David W Fletcher, *Apocalyptic Rhetoric in the Old Southwest* (Doctor of Arts Dissertation; Murfreesboro, TN: Middle Tennessee State University, 2007)

CHAPTER FOUR:
REVIVAL PHENOMENA AND RELIGIOUS DIVISION ON THE FRONTIER

In many places of the Old Southwest, strange bodily phenomena accompanied the early nineteenth-century revivals. These physical manifestations indicated the excitability of the populace as well as the experimental nature of frontier religion. The immediate impact of religious ideas on the body was nothing new in the history of religion or even on the American frontier. Perceived by many to be a result of divine intervention and a sign of the coming kingdom of God, these physical manifestations attended large gatherings on the frontier (Fig. 4.1) and were driven by social influences and concerns.[1] In their assessments of who was or was not saved, revival leaders certainly noted the influence of these physical "exercises" or "jerks" on individuals, an influence that cut across strict denominational lines. But the greater legacy of these puzzling bodily gyrations fell to the reordering of ecclesiastical structures, and much of this shuffling took place with respect to teachings about personal salvation and extreme apocalyptic ideas that accompanied these unusual phenomena.

During the summer of 1801, the revival at Cane Ridge near Lexington, Kentucky, drew large crowds and had the greatest outpouring of the so-called "jerks" or "bodily

[1]See the fine discussion of the social significance of the camp meetings in Ellen Eslinger, *Citizens of Zion: The Social Origins of Camp Meeting Revivalism* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1999), 213-241.

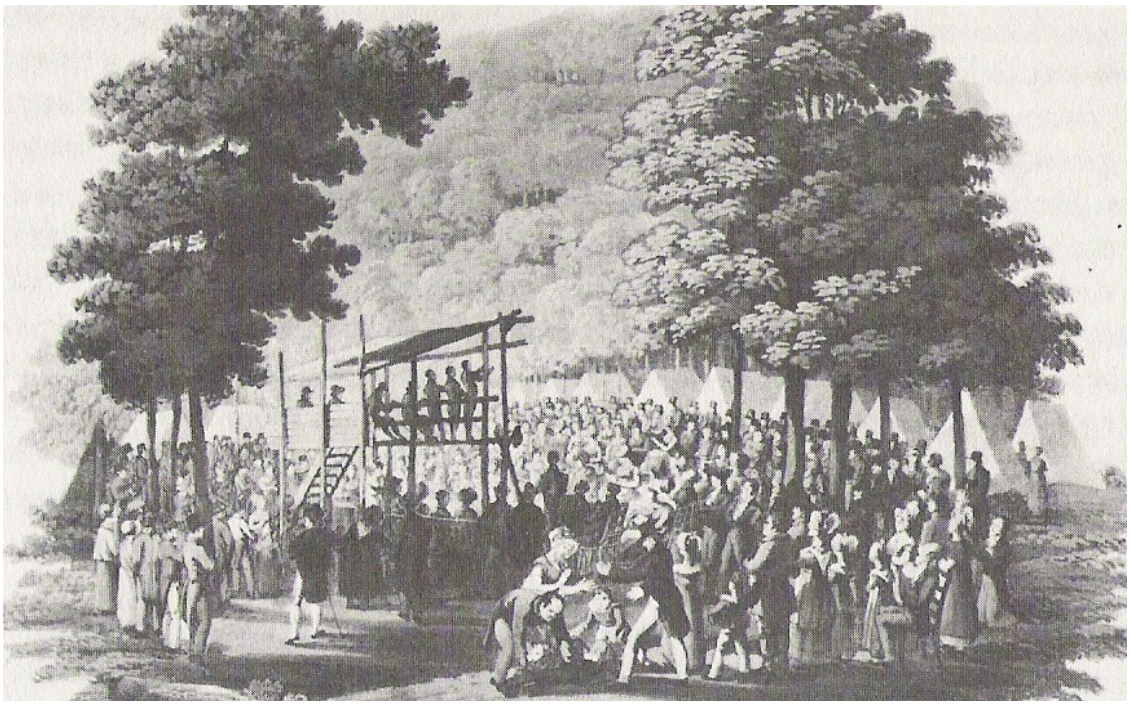

Fig. 4.1. Methodist camp meeting. Library of Congress (public domain), from Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity, Vol. 2, The Reformation to the Present Day* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1985), 247.

agitations or exercises."[2] Barton Stone recalled, "In the spring of 1801, the Lord visited his people in the north of Kentucky. In Fleming, and in Concord, one of my congregations, the same strange and mighty works were seen and experienced. . . . From this meeting, the flame spread all around and increased til the ever-memorable meeting at Caneridge, in August following."[3] Peter Cartwright estimated "twelve to twenty-five

---

[2]Barton W. Stone, *The Biography of B. W. Stone, Written by Himself* (1847; repr., Cincinnati: Restoration Reprint Library, n.d.), 39. See as well Paul K. Conkin, *Cane Ridge: America's Pentecost* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), 64-114.

[3]Barton W. Stone, "History of the Christian Church in the West," *Christian Messenger*, vol. 1 (24 February 1827), quoted in Hoke Smith Dickinson, ed., *The Cane Ridge Reader* (Paris, Kentucky: Cane Ridge Preservation Project, 1972), 2.

thousand people" in attendance at the Cane Ridge encampments and noted that "hundreds fell prostate under the mighty power of God, as men slain in battle." Cartwright related widespread occurrence of "the heavenly fire" and gave as proof the following testimony: "It was said by truthful witnesses, that at times more than one thousand persons broke out into loud shouting all at once, and that the shouts could be heard for miles around."[4]

The "Kentucky jerks" broke out in Tennessee as well. Unlike Cane Ridge, the Tennessee revivals have lacked a distinct voice in American religious historiography. This could be due to affiliation of Tennessee's Presbyterian churches with the Kentucky synod and, in part, the frequent movement of preachers. But the year after the Cane Ridge revivals, Thomas Wilkerson, a Methodist preacher assigned to the Cumberland District, saw in Nashville "the greatest excitement . . . the people . . . jerking, running, dancing, barking like dogs." Lorenzo Dow, the eccentric New Englander who traveled to the South to observe the enthusiasm, reported news of equivalent sensations in the Cumberland area in 1804, and revival efforts at Roaring River in Overton County by Valentine Cook, the Cumberland District's Presiding Elder, had even greater incidents of the "jerks" the year after.[5]

---

[4]Peter Cartwright, *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright* (1856; repr., Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1956), 34.

[5]John Abernathy Smith, *Cross and Flame: Two Centuries of United Methodism in Middle Tennessee* (Nashville: Commission on Archives and History of the Tennessee Conference, 1984), 51.

News of the exciting but unusual phenomena spread fast and far. A picturesque account came from James Finley, a Methodist Episcopal minister from Wyandot County in Ohio. He wrote:

> It was reported that hundreds who attended the meetings were suddenly struck down, and would lie for hours and, sometimes, for days, in a state of insensibility; and that when they recovered and came out of that state, they would commence praising God for his pardoning mercy and redeeming love. This exercise was accompanied with that strange and unaccountable phenomenon denominated the jerks, in which hundreds of men and women would commence jerking backward and forward with great rapidity and violence, so much so that their bodies would bend so as to bring their heads near to the floor, and the hair of the women would crack like the lash of a driver's whip. This was not confined to any particular class of individuals, but saint, seeker, and sinner were alike subject to these wonderful phenomena.[6]

As a supporter of the revivals, Finley offered a prudent and apocalyptic estimate of this "excitement . . . most intense and astonishing." He related that "some thought that the world was coming to an end; others that some dreadful calamity was coming upon the country as a judgment of God on the nation; others still, that it was the work of the devil, who had been unchained for a season, and assuming the garments of an angel of light, was permitted to deceive the ministers of religion and the very elect themselves."[7] Like many fellow clerics, Finley did not accept the validity or divine origin of such curious happenings carte blanche. But he did not dismiss the possibility either.

On the whole, frontier Methodists avoided the extremes of religious experience. One example was the disciplinary action taken by Methodist leaders against John

---

[6]James B. Finley, *Autobiography of Rev. James B. Finley, or, Pioneer Life in the West*, ed. W. P. Strickland (Cincinnati: Cranson and Curtis, 1854), 165. See in Appendix C the description given by Richard McNemar.

[7]Ibid.

Grenade. Grenade told his congregation that, unless it rained the following Sunday, God really had not planned for him to preach. The conference formally tried Grenade for prophesying and revoked his license to preach for three months.[8] Another example was the personal experience of Peter Cartwright who rode Methodist circuits in Kentucky and Tennessee and afterward in Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois. Cartwright was no stranger to religious experience, but he reacted negatively to behavior he considered inordinate or out of bounds in light of orthodox Christian theology and practice.

Cartwright confessed in his *Autobiography* that he grew up "a wild, wicked boy" who relished the evils of "horse-racing, card-playing, and dancing." But he could not escape the hand of the Almighty that was at work in the revivals. Prior to his conversion, Cartwright remembered that he had "such a fear of the devil . . . that it really appeared to me that he was surely personally there, to seize and drag me down to hell, soul and body, and such a horror fell on me."[9] After three months and still without "the blessing of pardon of [his] sins," Cartwright attended an outdoor meeting hosted by Reverend McGready and the Methodist preacher John Page, and this encounter brought about his spiritual transformation. He recalled:

> To this meeting I repaired, a guilty, wretched sinner. On the Saturday evening . . . I went with weeping multitudes . . . and earnestly prayed for mercy. In the midst of a solemn struggle of soul an impression was made on my mind, as though a voice said to me, "Thy sins are all forgiven thee." Divine light flashed all round me, unspeakable joy sprung up in my soul. I rose to my feet, opened my

---

[8]Smith, *Cross and Flame*, 51.

[9]Cartwright, *Autobiography*, 31, 37.

> eyes, and it really seemed as if I was in heaven; the trees, the leaves on them, and everything seemed, and I really thought were, praising God.[10]

As a convert of the revivals himself, Cartwright could not deny his own experience as something divinely sent. As a pro-revivalist, he cautiously accepted the heavenly causation of what he considered "strange and wild exercises." He reasoned, "I always looked upon the jerks as a judgment sent from God, first, to bring sinners to repentance; and, secondly, to show professors that God could work with or without means, and that he could work over and above means, and do whatsoever seemeth him good to the glory of his grace and the salvation of the world."[11]

But Cartwright joined with other Methodist preachers and spoke out against "extravagant wildness." He concluded:

> From these wild exercises, another great evil arose from the heated and wild imaginations of some. They professed to fall into trances and see visions; they would fall at meetings and sometimes at home, and lay apparently powerless and motionless for days, sometimes for a week at a time, without food or drink; and when they came to, they professed to have seen heaven and hell, to have seen god, angels, the devil and the damned; they would prophesy, and, under the pretense of Divine inspiration, predict the time of the end of the world, and the ushering in of the great millennium. . . . This was the most troublesome delusion of all; it made such an appeal to the ignorance, superstition, and credulity of the people, even saint as well as sinner.[12]

As a diligent minister of Christ, Cartwright "watched this matter with a vigilant eye." If he opposed the error, he would face the "clamor" of the masses. If anyone opposed the visionaries, they would single out that person and pronounce God's judgment upon them.

---

[10]Ibid., 38.

[11]Ibid., 46.

[12]Ibid., 46-47.

Because of their combative attitude, Cartwright compared these "visionists" and their apocalyptic teachings to groups that had broken away from mainstream Protestantism and were considered to be heretical. He observed:

> They would even set the very day that God was to burn the world, like the self-deceived modern Millerites. They would prophesy, that if any one did oppose them, God would send fire down from heaven and consume him, like the blasphemous Shakers. They would proclaim that they could heal all manner of diseases, and raise the dead, just like the diabolical Mormons. They professed to have converse with spirits of the dead in heaven and hell, like the modern spirit rappers. Such a state of things I never saw before, and I hope in God I shall never see again.[13]

As a dutiful soldier of orthodoxy, Cartwright acknowledged, "I pondered . . . searched . . . prayed . . . and proclaimed open war against these delusions." Perhaps Cartwright judged "these delusions" from hindsight, since he wrote these memoirs more than fifty years after the events. Presumably, he preserved a plausible but exaggerated account of the apocalyptic emphases of his antagonists.

Cartwright and other revival leaders ostensibly tolerated and promoted apocalyptic behaviors when they remained subservient to traditional Christian teachings about personal regeneration and the soul's salvation at the end of time. James McGready in this manner could speak about apocalyptic events–Christ's second coming, resurrection of the just and the unjust, and general judgment–and their concurrence with God's vengeance and his judgment of atheists and sinners. He affirmed:

> The God of Glory sends his summons forth:
> Calls the south nations, and awakes the north;
> From east to west the sovereign orders spread
> Through distant worlds and regions of the dead.

---

[13]Ibid.

> No more shall Atheists mock his long delay;
> His vengeance sleeps no more; behold the day.
> Behold the Judge descends; his guards are nigh–
> Tempests and fire attend him through the sky;
> Heaven, earth and hell draw near–let all things come,
> To hear my justice, and the sinner's doom.[14]

McGready's vision of the converse of the sinner's doom notably envisioned the favorable experience of the saint's acceptance into heaven. His message, "The Christian's Journey to the Heavenly Canaan," articulated the believer's passage through resurrection and judgment–traditional end-time apocalyptic events–with themes of joy, companionship, and reunion. He stated:

> But oh! the joy unspeakable, the floods of glory that deluge the soul when it parts from the body. The case is opened, and the spirit is liberated from *this* heavy clog of clay. The angel bands draw near; bright shining seraphs surround it on every side, and, perhaps, the departed souls of their Christian friends, who were their companions, sat under the same sermons, underwent the same difficulties and enjoyed the same pleasures, join to conduct them to their Father's House. But who can describe the happiness of the soul when conveyed by the celestial host? He rises from the earth–soars aloft the heavens–leaves sun, moon and stars far behind, and beholds the respondent glories of the new Jerusalem, whose pearly gates fly open wide to receive him. He enters the city of God, welcomed by all the redeemed of the Lord, and embraced in the arms of Jesus.[15]

From this reading there can be no doubt that McGready's eschatology conformed to evangelical emphasis on personal salvation. Barton Stone similarly could link final judgment with personal redemption and write hymns for his congregations that spoke of cosmic reordering. In a compilation of Christian hymns, Stone included the following:

---

[14]James McGready, *The Posthumous Works of the Reverend and Pious James M'Gready, Late Minister of the Gospel, In Henderson, Kentucky*, vol. 1, ed. Rev. James Smith (Louisville: W. W. Worsley, 1831-1833), 201.

[15]Ibid., 339-340.

The Lord, the Judge, before his throne,
Bids the whole earth draw nigh:
The nations near the rising sun,
And near the western sky.

No more shall bold blasphemers say
"Judgment will ne'er begin;"
No more abuse his long delay,
To impudence and sin.

Thron'd on a cloud, the Lord shall come,
Bright flames prepare his way;
Thunder and darkness, fire and storm,
Lead on the dreadful day.

Heaven from above his call shall hear,
Attending angels come;
And earth and hell shall know and fear
His justice and their doom.

"But gather all my saints," he cries,
"That made their peace with God,
"By the Redeemer's sacrifice,
"And seal'd it with his blood.

"Their faith and works, brought forth to light,
"Shall make the world confess,
"My sentence of reward is right,
"And heaven adore my grace."[16]

As for Cartwright and McGready, the emphasis on end-time or apocalyptic events for Stone clearly rested on God's justice in both judging sinners and saving saints by virtue of "the Redeemer's sacrifice."

---

[16]Barton W. Stone and Tho. Adams, comp., *The Christian Hymn-Book*, 1st ed. (Georgetown, Kentucky: N. L. Finnell, 1829), 284-285. Compare "mourner's songs," Charles A. Johnson, "Camp Meeting Hymnody," *American Quarterly* 4, no. 2 (Summer 1952): 118-119. And, compare Robert Henderson's eschatology in Appendix D.

Eschatology (end-time doctrines) and pneumatology (Holy Spirit doctrines) for these revivalists necessarily supported traditional Christian doctrines about personal salvation and individual judgment. Thus, the Spirit's outpouring of "jerks" and other salient marvels in the last days remained useful and permissible. On occasion, though, the imagination and practices of revivalists exceeded the confines of strict Christian soteriology (salvation doctrines). Such tampering for many church leaders overstepped ecclesiastical boundaries.

Samuel Jennings, a defender of the revivals, strongly condemned the soteriology of the extremists and did so in true apocalyptic fashion. He spoke of "other instances . . . how deism which is so prevalent in the world and growing amongst *new light* Quakers, *new kind* of Presbyterians, Arians, &c. Which all are a kind of deism, which are six and half a dozen, and which I conceive to be antichrist, and as by John, alludes to the beast ascending out of the bottomless pit, and which only can be removed by the power of God in a *providential* way."[17] This kind of either/or language, the labeling of so-called deists as "antichrist," and the prospect of divine intervention to remedy the problem placed a wedge between supporters of the revivals. Additionally, those church authorities who looked with disfavor on the excesses of the revivals put pressure on the promoters of revival to conform. Caught up in the frenzy themselves and close to the people whom they served and who genuinely had experienced renewal, many revivalists refused to

---

[17]Samuel K. Jennings, *A Defence of the Camp Meetings (North America) in Six Objections, Stated and Answered* . . . (Liverpool: H. Forshaw, 1806), 46.

respond positively to what they felt was ecclesiastical coercion. This tension among the Presbyterians and others resulted in division.

Schism had not been lacking among the finicky Calvinists in the Old Southwest prior to the turn of the century, but the revivals of the early 1800s put particular strain on churches that could not be suppressed except by the exodus of nonconformists.[18] By 1804, for example, Stone and fellow Presbyterian ministers Richard McNemar, John Thompson, John Dunlavy, and Robert Marshall were judged to be Arminian or Socinian by the orthodox. Robert Bishop, professor of history at Transylvania University, labeled Stone's splinter group the "New Light" or "Socinian Church of Kentucky."[19] Because of attacks like this, Stone felt obliged to reply to accusations that he did not believe in the trinity or divinity of Christ.[20] Stone and his four colleagues refused to recant their heresies and instead rejected their Presbyterian roots. They produced and circulated "The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery" that called for a return to the scriptures for religious authority, rejection of sectarian creeds, and re-creation of the New Testament church on the American frontier.[21] Their short "Last Will and Testament"

---

[18]On opposition to the revivals, see B. W. McDonnold, *History of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church*, 4th ed. (Nashville: Board of Publication of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 1899), 39-47.

[19]Robert H. Bishop, *Outline of the History of the Church in the State of Kentucky, etc.* (Lexington, Kentucky: T. T. Skillman, 1824), 129-140.

[20]See his *Address to the Christian Churches in Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio on Several Important Doctrines of Religion*, 2nd ed. (Lexington, Kentucky: I. T. Cavins & Co., 1821).

[21]Stone, *Biography*, 51-53.

included brief excerpts of traditional apocalyptic language. The authors exhorted, "*We will*, that preachers and people, cultivate a spirit of mutual forbearance; pray more and dispute less; and while they behold the signs of the times, look up, and confidently expect that redemption draweth nigh."[22] Although important, apocalyptic events and eschatological teachings took a lesser role in this ecclesiastical split. The chief concerns of these revivalists and their principle reasons for severing connections with the Presbyterians involved issues of church government and religious authority.

Other disaffected Presbyterians made a bold decision, and their action gave revivalists another new organization for ministry. In February 1810 near Charlotte in Dickson County (Tennessee), Finis Ewing and Samuel King, two Presbyterian clerics who supported the revivals, organized an independent Cumberland Presbytery and ordained their first minister–Ephraim McLean from Logan County (Kentucky).[23] The new church benefitted from its connectedness to modified Calvinistic roots and the flexibility of novel evangelistic methods like the camp meetings. The Cumberland Presbyterians grew rapidly, but the founders of the new church infused little apocalyptic spirit into its lifeblood. For instance, the new church's *Constitution* contained only two brief sections on eschatology, "The State of Man, after Death, and the Resurrection from

---

[22]Quoted in Edwin S. Gaustad, ed., *A Documentary History of Religion in America*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans, 1993), 365.

[23]McDonnold, *History of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church*, 82-92.

the Dead" and "The Last Judgment."[24] Both sections used apocalyptic language consistent with mainstream Calvinistic theology, since the Cumberland Presbyterians' controversy with "Old Light" Presbyterians involved soteriology more than eschatology.

For Presbyterians, Methodists, and the followers of Stone or "Christians," eschatology and its apocalyptic images served a legitimate purpose when secondary to soteriology. When disruptive of church order and structure, as thoroughgoing apocalyptic could be, eschatology had to take a subordinate place. As proponents of established denominational hierarchies, Presbyterian and Methodist clergy worked to set up churches according to fairly strict patterns based on long-standing traditions. The people on the frontier needed something different. Revivals and camp meetings gave them the freedom and the excitement they coveted. When apocalyptic ideas and practices broke out in response to the perceived call of the Holy Spirit, centrist revival leaders firmly attached such ideas and practices to core Christian teaching and avoided extreme apocalyptic tendencies. The greatest evil consequently occurred when those who had been enlightened by the revivals broke away from orthodox churches and joined thoroughgoing apocalyptic groups like the Shakers.

The Shakers, known as The United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Coming, held that their founder, "Mother" Ann Lee, represented the bodily fulfillment of the Messiah's second advent by her appearance in the New World. Shakers combined a simple communal lifestyle and lively worship rituals with what could be called realized

---

[24]*Constitution of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in the United States of America . . . as Revised and Adopted by the General Assembly at Princeton, KY, May 1829*, 3rd ed. (Nashville: James Smith, 1834), 129-131, 134.

millennial ideology. In their departure from traditional Christian beliefs, they believed themselves to be "custodians of truth miraculously received from heaven."[25] This represented a new authority and source for spiritual guidance, and such extremes proved too much for most revivalists. Cartwright lamented the need to do battle with the visionary Shakers, and Stone called the Shakers "our bitter enemies" who worked "magic, like Simon Magus" and taught "old woman's fables."[26] Because John Dunlavy and Richard McNemar, two of Stone's cosigners of "The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery," had defected to the Shakers, Stone decried their teachings. Stone lamented:

> Now the peculiar doctrines of the Shakers are, that Christ has come the second time in Ann Lee, without sin unto salvation–that we are now to obtain salvation by Ann Lee, and not by Jesus of Nazareth; that the final judgment is come and going on by the Shakers–they forbid to marry–they deny the resurrection of the body from the dead, or from the grave–they hold to auricular confession of sin, & c.[27]

---

[25]Iain H. Murray, *Revival and Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism, 1750-1858* (Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth Trust, 1994), 173.

[26]Cartwright, *Autobiography*, 47; Stone, *Biography*, 62-63.

[27]Stone, *Address to the Christian Churches*, 101. See too John Dunlavy, *The Manifesto, or a Declaration of the Doctrine and Practice of the Church of Christ* (1818; repr., Cincinnati: Art Guild Reprints, 1968), 487-520; "A Brief Account of the Entrance and Progress of What the World Call Shakerism, Among the Subjects of the Late Revival in Ohio and Kentucky" in Richard McNemar, *Kentucky Revival; or, a Short History of the Late Extraordinary Outpouring of the Spirit of God in the Western States of America, Agreeably to Scripture Promises and Prophecies concerning the Latter Day . . .* (repr.; New York: Edward O. Jenkins, 1846), 87-105; and "The Great Revival of 1801, 1802, 1803, and the Introduction of Shakerism," from Josiah Morrow, *The History of Warren County, Ohio* (1882; repr., Mt. Vernon, Indiana: Windmill Publications, 1992), transcribed by Arne Trelvik, 20 August 2003, http://www.rootsweb.com/~ohwarren/Beers/III/0267.htm (accessed 9 October 2006).

What most bothered Stone was the disruption of Christian soteriology by the Shakers (e.g., "salvation by Ann Lee and not by Jesus of Nazareth") and their denial of a future resurrection and judgment by a scheme of realized eschatology (e.g., "final judgment is come and going on by the Shakers"). For Christian traditionalists, the Shakers had gone beyond the legitimate boundaries for apocalyptic teaching and practice.[28]

In the Old Southwest, the early nineteenth-century revivals began among the Presbyterians who suffered serious disturbances to their fellowship. Iain Murray, a Scottish scholar of Reformed theology and its history, fittingly recapped the damage:

> One Presbyterian minister became a Quaker; another finally took his people into union with Alexander Campbell's Disciples of Christ; McNemar and two others went the full distance into delusion to become Shakers and supporters of Ann Lee's prophecies; three formed the nucleus for what became the Cumberland Presbyterian Church . . . ; while others, including McGready and Marshall, who had been temporarily carried away, finally remained with their brethren.[29]

In fact, every Protestant church on the frontier went through tensions and division between 1800 and 1820 due partly to the upheaval created by the fervent revivals. Some time after, Archibald Alexander, a professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, offered an explanation of the revivals in a letter to his friend George Baxter, who was a professor at Union Theological Seminary in Richmond, Virginia. He rationalized the unusual bodily phenomena and explained:

> The Spirit of God was really poured out, and . . . many sincere converts were made, especially in the commencement of the revival; but too much

---

[28]For the Shaker view, see Stephen J. Stein, "'Taking up the Full Cross': The Shaker Challenge to the Western 'Christians'," *Discipliana* 65, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 93-110.

[29]Murray, *Revival and Revivalism*, 170-171.

> indulgence was given to a heated imagination, and too much stress was laid on the bodily affections, which *accompanied the work*, as though these were supernatural phenomena, intended to arouse the attention of a careless world. . . . Thus, what was really a bodily infirmity, was considered to be a supernatural means of awakening and convincing infidels, and other irreligious persons.[30]

Alexander's identification of these phenomena as "bodily infirmities" or, as suggested by an even later interpreter, "nervous affections, which produced horrible convulsions of the body and contortions of the countenance,"[31] drew from insights of medical science and minimized the direct effect of perceived supernatural forces.

Many revivalists most likely would have disagreed with this assessment. They asserted in spite of the difficulties the God-given nature and purpose of the revivals and its accompanying phenomena, and often they did so in heightened apocalyptic language. Revivalist Jennings, for example, firmly believed in God's direct involvement in the cosmos and the revivals. He accepted the ancient chiliastic idea that one day of creation equaled one thousand years of human history, and six thousand years would precede the final epoch of eternal rest. "Six thousand years are now drawing near a close, when *rest* from wickedness shall take place," he affirmed. Jennings reiterated this ancient teaching as trustworthy and asserted that "omens of that good day are now at the door." He elaborated:

> What is the Lord about! Behold, the spirit of missionary in various lands encreasing! Behold the travail of Zion, swelling to solemn cry, "Thy kingdom

---

[30]Ibid. On this important shift in the interpretation of religious experience, see Ann Taves, *Fits, Trances, and Visions: Experiencing Religion and Explaining Experience from Wesley to James* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999).

[31]Morrow, *The History of Warren County, Ohio*, transcribed by Trelvik in "The Great Revival . . . and the Introduction of Shakerism."

> come, Thy Will be done" (which implies that every thing which stands in contrast as a hindrance must be removed) that God may send forth judgment unto victory! . . . Consequently what wonder if God should arise to shake terribly the earth, and sweep those as with the besom of destruction (by sword, famine, or pestilence, which are the scourages of the Almighty to correct the disobedience of the children of men) who stand in the way of others getting religion. . . . These meetings which originated in the order of God, undesigned by man, and of which the devil's kingdom, with deism, &c. felt the effect.[32]

Jennings no doubt would have rejected Professor Alexander's rationalization of the revival phenomena and its apocalyptic implications as merely "bodily infirmities." But as secularism continued to grip the nation and its religious leaders during the course of the nineteenth century, effusive apocalyptic rhetoric became less tolerable in centrist Protestant churches. Even on the frontier, those inclined to favor the Spirit's guidance toward visions with cosmic consequences increasingly found acceptance of these ideas in utopian societies and fringe religious groups. Others who dared not break away from traditional Christian institutions and thereby forfeit their salvation began to comprehend apocalyptic notions in the framework of postmillennial thought.

---

[32]Jennings, *Defence of the Camp Meetings*, 46-48.