Revival Movements as Conflict Agendas of the Popular in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries

Edited by
Veronika Albrecht-Birkner
Stefanie Siedek-Strunk

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Funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) – project number 438577023 – SFB 1472.

ISBN 978-3-031-75116-5 ISBN 978-3-031-75117-2 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-75117-2

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG.
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Preface

This publication emerged from the international conference "Revival Movements as conflict agendas of the popular", which took place at the University of Siegen from 22 to 24 June 2023. Taking a global perspective, it examines the potential for conflicts that arose from the transformations of the popular in the field of religion through different currents of revival movements in the 19th and early 20th centuries. It was produced in the context of the Siegen CRC 1472 "Transformations of the Popular", funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG).

We would like to thank all the authors for their contributions to this book project and express our gratitude to Emily Russel and Steven Fassioms of Palgrave Macmillan.

Special thanks go to Marie Briese, without whose work, dedication, and editing skills this publication would not have been possible.

Siegen, Germany

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Abbreviations

Anon.	anonym
approx.	approximately
c	column
cf.	confer
decd.	deceased
ed.	edited
e.g.	exempli gratia
fol.	folio
ibid.	ibidem
n	footnote
No.	Number
resp.	respectively
trans.	translated
UB	Universitätsbibliothek/University Library
unpag.	unpaginated
v.	vers
vol.	volume
vv.	verses

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Veronika Albrecht-Birkner and Stefanie Siedek-Strunk

1 Revival Movements as a Historiographical Challenge in the Context of German Church Historiography

The 19th-century differentiation and pluralisation of Protestantism in response to the Enlightenment, rationalism and religious criticism, which in church historiography goes under the label of "revival movements", continues to pose a considerable "historiographical challenge" in continental Europe (Kuhn and Albrecht-Birkner 2017). The diverse initiatives and discourses of this 'revival' (Gäbler et al. 2000) – some tracing back to the Pietism of the 17th and 18th centuries and seen as efforts toward re-Christianisation – demonstrably intersected with other, less conformist religious traditions like theosophical-hermetic and Masonic occult. As such, they appear to extend beyond the traditional scope of church historiography in a narrow sense, both discursively and to some extent performatively, leading to their controversial reception. Thus, the historiography of the revival movements, whose lines of tradition extend to the present

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V. Albrecht-Birkner, S. Siedek-Strunk (eds.), *Revival Movements as Conflict Agendas of the Popular in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-75117-2_1

day, is often characterised by a historiography of its own that aims to secure its own identity.

The historiographical challenges stem from deeper, historical disputes over the discourse on the history of the church and Christianity, which intensified with the concurrent professionalisation of theology and religious studies in the 19th century. While the religious studies approach prevailed to some extent in the exegetical disciplines, especially in Germany church historiography remained focussed on an implicitly normative historiography of the confessional institutions involved (Martin 2023: 839–844). In theology, this corresponds to the continuation of an understanding of popularity, as programmatically formulated in 1805 by the German Protestant theologian Johann Christoph Greiling in his *Theory of popularity*: "Popularity" is understood in this tradition, analogous to 'popular enlightenment', as "general comprehensibility […] that is also sufficient for the people", and in this respect as the necessary "condescension" of experts "to the way of thinking and to the concepts of the people" (Greiling 1805/2001). According to this understanding, "popular theology" involves the search for the most effective methods of conveying theological expert knowledge to "the people" and thus popularising it (Drehsen 1988; Dressler 2003). The concept of the popular, still common in theological scholarship today, essentially views popularisation as a trickle-down process, largely ignoring the dynamics between the efforts of theological experts to 'uplift' the laity by imparting knowledge and the phenomena of religious 'self-empowerment' on the part of the laity, such as those that intensified with the revival movements in particular.

These are all reasons why revival movements are typically relegated to a marginal status, especially in German church historiography. In the Anglo-American context, the research situation with regard to revival movements is different for two reasons. On the one hand, most historians of Christianity and religion in America do not take a narrowly confessional approach to Christian history – though there are still some strictly denominational church historians – due to the completely different historical framework and conditions. On the other hand, it is obvious that Methodism or the Great Awakenings, for example, are so essential to the understanding of the history of Christianity in North America and Britain that it would be impossible to tell the story without the revival movements (McClymond 2010; Richardson 2018). One may even go as far as to say that North American church history in particular is a more or less continuous history of revival movements, in which laypeople per se were the key players and

where, in contrast to the standardising state church system in the Old Empire, plural voluntary churches were the norm. This means that the normative historiographical perspective, which to some extent obstructs access to the revival movements in German church historiography, is much less of an issue here.

In Germany, the revival movements have been viewed, if at all, as movements of piety and not of theology, which is also reflected in the retention of the historical self-designation as a historiographical label (Mehlhausen 1997, 152–160). The integration of approaches from the history of everyday life, social history and the history of mentalities into church historiography, which has been observable since the last third of the 20th century, has also contributed to this perception, as has a link to older interests in phenomena of "popular religiosity" ("religion populaire"/"religiosità populare"/"folk" or "popular religion") in the sense of "mass religiosity" as opposed to "virtuoso religiosity" (Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher; Max Weber). The push for a church historiography that pays attention to the history of piety, originating from the study of the late Middle Ages and the early modern period (Hamm 1977), initially manifested itself in the form of distinctive, mostly historically and/or sociologically orientated research into popular piety (Ebertz and Schultheiss 1986; Molitor and Smolinsky 1994). The historian Lucian Hölscher's account of the history of Protestant piety in Germany, however, which can be read as a 'history of piety from below' and in which the revival movements of the 19th century are discussed under various aspects (Hölscher 2005), has faced sharp criticism from church historians in particular. The reason for this criticism was – and this brings us full circle to what we have stated above – that Hölscher does not describe piety from the perspective of the institutionalised church and under the premises of classical (German) Protestantism discourses, but rather from the perspective of the individual's sense of piety.

2 Different Labels: Different Perspectives

In German church historiography, the term "revival movements" has sometimes been used only in the singular (or simply referred to as "Revival" resp. "Awakening") up to the present day, typically referring to the first half of the 19th century (Schnurr 2021). This focus suggests that this revival movement was more or less explicitly rooted in (German) *Pietism* of the late 17th and 18th centuries, a fact supported by terminological interdependencies: On the one hand, the term 'revival' can be traced back

to the early 18th century in *Halle Pietism*, among other movements (Kuhn 2019); on the other hand, the term 'Pietist' was virulent as a self-designation and external label for followers of the revival movement from around 1800 (Schnurr 2016). When used in the singular, the terms "revival movement" or "revivalism", which centred on Germany, now include pluralistic approaches in relevant accounts insofar as *Methodism*, which originated in England, as well as the three so-called *Great Awakenings* in North America (1730s/40s; approx. 1790–1840; second half of the 19th century, see Keil 2019), the revival in Scotland, the *Réveil* in Switzerland and various phenomena in France, the Netherlands and Scandinavia are presented as parallel phenomena (Schäufele 2023: 315–323). In other accounts, the term "revival movements" is also used in the plural, referring to structurally comparable phenomena in North America and Europe that perceive and influence each other (Graf and Hambrick-Stowe 1999; Kuhn 2019; Stievermann 2021).

Separate from the revival movement or revival movements of the first half of the 19th century, German church history usually focuses on those that emerged in the Anglo-American region from the last third of the 19th century, which then extended their influence into Europe. These were closely linked to the Free Churches that were also establishing themselves in Europe at the time. In this context, the *Holiness Movement* should be mentioned, which primarily received its direct impetus in Central Europe from the so-called Holiness Conferences in England (1874/75), and the closely associated *Evangelisation Movement,* which originated primarily in the USA (Holthaus 2005; Melvin 1996; Ohlemacher 2000b). These Anglo-Saxon influences were significant for the German *Community Movement*, which was formed in the 1880s as an umbrella organisation for the awakened communities that had emerged within the German state churches since the early 19th century (Benrath 2000; Hahn-Bruckart 2021; Ohlemacher 2000b). Within the *Community Movement,* these diverse roots led to the differentiation between a (Anglo-American-influenced) "Newpietism" and an "Old Pietism" that traced back exclusively to German pietistic and revivalist traditions (Lüdke & Schmidt 2017). The partial integration of Anglo-American influences into the German *Community Movement*, despite clear theological differences, was no longer successful in the *Pentecostal Movement,* which continued the *Holiness Movement* in the early 20th century, established itself worldwide,

and also had its origins in the USA (Anderson 2014; Ohlemacher 2000b: 426–443).[1]

Depending on the point of reference from which the history of the revival movements is told, different master narratives dominate, serving as meta-narratives. In German-speaking countries in particular the concept of *Pietism* shapes the narrative, suggesting a continuous historical thread from its origins in the late 17th century to the modern day (for the 19th and 20th centuries, see Gäbler et al. 2000). Researchers outside Germany have also engaged with the narrative of *Pietism*, though typically limiting its application to the period up to 1820 or 1850 (van Lieburg and Lindmark 2008; Strom 2010; Strom et al. 2018).

The subsumption of the revival movements of the 19th century under the narrative of *Pietism*, originating in Germany, competes with their integration into the history of the narrative of *Evangelicalism,* rooted in America, although there are also various attempts to synthesise the two perspectives. For example, in a standard historical overview of Pietism covering the 19th and 20th centuries, three chapters are devoted to Evangelicalism, highlighting the connections and structural parallels between Pietism, Réveil, and Evangelicalism (Gäbler 2000: 27; Noll 2000: 466f.; Ohlemacher 2000a: 371–373; similar approaches by Kisker (2014) and O'Malley (2014) in the Companion to German Pietism, edited by Douglas H. Shantz, 2014). Ultimately, the assumption of a history of *Evangelicalism* distinct from *Pietism*, starting with the Methodist revival of the 18th century (Bebbington 1993, 2005; Noll 2004), remains unchallenged here, while acknowledging parallel currents that also characterised the revival movements of the 19th century in diverse ways.

The far-reaching historiography of *Evangelicalism*, as conceived by the British historian W. Reginald Ward (1925–2010), identifies the Pietism of the 17th century as its starting point (Ward 1992, 2006). According to this approach, the revival movements of the 19th century are to be understood as part of a continuous history of successive revival movements extending from the early modern period to the present day. However, the *Evangelicalism* narrative emerged in the 1960s and is not simply identical with "evangelical" in the sense of "protestant" in German. Rather, the term *Evangelicalism* owes its specific semantics to the *Evangelical Movement* of the second half of the 20th century, which was characterised,

[1] According to Michael Bergunder, the *Pentecostal Movement* is "currently the fastest growing part of Christianity" (Bergunder 2003: c 1241).

especially in America, by evangelists such as Billy Graham (1918–2018), and which replaced the specific use of the term 'evangelical' in English for the Methodist revival movement and the *First Great Awakening*, which had been common since the 18th century (Bauer 2012: 28–31). It is basically a non-specific collective term for theologically and ecclesiastically conservative trends, as could be summarised on the historiographical meta-level, without linking it to a judgement. The historiographical retransfer of the term *Evangelicalism* to early modern *Pietism* and the revival movements of the 19th century represents a historical narrative that has its function in the context of evangelical tradition formation and identity construction in the present (Dietz 2017).

3 Revival Movements as Conflict Agendas of the Popular

This volume was produced as part of the Collaborative Research Centre (CRC) 1472 "Transformations of the Popular" at the University of Siegen (Germany). The CRC examines the popular as a transformative quality in all areas of society since around 1800. The nominal definition of the popular in this context is: Popular is what is noticed by many (Werber et al. 2023). The popular is no longer a matter belonging to the common or the lower classes but becomes an agent of discourses and practices whose relevance has increased in scope and reach since around 1800 across social classes. The decisive factor here is the quantitative dimension. This can be linked to qualitative factors such as the favorite, trendy or the generally known, but it cannot be reduced to this. That which is measurably (or staged as) popular relativises elitist interpretations of what is good and meaningful and challenges their supporting institutions. Efforts by functional elites to "elevate" the people through the popularisation of knowledge and values, however, such as those pursued by the theologian Greiling quoted at the beginning, presuppose a socially stabilised, asymmetrical frame of reference with clear high/low semantics (high vs. low, educated vs. common, cultivated vs. vulgar, sophisticated vs. crude etc.).

In the history of the church and Christianity, the transformations of the popular since around 1800 are particularly relevant in the form of revival movements as lay-led initiatives that increasingly challenged theological and ecclesiastical elites. It is obvious that this potential for conflict in state-church systems in continental Europe have had a completely different

relevance than in America, because the standardising theological and state-church high culture did not exist there. That's why this volume focuses on the revival movements of the 19th and early 20th centuries as agendas of conflict in the field of the popular, especially in continental Europe, but asks also for something comparable in a global perspective. The concept of the popular as described above explains why popular or informal sources are sometimes referred to: It is precisely such sources that illustrate the transformative potential of popularisation processes.

The *high–low* terminology used in this context is based on the distinction between *high church* and *low church* in the Anglican Church, which is also found in Norway, for example, in the form of the term *Low Church Movements*. This refers to initiatives and movements that are based on a less formalised understanding of the church in liturgical and ecclesiological terms than traditional churches and that place greater emphasis on the supporting role of the laity. Low church can have sociological connotations in the form of support groups from lower social classes, but it does not necessarily have to. Rather, *high–low* differences are to be thought of as fluid and encompassing various forms and levels of "middle culture" – even conflicts between non-academic and the professionalising theology (cf. Chap. 10).

Specifically, this volume builds on interdisciplinary research in the CRC on discursive negotiation processes for interpretative sovereignty between experts and laypeople and the resultant practices since the 19th century (Albrecht-Birkner et al. 2023). While it may initially seem challenging to apply this approach to the revival movements in Protestantism – given the Reformation's aim to eliminate "spiritual asymmetry" between clerical elites and lay believers in the congregations (*priesthood of all believers*) – the reality is more nuanced: Protestantism is characterised by a persistent tension between this bottom-up (spiritual) impulse and enduring theological expertise that has not been abandoned even in Protestantism and has traditionally been institutionalised in the ordained pastorate.

From the 18th century onwards, revivalists in particular have both explicitly and implicitly drawn on the Reformation impulse of the spiritual valorisation of the laity, using it as an argument against Protestant churches perceived as overly influenced by theological elites in the course of discursive negotiation about religious evaluation regimes (Lovegrove 2002; Westerkamp 1988). In the Anglo-American world, *Evangelicalism* and the *Pentecostal Movement* have occasionally been explicitly analysed from the perspective of transformations of the popular (Noll 1994; Sepúlveda

1988). The CRC Transformations of the Popular has produced case studies on regional German revival movements as constellations of discursive negotiation between religious lay and expert knowledge, also in the sense of competition between religious high and low culture (Albrecht-Birkner 2023, 2024; Siedek-Strunk 2023; Siedek-Strunk and Albrecht-Birkner 2023).

This volume looks at the most diverse of the revival movements mentioned under Sect. 2 from the first and second halves of the 19th century as well as the early 20th century and considers them from a global perspective as agendas of conflict in the field of the popular. Specifically, this involves conflicts over claims made by laypeople to be new and true experts and hence also elites in matters of faith and theology, thus playing a unique and transformative role for Christianity and the church. These claims were not limited to any specific social class and could be observed among aristocrats as well as craftsmen, for example, but were found to be linked to economic activities. One aspect of this theological self-emancipation was the integration of knowledge that did not conform to the respective denominational traditions, as mentioned at the beginning. On the other hand, the boundaries between academic theology and non-academic knowledge were relativised – while at the same time professionalisation also intensified in theology.

This ties in with an interest in 'lay theology' (*theologia popularis*) that goes beyond mere pastoral theological and religious educational objectives, which on the Protestant side has its classical place in the church and cultural history of the Reformation as an impulse for an ecclesiastical and theological empowerment of 'laypeople' (Drehsen 1988; Obst 2000) and has since been further developed in the history of religion (Beyer 2017; Martin 2018). It also includes a new concept of popular theology that takes into account the dynamics between the top-down transfer of knowledge by theological experts and the bottom-up phenomena of religious 'self-empowerment' on the part of the laity (Albrecht-Birkner 2017b).

The focus on lay claims to a new and exclusive expertise in the field of faith and theology also involves exploring the political implications of such phenomena. This may include forms of political instrumentalisation as well as – intended or unintended – political consequences. This focus also extends to emancipatory impulses, particularly in terms of gender discourses and the social role of women, which in turn might have political implications, though not invariably so (Albrecht-Birkner 2017a; Sohn-Kronthaler and Albrecht 2018). The broader treatment of the revival

movements through the lens of conflict agendas of the popular places them at the intersection of conservatism and modernity, and within the dialogue between 'secularization' and the 'return of religion' (Koschorke 2013; Jarlert 2012). This localisation has been discussed in recent years as a key aspect of research into revival movements (van Lieburg and Lindmark 2008; Kuhn and Albrecht-Birkner 2017), most recently regarding their role in the expanding influence of the public sphere and the media in the 19th century (Albrecht-Birkner et al. 2024).

4 The Structure and the Individual Chapters of the Volume

The structure of the volume reflects its thematic focus on the practices of actors within the revival movements. It is organised into three main parts: the first focuses on Revival Groups in Conflicts (Part I, Chaps. 2–4), and the second on Agents of Revivalism regarding Opportunities and Limits of Self-Empowerment (Part II, Chaps. 5–8). The final part (Part III, Chaps. 9–11) deals with the theological, content-related and discursive aspects of conflict agendas of the popular in the revival movements, which also intersect with themes explored in Parts I and II. Each of the three parts follows a primarily chronological structure.

In Chap. 2, Witalij Morosow discusses the Moscow Martinists, a group of intellectuals who, from the 1780s, aimed to master the practical principles of alchemical natural philosophy through the project of building a so-called *Hermetic Library* – the largest collection of manuscript alchemical literature in Russian history. This project was closely linked to the translation of the works of Jacob Böhme and other theosophists into Russian. Indeed, the *Hermetic Library* encompassed a wide array of natural philosophical, theosophical and Hermetic writings since antiquity, akin to a *philosophia perennis*. The Martinists accessed this knowledge through their connections with high-ranking Prussian politicians who belonged to the Rosicrucians. The chapter illustrates the great popularity of alchemical interpretative frameworks as non-denominational bodies of knowledge among Russian aristocrats at the start of the 19th century, highlighting their transnational relevance. However, such activities, due to their political implications, led to persecution, particularly as the Martinists' efforts became a contentious issue. The Russian Orthodox Church, by contrast, maintained a cautious stance towards this non-conformist confessional

knowledge. Although the Martinists also aimed their publications at a broad audience, it was primarily the nobility who showed interest. The controversy surrounding the activities of the Martinists can be understood as a conflict between different varieties of high culture in Russian society.

The question of the entanglement of revival movements with political factors is also raised in the third chapter, which focuses on the *Mukti Revival* that occurred from 1905 to 1907 in India. The focus here is on the connections between concepts of revival, which are historiographically interpreted as one of the starting points of the Indian *Pentecostal Movement*, and colonial discourses and practices. Yan Suarsana emphasises the emergence of Pandita Ramabai as a key protagonist of the *Mukti Revival*, who had previously become known as a champion of women's rights in India and had been influenced in the USA by the *Holiness Movement* – which she perceived as an interdenominational *Low Church Movement*. However, the emancipatory impulse of an awakening of an authentic Indian church associated with the *Mukti Revival* was short-lived. Suarsana attributes this to the overwhelming interpretative sovereignty of colonial ideas of civilisation and "high culture" and to the extensive isolation of the few Indian protagonists of the *Mukti Revival* in their local contexts. The Indian *Pentecostal Movement* in the form of the *Mukti Revival*, interpreted by its protagonists as an expression of the undisguised popular aspects of Indian culture, collided with high cultural claims of a colonial and religious nature, which ultimately also prevailed locally.

In the fourth chapter, Susanne Kokel uses the example of the *Moravian Church*, a special church that emerged as early as the 18th century, to trace conflicting agendas of the popular in the field of (church) economy. She shows how the unique concept of church entrepreneurship for self-financing, which characterised the *Moravian Church* from the beginning, was increasingly called into question towards the end of the 19th century. At the same time, she asks what role was played in this process by the laypeople in the diaspora associated with the Moravian Church as a now highly cultural institution, who clearly outnumbered the actual members of the church. Kokel shows that the laity was significant in bringing about profound change in the theological assessment not only of church finances, but also of church entrepreneurship in general, and that this was accompanied by considerable conflicts. References to the emerging Free Churches and revival movements of the 19th century as role models for exclusively donation-based church financing also had an impact. Despite criticism from the diaspora, the Unity leadership initially continued to

expand its entrepreneurial activities and relied on a centralised and professionally managed business operation. Members and young theologians of the *Moravian Church*, on the other hand, took a critical view of these developments in the early 20th century and once again pushed for funding on the basis of donations. Thus, the laity's criticism in the 19th century had a lasting influence on the *Moravian Church*, although it ultimately did not abandon its tradition of company-based funding.

In the fifth chapter, the first within the thematic area "Agents of Revivalism: Opportunities and Limits of Self-empowerment", Diethard Sawicki presents the case of the lay prophetess Sara Gayer in Württemberg in the 1830s and 40s, based on detailed archival studies. The study is less a description of the course of events than a reconstruction of the interpretation of events by secular, spiritual and medical authorities. Above all, it is about the claim of these actors from different high cultures to interpretative sovereignty over the unique access to transcendence asserted by the protagonist. Historiographically, this claim can be located in the area of intersections between somnambulism or mesmerism and revival movements. Sawicki questions whether Gayer's case can be considered an instance of religious self-empowerment, given that she herself lacked control over the interpretation of her transcendental experiences. He suggests that despite this lack, she managed to carve out a significant space for herself through her claims of possessing special religious knowledge. The case reflects transformations of the popular in the field of religion in that, in connection with the disputes surrounding Sara Gaier's claim to extraordinary access to transcendence, a village opposition emerged against the pastor's authoritative role in theological matters. The involvement of a senior civil servant, asserting competing lay theological expertise, was pivotal in this conflict.

In the sixth chapter, Jakob Dahlbacka presents the self-image and actions of two colporteurs as an illustration of how the revival movement established itself in the late 19th century vis-à-vis the Lutheran state church in Finland, and how it institutionalised itself in the form of the *Evangelical Lutheran Association in Finland*. The backdrop here is political, as this establishment was largely facilitated by the repeal in 1870 of the Conventicle Act, which had been in force since 1726 and had prohibited religious gatherings outside the services of the Lutheran state church. Now laypeople could apply for a preaching licence. With the colporteurs as travelling booksellers and lay preachers, a social group characteristic of the revival movements in general comes into view, whose conflicts with

the clergy can be regarded as classic high–low-culture conflicts. Dahlbacka shows, however, that the relationship between the clergy and colporteurs in Finland was indeed ambivalent, insofar as the emergence of colporteurs was, at least initially, associated with the hope on the part of the clergy that they could work together to counter the shortage of pastors and secularisation tendencies in society, and thus cooperate rather than compete. The idea of co-operation initially also prevailed on the part of the *Evangelical-Lutheran Association*. It was precisely with the increasing professionalisation of the colporteurs, also as preachers, that they developed a feeling of spiritual superiority and with it the claim to have the actual expertise in matters of faith. This brought to the fore the aspect of competition to the church on the part of those involved in the revival movement.

The seventh chapter deals with the revival movements in the Waldensian minority church in Catholic Italy, which originated in the 13th century and has identified as Protestant since the 19th century. After an initial revival in the early 19th century influenced by the Swiss *Réveil,* Laura Popa notes a second wave of revival from 1860 onwards, which, unlike the first, was adapted by the Waldensian church leadership and institutionalised in the form of an evangelisation committee in the context of Italian national unification. 'Evangelisation' here carried a double meaning: it implied conversion both to the Protestant faith and also to a faith informed by the (institutionalised) revival movement, and it pertained to the whole of Italy. In this endeavour, the Waldensian Church was supported by revival movements and Free Churches in France, Scotland and Switzerland, whereby the *Second Great Awakening* in the USA also played a role. In particular, the chapter focuses on female actors in the Waldensian revival movement, including the teacher and Bible woman Giuseppina Pusterla. It discusses her conversion from the Catholic to the Waldensian Church as an act of religious self-empowerment. Moreover, it highlights her new, missionary roles as a Bible woman and teacher and thus as a lay theologian, insofar as these roles subtly undermined existing gender roles.

Evangelisation as a key theme of the revival movements of the 19th century is explored in greater depth in the following contribution (Chap. 8), in which Ruth Albrecht examines controversies surrounding female and male lay preachers in the German revival movements from their own perspective. The focus here is on general conflicts between churches and revival movements. The latter tried to transfer evangelisation by lay preachers to the German context as an element already established in the Anglo-American revival movements. Gender roles are also a particular focus here,

insofar as differences between the conflict profiles of male and female evangelists become clear: While male evangelists encountered resistance from church representatives – partly because they criticised liberal theology in their preaching – female evangelists met with resistance within the revival movements themselves. Moreover, it was welcomed when women were not involved in preaching but in other, new forms of Evangelisation such as Sunday schools within the revival movements. With regard to the emancipatory potential of the German revival movements, the overall picture is similarly ambivalent to that of the Waldensian revival movement in Italy: while the internal structures developed as decidedly masculine and gender roles endorsed by the church and society were officially maintained, women still managed to create new opportunities for involvement and challenged existing gender norms.

The ninth chapter, opening the third part of the volume which focuses on lay theology between *high* and *low culture*, looks at publications on visions of the afterlife in the works of Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling, a physician and representative of the German revival movement. Written around 1800, Jung-Stilling's works are placed within a broad temporal, cultural and spatial European context for a comparative study with Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. By comparing specific motifs, Grazia Dolores Folliero-Metz highlights a literary interconfessional transfer of ideas, positioning these works as embodying both canonical and popular cultural elements within lay theology. For Jung-Stilling, this implies – in addition to the incorporation of 18th-century spiritualist ideas – an integration of Catholic ideas of purgatory as a place of purification of souls after death. Further, Folliero-Metz draws parallels between Jung-Stilling's visual language and the illustrations in Dante's *Comedy* by William Blake, Jung-Stilling's contemporary from England. In addition, the three authors' critical stance on the church and culture and, in this context, their prophetic self-image and popularity are seen as connecting elements. Folliero-Metz emphasises that Jung-Stilling aimed to use his narratives of the afterlife to prompt a spiritual awakening among his contemporaries, diverging from the Enlightenment *zeitgeist*. His choice of literary genre, which melded elements of high and popular culture, significantly contributed to his popularity.

The tenth chapter examines the negotiation of high–low distinctions among editors and non-academic contributors to three 19th-century German theological journals. On the basis of a network analysis, Johan Smits examines how, in the course of the professionalisation of

theology – which included the founding of theological journals – allowed for partial inclusion of non-academic contributors, depending on the journal's profile. These contributors, often church representatives or teachers, were essential to achieving the necessary volume of content per issue. However, Smits suggests that their inclusion was sometimes strategic, inspired by the specific perspectives of the revival movements on the relationship between academic theology and lay theology. As far as the sources allow, Smits reconstructs the conflicts that arose from including non-academic contributors. He shows that journal editors who were academic theologians themselves made a clear distinction between contributions of academic and non-academic provenance, handling the latter with more editorial rigidity. Smits interprets these conflicts as high–low conflicts, the sharpness of which is explained by the tension between the desired professionalisation of academic theology and the impossibility of detachment from non-academic theology and church practice.

The concluding eleventh chapter draws a connection to the Anglo-American *Evangelical Movement* of the early 20th century. Cat Ashton uses the example of well-known rapture novels to examine how this literary genre of fiction was invented and used by authors of the *Evangelical Movement* to popularise apocalyptic visions of the end times and associated fears – and this against a background of traditional rejection of fictional literature. She sees this as a striking example of the skilful use of new media by the *Evangelical Movement* in the Anglo-American region, which demonstrates its ambivalent relationship to modernity and mainstream culture. The success of these publications in terms of their intention to reach a mass audience confirmed the authors' choice of literary medium, which purported to present readers with 'naked', unambiguous facts of biblical provenance. In this way, a worldview was conveyed according to which world history was to be divided into stages of salvation history and the dawn of a time of tribulation preceding the millennial reign of Christ was imminent. The true believers would escape this tribulation via the Rapture. Ashton interprets the rapture novels as a mirror of evangelical fears of various colours, which manifest themselves in anti-Semitism, anti-feminism or hostility towards science, among other things. Transformations of the popular can also be spoken of here insofar as these evangelical ideas – whose protagonists rejected all high theological culture as elitist and decadent – had a formative influence on American Protestant theology.

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PART I

Revival Groups in Conflicts

CHAPTER 2

Moscow Martinists as the Providers of the Rosicrucian Enlightenment in Russia: Enquiries into the Emergence of the *Hermetic Library*

Witalij Morosow

1 Introduction

The history of alchemy in Imperial Russia represents one of the most unusual and intriguing facets of intellectual life in Eastern Europe. Playing an important role in shaping new Romantic views on fundamental questions of natural history, alchemical literature in Russia around 1800 was not just associated with the search for the *elixir vitae* or the pursuit of gold-making. Much more importantly, alchemy provided a significant source of symbolic resources for the development of new forms of natural philosophy and theology that had not previously been widespread in Eastern Slavic Orthodox society. From this perspective, it is essential to note that the very process of translating a large number of sources from

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https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-75117-2_2

the history of alchemy was closely linked to the development of a new language or thesaurus, as only a few important works on alchemical *historia naturalis* were available in Russian until the last quarter of the 18th century.

In this context, particular attention is warranted for the intellectual circle of Nikolay I. Novikov (1744–1818), who emerged as one of the earliest and most influential advocates of the Martinist movement in the Russian Empire. Thanks to Novikov's circle, a project was carried out to prepare the largest manuscript alchemical collection in Russian history, known as the Hermetic Library. The prehistory of the establishment of this alchemical collection has not been studied sufficiently. Only a few sources of alchemical thought, which were translated and later included in this manuscript collection, were published during Novikov's lifetime, while the majority of translations remain in the form of manuscript volumes in two copies (i.e. Moscow and St. Petersburg versions) awaiting digitization.

The primary objective of the current study is to draw researchers' attention to the establishment of the *Hermetic Library* and to provide a framework for understanding the history of alchemy in the Russian Empire during the period between the 1780s and 1820s. This research specifically focuses on the problem of the background of the creation of the *Hermetic Library*, its place in the history of alchemy, and the role of Moscow Martinists in disseminating alchemical natural philosophy in Russia. The chapter also seeks to demonstrate how the dissemination of alchemy was intertwined with conflicts and contradictions between different cultural strata of Russian society.

2 Nikolay Novikov, His Circle and Their Activities

Nikolay I. Novikov was born on May 8, 1744, on his family estate in Tichvinskoe in the Moscow Governorate, into a Russian noble family. In 1756, he enrolled in the Gymnasium of the Imperial Moscow University, where he pursued his studies until 1759. Specifically, he focused on studying the French and German languages; however, he did not achieve proficiency in spoken language and, overall, by his own admission, did not achieve significant success in the field of foreign languages at all. In 1760, Novikov was expelled from the Gymnasium due to non-attendance of

classes. Following his exclusion, he served for many years in the Izmaylovsky Lifeguard Regiment (1762–1768) and then in the Murom Infantry Regiment (1768–1769). After military service, he found employment in the Collegium of Foreign Affairs of Russia.

From 1769 onward, he devoted himself entirely to publishing and journalistic pursuits. He developed an early interest in literature, philosophy, and social reform. Among his initial publications, one notices books and journals of satirical nature, historical works, and translations of philosophical literature, among others. It appears evident that Novikov harbored an ambition to undertake large projects and to introduce new names into literature. From the 1770s, he actively worked on creating historical projects, particularly those devoted to the heritage of Old Russian literature. Simultaneously, Novikov's interest in mystical literature grew, reinforced by close ties to German Rosicrucians, which directly correlates with his interest in hermetic philosophy and natural theology. Among the German intellectuals associated with Novikov's circle and its activity were diverse figures such as the mystical thinker and philosopher Johann Georg Schwarz (1751–1784), the poet Jakob Michael Reinhold Lenz (1751–1792), who played a significant role in the *Sturm und Drang* movement, the fervent adherent of the Order of the Golden and Rosy Cross Heinrich Jakob Schröder (1765–1822), and others.

Novikov's closest supporter and friend was the Russian state figure, moral thinker and translator Semyon I. Gamaleya (1743–1822), who effectively implemented two of Nikolay Novikov's most significant projects in the realm of the Occult Enlightenment in Russia. The first project entailed the translation of Jacob Böhme's *Opera Omnia* into Russian. The second project involved compiling the largest collection of alchemical literature in Russian history, known as the *Hermetic Library*. Both projects of the circle around Novikov were deeply intertwined. The translation of Böhme's works was driven by the aspiration to delve into the *speculative* principles of theosophical thought, while the creation of the *Hermetic Library* project aimed at mastering the practical or *operative* principles of natural philosophy. Both projects of the circle were closely associated with the study of the doctrine of signatures of nature, prevalent in the works of early Paracelsians and German theosophical authorities.

Modern research is aware of a list of books earmarked for translation, compiled by Semyon Gamaleya no earlier than 1814, which is preserved in two notebook copies, currently housed in the Arsenyev's Family Collection at the Russian State Library in Moscow. In these notes by

Gamaleya, alchemical treatises are listed in the same inventory as the works of Jacob Böhme and other authorities, suggesting that both of the main projects pursued by Novikov's circle were carried out practically concurrently. Therefore, it is clear that the project of the *Hermetic Library* was shaped by Novikov's circle in close connection with other projects devoted to the issues of spiritual revival of Christian European society.

3 Preconditions for the Emergence of the *Hermetic Library*

The exact timing of the creation of the *Hermetic Library* remains open to debate. We can only tentatively date the compilation of the *Hermetic Library*; dated manuscript volumes suggest that the work on creating the *Hermetic Library* began in the 1800s and continued until the 1820s, thus continuing even after Novikov's death. However, the foundational idea to establish a kind of *Theatrum chemicum ruthenicum* probably originated around 1782. This year saw the congress at the Wilhelmsbad resort (now a part of Hanau, Germany), which opened on July 16, 1782, under the auspices of Prince Ferdinand von Braunschweig (1721–1792).

The purpose of the congress was to regulate the activities of secret societies. Discussions primarily centered on adopting the *Rite écossais rectifié* by Jean-Baptiste Willermoz (1730–1824), but also other issues related to regulating the activities of secret spiritual societies throughout Christian Europe. The congress also addressed the status of the Martinists in Russia within the occult community framework. Representing the Russian Martinists was Johann Georg Schwarz, an ethnic German from the area of Siebenbürgen (Transylvania), who was one of the closest associates of Nikolay Novikov in Moscow.

Schwarz arrived in Prussia a year before the congress in Wilhelmsbad took place and laid the groundwork for establishing close ties with the Berlin Rosicrucians, who played a significant role in disseminating alchemical and theosophical literature in Europe. Schwarz was one of the most important mediators between Prussian and Russian mystical circles. He served as a professor at the Imperial Moscow University and played a key role in establishing the so-called *Friendly Academic Society*, a charitable organisation affiliated with Moscow University that sponsored students and enlightenment activities. This society successfully masqueraded as a university educational institution, but in reality it was organised with the

aim of involving students in activities of a religious-philosophical nature in the sense of spiritual revival, as understood by supporters of the Rosicrucian utopia. The majority of accomplished students who benefited from the support provided by the *Friendly Academic Society* were engaged in Novikov's translation projects. Thanks to Schwarz's efforts, the Order of the Golden and Rosy Cross began operating in Imperial Russia, thereby facilitating access to new editions of Prussian Rosicrucians, but also to other sources.

It is essential to mention that before moving to Moscow in 1779, Schwarz received a good education at the German universities of Halle and Jena. Later, Schwarz taught aesthetics, philosophy, and the German language, demonstrating profound knowledge of theosophical literature. Among his most notable students in Moscow was Alexander F. Labzin (1766–1825), a leader among non-denominational mystics during the reign of Alexander I (1777–1825). Labzin studied under Schwarz until his death in 1784. Subsequently, Labzin translated and published the works of Jacob Böhme (1575–1624), Pierre Poiret (1646–1719), Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling (1740–1817), Adam Sigismund Fleischer (18th century), Karl von Eckartshausen (1752–1803), and others in the first half of the 19th century. In Schwarz's own works, the influence of thinkers such as Paracelsus (1493/4–1541), Jacob Böhme, Johann Georg Gichtel (1638–1710), and Georg Friedrich Retzel (18th century) is clearly recognizable (Kondakov 2012: 7–220). Consequently, it was Schwarz who managed to establish intellectual contacts with Prussian Rosicrucians, enabling the acquisition and subsequent translation of relevant literature by Novikov's circle.

Whether the project of the *Hermetic Library* was formulated during Schwarz's lifetime is uncertain and overall unlikely. It is more plausible that the idea of creating a handwritten collection of alchemical works emerged only after the defeat of the Rosicrucians in 1792, Novikov's imprisonment by Catherine the Great (1729–1796), and his subsequent release by Tsar Paul I (1754–1801). The reason for Novikov's imprisonment by the empress was directly linked to his publishing activities related to Rosicrucian enlightenment. For the history of alchemy, it is crucial to emphasize that some of the alchemical treatises, which were later included in the *Hermetic Library*, were translated directly after the convention held at the Wilhelmsbad resort in 1782. Understanding the emergence of the *Hermetic Library* requires a closer examination of the fate of these early translations, to which we now turn.

4 Moscow Martinists as Distributors of Alchemical Literature

Initially, the concept of the *Hermetic Library* was conceived as a handwritten collection, or, more precisely, as two manuscript copies of the alchemical library, with one intended to be located in Moscow and the other in St. Petersburg. Thus, the alchemical collection was intended for a select circle of initiates who were supposed to have access to it in both capitals of Russia. The *Hermetic Library* was indeed translated, albeit in two different versions.

Research by St. Petersburg historian Yuri Kondakov has shown that after Novikov's death, the work on the Moscow and St. Petersburg collections was undertaken by two different groups (Kondakov 2018: 109). After the 30th volume in the Moscow Collection, there was a change in layout and name, and it became known as the *Continuation of the Hermetic Library*. From the 31st volume onwards, the contents of the collections no longer align. The Moscow collection consists of 49 volumes of manuscripts and is currently housed in the Russian State Library in Moscow. The second collection, which contains only 35 volumes, is located in the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg. The Moscow collection contains 212 alchemical treatises, while the St. Petersburg collection comprises 191 works.

Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that the initial translations of alchemical treatises, which later were included in the *Hermetic Library*, were prepared by Novikov's circle for *printing*. Moreover, Novikov openly sold some alchemical treatises in the 1780s. This indicates that the concept of the *Hermetic Library* as accessible to a very narrow circle of supporters formed later than the work on translating alchemical literature from Western European languages began.

One of the first alchemical works of this kind, which was initially published and made available for sale, and later became part of the *Hermetic Library*, was the *Chrysomander: eine allegorische und satyrische Geschichte von mancherley sehr wichtigen Inhalt*. This treatise, *Chrysomander*, presented in the form of an alchemical utopia, serves as an allegorical work about the attainment of the philosopher's stone. The Russian translation of the *Chrysomander* was made by Alexander A. Petrov (ca. 1760–1793) from the German edition of 1774 (Anon. 1774). The anonymous alchemical work was published in 1783 at Moscow University Press (Anon. 1783), i.e. completely openly and just a year after the congress in Wilhelmsbad took place (Fig. 2.1).

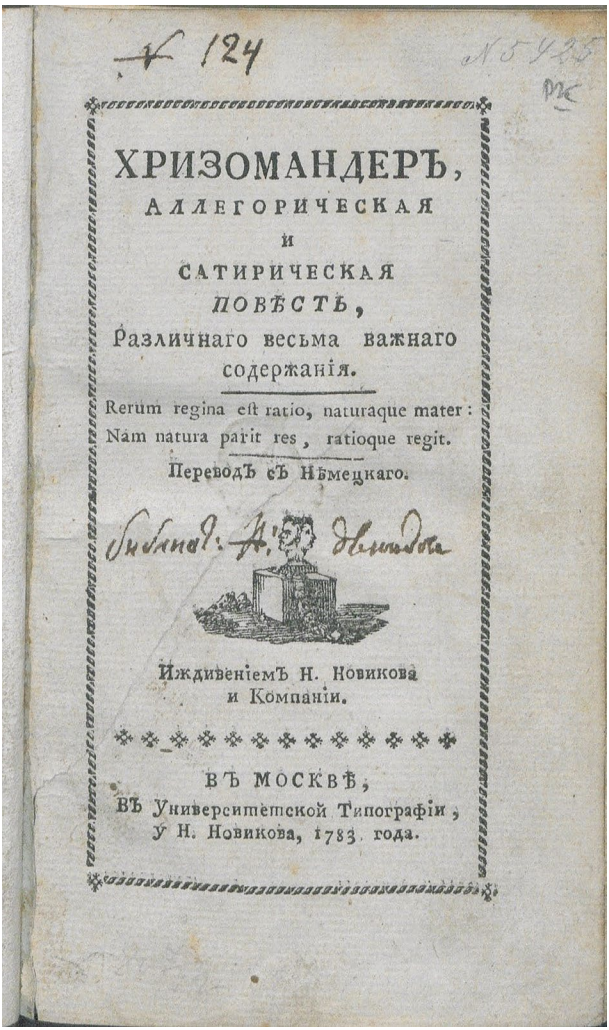

Fig. 2.1 The title page of the first Russian edition of the alchemical utopia *Chrysomander*, published by Nikolay Novikov in Moscow at the Moscow University Press in 1783

In the following year, 1784, with the assistance of the *Friendly Academic Society* at Moscow University, a Free Printing Company was established under the official management of Ivan V. Lopukhin (1756–1816). In fact, this printing house was directly affiliated with Novikov's circle, and the work on publishing translations of alchemical treatises was continued there. Later, the investigation into Novikov's case concluded that this printing press was established directly for the purpose of publishing literature with occult content deemed undesirable.

Several texts crucial to the history of alchemy, prepared by Novikov's circle, were published in the Free Printing Company. Among them, one of the first works was the translation of the alchemical treatise *Psalterium Chymicum* (Paracelsus 1784). This alchemical book was translated from the Amsterdam edition of 1771 and was attributed to Paracelsus, although its true author was Bernard Gilles Penot (1519–1617), a Renaissance alchemist and a friend of Nicolas Barnaud (1538–1604). The *Psalterium Chymicum* was translated by Alexei M. Kutuzov (1748–1797), together with Mikhail I. Bagryansky (1761–1813). The translation of this book was driven not merely by curiosity but by the practical alchemical intentions of Novikov's circle. This is evident from Kutuzov's expertise in chemistry and his subsequent assignment to the Berlin Rosicrucians to practice transmutations and seek the philosopher's stone, while Bagryansky's role as a professional physician further highlights their serious commitment to alchemy (Fig. 2.2).

The following year, Novikov's collection of publications was further enriched by the edition of the translation of the *Aurea Catena Homeri* (Kirchweger 1723) by Anton Joseph Kirchweger († 1746). Like the previous two editions, this work later became part of the *Hermetic Library*. This book, considered one of the most important works of the Rosicrucians, enjoyed extraordinary popularity and was translated into Russian multiple times. The basis for the first translation was the Berlin edition of 1781, prepared with the participation of the Prussian political figure Johann Christoph von Woellner (1732–1800) and the alchemist Johann Gottfried Jugel (1707–1786). Consequently, the authored texts by Woellner and Jugel on alchemy were also included in the *Hermetic Library*. An attempt to publish the first Russian translation of the *Aurea Catena Homeri* was undertaken by Novikov around 1785. The first part of Kirchweger's book (Kirchweger 1785) was already sent to print. Nevertheless, the initial translation was confiscated from Novikov's estate in Tichvinskoe. Almost the entire print run of this alchemical edition was destroyed (Fig. 2.3).

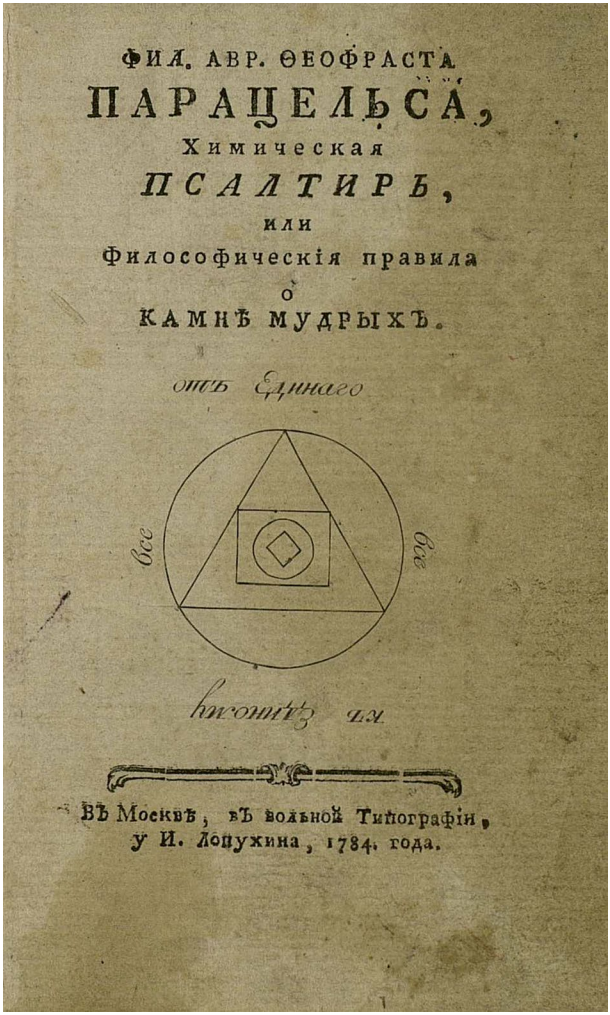

Fig. 2.2 Title page of the first Russian edition of the *Psalterium Chymicum*, published in Moscow at the Free Printing Company in 1784

Furthermore, in the 1780s, Nikolay Novikov prepared several other editions of alchemical works such as *Der Kompass der Weisen* (Birkholz 1779) and the collection of cosmogonical texts *Das Geheimnis der Schöpfung nach ihren sichtbaren und unsichtbaren Wundern* (Helmont

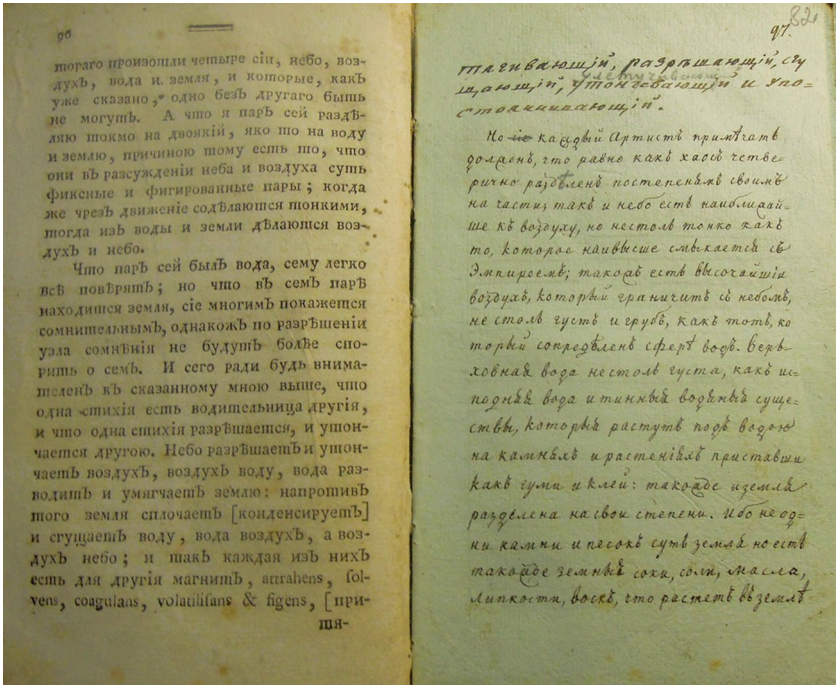

Fig. 2.3 A copy of the *Aurea Catena Homeri* (Moscow, 1785) from the demolished edition. RGB, F 14 (Arsenyev's Collection), No. 1007, p. 96f. [fol. 81b–82a] (Photograph by Witalij Morosow) (Some fragments of the edition have been carefully assembled in parts and combined with handwritten pages, where the lost printed pages have been restored.)

1701). The edition *Das Geheimnis der Schöpfung* was published in Moscow in 1785 (Helmont 1785) and included a number of works attributed at various times to Theophrastus Paracelsus, Valentin Weigel (1533–1588), Benedikt Biedermann (1543–1621), and Franciscus Mercurius van Helmont (1614–1698), making it one of the most intriguing sources for the history of natural philosophy in Russia at the end of the 18th century.

Significantly, the first translations of hermetic works were not just completed but also published, demonstrating Novikov's intent to distribute alchemical literature to a *broader audience*. Thus, it can be said that Novikov, as an enlightener, sought to introduce readers previously unfamiliar with alchemical philosophy to it, rather than limiting the knowledge

to a narrow circle of spiritual brothers and like-minded individuals. At the same time, the very circle of sources published since 1783 indicates that they belonged to a specific tradition.

For the present study, it is important to emphasize that the publication of texts such as the *Psalterium Chymicum* (Paracelsus 1784) and the *Aurea Catena Homeri* (Kirchweger 1785) may indicate that Novikov initially viewed the dissemination of alchemical literature in Russia within the context of the German Rosicrucian movement. Works attributed to Paracelsian and Theosophical authorities were particularly representative of this movement. The overwhelming majority of the initial translations of alchemical treatises were rendered from German, reflecting the interests typical of Prussian alchemists of that time.

This circumstance is not accidental, as these works were particularly esteemed by Prussian Rosicrucians, especially by Johann Christoph von Woellner, who not only had a deep interest in alchemy and maintained connections with the Martinists but also engaged in the reissuing of alchemical works himself. Woellner was one of those with whom Johann Georg Schwarz established connections in Berlin as early as the beginning of the 1780s. Woellner organised the supply of alchemical literature and instructions to leaders of the Order of the Golden and Rosy Cross in Russia. After Schwarz's death, he supported the candidacy of Baron Schröder as the person who was supposed to continue Schwarz's work. In summary, the transmission of alchemical knowledge in Russia after 1782 was directly linked to Woellner's activities, which later became one of the main reasons for the persecution of Novikov and the circle of translators working for him, as they came to be seen as conduits for Prussian political interests in the Russian Empire.

5 Novikov's Downfall and the Struggle Against Alchemy in Russia

Novikov was arrested in 1792. It is noteworthy that his confinement in the Schlüsselburg Fortress was connected to a series of events initially unrelated to the dissemination of alchemical literature. The publisher aroused suspicion due to the dissemination of underground literature of a historical nature. The initial investigation did not directly focus on his philosophical interests. Empress Catherine the Great ordered an inquiry into the appearance of derogatory writings about the Jesuit order, in

which the latter was depicted in a particularly negative light. According to Catherine's reasoning, such editions in the Russian Empire cast a shadow on the imperial household because the emergence of such writings undermined the authority of the word of the empress, who had promised protection to the order in her lands.

From 1785, Novikov's name directly appeared in investigations regarding secret printing presses in Russia. The suspicion arose because his books addressed subjects deemed unconventional by the church, prompting the empress to request an investigation into these ecclesiastical controversies. She ordered an investigation to determine whether they touched on matters of the Orthodox faith, instructed a search of Novikov's bookshop, and tasked Metropolitan Platon (in the world – Pyotr G. Lyovshin; 1737–1812) with examining Nikolay Novikov in the Law of God and inspecting the books he had published.

The Russian Orthodox Church has never officially evaluated the activities of Martinists and Rosicrucian groups. Metropolitan Platon was reluctant to handle the assigned task and found Novikov faithful to the rules of the church, but the majority of the books printed by him were withdrawn from sale. Among these books were the aforementioned editions on alchemical natural philosophy, including works like the *Chrysomander* and the *Psalterium Chymicum* (Paracelsus 1784), as well as several other books of occult content relating to questions of ritual magic, the ethos of spiritual knighthood and the significance of secret fraternities, and one book by Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin, *Des erreurs et de la vérité*, published in Russian translation in 1785 (Saint-Martin 1785). In total, only six editions from Novikov's numerous publications were singled out by Graf Alexander A. Bezborodko (1747–1799), the content of which raised particular concerns.

Subsequently, the investigation found that Novikov and his circle had been corresponding with Prince Ferdinand von Braunschweig and Johann Christoph von Woellner. The leaders of the Order of Gold- and Rosicrucian, such as Woellner and Hans Rudolf von Bischoffswerder (1741–1803), had a significant influence on Friedrich Wilhelm II (1744–1797), the new king in Berlin and Potsdam since 1786, who entered into an anti-Russian alliance with Sweden. Thus, it was concluded that Novikov's circle was directly linked to the activities of a secret organisation controlled by a hostile government, which was viewed by Catherine the Great as treason. The connections of Novikov's circle with Prussian political figures like Woellner began before the ascent of Friedrich Wilhelm II to the throne

and were directly associated with the interests of the religious revival movement and alchemy, as an integral part of true – that is, primordial – natural philosophy. However, from Catherine's perspective, these connections were seen, not without reason, as a political act against the Russian ruling dynasty. Indeed, this explains the empress's harsh reaction against Novikov and his publishing activities, as well as her crackdown on uncontrolled secret societies in 1792.

In addition to Novikov, the physician Mikhail Bagryansky was also imprisoned for his role in translating the work *Psalterium Chymicum* (Paracelsus 1784), attributed to Paracelsus. The alchemist Alexei Kutuzov, who also participated in the translation, was sent to study alchemical experiments in Berlin and witnessed the repression against his spiritual brothers. He never returned to Russia, meeting a tragic fate after years of conducting alchemical experiments, during which he lost his sanity and died in obscurity and poverty.

Indeed, the activities of the Rosicrucian order in Imperial Russia were crushed, and the circle of Moscow Martinists went into hiding after Novikov's imprisonment. However, defeating them on the political stage was not deemed sufficient. Discrediting them in the eyes of Russian high society became equally, if not more, important, and the Imperial government employed the theater as its weapon in this culture war.

6 *The Alchemist* of Alexander Klushin

The Russian Empress Catherine the Great, a proponent of enlightened absolutism, corresponded with many philosophers of the Enlightenment era, advocating for the principles of rationalism and opposing all forms of occult philosophy, which she saw as manifestations of obscurantism, superstition, and charlatanism. In her view, the dissemination of alchemical literature and the writings of authors like Saint-Martin represented elements of misconception and low education in society that needed to be debunked publicly for societal improvement.

Several writings against secret societies were composed in Imperial Russia even before Novikov's imprisonment. For instance, in 1786, the comedy *The Deceiver* was published, which directly ridiculed alchemy. Catherine the Great wrote it herself and published it incognito under the patronage of the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences (Catherine II, Empress of Russia 1786). The play satirizes the image of an alchemist-adventurer who deceives those around him, and it was directed against the

activities of Alessandro Cagliostro (1743–1795), who visited Russia in 1779.

A completely different image of the alchemist emerges in Russian literature after the imprisonment of Nikolai Novikov. Interest in this regard is represented by the comedy titled *The Alchemist* by the satirist Alexander I. Klushin (1763–1804). First performed in a theater in July 1793, this comedy received great acclaim from the audience. Its debut came one year after Novikov's imprisonment in Schlüsselburg and also after the Russian alchemist Kutuzov, unable to return to Russia, began unsuccessfully practicing alchemy in Berlin.

In this play, Klushin portrays the story of a Russian alchemist who does not try to deceive anyone but deceives himself willingly. The scenes depict various conversations between the inept alchemist named Vskipyatilin (the surname is derived from the verb *кипятить*, which means *to boil* or *to cook* in Russian), who dreams of finding the Philosopher's Stone, and his best friend Zdravomyslov (from *здраво мыслить,* i.e. *to think rationally, to use common sense*, thus Zdravomyslov is a *Person of Reason*), who tries to prove to Vskipyatilin the impossibility and futility of transmuting metals and searching for the Elixir of Life.

Throughout the day, Zdravomyslov visits his friend Vskipyatilin multiple times, each time disguised as a different character (such as an ugly old woman who wants to be young again, or an officer who wants his horse to come back to life, etc.), so that Vskipyatilin fails to realize that he is speaking to Zdravomyslov every time. After a series of humorous and sarcastic situations, Vskipyatilin finally comes to the conclusion that his pursuit only brings him problems and he swears never to seek the Philosopher's Stone again. Then Zdravomyslov reveals himself, and Vskipyatilin finally understands that he has spent the whole day with his best friend. This comedy became a great success in Russia. The Russian writer and fabulist Ivan A. Krylov (1769–1844) wrote an enthusiastic review of *The Alchemist* in the magazine *St. Petersburg Mercury*.

It is important to note that this comedy contains a reference to Paracelsus' work *Liber de nymphis, sylphis, pygmaeis et salamandris, et de caeteris spiritibus* (Paracelsus 1566). Upon hearing that the name of the alchemist Vskipyatilin is known to beings like gnomes and sylphs, the alchemist loses vigilance and does not notice how his wallet with money and his watch are being stolen. Obviously, this reference was intended to convey a specific meaning to the audience. Given that the alchemist Alexei Kutuzov, along with Mikhail Bagryansky, translated the *Psalterium Chymicum* (Paracelsus 1784) for Novikov, and the work was attributed to

Paracelsus during those years, it is reasonable to assume that Klushin did not just write a play about an abstract Russian alchemist, but rather that he specifically intended to remind the audience of Kutuzov's case. Since Kutuzov, once a naturalist and translator, had become a victim of alchemical dreams, a man who lost everything, including his own sanity. After Catherine's death, Kutuzov wished to return to Russia but died in a debtors' prison, consumed by madness and fear. The message of Klushin's play was to protect Russian intellectuals from the futile pursuit of gold-making.

7 Summary

Did the repression against the circle around Nikolay Novikov halt the spread of alchemy in the Russian Empire? Yes and no. Indeed, the activities of Novikov's circle were curtailed after 1792. However, the very project of the *Hermetic Library* – the first major manuscript collection of alchemical literature in the Russian language – was formed and successfully implemented largely due to the defeat of Rosicrucian activities. Novikov and his circle became very vigilant and realized their project secretly in the 1800s.

It is important to note that while the initial translations in the 1780s aligned with the German Rosicrucian philosophy of the 18th century, the project of the *Hermetic Library* aimed for a much more ambitious goal: to encompass the entire history of alchemy from the perspective of *philosophia perennis.* Essentially, the *Hermetic Library* project covers not just the texts of Paracelsians and Rosicrucians, but the complete spectrum of hermetic philosophy throughout history, including ancient and medieval authors from the entire Mediterranean region, as well as from other areas where the alchemy has reached.

The project was continued even after Novikov's death, during the reign of Emperor Alexander I (1777–1825), and work on the *Hermetic Library* persisted into the 1820s. Followers of Novikov's circle maintained their efforts to translate alchemical literature into Russian even in the 1840s, although their goal was no longer to create a library. Like any forbidden fruit, alchemy remained enticing. The alchemical texts translated within Novikov's circle circulated among Russian intellectuals in the 19th century through manuscript copies, leading to the dissemination of alchemical motifs in Russian literature, especially in the writings of romantic authors who saw in alchemy not so much a source of financial enrichment or life prolongation as a wellspring of metaphors and concepts that stimulated the imagination of their readers.

The chapter has highlighted the popularity of alchemical patterns of interpretation as bodies of knowledge that were not directly dependent on confessional traditions in aristocratic circles in Russia at the beginning of the 19th century, along with their close transnational connections to Germany. There was suspicion that Novikov's books touched on matters of the Orthodox faith. However, the massive conflicts between representatives of alchemy and the government in Russia, resulting from the claim to religious interpretation, were of a political nature. They can be understood as conflicts between different varieties of high culture in Russian society, and, more broadly, as part of the European debate on the nature of the Enlightenment.

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CHAPTER 3

Of Culture and (Indian) Nation: The *Mukti Revival* in Colonial Discourse

Yan Suarsana

1 Pandita Ramabai and the Mukti Mission

The so-called *Mukti Revival* (not only for contemporary witnesses) is firmly connected with the name of Ramabai Dongre Medhavi (1858–1922), better known as the Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati. Taking place between 1905 and 1907 within the compound of the *Mukti Mission*, a widow's home and orphanage near Pune/Maharashtra, it is usually considered an early center for revivalist (if not Pentecostal) spirituality in India (Suarsana 2014: 178–182). Its central protagonist and founder of the *Mukti Mission*, Pandita Ramabai, was born in 1858 near Mangalore in western India, where she received a profound education in Sanskrit and Brahmanic literature from her father, the Brahmanic scholar Anant Shastri Dongre, contrary to customary practice (Ramabai 1883/2000a: 116). After the decease of her parents in 1874, she first toured "various parts of India" (Ramabai 1883/2000a: 117) as a Sanskrit scholar, giving public lectures in which she called for the comprehensive education of women. In 1878,

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V. Albrecht-Birkner, S. Siedek-Strunk (eds.), *Revival Movements as Conflict Agendas of the Popular in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-75117-2_3

she received the scholarly title of a Pandita from respected pandits in Calcutta and acquainted with representatives of the *Brahmo Samaj*, a famous religious reform organization, in the context of which she was able to continue her lectures on the emancipation of Indian women (Kosambi 2000: 5f.). In 1880, she married the lawyer Bipin Behari Das Medhavi, a member of a lower caste, which was also contrary to custom of that time. However, Medhavi died in 1882, leaving behind his wife and a daughter named Manorama (1881–1921) (Ramabai 1883/2000a: 117f.).

After the death of her husband, the young widow decided to study medicine in England. In order to achieve this, she went into the care of the Anglican Community of St. Mary the Virgin (CSMV), an Anglo-Catholic/*High Church* women's order based in Wantage/Oxfordshire. Once there, she and her daughter were baptized in the *Church of England* in 1883 (Kosambi 2000: 8f.). Meera Kosambi, who has translated and edited numerous of Ramabai's writings from Marathi into English, suspects that her rather sudden conversion to Christianity was due to intense pressure from the Wantage Sisters, who saw the "study of Christianity away from other distractions prior to actual conversion" (Kosambi 2000: 14) as the "basis of their financial and practical support" (Kosambi 2000: 14) of this Indian woman. Ramabai herself, however, in her later stylized autobiographical notes recalls as follows:

> After my visits to the [Rescue] Homes at Fulham […] I began to think that there was a real difference between Hinduism and Christianity. I asked the Sisters who instructed me to tell me what it was that made the Christians care for, and reclaim the 'fallen' women. […] Thus my heart was drawn to the religion of Christ. […] I was hungry for something better than what the Hindu Shastras gave. I found it in the Christians' Bible and was satisfied. (Ramabai 1907/2000b: 307f.)[1]

[1] In this context, Gauri Viswanathan considers it a mistake to regard Ramabai's conversion to Christianity to be "motivated entirely by assimilationist motives" (Visvanathan 1998: 121), while charging her for "essentially rejecting her own cultural background in the act of identification with Western traditions and thought" (Visvanathan 1998: 121). Instead, Viswanathan considers "Ramabai's search for a moral and theological framework of social critique" (Visvanathan 1998: 121) to be decisive in countering the "obedience to the law (which she considered to be the source of human enslavement)" (Visvanathan 1998: 123) with the obedience to the word of God: "Her search for religion was essentially a search for viable ways of defining and realizing liberty far outside the boundaries of priestly intervention" (Visvanathan 1998: 123).

Fig. 3.1 Pandita Ramabai during her stay in the United States (Title page of Ramabai 1887, Photo by Frederick Gutekunst, Philadelphia)

In early 1886, Ramabai traveled to the United States, having accepted an invitation from Rachel Bodley (1831–1888), president of the *Woman's Medical College* of Pennsylvania, to attend the graduation of a distant relative, Anandi Gopal Joshi (1865–1887), who was to become the first Indian woman to receive a doctorate (Kosambi 2003: 22–26). Kosambi assumes that the following "Ramabai phenomenon" (Kosambi 2003: 23) in the United States was largely due to the fact that her profession as a Sanskrit scholar, her appearance in Brahmin robes (Fig. 3.1), and her 'Hindoo' origins met with a general enthusiasm for India at the time and surrounded Ramabai with a fascinating aura of the exotic (Kosambi 2003: 4).

On the other hand, her English education and Christian faith made the Pandita appear as 'one of us' right from the start. From March 1886 to the end of 1888, she traveled from coast to coast, conducted a study of

American education and "lectured on the need to educate Indian women, especially widows" (Kosambi 2003: 22). For despite the *Widow Remarriage Act*, which had already passed in 1856, it was still common in numerous parts of India to deny high-caste women remarriage after their husbands' passing. Instead, widows had to eke out their continued existence in an abstemious life, often in the service of the families of her deceased husbands. Frequently, they were disowned (especially in times of family economic difficulties) and were thus left to fend themselves in destitution (Kosambi 2000: 6f.). In this context, Ramabai's book *The High-Caste Hindu Woman* was published in Philadelphia in June 1887, immediately attracting international attention. It is still considered the "unofficial Indian feminist manifesto" (Kosambi 2003: 22). However, the enthusiasm for the Pandita culminated in the founding of the *American Ramabai Association* in Boston in December 1887, under Unitarian minister and noted author Edward Everett Hale (1822–1909) "with the object of giving education to high-caste child widows of India" (Butler 1910: 9).

The fact that Ramabai had converted to Christianity certainly played a large role in the broad support and sympathetic reception of the young widow among the U.S. population. This all the more so because the 19th-century American women's movement had been considerably influenced by revivalist circles (Kosambi 2003: 24). Accordingly, the narrative (later also propagated by Ramabai herself) is particularly widespread in evangelical and missionary literature, stylizing her conversion to Christianity as a recognition of the alleged falseness and cruelty of Indian culture and thus giving her the veneer of a convert to the "blessings of [Western] civilization and of education" (Chapman 1891: 2).

At the end of 1888, Ramabai traveled back to India. In March 1889, she opened the *Sharada Sadan* ('House of Learning') in Chowpatty near Bombay, a religiously neutral home for high-caste widows who had been denied an education because of their family background. However, after accusations of efforts to Christianize its inhabitants came to light, the institution gradually lost all support from local society from 1891 onward (Butler 1922: 21–25). This isolation from its immediate social environment also affected the *Mukti Mission*, a home for child widows and orphans, which Ramabai had founded in 1896 in the village of Kedgaon near Pune to face off the severe famines in the region. In contrast to the Sharada Sadan, the *Mukti Mission* was conceptualized as a decidedly Christian, albeit interdenominational, institution (Kosambi 2003: 29).

Ramabai, accompanied by her daughter Manorama, compensated for their local isolation by maintaining active contacts abroad, especially in England and the United States. The central medium of communication was their magazine *Mukti Prayer Bell*, founded in 1903 and edited by Manorama, addressing an international audience and calling for donations to the *Ramabai Association* as well as to the *Mukti Mission*.

The project was crowned with success: by 1900, 2000 girls and women were living in Mukti (Kosambi 2003: 29), where they were instructed in the mission's own workshops. Their further training, in addition, included professions that were traditionally reserved for men (such as carpentry, weaving, etc.). In 1922, after Ramabai's death, the American *Christian and Missionary Alliance* acquired the institution (Fuller 1928: 5). It still exists today.

2 The Religious Orientation of the *Mukti Mission*: Revival as an Anti-Colonial Program

Despite its interdenominational orientation, the Mission's religious basis was clearly dominated by the U.S. *Holiness Movement* from the beginning, in which it was embedded institutionally in the form of the *Ramabai Association*. This fact can be explained by Ramabai's break with the *Church of England*, which she had become acquainted with mainly in the form of the Anglo-Catholic sisters in Wantage. Her detachment was initially caused by a conflict between the Indian woman and the sisters in Wantage, above all with her mentor Sister Geraldine, culminating in a bitter discord between the two women (Suarsana 2013: 142–145). The dispute had ignited over Manorama's education, foreshadowing the interpretive conflict that would later arise in the course of the *Mukti Revival*: In a letter, Ramabai complained to Sister Geraldine that Manorama had already been introduced to the "mysteries" of the Holy Trinity without her knowledge and therefore demanded:

> I desire you and other kind friends with all love and honour not to teach my child anything about the mysterious Trinity, and about the deity of our Saviour, until you quite convince me that these doctrines *are* according to the Bible. […] It has pleased God to make me Mano's mother, and it is my duty not to let her learn anything which according to the inner teaching of God, I do not think to be right, until she is old enough to think and judge for herself. (Ramabai 1885/1977a: 84–87)

The front lines continued to harden when Geraldine insisted in a letter to Dorothea Beale (1831–1906), the principal of the *Cheltenham Ladies' College*, where Ramabai studied, that Ramabai

> has to learn that as a Christian, she is bound to accept the authority of those over her in the Church. She is a little inclined to take too independent a line, and though this is but a temporal matter, yet she should be willing even in this, to accept the opinion of those, who from their position in India and from their experience had a right to speak. If you could make this an occasion of giving her a little teaching on submission to authority, I think, the disappointment would not be without fruit to her. (Geraldine 1885/1977: 47)

Accordingly, these lines evoked an indignant response in Ramabai:

> I am, it is true, a member of the Church of Christ, but am not bound to accept every word that falls down from the lips of priests or bishops. […] I have just with great efforts freed myself from the yoke of the Indian priestly tribe, so I am not at present willing to place myself under another similar yoke by accepting everything which comes from the priests as authorised command of the Most High. (Ramabai 1885/1977b: 58–61)

Against this background, it is hardly surprising that Ramabai and Manorama did not return to England after their trip to the United States, but instead went directly to India at the end of 1888 (Fig. 3.2).

Ramabai's book on her stay in America (*The Peoples of the United States*), published in Bombay in 1889, testifies that her departure from the *Church of England* was not due solely to her reluctance of its hierarchical structures. Rather, during her time in the States, she had developed a reflective anti-colonial agenda, positioning a free and democratic America against the contemporary British Empire:

> A comparison between some of the rules of the British Government and those of this republic would immediately reveal the superiority of the latter. In Britain […] it is possible to fight a war with countries like Egypt, Burma, Afghanistan, etc., and sacrifice hundreds of thousands of human lives, and to suffocate a poor country like India under the burden of a tremendous debt, if only a handful of ministers nod their approval. No one consults the Parliament in such cases. Five or six selfish persons can ruin the entire country […] in the name of the Queen […]. (Ramabai 1889/2003: 87)

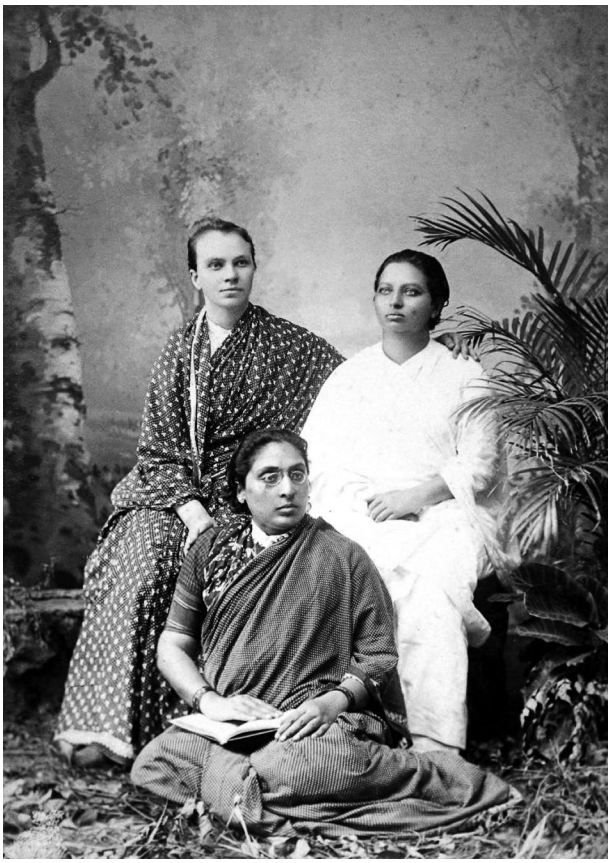

Fig. 3.2 Ramabai (on the right) with her friend Soonderbai Powar (1856–1921) and an unknown missionary (Photo by Molkenteller Hammes & Co.)

In Ramabai's eyes, the church herself is closely tied to the monarchy and, accordingly, is involved in the exploitation of India:

> It is said that even the bishops and other clergymen of the Church of England who go to our country to perform ecclesiastical duties for the Government are paid fat salaries from the Treasury of India [...]. (Ramabai 1889/2003: 154)

In contrast, the U.S. is stylized as a role model for a future, free and decolonized India:

> In the latter part of the eighteenth century, when the American people were trying to sever their political ties with England and become independent, they put aside their internal denominational differences and acted in unison. In the fear that their country would acquire a permanent stamp of English political power and of 'The Church', they […] put up a fight against England, and became independent. (Ramabai 1889/2003: 155)

Accordingly, the Pandita propagates secularism of the state and the accompanying freedom of religion as a prerequisite for Indian national unity:

> The people of our own country should give this matter serious thought. Although we belong to different denominations and religions, we can and must unite in the work of the national and public good. […] Hindus, Mohammedans, Christians, Shaivites, Vaishnavites, devotees of Ganapati, Shias, Sunnis, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Unitarians, Trinitarians, and believers in thirty-three *crore* gods – all these should put aside religious animosity and unite themselves in order to serve the country. (Ramabai 1889/2003: 166)

Against this background, Ramabai's turn to the evangelical *Holiness Movement* during her trip to the U.S. is also comprehensible, as she was totally dismissing her *High Church* connections and embracing some kind of *Low Church*-like opposition instead. Initially, however, she was rather quenched by the denominational diversity of Christian groups in England and the U.S.:

> No one can have any idea of what my feelings were at finding such a Babel of religions in Christian countries, and at finding how very different the teaching of each sect was from that of the others. […] The differences did not seem of any more importance than those existing among the different sects of Brahmanical Hindu religion. They only showed that people were quarrelling with each other, and that there was no oneness of mind in them. (Ramabai 1907/2000b: 308f.)

This "oneness of mind", which the Pandita was later to propagate as the basis of a future Indian nation, seems to have become manifest to her in Anglo-Saxon revivalism, a movement that had developed across all

denominations during the 18th and 19th century, and therefore constantly emphasizing its own super-denominationalism. Accordingly, after her return to India, Ramabai attended numerous camp meetings of revivalist missionaries from England and the U.S., such as George Frederick Pentecost (1842–1920) or William Haslam (1818–1905), sometimes accompanied by her students of the *Sharada Sadan* (Ramabai 1907/2000b: 315f.).

This helps to explain why the *Mukti Mission*, founded in 1896, clearly followed in its statutes the revivalist faith missions such as the *China Inland Mission*, characterized by denominational independence and essentially financed by donations (Anderson 2007: 22–31):

> The Mukti Mission is a purely undenominational, evangelical, Christian Mission, designed to reach and help high caste Hindu widows, deserted wives and orphans from all parts of India. It aims at training the young women and girls sheltered in Mukti home, mentally, morally and spiritually. […] After receiving a thorough training for some years, they go out as teachers or Bible women to work in different Missions, and many of them get married and settle happily in their own homes. (Ramabai 1903: 10)

The "Friends" of the *American Ramabai Association*, acting as financial sponsors, are urged to pray not only that the girls

> will be filled with the Holy Spirit, and that the Lord of the harvest will send out many of them as his harvesters (Ramabai 1903: 10);[2]

but also

> that the whole Indian Church may become a great evangelizing agency, that the good news may be preached by Christians to every man, woman, and child in India – just as freely as they themselves have received it. (Ramabai 1903: 10)

[2] For this biblical motif, see Matthew 13:10.

3 The *Mukti Revival* as an Awakening of the Indian Church

The American support of the *Mukti Mission* was not limited to financial donations. Additionally, in personnel matters, the mission maintained diverse valuable contacts with American and British faith missionaries in India. In 1897, Ramabai's closest employee – Minnie Florence Abrams (1859–1912) – was recruited from these ranks (Fig. 3.3). The U.S. Methodist had first been employed as a teacher in a Methodist girls' school in Bombay before she had moved through India as an independent full-time evangelist (Suarsana 2013: 199–202). The staffing decision bore immediate fruit, in that during Abrams' first week in Mukti, a "great and general awakening" (Dyer 1906: 66) occurred there, which "prevailed not only among those who had been rescued from famine [and therefore remained unbaptized], but reached to a goodly number of the widows

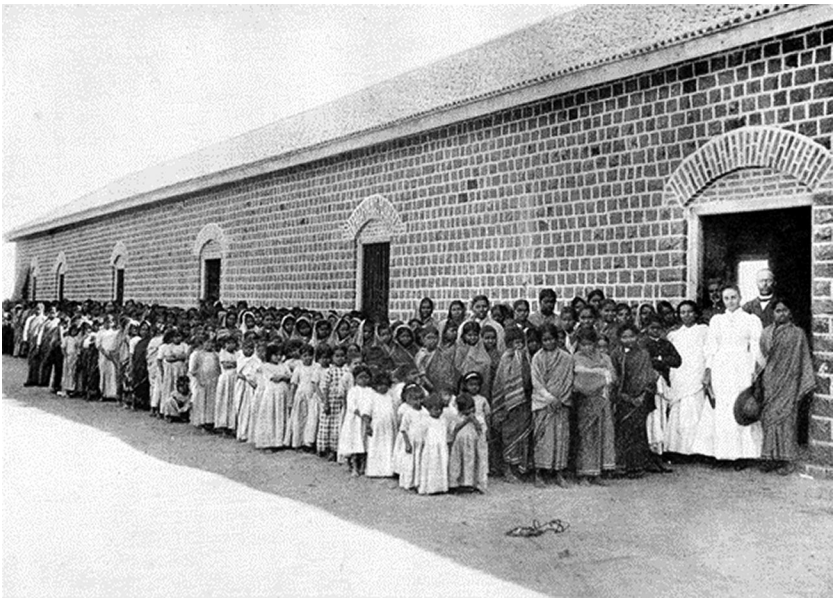

Fig. 3.3 Residents and staff of the Mukti Mission, including (in white dresses) Ramabai and Minnie Abrams (Photograph taken from Dyer 1906: 64)

who were previously in the Sharada Sadan" (Dyer 1906: 66).[3] In 1902, Abrams, in her capacity as Ramabai's right hand, traveled to New Zealand and Australia together with Manorama to promote the work of the *Mukti Mission* in the wake of the holiness campaigns of Reuben A. Torrey (1856–1928) and Charles Alexander (1867–1920) (McGee 2002: 93). After news of the *Welsh Revival*, which had also swept the Welsh mission stations in the Khasi Hills in northeast India, had arrived in Kedgaon in 1905, another revival fell upon the *Mukti Mission* in the middle of the same year, generating a great deal of media coverage in the revivalist press (Suarsana 2014: 182–192).

Certainly, the coverage of the revival initiated by Ramabai herself produced this strong resonance, in particular evident in Manorama's magazine *Mukti Prayer Bell*, which was tailored to an international readership. In October 1905, a detailed text written by the Pandita herself was published, placing the *Mukti Revival* in the context of a worldwide awakening that had just begun in Wales and was at this moment also taking hold in India:

> In the evening prayer meeting on 30th of June the Spirit of God came on those praying people with such power, that it was impossible for them to keep silent. They burst out in tears; loud cries, were heard in all parts of the Church building, and we were awe-struck. […] Little children, middle sized girls and young women wept bitterly and confessed their sins. Some few saw visions and experienced the Power of God, and things that are too deep to describe. (Ramabai 1905: 7)

After this event, the prayer meetings were always attended by a large number of girls.

> The first Tuesday of the month of July – the day of prayer, was indeed a day of great blessing. Many present received much blessing and all were wonderfully impressed. (Ramabai 1905: 7)

As for the theological interpretation, meanwhile, Ramabai lets her "fellow worker" Minnie Abrams have her say:

[3] Dyer traces the revival to the services held at the Sharada Sadan by U.S. preacher William W. Bruere (d. 1927).

> For more than six weeks a special and marvellous work of the Holy Spirit has been going on at Mukti. A large number of girls and women had been deeply convicted of sin, and filled with joy of pardon, and many had received the cleansing and fulness of the Spirit for life and service. (Ramabai 1905: 9)

The highlight of the report, however, is a section entitled "Stray Thoughts on Revival", apparently representing an article Ramabai originally published in the revivalist magazine *Bombay Guardian*. There, she defends the revival against various accusations, referring essentially to the external form of the revival as manifestation of the 'wild' and uncivilized nature of heathenism:

> The Spirit filled girls cannot suppress their sorrow for sin or their joy of Salvation. They burst into loud crying, and laughing, they shake, they tremble, some of them dance with joy, and almost all pray simultaneously in loud voices. (Ramabai 1905: 15)

Ramabai's reaction to this criticism is, as usual, trenchant and in addition partly reminiscent of the confrontation with Sister Geraldine in Wantage:

> I am nothing but a babe in Christ, just out of dark heathenism. I am not in a position to teach old Christians and Missionaries, who have had years and years of Christian teaching to help them in life. But I am certain of one thing, that those, who like me, are newly born in Christ, need a word of warning. I beseech you dear brethren and sisters, not to lay down rules for God as regards the way in which He shall send the much desired revival among us […]. (Ramabai 1905: 16)

In contrast, the teachings and formalized practices of "[s]ome of the missionaries" had made the church of India "cold and lukewarm" (Ramabai 1905: 18). The temporary shutdown of the mission's workshops and school due to the revival is also brought into position against the missionary work ethos:

> The children in school, must do so much work. That is the rule we have made. We must relax our rule a little bit, and give time to look after their souls and ours too. […] The heads of Christian Institutions […] will keep their people out of the Kingdom of heaven if they will not allow them time for fasting and prayer. (Ramabai 1905: 18)

Against this manifestation of a formalized Western 'high culture' that has taken hold of the Indian Church, the Pandita now outlines a kind of popular counter-program[4] through which the latter could break out of its lethargy and alienation caused by Western missionaries: with the help of a revival that must not be adulterated by human hands, thus revealing the true character of the Indian Church:

> Let the revival come to Indians so as to suit their nature and feelings. God has made them, He knows their nature […]. (Ramabai 1905: 18)

This nature, however, is decidedly contrasted with the Western one in that the outward expressions of Indian revivalism need by no means "conform with the ways of Western people and their lifelong training" (Ramabai 1905: 18f.). In Ramabai's eyes, revival can only have a lasting effect in India if it is understood as representing the undisguised 'popular side' of Indian culture. Therefore, "English and other Western missionaries" (Ramabai 1905: 19) should begin to engage with "Indian nature", by which "I mean the religious inclinations, the emotional side of the Indian mind" (Ramabai 1905: 19) – a topos apparently indebted to Orientalist discourses. In this context, she urgently warns against making the mistake of trying to take control of the work of the spirit among the Indian people through mediation:

> I tried to lay down some rules for God's work at the beginning of the revival at Mukti. […] I wanted to be very proper and conduct meetings in our old civilized ways. But God would have none of my ways. He laid His hand on me, and put me low down in the dust […]. I humbled myself under His mighty hand after receiving this severe rebuke, and took my hand off the work. The Holy Spirit has full liberty to work in us, and He takes charge of the revival meetings at Mukti. (Ramabai 1905: 17)

In consequence, the Pandita pleads for abandoning the paternalism of Western missionaries and their ways of working, ritual practices and manners in order to pave the way for an authentically Indian church:

[4] The similarity of this program to the ideas of earlier thinkers such as Keshab Chandra Sens and Kali Charan Banerjees cannot be denied. Although the Pandita does not explicitly refer to their writings here, it is not unlikely that the much-read scholar knew the theories in the context of the *Brahmo Samaj*. Cf. above.

> Let them not try to conduct revival meetings and devotional exercises altogether in Western ways and conform with Western etiquette. If our Western teachers and foreignized Indian leaders want the work of God to be carried on among us in their own way, they are sure to stop or spoil it. (Ramabai 1905: 19)

The renewed flare-up of the revival in early 1907 is defended by Ramabai against criticism with similar arguments. The event was apparently influenced by the great impression that the news of the *Azusa Street Revival* in Los Angeles in 1906 had left in Mukti, especially on Minnie Abrams (Suarsana 2013: 206–217; 2014: 186–189). This revival is generally regarded as the initial spark of the U.S. *Pentecostal Movement* (Burgess 2002: 1016), which, for its part, is considered by many researchers to have played a decisive role in shaping U.S. popular culture (e.g. Wacker 2001). And due to Azusa's great international appeal, it is not surprising that thenceforth reports circulated that in Mukti, the speaking in tongues was practiced, further intensifying the criticism of the revival (Suarsana 2014: 188–192). In her article in the *Mukti Prayer Bell*, published in September 1907, Ramabai first of all places the renewed flare-up again within the worldwide awakening that had begun in 1905, which she now characterizes as "Pentecostal". Meanwhile, large parts of the text again deal with the "bitter criticism" (Ramabai 1907: 6) of phenomena such as "shaking of the body and other physical demonstrations, speaking in different tongues, simultaneous prayer" (Ramabai 1907: 6). These have been called hysteria even by "our own brothers and sisters" (Ramabai 1907: 6) – a discourse that can also be found in a similar form in the case of the *Azusa Street Revival* (Robeck 2006: 129–135). And, once again, the Pandita counters this accusation by referring to the popular and authentically Indian character of the revival – in clear distinction to the formalized 'high-cultural' practices embodied by Western missionaries.

> Why should not the Holy Spirit have liberty to work among Indian Christian people? And why should everything that does not reach the high standard of English and American civilization, be taken as coming from the devil? […] I see that God is doing great things for us and among us. […], and what had happened here, during this revival, is not an imitation of anybody. (Ramabai 1907: 10)

4 The Empire Strikes Back

The letters cited by Ramabai display that various writers who regarded themselves as 'high-cultured' in fact obviously lacked manners. This is particularly evident in numerous examples illustrating the disparagement of the whole Indian people as well as the insulting of individuals, when it comes to the outer shape of the revival in Mukti. Accordingly, the general reactions to the remarks of the Pandita concerning the awakening of the Indian church seem to have been quite harsh, although there are only hints about it; for Ramabai's short letter to the "Dear Friends" (Ramabai 1906: 3), published in *Mukti Prayer Bell*'s January issue of 1906, does not mention any further reproaches. However, its style and argumentation differ completely from her article on the original outpouring of 1905, published in the previous issue. The letter first starts with a brief assurance of the common matter:

> I know you will join me in praising God with deep thankfulness for His goodness and mercy to us unworthy children of His. (Ramabai 1906: 3)

In addition to these blessings, the devil is up to no good in Mukti, trying to "catch the unwary in his net, and draws them out of the light into a greater darkness than before" (Ramabai 1906: 3). As a result,

> [m]any of us who have received the gracious Spirit to dwell in us, are being sorely tempted by the devil in various ways. (Ramabai 1906: 3)

What is striking about this passage is that this time the Pandita explicitly sees herself as a part of those exposed to the temptations of the devil. Subsequently, she reports on the fruits of the revival, especially the extensive prayers and intercessions, in particular including the

> English officials and English soldiers, that they may be revived by a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and may be used of God to bring the people of this country to Himself. (Ramabai 1906: 4)

Without a doubt this is a complete reversal of Ramabai's accusations regarding the paternalism of the Indian church by Western missionaries from her previous text, by conceptualizing the British colonial forces as God's instruments to Christianize India.

Accordingly, her effusive expression of gratitude "to my fellow-workers, who have left their home-land and home comforts, and are working with me" (Ramabai 1906: 5), as well as her explicit appreciation of the readers of the *Mukti Prayer Bell*, are diametrically opposed to her previous statements:

> The whole work at Mukti is altogether dependent upon your prayer and ours. Mukti Mission will exist just as long as you and we here, shall be praying [and donating, one might add, YS] for it. (Ramabai 1906: 5)

– a passage providing strong indication that meanwhile, the headwinds were apparently facing the substantial foundations of the mission.[5] In this context, Ramabai's detailed description of the processes set in motion by the revival is obviously concerned to emphasize the fact that order has been re-established in Mukti:

> [The girls] are sent out by turns, so that every one of the large company in the praying bands, gets her turn to go out every twelfth day. The Lord put this plan in my heart […]. The girls whose turn it is to go out into the villages, meet in a room on the previous night or in the morning, and have a long prayer meeting. (Ramabai 1906: 4)

Moreover, the closure of the school and the accompanying discontinuation of the workshops no longer seem to be an issue: "About 60 girls and women go out daily", but only if it is "possible to send them away from home" (Ramabai 1906: 4).

Against this backdrop, it is hardly surprising that until Ramabai's report on the renewed flare-up of the revival in 1907, no further personal statements from her concerning the *Mukti Revival* can be found. Even after her publication in September 1907, we only know of two small newspaper clippings including some remarks on the awakening, being of rather general character and therefore completely innocuous.

[5] At this point, the conflict in which many Indian Christians had already found themselves at the time of the founding of the first independent organizations such as the *Christo Samaj* or the *National Church* in Madras is revealed: on the one hand, they longed for independence from the colonial conquerors; on the other hand, Indian Christians in particular were often dependent, especially financially, on the European missionary societies and other foreign donors (Suarsana 2013: 89–94).

5 Conclusion

The sources examined above clearly demonstrate that the narrative of an awakening Indian church eventually emancipating itself from the influence of Western civilization and 'high culture' in its very own authentic nature, could not lend any plausibility to the revivalist discourse of the time.

On the one hand, this is certainly due to the fact that revivalism was inextricably intertwined with the colonial discourse. In this context, there was no doubt (even for the Pandita, as we can see above) about the hierarchical structure in which the different cultures of the world stood in relation to each other: At the top, the 'high culture' of Europe, followed (in graduated order) by the 'semi-civilized' or 'uncivilized' inhabitants of the colonial territories, who were seen not only as the objects of religious, but also of civilizing mission (Pannikar 2007). Thus, even though the revivalist press usually gave each and every revival outside of Europe rapturous coverage, the articles were always very careful to fit the various awakenings into their own narratives (Suarsana 2014: 189–192). Accordingly, among the majority of missionaries, we can find the confident awareness that the spiritual outpourings in their 'sphere of influence' naturally required control and care by themselves as 'civilized' supervisors. This is particularly evident in the case of Ramabai's right hand Minnie Abrams, who had joined the young *Pentecostal Movement* after her return to the United States in 1908: In several articles, she conceptualized the *Mukti Revival* in terms of the new Pentecostal theology of speaking in tongues – an interpretation that Ramabai had been rather hesitant about (Ramabai 1907: 10f.):

> God poured upon us a mighty wave of speaking in other tongues, and a mighty wave of interpretation; He used the Spirit of prophecy in witnessing to the heathen, and He sent us out on several occasions a hundred at a time. He sent us out to preach the Gospel. (Abrams 1909: 11)

In this context, Abrams leaves no doubt about the fact that the current revival in India was the result of constant prayer – especially of herself and her US audience:

> In this way God has spread the news of the Gospel in hundreds and hundreds of those hamlets and villages for which we prayed in former years, through the voice of those children […]. We are called Pentecostal people,

> and we are. We have asked of the Father and we believe that we have received the thing for which we have asked. (Abrams 1909: 11–13)

This understanding of Western missionaries being the natural guides and interpreters of all the spiritual awakenings around the world certainly helps to explain the heavy storm of criticism that Ramabai's emancipatory concept of the *Mukti Revival* provoked from the outset, since it avowedly sawed at the chair of the self-appointed representatives of Western 'high culture'. The fact that she on her part reacted so harshly to this criticism is perhaps also explained by her personal conflicts during her stay in England, revealing a similar understanding of her British mentors concerning their natural role as the leaders and 'tamers' of this Indian woman: In this context, Dorothea Beale, the already mentioned principal of Ramabai's college, had written in her reply letter to Sister Geraldine back in 1885:

> Yesterday Ramabai was speaking again of her idea of a sort of Guild, or of a School in India. She was afraid that if someone else were Head, she would not be able to carry out some plans, because any English lady would not see the necessity and a Head could not be interfered with. I told her I did not think it was in her to organise, and that a good Head would let her, as I do, carry out what seemed best, and listen to her in things about which she knew most. In fact, I was sure she *could* not manage anything of that sort alone. (Beale 1885/1977: 55f.)

On the other hand, the second reason for the quick 'career ending' of the narrative of an authentically Indian awakening could be seen in the fact that the few Indian protagonists such as Pandita Ramabai were largely isolated in their local context due to their revivalist religiosity. Because of this situation, the only option for them was to articulate themselves within the global revivalist discourse. Hence, it was impossible for them to enter similar narratives articulated in a broader societal context, say, the Indian national movement, which could have supported the status of their interpretations. As the case described shows, even a woman as self-confident as the Pandita therefore ultimately had to bow to the overwhelming interpretive power of the foreign missionaries, who silenced her voice in the end.

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CHAPTER 4

To Be or Not to Be an Entrepreneur: Disputes About the Relationship Between Church and Business in the *Moravian Church*

Susanne Kokel

1 Introduction

Planned church foundations, missions, evangelisation, the distribution of hymns and Bible readings ensured that the *Moravian Church* had an international and regionally diverse impact. This was associated with an openness, the religious repercussions of which will be discussed in this chapter using the example of the diaspora. The *Moravian Church*'s extensive evangelisation among non-members, the so-called diaspora work, exposed it to views of the laity that could question its traditions, theological terms and, in the end, provide impetus for change. Understanding those processes as transformations of the popular, the accompanying conflicts will be examined taking the economic sphere as an example, specifically analysing the

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V. Albrecht-Birkner, S. Siedek-Strunk (eds.), *Revival Movements as Conflict Agendas of the Popular in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-75117-2_4

extent to which diaspora work was relevant to the singular communal entrepreneurship of the *Moravian Church*.

What feedback did the *Moravian Church* receive from the laity in the diaspora about its traditional way of financing the church, and to what extent was this associated with a claim to validity or even conflict? Did this lead to a changed theological view of its tradition as an entrepreneur within the *Moravian Church*? And, finally, what role did the pluralisation of the Protestant church landscape and its customary financing through donations, which had been observable since the last third of the 19th century, play?

These questions will be explored based on the research literature available and the evaluation of published and unpublished sources, whereby the chosen period of investigation, from the end of the 19th century to around the middle of the 20th century, corresponds to the particular development of the industrially orientated business sector of the *Moravian Church*. Following brief overviews of the history of diaspora work and economic history, cross-connections between these two areas will be identified and analysed, which will also make a contribution to the relationship between religion and business.

2 Diaspora Work in a Changing Religious Landscape

The *Moravian Church*, founded in the first half of the 18th century by the Saxon Imperial Count Nikolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf (1700–1760), drew on the *Old Brethren Unity of Bohemia and Moravia* from the 16th century and influences from Lutheran, especially Halle Pietism, as well as the Philadelphian movement (Meyer 2020: 28). The *Church of the Brethren* realised the aspiration for unity and the gathering of believers associated with the ideal of the early church in various forms of living together and fields of activity, which were caught between the poles of demarcation and openness. While only members whose lives were subject to comprehensive and binding regulations were allowed to live in the planned, originally theocratic congregations, the diaspora work aimed to spiritually strengthen awakened people in the "dispersion" who, in a salvation-historical interpretation, formed the true church in different denominations in spiritual union. It was not their gathering in conventicles, as envisaged by Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705), or their connection through mission, but

precisely their remaining in the diaspora and the utilisation of their respective confessional "treasures" that ensured the true Christians their function as the "salt of the earth", i.e. their contribution to the spread of the faith (Breul 2024: 82). The members sent out as diaspora workers, who travelled widely with their wives and assistants to visit individuals, families and small groups of revivalists, implemented this concept through speeches, sermons, pastoral discussions and meetings. The importance that the *Moravian Church* attached to diaspora work from the beginning of the 1760s becomes clear in instructions and the establishment of special organisational structures, which included the division into regions (Beck 2018; Breul 2021: 612–614).

Despite an explicit renunciation of proselytising, the *Moravian Church* came into conflict with the state churches and state authorities in its diaspora work. Meetings could often only take place with church restrictions and were sometimes subject to police control. However, the relationship with the state churches differed locally as it depended very much on the cleric involved. This was mainly due to regular conferences (*Predigerkonferenzen*), initiated originally in 1765 by representatives of state churches, held with preachers from the *Moravian Church* for a theological and practical exchange (Meyer 2000: 73–75; Strahm 2016: 206f.). The emerging revival movements at the beginning of the 19th century also proved to be competition for the *Moravian Church*, as a result of which it lost its previously strong position in the care of many small and regionally dispersed communities (Strahm 2016: 207f.).

It was difficult to reconnect, as new religious actors emerged in the first half of the 19th century, often building on revivalist communities and institutionalising themselves over the coming decades. Numerous American and British missionary societies and churches took up ideas from the revivalist movements in Great Britain and the USA in the 19th century – the so-called *Second Great Awakening* – and pursued the goal of re-Christianising the European continent, to which end they assigned Germany the role of a central missionary territory. The cultural and linguistic skills of German emigrants played an important role there not only for the German-speaking branches of the various churches in the USA (Hahn-Bruckart 2017: 56f.; Strübind 2012: 165f., 174). The *Wesleyan Methodist Church of England* and, shortly afterwards, the *Methodist Episcopal Church of America* proselytised in various regions from 1850 on (Henkel 2001: 143). The Mormon Church (*Church of Jesus Christ*, with the additional name *of the Latter-day Saints* since 1838), founded in

America in 1830, began its systematic mission out of Hamburg in Germany in 1851 (Pöhlmann and Jahn 2015: 464). The Exclusive *Brethren Churches* (i.e. constituting themselves through their closed participation in the Eucharist and, thus, separating themselves), which emerged as a result of a split from the *Anglican Church*, founded their first assemblies in Württemberg and the Rhineland in 1843, and their own congregations from 1853. The *Christian Assembly*, as the Brethren congregations in Germany were called, expanded through evangelisation and the translation of the *Elberfeld Bible* by the Wuppertal teacher and publishing house founder Carl Brockhaus (1822–1899). The much smaller Open Brethren (without any claim to exclusivity) joined later (ibid.: 65f.). The *Seventh-day Adventist Church* chose Hamburg as the base for its systematic mission in Germany in the 1880s (Hartlapp 2008: 38). The *Salvation Army*, founded a few years earlier in England, began its activities in Stuttgart in 1886 (Pöhlmann and Jahn 2015: 117). *Jehovah's Witnesses* had also been active in Germany since this year, publishing the German-language edition of their missionary magazine *The Watchtower* from 1897 (ibid.: 407f.). With the exception of the free Protestant congregations, which proselytised in Germany from Wuppertal and joined together in 1874 to form a federation of free Protestant congregations, all of the relevant Christian religious communities founded in the 19th century can be traced back to the missionary activities of English and American churches (ibid.: 89). Finally, with the establishment of the *Community Movement* (*Gemeinschaftsbewegung*) in 1888, in which laity aimed for renewal within the state churches, the *Moravian Church* faced further and powerful competition in its work among "friends", as the recipients of its diaspora work in the state churches were called (Meyer 2000: 110–112).

One could argue that the *Moravian Church* itself was subject to the transformation of the popular, being one community of laity among others. However, there are arguments which support its representing rather a high culture challenged by the laity. Firstly, it could look back on a long tradition starting in the first half of the 18th century and, moreover, had reached an institutionalisation, including an explicit organisational distinction of the diaspora work. Secondly, there had always been close connections with the state churches and, thus, with their theology, leading, at some times, to a mirroring of theological discussions and polarisations (ibid.: 103f.). It was not only the aforementioned regular conferences of its preachers with the clerics from the state churches which illustrated its claims to an active involvement in the institutionalised theology. It was

mainly its own educational system for preachers in a well-established seminar, founded in 1754 and located in Gnadenfeld in Upper Silesia until 1920, later in Herrnhut, which also offered teachers or graduates professional opportunities outside the *Moravian Church* (ibid.: 100–104).

The religious landscape, which had changed dramatically for the diaspora work, was mentioned for the first time in the Brethren Calendar of 1898, which referred to "emissaries from other associations and societies pursuing similar goals". By the end of the 19th century, around 100 permanently employed diaspora workers (including their wives) were looking after the regions of the Kingdom of Saxony, the Kingdom of Prussia, Northern Germany, Central Germany, Southern Germany and Alsace, as well as Switzerland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Russia – European regions that were assigned to the so-called German (Province of the) *Unity of Brethren*, which was responsible for mainland Europe (Brüder-Kalender 1898: 45–48). The number of people who were reached, some of whom were united in associations and societies, was estimated at around 70,000 in the Brethren Calendar for 1894, although the extent to which this already reflected a decline is not known (Brüder-Kalender 1894: 38). Nevertheless, it was still a number many times higher than the membership figure, which was around 6700 in Germany according to the 1890 census (Henkel 2001: 185). The sheer scope and extent of the diaspora work, therefore, clearly indicated the importance of this church public for the *Moravian Church*, although national and regional differences must be taken into account in view of the expansion of the German Unity of Brethren across mainland Europe (Fig. 4.1). A scholarly historical study of the diaspora, however, is continuously lacking (Breul 2021: 614).

3 Moravian Entrepreneurship: A Singular Solution for Church Finance

The emergence of the new religious actors must have made the extensive entrepreneurial activities of the *Moravian Church* all the more special. Even though individual communities founded enterprises such as publishing houses, schools and hospitals, their corporate purposes were primarily the realisation of missionary and social welfare goals. The *Seventh-day Adventists* (*Adventists*), for example, founded a missionary school in Friedensau near Magdeburg in 1899 with a food factory and workshops,

Fig. 4.1 German Unity of Brethren (European Territory) 1930, Parishes and Diaspora Places of Sermon (Jahrbuch der Brüdergemeine 1930)

opened a sanatorium with nursing training in 1901 and an old people's home in 1907 (Hartlapp 2008: 47f.).

By contrast, the *Moravian Church* had a long tradition of jointly run businesses in various sectors of the market, whose surpluses were used to finance the work of the church. It had relied on this special type of church financing early on, which enabled it to fulfil a comprehensive and, not least, geographically extensive range of church and educational tasks. Its members – at no time more than 10,000 in Europe – would not have been able to raise the necessary funds for this strong religious commitment, understood as the work of the Kingdom of God (Mettele 2005: 318). The potential dangers of entrepreneurial activity due to close contact with the "world", which from a pietistic point of view was sinful because it was not awakened, the difficulties of making decisions between religious and

economic aspects, and, above all, the resulting conflicts within the close-knit members of the community were the subject of internal debate at all times. However, the usually consensual decisions of the committees, their concretisation in detailed and binding regulations for business, and, most importantly, their beginnings in the formative years ensured a broad legitimisation of community entrepreneurship, which was also reflected in internal publications. Abraham Dürninger, a successful entrepreneur of the 18th century, was claimed to be a "Herrnhut merchant", who still corresponded in a special way to contemporary ideas of an honourable merchant in the 19th century (Hammer 1925; Kröger 2006; Wagner 1940). In addition, craft businesses in congregations that benefited from the specific social structures and, thus, (also financial) support and controls were extremely successful over long periods of time (Kröger 2021). As a result, trust was also placed in trade, which increased its competitiveness, an economic approach that can be understood as a "moral economy" (Dorfner 2023). Further evidence of the recognition of successful economic activity can be observed in the founding histories of many communities that owed their existence to mercantilist-supported settlements (Dorfner 2018).

Towards the end of the 19th century, administrative reforms and structural change, on the one hand, and location factors, on the other, intensified the completely different economic developments of individual communities. While urban parishes, such as Neusalz (Oder), Neuwied on the Rhine and Zeist near Utrecht in Holland, benefited from the development of the cities, the small rural parishes were increasingly dependent on financial support from other diaconies – as specific households within the *Moravian Church* were called. Large-scale business losses in St. Petersburg and Neusalz (Oder) made it clear that Moravian entrepreneurship at the end of the 19th century no longer corresponded to the ideal-typical concepts as they were still laid down in the internal regulations, among other things, but that major enterprises simultaneously exposed the *Moravian Church* to new risks (Kokel 2020: 123).

4 Industry versus Donations: First Conflicts with the Diaspora

The discussions about the future direction of communal entrepreneurship, which took place with great frankness at the 1893/94 synod, also reached large sections of the diaspora via the weekly magazine *Herrnhut*.

It was probably there that many learned for the first time about the scope and expansion of entrepreneurial activities and the planned strategic reorientation towards a centralised and professionally managed business area. No active participation of the diaspora was stipulated, and no representatives of this area were sent as delegates to the synod, not even with a consultative function. Thus, interested laypersons were restricted to giving their feedback to known delegates. This was very clear: The disputes surrounding the reorganisation of the economic situation had caused great consternation in diaspora and societal circles and damaged the "spiritual credit" of the *Moravian Church* (Herrnhut 1894: 164). Further explanations are not yet known, but the wording suggests that the laity, who were rather loosely connected via the diaspora work, did not recognise the legitimacy of entrepreneurial activity as a means to an end of God's Kingdom work and instead feared the endangerment of spiritual life. Other aspects, such as the distinctiveness of the *Moravian Church* in comparison with other religious communities and, in particular, the previously unknown extent of entrepreneurial activities and the partly industrial orientation, may have added to this.

The *Moravian Church* also had to face this fundamental lack of understanding of its entrepreneurial activities in communities with a strong influx from the diaspora. In fact, it was probably the high proportion of new members from the diaspora in the Königsfeld congregation, the last colony to be founded by Herrnhut in 1807, that made the later work of the central Finance Department of the *Unity* Directorate more difficult. At the beginning of the 20th century, most of the families in the congregation were unable to trace their origins back several generations in the *Moravian Church*, with experience of missionary work or other service in the *Unity*. The new members not only brought their own ideas with them, but were also integrated into networks outside the *Moravian Church* through families and acquaintances, and were, therefore, subject to other influences. The Königsfeld preacher Theodor Jensen (1870–1938) justified the attitude of many members at the 1908 synod with their fundamental rejection of church entrepreneurship: "It is in the nature of our brothers and sisters who come from the diaspora that they will never understand our church business" (Synode der Deutschen Brüder-Unität 1908: 41). The businessman Christian Stamm (1851–1929), a member of the Council of Elders and himself from the diaspora, confirmed this assessment: "[…] It is only their fundamental view that the business would be better leased out" (Synode der Deutschen Brüder-Unität 1908: 41;

Stamm 1929). Although he bowed to the prevailing rules, Stamm ultimately rejected the idea of jointly run companies, which revealed a fundamentally different understanding of church financing in general and the associated rejection of the traditional communal economy of the *Moravian Church*.

It is worth taking a look at the financing of diaspora work in order to examine possible reasons for the rejection of church entrepreneurship. Although detailed analyses are not yet available, the diaspora appears to have made a significant contribution to the financing of the *Moravian Church* and especially its schools and educational establishments. Money collected in diaspora circles was channelled into the redemption fund, which had been set up to pay off the debts of the *Moravian Church*, from 1773 onwards (Beck 2018: 121). The actual diaspora work itself, i.e. the costs for personnel, travelling and premises, was also essentially to be financed by diaspora circles themselves. The synod of 1813, in view of the "manifold collections that we already have in our congregations", made a request to the "brothers and sisters from abroad" in this regard:

> In particular, however, we should endeavour, where our foreign brothers and sisters do not yet have the proper facilities with respect to the welfare of their workers, to give them a correct understanding of their duty to provide for their upkeep as far as possible. (Synodal decision, quoted from Beck 2018: 122)

This meant that diaspora work was strongly separated within the diverse spectrum of the *Moravian Church's* areas of work, which, on the one hand, corresponded to the specific, fund-based financing that was common, but, on the other hand, excluded it from the internal financial system – the so-called diaconal association – based on joint liability and compensation payments. Consequently, this led, above all, to a strong dependence of the diaspora workers on the region in which they worked and the economic situation of the local contacts (Beck 2018: 122). In addition to the direct support payments, income from interest from legacies and foundations seems to have been added later. The *Unity* covered a deficit of 18,000 Marks in 1889 (Brüder-Kalender 1894: 38). This relatively low amount is put into perspective when one looks at the funds collected solely for diaspora work, which totalled over 900,000 Marks in 1907 (Schärf 1907). Significant sums had indeed been collected here, with which the donors wanted to support the diaspora work directly and

immediately. In doing so, they were not only fulfilling their "duty", but donations or, at the time, "love offerings", were an expression of the strength of faith in the sense of 1 Peter 4:10 and 2 Corinthians 9:7. Sacrifice and voluntariness were essential components of this practical Christian charity. If these payments were categorised as insufficient, this was not only considered a breach of duty, but also an expression of a lack of piety as a report by the management from 1922 made clear:

> Although the contributions to the work from the diaspora itself have grown pleasingly, they are disproportionate to the costs of the work and show that our diaspora work does not really have a firm footing everywhere. (Deutsche Unitätsdirektion 1922: 18)

This quote shows that theologians of the *Moravian Church* practically shared the views presumably spread among the laity about the close relationship between giving and involvement. However, apart from these qualitative sources, it could be very beneficial to quantify the donations as well for a longer period of time for more insights into the changes of actors and ethos of giving, as Sarah Flew has done for the laity connected with the *Anglican Church* in England (2015).

The new churches and religious communities with which, as the *Moravian Church* recorded, the communities in the diaspora were in contact in different regions had also taken this route of financing the church through donations. Although no specific research has yet been conducted into their financing, it can be assumed that the foreign missionary societies and mother churches from the Anglo-American region financed their "Mission to Germany" mainly through donations. The founder of the German *Baptists*, Johann Gerhard Oncken (1800–1884), financed his activities as a colporteur (a hawker of Bibles and religious tracts) through various Anglo-Saxon missionary societies, such as the *London British and Foreign Bible Society* or the *Scottish Continental Society for the Diffusion of Religious Knowledge over the Continent of Europe*, the English *Sunday School Movement* and, finally, most importantly, the *American Baptist Foreign Mission Society*. He acquired additional donations while travelling in the USA, England and Scotland, as well as through letters of supplication to wealthy donors, such as the American Baptist entrepreneur William Colgate. He wrote to British *Baptists* in 1856 that the German members of the congregation were not yet in a position to finance the project on their own (Strübind 2012: 168f., 175). It was only with the growth of the

German congregations that the proportion of self-financing is likely to have increased, along with income from the sale of printed materials, such as Bibles and tracts. The purchase and management of land and buildings were other sources of income, as were capital gains from investments and securities (Baumann 2021: 97; Kosterlitzky and Zunkel 1995: 209). Members of the German *Adventist Church* also provided loans to their congregations (Hartlapp 2008: 83).

The *Moravian Church* left the traditional path followed in the diaspora itself with its business area, which only indirectly served to finance the church. As the discussions at the 1893/94 synod showed, it was not so easy to establish a connection between the strength of faith and corporate profits. The opposite conclusion, as reported from the diaspora under the term "spiritual credit", i.e. damage to spiritual life through entrepreneurship, was apparently only drawn by a small number at this time. Similarly, only a few delegates at the synod argued in favour of the possible abandonment of all companies, for example, by selling them in exchange for securities or handing them over to an external company, seeing the difficulty of Christian corporate governance in particular. Interestingly, the main protagonist here was Paul Reichel, the preacher and headmaster in Montmirail, a tiny parish in Switzerland dominated by a residential school for girls and, thus, very exposed to the diaspora. In the end, the vast majority of delegates voted in favour of retaining and expanding the business division. The arguments ranged from the God-given responsibility for the assets and the tradition of the "fathers" that had to be preserved, to the importance of entrepreneurial activity and thus of the merchants for evangelisation, and to the opportunity for the *Unity* to contribute to solving the social question through large enterprises (Kokel 2020: 126–131).

Following the fundamental legal and organisational reorganisation finally adopted at the synod, which transferred the companies into the ownership of the *Unity* from the parishes, the Finance Department of the Directorate responsible initiated a strategic reorientation from crafts and small businesses to large industrial companies. The restructuring process mainly affected small communities, whose few smaller businesses were now closed down. The Neusalz (Oder) region and other locations in Silesia were home to the largest companies in various sectors, including fertiliser manufacture, starch production, textile production and finishing, as well as trade and services, including banking (Kokel 2022: 211). It was now, to an even greater extent, the companies that generated the funds for church and school activities. While the *Moravian Church*, thus,

maintained its ecclesiastical and financial independence, expanded its school and church activities and, last but not least, was able to pay the pensions of its employees itself, the direct financial link to the members disappeared even more significantly. Supported by the almost uninterrupted economic upswing up to the beginning of the First World War, the Finance Department had steered the organisation into the profitability zone through targeted investment in larger industrial companies. To this end, it had utilised the church's assets as a liability fund as well as the savings deposits of small investors, both members and non-members, to build up capital. In 1911, the largest companies generated around 9.7 million Marks. Shortly before the First World War, the *Unity's* business financed almost 90% of the church's budget (ibid.: 142, 170).

5 Separation of Church and Business: Impulses from the Inside

Despite the obvious economic success of the Finance Department and the growing financial leeway, it was now increasingly no longer just members from the diaspora who took a critical view of the church's business area in general. This was evident in the preparation of a new church constitution, which began before the First World War. According to the ideas of younger theologians in particular, the church and school areas should be converted to self-financing, i.e. financed only by contributions and voluntary donations, which would heal the "considerable internal damage" of the reorganisation at the end of the 19th century, as one *Unity* director, Otto Uttendörfer (1879–1954), put it in retrospect in 1926:

> And so it was in those years, as before, that many expansions took place that only brought about insufficiently viable congregations or diaspora posts and that people repeatedly relied on the achievements of the whole and, on top of that, labelled such foundations, for which they were in no way willing to sacrifice financially and permanently, as acts of faith. Deliberate self-sacrifice was, therefore, only encouraged to a limited extent under the new order, again for the same reason that an account that has a backing is not acceptable. (1926: 6f.)

Uttendörfer, thus, saw parallels to the situation before the reorganisation, in that the former diaconal association, which was responsible for the joint liability and compensation payments, would have also stood in the way of

self-preservation: "[…] and, moreover, the principle of fraternity had undoubtedly had a morally debilitating effect; […]" (ibid.: 6). According to Uttendörfer, brotherhood or Christian charity had to find its limit in one's own efforts to support oneself, which he upgraded as moral behaviour. This view was in line with the description of a Protestant principle of solid, self-reliant financial management as expressed at the 1893/94 synod (Provinzialsynode Herrnhut 1893: 182).

In summary, internal discussions among theologians in the *Moravian Church* seemed to make a remarkable shift regarding the way in which the church should finance itself. Starting before the First World War, mostly young theologians transferred the religiously explained close connection between giving and the strength of faith, as practiced in the diaspora work, to the general way of finance in the *Moravian Church*. This has been formulated previously only by members and non-members linked to the diaspora. Whether this changed opinions at this point came to reflect a new common understanding within the Church would be worth analysing further as this development would hint at a significant influence of the laity on the traditional theology in the *Moravian Church* as laid down in orders and minutes. Turning away from mediocre financing through companies, the business sector increasingly no longer appeared as an integral part of the *Moravian Church's* identity, but as an area that followed its own laws and, thus, not only came into conflict with the ecclesiastical sector, but even exerted a negative influence on it.

However, this approach met with resistance from those responsible for the business division – mainly business people, some of whom were theologians – primarily for practical reasons. At this point, it no longer seemed possible to separate the two areas. The business division had benefited too much from the access to the church's assets and the use of the church's reputation to generate capital, since a leverage effect enabled a significantly higher allocation of capital to the companies than they could have generated due to their earning power. The resulting high level of debt meant that the Finance Department prioritised the absolute preservation of the creditworthiness of the *Unity*, with which it long justified a categorical rejection of the proposals for self-preservation.

This argument was justified after the First World War, but took on a new urgency in view of the catastrophic development of the business division, which threatened the very existence of the *Unity* by 1925 at the latest. The high level of indebtedness, which had now also reached banks, and the high pension burdens resulting from the exemption from

statutory pension insurance achieved before the war, forced the Finance Directorate – as the successor to the Finance Department was now called – to take massive cost-cutting measures. Protecting the *Unity's* creditworthiness was all the more important in this situation, but maintaining it proved to be difficult precisely because of the close links with church organisations. Appeals for donations, therefore, represented a concrete danger, as they could be interpreted by external parties as an indication of liquidity problems at the *Unity* and its companies. A finance director complained to the parish of Zeist in 1926 about a letter from the council of elders of the Dutch parish of Haarlem, which appealed for donations with reference to the poor economic situation:

> The circular now describes the situation of the Unity in such gloomy colours that we must fear that if any bank director working with Zeist reads it, he will be able to read the worst out of it. (Schütz 1926)

The religiously based principle of voluntarism and entrepreneurship proved to be incompatible in economic crisis situations. The disputes between "businessmen" and "public servants" in the *Moravian Church* intensified and were aired in publications (Kokel 2017). The fact that the goal of self-financing of the church and school areas, which was initially pursued primarily by theologians, ultimately gained in importance despite the Finance Directorate's concern about the creditworthiness of the *Unity*, had to do with the necessary restructuring and savings measures, which became more urgent during the economic crises at the end of the 1920s and beginning of the 1930s. It was now also in the interest of the Finance Directorate to reduce the financial requirements of the church and, as a result, to minimise the planned transfers of the company surpluses.

6 Sacrifices and Voluntarism: Signals for Strength of Faith?

However, it was unclear what the implementation would look like. The regular burdens were too great, especially due to salary and pension payments. And the hoped-for change in mentality was apparently not so easy to achieve. In this context, a synodal protocol from 1928 contains the first direct comparison with free churches and their financing. Significantly, it was a diaspora worker, Hermann Moritz Bielke (1881–1955), from Zeist in the Netherlands, who expressed his fundamental lack of understanding

of the entrepreneurial activity, in no small part due to the crisis-ridden development of the business area. There were other ways of financing, such as via securities, and would it not be possible to give up the companies? For him, voluntary action and, thus, a willingness to make sacrifices were once again the goal: "Voluntary action, which other free churches also thrive on, is even more important. But we were never brought up to be voluntary" (Synode der Deutschen Brüder-Unität 1928: 54).

Nevertheless, a look at the development of other free churches since the end of the First World War seemed to confirm the success of their way of financing. The problems of the post-war period had awakened a greater interest in religious issues, which led to a new wave of revival. From the 1920s onwards, *Quakers* founded congregations in Germany (Pöhlmann and Jahn 2015: 151). The *Baptists* recorded a high number of new baptisms until the mid-1920s (Balders 1989: 80). The *Adventists* founded numerous new congregations, and their membership grew from around 25,000 baptised members in 1920 to around 32,000 in 1927. The success of their funding through donations was illustrated by their expansion into the medical field with the founding of a hospital, a nursing school and several nurses' homes, as well as in education, with the opening of a missionary seminary and several schools for the training of preachers, missionaries and colporteurs. In addition, the German *Adventists* alone raised 1.1 million Reichsmarks in 1927 for the *Adventist* mission in South America, Africa and Asia, which had been interrupted by the war (Hartlapp 2008: 150 n. 421, 158–161, 165). The free Churches had reached a considerable number of members in the Protestant church landscape by the mid-1920s: the 1925 census of population and religion showed a total of almost 400,000 members for all free churches. By contrast, the *Moravian Church* – for which the recruitment of new members was not a priority – remained at a level of around 6,400 persons (Henkel 2001: 29).

7 Business and Local Parishes: More Than a Question of Identity

When the economic situation of the *Unity* worsened dramatically during the global economic crisis at the end of the 1920s and the Finance Directorate was forced to sell off more land and close down companies, the congregations affected by this and their local businesses once again came to the fore, as they had done in the first phase of restructuring. At

this point the internal discussions about "church and business" took a turn, which addressed the strong historical identity of the *Moravian Church* and, consequently, had to be clearly distinguished from impulses from laity in the diaspora.

The ideas brought to the Finance Directorate by the congregations in this context are described below using the example of the Neusalz preacher, Josef Grunewald (1863–1946), who had been a member of the synod's Audit Committee, the supervisory body for the Finance Directorate, since 1914. He was, therefore, very familiar with the development of the division from the First World War through to the crisis-ridden 1920s. He was also familiar with the recurring conflicts between the central Financial Directorate, on the one hand, and the parishes, on the other. The closure of the weaving mill in Gnadenberg in 1911, which the small and relatively poor congregation had long fought to keep open, was certainly a case that left its mark on him right at the beginning of his tenure as a preacher in Gnadenberg (Kokel 2022: 190f.). But his criticism went further: he was apparently critical of the so-called reorganisation of 1895 from an early stage. He asked in an article in the weekly magazine *Herrnhut* in 1926: "Did the certainly necessary reorganisation of 1895 go too far in terms of centralisation and did it somewhat cut off the lifeline of the individual community both internally and externally?" (Grunewald 1926: 116f.).

In his opinion, the reform had, thus, cancelled the necessary connection between the church and the economy, with drastic consequences for church life, which – in his view – would be doomed to die as a result. He explained this in an exchange of letters with Otto Uttendörfer in March 1930:

> I do not want to see such large businesses, some of them outside the congregation with people who hardly know the congregation, but rather DBU [*German Unity of Brethren*, S.K.] businesses in the congregations, run almost exclusively by members of the congregation as conscious work for the Lord and the congregation. Then we alone also have the intrinsic right to use the earnings for church purposes, but not as long as we let completely foreign people work for us on a tariff basis. If this happens through a gradual changeover, then not only a closer cooperation between the FD [Finance Directorate, S.K.] and the DUD [German Unity Directorate, S.K.] will be necessary, but also between the FD and the individual congregation or the ÄR [Council of Elders, S.K.], also in this respect a regression towards 92 [1892, S.K.]. (Grunewald 1930)

He believed that local community committees should be more closely involved in the management of *Unity* companies so that they were no longer "foreign bodies in community life". He also criticised the strategy of large industrial companies, but not so much for economic reasons – which would have been entirely justified after the huge losses – but for him, the focus was on church-related shortcomings. Non-members had to be employed for the most part, thus, there was a lack of a common basis of values, the common goal of building the Kingdom of God. Grunewald resigned from the Audit Committee in November 1931. He particularly criticised the fact that the ecclesiastical sector was more affected by austerity measures than the business sector, which, in his opinion, called into question the "community of destiny" that was so often invoked (Grunewald 1931). Grunewald's resignation must also have seemed like an admission of the failure of his ideas of a stronger community influence on *Unity* companies.

8 Church and Business: A Separation for Good Planned

While Grunewald's thoughts on reforming the business sector were based on the assumption that locally based *Unity* companies had close links to the congregations and, thus, aimed to reconcile church and business, the theologian and headmaster, Carl Bernhard (1877–1943), in 1936, followed up on earlier warnings that companies were damaging spiritual life. By this time, the conditions for church entrepreneurship had deteriorated considerably, exacerbated by the National Socialist church policy. In addition to the abolition of tax privileges, it was primarily the Reich Credit System Act, introduced in 1934, that no longer permitted the previous financing through the acquisition of savings deposits. The Finance Directorate saw the acquisition of its Oberlausitz properties by the Wehrmacht administration as an opportunity to strike a blow of liberation by repaying deposits, in a first step, and giving up the three banks, in a second step, thereby following the recommendations of the Reichsbank and its principal bank, Deutsche Bank (Kokel 2022: 430). Bernhard, a member of the Audit Committee since 1924, saw this plan as an opportunity to finally solve the "*problem of church and business*", which would also benefit the spiritual life of the *Moravian Church*:

> Neither of the two parts, the church with its property and the business sector, was, therefore, happy about this linkage. It had a pernicious effect on the church insofar as it did not sustain itself solely from its own internal resources, but allowed itself to be sustained by the business sector. (1936)

The scope of the tasks or the work of the Kingdom of God was, therefore, intended to reflect the strength of faith present in the *Moravian Church*, and the willingness to make sacrifices, thus, set a limit – also financially – to religious commitment. This should also be followed business-wise, therefore, limiting growth to the profitability of the companies instead of their creditability. This view was recorded as follows in the minutes of the 1936 synod by the chairman of the German *Unity* Directorate, Theodor Marx: "[…] the healthy development of a church requires that there be a direct interaction between its works and the resources it raises for them" (Synode der Deutschen Brüder-Unität 1936: 48f.). In other words, voluntary donations reflect the strength of faith, a position close to the one expressed by the diaspora around forty years ago, without, however, putting the general legitimacy of entrepreneurship into question.

The sale of the properties allowed the *Unity* to repay the savings deposits and, thus, reduce its debt significantly, but the planned fundamental restructuring of the division did not materialise in the following years. Beginning with the Four-Year Plan in 1936, the *Unity* also benefited from the armaments boom and, thus, from rising company surpluses, which made the decision to shrink the business division seem obsolete (Kokel 2022: 436). The end of the Second World War resulted in the loss of the Silesian companies and meant the de facto end of Moravian entrepreneurship. Nowadays, however, it has found a thoroughly successful continuation with the production of Moravian or Herrnhut Stars (for Christmas decoration) – still a business, but more in line with contemporary ideas of church business.

9 Conclusion

Without the possibility of directly influencing decisions or structures within the *Moravian Church*, the laity in the diaspora can be granted a considerable share in its process of rethinking the relationship between giving and involvement, and between donations and the strength of faith. Partly via members coming from the diaspora, partly via diaspora workers or preachers, the traditional concept of a communal entrepreneurship was

analysed in this period in an increasingly challenged way, leading to numerous conflicts within the *Moravian Church* that can be categorised as conflict agendas of the popular. The parallel continuous growth of new religious communities originating from Anglo-Saxon countries confirmed, in fact, the position that church finance should be solely secured by voluntary sacrifices of the members, expressing by this their religious beliefs.

However, neither the fundamental refusal of indirect church finance via enterprises nor the importance laid upon voluntary donations as a sign of the strength of faith found full acceptance in the *German Unity of Brethren*. There were two main reasons for this. Beside the limited indirect influence, a longstanding tradition of communal entrepreneurship and the importance of the enterprises for the local parishes strengthened the fundamental legitimacy of this indirect church finance. However, as theological views of church business changed, this finding should be investigated further. The theologically relevant questions whether voluntary donations as sacrifices are essential for a strong Christian faith and crucial for the existence of a church seem to be important when exploring the relationship between religion and business and could give new beneficial insights into the stability and growth of religious communities in general.

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PART II

Agents of Revivalism: Opportunities and Limits of Self-empowerment

CHAPTER 5

Clairvoyance and Commotion: The Making of a Lay Prophetess in the Era of the German Revivalist Movement

Diethard Sawicki

1 Introduction

In 1784, the Puységur brothers discovered that by applying mesmerising procedures, it was possible to deliberately put people into a trance-like state, which had previously been observed as a spontaneous phenomenon and was referred to at the time as *somnambulism*. In conjunction with the theories of animal magnetism, the psychophysiological phenomenon became a source of fascination for natural science, medicine, philosophical anthropology, religion, literature and art in the first half of the 19th century. Of particular importance was the fact that people in a somnambulistic state were credited with extraordinary sensory perceptions, especially the ability to see clairvoyantly through space and time (Ellenberger 1996: 113–131).

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V. Albrecht-Birkner, S. Siedek-Strunk (eds.), *Revival Movements as Conflict Agendas of the Popular in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-75117-2_5

The typology of gender characters that prevailed around 1800 as reflected in the contemporary theory of medicine provided the context for explaining why women in particular should have a special disposition for somnambulistic clairvoyance (Kaufmann 1995: 88f., 278f.; Jordanova 1989; Showalter 1985). The female somnambulist became a cultural topos that spread beyond scientific case descriptions, as exemplified by the large number of somnambulist figures in German literature of the early 19th century.[1] Somnambulism became particularly important for the esoteric and theosophical tendencies of the decades between 1790 and 1850. In French theosophical freemasonry, for example, somnambulism was said to enable a view not only into the future, but also into the spirit world. In 1787, the Swedish Swedenborgians proclaimed the complete agreement of mesmerism with their prophet's teachings on the cosmos and the spirit world (Sendschreiben 1787; Darnton 1983: 66f.; Gabay 2005).

In Germany, the first spiritualist cults centred around somnambulistic seers can be found in the last third of the 18th century in the West and South-West among groups of people who were interested in mesmerism against a background of pietistic and hermetic ideas (Baumann 1938: 81–83, 112–123; Funck 1894: 2–8; Ehmann 1859: 788–798; Renfordt 2013: 13, 19, 24, 32, 36, 40, 62, 78–80, 128). One regional focus was Württemberg. In the early 19th century, the physician and poet Justinus Kerner and the Tübingen philosophy professor and physician Karl August Eschenmayer were influential in the religious-metaphysical interpretation of somnambulism (Grüsser 1987; Schott 1990; Wuttke 1972). Kerner's compendium *Die Seherin von Prevorst*, in which he presented his experiences with the somnambulist Friederike Hauffe to the public in 1829, became a key text on ghostology of the era. Even the theologian Friedrich August Tholuck, one of the most eminent representatives of the German revivalist movement, integrated the theories of mesmerism in his theory of miracles (Wolsink 2020/2021).

The case of the seer Sara Gayer from the Württemberg village of Großglattbach, which is densely documented in files produced by the authorities and in contemporary print publications, makes it possible to

[1] Examples: Mignon and Makarie in Goethe's novel *Wilhelm Meister*, Heinrich von Kleist's play *Das Käthchen von Heilbronn*, Theodora in Ludwig Tieck's novella *Die Wundersüchtigen*, Flämmchen in Karl Immermann's novel D*ie Epigonen* and the figure of Marie from E. T. A. Hoffmann's story D*er Magnetiseur* – Barkhoff (1995, 195–237, 239–267, 274–281).

explore the social, medical and religious-historical dimensions of the phenomenon of somnambulism during the era of the revivalist movement in German Protestantism.[2]

In order to better understand how Sara Gayer was able to become the "visionary of Großglattbach", the events should be considered from the following perspectives: What role did Sara play as a visionary in the community's social network? Who categorised her as a lay prophet? How was her role as a prophetess religiously charged? Can we speak of the instrumentalisation of a young woman in favor of the interests of others? Or can we find evidence of female self-empowerment on the part of the seer?

2 The Social Space: Community and Family

The agricultural municipality of Großglattbach is located in the centre of Old Württemberg. The population was estimated at 833 towards the middle of the 19th century (Beschreibung 1856: 139–144). Special religious movements of a Pietist and separatist nature developed in the Duchy of Württemberg from around 1680 and intensified again from the middle of the 18th century. These movements intensified again under the influence of the Napoleonic Wars. The region around Großglattbach was no exception in this respect (Isermeyer 1992: 166–175; Trautwein 1987). From 1699, the Huguenot-Waldensian colony of Schönenberg near Dürrmenz existed, which was only incorporated into the Württemberg state church in 1823. The Großglattbach pastor Gottlieb Jakob Hauff (1758–1823, local pastor from 1808) was a friend of the Protestant theologian Johann Friedrich Immanuel Tafel (1796–1863), who began translating Emanuel Swedenborg's (1688–1772) works into German in the 1820s.[3] Editions of the sermons of the awakened Württemberg pastor Ludwig Hofacker (1798–1828) were apparently widely distributed in the parish.[4] His namesake Ludwig (Wilhelm) Hofaker (1780–1846), chief procurator of justice

[2] Based on additional research, this chapter supplements the older regional historical and folklorist account in Gehrts (1964/2015) and the micro-historical chapter in Sawicki (2016).

[3] On Hauff see Pfarrerbuch Württemberg, Hauff, Gottlieb Jakob; (Müllensiefen 1868: 8f.; Bergmann 1988).

[4] "[…] Hofacker's sermons, which a former clergyman sought to disseminate to increase religious understanding […]" (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Beck report, Jan. 8, 1837: fol. 1b). The pastor during whose tenure the distribution must have taken place was Johann Jakob Christian Straßer (1767–1832, pastor in Großglattbach from 1824/25 to 1832); on Straßer see Pfarrerbuch Württemberg, Straßer, Johann Jakob Christian.

in Tübingen, 50 kilometres away, also published Swedenborgian writings from the 1830s onwards (Hofacker 1834; Wischnath 2009). From 1832 to 1853, at the time of the events described, Wilhelm Friedrich Raßmann was the parish pastor in Großglattbach. The Reformed clergyman had held the same office in Schönenberg with the Waldensians from 1811 to 1823.[5]

Sara Gayer's father Ludwig, a butcher by trade, is described as not wealthy but of good reputation (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Beck report, January 8, 1837: fol. 1a). Between December 1815 and March 1829, Sara's mother gave birth to ten children, two of whom died young (Siglen 1837/1848: 133). Sara was the oldest living child of the Gayer couple. Like her parents, she tended towards "pietism" and often attended devotional meetings, according to Dr. Beck, the deputy medical officer responsible for the village (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Beck report, Jan. 8, 1837: fol. 1b).

3 The Unfolding of Phenomena

At the beginning of November 1835, the then 18-year-old Sara fell ill, suffering from cramp-like abdominal pains. Eventually she lost the ability to speak at times and often lay in bed with her eyes closed. This condition persisted until the second half of March 1836, when Beck from nearby Dürrmenz was consulted for the first time (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Beck report, January 8, 1837: fol. 1a–2b; Siglen 1837/1848: 137–140). It was around this time that Sara began to speak of apparitions. It was supposed that her sleep-like states were attacks of spontaneous clairvoyant somnambulism. It is not known for certain who first made this diagnosis. Sara's parents and 19 other residents of Großglattbach confirmed in writing a few months later that Pastor Raßmann and his wife had declared Sara to be a somnambulist. Allegedly, the two had also put pressure on the girl to be magnetised so that she could use clairvoyance to find out which medicine could help the sick pastor's daughter Emilie (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Submission to Dr. Cleß, May 11, 1837: unpag.; Siglen 1837/1848: 146).

Beck stated that Sara's relatives had told him on 30 March 1836 that the previous night she had had a conversation with God in her sleep. They

[5] Sauberschwarz (1899); on Raßmann see Pfarrerbuch Württemberg, Raßmann, Wilhelm Friedrich.

added that God had announced to Sara that she would regain her speech next Friday and that her cramps would also stop on Sunday (Siglen 1837/1848: 139). The relief did indeed materialise, and soon afterwards Sara prescribed herself remedies to be obtained from the pharmacy in Dürrmenz. She did not name these clairvoyantly determined medicines, but only indicated where the corresponding jars were located on the pharmacy shelves (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Beck report, January 8, 1837: fol. 4a; Medizinalkollegium 1811–1837, expert opinion of the Medical College, January 20, 1837: fol. 175b). In her visionary journeys, Sara described a heaven populated by deceased villagers. She

> spoke of the outer arrangement of the same, namely that it had 12 gates (as the New Jerusalem is described in the Revelation of John) […]. She had nothing to say about the state of the inner heaven except that her deceased grandfather, the Cronenwirthin of Glattbach with her child and the son of the village mayor Schmid, who had lost his life a few weeks earlier by falling from the barn, were sitting at the Lord's table and that the wounds of the man who had fallen to his death were girded with golden chains. (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Beck report, January 8, 1837: fol. 3a.)

At a later date, Sara spoke of the "valley of darkness full of the souls of the apostates", through which she was being led by her deceased sister Johanna (ibid.: fol. 9a/b). News of the visions spread throughout the neighborhood; soon curious people and those seeking help flocked to Großglattbach.

Between March and August 1836, Sara's utterances developed a profile that was influenced by the expectations of relatives and changing guests. According to Beck's report, most of Sara's visitors wanted to know about future events. However, the girl professed to know nothing about such things (ibid.: fol. 5 a; Medizinalkollegium 1811–1837, expert opinion of the Medical College, January 20, 1837: fol. 174a).

Apparently, Sara's mother explained and interpreted what her daughter reported about her visionary journeys and insights. It was also said that the girl's clairvoyant sleeps occurred at night – but then only family members were present as witnesses (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Beck report, January 8, 1837: fol. 5 a/b).

By August 1836, the Gayers must have realised that clairvoyance could help improve the family's financial situation. A pastor from the nearby state of Baden visited Sara and offered her the sum of 500 guilders if she could find a cure to rid him of a nasal disease that he thought was cancer

(ibid.: fol. 6a). This was a considerable sum that could secure the livelihood of a Großglattbach family for around two and a half years (Isermeyer 1992: 80). What happened next can only be roughly determined from the files. Beck wrote in his report that following the pastor's offer, Sara's parents had urged him to magnetise the girl. He had agreed on the condition that the treatment would not take place in Großglattbach, but at his place of residence. Sara's father then got her a room at the local inn, *Zum Löwen* in Dürrmenz. Beck maintained that he had made only a few unsuccessful attempts to magnetise Sara and otherwise had confined himself to observing her (Medizinalkollegium 1811–1837, expert opinion of the Medical College, January 20, 1837: fol. 174 b). He verified the authenticity of her paralytic fits and questioned her during one of her spontaneously occurring sleeps about the conditions in Satan's realm, where, according to her, the black souls of the damned resided (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Beck report, January 8, 1837: fol. 9a/b).

Even though Beck claimed not to have undertaken regular magnetic treatments, a close psychological relationship was established between him and his patient, the *magnetic rapport,* as it was called in contemporary medical literature. In one of her somnambulistic phases, Sara announced that Beck had been chosen by God and would be the only one allowed to enter heaven through the crystal gate of St John (ibid.: fol. 3a/12a).

Later, she also made a declaration of love to him. If this already made the doctor uncomfortable, he ended his closer contact with Sara when she made accusations of witchcraft against a resident of Großglattbach. The reason for this was the death of Adam Kühnle from Großglattbach. This patient of Beck's had been suffering from a heart disease and had been convinced that a resident of the village had bewitched him by making him eat an onion tart with horseshoe-nails baked into it (ibid.).[6]

During one of her spontaneous prophetic sleeps, Sara declared shortly before Kühnle's death that he had indeed been bewitched by the wife of a farmer. There were spikes in his stomach and he had three English sewing needles in his heart. After this accusation, Doctor Beck arranged for Sara to return to Großglattbach and advised her to "leave such things untouched" (ibid.: fol. 3a).

[6] According to another version, it was a lock of hair in a piece of cake and horseshoe-nails in a bottle of wine (Anon. 1837: 9–11).

4 Witchcraft Accusations and Conflict with the Parish Pastor

In connection with Kühnle's death, a dispute arose between Sara and the parish pastor Raßmann. Even before Kühnle's funeral, she claimed to have held negotiations with the spirit of the deceased. In one case, Sara – probably in the presence of witnesses – sat down at a table, had wine and bread served and began to eat a communal supper with Kühnle, who was supposed to be visible only to herself. On another occasion, she claimed to have been in heaven and to have received instructions from him there. Pastor Raßmann was asked by Kühnle's relatives to change the funeral arrangements and learnt that the deceased had arranged all the details of the ceremony via Sara from the afterlife. Among other things, the funeral procession was not to take the usual route to the cemetery, but was to be led past the Gayers' house. Sara would then come out and lay her hand onto the coffin. As a result, the witch who was responsible for Kühnle's death would die after four days (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Raßmann to Chief Magistrate, Oct 10, 1836: fol. 11a–13a). Raßmann refused to make the requested changes and informed the authorities of what had happened. In accordance with an instruction from the regional magistrate's office, the pastor summoned Sara's father to appear before the church council.[7]

Although no punishment was decided, Ludwig Gayer, as head of the household, was seriously admonished to put a stop to any superstitious practice in his household and to encourage his daughter to work regularly. Sara herself had not been summoned because Raßmann feared excessive publicity and believed that lecturing her would be fruitless anyway. But Ludwig Gayer was also stubborn and explained that he could not shut Sara's mouth if she spoke in her clairvoyant sleep. In the face of such recalcitrance, the clergyman's response is said to have been harsh. According to some Großglattbach residents, he demanded in front of the convention: "the dissolute wench shall work" (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, submission of May 11, 1837, point 5, letter from Raßmann, November 11, 1836: unpag.).

[7] On the Württemberg church conventions see (Häußermann 1996: 81–84; Ehmer and Holtz 2009).

From October 1836, Raßmann regularly submitted his observations on all incidents in connection with the Gayer family to the regional magistrate's office.

5 Swedenborgian Visions

However, the Gayers managed to find a protector and defender. It was the tax inspector Siglen (1796–1839) from the tax office in Wiernsheim, who, according to Raßmann, was "respected and trusted" everywhere.[8] Ludwig Gayer had been in contact with Siglen before and had received support from him in a legal dispute. On October 19, 1836, he went to see the administrator to ask him for help as his family was being frightened by slander and threats (Siglen 1837/1848: 163f.).

As Siglen complained in his writings that everything in the world was "completely wrong" and described his own faith as "evangelically simple-minded", this may indicate some closeness of his to pietist ideas (Siglen 1837: 1; 1837/1848: 51). On the other hand, he explicitly distanced himself from the "ghostly haunting" of Justinus Kerner in Weinsberg and his depiction of somnambulism in the *Seerin von Prevorst,* where the spirits "spoke a pietistic language" (Siglen 1837/1848: 150). Siglen's criticism of the "highly tense, precarious world" differs from pietism's moral criticism of worldliness because it has a political coloring by accusing the enlightenment, together with liberalism, of ideological tyranny:

> None of us stands in moral freedom, no one may dare to follow his best convictions under all circumstances. We feel our lack of freedom and cry out for freedom. We call our champions liberals, and their yoke is by no means gentler than the yoke of tyrants. […] For fear of the dishonor of not being considered enlightened, they join the ranks of those who seek to disgrace that which does not shine in human eyes […]. (Siglen 1837/1848: 143f.)

Siglen contrasts the believing "simple-minded" with the superficially educated "clever", who trust their intellect alone (Siglen 1837: 2). Sara Gayer's statements are only nonsense for those who do not have a sufficiently broad scientific knowledge of various disciplines at their disposal, namely "natural science, astronomy, metaphysics, dynamics, spiritual science, pneumatic theosophy and theology" (Siglen 1837/1848: 156, 158).

[8] It is probably Georg Albert Adam Siglen, even though the initials "J.R." appear on the title page of Siglen's writings (Winterhalder 1976: 339).

As a counter-image, Siglen sketched an irenic future in which all denominational boundaries are overcome. He referred to Swedenborg as a "teacher" and "awakener", but qualified that it was never God's will for people to follow a "single guide", be it Luther or Swedenborg (Siglen 1837: 3). For Siglen, Sara's clairvoyance, which enabled her to see into the spirit realm, was a sign from heaven that had to be proclaimed far and wide in order to contribute to the revitalisation of Christian faith and thought. In the autumn of 1836, Siglen began regular visits to Sara. He recorded her nightly visions afterwards and repeatedly took long walks with her, during which he talked to her about religious topics.

He published his notes at his own expense and announced the publication on February 28, 1837 in a supplement to the *Schwäbischer Merkur* (Fig. 5.1).

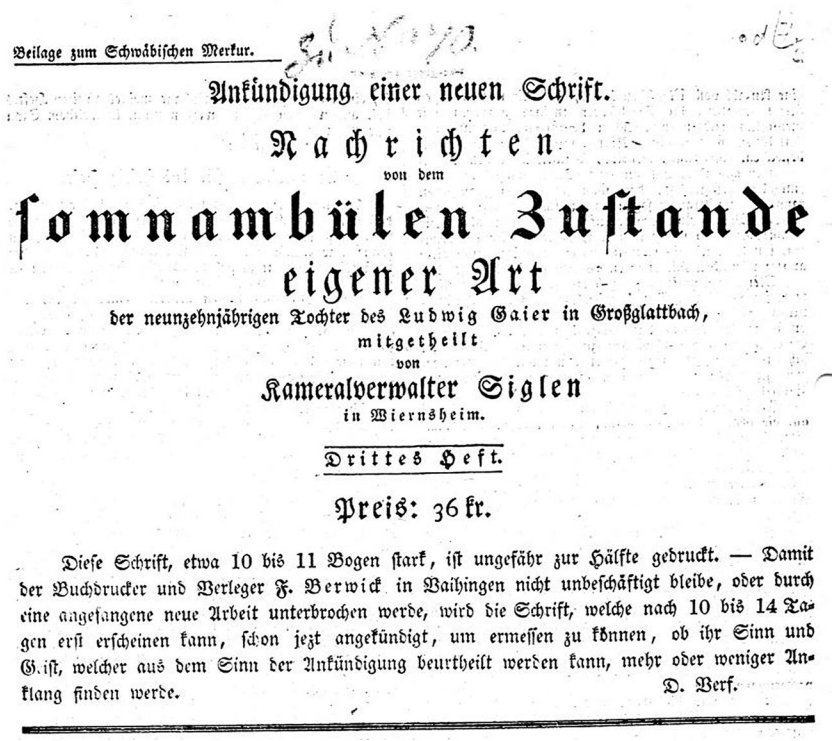
In a four-page advert, Siglen expressed the intention of the planned publication:

> When one has an overview of this phenomenon [Sara Gayer's somnambulism, DS], one no longer wants to die on one's denomination, but only on the Christian faith. […] All sects and all denominations which divide the Christian Church must in a short time be overcome by the convictions of men, for the time is perfectly ripe for the fulfilment of prophecy: There shall be One Fold, and One Shepherd. (Siglen 1837: 3)

With reference to Isaiah 42:3, Siglen interpreted Sara as a prophetess who was physically and emotionally oppressed by illness and persecuted by the superficially clever.[9] The files of the authorities and Siglen's printed works show that Sara's behavior and statements increasingly resembled the model of the somnambulist Philippine Bäurle, as depicted in the book *Geschichte einer Somnambüle in Weilheim an der Teck* (1834), which was already widely circulated at the time (Anon. 1834).

Beck pointed out to the regional magistrate that this book was in Sara's hands (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Beck report, January 8, 1837: fol. 18a). It is conceivable that Siglen was the one who obtained the publication and passed it on to her along with other religious literature (Siglen 1837/1848: 154). The book describes the somnambulist's visionary journeys to the

[9] "A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench […]". Isaiah 42:3 contains a reference to Psalm 34:18 in the Luther translation, which could also refer to Sarah. Literally it translates: "The Lord is near to those who are brokenhearted and helps those who have a broken spirit" (Siglen 1837: 2).



Beilage zum Schwäbischen Merkur.

Ankündigung einer neuen Schrift.

Nachrichten
von dem
somnambülen Zustande
eigener Art
der neunzehnjährigen Tochter des Ludwig Gaier in Großglattbach,
mitgetheilt
von
Kameralverwalter Siglen
in Wiernsheim.

Drittes Heft.

Preis: 36 kr.

Diese Schrift, etwa 10 bis 11 Bogen stark, ist ungefähr zur Hälfte gedruckt. — Damit der Buchdrucker und Verleger F. Berwick in Vaihingen nicht unbeschäftigt bleibe, oder durch eine angefangene neue Arbeit unterbrochen werde, wird die Schrift, welche nach 10 bis 14 Tagen erst erscheinen kann, schon jetzt angekündigt, um ermessen zu können, ob ihr Sinn und Geist, welcher aus dem Sinn der Ankündigung beurtheilt werden kann, mehr oder weniger Anklang finden werde.

D. Verf.

Fig. 5.1 Announcement of Siglen's publication on Sara Gaier's visions in the journal *Schwäbischer Merkur*, February 28, 1837

souls of the deceased on various celestial bodies. It also states that the visionary from Weilheim was requested by some of her visitors to ask her spiritual guide during her visions about medical prescriptions. In some cases, she also saw the herbs to be prescribed on Jupiter herself (Anon. 1834: 44, 16, 155, 258, 266, 269, 309, 310, 325, 328).

In line with this role model, Sara's visionary insights focussed on two areas: travels to celestial bodies and recipes for medicine. Tax inspector Siglen was able to log a whole series of journeys through the realm of spirits, which proved to be a heaven in the style of Swedenborg's visions. Sara's deceased siblings accompanied her on her visionary travels and just

as in the book about the Weilheim seeress, Sara spoke of the planets as places where the spirits of the deceased could be found (Siglen 1837/1848: 156–159, 204, 206f., 217f., 219–225, 233; Anon. 1837: 6–8). At the same time, spiritual beings counseled Sara on remedies for those visitors who asked for remedies against certain diseases.

In addition to Ludwig Hofacker's sermons (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Beck report, January 8, 1837: fol. 1b). and the *Geschichte einer Somnambüle,* Sara probably had access to another publication that unfolds in concrete, sensory terms an imagery of the afterlife: the German edition of Richard Baxter's (1615–1691) *The Saints' Everlasting Rest,* which Siglen mentions as his gift to her (Siglen 1837/1848: 154).[10] The Puritan pastor's work describes the state of the saved and damned souls after death on the basis of the relevant biblical passages and encourages contemplation of the afterlife by envisaging its scenery as concrete as possible: "to meditate on the joys of heaven, think of them boldly as Scripture has expressed them; bring down thy conceptions to the reach of sense." (Baxter 1836: 258).

Sara's mother gave Dr Beck a piece of paper with verses supposedly written by the girl, which were unknown to him (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Beck report, January 8, 1837: fol. 7).

In fact, they were lines from the hymns *Weil ich Jesu Schäflein bin* by the Moravian Henrietta Maria Luise von Hayn (1724–1782) and *Jesu, gib gesunde Augen* by the Halle pietist Christian Friedrich Richter (1676–1711). In Siglen's publications, verses that he quotes as uttered by Sara Gayer can be traced back to lines from the hymns *Hab Dank, mein frommer Gott* by Lorenz Wilhelm Crantz (1674–1742), *Du bist ein Mensch, das weißt du wohl* and *Noch dennoch musst Du drum nicht ganz* by Paul Gerhardt (1607–1676). Other verses by Sara are extracts from Johann Heinrich Daniel Zschokke's (1771–1848) series of edification books *Stunden der Andacht zur Beförderung wahren Christentums* (Siglen 1837/1848: 214, 244, 248, 250). There seems to lack a leitmotif why these verses were chosen; their combination seems coincidental, just as a reference to Genesis 20 by Sara may have been motivated simply by the mention of her namesake there (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Beck report, Jan. 8, 1837: fol. 3b).

[10] This may have been the edition Baxter (1836), based on the abridged version prepared by Benjamin Fawcett in 1758.

6 The Parishioners Against the Pastor

The prescriptions for remedies that Sara dictated were noted down by Siglen and labelled with the price to be paid to the pharmacist for their preparation. At 4 to 5 guilders per prescription, the sums calculated in advance were considerable. Sara herself also charged a fee or had visitors make donations (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Beck report, Jan. 8, 1837: fol. 18b).

Those seeking help were required by Sara to have their prescriptions mixed only by a certain pharmacist in the town of Pforzheim in Baden. As the pharmacy was located abroad, the Württemberg authorities were unable to make direct enquiries there (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Chief Magistrate Krauß to County Gov. 9.1.1837: unpag.).

This prescription practice brought not only the pharmacist but also the Gayers into conflict with the law. While the Pforzheim pharmacist was sentenced to a fine of 10 Reichsthalers in February 1837 for dispensing medicines that had not been prescribed by a licensed doctor (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, notification County Gov. Pforzheim, February 10, 1837: unpag.), Sara was found guilty of the offense of quackery (Medizinalkollegium 1811–1837, expert opinion of the Medical College, January 20, 1837: fol. 173b).

Since the disputes surrounding Kühnle's funeral, the parish pastor Raßmann had become the Gayer family's staunchest opponent (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Raßmann with signature of Schultheiss Schmidt to County Gov. January 24, 1837: unpag.). Raßmann also seems to have taken journalistic action against the family: Several critical and satirical articles about the seeress of Großglattbach had appeared in the liberal newspaper *Der Beobachter*, which were republished as a separate brochure in 1837. Among sometimes insinuating remarks and puns, there was also included an article about the disputes in connection with Adam Kühnle's funeral written from a first-person perspective and signed with Raßmann's name (Anon. 1837: 9–11, 29–31). The people of Großglattbach believed the pastor to be the co-author of the hostile articles, while Raßmann told his deanery that all this had happened without his knowledge (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Dean Hafner, March 17, 1837: unpag.). However, the wording of the published text largely corresponds to Raßmann's own report to the magistrate.

As Raßmann exposed himself as an opponent of Sara and her family, anger against him grew in the village. In March 1837, voices were raised

demanding that "if the truth is to prevail, the pastor must be overthrown". Under these circumstances, Raßmann no longer felt able to cope with the hostilities and asked the deanery to transfer him to another position. However, this request was not granted by the consistory (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Consistory to the County Gov. of the Neckar District, March 21, 1837: unpag.). On March 4, 1837, Sara's supporters in Großglattbach had a statement printed in the newspaper *Intelligenzblatt für die Oberämter Vaihingen und Maulbronn,* in which they claimed that the *Beobachter*'s articles were full of malicious slander and distortions of the facts (Intelligenzblatt 1837: 71f). When the affair had escalated into a public dispute, Sara was transferred by official order to Stuttgart's Katharinen Hospital on April 14, 1837 as a hysterical patient, despite several petitions to the king by Siglen (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Report from School-Inspector to Chief Magistrate: unpag.) .

On May 11, 1837, Sara's parents, together with 19 other residents of Großglattbach, wrote a letter to Chief Medical Assessor Cleß at Katharinen Hospital. The letter, in which they asked for Sara to be discharged so that she could recover at home with her mother, shows why the girl found so many supporters in the village. A main reason was the opinion that Pastor Raßmann was untrustworthy. According to the people of Großglattbach, the clergyman and his wife had initially declared the sick Sara to be a somnambulist themselves and urged them to provide medicine for their sick daughter through clairvoyance. When Sara refused being mesmerised because she believed she might die from it, the pastor was said to have replied, "she would have to die one day [anyway, DS]" (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Letter to Dr Cleß, May 11, 1837: unpag.).

To Sara's explanation that God did not want her to be magnetised, Raßmann is said to have interjected disparagingly: "Oh what, God" (ibid.). This insinuated that the pastor's family had wanted to instrumentalise Sara for their own interests and had even accepted the girl's possible death. Raßmann's description of Sara as a "dissolute wench" (ibid.) in front of the church convention was seen as a further provocation. The letter by the inhabitants of the village stated that this accusation was unjustified. The authors defiantly declared: "No one can prove that since she was a youth Sara has ever behaved dissolutely, but what a clergyman says is believed more than what low people say" (ibid). The last lines of the letter approach the point at which rebelliousness and obstinacy could turn into political criticism:

> Sara is not over-sensitive, but she has a human heart like us. It has hurt and frightened many better people in the whole neighborhood that the safety of a person should depend solely on the opinion that the royal authorities have of an innocent person. […] We have shown a binding obedience to the authorities, but the royal government itself will not desire that we would contribute to the prolongation of the affliction by our silence in the right place. (ibid.)

7 A Victory for the Authorities?

After Sara was discharged from hospital as cured at the end of July 1837, the situation in Großglattbach calmed down for a while. But as early as November 23, 1838, Raßmann reported to the magistrate that Sara had again feigned bouts of somnambulism shortly after her return from Stuttgart. It could be assumed that she was once again practicing clairvoyance in secret (Polizeisachen, 1834–1842, Raßmann to Chief Magistrate, November 23, 1838: unpag.). The surviving official correspondence is interrupted after this point. It only resumed in August 1840, nine months after Siglen's death at the end of 1839. The fact that there were now prominent guests among Sara's visitors was demonstrated when two magnificent coaches stopped in front of the Großglattbach inn *Zur Krone* on August 15, 1840 – one from Pforzheim and one from Karlsruhe. It was said that the wife of the mayor of Pforzheim was among the passengers (Polizeisachen, 1834–1842, Fauth to County Gov. Vaihingen, Aug 15, 1840: unpag.). Sara was able to continue her prescription practice until the late summer of 1843 (Polizeisachen, 1834–1842, Raßmann to Chief Magistrate Vaihingen, August 15, 1843: unpag.). It was only around this time that the authorities intervened (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Note by Chief Magistrate on Raßmann's letter: August 15, 1843: unpag., ibid, Mann to Gov. of Neckarkreis, August 25, 1843: unpag.). On July 7, 1843, Sara was convicted and punished for continuing her quackery. Four months later, on Martinmas 1843, the Gayers' household was dissolved; the building was sold shortly afterwards. Ludwig Gayer, who had apparently been widowed in the meantime, moved in with his married son in nearby Illingen. The children, who were still living at home, went to work abroad. Sara emigrated to the Grand Duchy of Baden. Chief Magistrate Mann from Vaihingen therefore notified the district government on April 13, 1844: "The house of this family […] is thus completely dissolved and

the mischief of Sara Geyer has ceased" (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Chief Magistrate Mann to the Gov. of Neckarkreis, April 13, 1844: unpag.).

Was this a complete and crushing victory for the authorities over Sara Gayer and her family? After all, it is conceivable that Sara's emigration was not one of the deportations of unpopular elements that were usual at the time (Isermeyer 1992: 175–182), but rather a social advancement made possible by the money she earned from her clairvoyance. Sara, now 28 years old, was not only able to provide the guarantee required by emigrants, but was also able to acquire Baden citizenship. In her new home, she married the widowed bijoutier Johann Jacob Boeffert from Dillweissenstein near Pforzheim on December 17, 1843. From an economic point of view, this was probably not a bad choice: Around the middle of the 19th century, the jewellery industry was one of the particularly up-and-coming trades in the Pforzheim area (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Fauth to Chief Magistrate, April 12, 1844: unpag.; Standesbuch Dillweißenstein 1842–1856).

8 Reflexion: A Lay Prophetess Between Interpretations, Instrumentalisations and Self-empowerment

Based on the criteria of research on Protestant lay prophetesses in the early modern period, Sara Gayer was a lay prophetess of the 19th century. Like the lay prophetess Anna Schütz from Dürrmenz in 1563, she had personal experiences of transcendence, which she reported on. At the request of other people, she asked questions of the spiritual beings with whom she seemed to be in contact. The statements attributed to her contain theological topoi of the era. The events surrounding her caused a great stir in the neighbourhood. The clergy and secular authorities took an interest in the case, questioned the visionary, drew up protocols, imputed interpretations and came to conclusions about the authenticity of the transcendental experiences she had confessed (Arend 2021; Beyer 2017).

Of course, Sara Gayer's recorded visionary scenes initially reflected the interests, conflicts and fears of the inhabitants of Großglattbach and Sara's visitors from abroad. The visionary and her family were constantly in a dynamically developing dialogue with the people who hoped for answers to their questions. Initially, when the news of Sara's magnetic sleeps was still limited to the village, the visions showed the fate of some deceased

parishioners. In addition, there was a practical interest in the prescription of remedies. However, the medical aspect was at least temporarily overshadowed by the explanatory model that illnesses could be caused by witchcraft. Similar to the findings of research on witchcraft in the early modern period (Groß 2009), local enmities and conflicts were also expressed in narratives about harmful spells in the case of Großglattbach. It seems plausible that Sara Gayer and her family tested the power of statements that appeared to be legitimised by a supernatural source of knowledge. In the conflict with the local pastor, the sources provide evidence of rebelliousness and the claim to the equality of one's own access to transcendence on the side of Sara and her supporters: Dr Beck noted that Sara had begun to make "religious speeches", and had entered into discussions with the special superintendent and pastor (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Beck report, January 8, 1837: fol. 5a). Sara's conversation with the spirit of a deceased person over bread and wine may have been modeled on a communion celebration (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Beck report, January 8, 1837: fol. 13a).

The judgments of the physicians involved show that before 1850 the boundaries between the possible and the impossible were different in medical discourse than they are today. The physicians did not fundamentally deny Sara Gayer's abilities as a clairvoyant. In line with the contemporary mesmerist literature, Dr Beck, and even more so the Royal Medical College in Stuttgart, considered it proven that Sara Gayer showed signs of emerging magnetic clairvoyance at the beginning of her illness. An expert report states that "in the present case, in the first period of Sara Gaier's illness, there really was a tendency towards so-called spontaneous somnambulism or magnetic ecstasy, and at any rate no deception had taken place at that time, […] [this, DS] can be assumed with certainty." And further: "Even if these phenomena mentioned so far do not indicate in the case of Gaier a so-called magnetic clairvoyance that has come to a full breakthrough, on the other hand it is not to be doubted that at least an approximate state of such took place" (Medizinalkollegium 1811–1837, expert opinion of the Medical College, January 20, 1837: fol. 170b, 175b). Various unfavourable factors then had interacted, resulting in a mixture of genuine somnambulism, feigned visions and systematic quackery, "the spectacle of a continuous mixture of truth and lies" (ibid.: fol. 170a). Sara herself was not primarily regarded by the doctors as a fraud, but as a sick person. However, Beck diagnosed her with "hysteria", thereby naming an illness coded as specifically female, which in his opinion was not

only characterised by physical symptoms, but also manifested itself in moral misconduct. At this pathological stage, however, lying was said to be a pathological symptom and no longer a moral act of free choice (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Beck report, January 8, 1837: fol. 17b).

The doctors, the pastor and the officials involved did not often use the marginalizing term "superstition" and usually only in connection with the witchcraft accusations (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Letters from Raßmann, October 10 and November 11, 1836, Letter from Beck to Chief Magistrate 10.11.1836, and Letter from Dean Hafner, March 17, 1837: unpag.). The medical college emphasised that the "witchcraft story is one of the dirtiest stains in this whole affair" (Medizinalkollegium 1811–1837, expert opinion of the Medical College, January 20, 1837: fol. 173a; Grüsser 1987, 166–179). These reactions were probably less due to the general fact that it was possible to hit upon the belief in witchcraft still in the 19th century (Davies and Blécourt 2004).[11] The persistence of the belief in ghosts, witches and harmful spells was a familiar fact to the clergy and doctors in the region around Großglattbach during the 1820s and 1830s (Isermeyer 1992: 90). The harsh remarks about the events were probably partly due to the discord that the witchcraft accusations had caused in the village. On the other hand, they can be understood as a reaction to an incident that had just taken place on the Prussian Baltic Sea peninsula of Hela and was reported on throughout Germany: In September 1836, it had become known that a woman there had been accused of witchcraft and drowned in the Baltic Sea during a witch probe (Freytag 1998: 117f.). Dr Beck feared a similar escalation of the situation in Großglattbach and therefore complained in November 1836 to the Magistrate that superstition in Württemberg would soon reach Prussian proportions, "so that in the end one would see witch trials in Gr. Glattbach as in a province of Prussia" (Polizeisachen 1834–1842, Beck to Chief Magistrate, November 10, 1836: unpag.).

It was only when tax administrator Siglen became close to Sara and her family that the young woman was transformed from the visionary of the village into a lay prophetess of a renewed Christianity. He placed her illness and her visionary gift in the context of his own religious beliefs, which were inspired by Swedenborg's writings. The emphasis on irenic thought and the positive reference to the sciences to understand Sara's visions, the

[11] For the survival of the belief in witchcraft into the 20th century specifically for southwest Germany see Schöck (1978).

rejection of "pietistic" language and Friederike Hauffe's frightening visions indicate that Siglen saw himself as a representative of a new type of Christianity, which he connoted brightly and positively. Like Ludwig Hofacker, Siglen spoke of revival in his sermons, repeated Hofacker's phrase about the "precarious times" in which we live, criticised the "mask of so-called education" and, like him, quoted the prophetic speech of the bruised reed and smoking flax from Isaiah 42:3 (Hofacker 1833: 11, 18, 25, 31, 35f., 75). However, Siglen had no equivalent to Hofacker's belief in the devil (ibid.: 247f.). Siglen also notes that when he gave Sara Gayer the volume by the Puritan Baxter, he drew her attention to what seemed too strict or harsh to him in it (Siglen 1837/1848: 154). Siglen and the Gayers belonged to different classes and their imageries of the realm of spirits differed, as well as their agendas as to what could be achieved by Sara's abilities. But they were united by the claim that Sara had direct access to a higher knowledge. Thus the parish pastor's position as the intermediator between earthly life and transcendence was challenged from two sides: by many of the common people of Großglattbach and by a well-reputed civil servant as part of the educated elite.

To identify Sara Gayer as an independently acting protagonist in the context of the events is only possible to a certain extent through the prism of the interpretations of the doctors, the pastor or the administrator Siglen. Irrespective of whether they were hostile or friendly towards the visionary, it was always a matter of attributions and actions through which Sara developed her role in asymmetric relationships. The visions and verses of the lay prophetess Sara in Siglen's publications and Dr Beck's reports can be identified as topoi from writings circulating at the time about visionary journeys to the afterlife and as quotations from church hymns and devotional literature of the time. The "seat in life" (Hermann Gunkel) of these texts was to provide Sara and her observers with a scenery of somnambulistic journeys, while religious verses chosen apparently at random provided a Christian framing. That Sara Gayer in her role as a prophetess can be seen as an example of female religious self-empowerment may be doubted against this background. However, the sources suggest that she tested and experienced the effectiveness of her word under the restrictions of an illness in the protective environment of her family. Sara's continued, legally precarious activity as a paid clairvoyant after Siglen's death makes her appear more as an independent actor. Perhaps Sara Gayer's female self-empowerment ultimately consisted of leaving behind the roles ascribed to her, emigrating to a prosperous region with the money she had earned and starting a new life as the Baden citizen Mrs Boeffert.

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CHAPTER 6

Between the Elite and the Masses: Or the Hardships of Being a Revivalist Colporteur in 19th-Century Finland

Jakob Dahlbacka

"If the priest is for us, everything works out well.
If the priest is against us, everything works out even better."
Gustaf Roos (1846–1918)

1 Introduction

Finnish society in general, and its religious scene in particular, underwent major changes in the latter part of the 19th century. After enjoying for centuries the status of a state church, *the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland* gradually lost ground and was forced to retreat from several societal areas that it had previously dominated. Its role was threatened not only by forces backed by Enlightenment thinking but also by emerging players in the ecclesiastical field. An inevitable consequence was that the clergy, who had long occupied the role of pillars and authorities of society,

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V. Albrecht-Birkner, S. Siedek-Strunk (eds.), *Revival Movements as Conflict Agendas of the Popular in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-75117-2_6

lost their prominent position. A shift in power relations took place in which both revival movements and free churches and their respective representatives established themselves at the expense of the state church by challenging the authority of church officials. Needless to say, this shift was not carried out without tension and friction (see, e.g., Murtorinne 2000: 77–290).

It is in this light that the initial quote, attributed to Gustaf Roos (1846–1918), should be read. Roos was one of the first colporteurs[1] – a travelling book salesperson and preacher – in the so-called *Evangelical revival movement* in Finland. As the quote seems to suggest, being at the forefront of this lay movement was not always easy. Among the clergy – but also the general public – opinions on colporteurs were divided, which meant that they sometimes ended up working between the elite and the masses. The current chapter focuses on this tug of war between the official clergy and the emerging colporteurs – or between the religious high and low culture represented by the clergy and lay preachers respectively. It does so by examining the previously unpublished autobiographies by Gustaf Roos and his relative and fellow teacher and colporteur Johannes Wirén (1854–1934).[2] In doing so, it offers a micro-historical account of the self-understanding and self-image of two colporteurs and a first-hand perspective on the loosening of the centuries-long monopoly on the religious field in Finland.[3] The aim is to analyse how these two colporteurs

[1] In an English-speaking context, the term colporteur could – at least further back in history – refer to a traveling salesman of books in general. From the 20th century onwards, the meaning seems to have increasingly come to refer to salesmen of religious literature in particular. It is in this latter sense that the term is to be understood in the current chapter. In the Finnish context, colporteurs also differ slightly from licensed lay preachers. By licensed lay preachers, I mean the laymen authorised by the state church with the right to preach, whereas the colporteurs – in addition to preaching (with or without *venia*) and selling religious literature – in many cases also acted as spokesmen of the revivalist movements they represented. However, over time many of the colporteurs also applied for and obtained the right to act as lay preachers.

[2] The hand-written autobiographies or spiritual journals by Gustaf Roos and Johannes Wirén are kept in the Manuscript Collections of the Archive Collections at Åbo Akademi University Library in Turku/Finland. The autobiographies are unpublished, and references will be made to correspond to the pagination made by Roos and Wirén respectively. The quotes are translated from Swedish to English by the author of this chapter.

[3] Gustaf Roos was born in 1846 in Lappträsk and Johannes Wirén was born in 1854 in Strömfors. The villages belong to the eastern part of the Uusimaa region and located some 100 kilometres east of Helsinki. Although they were almost the same age, Roos was in fact Wirén's uncle. However, they were very close and spent much of their lives in correspon-

saw themselves and their task, especially in relation to the representatives of the state church and with particular interest in when the contracting parties came into conflict with each other.

2 Background: The Religious Field in Finland Opens up

Until 1870, the so-called *Conventicle Act* was in force in Finland. This was a royal decree for the Swedish Empire dating back to January 12, 1726, which forbade conventicles, i.e. spiritual gatherings in places other than the Lutheran state church (Pleijel 1958: 12–48; Ruuth 1936). At the time, the decree had been issued so that the authorities could keep the Pietist Movement in check and preserve the unity of religion. Even after Finland became part of the Russian Empire in 1809, the Act remained in force in the Grand Duchy. It was applied as late as the 1830s and early 1840s in what was later called the Major Pietist Trials, when hundreds of pietists were put on trial (Ylikangas 1979; Murtorinne 2000: 108–110). Consequently, for pietists and other revivalists, the *Conventicle Act* was a thorn in their side, and they did their best to circumvent it in various ways. For example, revivalist priests gathered their fellow believers for meetings at baptisms, weddings, priestly installations, and markets (Akiander 1863: 322–387; Suokunnas 2011: 43–49). Throughout the 19th century, some forces wanted to abolish the decree, but it was not until the Church Law of 1869 (which came into force on June 1, 1870) that the decree was repealed (Fig. 6.1).[4]

Quite understandably, many priests[5] supported the Act. This was true, especially for vicars working in congregations where the revival was strong.

dence with each other. In addition to their autobiographies, hundreds of their letters to each other are kept in the Manuscript Collections of the Archive Collections at Åbo Akademi University Library. For biographic information about Roos and Wirén, see Wirén, E. (1919: 27–50; 1934: 35–60).

[4] The origins and significance of the Church Law of 1869 are discussed, for example, in Kansanaho (1954: 91–147), Pirinen (1985: 91–147).

[5] In the current chapter, the term "priest" is used throughout and consistently and in accordance with its use in the historical sources to refer to the clergy of the Lutheran state church in Finland. The Swedish equivalent, also found in the sources, is "präst" – a word that in itself reveals no distinction of rank but refers to the clergy in general. Whenever the word "vicar" is used, it refers to the priest in charge at the parish level (in Swedish often called "kyrkoherde"). In the 19th century, it was not uncommon for these leading priests to be addressed as "pastor" – whereas nowadays that word often brings to mind parish leaders in free churches.


Kongl: Maj:
Förnyade
PLACAT
Och
Förbud/
Angående
The oloflige Sammankomster/ hwilka uti enskylte Hus til en särskild och enkannerlig Gudztiensts förrättande anställas; Samt theras straff/ som ther med beträdas.
Stockholm i Räd-Cammaren den 12. Januarii Åhr 1726.
Cum Gratia & Privilegio S:æ R:æ Maj:tis
STOCKHOLM/
Tryckt hos JOH. HENR. WERNER, Directeur öfwer alla Tryckerier i Riket 1726.

Fig. 6.1 Conventicle Act (Konventikelplakatet 1726 – Kunglig förordning mot bönemöten i hemmet – Stockholmskällan, Stockholms stadsarkiv SE/SSA/Biblioteket/Kungliga fördningar 1726 12 januari)

In many respects, the *Conventicle Act* was a guarantee – one of the very last – for these officials to claim their position and maintain their reputation as the foremost dignitaries of the parishes. By referring to the Act, they believed they could maintain order in the parishes and uphold their position as teachers of the people. Their position was namely challenged in

several ways during the 19th century. Especially following the Finnish *Local Government Act of 1865* and *1873* (Local Government Act 1865, 1873) – which separated municipalities from parishes and deprived the latter of their jurisdiction in anything other than church affairs – the Church and its clergy lost responsibility for the school system, the health care, and the poor relief.

To make things worse, a large number of preachers who did not belong to the established Lutheran majority church, but to one of the many revival movements, began to travel around the parishes and appear as preachers at the gatherings of the revivalists. The Church law of 1869 not only provided for the possibility of individual devotional meetings under the guidance of a layman, but also encouraged people to attend them (Church law 1869, § 33; Koskenniemi 1964: 26–29). This meant, at least in theory, that the doors were opened for the revivalists to gather for meetings and conventicles. As a result, the *Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland* was founded, with the express task of preaching and distributing Christian literature through their colporteurs.[6] In addition, the Church law gave to laypeople the right to apply for permission to preach from chapters – the so-called *venia concionandi* – something that many of the above-mentioned colporteurs also did (Cnattingius 1952). In other words, the majority church and its clergy experienced competition even when it came to the spiritual domain and what had traditionally been their main task – preaching.

In a recent doctoral dissertation, Matleena Sopanen (2023, see also Sopanen 2021) investigated this so-called licence to preach system and mapped the men who applied for permission to preach. Sopanen positions the system within the ongoing modernisation of Finland, primarily as a tool adopted by the *Evangelical-Lutheran Church* to respond to the demands of the changing religious field. In other words – at least eventually – the *Evangelical Lutheran Church* saw the system as beneficial for its causes – as a way to address both the shortage of priests and the secularisation tendencies in society. However, in its initial phase, the system was rather a means to control the increasing number of lay preachers and to contain and meet the demands of the revival movements. For instance, the men applying for the licence underwent thorough examination by the

[6] For information on the *Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland*, see: Takala (1929, 1933–1948), Koskenniemi (1964, 1967, 1984), Arkkila (1975), Dahlbacka (1987).

chapters, were kept under supervision by the clergy, and could even be deprived of their preaching licence.

Of interest for the present study is Sopanen's analysis of the debate and the discussions around the licence to preach system. It is clear that the system divided the views of the church and the clergy; some were against it and some were in favour. This is also reflected in the diaries of Roos and Wirén – far from all parishes or priests were hostile towards the lay preachers and the colporteurs. Sopanen distinguishes four discourses that were at the heart of the debate when it came to both legitimising and opposing lay preachers and the licence to preach system. The first discourse was about who had a rightful calling to preach; the second was about whether clergy and laity were equal; the third was about whether laity was fit to preach and teach; and the last was about the Church's actual need for laity (Sopanen 2023: 38–42). As will become evident, these discourses are identifiable in the arguments and reasoning of Roos and Wirén as well.

According to Sopanen, "licensed lay preachers of the Lutheran church of Finland operated in a liminal space, located somewhere between laity and clergy but not quite belonging to either of these categories" (Sopanen 2021: 298). This claim is confirmed at a general level, for instance by previous research on colporteurs within the *Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland*, which I will return to in the next section. Sopanen concludes that "future research on regional level might tell us more about how the licensed lay preachers managed walking a thin line between institution and inspiration", or at "the interplay between religious agency and institutional control" (Sopanen 2021: 277, 299). This is where my research on Gustaf Roos and Johannes Wirén can contribute – perhaps not on a regional but on a local and personal level that bring the above-mentioned discourses to life and make them tangible. Since the journals of Roos and Wirén coincide with this dynamic period in Finnish church history, they provide an unusual first-hand insight into the hardships and conflict-ridden work of the early colporteurs and how they, so to speak, operated the liminal space given to them and walked the thin line between the elite and the masses.[7] Because the material is so extensive, the present study cannot deal with the contents of the journals in their entirety – even

[7] According to Sopanen, quite a lot of research has been done on the lay preachers of the revival movements in Finland, at least on a collective level. Some individual lay preachers have also been studied more closely (Sopanen 2023: 22). However, only a few lay preachers are known to have published autobiographies, Sopanen mentions only a couple.

though they illustrate in detail what the life of a colporteur and a lay preacher could be like around the turn of the century 1900, and offer unmediated perspectives on the religious life of that period.[8] The scopes of the texts reveal that we are not dealing with any kind of ordinary travel accounts or occasional diary entries, but with accounts that cover virtually the entire lives of the two men. Consequently, the focus will explicitly be on what they reveal about the tension between laity and clergy and how Roos and Wirén perceived their role in relation to the majority church.

3 Tension Arises: Revivals and Colporteurs in Southern Finland

Beginning in 1869, there was a revival in the Eastern part of the Uusimaa region in Southern Finland. It was largely thanks to the veterinarian and government secretary Anders Silfvast (1829–1891) that the revival reached these areas.[9] Silfvast was passionate about disseminating Christian literature. He had purchased a large number of Bibles and the writings of Martin Luther (1483–1546), which he sold to the public in Lappträsk, where he lived that year. There, and in the neighbouring villages, he also arranged evangelical meetings.

Silfvast aspired to achieve the spreading of literature on an even larger scale. In 1873, together with some friends, he ended up founding *The Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland* as an umbrella organisation for the Evangelical[10] Movement. According to its statutes, the association's main task was to disseminate Christian literature, especially the Bible and the writings of Luther. The distribution of literature was to be carried

[8] Roos' autobiography or spiritual journal was written between 1873 and 1918 and consists of 1331 pages of handwritten text. Wirén's autobiography consists of almost 5000 pages of handwritten text. It was written somewhat later, but is partly based on earlier diary entries beginning in 1873. The Manuscript Collections of the Archive Collections at Åbo Akademi University Library also contains a large number of letters relating to the life and work of these individuals.

[9] During his studies in Stockholm, Silfvast – through a religious crisis – had come to an evangelical faith and when he later moved to Helsinki, he continued to attend the meetings of the evangelical group. For biographical information about Silfvast, see Engström (1891: 97–123), Dahlbacka (2023).

[10] The term *evangelical* here refers to the Swedish word *evangelisk*, which, in principle, is synonymous with *Protestant*, or in the Nordic countries often even more specifically *Lutheran*. The *Evangelical Movement* in Finland had its roots in Pietism and in the teachings of the pastor Fredrik Gabriel Hedberg.

out by dispatched colporteurs. In addition to distributing literature, the colporteurs were allowed to give so-called oral or spoken testimonies. This meant preaching and holding Bible studies on their journeys (Koskenniemi 1967: 36–43). As such, the *Evangelical Association* emerged as the first more permanent colporteur organisation in Finland for a long time to come.

That it was a colporteur organisation was evident from the fact that only two out of twelve persons on the association's first board were priests. This is symptomatic of the importance attributed to laymen within the association – although their importance also extended beyond the association and into the wider community (Koskenniemi 1964: 49). So decisive was the importance of the colporteurs that Lauri Koskenniemi, who has written several scholarly works on the origins and activities of the association, states that the history of the *Evangelical Association* at the end of the 19th century is synonymous with the history of its colporteurs. As early as the beginning of 1874 the association received its first colporteurs and the board began to organise their activities. After this, things developed rapidly; in 1878, the association had 11 colporteurs in its service, and in 1900 the number was 34 (Koskenniemi 1964: 51–53, 246). The very first colporteur, A.O. Sundholm, worked as a children's teacher in Lappträsk. In addition to his teaching duties, Sundholm held weekly devotions in Lappträsk and the nearby villages – sometimes up to several times each week – and large numbers of people attended his meetings (Hydén 1927: 58–65; Koskenniemi 1964: 89–95). Among those attending were Gustaf Roos and Johannes Wirén. According to their autobiographies, they experienced their conversion in the same year that Sundholm arrived in Lappträsk (Wirén: 359; Roos: 58f). Soon after, they began arranging meetings, and a few years later they became licenced colporteurs, Wirén in 1875 and Roos in 1878 (Fig. 6.2) (Koskenniemi 1964: 100, 109).

According to the association's statutes, the colporteurs were primarily to sell Christian literature. In practice, however, it turned out that preaching became an increasingly important part of their activities. Overall, the colporteurs seem to have been allowed to operate relatively undisturbed in the parishes. In many written accounts, the colporteurs testify to the benevolence they encountered from both the clergy and the parishioners. At the same time, it is clear that in many places their presence and activity were met with scepticism or even resistance. This becomes evident from initiatives taken at both synodal meetings and church meetings in the 1870s and 1880s (Koskenniemi 1964: 172–189). The reasons for this

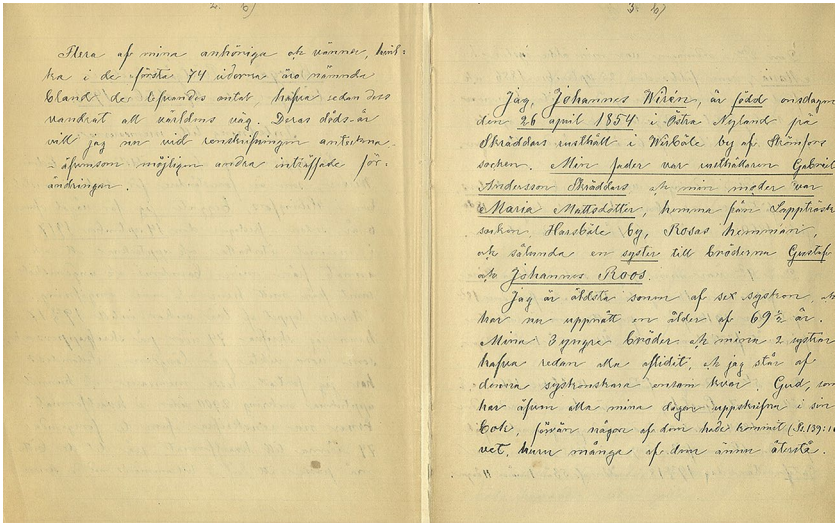

Fig. 6.2 An excerpt from Johannes Wirén's handwritten autobiography (Photo by Jakob Dahlbacka)

resistance are not always clear. Most likely, they coincide with the arguments put forward against the licence to preach system, as highlighted by Sopanen. On a general level, for instance, some colporteurs were critical of the clergy's teachings. This naturally led to reactions from the clergy. Another reason for dissatisfaction was their disruptive behaviour. In fact, during 1874–1900, the association's board was forced to dismiss no less than ten of the 66 people it had accepted as colporteurs, and, in some cases, the reason for the dismissal was inappropriate behaviour on the part of the colporteur (Koskenniemi 1964: 51–53, 72).

Consequently, measures had to be taken. Initially, there were no other rules for the colporteurs than those mentioned in the association's statutes. However, towards the end of the 1870s, the board considered that there was a need to issue special rules of conduct. These were published in the association's Annual report for 1879 (Annual report 1879: 14–17). Five years later, the rules were made more detailed (Annual report 1884: 22–28). They gave meticulous instructions on how colporteurs were to behave in their business. Their task was to sell books, preach, read, and

discuss. They were in no way to cause offence in the churches. They were to carefully avoid interfering in any way with the activities of the clergy and the order of the congregation. Instead, they were to support the priests in their work in every way possible.[11]

In addition to the rules of conduct, the issue was discussed during a special meeting that was held for the colporteurs in connection with the association's annual celebration in Helsinki in 1880. At this meeting, according to a report in the association's journal *Sändebudet*, it was emphasised that "The colporteur activity must not seek to take the place of the ministry of preaching; it should merely be a helper, albeit a weak one, in the priest's work that is heavy enough as it is" (Sändebudet 1880: 250f.). Roos and Wirén also took part in this meeting. Roos, in his diary, quotes a rural dean, Rosengren, who urged the colporteurs not to:

> seek to establish anything new within the church, nor to consider their activities as being something outside and against the church. Instead, they ought to contribute to making the pure doctrine come into more lively use among the people – a doctrine that the Lutheran church already possesses. (Roos: 350f.)

On the one hand, the quote shows that Roos and Wirén knew that they ought not to work against the clergy. They hardly saw the priests as their primary antagonists, but respected the given balance of power and were always careful to report – as prescribed in the rules and the Church law – to the priest whenever they arrived at a new place. On the other hand, the quote shows that the crucial point for the *Evangelical Association*, its colporteurs, and Roos and Wirén was the safeguarding of the "pure doctrine". Any deviation from this was to be fought against, regardless of who advocated or represented it.[12]

Consequently, the colporteurs fought their battle on many fronts. On the one hand, they fought against the unbelieving common people, which led to occasional descriptions of entire parishes as "dark and immoral," as

[11] The rules of conduct for the colporteurs are published, for instance, in Koskenniemi (1964: 59–64).

[12] The rules of conduct for the colporteurs included an expression that was repeated in various contexts and that describes the importance of preserving the true doctrine: "When the colporteur teaches the word of God, he must ensure that no side of the divine truth is deliberately evaded. He must proclaim the law in all its sharpness, the gospel in all its sweetness, but he must not neglect the evangelical admonition to all those who have accepted the Lord Christ" (Annual report 1884: 26).

"dead in a spiritual sense," and their inhabitants as "immersed in spiritual death and darkness and wandering carelessly in sin after the course of this world" (ibid.: 404, 449, 733). On the other hand – and perhaps above all – the colporteurs fought against "separatists and sectarians", i.e., against other preachers and representatives of Free Church movements and sects that appeared around the country at this time (Annual report 1880: 10–13). There were plenty of these; in his diary, Roos lists nearly a dozen heresies that "are currently in vogue in our country" (Roos, Autobiography: 335, 397–399, 464, 558, 592). Nevertheless, if the false doctrine came dressed as a priest – which the colporteurs believed it did at times – they also had to stand up against and criticise the priest.

For Roos and Wirén, pure doctrine was crucial. When that line was crossed, tension arose. On one occasion, Roos states that he would "rather be together with spiritually dead Lutherans, than with those who have a false doctrine and spirituality" (ibid.: 593). Another time, he explicitly states that it would be good if:

> the priests and the church at least outwardly were as correct and faithful to the Bible as possible; but if they are not, it is still not so dangerous, as long as they properly proclaim the pure and clear word – the doctrine – and administer the sacraments. (ibid.: 413)

In line with this reasoning, Roos, for instance, tolerates a rural dean on Åland who, according to him, "has a penchant for drunkenness", even though his conscience urges him to warn the priest of this serious and dangerous sin. In addition, he considers himself "too lowly to warn and punish a rural dean" (ibid.: 667–669).

In its mildest form, the tension or criticism against the clergy manifests itself in a kind of evaluation or ranking of priests – categorising them in relation to the above-mentioned pure doctrine. Thus, Roos and Wirén refer to some priests as "believers" or even "evangelical" – descriptions that suggest a higher degree of esteem – while they accuse other priests of lacking "the best, namely, the life and light of faith, which would be absolutely necessary for a minister if he is to feed the flock of God properly" (ibid.: 296, 599). As their theological knowledge grows, Roos and Wirén become more vocal in their criticism. They read a lot of theological literature and review and criticise what they read in their diaries. Not only that, they also write letters – or "epistles" – to "brothers and friends in our Lord", "for admonition and comfort" (ibid.: 575, 640; Wirén: 495). It is difficult not to perceive in these itinerant preachers a certain identification

with the early church apostles. Furthermore, as not only their knowledge but also their confidence grows, they cautiously begin to assert themselves against the priests. Initially, and for the most part, this assertion does not extend beyond the confines of the diary. When, for example, a priest takes the liberty of rephrasing a few words in a text that Roos has written and sent in for publication in *Sändebudet*, Roos notes – with forbearance but also with some nonchalance – that the editing of the text must be understood from the fact that his own "spiritual horizon" exceeds that of the priest (Roos: 483). Similarly, when he compares his theological knowledge with that of another priest, he confidently states – albeit only to himself in his diary:

> As regards knowledge and clarity in the word of God as well as the doctrine of the Church, as well as spiritual experience, I dare to believe that in these respects I was ahead of Jakobsson, even though he was a priest. (ibid.: 827)

These examples show how the identity of the colporteur gradually developed with the priest as a kind of benchmark. Eventually, it led to verbal discussions and even disputes on theological issues with the priests. Roos writes about how he "contradicts him [a priest called Olander, JD] and points out the distortion of the Beckian doctrine[13] and refutes it" (ibid.: 644f.). The high point is reached when he even performs an emergency baptism of a child "which the priest refused to baptise because its father was allegedly Greek" (ibid.: 496). The symbolic act could hardly be clearer than that – after all, the sacraments were the priests' to administer. What was this if not claiming to be new experts in theology?

4 Fredrik Christian Gestrin: The Opposition Personified

Everything was set up for confrontation, and as far as Roos and Wirén were concerned, the tension with the clergy culminated in the vicar in their parish, Strömfors, some 30 kilometres from Lappträsk. The vicar's

[13] "The Beckian doctrine" refers to the theology of German theologian Johann Tobias Beck (1804–1878) – also known as Beckianism or Biblicism – that was influential in Finland from the latter part of the 19th century, even among archbishops and university professors. For the influence of Beckianism in Finland, see Sentzke (1949–1957). Roos regarded Beckianism as a teaching that made man dependent on his own righteousness for salvation (Roos: 557, 1223).

name was Fredrik Christian Gestrin (1812–1889). He had arrived in the parish as an interim preacher in 1850, and in 1852 he became its chaplain. When Strömfors became its own pastorate in 1870, Gestrin was appointed vicar. Since Strömfors was the hometown of Johannes Wirén, he knew the vicar well. Ever since confirmation school, he had been in good books with Gestrin, who was his confirmation priest. However, when Wirén, after his conversion, began to organise gatherings within the parish and appear as a preacher at these gatherings – de facto without having informed the vicar – Gestrin became his fierce opponent.

The same applied to Gustaf Roos, who arrived in Strömfors in 1871. He had applied for and received the position as children's teacher, and began his work in January 1873. Word of the vicar had reached Roos even before he moved, and, in fact, it made Roos sceptical about moving there at all because he feared what was going to happen. He writes that he is anxious and sad in his mind because he fears the vicar will cause him much trouble "because of the word":

> In the last weeks before our move, when I thought about the fact that we would be separated from our hometown, the dear Lappträsk, and therefore feared that much inconvenience, especially from the priest for the sake of the word, would meet us in Strömfors, I was so anxious and sad in my mind that I could hardly talk about it with anyone. (Roos: 154)

Roos and Wirén describe Gestrin as a "hateful enemy and persecutor of the Gospel and Christians" and the parish in Strömfors as "dark and sinful" in comparison with Lappträsk (ibid.: 149; Wirén: 640, 654). Gestrin had no higher opinion of Roos either, since he connects him from the very beginning with what he calls the "Lappträsk heresy" – referring to the evangelical revival. According to Gestrin, this "heresy" involved "rejecting the law and having a dead faith". From the outset, the vicar makes it clear that he has "according to protocol, the power and right to dismiss me [Roos, JD] from the ministry if he should find me deviating from 'the church's doctrine'" (Roos: 153f.).

In their autobiographies, both Roos and Wirén describe in great detail Gestrin's hostile attitude to the revival. Neither of them spare their words when giving their opinion of the parish priest. Gestrin is described as "spiritually dead", "proud" and "authoritative", and Johannes Wirén says that Gestrin "received from our Lord an extremely small pound of talent and intelligence to manage" – compared to most other priests and other

gentlemen with whom he came into contact on behalf of the ministry (Wirén: 187). Roos, in his turn, writes that Gestrin "for nearly half a century has lulled the congregation into the sleep of sin and hypocrisy with his teachings on works righteousness and with his unfailingly worldly way of life" (Roos: 812). Thus, from the perspective of Roos and Wirén, the problem lies in the theology of the vicar. He represents the false doctrine and spirituality they so intensely detest.

What probably added to the tense situation was – if we are to believe Wirén's testimony – that no one in Strömfors had previously experienced anyone other than the priest preaching the word of God. Consequently, when Wirén appeared as a preacher, it aroused both curiosity and amazement among the parishioners (Wirén: 215, 219, 410). In other words, Gestrin's previously obvious position was threatened by the colporteurs' newfound zeal for the gospel.

At one point, Roos discusses in his notes a book called *Wet du hwad prest är?* (Do you know what a priest is?). With explicit reference to Strömfors and Gestrin, Roos writes that there still exists "a papal clergy" who "holds itself too much in authority and wants to be master of the congregation" and who:

> does not allow or want anyone who is not a priest to speak or explain the word of God to the people. And the unbelieving, blind people are so entangled in blind priest worship that they pay little attention to the word of God when someone other than the priest speaks it, even if that person had ten times more natural and spiritual understanding and gifts than the priest. In their ignorance, the blind people think that there is a special holiness in the priest and that the word of God should have its power and value from him, and thus, in their blindness, they are slaves to the thoughts of men and teachers of men. (Roos: 410–415)

The quote is telling. It shows that a belief in priestly authority was still strong in Strömfors among the common people – i.e., that the title of priest in itself guaranteed authority – something that Wirén also repeatedly endorses. It also suggests that Roos and Wirén, in their capacity as colporteurs, had distanced themselves from such a 'blind faith' and such an uncritical admiration and respect for the clergy. They believed that priests did not automatically possess a stronger theological capital than laymen but that – as Wirén puts it with reference to 1 Peter 2:9 – they were all part of "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's

special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (Wirén: 405f.). In other words, Strömfors appears as a prime example of the shift in power relations and the related controversies that followed in the wake of the repeal of the *Conventicle Act*. Controversy is perhaps too mild a term to describe what took place. Wirén goes as far as to label it hatred (Fig. 6.3) (ibid.: 222).

After Wirén had held meetings for a few Sundays, he was summoned to the vicarage. The vicar inquired about "what kind of sectarianism" was going on in the parish. He explained that in his parish "no layman has ever dared to appear with 'Bible explanations' and now there has suddenly been such running and singing in all the villages". Gestrin did not stop there; he went on to accuse Wirén of false doctrine. Wirén knew no other advice than to invite the vicar to visit a meeting and listen to his preaching

Fig. 6.3 Strömfors Church (Photo by Pöllö Licence No. CC BY 3.0. https://fi.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiedosto:Church_of_Str%C3%B6mfors_Ironworks_Ruotsinpyht%C3%A4%C3%A4.jpg)

before issuing such a condemnation. This is also what happened (ibid.: 407).

Gestrin arrived at a Bible study that had been announced in Wirén's childhood home. Wirén describes in great detail how the visit proceeded. He depicts it as a total confrontation. Since it was publicly known that the vicar would be present at the gathering, there were – according to Wirén – "so many people that they did not even find room in our 'cottage', even though it was quite large, but they also filled the hallway and the stairs". The vicar was in a bad mood when he arrived, which, according to Wirén, was probably partly because so many people had gathered. What also contributed to the vicar not finding the situation too comfortable was that Wirén's father had invited a person called Johan Nygårds from Lappträsk to the gathering. Nygårds was what Wirén calls "an older, experienced man" and Wirén's father had asked him to defend his son "who was still a child" in case Gestrin would start to throw insults at him.

Wirén had not even finished his Bible explanation before he was interrupted by Gestrin. The vicar accused him of preaching a false doctrine. However, Johan Nygårds stepped forward and demonstrated – with the help of "our teacher Luther" – that Wirén had made a correct interpretation of the biblical text. According to Wirén, the vicar became speechless and the debate would probably have ended quite embarrassingly for him if a peasant woman had not rushed to his defence. The woman could not understand why anyone dared to question the vicar's judgement. Wirén concludes his account of what happened by stating the following:

> Thus, the great day had come and the event, that had been so eagerly awaited, had taken place, albeit in such a marvelous way, that one did not know whether one had 'dreamed' all this or whether one had been 'awake' as a witness to this peculiar event, the like of which none of those present had yet experienced. However, even though this 'gathering' was now over, the consequences or effects of it were not over but extended far into the future in many strange ways. (ibid.: 407–422)

It is not entirely clear what Wirén means when he speaks about the consequences of the gathering. The statement could refer to the fact that it resulted in many new followers to the revival – at least according to Wirén, the vicar's measurements only contributed to them spreading Christian literature and organising spiritual gatherings with increasing zeal (ibid.: 216, 411). The statement may also refer to the increasing amount of

measures the vicar subsequently took to control the revival and the lay preachers. From that day on, namely, the vicar seems to have troubled Wirén, Roos, and the like in various ways.

These measures took various forms and they were carried out in the church, at reading examinations, and in other contexts where Gestrin met his parishioners. Just as he had threatened, the vicar had some influence over the school, which is why, when the opportunity arose, he blamed Roos for his activities there. According to Roos, the blame was not so much due to negligence as to "hostility towards me for the sake of the Gospel" (Roos: 716). According to Wirén, the vicar, among other things, invited parishioners – Wirén calls them "spies" – to the vicarage and asked them to report on the activities of the lay people in the parish (Wirén: 421f.). This move turned out to be fruitful. On one occasion, Roos writes, he was summoned to the vicar because the relatives of the vicar had reported that Roos and Wirén had collected money for their own use. Roos calls this lies and gossip that the priest "as an old enemy of the Gospel and the faith happily listened to in order to have another opportunity to spew his secret bile" (Roos: 299–301). Another rampant rumour was that Roos and Wirén had impregnated women – an accusation that Roos similarly dismissed as "lies concocted by ungodly people who hated them for the sake of the Gospel" (ibid.: 445f.). Among the more astonishing measures taken by the vicar was to urge Wirén's father to use "corporal punishment" on his boy to keep him quiet. Unfortunately, this was also something the father did, especially when he was under the influence of alcohol (Wirén: 530).

Overall, the examples testify to the veracity of the earlier conclusion: The old class society was still thriving, and the priest, through his mere office, was granted authority and could exercise, if not formal then at least informal power (Mikkola 2009: 156, 235–238). Although he cursed himself for harbouring such avaricious and unchristian feelings for another human being, Roos – after his last encounter with Gestrin – could not help but "resent him, who was a proud and unbroken man of the world, from whom nothing better could be expected or demanded" (Roos: 861). His last words about the vicar reveal how inflamed their relationship was and how distant they were from each other:

> I fear that Vicar Gestrin was separated from the world in his old unbroken and unchanged mind. His position and condition in eternity are best known

> to God, but I fear that he will have to reap there what he sowed here since no noticeable change of mind took place with him in time. (ibid.: 862)

It would have been interesting to hear the vicar Gestrin's version of the events in his parish, and how he viewed the colporteurs. One could imagine that Gestrin would have at least mentioned his challenges with the colporteurs during, for example, the bishop's visits to the parish at this time. Unfortunately, however, there is no sign of the conflict in either the vicar's accounts of the parish state before the bishop's visitations in 1870 and 1875 or the minutes from these visits. Neither do the minutes of the church meeting in his parish bare any traces of the tension that existed between the lay preachers and the vicar. If anything, the reports are unusually sparse. Apparently, the vicar did not want to reveal any of the heated situations to the bishop and the cathedral chapter, nor did he want to discuss it at the general church meetings where the affairs of the parish were otherwise dealt with.[14]

5 Conclusion: Blurred Boundaries Between the Elite and the Masses

Church historians have often described the Nordic revival movements as protest movements in relation to the Lutheran state or folk churches, at least in the initial stages of the movements' development (Haavio 1963; Huotari 1981; Kakkuri 2014). The epiteth is rooted in sociological analysis but also consistent with the movements' self understanding. They have sometimes been described as "for the church against the church"—suggesting that in order to support the church, the movements have been opposed to it. The movement discussed in this chapter—the Lutheran Evangelical Association in Finland, which is still one of the largest revival movements in Finland (Niemelä and Salomäki 2006)—has more or less explicitly expressed its relationship to the majority church as "critical solidarity" (Jern 2019: 246).[15] In practice, the movement has been formally loyal to the state church—its members remaining members also of the folk

[14] I have examined the minutes from parish and church meetings as well as bishop's inspections that are kept in the National Archives of Finland in Hämeenlinna, without finding any record of this. See: Minutes (1861–1893/1870–1891).

[15] "kirkon puolesta kirkkoa vastaan".

church—while at the same time, it has also often been critical of phenomena and tendencies within it.

Consequently, the attitude towards the official clergy of the colporteurs affiliated with these revival movements could also be described as one of critical solidarity. Certainly, the colporteurs' rules of conduct stipulated that the colporteurs should, at all times, avoid offending the clergy and refrain from causing offence in the parishes. At the same time, the game was played on the clergy's turf and the colporteurs were, in a way, competing for the same ball as the priests. Sopanen's depiction of the situation as a liminal space, or as a balancing act between the clergy and the common people, is well chosen. The entry of a new professional group into a religious field dominated by an already somewhat cornered clergy set the stage for conflicts between high and low culture. More often than not, this balancing act did not result in problems. However – as I have tried to show through this study – where problems did arise, the confrontations and their consequences could be remarkable.

The two colporteurs under scrutiny in this study, Gustaf Roos and Johannes Wirén, seem to have been aware of these possible problems even before they were appointed as colporteurs. They regarded the struggle, which I previously showed that they fought on many fronts, as a spiritual battle that ultimately was caused by the devil. For instance, Wirén writes that many people wanted to excuse Gestrin's opposition to them and the gospel with reference to his "poor judgement". Wirén himself was certain that this was not the case: "In my opinion, the reason for this must lie much deeper, namely in the enmity that God himself placed between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent" (Wirén: 232). The fact that the conflict had spiritual dimensions probably made it easier for them to endure.

It also seems that Roos and Wirén perceived what was taking place and what they were part of, as something historical. As I noted earlier, Wirén described one of his first public appearances in Strömfors – the one that led to such an uproar and a clash between himself and the vicar – as a "peculiar event, the like of which none of those present had yet experienced" (ibid.: 416). The context reveals that he was not only referring to his own performance but to the fact that the *Conventicle Act* had only recently been repealed – something that marked a decisive turning point in history:

> The vicar Gestrin in Strömfors probably had the same spiteful mind against me as the priests in Norway had had against Hauge. However, now, fortunately, the Conventicle Act had been repealed a year before I began to gather people around God's word in Strömfors, i.e. by the Church Act of 1869, which came into effect on July 1, 1870, and even though he [Gestrin, JD] now stormed and raged, he could not mobilise the county officials nor the judges, nor could he get me imprisoned. (ibid.: 231)

Wirén compares his situation to that of the Norwegian revival leader Hans Nielsen Hauge (1771–1824) living at the beginning of the 19th century.[16] This comparison, or rather identification – in which the colporteur is regarded as part of the ranks of pious fighters for and martyrs of the Gospel – seems, partly, to function as a kind of self-empowerment boosting his confidence. Partly, it seems to give legitimisation to the work he does. Wirén writes:

> In the biography of the revivalist preacher in Norway, Hans Nielsen Hauge, I have found quite a few similarities between the Norwegian priests' persecution of him and the Strömfors vicar's persecution of me. Both Hauge's and my 'misdeed' consisted only in the fact that we gathered the people around the word of God, which we proclaimed to them, and for this 'crime' Hauge suffered much more than I did. (ibid.: 229)

I noted earlier that the identity of the colporteur partly developed in an unspoken interaction with the clergy, in the sense that the colporteur compared and mirrored his emerging identity and activity against that of the priest. After all, the priests were the alleged, unchallenged theological experts who still held a reputable and respected role in the old class society and this forced the colporteurs to relate to them in some way.

To this gradual identity building, we can add the above-mentioned identification with earlier revivalist leaders, but also with the apostles of the early church or even with Christ himself. Just as Jesus had to endure ridicule before Caiaphas, Wirén writes that he had to endure the same bile before vicar Gestrin (ibid.: 218). In addition, just like the apostles, the colporteurs wrote letters, but they also read theological literature, thus acquiring a theological capital that enabled them to assert themselves

[16] For an overview on Hans Nielsen Hauge, see the recent anthology by Farstad and Nymark (2023).

against the clergy. They also wrote shorter theological texts themselves, mainly for the membership magazine of their organisation.

I believe that all of this contributed to the self-understanding of the colporteurs – helping them to see themselves as part of a larger group with a purpose and a mission. Over time, there would be a gradual professionalisation of the group: the colporteurs received colporteurs' certificates, attended meetings with other colporteurs, and got to be a part of an emerging organisation that even had its own rules of conduct. This not only legitimised their mission and boosted their self-confidence, but also contributed to their self-understanding as the up-and-comer in the theological field, thus appearing as competitors to the clergy.

This is not to suggest that Roos and Wirén perceive being a colporteur as synonymous with being a priest. Neither do they express any ambition to take over the role of a priest. On the contrary, they show an awareness that they constitute a qualified or specially equipped group in comparison with the clergy – the group of actual experts in matters of faith and theology. They know – or claim to know – that as laymen they have a merit or advantage that many priests lack, namely the people's trust. They claim, for instance, that many of the priests of the state church are "too high, noble, and withdrawn towards the lower people and lesser persons, whereby they are very much prevented from exercising their vocation with fruit and benefit". For the same reason, many people are also drawn to sect leaders and wild spirits, who – allegedly – at least make an effort to be humble and accommodating (Roos: 825.). In addition, being a colporteur also has the advantage of preaching the gospel all around the country, unlike the priest who is confined to a single parish (Wirén: 426).

Roos and Wirén know they also have an obvious advantage in comparison with the earlier revival leaders. In several places in the autobiographies, it becomes clear that both the colporteurs and the priests knew that the former ones had the law on their side and that a shift had taken place when the conventicle act was removed:

> when we announced that, according to the wishes of our friends, we would speak the word of God at the meeting, he [the vicar, JD] did not agree to it. He admitted that the Bible explanations of the colporteurs could well be useful where they were needed, but in his parish, he said, they were not necessary because there were several priests and even laymen who used to teach the word of God. However, he could not and did not dare to deny us to teach the word of God there, as much as he wanted to, because we were

> entitled to do so according to the word of God, as well as according to the church law and the statutes of the Association. (Roos: 290f.)

In a way, this quote summarises my study on the colporteur activity in its initial stage. It does so by highlighting a crucial precondition for the emergence of the colporteurs as a new professional group and a force to be reckoned with in the first place, namely the social, political and religious changes that took place especially in the latter part of the 19th century. As far as religion is concerned, these changes can be summarised in the repeal of the so-called Conventicle Act, which enabled new actors to enter the religious field. I have tried to show in this study how the removal of the *Conventicle Act* in Finland blurred and relativised the earlier boundaries between the elite and the laity and deprived the clergy much of their previous authority, and how this, in turn, sometimes led to problems and confrontations – to conflicts between high and low culture.

At least initially, confrontation was not something the colporteurs consciously sought to create – at least not the colporteurs I have examined in this chapter. The rules of conduct that were put in place by the *Evangelical Movement* clearly stated that the colporteur activity should not seek to take the place of the ministry of preaching but rather help it. They respected the given balance of power and did not intend to outmanoeuvre or replace the clergy. Instead, they co-operated with them and developed their own professional role in relation to them.

However, as the confidence and theological knowledge of the colporteurs grew, and their task in a way experienced a professionalisation, tension occasionally erupted into outright conflict. This happened especially if the colporteurs identified what they perceived as heresies in the priest's teaching and openly criticised him of it. Even though the priest, perhaps especially in rural areas, through his mere office was still granted much authority, the colporteurs' criticism shows that they had distanced themselves from a 'blind faith' and from an uncritical admiration and respect for the clergy. Many times the colporteurs regarded themselves as a necessary corrective to what they perceived as decrepit or deluded priests – as new and at least equal experts of theology.

The priests in turn – especially those who were averse to the revival – soon realised that their ability to prevent the colporteurs from preaching was limited. When they realised that they could not legally ban the laity from preaching, they tried other ways to at least limit their opportunities. They had to rely on whatever informal power they still possessed if they

wanted to stand up against or prevent the laity from preaching. In addition to outright and direct criticism, the examples provided by Roos and Wirén include what they call hiring "spies" among the parishioners to report on the activities of the preachers, threatening the colporteurs that they would lose their employment, or prohibiting them from preaching outside the parish. These hardships did not prevent Roos and Wirén from what they perceived as their calling. They only reinforced the conviction they had: "If the priest is against us, everything works out better" (Wirén: 228f.).

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CHAPTER 7

"He teaches me so I can teach": Revivalism and Protestant Laywomen in 19th-Century Italy

Laura Popa

1 Framing Revival in Post-*Risorgimento* Evangelical Waldensian Church[1]

From the 19th century into the 20th century, the history of revivalism in the Waldensian Valley (1825–1840) has been interpreted as the emotional response to the Enlightenment (Romagnani 2023: 9–21). One main line

[1] The Waldensian Church, whose origins can be traced back to 13th-century Europe, is one of the oldest minority churches in Italy, but it became 'Evangelical' in the 19th century only. From the 16th century until the middle of the 19th century, the Church survived in the so-called Protestant 'ghetto' around Val Pellice (or Waldensian Valleys), a mountainous area in otherwise staunchly Catholic Piedmont. Waldensian men and women shared

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V. Albrecht-Birkner, S. Siedek-Strunk (eds.), *Revival Movements as Conflict Agendas of the Popular in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-75117-2_7

of such analysis connects its beginnings to the itinerant preaching of a group of Swiss men influenced by *réveil*.[2] Accordingly, Swiss Protestants brought the *réveil* to the Waldensian Valleys in 1825. Established historiography attributes the religious enthusiasm ignited by the *réveil* to Félix Neff, who came from Geneva. Initially, the Waldensian elite dismissed the *réveil*, but subsequent generations later adopted it. These included professors from the Waldensian Faculty of Theology established first in Torre Pellice in 1855, then moved to Florence in 1861 and subsequently to Rome in 1922 (Spini 2002). As suggested by Waldensian pastor William Meille, it was "the revival of the consciousness within a small part of the Waldensian Church in the first half of the century" (Meille 1893/1978: 9)[3] which led to the evangelisation of Italy after 1860.

Drawing on Spini's and Meille's assessments and the sources at disposal, I propose that 1860 be seen as the starting point of an institutional revival: the established Church aimed at a religious revival from within. Previously rejected (1825–1840), it was about to be embraced within its ranks and transplanted into the nation-state. Its manifestation was the evangelisation project of Italy, which spanned from 1860 to 1915.[4] The (contested) decision to establish a committee for evangelisation signalled the beginning of this evangelisation project. The decision was taken during the annual Synod[5] in Pomaretto, between May 13 and 18, 1860.[6] On May 16, after discussing *Tavola*'s proposals (the Waldensian Executive Board), the Synod proposed to establish an Evangelisation Committee: "Commission d'Evangélisation" (Acts of the Synod 1860: 10). The proposal thus did not come from *Tavola*. The proposal opened a long

the experience of religious persecution since the Middle Ages as part of the Poor in Spirit's movement, through Modernity as a Reformed Church (after 1532), until the Emancipation Edict issued by King Charles Albert of Sardinia-Piedmont on February 17, 1848.

[2] I use the French term as the Waldensian Church did (its official language was French).

[3] The author has made all translations from French or Italian.

[4] See the most important works about this project, listed chronologically from the most recent: (Peyrot 1989; Vinay 1980; Bosio et al. 1952; Muston et al. 1899).

[5] The annual Synod is the general assembly still functional today formed by pastors and deputies chose by local churches.

[6] Emeritus Pastors, pastors of local churches in the Valleys, ministers of the Church (including professors and pastor evangelists), deputies of local churches, and lay members of the *Tavola* formed the assembly. The assembly elected Pastor Bartolomeo Malan (1810–1873) as president, Professor Paolo Geymonat (1827–1907) as vice president, Professor Giovanni Daniele Charbonnier (1823–1894) as secretary, and Pastor Jean Josuè Tron (1851–1933) and E. Costabel as assessors.

discussion that continued without a conclusion until 6 p.m.; the discussion on this subject was continued the following day, 17 May, and it created heated discussions: this was the longest debate of the Synod's meetings so far. The vote was secret, and the proposal was voted on by a majority of 14 (ibid.: 12). A draft of the commission was sent to the assembly, which after discussion and changes, was adopted with six points (ibid.: 34).

While the arguments supporting and opposing the evangelisation of Italy were not stated in the 1860 report, the previous reports from 1858 and 1859 include at least three revivalist arguments in support of the evangelisation project.[7] Firstly, the Church's elite aimed at a revival within its ranks. On May 18, 1858, the annual Synod adopted the following proposition by a large majority:

> […] to invite in the most urgently manner, pastors and believers alike, to direct their attention to the means most suited to bring a revival of our Church, a revival of the Christian life, in particular by the multiplication of Sunday School, and to obtain an abundant effusion of the Spirit of God on the pastors and their flocks. (Summary of deliberations 1858: 2)

At the end of the Synod, these deliberations were sent to all churches within 15 days to be read publicly by the pastor at the end of the Sunday service. According to the report presented at the next year's Synod in 1859, *Tavola* invited a Paris pastor to come as a delegate of the Sunday Schools Society for a few weeks. In this capacity, his visit was envisioned to spark "a revival of Christian life" (Summary of deliberations 1859: 6) and to encourage the foundation of Sunday Schools within churches. The second revivalist argument in support of the evangelisation project I individuated was the increasing general interest in evangelisation. *Evangélisation* is a subheading in the 1859 Synod's report (ibid.: 12f.) The commission, which had the task to report on evangelisation, highlighted its importance for the Waldensian Church. There were already some evangelisation stations and some evangelists in service. In response, *Tavola* saw Italy's evangelisation as a pressing duty of the church. There were, however, difficulties

[7] Other factors played a role in the atempt to implement this grand project, spanning from 1860 to 1915. One key factor was the increasing anti-Catholic and anti-clerical sentiment among the public in Piedmont during the 1850s, which gradually extended throughout the Peninsula. Additionally, the Catholic Church's loss of Rome in 1870, which later became the capital of Italy, also played a significant role.

associated with it: of economic nature, the opposition of the Catholic clergy, and the lack of well-qualified personnel. A third revivalist argument in support of the evangelisation project that appears from Synod reports is that much of the support came from foreign delegations of churches already impacted by *réveil*; of particular importance were delegates of the Free Churches of France, Scotland, and Switzerland. In 1859, foreign delegates had two hours to exhort the Waldensian public, composed of a mixed-gendered audience. Pastor Georges Fisch from Paris and deputy of the Union of Evangelical Churches of France exhorted Waldensians to become Italians for missionary purposes:

> As for you, whatever pleasure we have in hearing our language spoken here, we feel that you must be Italians, that you are called there, for a door is open to you towards Italy and as previously to the church of Philadelphia, God is saying today to you: I have opened a door before you that no one will close. (Summary of deliberations 1859: 20)

Another piece of practical advice which he offered was to have three separate committees: for evangelisation, the Synod, and the schools, as his church in France had. "As for us, we generally feel in France the need for a fresh outpouring of the Spirit of God, we have been moved to jealousy by America's revivals […]" (ibid.: 21). Finally, pastor Georges Fisch invited the Waldensian Church to organise prayer meetings.

As already noted, the next year (1860), the Synod set up the Evangelisation Committee and took three decisions especially important for the evangelisation work. Firstly, the Synod recommended the continuation or the establishment of special meeting prayers to ask God to revive the Church (Summary of deliberations 1860: 33). Secondly, ministers appointed by *Tavola* were to give special sermons in local churches starting in the summer, "to revive piety, and, in particular, the interest in the Italian mission" (ibid.). Finally, the Faculty of Theology was to be moved from Torre Pellice to Florence to reflect "[…] the need for the Waldensian Church to become ever more of a missionary Church […]" (ibid.: 34).

2 Roles of Protestant Laywomen During the 19th-Century Revivals

Women took on diverse responsibilities, serving as deaconesses, fundraisers, seamstresses, and schoolteachers[8] in the Waldensian *réveil* (1825–1840).[9] Women also played pivotal roles in missionary endeavours, particularly through education and evangelisation in the evangelisation project (1860–1915); women's roles became ever more missionary in nature: I am referring specifically to the schoolteachers and Bible Women.[10]

In 1893, Waldensian pastor William Meille (1853–1903) published the book entitled *The Revival of 1825 in the Waldensian Valleys*[11] (Meille 1893/1978), which was the first account of the phenomenon. Some of the roles played by laywomen in the Waldensian *réveil* (1825–1840) can be gleaned from this volume.

To begin with, women seemed to have been of major importance in the church's functioning. Among the deacons, at least one woman was elected: Meille referred to Maria Blanc as being elected deaconess by the revivalists. Secondly, women were fundraisers for foreign missions. In Meille's account, revivalist groups, who met separately and organised themselves while initially refusing to leave the Church, focused their attention on missionary work between what they called heathens (*pagani*) for the very first time. This wing brought missionary interest to the Valleys despite the hostility of the established churches, especially in San Giovanni and Torre Pellice. The fundraising among these groups and from door to door was destined for the *Paris Mission Society* (*Società delle Missioni di Parigi*); by the end of 1834, they collected 175 *franchi*. Thirdly, besides collecting money, women started producing clothes; to accomplish this, they established the *Spinning Society for Mission* (*Società di filatura per le Missioni*). Mrs. Cadoret, Susetta Bert, and Marietta Combe played a crucial role and at least seventy women were active (Fig. 7.1).

[8] It is important to note that Waldensian women were already working as schoolteachers in the Waldensian schools in the Valleys.

[9] No available research exists on this topic to my knowledge, and it requires further investigation.

[10] The Bible Woman was a female figure in the 19th-century Protestant missions' world devoted to the evangelisation of women. She was usually a native woman employed globally to evangelise women in grand cities or colonial contexts.

[11] I am using the Italian translation, *Il Risveglio del 1825 nelle Valli Valdesi*, published in 1978. William Meille originally authored the book in French: *«Le Réveil de 1825 dans les Vallées Vaudoises du Piémont raconté à la generation actuelle»*.

Fig. 7.1 Ritratti delle maestre valdesi, 1869–1873 (albumina su carta, Fondo pastori, evangelisti, insegnanti valdesi, Archivio Fotografico Valdese in ATV)

The opposition of *Tavola* and the local churches towards these revivalist groups was harsh; sometimes they resorted to physical violence against women as well. Moreover, potential schoolteachers were excluded from getting a job if suspected of revivalist tendencies. Consequently, Susetta Bert, who had teaching experience in France, did not obtain the teaching position at the girls' school in Villar Pellice. In response, dissidents (*dissidenti*) established a school for their children and hired her; the school was free of charge and open to Waldensian *dissidenti* and non-Waldensians alike.

In the run-up to and aftermath of the Emancipation Edict (*Lettere Patenti*) in 1848, the Waldensian Church responded to the *Risorgimento* events by aligning itself with the liberal views of the Cavour governments and their successors. As citizens (*cittadini*), the Waldensians developed strategies to consolidate *Risorgimento*. One of their aims was to convert Italians to evangelical Christianity in opposition to the influence of the Catholic Church. As shown in the earlier section, the Synod set up an Evangelisation Committee to be in charge of the project implementation. Besides the opening of churches in various parts of Italy, the committee set up elementary schools open to children regardless of religious affiliation[12] and gender, with a particular focus on certain areas in Central and Southern Italy that were considered backward by many contemporaries.[13] In the period between 1860 and 1915, more than 350 Waldensian schoolteachers were employed in 160 places in Italy (Ballesio 2019: 44); of those 240 were women (Cartini 1993: 32). The schoolteacher served as a missionary figure: the Evangelisation Committee extended the teaching role to the teaching of the Bible in Sunday School and the evangelisation of parents. The committee further employed Bible Women to read the Bible and evangelise non-Protestant women in their homes. It is difficult to estimate the number of Bible Women, but it is far fewer than the number of schoolteachers. In the Waldensian Archives, there are preserved photo albums containing pictures of female schoolteachers, as can be seen in Fig. 7.1.

The case of Giuseppina Pusterla (1827–1913) highlights these roles since she worked as a schoolteacher and a Bible Woman. Pusterla was the first elementary school teacher hired by the Evangelisation Committee in

[12] Most of the students were Catholics, see Cartini (1994: 105).

[13] Eighty-seven Italian cities had one or more evangelical schools by the end of the century. See Cartini (1993: 17).

the so-called Lombardy-Veneto-Emilia district.[14] Later, she became the first Bible Woman working for the Waldensian Church in the working-class neighbourhoods in Milan. Giuseppina Pusterla had already attracted interest in academic research: up to the present, few articles focused primarily on her activity as a Bible Woman (Cacchi 2002, 2005, 2014, 2018, 2019; Solari 1997). However, no attempts have been made to write her biography. This chapter contains thus the first historical account of her life and achievements.[15] To better understand her life and achievements, it is important to discuss her typically revivalist conversion story before discussing specific details in subsequent sections. By appropriating the Bible for herself, Giuseppina Pusterla made conversion a significant turning point in her life.

3 The Conversion Story of Giuseppina Pusterla

Surprisingly, Giuseppina Pusterla was not of Waldensian descent. She was born Beltramelli in 1827 into a Catholic family of six children (Personal file Pusterla: October 1878) in Vigevano, Lombardy (Registry Milan late 19th century: 64); the mother was Maria (born) Gagliardi, and the father was Pietro Beltramelli (Death and burial records 1898–1933: no. 142). Despite being born into a Catholic family and receiving a Catholic education, Pusterla converted to Protestantism at the age of 33 in 1860 (Personal file Pusterla: October 1, 1900).[16]

[14] The Evangelisation Committee divided Italy into five districts. These districts repeatedly change geographical configuration over the years.

[15] I analysed 319 letters reports addressed to the Evangelisation Committee she was required to send monthly, twenty-six personal letters, two telegrams, and two postal cards. Archival sources related to her activity as an elementary schoolteacher between 1865 and 1871 include twelve letters: six from 1865 to 1866, two from 1866 to 1867, three from 1868 to 1869, and one from 1870 to 1871. Among the most voluminous documents are the hundreds of letters written as a Bible Woman in Milan. Pusterla wrote 305 epistolary reports during her employment with the Evangelisation Committee as a Bible Woman between 1878 and 1909. Pusterla did not work for the Waldensian Church between 1871 and 1877, and there are no archival sources on her life and activities during this period. Because she provided a great deal of personal information during her correspondence, I recreated the missing years with the information she provided through her recollections of the past.

[16] I deducted this information from this letter dated 1900: "[…] I have already belonged to the evangelical church for forty years".

The reading of the Italian Bible together with her husband, Giuseppe Pusterla (1825–1903)[17] – most probably also a convert (Registry Milan 1861: no. 25) – was the catalyst for her conversion:

> I used to go to confession every eight days, but then my husband brought me the gospel and every night we read it in the family before going to bed and little by little it became light, I prayed to the Lord to enlighten my mind and He gave me grace. (Personal file Pusterla: February 1, 1880)

Bible reading ignited an inner conflict with beliefs and practices associated with the institutionalised religion of Catholicism: "[…] after much struggle, I knew I was in error, and so I came out of Romanism and gave myself wholeheartedly to the Lord" (ibid.: October 5, 1880). The decision to come "out of Romanism" seems to denote a deliberate break from what Pusterla perceived as the constraints of institutionalised religion. Pusterla's decision to convert was not taken lightly, as she describes her struggles in another letter to Paolo Longo (1851–1913) and Bartolomeo Revel (1852–1921).

> […] when I started reading the Bible I was in the middle of two obstacles; I understood that the Word of God cannot fail, but also had to leave all those old habits, I did not know how to strip myself and the devil tempted me […] doubts passed through my mind, and I was extremely troubled. […] I prayed to the Lord and He came to help me, and strength was given to me […]. (Personal file Pusterla: December 31, 1884)

Throughout her life, Pusterla advocated for the freedom to change one's religion in conversations with non-Protestants, so I conclude that she viewed her conversion as an act of religious self-empowerment. Take, for instance, the conversation reported in a letter dated 1878, the year she became a Bible Woman:

> About changing religion (I said to Galli) you should have no hesitations, for I too was a Roman Catholic […] I abandoned every precept and commandment of man and practiced the way of the Lord without so much as aching to offend my parents who taught me in the Roman Church, but on the

[17] He was born in Pietragavina (Pavia, Lombardy) in 1825 (Registry Milan late 19th century: 64) and passed away at 77 years old, on April 28, 1903 (Death and burial records 1898–1933: no. 52).

> contrary, I regret immensely that they, poor people, did not have the good destiny that we now have, because at that time there was no evangelical preaching […]. (ibid.: October 1878)[18]

The conversion was the result of inner conflicts ignited by Bible reading, which empowered Pusterla to choose for herself. Despite the persecution she encountered in her workplace following her conversion, she remained steadfast in her convictions. School officials in a state school threatened to terminate her employment if she did not abandon "the Bible and my beliefs" (ibid.: November 21, 1870). More specifically, the Catholic priest and mayor sought to take away the school she directed (ibid.: December 31, 1884) As we learn from another conversation with a Catholic woman who sought Pusterla's advice about changing her religious beliefs, Pusterla chose to resign from her job: "because I could not serve the Lord as I ought and as my conscience dictated […]" (ibid.: October 1, 1900). This experience occurred sometime before the employment by the Evangelisation Committee to teach in San Fedele in 1865. The years between the conversion in 1860 and the employment in 1865 are difficult to reconstruct.

4 The Early Years of Service After the Conversion, 1860–1865

> We must remember the death of Bible Woman Giuseppina Pusterla, who fell asleep serenely in the arms of her Savior at the advanced age of eighty-seven. She had served the committee since September 1866, when she was called to found the school in Guastalla. After working as a teacher for a few years, she moved to Milan, where she conducted her main work as a Bible Woman. She was faithful and zealous in her activity, worked as long as her strength permitted, and she had a few years retired from active service when she was called to the rest reserved for the Saints. (Report Evangelisation Committee 1913*:* 25)[19]

This announcement published by the Evangelisation Committee in 1913 in its annual report to the Synod laid the groundwork for

[18] The report was sent from Milan without specifying the date.

[19] The introduction of the publication also briefly mentions her passing: "[…] the Bible Woman G. Pusterla, whom the Lord called back to Himself during the ecclesiastical year now passed" (Chiesa Evangelica Valdese 1913: 6).

researching her biography. According to it, Giuseppina Pusterla began working for the committee in September 1866 as an elementary school teacher in Guastalla and worked for years as a Bible Woman in Milan. However, other data emerge using a cross-reference analysis of several sources, i.e., Giuseppina Pusterla's correspondence, the minutes of the Evangelisation Committee, the reports of the committee to the annual Synod, and the private correspondence of committee members. There are inaccuracies concerning, firstly, her beginnings as an elementary school teacher in Guastalla in 1866 and, secondly, her employment by the Evangelisation Committee.

Evidence refutes the Evangelisation Committee's announcement regarding the beginnings. According to Giulia Cartini's exceptional research on the history of schools (Cartini 1999; see also Cartini 1993, 1994), Giuseppina Pusterla began working in San Fedele one year earlier (1865) as the first female employee. It is possible that Cartini made this assertion because Pusterla's first letter preserved in the archives is dated October 24, 1865.[20] The Evangelisation Committee mentions Giuseppina Pusterla for the first time on October 6, 1865 (18 days before Pusterla's first letter dated October 24, 1865). The committee wanted "[…] the establishment of a school in S. Fedele. This school, to be kept open six months of the year, will be placed under the direction of Mrs. Giuseppina Pusterla, already a teacher at the school in Brescia, a pious and capable person, who will be paid a salary of fifty francs monthly" (Minutes 1860–1886: 30). Since she is already referred to as a teacher in Brescia, it is not clear whether she taught in a Waldensian or state school.

The data regarding her employment in Brescia by the Evangelisation Committee appears to be contradictory. In an 1865 letter, Giovanni Pietro Revel (1810–1871), chair of the Evangelisation Committee, included a table of evangelisation areas in which there were no evangelists or schoolteachers in Brescia at that time (Personal file Revel: December 16, 1865). In contrast, the report presented by the Evangelisation Committee during the Church's annual Synod of 1863 mentioned an evangelist in Brescia who received help from a licensed schoolteacher. Together, they managed an elementary school with twenty pupils and an evening school with up to sixty adult students (Report Evangelisation Committee 1864: 10). By

[20] In this letter addressed to the Waldensian pastor in Turin, Giovanni Pietro Meille (1817–1887), Pusterla did not mention the beginning of employment, the reasons for her candidacy and the date she applied for the position.

1864, the elementary school was already giving encouraging results (Report Evangelisation Committee 1864: 9). A confirmation of the committee's report is the brief history of the Brescia community written by M. Riviera in 1940 (Riviera 1940). The Evangelisation Committee sent to Brescia two missionaries to establish a community in 1861; in the building, there were both a church and an elementary school. Forneron Jacob[21] opened the school in 1861 and Giovanna Pusterla, most likely Giuseppina Pusterla erroneously reported by Riviera, later replaced him in 1863. Another piece of evidence is a letter written by Giuseppina Pusterla to Matteo Prochet (1836–1907), chair of the Evangelisation Committee: she had first applied to be a schoolteacher in 1862 (Personal file Pusterla: November 21, 1870). Finally, Giuseppe Pusterla's affiliation with the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1864 as a *colporteur*[22] in Brescia suggests his wife was already involved in evangelical circles.[23] As mentioned earlier, his profession was closely tied to missionary work in the 1860s, which facilitated the couple's significant involvement.

In conclusion, Giuseppina Pusterla may have already served the Evangelisation Committee in Brescia between 1862 and 1865. Although

[21] According to Giulia Cartini, his name was Forneron Giacobbe (?–1912), and he was a schoolteacher in Brescia in 1863, see Cartini (1993: 372).

[22] The *colporteur* or *colportore* was another figure in the 19th-century Protestant missions' world devoted to selling evangelical literature and Bibles in Italian. Itinerant, the *colporteur* was a crucial figure in the evangelisation project, alongside the pastor, (pastor) evangelist, and schoolteacher (Hugon 1980).

[23] The British and Foreign Bible Society's report from 1864 did mention one of their *colporteurs*, Giuseppe Pusterla. The text details a distressing incident of harassment by a priest in Brescia and the negative impact it had on his physical well-being: "At Monturone, in the neighbourhood of Brescia, during a festival, he exposed his Bible for sale, but soon the priest came, and with abusive language, ordered him away. As no one seemed to sympathise with him or came to purchase, he collected his books together and went away. At night he went to the Inn, the only one in the village, but the landlord told him that the house belonged to the Priest, who warned him to mind what he was about, unless he wished to be turned out. Pusterla was obliged to sleep under a shed, fasting; and, being a delicate man, he caught a severe cold" (Report Bible Society 1864: 87). One year later, in a letter to minister Rostagno, Pusterla mentioned that he was unemployed due to illness (Personal file Pusterla: August 19, 1865). The illness persisted in the following years, but by 1879, Giuseppe Pusterla would have returned to his job as *colportore* (Registry Milan 1861–1887: no. 223). Different registers of the Waldensian Church in Milan indicate that he worked as a street merchant (*Merciaiuolo ambulante*), see Registry Milan late 19th century, or *colportore*, see Registry Milan (1861–1887: no. 223). It is important to note that the data in these registers may not always align with other sources. As such, it is necessary to exercise caution when relying on this information.

the professional affiliation remains quite unresolved, it is documented that she was a schoolteacher in San Fedele (1865) and in Guastalla (1866–1870). She matched two criteria for selecting teachers according to the committee chair , Giovanni Pietro Ravel (1810–1871): she was Protestant and had teaching experience (ibid.: May 22, 1866).[24] There are at least two criteria that I believe were equally important, namely the knowledge of Italian and good theological knowledge. In the 1860s and early 1870s, the Evangelisation Committee struggled to find staff with mastery of the Italian language. To make up for this shortage, the Evangelisation Committee considered the employment of Catholic schoolteachers, "as long as she [they] had the other qualities required", as is evident from an 1874 letter written by schoolteacher Carolina Dalgas (1832–1893) to Matteo Prochet (1836–906), the chair of the Evangelisation Committee (Personal file Dalgas: July 11, 1874). Nevertheless, theological knowledge was most important once the candidate met the language criterion. The Evangelisation Committee rejected one of Giuseppina Pusterla's sisters—also a convert—for the role of schoolteacher in 1867 "for the reason that she does not offer the same sufficient guarantees from the perspective of religious knowledge and doctrines" (Minutes 1860–1886: 38). It is most probably that the Waldensian Church accommodated women such as Giuseppina Pusterla—without theological training and not viewing themselves as theologians—because of the Church's popular piety. Yet with its own Faculty of Theology and ordained male-only priesthood, the Church resisted women's theological studies and ordination until the second half of the 20th century.

5 Teaching Children and Working-Class Adults, 1865–circa 1877

Giuseppina Pusterla's career trajectory as a schoolteacher, particularly in her experiences in San Fedele, Como, Guastalla, and Milan,[25] underscores her determination to empower children and working-class adults through

[24] See the only preserved letter written by the president of the committee himself, Giovanni Pietro Revel, to Giuseppina Pusterla.

[25] In the first division of Italy in districts made by the Evangelisation Committee in 1863, these places were part of the Lombardy area. This division of Italy underwent changes. Five years later (1868), Guastalla was no longer part of Lombardy but was included in the Emilia district (Chiesa Evangelica Valdese 1868: 15).

education, both secular and religious. Pusterla's determination stemmed from her perception of her work after conversion as primarily missionary.

Pusterla went to teach in San Fedele in 1865, coming from most probably the city of Brescia. Val d'Intelvi had Waldensian communities in two villages, Argegno and San Fedele, where Catholic clergy regularly disrupted the meetings of Protestants and evangelists had to be escorted by the police (Report Evangelisation Committee 1864: 9). Pusterla wrote to Turin pastor and Evangelisation Committee member, Giovanni Pietro Meille (1817–1887), shortly after the school opened in October by the committee's decision (Personal file Pusterla: October 24, 1865). The school had seventeen pupils, including children and women, and Pusterla held classes in the evening because the pupils worked in the fields during the day. In addition to teaching Italian and other classes to children and women, Pusterla instructed the women of the congregation in practical work such as sewing and taught Sunday School. According to Pusterla's account, men emigrated so women populated both the church and the school; women well recognised Pusterla's work. Since she wrote the second letter six months later (ibid.: April 18, 1866), it is unclear how the school developed. In April 1866, Pusterla had been working at San Fedele for six months already: according to the committee's plans, the school was to be open for six months a year. To decide whether to stay or leave, she wrote to Giovanni Pietro Meille; Pusterla recommended her transfer because she accomplished her mission of teaching local people to read Italian (ibid.: May 11, 1866). The chair of the Evangelisation Committee, Giovanni Pietro Ravel, responded quickly on May 22 from Turin that the committee decided to transfer her to Guastalla (ibid.: May 22, 1866). In the letter, Revel proposes to Pusterla a salary of sixty francs plus a travel allowance. She accepted and due to economic difficulties was eager to start (Fig. 7.2) (ibid.: May 26, 1866).

On June 19, 1866, Giuseppina Pusterla left San Fedele for Como, which is not geographically far from San Fedele. According to the letter sent the following day (ibid.: June 20, 1866), Pusterla promised the locals that she would return to San Fedele every Saturday evening to teach Sunday School on Sunday mornings. Waiting for the transfer to Guastalla, she was struggling financially. Although she was not an employee anymore, she reported in another letter to pastor Giovanni Pietro Meille about the San Fedele community's problems (ibid.: June 22, 1866). That Pusterla gives him practical advice about the church—not schools—is remarkably interesting: it seems that the 'Waldensian diaspora' formed by

Fig. 7.2 Scuola domenicale di Milano, fotografia dell'album "Waldensian church a selection from its Sunday schools in various districts of Italy", 1904–1907 (albumina su carta, cm 17 × 24, Fondo Scuole domenicali, Archivio Fotografico Valdese in ATV)

the churches born out of the evangelisation project had more progressive gender roles than the Waldensian Valleys. At the request of Francesco Rostagno (1838–1874), evangelist in Guastalla, Giuseppina Pusterla left Como for Guastalla on August 5, 1866.

At the beginning of her stay in Guastalla, Giuseppina Pusterla kept an elevated level of mobility.[26] Upon learning of these travel expenses, Pastor Giovanni Pietro Meille sent her a letter chastising her for not informing him in advance (ibid.: August 29, 1866). Pusterla wrote to him from Guastalla explaining the unexpected expenses for herself and her husband, who was still ill and unemployed (ibid.). In her defence, moving from one place to another involves other expenses, such as transporting furniture. Her salary and travel allowances are documented in this letter,

[26] For example, from San Fedele to Como, from Como to Guastalla, from Como to Milan, from Milan to Parma, and from Parma to Guastalla.

as are the expenses for her husband. Accommodation in Guastalla was expensive – 13 francs monthly – as were the living costs. Her monthly salary was sixty francs, therefore, she asked for a salary increase. Letters sent from Guastalla mentioned economic difficulties, asking for the payment of her salary (ibid.: October 25, 1867; November 18, 1868; December 27, 1868). The reason for such insistence was that the Evangelisation Committee was not providing regular payments.[27] In Guastalla, Pusterla was actively involved in the religious community, advising the committee members on the community. She collaborated with evangelist Francesco Rostagno and pastor evangelist Giovanni Pietro Pons (1842–1909), whom she recalls working with in 1909 (ibid.: March 22, 1909). The husband Giuseppe Pusterla was still not well (ibid.: October 4, 1867) and her health was also worsening. It was in the third year of her stay in Guastalla (1869) that she began the treatment for this illness.[28] For this reason, Pusterla applied for a transfer from Guastalla in the same year (ibid.: June 17, 1869). The Evangelisation Committee rejected her request and dismissed Pusterla in 1870. The school in Guastalla remained open under Emilia Bonnet (decd. 1930). After the dismissal, Giuseppina Pusterla opened a school in Milan, most likely from 1870 to 1877.

As indicated in one letter to Matteo Prochet, Giuseppina Pusterla faced religious discrimination: as soon as people learned that she was a Protestant, they refused to send their children to her school (ibid.: November 21, 1870). Despite initial difficulties, her private school opened in 1870 flourished. It reached between fifty-six (ibid.: March 1, 1879) and seventy children (ibid.: August 1, 1886). Pusterla continued to evangelise the children and parents as she did while working for the Evangelisation Committee (ibid.: August 1, 1886). However, due to stress and overwork, Pusterla closed the school after six years in which she did not take a single holiday. After the closure of the school, a new church called "on S. Garibaldi" was built there (ibid.).

[27] For example, in November 1867, Pusterla received money from a certain Pregno, Malan paid her salary in July and August, and Micol in September and October.

[28] In her years as a Bible Woman from 1878 onwards, Pusterla asked for a one-month leave to cure this illness (see for example the letters dated June 1, 1878; July 9, 1879; July 2, 1880). On these occasions, she visited a brother in Lodi (near Milan), whose wife's doctor examined her.

6 Preaching the Gospel to Women and Men, 1877–1909

In 1877 the Evangelisation Committee employed Giuseppina Pusterla as their first Bible Woman following the proposal made by Ellen Henrietta Ranyard[29] (1810–1879), the founder of this role (Minutes 1860–1886: 192/5).

She and her husband became members of the San Giovanni in Conca Waldensian Church since its beginnings in Milan in 1879,[30] thus being able to fully participate in church life and activities – Pusterla taught Sunday School for the years to come. Figure 7.2 represents the Milan Sunday School in the early 20th century. Since Pusterla was a Sunday School teacher, it is possible that she is in that picture. In the church catalogue, she was still listed as a schoolteacher and her husband Giuseppe as *colportore* (Registry Milan 1861–1887: no. 223 and 224). Her teaching reputation was so strong that in 1889, she was referred to as "the evangelical teacher" (Personal file Pusterla November 7, 1889) and in 1904 as "the teacher who comes to my house […]" (ibid.: May 1, 1904). It may have been because she maintained contact with her former pupils and their parents to preach the gospel. For instance, in 1878 Pusterla visited the mother of two former pupils and ended up evangelising both parents (ibid.: November 11, 1878). Pusterla also engaged in mentorship, as was the case with a former Catholic pupil from Guastalla who contacted Pusterla in 1882 and asked to be visited by her; in turn, Pusterla invited her to church because she was already acquainted with the Bible (ibid.: December 1, 1882). As emerges from another letter written by Pusterla to Matteo Prochet, the former pupil Bianchi Lea, who was seamstress, attended the San Giovanni in Conca Waldensian Church (ibid.: February 1, 1883) and subsequently converted to Protestantism (ibid.: May 1, 1883).

Giuseppina Pusterla initially earned fifty *lire* a month with the support of Ellen Henrietta Ranyard (Minutes 1860–1886: 192/5); later, friends

[29] Ellen Henrietta Ranyard was also the founder of London Bible and Domestic Female Mission.

[30] The Evangelisation Committee bought in 1879 the desecrated Catholic church San Giovanni in Conca and transformed it into a Waldensian temple in 1881. Milan was home to two Waldensian churches for decades after the building in via dei Fabbri was bought in 1908. In 1936, the two communities became one in the new temple in via Francesco Sforza; this Waldensian temple still stands today. For more information, see Godino (2021).

of the Waldensian Church offered this amount, and the Evangelisation Committee was satisfied with her work. The monthly salary increased with the years, for example from fifty *lire* in 1878 to sixty-five in 1896, but it was not much, making her ask for an increase and thus asserting her worth to the Evangelisation Committee (Personal file Pusterla: November 1, 1889). As we know from a letter by her, she was supposed to receive extra compensation for training women to become Bible Woman (ibid.: February 5, 1887). On this occasion, it becomes apparent that Pusterla's perception of her role went beyond mere employment: "how often I pray to my Lord that He presents me the doors to enter and that He teaches me so I can teach. And sometimes I really see that the Lord answers me, and other times I feel discouraged" (ibid.). This excerpt suggests that Pusterla believed she had a mission to fulfil; the statement "He teaches me so that I can teach" emphasises her reliance on Jesus Christ for guidance in fulfilling her mission. It also suggests her ability to navigate her religious beliefs independently from the male clergy.

Often, she got into polemics with priests over the ban on popular Bible reading, thus challenging religious authority. For instance, in 1889 a certain Don Nazzaro accused her that "Protestants have a false, mutilated Bible" (ibid.: November 7, 1889). Pusterla's response to this was to deliberately oppose the authority of the Catholic clergy, entering theological polemics based on her knowledge of the Bible. Pusterla displayed her knowledge of the Bible by quoting scripture and refused the priest's arguments regarding traditional Catholic practices of masses or confession:

> Don Nazzaro it is false what you said, I also have Martini's New Testament and again the Vulgata, but all three of these books speak the same language: Go, says Jesus Christ […] preach my gospel […]. So, Jesus Christ commanded only to preach His gospel and did not command the Apostles to go and say masses nor to confess. Priest Nazzaro – Yes, the Apostles went to Rome to the catacombs to say masses. Not true, I answered the priest. Then the priest articulated to me a verse from the Bible in Latin, which I well understood to be the twenty-four verse of chapter XI of I Corinthians. I answered him, this Bible passage is about the Holy Supper, what does the mass have to do with it? (ibid.)[31]

Pusterla questioned Catholic doctrines such as purgatory and works, asserting that these concepts are not rooted in biblical teachings but are

[31] These Bible verses refer to Matthew 28:19f. and 1 Corinthians 11:24.

human doctrines. This stance can be interpreted as independence of thought and as refusal to accept religious dogma unquestioningly. In addition to that, Pusterla demanded respect from the priest despite his position and by doing so, she emphasised the importance of following Jesus' teachings, rather than adhering blindly to religious authority:

> The priest […] said, your Bible is false because you people do not have purgatory and works. I answered him: purgatory certainly is not found in the Bible because it is a human doctrine and about works, the Christian is known by works, a good tree bears good fruit, however, today you have borne bitter fruit. The priest: But what do you want, I too am a man, I apologise. Yes, I answered him, you are right you are just a man like any other, full of passion, but you should not insult people who want to follow Jesus who did such perfect work for our health that nothing else should be added. (ibid.)

The priest offered to bring Giuseppina Pusterla some books to teach her "true faith", but she replied that since Jesus Christ was her "Savior" and "unique Mediator", she did not require any further teachings (ibid.). Having a good knowledge of the Bible, it is evident that Pusterla treated theological disagreements with men on an equal footing, arousing strong reactions. In 1901 she was referred to as a witch[32] by a husband angry with his wife for listening to Pusterla's teaching to pray to Jesus Christ for healing instead of to the Pope (ibid.: January 6, 1901).

Giuseppina Pusterla stayed a Bible Woman emerita in Milan until she passed away at eight-seven years old on June 2, 1913. Pastor Vittorio Alberto Costabel (1864–1949) buried her the following day at the same place as her husband's, Musocco Cemetery (Death and burial records 1898–1933: no. 142). Pusterla left her possessions to the poor of the church[33] (Personal file Pusterla: June 8, 1913).

7 Conclusions

The chapter started with framing the religious revivalism in the Waldensian Church in 1860, arguing that institutional revivalism ultimately fuelled the evangelisation of Italy after 1860. The chapter then sketched the roles

[32] This label has a long history: the Catholic Church used it against Waldensian women preachers in the Middle Ages.

[33] The couple did not have children (Personal file Pusterla: August 1, 1879).

of Protestant laywomen, ranging from deaconesses, fundraisers, seamstresses, to schoolteachers and Bible Women. Giuseppina Pusterla stands out as a woman who worked as both a schoolteacher and a Bible Woman, contributing significantly to the evangelisation efforts. The chapter presented Giuseppina Pusterla's conversion from Roman Catholicism to Protestantism as religious self-empowerment. Reading the Bible in vernacular language led her to question and reject the beliefs and practices associated with Roman Catholicism. Finally, the chapter engaged in a meticulous examination of historical records to reconstruct the early years of Giuseppina Pusterla's service after her conversion, 1860–1865, the teaching years to children and working-class adults, 1865–circa 1877, and the preaching years to women and men as Bible Woman, 1877–1909. This case study provides two concluding remarks that shed light on Protestant laywomen's experiences of religious revivalism in 19th-century Italy. In the first place, women like Giuseppina Pusterla were self-empowered by Bible reading to speak and work with authority despite persecution and economic hardship. A profile appears of a highly convinced woman who testified with her story of conversion to the importance of a personal reading of the Bible in vernacular Italian. In contrast to the Catholic teachings and in line with Protestant theology, Pusterla promoted the agency and subjectivity of the believer. The second point is that the Protestant laywomen who were actively involved in the evangelisation project displayed emancipatory impulses, but they did not address emancipation directly. Giuseppina Pusterla who was once a Catholic but converted to Protestantism, went on to develop a career independent of traditional gender roles. She perceived her work as missionary work after the conversion, which was a major factor in breaking them.

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CHAPTER 8

Conflict Area Evangelism: Controversies About Lay Preaching in the 19th Century from the Perspective of Male and Female Protagonists of the German Revival Movements

Ruth Albrecht

1 Introduction

"Other opponents I know who did not want an evangelist were suddenly attacked by female evangelists; this was complete proof to them that 'evangelisation' is a great evil" (Schrenk 1905: 202). This sentence comes from Elias Schrenk (1831–1913) and can be found in his autobiographical review published in 1905. While in several places in his notes he mentions names of male colleagues (e.g. Schrenk 1905: 197) he esteemed and sometimes

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V. Albrecht-Birkner, S. Siedek-Strunk (eds.), *Revival Movements as Conflict Agendas of the Popular in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-75117-2_8

collaborated with, such as Friedrich von Schlümbach (1842–1901),[1] Hermann Dannert (1862–1936)[2] and Samuel Keller (1856–1924),[3] he does not specify the female evangelists he has in mind. Consequently, it is evident that he did not regard these female evangelists as colleagues, but rather saw them as a threat to the entire evangelistic mission. His choice of words not only conveys a negative perception, but also attributes damaging behaviour to these individuals. In his eyes, therefore, female evangelists represented a phenomenon entirely unrelated to evangelisation.[4] Through this verbal escalation, Schrenk highlighted a conflict that primarily emerged within the revival movements. The few women in this particular segment did not play a decisive role in the external perception. However, they did pose a competitive threat within the piety movement. Particularly, women who were well connected locally and enjoyed the protection of the authorities became targets for the representatives of traditional church work. The subsequent analysis uses examples of sources from the end of the 19th century to shed light on conflicts surrounding the topic of evangelisation from the perspective of those involved in revival movements. Specifically, it analyses biographical or autobiographical records by or about four people: Elias Schrenk, Friedrich Wilhelm Baedeker, Margarete von Oertzen and Frieda Ufer-Held. While Schrenk is credited with a near-paradigmatic role within the German revivalist movements, the other three individuals have, to date, received little attention.

[1] Schrenk recalls that Schlümbach offered evangelisations in Berlin in 1883/84 and thus made this format known in Germany. For Schlümbach's biography, see Hahn-Bruckart (2011).

[2] Dannert was not as publicly active as Schrenk, Schlümbach or Keller, but made a significant contribution to the spread and acceptance of evangelisations (Schnürle 2021).

[3] Keller initially became a pastor in Russia; after his expulsion he took on various positions in Germany before becoming an independent evangelist in 1898. His literary work consists of theological publications and an extensive narrative oeuvre, reflecting the vividness of his experiences in Tsarist Russia (Keller 1917). However, a more recent study of his person as well as his theological and literary work remains absent.

[4] In his memoirs, Schrenk makes it clear that he viewed independent women with scepticism, although he did allow for exceptions. An illness during his missionary training seriously affected him, so that he sought healing in various places. He turned down the recommendation to go to Dorothea Trudel (1813–1862) in Männedorf, Switzerland, because his most important teacher at the missionary school was "no friend of women's work" (Schrenk 1905: 51). When he did go there later, his complaints were alleviated by prayer with the laying on of hands, for which Trudel was known. "God's power emanated from that inconspicuous, hunchbacked woman, who was richly gifted in nature and spirit, and I received a real message of strength for my inner and outer man." (Schrenk 1905: 58). On Trudel's work in Männedorf see Holthaus (2005: 336–340).

2 Innovative Evangelisation Format

The long-term survivors among the awakened movements shared a predominantly conservative orientation both in political and theological terms as well as in their attitudes towards the cultural phenomena of modernity.[5] At the same time, however, these groups contributed to the development of new forms of church and social work. Despite their generally traditional stance, it was the revivalists, taking inspiration from Anglo-American models, who primarily comprised laypeople unable to find engagement opportunities in established churches. The new ways of preaching the gospel, some of which had already been tried out in America and England in the 18th century, were brought to Europe in the 19th century and adjusted to local contexts. These innovations, previously unseen in the church environment, included Sunday schools, evangelisation efforts, trombone choirs and specially tailored programmes for individual professional groups. These renewal movement groups were also extremely receptive to the use of print media of all kinds, whose mass distribution contributed significantly to the public attention that the activities of the new congregations and communities received.

The term *evangelisation*, denoting specific types of events entered German discourse towards the late 19th century, alongside the emergence of the first evangelists Samuel Keller, previously mentioned, stated that the main task of the evangelist was "to bring back to the unchurched in Germany the gospel that had become alien to them" (Keller 1917: 272). While *Mission* meant reaching out to those who had not yet come into contact with the Christian message, *Evangelisation* referred to people in countries where membership in a Christian church was still largely taken for granted during the 19th century. Before this new understanding and its associated practices became established, evangelisation was understood from a Protestant perspective as the spread of a Reformation understanding of faith in Catholic countries. Characteristic elements of the forms now understood as evangelisation included: "mass gatherings in neutral spaces, the work of charismatic evangelists, the focus of the message on conversion" (Moritzen 1999: 1703). Venues ranged from music and dance halls to theatres, restaurants and even tents. Schrenk commented on these innovations: "At the time, we were of the opinion that it was most

[5] Heitmüller (1930: 12–14), for example, paints a completely negatively distorted picture of the period around 1900. A similar sketch can be found in Schrenk (1905: 205).

appropriate to evangelise in secular venues, but experience has only confirmed this for large cities" (Schrenk 1905: 190). Advertising made use of modern media such as adverts in newspapers, on advertising pillars and through house calls. The calls for immediate conversion, offering personal conversations and prayers with the speakers or other attendees at the end of the event, characterised many evangelisations, which usually took place over several consecutive days.

Following the initial significant evangelistic events in major cities such as Berlin and Hamburg, led by American evangelists,[6] this form of preaching spread relatively quickly through the well-organised networks of the revivalists. This strategy was aimed not only at reaching those beyond the grasp of church congregations in burgeoning industrial metropolises but also at establishing centres for regular evangelistic campaigns targeting the already converted. In his memoirs, Dirk H. Dolman (1860–1949), an evangelist and missionary to the Jews, mentions a large number of such meetings in which he was involved. "Evangelisation is just as necessary for children of God as it is for worldlings. There are some who have once made a good start in their life of faith, but for some reason have not progressed further. […] Out of this need, meetings to deepen the life of faith have taken place here and there in various countries, from which great blessings have emanated" (Dolman 1921: 232). The speeches at evangelisations often distilled the gospel's message to a few salvation-critical points, inadvertently courting theological one-sidedness. Schenk therefore stipulated: "In the evening evangelisation events, the call to repentance and the call to Christ must of course be at the forefront" (Schrenk 1905: 198).

3 Conflicts from the Perspective of Male Evangelists

Elias Schrenk

Elias Schrenk had been active as a freelance evangelist since 1886, making him the first individual in Germany to undertake this role on a full-time basis. Over his more than twenty years of activity, he earned significant recognition and became emblematic of the classical evangelist (Fig. 8.1).

[6] The American lay preacher Robert Pearsall Smith (1827–1898) was the first evangelist to publicise this new form of preaching in 1875 (Holthaus 2005: 57–90). Schrenk recalls his experiences in 1865: "The name evangelisation was not yet known in Switzerland and Germany at that time; we called it daily meetings." (Schrenk 1905: 103).

Fig. 8.1 Elias Schrenk (Archiv des Evangelischen Gnadauer Gemeinschaftsverbandes)

In his autobiography, he interpreted his entire professional career, including his time as a missionary and preacher, as an evangelistic endeavour. He thus summarised that he had over 40 years of "evangelistic experience" (Schrenk 1905: 119). Schrenk had not completed an academic degree; rather, he had trained at the missionary seminary in Basel, where he was influenced by the revivalist movement.[7] When Schrenk began to develop his new activity, he described it as his calling to "help naturalise evangelisation in the German regional churches"; he wanted to offer "church evangelisation" (Schrenk 1905: 196, 203). However, his professional profile was not strictly defined by conducting evangelisation on behalf of a church, but rather by the attempt to implement something hitherto unknown in the areas claimed by the churches.

[7] The training centre was founded in 1815 (Rennstich 2000: 308–310).

Schrenk's notes show that he was confronted with two hostile fronts during his work in Germany: the restrictions imposed by pastors and "doctrinal confusion", for which he primarily blamed the liberal theologians at universities (Schrenk 1905: 197, 199). Just as Schrenk viewed his work as helping the churches to provide them with an additional, modern means of Gospel proclamation, so he saw his theological struggle as a means of preserving the church against modern tendencies: "All modern spirits who deny the divinity of Christ are mortal enemies of the Gospel and are consciously and unconsciously working towards the dissolution of the Protestant church" (Schrenk 1905: 201). His criticism of the churches sounded harsh:

> Is it not insanity, and in part wretched hypocrisy, when men who work all year round with colleagues who deny the divinity of Christ want to portray the evangelist who brings sound doctrine as dangerous to the church? According to our sad circumstances, I have had three goals with my evangelist work all these years: 1. strengthening believers against the many dangers of our time. 2. to save sinners. 3. preservation of the pure gospel in our Protestant church. (Schrenk 1905: 201)

Schrenk campaigned for the integration of evangelists and evangelisations into church and community life – albeit grounded in his interpretation of the Christian faith as being distinct from prevalent modern trends in all spheres of life. Towards the end of his evangelistic career, he continued to see the commitment to evangelisation everywhere as paramount. Contrary to his understanding of evangelism as a form of "kingdom work", he defined "liberal evangelism", whose advocates were "gentlemen who put the idol of 'doctrinal freedom' in the place of the eternal gospel and natural development in the place of divine revelation" (Schrenk 1905: 228).

Schrenk not only carried out evangelisations himself, but also spurred the integration of evangelisation into the structures of associations and communities within the awakening movement. He was involved in the founding of the *Evangelisation Association* (*Evangelisationsverein*) in Germany, which later led to the formation of the *Gnadauer Gemeinschaftsverband*, and helped establish the Johanneum training centre for evangelists in Wuppertal-Barmen (Holthaus 2005: 203–205, 261f.).[8] Schrenk viewed addressing contemporary theological trends as a

[8] The *Evangelisation Association* was founded in 1886 as a merger of existing regional groups; the Johanneum was initially established in Bonn, but moved to Barmen in 1893, where it still exists today.

critical task, emphasising its importance not just at individual evangelisation events but also across the entire movement and its overseeing associations. At a meeting of the *Evangelisation Association* in April 1887, he warned: "Ritschl's theology is gradually eroding our so-called faithful theology and flattening the biblical concepts" (quoted from Ohlemacher 1986: 241). This accusation was aimed at Albrecht Ritschl (1822–1889), who taught systematic theology in Göttingen and is regarded as the most important representative of a liberal theology following Georg Friedrich Wilhelm Hegel (1770–1831).

Friedrich Wilhelm Baedeker

The conflicts surrounding evangelisation from the perspective of male evangelists are complemented by the insights of Friedrich Wilhelm Baedeker (1823–1906), a key figure of the international *Holiness Movement*. Baedeker, a German-English evangelist, travelled mainly across the Russian Empire of the time, delivering speeches and distributing Christian literature. Originating from Witten in Westphalia, he was influenced by the religious revival movements prevalent in England in the 19th century and became an evangelist in 1866, under the influence of Granville A.W. Waldgrave Lord Radstock (1833–1913). Radstock, who had established connections with Russian nobility, encouraged Baedeker to become an evangelist in Russia.[9] Starting in 1877, Baedeker embarked on his relentless journeys through the vast Russian Empire. Although he worked independently of any organisation, the British Bible Society supported his endeavours by supplying Bibles and tracts at no cost. Furthermore, Baedeker maintained strong ties with leading figures in evangelistic circles, primarily in England and Germany.[10]

The following analysis draws on Robert Sloan Latimer's biography of Baedeker (1857–1931), first published in 1907, specifically the chapter

[9] In her memoirs, Princess Sophie Lieven (1880–1964) describes the great importance of Lord Radstock for the spread and acceptance of these Protestant piety movements in Tsarist Russia (Lieven 1952: 7, 9, 11–15).

[10] Lord Radstock, Schrenk and Princess Natalia Lieven, the mother of the aforementioned Princess Sophie, contributed forewords to the biography on which this book is based (Latimer 1907: 3–6). Natalia Lieven, née Countess von der Pahlen (1842–1920), who was married to Prince Paul von Lieven, the chief master of ceremonies at the tsar's court, was one of the most influential patrons of the arts who advocated tolerating the new culture of piety. Bible lessons, Sunday school classes and evangelistic meetings were held in her palace in the centre of St. Petersburg (Lieven 1952).

Spiritual Enmity and Police Zeal (Latimer 1907: 65–73). It recounts an incident where, after Baedeker had rented a room in Riga and advertised a meeting in the newspaper, police officers visited him at his hotel to inform him, "'You are not allowed to hold meetings here,' […]. 'Are you aware that religious meetings other than those of the state church are strictly forbidden?'" (Latimer 1907: 66). Upon inquiring, Baedeker learned that he could deliver a lecture, provided it excluded any religious elements such as prayers or singing. Baedeker accepted the compromise and subsequently gave lectures to 2,000 to 3,000 people over several evenings. "The nobility of the region was strongly represented, but so was the lower population. Barons and counts sat there with their ladies, family members and servants, squeezed in among merchants and simple labourers. All were eager to hear the precious words of life" (Latimer 1907: 66). According to Baedeker's biographer, however, it was above all pastors who sought to thwart his efforts. In the German-speaking areas of the Baltic provinces of the tsarist empire, the Lutheran church was predominant. The narrative vividly portrays these conflicts.

> The doctor met with the fiercest resistance from the Lutheran clergy. In some places they displayed a distressing eagerness to set in motion the machinery of the state laws to destroy his work. He could have been taken for a sower of seduction and revolution, a terrible corrupter of the people, instead of a messenger of God's mercy on sinful and sorrowful humanity – so they snorted threats and murders against him. Unfortunately, they were not content with the clean, albeit harsh, means of obtaining bans, arrest warrants and imprisonment. Again and again they contemptuously appealed to the lowest passions of the crowd and tried to make his blessed work among the people impossible by catcalls, bell ringing and even direct physical attacks. The Lord graciously protected him from all danger and wonderfully opened the door for his ministry, even in places where one would have least expected it. But nevertheless, the story of the resistance and persecution he had to endure remains unpleasant reading for every sensitive person. (Latimer 1907: 67)

Baedeker contrasted his experiences with Lutherans in the Baltic states, which were under Russian control at the time, with his experiences with Finnish clergy: "The Lutheran pastors in Wasa (governorate in Finland) showed great participation. They seem to be cut from a different mould than the Baltic pastors", leading to the inference "that the Lutheran Church as such is not opposed to the free gospel" (Latimer 1907: 67).

Baedeker and his biographer, Robert S. Latimer, perceived a clash in the Baltic region between the local Lutheran church's insistence on the exclusive right of ordained pastors to preach the gospel and the evangelist's demand for freedom of proclamation. Despite having completed his philosophical and medical studies with a doctorate from the University of Freiburg, following diverse travel and employment, Baedeker was considered a layman in ecclesiastical law, lacking formal theological training. His academic credentials, often highlighted by the inclusion of his doctorate in most references to his name, facilitated recognition by Russian authorities, significantly impacting his evangelical work more than his theological understanding. Ultimately, however, it was influential aristocratic circles close to the tsar's court that protected him as an evangelist, because "had he not had letters of recommendation from the highest circles of St. Petersburg, he would probably have been sent to Siberia without further ado to end his days there" (Latimer 1907: 73).[11]

4 Women in Evangelistic Work: Not Evangelists

'Kingdom of God workers' and 'women serving with the Word'

In both the revivalists' arenas of engagement and the literature of these piety movements, it is evident that women were key players in many areas. The considerable involvement of female nobles is particularly striking, representing the most active group in percentage terms. While a significant proportion of nobles were men, the extent of their involvement was not as pronounced as among women (Albrecht 2009; Holthaus 2005: 512–515).

To understand this phenomenon, which has been acknowledged for the revival movements but has not yet been sufficiently investigated, it is necessary to take account of the changes in aristocratic structures in the German Empire and the diminishing importance of aristocratic representation in the course of industrialisation. By virtue to their background, aristocratic women were well-suited for leadership roles and, despite their

[11] Lieven gives a similar assessment of the situation in (1952: 62–66). A photograph showing Baedeker wearing a bearskin coat and beaver cap emphasises the field of tension in which his work as an evangelist took place: this clothing identified him as an influential person, but he turned his attention to the exiles in the prison camps. Photos of these men show them in chains, rags and slums. The pictorial material in Latimer's biography requires its own analysis. Becker and Stornig (2018) offer an instructive model for such analyses.

dwindling social importance, frequently had the financial means to engage in social and charitable activities (Nonn 2021).

However, as the nascent movements solidified into longer-term structures, male dominance became evident in these organisations. This applies in a prominent way to the *Gnadauer Gemeinschaftsverband*.[12] According to the invitation, only men were admitted to the founding meeting in September 1887 (Ohlemacher 1986: 61), with women excluded from holding any positions in this new networking body. Women's involvement, if present, was relegated to support roles. Only when exclusively female target groups were addressed, as in the case of Bible studies for women, young girls' groups, Bible courses for women or prayer groups for women, did this situation change, because when women remained among themselves, they were able to occupy all levels of leadership. They received high recognition for such activities, even from the male actors in the revivalist movements. Adeline Countess Schimmelmann (1854–1913) was one of the very few women who acted as evangelists in Germany, although she kept her distance from all network structures and was heavily criticised by their male and female representatives, despite her proximity to the *Community* and *Holiness Movements*. She will not be considered further here, as there are already several studies on her evangelistic work.[13]

When analysing primary and secondary sources on the subject of women evangelists, it should be noted that it is often necessary to read 'between the lines', as their activities are usually described in a concealed manner, so that the gender roles accepted by the church and society were not so much openly attacked as effectively undermined. The women proved to be extremely skilful in taking up new spheres of action and defending them with arguments. In her biography of her relative Countess Marie Esther von Waldersee (1837–1914), Elisabeth Countess Waldersee (1860–1931)[14] described in detail her commitment and patronising activities in the various groups of the awakened milieu (Waldersee 1915). As a widow, M. E. von Waldersee lived in Hanover, where her villa became a centre of the *Community Movement*. Evangelists and preachers were regular guests, who held devotions and lectures for the employees and others

[12] Elias Schrenk also played an important role in its foundation (Ohlemacher 1986: 93–105).

[13] See Albrecht et al. (2011), Albrecht and Wetjen (2013), Albrecht (2019). However, many aspects of their broad international impact have still not been investigated.

[14] There is also a biography of Elisabeth Waldersee, but for various reasons it lags far behind her relative in importance (Redern 1931).

present. Elisabeth Waldersee counted the following women among the "Kingdom of God workers" (*Reichs-Gottes-Arbeiterinnen*),[15] who were guests there: Margarete von Oertzen (1854–1934),[16] Countess Else Baudissin,[17] Frieda Ufer-Held (1866–1950), Marie Palmer Davies († 1843)[18] and Caroline Rhiem (1878–1941).[19] Like the male visitors, these women also served "with the word" (Waldersee 1915: 335). The phrase 'to serve with the word' or 'in the word'[20] is an example of the insider language used by the revivalists to describe the act of gospel proclamation. This formula was well-received within the movement, as spreading the word of God was deemed the most important goal of all so-called *Kingdom of God Work*. When applied to women, this expression indicated that they were involved in preaching or evangelising in some capacity. In the context of the gatherings in the Waldersee Villa, however, the specific audience these women addressed remains unclear.

Margarete von Oertzen

Margarete von Oertzen, who has already been mentioned in the context of Countess Waldersee's biography, also wrote an autobiography detailing her path to greater independence and the growing conflicts resulting from her religious activities (Oertzen 1934). Originating from a noble family in Mecklenburg, she spent most of her life in her native region, except for a brief period in Berlin. After her marriage, she moved to Ludwigslust with her husband, Friedrich von Oertzen (1848–1936), in 1873. There she founded a Sunday school in her residence and invited local children to attend. It did not take long for her teaching to spark heated disputes with the local pastors, as Oertzen reports in her autobiography:

[15] The term is used relatively unspecifically within the revivalist movements, see e.g. Gordon (1911).

[16] Cf. 4.2. Although there are a few articles that honour her, a more in-depth study of her person and work is lacking and urgently needed.

[17] No personal details can be provided.

[18] Palmer Davies, née von Dungern, came from a noble Hessian family and had married the representative of the British Bible Society George Palmer Davies (Albrecht 2019: 265). M. von Oertzen met the Davies couple in the Berlin network of the Revivalists (Oertzen 1934: 34).

[19] After working as a teacher in several places, Rhiem concentrated on writing stories, especially for young people, as well as Christian songs. There are no biographical studies on her that examine her literary work and its theological orientation.

[20] Dolman (1921: 233), Schrenk speaks of him serving "the gospel" (Schrenk 1905: 72).

> In the meantime, however, the local clergy had got wind of the matter, and that caused great concern and hostility. One of the pastors wanted to take matters into his own hands, but I thanked him and told him I wanted to carry on as before. When my children were back on Sunday, he suddenly sat in the background with a stern face. […] The next Sunday came the second [pastor; RA]. […] But now the storm came. Neither of them wanted to suffer it any longer. (Oertzen 1934: 25)

Although Oertzen and her husband belonged to the nobility, they had no official function in the small residential town. It would appear that von Oertzen had started Sunday school lessons, a practice spreading in Germany since 1825 with the revival movements,[21] without consulting the local Lutheran pastors. Their reaction to a woman independently introducing such an innovation[22] ranged from initial attempts to assume control of the classes to outright banning them. In his church history of Mecklenburg, Karl Schmaltz (1867–1940) mentions "children's church services", apparently referring to Sunday school lessons. By the 1880s these had become established in towns "according to the group system with helpers based on the English model, despite initial opposition to the involvement of women, according to the Pauline sentence 'the woman is silent in the church'" (Schmaltz 1952: 446).[23] The Sunday classes run by M. von Oertzen were not church-sponsored, but were private initiatives held on her own premises – an approach that aligned with the ideals of the revivalist movements: laypeople were committed to helping disadvantaged groups with accessible programmes. This conflict was resolved by the intervention of one of the town's highest-ranking personalities. In the small residential town of Ludwigslust, where von Oertzen's husband served as a lieutenant, Therese von Willisen (1836–1876), the wife of the commander Major Friedrich von Willisen (1830–1879), spoke out in favour of the Sunday school, so that the pastors no longer attempted to intervene with bans.[24] Von Oertzen,

[21] On the spread and significance of Sunday schools in Hamburg, see Albrecht (2023).

[22] It is not known whether there had been Sunday school lessons in Ludwigslust before. The situation in this town would also have to be included in the spread of the new model of teaching in the Grand Duchy of Mecklenburg. Oertzen attributes her idea for a Sunday school to the suggestion of her relative Jasper von Oertzen, who worked full-time in Hamburg for various branches of the *Community Movement* and the *Inner Mission* (Oertzen 1934: 31f., 34; Albrecht 2023).

[23] At this point, Schmaltz does not mention the names of those involved or any specific sources to which he refers; however, it is not unlikely that M. von Oertzen was also involved.

[24] From 1872 to 1876 Willisen commanded Dragoon Regiment No. 17, which was stationed in Ludwigslust.

who modelled her actions on those of the revivalists without a supportive network, relied on local authoritative structures for implementing her ideal of Christian responsibility for all laypersons against the express will of the representatives of the Lutheran Church.

During her work in Berlin, von Oertzen faced completely different challenges. When she and her husband attended church services led by Karl Kuhlo (1818–1909), pastor at the Elisabeth Hospital and the associated deaconess community, he asked her to visit the hospitalised children and tell them Bible stories. Von Oertzen particularly focussed on the boys and reports in her autobiography:

> I was not at all comfortable with the fact that there were men sitting in the corners of this large hall. […] But then something began to stir in my heart that it would be unnatural if the men always sat in the corner like that – they could actually join in. But I didn't know whether Pastor Kuhlo would approve. So I asked him once and he said: 'Well, could you perhaps speak a little louder?' Yes, I could; but maybe they could move a little closer? He smiled. He wasn't so much in favour of women speaking in front of men. But at least he hadn't said no. (Oertzen 1934: 35)

Oertzen thus touched on the conflict area of gender segregation and the question of women's authorisation to participate publicly in the preaching of the Gospel. Traditionally, the ban on women speaking in mixed-gender settings was defended by churches with reference to 1 Corinthians 14:34f., with women's care for children, the elderly and the sick not seen as public preaching, but rather as fulfilling their natural roles. In the figure of Kuhlo von Oertzen was confronted with a representative of the older, church-aligned revivalist movements less affected by Anglo-American influences. She approached him as the spiritual authority, and both agreed on a solution without addressing the fundamental aspects of gender relations. The men then joined in the singing and sat down at the table without intervening in the conversations with the children. A note on the door labelled the format as a Bible lesson (Oertzen 1934: 36). Oertzen writes that the men – who were silent except for the singing – declared the event to be a Bible study, a term she did not coin herself. Telling Bible stories to children could be seen as a traditionally female field of activity, but holding a Bible study for men clearly went beyond the scope of conventionally accepted fields of activity for women. Here it was the pastor who offered tacit approval to von Oertzen's actions.

Upon resettling in Rostock in 1899, von Oertzen and her family encountered another conflict, this time not with the local pastors, but with the leading clergyman, the superintendent. In accordance with her pious practice, von Oertzen had resumed offering Sunday school lessons in Rostock. After her private rooms proved to be too small due to the large number of children, she rented two rooms for Sunday school and other religious gatherings. In her autobiography, she writes:

> In taking this step from my own home to a rented house, it seemed important to me to inform the superintendent of our town. So I went there and told him how the thing was growing from small beginnings. Perhaps he had already heard about it. In any case, he was very dismissive and rude right from the start. He asked me where I had been trained, how I was preparing and who had given me permission in the first place. When I realised that he was unfriendly towards our work, I told him: 'Mr Superintendent, I didn't come here to do this. I just didn't want to do anything behind your back and that's why I told you'. (Oertzen 1934: 68)

Despite his clear rejection, the superintendent does not appear to have intervened directly against the revivalists' endeavours. However, subsequent disputes showed that he had reported them to the highest church authority of the Grand Duchy, the Oberkirchenrat in Schwerin, with the intention of stopping the activities of the revivalists (Oertzen 1934: 78–80).[25] Other pastors in Rostock, on the other hand, endeavoured to support von Oertzen; they "regretted the position of the superintendent and encouraged me to continue calmly", according to von Oertzen (1934: 69; Schmaltz 1952: 448). Another conflict arose at a major conference organised in 1902 by the Women's Missionary Prayer League, which had been founded in 1900.[26] In addition to the women, men also took part.

[25] The superintendent was probably Ludwig H.W.F. Siegert, who initially held the role and was only formally appointed to this office in 1900. I would like to thank Dr J. Peter Wurm, Schwerin for his help in identifying this person. What is interesting about this volume of the church history of Mecklenburg, which was written in the 1930s and only published posthumously, is that the work of Hans-Werner von Tiele-Winckler (1865–1915) is given more importance here than the activities of Oertzen (Schmaltz 1952: 458). According to Oertzen's account, it was ultimately an order from Grand Duke Friedrich Franz IV to "finally leave the people in peace" that finally defused the situation (Oertzen 1934: 79f.; cf. Schmaltz 1952: 453–460).

[26] Von Oertzen took over the leadership of this association in 1915 from the first chairwoman, Freda von Bethmann-Hollweg (1842–1916), who had co-founded the German branch in 1900 (Oertzen 1934: 112–117).

Von Oertzen writes: "This wonderful experience also had a very unsettling effect on the church. A pastor was sent to me as a mediator to negotiate peace. I was allowed to work here unhindered, even to continue holding our meetings in front of men and women, if I would only promise never to let anyone from outside speak here again. I couldn't possibly promise that" (Oertzen 1934: 74). Her reference to "peace negotiations" emphasises the fierceness of the disputes.

Another demand was to stop using the songbook *Reichslieder*,[27] favoured in the *Community Movement*, and to replace it with a church hymnal. However, both the supra-regional and international networks and the use of their own hymns were characteristics of the revivalist movements, rendering these demands unfulfilled. Attempts by church representatives to demote the committed laywoman to traditional, more restricted modes of Christian preaching did not succeed.

Shortly after the turn of the century, the concerted efforts and years of dedication by von Oertzen and her colleagues in Rostock culminated in the founding of a community with its own premises, called the *Rostock Christian Association* (Oertzen 1934: 88–97). Recognised across Germany within revivalist circles as the unequivocal founder and leader of the association, von Oertzen openly embraced her evangelistic endeavours. She described the project as a "women's work": they had "come to terms with the male visitors in such a way that we said to them: Whoever is offended should not come. It's women's work. But anyone who doesn't mind is very welcome" (Oertzen 1934: 96). While initially seeking approval from theological authorities, von Oertzen later pursued her activities with complete autonomy, undeterred by threats from Lutheran pastors or scepticism from the (male) representatives of the revivalist movements. She fought for her place as a theologically educated laywoman who did not attach any importance to engaging in theoretical debates. In her memoirs, she wrote: "How many theological attacks I have had to withstand, for example, against a woman's right to speak in front of men and women! I was never allowed to defend myself theologically, only biblically. But I have never been allowed to be inwardly disturbed or discouraged. That is the great faithfulness of God" (Oertzen 1934: 86). It is interesting that von Oertzen did not go into the biblical foundations that were usually used to justify the ban on women speaking.

[27] The *Reichslieder* are a collection of songs published by Friedrich Ihloff in Neumünster that are intended to spread the kingdom of God. On this literature, which was of great importance for evangelisation in particular, see Holthaus (2005: 516–550).

From the outset, Oertzen's community foundation in Rostock was well-received by like-minded people. She writes: "The visits from evangelists increased in our club room. Pastor Modersohn, Pastor Dammann, Pastor Dolman, Mother Eva, who were still viewed somewhat uneasily by the church, came" (Oertzen 1934: 94). There are two remarkable things about this description: firstly, it shows the naturalness with which von Oertzen acted. The Mecklenburg Lutheran Church apparently no longer attempted to prevent her work in principle, but a feeling of unease – as she calls it – remained. The parishes in Rostock continued to view her endeavours with suspicion, as the forms of work used by Oertzen were fundamentally alien to them. It is also highly interesting to see how the differences between the various forms of the revivalist movements are dealt with here. The male evangelists were well-connected preachers who travelled throughout Germany: Ernst Modersohn (1870–1948),[28] Julius Dammann (1840–1908)[29] and Dirk H. Dolman[30] were academically educated and ordained pastors who, after serving in church ministry, had shifted the focus of their work to participating in evangelistic campaigns and writing. In the series of evangelists preaching in the association hall, however, a woman is also mentioned, albeit at the very end: Eva von Tiele-Winckler (1866–1930) from Silesia, who had founded a deaconess community in 1890, increasingly aligned herself and her motherhouse with the *Holiness Movement*, as a result of which she gained great recognition in its ranks. Her writings and poems also publicised her work. She accepted invitations to give speeches and addresses at events in the centres of the revivalist movements, but never explicitly presented herself as an evangelist (Fig. 8.2) (Holthaus 2005: 30f.; Tiele-Winckler 1926, 1929).[31]

[28] After several years as a parish pastor, Modersohn took over the management of the Bad Blankenburg Alliance House in 1906 and from there shifted his focus to freelance evangelism and writing (Holthaus 2005: 177–183, 397, 567–570).

[29] Dammann remained a church pastor throughout his life, but also travelled extensively as an evangelist and founded the magazine *Licht und Leben in* 1889 (Holthaus 2005: 412–414).

[30] Dolman was an Anglican clergyman and had been sent to Hamburg on behalf of the London Jewish Missionary Society in 1897 (Albrecht 2024a, 2024b).

[31] Her brother Hans-Werner von Tiele-Winckler (1865–1915), who founded a centre for *Community* and *Holiness Movement* events on his Rothenmoor estate in Mecklenburg, also played an important role as an ally of von Oertzen (1934: 76, 80f., 96f.; Dolman 1915).

Fig. 8.2 Hall in a house of Prayer in Rostock (Oertzen v. 1934: after page 88)

Frieda Ufer-Held

Through her encounter with Elias Schrenk and Marie Römmele (1840–1902), who began her evangelistic work among young women in Baden in the 1880s,[32] Frieda Ufer was inspired to offer groups for children, young people and women with an evangelistic focus as part of the Karlsruhe City Mission. Even after her marriage to Karl Ufer in 1897 and the birth of a daughter, she continued her extensive activities by holding "missionary lectures and Bible lessons for girls" on Sunday afternoons in the Wuppertal area (Katterfeld 1951: 70).

According to her biographer, speakers at women's conferences became her role models: "Marie Römmele, Dora Rappard and later also Mrs Schrenk stood before her eyes when she was denied the right to interpret the Bible in women's circles or to evangelise women from a theological

[32] Stephan Holthaus is one of the few who discusses Marie Römmele as a hitherto unexplored protagonist of the revival movements (Holthaus 2005: 217, 449f.).

perspective. These women affirmed her determination to join their ranks and go her own way" (Katterfeld 1951: 53). Römmele has already been mentioned. Berta Tappolet, who came from a family of Swiss pastors, had been married to Elias Schrenk since 1866 (Schrenk 1905: 105–108, 229). Starting in 1868, Dora Rappard (1842–1923) and her husband Carl Heinrich Rappard (1837–1909) ran the evangelistic training centre St. Chrischona in Switzerland, one of the most important centres of the German-speaking *Holiness Movement* (Holthaus 2005: 125–135, 277–281, 476–481). All three women were rather cautious in their advocacy of evangelisations held by women; although they themselves gave speeches to large audiences, they usually addressed only women and girls, thus not fully endorsing unrestricted public speaking for women. Frieda Ufer-Held was regularly invited by women's groups because of her "talent for revivalist speech" (Katterfeld 1951: 78). She outlined her position on this with the following words: "I do not generally consider it desirable for women to administer the actual parish ministry, but I do consider it desirable for them to serve even more than before in the areas of inner mission, women's evangelisation and pastoral care, school teaching at female institutions" (Fig. 8.3) (Katterfeld 1951: 141).

According to her biographer, she considered the Pauline commandment of silence for women (1 Corinthians 14:34f.) "outdated in terms of contemporary history", but "strictly limited herself to ministering to women. If the fathers also came to a meeting in villages, then she had no objection and probably also addressed a personal word to them. But in meetings that were mainly attended by men, she never spoke" (Katterfeld 1951: 141f.). In addition to her evangelistic lectures, Ufer-Held also addressed her female audience with advice letters, stories and the magazine *Frau und* Mutter, which was published from 1911 and had a circulation of 320,000 copies (Katterfeld 1951: 87–94).[33] In her publications, Ufer-Held outlined a wide range of practical, everyday evangelistic and missionary opportunities accessible to every woman, regardless of her circumstances. She viewed every woman as a "representative of God" who had to fulfil her task – "not through many words and discussions", but "through the quiet, faithful walk of tireless love" (Ufer-Held 1911: 141). Within the scope of religious endeavours, Ufer-Held saw herself and her

[33] In 2004, Stuttgarter Kreuz Verlag ceased the publication of the magazine, marking the end of its publication run. There was no longer a readership that was sufficiently interested in this subject area.

Fig. 8.3 Frieda Ufer-Held (Title page of Ufer-Held, 1911)

work as complementing, rather than competing with, church programmes, emphasising a distinct domain of responsibility for women, which she sought to bolster through her writings and speeches. Her support for women's suffrage during the early Weimar period marked a brief divergence from her usual focus, after which she returned to her original topics, positing: "Our female theologians are so focused on the masculine, on the scientific and theological, while I find that the rich female experience of an older motherly woman would serve the church more than supplementing the bearers of the ministry with female forces" (Katterfeld 1951: 141).

Although Frieda Ufer-Held's work is categorised as evangelistic by her biographer Anna Katterfeld, she does not explicitly refer to Ufer-Held as

an 'evangelist' at any point. This reflects the broader context in which disputes with church representatives over women's rights to evangelise were recognised, but not highlighted as a primary area of conflict, nor were the internal divisions within revivalist movements over conservative gender roles thoroughly explored.

5 Conclusion: Evangelisation as a Source of Innovation for Laypeople

Evangelisations as a new format attracted significant attention in the last third of the 19th century, marking the transferral of a feature of Anglo-American movements to the German context. While the groups of the revivalist milieu that were able to successfully establish themselves in the Wilhelmine Empire often used this new method of preaching, pastors and church authorities generally reacted with restraint or even rejection. The event form of evangelisation was typically part of a broader array of activities previously uncommon in church contexts, such as Sunday schools, Bible studies for individual professional groups and age groups, tea evenings, and prayer meetings. For Germany's church-based religious structure, however, the greatest innovation lay in these initiatives being led by laypersons. The revivalist movements opened new avenues of engagement for both men and women, which they undertook alongside their work and family duties or even full-time. Male evangelists who were rooted in these groups met with great approval in their milieus – for women, on the other hand, the situation was much more complicated, as can be seen from the avoidance of the term 'female evangelist'. In the German revivalist movements, which were generally conservative in political, cultural and social terms, there was a markedly high level of female involvement and thus emancipatory impulses concerning women's roles. This occurred under the stipulation that the New Testament's mandate for women's silence was approved (1 Corinthians 14:34f.). In fact, this Pauline instruction was subtly circumvented by all women, although open debate about the interpretation of this biblical tradition was mostly avoided. Nevertheless, countless women worked in the revivalist groups as Sunday school teachers, group leaders, songwriters, writers, preachers, missionaries and church leaders. Under the pretense of combating modern tendencies, these movements nurtured a potential for innovation that has not yet been

sufficiently explored in the history of research – probably also because of its contradictory nature. Evangelisation also remained a central theme into the 20th century in the conflict between regional churches and lay-led renewal movements – with churches increasingly accommodating revivalist and evangelical agendas on this topic (Albrecht-Birkner et al. 2023).

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PART III

Lay Theology Between High and Low Culture

CHAPTER 9

Jung-Stilling's Afterlife Visions in Their Interconfessional and Intercultural Contexts

Grazia Dolores Folliero-Metz

1 Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling and His Double-Faced Age

Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling (1740–1817), a multifaceted autodidact living at the turn of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, can be regarded as a popular author in comparison to contemporary canonical authors such as Moritz (1756–1793), Schiller (1759–1805), Goethe (1749–1832) or Schleiermacher (1768–1834) (Mittner 1978: 636–638). As a pietist, doctor, writer and lay theologian, his autobiographical and religiously edifying writings found a broad readership, especially in Southern Germany and in Switzerland, and were translated into numerous languages. This study explores two different works of his disparate works within an interdisciplinary and international framework.

In some cases, great writers manage to describe an epoch as accurately as scholars, adding a touch of salaciousness or emotional depth, as the case

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V. Albrecht-Birkner, S. Siedek-Strunk (eds.), *Revival Movements as Conflict Agendas of the Popular in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-75117-2_9

may be. Despite the poetic prose and a certain sarcasm, the overture to Charles Dickens' (1812–1870) novel, *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), is entirely in tune with the findings of historical analyses of the 18th century:

> It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way […]. (Dickens 1859/1985: 2)

English empiricists aside, on a philosophical and cultural level, the 18th century had in fact been marked by the French rationalist and materialist philosophers gathered around the *Illuministes* and *Encyclopédistes* (Voltaire, Denis Diderot, d'Alembert, d'Holbach etc.), who had radically questioned the entire institutional conglomerate of the time – that is, the established political, juridical, social and cultural order, which would later be given the appellation *Ancien Régime*. Immanuel Kant, with his *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, represented a natural yet distinct continuation of that work, posing a foundational set of questions: "What can I know? What should I do? What can I hope for?" (Kant 1781/1787/1998: 838).

Despite Kant's rationalist critique, the latter half of the 18th century still harbored currents that valued the intuitive, fantastic, and sentimental – later, even the irrational. These currents ranged from serious religious literature to more whimsical works intended for entertainment. For instance, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), which pioneered the Gothic novel genre, reflects this shift towards the spectral and fantastic, set against an imaginatively medieval backdrop. Walpole famously stated "Miracles, visions, necromancy, dreams and the praeternatural events, are exploded now even from romances" (Walpole 1764/2014: 6). This era was also marked by a significant cultural conflict during the French Revolution, where Gothic and Romanesque sacred architectures were vandalised by revolutionaries, even as a resurgent appreciation for the Middle Ages was taking shape across Europe.[1] Literary critics therefore

[1] "The weird significance of dreams, the appearance of the animated dead […], for instance, became staples of a new form of fiction that was eventually christened the 'Gothic' novel" (Nick Groom, introduction to Walpole 1764/2014: ix). The international popularity of this Gothic fashion is demonstrated by the story of the wedding feast of Stilling's parents, Wilhelm and Dorothea, which ends with a folk song set in the Middle Ages: "But Stilling's

locate the gestation of Romanticism in the Age of Enlightenment, facilitated by an international cross-fertilisation of various authors and currents, which led to the emergence of what is often referred to as Preromanticism and the distinct Romantic movements in England, Italy, France, and Germany; and notably, scholars confirmed the origins of Preromantic and German Romanticism in Pietism.[2]

Many authors of the canonical and high culture of the 18th century paradoxically drew nourishment from the religious spirit of *Die Stillen im Lande*, the grassroots movement that aspired to an inner renewal of religion.[3] The question at this point is whether the reverse was also true: that is, whether there was an influence of canonical authors and high culture on popular authors, such as Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling, who was not only born into a pietistic environment, but primarily wrote with the intention of spiritual edification. The examination of two of his works reveals the interaction of remarkably heterogeneous cultural elements at the turn of the century.

Scenen aus dem Geisterreich, written between 1795 and 1801, comprises 27 short prose stories, and, as the title suggests, Stilling narrates encounters, dialogues and conflicts occurring in the afterlife, between the

daughters sat under the cherry tree at dusk and sang the following beautiful secular song: '[...] At midnight she wanders around / By the moonlight she sighs so much / She walks there in a white dress / And laments her sorrow to the forest / Adie! Adie! Adie! /// Like mist in the wide space / The maiden flew up through the tree / She was never seen again. / The knight went to the monastery / And began a pious life.'" (Jung-Stilling 1777/2013: 22, 24). All German quotations were translated into English by Marie Briese.

[2] German Pietism is one of the spiritual fathers of Preromantic, *Sturm und Drang*, Romanticism and German Idealism (see Calò and Necco 1935; Antoni 1968; Mittner 1978; Dieter Cunz in his epilogue to Jung-Stilling 1777/2013: 413). For the genesis of the sensibility of the late 18th-century scholars focus not only on German Pietism but also on the authors of English and French literature (Drabble and Stringer 2003: 272f., 554f.; see also Cazamian and Legouis 1951: 925–934).

[3] For example, Kant, who was not a Pietist, held Pietism in high esteem, and even Goethe, who had a rather 'pagan' view of life, probably found inspiration for *Hermann und Dorothea* (Goethe 1797) in the quiet and solid way of life of Pietist families. It is worth noting that both in Stilling's autobiography and in *Hermann und Dorothea* the adjectives used to describe simple characters as Stilling's grandparents are somehow out of context. I leave open the question of whether Stilling inspired Goethe, or whether Goethe, who had edited Stilling's autobiography, chose to apply these high-sounding adjectives to a rural context, first in Stilling's autobiography and later in *Hermann und Dorothea*.

souls of the dead and angelic beings, all aimed at enlightening his readers.[4] *Theorie der Geisterkunde oder was von Ahnungen, Gesichten und Geistererscheinungen geglaubt und nicht geglaubt werden müßte* (1808), in contrast, is a theoretical work that articulates a clear stance on the extent and limits of man's visionary power.

In what follows, my aim is to understand the intersection of these culturally diverse segments of thought within these two works by Stilling, paying special attention to the relationship between canonical and popular culture,

2 Stilling's Afterlife Visions in an Interdisciplinary Context

Just as Martin Luther (1483–1546) challenged the Church of Rome, in which both the ecclesiastical power and the theological mainstream of his time resided, and opposed it with the principles of *Sola fide* and *sola Scriptura*, so too did Pietism become part of a chain of religious renewals in the Protestant church, born from below. These movements challenged their respective official Churches in the name of the individual conscience of the faithful and their direct contact with the sacred texts. In the first volume of his autobiography, published in 1777 under the title *Heinrich Stillings Jugend. Eine wahrhafte Geschichte* – after Goethe had read and printed it without the author's knowledge – Stilling discusses his earliest childhood, recounting that he had put the local pastor on the spot with his witty and somewhat cheeky answers. This confrontational stance was repeated years later, with the official church leaders in Siegen (Jung-Stilling 1777/2012: 113; 1777/2013: 56f., 153–161).[5] By this means Stilling stylised himself as being at odds with ecclesiastical power.

Belief in the possibility of paranormal 'visions' with eschatological significance was a common element among late 18th-century canonical

[4] The work is divided into two books; the second book was written in 1801 six years after the first and after great success, both at home and abroad for the first. Stilling said he wrote the second part after receiving many inner illuminations and new knowledge concerning the afterlife (Jung-Stilling 1795/1801/1973, I: 217). The edition we are quoting from contains both books in a single volume, so we will refer to the first volume as 1795/1801/1973, I: pages…; and to the second volume as: 1795/1801/1973, II: pages …

[5] French translator Yves Wattenberg comments on this episode in a witty way: "The author has Meinhold/Weinhold speak in the dialect of the Siegen region (Salen in the story), to accuse him of being a ridiculous, unpolished theologian" (Jung-Stilling 1777/2012: 113).

culture as well as in popular culture. Critics, however, did not shy away from satirising visionaries and their predictions, as seen in Charles Dickens' ironic commentary on visionaries of the previous century in *A Tale of Two Cities*:

> It was the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy-five. Spiritual revelations were conceded to England at that favoured period, as at this. Mrs. Southcott had recently attained her five-and-twentieth blessed birthday, of whom a prophetic private in the Life Guards had heralded the sublime appearance by announcing that arrangements were made for the swallowing up of London and Westminster [sic, GFM]. (Dickens 1859/1985: 2)[6]

At the level of high-profile religious culture, the phenomenon began with Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772) and was still present in the English poet and artist William Blake (1757–1827).[7]

In the German-speaking area, a high-profile poet, Friedrich G. Klopstock (1724–1803), created a religious epic, *Der Messias* (1748–1799/1800),

[6] She is Joanna Southcott (1750–1814), a self-proclaimed seer and founder of two minor churches that still exist today (Marshall 2018). Immanuel Kant, fascinated and repulsed by Swedenborg's theory, began his early work, *Träume eines Geistersehers*, of 1766, as follows: "The Shadow Realm is the paradise of fantasists. Here they find unlimited land where they can grow whatever they like" (Kant 1766/1968: 923). Regarding the meaning and the use of this word, see Sawicki (1999: 367–370). Kant's choice of the word 'Geisterseher' seems to be the most ancient recording of it (ibid.: 368). The philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer criticised Stilling himself in a mordant manner: "In 1818, 7,000 Chiliasts from Württemberg moved to the vicinity of Mount Ararat; because the new kingdom of God announced by Jung-Stilling in particular was to dawn there" (Schopenhauer 2004: 94).

[7] The Swedish scholar Swedenborg, after a mystical turn of events, not only claimed to regularly have visions in a waking state, in perfect consciousness, and to be able to communicate with angels and spirits, but also developed a much-debated theory of communication between realms (Stengel 2011). William Blake was influenced by the artist John Flaxmann, a follower of Swedenborg. Blake's production as a poet and artist is characterised by constant revolt against tyrannical power (whether church, state, or convention) combined with a highly personal religiosity and visionary ecstasy (Drabble and Stringer 2003: 69). He is said to have "had a strongly visual mind: whatever he imagined he also saw" (see Bronowski in Blake 1975: 9). In fact, in a 1799 letter to the Reverend Trusler Blake states: "To Me this World is all One continued Vision of Fancy or Imagination […]" (Blake 1988: 702). A year later, in a Letter to William Hayley, he described himself as an "enthusiastic, hope fostered visionary" (ibid.: 715). And another year later, in a Letter to Thomas Butts, he adds: "I am under the direction of Messengers from Heaven, Daily and Nightly […]" (ibid.: 724). Nevertheless, for Bronowski "Blake's form of Christianity was heretical" (Blake 1975: 11).

intended to parallel the classics of Greco-Roman antiquity such as Homer's *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and Virgil's *Aeneid*. Klopstock undertook a monumental task in the Protestant, German-speaking cultural area: his epic was not just another poetic work, but the artistic creation of a modern Christian seer, just as the blind Homer was a seer for ancient culture. Thus, the author of the *Messias* became a spectator of divine mysteries, without, however, having to deny poetic creation the power to remove or add details to the story handed down in sacred texts. Moreover, this work, the drafting and publication of which had taken place during the second half of the century, could not, precisely because of its long gestation, be ignored by the intellectual public:

> Sing, immortal soul, the redemption of sinful men, |
> Which the Messiah accomplishes on earth in his humanity. |
> […] |
> But, O work that only God omnipresent recognizes, |
> May poetry approach you from a dark distance? |
> Consecrate it, Spirit Creator, before whom I silently pray here, |
> Lead it to me, as your imitator, full of delight, |
> Full of immortal power, in transfigured beauty. |
> Arm it with that profound solitary wisdom, |
> With which you, inquiring spirit, see through the depths of God; |
> So through it I shall see light and revelations |
> And sing worthy of the great Messiah's redemption. |
> (Klopstock 1748/1986, Erster Gesang: 7, Vv. 1–2; 8–17)[8]

With *Messias*, Klopstock, who became fashionable in the German-speaking world, had by no means invented a new genre but revitalised the European Christian epic tradition, which had previously included interpreters like John Milton (1608–1674) in the Protestant domain, serving as both

[8] In German: "Sing, unsterbliche Seele, der sündigen Menschen Erlösung, | Die der Messias auf Erden in seiner Menschheit vollendet. | […] | Aber, o Werk, das nur Gott allgegenwärtig erkennet, | Darf sich die Dichtkunst auch wohl aus dunkler Ferne dir nähern? | Weihe sie, Geist Schöpfer, vor dem ich im stillen hier bete, | Führe sie mir, als deine Nachahmerin, voller Entzückung, | Voll unsterblicher Kraft, in verklärter Schönheit, entgegen. | Rüste sie mit jener tiefsinnigen einsamen Weisheit, | Mit der du, forschender Geist, die Tiefen Gottes durchschauest; | Also werd ich durch sie Licht und Offenbarungen sehen | Und die Erlösung des großen Messias würdig besingen." Although he does not specify which of Klopstock's poetic works he has in mind, Stilling does mention him in the highest terms in his autobiography (Jung-Stilling 1777 and 2013: 133).

Klopstock's inspiration and poetic model. It is noteworthy to mention that the genre of the Christian epic had its origins with Dante Alighieri (1265–1321), later enriched by Torquato Tasso (1544–1595). Despite their temporal and stylistic differences, these four authors shared a common portrayal: the heavens seem to be torn apart, akin to the grandiose Baroque paintings, revealing a vision filled with angels, demons, divine mysteries, and revelations – all elevated to the realm of high culture. This bridging of centuries, languages, confessions, and authors, which might seem implausible today, was not uncommon in the 18th and 19th centuries. William Blake frequently referenced these authors in his letters, highlighting their affinity and the potential for integrating poetry and art with biblical themes.[9]

A naive faith in visions of the afterlife was familiar to Stilling,[10] but when he wrote *Scenen aus dem Geisterreich*, he demonstrated an awareness of high culture's sophisticated taste for poetic prophecies, distinct from

[9] See the obvious proximity between these verses by Klopstock, and those by Torquato Tasso: "[…] In vain did Satan rise up against the divine Son, in vain did Judea rise up against him; he did so and accomplished the great reconciliation" (Klopstock 1748/1986, Erster Gesang: 7, Vv. 6f.); "e in van l'Inferno vi s'oppose, e invano // s'armò d'Asia e di Libia il popol misto" (Tasso 1581/1961, I, 1: 3, Vv. 5f.). Many elements of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* with the Devil, angels, Adam, and Eve etc. trace an influence back to Torquato Tasso or to Dante Alighieri. The first acknowledged translation of Dante's *Comedy (Inferno,* Ugolino's *Canto*) goes back to 1719, but Italian Literature had been known in England since Geoffrey Chaucer. Dante anticipates many themes not only of the Italian Renaissance, but also of the Modern Age, thus remaining a source of inspiration for the following centuries; see Folliero-Metz (2004: 37–103). The *Divine Comedy* had already been read and appreciated by Milton in the 17th century, and a Dante revival gradually took place in Europe between the pre-Romantic and Romantic eras, and then continued into the 20th century (Drabble and Stringer 2003: 179f.), culminating during the last decade in Dan Browns thriller *Inferno* (Brown 2016).

[10] As far as popular culture is concerned, the possibility of having visions was very familiar to Stilling, who called himself a shepherd boy, and he had been brought up in the firm belief in omens, and even apparitions. Indeed, in the first book of his above-mentioned autobiography Stilling recounts how his own late mother had appeared to his grandfather to announce that his death was near. The grandfather, who was a charcoal burner, had gone off alone that morning into the woods of Siegerland, immediately told this 'Vision' to the young boy, probably leaving an indelible impression on his soul: "As I went from you into the forest, I saw a light far ahead of me […] Oh! I thought, there is [already] the sun in the sky; is this [perhaps] a new sun? That must be something wonderful […]. I went up to it […]. There were many thousands of splendid castles […] as if they were made of pure silver. […] Someone came out of the door of this castle and approached me […]. Ah! a glorious angel!" (Jung-Stilling 1777/2013: 76).

the ecstatic trance of simpler-minded seers. By choosing to adopt a universally Christian viewpoint rather than a purely mono-denominational stance, he aimed to affirm his vocation as a lay preacher devoted to the spiritual salvation of souls. Stilling himself described this calling in his writings:

> My inner calling has urged me for many years to work for the unity of the spirit, for the inner […] union of all true Christian religious parties, and in this urge Siona, in a lonely, quiet hour, led this scene of my soul past: I found myself in my imagination […]. (Jung-Stilling 1795/1801/1973, II: 345)[11]

Significantly, with these scenes of the Afterlife, Stilling goes beyond what the Reformed canonical tradition had previously offered (Albrecht-Birkner 2017: 279–283). Milton had turned the *Genesis* account into a compelling narrative, endowing it with psychological interpretation and dialogues; Klopstock had turned the Gospel account of the Passion of Christ into a dramatic narrative, attributing different intentions to men, angels, and demons. But in both cases, they were poetic re-readings of biblical texts. Instead, Stilling creates new texts allegedly aimed at directly addressing and judging his contemporaries in the light of the Gospel message, an approach that brings him close to Dante Alighieri, making a comparison between the *Divine Comedy* and the *Scenen aus dem Geisterreich* not only possible but insightful.

In 1321, hovering between the Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance, Dante Alighieri, Italy's most canonical national poet, died in Ravenna shortly after completing a didactic poem in three *Cantiche*, the *Commedia*, to which readers would soon add the adjective 'divine', and which would become the *Divine Comedy* over the centuries (Alighieri 1960).[12] In the *Comedy*, Dante recounts his own visionary, i.e., *fantastic*, journey into the

[11] On this subject, see Cunz's epilogue to Stilling (1777/2013: 414). The first volume of the work has as its motto a passage from the Apostle Paul concerning the final retribution of human actions (2 Corinthians 5, 10): "We must all be made manifest before the judgment seat of Christ, so that everyone may receive what he has acquired in his earthly life, whether it be good or bad" (Jung-Stilling 1795/1801/1973, I: 16).

[12] The English translation of the Divine Comedy quoted here is that of 1814, by the Rev. Henry Francis Cary (1772–1844), which was used by William Blake (Alighieri 1892/2005). For the sake of better comprehension of the text, we have decided to correct the blank verses by the addition of the missing vowels.

three realms of the afterworld, which he conceived as an orderly structure of Christian Hell, Purgatory and Paradise, in which the damned souls serve their eternal punishments, the purging souls purify themselves by suffering, praying and waiting for a better destination, while the blessed souls finally enjoy participating in the blissful vision of the Trinity, together with the Virgin Mary, all the Saints, and the heavenly powers.

Dante, who was not only the author of the poem but also its main protagonist (Folliero-Metz 2021a), in his own literary fiction, visits the three places of the underworld by virtue of a particular saving grace, dialogues with the souls inhabiting the three realms, and returns to this earth perfected by the visions he has experienced, to act for the better. For the purposes of this comparison with Stilling, it is only necessary to mention the topography of Dante's Hell and Purgatory.[13] Dante conceived them with strong visuality and in a way that they reflect each other: The *Inferno* is a funnel-shaped chasm in the centre of the earth, populated by demons and the damned, culminating in Lucifer, who is fixed upside down at the end of his fall from Paradise. The funnel, distinct in both geology and climate, is divided into various circles ranging from flaming pits to boiling pitch, from a scorching desert to an eternally frozen lake – places of punishment for mortal sins. This is, succinctly, the structure of Dante's *Inferno* – note the presence of infernal rivers, inspired by classical epics. In the antechamber of Hell, the souls of the undecided are tormented by stinging insects; neither Heaven nor Hell will receive them.[14] Geographically, at the antipodes of Hell and its eternal darkness, the mountain of Purgatory rises above the waters created when Lucifer plunged into the infernal abyss, while the surplus earth reappeared in the opposite hemisphere. While a visual diagram of Hell must be read from top to bottom, that of Purgatory must be read from bottom to top.

With this work Dante synthesises and brings to their culmination two strands of medieval literature: didactic-symbolic poems and tales of ecstatic visions. Yet, in comparison to his predecessors, Dante's work is distinguished by its complexity: his intentions are political-theological-humanistic, his

[13] On the intersection of an imaginary and spiritual topography in Dante's Three Canticles with the real landscapes evoked by the souls encountered during the imagined journey, see Folliero-Metz (2022).

[14] William Blake's 102 watercolours dedicated to the *Divine Comedy* are – due to his sudden death – unevenly distributed: 72 devoted to Hell, 20 to Purgatory and 10 to Heaven. For this reason, his illustrations of the *Inferno* follow very closely the sequence of circles and encounters with the sufferers.

language powerful, and his poetic imagination remains largely unparalleled; the souls he meets during his visionary journey, marked by passions, madness, and also greatness or holiness, have maintained a vivid presence across centuries (Flasch 2020). Reflecting on Dante's impact, popular author Dan Brown has stated:

> My friends, it is impossible to overstate the influence of Dante Alighieri's work. Throughout all of history, with the sole exception perhaps of Holy Scripture, no single work of writing, art, music, or literature has inspired more tributes, imitations, variations, and annotations than the *Divine Comedy*. (Brown 2016: 83)

Although we are discussing both a canonical author and an author from popular culture, although it is not possible to compare Stilling's 27 varied scenes with the mathematically perfect structure of Dante's three realms of the afterlife, their deeper intent is similar: both wish to change the perspective of their respective contemporaries. Stilling, acting as a lay pastor, employs a didactic approach in each scene, striving to engage his readers with the sapiential truths of the Scriptures to inspire conversion. This proselytising undercurrent in Stilling's lay theological writings may represent an aesthetic-literary limitation: his works resemble sermons presented as visions. However, by adopting the popular literary form of visions, Stilling effectively captured the zeitgeist, making a significant impact.

The dialogical form is common to both authors: the *Divine Comedy* essentially unfolds as a series of interviews that Dante holds with souls he meets during his otherworldly journey. Similarly, Stilling's souls seek companionship, interact and dispute: "Hanon: How lonely! – I have to look for beings to whom I can express myself […]" (Jung-Stilling 1795/1801/1973, I: 18; see also the dispute between Zalmon, Timeus and Jeriel ibid.: 30). Or at another place: "Hasmon: But may I ask you to tell me your story?" (ibid.: 67).

Unlike Stilling, Dante, converses not only with mythological figures, demons, and angels, but also with the souls of historical figures who had recently passed away, so that he can be said to critique his own century politically and morally. To avoid direct references to contemporary individuals as far as possible, Stilling deliberately chose to attribute Jewish names to the characters in his depictions of the Afterlife, and emphasised: "I don't have people in mind anywhere, only things" (Jung-Stilling

1795/1801/1973, I: 25, Stilling's commentary).[15] On the other hand, Stilling's reference to his own century, and to academically dominant currents of thought, is undoubtedly similar to Dante's method. For example, one character exclaims: "Hanon: I heard a lot about enlightenment" (ibid.: 20; cf. also Abiel's account ibid.: 76).

Regarding the logistics of the three kingdoms and the non-terrestrial creatures, i.e. angels and demons, Stilling is far from Dante's systematic approach, but exhibits similarities in describing their appearances:

> Adriel: Do you also know the nature of hell and its three realms, dear Mahlon? […] The dreadful abode […] lies on the evening side of the shadowy realm, and consists […] of three regions; the first is called the realm of misery; the second the realm of darkness, and the third: the realm of fire. […] From time to time the princes of hell come in gigantic size, but with the most terrible distortion of the human figure […]. (Jung-Stilling 1795/1801/1973, I: 43, 45f.)[16]

Finally, the locus most represented by Stilling, a sort of 'Purgatory', is the one most obviously similar to Dante and the least Lutheran from a dogmatic point of view.[17] Several elements (topography, atmosphere, mood, spirituality) bring to the reader's memory Dante's *Purgatory*: first and foremost, the place where souls find themselves after death and in which they remain for a certain amount of time, facing a mountain:

> Hanon: There over the distant mountains a gentle light, like the earnest of the May morning. […] It is my awakening to eternal life. […] I feel no homesickness for my loved ones left behind, only tender memories […]

[15] Perhaps this was an echo of the resonant Hebrew names found in Klopstock's *Messias* (see, for example, the names of the demons in the second canto: Adramelech, Moloch, Belielel, Abdiel, Abbadonaa). In the second volume of *Scenen aus dem Geisterreich*, however, Stilling is more generous than in the first in identifying souls as actual deceased.

[16] As far as angels are concerned, see, for example, the description of *Azuriel* in Jung-Stilling (1795/1801/1973, I: 22).

[17] According to Jacques Le Goff, Dante Alighieri gives the most sublime form to the slow genesis of Purgatory in both individual consciousness and medieval theology (Le Goff 1998: 449). Le Goff also points out how after Dante, Purgatory lived a visual life of its own until the 19th century, on the wall images of churches, both Catholic and later also Protestant. Ernst Leonardy assumes that Jung-Stilling's concept of Hades, in contrast to the Catholic doctrine of purgatory, was not a "place of purification", but a "place of maturation both for the better and for the worse" (Leonardy 2001: 128). As in older pietism, the doctrine of *apokatastasis panton* played an explicit role in Jung-Stilling's concept of Hades (Shimbo 1994).

> Invigorating coolness, May air whispers from this eternal East; what a gentle light! (Jung-Stilling 1795/1801/1973, I: 17)

> Sweet hue of eastern sapphire, that was spread / Over the serene aspect of the pure air, / High up as the first circle, to mine eyes / Unwonted joy renewed, soon as I escaped / Forth from the atmosphere of deadly gloom, / That had mine eyes and bosom filled with grief. […] The dawn had chased the matin hour of prime, / Which deaf before it, so that from afar / I spied the trembling of the ocean stream. (Alighieri 1960, Purgatorio, I: 563, vv. 13–18, 115–117).

It is perhaps worth noting here how Stilling's path leads him to formulations that closely resemble the later Dante illustrations of his contemporary William Blake. From 1824 until his death in 1827, Blake produced an (unfinished) series of 102 watercolours dedicated to the *Divine Comedy*, which are not mere illustrations, but a creative reinterpretation of Dante's poem. According to Sebastian Schütze: "Along with the prophets of the Old Testament, Homer, Shakespeare and Milton, he regarded Dante as the supreme embodiment of poetic genius" (Blake 2020: 51). It would therefore be a romantic rediscovery of the Italian poet, thanks to whom Blake was also able to give substance to his own visions and aesthetics (See Fig. 9.1 below).

3 Stilling, Dante, and William Blake: Some Reflections on Their Unexpected Affinity

One might understand Stilling's second work, considered here, as his attempt to duly acknowledge both sides of the 18th century, defined earlier as 'A double-faced Age': that is, both the Enlightenment, which reached him through Kant, and the sentimental and creative sensibility of the anti-Enlightenment currents. Moreover, it is interesting to note how a long-distance and somewhat random comparison between Dante, Stilling, and William Blake continues to remain relevant even in this context.

In his later work, *Theorie der Geisterkunde oder was von Ahnungen, Gesichten und Geistererscheinungen geglaubt und nicht geglaubt werden müßte* (Jung-Stilling 1808/1987) Stilling provides theoretical consistency to what he had already expressed poetically and popularly in *Scenen aus dem Geisterreich* (Titzmann 2012). Apart from the introduction (§§ 1–16), the treatise is divided into five parts, which are devoted,

Fig. 9.1 Illustrations to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, The Circle of the Lustful: Francesca da Rimini (*The Whirlwind of Lovers*), 1826/27. Artist: William Blake. Photo Tate

respectively, to the refutation of mechanistic philosophy (I. §§ 17–56: "Examination and refutation of the principles of mechanical philosophy"); to considerations on human nature (II. §§ 57–120: "Remarks on human nature"); to the domain of the para-sensible and the ultrasensible (III. §§ 121–177: "Of premonitions, predictions, spells and prophecies"); to visions and apparitions of spirits (IV. §§ 178–255: "Of visions and ghostly apparitions"); and finally in the fifth part, which has a numbering of its own (V. §§ 1–55: "Brief overview of my theory of spiritualism, and conclusions from it"). Stilling devotes himself to his own theory of what is permissible to believe and gives conceptual form to what he had previously described in poetic form only.

The first part of this work sketches a concise history of humanity's spiritual evolution, emphasising from the outset how Christian doctrine and

the Holy Scriptures, despite having fought "the errors" of previous religions, had never refuted or rejected "faith in omens, visions, apparitions" (ibid.: 41, § 17). After listing the representation of the Afterlife of the common Christian church all along ("the universal Christian church from the very beginning", ibid.: 42, § 18), – Stilling means the Catholic Church – divided into Paradise, Hell and Hades (the underworld in which the purging souls lie), he discusses the angelic beings that inhabit the afterlife and in the next paragraph shows the connection between this vision of the afterlife and the cosmological system underlying the world and the stars.

After mentioning the corruption of the Catholic Church linked to the sale of indulgences, the cosmological reform of the Copernican system and then the moral reform of the Christian Protestant doctrine, based on the reading of the Holy Scriptures alone, Stilling notes a deep hiatus between the two confessions, with the Catholic Church maintaining its role as the Governor of the spirit realm, while the Protestant Churches ignore this realm. Stilling goes on to mention, in quick succession, the Protestant confession, the mechanistic system, the Leibnizian *best of all possible worlds*, 18th-century materialism and the Enlightenment, his aim being to show how the different 18th-century systems of thought either reveal a materialistic determinism or a reason that is denied access to the supersensible, creating a hiatus with the simple faith of the people in their Scriptures (ibid.: §§ 29–38).

The German author wishes to restore plausibility to the supersensible dimensions and visions in a scientific manner, using arguments and instruments derived from Kant's *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* to develop his own conclusions (Albrecht-Birkner 2018: 214–219). He argues that human concepts of space and time are relative, and God towers above space and time (Jung-Stilling 1808/1987: § 46); what moves within space and time, matter, forces, and their interaction, so important for mechanistic physics, are thus denied ("so what we call matter, force and reciprocal action on each other is merely human imagination, in truth everything is different"; ibid.: 59f., § 49). To understand this unexpected shift in the register of discourse, it may be helpful to recall how the 'post-Kantian' generation sought to recover, artistically, theoretically, or spiritually, everything that seemed to have been lost to Enlightenment rationalism and Kantianism. In this vein, William Blake's artwork powerfully criticises both Materialism – painting a degraded Nebuchadnezzar crawling naked – and Enlightenment empiricism – showing Newton meticulously measuring the universe with

tiny geometric instruments, which contrasts with his conception of the Prophetic Genius, a faculty enabling the perception of infinite truths: "[…] another faculty, which Blake calls Poetic or Prophetic Genius, which enables him [i.e. man] to apprehend eternal truth, or […] to perceive the infinite" (Anthony Blunt in Butlin 1957: 10) (See Fig. 9.2 below).

Stilling notably lends the greatest subjective plausibility to the traditional geocentric worldview (ibid.: § 50). Leveraging the Kantian notion that space and time are subjective, he restores the potential for the Bible's

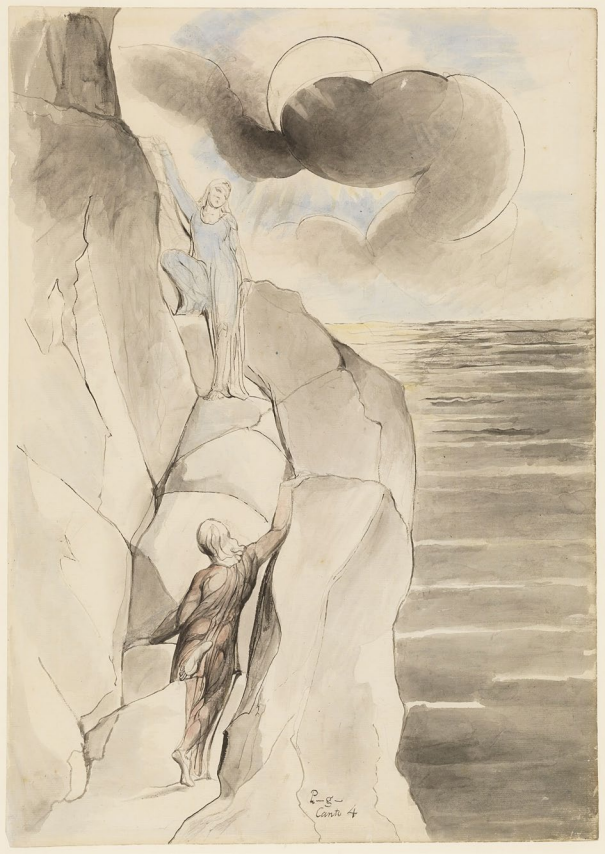

Fig. 9.2 Illustrations to Dante's *Divine Comedy*, *The Ascent of the Mountain of Purgatory*, 1824–1827. Artist: William Blake. Photo: Tate

various dimensions to coexist with empirical reality: "The Holy Scriptures are always based on human concepts, but nevertheless in a way that is most suitable for God and the truth, and most fruitful for the happiness of mankind" (ibid:, 62, § 52). The sudden, yet reasoned conclusion is that the possibility of a dualistic existence for mankind, in parallel worlds, is reprofiled: "Our body belongs to the sensory world, and our spirit to the supernatural […]" (ibid.: 63, § 53),[18] and that it is precisely the freedom to act and the moral responsibility of man which restores a series of consequences, all not far removed from Dante's cosmological and eschatological vision:

> […] We feel free in fact and truth, our nature tells us so out loud; reason also teaches us, because the opposite is incompatible with divine, spiritual and human nature, […] and finally the Bible asserts it on every page. (ibid.: 65, § 56)

While the freedom of individual conscience is a foundation of the Protestant confession, it is not unknown in pre-Lutheran thought. As Bruno Bernabei points out, human freedom is a central concept in Dante's thought from his earliest works through to the *Comedy* (Bernabei 1970). In Heaven he opposes servitude and freedom in clear antithesis, almost as if to express the trajectory of his transcendent journey: "Of slave, / Thou hast to freedom brought me" (Alighieri 1960, Paradiso, XXXI: 789, v. 85). Beatrice will reveal in Paradise the divine origin of this *libertà*, infused by the creator, as his greatest gift, in all and only intelligent creatures: "Supreme of gifts, which God creating gave / Of his free bounty, sign most evident / Of goodness, and in his account most prized, / Was liberty of will, the boon wherewith / All intellectual creatures, and them sole / He hath endowed" (ibid. V: 695, vv. 19–24).

In part five of the treatise *Theorie der Geisterkunde*, Stilling develops his earlier arguments from Part One, drawing on the terminology and quintessence of Kant's doctrine of the *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Kant 1781/1787/1998) while at the same time transforming it and arriving at conclusions that are at least innovative as a procedure. In tune with the first Kantian critique is the definition of space and time as subjective categories of man (Jung-Stilling 1808/1987: 338f.,V, §§ 6–8); at the same

[18] A great closeness between Stilling's position and the previous writings by Heinrich Martin Gottfried Köster (1734–1802), published in 1775 and 1777, must be emphasised. Köster, a former clergyman, was professor of History at the university of Gießen. See Sawicki (1999: 374f).

time, however, their very 'relativity' means that they are not also applicable to God, who transcends them:

> From this it follows irrefutably that the way in which we imagine creation, and all the knowledge and sciences derived from it, depend solely on our organization. […] Consequently, no space exists apart from us in nature, but our conception of it has its foundation solely in our organization. […] But we humans cannot and should not think otherwise than in space and time. (ibid.: 338f., V, §§ 6–7–8).

The possibility that the human soul can exist, move and perceive even without the body, which Stilling platonically defined as 'the prison of the soul' (ibid: 339, V, § 12), had already been affirmed in § 53 of Part I, so that now the author harvests, so to speak, the fruits of the preceding theoretical journey, arriving at results that are at least unexpected for the reader. Stilling postulates two quite distinct domains: the so-called external world, governed by common sense, reason, and sensory perception, and the 'supernatural' realm, guided by Holy Scripture and divine providence (ibid.: 342 V, § 21).

In the following paragraphs (§§ 23–26) Stilling condemns as dangerous and misleading, if not criminal, the attempts by religious and irreligious souls alike to cultivate a predisposition towards perceiving things in a 'paranormal' way. He goes on to explain the reason for this stance in the following paragraph: he postulates an infinity of mediocre 'spirits' capable of influencing sensitive individuals, causing serious evils: "Swarming, heresies, and abominable mistakes" (§ 27). On this theme Dante would likely agree perfectly: "Christ said not to his first conventicle, / 'Go forth and preach impostures to the world'" (Alighieri 1960, Paradiso, XXIX: 783, vv. 109f.).

A line of reasoning, previously controlled by 18th-century common sense and the results of both Kantian philosophy and the natural sciences, takes a decidedly romantic turn from § 30 of Part V of the work towards the supra-rational, if not the irrational. This shift allows for an unexpected proximity even to the medieval cosmological system of the *Divine Comedy*. The aim of Stilling's 'Kantian' segment in his second work is to limit superstition and exaggerated fantasy; the aim of his use of visions, on the other hand, is the attempt to grasp the realm of the incomprehensible – in the Romantic sense – through the proximity of the Bible.

A few examples may serve to illustrate the similarities and differences between Stilling's and Dante's models of vision and their theological implications. First, for Stilling the element in which the spirits live, and act is the ether (Jung-Stilling 1808/1987: 345, V, § 30). For Dante, on the other hand, as we have seen, there are three clearly distinct topographical worlds. As far as the 'damned souls' are concerned: the abode of fallen angels and souls who have died without repentance is, according to Stilling, the atmosphere surrounding the earth up to the centre of the earth, a place defined in the Bible as Sheol and Hades[19] (ibid.). According to Stilling, evil spirits will be cast into the great abyss at the centre of the earth (ibid.: 345, V, § 31). This bears a clear resemblance to Dante's depiction.

For Stilling the souls that have devoted themselves only to the pleasures of the flesh will remain attached to the flesh (ibid.: 346, V, § 34). On this point, too, there is a close resemblance to Dante, who describes a whirlwind by which the lustful, including the famous lovers, Paolo and Francesca, are swept away just as they were swept away by their passions in life. William Blake made an illustration of this whole episode but altered it: "Blake shows them reunited in love, as are Francesca and Paolo in the sun above Virgil, having found salvation in the reenactment of their first kiss […]. This is a typical 'correction' of Dante, whose orthodox correction of sin, particularly when that sin arose from unnatural restraint, was abhorrent to Blake" (Butlin 1978: 149; see above fig. 9.1).

For Stilling the souls of the godless will be surrounded by evil spirits, who will torment them in various ways; the more godless they have been, the deeper they will plunge into the abyss (Jung-Stilling 1808/1987: 346, V, § 37). Here, too, the similarity with various cantos of Dante's Hell is obvious. For example, in If. XXI, the demons torment the damned immersed in boiling pitch. According to Stilling the real damnation begins only with the resurrection; and the whole man (flesh and soul) will be cast with all the evil spirits into the abyss, the centre of which is a furnace of fire and pitch, which lies in the centre of the earth (ibid.: 352, V, § 55). On this point, too, there is an affinity with Dante, who on many occasions

[19] The Hebrew word 'sheol' occurs 66 times in the Hebrew bible and refers to the underworld. Examples for occurrences are Genesis 37:35, 1. Samuel 2:6 and Job 17:16. The Hebrew word 'sheol' is translated with 'hades' in the Septuaginta. For examples see Isaiah 14:11, Matthew 11:23 and Luke 10:15.

alludes to the future final judgment of souls (e.g. Alighieri 1960, Inferno, VII: 466, vv. 55–57).

As for the imperfect souls, according to Stilling, the souls of all those who, *without* being true Christians, were only good or even excellent citizens, must suffer the lack of what was dear to them during a long sojourn in Hades, until they are purified and can reach the lowest degree of bliss (Jung-Stilling 1808/1987: 346, V, § 35). This idea of the purification of souls can also be found in Dante (e.g. Alighieri 1960, Purgatorio, XXIII: 642, vv. 64–75).

As for the blessed souls, according to Stilling the souls who have fallen asleep in the true faith in Jesus Christ and in his reconciling grace, are directly led by angels to the pure regions of light (Jung-Stilling 1808/1987: 346, V, § 36). Dante's *Paradi*se is characterised throughout by the element of light (e.g. Alighieri 1960, Paradiso, I: 682, vv. 61–63; ibid. XXIII: 760, vv. 28–33; ibid. XXX: 785, vv. 61–64). According to Stilling after the resurrection of the body, true happiness begins, the body receives its transfiguration and is united with the soul, and man is ready for the transfigured world of the senses and the world of the spirits. Similar ideas can be found in Dante (ibid.: XIV, 43–48).

4 Conclusion

The comparison of Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling's writings *Scenen aus dem Geisterreich,* and *Theorie der Geisterkunde* as lay theological publications, with Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy* reveals unexpected convergences regarding the development of ideas about the afterlife. Although these comparisons do not suggest a direct derivation from one another, they highlight a similarity in intent and the common use of the Bible as an authoritative source. For Dante, the Christian framework integrates not only biblical texts but also other sources of inspiration explicitly acknowledged. To define William Blake's position, as Anthony Blunt has noted, "Blake's religion may have had many elements which are technically speaking heretical, but his passionate belief in the Gospel of Christ was one of the most constant factors in his whole intellectual development" (Butlin 1957: 14). For Stilling, on the other hand, the primacy of Holy Scripture is nominally absolute, yet in fact he also makes use of alternative bodies of knowledge, such as ideas of a Hades (which as a term originates from pagan antiquity) akin to the Catholic tradition of purgatory as a place of purification of souls after death, as well as to spiritualist traditions.

This analysis began by questioning whether it is appropriate to place the popular theologian Jung-Stilling in the interdisciplinary and international context of literature and the visual arts, comparing him in an apparently heterogeneous way with artists, works and texts of canonical relevance. In our view, the comparison between popular culture and high culture remains relevant in that it allows us to understand how, with regard to the transition from the 18th to the 19th centuries, questions that were common could find answers that were indeed different – those of Stilling and Blake, for example – but necessary to continue the cultural journey.

As far as interdenominationalism in Europe is concerned, it was precisely art and literature that made it possible to communicate and transfer innovations across centuries and denominations. For example, the concept of the poet as a seer (Vate), originally of classical origin, which Dante had revived with the *Commedia*, was embraced by Milton and Klopstock within their own poetics and their national cultures, so that when Stilling wrote visions of the afterlife, his work cannot be said to be divorced from the reflections that preceded him. One must simply postulate a communication between the works of canonical culture and those of popular culture.

Even regarding the conflicts of our three authors with the "official" culture of their time, it seems that we can bypass the barriers between canonical authors and those of popular culture. In the specific case of Dante's conflict with the Catholic hierarchy of his time, the criticism of the customs practised by the clergy could not be fiercer, even though Dante never questions the legitimacy of the Church of Rome per se. In fact, Dante wished for a great internal reformation of the Church, and often pointed out the dangers of its loss of independence due to its moral weakness and obsequiousness towards the leading political powers. Furthermore, Dante demands a reform that revalues interiority at the expense of formalisms.[20] Moreover, despite his theological and philosophical studies, Dante was a married layman. Hence, Dante positions himself towards a 'reformed' Christianity, thus opening towards the Modern Age.

William Blake, to use Anthony Blunt's words, was vehemently opposed to the "uninspired Anglicanism of his day" (Butlin 1957: 10) and opposed it with a very personal, anarchic Christianity. Interestingly, Blake made two splendid illustrations of Beatrice in his cycle of Dante drawings on the

[20] Eternal damnation is possible for Dante, in spite of the absolution of the Church; and eternal salvation is possible, even when the Church is unaware of it (Folliero-Metz 2021b).

chariot of the Church and the subsequent monstrous transformation of the chariot and its occupant but made it clear that the Church as an ecclesiastical structure could never have been or become anything positive. In the watercolour *The Harlot and the Giant* "Blake implies that perversion of the Church is not just a temporary condition, but one implicit all along" (Butlin 1978: 153). William Blake probably became acquainted with Dante's work through his pre-Romantic fascination with the supra-rational and the ingenious, and he shared with Stilling an interest in the internal reform of the Protestant church of their era, as well as knowledge of authors like Swedenborg.

Dante, Stilling and William Blake, who each saw themselves as prophets for their time, are probably not so far apart in their desire to speak to everyone, i.e., to be popular. Dan Brown has very recently underlined why a writer of high culture like Dante must be considered a 'popular' writer: "The Divine Comedy was written in the vernacular – the language of the people. Even so, it brilliantly fused religion, history, politics, philosophy, and social commentary in a tapestry of fiction that, while erudite, remained wholly accessible to the masses" (Brown 2016: 82f.).

Stilling's influence and popularity probably stem from his ability to reformulate religious practices for those seeking a less dogmatic and more introspective faith, as well as from his efforts to shield popular religiosity from the distortions of superstition. His complex balancing of popular faith with the intellectual reforms of the Enlightenment and the demands of the new, decidedly 'Romantic' age, should therefore be recognised as a notable effort to integrate elements of canonical high culture into the popular sphere. At the same time, he worked to reform established protestant faith by embracing a form of popular piety that diverged from Protestant doctrinal traditions.

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CHAPTER 10

Theological Journals Between Professionalisation and Cooperation: Navigating the High-Low Distinction Between Editorial Boards and Non-academic Contributors in Germany, 1828–1870

Johan C. Smits

1 Introduction

Conflicts between religious authority and the 'laity' are almost a permanent characteristic of any form of religiosity, whether organised or unorganised (Martin 2023). In the 18th and 19th centuries, these conflicts acquired new dimensions with the rise of professionalisation ideals among religious elites (Bos 1999). New among these ideals was the concept of expertise, which introduced an additional high–low distinction: that of the relationship between pastors and other professional religious elites to the intellectual elites, i.e. professors of theology. These professors were also

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V. Albrecht-Birkner, S. Siedek-Strunk (eds.), *Revival Movements as Conflict Agendas of the Popular in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-75117-2_10

involved in profound transformations, as they had to deal with the formation of a distinct academic sphere and debates on the legitimacy of theology as a scholarly discipline.

This chapter explores the dynamics between academic theologians and stakeholders outside academia using the example of theological journals. These journals served as critical arenas for negotiating the high–low distinction, evidencing the growing self-consciousness of academic theology while at the same time bridging the gap between academic theology and the broader public (Ottner 2014: 157–170). On the one hand, theological journals embodied the ideal of professors guiding the clergy and other professional elites and contributed to carving out a distinct academic sphere of debate. On the other hand, the journals relied heavily on their readership, often requiring contributions from them to populate their pages. The editorial processes of the journals show that the distinction between academic and non-academic theology was often something of a balancing act.

In the first section of this chapter, I outline key developments in academic theology and explain their role in prompting academic theologians to seek a professional self-understanding. I also introduce the theological journal as a textual genre. Section 3 is devoted to the dynamics of founding and populating a journal, focussing on the 'high' angle of the high–low distinction, given that editors were generally professors of theology. The following section shifts focus to the 'low' angle by studying three cases of frequent contributors from outside the academic sphere. The fifth section investigates whether the negotiation of the high–low distinction resulted in conflicts. On the basis of the editorial archives of the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, this section aims to reconstruct these negotiations. The chapter ends with a short conclusion.

2 Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Professors

In the period 1820–1870, careers in academic theology generally followed a fixed and rather predictable course (Wischmeyer 2008: 157–204). Full professors were at the pinnacle of the theological faculty hierarchy. During this time, there were usually four to five full professors at any given faculty. Initially, most faculties still adhered to the traditional, hierarchical system with a first, second, third and fourth professor. By the end of this period,

almost every university had established four to five specialised chairs, based on disciplines (Old and New Testament, Systematic Theology, Church History and often Practical Theology). In addition, there were extraordinary professors, often hired for practical reasons, such as a large number of students or to lecture on a specific subdiscipline. At the bottom of the academic hierarchy were unestablished senior lecturers (*Privatdozenten*) and others, like *Repetenten*, as at the Tübinger Stift.

The Napoleonic era had initiated a series of reorganisations in the academic world. Foremost, it had profoundly reshaped the academic landscape (Charle 2004: 33–80). Seven universities had been closed, while others, most notably Bonn and Berlin, had been founded and many others, like Halle university, had undergone dramatic reorganisation. This nationwide overhaul was accompanied by restructuring at the level of individual universities and faculties (Rüegg 2004: 62–72). Berlin University, designed to serve as a model for other universities, was based on a new educational approach developed by academics like Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834) and Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767–1835) (Howard 2006: 130–211). At universities influenced by the Berlin model, the theological faculty, traditionally preeminent, now had to give way to the philosophical faculty, marking a shift in the hierarchy of university disciplines.

It is important to realise that not all universities were able to take advantage of these developments. The disparity in size among German universities is illustrated by the fact that the four largest (Berlin, Halle, Leipzig, and Tübingen) had as many students as the combined total of the eleven smaller ones (Titze 1997: 72). Furthermore, research has demonstrated that some smaller universities, like Gießen, struggled to implement innovations due to limited budgets and traditional methods of recruiting academic staff (Moraw 1984: 47–71).

The identity of academic theology was shaped by two main ideals, each aligning with one aspect of the theological faculty's context. From its position in the university, surrounded by other faculties, academic theology derived an ideal of scholarship. Stimulated by ongoing historicisation, this ideal increasingly emphasised studying religion and faith from a detached and methodologically sound perspective (Zachhuber 2017: 53–71). Although critical approaches did not predominate until after 1870, there was a strong sentiment in favour of a certain degree of academic freedom, unconstrained by ecclesial interests.

At the same time, the theological faculties had a significant bond with the church by training its clergy, and professors were deeply involved in

church activities as well (Wischmeyer 2008: 248–254). For example, some preached or even ministered to congregations, while others participated in church administration, for example through synod or consistory memberships. And, of course, most professors advocated for certain views on church evolution. From their relationship with the church, a portion of the theology professors derived an ideal which defined the role of the professor more in terms of piety and ministry. To these professors, the ideal of theology as a scholarly discipline was secondary to training ministers for spiritual and ecclesiastical leadership (Lee II 2022: 160f.).

Journals

In this dynamic between scholarship and religious authority, the theological journal (Kippenberg 1913) had its place. Periodical publications by professors fall into two categories. The first comprised confessional newspapers (Mehnert 1972; Kantzenbach 1983: 201–209), such as the conservative *Evangelische Kirchenzeitung* (1827–1869) of Ernst Wilhelm Hengstenberg (1802–1869) and the liberal *Allgemeine Kirchenzeitung* (1822–1872), edited by figures like Ernst Zimmermann (1786–1832) and Daniel Schenkel (1813–1885). In the confessional newspaper, the focus was clearly on the current affairs of the church, with limited space for scholarly contributions.

In this chapter, I focus on the second category: the scholarly journal (Schulze 2004: 123–137). Unlike confessional newspapers, scholarly journals featured longer contributions and typically appeared no more than quarterly. Their content was generally of a scholarly nature, with a less immediate connection to ongoing church or societal debates. However, hybrid forms existed, such as the *Deutsche Zeitschrift für christliche Wissenschaft und christliches Leben* (1850–1861), which combined the form of a confessional newspaper with the content of a scholarly journal, and the Erlangen-based *Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche* (1838–1875), which had the layout of a scholarly journal but commonly engaged with contemporary church affairs.

One of the main purposes of theological journals was to disseminate the views of editors and contributors among a particular audience. These journals targeted not only academic theologians but also theologically interested and educated readers, including clergy. However, in terms of subscriptions, theological journals were not very successful. It is quite difficult to reconstruct subscriber numbers, but they were generally modest, leading to the discontinuation of most journals due to insufficient

subscription rates. Even the comparatively popular *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* probably never exceeded a thousand subscribers (Voigt 2006: 26). Correspondences and editorials in the journals studied indicate that readership size was not a major concern, with any mention of it primarily relating to economic considerations and viewed as a matter for the publisher (e.g. letters from Carl Ullmann to Friedrich Lücke, June 9, 1829, and October 17, 1830 [File Ullmann: unpag.]). Conversely, editors prioritised assembling a representative group of collaborators, suggesting that the formation of a group identity was envisioned more through the contributors than the readership.

The launch of a journal typically began with a preliminary advance notice of publication and/or an editorial preface (examples of similar prefaces to ecclesial newspapers can be found in: Mehnert 1972). These programmatic texts expressed high academic standards for the studies to be published.[1] Yet they were often quite vague on the academic qualifications of contributors. Many prefaces employed the term *Theologen*, which, as the prefaces suggested, included both professors and other academic staff, as well as a wider circle interested in theology.[2] The share of laypeople was generally low, as a theological education was seen as a prerequisite for contributing.

Methodology

This chapter presents some results from my research on the formation of nationwide discourse communities in the German-speaking world during the period 1820–1870. My research focused on journals founded with the intention of creating a scholarly community which transcended state borders, state churches and individual faculties. In this context, journals were

[1] As far as I am aware, only the announcement of the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* has been preserved: Gieseler, Johann Carl Ludwig et al., 1.6.1827. *Ankündigung. Theologische Studien und Kritiken. Eine Zeitschrift für das gesamte Gebiet der Theologie, in Verbindung mit D. Gieseler, D. Lücke und D. Nitzsch herausgegeben von D. C. Ullmann und D. F.W.C. Umbreit, Professoren an der Universität zu Heidelberg* (File Ullmann: unpag.).

[2] "[…] to invite all those theologians of our church to join us who, with the freest diversity of gifts and views, are happy to unite with us in that fundamental theological confession" (ibid.: [3], all German quotations are translated to English by Marie Briese); "[…] Theologians, i.e. those who are able and called to cultivate the scientific understanding of the Christian religion […]" (Müller et al. 1850: 2); " [...] many of our theological contemporaries who are interested in the continuation and flourishing of a German theology" (Dorner 1856: 47).

part of a larger movement, which, for the Protestant religious community, also included associations. It should be noted, however, that some journals merely served to unify an already existing community, such as the clergy of a specific state church or individuals associated with a specific faculty. Similarly, other journal initiatives aimed at attracting contributors from outside the immediate sphere of the founders but failed to do so. These two categories of journals have been excluded from the study.

To explore the formation of communities through journals my research has employed tools from social network analysis.[3] Social network analysis offers both a paradigm and a set of tools for examining relational data. In my doctoral research, I compiled a database cataloguing participation across various institutions. This database was analysed and visualised using the digital tool Gephi (Bastian et al. 2009; van Geenen 2020). From this database, a visualisation was produced to display the authorship within the three journals studied, e.g. the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken,* the *Deutsche Zeitschrift für christliche Wissenschaft und christliches Leben*, and the *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie*. This graphical representation covers the period from 1850, marking the inception of the second journal, to the foundation of the empire.

The visualisation in Fig. 10.1 illustrates the extent of overlap in authorship among the journals. The algorithm employed arranges the journals proportionally based on the number of shared versus unique authors. Journals with more authors in common are placed closer together. Conversely, authors who exclusively published in one journal push that journal to the periphery of the visualisation. The 'clouds' at the edges give some indication of the number of contributors unique to the journal in question. The names of contributors to multiple journals are highlighted, with theologians in italics and other contributors in regular font. The position of individual authors indicates their association with the journals: some were closely aligned with one specific journal, contributing to others only sporadically, while others were somewhere in between, publishing across different journals.

[3] For a theoretical perspective, see Knox et al. (2006), Ahnert et al. (2022); on a practical level, Barabási (2016) serves as a good introduction; much more elaborate is Scott and Carrington (2014).

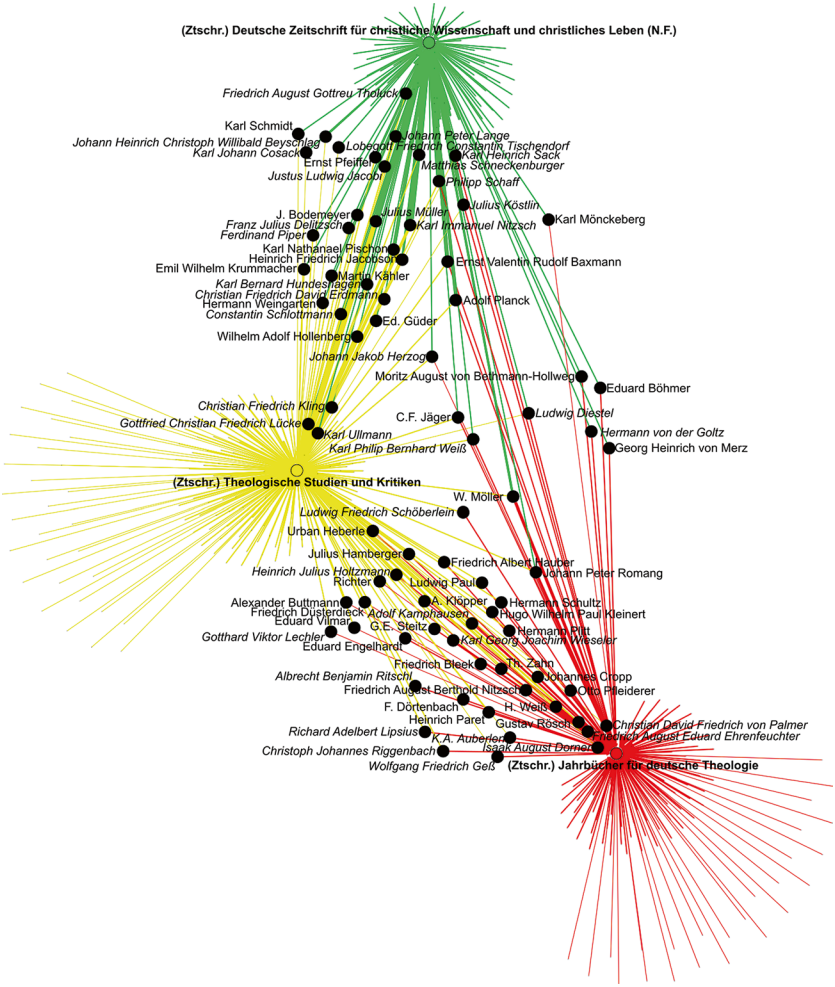


Fig. 10.1 Network of Journals (1850–1870) by Johan Smits. Organisations are highlighted in large font. Contributors connected to more than one journal are clearly labelled and made visible, with professors' names in italic script. Settings include a dynamic range from 1850 to 1870 and the use of ForceAtlas2/label adjust algorithms for layout. Readability has been manually enhanced

3 Founding and Filling: The Dynamics of Leading a Journal

Theologische Studien und Kritiken

The *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* (1828–1947), the first journal to be discussed, was founded relatively early, at a time when cross-state initiatives were quite rare. Initiated by a collective of junior professors, the journal was driven by the ideal of mediating theology (*Vermittlungstheologie*) (see Voigt 2006: 22–26 for an introduction). It focussed on disseminating original research, with book reviews forming a smaller segment of its content.

Over its years of publication, the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* attracted a relatively large number of contributions from theology professors. This appeal to professors might be attributed to the composition of the editorial board, which consisted of five professors who were active at major German universities: Bonn, Heidelberg and Göttingen (and Halle) (Fig. 10.2). In addition to the considerable professorial input, the journal also included work by other 'theologians'. These other 'theologians' were a diverse group, which consisted of local pastors, scholars affiliated with non-academic institutions such as lower educational institutes, and university candidates and lecturers.

There is evidence to suggest that the inclusion of contributions from non-academic 'theologians' was a deliberate choice by the editorial boards. A significant piece of evidence supporting this theory is a document from the estate of Carl Ullmann (1796–1865), preserved at Heidelberg University. This collection contains extensive material related to the preparation of the journal's inaugural issue. One of the most interesting documents for our current purposes is a draft list of potential contributors (Carl Ullmann, Vorzuschlagende Mitarbeiter [Ullmann Notes and Lists: 1f.]), which probably served as input for an editorial meeting held to plan the publication of the journal's first issue (Christophersen 1999: 179–191). It consisted of suggestions for future contributors, which were probably scrutinised at this meeting, as suggested by the aforementioned notes, and of a list of scholars who had already been invited or had agreed to contribute. Examination of the estates of Friedrich Lücke (1791–1855) (Göttingen City Archive) and Ullmann (Heidelberg University Library) reveals that names added in pencil denote the editor responsible for sending invitations to contribute to the journal.

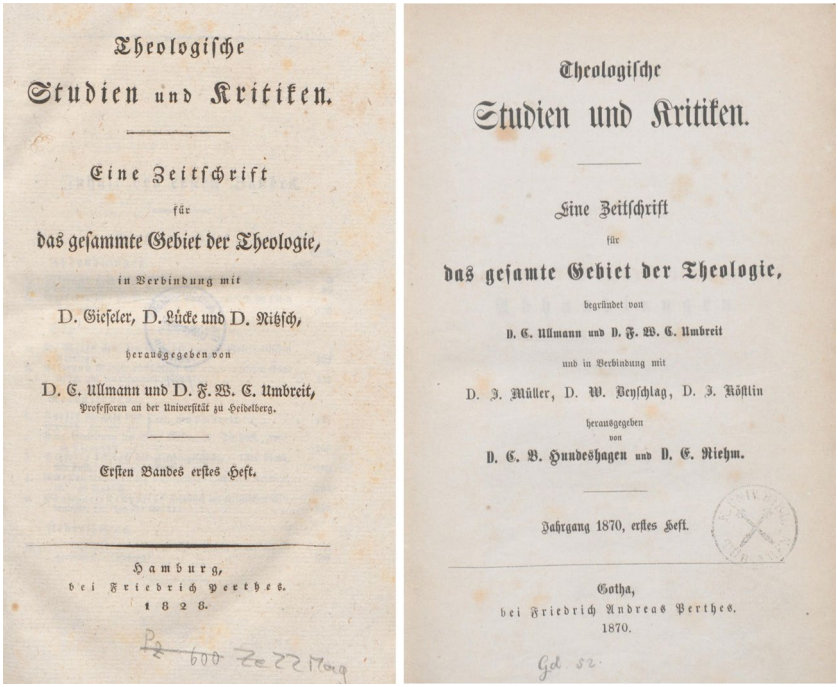


Fig. 10.2 Front pages of the first issues of 1828 and 1870 of the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* (Bavarian State Library, Munich Digitisation Centre, Digital Library). The covers indicate the members of the editorial board and collaborators. In 1870, a completely new editorial board and group of collaborators had been formed, as all original founders had died

Out of the 66 individuals likely approached for a contribution, 14 did not hold an academic position at the time. Among them were a number of pastors, a few junior scholars and some teachers or directors at seminaries dedicated to pastor education. The observation that six out of the eleven proposed contributors who were erased from the list were non-academic theologians suggests that the editors scrutinised this group more critically when considering contributions to the journal.

In the literature, the *Theologische Studien and Kritiken* is often described as the primary organ of a distinct school of mediating theology (Holte 1965: 9). The Heidelberg wish list for potential contributors reveals a

vision for the journal not only to unite a 'middle group' but also to serve as a conduit between opposing theological perspectives. Included were rationalist theologians, like David Schulz (1779–1854) and Wilhelm Gesenius (1786–1842), their confessional opponents, like August Hahn (1792–1863) and Heinrich Guericke (1803–1878) and supernaturalists, like Friedrich Steudel (1779–1837).

The 1850s

The 1850s, buoyed by greater freedom of the press, witnessed the foundation of a number of journals. Of particular interest are two of these that were related to the project of mediating theology. From the outset, the *Deutsche Zeitschrift für christliche Wissenschaft und christliches Leben* emerged as a distinctly Prussian endeavour (Aubert 2023: 586f.). Compared to the other journals under survey, there are few surviving sources detailing the publication process of this journal. Its editors were all affiliated with Prussian universities, and the vast majority of contributors also hailed from Prussian backgrounds (Fig. 10.3).

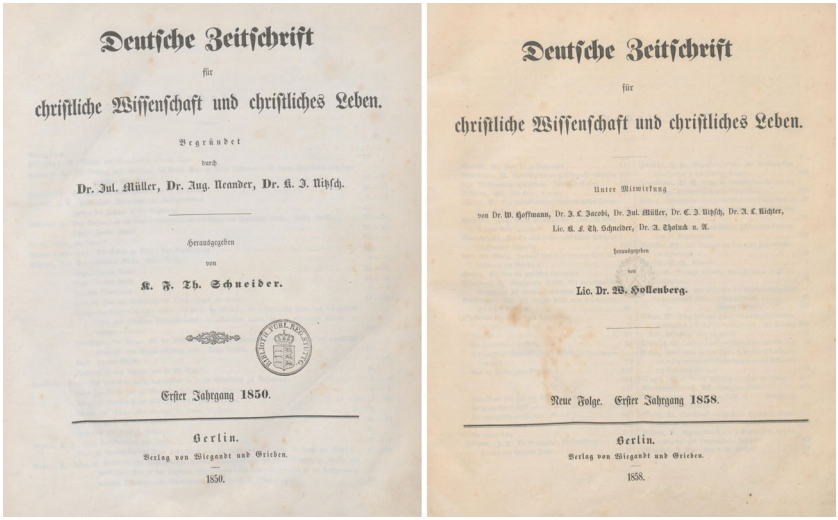

Deutsche Zeitschrift
für
christliche Wissenschaft und christliches Leben.
Begründet
durch
Dr. Jul. Müller, Dr. Aug. Neander, Dr. K. J. Nitzsch.
Herausgegeben
von
K. F. Th. Schneider.
Erster Jahrgang 1850.
Berlin.
Verlag von Wiegandt und Grieben.
1850.
Deutsche Zeitschrift
für
christliche Wissenschaft und christliches Leben.
Unter Mitwirkung
von Dr. W. Hoffmann, Dr. J. C. Jacobi, Dr. Jul. Müller, Dr. C. J. Nitzsch, Dr. A. C. Richter,
Lic. K. F. Th. Schneider, Dr. A. Tholuck u. A.
herausgegeben
von
Lic. Dr. W. Hollenberg.
Neue Folge. Erster Jahrgang 1858.
Berlin.
Verlag von Wiegandt und Grieben.
1858.

Fig. 10.3 Front pages of the first issues of 1850 and 1858 (Neue Folge) of the Deutsche Zeitschrift für christliche Wissenschaft und christliches Leben (Project Theologie Digital, UB Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen)

In contrast to the other journals, the identity of the *Deutsche Zeitschrift* was shaped primarily by a religious program. The journal's mission was based on an observed conflict between negation and positive faith,[4] arguing that only a "progressively conservative direction", inspired by Schleiermacher's view of the relationship between religion and theology, could offer a way out of this conflict (Müller et al. 1850: 2). The journal's first chief editor, lecturer Karl Friedrich Theodor Schneider (1821–1895), stated that the journal should be assessed on the basis of its adherence to both evangelical and academic rigour (Schneider 1850: 2). This prioritisation influenced the journal's contributors, attracting a large number of clergymen. Contributions from theology professors, other than the editors and their immediate colleagues, were notably sparse.

The *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie* (1856–1878) were driven by a different motivation, namely to promote the scholarly rejuvenation of theology, aiming for a uniquely German synthesis of spirituality and scholarly tradition (Dorner 1856). However, this journal, too, was influenced by the ecclesiastical political conflicts of the day. An important piece of evidence for this is provided by a letter from one of the journal's founders, Isaac August Dorner (1809–1884) to his Danish friend Hans Lassen Martensen (1808–1884), whom he hoped to convince to participate in the project. This letter presents the foundational vision of the journal:

> The foundation of a Scholarly Journal for the Doctrine and Life of the Church, especially of the Lutheran Regional Churches' would be the most powerful intervention here. I am confidentially informing you that the foundation of such a journal is being considered. The idea is this: in order for its dogmatic tone to be immediately apparent, you, the present *Oberhofprediger* and *Oberconsistorialdirector* Liebner and I would have to lend your name and give your support. The names of other collaborators could also be included. From here, for example, Ehrenfeuchter, Uhlhorn, Schöberlein, Duncker, Köstlin and others. From Württemberg it would probably also be possible to recruit a number of capable co-workers in our spirit. Similarly from other Lutheran regional churches, e.g. Ackermann from Meiningen, Ohl in Mecklenburg-Strelitz, etc. The journal would be opposed to a narrow-minded Lutheranism as well as a unionism without history, but would have to serve the development and strengthening of Lutheran individuality in the spirit of true catholicity.

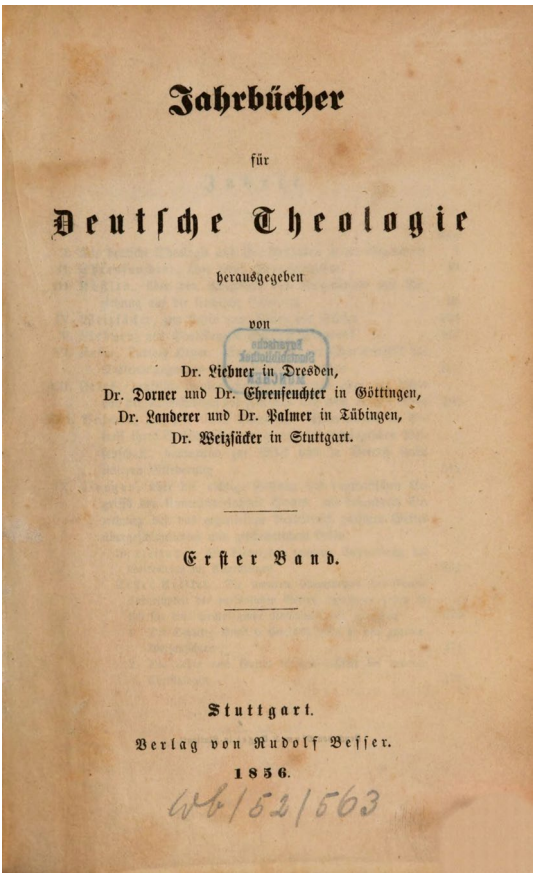
[4] According to Leopold Witte, this threat was the rise of Lutheran confessionalism in the Prussian state church. See Witte (1886: 449).

> It would not get involved in daily ecclesiastical disputes, where so many impure and personal matters interfere, but would, if necessary, discuss practical questions only from a strict theological point of view. It would also have to set an example for a nobler tone of polemics than that which is now often used.
>
> (Letter from Isaac Dorner to Hans Lassen Martensen, October 16, 1888 [Dorner and Martensen 1888: 255f.])

This initial plan for what would later be the *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie* positioned it uniquely at the intersection between theology and ecclesial practice. Central to achieving this intermediary stance was the composition of the editorial team, as the three proposed editors – Dorner, Martensen and Carl Theodor Albert Liebner (1806–1871) – were engaged both in church administration and academia (Fig. 10.4). Liebner and Martensen transitioned from professorships to posts in church administration, whereas Dorner, while a professor, also participated in the state consistory of Hannover. Among the proposed collaborators were scholars – Dorner mentioned five of his colleagues from the university of Göttingen – but also high-ranking church administrators without actual connection to academic life, such as Constantin Ackermann (1799–1877) and Hermann Lebrecht Ohl (1806–1885).

Dorner's initial plan failed, as Martensen and most church administrators declined involvement. In the end, the journal was launched in 1856 with an editorial board comprising four professors and only two church administrators, Liebner and Carl Heinrich Weizsäcker (1822–1899), the latter of whom would, however, also obtain a professorship in 1861. Despite these setbacks, Dorner and Liebner managed to achieve a level of success in representing the major Lutheran states. At its inception, the journal boasted editors from Hannover, Saxony, and Württemberg, reflecting a broad regional involvement. Nonetheless, contributions from smaller states lacking their own universities, such as Meiningen and Mecklenburg-Strelitz, were sporadic, limiting the journal's scope to the more significant academic centres.

In its early stages, the title of the journal was envisioned to cover both practical and academic concerns, similar to the *Deutsche Zeitschrift für christliche Wissenschaft und christliches Leben*. However, the mention of Lutheranism and unionism indicates that the journal's creators did not intend to completely overlook the church-political landscape. A notable piece of evidence regarding the journal's ecclesiastical political role is a


Jahrbücher

für

Deutsche Theologie

herausgegeben

von

Dr. Liebner in Dresden,
Dr. Dorner und Dr. Ehrenfeuchter in Göttingen,
Dr. Landerer und Dr. Palmer in Tübingen,
Dr. Weizsäcker in Stuttgart.

Erster Band.

Stuttgart.
Verlag von Rudolf Besser.
1856.

Fig. 10.4 Cover of the first issue of the 1858 volume of the *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie* (Bavarian State Library, Munich Digitisation Centre, Digital Library)

letter from Dorner to Carl Ullmann. In this correspondence, Dorner intended to inform Ullmann and Friedrich Wilhelm Karl Umbreit (1795–1860), the chief editors of the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, about their plans for launching a new journal (Letter from Dorner to Ullmann, April 10, 1856 [Letters from Dorner to Ullmann 1837–1858: 28]). By this point, the original idea of a mixed editorial board had already been abandoned in favour of a predominantly academic one. Despite this shift, Dorner still emphasised the journal's church-political objectives, expressing hope that it would rally moderate Lutherans and Lutheran

state churches around a centrist stance, thereby avoiding more radical forms of neo-Lutheranism.

Both the *Deutsche Zeitschrift* and the *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie* relied heavily on the personal networks of their editors for contributions. The *Jahrbücher*, for example, served as an important platform for publications by the *Repetenten* of the Tübinger Stift, with fifteen of these junior researchers publishing at least one article in the journal over the years. Similarly, the *Deutsche Zeitschrift* saw many contributions from Berlin, often from non-academic or junior scholars. Notably, *Privatdozent* Karl Friedrich Theodor Schneider and *Gymnasiallehrer* Wilhelm Adolf Hollenberg (1824–1899), who also served as editors, were frequent contributors. In addition, a number of Berlin pastors from Berlin were involved, such as Hermann Krummacher (1828–1890) and Friedrich Gustav Lisco (1791–1866). Thus, despite their ambitions for a 'national' reach, these journals mirrored the more localised journals of faculties in that their contributors predominantly came from specific, rather narrow geographical areas.

It is difficult to assess the extent to which the increased 'border-crossing' between church and academia in the 1850s was a deliberate attempt to integrate non-academic scholars into theological discussions. It is clear, however, that the both the *Deutsche Zeitschrift* and the *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie* were more closely associated with the German Revival Movement (*Erweckungsbewegung*) than the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*. The editorial board of the *Deutsche Zeitschrift* included two prominent representatives of the Revival, August Neander (1789–1850) and Julius Müller (1801–1878), with Friedrich August Gotttreu Tholuck (1799–1877) joining in 1858. Although the editors of the *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie* were not directly involved in the Revival, the journal was nonetheless linked to the movement through the involvement of Julius Müller. Letters by Dorner and the journal's publisher Andreas Perthes (1813–1890) suggest that Müller encouraged the founders to launch the journal (Letter from Perthes to Ullmann, April 29, 1856 [?] [Letters from Perthes to Ullmann 1840–1864: 21]; Letter from Dorner to Ullmann, April 10, 1856 [Letters from Dorner to Ullmann 1837–1858: 28]). The ties of both journals to the German Revival Movement imply that the admission of non-academic scholars to these journals may have been motivated not only by practical concerns, but also by the movement's distinctive views on the relationship between academic theology and lay theology.

4 Understanding the Motives of Non-academic Authors

In this section of the chapter, I discuss three prominent non-academic contributors to the theological journals under survey. Generally, non-academic contributors contributed sporadically, often only once or twice. More consistent contributors usually had some affiliation with a university. In many instances, single or rare contributions from non-academic theologians were based on research conducted during their study periods. In other cases, there was a clear link between the contributors' pastoral or homiletical practices and the research they presented. This section focuses on non-academic theologians who made substantial contributions to journals, using them as a platform for communication with other scholars. The theologians discussed demonstrate that, to a certain degree, the journals offered an opportunity for transcending the high–low distinction between the academy and the church.

Julius Hamberger (1801–1885)

Julius Hamberger was an example of a group of non-academic contributors who pursued very specific research interests (Preger 1886: 780–784). His focus was on theosophical approaches in Christianity, prominently influenced by figures such as Jakob Böhme (1575–1624), Franz von Baader (1765–1841), and Friedrich Christoph Oetinger (1702–1782). In his autobiographical work *Erinnerungen aus meinem Leben*, Hamberger recounted declining a pastoral position not only as a consequence of his wish to continue teaching in Munich but also due to his evolving speculative perspective which closely linked religiosity to nature and history (Hamberger 1883: 26f.). This inclination led him to explore and integrate religious knowledge outside the mainstream Protestant confessional tradition.

Opting against an ecclesial career, Hamberger joined the educational profession. From 1828 to 1884, Hamberger served as a teacher of religious education at the *Cadettencorps* and the royal *Pagerie* in Munich. During this period, he published fifteen books, mostly on speculative theologians of the past. In 1846, he published a small review in the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, which dealt with the similarities between kabbalah and Christian theology (Hamberger 1845). After this first contribution, Hamberger became the standard reviewer for books

from a more theosophical background,[5] though his article contributions remained few, including two concise pieces on Franz von Baader (Hamberger 1852, 1867).

Hamberger's activity intensified with the launch of the *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie*. He published six articles in the journal[6] and, after a few years, also became a dedicated reviewer.[7] Hamberger must have felt a profound connection with this journal, which, as Isaac August Dorner outlined in the opening essay, aligned with the speculative and theosophical sources which Hamberger was so devoted to.[8] In addition, Hamberger corresponded with Martensen and Friedrich Ehrenfeuchter (1814–1878), who were not only representatives of a more speculative approach to theology but also involved in the foundation of the journal (Hamberger 1883: 74).

Georg Eduard Steitz (1810–1879)

Georg Eduard Steitz pursued a more standard career path after completing his theological studies, becoming a pastor in his hometown of Frankfurt am Main (Dechent 1884, 1893). Steitz was already in his late forties when he began publishing, coinciding with the establishment of the *Verein für Geschichte und Alterthumskunde* in Frankfurt am Main. He joined this historical society upon its founding in 1856 and actively participated in its meetings (Verein für Geschichte und Altertumskunde 1858/60: 18). Steitz extensively published articles and several books on the religious history of Frankfurt, particularly during the Reformation period.

Steitz also contributed studies on the history of theology and early Christianity to *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* and *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie*.[9] His contributions often touched upon contemporary

[5] Hamberger published reviews in 1846, 1849, 1852, 1853, 1855, 1859, 1860, 1861, 1865 and 1873.

[6] In 1858, 1860, 1862 and 1863, and two articles in 1867.

[7] He published reviews in 1865, 1867 (5), 1868 (4), 1869 (4) and 1870 (3).

[8] Dorner mentioned Oetinger (Dorner 1856: 15, 27–28), Böhme (ibid.: 27), and Friedrich Willhelm Joseph Schelling (ibid.: 28f.).

[9] Steitz published one article in the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* each in 1856, 1861, 1866 and 1869, and two articles each in 1857, 1859 and 1868; reviews by Steitz were published in 1859 and 1867. In the *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie* were one article each published by Steitz in 1861, 1863, 1866, 1867 and 1869, two articles in 1864, 1865 and 1868, and reviews in 1862, 1864, 1868 and 1870.

ecclesial and theological concerns. His focus on the authenticity of the Johannine Gospel, for example, was a response to the Tübingen school (Dechent 1884: 669f.). It seems, however, that an important stimulus for his research came from his polemical encounters with Jesuit missionaries in 1852. These missionaries stressed the importance of confession of sins, which Steitz countered by minimising its significance (Steitz 1853). This polemical exchange prompted Steitz to undertake a historical analysis of confession practices in early Christianity.

This debate took place in the local context of Steitz's work as a Frankfurt pastor. In the years to follow, however, the themes of this controversy would also shape his research agenda. In the diverse journals, but also in the *Real-Encyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche* (Verzeichnis 1888: 744), Steitz focussed on contemporary and past debates between Protestants and Catholics, with a particular focus on the development of Christian thinking on the eucharist. In an extraordinarily lengthy series of articles in the *Jahrbücher*, based on the conviction that the history of doctrine should be neutral, Steitz argued that transubstantiation was not a historical element of Greek orthodox thinking on the eucharist (Steitz 1864: 409–412).[10] On the whole, Steitz's publishing activity across various journals and other publications seems to have been driven by concerns stemming from his practical church activities. While this motive for journal participation was not unusual, it rarely led to a coherent research program as it did in Steitz's case.

Ernst Valentin Rudolf Baxmann (1832–1869)

Rudolf Baxmann, whose life trajectory illustrates the struggles faced by aspiring academics who often did not secure a permanent place within academic ranks, is a poignant example of this class (Kamphausen 1875). After studying theology in Berlin, Baxmann held various positions, including tutor, clergyman at the Wittenberg seminar, and preacher for the German legation in Lisbon. In 1862, he took on the role of inspector at the Evangelisches Stift in Bonn, a facility associated with the theological faculty dedicated to assisting students who had faltered in their academic pursuits for various reasons. Life in Bonn proved challenging for Baxmann; his salary was insufficient, compelling him to undertake a variety of

[10] The article was continued in the issues of the *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie* 1865: 64–152, 193–253; 1866: 193–253; 1867: 211–286, and 1868: 3–66, 649–700.

additional educational roles, and he faced notoriously poor hygienic conditions at the seminary. These adverse circumstances eventually contributed to his premature death at the age of 37 in 1869 (Rüterswörden 2018: 130f.).

Baxmann's entry in the *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie* lists eight journals to which Baxmann contributed over the years. Among them were contributions to the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*,[11] to the *Deutsche Zeitschrift*,[12] and to the *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie*.[13] His articles covered broad sections of the theological discipline, including contributions to Old Testament Studies, Church History and Practical Theology. The diversity of themes and journals to which he contributed makes it difficult to characterise Baxmann's precise intentions as an author. However, it is likely that his prolific writing was motivated by the hope of enhancing his academic standing. Although there are instances of non-academic contributors achieving academic recognition, such as Gotthard Victor Lechler (1811–1888) who became a full professor in Leipzig at the age of 47, these cases are exceptions (Ficker 1906). Unfortunately, Baxmann's extensive publishing efforts were insufficient to overcome his reputation as a less effective teacher (Rüterswörden 2018: 126).

5 Conflict or Cooperation?

The contributions to this volume explore the question as to whether the various negotiations of the high–low distinction were accompanied by friction between high and low. As demonstrated in the section concerning the considerations of journals' editorial boards, the boundary between academic and non-academic scholars was not impenetrable. There was a noticeable openness on the part of these boards to consider contributions from scholars outside the theological faculties. However, a deeper understanding of the interactions between academic and non-academic actors around these journals is significantly hampered by the scarcity of sources detailing the editorial board processes. For journals like the *Deutsche Zeitschrift* and the *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie*, there are no substantial records that shed light on the workings of their editorial boards. In

[11] One article each in 1863 and 1867, two articles in 1869.

[12] One contribution each in 1857 and 1858; three contributions each in 1856, 1859, 1860 and 1861.

[13] One contribution each in 1859, 1860, 1863 and 1867.

contrast, the situation with *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* is different; the academic estates of Carl Ullmann and Friedrich Lücke provide extensive documentation of the deliberations and discussions within its editorial board.

On the subject, the estates contain both correspondences between different editors and between editors and contributors. It should be noted that these correspondences also provide a fragmentary and incomplete view of the editorial boards' proceedings; conscious and unconscious selection processes have impacted the current content of the estates. Nevertheless, the documents that are preserved allow us to make some observations on the ways in which the high–low distinction was negotiated within the board and between board members and contributors.

Firstly, there was an awareness of hierarchy impacting the relationships between the editorial board and non-academic contributors. This is evident from the correspondence between Carl Ullmann and Georg Veesenmeyer (1760–1833), a teacher at the Ulm gymnasium who also engaged actively in authoring works on the history of the Reformation, focusing particularly on manuscripts, early prints, and his hometown of Ulm. When Ullmann invited him to contribute to the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, Veesenmeyer expressed doubts about whether his publications would meet the journal's standards in form and content (Letter from Veesenmeyer to Ullmann, June 21, 1827 [Letters from Veesenmeyer to Ullmann 1827–1832: 1]). Veesenmeyer stated emphatically that his reservations stemmed not from false modesty, but from a genuine awareness of his own limitations. To ward off potential criticism of his modest contribution, Veesenmeyer requested that Ullmann introduce (and thus sanction) his article with a recommendation, to which Ullmann agreed, subsequently writing extensive praise of Veesenmeyer's scholarly merits (Ullmann 1828). At the submission of another article, in 1828, Veesenmeyer indicated his openness to receiving feedback from Ullmann on his work (Letter from Veesenmeyer to Ullmann, May 26, 1828 [Letters from Veesenmeyer to Ullmann 1827–1832: 5]).

A second significant observation concerns the selection of articles for the journal. Over the years, as the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* grew in popularity and faced a surplus of submissions, the editorial process included 'peer-reviewing' doubtful contributions, especially when questions arose about the quality of research or articles. Ullmann would often forward the proposed contributions to a board member specialising in the relevant field. For instance, the estate of Friedrich Lücke contains various

letters requesting a 'peer review' of articles on New Testament studies. These correspondences highlight the application of rigorous academic standards to evaluate contributions. In one specific instance, Ullmann critiqued an overview of recent publications on the New Testament as immature and inadequate for acquainting readers with the discussed books (Letter from Ullmann to Lücke, October 30, 1840 [File Ullman: unpag.]). He also noted the article's lack of a scholarly (*wissenschaftlich*) foundation and attitude. Other feedback on submissions often included more concise and more general comments, typically concerning length and cohesiveness of the argument (Letters from Ullmann to Lücke, June 9, 1829, and January 14, 1835 [ibid.]).

Thirdly, there is evidence to suggest that the editorial criteria were applied selectively, often to the disadvantage of non-academic scholars. The vast majority of the 'peer-review' cases documented in the letters from Ullman to Lücke concerned contributors from outside the university. Although these criteria, such as the length of the contribution, were regularly brought to the attention of the contributors, they were seldom used to criticise professors. In the case of an excessively lengthy article by Bonn professor Karl Heinrich Sack (1789–1875), the board eventually accepted the article following Sack's refusal to shorten it. In contrast, the contributions from non-academic outsiders could even be rewritten by the editorial board. The correspondence between Lücke and Ullmann records three cases of this practice (Letters from Ullmann to Lücke, June 9, 1829; October 10, 1831; October 30, 1840 [ibid.]). In all these cases, Lücke probably knew the authors, leading Ullmann to assume that the authors would probably agree to the suggested changes to their submissions. These observations testify to an editorial practice that reinforced the existing barriers between academic and non-academic scholarship.

Fourthly, an exchange between Umbreit and Ullmann regarding an article by a clergyman, C. Schaubach from Meiningen,[14] conveys the impression that non-academic scholars were not perceived as a homogeneous group by the editorial board. Umbreit, who raised the matter in 1830, was not completely impartial, as he had studied together with the superintendent in question. He emphatically argued that pastors and superintendents should not be excluded from the journal (Letter from Umbreit to Ullmann, June 20, 1830 [Letters from Umbreit to Ullmann 1829–1854: 7]). Almost a year later, Umbreit wrote that he had received

[14] The article concerned is probably Schaubach (1831).

the essay and that he favoured its publication, praising the author as embodying the ideal of any pastor and thus deserving inclusion in the journal (Letter from Umbreit to Ullmann, April 29, 1831 [ibid.: 10]). The effort Umbreit expended to argue for the inclusion of contributions from lower clergy indicates that such inclusivity was not a foregone conclusion. In a subsequent letter, Umbreit reports receiving a concerned comment on the scholarly character of the journal from the journal's publisher, Friedrich Perthes (1772–1843) (Letter from Umbreit to Ullmann, July, 20, 1831 [ibid.: 11]). Although this letter did not explicitly mention the Schaubach case, it suggests that Perthes (and probably co-editor Nitzsch) believed that the inclusion of articles by friends and associates might undermine the consistent application of scholarly standards.

This remark ties in with another, final observation on the editorial proceedings of the journal. The correspondences show that the journal navigated between the opposing interests of offering a platform for publications by diverse kinds of scholars and of acting as a mouthpiece for the editorial board. It appears that Ullmann in particular was keen on ensuring that the journal offered a comprehensive perspective on theological developments and publications. For Ullmann, the original editors of the journal were critical in achieving this, as their combined expertise spanned the full breadth of theological disciplines. However, as the editors were not always fully focussed on the journal, Ullmann frequently called for closer cooperation from those 'on the frontpage' (Letters from Ullmann to Lücke December 26, 1829; October 10, 1831; May 9, 1842 [File Ullmann: unpag.]). The ideal of a journal which covered and commented on current developments in theology favoured, sometimes even explicitly, contributions by scholars with a senior position at the universities. Although this ideal could never be achieved fully, it shows that, for the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, the inclusion of non-academic authors was not so much a matter of principle as well as good means for making up for the lack of submissions.

As mentioned above, documentation is lacking for the editorial proceedings of the other two journals, leading to some conjecture about their editorial stances. The *Deutsche Zeitschrift*, for instance, already distanced itself somewhat from the university environment by not exclusively focusing on Christian scholarship but also on Christian life. In a letter to Lücke, Ullmann saw this journal, which he referred to as the "Berlin journal," as posing only a limited threat to the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* because it targeted a 'non-theological' audience, whereas the 'academic

circles' would continue to be served by *Theologische Studien und Kritiken* (Letter from Ullmann to Lücke, January 24, 1850 [ibid.]).

In contrast, the founding of the *Jahrbücher für deutsche Theologie* could be construed as an infringement on the hegemony of the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, as the then-publisher of the journal did (Letter from Perthes to Ullmann April 29, 1856 [?] [Letters from Perthes to Ullmann 1840–1864: 21]). While both journals shared academic characteristics and aimed to represent a moderate stance in theological and ecclesiastical-political debates, the *Jahrbücher* never quite achieved the status and influence of the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*. The senior scholars who edited the *Jahrbücher* were often too preoccupied to contribute significantly or use the journal as a platform for their own perspectives. Furthermore, the journal's specific focus on Systematic Theology and the study of traditional sources necessitated the involvement of non-academic enthusiasts who were deeply engaged with these specialised fields.

6 Conclusion

Like many other disciplines, academic theology underwent a process of professionalisation over the nineteenth century. The foundation of theological journals adhering to high academic standards was part of this process. At the same time, professionalisation did not exclude the involvement of non-academic theologians in these journals. In fact, non-academic theologians were explicitly invited to make a contribution to various journals. Especially in the journals established in the 1850s, the inclusion of church representatives was crucial to their identity as a mediator between church and academy.

While most non-academic theologians contributed to these journals only once, a few managed to make significant contributions. The extent of their success in achieving their intentions varied. These journals served as portals into academic discourse, and in some instances, they also offered a measure of recognition.

The final section of the present chapter, drawing on the editorial archives of the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, has elucidated some of the mechanisms that maintained the high–low distinction between the academy and the church through scholarly standards. The archival material generally does not indicate overt conflict between non-academic contributors and academic editors. Nevertheless, it is evident that the inclusion

of non-academic voices was not straightforward, at least in the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*. This emphasis on maintaining a clear distinction between high and low can be understood in the context of the change in the scientific demands on theology in the course of its emergence as an academic discipline.

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CHAPTER 11

Revelation Remix: Using Rapture Novels by *Evangelical Movements* in England and America in the Early 20th Century

Cat Ashton

1 Dispensationalism: A Brief Introduction

Dispensationalism first arose as a hermeneutic among a sect called the *Plymouth Brethren*, led by John Nelson Darby (1800–1882), in the late 1820s and 1830s. In America it became extremely popular, and today aspects of it are incorporated into the dominant American pop culture understanding of the Bible, even in secular contexts (Hankins 2008; Harris 1998; Krapohl and Lippy 1999). Dispensationalism divides time into a number of periods or dispensations – usually seven – that mark different relationships between humans and God. The scheme varies among dispensational thinkers, but this chart from Clarence Larkin is typical (Fig. 11.1).

Apparently contradictory Bible passages, rather than being the product of a multivocal, multilayered text compiled across centuries, apply to

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V. Albrecht-Birkner, S. Siedek-Strunk (eds.), *Revival Movements as Conflict Agendas of the Popular in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-75117-2_11

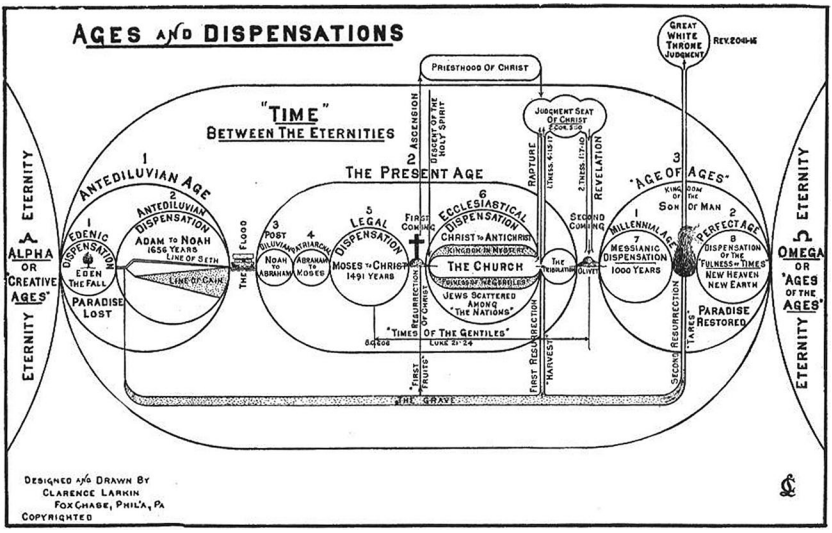


Fig. 11.1 Clarence Larkin's chart showing seven dispensations, from his self-published 1920 book *Rightly Dividing the Word*. Public domain (http://www.clarencelarkincharts.com/Clarence_Larkin_2.html, free to use)

different dispensations. The current dispensation is that of Grace. For nearly two centuries, dispensationalists have been certain that the Rapture is imminent, and the Age of Grace will come to an end at any moment.

At the end of the 19th century, evangelical belief in England and America was changing. Erling Jorstad, in his 1970 book *The Politics of Doomsday*, describes successive small rifts – the teaching of Darwin's Theory of Evolution, the ecumenical movements that led to the establishment of the *National Council of Churches*, and a divergence of approaches to reading the Bible (Jorstad 1970: 19).[1]

Evolution, ecumenism, and Higher (Historical) Criticism of the Bible were embraced by mainline Protestant churches and liberal evangelical churches, but left an increasing number of conservative Christians

[1] The novels I have studied characterize the rift as a modern departure from orthodoxy on the part of mainline Protestants, but in his study E*vangelicalism in Modern Britain*, David Bebbington, himself an evangelical, traces the development of the concept of biblical inerrancy, demonstrating that despite conservative evangelicalism's claim to represent tradition, biblical inerrancy is relatively recent (Bebbington 1989: 183).

concerned that modernizing meant bowing to forces that were not of God. Dispensationalists were among the groups that resisted modernity, as were premillennialists, who believed that Jesus would defeat the Antichrist and reign on Earth for a thousand years before the Final Judgement,[2] and professed a staunch belief that biblical prophecy mentioned America (Boyer 1992: 84f.).[3] Premillennialism and dispensationalism started out as separate movements that were thrown together by a shared sense of alarm over the pace of change in modern life, an interest in the apocalypse, and what they perceived as a mainstream Christian capitulation to secularizing forces, which in their shared interpretive framework were Satanic. They came together as part of the parallel cultural infrastructure that evangelicals were building to resist the forces of modernity. The premillennial dispensationalist (PMD)[4] rearrangement of the Bible creates a new narrative, one that believers claim foretells the future. It has become so prevalent in American culture that PMD interpretations of the *Book of Revelation* dominate even secular understandings of Christian eschatology. The new narrative proceeds thus: The Earth is winding down like a broken clock. Very soon, Jesus is going to return and all the Christian believers still alive will be Raptured, vanishing from the Earth, to be conveyed to Heaven. Those humans left on Earth will be ruled by the Antichrist, who will create a single world government and a single world religion. He makes, and then breaks, a covenant with the restored nation of Israel, and compels all those left alive to take the Mark of the Beast[5] or face death. After seven years of worsening plagues and natural disasters, Christ will return again to pass final judgment, and reign over the Earth for a thousand years.

Liberal evangelical blogger Fred Clark objects to PMD as a hermeneutic on several grounds. It assigns the *Sermon on the Mount*, the focus of Clark's own Christianity, to a future dispensation, that of Christ's millennial reign (Clark 2003b). It takes that multivocal, multilayered sacred text and reduces it primarily to a book of prophecy (Clark 2003c). Finally, it is a hermeneutic that denies its status as a hermeneutic, insisting that the

[2] For these biblical motifs, see John's Apocalypse 20.

[3] The group also included postmillennialists, who argued that Christians themselves were expected to establish Jesus' kingdom on Earth, although postmillennialism accommodated a richer variety of beliefs.

[4] In the following, 'PMD' is used as an abbreviation for both 'premillennial dispensationalism' and 'premillennial dispensationalists'.

[5] For this biblical motif, see John's Apocalypse 13:16.

Bible is literally true, and that PMD, with its elaborate web of cross-references and pages of annotations, is a literal reading of the Bible, clear and intuitive (Clark 2007a).

While PMD enjoyed middling success in England, in America it gained widespread popularity, perhaps due to the country's apocalyptic foundations: the Puritans conceived of their adopted land as the third and final covenant nation, after Israel and England had proven to be faithless (Wilson 1979: 34). This raised the stakes for believers: private faith was private faith, but in order to keep the covenant with God, America must remain a Christian nation. It also meant that from its inception, America was designed to take the world to the end of time.

At the same time, Mark Noll points out, with no established church, churches had to compete in a marketplace of ideas (Noll 1994: 66). Dispensationalism told an oddly compelling, exciting story of the future. Christians would be surrounded on all sides by enemies and yet ultimately triumph, invoking both the martyrs in the early Christian church and America's frontier narrative, in which the most authentic life is one lived in struggle against the threats all around.

Not all of the novels in this chapter come from the same denomination, or share exactly the same theology. Crawford Gribben's *Writing the Rapture* (Gribben 2009) does an excellent job of tracing the backgrounds of the authors and the theological differences between texts. I am concerned with what these six texts, taken together as a body, can tell us about PMD fiction and its engagement with secular culture, and conflicts between high and low culture that are part of the transformations of the popular in the realm of religion.

2 Writing Fiction: Popularising Dispensationalism

Evangelicalism, Gribben writes, has long had an uneasy relationship with fiction, and in the 19th century, "[u]ncertainty about the value of the fictional mode gave way to widespread disapproval of its method and scope" (Gribben 2009: 28), especially among premillennial dispensationalists, who "most vigorously insisted upon separation from the rapidly perishing world" (28). However, by the end of that century, evangelical authors were readily using fiction to advance their causes. This stands to reason; evangelicalism, while positioning itself as anti-modern and separate from the world, has a history of savvy, innovative use of modern media to disseminate its message. In the middle decades of the 20th century,

radio programs spread PMD to millions of Americans. A few decades later, televangelists built mighty media empires. In the early 20th century, evangelicals used the medium of the novel. According to Gribben, many early evangelical novelists adapted bestselling genres, but he credits evangelical authors with the invention of the Rapture novel (ibid.: 29).

The Rapture novels I examine here were not written to explore a problem, situation, dynamic, or even an artistic technique, as one might expect from a highbrow novel. They aspire more to the popular press's goal of telling a ripping good yarn, but that is the delivery method, not the content point. The content point is to bring to life what the PMD reading of the Bible prophesies, depicting a future so horrible that readers will mend their ways, believe 'correctly', and escape in the Rapture. To this end, the authors work to ensure there is no mistaking their meaning or intent.

The first English-language Rapture novel was Dr. Joseph Birkbeck Burroughs' *Titan, Son of Saturn: The Coming World Emperor*, originally published in 1905. In a preface to the first edition, he says: "The author of this book has used imagination to clothe these naked facts and make them vividly real to the reader. He claims little originality in the conception of the story. It is God who has parted the curtain from before the approaching days" (Burroughs 1905: 5). This portion of the preface is absent in the 1907 edition, suggesting that the success of the first edition (Gribben 2009: 32) removed many of the author's qualms about fiction.

In *In the Twinkling of an Eye*,[6] the first book[7] in English author Sydney Watson's (1847–ca. 1918) trilogy, Watson says that he got the idea from reading General Robertson's pamphlet *Long Odds*, which has not itself survived, but which the novel later quotes in its entirety. He writes:

> The first and only real problem I had to face in the matter was that of the *principle* involved in using the fictional form to clothe so sacred a subject

[6] The title refers to 1 Corinthians 15:52.

[7] Sources vary as to the original publication dates and order of Watson's books. Crawford Gribben lists their publication dates as 1913 for *Scarlet and Purple*, 1915 for *The Mark of the Beast*, and 1916 for *In the Twinkling of an Eye*. However, Watson's preface to *Scarlet and Purple* indicates that it was written after the other two; and in a preface, dated 1911, to the Project Gutenberg version of *The Mark of the Beast*, he writes, "The great acceptance with which the Author's previous volume 'In the Twinkling of an Eye' was received, when published in Oct. 1910, together with the many records of blessing resulting from the perusal, leads him to hope that the present volume may prove equally useful" (Watson 1911/2006). Therefore, I have revised the dates accordingly.

> (for, to me, the near Return of our Lord is the *most* sacred of all subjects.) But the problem of the *principle* was speedily settled, as I remembered how wondrously God had owned and blessed 'Long Odds,' in which the fictional is the vehicle of the teaching. […] If any Christian cavils at the dramatic in this book, I would refer him or her to Christ's own pointing in the picture of Noah's time[.] Then, if the objector is honest, and is *capable* of the least imagination, he will say, 'I see! and, now that I see this fact, my wonder is *not* that there is a certain dramatic freedom in this book, but that the writer has kept so powerful a restraint upon his pen.' (Watson 1910/1918/2022: vi–vii)

These prefaces suggest that Burroughs and Watson expect criticism for writing fiction, and wish to justify their choices.

Milton Stine (1853–1940) and Joshua Foster (1861–1947) seem to anticipate no resistance to their use of fiction, but their prefaces still seek to make their intended meaning clear and unambiguous. "The object of the book," Foster writes of *The Judgment Day*,[8] "is to call people's attention to the mercies of God and to the fact that the time is imminent when these mercies will cease and the fearful judgments of God will begin" (Foster 1910: 3). Stine, meanwhile, offers *The Devil's Bride: A Present Day Arraignment of Formalism and Doubt in the Church and in Society, in the Light of the Holy Scriptures: Given in the Form of a Pleasing Story* "[i]n the hope that this little volume may cause the evil-doer to stop and think upon his evil ways, and that it may stimulate the doer of righteousness in the course he has taken" (Stine 1910: ix). Stine and Foster also use names to direct reader interpretation. In *The Judgment Day: A Story of the Seven Years of Great Tribulation*, Emily Trueheart disappears in the Rapture, while most of the Goodenough family are left behind, and the rich widow Mrs. Snobby is eventually possessed by Satan. Stine's erring minister character, Dr. Knowit, is educated, and popular "because he could talk real learnedly, and because he was a good thinker" (Stine 1910: 116). Over the course of the novel he blithely embraces all that Stine deplores.

All four authors periodically argue their positions more directly to the reader. They quote the Bible, include snippets of poetry, and speak through sermons and editorials. All use footnotes, most use in-text citations (particularly when quoting something they expect the reader to find outrageous), and Burroughs includes an appendix explaining his reasoning for

[8] The title is of course an allusion to John's Apocalypse 20:11–15.

concluding that Antiochus Theos Epiphanes is the Antichrist.[9] Stine, who incorporates illustrations by Paul Krafft (1877–1953), often simply addresses the reader. Burroughs and Watson speak through characters – even the as-yet-unconverted – who have long conversations about minute points of scripture. Watson quotes in its entirety the aforementioned *Long Odds* tract that convinced him that the Rapture could be treated well in fiction.

There is no guaranteeing how a reader will receive the text, but in the above ways, the authors direct the interpretation. Even the authors who see no need to defend their use of fiction take steps to ensure that their meaning is absolutely clear, and to forestall readings that would challenge the PMD scheme they put forward – even, as Gribben points out, Burroughs' heterodox reading (Gribben 2009: 32), which posits that Satan thought he should have been the Messiah, names the Holy Spirit rather than the Christian church as the Bride of God, and suggests that both good works and church membership play a role in making Christians fit for the Rapture (ibid.: 34).

The discomfort with fiction also manifests as awkwardness in its deployment. Burroughs, Foster, and Stine shift indiscriminately between past and present tense. Although the authors occasionally describe the beauty of the natural world, or a landscape devastated by the judgments of God, or the spectacle engendered by the forces of evil, the plot unfolds primarily through dialogue and summary, which allows the authors to switch back and forth between the everyday sphere that the characters inhabit and the world-changing catastrophes taking place, and further to gloss over events that, if described more thoroughly, would challenge the reader's credulity (Fig. 11.2).

In *The Judgment Day*, the clash between the strangeness of events and the restrained everyday-ness of people's behaviour becomes increasingly jarring:

> It looked as if a mountain of fire was being hurled through the air. It fell into the sea and the water was changed into its constituent elements of oxygen and hydrogen. Sprays of fire shot into the air and many ships were destroyed. The surface of the water was soon covered with dead fish. […] The waters became bitter and all who drank of them died. The more intelligent men

[9] In the 1907 edition, the first edition's chapter denouncing evolution is also moved to the appendix.

Fig. 11.2 The great star from heaven (Stine 1910: 123, free to use)

> met together and discussed the situation. They agreed to issue a call for a week's fasting and prayer. They petitioned that for this length of time all places of amusement and all barrooms be closed. Large numbers gathered at the churches and many seemed to be filled with the spirit of reverence and penitence. Mrs. Snobby ridiculed the whole thing and said that she thought the correct thing to do was to have a grand ball in honor of the devil, through whose power the terrible plagues had been stayed. This met with the approval of a majority and notice was given that on Friday night there would be a grand ball. The people stopped going to the churches (except a few) and spent their time talking about the ball. (Foster 1910: 83f.)

The geophysical implications of "a mountain of fire" impacting near a major city were not yet known. Still, in a New York so devastated, it is difficult to imagine any activity beyond relief efforts and a scramble for clean water. Even if the city could escape unscathed, with a supply of potable water, through what platform does Mrs. Snobby suggest this grand ball and gain the majority's support? How does she persuade even Christians who were previously willing to engage in fasting and prayer? Summary is necessary because describing events in detail would only emphasize their

impossibility. New York's steadfast Christians respond not by arranging for care of the survivors or distribution of fresh water, but by lobbying the mayor to enforce the city's blue laws – the laws preventing businesses from opening on the Christian sabbath – to prevent a second satanic ball on Sunday (Foster 1910: 86). And in the closing pages of the book, the Antichrist's forces are thwarted because they can't agree on a plan, and keep having to reschedule their meetings (ibid.: 126).

The Judgment Day is perhaps the starkest example of this disconsonant blending of the spectacular and mundane, but characters at the end of *Titan, Son of Saturn*, resurrected in Christ's millennial kingdom, rejoice to hear that their hometown will become "the most attractive great national center of learning in America" (Burroughs 1905: 450). And in *The Devil's Bride*, a third of the Earth's crops burn in a hail of fire (Foster 1910: 119) shortly before a massive meteorite hits the Pacific Ocean, causing a tsunami that scours all life from the Pacific coast (ibid.: 122), but neither of these interrupt the lavish New York wedding of Lillian DeLisle (ibid.: 124), or the activities of the unhoused people outside (ibid.: 127).

This disconsonance continues to be a problem in present-day Rapture novels, the best known of which is the *Left Behind* series, which from its first publication in 1995 to the series' conclusion in 2007 regularly appeared at the top of secular bestseller lists (LaHaye and Jenkins 1995–2007). In Fred Clark's analysis of the *Left Behind* series, he says the post-Rapture world is both too strange and not strange enough. On the one hand, the novels distort geography, reducing Manhattan and the Sea of Galilee to imaginary landscapes (Clark 2005a/2015), and the geopolitical situation at the beginning of the near-future series is "utterly out of sync with anything resembling reality" (Clark 2003a/2012). On the other hand, the world one week after the disappearances looks remarkably like the world before them:

> One might think that hundreds of rail and plane crashes one week ago might still be affecting supply lines. That the sudden disappearance of tens of thousands of workers from every step along the way – from field to shelf, from refinery to pump – might cause at least a hiccup in prices. That every worker at every stage is suddenly and inexplicably dealing with the loss of their children might also have some affect on the economy and the availability of goods. But no. (Clark 2007b)

Clark attributes some of this tendency to dispensationalism itself. With its rigid timeline, "the obvious and likely consequences of events don't happen now because they're supposed to happen *later*" (Clark 2007b). The meticulousness about certain details in the face of an unbelievable greater picture, and the jarring discord between catastrophic world events and the largely unchanged private sphere, are attributable partly to sloppy craftsmanship on the part of author Jerry B. Jenkins (born 1949), he argues, but dispensationalist hermeneutics also play a role. The lack of continuity, Clark writes, "forces the reader to regard the text as a collection of disparate, discrete stories – some of which apply to one set of storylines, others of which apply to another set. This is, of course, exactly how dispensationalists read the Bible" (Clark 2005b).

It makes sense that credible worldbuilding would challenge PMD authors, especially at the beginning of the 20th century. In a movement that distrusts fiction and insists on separation from the world, authors would be unlikely to read widely in secular genres such as the adventure novel and the scientific romance, which would furnish models for writing about world-changing catastrophes. Moreover, questions about the mechanics of the fulfillment of biblical prophecy could require a dangerous degree of entanglement with secular affairs, and possibly challenge one's faith. All four authors take a dim view of characters who offer rational explanations for the supernatural events around them.

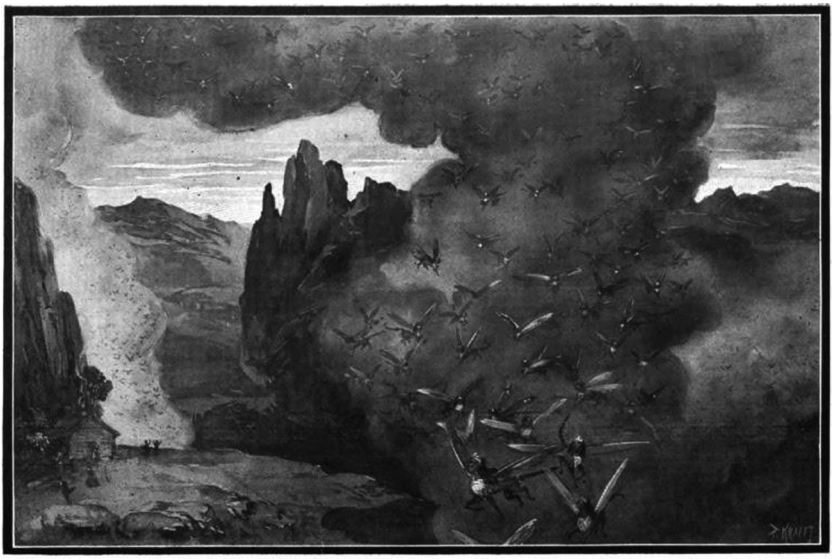
Finally, a future world in which the consequences of mass disappearances, environmental cataclysms, and tyranny are meticulously extrapolated would be too far removed from the here and now of the early 20th century, and the novel would lose the power to critique its own culture.[10] Too much of a departure from the reader's world, however warranted by the events of the narrative, risks making the novel unintelligible to its intended audience.

For all the difficulties that writing fiction presents to a PMD author, it also offers advantages. One is the potential to reach a mass audience. At least Burroughs' and Watson's books sold well, going into multiple printings, although it is difficult to know how many readers were already "true believers" from the dispensationalist perspective. Secondly, such books

[10] While it is true that science fiction and fantasy authors use distant worlds to comment on the times in which they live, they do so by drawing analogies and depicting similar dynamics, and trusting their readers to see the connections. Conservative evangelical audiences, however, are more likely to see this as a form of obfuscation.

give an evangelical audience "safe" literature to read. Differences in doctrine notwithstanding, a reader could be assured that the books would contain nothing to inflame the passions, and would condemn licentiousness and immoral behaviour such as drinking, dancing, and theatre-going (Fig. 11.3).

Further, as much as PMD eschatology resists thorough narrative treatment, fiction is a useful technology for enhancing the hermeneutic's ability to persuade (Taylor 2024). Despite their narrative clumsiness, the novels do contain striking, spectacular imagery: in Burroughs, the resurrection of the Antichrist (Burroughs 1905: 125–127) and the battle on the fields of Megiddo (ibid.: 438–441); in Stine, Dr. Knowit wandering dazed after an earthquake (Stine 1910: 70f.), and the locusts from the pit of hell (ibid.: 173f.); in Foster, the pit of hell opening in Central Park (Foster 1910: 93); in *In the Twinkling of an Eye*, the sudden disappearances (Watson 1910/1918/2022: 211–224); and in *The Mark of the Beast*, the Antichrist's theatrical processions (Watson 1911/2006,



"HAVE THE GATES OF HELL BEEN OPENED?"—This Picture Shows How the Devil Whom Men and Women Have so Long Courted Now Makes His Appearance to Harass and Worry His Elect. Rev. 9:1-12.—Page 173.

Fig. 11.3 Have The Gates Of Hell Been Opened? (Stine 1910, after page 168)

Chapters XIII–IX). These images don't need plausible narratives; they can hang like beads on a string, connected by the thinnest of pretexts. Jennie Chapman, writing about the *Left Behind* novels, notes that in Rapture fiction, witnessing the spectacle is the only course of action open to the characters, who are unable to affect events on the apocalyptic timeline. (Chapman 2013: 61)

Both Watson and Burroughs use fiction to reinforce their claims about the straightforwardness of the PMD hermeneutic by having a character from outside of the dominant Christian culture encounter the Bible, and independently arrive at a PMD reading. In *Titan, Son of Saturn*, this character is Abez Uriel, a young Russian Jewish man. In a conversation that protagonist Homer McRain overhears, Abez repeats dispensationalist interpretations of Hebrew scriptures to his father, saying that, prompted by a street preacher, he searched the scriptures for Jesus. His father asks, "Did he find what he was looking for?" Abez replies, "I had no choice, if I kept from putting my own opinion into the passages and accepted what I read as meaning what is written" (Burroughs 1905: 182).

In *Scarlet and Purple*, Watson introduces the character of Tomassi Itoi, a Japanese man who talks at some length with the other protagonist, Jack Quentin, about the divinity of Christ and hypocrisy of supposed Christians who still drink alcohol and go to the theatre (Watson 1913/1974: 27f.). Both men are not Christians at the time – Tomassi protests that he is a "poor heathen" (ibid.: 23) who has simply read the Bible – but in his disinterested outsider position he concludes that the Bible says the Rapture is imminent (ibid.: 31f.), and is quite clear about the measures that he should take. Tomassi does eventually convert to Christianity, and the second half of *Scarlet and Purple* focuses on his pre-Rapture life of Christian activism and 'wholesome romance' (Fig. 11.4).

Rapture fiction in particular has one straightforward way to support PMD claims: those who are right disappear in the Rapture, and those who are wrong are left behind. In *Titan, Son of Saturn*, the Christian Scientists are left behind (Burroughs 1905: 86f.). In *The Judgment Day*, only one Catholic priest is taken (Foster 1910: 36). *The Devil's Bride* involves a mid-tribulation Rapture – although Stine professes in a foreword that "[t]he author does not […] believe that the saints pass through the tribulation" (Stine 1910: xi), but only two characters vanish. In *In The Twinkling of an Eye*, after the disappearances, the newspaper editor who steps into his vanished employer's place writes, in an editorial:

Fig. 11.4 Consummation and translation (Stine 1910, after 288, free to use)

> One curious fact which we speedily discovered, was, that no one had been taken in this wondrous translation, from any of the Theatres or music-halls. In the old days […] before this awfully solemn event, discussions arose, periodically, in certain religious and semi-religious journals, as to whether *true* Christians could attend the theatre and music-hall. The fact that no one appears to have been translated from any of these London houses of amusement answers, we think, that question, as it has never been answered before. (Watson 1910/1918/2022: 469)

This fictional winnowing is presented as its own kind of proof.

A final advantage of fiction is that readers can imagine themselves in the situations depicted in the text. Although the goal of such novels is to create believers who will disappear in the Rapture as posited by the followers of dispensationalism, Gribben notes that *The Judgment Day* "made it possible for American evangelicals to imagine their own political eclipse, for his believers were depicted as being much more marginal than those of other early novels" and that Foster's use of the present tense enabled "evangelical readers to imagine that they were already in the end-time

conditions their leaders had encouraged them to expect" (Gribben 2009: 54).

In *Reverse Colonization*, his study of secular American alt-right identification with narratives of being colonized or subjugated, David M. Higgins writes that after the social reckonings of the 1960s, "stories celebrating outward conquest in science fiction were dramatically overshadowed by narratives that invite audiences to see themselves as victims or liberators rather than as colonizers" (Higgins 2021: 20). However, in American evangelical culture, persecution narratives were popular much earlier. The authors in my study depict nonbelievers and mainline Protestants treating evangelicals badly. With the exception of Stine, every author imagines this escalating into Christians being systematically hounded, persecuted, and ultimately beheaded for refusing to take the Mark of the Beast. In *The Judgment Day*, when William Goodenough converts to Christianity, his fiancée leaves him and his father disinherits him, and refuses to see him or allow him food (Foster 1910: 46–48, 61). Goodenough Sr.'s friend Ellis murders his newly Christian daughter and her beloved, and tells Goodenough to "throw them out to the dogs" as a "Christian burial" (ibid.: 67). The persecutors convert later, but before that, their attitude towards Christianity is one of violent antipathy. Likewise, in *Titan, Son of Saturn*, the newly converted Abez Uriel is disinherited by his Jewish family, turned out of his house, and burned in effigy, and his enraged father reports him to the police as a terrorist (Burroughs 1905: 184–186). Burroughs even makes persecution a hallmark of true Christianity: during the Tribulation, a newspaper editor writes, "In our American cities there are millions of non-church going people who will not be persecuted and yet they call themselves Christians. They would consider it an insult to be told they had no claim to the name Christ" (ibid.: 318).

This stance cements evangelical, and particularly PMD, opposition to the world at large. Evangelicals claim to be 'in the world, but not of the world', and if they are not persecuted, they are not practicing their faith correctly. The experience of persecution becomes a sign of salvation, and relief is close at hand in the form of a final reckoning. This gives meaning and a shape to hardship, and renders the day-to-day practice of Christianity a heroic act.

3 Engagement with Popular Mass Culture

Conservative evangelicalism in general, and premillennial dispensationalism in particular, is widely recognized as a reaction to anxieties about modernity. Crawford Gribben calls prophecy fiction "a palimpsest upon which the tensions and conflicts of the last century have been inscribed" (Gribben 2009: 24), while Daniel Wojcik writes, "By asserting that history and worldly renewal are predetermined, religious apocalyptic belief systems affirm that the cosmos is ordered, that evil and suffering will be destroyed, that human existence is meaningful, and that a millennial realm of peace and justice ultimately will be created" (Wojcik 1997: 4). Amy Frykholm sees in the PMD doctrine of the Rapture not just a promise of rescue and justice, but vindication:

> In the midst of turmoil over the rapid changes in cultural life that were the result of capitalist expansion, new technologies, scientific discoveries, and large-scale immigration, the narrative of the rapture came to hold an important place. In an atmosphere where conservative Protestants sense a loss of cultural control, the doctrine of the rapture promised an escape. In a complex and confusing social arena, the rapture divided saved from unsaved. As a vivid story of justification, the rapture became a way for these Christians to reject a disorienting new social terrain. (Frykholm 2004: 19)

However, while conservative evangelicalism positions itself as anti-modern, it is always a product of its surroundings, and its rejection of mass culture can never be complete. The necessity of spreading the gospel means that evangelicalism must appeal to the masses, adopting the tactics used to spread popular culture. Searching for signs of the times, it must continually reinvent itself to address new anxieties.

To the present-day reader, some of the concerns expressed by early Rapture fiction seem antiquated – for example, the universal condemnation of the theatre. Hostility towards theatre has its roots in Calvinism and is also a well-known component of European revival movements from the early modern period, such as Pietism (Thomke 2002). In *Titan, Son of Saturn*, the protagonist is falsely accused of being "on intimate terms with a professional dance girl" (Burroughs 1905: 22). Upon learning of the ruse, the dancer says, "I never have sought to harm a good man. Good men do not come where I am" (ibid.: 24). Milton Stine says of Dr. Knowit, "He did go to the theatre, 'but only to the best plays'. He had no objection to his people dancing, and several times he led the dance in social

gatherings in the homes of his people" (Stine 1910, 98). And in *The Judgment Day*, William Goodenough's fiancée leaves him when he converts because she "loved dancing and the theater" (Foster 1910: 23). In *The Mark of the Beast*, the post-Rapture descent of the church into licentiousness is marked by its more comfortable pews and printed programs, "theater style" (Watson 1911/2006: "IV: Foreshadowings") and the Antichrist's public rituals are always described as "theatrical" ("XIII: The Abomination of Desolation", "XIV: Death of the 'Two Witnesses'", "XV: Flight! Pursuit!"). In *Scarlet and Purple*, Jack and Tomassi attend a film on the subject of Jesus' life, and Tomassi says that if he were a Christian, "'I should condemn the spectacle root and branch'" (Watson 1913/1974: 35).

More seriously, most of the novels partake of the era's anti-Semitism and racism. 1905, the year in which *Titan, Son of Saturn* was published, also saw the publication of Baptist minister Thomas Dixon Jr's (1864–1946) *The Clansman: A Historical Romance of the Ku Klux Klan*, and, in Russia, Sergei Nilus's anti-Semitic fabrication *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum 2024). The previous year, Francis Galton had published an introduction to the pseudoscience of eugenics in *The American Journal of Sociology* (Galton 1904). Slavery had ended in the US, but deep inequalities persisted, and in former Confederate states, a combination of repressive laws and brutal vigilantism worked to terrorize and oppress Black communities. In both England and America, anxieties about immigration (Lee 2002: 37; Lloyd 2007) and urban poverty dovetailed with the burgeoning field of scientific racism to create a dominant culture marinating in racial panic.

Dispensationalism is fundamentally anti-Semitic:[11] it claims that despite millennia of exegesis, Jewish people cannot understand their sacred texts; that centuries of European anti-Semitism is divine justice provoked by the victims themselves; and that holding to Judaism will result in eternity in hell. Although dispensationalism envisions a future that welcomes many Jewish people into the utopian millennial kingdom, they must convert to Christianity, losing their Jewishness.

Gribben describes the depiction of Jewish people in early Rapture fiction as important and worthy of protection and thus as a form of

[11] See Clark (2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c, 2014). While he speaks specifically of Tim LaHaye, LaHaye's theology in this regard is not a departure from dispensationalist orthodoxy.

"philo-Semitism" (Gribben 2009: 53). In this context I disagree. Dispensationalism values Jewish lives not as the fully human lives of people who practice Judaism, but rather for their role in an apocalypse that eliminates Judaism. Nevertheless, Rapture fiction contrasts its own objectifying, exoticizing anti-Semitism with the sadistic anti-Semitism of the Antichrist.

In *Titan, Son of Saturn*, the Gentile unbeliever Homer McRain is rescued from drowning by Zia Uriel (Burroughs 1905: 164), Abez's younger brother, and invited to his family's Passover feast. The family is portrayed in a positive light until Abez admits his Christianity to his father, who overreacts in the ways I have described above. The family is reunited later in the text (ibid.: 299), when Abez' parents and extended family appear as refugees in Palestine. Milton Stine does not include Jewish characters in *The Devil's Bride*, but Foster's *The Judgment Day* involves Jewish side characters, one of whom announces to a newly converted friend of Mrs. Snobby's that she too has just become a Christian, saying, "Yes, I have believed for a long time that Jesus was the Messiah but you know it is hard for a Jew to become a Christian. I knew my own people would count me dead, and that Christian people would suspect me. It makes it very hard for one of my nation. It is hard no longer" (Foster 1910: 75). The previous night, she says, her rabbi preached to his New York synagogue that Christ was the King of the Jews, and while some of the congregation cried "'Traitor!'" and "'Curses on the turncoat!'", "'The majority in the synagogue were with him'" (ibid.: 75). Members of the congregation later burn the synagogue (ibid.: 76). Foster takes a quintessentially anti-Semitic crime, and reimagines it as anti-Christian persecution at the hands of Jewish people.

In *In the Twinkling of an Eye*, a chapter opens with a Jewish man in a workshop, muttering scripture as he lovingly carves. Watson writes, "The light – it was now almost a fire – deepened in his eyes. A rare, a rich, cadence filled his voice as he read the holy words" (Watson 1910/1918/2022: 39). These are laudatory terms, but exoticizing ones. Then, Watson names him as Abraham Cohen, his workshop door opens, and his daughter Zillah enters, followed by his grandchildren, calling him for supper. This scene, moving as it does from the exotic to the domestic, plays with the expectations of a projected readership assumed to be already anti-Semitic. The introduction of the Cohen family may have been intended to mitigate the anti-Semitism in the next chapter. When a woman

asks yet-unconverted protagonist Tom Hammond why his newspaper column focuses on Jewish people, he replies:

> 'It is not simply that they practically hold the wealth of the world in their hands, that they are the world's bankers, but they are dominating our press, our politics.' With glowing picture of words he poured out a flood of wondrous fact and illustration, winding up presently with: 'Then you cannot kill the Jew, you cannot wipe him out. Persecution has had the effect of stunting his growth, so that the average Britisher is several inches taller than the average Jew. But the life of the Hebrew is indestructible.' (Watson 1910/1918/2022: 52)

Later, Tom will fall in love with Zillah, who confesses her Christianity to him in secret, and manages to convert her father at the beginning of their Passover feast. Thus are the novel's two sympathetic Jewish characters stripped of their Jewishness before disappearing in the Rapture.

In *The Mark of the Beast*, despite a handful of sympathetic, if undeveloped, Jewish characters, the most prominent Jewish characters are Judith Montmartre, a rich occultist beauty who nevertheless has "cruelty in the ruby lips, and a shade of hell lurking in the melting black eyes" (Watson 1911/2006: "Prologue"); and her son, the Antichrist himself, Lucien Apleon, although he does not practice Judaism. The other Jewish people in the novel are an undifferentiated mass, acted upon by the Antichrist – either victimized on his orders, or seduced into joining the blasphemous killing mob.

The four authors also express, to varying degrees, anxieties about the position and future of whiteness. Burroughs imagines that England and the USA, the "Saxon people", have an explicit part in "the Divine plan", in that in the first half of the Great Tribulation,[12] they will use hoarded colonialist wealth to send missionaries across the globe, converting "the eight hundred million heathen who had never heard the name of Christ" (Burroughs 1905: 386). When the Antichrist later seizes the wealth of England and the USA, turning Europe into a socialist paradise with closed borders, European immigrants to the "Saxon" countries, who have undermined resistance to European aggression, return to Europe. "All classes of people rejoice in his leadership", Burroughs writes of the Antichrist, "and are ready to follow him to the brink of Hell as long as he continues to give

[12] For this biblical motif, see Matthew 24:21 and John's Apocalypse 7:14.

them wealth" (ibid.). However, none of these wealthy men want to do manual labour, so the European government restores chattel slavery, once again targeting the people of Africa – this time Ethiopia and Egypt (ibid.: 387). In other words, the loyalties of immigrants cannot be trusted, racial hierarchy is bound up with economic hierarchy and class hierarchy, and attempts to create equality in one area will undo hard-won progress in another.

Racism appears in *The Judgment Day* with no apparent deeper philosophical meaning. Foster writes that after the Rapture war breaks out, but white men refuse to serve in the military:

> Men were afraid to leave their homes. In the South the Negro problem was no nearer a solution than fifty years ago. If the people of the West should leave home their property and families would be at the mercy of Mexicans, Chinese and Japanese, who swarmed the land. In the North, Italians were waiting their opportunity to wrest the government from the hands of the native-born Americans and rule or ruin. (Foster 1910: 50)

Shortly after, these groups launch civil wars, "pillaging, dynamiting and committing the most atrocious outrages" (ibid.: 51). Although Foster seems to have no special point to make about the role of America in the End Times, these passages evoke pre-existing secular narratives, including "Yellow Peril" narratives of Asian people overrunning America (Tchen and Yeats 2014: 12; Sharp 2000: 437). White supremacy is presumed, but not explicitly woven into the novel's philosophical framework.

Watson's treatment of characters of colour echoes his treatment of Jewish characters. Individuals are allowed to be sympathetic, even heroic – after his conversion to Christianity in the second half of *Scarlet and Purple*, Tomassi Itoi becomes the consummate Christian romantic lead – but groups are a dehumanized mass. Watson plays with reader expectations in ways that presuppose familiarity with racist narratives, undercutting them in places while reinforcing them in others. For example, Ralph Bastin's adopted daughter is a survivor of "hideous ceremonies" (Watson 1910/1918/2022: 89) involving a blood sacrifice on a fictional Caribbean island. Watson describes the ceremony in the exoticizing and sensational register of Victorian imperial gothic author H. Rider Haggard,[13] but when Ralph and the reader expect the girl to be killed, she loses only a few drops

[13] Compare, for example, Chapter 12 of Haggard's *She* (Haggard 1886).

of blood (ibid.: 86–89). Watson sets up and then defies reader expectations, refusing to portray the islanders as bloodthirsty practitioners of human sacrifice. The girl becomes a Christian before Ralph does, and is among those who disappear in the Rapture.

But Watson is also capable of expressing virulent racism. For the first half of *Scarlet and Purple*, Tomassi is merely "the Jap".[14] In *In the Twinkling of an Eye*, shortly before Tom Hammond's disappearance in the Rapture, he writes that if legislators realized Jesus' return is imminent, "Theatricals would be left to the theatres; n*****[15] entertainments would be left to the music-halls; the church would leave all these things to their master – *the Devil*" (Watson 1910/1918/2022: 196f.). Watson conflates Christianity itself with the modes of worship and expression practiced by white Protestants, and for all his inclusion of characters of colour, he describes any departure from these modes as satanic.

While it is unsurprising to find racism, particularly anti-Blackness, at the turn of the last century, it was not universal. *The Devil's Bride* goes out of its way to create a more positive portrait of Black people. When her train holds at a station, the young Mrs. Gregory goes walking in a Black neighbourhood:

> There were the same negroes loafing in the door-steps of their miserable homes. Here and there was the frog-like thrum of a banjo, and the merry, good-natured laugh of some dark-skinned maiden. Mrs. Gregory realized as she had never done before, that happiness does not necessarily go with wealth and social standing, and that a laugh is the most Democratic of the emotions, preferring to make its place of abode in the humblest cottage and illumining the plainest face rather than making its dwelling in the mansion and forever adding its sweetness to the classic features of some queen of fashion. (Stine 1910: 205)

The above description does perpetuate harmful stereotypes, associating Blackness with laziness and ugliness, but it also challenges the idea that whiteness is the more natural repository of virtue. The danger, when it appears, comes from a white kidnapper. And it is a Black detective who, succeeding where white detectives have failed, solves the mystery of the Blue-Eyed Three, a gang that kidnaps rich people and holds them in an

[14] Watson assures the reader that he uses the racial slur affectionately (Watson 1913/1974: 21, n).

[15] I have refrained from spelling out the full term, an anti-Black racial slur.

underground lair to extort money from them (ibid.: 268–271). The subplot of the Blue-Eyed Three is unrelated to the PMD timeline, but more engaging and exciting than the main plot. Stine interrupts his main dispensational narrative to create a subplot that challenges dominant racist depictions.

With the exception of *The Judgment Day*, the novels express concern about the rise of totalizing systems, especially those that promised to improve human lives. These systems include science, social science, and economic systems – both socialism and unfettered capitalism. According to premillennial dispensationalism,[16] humans are powerless to improve anything, and any effort to do so stems from satanic hubris. Whether one agrees or not, these novels occasionally raise valuable critiques, and are unmoved by appeals to science, progress, or expertise in ways that are both frustrating and necessary: necessary because it is reasonable for authority to be questioned and critiques are essential for improvement, but frustrating because evangelicalism is structured in such a way that it can never be satisfied with the answers.

Burroughs uses the science of the time to argue that evolution is a slippery slope to godlessness. From the vantage point of 2024, the theory of evolution through natural selection was not wrong, but plate tectonics, the Big Bang, and DNA were unknown in 1905, and Burroughs raises some legitimate problems with the then-*au-courant* theory that the Earth and the planets coalesced out of spinning material. He further writes:

> Evolution is branching out in many directions. Every paper speaks of the changes in government, progress in commerce, the unrest of the people, and every magazine has declared these things are due to the law of evolution. From the formation of great trusts to the disappearing of the little toe, everything is called evolution. (Burroughs 1905: 50f.)

[16] Postmillennial dispensationalism takes a radically different view, asserting that humans must bring about the millennial kingdom themselves in order for Christ to return. This movement was one of the roots of abolitionism and the Social Gospel movement (Strong 1999: 30), which gave rise to, among other things, the founding of Canada's New Democratic Party (Shackleton 1975: 31f.), the most left-wing of the major parties. In America, it also formed the basis of Dominionism, a right-wing movement that advocates for the imposition of biblical law, including the death penalty for homosexuality and adultery (Clarkson 1994: "Part 1: Overview and Roots").

Again, this was not unreasonable criticism. The theory of natural selection was put to inappropriately broad use, from forced sterilizations and eugenics to the erosion of the social safety net. Burroughs' alarm was not unfounded.

Later in the novel, when the ten princes of Europe meet to plan their support of the socialist Antichrist in order to attack America and England, part of their rationale is English imperialism, colonial violence, wealth inequality, and the lack of pensions for workers (Burroughs 1905: 200–204). These critiques are treated as well-founded, although Burroughs plainly sees socialism as an overcorrection.

Milton Stine takes science to task for destroying faith in the Bible by "adopt[ing] theories in her attempts to account for the physical universe, which were for the most part a negation of what the Bible teaches" (Stine 1910: 299). This, he says, led to the secularization of the home and the universities, the decline of marriage as a sacred institution, the dissolution of the family (ibid.: 300), and the development of Higher Criticism, which treats the Bible first and foremost as a text, rather than the divinely inspired word of God. He concludes: "From out this abandonment of Holy things came a generation as uninstructed as our fathers were instructed in the Bible" (ibid.: 302). After the Rapture marks the disappearance of all Christian believers, he anticipates that this latter generation will quickly sink into ruin.

One of Stine's chapters recounts an invitation-only meeting of oil magnates who collaborate across many industries in order to fix prices and maximize profits. One of them tells the assembly:

> But this accummulation [sic] of capital has conferred immense advantage upon us who control the oil industry of this country. […] We can, if we wish, dictate the price of bread and meat, salt and sugar. […] Both the laws of the state and the army of the commonwealth must protect us. If need be we can enact any laws we desire. If the legislators in power will not enact the laws we desire we need only wait to see what they will do, and then we can elect the legislators we need, men who will protect our interests. (Stine 1910: 77f.)

Stine's vision of a "trust of trusts" (ibid.: 78), exerting an undue influence on commerce and swaying legislators, has proven prescient. It also brings to mind the "Spiritual Mobilization" movement, an effort by industrialists, spearheaded by California reverend James Fifield, to rehabilitate

capitalism's image in the wake of the Great Depression (1929–1939) and the New Deal (1933–1938), and to rebrand free enterprise as a fundamental Christian value (Kruse 2013: 7). Spiritual Mobilization's success is perhaps best demonstrated by the *Left Behind* novels, in which not a trace of their predecessors' warnings about unfettered capitalism survives, despite this being an area in which Dispensationalism's concerns proved to be well-founded.

Watson, like Burroughs and Stine, expresses dismay about new modes of thought that value progress, collectivism, ecumenism, and the centralization of commercial interests (Watson 1911/2006: "Anti We-ism"). Even as he lists the things he thinks legislators would do if they knew Christ's return was imminent – a list which includes an end to British imperial activities (Watson 1910/1918/2022: 197) – Tom Hammond's last column denounces the very idea of progress:

> But, even as I pen this millennium-like picture, I know, from the Word of God, that it *cannot* be *before* Christ comes. […] The vast bulk of the churches, I know, preach, that the world will continually improve until the earth shall be fit for Christ to come and reign. But I defy any cleric or layman to show me a single word of scripture that gives the faintest colour to that belief, or statement – unless the person wrests the passage so advanced from its distinctly marked *dispensational* setting. (ibid.: 197)

Likewise, in *The Mark of the Beast*, Ralph Bastin tells his boss,

> For years, blinded by Satan whom most of us, unknowingly, served, and blinded by what we termed the 'Progress of the Age', and of the World, but which ought to have been recognized for what it really was, the growing of the Apostasy, which has now begun to be avowed and absolutely universal – blinded, I say, by all this […] we suffered many mighty forces to stealthily, powerfully work together so that the climax that has come upon us, was made absolutely easy. (Watson 1911/2006: Chapter XII, "Anti-'We-ism'")

This apostasy, according to Watson, includes the equality of the sexes. Of the horrors of the post-Rapture world, in addition to unbridled theatre-going and the wanton use of tea-rooms, he writes:

> Marriage was a thing of the dead past. There had been a growth of foul, subtle, hideous teaching *before* the translation of the church. Marriage had been taught (in many circles) to be 'an unnecessary restraint upon human

> liberty'. 'Women' – it had been written, '*absolved from shame*, shall be *owners* of themselves.' 'We believe' (the same writer had written) 'in the sacredness of the family and the home, the legitimacy of *every* child, and the inalienable right of every woman to the absolute possession of herself.' (Watson 1911/2006, Chapter IV, "Foreshadowings")

Later, bands of women brutalize the population, "for with the growth of the 'woman's rights' question, and the establishment of the 'equality of the sexes', bands of women […] wrought even fouler cruelties and butcheries than the men" (Chapter XIII, "The Abomination of Desolation"). Evangelicalism had created more opportunities for women to participate in the church (Bebbington 1989: 25f.), and the novels in my study, including Watson's books, are full of women characters who inspire the male protagonists to become Christians, but these powers are not grounded in the principle of equality.

Watson seems most concerned, though, about unfettered capitalism. When Babylon is reestablished, it is as a centre of commerce. Ralph's talk with his boss comes on the eve of the Antichrist's announcement of the merging of commercial interests with one world religion, and he laments,

> The last twenty years of the nineteenth century, and more so the first ten years of the twentieth century, was marked as an age of centralization and concentration of all kinds of interests, commercial, and religious. Each year, the trusts and monopolies in the commercial world became more and more concentrated, until it has become perfectly easy for Lucien Apleon, Emperor-Dictator of the World, to govern and control (from that beautiful, hellish city, Babylon the great,[17]) every business interest in the world. (Watson 1911/2006: Chapter XII, "Anti-'We-ism'")

To a present-day reader, some of the above criticisms aged poorly, even in evangelical circles, while others sound warnings that turn out to have been well-founded. Still others are best treated with nuance: while the systems of thought that they denounce may still be useful and valuable, the completeness of the picture these systems claimed to offer at the turn of the last century, and their power to reduce suffering and improve human life, was overstated in ways that PMD writers recognized and spoke against.

[17] See John's Apocalypse 14:8, 16:19 and more.

4 Conclusion

The Rapture was not imminent. However, Burroughs, Foster, Stine, and Watson formed the beginnings of a genre of fiction that has persisted to the present, processing the anxieties of evangelical culture and popular culture. Paul Boyer writes that prophecy interpretation "evolves in complex, intriguing ways. Outmoded themes are quietly abandoned and new themes introduced, elaborated, modified, and subtly altered within a subculture in which the premium is on continuity and regard for "biblical inerrancy'" (Boyer 1992: xi). That incorrect predictions have dropped away is not really a surprise, but the genre is also remarkably selective about the things it has gotten right: the creation of Israel in 1949 was seen at the time as confirmation of the dispensational timeline, but as American Christianity became regarded as essential to the fight against communism, Rapture fiction's critiques of capitalism and imperialism fell silent, even as – or perhaps because – these critiques were taken up by more progressive groups.

Rapture fiction is difficult for an academic reader of the present day, because it doesn't exist for academic readers. It closes off interpretation, expresses scorn for foundational principles of modern academia and literature, and measures its success along different lines from secular literary fiction. Reading it remains worthwhile. These early entries into the genre show a snapshot of worry, hope, and belief that, despite its claims of permanence, is not like PMD belief now.

Premillennial dispensationalism, although it was a profoundly modern movement, saw itself as steadfast, traditional, and anti-modern in the face of an English-speaking world that was, in its estimation, too quick to embrace change. Rejecting high culture as elitist and decadent and low culture as worldly and lewd, PMDs saw any efforts at improving a decaying world as fruitless. They sought only to win as many converts as possible – an effort of which these novels are a part. Ironically, perhaps, over the course of the 20th century PMD would come to dominate American Protestant theology.

Acknowledgements The author gratefully acknowledges that this project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 945422.

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V. Albrecht-Birkner, S. Siedek-Strunk (eds.), *Revival Movements as Conflict Agendas of the Popular in the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries*,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-75117-2

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