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**SAMUEL MILLER (1769–1850) AND PROFESSIONAL  
EDUCATION FOR THE MINISTRY**

BY

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B.D. (Hons.), University of Edinburgh, 1997

MSc (Information and Library Studies), University of Strathclyde, 2005

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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with a concentration in

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REGENT COLLEGE  
Vancouver, British Columbia  
May 2006  
Robert John C. Robertson

To Tommy, Kristine, and Thomas

## VITA

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## A. A Time of Change and Opportunity

In the history of theological education, the early nineteenth century marks a change in the method of how ministers were trained. It sees the beginning of graduate theological education in the United States and the growth of the ministry as one of the professions. This thesis will examine one man's involvement in this process, his vision of the ministry, and his attempt to educate ministers through a model based on graduate study. In doing so it hopes to investigate his view of the relationship between education, faith, and ministry and consequently his reasons for promoting graduate theological education.

Although many of the stimuli for the growth of graduate theological education were present in colonial America, the revolution and the new Republic acted as a trigger and catalyst for its rapid development. The catalysts provided by era of the new Republic were the emergence of democracy, the end of established religion and the reduction in the supply of ministers from the Old World.

In the euphoria associated with democratic freedom and the end of established religion it was hoped that a truly Christian nation would emerge. However, these political and religious changes brought pitfalls as well as opportunities. The deregulation of churches led to greater freedom but also to greater competition, as the religious world became a competitive 'marketplace' and popular religious movements challenged denominational authority from within orthodoxy, like the Cumberland Presbyterians, and from without, like Unitarianism and Deism. The disestablishment of Anglicanism, which



other churches had celebrated, turned out to be the wider disestablishment of Christianity. To confront these challenges of intellectual heresy, unorthodoxy and atheism the church looked to its ministers and required that the future training of ministers should be rigorous and detailed enough to prepare them to face this threat.<sup>1</sup>

Even as the denominations looked to their ministers to combat these challenges, other forces were pressurising ministry in the new Republic. The numbers of ministers coming from the Old World reduced dramatically. Westward expansion, which had been restrained under colonial rule, became more rapid and as people moved west they needed ministers. Both these new churches and the existing ones grew as the result of popular revival. The demands for a greater quantity of ministers to meet this need and that they be of a higher quality could not be met by the existing educational structures. The churches' response led to new initiatives, one of which was graduate theological education.<sup>2</sup>

The exact origins of the idea of graduate study are not of particular interest to this study, but it is of note that this shift within the churches to specialized second-degree education was occurring in other disciplines as well. The other 'professions' of law, medicine, and engineering were also beginning to move from a model of training based around apprenticeship to an academic model. These new patterns for academic education were in part fuelled by the massive expansion of the bachelor's degree curriculum which was reducing the time available for any one subject. This expansion was caused in part by a shift in the nature of a university education which was developing from mastering a

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<sup>1</sup> William Warren Sweet, "The Rise of Theological Schools in America," *Church History* 6 (1937), 266-7; Glenn T. Miller, *Piety and Intellect: The Aims and Purposes of Ante-Bellum Theological Education*, Scholars Press Studies in Theological Education (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1990), 56-57.

<sup>2</sup> Sweet, "Rise of Theological Schools," 267; Miller, *Piety and Intellect*, 1-9.

‘fixed body of truth’ into acquiring imparted skills and exploring of a growing body of knowledge, and in part by the attempt of colleges to provide initial training for a wider range of professions.<sup>3</sup>

This shift in educational method to graduate study and the increased demand for ministers led to the creation of a new model for theological education, the seminary. This term had been used before, but ‘seminary’ came to be clearly associated with and marked by formal graduate education, in a setting controlled to some degree by the church. Although it would become the dominant model of education for the ministry in the later part of the nineteenth century, at this stage the seminary co-existed with, rather than replaced existing models. There were various attempts to establish seminaries but two of the early successes, Andover Theological Seminary (1808; hereafter Andover) and the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America at Princeton (1812; hereafter Princeton Seminary), offered prototypes for future attempts.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Lefferts A. Loetscher, *Facing the Enlightenment and Pietism: Archibald Alexander and the Founding of Princeton Theological Seminary*. Contributions to the Study of Religion, no. 8 (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press for the Presbyterian Historical Society, 1983), 6; Frank Dixon McCloy, “The Founding of Protestant Theological Seminaries in the United States, 1784-1840” (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1959), microfilm, 84; Burton J Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1976), [page#]; Daniel H. Calhoun, *Professional Lives in America: Structure and Aspiration 1750-1850*, (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1965), [page#].

<sup>4</sup> Miller, *Piety and Intellect*, 47-50.

## **B. A model seminary**

These two prototype seminaries, Andover and Princeton, were both founded under the auspices of a major denomination, Congregationalism and Presbyterianism respectively. They both provided principles for the organization and constitution of a seminary which influenced many subsequent seminaries. They both decided upon strategies to preserve the seminary's orthodoxy, but chose different ones. Andover chose to incorporate subscription to a creed into its constitution as a way to preserve orthodoxy, whereas at Princeton Seminary the church chose to exercise direct control over the appointment of the board and lecturers, determine the curricula, and provide a set of guidelines for student conduct. Both models of control ran into difficulties in the decades that followed. Andover's model of creedal subscription proved highly inflexible. Princeton Seminary's model of direct denominational involvement was more successful but divisions within the denomination were played out in the college as well. Unlike Andover, Princeton's prototype was reproduced in other seminaries and proved relatively sustainable – this is one of the reasons that a study of Princeton Seminary is valuable.<sup>5</sup>

Another reason to study Princeton Seminary is the ideal comparison the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University) provides. The two institutions represent the old (collegiate) and new (seminary) models of ministerial education of this era, literally side by side (both geographically and chronologically). The College of New Jersey though not directly controlled by the church, had been the cornerstone of Presbyterian education. Its funding, trustees, board members, and teachers had strong Presbyterian connections and it was the denomination's flagship for the training of ministers. Its 'failure' to provide

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<sup>5</sup> Miller, *Piety and Intellect*, 47-114.

enough candidates for the ministry and increasing concerns about the quality and maturity of the candidates it did produce were direct impetuses to the foundation of Princeton Seminary. The two institutions co-existed in a similar religious, political and cultural setting, and were a microcosm of the developments in the denomination and wider American society. During the revolution the College of New Jersey had reflected the struggles of the country; in the years that followed the seminary reflected the wider issues in the church. As tensions in the denomination grew, the seminary would come to represent the Old School faction in the Presbyterian divide, and its graduates would positively or negatively come to typify American seminarians.<sup>6</sup>

At the beginning of the Republic, Presbyterianism had one of the strongest starting positions to become the dominant player in American religious life. The choices it made about ministry and education affected how its position would develop, and perhaps reflect why it did not gain ground as quickly as some other denominations. The effects of these choices in education make the study of Princeton Seminary important in the history of Presbyterianism as well as the history of theological education.<sup>7</sup>

The study of Princeton is also important because of the theological prominence that it came to have, as one of its early graduates and subsequent professor, Charles Hodge, generated what would become the theological stance for conservative orthodoxy for at least much of the next century, both within and without the Reformed world.

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<sup>6</sup> Mark A. Noll, *Princeton and the Republic, 1768-1822: The Search for a Christian Enlightenment in the Era of Samuel Stanhope Smith* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1989), 13-14, 50; Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, *Charles G. Finney and the Spirit of American Evangelicalism*, Library of Religious Biography (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1996), 27.

<sup>7</sup> [Prominence of Presbyterianism ref].

### **C. A model minister**

There are many approaches that could provide insight into the relationship of faith, education, and ministry at the formative stages of Princeton. This study has chosen to examine the thought and work of Samuel Miller (1769 -1850).

Miller entered the ministry shortly after the revolutionary war. He was co-pastor of an important joint charge in New York City, a noted historian, and an ardent supporter of the democratic process. A first-hand observer of the changes in the religious and political culture of the United States, he served as a trustee of the College of New Jersey and was instrumental in the founding of Princeton Seminary in 1812. He then taught church history and polity at the seminary from 1813 to 1849, was an active ecclesiastical politician, and published extensively on church order and other issues surrounding ministry.

Despite this, he is a relatively unknown and understudied figure. In his time, though an important man, he was outshone by the brilliance and personality of his colleague Archibald Alexander, and they were both subsequently eclipsed by their student Charles Hodge. Alexander and Hodge have received much warranted attention, but as a result Miller has suffered neglect. Miller's theological viewpoint and publications were also overshadowed towards the end of his life, as ecclesiology, which had been the key question for Miller and his generation, ceased to be perceived as important as it had been. Even within Princeton itself Miller's views on ecclesiology were displaced by the more individualistic ecclesiology implicit in Hodge's approach to theology.

#### **D. Statement of Thesis and Limits of the Study**

For those interested in the history of theological education Miller is a useful object of study as he provides a relatively unknown perspective on one of the first efforts at graduate theological education. The thesis of this study is that the model of ministerial formation in piety and pastoralia which Samuel Miller presented while at Princeton was neither a simple repetition of previous models nor merely a defensive response to concurrent opposing models. It was rather an attempt through professional education to fuse piety and learning in the creation of competent pastors and a united church. Despite his concern with outward form, Miller realised the limits of education in the creation of piety and ministerial formation but nonetheless considered it the best option for the good of the church.

Previous studies of significance in this area include numerous works by Mark Noll on this era at both Princeton University and Seminary and Glenn Miller's *Piety and Intellect* which has laid out the role of Princeton Seminary as one of the formative models for theological education. Samuel Miller has been the subject of a number of dissertations. His view of the eldership is investigated in the dissertation of Belden Curnow Lane, and as a member of the Princeton theologians by John Oliver Nelson, Raleigh Don Scovel, and David A. White.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Belden Curnow Lane "Democracy and the Ruling Eldership: Samuel Miller's Response to Tensions between Clerical Power and Lay Activity in Early Nineteenth Century America" (Ph.D. diss., Princeton Theological Seminary, 1976); John Oliver Nelson, "The Rise and Early Development of the Princeton Theology: A Genetic History of Presbyterianism until 1850." (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1935); Raleigh Don Scovel "Orthodoxy in Princeton: A Social and Intellectual History of Princeton Seminary, 1812-1860"

In distinction from these and other previous works, the thesis of this study argues that Miller's reasons behind founding the seminary were not merely about training a greater number of well-qualified pastors, but that he also had the higher goal of encouraging the unity of the church through community-based personal formation.

This thesis will not explicitly address the reasons that other individuals had for founding this or other seminaries. It will not examine the later German influence on theological education, nor the development of training seminaries within the Roman Catholic Church. Within Miller's thought, his view of the office of elder will only be addressed in so far as it is relevant to the focus of this study.

There are a few questions on nomenclature: Princeton University was at this stage known as the College of New Jersey and it will be referred to as such.

Princeton Seminary was known as the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America at Princeton, New Jersey throughout this study it will be referred to as Princeton Seminary.<sup>9</sup> Like many writers Miller frequently used abbreviations in his manuscripts: “{}” will be used to distinguish the expansion of these abbreviations from editorial changes marked as usual with “[].”

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(Ph.D. diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1970); David A. White “Samuel Miller: A Study in Princeton Theology” (M.A., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1988). TREN microfiche.

<sup>9</sup> The nomenclature for Princeton Seminary follows Mark Noll, “The Founding of Princeton Seminary”; contra Noll, I have chosen to refer to the College of New Jersey as such.

## II. THE CONTEXT OF MILLER'S LIFE AND WORK

To understand Samuel Miller's view of ministry, his model of ministerial formation and his reasons for advocating seminary training, it is helpful to examine the background to and context of his model of ministry and the foundation of the seminary. In this chapter the wider context that shaped Miller and his model will be examined, and in the following chapter the influences of the immediate events of Miller's own life will be addressed. The wider context for Miller's model is the development of ministry and training in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. For the purposes of examining this context it is helpful to split it into four sequential stages: the Old World, the colonies, the New Republic, and period after this prior to the Civil War. That these divisions correspond in the most to political events is of note as these political events led to significant changes in the context of ministry and training within the church.

### **A. The Old World Outlook: Reformation and Puritanism**

#### *1. Reformation Changes*

The period following the Reformation produced a drastic change in the pre-existing conception of ministry. The change was initially most noticeable in the widespread abandonment of the practice of confession, the reduction of the role of the liturgy, and the use of vernacular languages in Protestant churches. Of greater significance for the role of the minister however, was the increased focus on the sermon, the availability of the Bible in the vernacular to the laity, and the abolishment of religious orders. These changes are significant because they fostered a rational and intellectual approach to faith, encouraged independent Bible reading, and reduced the role of the



laity, respectively. These factors in turn encouraged an emphasis on education, a growth in dissenting and unorthodox interpretations of the bible, and in the case of the abolishment of religious orders, not only a shift of responsibilities onto the minister, but also a move away from missionary endeavours. The abolishment of religious orders also removed a major outlet for lay piety and praxis. It would take nearly three hundred years before a new form of lay involvement would develop and become widespread. Significantly this new form, the ‘society’, would often be outside direct church control.<sup>10</sup>

## 2. *Scottish and Irish Presbyterianism*

The drive within the Reformation for literacy and education found particularly fertile soil in Scotland, which already had relatively high levels of public education. In turn the denomination that emerged in this setting, Presbyterianism, made education a very high priority. This was evidenced by a desire both that ministers should be well educated and that they should take a prominent role in encouraging education within their communities.<sup>11</sup>

From its beginnings Presbyterianism had a mixed relationship with the state, although it became the established religion in Scotland, it was characterized by sympathy with religious dissent elsewhere, and a refusal to accept government interference in church life and order. This was made markedly clear in the period prior to and during the American war of independence, as the Scottish church vocally supported the American

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<sup>10</sup> Wilhelm Pauck, “The Ministry in the Time of the Continental Reformation,” in H. Richard Niebuhr and Daniel D. Williams eds. *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1956), 131-7; [Ministry development ref].

<sup>11</sup> Pauck, “Continental Reformation,” 135; [Presbyterian education ref].

cause and Scottish Common Sense philosophy, transmitted in part through emigrant Scottish ministers, was responsible for some of the intellectual rationale behind the revolution. Presbyterianism also spread to Ireland, particularly through the Scots who settled in the north. Irish Presbyterianism's relationship with the government was even worse with Presbyterians being involved in uprisings against British rule around this period.<sup>12</sup>

The churches of Scots and Irish Presbyterianism though very similar, developed differences. They had different relationships with the state- one was established, one was not. The Irish church served an immigrant but not dominant population, whereas the Scottish church 'inherited' a dominant position with four universities and well-developed cities. This led to a disparity in access to education for both ministers and laity, and a different view of church discipline. As both strands of Presbyterianism emigrated to the North American colonies these differences became a source of tension in the immigrant Church.<sup>13</sup>

### 3. *English Puritanism*

The English Puritans, though distinct from their Presbyterian neighbours, were responsible for significant parts of the theological development of Presbyterianism, American Christianity and the minister's vocation in general. The Westminster Confession which became the theological standard of Presbyterianism was a collaborative effort between reformed divines throughout the United Kingdom, but with

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<sup>12</sup> [Presbyterianism in Scotland ref ;Triterund ref].

<sup>13</sup> John T. McNeill, *A History of the Cure of Souls* (London: SCM Press, 1952), 248, 262; [Presbyterianism in US ref – Triterund].

an overwhelming Puritan influence. The Puritans advocated a plain style of preaching, unconcerned with showing erudition, and focused on communicating plainly with the hearts and minds of its hearers. The writings of Richard Baxter and John Owen provided theological reflection on the role of the minister and the church; in particular, Baxter's *Reformed Pastor* led to the re-emergence of a wider practice of the pastoral aspects of ministry, especially visitation, a practice he developed so that he might know the spiritual state of those he preached to and informally catechise his congregation in their homes.<sup>14</sup>

#### 4. *Training for the Ministry*

In Presbyterianism training for the ministry comprised of a university education during which the hopeful trainee was put forward to Presbytery to be accepted as a candidate. Once a candidate they had to successfully preach several trial sermons, and undertake one or more public examinations by the Presbytery before they became eligible for a call to a church. A university education was a general education that involved mastering the classical literature in Greek and Latin and supplemental lectures in logic. Occasionally this university curriculum was supplemented with lectures in divinity, but as it was usually considered an advanced subject, a candidate normally stayed at university after graduation to read divinity. These studies only continued until they found a parish or a training position, (effectively an apprenticeship) in the home of an

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<sup>14</sup> Winthrop Hudson, "The Ministry in the Puritan Age," in *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, 187-8; 191-2.

experienced clergyman. As a result of this education and their role in the community, Old World ministers held a social position similar to that of the gentry.<sup>15</sup>

With the Act of Uniformity in 1662, and the resulting expulsion of the Puritans from the Church of England, there was a growth in independent or dissenting churches and although some of these churches sent candidates north to train at Scottish universities, other forms of training also began to develop. Some churches began training candidates with only an apprenticeship, and others founded independent colleges. Some of these colleges were established with the sole intention of training ministers and consequently their course of study was often specifically geared towards theological training.<sup>16</sup>

These different theological influences and models of training provide the backdrop to the development of Presbyterianism in the American colonies.

## **B. The Colonial Developments: Presbyterianism Flourishes**

### *1. Establishment*

In the New World the colonies tended to have one denomination that tended to serve as the state church. On the whole this was, of course, Anglicanism. However, as immigrant groups, especially from other nations, that came to the American colonies usually brought their own political and religious views, the setting in the colonies was

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<sup>15</sup> E. Brooks Holifield, *A History of Pastoral Care in America: From Salvation to Self-Realization* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1983), 53; Hudson, "Puritan Age," 204; Everett C. Hughes and Agostino DeBaggis, "Systems of Theological Education in the United States," in *Education for the Professions of Medicine, Law, Theology, and Social Welfare*, Report for Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1973), 170.

<sup>16</sup> [growth of dissenting colleges ref]

generally much more diverse and tolerant than in the United Kingdom. In this context the Irish and Scottish immigrants soon set about gathering in their own Presbyterian churches more or less formally. These early churches were pastored by ministers who had immigrated or by asking ministers from the Old World to immigrate. The earliest recorded presbytery was founded in 1706 by the leadership of Francis Mckemie, a minister from northern Ireland. Other Presbyterian churches were soon founded in the New York and New Jersey area, and in 1716 they organised themselves into a synod. After the revolution this synod and others that had formed gathered together in 1789 to form the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.<sup>17</sup>

Like other denominations Presbyterianism found that religious life in the colonies was quite different from the more settled situation it was used to in the Old World. The early Presbyterians had a mixed relationship with the colonial administrators. As well as this, the denomination had to address greater difficulty in maintaining discipline and higher levels of emotional expression.<sup>18</sup>

## 2. *The Role of the Great Awakening*

Between 1740 and 1742, what had been a series of sporadic localised revivals, blossomed into the Great Awakening, spanned the North Atlantic, and challenged the settled nature of church life and piety. One of the changes that developed as a result of the Great Awakening was the assumption that the process of conversion was a fast one.

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<sup>17</sup> H. Shelton Smith, Robert T. Handy, and Lefferts A. Loetscher, *American Christianity: An Historical Interpretation with Representative Documents*, vol. 1, 1607-1820 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), 256-257; [Presbyterian founding ref]

<sup>18</sup> Holifield, *History of Pastoral Care*, 63; John T. McNeill, *Cure of Souls*, 262.

The Puritans had argued for an extended period of months or years of careful sober reflection and cost-counting before choosing to become a Christian, but in the course of the Awakening this time of reflection became shorter and shorter as preachers urged their listeners to repent. This shift in timescale from months to days allowed a larger role for the emotions in the process of conversion- an individual's conviction of sin became an emotional as well as an intellectual experience. Although those so affected were urged to go home and soberly reflect on the call of Christ, emotions were now allowed to play a part.<sup>19</sup>

The Great Awakening also challenged attitudes to parish boundaries and open-air preaching. The desire to preach (and hear) this evangelical gospel led many to move outside of the traditional structures of ministry. This led to greater itinerancy, different settings for preaching, and the dramatic growth of unofficial lay preaching. It also created a setting for a form of ecumenism as evangelical preachers from differing denominations preached in public settings with no regard to denomination.<sup>20</sup>

The Great Awakening stimulated the growth of dissenting churches including the eventual creation of the Methodist church. Methodism encouraged new forms of ministry, including circuit-riding by itinerant preachers. This style of ministry thrived in America, because the frontier setting was predisposed to itinerancy and the established church had less control over preaching.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> [Conversion change ref]

<sup>20</sup> Hudson, "Puritan Age," 206.

<sup>21</sup> Mark A. Noll, *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1992), 171-2.

The Congregationalists and Presbyterians in the Americas also underwent extensive revival, but in 1741 they both split into Old Lights and New Lights. The division was over the changes in attitudes to conversion and ministry, spiritual experience, the role of emotions, and the excesses that had accompanied the revival.

The Old Lights were concerned about the revival's excesses and desired that conversion should be the gradual "action of an understanding rightly informed." This 'understanding rightly informed' included emotions but was neither ruled nor overly swayed by them. The Old Lights desired that their ministers should follow established social patterns and that their task was to "evaluate the doctrinal beliefs and public behavior of parishioners."<sup>22</sup>

The New Lights saw the revival as God's blessing. For them conversion was a sudden breaking of the sinful self in which, in the words of Gilbert Tennent "The Blessed God, treats with men as rational Creatures, by applying to their rational Powers; and therefore whatever Good they get passes through their Understandings, to their Wills and Affections."<sup>23</sup> Conversion was thoughtful, but ultimately intensely emotional. The New Lights were concerned that pastors had a genuine experience of God and "wanted their pastors to be experts in the interpretation of inner spiritual experience."<sup>24</sup> The split in the churches was short-lived and churches reunited in 1758.

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<sup>22</sup> Holifield, *History of Pastoral Care*, 74, 82, 85, 90, 29.

<sup>23</sup> Gilbert Tennent, *The Duty of Self-Examination*, (Boston, 1739), quoted in Holifield, *History of Pastoral Care*, 75.

<sup>24</sup> Holifield, *History of Pastoral Care*, 29, 72, 85.

### 3. *Training for the Ministry in the New World*

After they arrived in the New World, denominations and civic bodies quickly began to establish colleges with the aim of educating their future leaders and ministers. As ministers still represented a large proportion of all those who had received an education, the lecturers of these colleges were usually ministers and as a result, the ministry was often held up as the noblest goal. The numbers of colleges multiplied quickly as they were driven by a desire to promote education in general and a particular denominational perspective.<sup>25</sup>

The training these colleges provided followed a similar curriculum and pattern to the Oxford and Cambridge model; for example, Harvard's curriculum in 1636 comprised of Greek, Latin, Logic, and Philosophy. Not long thereafter however, these colleges were also influenced by ideas from Continental Europe, transmitted through the Scottish universities and the dissenting academies, which led to elocution, prose, poetry, maths and the sciences entering the curriculum.<sup>26</sup> Within Presbyterianism the requirement for ministers to train at a recognised university had been tightened as a result of increase in lay preaching encouraged by the Great Awakening.<sup>27</sup>

The practice of informally reading theology after graduation continued in the colonies, but it also developed as an alternative to college training when the college was too far away, too expensive, or had differing theological views. The student would live in

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<sup>25</sup> Sidney E. Mead, "Rise of the Evangelical Conception of the Ministry in America: 1607-1850" in *The Ministry in Historical Perspectives*, 242; Hughes and DeBaggis, "Systems of Theological Education," 171.

<sup>26</sup> Loetscher, *Facing the Enlightenment and Pietism*, 7.

<sup>27</sup> Edwin Scott Gaustad, *The Great Awakening in New England*, (New York: Harper & Brothers 1957; Chicago: Quadrangle Books Inc, 1968), 107-8.



the minister's house, study under his guidance, and gain practical experience in his church. In an attempt to improve the quality of ministers trained in this way, some key figures in the religious life of the colonies (such as Samuel Willard, at that point the vice-president of Harvard, and Cotton Mather, one of the leading pastors in New England) wrote guidelines and sample curricula for students training to become pastors within or without college settings. These guidelines included practical advice on arranging subjects, choosing texts and taking notes. This practice of staying with a minister and reading divinity developed into a recognised alternative model of training that persisted even when the opportunities to attend college had dramatically increased.<sup>28</sup>

There were also colleges specifically for the training of ministers. For example, in 1735 during the Great Awakening, Gilbert Tennent, a key New Light Presbyterian, became concerned about the spiritual state of many ministers in the Presbyterian Church. To address this problem, he developed the apprenticeship-style he was already carrying out into a training college for ministers and evangelists. The Log College, as it came to be known, produced many highly influential figures in the next generation of Presbyterianism.<sup>29</sup>

Although it was only the Episcopal Church and Dutch Reformed Church that required all candidates trained in America to be ordained their denomination's home country, the other denominations still relied on large numbers of immigrant ministers. In

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<sup>28</sup> Kennerly M Woody, "Cotton Mather's *Manuductio ad Theologiam*: the 'more quiet and hopeful way'," *Early American Literature* 4 no. 2 (1969); Eugene E White, "Cotton Mather's *Manuductio ad Ministerium*" *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 49 (1963); [Willard ref].

<sup>29</sup> Holifield, *History of Pastoral Care*, 73; Mead "Evangelical Conception of the Ministry," 242.

the Presbyterian setting, ordination was carried out by the local presbytery level. The demand for ministers was held in tension with the educational requirements of the presbytery (and later of the synod). That it was presbyteries and not the General Assembly who ordained was a shift away from the Scottish or Irish model, and gave the presbyteries greatly increased control over the shape of their churches.<sup>30</sup> One result of this system of ordination was that the Assembly, though it could advise or censure, had no direct control over what qualifications or training candidates required.

The gradual establishment of presbyteries did lead to greater control over who performed what functions within churches and reduced the amount of unofficial lay ministry. Presbyteries also began to regulate the acceptance of those trained outside of colleges, and of immigrant ministers. One of the methods some presbyteries began to use to ensure orthodoxy amongst their candidates and immigrant ministers was to require them to subscribe to the Westminster Confession. This standard assured presbyteries and later could be used to hold ministers accountable. This was accepted practice within some forms of Presbyterianism but was opposed by those Presbyterians influenced by Puritanism, who felt that such a use of a confession gave it status that rightly only belonged to the Bible. A compromise was eventually reached and a form of subscription to the standard was adopted in 1729. Presbyteries occasionally began to ordain candidates without a formal education who had demonstrated their ability and calling, but unlikely to do so.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Mead “Evangelical Conception of the Ministry,” 217; [Triterund ref].

<sup>31</sup> W. Clark Gilpin, “The Seminary Ideal in American Protestant Ministerial Education, 1700-1808,” *Theological Education* 20 (Spring 1984), 89; Smith, Handy, Loetscher, *American Christianity*, 262-263; Smith, *Presbyterian Ministry*, 20.

The Methodist Church developed new forms of training for the ministry, with the local class meeting becoming a training ground for preachers. Individuals whose talent and calling were recognised could become apprenticed to circuit riders and then circuit riders themselves. This intensive ‘assessed’ on-the-job training, supplemented when possible with reading proved an ideally flexible model of training in the less settled New World setting, and would prove one of the reasons for Methodism’s later success.<sup>32</sup>

#### 4. *The Presbyterian Ideal: The College of New Jersey*

Of the colleges founded in the American colonies the one that made the most significant contribution to the Presbyterian churches during this period was the College of New Jersey. It not only provided a steady source of candidates for the ministry but also contributed significantly to the intellectual climate and perspective of the denomination. This was in no small part due to the work of John Witherspoon (1723-1794).

When Witherspoon was invited to emigrate from Scotland and take charge of the College of New Jersey, he was a latest in a rapid succession of college presidents. He brought with him a version of Common Sense Philosophy that would prove highly influential. His tenure as President was the first that lasted for any length of time and he established the college as an important seat of learning. Witherspoon was very active in both the Presbyterian Church and the politics of the colonies.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Mead, “Evangelical Conception of the Ministry,” 239-240; Noll, *History of Christianity*, 171-4.

<sup>33</sup> Mark A. Noll, *Princeton and the Republic, 1768-1822: The Search for a Christian Enlightenment in the Era of Samuel Stanhope Smith*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), 6, 13-14, 33-34, 50, 90.

## **C. American Developments: a Revolution, an Educational Need and a New Response**

### *1. The Role of the Revolution*

In the colonies, churches had been closely tied to their originating denominations in the Old World, and the patterns of training and ministry had been more or less transplanted across the Atlantic. This situation was significantly changed by the revolution and its aftermath. In the new Republic, churches were disestablished and cut off from overseas resources; piety and national identity became linked; and democracy began to affect perceptions of church structures.

#### a) Disestablishment

For churches in America, the revolution brought freedom from overseas regulation and put them on a level playing field: in general, there would no longer be support from taxes for some denominations, nor would civil authority be used to obstruct others. On the whole, this change was received favourably because not only did it remove artificial support or impediment but it was also “believed that voluntaristic religion produced healthier varieties of Christian commitment.”<sup>34</sup>

Anglicanism was displaced from its favoured position, and the Presbyterian Church found itself in a strong position to be a leading denomination in the early Republic. The denomination was in the right places – they had established congregations

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<sup>34</sup> John M. Murrin “Religion and Politics in America from the First Settlements to the Civil War,” in *Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the 1980s*, Conference papers, Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals, 1988, ed. Mark A. Noll, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

clustered around the seats of power and key urban areas. It had also fervently embraced the revolutionary cause creating informal ties with the new political system.<sup>35</sup>

This much-desired freedom from regulation had unforeseen results however, as alternative religious viewpoints and hitherto heretical opinions found followings and a public voice. Forms of liberal Christianity (which would later develop into Unitarianism) appealed to the American intellectual elite through the removal of the seemingly irrational and miraculous from Christianity. These liberal forms became an established religious presence through the takeover of Harvard in 1803 and 1804 when liberal candidates were appointed to the chair of divinity and the presidency respectively. One of the oldest colleges in the country became firmly committed to an unorthodox form of faith. Other intellectuals discarded personal religion altogether, embracing either atheism, or subscribing to a deist view of the universe.<sup>36</sup>

#### b) Patriotism and Piety

During the Revolutionary War and in the early years of the Republic there was an expectation among church leaders and members that their new country would be a truly Christian nation. They saw themselves as a chosen nation, blessed by God, and given freedom from European oppression. God had delivered them from the oppression of the Old World with its corruption and ‘controlled’ religion, and they had a providential opportunity to found a Christian country on the principles of democracy and freedom, a new promised land. In spite of the previously mentioned unforeseen consequences of

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<sup>35</sup> [Presbyterians position ref]

<sup>36</sup> Jonathon Sinclair Carey, “For God or against Him: Princeton, Orthodoxy, and Transcendentalists” *American Presbyterians* 64 (Winter 1986): [page#].

disestablishment, churches perceived themselves as the first fruits of a godly world order.<sup>37</sup>

In this setting many ministers shouldered upon themselves the responsibility not only to fulfil their church roles, but also to seize this opportunity to encourage the godly governance of civic life through political involvement and partisanship. There were no clear divisions of political opinion along denominational lines and Presbyterianism was as divided as the others. Within the northern states and among the church leaders, such as Witherspoon, sympathies were generally Federalist, but there was also a significant body of opposition to Federalism in the middle and southern presbyteries.<sup>38</sup>

#### c) The Democratic Impulse

The opportunities presented by the revolution and the changed relationship between church and state were embraced as God's deliverance. Now that men would be able to elect representative rulers, a godly country could be created. Among some, including Miller, there was an understanding that democracy would inevitably lead to the triumph of Christianity in the New and Old Worlds.

In their embrace of democracy for civic life however, few church leaders seem to have thought about its implications for life within the church. The effect democracy would have on church life would not be immediate, but it would make life difficult for

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<sup>37</sup> [Church and politics in early republic ref]; Mark A., Noll, George M. Marsden, and Nathan O. Hatch, *The Search for Christian America* Expanded ed. (Colorado Springs: Helmers & Howard, 1989), 63.

<sup>38</sup> Stephen A. Marini, "Religion, Politics, Ratification," in *Religion in a Revolutionary Age*, eds. Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia for United States Capitol Historical Society, 1994), 205.

the clerical elite, just as it had overthrown the political elite. The shape of religion and piety changed and often moved out of the control of the leaders of the traditional churches taking on more populist forms in new structures, new denominations, and new forms of religious expression. Elders and congregants soon began to think and act for themselves and challenge the ‘oppressive’ forces in the churches.<sup>39</sup>

#### d) Ecumenical Endeavours

Before these effects of democracy began to manifest themselves, there was a limited era of religious co-operation as denominations worked together in trying to establish Christian America. One clear example of this co-operation was the 1801 Plan of Union negotiated between the Congregationalist churches and the Presbyterian Church in the United States. This plan allowed for co-operation and collaboration between the two denominations by formalizing pulpit exchanges and joint missionary endeavours while allowing both churches to retain their distinct identities. The plan did produce a united denomination of sorts, but proved vastly more beneficial to the Presbyterians than the Congregationalists. This occurred because the plan failed to take account of how the inherent differences in church order might work themselves out as the churches collaborated - the Presbyterians had the superstructure to capitalise on the joint endeavours. The plan also failed to adequately address the differences in spirituality, and would set the stage for the later split within Presbyterianism.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Mead “Evangelical Conception of the Ministry,” 218; [Hatch ref]

<sup>40</sup> [Plan of Union and tensions ref]

## 2. *Training for the Ministry in the New Republic- a new need*

In the first years of the Republic it became clear that there was a growing crisis in the recruitment and training of ministers. There was, as mentioned, both a marked reduction in supply of ministers from the Old World and an increasing challenge from unorthodox opinion in the wake of new religious freedoms. Alongside this reduction in supply, there was an increase in demand as immigration in general increased and as westward expansion, which had previously been restrained, began in earnest. As well as these factors, there was also concern over the insufficiency of previous models and a general desire that training for the ministry be more specialized. This general desire was partly in response to the preceding factors but was also a reflection of the direction general university education had taken.<sup>41</sup>

### a) The Threat to Orthodoxy

When Harvard University appointed the Hollis Chair of Divinity in 1631, they hoped to ensure that divinity was taught well. The appointment of the chair was a landmark in theological education, as it began to mark out theology as a specialist field.<sup>42</sup> With the appointment of the liberal Henry Ware in 1803 to this chair, however, control of the divinity school passed into the hands of what would become the Unitarian Church.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Sweet, "Rise of Theological Schools," 267; McCloy, "The Founding of Protestant Theological Seminaries," 4.

<sup>42</sup> William Orpheus Shewmaker, "The Training of the Protestant Ministry in the United States of America, Before the Establishment of Theological Seminaries," *The Papers of the American Society of Church History*, Second series vol. 6. (n.p., n.d.; reprint n.p.: Knickerbocker Press GP Putnam's Sons [1915?]), 128,135.

<sup>43</sup> Miller, *Piety and Intellect*, 61-62.



That control of one of the leading schools and theological training centres could and had fallen into the hands of the unorthodox sent a shockwave through other schools and denominations. Now not only was there was one less place to train orthodox ministers, but a heretical church was in a position of respectability and was geared to continue to grow. There was now a perceived need for ministers who could both teach what they believed in distinction to other Christian denominations and refute heresy in Christian clothing.<sup>44</sup>

As well as the rise of liberalism, Christians in the New Republic were confronted with the growth of deism. From the militant deism of Thomas Paine to the less militant but more serious deism of a large number of other signatories of the declaration of independence, deism was becoming more popular throughout the privileged and educated sections of society. It was attractive as it allowed belief in God but left morality to individual and societal mores. Archibald Alexander frequently devoted sections of his sermons to combating Deism, seeing in it ‘a torrent of “vice and infidelity which threatens to overflow the land,” which required the church to take united action oppose it.’<sup>45</sup>

The growth of these intellectually and socially respectable alternatives to mainstream Christianity challenged the church to train ministers who could engage with and defeat the intellectual arguments for these alternatives. The university system as it was did not appear to have the time in the general course of study that was offered to

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<sup>44</sup> Sweet, “Rise of Theological Schools,” 266-7; Miller, *Piety and Intellect*, 56-57; [ref – need for adequate ministers]

<sup>45</sup> Archibald Alexander, “Letter to the Editor, Jan. 25, 1802,” in *Connecticut Evangelical Magazine II* (1801-1802), 354 quoted in Loetscher, *Facing the Enlightenment and Pietism*, 65 ft. 17.

devote to this problem so the churches were now forced to consider how they could further train their ministers.

b) Supply and demand

In this context of wanting ministers who had received more training, churches were also faced with a decreased supply and an increased demand. The decreased supply arose for a number of reasons. During the revolution there was an immediate reduction in the number of ministers of all nationalities emigrating from the Old World as a result of the naval blockades. This reduction highlighted to the denominations their dependency on Europe and they began to think about how they could increase the numbers of home-grown ministers.<sup>46</sup>

The increased demand occurred due to the combination of three factors: Western expansion that had been tightly controlled was now encouraged, there was a great increase in immigration to occupy these newly available territories, and during the war there was a revival. Ministers were needed to try to develop churches for a rapidly growing population over a dramatically expanding area. Between 1790 and 1810 the American population nearly doubled.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, as the new expansion was extending into totally undeveloped regions, itinerant evangelists were needed until the infrastructure to support a settled minister was in place. Within developed areas the revival had also led to a massive growth in church numbers during the war. For example the Presbyterian Church had gone from having 340 churches in the Synod of New York and Philadelphia

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<sup>46</sup> Sweet, "Rise of Theological Schools," 267.

<sup>47</sup> Mark Noll, "The Founding of Princeton Seminary," *Westminster Theological Journal* 42 (Fall 1979): 87.

in 1770 to nearly 500 in 1788. Their supply of ministers had not kept up with this and there was a vacancy rate of around fifty percent.<sup>48</sup>

c) Professionalization

One of the issues that shaped the response to this demand and that also indirectly contributed to the demand for ministers was the changing shape of college education. College education in general was undergoing a shift that had a direct bearing on the number of students going on to become ministers. Science was a rapidly growing subject and, in response to the demands of students and society that it become part of the curriculum, there was an inevitable decline of in the emphasis on the classical subjects. With science contributing to an ever-expanding curriculum, intentionally or not colleges began to specialize, and courses designed to prepare students for specific professions began to emerge. In the American environment, where more than elsewhere colleges competed for students, the college that offered the most up-to-date education prospered. Thus, students completing degrees were now even less prepared to enter the ministry. This shift did not just occur as a result of changes in the curriculum however, as it also occurred in the student perception of society. Students who wanted to contribute to society and previously might have entered the ministry now considered contributing through other fields. In the early Republic a large number of those who might previously become ministers, now saw the importance and opportunity of the legal profession and political office as a way of playing a part in the civic life of their country. Other professions, such as medicine and engineering, now also began to train through a university education. Without an aristocracy controlling the upper echelons of American

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<sup>48</sup> Marini "Religion, Politics, Ratification," 199.

society, education promoted rapid social mobility. As a result of these new opportunities although more students graduated, fewer students became candidates, and undergraduate colleges increasingly began to hire professors with interests other than divinity.<sup>49</sup>

Another consequence of this growth in the numbers of graduates was a further contribution to the growing need for better-trained ministers. Better-educated congregations had higher expectations of ministers' abilities. This meant that the ministers produced in less formal methods of training had difficulties with educated congregants.<sup>50</sup>

### 3. *The Failure of Previous Models*

#### a) The general failure of existing models of training

In this situation of increased demand and a need for comprehensive training it may be wondered why the churches did not simply found more colleges of the type they already had, or add professors of divinity to their existing colleges. The short answer is that they did, but that, at least in the minds of church leaders, these solutions were postponing rather than solving the problem.

Although the existing college model would continue to provide the primary locus of training for ministers for decades, it was a model that was proving insufficient as a source of ministers. As mentioned above, colleges began to focus on science, at the cost

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<sup>49</sup> [development of professions]; Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism*, [Page#]; Calhoun, *Professional Lives*, [Page#].

<sup>50</sup> Gilpin, "The Seminary Ideal," 88; Calhoun, *Professional Lives*, [Page#].

of classical subjects. Not all colleges were able to offer theological lectures for students, and increasingly the general student body were not interested in taking them.<sup>51</sup>

With the general faculty of colleges increasingly being unable to provide supplemental theological lectures, one early solution was to add divinity faculties to existing colleges in order to support those who were still interested in training for the ministry. On the whole, this approach had difficulties as the staff appointed as divinity faculty tended to become isolated from the rest of the faculty which tended to cause conflict, and as what was taught was still outside of church control. The dynamics of appointing a professor just to teach a minor part of a curriculum when other staff members were overworked teaching everything were perhaps predictable. Divinity faculties, such as the one at Harvard, had also gone ‘astray’, so this approach to improving the education of ministers provided insufficient assurance to concerned denominations.<sup>52</sup>

Although apprenticeship-style training without a college education continued to happen, it was not regarded as a significant source of ministers in most denominations and was seen as a second rate option. Apprenticeship training with a minister or reading divinity with a lecturer after a college education remained the norm, but was unregulated and there was growing concern over the quality of minister this produced. This was evidenced within the Presbyterian Church in the unsuccessful efforts of the Synod of New York and New Jersey to require “That in future candidates who have the Gospel Ministry in view be required to attend to the study of divinity, at least three years before

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<sup>51</sup> [Shewmaker ref]

<sup>52</sup> Loetscher, *Facing the Enlightenment and Pietism*, 8-10.

licensure.”<sup>53</sup> Although the measure was deemed unconstitutional, it reflects a concern that too many inadequately prepared ministers were being accepted.

#### b) The Failure of the College of New Jersey

With colleges generally failing to provide enough good candidates for the ministry it is perhaps not surprising that these trends manifested themselves at the flagship of Presbyterian training as well. The outworking of these trends at the College of New Jersey is worth examining in some detail, both as a good case study for the problems college education faced and also because it is the immediate context for the founding of the seminary.

When the revolution came, Witherspoon, along with most of the members of faculty and students, was a fervent supporter of the revolutionary cause- to such an extent that the college earned the sobriquet the ‘seminary of sedition’. After the success of the War of Independence, Witherspoon and many of the trustees of the college continued to be active in the political life of the United States, bringing the college recognition and standing. Many of the trustees were also instrumental in the creation of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in 1789. This link is perhaps one of the main reasons that the Church would come to regard and rely on the College of New Jersey as its prime source of future ministers.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, *Minutes of The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America From its Organization A.D. 1789 to A.D. 1820 Inclusive*. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, [1847]), 59.

<sup>54</sup> Noll, *Princeton and the Republic*, 6, 13-14, 33-34, 50, 90.

The intellectual climate Witherspoon established at the College of New Jersey was not without difficulties, however, as the relationship that he established between religion and learning and between the church and the state contained inherent tensions. As these became evident, the key question for the church and college became, in the words of one historian, “Could the college remain a nursery of both piety and science, a place at once to train ministers and statesmen, a promoter of character, social order, Presbyterian orthodoxy, and political well-being?”<sup>55</sup>

Witherspoon’s successor, Samuel Stanhope Smith, thought that it could. An existing member of faculty, Smith served as the acting president for long periods of time when Witherspoon had been away on political business. Smith continued and developed Witherspoon’s version of Common Sense Philosophy in its combination of religion and learning and its promotion of learning as an unbiased and unfettered activity. His development of this worldview brought to the surface the tensions between his view, that reason and learning were ends in themselves, and the attitude of those who saw the college as primarily a ministerial training ground and were suspicious of total academic freedom. These tensions would eventually lead to investigations of Smith’s orthodoxy.<sup>56</sup>

It was, however, the more specific areas of student discipline, the decline in the number of candidates, and the hiring of a divinity professor that eventually led to the College of New Jersey itself being considered to have failed as a sufficient and reliable source of ministers.

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<sup>55</sup> Noll, *Princeton and the Republic*, 57, 77.

<sup>56</sup> Noll, *Princeton and the Republic*, 146, 155.

The general trend of an increase in demand for candidates coupled with a decline in students becoming candidates played itself out at the College of New Jersey as well. With Witherspoon having been such a key political figure and many other trustees, staff, and graduates from the revolutionary period having brilliant political and civic careers, many students were choosing to follow in their footsteps civic life rather than enter the ministry. This did not, however, stop the denomination desiring that the college should be producing even more candidates than before the war, and suspecting that Smith was not doing all he could to promote piety and the cause of the church.<sup>57</sup>

Another effect of the revolution on the College of New Jersey manifested itself in issues of student discipline. In the early years of the Republic, student conduct throughout the United States plummeted and the College of New Jersey was no exception.<sup>58</sup> It suffered a serious fire (in 1807) and numerous riots leading the trustees to become very concerned over the state of the college and Smith's apparent failure to maintain high moral standards. The conditions of student life were fairly harsh and restricted, dormitories were overcrowded, and there was little to do, especially in winter. Students saw their behaviour in objecting to these conditions as similar to their fathers' objection to British rule. The trustees however, interpreted their defiance as spiritual rebellion and insolence, and intervened in Smith's running of the college by requiring students to take an oath of good behaviour and by appointing a bursar to control their access to money.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup>Noll, *Princeton and the Republic*, 170-1.

<sup>58</sup> Burton J. Bledstein, *The Culture of Professionalism: The Middle Class and the Development of Higher Education in America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1976), 229-31.

<sup>59</sup> Noll, *Princeton and the Republic*, 6, 83, 166, 168-9, 221, 234-5.



As a result of these lapses in discipline, and suspicious of Smith's orthodoxy, church leaders, who were concerned about the state of training for the ministry, began to push for the founding of a Presbyterian seminary, feeling no longer able to entrust training to the College of New Jersey.<sup>60</sup>

#### 4. *Responses to this need*

As outlined above, there were some church leaders for whom the existing options to supply enough candidates for the ministry were not adequate. They felt the need for another option, and given the trend in education towards specialisation they began to outline plans for graduate theological education. The notion of a seminary, an independent higher education institution under greater church control that would be able to provide a course of study in theology for graduates, began. Two approaches to managing such an institution were tried; one maintained church influence and control through a board of trustees and the other through subscription to a creed.<sup>61</sup>

##### a) *Andover's Model*

In 1808 Orthodox Congregationalists founded the first such institution at Andover.<sup>62</sup> They founded the seminary at Andover in direct response to the takeover of Harvard by the liberal faction. This takeover happened, at least in part, because they were unable to appeal to any specific theological standard. Their response when establishing Andover was to create a creed detailing the specifics of the faith to be held and taught by the faculty members. The hope was that this creed would ensure the quality and

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<sup>60</sup> Noll, *Princeton and the Republic*, 177-8, 180, 214, 242, 252, 155.

<sup>61</sup> Miller, *Piety and Intellect*, 48, 31-33, 57.

<sup>62</sup> Miller, *Piety and Intellect*, 49.

orthodoxy of the seminary. This approach failed as the creed's focus became irrelevant to crucial questions and was used as a political tool rather than a theological one. Despite its problems and relative lack of followers, this effort at graduate education and this approach to controlling orthodoxy raised key questions about the shape of training for the ministry.<sup>63</sup>

b) Princeton's Model: the Committee's Report and the Commission

Within Presbyterianism, the drive to found a seminary was similarly prompted by disappointment with the existing structures. Where Harvard had failed for Congregationalist training, the College of New Jersey, as outlined previously, failed in a number of less drastic ways. The earliest recorded correspondence discussing the founding of a theological seminary is a letter from Ashbel Green to E. D. Griffin dated January 13th 1800.<sup>64</sup> Green, who was increasingly frustrated by and suspicious of Smith's presidency of the College of New Jersey began to gather support for the establishment of another institution. Samuel Miller quickly became another of the advocates for a seminary and in 1805 began letter-writing and raising the issue of the quality of ministers before the General Assembly. In 1806 in response to this campaign, Smith decided to bolster the position of the College of New Jersey by proposing that a professor with a specific remit to teach theology, to promote the ministry as a career, and

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<sup>63</sup> Miller, *Piety and Intellect*, 65-79. The role of the creed in the dismissal of Andover's professor of history is detailed on 72-73 and in J. Earl Jr. Thompson, "Church History Comes to Andover: The Persecution of Mr. Murdoch," *Andover Newton Quarterly* vol. 15 no. 4 (March 1975): 213-27.

<sup>64</sup> Noll, *Princeton and the Republic*, 156; cf Miller, *Piety and Intellect*, 102 that it was a letter from Green to Samuel Miller.

to assist those students interested in becoming candidates be appointed. During the process of making this appointment, Smith and Green had a serious falling out over who should be chosen. Smith was eventually successful, perhaps helped by the fact that the duties of theological education were his prerogative as college president. He secured the appointment of Andrew Kollock to teach divinity in an attempt to prove that the College of New Jersey was up to the task, and when he failed to secure enough interested students for Kollock to teach, Kollock resigned, and support for a seminary grew.

This failure prompted Archibald Alexander, another leading figure in the Presbyterian Church, to align himself with those in favour of the seminary. In 1810, having gathered support from the Presbyteries, the General Assembly set up committees to come up with a plan for a new school. The school was opened two years later in 1812 with Alexander as its principal. The following year Miller was appointed as professor of church history and polity.

The church opted to assure the quality and orthodoxy of the seminary by controlling the appointment of board and faculty members. This gave the church a great deal of direct power over seminary life and teaching, and was a model that would be replicated in other institutions.<sup>65</sup>

#### c) The Older Models Continue

This is not to say that as soon graduate theological education began the other forms of ministerial training stopped. The majority of ministers continued to train following existing patterns. It is to observe, however, that standardised graduate

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<sup>65</sup> Miller, *Piety and Intellect*, 102-113. The details of the Assembly's decision to found a seminary will be returned to when discussing Samuel Miller's role in the following chapter.

theological education came to be seen as a way for denominations and congregations to have greater certainty of their ministers' piety and status and that, as life-long ministerial tenure decreased, ministers with professional education were those who enjoyed the most permanence. By the 1830's professional education had become the norm rather than the exception.<sup>66</sup>

#### **D. American Developments: changes during the pre-civil war era.**

In the years between the establishment of these two seminaries and the outbreak of the Civil War the shape of religious life in America once more changed dramatically.<sup>67</sup> The warm relationship between the churches and the government cooled, the period of inter-denominational co-operation ended, voluntary societies began, there was another revival (the Second Great Awakening), and colleges and seminaries proliferated.

##### *1. Politics, the State, and the Christian: The Shift*

Although the idea of America as a chosen nation set apart by God with a responsibility for establishing a Christian nation would persist, around the turn of the nineteenth century it became clear to church leaders that not only had the constitution disestablished particular denominations, but also it was establishing a secular state. There was a growing disillusionment with the government and political process, precipitated by the presidencies of Jefferson and Jackson. In 1802 Jefferson refused to continue the

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<sup>66</sup> Calhoun, *Professional Lives*, 104, 112, 142 makes this case based on the statistics of Congregationalist Clergy in New England.

<sup>67</sup> Obviously this study is only concerned with the part of this period in which Miller was alive, but the political era's serve as a useful and appropriate framework with which to draw out the characteristics of the different sets of influences on Miller's thought.

practice of sponsoring a national day of fasting and prayer – a practice which had been a common response to a national crisis in the early days of the Republic. With Jackson’s presidency came a perceived change in the national character, as coarse habits became more acceptable.<sup>68</sup>

The churches’ goal was still the establishment of a Christian nation, but they no longer looked to the government to take the lead and began to distance themselves from political life.<sup>69</sup> Further disillusionment with democracy occurred when the excesses of the French Revolution became known. Churches who had been ardent supporters of the American Revolution were shocked and horrified by the French Revolution’s barbarism and denunciation of Christianity, and, between the years 1790 and 1815, there was an outpouring of tracts and sermons condemning it.<sup>70</sup>

## 2. *Denominationalism*

The period of interdenominational cooperation that had marked the early days of the Republic did not last. Many polemical writings about distinctive points of doctrine were published as denominations sought to re-establish and promote their denominational identity. Even at the College of New Jersey, whose charter required a variety of denominations to be represented on its board, 1791 marked the “high point of non-

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<sup>68</sup> National days of fasting and prayer had previously been called by congress, Washington and Adams, for example the day for thanksgiving for the success of the revolution. Perry Miller, *Life of the Mind in America: From the Revolution to the Civil War*, (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965), 38; Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson* (New York: [Twayne Publishers] 1966), 106-108 quoted in Lane, “Democracy and the Ruling Eldership,” 155-6.

<sup>69</sup> Noll, “The Founding of Princeton Seminary,” 87-88.

<sup>70</sup> Miller, *Life of the Mind*, 4-5.

partisanship.”<sup>71</sup> Within Presbyterianism and Congregationalism, the Plan of Union survived the initial phase of this trend, but was later abrogated.

### 3. *Voluntary Organizations*

The rise and role of voluntary organisations and societies is characteristic of nineteenth-century church life. These organisations created new opportunities for the protestant laity to get involved in God’s work in a structured way that had been denied to them since the closure of the religious orders. In the American context, they capitalised on the democratic impulse and mobilized great numbers of people for good causes. The development of these primarily lay-led organizations changed how the church ministered. They created powerful groups with focused agendas that operated in areas that had previously been subject to church control. The churches’ earlier advocacy for democracy had come home to roost. Voluntary organisations enabled anyone to participate and lead and so were often very egalitarian in their nature. They also, however, often had little accountability to any church structure. The effects of this independence would be felt at both congregational and denominational level and cause some to question these societies.

As these groups were formed to support particular causes, they naturally prioritised their cause at the expense of other issues, and tended to take their support for these causes to extremes. The most prominent causes were mission, temperance, and abolition. These issues were often forced onto denominational agendas, uncovering and highlighting tensions within churches particularly over abolition and missions.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Noll, *Princeton and the New Republic*, 93.

<sup>72</sup> [refs – hatch; and others]

#### 4. *Revivalism, Finney, and the New School*

After the Great Awakening revivals continued to occur and affect church life. There was a wartime revival that contributed to a dramatic growth in church membership, there was the 1810 revival that led to the Cumberland Presbyterian's separating from their denomination, and there was an ongoing succession of localised revivals. It was, however, the Second Great Awakening that had a dramatic effect on the shape of ministry in North America.<sup>73</sup> It developed a new understanding of conversion, 'new measures' for evangelism, and also created an important role for ordinary people in the process of revival. Additionally, it shifted control of religious experience out of the hands of denominational authorities.<sup>74</sup>

The leading figures in the revival had mixed views towards the theological and denominational establishment: Some, like Charles Finney, became openly hostile, while others, like Lyman Beecher, worked within the established denominations. For Finney, who is perhaps the individual who typifies the American character of the Second Great Awakening, graduate theological training in general and Princeton Seminary in particular encapsulated all within existing church structures that was obstructing revival. Finney's assessment was that "Young men are shut up in schools, confined to books and shut out from intercourse with the common people, or contact with the common mind."<sup>75</sup>

Within Presbyterianism and Congregationalism the Second Great Awakening received a mixed reception. It challenged the traditional theology of conversion and

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<sup>73</sup> Miller, *Life of the Mind*, 14-15; [Additional ref about start of 2<sup>nd</sup> GAw].

<sup>74</sup> Holifield, *History of Pastoral Care*, 117-21.

<sup>75</sup> Charles G. Finney (unreferenced) quoted in Perry Miller, *Life of the Mind*, 30-31; James E. Johnson. "Charles G. Finney and a Theology of Revivalism" *Church History* 38 No. 3 (Sep 1969), 338-58.

practice of evangelism, existing principles of church order, and the church's authority to lead social and missiological initiatives. Those who maintained a traditional view on these issues were known as the Old School, those who supported the changes brought about by the revival and voluntary societies were the New School. Cracks began to appear in the unity of the denomination in 1831 when Albert Barnes was tried for unsound preaching. This theological division was compounded by the rising influence of the American Home Missionary Society – an independent inter-denominational society sought to merge with the Presbyterian Board of Home Mission. This move was supported by the New School as a means to further co-ordinate and push forward mission, but opposed by the Old School as it would not be accountable to the church. Relations between the two sides deteriorated further and in 1837 the Old School published a “Testimony and Memorial” opposing the influence the Plan of Union had had on the denomination. In the General Assembly which followed, the Old School had a majority and abrogated the Plan of Union, and dismissed the synods which had joined the assembly under the Plan – splitting the denomination. An underlying issue, not addressed in the division was slavery. The New School was closely tied to societies wanting the immediate emancipation of slaves, but the Old School which was spread over northern and southern states wanted to downplay this issue for the sake of presenting a united front. This difference added significantly to the tensions in the church.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Maurice W. Armstrong, Lefferts A. Loetscher, and Charles A. Anderson, eds., *The Presbyterian Enterprise: Sources of American Presbyterian History*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), 146-56.



### 5. *Developments in training*

In the years after the founding of Andover and Princeton, seminaries flourished and multiplied. This multiplication was not only the result of geographical demand (or at least perceived demand) but also of varied opinions. Each different denomination and each viewpoint within a denomination founded a college and, if possible, a seminary to foster its view. The ever expanding American setting provided the “unlimited social and geographical space” necessary to support such a proliferation of institutions.<sup>77</sup> One of the side effects of this proliferation of colleges and seminaries was that starting around 1837 there began to be an excess of ministers. This excess was fuelled by the work of education societies. These societies were founded with the intent of aiding poor students to study for the ministry and did just that, but in doing so provided an easier path to upward social mobility.<sup>78</sup> The problem of a quantitative shortage of ministers that had faced the early Republic was thoroughly addressed, and the qualitative issues were addressed in some respect by the marketplace as more education translated into a greater chance of getting and keeping a charge.

#### **E. Implications for this study**

The world in which Miller sought to develop his model of ministerial formation was marked by change. The revolution and subsequent political upheaval had forced denominations to become independent of external support from local government and

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<sup>77</sup> Mead, “Evangelical Conception of the Ministry,” 208; Mead also records that between 1807 and 1827 17 seminaries were founded. *Ibid.*, 243; Hughes and DeBaggis, *Education for the Professions*, 171.

<sup>78</sup> Calhoun, *Professional Lives*, 110-2.

mother countries. The opening up of the westward frontier had also greatly increased opportunities for and demands on the churches.

Ministry in this time was similarly undergoing dramatic changes. Ministers faced a decline in their status and authority as they became one among many acceptable professions. At the same time in addition to the normal demands of ministry they were increasingly expected to be able to refute sophisticated heretical arguments and demonstrate an appropriate spiritual vibrancy.

On a corporate level the Presbyterian Church was also trying to decide how to cope with how it related to other denominations and independent voluntary societies. The church had sufficiently diverse opinions on some of the issues the voluntary societies were formed around that how to respond to both the societies and the issues caused tension and later division.

Existing models of training for the ministry were struggling to provide both enough ministers and provide them with enough training. Colleges were increasingly focused on scientific subjects, and subsequent study with ministers or college presidents was often too abbreviated in time and not comprehensive enough in scope.

### III. MILLER'S LIFE

#### A. Overview

Samuel Miller was born on October 31<sup>st</sup> 1769, the eighth of nine children of John and Margaret Miller. John Miller was the son of a Scottish immigrant and the pastor of the Presbyterian churches at Dover and Duck Creek crossroads. He pastored there from his ordination in 1749 until his death in 1791. His wife, Margaret, came from an Episcopalian background but became Presbyterian after her marriage and was converted shortly thereafter. Samuel was initially educated Samuel at home until 1788 Samuel when he moved to Philadelphia to attend the University of Pennsylvania. Miller graduated at the end of July 1789, and then returned home to decide his future course.<sup>79</sup>

On August 20<sup>th</sup> of that year, he decided to enter the ministry, and began to study theology with his father. In November his mother died. In April 1791 he began his trials before Presbytery and in October he was licensed to preach. His father had died in July and Samuel, being freed from household commitments, sought out other theological instruction. He travelled to spend several months at Dickinson College with the principal of the college, Dr. Nisbet. During that following summer (1792) Samuel preached at the congregation his father had pastored and undertook a short tour of New England to visit relations. On this tour he took what preaching opportunities he could including preaching during a stop in New York. In the fall Miller received two calls, one from his father's former congregation and one from the United Congregations of New York.

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<sup>79</sup> This overview draws on Miller's biography. Samuel Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller, D. D., Ll. D., Second Professor in the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church, at Princeton, New Jersey*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Claxton Remsen & Haffelfinger, 1869).

Miller accepted the New York call and was ordained to his post in the joint charge on June 5, 1793. His colleagues in this charge were Dr. Rodgers and Rev. McKnight. Miller became involved in a diverse variety of intellectual societies and voluntary organisations in New York. His brother Edward moved to New York as well, and they lived and socialized together. During this time Miller wrote his comprehensive historical work *A Brief Retrospect on the Eighteenth Century* for which he was awarded a D.D.. After a brief courtship, he married Sarah Sergeant in October 1801. He served as Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, and became a trustee of the College of New Jersey.

In March 1805 he began to correspond with Ashbel Green about the state of theological education for Presbyterian candidates and the potential need for the establishment of a seminary. When the issue came before the General Assembly in 1805 Miller was appointed to the investigating committee. In 1812 the General Assembly founded a seminary at Princeton in New Jersey, and appointed Archibald Alexander as its principal. The following year Samuel Miller was appointed as its second professor.

Miller commenced his duties with teaching responsibilities for church history, introductory preaching, and church polity. Alongside this he continued to preach, write and be involved in the wider politics of the church. In the early 1830's the seminary reluctantly found itself forced to take sides in the growing divide between the Old and New Schools. Although some members of the seminary had been outspoken against revivalism and the direction the New School had been moving in, as a body they had up to this point tried to maintain relations with it and find common ground. Miller now threw himself publicly into the debate in support of the Old School. With the subsequent

abrogation of the Plan of Union, and the resulting split in the church, Miller and the seminary became firmly entrenched as bastions of the Old School view.<sup>80</sup>

In the period that followed Miller grew increasingly wary of voluntary societies and their influence. He also shifted his opinions away from some of his earlier statements about the role of elders and about slavery. He continued to teach, publish, and play an active role in academic life up until immediately before his death in 1850, but his thought was largely eclipsed by the increasing theological dominance of Hodge. His wife died in 1861.

## **B. Major Influences on Miller**

This section examines some of the formative influences in Samuel Miller's life, his experiences undergoing theological education, and his experiences in ministry prior to his move to Princeton

### *1. Influences at Home*

#### a) Early Education

John Miller valued education highly and, although their farm's produce and his stipend were barely adequate, he developed an extensive library and provided a liberal education at home for all of his children. He also taught his sons Latin and Greek in case any of them decided to enter the ministry. Four of the sons went on to attend the University of Pennsylvania and the other attended a private college-like school.<sup>81</sup>

For much of his childhood, Samuel displayed little interest in his studies or future career. However, in 1787, during his eighteenth year, Samuel records that "it pleased God

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<sup>80</sup> White, "A Study in Princeton Theology," 48.

<sup>81</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 18.

[...] to excite in me a desire for the acquisition of knowledge; though without any settled purpose as to future profession.”<sup>82</sup> This desire produced in him an anxiety as to how his education might best be furthered.

On July 21<sup>st</sup> 1788 Samuel enrolled in the senior class at the University of Pennsylvania: During his studies he stayed with his sister and her husband. While a student, Samuel’s lack of a purpose in life caused his family some concern and he did not always seem to realise the familial financial constraints. Under his sister’s watchful eye, Samuel completed his studies and graduated on July 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> 1789 gaining the first honour in his class. He delivered his Latin oration “Remonstrating against the neglect of female education.”<sup>83</sup> After graduation, Miller returned home to the family farm to help out and ponder what came next.

#### b) The Revolution

Although he had given little thought to his career in his early years, the revolution and establishment of the early Republic had awakened in Miller a keen interest in the welfare of his country and a passion for democracy.

Part of this enthusiasm for democracy undoubtedly came from growing up in interesting times – he was five when the revolution began. It also came, however, from his family’s involvement in the revolution. Samuel’s father had a keen interest in politics and preached in support of the revolution. Samuel’s eldest brother, John, served as an army doctor, but took ill and died while returning home in February 1777. Another brother, Edward, joined the army in 1780 after medical studies. After the close of war,

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<sup>82</sup> Quote from unspecified reminiscence in Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, 33.

<sup>83</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 36-42.

Edward was part of a delegation sent to France for a year. In May 1787, during a visit to his sister in Philadelphia, Miller saw the great political leaders of his day as the delegates gathered to draft the American Constitution. He was particularly struck this event and would recall the event fondly throughout his life.<sup>84</sup>

### c) Religious Background and Conversion

Samuel's father was the minister of a rural parish from his ordination to his death, serving twice as moderator of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia (1765 and 1780).<sup>85</sup> His father was comfortably but not fanatically Presbyterian, being sympathetic with Congregationalist views. Samuel's mother was brought up Episcopalian and became Presbyterian at her marriage, coming to faith shortly thereafter and devoting herself to her children's care and training in the Lord.

In 1787, despite his previous indifference to study, God excited in Samuel a desire for knowledge. This desire had not yet any fixed aim but it produced in him the aforementioned anxiety over his education and future. This anxiety was magnified by his father's growing infirmity, which not only reduced what Samuel could learn from his father's tuition, but also increased Samuel's farm responsibilities.

It was in this period that Miller was converted. His own words describing his conversion are

During this anxiety, I was brought under very serious impressions of religion, which I hope soon after issued in a cordial acceptance of the Saviour as my hope and life. Early in the Spring of 1788, I made profession of religion in the

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<sup>84</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 31-32.

<sup>85</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 23.

church of Dover, under my father's pastoral care. I have often looked back on that step, with its preceding and attending exercises, with much solicitude as to the question, whether it was founded on a saving acquaintance with Christ or not, I can only say, that I had hope in Christ, which, though afterwards and often painfully interrupted, was then steady and comfortable; and that my excellent mother, an intelligent and faithful counsellor in such matters, concurred in the measure of uniting myself to the church.<sup>86</sup>

This passage highlights the role his family played both in his conversion and also in his wider spiritual formation. It also provides us with a frame of reference for his theology of conversion.

## *2. Influences in Calling, Training, and Pastorate*

### *a) Calling*

Miller's awakened interest in learning, though contributing to his conversion, did not yet have a focus. His father and sister were concerned about his lack of direction in life and their correspondence records concern over the possibility that Samuel might enter into life as physician or lawyer, professions they considered less conducive to Samuel's spiritual well-being than that of a minister. Prior to university, Miller's intent had been to enter a counting house upon graduation.<sup>87</sup> While in Philadelphia, he lived with his sister, Elizabeth and her husband and went with them to 2<sup>nd</sup> Presbyterian Church. During Miller's studies he was quite ill several times and on some of these occasions, Ashbel

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<sup>86</sup> Autobiographical note by Samuel Miller quoted in Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 33.

<sup>87</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 33.



Green, then co-pastor of 2<sup>nd</sup> Presbyterian Church, came to visit him. Miller was impressed by Green and turned to him for advice throughout the coming years.

Miller was also in Philadelphia in May 1789 at the time of the first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. It is unknown if he attended the assembly as a member of the public, but as a young man in his final year of study with no fixed career he would have heard a lot about it.

After university Miller returned home to help his father on the farm and decide what to do next. On August 20<sup>th</sup> 1789, after a day of prayer and fasting, Miller decided to enter the ministry. His diary extract reads

Set apart a day of fasting and prayer for the divine direction in my choice of profession. Before the day was closed, after much serious deliberation, and, I hope, some humble looking for divine guidance, I felt so strongly inclined to devote myself to the work of the ministry, that I resolved, in the Lord's name, on this choice. How solemn the undertaking. May the Lord help me to make a suitable estimate of its character, and to enter upon it with the deepest humility, and at the same time with confidence in the riches of his gracious aid.

'O my Father's and my Mother's God, I yield myself to thee! Yet, what an office for a poor, polluted, weak creature, who is helpless in himself, to aspire unto! Lord, help me to realize my own weakness and unworthiness; to lie in the dust of abasement, and habitually to look for strength to him who can 'make me strong in the power of his might.' Lord, I, this day, devote myself to thy most worthy service. I am thine by creation and preservation; I ought to be thine by a

holy regeneration and a gracious adoption; and I would humbly devote myself to the promotion of thy glory to my latest breath.<sup>88</sup>

b) Education and Presbyterian Process

Having made this decision, Miller began to study theology at home with his father, but in a letter to Ashbel Green shortly after resolving to enter the ministry he expresses concern that his father's library and training might be dated. The household was soon disrupted however, by the prolonged illness of his sister Polly and the death of his mother on November 22<sup>nd</sup> 1789. As a result of his mother's death and his father's age, Samuel spent the next two years studying theology in the midst of having to run the farm, take care of his sister, and organize the household.<sup>89</sup>

Miller underwent his first trial before the Presbytery of Lewes on April 19<sup>th</sup> 1791, and his second on June 21<sup>st</sup>. His father was unable to attend either trial and died the day after the latter. Miller was licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of Lewes on 13<sup>th</sup> October 1791, and began a period of pulpit supply at his father's church.<sup>90</sup>

Now that he was freed from the immediate demands of his parents' household he travelled to spend several months with Dr. Nisbet, the principal of Dickinson College. Miller, arriving at the wrong time of year, did not enter into the regular term of study and so did not actually hear any of Dr. Nisbet's theological lectures. Instead he was invited to spend several hours a day, often in the evenings, in the learned company of Dr. Nisbet

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<sup>88</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 43.

<sup>89</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 44, 51.

<sup>90</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 53-55.

and others. Miller valued this immensely, and considered himself to have benefited greatly by it.<sup>91</sup>

In the spring following this period of study, Miller went to candidate at a church in Long Island and on his way he stopped in New York where his preaching was well received. He then returned home, but was invited back to preach in New York and extended this into a trip to visit relations in New England.

On August 29<sup>th</sup> 1792 Miller received a call from the United Presbyterian Church in New York, and also from his father's charge at Dover and Duck Creek. After praying and fasting he accepted the call from New York on November 20<sup>th</sup> of that year.<sup>92</sup>

On January 3<sup>rd</sup> Samuel Miller arrived in New York and after meeting with presbytery and passing his trials for ordination, was ordained as a minister on June 5<sup>th</sup> 1793 and installed to United Presbyterian Churches of New York as a colleague of Rev. Dr. Rodgers and Rev. McKnight.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 59.

<sup>92</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 64-66; It is worth noting that Miller's family liked to remain fairly close together. After returning from France his brother Edward commenced practice at Frederica (17 miles from Dover). He then moved to Maryland but back to Dover in 1786. His brother Joseph had settled in Dover after graduation, but died shortly after Samuel moved to New York. Shortly thereafter Edward moved to New York to live with Samuel. Given this strong draw to live near family, Samuel's move to New York, away from his two brothers, shows a resolution or ambition that might have surprised his parents had they still lived.

<sup>93</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 87.

### c) Life in New York

Miller flourished in New York and, under the influence of his brother Edward who moved to New York at Samuel's invitation in 1796, he developed a wide range of interests. The Miller brothers were noted members of New York society and were involved in a multitude of organisations. These included the masons, the New York Historical Society, and one of the city's literary circles. On 1<sup>st</sup> Nov 1796 Samuel was involved in the founding of an interdenominational missionary society involving the Presbyterian, Reformed Dutch, Associate Reformed, and Baptist churches.<sup>94</sup> He enjoyed a positive relationship with other voluntary and mission societies including being the secretary, vice-president, and president of the New York Bible Society and a member of the New-York Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves. At this society, Miller preached of the disgrace of slavery in a land where all men are free and equal, and advocated for gradual emancipation coupled with education: As part of this endeavour he was involved in founding a school for young Africans.<sup>95</sup>

In the summer of 1801 Miller courted Sarah Sergeant and on October 24<sup>th</sup> they were married. Just over a year later, September 29<sup>th</sup> 1802, they had a daughter Margaret. Sarah took communion for the first time on Dec 5<sup>th</sup>, 1802 but continued to be anxious about her salvation. On May 12<sup>th</sup> 1805, under the influence of a particular series of sermons, she found a greater degree of assurance.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 105.

<sup>95</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 277; Samuel Miller, "A Discourse, Delivered April 12, 1797, at the Request of and *Before* the New-York Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves and Protecting Such of Them as Have Been or May Be Liberated," (New York: T & J Swords, 1797).

<sup>96</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 143, 144, 168, 171, 193.

Miller's successful adjustment to the social side of city life was mirrored in his work as a minister. He had been taken on by the United Presbyterian church of New York, a charge which encompassed one church in two buildings – Wall Street and the Brick Church. His partnership with Rodgers and McKnight established his reputation as a minister. He was a commissioner in 1801 when the Plan of Union was adopted, and at that assembly he first met Archibald Alexander, who paid him a visit in New York after the proceedings. In 1806, Miller became the Moderator of the General Assembly.<sup>97</sup>

The demands of city life and the ministry frequently took their toll on his health; particularly taxing was that every congregant expected a visit from each minister. This excessive activity led Miller to need periods rest and recuperation in the country.<sup>98</sup> The stress of charge led to tension between the ministers as well and when Dr. Rodgers approached retirement relations between Miller and McKnight grew more strained. On Dec 1<sup>st</sup>, 1808 they agreed to separate the charge, but even this went sour and McKnight accused Miller of stealing the best church. Miller was exonerated by the presbytery and remained the sole pastor of the Wall Street Church until his move to Princeton. In May 1811 Dr. Rodgers died and Miller wrote his biography.<sup>99</sup>

#### d) Early Writing

Miller flourished intellectually in New York and published a significant body of work in this period. These publications included: historical works, religious works, and political works. Miller might not have made a distinction between his political works and

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<sup>97</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 140.

<sup>98</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 265.

<sup>99</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 268-272.

religious works, but given the later shift in his view of politics, it is useful to distinguish the two.

Like a large number of his contemporaries, Miller preached sermons on the Fourth of July in which he praised God for freedom from oppressive political and religious systems, thanked him for the creation of democracy and religious liberty, and prayed for the continued prosperity of the nation.<sup>100</sup> Even when his contemporaries had begun to question the results of unrestrained democracy and religious liberty and had begun to withdraw from political partisanship, Miller continued to be outspoken in his political opinions. Unlike most of his peers who were Federalist, Miller supported the Republicans and their candidate Thomas Jefferson.<sup>101</sup> Despite his reservations about Jefferson's curious religious beliefs, Miller was convinced that Jefferson's advocacy of democracy would be good for the spiritual state of the country. Furthermore, in contrast to his peers, Miller called for continued public and religious support for the French Revolution. Though most Christian leaders were condemning the godlessness of the French Revolution, Miller was utterly convinced that political liberty and democracy was favourable to the Gospel and that the political freedom now enjoyed in France would inevitably lead to the rapid advancement of the gospel in that country.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Samuel Miller, "A Sermon, Delivered in the New Presbyterian Church, New-York, July Fourth 1795," (New York: Greenleaf, 1795), 9, 13.

<sup>101</sup> White, "Samuel Miller: A Study in Princetonian Theology," 32; Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 129-33, 235-7.

<sup>102</sup> Samuel Miller, "A sermon preached in New-York, July 4<sup>th</sup>, 1793, being the anniversary of the independence of America (to the Tammany society)," ([New York: Thomas Greenleaf, 1793]), microfiche, 36; Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 94-96.

Only some of Miller's historical projects came to fruition, but those that did made his reputation. *A Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century* is one of the landmark works of history produced in early America. This work was a comprehensive account of the events and advances in different fields throughout the eighteenth century.<sup>103</sup> The book was well received on both sides of the Atlantic and established Miller's academic credentials and reputation as a historian. Consequently Miller was awarded a D.D. by Union College on May 4<sup>th</sup> and by the University of Pennsylvania on May 6<sup>th</sup> 1804. On June 29<sup>th</sup> he was elected a corresponding member of the Philological Society of Manchester, England. Miller was involved in the founding and later incorporation of the New York Historical Society (December 10<sup>th</sup> 1804, and, February 10<sup>th</sup> 1809, respectively). He also served as their corresponding secretary, as well as being a corresponding member of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

As the period of cooperation that had surround the revolution and early Republic ended, Miller became the defender of Presbyterian polity in his religious publications. In particular, he was drawn into the debate with members of the Episcopal Church over the roles elders and bishops. Miller was particularly concerned by the aggressive claims of superiority being put forward by some Episcopalians. Although in retrospect one can see how insecure the Episcopalian position was, it continued to be regarded as the denomination of the cultured and genteel, and thus for Miller it may have represented the major orthodox threat to Presbyterian status.<sup>104</sup> Miller published books

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<sup>103</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 102, 173-6, 178.

<sup>104</sup> Miller, *Life of the Mind*, 14.

and tracts and wrote many letters advocating the Presbyterian view of church order for the rest of his life.

### **C. Educator:**

#### *1. Miller's Role in the Founding of Princeton*

During this period in New York, Miller's academic success and promotion of Presbyterianism drew him further into the world of education and of church government. His growing involvement in these worlds was coupled with an increasing concern over the future success of the denomination. In a letter to Ashbel Green on March 12<sup>th</sup> 1805 he expresses unease about the Episcopal Church's desire to recover its dominant position in North American church life. He then goes on to express a reciprocal disquiet about the quality and quantity of the ministers the Presbyterian Church was training and accepting. After commenting on the lamentable shortage of ministers he writes

It appears to me, that we ought, forthwith, either to establish a new theological school, in some central part of our bounds; or direct more of our attention to extend the plan and increase the energy of the Princeton establishment. On the latter part of the alternative many doubts occur to me; and, with respect to the former, I know difficulties of the most formidable kind will arise.<sup>105</sup>

Miller returned to this topic on May 13<sup>th</sup> in a subsequent letter, prompting Green to send an overture to the upcoming meeting of the General Assembly. Green's overture

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<sup>105</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 192; Miller's biographer draws the conclusion that in this letter Miller regards the College of New Jersey 'distrustfully' as a source of candidates for the ministry, *Ibid*, 202.



resulted in the assembly commending to presbyteries the need to examine the supply of ministers.

In response to this directive from the Assembly, the Presbytery of New York set up a committee of five ministers and five elders to examine the education of candidates for the ministry in October 1805. Miller was appointed to this committee. When the presbyteries reported on this issue at the General Assembly the following year, Miller was also appointed as moderator of the Assembly - an achievement in itself, but more significantly a move that shows the importance of the education issue. The Assembly's dismay at the content the presbyteries' reports prompted them to agree that presbyteries should report annually on candidacy and training within their bounds.<sup>106</sup>

Miller was made a trustee of the College of New Jersey in 1807 and began to be involved in its governance.<sup>107</sup> Alongside his involvement at the College of New Jersey, he was made a trustee of Columbia College (appointed 1806), and continued to receive job offers from other churches and colleges including Market Street Presbyterian in Philadelphia (1799) and Dickinson College (July 5<sup>th</sup> and October 31<sup>st</sup> 1808).<sup>108</sup> Neither prospect appeared adequate to him, and his concern appears to have been more taken up with the aforementioned committee work with the assembly.

Miller had also entered into dialogue with a colleague, Dr Griffin, who was being considered by the Congregationalists for one of the faculty positions at the then emerging Andover. In this discussion Miller made it clear that as much as the founding of Andover

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<sup>106</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 192-96, 201.

<sup>107</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 228.

<sup>108</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 120, 244-50.

was a development to be welcomed, it would not adequately serve Presbyterian training needs and he expected that “Our General Assembly will, doubtless, in a few years, institute a seminary of its own, unless Princeton college [i.e. College of New Jersey] should be placed on a better footing.”<sup>109</sup>

With Kollock’s departure from the College of New Jersey Smith’s standing as college president had been irreparably damaged. In May 1808 Miller wrote to Green about the foundation of a theological seminary and outlined why he thought the Presbyterian Church should found its own institution rather than develop the embryonic divinity school at the College. He argued that under the current regime at the College of New Jersey little could be done, but that even in the longer term, adding a divinity faculty to the College was not a desirable option. His reasons were that the arts students might have a negative influence on the divinity students, an expanded faculty of divinity would be in conflict with the arts faculty (as would their respective heads), and the non-denominational board of trustees of the College would not be suitable as trustees of a denominational theological institution. In a subsequent letter to Green he comments further on the possibilities for developing ministerial training, outlining his concern that founding multiple seminaries might “run the risk of having our church divided into seven or eight parties”; each party corresponding to the personal agendas of the heads of the seminaries. Miller’s also dismisses the idea that the new theological seminary might be able to provide the general and theological education of a candidate. His concerns about the multiple seminary approach were founded on his general attitude to seminary

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<sup>109</sup> Letter to Griffin of the December 28<sup>th</sup> 1807 quoted in Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 233; Ibid., 230-4.

education and on his understanding of the how such an approach had played out in the Dutch church. He dismissed the idea that a seminary could provide the entire education of a candidate because he thought that the general education provided in such a seminary would be poorer than one gained elsewhere, that such an establishment would cause rivalry with existing colleges, and that the staffing required for such an establishment would instantly double the required budget of the seminary with no corresponding increase in the number of candidates produced.<sup>110</sup>

In response to the Presbytery of Philadelphia the 1809 General Assembly asked presbyteries to examine and respond to the outlined options for theological education. In the debate that followed within the Presbyterian Church there were several routes forward were suggested: 1) the church could add divinity professors to its existing colleges; 2) it could found one seminary; or 3) it could found several seminaries. By this stage Miller had already discounted the expansion of the College of New Jersey, and was still opposed to multiple seminaries for the above reasons; consequently he expressed a strong desire that there be only one theological school, and in a letter to Green in 1810, requested that he write a pamphlet in support of this position. In another letter to Green on January 23<sup>rd</sup> and also in the Presbytery of New York's response to the Assembly (a document which effectively represented Miller's view), Miller restated his support for a single school and outlined his reasoning in some detail. In the Presbytery's response he gave four arguments in support of his case: a single school would use resources more efficiently; a single school would allow the denomination to more accurately assess the number of candidates it had in training; a single school would have the resources to support a more

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<sup>110</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 240-4.

‘extensive and complete’ education; and a single school would promote the unity and peace of the church. On this last point he writes

The youth educated on this plan [of a single school] would be more likely to be united in the same views of evangelical truth and order, than they would if educated at different seminaries. In this case also, the great body of our ministers would be personally acquainted with each other; early and intimate friendships would be formed between them; and in addition to the higher and more important motive of promoting the interest of the Redeemer’s kingdom, they would be prompted, by a desire of seeing and conversing with each other, to come together in the higher judicatories of the Church.<sup>111</sup>

On May 17<sup>th</sup> at the Assembly the following year a further committee was established to examine reports from the presbyteries and Miller was its chair. The presbyteries reported back with ten supporting a single school, ten supporting a school in each synod, one supporting two schools, six opposed to any school, and nine not responding. After some curious logic, Miller convinced the committee and the Assembly that the preferred option was to establish a single theological school at Princeton in New Jersey.<sup>112</sup>

A committee including Green, Miller, Alexander and four others was established to draw up a plan for the school. As part of his duties, Miller was delegated to write a

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<sup>111</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 280 – 1.

<sup>112</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 284 – 5; the logic was that the majority of respondents favored the establishment of a school of some kind and within those in favor of school, the objections they had to a single school were founded on misconceptions.

letter to churches campaigning for funds. A plan was decided and Archibald Alexander was appointed by the General Assembly as the first member of faculty and president of the seminary.<sup>113</sup>

Miller was amongst those who convinced him to accept the post and it was Miller, now a member of the board, who delivered the inaugural lecture to Alexander and the first students “On an Able and Faithful Ministry.”<sup>114</sup> Throughout this period Miller continued to receive and decline job offers including the presidency of the University of North Carolina (May 18<sup>th</sup> 1812), and the presidency of Hamilton College (July 30<sup>th</sup> 1812).

The decision to found the theological seminary, in addition to the failure of Kollock’s appointment had also made Samuel Stanhope Smith’s position as President of the College of New Jersey untenable. There were those among his fellow trustees who wanted to appoint Miller to this presidency, but Miller circumvented them however and privately campaigned for the appointment of Ashbel Green. After the ‘arranged’ unanimous vote Green accepted the position on August 14<sup>th</sup> 1812.<sup>115</sup>

## 2. *Miller at Seminary*

### a) Changes

By this stage, Miller had also distanced himself from political partisanship and, although he continued to strongly advise all Christians to exercise their franchise, he would now strongly advise ministers to rarely express political opinions. This change in

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<sup>113</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 285.

<sup>114</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 334-5.

<sup>115</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 335-7.

Miller's civic outlook from his earlier political enthusiasm is rooted in his 1808 correspondence with Jefferson.<sup>116</sup> Miller requested that national days of fasting receive presidential favour, and Jefferson responded not only by strongly rejecting Miller's suggestion but also by spelling his name wrong. This incident brought to an end Miller's support for Jefferson and politicians more generally.<sup>117</sup>

1812 was a particularly difficult year for Miller. On Feb 5<sup>th</sup> 1812 his son, Edward Millington Miller, died age 7. A greater shock was to come however, when on March 17<sup>th</sup>, Samuel's brother Edward Miller died of a typhoid-like fever. The brothers had been very close and Samuel was devastated. Shortly after this Miller also fell ill and nearly died. In the years that followed both he and his wife become more serious and focused on what they saw as important.<sup>118</sup>

At the General Assembly the next year on May 28<sup>th</sup>, Miller was appointed as the second professor of the seminary. After some thought he accepted the post, and the family moved to Princeton and he was inaugurated Sept 29<sup>th</sup>, 1813. Upon moving to Princeton, Samuel continued his method of marking important events and their anniversaries with prayer and fasting, but on this occasion he also drew up a list of resolutions to guide his life and behaviour at the seminary. These resolutions included being careful to stress the importance of piety by example as well as speech, and to try to avoid his besetting sin of jesting and levity.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> This letter was the fourth occasion Miller and Jefferson had corresponded.

<sup>117</sup> Edwin S. Gaustad, *Sworn on the Altar of God: A Religious Biography of Thomas Jefferson*. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996), 105-6.

<sup>118</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 324, 359.

<sup>119</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 350-356; *Ibid*, vol. 2, 10.

The move also acted as a catalyst for more general change in the Millers' opinions. They decided to give up dancing and gradually abstain from alcohol. Upon the move to Princeton, Samuel also seems to have distanced himself from the Masons and advised his sons or others not to join. The period also marks the beginning of a gradual change in Miller's views on a number of other issues such as emancipation and the authority of elders.<sup>120</sup>

#### b) Life at Princeton

Upon Miller's move to Princeton he commissioned a house, and began to teach classes. Miller continued to preach- in the seminary, at the college, and in churches around New Jersey. He also continued to be embroiled in a written debate with members of the Episcopal Church over forms of church government.

When Miller turned down the presidency of Dartmouth in August 1826 it had become clear that he was happy to stay as 'second fiddle' to Alexander.<sup>121</sup> Not only did he not want to be the president of a college, he had stuck with his resolution and adopted a deliberately diffident attitude towards his colleagues. Why he did so is uncertain, but perhaps it was a mixture of learning from his experience with McKnight and his new resolve to not be distracted or cause distraction to the important work of the seminary by promoting internecine struggles, that led him to avoid conflict.

Miller taught church history, church government, and introductory preaching (for first and second year students). He also played an active role in the devotional life of the seminary and continued to preach extensively in the college and surrounding churches.

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<sup>120</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 132, 135; Ibid. vol. 2, 99.

<sup>121</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 2, 22.

He took an active interest in the lives and future of his students and their formation as ministers. He also contributed to development of the seminary library. In his approach to ministerial formation he valued non-religious education and experience of the world.

Miller continued to become more conservative in his own habits and carefully adhered to the resolutions he had made upon coming to the seminary. Though not brilliant in the same way as Alexander, Miller possessed a methodical wisdom in all aspects of his life, a wisdom which he tried to impart to his students. A watch could be set by his habits, and he was economical with time, but this discipline never lapsed into cold detachment.<sup>122</sup>

c) The Unity of the Denomination- securing control

Miller's life at the seminary became quite routine and, despite his ongoing involvement in the affairs of the church, the next major event came a number of years later. As Miller turned sixty two, the Presbyterian Church was entering a difficult period, the second Great Awakening was underway and tensions inherent in the church were under increasing strain. 'New measures' in evangelism were causing apprehension for some and delight for others. Voluntary societies, often with an increasingly radical agenda, were growing rapidly and often at the expense of the church societies. Spiritual experience was taking priority over doctrine or training in deciding who congregants went to hear preach. The parties on each side of the debate within the Presbyterian Church became known as the Old School and the New school. In 1833 Miller wrote a series of letters on the current crisis in the church that were published in the *Presbyterian*. At this stage Miller was arguing for a calm resolution of the issues, desiring that the

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<sup>122</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1., [student reminiscence ref].



dignity and experience of the church be respected but also that the work of God happening elsewhere be acknowledged and supported. Though he disagreed with the new measures, he wanted to see the church work through these tensions with tolerance. As late as 1835 he wrote:

Of one thing, my dear Brother, you may rest assured, that, however a few such men as Dr Joshua L. Wilson, {and} Mr Wm L McCalla may feel, {and} be disposed to act concerning our congregational brethren {and} their churches;- there is no such feeling among the mass of our Old School brethren, {and} especially among all who rally round the Princeton standard. The Evangelist man, {and} all like him, are labouring to create feelings of jealousy {and} alienation between our New England brethren {and} the Pres{byterian} church.<sup>123</sup>

Within a few years however, he and the other Princeton faculty, had been forced to take sides because of a growing polarization between the two sides. Hodge had been an outspoken opponent of revivalism and the revivalists had not been slow to caricature seminary education and seminarians.<sup>124</sup> The New School, although not at the extremes of

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<sup>123</sup> Letter to Ashbel Nettleton, in Easthampton, Long Island, from Samuel Miller Princeton, August 18<sup>th</sup> 1835 [ALS] Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries, Department Of Archives And Special Collections, Samuel Miller Manuscript Collection; Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 2, 233-7.

<sup>124</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 2, 202; Miller, *Life of the Mind*, 15-17. For example Charles Finney was scathing of preparing ministers in a setting cut off from the field and current practice, “Those fathers who have the training of our young ministers are good men, but they are ancient men, men of another age and stamp, from what is needed in these days of excitement” or “Some [seminarians] pray out a

revivalism, as Finney was, was sufficiently revivalist and determined to challenge the established views on evangelism and theology that Miller, the apologist for Presbyterianism, became, in support of Hodge, an apologist for the Old School. He came to the determination that the New School faction could not be reasoned with and were determined to have their way, and so he opposed them for the sake of maintaining the unity of the proper church.<sup>125</sup> In his defence of the Old School, Miller argued that it was properly carrying on the spirit and thought of the first Great Awakening and that Calvinist ministers were not “unfriendly to revivals of religion, and tend[ing] to lull their hearers asleep in supineness and sloth.”<sup>126</sup>

In 1838 the church split, and for the remaining 12 years of his life, Miller lamented the catastrophic price of social issues. The division in the church led him to a further shift in his opinions, in particular his opinion on slavery. The remaining Presbyterian Church associated with the Old School was spread over Northern and Southern States and was deeply divided on the issue of abolition; Miller came to the conclusion that ministers and the church should withhold judgement on the issue of

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whole system of divinity. Some preach, some exhort the people, till every body wishes they would stop, and God wishes it so too, undoubtedly.” Unreferenced quote in Miller, *Life of the Mind*, 31.

<sup>125</sup> Not the ‘true’ church, Miller has definite opinions about what is right but thinks his opponents misguided and wrong but he does not demonize them.

<sup>126</sup> Samuel Miller, review of *Bible Class Manual: or a System of Theology in the Order of the Westminster Shorter Catechism, adapted to Bible Classes*. Vol.1 by John M’Dowell, *The Biblical Repertory and Princeton Review* 10:1 (January 1839): 35-36.

slavery absolutely. He still supported emancipation in some form but came to the conclusion that the church could not afford further division at this time.<sup>127</sup>

### 3. *Publishing at Princeton and ending*

During his time at Princeton, Miller continued to publish on church order and government. Some of his publications were directed toward the ongoing debate with the Episcopalians, but he also became involved in a discussion with the Unitarians over the generation of the Son. In the midst of these heated debates Miller usually maintained cordial relationships with many of his opponents; for example Jared Sparks, Miller's Unitarian foil, commissioned Miller to write a biography of Jonathan Edwards for a series of biographies he was editing.<sup>128</sup>

Miller continued to publish about the church throughout his life, and contributed frequently to magazines and periodicals. In the last years of his life Miller published profusely, though given Miller's habit of reusing material, much of it had most likely had been written at an earlier stage of life.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. [specific shift on slavery REF]

<sup>128</sup> Samuel Miller, *Letters on Unitarianism: addressed to the members of the First Presbyterian Church, in the City of Baltimore*. (Trenton: George Sherman, 1821); Samuel Miller and William B. O. Peabody *Lives of Jonathan Edwards and David Brainerd*, The Library of American Biography vol. 8 (Boston : Hilliard, Gray; London: R. J. Kennett, 1837).

<sup>129</sup> Miller's sermons and lecture notes frequently have multiple dates and locations scribbled on the front page. They often span large sections of his career. For example, Lecture XII Valedictory Lecture to the First *Class* delivered Sept 15<sup>th</sup> 1823, [AM], Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries, Department Of Archives And Special Collections, Samuel Miller Manuscript Collection , bears the dates Sept 15<sup>th</sup> 1823, Sept 21<sup>st</sup> 1825, Sept 20<sup>th</sup> 1826, Sept 19<sup>th</sup> 1827, Sept 17<sup>th</sup> 1828, Sept 22<sup>nd</sup> 1830, Sept 21<sup>st</sup> 1831, Sept 19<sup>th</sup>

Miller stepped down from his responsibilities shortly before dying in 1851. In his funeral address Archibald Alexander credited Miller and Green as being the founders of the seminary.

#### **D. Assessing the context of Miller's life**

##### *1. Stages in Miller's life*

In examining the influence his immediate experience had on his model of training and model of ministry it is helpful to look at the stages of his career. The stages in Miller's career are his training, his move to and time in New York, his early years at the seminary, and the second half of his time at the seminary (from the time leading up to the churches split).

Upon his move to New York and time in the collegial charge there, Miller blossomed, developing a wide variety of interests. He was involved in many societies and, prior to his marriage lived with his brother. This period is regarded by commentators as his most vigorous and dynamic part of his life – being marked by openness, and support for diverse causes and wide-ranging interests.

Around the time of his move to Princeton, Miller became much more serious, and there is a noticeable turning point in his attitudes on several subjects. From the minor shift towards abstinence and away from dancing, to the more significant shifts: distancing himself from politics and the masons, shifting his position on slavery to a much more cautious approach, toning down his view of the role of elders.

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1832, Sept 16<sup>th</sup> 1833, Sept 17<sup>th</sup> 1834, Sept 23<sup>rd</sup> 1835, Sept 21, 1836, Sept 20<sup>th</sup> 1837, Sept 19<sup>th</sup> 1838, May 6<sup>th</sup> 1842, May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1844.

These changes in Miller around the time of his move to Princeton have led scholars to conclude that he may have had a mid-life crisis. Some of them go further and suggest, not only did Miller take stock and prioritise as a result of this, but that he also began to move away from his earlier ideals to a more conservative stance. The dynamic radical minister is becoming the stuffy curmudgeon, who recants his support for democratic church order, emancipation, and voluntary societies.<sup>130</sup>

The trends that began in the move to Princeton continued throughout Miller's time there but the time around the split in the Presbyterian Church acted as a catalyst to for the rate of Miller's progression to a highly conservative stance on the issues he had begun to shift position on: slavery and the role of elders. At this point Miller, siding with his colleagues, also took a clear stance against the excesses of the revival and increasingly independent actions of voluntary societies not explicitly run by the denomination.

## 2. *Views of Miller's Development*

As mentioned, commentators on Miller's life view his move to Princeton as a turning point. The most significant of these commentators is his biographer, his son Samuel Miller Jr. The biography was published nearly twenty years after Miller's death. The delay in writing or publishing the biography may, as Miller Jr. claimed, have had to do with calm reflection but, as one contemporary reviewer observed it may have had more to do with Miller Jr's church politics.<sup>131</sup> Two good examples of Miller Jr.'s

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<sup>130</sup> Scovel, "Orthodoxy in Princeton," 140, 315-20.

<sup>131</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, preface; Review of Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, *New Englander and Yale review* 28, no. 108 (July 1869), [journal online]; available from

perspective are in his view of what is important in life and in his portrayal of his father's attitude to the New School and spiritual experience. Miller Jr. is unfailingly critical of Miller's endeavours and interests outside of church work, commenting that Miller had "not yet learned to give himself wholly and rigorously – [ ... ] – to his bare Gospel work."<sup>132</sup> He goes yet further than this in commenting that Miller's brother Edward had been a distraction and negative influence on his father.<sup>133</sup> Miller Jr. also portrays Miller as resolutely opposed to the new measures and a firm bastion of the Old School: this may be in the later years of Miller's life but throughout his early life, and even up to the split in the church, he displays remarkable willingness to enter into dialogue with the New School to try to find a way forward.<sup>134</sup> In his biography Miller Jr. flattens his father's interests and personality.

Modern scholars working on Miller have taken the opposite view seeing the younger Miller as the key figure and the older Miller as becoming increasingly set in his ways. Miller's thought is seen as moving from "the expansive to the restrictive, from an openness to innovation to a determined resistance to change."<sup>135</sup> Nelson's analysis of

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<http://cdl.library.cornell.edu/cgi-bin/moa/moa-cgi?notisid=ABQ0722-0028-95> ; accessed 6<sup>th</sup> December 2005.

<sup>132</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 128

<sup>133</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 1, 324.

<sup>134</sup> [Letters to Presbyterians in current crisis REF].

<sup>135</sup> Belden Curnow Lane, "Miller and the Eldership: a Knickerbocker goes to Nassau" *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* n.s.6 no.3 (1985): 214.

Miller suggests that the debate with the Unitarians was acrimonious, that Miller was responsible, and that this reflected Miller's narrowness at this later point of his career.<sup>136</sup>

An understanding of Miller's model of formation and of ministry needs to take some account this mid-life crisis. This study suggests that despite all of the changes in Miller's attitude that take place in the period around moving to Princeton, there is continuity in his ideal of ministerial training. The nature of this continuity will be returned to in the final chapter.

Although some of the changes might be part of the innate tendency to become more conservative and serious with age, it is worth noting at this stage that the shifts in Miller's opinions are taking place in the context of wider shifts in circumstance for the American Presbyterianism. These shifts, outlined in the previous chapter, reflect the influence of the revolution, disestablishment, denominationalism, westward expansion, voluntary societies and revival. The nature of American church life was changing rapidly and Miller, ever aware of the opinions of others, cannot have failed to notice them. The changes brought about by Miller's year of crisis needs to be seen in light of the views of his contemporaries. Miller's peers have already shifted their opinions on many of the issues Miller shifts position on. Few who he regards as working for the good of the church supported his early opinions on politics, and his other shifts are likewise moving into line with his closest colleagues. Miller does change but in the context of his peers he

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<sup>136</sup> Scovel, "Orthodoxy in Princeton," 140, 315-20; Nelson, "Genetic History of Presbyterianism," 286.

Subsequent studies, including Carey, "For God or against Him." and this author are not convinced by this interpretation.

is consistently among the last to change from attempting a middle ground in response to the changes in circumstances.

3. *Miller's model of training and ministry*

The different stages of life Miller's each contained factors that influenced his model of ministerial training and ministry. His experience in New York as a busy minister undoubtedly contributed to his view of ministry, but it was his training with Nisbet and his intellectual pursuits that were foundational to his model of ministry. Miller's minister was an eighteenth-century gentleman.<sup>137</sup>

In the next chapter, examining Miller's models, a recurrent theme that will emerge is that of unity. His close-knit family background (including the extended influence of his brother while in New York) may have influenced the importance of unity in his thought, the antagonistic, bitter, and prolonged dissolution of the United Church of New York disturbed Miller greatly.

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<sup>137</sup> Lane, "Democracy and the Ruling Eldership," 242, 254.



## IV. MILLER'S MODEL OF MINISTRY AND EDUCATION

### A. Tracking development

In examining the thought of Samuel Miller there are some challenges in assessing the progression of his thought. These challenges occur because of his reuse of material, his later publication of material, and, as discussed, his biographer. Miller reuses materials prolifically and methodically: very few of his extant sermon manuscripts bear only one date. Sermons have the title, original date and location when they were preached and then most of them have between two and twelve other locations and dates throughout his life. Most of the sermons were written prior to his move to Princeton during his time in New York, but he continues to reuse them prolifically throughout most of his time at Princeton, both within and without the seminary environment. Although some of them bear changes and additions, it is difficult to pin down development through these as they are haphazard.

With respect to the publication of material, Miller published throughout his life, but not prolifically. He tended to revise and reissue books but tracking that sort of change is beyond the scope of this inquiry. Towards the end of his life he published extensively, but it is probable that this material was drawn from lecture notes or other existing material. Consequently in the collection of his published work it again can be difficult to assess the progression of his thought. This does suggest however, that in Miller's mind, most of his basic views remained constant with any changes primarily relating to how those views worked out in practice. He acknowledges that his thought did change on some issues - these being the role of elders, the proper response to slavery, and the

minister's involvement in politics. It is notable that these are all areas which had undergone significant shifts in external circumstances during his lifetime.

### **B. Why be Presbyterian?**

For Miller, Presbyterianism in the United States reflected the most biblical model of the church. Its model of government by ruling and teaching elders, coupled with local and regional assemblies of peers, ensured fair and biblical government. The Presbyterian Church in the United States was in a better position than other Presbyterian churches as it was independent of the government in any form, neither being oppressed by or oppressing through civil powers. Miller was convinced that Presbyterianism was also historically the true church and, in his lectures on church history, he plotted the course of Presbyterianism from the early church until the Reformation (though what a modern commentator would make of his description is another story). This was not to say that other denominations were not Christian, but rather that Presbyterianism was closest to the biblical ideal. It was up to each Christian to examine what a church stood for in deciding their membership. Indeed, Miller thinks different denominations are not only a good thing but necessary in an ideal world as people will disagree over the nature of the true church and “no particular denomination of Christians is now entitled to be called by way of eminence, the Catholic, or universal Church.” Miller even states that he has no doubt that there are still Christians within the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>138</sup>

Creeds are therefore necessary as a secondary measure to let people know what a church stands for, and to hold those within a church accountable to what their

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<sup>138</sup> Samuel Miller, *Presbyterianism the Truly Primitive and Apostolical Constitution of the Church of Christ* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1835), 8-9.

denomination has agreed is biblical. In this regard, though denominations differ over the shape of the true church, a denomination should strive to be “homogeneous.”<sup>139</sup>

### C. Why go to Seminary?

#### 1. *What is a Seminary?*

In Miller’s use of the word, “seminary” is quite a broad term. He uses it to refer to different forms of educational institution, including a school for African children as well as the theological seminary. In Miller’s mind, Princeton functionally follows the schools of prophets, the midrashim ‘divinity schools’, the Christian schools in Alexandria, Rome, Caesarea, and Antioch, and also the reformed seminaries in Geneva, Scotland, Holland, and Germany.<sup>140</sup> For him, a seminary’s purpose is to train ministers in better knowledge and piety that they might have united views and plans, and thus the church may have harmony in action.<sup>141</sup>

#### 2. *Value of Seminary Education*

For Miller there are three routes that a candidate can take in training for the ministry after a bachelor degree: one is to train with a pastor, one is to read divinity with a college president, the other is to attend seminary. All three of these options presuppose

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<sup>139</sup> Samuel Miller, *The Utility and Importance of Creeds and Confessions: Addressed Particularly to Candidates for the Ministry* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, William S. Martien Publishing Agent 1839), 15.

<sup>140</sup> Introductory Lecture Nov. 13, 1818; and again with alterations and enlargements Nov. 10, 1820. [AM] Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries, Department Of Archives And Special Collections, Samuel Miller Manuscript Collection, insert.

<sup>141</sup> Samuel Miller, *Letters on Clerical Manners and Habits: Addressed to a Student in the Theological Seminary, at Princeton, N. J.* 3rd. ed. rev. (Princeton: Moore Baker, 1835), 180.

the student's knowledge of Greek, Latin, and the physical and moral sciences.<sup>142</sup> He doesn't address informal training, in the Methodist circuit-riding style, as a college education has become the normal requirement of presbyteries.

a) Its value for the candidate

Miller's assumption is that a first degree is no longer sufficient preparation and that the candidate will want to choose an option from these three. In an introductory lecture to the students of the seminary he discusses this question, and summarizes the pros and cons of the various options. He addresses one of the main drawbacks of seminary education: that the study of theology at a seminary is a scientific endeavour in a setting removed from practice, and that therefore it can produce those who gain intellectually, but not morally or spiritually. Miller does not deny this danger but points out that it is as likely to occur in private study and that it can even occur when studying in the ministry setting.<sup>143</sup>

In favour of seminary study, Miller points out benefits of having multiple teachers, and the primary benefit of communal study. Multiple teachers ensure that students are not impressed with one teacher's viewpoint, but that they are able to appreciate different teachers and so also realise their teachers' shortcomings. Furthermore, if a student has one teacher who is also a minister or college president, the teacher will not be primarily concerned with teaching but rather with running a church or

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<sup>142</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 206.

<sup>143</sup> Introductory Lecture Nov. 13, 1818, 4-5.

college. Seminary study also enjoys other economies of scale, in particular a much more substantial library.<sup>144</sup>

In addressing students on how to make the most of their time at seminary, Miller urges them in particular to pay attention to the benefits of communal study with its interactions and opportunities to learn from each other.

If, then, you wish to gain, from your connexion with this institution, take large views of the advantages which may justly be sought and expected in such society, and with steady aim, and indefatigable perseverance, pursue the attainment of them. The opportunity which you have of contemplating *different grades of talent*, among your companions in study—some of them above, and others below your own, ought to teach you equally to avoid arrogance and despondency; and to operate as a constant stimulus to diligence. From all the varieties of *taste, temper, and habits*, displayed among your associates, you ought to be constantly endeavouring to draw lessons of practical wisdom. In such an interesting society, your knowledge of the *world*, and of the *human heart*, ought to be with every hour increasing. From daily intercourse with companions from almost every part of the United States, you ought to aim at deriving, while stationary, some of the advantages of *extensive travelling*.<sup>145</sup>

Seminary education offers students the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge through the academic community as much as through academic study. The

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<sup>144</sup> Introductory Lecture Nov. 13, 1818, 3, 30.

<sup>145</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 181-2.

“gentle attrition of mind on mind” will develop in them the character of a pastor while they grapple with the knowledge a minister needs. It will “arose [sic] {and} stimulate {the} mind.” Students will freely converse about their studies and will be challenged to emulate their peers’ achievements and holiness through a “pious {and} amiable rivalry [sic] ... by {which} knowledge is infused on {their} minds; by which their mistakes foibles {and} evil habits are mutually corrected.” This peer correction is to be valued as candidates and ministers are so often in a teaching position, and therefore do not receive this type of correction and critique. The seminary context it also allows them the opportunity to form close friendships that will offer ‘cordial intercourse’ throughout their careers.<sup>146</sup>

Seminary education also allows students to gain from each other not only sober self-judgement and sharpened mental faculties, but also a breadth of experience and knowledge of the world beyond their years. As each student comes from a different geographic area, social position, and experience of life, they are in an ideal position to learn from each other. In Miller’s view, “there is no [other] way in which so much knowledge of this kind may be gained, with perfect safety, as in a large number of pious theological students.”<sup>147</sup>

#### b) Its value for the church

According to Miller, if seminary education is necessary for the good of the student it is doubly so for the good of the church. The aforementioned lifelong cordial friendships will aid smooth church government, further theological research, and develop

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<sup>146</sup> Introductory Lecture Nov. 13, 1818, 17-18, 6-7, 9-10; Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 196.

<sup>147</sup> Introductory Lecture Nov. 13, 1818, 26-27.

a “sacred phalanx” for God’s work. Miller envisions that ministers trained together will be in agreement not only on the essentials, but will also have similar views on the non-essentials of church work, thus reducing time wasted in presbyteries and the Assembly in dealing with inconsequential or petty differences.<sup>148</sup>

As well as providing a better minister in these ways, the public nature of seminary education also allows the church to monitor and control what is taught, thus preventing poor scholarship or heresy: Reading divinity with a pastor or college president provided no such comfort. For these same reasons Miller also argued against founding many seminaries as this would of necessity reduce the supervision possible, and also might increase the possibilities of divergent schools of thought.<sup>149</sup>

### 3. *The Goal of Seminary Education*

For Miller the driving purpose in moving to seminary-based education is the good and the unity of the church. As superior as the benefits of a seminary education are for the candidate, it primarily exists for the denomination. The goal of seminary education is to ensure orthodoxy and to develop the next generation of ministers into this “sacred phalanx” – a body of ministers who have acquired, through communal education and training, unity of purpose and thought. Miller perceives the actions and intent of the denomination in seminary education to have this purpose as well.<sup>150</sup> He sees a seminary-based approach to training candidates as necessary and vital both to address the shortfall of ministers and also to promote the future unity of the denomination.

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<sup>148</sup> Introductory Lecture Nov. 13, 1818, 12-15.

<sup>149</sup> Introductory Lecture Nov. 13, 1818, 21-23.

<sup>150</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 180.

#### **D. How to Inculcate Piety and Pastoral Skills in Seminary**

Although Miller believes seminary students receive a better theological education than those trained in other ways, for him it is the added extras that make seminary education the ideal for training. It is the opportunity for accelerated growth in piety, maturity, and unity that make a seminary education ideal for preparing ministers. His intent is that the habits and character acquired through the interaction and solitude of seminary study form a minister's character and the learnt skills that prove useful throughout his life and ministry. In seminary these traits develop through the activities of the professor, the community, and the individual.

##### *1. Through the activities of the professor*

There were several features of the contact between students and professors at the seminary that were designed to promote piety, maturity, and unity. Although these naturally included the normal lectures, it was the introductory lectures, Sabbath conferences, and chapel services that provided particular opportunities to discuss and promote the personal and corporate formation that Miller desired to see.

Within his normal lecture courses Miller sought to point out practical issues arising from his subject material and also to highlight pious examples of past ministers. He also pointed out their failings as well as drawing attention to difficulties in their preaching style.<sup>151</sup> He encouraged students to take advantage of the opportunities to speak publicly which were occasionally provided in lectures and more frequently in the student

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<sup>151</sup> John Knox and the Reformation in Scotland July 22<sup>nd</sup> 1818.[AM] Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries, Department Of Archives And Special Collections, Samuel Miller Manuscript Collection.



theological society.<sup>152</sup> In this way students would not only gain experience but would also be submitted to peer criticism and incited to engage in self-assessment and self-examination.

Introductory lectures occurred at the commencement of each university session. These lectures, given alternately by members of the faculty, examined topics which would stimulate and challenge the students in their upcoming year. They addressed subjects which would not normally fall under the curriculum such as the character of a theological student and the importance of completing the course of theological study.<sup>153</sup>

The other opportunities that professors had to aid their students' formation were morning and evening chapel services and frequent Sabbath Conferences.<sup>154</sup> When preaching at these chapel services, Miller mostly reused a selection of his older sermons. The Sabbath conferences seem to have been important and relatively informal settings for discussion. Much about them is unclear and there do not appear to be any extant manuscripts from Miller associated with these meetings. Given the completeness of the archive and his habit of writing about half of what he delivered, the fact that nothing exists suggests that these conferences either involved question and answer sessions of

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<sup>152</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 198-9.

<sup>153</sup> Introductory Lecture. Nov 12<sup>th</sup> 1814. Again with Additions, June 30, 1815. [AM] Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries, Department Of Archives And Special Collections, Samuel Miller Manuscript Collection.; Introductory Lecture. Delivered in the Theological Seminary; Nov 9, 1821 [AM] Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries, Department Of Archives And Special Collections, Samuel Miller Manuscript Collection.

<sup>154</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 186.

some kind, or some form of student presentation.<sup>155</sup> Either way, as W. Andrew Hoffecker points out in his preface to *Piety and the Princeton Theologians*, “according to some reports it was the weekly conferences held in the seminary oratory on matters of practical religion that provided the greatest impact that these men had on their students.”<sup>156</sup>

## 2. *Through Community*

Although great effort was made by the professors to encourage piety and ministerial formation in their students through teaching, the distinctive of seminary education was perceived by Miller to be the effect of communal living and study. He deliberately extended hospitality to students not just to be friendly, but also in a genuine effort to get to know them and seek to influence their lives for the good. Hospitality provided a setting for informal conversation. In this way, Miller sought to recreate what he had experienced in his informal studies with Nisbet by creating opportunities in the evenings for discussion and debate with other professors and students. Through this he helped students personalize their learning and gave them a chance to discuss the issues that taxed them. The success of these meetings and of his pursuit of opportunities for conversation is one of the things his students recalled in their reminiscences of him.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Miller himself estimated that he had written notes for around half of his lectures. Letter to Rev Prof Cogswell, New Britain, CN. from Samuel Miller, *Princeton*, NJ. Sept 26, 1834. Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, Samuel Miller Papers; this view is confirmed but not evidenced in Scovel, “Orthodoxy in Princeton,” 115.

<sup>156</sup> W. Andrew Hoffecker, *Piety and The Princeton Theologians: Archibald Alexander, Charles Hodge, and Benjamin Warfield*. (Philipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing Co., 1981), vii.

<sup>157</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller*, vol. 2, 31-36, 373-4.

These informal conversations with professors were only part of Miller's vision for the formation of ministers; he perceived and planned that the struggling and living together of fellow students would provide the cornerstone of formation as 'iron sharpens iron'. Miller thought that, despite the importance of personal devotion and solitude, there was much spiritual benefit to students in partaking of each other's company. For Miller "The religious principle is essentially a social one!"; or more extensively

Altho' much retirement is favorable nay, even necessary to ardent piety; - altho' {the} exercises of {the} closet are, above all estimate important, to a flourishing state, {and} growth of piety; yet at {the} same time, there is something, nay there is much, also in society- {the} society of pious friends {and} companions, {which} has also a direct {and} obvious tendency to cherish piety!<sup>158</sup>

Students, although they were required to possess a degree of self-discipline and motivation in their preparation for the ministry, had to hone these skills in this new social setting.

The college community had its own rules and regulations, but Miller was convinced that if a student required the sort of minute external discipline that was necessary at schools or colleges, they should think carefully about their studies and their calling as this sort of character was not well suited to the ministry by "want of *principle*, or a want of *consideration* and *circumspection*."<sup>159</sup> In passing it is worth noting in this

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<sup>158</sup> Introductory Lecture Nov. 13, 1818, 27-29.

<sup>159</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 178.

connection that Miller does not assume that all seminary students are saved, but he assumes they are at least moral.<sup>160</sup>

In his advice to students Miller suggests that they should also make productive use of their time with other students both academically and socially. They should make a habit of discussing their studies, but in a pious rather than a secular manner. His goal is that they may, by mutual insight, profit from greater understanding of the subject at hand and also learn the art of easily turning everyday conversation to religious discussion. Socially they should seek to develop friendships with other candidates. His advice for this is that, as no one can be equally friendly with everyone, students should seek out a few like-minded fellows and concentrate on those friendships. They should form small groups of four to six people and “establish convenient, stated times of meeting with them, for conversation [and] prayer.” In doing so, not only will the student enjoy and benefit more from his studies, but he will also form friendships to last a lifetime. It is in this that Miller sees the “sacred phalanx” being knit together. Forming friendships is particularly important at this stage of their careers as, due to their position and spiritual authority, ministers are rarely among their peers. Consequently, they have few equals to correct them, and those they have they usually only meet at church judicaries.<sup>161</sup>

The wider knowledge of world which students gain through social interaction with their peers will help them not only to be more balanced in themselves but also to be more rounded as preachers and pastors. They can also gain additional knowledge of the

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<sup>160</sup> Introductory Lecture Nov. 13, 1818, 7.

<sup>161</sup> Introductory Lecture Nov. 13, 1818, 37- 39 and manuscript insert; Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 189, 192.

human soul through the experiences of their peers, general knowledge through their peers' travels and previous society, and academic knowledge through their corporate previous education. The last is important for not only for its usefulness in making more interesting sermons, but also because ministers will often be called upon to fulfil educational responsibilities of some kind wherever they end up.<sup>162</sup>

### 3. *Through Individual Responsibility*

Miller is keen to stress that all these advantages of tuition and community will accomplish little without the efforts of an individual themselves and their participation in them. It is of interest, given Miller's enthusiasm for student community, to note how he characterises it and how he advises students to make company profitable and to work within the tension of solitude and company.

#### a) In company

To further elaborate on this, it is useful to examine some of the reasons Miller stresses for the importance of self-discipline, the reasons why not all company is "truly profitable and delightful!" and why it seminary is not "a little heaven upon earth." He says,

Students are sometimes too much together;- so much as to interfere [with] [the] convenience [and] mutual respect of each other! = Sometimes ill-will is apt to arise, even among pious students, from pride, from envy ~ from wounded vanity- [and] from various forms of selfishness [and] egotism, [which] are always deeply hostile to social comfort, [and] especially to [the] edification of [Christian]

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<sup>162</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 181.

society! = One individual [and] another imagine that their talents or acquirements entitle them to more distinguished attention [and] honour among their fellow students, than [p33] they receive, or think they receive!<sup>163</sup>

Students also need to pay necessary diligence to their behaviour and conversation when in company so that it might best promote growth. They must struggle against ‘timidity’, diffidence’, and lack of conversational skill or spiritual feeling. They must develop one of the most “important offices of {Christian} Friendship” which is the “constant habit of mutual, respectful, {and} affectionate criticism on [sic] each other!” without it becoming merely fault finding.<sup>164</sup>

#### b) In solitude

Miller assumes that the student will take time for the most important elements of spiritual growth: reflective solitude and the exercises of personal devotion- “[that] calm, leisurely, secret converse with your own hearts, [and] your God.” He notes that spending too long in company and the difficulties of shared accommodation can hinder this, but students must learn to

Embrace every opportunity of being alone. Let each one form {the} habit, whenever his roommate has the occasion to withdraw or seizing {the} occasion to spend a few minutes with God! = Whenever {the} season, {and} other circumstances admit, go into {the} neighbouring wood, or into some other

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<sup>163</sup> Introductory Lecture Nov. 13, 1818, 31, 32-33.

<sup>164</sup> Introductory Lecture Nov. 13, 1818, 32, 41-42.

secluded place, {and} there, shut out from {the} {world}, cultivate a holy fellowship with Him who seeth in secret!<sup>165</sup>

Alongside this cultivation of withdrawal, Miller suggests students should learn to plan their weeks and months in advance and establish a routine. This system should include a systematic plan of study and self-assessment and “at the close of every day, and especially every week, CALL YOURSELF TO A SOLEMN ACCOUNT FOR THE MANNER IN WHICH YOU HAVE SPENT THE PRECEDING DAY OR WEEK [Caps sic].”<sup>166</sup> Students must learn to attain uninterrupted hours for study and conversely learn not to interrupt a fellow student during their designated hours of study.<sup>167</sup> Miller hoped that through this monitoring of self, students would not only make the most of their time at seminary but that they would also learn their own habits, peculiarities and weaknesses. For example, Miller recognised that different people had prime times of attention and study, and he recommends that each discern that time and commit that part of the day to their most demanding endeavours. They must also learn that keeping on schedule is attained through the art of “dismissing intrusive company without ceremony.”<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Introductory Lecture Nov. 13, 1818, 40-41, 27.

<sup>166</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 204; see also Introductory Lecture Nov. 13, 1818, 45- 46; Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 185.

<sup>167</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 165 including “Cause it to be understood, that you wish to enjoy certain definite hours for unbroken study; and if there be any with whom this understanding is not sufficient, I would deliberately advise that you *lock your door*, and utterly disregard all knocks, until the portion of your time devoted to study shall have closed.”

<sup>168</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 240.

c) Attendance at the seminary

One of the aspects of individual responsibility that Miller singles out is the importance of participation in seminary life during the full course of study. He is concerned about both leaving seminary before completing a full course of study and distractions during a course of study.

Miller felt it necessary to encourage his students to stay for their full course for two key reasons. Firstly, students were there at their own volition and so could opt out. They could transfer to a different college, go to train with a pastor, or, given the shortage of ministers, seek a call from a church at any point. They would have already received more theological training than some other ministers and there was no denominational mandate to stay. Secondly, students were under pressure from others within the church to quit their studies and join in the evangelisation of the nation. There was a great sense of urgency about the work of mission and revival and a feeling that others might convert the nation while they wiled away idle hours in seminary.<sup>169</sup> For Miller, however, it is important that students remain at seminary for the full course of their studies – three or four years at seminary would produce a more mature and steady minister. Even if the knowledge could be imparted in a shorter length of time, the development of the ministerial character benefits from a full course of study. Miller states that such a long course of study is important not only for the

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<sup>169</sup> Miller had due cause to be concerned about student drop-out rates; Lane's research suggests up until 1828 (at least) that most students left the Seminary before they were half way through the course of study (thought they still went on to become ministers or evangelists). Lane, "Democracy and the Ruling Eldership," 199-203, 233-6.



required knowledge, but also for {the} purpose of that intellectual {and} moral discipline, which is not of less value to a Gospel Minister... {the} discipline of {the} heart- {the} temper {and} {the] general character, is among {the} most important parts of professional education! ... if the requisite amount of facts {and} principles could be crowded into {the} mind in 6 months, or in 6 days, still are most essential object of professional training would be unattained! which is, {the} correction of bad habits; - {the} formation of new {and} better ones- discipline, {and} ripening of intellectual powers; {the} gradual mellowing {and} softening graces of the heart.<sup>170</sup>

As part of his concern about students being distracted during their course of study, Miller advises them to limit their external preaching engagements.<sup>171</sup> Miller pushes for a greater focus on studies, as the students will have a lifetime in which to minister. Miller wants to provide training that is immediately related to the life of the church, but it requires students to withdraw from some of their church commitments for a while.

#### 4. *The limits of seminary education*

Throughout this section on the inculcation of piety and pastoral skills it can be seen that Miller realises some limits to the effectiveness of seminaries. He sees them as

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<sup>170</sup> Introductory Lecture. Delivered in the Theological Seminary; Nov 9, 1821 [AM] Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries, Department Of Archives And Special Collections, Samuel Miller Manuscript Collection, 32-33.

<sup>171</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 240; this is of interest as an aside, because it leads to the implication the students were normally very involved in practical church experience during their seminary studies.

able to provide conditions to accelerate the nurture of piety, maturity, and the ministerial character but the responsibility to capitalise on these conditions lies with the student. In his opinion seminaries may provide an ideal communal setting but it depends on both the candidate's character and their commitment. A student must have or be willing to learn the right temperament for seminary and the ministry. The success of the seminary therefore, and its limitation, is that it is dependent on the quality of candidate that presbyteries select and their behaviour and attitude thereafter.

Miller's concerns over candidates leaving before they finish the full course of study highlight his understanding of this limit of his model: Seminaries require substantial time commitment to inculcate piety and character. Miller's awareness of this limit of his model is illustrated in efforts he makes to encourage students to stay the course. As Lane has pointed out, the need to persevere was another recurring theme for Miller's introductory lectures (including 1825, 1827, 1829). In 1834 he also attempted to persuade the Presbyterian Church's Board of Education.<sup>172</sup>

## **E. What is a Minister?**

### *1. The Minister's Character and Life*

#### a) Conversion, piety, and calling

Miller's understanding of conversion and piety are closely tied together. For Miller, conversion is a deliberate and emotional extended process involving both the individual and their wider community of church, family, and friends. His expectation is that people, but perhaps in particular clergy, will be converted in ways not totally dissimilar to his own experience. In writing to ministers about pastoral counselling in

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<sup>172</sup> Lane makes both these points in "Democracy and the Ruling Eldership," 234-6.

connection to conversion, Miller is concerned that there should not be a quick answer or false comfort. He states “It is far better that an anxious inquirer after salvation should pass a few more weeks or months in a state of deep mental solicitude, and even anguish, than that he should be prematurely comforted, and led to a repose in false hope, from which he may never awake.” Conversion requires retirement and cost-counting alongside pastoral counsel, and Miller’s view is that, although there is no fixed length of time, conversion is likely to be a process lasting several months.<sup>173</sup>

The experience of conversion and ongoing spiritual life are based on experience of God not just assent to doctrine. In his sermon to the General Assembly of 1807, titled *The Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ*, Miller preached on the nature of knowing God. He observed that first a doctrinal acquaintance of the character of God as Saviour and Lord of his people and of the gospel are necessary, but that there has to follow a practical and experimental knowledge of God – a “cordial friendship.” This knowledge can only come through the work of the “enlightening Spirit” and without it “the most learned [and] profound divine may be totally destitute.”<sup>174</sup> In this respect Miller sees himself as an heir to Edwards, and it is interesting to note that many of the preachers and evangelists Miller

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<sup>173</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 130, 135-136.

<sup>174</sup> The Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ: A Sermon on Phil3:8 No. 415, Preached at the opening of the General Assembly of the P. Church in the U.S.A. May 21 1807. [AM] Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries, Department Of Archives And Special Collections, Samuel Miller Manuscript Collection. , 6-8, 13; See Also Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 272.

commends to his students are from the previous generations of revivalists, evangelists, and new lights.<sup>175</sup>

In determining one's calling the issues of denomination also have to be considered. For Miller, being a candidate of Presbyterian Church does not automatically progress to being a Presbyterian minister; it is perfectly possible that one may be called to another church. The candidates should examine with diligence the creeds and rules of the church to be sure they agree with them. If, after this examination a candidate, still desires to be Presbyterian, but has a difficulty with a detail of the confession or rules, he should bring this discussion frankly to Presbytery, so that it may decide the best way forward.<sup>176</sup>

b) Character, interests, and family life

For Miller, an important part of the ministerial character is the ability to be systematic and orderly – a fact already commented on in his view of student formation. A further aspect of this practice which runs throughout Miller's life is the importance of a character formed by remembrance of the past. When Miller approached major decisions or events, he was in the habit setting aside time for fasting and prayer. He also did this to mark the anniversaries of important events, with the intention of remembering past events and assessing subsequent ones. The most important days for Miller were his birthday

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<sup>175</sup> Introductory Lecture. Delivered in the Theological Seminary; Nov 9, 1821, 26. Needless to say, Edward's legacy was still the subject of differing interpretations in Miller's time, as both Miller and Finney, among many others, would lay claim to his position to support their own.

<sup>176</sup> Samuel Miller, *The Utility and Importance of Creeds and Confessions: Addressed Particularly to Candidates for the Ministry* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, William S. Martien Publishing Agent 1839), 101.

(October 31<sup>st</sup>), New Year's Day, the anniversary of his ordination (June 5<sup>th</sup>), and later the anniversary of his move to Princeton.<sup>177</sup>

Given Miller's broad interests in his earlier life, it is no surprise that he prizes knowledge of the world in a minister. He equates this knowledge with maturity and experience, and is concerned that so many ministers lack it. He points out that this knowledge cannot be taught but must be acquired from keenly observing people. To this end, Miller suggests to ministers that they should make every effort to profit from their travels.<sup>178</sup>

Ministers public conduct should be marked by “*Dignity, Gentleness, Condescension, Affability, Reserve, and Uniformity.*”<sup>179</sup> They should always appear presentable as they are public figures and Miller devotes a significant amount of his *Clerical Manners and Habits* to spelling out manners and habits relating to social niceties. Ministers should take care to pay attention to their ‘personal cleanliness’ but should not be ostentatious in dress or habit. Neither should their family or house be ostentatious Miller stresses utility and convenience as the important aspects of furniture.<sup>180</sup>

Miller also gave his students and readers extensive advice about marriage and family life, not only to benefit them as individuals but also because after the Reformation, as one commentator puts it, “the family life of ministers became symbolical of the

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<sup>177</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller* vol.1, 112, 127; vol. 2, 209.

<sup>178</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 14, 23, 390.

<sup>179</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 32.

<sup>180</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 52, 350-3.

communal character of the evangelical faith.”<sup>181</sup> Ministerial families therefore need to be circumspect about their personal opinions and any plans the minister might have.

Ministers should take care who they let themselves become attached to and some, particularly itinerant evangelists, should not marry if it would interfere with their calling and if they can be content as single men. These ministers aside, Miller assumes that it will be useful to marry, but that the choice of a wife should be undertaken with much care and prayer, and that the marriage should occur after the completion of studies.<sup>182</sup>

In Miller’s model, ministers are, by profession, social people but they have few peers. Thus, they must be more scrupulous about social visits than about pastoral ones, as social visits, though necessary, can absorb too much time or accidentally show favouritism. Ministers should seek out the company of other ministers in whatever locale they find themselves, both to form cordial friendships as well as to form professional contacts.

As Lane and others point out, the character of Miller’s ideal minister has a marked inheritance from his discussions of the previous century’s aristocratic behaviour in the *Retrospect*. In relation to this model character, Lane goes on to suggest that Miller “tended to equate spiritual effectiveness in the ministry with social eminence.”<sup>183</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> Pauck, “Time of the Reformation,” 146; Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 47, 341.

<sup>182</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 319-23.

<sup>183</sup> Lane, “Democracy and the Ruling Eldership,” 251-4.

## 2. *The Minister and Church*

### a) Preaching and Worship

As a young man, Miller's style of preaching shifted from "from the vehement and fervid, to the deliberate" and he very rarely spoke without some notes in front of him. In Miller's view becoming a better preacher involves, not only a greater knowledge of the Bible, but also knowledge of great orators (ancient and modern, Christian and non-Christian). Miller's recommendations on preaching style are that it should be authoritative, solemn, respectful, affectionate, animated, and varied. In worship, Miller considered prayer, though vital, to be secondary to preaching. It an ordered structure and be kept short (7-8 minutes).<sup>184</sup>

### b) Pastoral Care

For Miller, a significant part of the minister's work is to visit and know the members of his congregation. His recommendation is that a minister should aim to visit between twelve and twenty families a week. Such visiting not only cares for the congregants but also informs the sermon.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller* vol.1, 70; Letter to Rev Prof Cogswell; Composition {and} Delivery of Sermons. Lecture III. July 16 1819. [AM] Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries, Department Of Archives And Special Collections, Samuel Miller Manuscript Collection, 6-8; Lecture X: Composition and Delivery of Sermons: Public Prayer and Sacraments (Sept 15, 1815), Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries, Department Of Archives And Special Collections, Samuel Miller Manuscript Collection.; Lecture 1: History of Sermonizing, 4; Composition and delivery of Sermons. Lecture August 28<sup>th</sup> 1820: Publick Prayer, continued [AM] Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries, Department Of Archives And Special Collections, Samuel Miller Manuscript Collection, 1-7.

<sup>185</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 145.

Despite Miller's previous assertions of the importance of an emotional and personal components in conversion, his view of 'normal' pastoral care and visitation is that in visiting and counselling the minister should

avoid the discussion of PERSONAL CHARACTER AND CONDUCT as much as possible: and that you prefer dwelling on those *principles, doctrines, and facts*, which are always, and to all classes in society, interesting and instructive, and the discussion of which, moreover, is always *safe*.<sup>186</sup>

In conversation, ministers should avoid controversy, tactfully but firmly oppose false doctrines, and strive to always make their discussions useful (even if not religious).<sup>187</sup> Pastoral and social visits should be distinct and the minister should remember in both circumstances that he is a guest.<sup>188</sup>

#### c) Church Government

In "Democracy and the Ruling Eldership," Lane analyses the development of Miller's relationship with the eldership, from his positive early view of the potential of the role to support ministry and represent laity to his later view of it as a threat to ministerial authority. By the time Miller is teaching and writing his *Clerical Manners and Habits*, he has begun to stress the authority of the minister.

When discussing participation in the other structures of church governance, such as presbytery and the general assembly, Miller stresses the need to be punctual and the

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<sup>186</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 81; Holifield, *History of Pastoral Care*, 130.

<sup>187</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 82-87.

<sup>188</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 144-5, 162-3.



benefits of friendships among ministers but he also warns against expecting to be edified by participating in these structures.<sup>189</sup>

d) Ecumenicalism

As a result of his views on denomination, Miller stresses the importance of not proselytising when talking to, counselling, or visiting a person expressing interest in another denomination. He says that one should “Be much more anxious to see them *Christians*, than to see them *Presbyterians*.”<sup>190</sup>

This having been said, the minister should take great care in who he lets preach in his church. Although there may be individuals of known piety from outside his denomination that a minister will let preach as a rule pulpit exchanges and visiting preachers should be from within one’s own denomination.<sup>191</sup>

3. *The Minister and the Wider World*

a) Miller and Voluntary Societies

It has been noted that Miller’s view of voluntary societies changed over the course of his lifetime. As it changed it can be reasoned that his advice to ministers about involvement with such societies followed suit. His ministry began with a positive

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<sup>189</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 278, 288.

<sup>190</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 122.

<sup>191</sup> Letter in the *Panoplist* 1810, quoted in Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller* vol. 1, 292-3.

relationship with voluntary and mission societies, and he was much involved with them.<sup>192</sup>

By the middle of his life he remained a supporter of many societies but had grown concerned and uneasy by the actions of some of them. His unease is illustrated in his correspondence with the American Home Missionary Society, which he had joined shortly after it was founded and on which he served as one of its vice-presidents. The society began to discuss and work towards some form of merger with the Presbyterian's Church's Board of Home Missions. In a letter of January 4th 1832, Miller after stating his continued support for society, he stated his opposition to any pursuit of a link between the board and the society, writing

“I am now perfectly satisfied, that connecting the two together, *in any way*, would be productive of more harm than good; and [...] ought to [...] remain perfectly separate: each independently of the other pursuing its own course, moving in its own sphere, looking to its own patrons, and seeking to do good in its own appropriate department; without in the least interfering with the other.”<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>192</sup> Holifield, *History of Pastoral Care*, 140. For example, Samuel Miller, *A Discourse, Delivered April 12, 1797, at the Request of and Before the New-York Society for Promoting the Manumission of Slaves and Protecting Such of Them as Have Been or May Be Liberated*. (New York: T&J Swords, 1797). Microcard.

<sup>193</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller* vol. 2, 210-2; As an example of Miller's ongoing support for another society see: American Bible Society, *Twenty Second Annual Report of the American Bible Society, presented X May, MDCCCXXXVIII. With An Appendix, containing the Addresses at the Anniversary and Extracts of Correspondence, together with a list of Auxiliary Societies, Life Directors, and Members* (New-York: Printed by Daniel Fanshaw, 1838).

Thinking the proposal had been set aside, Miller remained an officer of the society. On Dec 3<sup>rd</sup> 1836, writing in response to a new initiative by the society, he took a different view. His understanding had been that the society wished to have “*full liberty*” to pursue its aims without formal church ties or restrictions – this he supported. Miller has now come to the realisation that the society sees the mission board as competition. Miller writes,

“But when I found the watchword [of the societies] to be, ‘*The Boards of the Church MUST DIE!*’ I became convinced that it was the duty of every good Presbyterian, not to put down or even molest voluntary organisations, but to cling with new affection to the Boards of the General Assembly, and to sustain them with increasing zeal. I can truly say, that the language and conduct of the brethren, who have taken the lead in these associations, have done more, a thousand times, to convince me that many of them, at least, cherished a deadly hostility to the best interests of the Presbyterian Church, and were determined to depress, if not to prostrate, her influence, than all the complaints of the ultra-partisans of orthodoxy.”<sup>194</sup>

Miller then continues to spell out the dangers of the structure of voluntary societies, in particular the power and finances they vest in one or two unaccountable people.

#### b) The Church, Politics, and Civil Government

The shift in Miller’s attitude to politics has already been mentioned, but it is worth noting that he makes this into explicit advice. He says that “Ministers of the gospel, and

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<sup>194</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller* vol. 2, 320-1.

those who are preparing for the ministry, have infinitely more important work to do [than be involved in politics].”<sup>195</sup>

c) Mission and Evangelism

Although he considered much of the second great awakening to be exciting and beneficial to the church, in his discussions of revivals and evangelism he outlined the dangers the new measures posed. In the new measures

means have been resorted to, in the fulness [sic] of ardent feeling, which scriptural wisdom and experience could not justify. Irregularities and excesses have insensibly crept in, which, though meant for the best, and promising, at the time, to be useful, proved far otherwise in their influence.<sup>196</sup>

The issues that Miller is concerned about fall into two categories, those that disrupt church order and those that hinder evangelism and church growth. Church order is disrupted by the encouragement of lay preaching, public prayer and exhortation by women, unreasonably long and late meetings, bodily agitation, and public confession. As

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<sup>195</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 380.

<sup>196</sup> Letter IV Princeton March 8, 1832 [AM]Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries, Department Of Archives And Special Collections, Samuel Miller Manuscript Collection, 23; Introductory lecture Nov 11 1835 [AM] Princeton Theological Seminary Libraries, Department Of Archives And Special Collections, Samuel Miller Manuscript Collection. Unfortunately the manuscript of this lecture is unfinished. Miller has described the current era positively e.g. “The religious, as well as {the} political {world} seems to be shaken to its centre the whole Church is moved, not only by {the} influences of {the} {Divine Spirit}; but by {the} Spirit of inquiry-of discussion- {and} of action!” He is about to discuss the new measures when the manuscript finishes – it is unclear whether or not he ever completed or delivered this lecture.

an example, public confession disrupts church order by the promoting the ‘disgrace of Christian character’, advancing the ‘destruction of domestic peace’, and encouraging gossip.<sup>197</sup>

Evangelism and church growth is hindered by promoting circumstances that encourage the insincere imitation of true emotions and repentance, and by using measures, such as anxious seats or camp meetings, that increase the emotional pressure on listeners to make a quick decision. In the long term, pressured converts are more likely to fall away.<sup>198</sup>

Apart from his view that these measures are not biblical, Miller’s concern is that, such things have previously led to division and separation in the church. For example in Kentucky in the case of the Cumberland Presbyterians.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Miller, Letter IV Princeton March 8, 1832, 23, 29, 42.

<sup>198</sup> Miller, Letter IV Princeton March 8, 1832, 38 -41.

<sup>199</sup> Miller, Letter IV Princeton March 8, 1832, 30-33.

## V. ASSESSING MILLER'S MODEL AND CONCLUSIONS

### A. Development and continuity in Miller's thought

#### 1. *A uniting principle?*

Before an assessment of Miller's model with respect to the thesis of this study is carried out it is necessary to examine the issue of development and continuity in his thought. As such a significant shift in Miller's attitudes seems to begin around the time of his move to Princeton, with resulting shifts in his view on how ministers should conduct themselves, is it possible to have one assessment of Miller or must there be at least two? It is suggested that one assessment of the thesis is possible, because the driving force behind Miller's model of formation remained constant.

Throughout his career Miller was motivated by the good of the denomination; it is suggested that he understood the continuance and long-term good of the Presbyterian Church to require two things - a supply of well-trained ministers, and that these ministers were united. Miller's dedication to supporting the first of these is evident in his actions in the founding of, and later teaching at, Princeton Seminary. That this was Miller's stated concern is not disputed.

The second of these, however, is not recognised, and this study contends that an understanding of Miller's dedication to the unity of the church is vital to make sense of why he thought the seminary education model was so important. The development of Miller's thought should also be understood in this context.

It is difficult to pin down Miller's understanding of unity prior to the discussions about the need for a seminary. As a result, it is hard to assess the degree to which the unfortunate ending of his ministerial partnership affected his perspective on the

importance of unity in the church. It undoubtedly strengthened his appreciation of the need for unity, had a marked effect on how he related to subsequent colleagues and influenced his view of ministry. It cannot, however, be determined if that event was the catalyst that changed his understanding or merely a further buttress to an existing view.

The centrality of the future unity of the church to Miller's thinking becomes explicit in his thought about founding a seminary, and in particular in his reasoning behind why seminary education was better than other forms of training, and why only having one seminary was so important.

For Miller, unity is much more than agreement and the ability for the church to move in the same direction. Unity involves homogeneity; he wants a single seminary so that the church will have harmonious views and actions; he wants the church to reap the benefits of a system in which students experience the "same place... same teachers ... same habits!"<sup>200</sup> Miller wants the denomination to be of one mind and one way of doing things.

That this understanding of Miller's view corresponds with how he understood and acted can be seen in his passionate advocacy and political manoeuvring when the issue of the seminary founding was under debate. It is also evident in how he perceives and portrays the advantages of community in the process of theological education.

It is also evident in how Miller interacted with colleagues and contemporaries. Miller sought the advancement of like-minded thinkers within the Church – helping secure a DD for Griffin and the Presidency of the College of New Jersey for Green.<sup>201</sup> On

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<sup>200</sup> Miller, *Clerical Manners and Habits*, 180; Introductory Lecture Nov. 13, 1818, 16.

<sup>201</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller* vol.1, 199, 335-7.

his move to Princeton, he resolved to avoid giving offence to or taking offence from his colleagues and stuck to this resolution, always deferring to Alexander. In interacting with contemporaries who were neither colleagues nor opponents, Miller supported their work as he could, but only so far as it didn't conflict with his colleagues or the denomination. For example, although Miller welcomed the establishment of Andover and supported it, he did not want Presbyterians involved as this would detract from the Church's own efforts.<sup>202</sup>

## 2. *A persistent principle?*

In assessing the view that the idea of a united church provides a key to understanding Miller's model, a further test of this view's ability to represent his thought is how it relates to his changes in opinion. Some of Miller's shifts in opinion reflect changes in his age and in his era. His decision to stop drinking alcohol and stop dancing can be seen as signs of his age and as part of his determination to become more serious. His eventual disengagement from politics and the masons was inline with his peers' views.

Miller's shifts in attitude to the issue of slavery, to voluntary societies, and to the New School, are all, to some degree, based on preserving the unity of the church. He began to question voluntary societies when they sought to encroach on the church's business, and in particular when they sought to "disturb the harmony of the Presbyterian Church."<sup>203</sup> The toning down of his views on slavery occurred in an effort to keep the southern wing of the Old School in the denomination, and his opposition to the New

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<sup>202</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller* vol.2, 10; Scovel, "Orthodoxy in Princeton," 86.

<sup>203</sup> Miller Jr., *The Life of Samuel Miller* vol.2, 212.



School was brought about by their opposition to his colleagues and the realisation that one party in the debate would be leaving the Church.

Miller's willingness to shift position on these issues is perhaps understandable in light of Lane's argument that Miller didn't have a coherent theological framework from which he derived his thought. He rather, responded to circumstances in light of his understanding of the Bible. This meant that changes in circumstances could produce different interpretations.<sup>204</sup>

### **B. Miller's Pastor**

Like most of his contemporaries Miller did not think that he was doing anything particularly innovative: he saw himself as continuing the traditions of the church and if anything returning to earlier patterns of thought. Miller perceived his actions as following from the early church through the Reformation and indeed as continuing the work of preceding generations.<sup>205</sup>

Letters on Clerical Manners and Habits is probably Miller's most successful work and the way in which he articulates his view of the minister's character, habits, and role in society must have struck a chord. Amongst all those writing similar books, Miller's book was held up as an ideal and went through several editions. There were others writing this genre, but Miller's book typifies the sort of minister he wished to encourage and produce. There seems to be little content in his book that is in itself innovative, but the way in which it thoroughly draws together character formation and the mundane aspects of ministerial life provided a distinct viewpoint. As mentioned this model of the

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<sup>204</sup> Lane, "Democracy and the Ruling Eldership," 374-5.

<sup>205</sup> Mead "Evangelical Conception of the Ministry," 211.

Christian Gentleman was indebted both to Miller's education with Dr. Nisbet and to Miller's major work *A Brief Retrospect*.

### **C. Miller's model of formation**

The concluding point for consideration in Samuel Willard's *Brief Direction to a Young Scholar Designing the Ministry for the study of Divinity* is "Let him take Opportunities to *confer with Others*, especially orthodox and able Ministers, about those Points that are dark and difficult, for his farther Information."<sup>206</sup> Miller sought to formalise such interaction through theological education in a seminary setting. He attempted to create circumstances alongside the study of theology that would encourage such communal formation. Miller was endeavouring not just to supply more ministers but also to build the next generation of the church into a cohesive and coherent unit.

### **D. Miller's Place in History**

Miller is undoubtedly a very important figure in this period. He plays a crucial role in Presbyterian politics and the foundation of the seminary. Then he vanishes. In the introduction it was suggested that he was outshone by Alexander and Hodge. That remains true but there are other reasons Miller vanishes. Miller's ideal minister is based on the settled conditions of the previous century. The setting in which he's articulating it is however, rapidly changing. Miller's model of formation and his model minister did not suit the direction American church life was taking.

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<sup>206</sup> Samuel Willard, *Brief Direction to a Young Scholar Designing the Ministry for the study of Divinity* (Boston: J. Draper for T. Hancock, 1735), XII.

## **E. Conclusions**

Miller's model of formation was based on an understanding of unity that emphasised homogeneity, in a way that, today, seems very naive. As he strove to build his "nursery of vital piety," he envisioned the interaction between students as key. Despite the limitations of his understanding of unity, and his perception that much of ministerial formation was about training, he grasped the importance of interaction and community. In the context of discussions about the right way to train ministers and the problems candidates face in being removed from the church settings they intend to minister in, it is worth considering that at least one of those who was responsible for developing the model of graduate theological education saw the process, not as a removal to an isolated ivory tower, but rather as a removal to a community of study.

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