

From Calvinism to Arminianism: Baptists and The Second Great Awakening (1800-1835)

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The newly-constituted United States of America experienced the second great religious revival during the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Because of its magnitude as a revival movement and its pervasive influence on the future of American religious life, this phenomenon has been termed the Second Great Awakening.

An Awakening is more than a simultaneous eruption of isolated revivals. For a reordering of such magnitude to occur, certain conditions must apply, according to William G. McLoughlin:

1. a grave theological reorientation within the churches;
2. a concurrent ecclesiastical conflict;
3. a particularly grave sense of social and spiritual cleavage both within the churches and between the churches and the world;
4. a feeling on the part of those outside the churches that Christianity has a particular relevance to their contemporary situation both individually and corporately (McLoughlin 7).
5. I would add that each awakening brought about a revitalization of hymn singing and the introduction of new hymns.

The First Great Awakening (c. 1725-1750) was thoroughly Calvinistic, being carried forward by Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield. The Second Awakening, as we shall see, was transitional between Calvinism and Arminianism. The third was characterized by the emergence of mass evangelism with such figures as Dwight L. Moody and Billy Sunday. The fourth continued the techniques and practices of modern revivalism, as it evolved during the second awakening, with twentieth-century technology and with popular musical styles. It was represented most typically by Billy Graham.

Among the larger societal issues that faced the new republic immediately after the Revolution were 1) The organization of the new government; 2) religious apathy, which had reached its peak, in part due to the extended focus on establishing America's independence; 3) the disruption of church life by the Revolution, especially among those bodies with strong ties to Europe; 4) the influence of the Enlightenment and Deism, producing the threat of "infidelity;" and 5) social issues such as alcoholism and frontier isolationism.

In terms of dating The Second Great Awakening, the earliest outbreak of revivals most likely occurred at Hampton-Sidney College in Virginia in 1786. Several short-lived revivals followed in Connecticut during 1790s, and Timothy Dwight led a famous revival as president of Yale in 1802 following a series of sermons on infidelity.

The rural phase of the revival was typified by the famous camp-meeting at Cane Ridge, KY near Paris and Lexington. Thousands came together for this the largest recorded camp meeting. Camp meetings were usually 4-day events; were interdenominational in scope; featured several

dramatic preachers, improvised singing, choruses, and folk styles of music; included the Lord's Supper; and were intensely emotional conversion experiences.

The other phenomenon characteristic of the Second Awakening was the urban revival movement that began in the North. A contemporary writer delineated the two:

In New England the character of the communities has always been of a grave and sober cast, where thought takes lead of feeling; and the temperament of the ministry more severe than ardent—more prone to stock the understanding than excite the passions. Hence the public excitements of revivals have never exposed the people or the minister to extravagancies. The most remarkable characteristic of such seasons, is not noise but stillness—the reign of contemplative silence and solemn reflection (Colton 133).

Because awakenings require a theological reorientation, it might be helpful to summarize very briefly what had transpired since the First Great Awakening. The term given to nineteenth-century revival theology was the New Haven Theology, so-called because of Yale's central position in this transition. This was the end product of several theologians' efforts to reinterpret the Calvinism of Jonathan Edwards. Joseph Bellamy and Jonathan Edwards, Jr. softened the idea of God as absolute sovereign, who foreordained each soul's eternal destiny, to that of God as the *Moral Governor*. Christ's atoning death was an expression of God's love and the demonstration of his moral government. Bellamy also denied that salvation was limited only to the elect (Ahlstrom 407).

Samuel Hopkins, who like Bellamy was a student of Jonathan Edwards, modified the concept of original sin to say that man was depraved by nature but that his guilt for sin was not the result of Adam's original sin. Sin was the result of self-love, and one must turn from a self-centered life to one of concern for all humans (Marsden 35-38). The Second Awakening, as a result, spawned several organizations committed to social activism, including the temperance, education, and abolition movements.

Scottish Common Sense Realism became the dominant philosophy in American intellectual circles in the late eighteenth century. It recognized humans' rational powers and the ability to intuit self-evident moral principles. These beliefs influenced revival practitioners to appeal to the rational faculties as well as to the emotions. (Marsden 233; Ahlstrom 355-356)

The founder of modern revivalism was Charles G. Finney (1792-1875). He established most of the practices that would define revivalism to the present day, even though he maintained strong Calvinistic leanings throughout his life. The First Great Awakening was generally believed to have been a divine initiative without human intervention. Finney, on the other hand, defined a revival as "the purely philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means" (Finney 12). The *new measures*, as he called them included the anxious bench, inquiry meetings, public prayer for individuals by name, and public prayer by women. In the context of the protracted meeting, the standard urban revival format, these means for promoting a revival became the mainstay of professional revivalists. For Finney, each individual was given the power to accept or reject salvation. Finney believed that the revivalist's function was "to utilize the laws of mind

in order to engineer individuals and crowds into making a choice which was ostensibly based upon free will” (Finney 205).

Finney’s views on music, however, retained vestiges of Calvinism. He wrote:

A great deal of singing often injures a prayer meeting. The agonizing spirit of prayer does not lead people to sing. . . . Singing is the natural expression of feelings that are joyful and cheerful. The spirit of prayer is not a spirit of joy. It is a spirit of travail, and agony of soul, supplicating and pleading with God with strong cryings and groanings that cannot be uttered (Finney 126).

There was no hint of the “sanctifying power” of song which motivated Sankey nor which leads modern worshippers to sing “in the Spirit.” In fact, Finney said he “never knew a singing revival to amount to much” (Finney 127). Rather than unifying the congregation through singing, Finney believed that “common singing dissipates feeling” (Finney 127).

Baptists were actively involved in the initial phases of both the rural and urban revival practices, even though the Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Methodists were the leaders. The division among Baptists, as defined by Walter Shurden and others, into the Charleston tradition and the Sandy Creek tradition roughly parallels that of the urban revivals and camp meetings. We might be surprised to learn that the Baptists who were active in the Kentucky camp meetings were known for their restraint. David Benedict, in *A General History of the Baptist Denomination in America* (1813) wrote:

It was computed that about ten thousand were baptized and added to the Baptist churches in the course of two or three years. This great work progressed among the Baptists in a much more regular manner than people abroad have generally supposed. They were indeed zealously affected, and much engaged. Many of their ministers baptized in a number of neighbouring churches from two to four hundred each. And two of them baptized about five hundred a-piece [*sic*] in the course of the work. But throughout the whole, they preserved a good degree of decorum and order. Those camp-meetings, those great parades and sacramental seasons, those extraordinary exercises of falling down, rolling, shouting, jerking, dancing, barking, &c. were but little known among the Baptists in Kentucky, nor encouraged by them. They [i.e., the “exercises”], it is true, prevailed among some of them in the Green River country, but generally speaking, they were among the Presbyterians and Methodists (McBeth167).

For my dissertation, I studied the three most influential hymn books of the Second Great Awakening: Calvinist evangelist Asahel Nettleton’s *Village Hymns* and a companion tune book, *Zion’s Harp* (1824); Joshua Leavitt’s *The Christian Lyre* (1832), which he intended for use by Finney but which Finney rejected; and finally *Spiritual Songs for Social Worship* (1833) by Thomas Hastings and Lowell Mason. The latter two contained both music and text. I examined several Baptist revival collections during the course of this study, and these will serve to illustrate various musical aspects of the awakening.

The compiler who set the stage for revival music to be associated with the music of the broader cultural landscape was Joshua Smith. His *Divine Hymns, or Spiritual Songs* was first issued in 1784 and was revised and reprinted until as late as 1816. It was one hymnbook designated by Samuel Holyoke for use with *The Christian Harmonist* (1804). Textually related to Smith's book, *The Christian Harmony* (1805) by Jeremiah Ingalls was the first source to print revival tunes from oral tradition and was intended for Baptists in New England. According to David Klocko, Smith's *Divine Hymns* was the primary text source for Ingalls. Others included *The Methodist Pocket Hymn-Book*, Isaac Watts' hymns, and two other revival collections (Ingalls VIII). Ingalls borrowed his thirty-six polyphonic pieces from English and American tunebooks. Almost one-fourth of the tunes were from "Anglo-American oral sources" or were melodies rendered in a folk style. In his preface to the facsimile edition, Klocko specifically identifies thirty contrafacta adapted from secular sources. Among the more familiar of these contrafacta are "Jesus Christ, the Appletree," and the Captain Kidd tune, which is the same meter, but not the same tune, as WONDROUS LOVE.

While Klocko identifies several contrafacta derived from folk-tune sources, he does not mention that the one survivor from this book in our hymnals, CHARITY, the tune for "I love thee, I love thee," was also derived from a secular English folk tune. The resemblance between this tune and this variant of the LORD RANDAL ballad is striking. (ILLUSTRATIONS ONE AND TWO)

Through Ingalls and later in Mercer's *Cluster*, we shall see that Joshua Smith's work continued to influence revival compilers for generations.

The Cluster of Spiritual Songs (third edition, 1810) was compiled by Jesse Mercer, for whom Mercer University is named. It was first published in unbound editions prior to 1810, the date of the earliest extant edition (Music & Richardson 188 fn.). Like other hymnbooks, Mercer's contains many of the standard British hymns of its day. It also includes nineteen hymns with choruses and thirty-five with semi-choruses or repetitive words (Brewster 168). Even though the book presents itself as more representative of the Sandy Creek tradition, Mercer himself remained a Calvinist (Brewster 20).

The Cluster contains "The Voice of Free Grace," a widely-circulated hymn that appeared in 352 hymn and tune books, according to *The Dictionary of North American Hymnology* (http://www.hymnary.org/text/the_voice_of_free_grace_cries_escape). The hymn was written by Richard Burdsall (1735-1824), a Wesleyan Minister. I have chosen a version from Leavitt's *The Christian Lyre* with its commonly-used tune SCOTLAND (ILLUSTRATION THREE). Incidentally, this text and tune may be heard on the Cyber Hymnal web site. (<http://www.cyberhymnal.org/htm/v/f/vfgracec.htm>)

Perhaps this statement of Mercer's theology helps us to reconcile our notion of free grace with that of nineteenth-century Calvinists. Speaking of a fellow minister,

In doctrine, bro Roberts was sound and evangelical. His views were in accord with the faith of the Baptists in the State. . . . The theme of his preaching was *free grace*. Man's depravity from the fall of Adam, Regeneration and Faith by the operation and influence of the Holy Spirit, and the Perseverance through grace to Eternal Life (Brewster 20).

In other words, grace was freely offered through Christ's atonement, but since humankind is depraved, God in His sovereignty foreordained who would be saved. It was not a product of human works; instead, it was the duty of each person to discover whether or not he or she were among the elect. There appears to be a concurrent arrangement of hymn books in this Calvinistic vein that reflects a progression of the soul through such states as "invitation and warning," "conviction and conversion," "believer's baptism," and "perseverance in grace." Mercer himself wrote a hymn that illustrates the struggle of the soul under conviction:

O how shall I myself assure,
 That I am safe in Christ secure,
 Or that I do in him believe,
 And from him grace for grace receive?

And in stanzas seven and eight:

Others I hear say they have found
 The Saviour precious all around;
 But I am mostly cold and dead,
 Which often makes me sore afraid.

Some Christians when they come to die,
 Seem full of joy and long to fly;

But I have oft a tortur'd mind,
Lest I shall then be left behind.

As mentioned earlier, Mercer owed a debt to Joshua Smith. In comparing the two books, Mercer eventually employed fifty-four texts that also appeared in *Divine Hymns*.

Elder Jacob Knapp identified himself as “the first Evangelist of the Baptist denomination now in the field” (Knapp 219). In his essay on evangelism contained in *The Evangelical Harp* (1845), he compares earlier revivals with the current phenomenon and reveals himself to be a proponent of the new measures:

It is not many years since, the idea that we could have a revival *any where* [sic] and at *any time*, when the right means were used in good faith, was considered wild, fanatical and heretical, both by ministers and churches. Indeed, many thought there was a time fixed by the decree of Heaven, when God would pour out His Spirit, and that nothing could prevent it, and that no means could produce a revival, until that time arrived. . . . and now, when revivals are gotten up without the aid of Evangelists, their measures are employed, protracted meetings are gotten up, anxious seats are used, efforts are made to arouse the church, and set all at work, and revival hymns are sung. . . . The wonderful increase of the Baptist denomination within the last twelve years, under God, is to be attributed more to the combined and harmonious labors of pastors and evangelists, than to any other one thing (Knapp 201). . . .

The character of his book reflects the lighter nature of revival music at this time, including tunes in two and three parts, some with choruses. Knapp's revival in Boston spawned *Revival Melodies* containing "popular and favorite hymns as they were originally sung at the meetings of the Rev. Mr. Knapp" (Music and Richardson 309). We see in his work the beginnings of music of a lighter nature becoming associated with revivals.

E[dwin]. T[heodore]. Winkler, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Charleston, South Carolina, published a revival collection titled *The Sacred Lute: A Collection of Popular Hymns* (1855) through the auspices of the Southern Baptist Publication Society. Basil and Basil Manly, Jr. had issued *The Baptist Psalmody* (1850) through the society, and Winkler's publication was intended as a revival and "social" collection (Music and Richardson 217). It contained only texts. The 1861 edition, however, contains a section of twenty-seven choruses. Among those we would recognize are

Happy day! Happy day!/When Jesus washed my sins away. . . .

Hallelujah to the Lamb!/Who hath purchased our pardon

I am bound for the promised land. . . .

His [the compiler's] primary object was to collect into one book, the spiritual songs, to which in social gatherings and religious awakenings our people instinctively recur:--to repeat the sacred, impassioned utterances, which, on all such occasions break forth, as well from the churches of our cities, as from our forest sanctuaries, remote amid the shadows of the oak and the pine. . . . They are, for the most part, hymns of a similar character; expressive of states of unconstrained, and generally of elevated, Christian feeling (Winkler 4).

Winkler's organization reflects a concern with order, as is the case with books spawned in the Charleston and urban traditions. His section of 118 revival hymns is organized into six sections: Preparation for a Revival; Sinners Warned; Sinners Invited; Inquirers; Converts; and The Spread of the Gospel. If, as Music and Richardson state, *The Baptist Psalmody* was the first "official" Southern Baptist hymnal, then *The Sacred Lute* was likely the first revival collection issued by Southern Baptists.

One important outgrowth of the Second Great Awakening was the adoption of the revival model for Southern Baptist worship. As Finney wrote: "All ministers should be revival ministers, and all preaching should be revival preaching, that is, it should be calculated to promote holiness" (Finney 208). The most influential preacher of his time, and some say one of the most influential men in America, was Lyman Beecher, who opposed Finney's extreme methods. Beecher's desire as a pastor, however, was to foster continuous revival. Finney's association with Thomas Hastings and Beecher's with Lowell Mason ensured that music would become an integral part of

evangelical worship. Mason recounted an incident that occurred during an inquiry meeting, in which Beecher interrupted the private conversations among believers and the anxious to have Mason lead “The Voice of Free Grace,” which we examined earlier. The following day, Beecher informed Mason that at least one convert had been gained during the hymn (Cross 114). Thus, the Second Great Awakening not only established the model for revivals for the next two hundred years, but it also bequeathed a revivalistic model for Baptist worship that has shaped us to this very hour.

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ILLUSTRATION ONE

44

Charity.

Oh! Jesus, my Saviour, to thee I submit, With love and thanksgiving fall down at thy feet, My

sacri - fice offer, of soul, flesh and blood, Thou art my Redeemer, my Lord, and my God.

ILLUSTRATION TWO
I 2. LORD RANDAL



The copy is as noted by Herzog, except that his signature, "4/4," has been altered to 6/8, and the pitch is raised.

"What have you been eating, O Billy my son?
What have you been eating, my own darling one?"
"Fried eels and a serpent, mother; make my bed soon,
For I'm sick to the heart and I fain would lie down."

"What's willed to your brother, O Billy my son?
What's willed to your brother, my own darling one?"
"A suit of fine clothing; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm sick to the heart and I fain would lie down."

"What's willed to your sister, O Billy my son?
What's willed to your sister, my own darling one?"
"A rope for to hang her; mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm sick to the heart and I fain would lie down."

17. [Lord Randal]

Sharp MSS., 3331/2438. Also in Sharp and Karpeles, 1932, I, pp. 39(C)-40. Sung by Emma Hensley (13), Carmen, N.C., August 28, 1916.

m π^1



Sharp and Karpeles, 1932, transpose to E major.

1. It's what did you eat for your breakfast, Jimmy Randal my son?
It's what did you eat for your breakfast, my own dearest son?
It's cold pie and cold coffee. Mother, make my bed soon,
For I'm sick at the heart and I want to lie down.
2. It's what will you will to your father . . .
My mules and my wagons.

3. It's what will you will to your brother . . .
My house and plantation.
4. It's what will you will to your sister . . .
My gold and my silver.
5. It's what will you will to your mother . . .
My trunk and my clothing.
6. It's what will you will to your sweetheart . . .
Bulrushes, bulrushes, and them half parched brown,
For she's the whole cause of my lying down.
7. Where do you want to be buried . . .
By my little baby.

18. [Lord Randal]

Sharp MSS., 420/545. Also in Sharp, *JFSS*, II (1905), p. 31(5). Sung by Miss Doveton Brown, Clevedon, September 11, 1904.

m π^1



O where have you been to, Randal my son?
O where have you been to, my handsome young man?
Hunting, mother, hunting, O make my bed soon,
For I'm sick at the heart and I fain would lie down.

Where had you your dinner, Randal my son?
I dined with my love, O make, etc.

What had you for dinner, Randal my son?
Eels boiled in broth, O make, etc.

O where are your blood hounds, Randal my son?
They swelled and they died, O make, etc.

I fear you are poisoned, Randal my son?
Yes, yes, I am poisoned, O make, etc.

Sharp's MS. note: "Sung by Miss Doveton Brown of Clevedon, who learned it when a child from her mother, who had it from her grandmother, Elizabeth Grossman, who was born in 1784."

19. "William, my Son"

Editor, from E. S. McLellan, Jr., Berkeley, Calif., 1933; learned from his mother, who learned it from her uncle, Captain John Wilson, a Confederate soldier, of Roane County, W.Va.

p I/M

29. FREE GRACE

1. The voice of free grace
 Comes echoing in the mountain,
 For Adam's lost race,
 Christ has opened a fountain,
 For sin and transgression,
 And every pollution,
 The blood flows freely
 In streams of salvation.
*Hallelujah to the Lamb,
 Who purchased our pardon,
 We'll praise him again,
 When we pass over Jordan.*

2. This fountain so clear,
 In which all may find pardon,
 From Jesus' side flows
 In plenteous redemption:
 Though your sins they were
 raised
 As high as a mountain,
 The blood it flows freely
 From Jesus the fountain.
Hallelujah, &c.

3. O Jesus! ride on,
 Thy kingdom is glorious,
 Over sin, death and hell,
 Thine will make us victorious,
 Thy name shall be praised
 In the great congregation,
 And saints shall delight
 Ascribing salvation.
Hallelujah, &c.

4. When on Zion we stand,
 Having gained the blest shore,
 With our harps in our hands
 We will praise him evermore,
 We will range the blest fields
 On the banks of the river,
 And sing hallelujahs
 For ever and ever.
Hallelujah, &c.

30. WARR, ISLES OF THE SOUTH

Composed by W. E. Tappan, and
 sung on the wharf in New Ha-
 ven, at the embarkation of the
 missionaries to the Sandwich
 Islands, in 1822.

1. WARR, Isles of the South!
 Your redemption is near,
 No longer repose
 In the borders of gloom;
 The strength of his chosen,
 In love will appear,
 And light shall arise
 On the verge of the tomb.

2. The billows that girt ye,
 The wild waves that roar,
 The zephyrs that play
 Where the ocean storms cease,
 Shall bear the rich freight
 To your desolate shore,
 Shall wait the glad tidings
 Of pardon and peace.

3. On the islands that sit
 In the regions of night,
 The lands of despair,
 To oblivion a prey,
 The morning will open
 With healing and light;
 The young Star of Bethlehem
 Will ripen to-day.

4. The altar and idol,
 In dust overthrown,
 The incense forbade
 That was hallowed with blood,
 The Priest of Melechizedec,
 There shall atone,
 And the shrines of Atool
 Be sacred to God.

5. The heathen will hasten
 To welcome the time,
 The day spring the prophet
 In vision once saw,
 When the beams of Messiah
 Will illumine each clime,
 And the isles of the ocean
 Shall wait for his law.

