

DEVELOPMENT AND CONTRIBUTION
OF
EARLY RELIGIOUS JOURNALISM
IN THE UNITED STATES

By

Pier D. Aldershof

B.A., University of Iowa

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INTRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

A. The Subject Introduced

Religious Journalism in the United States has played an important part in the field of professional journalism in America, yet seldom has it been studied thoroughly. It is true that some authors in their books on journalism, in others in their study of magazines, have devoted some attention to religious periodicals, but no one has seen his way to write a history, or to evaluate the contribution, of religious journalism in America.

B. Purpose

It is the purpose of this thesis to be a history of the earliest Protestant magazines and periodicals, and also to be an evaluation of their contribution. In order to give a valid appraisal of the contribution of the religious journalism in its infancy it has been found necessary to devote some attention to the history of the times during which the religious periodicals came into existence. This will lead to an acquaintance with the contributing factors which led to the establishment of Protestant journalism in America.

A study like this can serve two purposes: It can become a maid-servant to history, and it can become an in-

strument with which can be measured the effect of religious thought upon the minds and hearts of the people. This thesis has kept this fact in mind, and careful attention has been paid to the religious life of the time when Protestant journalism made its appearance in the United States. In the various chapters the religious life of the people has been touched, especially as reflected in the periodicals of the time.

This particular investigation has been made with this point in view, and also has focused upon the idea of being, as nearly as possible, an accurate history of early religious journalism in the United States. It may also be said that this study is not only a history of the beginning of this type of journalism, and an examination of the times during which it developed, but also an evaluation of the contribution which it has made to mankind.

C. Limitation of the Subject

Naturally such an inquiry must be limited. To write an entire history of this particular type of journalistic endeavor is obviously impossible in this study. For that reason an arbitrary limit of about fifty years has been set. Roughly speaking the investigation therefore concerns itself with the period of 1780-1830, with especial attention given to the early Nationalistic period. It was during that time that there was great interest in the founding of religious journals. As indicated

in the chapter on the history and background of the times, there were many factors which influenced the founding of these periodicals.

Books were published in greater number than ever before during this time. Literature in general took a rapid upward trend during the rise and development of the American nation. This study cannot concern itself with the books of the time, however, and has therefore been strictly limited to an examination of the periodicals of the time.

D. Definition of Terms

In connection with the relation of books and periodicals, including magazines, the question naturally arises: Just what is meant by religious journalism, if books are not included? The answer is that by religious journalism is meant the newspaper and periodical literature directly concerned with religious matters. These newspapers and periodicals may be published in different formats and also at different times. But any periodical or magazine published at least every three months would be included in the classification of journalism.

By newspapers we do not necessarily mean big metropolitan papers like the New York papers, but any publication issued regularly, without stapling, stitching, or cover.

Under periodical literature many types of jour-

nalistic products may be included. In the period with which we are dealing there were two main types of journalistic productions. They may be roughly classified as (1) periodicals, and (2) magazines. By periodicals we mean anything that has periodicity, and includes therefore a variety of publications. It may include magazines although they may be defined as bound pamphlets, issued more or less regularly, and containing a variety of reading matter. In a magazine there also must be present an element of entertainment if it is to fall under a proper classification of magazines.

There is still another type of journalistic production that should be mentioned here, and that is a publication. By publication is meant any issue of the press which may or may not be published at regular intervals, but must be printed under the same name at various times. Several of the periodicals of the early nationalistic period would come under this classification, as many of them were not published regularly.

It can readily be seen that these terms are all more or less indistinct and confused in common language. This certainly seems true when one peruses the literature of the United States during the last 200 years. It would be hard to find precise definitions for many of the products issued from the presses during these years.

Regardless of definition one can readily see

what is meant by religious journalism. It is that kind of writing for print, excepting books and pamphlets, which concerns itself chiefly, if not exclusively, with religious subjects.

E. Religion and Journalism

A word may be said about religious journalism in general and also of writing about religious subjects. Journalism always concerns itself with these matters in which the entire public or a section of the public is interested. Each particular newspaper or magazine has its individual and special appeal. In religious journalism this appeal is directed to a person's religious feelings and experience. Religion has always been one of man's greatest adventures and one of the phases of life with which he has concerned himself most. In this connection it is worthwhile to point out that Christianity, which has been the expression of millions of people for nearly twenty centuries, has from its beginning been a literary religion. Hurst * has pointed out that before the first Christian century was half over, the followers of Jesus Christ had begun to write in the interest of their faith. From that time to the present this Christian literature has continued to grow. "Today," he says, "it is a literature as great and as rich as any, and is one of the

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* Hurst, Geo. L. "An Outline of the History of Christian Literature."

remarkable achievements of the church." * Looking at the multitude of religious periodicals that now stream from the presses we can readily assent to such a statement.

F. Justification for Investigation

Because religious literature is one of the remarkable achievements of the Christian church, the present investigation is justified. As stated before, very little has been done in the field of history or evaluation of the contribution religious journalism has made to the life of the American people, and that religious journalism has made such a contribution no one can deny when an extensive study of the journals of a hundred years ago is undertaken. These journals reflect the thought of the time, and they also reflect the religious experience of the people. An effort has been made in this thesis to indicate some of the thought and experiences of the people. For these various reasons a study like the one undertaken here seems warranted.

G. Method of Study

In regard to method pursued we point out that first of all an effort has been made to see what various writers have written on the subject, and this is used as a background for the thesis. The material presented by authors and writers of books is very limited, if the

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* Hurst, op. cit., p. 1

field of religious journalism is touched by them at all. In the second place the history of the times has been investigated. This is given as primary background for both reader and writer. After that an intensive study has been made of various representative magazines and periodicals of the period, and this has been organized as a history of American Protestant journalism. Following this there is a more detailed examination of the contents of the various journals, and then the contribution of this type of journalism was evaluated.

H. Sources

Concerning sources of material we may remark that along with examination of what other writers have had to say on this subject, an intensive investigation of original documents has been made. Some of these documents are so rare that they have to be kept locked up in the rare book room of the New York Public Library, and one may consult them only when locked in this room. Other files are found in different libraries where they have been for years and have never been touched, testimony of which is the layer of dust that usually covers them. Many of the magazines are damaged, some of the files are incomplete, in others the printing is obliterated, and still others are likely to crumble to pieces when handled, yet it is a study of documents like these which makes this investigation valuable and authoritative.

CHAPTER I

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF THE TIMES

A. Spiritual life

1. Preachers and dogmatic theology
2. Denominational divisions
3. Attacks on traditional forms of Christian faith
4. Organization of religious forces
5. The foundation of seminaries
6. Various religious influences

B. Intellectual Life

C. Political, Social, and Economic Life.

D. Summary

CHAPTER I
HISTORY AND BACKGROUND OF THE TIMES

A. Spiritual Life

In order to fully appreciate the difficulties which the editors has, and also to indicate the contribution of the religious periodicals to the people of the nationalistic period, it is necessary to give a brief sketch of the times.

1. Preachers and Dogmatic Theology

Along spiritual lines the ministers of the Gospel were the leaders and they had a firm grip on the lives of the people. But not only were they the spiritual leaders, they were also the intellectual leaders. As Beard says "everywhere, except among the Quakers, who had no clerical estate, preachers with their passionate interest in dogma, in theology, and in dominion over the minds of the laymen, stood at the gates of knowledge with flaming swords.

"Following the tradition of sixteen hundred years in the Old World, the Puritan divines of New England took to the printed word with holy fervor, filling yards of shelves with volumes, tracts, and pamphlets. They wrote heavy treatises on the Christian Doctrine of Orig-

inal Sin and brochures on Eternal Damnation and the Punishment of Sinners. Even secular matters, such as wars, and shipwrecks, were viewed in the light of divine purpose."*

That this method of preaching the word by printing was effective, is brought out by Beard when he says that with the spread of printing, the theories of theology sometimes in curious shapes ran as current coin among the masses.**

2. Denominational Divisions

As regards denominations in America, it may be stated that already during this period there was a great variety. "The Congregationalists predominated in New England, but outside of that region they found very little support. The Church of England was dominant in the South ...The Dutch in their Reformed Church constituted the oldest body of Calvinists in America. The Germans---some of them also Calvinists in their own Reformed Church---were in many cases Lutherans or Moravians, chiefly in New York, Pennsylvania, and North Carolina....The Scotch-Irish were of a sterner religious temper than any of these, and, tracing their spiritual ancestry back to Presbyterianism of Scotland and the north of Ireland, they looked upon

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* Beard, Chas. A. and Mary R. "The Rise of American Civilization" p. 146
 ** Ibid, p. 149

their religion as a subject worthy of constant thought
and frequent discussion."^{*}

The Baptists were strongly entrenched in Rhode Island, with a somewhat precarious hold on other parts of New England and South Carolina. "The Friends, or Quakers, finding their earliest home also in Rhode Island, became especially prominent in the Middle Colonies, Virginia, and North Carolina....The Methodists at this time...began their career as a spiritual force in America with Robert Strawbridge in Western Maryland about 1764. Most of the Roman Catholics were to be found in Maryland and a few in other colonies."^{**} All this indicates that there was great diversity of religious beliefs. It must also be remarked that some of these denominations were stronger than others. The Congregational and Anglican churches at the beginning of the period seem to have been the strongest.

3. Attacks on Traditional Faith

The religious life of the people may be characterized by saying that "In all the states religion still held a foremost place in the lives and consciences of the people, although in most all of the states the affairs of religion had been entirely separated from the affairs of the government, and churches were no longer supported at public expense."^{***}

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* Andrews, Chas. M. "Colonial Folkways" pp 160-1

** Ibid, p. 162

*** Forman, S. E. "Advanced American History" p. 243

The political and economic revolution, as well as advance of science and invention, the accumulation of knowledge, and the blasts of foreign influence---all these reflected upon the intellect and theology of the times. In the realm of theology it may be said that in many circles of America "the trinitarian doctrine of Christianity crumbled under two fires. On the part of theologians, especially in New England, there went on during the eighteenth century a continuous debate over the traditional forms of Christian faith, which eventuated in a return to one of primitive creeds, a widespread acceptance of the unitarian view of Christ's teachings and mission."

4. Organization of Religious Forces

Another change in religious life in the United States was that more emphasis was laid upon organization. "Soon after the Revolution most of the great churches of America sought national organization....In 1784 James Seabury was consecrated as Bishop of Connecticut at Aberdeen, Scotland; he came over and in the next year was held the first general convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States. The Methodist church, founded by Wesley and Whitefield, began its formal American organization in 1784 when the Methodists summoned a national conference, which adopted the title Methodist Episcopal and gave to Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke the title of Bishop."

* Beard, op. cit., p. 447

** Hart, A. B. "Essentials in American History" p.230

The body which became the General Convention of the Universalist church was organized in September, 1785. The year 1789 was noticeable for the organization of three groups. In that year the first conference of the congregations of United Brethern was held in Baltimore. In the second place the Protestant Episcopal Church in the U. S. of America held its first convention in Philadelphia and adopted a constitution. In the third place the first general assembly of the Presbyterian Church in U.S. met in Philadelphia; and at that time there were 188 ministers and 419 churches, distributed into four synods and 17 presbyteries. Of this organization of the Presbyterians in the United States one writer says:

"Another type of church government was established when in 1789 the Presbyterian local synods united in "the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America," which has ever since been the supreme governing body of that church. The Dutch Reformed church of New York and New Jersey, though closely akin to the Presbyterian church in doctrine, had a separate synod." ***

We find that the Reformed Church in U. S. severed its connection with the parent body in Europe in 1792. Little is heard of the organization of national religious bodies for a time, perhaps on account of strife and warfare, then rampant, until 1825, when the 25th of May the American Unitarian Association was organized at Boston.

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* Belford, Robt. James "A History of the United States" p 98
 ** Ibid, p. 103
 *** Hart, op. cit., p. 231 **** Belford, op. cit., p 105

Three years later a portion of the Yearly Meetings of the Society of Friends set up a distinct association under the leadership of Elias Hicks, April 21, 1827, and were distinguished by the name Hicksites.* In the same year a general conference of the Freewill Baptist church was organized, and Joseph Smith, Jr., of Palmyra, N. Y., began to assert vague claims as the founder of a new religion and the discovery of the Book of Mormon.** In 1829 the first meeting of the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian church was held at Princeton, Ky. From all these facts it can easily be seen that this was a period of denominational division and national organization.

5. Foundation of Seminaries

In connection with the national organization of many of the Protestant bodies it may be remarked that this was also a period of founding of seminaries. After the church bodies had been organized it was found necessary to establish schools where the prospective ministers might be trained in the theology of the denomination. As a consequence the Theological department of Yale college, Congregational, and the Episcopal Theological School of Virginia, were founded in 1822. In 1825 the German Reformed Theological school, at Mercersburg, Penn., and the Gettysburg, Penn., Theological seminary (Lutheran) were founded, to be followed the next year by the establishment of the Newton, Mass., Theological institute, by the Baptists. The Pres-

* Belford, op. cit., p 129

** Ibid, p. 130

bytemans in 1828 founded the Western Theological Seminary at Alleghany, Penn. Two other Presbyterian seminaries were founded the next year, namely the Auburn, N.Y., theological seminary, and the Lane theological seminary, at Cincinnati.*

Of course a number of seminaries had been established before this time. In 1784 New Brunswick theological seminary had been established. In 1808 Andover theological seminary was established, Bangor in 1816, General theological seminary in 1817, Union in 1824, and several other well-known and leading seminaries were founded shortly after this beginning nationalistic period. Also to be mentioned is the founding of many colleges at that time.

The evidence is sufficient to indicate that people meant business as far as their religion was concerned. This is still further brought out by the fact that many important events in religious life occurred during this time. In 1816, for example, the Board of Missions was founded, six years after the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions had been organized by the Congregational church. Ten years later the American Missionary Society was organized, May 10, 1826, in New York City. The Methodist Book Concern had been established in 1824, and the American Bible Society was founded in City hall in New York City in 1816. Again it may be mentioned that in 1825 the Sunday school work was organized on a national scale.

* The World, "A History of the United States." (Summarised)

6. Miscellaneous Religious Influences

All of this is sufficient to indicate that religious life in the United States during this period was at great heights, and was keeping close at the heels of the progress of science and learning. But it is also to be noticed that thinkers caused strife and division in the churches. Not only is this a period marked for its national organization of religious bodies, but also for its divisions. For example, "Strong religious antagonism between the Congregationalists of New England and the Episcopalians of the South, prevails throughout the country." * In 1802 Thomas Paine's book "The Age of Reason" created many freethinkers.

In 1815 we find that "strong religious influences prevail among the people. The Baptist, Presbyterian, and Methodist sects are largely increased, and they exert an important control over public opinion. New England Puritanism becomes aggressive, and with much zeal attacks the "Latitudinarians," or "Liberals." Religion even affects politics; the Liberals are generally Democrats, while the Congregationalists are Federalists." **

It is not necessary to say anything more of the religious activities and forces of the period. It was a time of thought and activity, which was reflected in organization and division, of founding and of creating national bodies and institutions.

* The World, op. cit., p. 113

** Ibid, p. 119

B. Intellectual Life

A short paragraph will suffice to indicate the intellectual progress of the times. Theological controversies show that there was mental activity. Furthermore the founding of the theological seminaries and institutions of higher learning indicate that there was the desire on the part of many for more knowledge. The leaders of this intellectual progress were naturally few, as the masses of people had no time nor interest in the matter, and were forced to remain in a stage of illiteracy. This intellectual progress, though it was insignificant at the beginning of the 19th century, became more evident as time progressed, and was very noticeable at the time with which our period of study closes. A number of writers made their impact upon the minds of the people at this time. "In 1809 Irving published his inimitable Knickerbocker's History of New York and eight years later Bryant surprised the literary world with his Thanatopsis. Cooper began to publish in 1821, Hawthorne in 1825, Poe in 1829, Whittier in 1831, Longfellow and Prescott in 1833." * In this connection it may be observed that more people were able to read as a result of the education of the rural x schools, especially in New England.

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* Forman, S. E. "Advanced American History." p. 338

C. Political, Social, Economic Life

The population of the United States at this time was increasing rapidly, and coupled with this growth in population was the growth of the various denominations. The population of the United States in 1790, when the first census was taken, was 3,929,214; in 1800 it was 5,308,483. Of this number 896,849 were slaves, leaving a white population of approximately 4,500,000. "There were but six cities of noticeable size in all the country. The South, which held half the population, had but two, Baltimore, and Charleston; and the population of these, added to the population of Philadelphia, and New York, and Boston and Salem, the other four, made up a total of only one hundred and thirty-one thousand all told." *

This population was divided into various classes, and social consciousness was quite acute. In all the colonies the ruling orders, in English fashion, still often-times demanded the obedience to which they considered themselves entitled by wealth, talents, and general pre-eminence. In churches, Puritan and Anglican alike, congregations were seated according to age, social position and estate. ** It is unnecessary to go into an examination of these various classes, except to say that there were the ruling classes, the freeholders, the free artisans and laborers, indentured servants, and, lastly, chattel slaves.

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* Wilson, Woodrow, "A History of the American People" p.124

** Beard, op. cit., p. 129

Naturally the culture of such a varied group would differ considerably. The fact that the people had come from, or were descendants of people who had been born in, foreign countries also would cause a diversified culture and different beliefs. This led to a broad diversity in manners and customs.

But as people began to mix and got acquainted with each other, they began to change their viewpoints, and thus a gradual change was brought about. The war with England, especially, was instrumental in bringing about many changes. As Beard says "Undoubtedly the period that followed the close of the Revolutionary War was one of dissolution and reconstruction; that is the story of every great social dislocation." * Speaking more definitely, Beard says that at the top of the social order inherited from England and nourished in colonial times, dislocations were numerous and significant. In the concrete, the wealth and the talents of Colonial America were decimated by the overthrow of English protectors and defenders. The expulsion and flight of the English official classes--governors, army officers, judges, and retainers of every type--raised to a prouder estate the second stratum of American society--merchants, yeomen, planters, and farmers; and in^{the} general upward heave mechanics soon found their way higher in the scale of things.

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* Beard, op. cit., p. 303

** Ibid, p. 440

Summary

Summarizing the history and background of the times when American religious journalism appeared at the horizon, we notice that it was a period of "firsts." It was a period when for the first time doctrinal differences were brought out into the open. Again there was the first organization in this country of many of the important religious bodies. In addition there were the "firsts" in science: the first steamboat, the first steam printing press, etc. We also find the beginning of thorough organization of towns, counties, and states. More important than all this, so far as this investigation is concerned, it was a period ripe for the founding of the first religious periodicals. It was a time of invention and organization, and later of thought and separation. Be it also remembered that it was a period when the United States began to grow in population, which made possible the establishment of the new journalism, for not only is production of an article necessary, but there must be a consumption of the same, and in this case the American people were therefore an essential factor in the founding of religious journalism.

CHAPTER II

DIFFICULTIES ATTENDING FOUNDATION OF EARLY RELIGIOUS JOURNALISM

A. Historical Statement

B. Obstacles in Publication

1. Mechanical Difficulties
2. Subscription lists
3. Collection of Editorial Material
4. The appellation "religious."

C. Summary

CHAPTER II
DIFFICULTIES ATTENDING FOUNDATION
OF EARLY RELIGIOUS JOURNALISM

A. Historical Statement

The first press "worked" in American colonies was "set up" in Cambridge, Mass., in 1629. Rev. Jesse Glover procured this press by "contributions of friends of learning and religion" in Amsterdam and England, but died on his passage to the New World. Consequently to Stephen Day falls the honor of being the first printer to ply his trade in the United States. The history of printing goes back nearly 150 years, for printing was discovered by Gutenberg in 1452, and in 1457 the Germans printed the first journalistic product, the Gazette, of Nuremberg, in 1457. Nearly 200 years later the art is recognized and rewarded in the United States, when the Council of Massachusetts in 1640 voted to "Stieven Day" three hundred acres of land for being the first to set up printing in the colony.*

But setting up a press in the colonies did not mean that journalism had been started. Attempts at publication of a newspaper had been made in 1690. "On the 25th of September A.D. 1690...70 years after the landing of the pilgrims--Publick Occurrences was born. It winked out

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* Cf. Crawford, Geo. A., "The Press and the Centennial" pp.10-14

with one issue." "It was fourteen years later before there was courage to make another trial. John Campbell, the postmaster at Boston, was the Columbus of the new venture. His Boston News Letter was really the first live newspaper in America. Its first issue was Monday, April 24, 1704." * This demonstrates that the manufacture of journalistic products was not an easy task. The secular newspapers and magazines faced difficulties, some almost too big to be overcome. When religious journalism was born it met with some of these same and other problems.

B. Obstacles in Publication

1. Mechanical Difficulties

Publication during the nationalistic period had to meet many difficulties. There were mechanical problems which were hard to overcome. One publisher, for instance, says, in starting a new volume, that "the publication of our first number has been delayed longer than we expected, in consequence of having to wait for a quantity of new type, and other materials required." ** Then there were other publishers who had difficulty in getting out their publications because of limited material and old, small presses.

2. Subscription lists

But mechanical difficulties were not the only ones. The editor of the Theological Magazine, for example,

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* Crawford, Geo. A. "The Press and the Centennial" p. 14

** Religious Inquirer, Vol. VIII, No. 1, p. 8

says after three years of publication, that "the work has been steadily carried on through many difficulties and discouragements...The difficulty of keeping up the attention and the interest of the readers to a periodical publication, in its uniform progress, has always been ~~acknowledged~~ ^{acknowledged} to be great. Experience proves that it is peculiarly so in the United States." *

This difficulty in keeping up the interest and attention of the readers oftentimes reflected harshly upon the magazines, sometimes to the extent that they were forced out of business. The Christian Journal, in its last number, is led to state that "it cannot be expected that a work of this kind can be sustained without the aid of adequate funds; and it is altogether from the want of this aid that the Christian Journal now ceases to exist. It is true that the subscription list has at no time been short of a sufficient number of names to defray the actual expense of publication; but so great has been the deficiency in payments, that a very large sum would be necessary to liquidate the debt incurred by it, without allowing any thing for the labor required in managing its concerns." **

The Christian Journal is not the only magazine to complain of subscribers being in arrears. Any number of them from time to time published appeals to subscribers to pay their subscriptions. A bona-fide subscription list, like the standard newspapers and magazines of today maintain,

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Preface,

* Theological Magazine, Vol. III, p. 3

** Christian Journal, Vol. XIV, No. 12, Dec. 1830, p. 380

was then unheard of. Oftentimes the readers would subscribe for the magazine without any thought of paying, or their ministers would subscribe for them, and thus it is not strange that several of the magazines were forced to discontinue due to lack of funds. At that time there were no wealthy philanthropists who would come to the aid of the financially crippled publications. The people of the day, much though they may have liked their magazines, simply refused or were unable to pay their subscriptions. But this would not have been so bad had there been enough subscribers to pay for the magazine, but the subscription lists never were very large. The list of the New York Missionary Magazine at the close of the second year ran up to nearly 2,500 copies, and most of this list was composed of club subscriptions taken by clergymen, some subscribing for 100 copies, and many for 50 and less.* Of the New York Missionary Magazine it may be said that "the total neglect of many of the subscribers" to pay for their copies wrecked that venture.

3. Collection of Editorial Material

Editors had to face still other difficulties. Not only did they have to meet a lack of interest on the part of the readers, but also of writers. Writers in those days were few, and those who did write would not do so for a religious magazine. As a consequence the magazines had to publish a great deal of eclectic material, as pointed

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* Cf. New York Missionary Magazine, Vol. II, Preface.

out in the chapter dealing with the contents of the magazines. Professor Mott in his book has remarked that there were few practiced writers at any time during this period.* The average writing in magazines at that time was not of a high type and often slipshod and bombastic. One of the reasons for the scarcity of writers was that payment for articles was practically unknown. There is not a single religious magazine until 1825 that makes mention of paying for contributed articles. All of them request contributions, and these requests are made in every issue in many of the periodicals, but no mention is made of compensation.

4. The appellation "religious."

Still another difficulty in the publication of the religious magazines must be mentioned, and one which even today is still in existence. This difficulty is the disadvantage the religious journalist himself has. This is well described by Horwill when he remarked that "the essential disadvantages of Religious Journalism are akin to those attributed to amphibious animals in the school boy's definition, "Creatures that cannot live on the land and die in the water." It is not at home either in the church or in the world. In ecclesiastical circles it is seldom that the editor of a religious newspaper is thought of as exerting an influence equal to that of a leading pulpit or that his work receives such sympathy and cooperation as are given to a missionary society.

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* Mott, F. L., op. cit.,

"To his clerical brethern the editor of a church paper seems scarcely more than a layman, while secular journalists regard him very much as an amateur." * The psychology of such a situation is very apparent--neither the religious man nor the man of the world has much faith in the religious journalist, and therefore he has to overcome this attitude of doubt and suspicion on the part of his subscribers.

C. Summary

In summarising some of the difficulties we may say that coupled with indifference of the readers and writers of the times, the early American religious journalists were also confronted with a lack of adequate means, a lack of adequate distribution, as transportation then had not yet been developed, and the difficulty of manufacturing, which would have been enough to discourage any publisher. "Presses, type, paper, and ink, had, for the most part to be imported from England...for a long time supplies of these materials were inadequate both in quantity and quality." ** Connect with this the unpreparedness of the editors themselves, for they could not be trained in branches of writing, of managing, and editing, and also in religion, and it is easily seen that these men who undertook to publish religious magazines had to overcome almost insurmountable difficulties.

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* Horwill, Herbert W., "Religious Journalism in England and America" The Forum, Vol. XXXI, July, 1901, p.609

** Mott, op. cit., p. 20

CHAPTER III

GENESIS OF RELIGIOUS JOURNALISM IN THE U.S.

- A. Introductory Statement
- B. The Earliest Religious Magazines
 - 1. Christian History
 - 2. The Royal Spiritual Magazine
- C. Magazines Before 1800
 - 1. Christian's, Scholar's, and Farmer's
 - 2. Arminian Magazine
 - 3. Theological Magazine
 - 4. The Christian Pocket Library
 - 5. American Moral and Sentimental Magazine
 - 6. Methodist Magazine
 - 7. Christian Monitor
 - 8. Religious Monitor or Theological Scales
- D. Resume

CHAPTER III
GENESIS OF RELIGIOUS
JOURNALISM IN THE U.S.

A. Introductory Statement

In the preceding chapter it was pointed out that there were innumerable difficulties connected with the establishment of religious periodicals. However, the pioneering spirit of the country also made itself felt in the field of religious journalism, but the founding of religious periodicals in this country was marked by deliberation. An attempt to establish a religious magazine had been made in 1743 when Christian History was published, and in 1771 the Royal Spiritual Magazine was printed, but these two were the only attempts until 1789 when Christian's, Scholar's, and Farmer's magazine was published. Efforts to establish religious periodicals were not numerous until 1800, as evidenced by a statement in the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine:

"The usefulness of periodical religious publications hath long been experienced in the Christian churches of Europe. That so few attempts, of this kind, have been made in the American church, hath arisen, neither from a deficiency of zeal and abilities, nor from a want of valuable matter in this country, to form a monthly publication, which would be interesting to pious minds." *

The attempts were few before 1800, as only about half a dozen outstanding periodicals of religious nature

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* Conn. Evang. Magazine, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 4

were founded before that year. The reason for this, as advanced in the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine, is that

"The religious as well as civil policy of this country before the independence of the United States, drew all important communications to a central point across the Atlantic; and a considerable period of time was necessary to change the current of intercourse, and bring the churches and clergy of the different states, to that mutual and extensive acquaintance, wherby proper matter for an Evangelical Magazine may be regularly furnished." *

B. The Earliest Magazines

Before discussing the founding of the magazines during this period it is well to take a backward look and see what had been done in this field. In 1743 Christian History had been started. It was the "first distinctively religious magazine in America." ** Perhaps it is for this reason that copies of this magazines at the present time are scarce. The magazine was issued weekly for two years. It was edited by Thos. Prince, Jr. The magazine, according to the title page, contained "Accounts of the Revival and Propagation of Religion in Great Britain and America." An examination of the contents of the first volume bears out this testimony. In the first number we find "Authentic Accounts from Ministers and other Creditible Persons of the Revival of Religion in the several parts of New England," also "Extracts of the Most Remarkable Pieces in the weekly Histories of Religion, and other Accounts, printed both in England and Scotland," as well as "Extracts of

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* Connecticut Evangelical Magazine, Vol. I, No. 1

** Tassin, A. "The Magazine in America" p. 256

Written Letters both from England, Scotland, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Georgia, of a Religious Nature." * The first number is devoted to "A faithful narrative of the Extraordinary work of the Spirit of God at Kilsyth and other Congregations in the Neighborhood." This article is all that appears in the first number consisting of eight pages. It is continued in seven succeeding numbers. In No. 8 began a Christian History of New England, endeavoring "To give some Account of our original settlement with the Principles, Spirit and Power of Religion among the Primitive Planters." ** In Vol. I, No. 8 we find "a sermon by the Rev. Mr. Prince's, delivered at Cambridge to the General Assembly of Massachusetts, May 27, 1730" thirteen years ago! In succeeding numbers follow extracts of sermons and tracts dealing with the foundation and growth in America. In volume 2 there are accounts of Revivals from everywhere, based on original letters, sermons, and tracts.

The last number of this first religious magazine in America states that "Thus according to the Design of this Paper and from the best and most authentick Materials we have given the reader a specimen of that wondrous Work of God which has in the midst of these Years been revived in many parts of Great Britain and America. And...the present paper concludes the Year and therewith Christian History." ***

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* Christian History, Vol. I, No. 1

** Ibid, Vol. I, No. 8

*** Ibid, Feb. 23, 1745, p.416

The other religious paper, "The Royal Spiritual Magazine" was published in 1771 in Philadelphia, and was edited by Joseph Crukshank. It was a small publication. A German religious publication was issued in Germantown, from 1764-70. It "presented two unusual features. It was printed in German and used in its 12th number the first German type cast in this country." Besides these few periodicals little is known of religious journalism in the United States until 1789 and the years following.

C. Magazines Before 1800

1. Christian's, Scholar's, and Farmer's

In 1789 Christian's, Scholar's, and Farmer's Magazine began. The first issue of this undenominational bimonthly magazine is dated April-May, 1789, and the last issue Feb.-March, 1791. It was "calculated in an eminent degree to promote religion; to disseminate useful knowledge; to afford literary pleasure and amusement; and to advance the interests of agriculture." In the first number the editors stated that "it shall be our endeavor, by this publication, to advance the general interest of our most holy religion, particularly we shall attempt to inform the ignorant; to reclaim the vicious; to edify the virtuous; to console the afflicted; to assist the young divine in the performance of his sacred functions: And also to promote that spirit of mutual forbearance and love."

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* Tassin, A., op. cit., p. 256

** Christian's, Scholar's, and Farmer's Magazine, Vol. I, No. 1

*** Ibid, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 6

This magazine with varied interests was conducted "by a number of gentlemen." The first volume of six issues consists of 768 pages. At the conclusion of the second volume the editors announde the discontinuance of the publication:

"Two years have elapsed since the commencement of this Publication. The Editors sincerely regret, that want of Leisure will oblige them (at least for the present) to discontinue it. It affords them very sensible pleasure to reflect, that this work hath been honored with the patronage of several of the most eminent literary characters in these States; that it hath given general satisfaction, and (it is hoped) that it hath been of Public Utility; especially by contributing to promote the important Interests of Christianity; by diffusing a great variety of useful Knowledge, as well as affording literary Pleasure and Amusement. As not literary Fame, but the Benefit of Mankind, was the object of the Editors in publishing this Miscellany, they beg Leave still to conceal their names from Public View." *

That the editors took their tasks seriously is evidenced in the magazine, for "deep" theological discussions and thought provoking articles fill its pages.

2. Arminian Magazine

The next periodical to be studied is the Arminian Magazine. It was started in the same year as Christian's, Scholar's, and Farmer's, but as indicated by the title, did not have as wide an appeal. The Arminian Magazine was designed to undermine Calvinistic doctrines, and consisted of "Extracts and General Treatises on General Redemption." It was begun January 1789, under the editorship of Bishops Coke and Asbury, the first bishops

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* Christian's, Scholar's, and Farmer's Magazine, Vol. II

of the Methodist church in the United States. In their preface the editors remark "We do assure the subscribers that the work is undertaken purely to promote the glory of God and their edification."^{*}

Lengthy articles filled the pages of the magazine. A long sketch of the life of Arminius, an account of the Synod of Dort, an original sermon by Wesley, and nine pages of poetry compose the first number. In the second number the account of the Synod of Dort is continued, and another sermon by Wesley is included. There also is given an account (a "short" account) of the death of Wm. Adams, a youth of Virginia. The short account is prolonged over thirteen pages. Eight pages are devoted to poetry.

In the third article we find still more space devoted to the Synod of Dort, and a continuation of the account of the Examination of Tilenus before the Triers written by one who was present at the Synod of Dort. The sermon, included in all numbers, is followed by a discussion "Of the right method of meeting classes and bands in the Methodist societies." Then follows a continuation of the short account of the life and death of Wm. Adams, eight pages being devoted to it this time.

The Synod of Dort and the Examination of Tilenus are again given preference in the fourth number. A new feature was introduced when the Journal of Bishop Asbury was published. In the May number the Journal of Bishop

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* Arminian Magazine, Vol. I, No. 1, p. VI

was begun. The feature in the June number was the address of the Bishops of the Methodist church to the President of the United States, with the answer of the President (Geo. Washington.)

The second volume is much like the first. In eight issues we find "Predestination Calmly Considered." There are also original sermons, and the Journal of John Wesley is commenced. The life and death of John Fletcher are considered in detail. Many miscellaneous articles and much poetry complete the volume.

3. Theological Magazine

In 1795 the Theological Magazine was published. It was undenominational, as intimated by the preface: "The serious and judicious of all denominations are earnestly solicited to forward such pieces, original or extracted, as they consider useful and entertaining." * The introduction states that "Through the medium of this Magazine, a variety of useful information, concerning the doctrines and practice of religion, may be communicated to mankind."

The reason for the publication of the Theological Magazine was stated by the editors in the following terms:

"The design is to disseminate useful knowledge, to promote the interests of piety, by inserting essays on the most distinguishing points in theology--explanations of difficult passages of scripture--candid remarks on important subjects--and whatever else may be calculated to promote the cause of true religion." **

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* Theological Magazine, Vol. I, No. 1
 ** Ibid, preface.

How far the magazine lived up to its aims is demonstrated by the contents. The first article, nine pages long, consists of Sketches of the Life of Joseph Bellamy, D.D., of Bethlehem, Connecticut, extracted from Mr. Benedict's sermon at the Doctor's funeral." The second article, also nearly nine pages long, is a "Brief View of the Evidence of the Divinity of the Sacred Scriptures, arising from a Consideration of the Nature and Importance of the Doctrines Contained in them." * Several other articles concerned with equally weighty theological questions are included. All this is an indication that the magazine was what its name indicated: a theological magazine. It aimed to be "a vehicle for religious knowledge and candid disquisition, and afford the friends of truth and rational inquiry, an opportunity to publish their opinions, queries, and arguments, and submit them to the scrutiny of the wise and judicious." ** That the magazine was not narrow in its outlook is evidenced by this statement:

"The plan of the Theological Magazine is formed for the encouragement of free and impartial inquiry. Through this channel, the studious and contemplative may convey their discoveries of their difficulties to the public, without much trouble or expence, and with a hopeful prospect of communicating or receiving instruction. In this way, many original thoughts, which arise from time to time in inquisitive minds, and pass unnoticed and undigested away, might be rescued from oblivion. Perhaps such accidental gleams of intellectual light, might, if carefully pursued, direct to the most important discoveries, and greatly *** conduce to the instruction and improvement of mankind."

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* Theological Magazine, Vol. I, No. 1

** Ibid, p. 3

*** Ibid, p. 4

The issues of the Theological Magazine contained a variety of information. In the first number fifteen pages were devoted to "Thoughts on the Atonement." Five pages were devoted to "Observations on the Nature of Benevolence." The next article dealt with "Free Thoughts concerning the Origin and Tendency of certain modern prevailing opinions." In this some heretical tendencies of the times are brought out:

"Some professing an attachment to the holy scriptures labor to find in the sacred volume a scheme of doctrine consistent with the depraved taste and feelings of the human heart. This is the source of a great variety of errors. For, those who essentially depart from the system of revealed truth, under the christian name, are generally led by loving darkness rather than light to take their devious course." *

The magazine apparently was not afraid to speak and think out loud. Concerning some of the people of the day it remarked

"These loose professors of universal charity are increasing in number and reputation at the present day. They are really infidels concealed under the specious pretext of adhering to divine revelation. Others, sensible of the inconsistency of acknowledging the divine authority of the Bible, and neglecting its doctrines,---and of the impossibility of deriving from that sacred book a scheme of things which will quadrate with the natural inclinations from the human heart, become open and professed infidels, and commit their religious concerns to the direction of human reason....This infidelity is dressed and adorned with all the flowers of eloquence, garnished with all the alurements which are all adapted to the taste of a carnal heart, and arrogantly called "The system of reason." **

The article then describes in detail the evidences of growing infidelity in the United States.

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* Theological Magazine, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 69

** Ibid, p. 70

In the Sept.-Oct. number, 1795, appears a short account of the People known by the name of Shakers or Shaking Quakers. Again the magazine is very outspoken, and gives the following account of this sect:

This peculiar sect, if they belong to any known religious denomination, are a species of Roman Catholics. Like the Papal church they have their own Popes, their extra-ordinary saints, their auricular confessions, their abolitions, their exorcisms, their Purgatories.....

Their likeness to the Romish church the Shakers are sensible of, and say, the Papal church is the only church on earth established on the true gospel plan, but having lost the spirit is become a lifeless body; which spirit hath revived in the Shakers, and hence now they are the only true church on earth; and the salvation can be obtained in no other way. *

In regard to the founding of the sect and in the description of its founder the magazine minces no words. Apparently it was not worried over the law of libel which would prevent any periodical of our time from making statements like the Theological Magazine did. The founding of the sect of Shakers is described in the following manner:

The first founder of this wild sect was one Jane Lees: She lived in the town of Manchester, England, was ~~one~~ of low parentage and procured her living at the expence of her chastity. She sustained the character of a woman of ill fame in England, which character she supported in America till her death.

...As a woman she was in the eyes of the world disqualified for the office of a bishop. Her person was so far from charming, that she was deemed ugly; she was wholly destitute of letters, she could neither write nor read, her character was lewd; her conversation vulgar, and her language very prophane. She lived a most intemperate life, and her behavior was most outrageous, and provoking in her scenes^{of} intoxication." **

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* Theological Magazine, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 81

** Ibid, p. 83

As though this description was not sufficient the magazine went even farther:

"The pretensions of this bold impostor were, that she was Christ in the second appearing, that she was really the Saviour of the World as Jesus of Nazareth was; that the divine nature as really dwelt in her as it did in him; and as the second coming of Christ was to be far more glorious than his first appearing; so she was seven times more glorious than Jesus." *

Later the woman is accused of being a thief, of robbing the members of the Society. Members of the sect were described as "fit for no other Society, and indeed they were ashamed to appear in any other."

In fairness to the Magazine it must be said that this one article is not a fair example of its contents. Succeeding articles deal with a variety of topics such as "An Estimate of the Progress of Christian Religion," "An Act Against Lotteries," "An Essay on Disinterested Love," "Defence of the Doctrines of the Westminster Confession," "Reflections on the Necessity of the Mediator's being a divine Person," a six page extract from "Mr. Niles's sermon on "Sinful Pleasure," and then an article from the London Evangelical Magazine concerning that "sad conformity to a sinful world, so expressly forbidden in Scripture and now too common among the professors of religion." Other numbers contain much the same material. Enough of the contents has been given to show that the magazine was attacking some of the indolence and non-conformist atti-

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* Theological Magazine, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 84

tude of the Christians of the day. That the work met with the approval of the readers is attested by the words of the editor in the preface to the second volume: "The encouragement given to the first volume of this work was so great that the second was undertaken with raised expectations."^{*}

However, the outlook does not seem quite as bright at the commencement of the third volume; for "The work has been steadily carried through many difficulties and discouragements....The difficulty of keeping up the attention and interest of readers to a periodical publication in its uniform progress has always been acknowledged to be great. Experience proves that it is peculiarly so in the United States. The editor of the Theological Magazine therefore ought not to have been surprised had he found it necessary to relinquish his favourite work before the present period.

Apparently the editor found out that the United States was not yet quite ready for religious journalism, for the last issue of the Theological Magazine was published in 1799.

4. Christian Pocket Library

A religious magazine of rather unique design appeared the year after the Theological Magazine was founded. It was the Christian's Pocket Library, and as the title

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* Theological Magazine, Vol. II, Preface, p. III

** Ibid, Vol. III, p. III

indicated, was of pocket size, four by six inches. Few copies of this magazine are in existence today.

This small size magazine contained, like the other religious periodicals, a variety of material. The first article in the first number is entitled "On Happiness --Religion the Soul of Happiness." The second article had as title "Memorial of the Lord's visitation to the City of New York by a malignant fever, which swept away by death, seven hundred and forty-six inhabitants, from the 26th of July till the 5th of November, 1795." * Article number three is entitled "A Day's Work at Sea--'Written by a Minister for the Improvement of Capt. P. S. on his voyage to the East Indies, with a Request to the Captain not to open the paper until he had been three Weeks at Sea." Other items are "An instance of the Power of Divine Grace," "Natural History," "Improvement," "Dialogue Between a Father and a Son," which is concerned with the moral welfare of the Son, in which the Father advises the Son to read and practice the precepts of Scripture. Poetry and obituary complete the contents of the magazine. It apparently was in existence only in 1796.

5. American Moral and Sentimental Magazine

The year after the initial publication of the Christian Pocket Library the American Moral and Sentimental magazine was issued. Although not definitely a relig-

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* Christian Pocket Library, Vol. I

ious publication it contained so much material directly related to religion that it should be included in this study. It paid much attention to religion; described deathbeds; contained dying letters; published narratives of conversions, and narrated many remarkable providences. As in the case of the Theological Magazine, this publication also was opposed to "the torrent of infidelity" which seems to have caused grave concern.

That it was not narrow, however, is indicated by the statement that the Magazine was "established on principles of unlimited liberality."^{*}

The contents and the purpose of the periodical were described on the title page as follows: A collection of select pieces in prose and verse, from the best authors, on Religion, Moral and Sentimental Subjects, calculated to form the understanding, and improve the heart.

An examination of the contents of the first number reveals the variety of interests. The first article is a "Letter to the unfortunate Dr. Todd, while under sentence of death...with the Doctor's answer." The second write-up is an "Extract of the Predictions of Mr. Christopher Love, Minister of the Gospel, who was beheaded on Tower Hill, in the time of Cromwell's Government of England." The third deals with observations on the Bohon-Upas, or poison tree of Java. The fourth article is "A narrative of the most remarkable occurrences, and strange

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* American Moral and Sentimental Magazine, Vol. I, p.4

vicissitudes, in the life of James Albert Ukafaw Groniofaw, an African Prince, as related by himself. (This account of the life of James Albert was taken from his own mouth and committed by the elegant pen of a young lady, for her own private satisfaction, and without any intention at first that it should be made public.)* The narrative was continued in many issues.

This article was followed by Reflections, Anecdotes, and Poetical Effusions. Many essays are included in the magazine, most of them being on moral and ethical subjects.

6. Methodist Magazine

The first definitely denominational magazine of any consequence was the Methodist Magazine, established in 1797, the date of the Moral and Sentimental Magazine. The Arminian Magazine in 1789 had been the first attempt on the part of the Methodists in the founding of a denominational publication.

This second attempt was made by the Rev. John Dickins. It was published at Philadelphia from January 1797 to August 1798. The name was resurrected 20 years later. Then, after various changes of title and of frequency of issue, it became the Methodist Magazine of today, one of the oldest and best sectarian reviews.*

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* American Moral and Sentimental Magazine, Vol. I

** Mott, F. L. op. cit., p. 132.

7. Christian Monitor

Another paper to make its appearance at this time was the Christian Monitor, which was published at Maine in 1798. Like many of its predecessors it soon was forced to discontinue publication.

8. Religious Monitor

In the year of the Christian Monitor's issuance, another Monitor made its appearance. It was the Religious Monitor or Theological Scales. The first issue was published April, 1798. The title pages indicated that the magazine contained a "Variety of essays on Religious and Moral Subjects, original and selected, interspersed with sketches of Biography, Poetry, etc." It was "designed to open a door for free and candid inquiry after religious truth, for the promotion of Piety and Virtue, and the Discouragement of Vice and Infidelity." The magazine would be commended by present day journalists for its extracts and anecdotes and its short articles.

That the publication met with success at first may be deduced from the statement made by the editor a month after its establishment. He said "We feel ourselves under great obligations for the generous encouragement offered us in the infancy of the Religious Monitor, etc. as well as on account of a liberal subscription, as well as for the valuable productions politely sent us for publication." *

* Religious Monitor, Vol. I, No. 3, p. 23

D. Resume

Looking back over the period we notice that less than a dozen important publications were founded during the latter part of the eighteenth century. Those which were published, with one exception, all contained lengthy articles, very often exceedingly weighty. A great deal of attention was paid to theology, but ethical and moral subjects were not neglected.

Most of the magazines were undenominational, and nearly all of them were of conservative character. There was a great deal of frankness in the periodicals, and infidelity, one of the "plagues" in religion at that time, was one of the favorite topics of debate. Accounts of deathbed scenes, and conversion narratives, as well as great quantities of poetry, provided material for the religious periodicals. In spite of all their material the magazines failed to make the necessary appeal and many of them were forced to discontinue publication.

CHAPTER IV

THE GROWTH OF RELIGIOUS JOURNALISM

- A. Introductory Statement
- B. Periodicals from 1800-1810
 - 1. New York Missionary Magazine
 - 2. Connecticut Evangelical Magazine
 - 3. The Christian Observer
 - 4. The Berean or Scripture Searcher
 - 5. Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine
 - 6. Massachusetts Missionary Magazine
 - 7. The Panoplist
 - 8. The Herald of Gospel Liberty
- C. Resume

CHAPTER IV

THE GROWTH OF RELIGIOUS JOURNALISM

A. Introductory Statement

In the preceding chapter attention was called to the fact that about half a dozen magazines of any consequence were published during the latter part of the 18th century. The magazines were small, and contained long articles. With the beginning of the 19th century there came a rapid change in the religious periodical situation in the United States. More magazines were founded than ever before, and unlike the magazines of the preceding period, many of the newly founded ones succeeded to hold their own and some of them are still in existence today.

Religion apparently had an appeal for the people at the beginning of the 19th century. This was brought about by various factors. "It was the period of missionary enthusiasm, of the Kentucky Revivals, and of the Unitarian and other controversies." * For this reason it is not surprising that this was a prolific period in the founding of religious magazines, and in religious discussion in secular journals.

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* Mott, F. L., op. cit., p. 131

B. Periodicals from 1800 to 1810

1. New York Missionary Magazine

Two outstanding publications were founded in 1800. One of them had a distinctively missionary appeal, as indicated by its title: The New York Missionary Magazine and Repository of Religious Intelligence. Apparently this magazine succeeded in making an impress on the pastors of the various churches, for in an itemized account in the first volume, a table reveals that several ministers subscribed for the magazine in clubs. Some would take many copies, two ministers subscribing for 200 copies each, one for 100, and several for fifty.

The need for a periodical like the Missionary Magazine is pointed out by the editors in the following statement:

"Many serious persons have lately expressed a regret that no publication devoted to the conveyance of religious intelligence, exists in the United States. While the presses throughout the union are teeming with literary and political journals, they have lamented that no convenient medium is found for conveying to the public information relative to the state of the Church, and the prosperity or decline of that Kingdom whose interests they esteem more important than all those of any temporal sovereignty. This deficiency is the more to be regretted, as, from the scattered state of our American churches over an immense territory, communication between them is rendered difficult, if not impracticable, by ordinary means....The most illustrious triumphs of grace are heard of only in a small circle; and some of the most interesting articles of information, respecting the Displays of Divine power in the conversion of sinners and the promulgation of evangelical truth among the heathen in our own land, have been altogether unknown among ourselves, until they reached us through the medium of foreign publications." *

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* New York Missionary Magazine, Introduction, Vol. I

That the editor was fully aware of the reasons for the establishment of a religious publication at that time is displayed in this further statement:

"Were the present a period of ordinary aspect perhaps there would not be so much reason to lament the want of such a channel of public intelligence. But it is far otherwise. On the one hand, the unusual prevalence of error, infidelity, and profaneness, though it ought not to alarm, should yet interest and arouse all believers in God's word, and animate them to union and zeal against the common enemy." *

In regard to the purpose of the magazine the editor remarks that "The work is designed to embrace, and convey to the public, every species of interesting religious intelligence." ** This periodical, the first distinctively missionary organ, at least in the United States, lasted four years.

2. Connecticut Evangelical Magazine

The year 1800 also marked the beginning of another successful publication, the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine, published at Hartford. This magazine had the noble ambition to devote all the profits accruing from the publication to missions. In the prospectus it is proposed that "The publication will be commenced as soon as 400 copies shall be subscribed." *** Apparently the publishers felt differently from magazine publishers today, for they would not think of printing a popular magazine with such limited circulation.

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* New York Missionary Magazine, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 2

** Ibid, p. 4

*** Connecticut Evangelical Magazine, Vol. I, No. 1, p.3

The Connecticut periodical was to contain "Essays on the doctrines of Christianity, and on religious, experimental subjects:-Occasional remarks on the fulfilment of Scripture prophecies in the present day, and expositions of difficult and doubtful passages of Scripture: -Religious intelligence concerning the state of Christ's kingdom and sketches of original ecclesiastical concerns of this country:-Information respecting Millions to the new settlements in the United States and among the Heathen nations:-Narratives of revivals of religion in particular places together with the distinguishing marks of true and false religion...." *

The work was to, and did, consist of, "original pieces and extracts from the best European and American publications." The magazine succeeded in living fifteen years.

3. The Christian Observer

The next important publication to make its appearance was the Christian Observer, which began publication in 1802. It was "conducted by the members of the Established church" and was "taken from the London edition." It was printed in Boston. Later editions have London as the place of publication.

In the prospectus it is remarked that the chief object is to promote the increase in sound theological

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* Connecticut Evangelical Magazine, op. cit., p. 3

knowledge, and to delineate the characters of primitive and unadulterated Christianity," and that it would be "the constant object...to excite and cherish the affections of charity, piety, and constant devotion, and to direct fellow Christians in the paths of truth and righteousness." *

The publication met with the favor of the public the first year, as evidenced by the statement of the editors at the conclusion of their first year's work: "If we had entertained any doubts of the expediency of engaging in a work of this kind, the handsome patronage we have experienced from the public would have dissipated such apprehensions." **

4. The Berean or Scripture Searcher

A distinctly denominational publication was begun in 1802 when the earliest fairly regular publication of Universalist believers was issued in Boston. It was The Berean or Scripture Searcher. "It was irregular in publication. It was succeeded in 1811 and 1812 by The Gospel Visitant. But this was also irregular and continued two years." ***

5. Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine

Another Missionary periodical was started in 1803. It was the Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Mag-

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* Christian Observer, Vol. I, prospectus, p. IV

** Ibid, preface, p. VI

*** Barrett, John P. "Modern Light Bearers" p. 153

azine. "It might be expected that the Baptists would take an early interest in journalism, as they were active in propagating their faith by preaching and by the publishing of pamphlets." *

This magazine "was begun in 1803 as a semi-annual publication, to become after a few years, a quarterly. Its founder, the Rev. Thos. Baldwin, was its editor for more than twenty years....After fourteen years of gradual growth in which it increased from one to four thousand in circulation, it began a new series in numbering in 1817." **

"For many years this was the only Baptist periodical in America."

6. Massachusetts Missionary Magazine

In the same year the Baptist Missionary Magazine was started, another missions organ made its appearance. It was published in the same state and bore almost the same name, the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine. It contained "Religious & Interesting Communications Calculated to edify Christians and inform the rising generation." A variety of material is to be found in its volumes. In the first number the Constitution of the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine is printed, as well as a "Religious Conference of Clerus and His Young Friends," in which a cleric gives advice. There is a "brief" account of a Religious Attention in the North Parish of

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* Barrett, John P., op. cit., p. 83

** Mott, op. cit., p. 251

Weymouth, a treatise on "Divine Sovereignty," an account of the "Conversion of a Female," occupying five pages, "Summary Character of a Minister," "Death of Dr. Foster," and an "Account of the Conversion of Two Jews to Christianity," and various other articles. Poetry also found a place in the magazine. In succeeding numbers biography appears, and also accounts of Revivals, and Missionary Intelligence, as well as all sorts of doctrinal articles.

Apparently the magazine did not find much favor with subscribers, for the editor is led to remark at the conclusion of the first year's work

"This Magazine was commenced with no very raised expectations. In addition to the serious discouragements, which at all times attend an undertaking of this kind, other Publications, upon a similar plan, and of acknowledged merit, had secured a deserved patronage, which forbade the hope of obtaining for this a very extensive circulation, or a very numerous subscription." *

Any editor who dared to make such an admission today would be fired from the staff as incompetent to meet competition. A year later the editor was still complaining about the small subscription list:

"By suitable attention, double and treble the number we have published might easily be distributed. Why will you not then quit the easy chair, exert yourselves, and give us liberty to publish 5,000 copies....Must we be compelled, by the inattention ** of the society, soon to discontinue the publication?"

That all these appeals and apologies did not help is demonstrated in the following volume, the editor saying

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* Mass. Missionary Magazine, Vol. II, No. 1, p. 3

** Ibid, Vol. III, No. 1, pp. 4-5

"ill health in some, and the multiplying duties of others (the editors), together with various other circumstances, admonished us that the Magazine was not likely to be so useful as it had been. In this situation we seriously and anxiously inquired what could be done....In this moment of indecision we received an affectionate invitation from our friends, the editors of the Panoplist, to unite with them in a joint publication. The offer was seriously considered by the Missionary Society and accepted." *

Thus the Missionary Magazine was absorbed by the Unitarian Panoplist, after a hectic five years' existence.

7. The Panoplist.

The Panoplist was started in 1805, and immediately forced several of the denominations to define their positions. This was also true of other religious magazines, as, for example, the Monthly Anthology, started by several liberals in 1803, which was met by the Panoplist when it was founded, June, 1805. The Magazine was published under the combined title of Panoplist and Missionary Herald when the latter publication was merged with it in June, 1808. It was published under the combined title until January 1818, when the name was changed to The Panoplist and Missionary Herald.

The magazine was conducted by an association of friends to Evangelical truth. Its chief business was "doctrinal propaganda, and essays and sermons on theological principles were the staple fare....There were some

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* Mass. Missionary Magazine, Vol. V, No. 12, p. 480

reviews in nearly every number, and these were often mildly controversial,...The reviewing, as well as everything else in the Panoplist, was in the strain of utmost seriousness.*

"Biography played a large part in the Panoplist, nearly every number being introduced by a memoir, original or selected. There was also a modicum of religious poetry; and, as if to offset that, a growing amount of "religious intelligence"--that is, news of the churches. After the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine was merged in the Panoplist in 1808, large space was given missionary activity in the West and abroad.** In 1821 the magazine became the Missionary Herald and began then a long career. After the establishment of the Panoplist there was no other important magazine founded until 1808 when the Herald of Gospel Liberty was published. In 1806, however, the Christian's Magazine was issued in New York. It continued for five years and was "designed to promote the knowledge and influence of evangelical truth and order."

8. The Herald of Gospel Liberty

The editor of the Christian's Magazine was Elias Smith, a Christian leader at Portsmouth, N. H. The magazine, which was the forerunner of the Herald of Gospel Liberty, has sometimes been called "the first de-

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* Mott, op. cit., p. 262-3

** Ibid, p. 263-277

nominal paper." * On Sept. 1, 1808, Elias Smith published the first number of the Herald of Gospel Liberty, which has appeared continuously, although not always under the same name.

"The idea of a religious newspaper was not original with Elias Smith, as he himself testifies, but he caught the vision of its importance and had the courage to put the idea into motion and make it a tangible entity and reality as a medium to disseminate religious facts and happenings and a vehicle to convey the ideas of a dawning religious liberty."^{**}

The Herald of Gospel Liberty, one of the oldest religious newspapers, still in existence today, and published under various names, has had a varied and interesting career.

C. Resume

A number of other smaller magazines were published during the period which has just been studied. However, their careers were too checkered, and the magazines were too short lived to be of any great significance or importance to merit a detailed study. For example, "it took the Baptist Missionary Messenger, started in 1803, five years to complete its first volume.... Another Baptist magazine, laboring under the singularly attractive title of Analytical Repository, had been at-

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* See article on merger of Christian and Congregational churches in New York, Herald-Tribune, Nov. 24, 1929.
 ** Whitelock, in Barrett's "Modern Light Bearers" p. 28

tempted in 1801, but could not survive." * Many magazines of which no copies can be found at the present time, were published during these early and significant years in American religious journalism. In the year 1810, for example, there were in existence The Panoplist; The Christian Monitor; The Evangelist, of Hartford; The Churchman's Magazine, of New York; and the Magazine of Ecclesiastical History. It was a period when magazines were founded and when they succumbed in great number.

* Tassin, A., op. cit., p. 257

CHAPTER V
THE PROGRESS OF DENOMINATIONAL
JOURNALISM

- A. Introductory Statement
- B. Magazines from 1810-1830
 - 1. Universalist Magazine
 - 2. Unitarian Publications
 - 3. Episcopalian Journals
 - 4. Methodist Magazines
 - 5. Baptist Periodicals
 - 6. Presbyterian Journalism
- C. Resume--including study of journalism of Lutherans and Quakers

CHAPTER V

THE PROGRESS OF DENOMINATIONAL JOURNALISM

A. Introductory Statement

During the first ten years of the 19th century many religious periodicals were founded, and many succumbed not being able to meet the difficulties they had to encounter, or being unable to supply the readers with what they wanted or needed.

The next twenty years several other magazines, many of which were denominational in character, were founded, and these were more successful. They apparently profited by the mistakes of the earlier magazines, and were thus able to exist for longer periods of time, and many of the magazines then founded are still in existence today.

B. Magazines from 1810-1830

1. Universalist Magazines

During this period a number of miscellaneous magazines were established. In 1811 The Gospel Visitant, a Universalist publication, succeeded the Berean. It was irregular in publication and continued for two years. The next important magazine to be founded by the Universalists

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* Cf. Barrett, op. cit., p. 153

was the Universalist Magazine, a weekly publication, which began July 1, 1819. It has been published under various names and is still published today.

2. Unitarian Publications

The cause of the Unitarians was championed in 1812 when the General Repository and Review was founded by Andrew Norton, 28 years old, and tutor in Harvard college. "He designed this review to be a mouthpiece for the liberal theology of Unitarianism....The Repository was very much a Harvard periodical. There were four departments in the magazine: Theology, Literature, Review, and Intelligence (with a list of new publications.) In the middle of the second year the Repository was turned over to "A Society of Gentlemen" who issued the July number, and after a long interval an October number, and with that publication ceased."^{*}

There was also another Unitarian publication, which met with a better fate. In May, 1813, appeared, under the editorship of Noah Worcester, the first number of the Christian Disciple. "It was not a controversial publication, but rather humanitarian, devoting much space to temperance reform and to the condemnation of slavery and the war."^{**} In 1824 the title was changed to The Christian Examiner. "Gradually it became the organ of a higher intellectual life of the Unitarians and gave ex-

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* Mott, op. cit., p. 277

** Barrett, op. cit., p. 149-50.

pression to their interest in literature, general culture and philanthropies, as well as theological knowledge." *

The paper continued publication until 1869.

The Christian Examiner has been complimented as "one of the most important religious reviews, not only because of its exposition of the Unitarian point of view in theology throughout more than half a century, but because of its distinctive work in literary criticism, and its comment on social, philosophical, and educational problems." ** It has also been said that "the intellectual currents of the times may be traced through the file of the Examiner with profit; it contains a record of high value." ***

3. Episcopalian Journals

The Episcopalians, who have played an important part in the religious life of the United States, found their cause defended in the Christian Journal and Literary Register, a bi-weekly, started in 1817. It was issued under the inspection of the Right Rev. Bishop Hobart. In the introductory remarks it is stated that the magazine would be "devoted to theological and miscellaneous subjects, and particularly to interesting religious and literary intelligence, and biographical and obituary notices. Besides occasional matter it shall contain selections from the various British periodical works, lit-

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* Barrett, op. cit., p. 150

** Mott, op . cit., p. 285

*** Ibid, p. 285

erary and religious. ...While its object shall be to record important religious events in general, particular regard will be paid to those which relate to the Protestant Episcopal church.*

The magazine contained much eclectic material, but possessed the virtue of presenting a variety which is missed in many of the other magazines. Sermons, theological essays, missionary accounts, and biography occupy a prominent place in the periodical.

In the thirteenth volume the editor made a significant statement about Episcopalian journalism:

"When the Journal was commenced, it was, we believe, the only religious periodical belonging to our church. Since that time a number have sprung into being, and about half of them again ceased to be." **

The Christian Journal continued until 1830, when the fourteenth volume was completed. In discontinuing the magazine the editor comments: "It cannot be expected that a work of this kind can be sustained without the aid of adequate funds; and it is altogether from the want of this aid that the Christian Journal now ceases to exist." *** The magazine was succeeded January 1, 1830, by the Protestant Episcopalian and Church Register.

4. Methodist Magazines

One of the earliest, if not the earliest religious publications, was that issued by the Methodist

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* Christian Journal and Literary Register, Vol. I

** Ibid, Vol. XIII, p. 3

*** Ibid, Vol. XIV, No. 12, p. 380

board of publications. In 1818 the General Conference of this church ordered the publication of the magazine. The Methodist Magazine was the outcome of the decision. It was edited and published by the agents of the Methodist Book Concern in New York.

It is remembered that other attempts by Methodists had been made. Reference has been made to the establishment of the Arminian Magazine which was edited by the first two Methodist bishops in America. In 1797 the Methodist Magazine was published for two years. Twenty years after its discontinuance the name was used again for a new adventure which met with great success, as the Magazine is still published, and prosperous, today.

The design of the Methodist Magazine was much like that of the Episcopalian Journal, for "The great design of this publication is to circulate religious knowledge,--a design which embraces the highest interests of rational existence, as the sum of individual and social happiness, increases on a scale of proportion with the increase of spiritual light and information." * But this is not all, for the editors continue: "That all persons into whose hands this work shall come may receive instruction, edification, and comfort, through its instrumentality, is the sincere desire and earnest prayer of the editors." **

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* Methodist Magazine, 1818, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 3

** Ibid, p. 7

As in the Arminian Magazine, so also Arminianism was defended in the Methodist Magazine. Several treatises on this subject appear in the various issues.

The Methodist Magazine was distinct in that it was one of the first periodicals to use illustrations. Opposite the title page of the first volume, for example, appears a picture of Rev. Frances Asbury, Bishop of the Methodist church in the United States.

That not much *attention* was paid to the magazine at first is indicated by the statement of the publishers:

"The care and labor inseparable from the agency of the Book Concern, forbid our devoting as much time and application to the selection and arrangement of materials for publication in the magazine, as its nature and importance demand." *

The editors succeeded, however, in securing a great variety of material, although they were not always very wise in their selection. Long theological treatises found a place in its pages, as well as long sermons, lengthy obituary articles, and some poetry. Much attention was paid to Religions and Missionary Intelligence.

Another magazine published for Methodists which should be mentioned, is the Zion's Herald, "oldest Methodist newspaper in the world." The first issue was published Jan. 9, 1823. "For four years the paper was published in New York in connection with the Christian Advocate and Journal as the Christian Advocate and Journal and Zion's Herald." **

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* Methodist Magazine, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 3

** Barrett, op. cit., p. 141-3

5. Baptist Periodicals

In a preceding chapter reference was made to a Baptist periodical, the Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine, which began publication in 1803. Sixteen years later the Christian Watchman began in Boston. It was "conservative on questions of the day" and certain issues, "especially slavery, antagonized many." * In 1822 the Christian Secretary was attempted at Hartford, Conn., under the auspices of the Connecticut Baptist Convention. "In the same year the Columbian Star was issued in Washington, D.C. Later it was removed to Philadelphia, and subsequently to Georgia.

"In New York State the Baptist Register was published in 1824 at Utica. This became the organ of the Baptist convention and was later united with the New York Christian Recorder which had grown out of the Baptist Advocate. In 1828 Zion's Advocate was founded at Portland, Maine." **

The Christian Watchman was destined to a successful career. In later times it became the Watchman and Examiner, and then the Watchman-Examiner, and was then, even as now, "the greatest of Baptist journals, representing a union of twenty-three papers." ***

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* Barrett, op. cit., p. 84

** Ibid, p. 85

*** Mott, opp cit., p. 138

6. Presbyterian Journalism

Another strong denomination which has been very influential in the establishment of religious journalism in the United States is the Presbyterian. To the Presbyterian church belongs the distinction of possessing the oldest religious weekly with a continuous publication record. The paper which has this honor is the Christian Observer, "A Presbyterian Family Newspaper," founded in Philadelphia in 1813 by John W. Scott, under the name of Religious Remembrancer, but removed to Louisville, Kentucky in 1869 upon its union with the Free Christian Commonwealththere. It is still published in Louisville, after having swallowed up eight of its contemporaries. Another paper of the same denomination, the Presbyterian Banner, of Pittsburgh, traces its line to the Weekly Recorder, founded by the Rev. John Andrews at Chillicothe, O., in 1814.*

January, 1821, the Presbyterian Magazine was founded by William Neill, a clergyman of Philadelphia. Two volumes containing 24 numbers were published. Then several of the Philadelphia clergymen took over the work and renamed it the Christian Advocate. It then ran through twelve annual volumes. The success of the paper cannot be attributed to the Philadelphia clergymen, for after a year's effort the Rev. Ashbell Green, who had been president of Princeton, became the publisher and editor of

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* Mott, op. cit., p. 137-8

the magazine. "He made the magazine a power in his church, though it never exceeded twelve hundred in circulation. With the founding of the Presbyterian by Neill in 1831, and with Green's growing opposition to certain church policies, the Christian Advocate lost some of its subscribers; and it continued to decline till its suspension in 1834." * An examination of the magazine shows that it contained many essays, biography, and a great variety of miscellaneous articles. Eclectic material is very prominent.

The Presbyterian Magazine filled a great need, however unsatisfactory some of its contents may have been. It was a work "furnished in numbers, issued monthly, containing sound doctrine, religious intelligence in a condensed form, and occasional notices of institutions and publications which have an influence on religion and morality, affords great advantages to persons whose employments, or professional duties, allow them but little time for general reading." **

In their introduction of the magazine the editors stated "We are aware that many similar attempts have failed for want of support....We shall be thankful for aid, either in subscriptions, or communications free from expense." *** Few magazines would dare to assume such an appealing and apologetic attitude.

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* Mott, op. cit., p. 315

** Presbyterian Magazine, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 3

*** Ibid, p. 3

The change in the policy in the editing of the magazine at the end of the first year was described by the editors as follows: "Its conductors, after some delay and discouragement, have succeeded in engaging an editor; and to whom they have committed the whole concern of providing and deciding on the various articles of which the publication shall consist."*

The change of name at the end of the second volume was presented by the editors in the following statement:

"It has been thought advisable to change the name of this miscellany---not because it is intended materially to change its character, but principally to prevent an injurious misapprehension, which, to a certain extent, there is reason to believe, has actually taken place. We usually form some judgment of a publication from its title, and indeed it is for this very reason that a title is given. Now on hearing of a Presbyterian Magazine, some, it appears, have set it down at once as a sectarian work." **

Obviously the editor did not want the reading public to entertain the opinion that the Presbyterian Magazine was a denominational publication, for he continued:

"more than nine tenths of its pages ever have been, and it is designed that they ever shall be occupied, with discussions, information, and intelligence, in no respect sectarian; but in which all who hold the great doctrines of the Protestant Reformation may, alike, find their favourite sentiments supported and their minds interested and gratified." ***

The real reason for the change of name is implied in this statement:

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* Presbyterian Magazine, Vol. II, Introduction, p. 1
 ** Ibid, p. 2
 *** Ibid, p. 2

"With a view, then, to prevent a misapprehension, unfavorable to the extensive circulation of this publication, and also to make it known by an appellation more truly indicative of its design than it has hitherto borne, it has been decided that its title hereafter shall be, The Christian Advocate." *

The Presbyterian Magazine, to which we devote so much attention for the simple reason that it made a great contribution to religious journalism, in furnishing the public with a great variety of religious material, is also to be noticed for two other things. It was one of the few, if not the only magazine, to use parallel column rule, giving the magazine an artistic effect. Then also the magazine was one of the first, if not the first religious magazines, to pay for articles, as proven by this statement:

"Account or apologize for it as we may, it is still a fact deeply to be regretted, that in our country literature has hitherto received no adequate remuneration....It is the acknowledged cause that periodical publications have so often been deficient in merit and short in duration. As a matter of justice, then, it has been determined that for every composition inserted in the Christian Advocate, the author, unless he decline it, shall receive a pecuniary compensation, to the full extent as liberal as the avails of the work will permit." **

It is not known how many authors declined to accept compensation for their work, but evidently the scheme met with success, as the magazine continued for many more years.

That the Presbyterian Magazine was the first

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* Presbyterian Magazine, Vol. II, p. 2

** Ibid, pp. 4-5

real publication of the denomination, is intimated by these remarks:

"It certainly has been a just cause of regrets ...that although the Presbyterian denomination of Christians is among the most numerous of any in the United States...has, hitherto, made no combined effort, to establish and maintain, a religious publication." *

Presbyterians saw their opportunity, apparently, for ever since the establishment of the first Presbyterian journal there has been some kind of denominational publication, one of which, the Presbyterian, begun Feb. 16, 1831, recently celebrated its one hundredth birthday.

Another Presbyterian publication which deserves some attention is the Princeton Review, started originally in 1825 as the Biblical Repertory. This magazine was distinctive in that it was one of the weightiest in its day. That the magazine was designed for theologians, rather than for popular thought, does not need to be questioned, as the quarterly contains essays and scholarly treatises which demand a great deal of thought, concentration, and meditation, and which for the average layman, are unintelligible.

The first editor of the magazine was the great Presbyterian theologian, Chas. Hodge. The first issue of the magazine was really a "collection of Tracts in Biblical Literature." The first of these is a translation of Bechii Monogrammata Hermeneuticas Novum Testamentum.

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* Presbyterian Magazine, Vol. II, p. 6

This first article is really more like a good sized book, for 122 pages of the magazine are devoted to it. The second essay is also quite lengthy, and occupies 27 pages. It is a translation of Tittman on Historical Interpretation. The succeeding issues continue in the same vein. The length of the articles is explained by the editors as follows:

"With respect to the contents of the following number it may be proper to remark that the selection was determined by the consideration that it would be most expedient to publish something in the first number which would be valuable and saleable in a separate form." *

The editor also stated that the nature and design of the publication had arisen "from the conviction of Biblical studies, and from the desire of exciting greater interest in their cultivation." **

C. Resume

In looking back over the period we see that many denominations, including the Universalists, Unitarians, Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians, had been instrumental in establishing religious journalism in the United States.

The Lutherans also should be included in this group, the Lutheran Observer having begun publication in 1831. "It was a continuation of the Lutheran Intelligencer founded in March, 1826, which was the first Lutheran periodical issued in America." ***

* Biblical Repertory, Vol. I, No. 1, p. V

** Ibid, p. III

*** Smyth, A. H. "The Philadelphia Magazines" p. 125

The Quakers also have a part in the establishment of religious journalism in the United States, for in 1827 the Philadelphia Weekly Friend was born. "Under the control, during all of its century and more of its existence of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, it has, like that organization, been distinctively conservative. The Friend was born in 1827 in the midst of the controversy which caused a separation in that year between the followers of Elias Hicks and the orthodox body of the Society; it was dedicated to be the spokesman of the parent branch....The Hicksite controversy ran through the first dozen volumes of The Friend, though by no means to the exclusion of other matter.

We may conclude by saying that the period from 1800-1830 is to be noticed for the founding of many denominational magazines, many of which succeeded in maintaining their own, some leading a long and healthy life, and still existing today.

Doctrine and controversial subjects were leading topics of discussion. These articles were lengthy, and oftentimes exceedingly weighty, and if published today would find little favor with the public, and it is questionable if many ministers and leaders in religious life would have the inclination or time to read and study them. Modern journalism has taught that what readers like

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* Mott, op. cit., p. 562

in their reading is variety and brevity, and that is exactly what the early religious periodicals failed to supply, as will be noted in the next chapter which will deal more specifically with the contents of the magazines. It is to be borne in mind, however, that during the time of the founding of religious periodicals, magazines were comparatively few in number, and people had amazing endurance, as is testified by the fact that they would patiently listen to long sermons and discourses. The length of these seemed to have been carried over in the religious journals.

CHAPTER VI
CONTENTS OF SOME OF THE
RELIGIOUS JOURNALS

- A. Introductory Statement
- B. Contents of the Periodicals
 - 1. Revivals
 - 2. Controversy
 - 3. Missionary News
 - 4. Miscellaneous
- C. Summary

CHAPTER VI
CONTENTS OF SOME OF THE
RELIGIOUS JOURNALS

A. Introductory Statement

In the preceding chapters it was shown that some of the religious periodicals rated high in regard to content. It must also be remarked that there is a distinction to be made in regard to the quality of the material published in the various magazines. Some of them printed, as will be seen later in this chapter, a great deal of eclectic material. Others contained a variety of original matter. The one thing that nearly all the magazines were agreed on was a high aim. This also has been brought out in preceding chapters, and as it is not the purpose of this chapter to again investigate the aims of the periodicals, but rather the contents, we can summarize their aims in a few statements, and then compare the contents with the aims.

The motives of practically all the magazines were two-fold: the edification of man, and the glorification of God and His Kingdom. To some of the editors this seemed most easily accomplished through promotion of sound theological knowledge. Others placed emphasis on Christian living, including charity, piety, truth, righteousness, devotion, and the various other attain-

ments of true Christian living. Generalizing we may say that the aims of the various magazines were noble, very comprehensive and ambitious, although not always obtainable.

B. Contents of the Magazines

1. Revivals

As has been noticed in a previous chapter some magazines were devoted to missions, and others carried a great amount of missionary news. More about this will be said later. Another phase of religious news that found a great deal of room in the religious periodicals was the news of revivals. Much of the information concerning revivals was gleaned from local newspapers, and many accounts were sent in by pastors of the churches concerned. That the revivals were prominent, and that they made people think, is evident when the accounts are read. One of the most significant accounts of the spirit of revival is found in the Christian Magazine, March 1826, in which is described the spirit of revival in Salem, Mass., as reported in the Recorder and Telegraph:

"The influence spread from heart to heart, from house to house, from neighborhood to neighborhood, increasing as it went, until the excitement became general and strong. It was not, indeed, like the rushing of a mighty wind, or the pouring of a torrent, but like the distilling of a gentle dew, silent, yet effectual. Religious meetings, which were well attended before, were now full to overflowing, and solemn as the house of death." *

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* Christian Magazine, Vol. III, No. 3, p. 94

Reference is also made to the spirit of revival in other communities in the state, as well as in Maine, Vermont, New York State, and New Jersey. The accounts are carried in many issues of the magazine. In the April number, for example, appears an extract of a letter to the editors of the Recorder and Telegraph from a gentleman in Oneida County, N. Y.:

"I have just returned from attending a session of our Presbytery, and a more interesting meeting I never attended; and so it was remarked by the oldest preachers. The Lord in mercy is carrying on revivals in a most powerful manner in many places.... It does seem that there never was a time like the present, since the day of Pentecost; such wonderful displays of sovereign grace, such multitudes flocking to the cross." *

That this spirit of revival, which finally culminated in the Finney revival in 1830, was prevalent during the entire period of years between the second great awakening of 1800 and the Finney revival, is manifested by the fact that accounts of revivals appear in all religious periodicals of that time. In 1820 the Religious Intelligencer, for example, stated:

"We have occasion to mention, very frequently of late, the numerous revivals of religion which appear to multiply around us." **

The editors of the magazine solicited accounts of revivals, saying "In behalf of our readers, we would tender our grateful acknowledgements for all such accounts. There is nothing read with more interest, and

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* Christian Magazine, 1826, Vol. III, No. 4, p. 123

** Religious Intelligencer, June 1820, p. 26

perhaps nothing is better calculated to promote Revivals in other places, to enliven Christianity, and to silence Infidelity." * It is not surprising to find many accounts of such revivals in this particular magazine.

An examination of the magazines of 1800, the date of the Second Great Awakening, shows that revivals received much attention during those days. In the Connecticut Evangelical Magazine, for example, we read that

"The late, wonderful outpouring of the Holy Spirit and revival of experimental religion, in large districts of the American Church will furnish much matter for publication to delight the hearts and satisfy the benevolence of the children of God. There hath not been so great and extensive a work of divine grace in this land since the years 1742 and 1744." **

The inferences from these citations is that the revivals played a prominent part in religious journalism and that religious journalism in turn undoubtedly helped the cause of revivals by giving them the necessary publicity and calling them to the attention of the backsliders and unconverted, and awakening a new sense of responsibility and accountability in all who read the religious news.

2. Controversy

It is hardly necessary to point out that controversy received a prominent treatment in the religious periodicals. As a matter of fact some of them were born

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* Religious Intelligencer, June 1820, p. 26

** Connecticut Evangelical Magazine, 1743, Vol.I, No.1, p.3

to controversy. The Arminian Magazine, for instance, was certainly concerned with theological and controversial questions. The Panoplist also has been pointed out as being a highly controversial paper, as is brought out in its very name. The Universalist and Unitarian magazines also devoted a great deal of space to controversial subjects. It also has to be considered that this was a period of theological controversy--new denominations were constantly born, and old ones were constantly under fire by those whom some of the newspapers and religious periodicals called "Infidels."

To substantiate the point we may quote the Christian Scholar, which printed an article dealing with Natural Theology:

"The object of theology is the knowledge of God, and of the manner in which he is to be worshipped. We, therefore, stile the doctrine of which we here treat, theology; because it is employed in inquiries concerning the existence of God; his essence; his attributes and perfections; the relations we have to the Supreme Being, and the duties and obligations which result from this authority over us. We add the epithet natural to distinguish it from that theology which is found in revelation." *

The Christian Inquirer of 1826 remarks that it has "seen with regret that the leaven of sectarianism too much pervades the feelings and operations of some who profess liberal Christianity. For persons of this description we have been too liberal; and as they cannot give countenance to a paper which is not devoted to build up a sect, we of course are deprived of their patronage. There are others who are unwilling that the columns of this paper should be so much

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* Christian's, Scholar's, and Farmer's, 1789, Vol.I, No.1

occupied with the controversy which at present agitates the Society of Friends." *

The spirit of the times and the need for a good religious magazine was emphasized in the Christian Magazine in 1824 when the editor remarked that "a spirit of scepticism and of covert infidelity was observable." Continuing we read:

"Learned and subtle opposition to what we believe to be the truth, was entering itself....The simple and obvious doctrines and duties of our holy religion were passing, imperceptibly, into oblivion, and even among those justly repeated orthodox.... religious intelligence was occupying the minds of the serious readers to the exclusion of the substantial truths and leading precepts of the Gospel. A taste was thereby generating, which was, likely to become too fastidious to relish the discussion and vindication of primary topics in theology." **

The editor does not mince words in speaking about the conditions of the times, especially as concerns religion. He remarks:

"We have, indeed, fallen on times of no ordinary character and which demand no ordinary exertions on the part of those who would maintain and promote the doctrines and spirit of the gospel. The most careless observer cannot have failed to notice the varied theology of the present period, nor the lax morality produced by its influence. The foundations of many generations are assailed and with weapons too formidable and wielded, in a manner too dexterous not to excite vigilance and activity. Old and long exploded errors appear under new modifications, and opinions, as novel in character, as pernicious in their effects, are obtruded on our notice. The plain Bible christian is perplexed and knows not what to think; the wicked triumph and the uncircumcised rejoice. The cry of traditions, bigotry and superstition frightens hundreds out of their belief, and leaves them trembling on the ruins of their faith amidst universal doubt.

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* Christian Inquirer, Jan.-July 1826, p. III

** Christian Magazine, Vol. I, No. 12, pp. 379-80

When in this situation, they are prepared, as it was intended, to take any other ground, than that on which they before stood....Under the reign of infidelity, it was not the bible, considered as a revelation, that enkindled the spirit of opposition, but its holy precept and its restraining motives. If we mistake not, much of the same disposition is observable in the present day." *

The last sentence would be very applicable even in our day: it sounds very modern and up to date. It does seem as though the Christian church a hundred years ago was fighting some of the same great battles in which today's theologians are engaged.

Enough evidence has been furnished here to show that controversial subjects were not omitted in the magazines, but that they supplied a great deal of food for thought in the earliest journals. We next turn our attention to Missionary Intelligence which received a great deal of space also.

3. Missionary News

A previous chapter dealt with some of the Missionary magazines which were founded during those years. There was, for instance, the Massachusetts Missionary Magazine, the Baptist Missionary Magazine of the same state, the New York Missionary Magazine, all of which have been considered in greater detail. Besides these bigger periodicals dealing with Missionary intelligence, there were a number of smaller ones. Those Missionary

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* Christian Magazine, op. cit., p. 381

magazines furnished interesting accounts of Missionary activities which were clipped by the other religious magazines. Time after time editors of the periodicals not definitely interested in missions, credited stories to the Missionary journals.

The Theological Magazine of 1797 presented a good picture of this expression of Christian activity:

"Never, since the days of the apostles, has there been so much and such general attention paid to the great object of spreading the gospel as at the present day. In Great Britain, the missionary zeal, concerning which we have conveyed so much information to our readers at different times, continues with unabated fervour....In this country, animated by the example of our European brethren, and, it is hoped, directed by the Spirit of truth, many have been impressed with a serious concern for the salvation of the heathen on our borders;---Societies have been formed,---Missionaries are now employed to proclaim the good news...among those who are sitting in the region and shadow of death." *

This interest in missions was also emphasized by the New York Missionary Magazine in 1800, for we read that

"the plans which have been recently set on foot, both in Europe and America, for spreading the Gospel, and which have received such exemplified support, amidst scenes of convulsion, revolution, and blood, cannot fail to warm and engage every pious mind." **

It is not surprising that the Missionary magazines as well as other religious periodicals contain many accounts of proceedings of missionary societies and the missionary work conducted by the churches. Even a publication of the type of the Connecticut Evangelical

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* Theological Magazine, Vol. III, preface p. 4

** New York Missionary Magazine, VOL. I, No. 1, p. 2

Magazine saw fit to fill many of its pages with accounts of missionary societies and missionary activities. It can safely be asserted that all of the larger and more widely circulated periodicals had a department devoted to Missions.

4. Miscellaneous

News of revivals, controversial subjects, and items and articles dealing with missions, though they occupied a prominent portion of the periodicals, was not the only news and religious intelligence found in these magazines. Reference has already been made to the fact that a great deal of poetry was published in the early religious journals. Looking back over those periodicals today it would seem as though editors were somewhat in error when they saw fit to devote eight pages to poetry, and yet some of them continued to do so for a long time. Some of this poetry was good, and some was quite to the contrary. The poetry all dealt with religious and moral subjects, calculated to edify the reader religiously, no doubt.

It is to be remembered in this statement that the editors could not expect too much, for there was no pay for the work submitted. Evidence for this is to be found in a statement in the Presbyterian Magazine, as quoted in chapter V.

Examination of the contents reveals a great

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* Presbyterian Magazine, 1822, Vol. II, pp. 4-5

variety of material in the religious periodicals. Substantiating this statement we find in one number of Christian's, Scholar's, and Farmer's: * articles dealing with: Natural Theology; Physico-Theology, or a Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God proved from a survey of the heavenly Bodies; Christian theology; Systematic theology; Moral theology; Ecclesiastical History; A Summary of the History of the Christian Church from its Commencement to the Present Century; A Commentary on St. Matthew; The Beautiful and Sublime of Scripture; Mistranslations of Scripture rectified; A Dissertation on the Sacred Trinity; an Essay on Faith; Christian Biography: the Life of St. Chrysostom, and the Life of John Calvin; and numerous other articles.

Examining a magazine of a later date, the Theological Magazine of 1795, we find the following contents: Sketches of the life of Joseph Bellamy, D.D., of Bethlem, Connecticut, extracted from Mr. Benedict's sermon at the Doctor's funeral. More than nine pages is devoted to this subject. The second and following articles are contributed. The first of these is a brief view of the Evidence of Divinity of the Sacred Scriptures, arising from the consideration of the Nature and Importance of the Doctrine contained in them. This consists of $8\frac{1}{2}$ pages, and is followed by similar articles. In one of these succeeding ar-

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* Christian's, Scholar's, and Farmer's, Vol. I, No.1

ticles an interesting question, reflecting the thought of the time, is asked. It is: "Wherein consists the difference between the faith of God's elect and the faith of devils? Does it lie in different apprehension of the same subject; or in the nature of the exercise itself?" *

A further inspection of the magazine reveals that fifteen pages have been devoted to a treatise on the Atonement. "Observations on the Nature of Benevolence" require five pages. And so the magazine continues. The reading matter is extremely heavy, and is written in a laborious style. Readers of the twentieth century are led to wonder how much these heavy topics and their still heavier treatments were read and digested by the people of the day.

In this connection it may be remarked that not only was the treatment of the material very undesirable from a modern journalistic standpoint, but the make-up and the typography of the magazines did very little to help the situation. Large and attractive headlines were unknown, nearly all the heads, if the articles carried any captians beside the departmental head, were set in caps, sometimes in small caps. Oftentimes the type was very small and it is not uncommon to find seven point type used. Six point type was utilized when quotations were made. Eight, nine, and ten point type was the type size of most of the magazines, eight point predominating.

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* Theological Magazine, 1795, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 44

Some of the periodicals were wise enough to divide the pages, which were of our present day book size, that is approximately six by nine inches. These pages sometimes were divided into two columns, thus making the reading easier. It does not need to surprise the examiner of these magazines a hundred years later to find that they could not attain success--the editors simply did not have sufficient business acumen and stamina, nor editorial training and knowledge of psychology to make the magazines attractive and popular with the masses.

That the magazines did not succeed in making improvements in many respects is indicated by an examination of later date, and for this purpose we have taken a denominational magazine, the Christian Journal, an Episcopalian paper started in 1817.

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In the first number appears an article "The Character of Luther" with remarks on the principles of the Reformation (Abridged from the British Review.) The next article is a feature "The Pastor's Visit to the Cottage" and then comes an account of "The Episcopal Church in Scotland," (from the British Critic), followed by a poem by Mason, after which comes an article "Man's Demerit," from the forcible pen of the "judicious Hooker." The next is the "Liturgy" from a late charge of the Bishop of Gloucester. This is followed by a tragedy in five acts

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* Christian Journal, 1817, Vol. I, No. 1

"Bertrand, or the Castle of St. Aldobrand" (abridged from a late number of the British Review.) An anecdote is used as a filler and then comes an article "Silliman's and Simond's Travels" of which the editors say, "We select the following remarks on Silliman's and Simond's Travels in England from the last number of the Quarterly Review, not yet republished in this country." * The following numbers continue in the same way, all of them containing a great deal of eclectic material, and extracts of addresses.

The Methodist Magazine, started the year later, had a definite classification which was followed in each issue. The number and order were as follows: 1. Divinity. 2. Biography. 3. Scripture Illustrated. 4. The attributes of God displayed in the work of Creation, and Providence. 5. The grace of God manifested. 6. Miscellaneous. 7. Religious and Missionary Intelligence. 8. Obi-
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 tuary. 9. Poetry.

The first article under the general head "Divinity" is entitled "Evidences of the Truth of Christian Revelation" and consists of four pages. It is extracted from the New Edinburgh Encyclopedia. Scrutiny of the magazine reveals that many of the articles are extracted and are quite lengthy.

To secure still more evidence of the hebero-

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* Christian Journal, op. cit., p. 13

** Methodist Magazine, 1818, Vol. I, No. 1

geneous contents and the weight treatment of many of the subjects, we examine a period of still later date, the Presbyterian Magazine, founded in 1821. In the first volume the editors remark that "The materials of the work will, in general, be arranged under the following heads, viz: 1. Religious communications, including essays on doctrinal subjects, church history and government; the nature and design of gospel ordinances; religious biography; biblical criticism, illustrations of prophecy, and evidences of the truth of Christianity. 2. Reviews of old books and new publications....3. Religious intelligence, such as well attested accounts of revivals of religion; with some notices of institutions likely to subserve the cause of Christianity....4. Selected pieces of approved poetry on religious subjects. 5. A select list of new publications. 6. An obituary." This is exactly what is found in the magazine, but what is omitted in the list is a prolific number of reviews of sermons.

C. Resume

Summarising we may therefore say that the magazines contained a great deal of contributed as well as eclectic material. The articles oftentimes were exceedingly weighty and ponderous and very lengthy. Poetry, biography, and sermons were favorite provender for the re-

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* Presbyterian Magazine, 1821, Vol. I, No. 1, p. 4

ligious periodicals of the day. Controversial subjects were introduced frequently, but news of revivals and missionary intelligence and evangelical endeavor was also played up.

Considering all the limitations of the periodicals of that day the editors did remarkably well; their lives must have been hardened a great deal by the work they performed, yet they overcame the difficulties and published materials both good and bad. Some of the latter material would not be printed in the magazines today even if the editors could find people who had a sufficiently good religious background and desire for polemics as well as editorial training to write articles like those written a hundred years ago.

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

In evaluating the contribution of the earliest religious periodicals we must bear in mind several factors. One is that the magazines of a hundred years ago cannot be evaluated in the same light as the magazines of the present day, for times and conditions then were different. It must also be borne in mind that the typographical art had not been developed to its great height of artistry of today. A third difference is found in the securing of original material, which a century ago was much more difficult than it is today. Now there are hundreds of special writers, whereas a hundred years ago writers were few and were not paid. A fourth difference is that today the United States is a fully settled and well developed country, something that certainly cannot be said of the earlier United States. A fifth difference noted in the thesis is that a hundred years ago there was a beginning of national organization of a few great religious bodies, whereas today there are many more sects and more national groups of religious people and denominations than ever before. A safe statement to make is that there were fewer people a century ago to whom the religious journals could appeal than there are today, and also their religious interests were along a few lines, whereas today, with the many separate bodies and theological systems, there is a field for more religious journals

and with people having more time to read, and with a more professional class of journalists to provide the people with religious literature it is not surprising that there has been a great advance in religious journalism. It must be remembered, though, that it was through the efforts of the entrepreneurs of a century ago that present day religious journalism has attained its height.

Regardless of all the factors detrimental to a richly developed religious journalism, the publications which dealt with religious, moral, and spiritual matters made their contributions. No one can estimate the power and influence of the Missionary press upon the people. News of missionary activities interested people in missions. Then again there were the other periodicals which promoted the intelligence and the spirituality of the people by the publication of narratives dealing with actualities, such as conversion, death, etc., the printing of biographical material, and the insertion of many topics dealing with spiritual life.

Again it must be remembered that "In the evangelization of a literary people, the Christian press is indispensable. The influence of the native heathen or unevangelical literature ^{*} must be counteracted." This is exactly what many of the magazines which we have studied did--they counteracted unevangelical tendencies and helped to bring to the heathen and the unconverted the great Christian truths and the Gospel of Christ.

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* Powers, O. W. in Barrett, op. cit., p. 187

When we think of the controversial subjects with which the magazines dealt, we can readily see that they made a contribution in that they presented various aspects of the problems, and made people think, and also made them fight for the principles in which they believed. In this respect the periodicals were thus also educators in that they presented and clarified many of the religious issues of the day.

There need be no question but that the journals which have been studied were great educative forces. The variety of material, and the news from other lands as well as the United States, helped to make people in the United States to see and know what was going on in their own country and in the world. Who would deny that such periodicals when read by adults and children were not great educational and spiritual blessings to them? They helped to make them see life, both physical and spiritual, and that is what education is really supposed to do for man - it is supposed to do something for and to him.

It was along these spiritual and educative lines that the religious periodicals aimed. They aimed at the salvation and the edification of man, and there need to be no doubt that many succeeded in doing this. In an age when literature was scarce, when religious institutions had to go through the pioneering days, the help of the religious periodicals was of incalculable value.

The publications which have been studied cer-

tainly must have stirred man's emotions, must have made him think, must have been able to make him see the great needs in life. The religious periodicals showed the difference between darkness and light, many of them indicated the evils of the world and pointed to the realm of the spiritual, and in that respect made a contribution which cannot be measured.

Besides spiritual stimulus the magazines also offered intellectual stimulus. No one could read the weighty discussions without exercising a great deal of brain power. No one could read the poetry in the journals without the use of imagination. The discussion of the weighty theological questions presupposed a mind that could grasp and grapple with such problems, and for that reason many of the articles were good intellectual food.

But not only was religious journalism beneficial to the reader, but also to the writer. "In many cases they have afforded an opportunity of literary experience to contributors who have afterward won distinction beyond the boundaries of their own church." *

In the last place it must be remembered that the early religious periodicals have made a valuable contribution in that they reflect to posterity not only the spirit, but also the life and the thought, especially in the field of religion, of a century ago. They show, as indicated in the chapters, that people were concerned not

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* Horwill, op. cit., p. 610

so much over trivial and temporal affairs, as they show that people were interested in the eternal and the spiritual matters, otherwise the editors would not have supplied so much of the heavy reading matter.

The reflection of the religious thought, which was on a high plane; the religious life, which was a real issue with the people; and the growth and spread of religion in the United States, all recorded in the religious periodicals offer an invaluable contemporaneous history of the story of religion in America which no secular magazine could supply, and which text books are unable to describe because of limited space and the great difficulty of coming near the original sources.

Finally it must be remembered that the early religious journalists, if they may be called so, were the pioneers in the field. They made the blunders and had to go through the experiences by which present day religious journalism profits---in other words they opened the door for present day religious journalism.

APPENDIX

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST
OF
IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS PERIODICALS
FOUNDED FROM
1743 - 1830

- 1743 Christian History
- 1771 The Royal Spiritual Magazine
- 1789 Christian's, Scholar's, and Farmer's Magazine
Arminian Magazine
- 1795 Theological Magazine
- 1796 The Christian Pocket Library
- 1797 American Moral and Sentimental Magazine
Methodist Magazine
- 1798 Christian Monitor, Portland, Me.
Religious Monitor or Theological Scales
- 1800 New York Missionary Magazine
Connecticut Evangelical Magazine
- 1802 The Christian Observer
Universalist
- 1803 Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Magazine
Massachusetts Missionary Magazine
The Monthly Anthology
- 1805 The Panoplist

- 1806 Christian's Magazine
- 1808 Herald of Gospel Liberty
- 1811 The Gospel Visitant
- 1812 General Repository
- 1813 Unitarian Magazine (Christian Disciple)
Christian Observer
- 1814 Weekly Recorder
- 1816 The Religious Intelligencer
Christian Herald
- 1817 Christian Journal and Literary Register
- 1818 Methodist Magazine
- 1819 Christian Spectator
Universalist Magazine
The Watchman (Baptist)
- 1820 Philadelphia Reformer
- 1821 Christian Register
Presbyterian Magazine
- 1822 The United States Catholic Miscellany
Religious Inquirer
Episcopal Recorder
Baptist Magazine
Christian Advocate
- 1823 Zion's Herald
- 1824 Christian Magazine
American Sunday School Magazine
The Reformer
Christian Examiner

- 1825 Princeton Review (Biblical Repertory)
Christian Mirror
- 1826 Lutheran Observer
- 1827 The Friend
- 1828 The Religious Herald
- 1830 Protestant Episcopalian and Church Register
- 1830 Methodist Review
- 1831 The Presbyterian

(Observe the number of denominational papers that were founded during these last ten years. All the important denominations of the time are represented)

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NOTE:--The places and dates of publication are given, indicating where the magazine was founded and how long it existed. Where a date is hyphenated it means that the magazine is still in existence, this being the case in only a few instances. The symbols N.Y., General, and Union mean that the files of these magazines may be found at the Public Library (N.Y.), at Columbia, General, or Union libraries, all in New York City.