sermons and Writings* (Los Angeles: Echo Park Evangelistic Association, Inc., 1923). This book, which was first published in 1919, went through several editions and transformations.
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124. Aimee’s Four-Square Gospel was almost identical to Simpson’s Four-Fold Gospel.

125. Penn-Lewis’s books were available in the bookstore of Angelus Temple in 1984.


150. Although not dealt with in this study, the co-founder and theologian of the Seventh-Day Adventists, Ellen G. White (1827-1915), was exceedingly manichaen in her thought. Her writings were used by a number of fundamentalists. She saw the medieval Albigensians as her link to the primitive church (*The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan: The Conflict of the Ages in the Christian Dispensation* [Oshawa: Signs of the Times Publishing Company, 1888; reprint, 1944], pp. 109, 309).