A Rhetorical Study of the Preaching of John McMillan From 1820 to 1830.

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JOHN MCMILLAN FROM 1820 TO 1830.

Louisiana State University and Agricultural and
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Speech

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A RHETORICAL STUDY OF THE PREACHING OF
JOHN MCMILLAN FROM 1820 TO 1830

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of Speech

by
Harold Stanford Baker
B.A., David Lipscomb College, 1952
M.A., Louisiana State University, 1956
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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the methods and achievements of John McMillan, one of early America's most influential ministers. As a leader in Western Pennsylvania's theological, doctrinal, educational, and moral development, McMillan's contemporaries called him the Father of the Churches in the Synod of Pittsburgh, the Apostle of Presbyterianism in the West, and the Father of education in Western Pennsylvania. McMillan's speech training and ministerial methods are reconstructed and analyzed. The chief sources are fifteen manuscript sermons, McMillan's Journal, personal letters, and autobiographical material, and denominational histories.

McMillan's education gave him special qualifications for the several roles he filled on the frontier. His pre-college training was directed by two graduates of William Tennent's Log College who had tested their techniques and skills under frontier conditions. His work at the College of New Jersey was under the instruction and close supervision of John Witherspoon, an effective revival preacher and lecturer. Upon graduation, McMillan returned to one of his academy teachers for two years of in-service training in theology. As he entered his ministry, McMillan felt both qualified and obligated to establish his own log-cabin school for
educating ministers and other professional men on the frontier. As an outgrowth of his early efforts and continued leadership, two fully accredited colleges and a medical school later developed to serve the area. His work in education coupled with his leadership in organizing presbyteries and synods gave him greater ethos in his preaching.

Based upon an analysis of fifteen representative sermons, his Journal, and testimony from contemporary critics, this study reveals that McMillan used an acceptable pattern of speech development and regularly followed a program of thorough sermon preparation. He prepared manuscripts for his sermons—some were full-content manuscripts and others were extensive notes from which to extemporize—and memorized them. However, he is reported to have delivered the sermons with all of the vigor, feeling and vividness characteristic of good extemporaneous speaking.

McMillan regularly began his sermons by introducing a Biblical text and engaging in a lengthy explanation of it. After his theme began to emerge, he previewed the main points of his sermon and the major subheads he planned to develop. Using the statements from his preview as transitional devices, McMillan reasoned out the body of the sermon. He usually concluded in one of three ways: (1) making some "improvement" upon the last main head in the sermon or upon the whole subject; (2) making his last heading into an appeal; or (3)
presenting hypothetical questions to guide his listeners into an inductively persuasive self-analysis.

McMillan used the Bible almost exclusively for his source of proof, drawing from it specific instances, illustrations, analogies, contrasts, and the general principles from which he reasoned deductively. Though he made limited appeals to the emotions of gratitude, honor, respect for authority and power, justice, and fair play, he appealed primarily to fear. To McMillan, hell was a very real place and a horror to be avoided at all costs.

McMillan often included a large number of minor points in his sermon structure which gave him an involved style that lacked clarity and coherence. Though his listeners probably had difficulty in following his reasoning, the abundance of material and regular use of Biblical wording gave his preaching an air of completeness and Biblical authority. He relied upon his regular catechetical sessions to undergird his preaching with instructional power.

Though sometimes harsh in tone and unkind in statements, his massive body, vocal power, air of humility and earnestness, and total platform manner added persuasiveness to his messages. The other areas of his influence also gave him force as a persuasive speaker.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

During the middle years of the eighteenth century, thousands of newly-arrived and second-transplant immigrants poured over the Allegheny Mountains to continue the westward movement of the American frontier. More than a half-million Scotch-Irish Presbyterians from northern Ireland were among those newest citizens of the New World.¹ Within a few decades following independence—1791 to 1821—eleven new states were added to the original thirteen.² Sweet says there is nothing recorded in the history of modern times to compare with that great migration.³

"The Scotch-Irish were poor, land-hungry, boisterous, and contentious. They were also tenaciously Presbyterian."⁴ Cut off from the established ties of their former homes,


neighborhoods, churches, and schools with all of their restraining and refining influences, many families lost their feeling of need to be loyal to God, Bible doctrine, Christian ethics, or the call to worship.\(^5\) A frontier minister described the influx of settlers to a friend in Scotland: "The settlements and congregations be multiplied with us; yet alas, there is little of the power and life of religion in either."\(^6\)

The greatest contribution made by the American churches during this unsettled period was to provide restraint and discipline for the restless, rowdy population. The Presbyterians of Pennsylvania were particularly effective in carrying their denomination's influences and forms of control to the frontier. Just as their forefathers had carried the Presbyterian system of polity and doctrine from Scotland to North Ireland, so these Scotch-Irish, with equal vigor and tenacity, brought the cultural and religious patterns to America.\(^7\)


\(^{7}\)Sweet, The American Churches, p. 20.
I. McMillan in Frontier Religious History

One of the most outstanding Scotch-Irish Presbyterians of the period was a minister named John McMillan. He settled in Western Pennsylvania in 1778 and spent the next fifty-five years in significant roles of leadership. He established his own classical and theological school in which he trained many young men for the various professions, but his primary interest was in training ministers. For several years nearly every minister in that general area was a product of his school.

McMillan also took the lead in establishing the various organizational bodies of the Presbyterian Church. After organizing several congregations, he was instrumental in forming the first two presbyteries west of the Allegheny Mountains. When a third presbytery had developed, McMillan was the leader in forming the three presbyteries into a synod.

McKinney, the Presbyterian historian, said of McMillan: "For nearly sixty years he was the acknowledged leader of Western Pennsylvania Presbyterianism and molded the conduct and thinking of a widely scattered community."\(^8\) McMillan was of such stature, especially in education, that Allen Ditchfield Campbell wrote the following appraisal of him: "He was emphatically the Father of the Churches in the Synod

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of Pittsburgh. . . . One thing is certain, he was the educator of the ministry of that day.9

The quality and scope of McMillan's contributions to his community and his state are summed up in the following encomium: "From whatever angle the early development of Western Pennsylvania is viewed, the achievements of this pioneer Presbyterian leader are notable and decisive."10

II. THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

This rhetorical study of the preaching of John McMillan (1752-1833), a frontier Presbyterian minister in Western Pennsylvania, attempts to determine the nature and effectiveness of his training, the character and influence of his ministry, and the structure and quality of his sermons. The scope of the study has been limited in at least four ways. First, it is not biography, though it does make a brief study of McMillan as a speaker and as he filled other ministerial roles whereby he established a speaker-audience relationship. Dwight R. Guthrie published a complete biography of McMillan in 1952, entitled, John McMillan: The

9"The Founding and Early History of Western Seminary," The Bulletin of the Western Theological Seminary (Pittsburgh) XX (October, 1927), 129.

Apostle of Presbyterianism in the West, 1752-1833. The present study is comparable to rhetorical studies made of other frontier ministers in the early nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{11}

Second, this investigation is limited to McMillan's preaching during the decade, 1820-1830. Some of the reasons for choosing that decade were: one, it was the last decade of McMillan's active ministry, and therefore, would represent his years of fullest maturity and experience. Two, that decade is included in McMillan's Journal and that will make some evaluations possible which could not be made of the years in which he did not keep a Journal.\textsuperscript{12} Three, the chosen decade was also included in McMillan's expense account which is available for examination. Four, McMillan was freer from the extra duties in education and theology instruction during those years near the end of his life. Five, the years 1820 through 1830 were sufficiently removed from the camp meetings and area-wide revivals of such men as M'Gready to permit an evaluation of McMillan's settled convictions and adjustments to the frontier in his preaching.

Third, the study is limited to the analysis of fifteen


\textsuperscript{12}There were no Journal entries for the years 1792 through 1819.
sermons selected from among the approximately four hundred extant manuscripts. Ten of the sermons were chosen because they appear to be typical of McMillan's style and choice of subjects. Two of them are built on Old Testament texts and eight are centered in the New Testament. Five of the sermons were chosen because they are of a single type—sacramental sermons. That is, they were delivered on the special occasions when McMillan's congregation, or other congregations for whom he spoke, were celebrating the Lord's Supper, which Presbyterians and others call the Sacrament. Headnotes on each sermon give the dates it was preached and, on some, other data. Some of the sermons were first prepared prior to the period under study, but they were also repeated once or twice during the period. Three manuscripts were first prepared during the chosen decade. The sermons are analyzed in terms of McMillan's use of ethical, emotional, and logical proofs. A search is made to discover McMillan's central theme in preaching, his basic premises, his lines of argument, and his forms of support.

Only the "Sin Abounding and Grace Superabounding" sermon has a title given by McMillan. That may have been done because it was to be printed. All of the other sermons have been given titles by this researcher (based upon the scripture texts used in them) for purposes of identification in this study. The titles of the two types of sermons are these:
Sacramental:
"Sin Abounding and Grace Superabounding"
"Fear Not, Little Flock"
"Behold! Your King"
"In Memoriam"
"Seeking Christ's Love"

General:
"Remember God Early"
"Will ye Also go Away?"
"The Spirit's Possession" (No. 1)
"The Spirit's Possession" (No. 2)
"A Helping Spirit"
"The Shepherd and His Sheep" (No. 1)
"The Shepherd and His Sheep" (No. 2)
"Knowledge Increases Responsibility"
"He That Loveth Not is Lost" (No. 1)
"He That Loveth Not is Lost" (No. 2)

Fourth, this study is limited to an analysis of McMillan's invention and arrangement, with a limited, general treatment of his delivery. Therefore, the canons of style and memory are not considered here.

The format of this study evolved from an analysis of the four major elements of a speaking situation: speaker, audience, setting, and speech. An attempt is made to determine the effectiveness of McMillan's preaching in the light of all these factors.

The study focuses on McMillan's training, theological views, and his purposes in preaching. An effort is made to determine what antecedent impressions McMillan made upon his listeners by reason of his former experiences with them, and by his profession and position of leadership.

In analyzing the audience, a study is made of their antecedent conditioning for the speaking occasions being
studied. Such factors as former religious experiences, relations with the governments under which they had lived, conditions of migration and frontier life, educational opportunities and attainments, and emotional conditioning. Consideration is given to what a psychologist calls a previously established set of values. Those values are: economic, aesthetic, social, political, theoretical, and religious.\textsuperscript{13}

The analysis of the occasion and setting is concerned with such factors as the nature of the assembly, proximity of the place of meeting to the homes of the listeners, the time spent at the place of meeting or in its near vicinity, the purposes of speaker and hearers in coming, the physical arrangements and comfort of the listeners, and the state of religion and morals at the time.

After the analysis is complete, the study concludes with a body of interpretations and evaluations.

III. MAJOR SOURCES FOR THE STUDY

Primary source materials are extensive and may be consulted with relative ease and freedom. In addition, several secondary sources are available which were drawn from primary sources no longer extant.

The Presbyterian Historical Society Library in Philadelphia has a store of valuable records. Among them are an autobiography of Thaddeus Dod (an associate and close friend to McMillan); minutes of Donegal Presbytery, 1774-1777; minutes of New Castle Presbytery, 1759-1834; minutes of Redstone Presbytery, 1781-1814, 1828-1836; minutes of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia, 1758-1788; and the minutes of the Synod of Pittsburgh, 1802-1838.

Valuable primary materials may also be seen at Memorial Library, Washington and Jefferson College, Washington, Pennsylvania. Part One of McMillan's three-part Journal is there. A Journal of Thaddeus Dod is also there. They also have the following school records: minutes of the Academy and Library Company of Canonsburg from January 25, 1796, to the organization of Jefferson College on January 15, 1802; minutes of the Board of Trustees of Washington Academy, 1787-1806; and the minutes of Jefferson College, 1802-1864. In the archives room at Memorial Library a host of small items are stored. They have pictures of McMillan, his home, his log college, the Chartiers and Pigeon Creek church buildings, and the highway monument erected to McMillan near Canonsburg. They have newspaper clippings, manuscripts of lectures and addresses, and evaluations of McMillan made by his contemporaries. They have several transcripts of McMillan's sermons made in 1806 by his son-in-law, and two sermons in tract form.
Mrs. Helen Allen Wragg, the great, great, great, granddaughter of McMillan, has several valuable source materials at her home, 1133 Lancaster Street, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She has Part Two of the Journal, 1776-1791, and Part Three, 1820-1831. She also has manuscript copies of McMillan's expense account, 1821-1833; a memorandum book of accessions into the Chartiers Church, 1815-1830; an appraisal of McMillan's estate; a copy of his will; and a copy of his theology lectures as copied in 1806 by McMillan's son-in-law, Moses Allen.

A letter from McMillan to Albert Gallatin dated May 5, 1796, is in Memorial Library, Washington and Jefferson College. A letter to McMillan from James Watson is also in Memorial Library. McMillan's original manuscript of his theology lectures and James McGready's letter to McMillan describing the Logan County, Kentucky, revival are in the Western Theological Seminary Library at Pittsburgh.

While McMillan was serving as an editor of Western Missionary Magazine, he wrote an account of the Kentucky revival of 1802. The manuscript of that account may be seen at Western Theological Seminary Library. Other primary sources to be found in the Western Theological Seminary Library are the records of the Western Missionary Society, October 5, 1804, to July 24, 1826; records of Ohio Presbytery, 1793-1870; and the original copy of McMillan's theology lectures.
Many primary source materials have also been published. Most of the minutes and records of presbyteries and synods mentioned earlier can be found in book form. McMillan's letter to James Carnahan was published in the *Presbyterian Advocate*, January 29, 1845. Joseph Smith, in his *History of Jefferson College: Including an Account of the Early "Log-Cabin" Schools, and the Canonsbury Academy, etc.*, inserted McMillan's incomplete autobiography in an appendix. Such other works as Karl Bernhard's, *Travels Through North America During the Years 1825 and 1826*, give much first-hand information.

Secondary sources are numerous, but some of them are now hard to locate. Three of them were helpful in locating the primary materials and other secondary materials. They are these: Joseph Smith's *History of Jefferson College* (mentioned above), published in Pittsburgh in 1857; Joseph Smith's *Old Redstone: or Historical Sketches of Western Presbyterianism, its Early Minister, its Perilous Times, and Its First Records*, published in Philadelphia in 1854; and Dwight R. Guthrie's, *John McMillan: The Apostle of Presbyterianism in the West, 1752-1833*, published in Pittsburgh in 1952. The bibliography of Guthrie's biography of McMillan was especially helpful.

John McMillan was a significant person on the Pennsylvania frontier throughout the Revolutionary and early national periods of our nation's history. The questions
which remain to be answered are these: In what ways did he become significant? How did his speaking contribute to his success? How did he use his place of prominence among the people to strengthen his influence as a speaker? What is McMillan's place in the history of American religious speaking?
CHAPTER II

McMILLAN'S BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION

"The critic," according to Thonssen and Baird, "will be in a better position to understand the orator's arguments if he knows the practical experience upon which the thinking rests."\(^1\) Aristotle insisted that what the speaker does during a speech is of primary concern in the matter of ethical suasion and that what people thought of him before he spoke is not in itself directly related to the modes of persuasion. He said: "This trust of men of probity, however, should be created by the speech itself, and not left to depend upon an antecedent impression that the speaker is this or that kind of man."\(^2\) "It is, however, an artificial restriction," Thonssen and Baird observe, "since the attitude of the audience toward the speaker--based upon previous knowledge of the latter's activities and reputation--cannot accurately be separated from the reaction the speaker induces through the medium of the speech.\(^3\)

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\(^3\)Thonssen and Baird, *op. cit.*, p. 385.
Thonssen and Baird's observation seems especially important in relation to John McMillan. In 1820, his listeners were conscious of their kinship to McMillan by blood and by experience. They identified themselves with him as fellow-Scotch-Irishmen, fellow-Presbyterians, fellow-members of the Elect, and fellow-conquerors of the wilderness.

I. PARENTAGE AND EARLY TRAINING

John McMillan's parents, William and Margaret Rea McMillan, were part of the great wave of Scotch-Irish immigrants which came from North Ireland to America at the rate of twelve thousand per year in the 1740's. By 1774, Benjamin Franklin estimated that one-third of Pennsylvania's 350,000 inhabitants were Scotch-Irish. In 1742 the McMillans settled

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4 William was born in 1717. Margaret's birth date is unknown. Both were born and reared in Antrim County, Carmony Parish, Ireland. Their eldest son, Thomas, was born in Ireland in 1740. John was next to the youngest of six children who lived to adulthood. Two died in infancy. See Daniel M. Bennett, Life and Work of Rev. John McMillan, D. D., Pioneer Preacher-Educator-Patriot of Western Pennsylvania (Bridgeport, Pa.: Privately Published, 1935), p. 150.


6 Ibid. The name Scotch-Irish is purely American and a misnomer, for the people are not Irish in any respect. The term refers to people of Scotch ancestry who lived in Ireland before emigrating to America. See Margaret Adair Hunter, Education in Pennsylvania Promoted by the Presbyterian Church, 1726-1837 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1937), pp. 14-15. This is an Ed.D. dissertation.
at Fagg's Manor, Chester County in eastern Pennsylvania. They probably chose that area because others of their former countrymen were settled there. Since the McMillans came during a wave of Scotch-Irish emigration caused by poor crops and famine, and since they bought a farm which bordered the Fagg's Manor Presbyterian Church grounds, it is probable that they were farmers. They settled on land adjacent to the church and school of the preacher-educator Samuel Blair. Blair, a graduate of William Tennent's Log College, was guiding his church through a season of revival which had been running for two years when the McMillans settled there. In contrast to the disruption which many of the migrating families experienced as they were transplanted from Ireland to the New World, the McMillans seem to have made a happy transition.

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7Joseph Smith, History of Jefferson College: Including an Account of the Early "Log-Cabin" Schools, and the Canonsburg Academy (Pittsburgh: Published and Printed by J. T. Shryock, 1857), p. 413. This is a published transcript of McMillan's partial autobiography. A copy of the original is filed at the Pennsylvania Historical Society, Philadelphia.


10Bennett, op. cit., p. 6.

11George Chambers, A Tribute to the Principles, Virtues, Habits, and Public usefulness of the Irish and Scotch Early Settlers in Pennsylvania (Chambersburg, Pa.: Printed by M. Kieffer & Co., 1856), p. 120.
John McMillan was born on November 11, 1752. He later said that long before his birth his parents had entered into a vow and into a life of constant prayer wherein they told God that if He would give them another son, they would "call his name John and devote him to God's service in the ministry of the gospel." In view of this commitment, surely John received home training that was equal to the norm for Presbyterian children of similar status.

Klett, research historian for the Presbyterian Historical Society of Philadelphia, says that education in the New World followed the lines established in Ireland and Scotland. The Scots were steeped in Calvinism. One year of a child's instruction came from Calvin's The Catechism for Children. The Church of Scotland augmented the child's home study by using The Catechisme, or Manner to teach Children the Christian Religion; wherein the Minister demandeth the Question, and the Child maketh Answers: Made by the excellent Doctor and Pastor of Christ's Church, John Calvin.

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13Ibid.


16Ibid.
One of the major parts of Calvin's church discipline is that children shall be trained at home by Christian fathers and mothers so that a generation of Christian fathers and mothers will thereby be developed. In his *Diary*, David McClure described the home training of Scotch-Irish Presbyterian families during the middle of the eighteenth century in Pennsylvania. He wrote:

They are generally well indoctrinated in the principles of the Christian religion. The young people are taught by their parents and school masters, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, and almost every family has the Westminster Confession of Faith, which they carefully study.

That description confirms one historian's conclusion that "Knox's educational ideas were the same as Calvin's and that they became 'part and parcel' of the Presbyterian Church in America." McMillan also studied reading and spelling at home, probably using *The New England Primer* and *Dillworth's Speller* which were popular in the colonies after 1750. He said of himself:

as soon as I had acquired a sufficient degree of English literature, I was sent to a grammar school, kept by the Rev. Mr. John Blair, in Fagg's Manor; where I continued until Mr. Blair was removed to Princeton, to superintend the college there. I was then sent to Pequea to a grammar school, kept by the Rev. Robert Smith.

Samuel Blair, the preacher-teacher at Fagg's Manor when the senior McMillans settled there, died in 1757, and his brother, John, another log-college graduate, took his place. Until age fifteen, McMillan studied at Blair's grammar school and then he transferred to Smith's Academy at Pequea for two years.

Both schools had three departments: first, a grammar or elementary division; second, a preparatory division to prepare students for college; and third, a theology department. McMillan probably did his elementary work at Blair's school and his preparatory work at Smith's school. After graduating at Pequea, he enrolled at the College of New Jersey and, upon graduation returned to Smith's school at

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22 Hunter, op. cit., p. 96. John Blair was elected to a professorship and to the Vice-Presidency of Princeton in 1767. McMillan was then fifteen.

23 Robert Smith received his training from Samuel Blair and therefore patterned his own school after Tennent's Log College. Therefore, all of McMillan's academical training was in the Log College tradition.

Therefore, McMillan's training embraced the full range of the log-college type schools and a full college course.

An extensive search failed to reveal the courses of study pursued at Fagg's Manor in McMillan's day, but a sketch of the subjects studied in a nearby academy at Nottingham, founded by a fellow log college graduate Samuel Finley sheds some light on Blair's probable curriculum. Finley's students studied "Latin, Greek, logic, arithmetic, geography, and part of Ontology, Natural Philosophy, in a more cursory manner, as far as Optice in Martin's order."\(^{26}\)

Frederick Beasley described the nature of work done in the Pequea Academy as follows:

> It was the custom of the school to require the pupils not merely to dip into the Latin and Greek classics, or pass in rapid translation from one to the other, by which means a very superficial knowledge of any is obtained, but when once they had commenced an author, to read carefully and attentively the entire work. . . . Latin was the habitual language of the school. . . . When any class had advanced in its course beyond the Metamorphases of Ovid and Bucolics of Virgil, the members of it were permitted to enter into voluntary competition for pre-eminence.\(^{27}\)


\(^{27}\)Beam, op. cit., pp. 145-61. Beasley's description was written as an introduction to a book of sermons published by one of Robert Smith's sons, Samuel Stanhope Smith. Stanhope and Beasley were both graduates of the Pequea Academy.
It has been stated that theology was taught in both of the academies. Helen Coleman says that "Hebrew was also offered." The only language allowed to be spoken in the schools was Latin, and whoever uttered a word in his mother tongue was marked as a delinquent. Sprague says the Pequea Academy, particularly, "afforded an excellent classical education and some of the most accomplished teachers from abroad were employed." The foregoing references to McMillan's probable courses of study are strengthened by the general conclusion expressed by one historian in reference to those Latin schools. He wrote:

With all the intellectual energies devoted to so formal a study as Latin, ... with the keenest analysis of all of the machinery of speech, rhetoric was a necessary development and the great Roman orator and stylist was the original exemplar. It was to Cicero then to Livy and to other Latin authors, then past these to Aristotle, that the schoolmasters pointed their students.


31 Ibid.

II. COLLEGE TRAINING

In the spring of 1770, at age seventeen John McMillan enrolled at the College of New Jersey. To gain admission, he was required to translate Virgil and Cicero into English, write "true and grammatical Latin," translate any of the four New Testament gospel accounts from Greek into English or Latin, and solve basic arithmetic problems. In 1769, the trustees had stated that they assumed a student could read English with propriety, spell, and write without grammatical errors. Easily meeting those entrance requirements, McMillan was sufficiently conversant with the first-year curriculum that he was admitted at the sophomore level. The freshman year which McMillan bypassed was devoted to "Latin and Greek languages, particularly in reading Horace, Cicero's Orations, and Xenophon's Cyropoedic." John Maclean's history of Princeton provides no

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33 The College of New Jersey was renamed Princeton in 1896. See Coleman, op. cit., p. 2. Except in quoted material, it shall be called Princeton in this study.


35 Ibid.


37 John Maclean, History of the College of New Jersey, from the Origin in the 1746 to the Commencement of 1854 (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott and Co., 1877), I, 266.
information about the curriculum during the years of McMillan's residence. Maclean said the available records did not contain "any detailed reports of the course of instruction during those years;"38 that is, the early part of the presidency of John Witherspoon. Maclean does discuss the curriculum of Witherspoon's predecessor. To use it as a basis for studying McMillan's college training seems defendable because Witherspoon is reported to have made "additions . . . to the previous curriculum of the college."39

In addition to the freshman course, Maclean describes the curriculum of the other three classes in this manner:

In the Sophomore year they still prosecute the study of the languages, particularly Homer, Longinus, etc., and enter upon the sciences, geography, rhetoric, logic and the mathematics. They continue their mathematical studies throughout their Junior year, and also pass through a course of natural and moral philosophy, metaphysics, chronology, etc.; and the greater number especially such as are educating for the Church, are initiated into the Hebrew. . . . The Senior year is entirely employed in reviews and composition. They now revise the most improving parts of Latin and Greek classics, part of the Hebrew Bible, and all the arts and sciences. The weekly course of disputation is continued, which was also carried on through the preceding year. They discuss two or three of these in a week; some in the syllogistic and others in the forensic manner, alternately; the

38Ibid., I, 316.

39Ibid., I, 404. Maclean here quotes from William C. Rives, "A statesman, scholar, and biographer of James Madison." Madison, a classmate of McMillan, graduated in 1771 and became the fourth President of the United States. Rives does not mention any close friendship between Madison and McMillan, though they were well acquainted.
forensic being always in the English tongue. A series of questions is also proposed on the principal subjects of natural and revealed religion.\textsuperscript{40}

Continuing at great length, Maclean tells of the exercises and programs of the students. They delivered public addresses frequently and original orations once per month. The content and structure of the speeches were critically examined before delivery in order to discipline the students in composition. When delivered before general audiences, the speeches were evaluated with respect to voice, diction, gestures, and general platform behavior. On a rotation basis, students were also required to give various oral interpretative readings and declamations from Cicero, Demosthenes, Livy, Shakespeare, Milton, and Addison in order to learn to feel and communicate emotions.\textsuperscript{41}

In a letter to prospective students in the West Indies, Witherspoon gave an additional note on the four-year course of study in 1772, the year of McMillan's graduation. In his letter he said: "The President gives lectures to the juniors and seniors, which, consequently, every student hears twice over in his course--first upon chronology and history, and afterwards upon composition and criticism. ..."\textsuperscript{42} That sentence, as well as the larger body of Witherspoon's and

\footnotesize{
\begin{enumerate}
  \item Ibid., I, 266-67.
  \item Ibid., I, 267-68.
  \item Ibid., p. 362.
\end{enumerate}
}
Maclean's discussion of the curriculum, suggests that there were few elective courses at Princeton during that period. Other than the voluntary reading and speaking competition at commencement, and the permission for non-preaching students to omit Hebrew courses, every student studied the complete curriculum. In any event, McMillan probably had opportunities to participate in closely supervised classroom speaking, speech contests, oral readings, debates, oral examinations, and speeches before large assemblies.

Princeton was established for the announced purpose of "advancing the Redeemer's kingdom by promoting the advancement of piety and learning in happy union, ... and by training ministers to preach a sound gospel." Those institutional aims directed the professors to teach the classical languages and to emphasize public speaking and preaching. In addition, the curriculum gave substantial attention to the classical speech models and speech writers, to rhetoric, oratory, logic, and composition. Maclean concludes about the teaching staff:

... we are assured from the success attending their teachings, and from the eminence attained

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43Written exams, in addition to orals, were introduced at Princeton in 1830, but were not adopted until 1845. Therefore, no written examinations were given during McMillan's residence. Orals were conducted by a panel of learned persons—some were professors, some alumni, and some were alumni of other schools. See Maclean, op. cit., II, 285, 314.

44Maclean, op. cit., I, 6, 25, 26.
by many of their pupils, both in the Church and in the State, that the instruction was most ably and efficiently conducted.\footnote{Ibid., I, 316.}

In support of Maclean's judgment, a study of the 469 men who graduated during Witherspoon's administration (1769-1794) reveals that 114 became ministers; 13, college presidents; 6, college professors; 6, members of the Continental Congress; 20, U. S. Senators; 23, members of the House of Representatives; 1, President of the United States; 1, Vice-President; 13, governors of states; 3, judges of the U. S. Supreme Court; 13, officers in the U. S. Army; and 30 others distinguished themselves as district judges, lawyers, medical doctors, men of letters, or as other active useful citizens.\footnote{Ibid., I, 357-62.} This list of outstanding graduates suggests that besides developing ministers the College of New Jersey produced learned men in many other areas. Therefore, when McMillan graduated in the fall of 1772, he had been exposed to a rigorous program of college training.

III. THEOLOGY TRAINING

Although his parents had given him an education geared to ministerial preparation, and though he knew of his parents' vow to devote him to God's service, McMillan had not
definitely decided to preach when he finished college.\(^7\) He had first received religious impressions during a season of revival at Pequea Academy, but he was not sufficiently impressed to give his life to God. "In this situation I continued," he says, "until I went to college, in the spring of 1770."\(^8\) In college, another period of religious revival took place and McMillan became deeply involved. After a season of fasting, meditation, and prayer which he affirmed was his moment of conversion, he concluded, "and this was followed by a delight in contemplating the divine glory in all his [God's] works, and in meditating on the divine perfections."\(^9\) A second period of religious awakening developed at Princeton and lasted throughout the winter and spring of McMillan's senior year.\(^50\)

Though in a state of indecision about his future plans, McMillan returned to Robert Smith's school in Pequea. If he were going to preach, he must further prepare for ordination. The Synod of New York had ruled in 1761 that every student receiving his first degree in Arts should spend at least one


\(^8\) Ibid., p. 2.


\(^50\) Maclean, op. cit., I, 389.
year under the supervision of some minister who was trained in theology. McMillan may have wanted help from the teacher he admired and respected in removing his indecision. If he did decide to preach, he would then study theology under Smith.

With the help of Smith, McMillan discussed difficult points of theology, studied the Bible, prepared sermons and lectures, and preached under the teacher's observation. During that apprenticeship, McMillan probably assisted or observed as Smith conducted weddings, funerals, and periods of counseling. For reasons unknown, McMillan studied with Smith for two years instead of the one year required by the synod. Those two years of study were pursued under the supervision of the Presbytery of New Castle, and by that body McMillan was licensed to preach on October 26, 1774. On the Sunday following his licensure, he preached in his home congregation at Fagg's Manor.

With his training completed and, probably, with some

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51 Records of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Embracing the minutes of the Presbytery of Philadelphia, 1706-1716; Minutes of the Synod of Philadelphia, 1717-1758; Minutes of the Synod of New York, 1745-1758; (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1841), p. 119.

52 Ibid.

53 McMillan's letter to Carnahan, p. 3.

54 Smith, Old Redstone, p. 179.
books and sets of class notes—especially Smith's lectures on theology and Witherspoon's lectures on theology, composition, criticism, eloquence, and moral philosophy—McMillan was ready to go wherever he might decide to preach and to teach others how to preach.

A Conspectus of the Life of John McMillan

Event: Date: Age:

Born at Pagg's Manor, Pennsylvania 1752
Attended Blair's Academy: from school-age until 1767 15
His mother died 1768 16
Attended Smith's Academy from 1767 until spring of 1770 17
Entered College of New Jersey in spring 1770 17
Graduated from College of N. J. Sept., 1772 19
Entered Robert Smith's School of Theology 1772 20
Licensed to Preach by New Castle Presbytery Oct. 26, 1774 21
Went on Preaching Tour of Va. & Western Pa. 1775 22
Preached 1st sermon at Chartiers & Pigeon Creek Aug., 1775 22
Ordained to preach at those two Churches June, 1776 23
Married Catherine Brown Aug., 1776 23
Commuted to both Churches on Frontier until Nov., 1778 26
Started a "School" in his home 1780 28
Helped organize Redstone Presbytery Sept., 1781 28
Helped organize Washington Academy Sept., 1787 34
Helped organize Canonsburg Academy Sept., 1791 38
His father died July, 1792 39
Resigned as minister at Pigeon Creek 1793 40
Helped charter Jefferson College Jan., 1802 49
President of Board of Trustees of Jeff. Col. 1802 49
Appointed Prof. of Divinity at Jeff. Col. 1802 49
M.A. degree conferred on him by Jeff. Col. 1805 52
Became Vice-Pres. of Jeff. Col. April, 1805 52
D.D. degree conferred on him by Synod of Va. 1807 54
His wife died Nov., 1818 66
Resigned as minister of Chartiers April, 1830 77
Surveyed as supply preacher until Nov., 1833 80
John McMillan died Nov. 16, 1833 815

The events, dates, and age listings have been gathered from most of the sources referred to earlier in this work.
CHAPTER III

McMILLAN'S LIFE AS A MINISTER

I. BECOMING SETTLED IN HIS PLACE OF SERVICE

After the Presbytery of New Castle licensed John McMillan to preach on October 26, 1774, it asked him to spend that winter and spring visiting the churches which were without preachers within the jurisdiction of New Castle and Donnegal Presbyteries. The following summer McMillan continued his visitation of similar churches in the widely scattered "settlements of the wild back-country of Virginia, between the North and South Mountains."¹

In an average day he traveled from thirty to thirty-five miles, stopping when he found a cabin where he could spend the night. He held religious services in the sparsely settled hamlets, baptized converts, catechized those who were Presbyterians, and urged them to organize congregations and to build meeting houses.² As he arrived in each settlement, he sent word to the next one that he "intended to

¹John McMillan's manuscript letter to James Carnahan, as published in The Presbyterian Advocate, January 29, 1845, p. 1.

²John McMillan, Journal, Part I. This part may be found at Washington and Jefferson College. See entry for fourth Sunday of July.
preach there on the next sabbath at a place where it was supposed to be most convenient for the inhabitants.\textsuperscript{3}

During this tour of the back country, McMillan found a number of his relatives settled among the numerous other Scotch-Irish families which were rapidly filling up the West.\textsuperscript{4} He continued his westerly direction until he came to Shirtee Creek (later called Chartiers) and Pigeon Creek, near Fort Pitt, and then he headed eastward towards home. In the beginning of 1776, McMillan made a second tour into Washington County and spent three months preaching in the area of Chartiers and Pigeon Creek. Later that year he accepted a joint-pastoral call from those two churches.

After his call and ordination, McMillan remained in eastern Pennsylvania and preached at Fagg's Manor, Pequea, and Brandywine throughout the summer. He partially explained his delay by saying:

\begin{quote}
Having now determined to remove to the western country and take charge of the congregations of Chartiers and Pigeon Creek, I thought it my duty to take with me a female companion. Accordingly, on the sixth of August, 1776, I was married to Catherine Brown, a young woman with whom I had long been acquainted, and who, I believed, was a dear child of God.\textsuperscript{5}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{3}Ibid.


\textsuperscript{5}McMillan's uncompleted manuscript autobiography. The original is at the Presbyterian Historical Society,
In a further comment, McMillan said, "It being the time of the Revolutionary War, and the Indians being very troublesome on the frontiers, I was prevented from removing my family to my congregation until November, 1778."

On schedule, John, Catherine, and Jean McMillan moved over the mountains to Chartiers in southwestern Pennsylvania. For a brief time they lived with members of the congregation, while McMillan helped finish their own cabin. On December 16, they moved into their new house which "had neither bedstead, nor tables, nor stool, nor chair, nor bucket."

The next day neighbors helped McMillan build the necessary furniture. McMillan described their early days in their new home as follows:

Sometimes indeed we had no bread for weeks together, but we had plenty of pumpkins and potatoes, and all the necessaries of life; as for luxuries, we were not much concerned about them. We enjoyed health, the gospel, and its ordinances,

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6 McMillan's letter to Carnahan.

7 McMillan's Journal. To account for the name Jean McMillan, an entry in his Journal reads, "On Saturday the 31st of May at half past seven o'clock Post Meridian Jean McMillan was born, 1777."

8 Letter to Carnahan. "All these things," McMillan wrote, "we had to leave behind us, as there was no wagon road at that time over the mountains; we could bring nothing with us but what was carried on packhorses."
and pious friends. We were in the place where we believed God would have us to be, and we did not doubt but that he would provide for us every thing necessary; and (glory to his name!) we were not disappointed.9

In addition to ministering to his two new congregations, during the winter McMillan built a barn, spring house, smoke house, and a shed and excavated a cellar under the kitchen. In the spring he planted his 31½ acres with a variety of grain. The first winter had been difficult because McMillan had no food stored up, and his poor congregations could only pay him an annual wage of one hundred pounds.10 Part of his salary was paid in tallow, paper, corn, and wheat.11 However, by industry and thrift the McMillans soon began to feel relief from this hard life. In less than twenty years they had built a new two-story, three-bedroom log house and had increased their land holdings to nearly one thousand acres.12

9McMillan's Letter to Carnahan.

10The English monetary system was used throughout this era. An English pound was worth from $2.60 to $2.80 in American currency.


II. McMillan's Ministry: Its Time and Place

McMillan was the first Presbyterian minister to accept a call west of the Allegheny Mountains, though another minister, James Power, moved his family to the frontier first. McMillan chose to settle in Washington County because of the large concentration of Scotch-Irish in that area and because his relatives were also settled there.

McMillan worked hard with his hands cutting timber and fire-wood, using the hoe, the mattock, and the plow. However, he did not permit his manual labor to prevent his preparation of sermons or other ministerial responsibilities. To appreciate better the perilous times in which the young minister began his ministry, one needs to recall that until 1794 the West continued to be harassed by the Iroquois, Delaware, and Shawnee Indians.


every rod of ground, had to be cleared with the ax and held with the rifle."17

In addition to performing the duties laid upon him by his two congregations, McMillan went regularly to help organize churches and preach in communities which did not have regular ministers. He began almost immediately to see the good results of his work. It is doubtful that McMillan ever formulated a broad set of plans for his frontier ministry. He probably accepted challenges and opportunities as they presented themselves until he had become quite diversified in his activities. Having begun his life's work as a preacher and farmer, he soon turned his mind to other areas of community service also.18

His Work in Education

Within two years after his arrival on the frontier, McMillan saw that the young men were growing up without the necessary training to make them productive members of society. Consequently, he began selecting some "pious young men" and started a school in his home in 1780, which he called an


"English School." Soon McMillan built a log-cabin near his home, about two miles east of Canonsburg, where he trained young men for the ministry, in law, politics, business, and teaching. The curriculum was soon expanded to include the classics, science, and theology.

In addition to providing the building, and teaching without tuition, McMillan boarded most of his students without compensation. Some students, like James Ross, studied under McMillan, boarded with him, and "taught the general branches of English education" to offset their own board and instruction. Others, like James M'Gready, worked on the McMillan farm to help defray their expenses.

"From the founding of Tennent's Log-College in 1726 until the end of the century," according to Sweet, "Presbyterian ministers established an even hundred schools," and


McMillan conducted his log college until two academies which he helped to establish were in operation. He continued to lead in educational affairs until he saw two fully accredited colleges and a medical school as the fruits of his labors.

Because of his leadership in education, his contemporaries called McMillan the "Father of education in Western Pennsylvania." "Presbyterians have long been the earnest advocates and patrons of general learning," Craighead testifies, "so wherever Presbyterianism has been planted, it has invariably shown a similar love for learning." McMillan,


25 Washington Academy, Washington, Pa., began in 1787 and Canonsburg Academy in Canonsburg started in 1791.

26 Cortlandt W. Elkins, "A Speech by the Honorable Edward Martin, Governor of Pennsylvania," The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine, XXVIII (September-December, 1915), 155. On the 170th anniversary of Chartiers Church, Gov. Martin told how McMillan was the moving force behind Jefferson and Washington Colleges and Jefferson Medical School in Philadelphia. Those were the only colleges in Washington County prior to McMillan's death in 1833. Jefferson College was chartered in 1802 and Washington College in 1806.

27 Daniel W. Kauffman, Early History of Western Pennsylvania, and of Western Expeditions and Campaigns, from MDCCLIV to MDCCCXXXIII (Pittsburgh: Published by the author, 1846), p. 270.

a well-trained leader for the frontier, was himself the product of that traditional love of learning, and he was fortunate to serve in a community notably congenial to him and his training. One historian says of McMillan:

He was a man who knew how to convert such a population into a self-supporting community in church matters, by raising up laborers at home. Largely to him and his pupils is it due that this became the most Presbyterian region of the whole country, and the most conservative in its influence on the whole church at large.29

His Work in Theology

When he opened his log school in 1780, McMillan had as his primary motive the training of young men for the ministry. His own theology teacher had said to McMillan as he was preparing to take up his ministerial duties, "Though some men of piety and talents may go to a new country at first, yet if they are not careful to raise up others, the country will not be well supplied."30 McMillan's expressed compliance with his professor's advice reads: "Accordingly, I collected a few who gave evidence of piety, and taught them the Latin and Greek languages."31

McKinney says of McMillan's school:

His Log College was, in fact, an embryo theological seminary from which numerous young preachers

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29Thompson, op. cit., p. 59.

30McMillan's letter to Carnahan, p. 5.

went forth to the Christian ministry. It is estimated by Dr. Matthew Brown, the first president of Washington College, that no less than a hundred ministers received their theological training under the guidance of Dr. McMillan. His prestige as a teacher of theology was recognized by Canonsburg College. When that institution developed from an academy into a college in 1802, he was appointed its "professor of divinity."

His preeminence as a teacher of candidates for the ministry received wider recognition in the action of the Synod of Pittsburgh in 1821.32

Looking toward the establishment of a fully developed seminary in the western part of Pennsylvania, the Synod launched upon an intermediate plan. Synod records reveal the following action:

Whereas, it appears to this Synod that a number of promising young men, who are setting their faces toward the gospel ministry, are not in circumstances to attend the Theological Seminary at Princeton; therefore, Resolved, that this Synod take measures for procuring a library for the benefit of such, to be under the control and direction of this Synod. That it be recommended to every member to solicit books or moneys for this purpose, and that this library be located at present in the edifice of Jefferson College, at Canonsburg, and placed under the care of Rev. John McMillan, D.D., Professor of Theology in that Seminary.33

The action by the Synod greatly enlarged the number of students who came to McMillan, but, more important, it


33Minutes of the Synod of Pittsburgh, October, 1821, p. 178. The minutes for the years 1802-1832 are at the Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.
officially recognized his work and thereby increased his influence and ethos as a preacher. S. J. M. Eaton, historian of the neighboring Presbytery of Erie, alluded to McMillan's work as a theologian in this way: "Of the first twenty-eight ministers on the roll, ... twenty-two pursued their theological studies in the West and no less than eighteen at Dr. McMillan's log cabin." Eaton further explains that McMillan's students taught other men theology and shared the McMillan lectures with them; "so that the influence of Dr. McMillan's teaching did not stop with his immediate pupils, but extended to those who never saw his face or heard his voice." "One thing is certain," Allen Campbell says, "he was the educator of the ministry of that day."

While performing his duties as a minister and as an educator, McMillan also made significant contributions to the various judicatories of the Presbyterian Church. He encouraged three other ministers to join him in 1781 in forming Redstone Presbytery, the first presbytery west of the

34 S. J. M. Eaton, History of the Presbytery of Erie; Embracing in its Ancient Boundaries the Whole of Northwestern Pennsylvania and Northeastern Ohio; with Biographical Sketches of all its Ministers; and Historical Sketches of its Churches (New York: Published by Hurd and Houghton, 1868), pp. 7-8.

35 Ibid., p. 171.

36 Allen Ditchfield Campbell, "The Founding and Early History of Western Seminary," The Bulletin of the Western Theological Seminary (Pittsburgh), XX (October, 1927), 129.
Allegheny Mountains. McMillan served as the first moderator of that presbytery. He also helped organize the Presbytery of Ohio in 1793. By 1802 McMillan had led his denomination's organizational growth until it had in that year formed the Synod of Pittsburgh, of which McMillan was the first moderator. By 1820 that synod consisted of eight presbyteries, ninety-four ministers, and two hundred sixteen churches.

His Work in Revival Preaching

His ministerial duties with the Chartiers and Pigeon Creek Churches, his educational and theological work, and his frequent trips to attend presbytery and synod meetings did not prevent McMillan from doing supply preaching and evangelistic preaching. After describing the educational work of McMillan, Charles Thompson said, "But he [McMillan] was more than an educator, he was a preacher of such pungency and power that revivals were of frequent occurrence and churches were organized and strengthened on every hand."
McMillan received training for the ministry from revivalistic preacher—teachers of the Log College, new side tradition whose emphasis on conversion is traceable in the middle colony revivals of Theodorus J. Frelinghuysen in 1726. McMillan definitely accepted the New Side premise that "a conversion experience was pre-requisite to entrance into the ministry." His own religious experiences at Pequea and at Princeton, and his observation of the revivals which recurred during his student days at those two schools prepared him to be a revivalistic preacher.

McMillan had his greatest revival season in 1802 which probably had some connection with the "Great Revival in the West, 1797-1805." The Great Revival began in southwestern Kentucky and spread northeastward into the Upper Ohio Valley. For the first time McMillan saw what had been termed "bodily exercises" during this revival period. He

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40 Sweet, Religion in Colonial America, pp. 274-75.


42 For a complete picture of McMillan's revivals, see McMillan's partial autobiography, his letter to James Carnahan, and the manuscripts of reports given to the Western Missionary Magazine, of which McMillan was an editor. These mms. are at Western Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh.

43 McMillan's letter to Carnahan.

reported his observations in the following manner:

It was no unusual thing, to see a person so entirely deprived of bodily strength, that they would fall from their seats, or off their feet, and be as unable to help themselves as a newborn child. I have seen some lie in this condition for hours, who yet said that they could hear everything that was spoken, and felt their minds more composed and more capable of attending to divine things that when their bodies were not thus affected.\(^45\)

McMillan knew that some critics were calling the revivals "an evil work" and "a work of delusion,"\(^46\) while others described them "as fanatical and of Satanic origin."\(^47\)

McMillan and the elders of the church examined those who were visibly affected in order to discourage the excesses reported in the Kentucky revivals.\(^48\)

McMillan retained the strength and ability to arouse his hearers to revival fervor until near the end of his life. In his own words he related the events of a revival in the 1820's in this manner:

After the close of the revival which began in 1802, though upon every sacramental occasion some

\(^{45}\)McMillan's letter to Carnahan.


\(^{48}\)James M'Gready's letter (Nov. 18, 1801) to McMillan. This letter has been copied and the typescript is at Western Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh.
joined the church, yet nothing remarkable took place until the fall of 1823, when God again visited this dry and parched congregation with a shower of divine influences. About sixty joined the church as the fruits of this revival; a number of whom were students in the college.49

As a community-minded minister, McMillan also found it necessary to speak out on social and civic topics. For example, the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794 called McMillan and all of the neighboring ministers into action. One author says:

McMillan, recognizing in the rebellion a threat to the orderly life the Church stood for on the frontier, took the side of law and used the pulpit and every persuasive power of his leadership in the community in the defense of that side.50

In another place, a historian refers to McMillan's reaction to various political matters in general:

Upon occasions he closed his regular religious services and before his congregation could disperse plunged immediately into a discussion of politics.51

III. SUMMARY

Because of the preaching and teaching of McMillan and his fellow school founders, Sweet says that frontier religion in the 1820's was much more solidly based.52

49McMillan's autobiography.


long list of catechisms, Bibles, Testaments, hymn books, disciplines, and other religious books, which were sold by the Methodist circuit riders to the people on their circuits are evidence of the religious instruction afforded," Sweet continues. "The fact that almost all the early Presbyterian preachers in the West were also school teachers is evidence that theirs was a teaching as well as a preaching ministry."53

After 1781, McMillan was constantly engaged in a wide variety of speaking situations. He taught his classes in the log school and later, on a much larger scale, in the Canonsburg Academy and Jefferson College. He was instrumental in organizing and administering the Presbytery of Redstone, the Presbytery of Ohio, the Synod of Pittsburgh, Washington Academy, Jefferson Medical College, and was often a delegate to the General Assembly of the Church. As a minister, McMillan preached about six thousand sermons during his career.54 Some four hundred of them are extant today. In the course of his preaching at Chartiers and Pigeon Creek, and in the larger area where he served concurrently as a supply minister, he enjoyed several seasons of revival which brought hundreds into the church and strengthened those who were already members.55 Joseph Smith says that McMillan

53Ibid.

54A note by an unknown author is penned at the end of Part Three of McMillan's Journal which makes this observation.

55Guthrie, op. cit., pp. 36-70.
"passed the ordinary boundaries of old age," "was exempt from its infirmities," and that "his mental and physical faculties were but little impaired."  

It seems that historians concur in giving McMillan a prominent place in religious leadership on the frontier. For example, an early historian says, "It is probable no one of the early missionaries exerted an influence so commanding and wide-spread, or did so much foundation-building as this humble and godly minister."  

A late historian says, "McMillan remained the outstanding Presbyterian leader in western Pennsylvania throughout his long life." "His personal influence was great, his energies tremendous," Guthrie concludes, "and his sincerity was deep and genuine."  

56Smith, Old Redstone, pp. 210-11.  
59Guthrie, op. cit., p. 158.
CHAPTER IV

AUDIENCE AND SETTING

Southwestern Pennsylvania was the first area west of the Alleghenies to which large numbers went for settlement, and so it obtained the designation of "the West" or "the Western Country."\(^1\) Formally opened for settlement in 1768, following purchase of the area from the Indians, in 1770-1771, many Scotch-Irish from the eastern counties of Pennsylvania, from Virginia, and newly-arrived from North Ireland settled in Washington County.\(^2\) "From this time forward Western Pennsylvania was, for a long time at least, characteristically Scotch-Irish."\(^3\) Washington County was from the first dominated by these people.\(^4\)

The reasons for the Scotch-Irish emigrations to America

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were "economic and religious—exorbitant land rents, 'hard times,' the Act of Parliament of 1699 which prohibited the exportation of wool from Ulster, and enforced payment of tithes to support the Anglican Church, which was particularly repugnant to disciples of John Knox." Generally speaking, the Scotch-Irish were a deeply religious, earnest, honest people, for whom life was a serious business. Religious and civil strife and their struggle for a livelihood against adverse natural and political conditions in Ireland and Scotland had impelled this aggressive and hardy race of people to migrate to the American colonies.

Scotch-Irish immigrants of the 1770's found the land in the three original Pennsylvania counties—Philadelphia, Bucks, and Chester—fully occupied, consequently they passed on to the frontier which they found more to their liking anyway, because the shale soil in the foothills of the western mountains more closely resembled that to which they had been accustomed in the homeland. Hardy, courageous, self-reliant, they were qualified to conquer the wilderness.

5Fletcher, op. cit., p. 51.


8Fletcher, op. cit., pp. 52-53.
Whether using an ax to clear their land or a rifle to defend it, or whether cutting a "big road" to connect remote points, the Scotch-Irish "applied their heads and hearts to nation building."9

However, in the transplant to American soil, the Scotch-Irish underwent some radical changes. The disastrous effects of migration upon culture in general and upon religion in particular may readily be ascertained by a study of the history of migrating peoples. "Transplanted to a new field," says Sweet, "the emigrant race loses, of necessity, a considerable portion of that vital force which is the organic and conserving power of society."10

Their prior experiences in civil strife, economic discontent, religious grievances, and social abuses which sent the Scotch-Irish from Ireland to America "burning with hostility towards England," made the destructive effects of migration the more damaging."11 L. J. Trinterud adds the following perspective to this developing picture:

When all the old traditions, mores, conventions, and customs of the homeland which made for a formal adherence to religion and morality were sloughed off at the frontier, indifference to the

9Ibid., p. 54.


Church and even to common morals, became evident everywhere.12

The unceasing toil and the distressing hardships which necessarily go hand-in-hand with conquering a new land react upon the pioneers and tend to turn them into an uncultured and partially wild society.13

At the time the Scotch-Irish migrated to Western Pennsylvania, according to Trinterud, "they settled on the newest frontier with little vital and practical godliness. Those coming from Ireland and those from New England alike had lost their keen sense of piety and their earlier zeal and spirit."14 "Whatever man or family removes to any new country," Horace Bushnell affirms, "makes a large remove toward barbarism."15 Or, as Sweet affirms, "It is easy to make a savage of a civilized man, but impossible to make a civilized man of a savage in one generation."16 Elsewhere, Sweet has concluded:


14Trinterud, op. cit., p. 36.

15Horace Bushnell, Barbarism, the First Danger: A Discourse for Home Missions (New York: American Tract Society, 1847), p. 7. This pamphlet is a sermon which describes religion's battle for the frontier.

16Sweet, Religion in the Development of American Culture, p. 129.
For at least fifty years following independence a vast struggle was going on from the Alleghenies to the Mississippi River between civilization and Christian morality on the one hand and barbarism on the other, and upon the outcome of that struggle hung the fate of the new nation.17

These people were "unreligious, rather than irreligious.18 They needed stimulation and motivation.

I. A STUDY OF McMILLAN'S AUDIENCE

Prior to 1774, an occasional itinerant preacher or missionary gave the settlers of Washington County instruction, encouragement, or religious guidance.19 In the summer of 1774, John Power did missionary work for three months over a three-county area, preaching in the Shirtee Creek and Pigeon Creek communities.20 Those three counties—Greene, Washington, and Allegheny—were the area which Klett describes as "the most characteristically Scotch-Irish in Pennsylvania."21


In 1775, and again in 1776, John McMillan did extensive missionary work in the tri-county area and, as a result of his work, congregations were established in the Shirtee Creek and Pigeon Creek communities. By the time McMillan reached his home presbytery east of the mountains, the two newly-formed churches had sent a call for him to move to Washington County and be their settled minister.  

When McMillan finally moved his family to Western Pennsylvania in November, 1778, there were no church buildings, no schools, no courts of law, no presbyteries or synods, and no established churches except the two which McMillan was to serve. McMillan built his house two miles east of a crossroad which was to become the site of the present town Canonsburg. The village of Pittsburgh, eighteen miles to the north, had one hundred log houses, and

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22*McMillan's Journal, Part II. Holographs of Parts II and III of the Journal are in the possession of Mrs. Helen Allen Wragg, 1133 Lancaster St., Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.


24Margaret A. Hunter, Education in Pennsylvania Promoted by the Presbyterian Church, 1726-1837 (Philadelphia: Temple University, 1937), p. 42.


26McMillan led the way in establishing the first church, presbytery, and synod west of the Allegheny Mountains. See Trinterud, op. cit., p. 268.

27Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier, p. 23.
"Catfish" (later to become Washington), fourteen miles to the south, had only a dozen houses. Only a few people lived within a day's ride of McMillan's home.

At the time McMillan began his ministry, the total population of the thirteen colonies was about two and one-half million, and more than one-half million of them were Negroes. Only five cities had developed: Boston, Philadelphia, New York, Newport, and Charleston. Less than 10 percent of the total population was urban. The combined population of those five cities was 110,000 in 1774.

There were only forty-two newspapers in all of the colonies (fifteen in New England, thirteen in the Middle Colonies, and fourteen in the Southern Colonies), with an average circulation of three hundred. As exceptions, the Boston Gazette boasted two thousand subscribers, and the New York Gazette, three thousand six hundred. The first newspaper ever published in the West was the Pittsburgh Gazette, which began July 29, 1786. Besides newspapers and imported

28Smith, Old Redstone, p. 216.


32Smith, Old Redstone, p. 162.
books, approximately fourteen thousand books, pamphlets, and broadsides had been published since printing was begun in the colonies in 1700.33

The sparsity of the population and the scarcity of publications made speaking occasions more important. There were no post offices, and no regular mail crossed the mountains for several years after the Redstone Presbytery was organized in 1781. The first regular mail between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh started in 1788. The Western Missionary Magazine, begun in 1802, did not survive its third year.34 News traveled slowly, people assembled infrequently, and therefore hungered for information and entertainment.

The dearth of news and infrequency of assembly left the people almost without social control. As a consequence, some became notorious for rowdyism, gambling, swearing, drinking, and fighting.35 Many were harsh, irascible, intolerant, and restless. They were revengeful and held their resentments. Against those faults must be set, as credits, their quick hospitality, courage, self-reliance, aggressiveness, hardiness, and their capacity for warm and lasting friendships.36


34Smith, Old Redstone, p. 162.

35Sweet, The American Churches, p. 36.

Other influences were working to corrupt the morals of the people and hinder them in their response to the spiritual leadership which McMillan offered them. The eight years of the War for Independence had served to undermine and erode religion and morals. Sweet quotes Timothy Dwight as having said in 1801, "The Revolutionary War unhinged the principles, the morality, and the religion of this country more than could have been done by a peace of forty years."37 Deism was popular with parts of the younger generation and prevented them from taking the Bible and religion seriously.38 Influences radiating from the French Revolution and the widespread political, social, and intellectual upheavals which accompanied it made an insidious attack upon religion and morals throughout the United States.39

Two other evils retarded the growth of the church. Whiskey was freely used as a beverage and as a commodity in the bartering system.40 Like meat and bread, whiskey was considered a necessity and was commonly found on subscription papers for ministers' salaries. The most frequent cause for


39Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier, p. 54.

discipline of ministers and church members was the excessive use of whiskey. What McMillan called "materialism" was another vexing problem. Unlike McMillan, who did not allow the building of his house, the tilling of his fields, or any other physical activity to interfere with his religious duties, many professing Christians were primarily concerned with material things to the neglect of spiritual things. "Homes must be built, farms must be carved out of the forests . . . fences, barns, roads and bridges must be constructed, while the things of the mind and of the spirit must wait."

Confronted by those attitudes and corrupting influences, McMillan was severely tested. Whatever recognition and influence he desired among the people, McMillan had to pursue his goals without the aid of an established church or a ministerial alliance. "Whatever he was to accomplish . . . depended in large measure upon his own influence and ability." The situation demanded a minister endowed with deep piety, great personal zeal and initiative, and great physical stamina.

By 1781, McMillan was joined by three other ministers--James Power, Thaddeus Dodd (sometimes spelled Dod), and

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42Ibid., p. 56.
43Trinterud, op. cit., p. 37.
Joseph Smith. Each minister served two churches eight to twelve miles apart and supplied in churches which had no preachers. Many of the settlers became dissatisfied as the population grew; consequently, they sold out and moved farther west or south. Those withdrawals and the constant tide of incoming Scotch-Irish, which was to continue until 1840 preserved the spirit, temper, and nature of the early frontier until the end of McMillan's ministry.

The Scotch-Irish aversion to change from the ways and attitudes of their ancestors seemed as stedfast in the New World as it had been during their sojourn in North Ireland. John Dalzell describes their unbending ways in this manner:

Let it be noted that upon the part of the Scotchman who came to Ulster, there was no assimilation with the native Irishman; no connection by marriage and inter-marriage; no conformity to local religion or custom; no sympathy with local tradition, history, or sentiment; nothing in fact to identify him with Ireland but the accident of place. Scotland had moved over and taken possession of Ulster, and Ulster had become, as far as nature would permit, Scotland.

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45 Fletcher, op. cit., pp. 51-54.


47 Fletcher, op. cit., p. 52.

One historian says of the Scotch people's stay in Ireland, "Their blood never intermingled except on the battlefield."49 Indeed, until the Scotch-Irish became thoroughly imbued with the spirit and pride of being Americans over a period of years, they were as clannish and determined to maintain their Old World heritage and ways as the Jewish people were during their stay in Egypt.50

It is the consensus of all the Scotch-Irish historians cited in this study that there was little change in the nature, disposition, habits, and mores of McMillan's congregation during the years prior to 1820. Authorities have been quoted to show that the Scotch-Irish did not respond to the influences from outside their group. An equal number of historians testify that the Scotch-Irish were "the most clannish group among all the Presbyterians."51 Physical comforts were increased somewhat and communications were slightly improved, but it seems that in-group influences and the relatively low economic and social status of the people kept changes to a minimum.

Pennsylvania was to undergo great changes in the 1830's, but those improvements did not greatly affect the previous

49Dinsmore, op. cit., p. 16.
50Hunter, op. cit., p. 33.
decade. "As in the colonial period, agriculture continued to be . . . the main source of employment." The home continued to be the factory. "Much flax and wool are converted into clothing of a rude but durable texture by the hands of the farmers' wives and daughters."

In the nine-year period, 1820-29, comparatively little was contributed by the state to education. "Of public schools there were none in 1829. Of private schools there were plenty, such as they were; but the public schools did not come until 1836 or 1837."

In 1830 the cities and towns were still small and transportation was poor. Washington, Pennsylvania, had a population of 1,816 and Canonsburg had 792. In all of Washington County there were only 42,680 inhabitants and a total of 176 were in learned professions. "Pennsylvania had only three cities, Philadelphia, Lancaster, and

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53Ibid., p. 386. There were a few factories seeking women to work. One ad in American Republican, March 28, 1815, p. 2, wanted five or six women to work in a paper mill.


Pittsburgh, and the last two were as yet very small."

"There was but little choice then [1829] in modes of transit. There was a stage line from Philadelphia [to Pittsburgh], and the canal. The other methods were on horseback, by wagon, and on foot." On even the best roads, the speed of the stagecoach was but four miles an hour, and the wagons which were used to carry merchandise between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh took from twenty to thirty-five days to cross the state.

In 1829, there were daily mails east and west, but it took three days to reach Philadelphia. As late as 1844 it took three days to get results of the New York election at Pittsburgh, and in 1840 it was three weeks before the whole state of Pennsylvania was heard from. The counties of the northern and western sections of the state were thinly populated and communications among them were relatively few.

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56 Mulhern, op. cit., p. 150.

57 Harpster, op. cit., p. 287. The 1830's saw Philadelphia and Pittsburgh linked by a canal and railroad system. See Mulhern, op. cit., p. 440.


59 Harpster, op. cit., p. 294.

60 Mulhern, op. cit., p. 150.
According to the foregoing facts and conditions, life in Western Pennsylvania was still rather crude in the 1820's. A town like Canonsburg, with its churches, taverns, and stores, was the center of a farming community, and most of the people living in the area seldom went far from its vicinity.  

Margaret Hunter says:

The Scotch-Irish were one kind of people, all belonging to the same sphere and grades of life. As far as earthly possessions go, they were poor, but they possessed those traits of character, which with their acute intellect, made them leaders among men.

In 1820, McMillan had been living for forty-two years within the immediate vicinity where most of his preaching had been done. A large percentage of his congregation had grown up under his influence and guidance. He had taught them the most of what they knew about God and the Bible. Through the years he had instilled in them a knowledge of and a reliance upon the basic tenets of the Presbyterian religion. He furnished them the evidence to support the things they believed.

An enthymeme, according to Lloyd F. Bitzer, is a rhetorical syllogism which usually deals with probabilities (matters not capable of scientific demonstration), and one of its principal parts is often elided, but its essential

61 Ibid.
62 Hunter, op. cit., p. 33.
feature is that it makes an assertion or contention and supports it with evidence. Bitzer also says that when the listeners grant the evidence in the speaker's enthymemes, they are thereby providing the means for their own persuasion. If that be true, then McMillan had spent years preparing a congregation to help him persuade them. Therefore, his sermons were likely to have an effectiveness and a persuasive power out of proportion with their observable logical strength. By the training he gave his people outside the worship period, he predisposed them to believe and follow his sermon appeals.

However, McMillan's congregation were still a frontier society and bore many marks of their earlier lack of piety and zeal for religion. Whiskey continued to be a major problem through the years. "Everyone on the frontier seems to have indulged, Sweet records, "including women and children, and until as late as the eighteen twenties, it was a rare thing to find a teetotaler even among the preachers." Before civil authority was able to extend its control effectively, the people were guided, restrained, tried and punished or acquitted by the judicatories of the Church for


at least a third of the nineteenth century. Whiskey drinking and many associated evils such as rape, divorce, bigamy, adultery, stealing, lying, fighting, and dishonest business dealings, demanded that church discipline play a much larger role in the life of its members than in a more settled, older society. It is no wonder that Guy Klett remarks, "It is difficult to state what the conditions of the regions settled by the Scotch-Irish would have been without the ministrations of the Church."

McMillan did not seek to proselyte members of other religious groups, but sought only for Presbyterians and such persons who had shown some kindly disposition toward Presbyterian doctrines. As moderator of the Chariters Church session, as a teacher of theology, as a catechizer of children and adults, as a counselor, and as a minister, McMillan devoted his full resources to the leadership of his community. The subsequent analysis of his sermons seeks to determine how effectively that leadership was exercised through preaching.

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65 Sweet, Religion on the American Frontier, pp. 64-69.
67 Klett, The Scotch-Irish in Pennsylvania, p. 34.
II. SETTINGS FOR McMILLAN'S PREACHING

As McMillan began his preaching, there were two organized congregations west of the Alleghenies. They met in barns, homes or in the open air. The early type of "meeting houses," as they were called, were log structures built of the same materials and by the same design as the frontier homes, except that the logs were longer. Those churches which erected buildings around 1790 used hewn logs and slab-shingles for the roofs.

Chartiers' early log building, having no organ and no form of heating, was used until 1800. It was built around a large stump which served as a pulpit. Two vertical puncheons, one on each side of the stump, with a horizontal puncheon across their upper ends served as a speaker's stand. The windows were made of paper glazed with grease. The worshipers sat on log benches with no backrests and kept their rifles ready in case of Indian attacks.

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69 Trinterud, op. cit., p. 268.
70 Smith, Old Redstone, p. 152.

71 Numerous histories describe meeting houses, their locations, and the lay-outs for services. The description given here is a synopsis of Smith's two accounts in Old Redstone and History of Jefferson College; S. J. M. Eaton, History of the Presbytery of Erie (New York: Published by Hurd and Houghton, 1868); and Daniel M. Bennett (ed.), Life and Work of Rev. John McMillan, D. D. (Bridgeport, Pa.: privately published, 1935). A church building was usually situated near the center of the church membership, near a water supply, and where land could be had for a graveyard. See Posey, The Presbyterian Church, p. 102.
In 1800, a stone building replaced the log structure. The new building was heated by stoves and had regular church furniture. The auditorium measured about seventy by fifty-six feet. According to present day standards, such an assembly place would seat from 550 to 565 persons. The stone was reportedly taken from an Indian mound which topped a nearby hill.

In 1793, the year McMillan resigned his ministry at Pigeon Creek in order to devote his full time to Chartiers, the Chartiers Church applied for a charter of incorporation. If the thirty-four members, in addition to McMillan, who signed the charter application constituted the adult membership of the church, then the need for a larger, better building in 1800 suggests a growth in the church's membership and prosperity. A later and better indication of the Church's size and growth is revealed by a holograph which McMillan left among his personal papers, entitled, "A Memorandum Book

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73 These figures were supplied by a brochure from the L. L. Sams Company of Dallas, Texas, manufacturers of church furniture.

74 An Act of 1791 by the Commonwealth of Pa. required a charter of every institution which held title to property.

75 Drumrine, in his History of Washington County, says that the charter was granted March 28, 1798. He also says the stone building was greatly enlarged in 1832, at about the time Lemuel F. Leake succeeded McMillan as regular minister of the church.
of Such as Have Been Admitted to the Sacrament of the Supper in the Congregation of Chartiers from June, 1815, to February, 1830. 76 Immediately below the title on the cover of the book McMillan had written the following summary statistics: "Total admitted to the Church on examination from May, 1797, to February, 1830, was 450. Of these, 30 became ministers of the Gospel." Those figures tend to confirm the seating capacity of the Chartiers building. The non-members and neighboring Presbyterians who may have visited the services from time to time probably filled the building to capacity.

McMillan's Memorandum Book reveals the presence of Negroes in the congregation and there is no indication in any of the sources used in this study that the frontier church segregated the Negroes or discriminated against them in any way. McMillan's list for June, 1816, includes "Alice Hopkins (a black woman)." Another "black woman" was received in February, 1819, another in September, 1823, and a "black man" in September, 1824. 77 Those Negroes probably were or had been slaves. The extent to which McMillan adapted his sermons to them is not revealed in any of his records.

76 This Memorandum Book is in the possession of Mrs. Helen Allen Wragg, McMillan's great, great, great granddaughter, 1133 Lancaster Street, Pittsburgh, Pa.

77 The Memorandum Book is chronological throughout. Events and statistics can easily be found according to date of entry. There are no page numbers.
A special type of settings wherein five of the sermons considered in this study were preached were the sacramental seasons. Joseph Smith says that such occasions had "many visitors from surrounding congregations and distant settlements," and that the outdoor services were continued in fair weather, and sometimes in extremely bad weather, even after church buildings were built.

For a typical sacramental season a hillside was selected, where the trees were large and there was no undergrowth. A platform about eight by twelve feet was erected approximately four feet high at the base of the hill so that the listeners, seated on log benches arranged in a series of concentric semicircles on the slope of the hill, could both see and hear the speaker. The platform was walled up a few feet above the floor; the roof slanted from front to rear; a door provided entrance; and the back side was boarded up to the roof to provide a sounding board for the speaker. That enclosed platform was called a tent. Directly in front of the tent was a table on a lower platform for the clerk. It was from the lower position that an elder lined out the songs or psalms.

78 At Chartiers these seasons centered around the second Sundays of February, June, and September. Sometimes they were shifted slightly to allow McMillan an opportunity to help neighboring churches with their sacramental occasions.

79 Smith, Old Redstone, pp. 153-54.
Usually a long log (split, with the flat side up) extended from the clerk's table up the wide aisle which ascended the slope. The log table was set on blocks of wood to make it the proper height for eating. Along each side of the log table was a smaller log in similar shape and position to serve as a bench. Two other rows of tables and benches extended from the clerk's table at right angles to the center tables. All of the tables were covered with white linen cloths for the sacramental service. The tables were surrounded and vacated as many as seven times in one service by those who ate the Lord's Supper.®

To the sacramental assemblies in McMillan's congregation during the 1820's hundreds, and even thousands, are reported to have come--on foot, on horseback, and wagons. James Carnahans says, "I have seen him [McMillan] preaching to fifteen hundred or two thousand people in the open air, under the shade of the trees."® Many of them were guests in the homes of McMillan's congregation, and others camped under the wagons, trees, and other improvised shelters for several days. The sacramental occasions were the beginning

®®Smith, Old Redstone, pp. 153-59. The sacramental setting and service are described in several histories and each gives some details not given by the others.

of the camp meetings. People came from a radius of fifteen miles or more. 82

The sacramental seasons usually occupied four days. The first was a Thursday which was set apart as a fast day and was observed just like Sunday. The sermon on the fast day was planned with the purpose of persuading the worshipers to enter into a spirit of humility, gratitude, and prayer. It prepared them for the solemn observances the following Sunday. No work was done during the whole period. For weeks prior to the occasion much preparation was made so that full attention could be given to the services and no worldly cares would interfere. Neither was the weather permitted to disrupt the assemblies; the services were neither broken up nor abridged because of a driving rain or storm. 83

The second day of assembly during that season was Saturday. The day was largely given over to worship, but there was a period set aside wherein the members were examined to see if they were worthy to eat the Lord's Supper on the following day. Those who were qualified were given lead tokens which bore the initials of their home congregations as a means of identifying the communicants on Sunday.

82 Smith, Old Redstone, p. 157.

Applications for church membership were also received on Saturday.84

The high day of these sacramental occasions was Sunday. The assembly began its worship in the morning, took a one-hour break in the middle of the day, and continued until night. Sometimes it continued through the night. Usually the local minister preached the sacramental sermon and a visiting minister preached the other sermons. Both men strove to make all of the messages evangelistic. It was on such occasions as these that "bodily exercises" began and affected nearly every church in the region, or perhaps throughout the entire area being served by revivalist ministers.85

Sundays were also important days for baptizing infants. Baptizinings were held frequently and regularly, but Communion Sundays seem to have been considered special days by parents who had neglected to observe it earlier.

The fourth assembly day of the sacramental season was Monday. On that day the ministers tried to get the persons who had received "serious impressions" on Sunday to accept Christ and his promised blessings. The continuance of the services through a five-day period served to relieve the peoples' minds of worldly cares and anxieties and release

84Smith, Old Redstone, p. 157.
the tensions of daily domestic life. The "exercises" developed other kinds of anxieties, to be sure, but this concern was considered wholesome and holy.

Christian friendships and sympathies were cultivated. No doubt many courtships were begun, and marriages celebrated. Many church members testified that they were brought under serious impressions first at a sacramental session. Special impromptu preaching and prayer services sprang out of these emotion-filled periods. The larger assembly was divided into smaller groups which met wherever they could. McMillan said that some prayer meetings lasted all night. Such occasions as these were calculated, even apart from the content of the several sermons, to be emotionally persuasive, as psychologists affirm.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The people who made up McMillan's audiences in 1820 to 1830 had a large measure of homogeneity and a large number of factors which united them in their attitudes and purposes. The abuses and hardships from which they or their fathers had fled made them ardent seekers for freedom, security, and

86 Smith, Old Redstone, p. 156.
88 Posey, The Presbyterian Church, p. 125.
adventure. Though many of them were not zealous practitioners of their traditional religion, they were zealous in protecting its forms, and wanted their women and children to enjoy its benefits and privileges. In fact, during their early years on the frontier many basically good people regressed toward barbarism. Only by the educational, religious, social, and political leadership of McMillan and others associated with him in the ministry were the people redeemed from their regression and pointed toward a stable society. By the end of McMillan's ministry his area had practically ceased to be a mission field and had become somewhat mission-minded themselves.

In addition to his continuing efforts to get the people to be ethical, moral, and spiritual and "thereby closing with Christ in the enjoyment of his blessings upon the elect," McMillan seems to have been zealous in utilizing three annual sacramental seasons to give them recurring spiritual revival. Each sacramental season was a five-day period wherein McMillan gave his listeners a great deal of religious instruction and stimulation. It was also a period filled with emotional persuasion growing out of the cumulative spiritual emphasis, the fellowship with others of like faith, and the very atmosphere wherein prayers and meditation were not only acceptable but desirable. On those occasions McMillan sought to intensify and direct those emotions by his messages and his own personal example.
McMillan has been accorded a place of prominence because of his role as a frontier minister. However, he also earned a place in history as an educator, a theologian, and as a leader in the various judicatories of the Presbyterian Church. Therefore, it is hard to evaluate him in his preaching role alone.

A study of McMillan's Journal and sermon manuscripts reveals no trace of an apologetic sermon during the years in which he kept records. That is, he devoted no entire sermons to a defense of the Bible or Presbyterianism. No prominence can be claimed for him as an apologist. He left behind no thorough defense of his religious convictions except in his theology lecture notes. Much of his argumentation must also be discovered from those notes.

Regrettably, no record has been preserved which indicates that McMillan ever spoke or wrote anything substantial about his homiletic views. He may have treated that subject somewhat fully on the numerous occasions when he is reported to have delivered charges to ministerial candidates who
appeared before the presbytery seeking to be licensed. Such lectures set forth the young minister's duties and responsibilities and were probably delivered impromptu. The charges probably followed the same general pattern on all occasions. However, no such lectures or sermons are to be found among McMillan's papers and no specific reference to their content by him or by others has been discovered.

I. SERMON PREPARATION

"The wise young minister," according to Andrew Blackwood, "forms the habit of writing a sermon every week. He looks on the composition and revision of that message as the most important task between Sundays." While yet a very young minister, McMillan began the practice of writing out his sermons and he continued that practice throughout his ministry. The importance which he placed upon thorough preparation is illustrated in the following extract from his Journal:

1In the records of Redstone and Ohio Presbyteries, ministerial candidates are reported to have delivered their sermons for their ordination trials and "then McMillan delivered the charge."


3Samples of McMillan's many references to sermon writing are reproduced from his Journal in Smith's Old Redstone, pp. 180-84.

4Among the collected sermons of McMillan, there are several dated 1830, 1831, and 1832.
Monday--[1st Mon. in Dec., 1775]... This evening I began a sermon Luke xiii.5.

Tuesday--This day I spent chiefly in study.

Wednesday--This day I moved my camp to Wm. M'Phuter's.

Thursday and Friday--continued at the same place, spending my time chiefly in study, and finished my sermon on Luke xiii.5.

Spending three whole days and an evening of the fourth day in writing one sermon indicates his attitude about the regular production of sermons. Neither his Journal nor any other record states how much time McMillan spent rehearsing his sermons after he had written them. However, he must have used many hours because Joseph Smith described McMillan's delivery in this manner: "Though he preached from memory, he had the faculty of delivering his discourse in so natural a tone of voice that his hearers would suppose it was perfectly extemporaneous."

In 1820, McMillan had had forty-five years of experience in sermon preparation plus the added qualification of knowing his auditors very intimately. George Buttrick told the Yale theology students that such knowledge of the listeners was essential in preparing sermons of high quality. He stated:

The sermon must be written—not as an essay is written, but as a sermon is written; that is to say, with the eyes of the congregation (wistful,

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hungry, sad, or gayly indifferent) looking at the writer over his desk.  

McMillan's sermon manuscripts indicate that much time, thought, and energy went into their preparation. According to Posey, Presbyterian ministers made it a general practice to write out their sermons in full manuscripts, but it was not a universal practice.  

No known record remains of McMillan's study habits, methods of gathering and compiling sermon materials, or ideas about redrafting early versions of sermons. All extant sermon manuscripts carry one or more dates which indicates that he preached them in that form or that he modified them at the time of delivery.  

There is a wide variation in the length of the preserved manuscripts and that poses a problem. Even though McMillan is reported to have spoken for one hour on each occasion—"not five minutes more or less"—some of the manuscripts are approximately three times the length of others. The longer ones were evidently nearly word-for-word texts as he delivered them. A word count of the "Sin Abounding" sermon

6George A. Buttrick, Jesus Came Preaching (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), p. 156.  


indicates that a speaking rate of 130 words per minute would be required to present the message in one hour. Though somewhat slow by present-day standards, that was probably a popular speaking rate on the unhurried frontier in the 1820's. Three of the fifteen manuscripts used as a basis for this study are of the longer variety.

In contrast, the shortest manuscripts used in the study reveal the inclusion of a large number of "etc.'s" which may indicate that McMillan planned to elaborate at those points extemporaneously. Except at the points where McMillan wished to open his Bible and read scripture passages, the three long sermons include no "etceteras" or any other evidence of a plan to deviate from the written text. "He That Loveth Not Is Lost" #2 and "Knowledge Increases Responsibility" have sixteen and twenty-one "etceteras" respectively. He must have extemporized a great deal when he preached the shortest manuscripts.

Since twelve of the fifteen manuscripts were prepared after 1820, it seems improbable that McMillan did not have adequate time to prepare all of his sermons fully. His

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9McMillan made it a practice not to quote scriptures, but opened his Bible and read it for effect. His manuscript carried the first few words of the passage or a location reference, followed by "etc."

10"Sin Abounding and Grace Superabounding," "The Shepherd and His Sheep #1," and "The Shepherd and His Sheep #2."

11Only one extant manuscript carries a date prior to the establishment of Jefferson College in 1802. After that time, McMillan's duties were lightened and he must have had more time for sermon preparation.
Journal discusses the places and circumstances of delivery but fails to explain the variation in manuscript length. Probably the subject matter in the briefer manuscripts lent itself more readily to extemporaneous preaching than did the others.

Another observation is worthy of notice here. In "Knowledge Increases Responsibility"—a manuscript with twenty-one "etceteras"—except at one point where McMillan wished to open his Bible and read a scripture, he included no "etceteras" until he was well into the body of the sermon. But from that point, sometimes there were six or seven within an equal number of lines of sermon text. It seems that McMillan wrote out a carefully planned introduction, indicated all of the points to be developed, and then filled in the numerous details extemporaneously. There is an evident correspondence between the number of "etceteras" and the length of a given manuscript.

The dates when McMillan preached the various sermons are recorded at the top of each manuscript. Less than a dozen of the more than two hundred sermons examined were undated. Of the 150 sermons microfilmed for this study, McMillan preached eleven of them only one time each; twenty he preached twice; eighty-eight, three times; twenty-four, 

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12 Each delivery date is recorded and they are easily double-checked by McMillan's Journal.
four times; and seven, five times.

Certain implications follow from the fact that the great majority of the extant sermons were preached from two to four times each. First, McMillan selected for re-use those sermons which he found to be effective or to his liking. From 1801 until his death, he followed that program of selection. Of the hundreds of sermons mentioned in his Journal only a relatively small percentage have been preserved. The preserved ones carry composition dates that range over the entire period, 1801 to 1830. Probably, McMillan purposefully discarded the sermons which he did not wish to keep and re-use.

Secondly, McMillan approached his sermons in a somewhat stable cycle and in approximately the same order through each cycle. He repeated the rotation every six to eight years. The following sermon texts and dates of repeated delivery will illustrate the recurring cycles:

1. Psalm 149:2---July, 1813; April, 1820.
2. Psalm 26:6----Dec., 1813; May, 1820; Sept., 1827.
4. Matt. 12:43-45-Sept., 1813; April, 1820; June, 1827.
5. Matt. 12:43-45-Sept., 1813; April, 1820; June, 1827.
6. I Cor. 16:22---Nov., 1820; Feb., 1828.
7. I Cor. 16:22---Dec., 1820; Feb., 1828.
The eleven sermons which McMillan preached only one time each were written within the last six years of his life, and they may have been redrafts of earlier sermons on the same texts or completely new productions.

Thirdly, McMillan's manuscripts of the oft-repeated sermons show no signs of alterations or rework. He probably made extemporaneous adaptations or else rewrote the sermon for each successive delivery and affixed the dates of former presentations. If the latter is true, then the "Sin Abounding" sermon is an exception. The microfilm copy of that sermon as McMillan preached it at Chartiers on the second Sunday of February, 1830, is an exact duplicate of the printed version which he preached in the Second Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh on the fourth Sunday of October, 1830. The conclusions of his sermons, which McMillan often called the "improvement," were quite frequently extemporized and, therefore, made possible some alteration in the sermons from one delivery situation to another. Yet, even in the

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13 The three pairs of sermons on the same texts are typical of McMillan's style. They were sermon series, preached on successive Sundays, and in the same order in each repetition of the cycles. For example, the first I Cor. 16:22 sermon was used the third Sunday of Nov., 1820, and the third Sunday of February, 1828. The second sermon on the same text was used the first Sun. of Dec., 1820, and the fourth Sun. of Feb., 1828. At times McMillan had a six-sermon series on the same scripture text.
conclusions there was only a limited variation. "On certain
topics," according to Joseph Smith, "he would often use the
same language, word for word, that had been heard before.
This was especially the case with some of his exhortations."¹⁴
Smith then went on to explain that such a method of repeat­ing
standardized, memorized conclusions did not rob a given
sermon of its effectiveness or moving power. However, even
for a people who had become accustomed to the strict, duty­
binding requirements of Calvinism, such a practice of repeat­ing
whole sermons or standardized conclusions was likely to
cause a loss of spontaneity and interest on the part of both
speaker and listener. It would probably be a much more per­
suasive message if a new and fresh introduction and conclu­sion
were prepared for each sermon that was to be repeated
to the same hearers, even after a lapse of years.

Fourthly, McMillan prepared sermons on general themes
which could appropriately be presented to various audiences.
The manuscripts themselves contain no specific reference to
local events or circumstances. If such references were
made, they were extemporaneous. Guthrie, McMillan's biogra­
pher, reports that McMillan did refer to national events and
to events of local color.¹⁵ Of the 150 collected sermons,

¹⁴Smith, Old Redstone, p. 206.

¹⁵Dwight R. Guthrie, John McMillan: The Apostle of
none appears to have been prepared for one specific audience or occasion. One of the fifteen sermons being analyzed in this study was first prepared and preached as a sermon adapted to appeal to young people at a specially appropriate time when a young man had been killed by lightning. Ten years later, McMillan used the same manuscript for a Sunday sermon after his daughter, Catherine, had died the previous Tuesday. However, this sermon manuscript contains no reference to either event and could have been used with equal effectiveness as a sermon to young people at any time, except for whatever force the deaths may have lent to the occasions.

Fifthly, the fact that McMillan preached most of his extant sermons from one to five times each probably indicates that he made little or no shift in his theological concepts or homiletic techniques during his nineteenth-century preaching. Indeed, Guthrie supports this conclusion as follows:

In his theology, McMillan changed little as his life went on with the passing years. ... Nor was he often able to vary details of doctrine to meet the variety among the men and the women in his congregation, each of whom was living in his own world and having his special experiences, and each of whom needed, if he was to see the truth, to have it shown him in a way that would touch his understanding and his heart.17

16 John Davidson was killed during the third week of July, 1820. See the Journal for this entry and the following reference to Catherine McMillan's death the first week of May, 1830.

17 Guthrie, op. cit., p. 183.
The extant sermon manuscripts are evidently representative of McMillan's whole scope of sermon topics, for they thoroughly substantiate a summary review given by Matthew Brown. In reviewing McMillan's preaching during the decade covered by this study, Brown concluded:

The subjects which characterized his sermons were: the dreadful evil of sin; the awful danger of the sinner, exposed to the wrath of God; the character of God as holy and just, as well as merciful; the spirituality, purity, extent, and excellence of the divine law; the absolute need of salvation through the atoning sacrifice of Christ; the fullness, sufficiency, and freedom of gospel salvation; the utter helplessness of the sinner; insufficiency of his own righteousness; the necessity of an entire change of heart, and absolute need of Christ for pardon and acceptance.

Those subjects also constitute the heart of McMillan's lecture notes on theology, which represent his concept of Calvinism.

McMillan wrote his sermons on a piece of paper, folded like a book to make four pages, each measuring four by six inches. The well-written, tiny manuscript was then inserted in his Bible to serve as a prompter, if and when

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18Brown was McMillan's associate minister at Chartiers from 1822 to 1830. Brown was also president of Jefferson College from 1822 until his resignation in 1845. As a close associate of McMillan, his remarks about McMillan's preaching should be revealing and pertinent.

19Smith, Old Redstone, p. 206.

20For a description of McMillan's "remarkable specimen of penmanship" even in his eightieth year, see James Carnahan's article on McMillan in Sprague's Annals of the American Pulpit, III, 350.
he needed it, though he had usually committed it to memory. Several references to his manner of preaching suggest that McMillan adopted a style much like that of John Witherspoon, his college professor. Of the latter's style, an associate, Ashbel Green, commented:

[He] was wont to deliver his discourses from memory, and yet he never repeated from memory any considerable portion of scripture, however perfectly recollected, but opened his Bible, and read it from the sacred text.  

Many of the manuscripts which McMillan prepared in the last decade of his life were more thoroughly developed than the ones prepared earlier in the century, suggesting that he probably relied more on his manuscript and less on his memory in those last years. In the spring of 1832, he made the following appraisal of himself:

I am still able to preach, though my memory has much failed, so that I am obliged to make more use of notes than formerly, yet my lungs are still good, and I can bawl almost as loud as ever.

Most of McMillan's sermons were of a single type, text sermons. That is, they grew out of a scripture text and followed its limits of subject matter. That may partially

21 Guthrie, op. cit., p. 178.


explain why he never gave titles to his sermons. At times some of the characteristics of what the homileticians call a subject sermon appear, but they are rare. He seems to have had no desire to preach either subject sermons or expository sermons. Because he neglected or avoided topical sermons, McMillan never used what the moderns call the problem approach; that is addressing himself to the human situations before him or on themes of immediate interest to his listeners. He seems to have thought only in terms of theology, Biblical doctrines, and their rational explanations. McMillan preached sermons built upon scripture texts which had a tone of sacredness about them, but they often lacked the help for daily living which his hearers needed. He seems to have been guilty of a fault which one critic says is somewhat characteristic of all doctrinal preaching. "We are troubled and baffled," according to William Faunce, "because Christ seems interested in people rather than discourses, and persists in lightning up the recesses of human hearts instead of helping us in the formation of our creeds and theologies. But he was wiser than we are."  

McMillan was concerned about adequate preparation. He prepared some manuscripts which could be followed closely.
for a completely developed message, and others which could be expanded at the time of delivery as he saw the need or felt the urge to do so. In preparing his manuscripts and memorizing them, McMillan became so familiar with his subject matter that he could easily expand it when he desired to do so.

II. SERMON ORGANIZATION

Phillips Brooks strongly advised preachers to use good organizational structure. He said:

But give your sermon orderly consistent progress, and do not hesitate to let your hearers see it distinctly, for it will help them first to understand and then to remember what you say.25

The particular type of organization, however, and the degree to which it is obvious to the listeners depends upon the kind of people who are to hear. "The structure of the sermon will vary according to the taste and mental habits of the individual," Matthew Simpson asserts. "A man of systematic habits, of logical power, and of little imagination, will need his divisions accurately made to serve as steps of the stairway on which he ascends."26 Trained as he was in argumentation, McMillan knew the values of orderly arrangement


of ideas. Knowing the taste and mental habits of his individual listeners, McMillan knew what type of sermon structure to use. One of his greatest strengths as a preacher was the orderly arrangement of his material.

One of the major objectives of a speech critic, according to Thonssen and Baird, is to examine a "speech as an instance of rhetorical craftsmanship, per se. That is, he considers the speech from the point of view of its basic construction, as an assembly of many parts bound together in an orderly and balanced whole." Like George Whitefield, Gilbert Tennent, and other revivalistic preachers of the period, McMillan ended many of his sermons with strong appeals or exhortations. He nearly always followed the same form of development: an introduction, a plan of development, the discussion, and a conclusion, which McMillan called his application or improvement. That form resembles Aristotle's proem, statement of the case, proof, and peroration. McMillan followed a principle which was urged upon ministerial students nearly one hundred years later by Charles Reynolds Brown who said, "Let your plan be your own--strictly,


exclusively, preeminently, your own. The sermon plan should be a thing as personal as a toothbrush."  

The Introduction

"The most characteristic part of the prooemium [sic] theory," George Kennedy states, "is the requirement that it make the hearer well disposed, attentive, and tractable." McMillan's manuscripts and several recorded reports on his manner of preaching indicate that he took it for granted that his listeners would be well-disposed, attentive, and tractable. Apart from the attitudes and behavior which indered in Presbyterian worship services, and the influence of his own presence before them, McMillan gave only secondary consideration to establishing attention, rapport, and good will. As was the custom, McMillan made it a practice to begin each sermon by presenting a scripture text. Then in seven of the fifteen select sermons he proceeded immediately to explain that Biblical text as his introduction. For


31 Many who heard him in a religious service describe the effect McMillan's preaching had on them. They "felt his sincerity, his determination, and the awful seriousness which the service had for him." "He never used flattery or the studied ornaments of speech." See Ezra Hall Gillett, History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (revised edition; Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1864), I, 41.
example, in "Knowledge Increases Responsibility," he said, "The main design of this passage is to convince the people of Israel that God had a controversy with them." In "The Spirit's Possession" McMillan began by saying, "This speech appears to be parabolical, that is, applied to the wicked men of that generation, as you may see in the last clause of the 45th verse."

Though he desired what Gray and Braden call "an attentive hearing" and "a friendly hearing," McMillan was especially interested in what those authors describe as "an intelligent hearing." He desired to establish the meaning, importance, and purpose of a Biblical text, and to have his listeners visualize its context. In each of the fifteen sermons he discussed the scripture text somewhere within the introduction, but usually related the text to his listeners as soon as he had made the text clear and emphatic. For instance, when he had explained the "main design" of the scripture text in "Knowledge Increases Responsibility," he said:

The Jewish Church at this time seems to have been in the same condition that ours is in now: They enjoyed the means of grace, as we do; they had the ministers of God among them, as we have; God called after them . . . but they would not harken. . . . And is not this the case with us?

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This sermon also exemplified McMillan's technique of establishing his theme or thesis as he concluded his introduction. At the same time he was paraphrasing his scripture text. The basis for the sermon was Amos 3:2: "You only have I known of all the families on the earth: therefore I will punish you for your iniquities." McMillan concluded his introduction in this manner:

The following doctrine is clearly contained in these words viz:

That the sins of professors, who enjoy the means of Grace and the privileges of God's people, are more highly aggravated than the sins of others, and expose to heavier judgments.

In the absence of an announced title or subject, McMillan was probably wise in forcefully establishing his thesis or goal in his introduction. The Biblical text for his "Sin Abounding" message, Romans 5:20, states: "Moreover, the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." After elaborating extensively on the textual meaning and drawing his hearers into a fellowship of inquiry, McMillan paraphrased his text as follows: "It [the law] entered to discover the abounding of sin, that so a way might be paved for a more illustrious display of the superabounding grace of God, which pardons and saves from such abounding iniquities."

McMillan's second method of introducing his sermons was to arrest his auditor's attention and secure their interest in his message. In "He That Loveth Not is Lost #1," for
example, he begins: "We are all deeply concerned to make a strict & narrow search into our own hearts that we may know how matters stand between God & our souls. We are all candidates for eternity. . . ." He began the second installment of that two-sermon series by asking rhetorical questions and appealing to the emotions of fair play, gratitude, and self-respect. He asked:

But is it possible that this can be true of any of the human race, that they love not the Lord Jesus Christ? What, not love the most glorious lover in all the world? "Him who loved us, and gave himself for us." Who shed his blood for us to testify his love to us. . . . What had we power of living for, if we are unmoved with such love as this, and without love to such a Savior?

Immediately following the words just quoted, McMillan sought to build interest in his message by stressing its importance. He continued:

But alas! It is a solemn awful truth, that notwithstanding all that Christ has done for men's salvation . . . by far the greater part of mankind have no true affection for him. . . .

In the "Remember God Early" sermon, McMillan used the following appeals to danger and uncertainty of life to arouse attention and interest:

My dear young friends, Death, the king of terror is abroad, his darts fly thick around us: we are frequently hearing of someone's acquaintances, perhaps a brother or a sister, a father or a mother, an intimate companion, or a dear friend, falling by his envenomed arrows, and hurried away into a vast eternity, no more in mortal flesh to again be with their sorrowful relatives whom they have left behind to mourn for those of every age, and the blooming healthy youth often drops into it, while the aged, loaded with the infirmities of many years,
have their span protracted, and still continue to breathe the vital air. . . .

In addition, those words were McMillan's nearest approach to personal appeal and evidence of good will. If he had any personal word for his congregation—any current experiences to acknowledge or commend, any particular feeling about the day, the people, the occasion, or any current situation--, he delivered it extemporaneously: no manuscript reflects it.

For sermons of one hour's length, "not five minutes more or less," McMillan's rather lengthy introductions were probably in good balance. His reliance upon the earlier part of the worship service to help establish the mood and atmosphere for his message was in harmony with the thinking of such men as Lyman Abbott, who said,

As to introduction, generally the less introduction the better. The whole service of prayer and praise and Scripture reading has been introduction; that is, it has been preparing the mind and heart of the congregation for the message of the preacher. He who strikes the heart of his subject in the first sentence is the one most likely to secure an attentive listening at the outset of his discourse.33

Judged in the light of that day, McMillan was probably more effective in his introductions than it seems to a twentieth century critic. However, more effort to establish rapport, good will, and the ethos of the speaker would have

probably strengthened McMillan's introductions. He was generally effective in emphasizing the need for his message and in preparing the minds and hearts of his listeners for what was to follow.

The Plan of Development

Immediately after his introduction, McMillan gave a preview or forecast of what he proposed to accomplish in the remainder of the sermon, as is the case in every sermon among the fifteen, except two. The plan is uniformly brief and clear, but it does vary slightly in form occasionally. For example, the plan of "The Spirit's Possession #1" is as follows:

From the words thus introduced and explained, we may observe
1. That the Devil has the first possession of fallen man.
2. That the Devil may go out of a person or people for a time, yet he doth not give up his claim, but will return, and endeavor to re-enter and keep possession of every soul.
3. Whatever religious impressions a person may have been under ... yet if the soul be empty of Christ ... the Devil will again easily take possession.
4. That the last state of the person will be more dangerous than the first.
What I design is to speak a little to each of these particulars, etc.

As McMillan began the second sermon of that same subject, he

34"Behold Your King" is the second installment of a two-sermon series. It refers to the former sermon's plan but does not restate it. The second installment of "The Spirit's Possession" is presently used in detail.
summarized the former one, using a clause for each of the four steps in the former sermon's plan of development to make one sentence of 109 words. His next sentence was: "I now proceed to make some application of the subject." With no other statement of plan or purpose, he proceeded to make the entire sermon an application of the former message's content.

A fuller, more meaningful view of McMillan's plan of development is illustrated by the two installments of "He That Loveth Not Is Lost." After a two-page typescript introduction, the plan of the first sermon is as follows:

In treating further on this subject, what I design at present is

1. To speak a little of the person to be loved, as here held forth under various names, the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To speak a little of what is implied in loving the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. Speak a few words of the threatening denounced against such as are destitute of this love.
   And then apply.

After a much longer introduction, McMillan began the second "He That Loveth Not" message in this unusual manner:

The method [or plan] I proposed, you remember was--

1. To speak a little of the person to be loved, as here held forth under various names, the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. Show what is implied in loving the Lord Jesus Christ.
3. Speak a few words concerning the threatening denounced against such as are destitute of this love.
   And then apply--
The first of these I have already spoken to and have also entered upon the second, and mentioned five things implied in loving Christ, viz, a believing view of his lowliness, and actual out-going of heart after him, a loving of everything that bears his image, and earnest longing after still more and more nearness to and enjoyment of him, and an hatred of all his implacable enemies. I now proceed to observe, 6ly. [He here proceeded with his sixth, seventh, and eighth points without further explanation or review.]

McMillan sometimes gave a brief initial summary just before stating his sermon plan. The first "Shepherd and His Sheep" address furnished this example of such a summary, followed by a typical plan:

In these words we have
1. God's people characterized, or some characters of Christ's flock laid down, viz: that they hear his voice and follow him.
2. Christ's claim to or prosperity in them; they are his sheep: My sheep hear my voice.
3. Some privileges they enjoy from him. . . .

What I design in the further prosecution of this subject is
1. To consider some of the characters of Christ's flock or people, as laid down in those verses.
2. Speak a few words concerning the claim which Christ has to them.
3. Consider some of their privileges mentioned in the text.
And then conclude with some improvement of the subject.

Five of the sermons have plans which begin with practically the following introductory statement:35 "In treating further on this subject, what I design is:" The other

35They are: "Fear Not Little Flock;" "Remember God Darly;" "Will Ye Also Go Away?" "Knowledge Increases Responsibility;" and "He That Loveth Not Is Lost."
introductory statements are similar and equally definite, but he varies their wording. However, there was not enough variation to give freshness or variety to his over-all sermon development. Only occasionally did McMillan use any transitional device except to restate the points as set forth in his plan and then, without any other word of connection or direction, launch into its discussion. It was perhaps this sameness in plan of development coupled with the repeating of sermons in a somewhat regular cycle that caused one of his contemporaries to remark about McMillan's preaching in his later years: "It had not the variety that it probably once had. Sometimes it appeared rather untimely, with a great sameness in public prayers. His days of close observation had then gone past."36

The Discussion

After his summary and stated plan, as noted earlier, McMillan proceeded to analyze the subject in minute detail. Each step in his analysis is numbered and it is altogether possible that he called out the successively numbered headings as he delivered the address. Though the course of development can be followed easily enough in the manuscript, he is quite confusing in his use of symbols to mark out his

36S. C. Jennings, Recollections of Useful Persons and Important Events Within Seventy Years (Vancefort, Pa.: J. Dillion & Sons, Steam Power Printers, 1884), p. 121.
progress.

It must have been a great deal more confusing in the oral delivery of a complex and lengthy analysis. McMillan employed no Roman numerals and no letters from the alphabet to designate his divisions of the ideas. He used only arabic numerals: some of them without brackets and some with brackets, but they did not have a consistent meaning. "The Shepherd And His Sheep #1" again provides a good illustration. After giving his early summary and stating the plan of his proposed development, McMillan proceeded as follows:

1. I am to consider some of the characters of Christ's flock. . . . They are called sheep, which denotes
   1st. Their harmless and inoffensive nature. . . .
   2ly. This denotes also their purity, which is manifest
   (1) By their loathing of sin. . . . This hatred is
       (1) universal
       (2) . . . it is strong. . . .
       (3) . . . it is rooted. . . .
       (4) It is habitual. . . .
       (5) It is an hatred to sin as sin. . . .
   (2) This purity is manifest by their delight in holiness. . . .
   (3) This purity is manifest by their delight in and prizing the means of obtaining it. . . .
   (4) Their purity is manifest by their delight in holy objects
       (1) In God. . . .
       (2) In the whole of God's law. . . .
       (3) In the people of God. . . .

2. Another character . . . they hear his voice, which implies
   1st. That it comes with power on their hearts. . . .
   2ly. This hearing . . . implies obedience to it. . . .
3. Another Character . . . they follow him, which implies
   1st. Life . . .
   2ly. . . . a love to him . . .
   3ly. . . . Christ's drawing or leading them . . .
   (1) In the soul's pursuing
   (2) . . . they follow his steps.

Question 1: How do they follow Christ?
Answer 1: Willingly, not by constraint.
Question 2: Whither do they follow Christ?
Answer 2: Toward the heavenly Canaan.
Question 3: When do they follow Christ?
Answer 3: Through the general course of their lives.
   (1) When they feel much of his 
       . . . influences . . .
   (2) When he is withdrawn . . . from them . . .

Question 4: Through what do they follow him?
Answer 4: Through good report and evil report.
Question 5: In what condition do they follow him?
Answer 1: When they are in some measure deserted.
Answer 2: . . . dogged and fettered with their own corruptions.

I should now proceed to the second thing proposed which was to speak a few words concerning the claim which Christ has to them. But having dwelt so long upon the former, I shall say nothing to this, nor the following head at present, but conclude with some improvement of what has been already said.

1st. What reason have we to bless God?
2ly. This subject may be improved . . .
3ly. From what has been said, let me exhort . . .

The foregoing excerpt from a sermon of the "general" classification is quite extended, but it will serve to illustrate a number of points. The symbols and other means employed to designate the partitioning of ideas is awkward and difficult to follow. The dissection of the material in the first half of the sermon is too minute and labored, and
thus prevented the consideration of two-thirds of the material proposed in his sermon plan. The sermon, in its present state, can hardly be said to be complete. It is hard to conceive of a preacher preparing a manuscript over a period of several days that proved to be incomplete in the light of his stated plan or proposal. Why would he not rework it so as to cover his announced plan of treatment? Or, if he liked the treatment of the material as his manuscript developed, why did he not re-write the plan to conform to the body of the sermon? It should also be noted that McMillan wrote the first installment of "The Shepherd and His Sheep" to be delivered on the second Sunday in October, 1821, and did not deliver the second installment until the first Sunday in February, 1822. Yet, notwithstanding that long intervening period of four months, he linked the two sermons together as though they had been delivered in the morning and evening of the same day. As he delivered the second sermon, he began with what appears to be a three- or four-minute introduction of the scripture text upon which both sermons were based. Then he bridged those four months of time between the sermons and fastened them together in the following words:

In treating this subject, you may remember, I proposed to consider some of the characters of Christ's flock or people as laid down in these
2. Speak a few words concerning the claim which Christ has to them.
3. Consider some of their privileges mentioned in the text and then conclude with some improvement of the subject. The first of these I have already spoken to and shall now proceed.

He simply restated the plan of his first sermon, told his listeners to what point he had earlier progressed, and, beginning at the terminal point of the former message, resumed and concluded the fulfillment of that stated plan.

In his Journal, McMillan definitely confirms the dates given at the head of both sermons and also shows that he preached for the Chartiers church ten times between the two installments of "The Shepherd" sermon. It seems strange that he would delay so long to finish the analysis of a text he had so fervently begun. It is even more incredible that he should have repeated both installments of the sermon seven years later without any apparent revision. However, in 1829, he did deliver the two on successive Sundays. 38

In the body or discussion of his sermons, McMillan most frequently employed what Thonssen and Baird called the distributive method. They say: "According to the distributive

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37 McMillan considered this his first point of review of the plan as stated in the former sermon, but did not number it. After giving it and numbers two and three, he then restated number two as his point of continuance in this sermon.

38 The Journal shows that he preached them on the third and fourth Sundays in May.
method of arrangement, matters having a common thought center and an obvious connection among themselves are grouped in certain sections. . . . An effort may be made to distribute the materials according to the relation they bear to the specified ideas. The foregoing excerpt from the first of "The Shepherd" sermons clearly illustrates the distributive method. The great bulk of McMillan's sermons were developed by that method, but a few of them were an admixture of the distributive and what Thonssen and Baird further classified as the logical method, plus the textual method as defined by Broadus. That is, McMillan let the parts of his scripture text suggest the order of his main heads, but then developed a line of logical or distributive development. Without the scripture text they would have been distributive. This latter type is illustrated in the first "Spirit Possession" message. That sermon seems to be the nearest approach McMillan made to a textual sermon.

Preachers need to be cautioned against the error of substituting vocal force and showmanship for soundness of ideas and reasoning or for good attention-getting techniques. In one of his Yale lectures on Preaching, William Faunce pointed out the following to a class of theology students:

39Speech Criticism, p. 394.

Any man can secure attention for a few Sundays—but can he hold it for twenty years? Any man can secure absorbing interest by sensationalism in speech or garb or action. . . . Mere exhortation soon becomes wearisome to him that gives and him that takes. Physical fervor will not long serve as a substitute for ideas. Pulmonary eloquence soon exhausts itself and its audience.41

It has been noted earlier that McMillan had great vocal power, but that does not mean that he substituted either physical or vocal fervor for ideas. It would seem, however, that McMillan's sameness of development in the overwhelming majority of his sermons placed a heavy burden upon other aspects of his preaching to hold attention and interest. His fault was surely not sensationalism, but more likely its opposite, sameness. Some critics on preaching would say that McMillan's method of beginning a sermon was weak in itself. His almost unvarying use of it compounded the weakness by adding monotony to a weak method. It will be remembered that McMillan began each sermon with the reading of a scripture text and then introduced the message by a preliminary discussion of the scripture. In sermons, George Wharton Pepper had this to say:

My suggestion is that the sermon should be begun in the way most appropriate to the particular occasion, and that, more often than not, this will require some other beginning than the announcement of a text from Scripture.42

41Faunce, op. cit., p. 169.
In his transitions, McMillan usually marked the course he was about to take, but here again, he fell into a stereotype, and used the same expressions over and over with no attempt at freshness or novelty. Though he often used such transitions as "But this leads me," "I come," "But again," "But this brings me," "And," "which brings us to the 3 [rd] proposition," "For," "Which brings me to the 4 [th] proposition, viz." "For,McMillan learned close analysis in his preaching in his work as a schoolman and teacher of theology. He restated each main head in the sermon as a flashback upon the sermon plan, and thus gave an internal unity and an over-all coherence to the message. It did not, however, keep the multitude of sub-points from becoming vague and separated from the major ideas.

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43These typical examples are from "In Memoriam" and "The Spirit's Possession" #1.

44Faunce, op. cit., p. 172.
which they were intended to support. On the other hand, it might be well if any twentieth century evaluation of John McMillan's sermon organization took note of the fact that on the unhurried frontier the people had probably developed both an ability and willingness to follow an involved sermon plan. But even so, they would have been no less receptive nor grateful if he had chosen to add vitality, freshness, and zest by means of variety, novelty, and simplicity.

McMillan kept his main points of his sermons at three or four. However, his lengthy introductions and conclusions and numerous subpoints within the discussions made many of his messages seem involved and disorganized. For example, in the "Sin Abounding" sermon he divided his scripture text into "two natural divisions." He then subdivided the first half into three points and discussed each one briefly. Next, he made two points of the last half and discussed them. At that juncture McMillan said,

From this view of the text, if appears natural, in the further consideration thereof,
First, to mention some things in which the abounding is discovered by the law; and
Second, to mention some things in which the saving grace of God in Christ does much abound; and then apply the subject.

McMillan then restated the first of the two major points and proceeded to expound it. He made four subpoints in that exposition. Then he restated the second of the two major points and discussed it under six subheads. Finally, he came to the third major division of the sermon and there he
said, "I shall proceed to make some improvement of the subject, and so conclude." He made ten points of improvement and concluded by subdividing and elaborating the tenth point into five other subpoints. The sermon has thirty-two subpoints in addition to its three main heads or divisions. The sermon would have been much harder to follow aurally if McMillan had not kept restating his central idea in each main head and major subpoint. McMillan seems to have been more concerned about the impact of his total body of material than about the amount his listeners may have been able to recall after the sermon's delivery. A better plan of organization probably would have increased both the immediate and the long-range effectiveness of his sermons.

When McMillan built two sermons on the same text he usually kept the major points at three of four for both addresses. In delivering the first installment, he established one or two points and concluded, usually using the last major point as the basis for his conclusion. The second sermon usually reviewed the former points and, proceeding from that point, terminated in a fuller application or improvement.

The Conclusion

McMillan used various terms to designate the endings of his sermons, and there seems to be no difference in the meanings of the various terms as he used them. He spoke of
applying or making application of the lesson of the hour, making some improvements, or simply concluding. He dis­played less uniformity in this matter than in the other areas of sermon preparation.

A large percentage of the manuscripts in the larger body of sermons examined for this study do not contain com­plete conclusions. Contemporary critics were cited earlier in this chapter who testified that McMillan reached the end of his memorized manuscript sermon and then extemporized his conclusion or improvement. It was also shown that he ended many of his sermons in the same manner, often using the same words which he had used many times before. That probably accounts for the fact than many of the extant manu­scripts do not contain conclusions, but end rather abruptly.45

The manuscripts which contain conclusions display variety in length and method of concluding. The length and type of the sermon probably dictated the length and type of conclusion. For example, the "Sin Abounding" sermon is approximately three times the length of "Seeking Christ's Love." The conclusion of the former is also three times as long as the latter. In his Rhetoric, Aristotle said that epilogues or conclusions are made up of four elements: (1) rendering the audience well-disposed to the speaker; (2) magnifying what is important and minifying what is

45Old Redstone, p. 206.
unimportant; (3) putting the audience in the right state of emotion; and (4) refreshing their memories or summarizing. McMillan gave little attention to the first two of Aristotle's elements. However, in his emphasis on the other two elements, much of the first two were implicit in his manner and material.

In the "Sin Abounding" sermon, McMillan said expressly, by way of an internal summary and transition to his conclusion, "And concluding that what has been already said is sufficient to illustrate the point, that though sin hath abounded, grace hath much more abounded: I shall proceed to make some improvement of the subject, and so conclude." Then followed a sixteen paragraph conclusion which contained highly emotional language highlighted by a poem which eulogized divine grace. The first paragraph will illustrate the manner in which McMillan sought to put his audience in the right state of emotion:

If sin be such an evil in its very nature, if its venom is so infectious, its strength so great, and its damning weight so heavy as has been represented; what wonder, then, if believers hate it, groan under it, and long to be delivered from it, and cry out with Paul, Rom. 7:24, O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death? The true believer, having his mind enlightened by the Spirit of God, sees sin, in some measure, in its native colors, looks upon it as the most vile, loathsome, and abominable thing, and therefore hates it, groans under it, as under a

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heavy burden, and mourns bitterly for it, because he is so defiled thereby, and rendered so odious in the sight of a holy God. He hates it for its own sake, for its native vileness and deformity, and not only because it exposes him to everlasting destruction.

That one paragraph, which was only about 5 per cent of his whole conclusion, contained the following words to which McMillan's listeners would react negatively, even as he desired for them to do: sin, evil, venom, infectious, damning weight so heavy, hate, groan, cry, wretched, death, vile, loathsome, abominable, heavy burden, mourns bitterly, defiled, odious, vileness, deformity, and everlasting destruction. Later paragraphs have an equal number of words or terms with positive appeal. Such conclusions did truly refresh the minds of the listeners and set them in the right state of emotion to apply the lesson to their own lives.

The "Sin Abounding" sermon also illustrates McMillan's broadest purpose in a sermon conclusion. It shows that he intended for the message to be stimulation, convincing, and actuating, according to each listener's needs. He addressed the believers and the unbelievers in his audience at great length; appealing to the former to appreciate their heritage and to the latter to evaluate their estate. Then he asked the believers to partake of the communion feast with glee, and the unbelievers to flee to Christ for deliverance and safety.

The following brief excerpts from those larger bodies
of development illustrate McMillan's persuasive purposes and techniques. To the believers, he said:

> How deeply are true believers in debt to sovereign grace for their deliverance from the government and damning weight of sin! O believers, sin shall no more have dominion over you. . . . O, how deeply, then, are you indebted to the superabounding grace of God, which has not only delivered you . . . but has given you a sure title to the glorious inheritance of the saints in light. . . .

To the unbelievers, he said, "O sinners, this is a death indeed--better would it be eternally to be in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace . . . than thus to die." McMillan's appeal to the sinners for action was expressed in this manner:

> If the weight of sin thus pressed the Son of God (as in Gethsemane and on Calvary), how will it press you eternally down into the depths of inconceivable woe and misery, unless prevented by a speedy repentence, and closing in with the blessed Jesus, who chose to bear sin's weight himself, that so his people might escape.

As his final appeal to the believers, he said:

> And let such of you as are under the government of grace bless God for that solemn, sweet ordinance of the Supper. . . . And as the Lord has given us so near a prospect of this ordinance, let every one of grace's children within my hearing, arise, come, see, and enjoy.

Another persuasive technique of McMillan's is displayed in his concluding remarks of the "Sin Abounding" message. He voiced what might be objections to his actuating appeals to the believers and then answered them. He said, "'O! but I am so black and vile,' says one. But see the superabounding grace of God to sanctify you. . . . 'But, O! I am guilty and hell-deserving.' But see the atonement and perfect
righteousness which grace has provided. . . . 'But, O! I am so weak, I fear I shall one day fall by the hand of one or other of my powerful enemies.' But see the omnipotence of grace to strengthen. . . ."

In other sermons, McMillan used a series of well-chosen questions in his conclusions in an attempt to get his hearers to internalize his message and respond as he desired. In "Seeking Christ's Love," McMillan established eight points on the nature and need for Christ's love. Then he said, "From what has been said, let me beseech you all to examine and try yourselves whether you be among the number of Christ's sincere lovers. . . ." Then, in order to guide and further stimulate that examination, he posed nineteen questions for their inner thought. He commented upon some of the questions, answered some, and quickly heaped the others up before their minds in order to overwhelm them into a full and proper confrontation with them. Following those questions, McMillan addressed himself to the "Christless sinners" in his audience, using highly emotional language, and then briefly concluded the sermon with an appeal to the "sincere lovers of Christ" to come to the Lord's Supper. That question method was one of McMillan's favorite ways of concluding his sermons. He used it in "Sin Abounding," "Seeking Christ's Love," "He That Loveth Not Is Lost #2," and both installments of "The Shepherd and His Sheep."

In "In Memoriam," McMillan concluded by making a vivid
description of the crucifixion of Christ and then stating, "Now it is the deep calleth upon deep; deep sufferings in Christ, for deep sorrow in you." As a sacramental sermon, that was an effective way to summarize the sermon and intensify the appeal for his hearers to be impressed by the love and sacrifice of Christ as they communed at His table.

Unique among the fifteen sermons upon which this research focuses is the conclusion to "Behold Your King." McMillan used nearly all of his sermon to set forth the manner and merits of the sinner's acceptance of Christ. Then he gave his listeners a "test" by which he intended for them to determine whether or not they had accepted Christ. He set forth the new-found goals of those who are Christ's and asked them to test themselves thereby. The abrupt ending of the surviving manuscript probably suggests that McMillan thereafter added an extemporized conclusion or "improvement." The brevity of the manuscript tends to confirm that assumption.

In the larger body of McMillan's extant manuscripts, examples of other types of conclusions are evident, but he relied most heavily upon summary, rhetorical questions, objections answered, and vivid, emotional descriptions of the status of the "saved" and "lost" to move his listeners to act upon his appeals. At times he built his conclusion by expanding the last major idea in the discussion and charging it with emotional appeal. At other times he built
his appeal for belief and action upon the whole body of the
sermon, and added many extra appeals from scripture or
experience. He sought to leave no objection unanswered.
Every man who presumes to speak for God should bring to every speaking situation "all of the available means of persuasion" which he is able to command. It is not enough that he should have researched and fashioned compelling arguments, nor that he should have discovered ways to activate the springs of human action. "It is highly important," according to Aristotle, that the speaker should evince a certain character, and that the judges [audience] should conceive him to be disposed toward them in a certain way, and further, if possible, that the judges themselves should have a certain attitude towards him.\(^1\)

Of all public persuaders, a preacher should be preeminently a "good man speaking well." Phillips Brooks says, "The truth must come through his character, his affections, his whole intellectual and moral being. It must come genuinely through him."\(^2\) Through ethical, emotional, and logical appeals, McMillan sought to persuade his listeners to accept and support Presbyterian doctrine.


I. ETHICAL APPEAL

"We preach to persuade men," Behrends affirms, "and the secret of persuasion is the impact of soul upon soul."\(^3\)

Ralph Sockman went so far as to say, "Not what is said, but who says it— that is the consideration which gives weight to what we hear."\(^4\)

The right impression which Aristotle says the speaker must give of himself inheres in what the speaker says, in the impressions he makes while saying it, and in what the listeners know or think about him by reasons of antecedent impressions. During the years 1820 to 1830, McMillan probably did not preach to many persons who did not have antecedent impressions of him. Whatever impact his sermons may have made by reason of their content, that impact was either enhanced or diminished by McMillan's standing in the community.

The antecedent impressions which McMillan earned among his congregation were based upon the experiences he had shared with them over a period of years. He had been the local minister since before many of them were born. He had catechized them, baptized them, attended them in sickness, attended them in sickness,


educated some of them, performed their wedding ceremonies, counseled them during times of crisis, and buried their loved ones. Each of these experiences which he shared with the various ones served to tie him emotionally to them. These antecedent impressions gave McMillan a place of trust, respect, gratitude, and perhaps awe and reverence in the hearts of his congregation.

On the other hand, through his strong leadership in putting down the Whiskey Rebellion, and his refusal to serve the Lord's Supper to those of his congregation who would not vote to end the rebellion, McMillan stirred resentment and criticism in his congregation. Through his involvement in politics, as described earlier in this study, he moved others to oppose him for what they termed "the abuse of his office." In personal contacts and in the pulpit he often spoke bluntly, sarcastically, and critically. Through such behavior he injured friendly relationships and alienated others.5

Yet, in spite of the incidents and occasions when McMillan lost favor and prestige, he exercised positive and wholesome leadership in social, academic, moral, religious,

and charitable enterprises. Having considered all of McMillan's undesirable qualities, Joseph Smith concluded: "I doubt whether there was in the country another man more respected than Dr. McMillan." 6

Apart from the content of his sermons, McMillan made both favorable and unfavorable impressions during their delivery. He was a big man, six feet tall, having a rectangular face, coarse features, prominent nose, thick eyebrows, and a dark complexion. He was impressive, but far from being attractive. 7 "A man of physical vigor," according to George Pepper, "has a great natural advantage in the pulpit, just as he does at the bar of the court." 8 By his robust body, McMillan not only gave his hearers a sense of confidence as to his health of mind and soul, he reminded them of his industry and productivity in working with his hands. They probably listened with greater credence to "a man of the cloth" on Sunday who was equally skilled as "a man


with the hoe" on weekdays.

McMillan also exhibited what might be termed an air of sincerity and humility. Carnahan says that McMillan would have been six feet tall when standing erect but that he rarely stood erect. He "usually walked with his neck and head inclined forward."9 Others have been cited earlier in this study who spoke of McMillan's earnestness, sincerity, and dedication.

On the negative side, McMillan's biographer said of him: "Usually his sermons in their substance and the intensity with which he preached them seemed intended to force the listeners toward goodness rather than to draw them by gentler appeals."10 However, as Guthrie continued to explain, much of McMillan's nature was cast in the stern mold of the frontier. When one becomes better acquainted with the sternness of nineteenth-century Presbyterianism, made even more stern by frontier circumstances, this quality in McMillan no longer seems so undesirable. In fact, it may have been a necessity in working with people of such heritage and training as the Scotch-Irish.

McMillan was impatient, irritable, irascible, and petulant. He, for example, was irritated one Sunday when General


10Guthrie, op. cit., p. 179.
George Morgan drove his family to church in a carriage. According to Joseph Smith, "The Doctor [McMillan] was annoyed, . . . and did not omit in the course of his sermon to intimate that people might travel on the broad road in fine carriages, as well as on horseback, or on foot." What McMillan said cost him the friendship of General Morgan. Howard Crosby says that such undesirable attitudes and actions in a minister "deprive him of half his efficiency by reason of this barrier to easy intercourse."  

McMillan had what to a twentieth century audience would seem to be oddities of dress and manners, but the people of the Chartiers community accepted them. For example, James Carnahan reported:

I have often seen him, when preaching to fifteen hundred or two thousand people, in the open air, under the shade of native trees, take off his coat and neckcloth or stock, in the midst of his discourse, and proceed without exciting a smile in one of the audience.

Probably all of the characteristics of McMillan's

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11 Smith, Old Redstone, p. 204.


platform appearance and manners which would seem undesirable to a present-day critic were somewhat typical of frontier Presbyterian ministers. The ministers of that day and religious faith were in positions of authority and power. They were therefore expected to rule with a strong hand. Carnahan gave more firsthand testimony when he reported of McMillan, "His voice was strong and coarse, and he poured his words out in such a torrent, that it often offended delicate ears." The earlier study of McMillan's audience showed that the listeners were much like their minister in temperament, traditions, and manners. Probably McMillan's interest in religion, his sincerity, enthusiasm, and earnestness tended to motivate his hearers in the building of similar qualities.

McMillan also used ethos in the subject matter of his sermons. "As for the speakers themselves," Aristotle states, "The sources of our trust in them are three, for apart from the arguments there are three things that gain our belief, namely, intelligence, character, and good will.

Intelligence

Intelligence or "good sense" is not to be equated with

15The Presbyterian minister was the moderator of the congregation's session--a judicatory of that church composed of the elders or presbyters and the minister.


17Cooper (ed.), The Rhetoric of Aristotle, pp. 91-92.
the extent of one's formal education. If measured by the standards of his day, McMillan was far above the average of his listeners in education. Indeed, as an educator and theologian he was considered a well-educated man. That fact did not need to be proved to anyone in his audiences. McMillan also had the good sense to present his sermons in words which most of his hearers could easily understand. However, he probably should have made even more concession to those who were nearly, if not totally, illiterate.

A study of the American Revised translation of Christ's vocabulary in the "Sermon on the Mount," according to Batsell B. Baxter, "shows that just under seventy-nine percent of the words were of one syllable, seventeen percent were of two syllables, and just over four percent were of three or more syllables."18 A word study of a random selection from McMillan's "Sin Abounding" message shows that 70 percent were of one syllable, 16 percent were of two syllables, and fourteen percent were of three or more syllables. "A certain grand-looking obscurity is often pleasing to some hearers . . ." John Broadus declares, "who suppose that it shows vast learning, or great originality, or immense profundity."19 Though McMillan used a much higher


percentage of three- and four-syllable words than Jesus did, he still cannot be charged with using a vocabulary that called attention to his educational superiority over his auditors.

McMillan avoided complex forms of argument or reasoning, and he never made reference to his intellectual or academic achievements. He never spoke of having vast experience and he never referred to his qualifications to speak on any subject. He demonstrated that he possessed intellectual integrity and wisdom by the manner in which he handled speech materials.

However, McMillan did not always act with tact and moderation. For instance, in "Knowledge Increases Responsibility" he implied that many of his hearers were stupid. He said:

... I will now proceed to shew what it is that renders the sins of a professing people so exceedingly heinous. ... Senselessness & stupidity under the means of Grace is another crimson, scarlet sin, and one that prevails exceedingly in our day. Alas! for the stupidity that almost universally prevails, etc.

His manuscripts do not reflect a broad familiarity with the interests of the day. He demonstrated little awareness of current events, current thought, or current trends. He may have extemporized on these matters, but there are no references, allusions, or illustrations in the preserved sermons to reflect it.
According to Aristotle, "Character is manifested in choice; and choice is related to the end or aim." There can be no doubt that McMillan's choice of a profession, major life choices, and the choices he called upon his listeners to make were centered upon a worthy end or aim. "If preachers are to speak with authority," Mouzon counsels, "they must speak out of knowledge experimentally established." McMillan's appeals to his listeners to establish a personal relationship with God are repeated against the backdrop of his own consciousness that he is God's and that he is doing the work of God. This is particularly evident in his sermon to young people, "Remember God Early," where he pleads:

> O, be exhorted then, now, instantly, to agree and make up your peace with your Creator, while he is yet waiting to be gracious . . . now he entreats and beseeches you by his ambassadors to be reconciled to him. . . .

Often in the times when his people's faith was sorely tried and was almost ready to fail, their observation of McMillan's confidence must have given them new hope and courage.

McMillan used ethos in his sermons by identifying himself with Christ and Christ's cause. This he did by (a) being

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20Cooper (ed.), The Rhetoric of Aristotle, p. 46.

a spokesman for Christ and His cause, (b) his constant expressions of respect for and reliance upon the Bible as God's holy word, (c) his constant use of scripture to support his assertions and arguments, (d) implying that he was committed to the Christ whom he asked others to obey, and (e) being shocked that any person could fail to love the world's greatest lover--Jesus Christ. In "Behold Your King" McMillan exulted that he was a confidant of Christ who "came into the world that he might dethrone Satan, destroy his works in the souls of men, and deliver them from his cruel tyranny." By blaming Satan as a cruel tyrant and praising Christ as the great deliverer, McMillan was establishing himself as a man to be respected, trusted, and heard as God's messenger. He further associated himself with Christ when in "He That Loveth Not Is Lost" #2 he said, "In order, therefore, if possible, to prevent your eternal and inconceivable ruin and engage you to set your love on Christ supremely, I have chosen to address you from these words. . . ." Later in that same sermon, he pictured all non-Christians as rebels to God, slaves to their lusts, vile, loathesome, having souls that were naked and swarming with the vermin of filthy lusts.

Good Will

If McMillan may justly be judged on the basis of his manuscripts, he made little overt effort to establish good
will through sermon content. That does not mean, however, that he was unaware of the need for good will or that he gave no thought to it. It does mean that he neglected some very promising means of effecting persuasion. Beecher has advised, "The first thing you want in a neighborhood is to get en rapport with the people. You want to get their confidence, to induce them to listen to you." As pointed out earlier, McMillan began early in his ministry to "get en rapport with the people" of his neighborhood by his willingness to sacrifice, to toil with his hands, to confront the Indian raids courageously, to be charitable and helpful, to serve unstintingly in the people's interests, to wait for his salary when his people suffered financial reverses, and by the godly family he led in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord." There was probably little or no doubt among his listeners in the 1820's that McMillan had their interests and well-being at heart. He enjoyed their confidence and probably their good will as well.

When McMillan sought from the outset of his sermon to speak only of spiritual things, he was following what some teachers strongly advocate. As counsel spoken directly to this point, William Merrill states,

> It may be laid down as an absolute law, that, given clear confidence on the part of the hearers

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that the speaker seeks first their spiritual upbuilding, that his main concern is with the spiritual life and not with the propagation of certain views, and he can say anything he honestly believes, and carry the wholesome respect and attention of practically all in the congregation. 23

Yet, if McMillan enjoyed "the wholesome respect of practically all in the congregation," he did not always enjoy their attention. For though it was somewhat customary for individuals to arise and leave the assembly for a while and then return, 24 McMillan looked upon it with disfavor. In the second "He That Loveth Not Is Lost" sermon, he strongly rebuked his listeners for their lack of concern for Christ and religion. He censured them in this manner:

They [mankind] hear a great deal about him on the sabbath, sometimes, but it is such an unpleasant subject that many cannot bear to attend to it with patience, but are under the necessity, in order to ease their minds a little, to go out of the house awhile and spend some time, either in gadding about, or with some one or other of their dear companions in sin, in conversing about something that pleases them better—a sad evidence of the rooted enmity of their hearts against God & religion. Others . . . keep their seats until the whole is over, yet as soon as they get out of the house, their minds are carried away by empty vanities . . . and this is the case with many, nay with most here today, your own consciences are witnesses.

McMillan made little use of direct address in his sermons and some of the references he did use were not likely


24In several accounts of their worship services this habit is described. See Smith, Old Redstone, pp. 152-65.
to build good will. In one sermon\textsuperscript{25} he referred to "my dear young friends" six times, but, within the same message, he also said, "poor, giddy youth," "poor youth," and "0, graceless youth." In another sermon,\textsuperscript{26} he addressed his listeners appealingly with "0, my brethren." He often spoke disparagingly of some as "0, graceless sinners" and "gospel trodden sinners." Though some of those terms were accepted terminology for Calvinistic preachers, they are contrary to the rhetoricians' consensus on how to establish and maintain good will.

McMillan's characteristically harsh and extended denunciations of sin and sinners, with no apparent sorrow that such conditions prevail, is, in Beecher's judgment, foreign to the spirit of Christ. Beecher's incisive words state:

\begin{quote}
It is not the man who has the most profound sense of the glory of God; it is not the man who has the most acute sensibility to the sinfulness of sin; it is the man who carries in his heart something of the feeling which characterized the atoning Christ,—it is he that is the most effectual preacher. . . . It is not the man who is merely seeking the vindication of abstract law, or the recognition of a great, invisible God; it is the man who is seeking . . . to make plain the manifestation of God as a Physician of souls, sorrowing for them, calling to them, and yearning to do them good.\textsuperscript{27}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{25}See "Remember God Early."

\textsuperscript{26}"He That Loveth Not Is Lost" \#2

An analysis of fifteen of McMillan's sermons leads to a conclusion, which is supported by an evaluation of 150 sermons, that he was weak in his over-all use of ethos as a minister. He probably enjoyed a fine relationship with most of his listeners, but he failed to use many effectual means to secure a more agreeable listening audience and a group more dedicated to carrying his ideals and truths into their daily lives. If he had made better use of ethos, he may not have found it necessary to say, "0, methinks the sinners of our day are sermon-proof, and judgment-proof, too. Their hearts seem as if they were case hardened in the furnace of Hell, so that nothing will move them." He went on to say that the strongest arguments and most persuasive motives ever uttered by man would not move them. He even suggested that Christ could plead with tears and show his pierced hands and feet and sinners still would not respond. He might have been surprized at the results if he had held before them more of the same appeals which Christ used and had radiated more of Christ's compassion and love.

II. EMOTIONAL APPEAL

"There can be no doubt that allegience to 'large principles of truth and reason' is the desideratum of oratory," Thonssen and Baird assert, "but all men are not completely

28See "Knowledge Increases Responsibility."
prepared, intellectually and emotionally, to receive the truth in its boldest and least adorned guise; it must often be articulated or identified with feelings that will conduce to the good of the people themselves. . . ."29 McMillan, a New Side, revivalistic minister, sought to use both language and arguments which were surcharged with emotion, in an attempt to convert the unbelievers and confirm the believers.

On each of the two occasions when McMillan preached the "Remember God Early" sermon, the congregation had been stirred emotionally by the death of one of their members within the previous week. After presenting a brief text of scripture which counseled young people to remember God in the days of their youth, McMillan began his message with a direct appeal to security and confidence in the face of death in an undeterminable time and manner. He urged:

My dear young friends, Death, the king of terror is abroad, his darts fly thick around us: we are frequently hearing of someone's acquaintances, perhaps a brother, or a sister, a father or a mother, an intimate companion, or a dear friend, falling by his envenomed arrows, and hurried away into a vast eternity, no more in mortal flesh to visit this weary wilderness, nor converse again with their sorrowful relatives whom they have left behind to mourn their unexpected & untimely departure.

Throughout the remainder of the sermon McMillan appealed to the basic motives of fear, gratitude, respect, honor, justice,

and fair play. He also gave emotional impact to his lan-
guage by using such phrases as: "Death, the king of terror,"
"someone's acquaintances falling by his [Death's] envenomed
arrows," "Grave opens its mouth for those of every age,"
"our days are but a hand's breadth, or vapors which appear
for a little time and vanish away," and "Jehovah, himself is
your enemy." Yet for all of his emotional appeal, his
Journal shows that he did not convert a single young person
on either occasion. 30

Though frightening emotional appeals are to be expected
in the conclusions of Calvinistic sermons, McMillan often
began on such a note, as the "Remember God Early" sermon
quoted above illustrates. In the first "He That Loveth Not
Is Lost" message, the second sentence of the introduction
says, "We are all candidates for eternity—in a little time
Death will put a period to our lives, and while our friends
convey our bodies to the grave, angels will attend our souls
to the blest realm of everlasting glory; or devils drag them
down to the awful abyss of burning Tophet [Hell]." As his
introduction continues, McMillan uses the following
"unpleasant" words or phrases, and repeats some of them two
or three times: "punished," "sink us down to Hell," "doom,"
"denounced," "accursed," "dreadful," "eternal destruction,

30 At least there were no baptisms recorded in McMillan's
Journal.
"heaviest and most dreadful curse," "condemned," "destroy," "condemning sentence," "perish," "fear," "final and irrevocable & inexorable vengence." He also used a few emotionally "pleasant" words such as: "immortal glory," "light," "saints," "glorious inheritance," "faith," and "friend."

However, the pleasant words were few and the nobler motives of love, reverence, gratitude, loyalty, and honor are seldom employed. Even though the sermon is centered on love, it is more of a command to love than a passionate appeal to love.

Such strong appeal to basic motives is characteristic of Calvinism, and represents McMillan's concept of scriptural preaching and teaching. It is also reminiscent of Jonathan Edwards' vivid appeals in such sermons as "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."

Not all of McMillan's sermons have such bold, vivid emotional appeals, however. Only four of them have this degree of emotion. In three others, with only a little less emotion, McMillan warns the "professors of religion" lest they sin against their past opportunities and privileges and thereby cause their damnation to be greater than if they had never known the truth. McMillan shows in his stated plan of development for "Knowledge Increases Responsibility"...
how the emotional appeals are scattered throughout this type of sermon. He divides the body into two parts in this manner:

In treating further on this subject, what I design is:
1. To mention some of those things which render the sins of a professing people so highly aggravated in the sight of an holy God, and particularize some sins which are so in an eminent degree.
2. Speak a little of the punishment which God inflicts for such sins, and then apply.

McMillan listed their sins as (a) levity and looseness bordering on profanity, (b) senselessness and stupidity that almost universally prevails, (c) earthly mindedness, (d) lukewarmness and formality in the performance of religious duties, (e) backsliding, after solemn resolutions and promises, and (f) unbelief. It is these professors to whom McMillan said, "they are sermon-proof, judgment-proof, with hearts case hardened in the furnace of Hell."

A third group of three sermons,33 as their very assigned titles show, reflect McMillan's homiletic views in preaching to the "saved" or the elect. Indeed, one of his major theological difficulties appears in these sermons as well as in the immediately foregoing group. McMillan pictures the "saved" in one place as exotically happy and engaging in what delights them. In the early part of the discussion of "A Helping Spirit," he says, "Those things which were

33The two installments of "The Shepherd and His Sheep" and "A Helping Spirit."
insurmountable difficulties to them [the saved] before, now vanish; the exercises of religion are now their delight, and their souls follow hard after God, when the divine right hand thus upholds them." Contrarily, he says in the first "Shepherd and His Sheep" message that Christ at the judgment will separate the sheep [Christians] from the goats [sinners] and reward them according to their deeds. Then he continues, "In this world, the goats are often hardly distinguishable from the sheep, yea, sometimes even the sheep themselves can hardly tell to which fold they belong..." The latter quote, however, is an attempt to show his auditors who are sheep that even though they have a hard time in this world, heaven will be worth waiting and working for. Apart from his theological conflict, McMillan sought to reach two goals and his method is psychologically sound. To the Christians he says, in effect, "Be confident and comforted because, as sheep, you are blessed, secure, and happy in the secure keeping of your Great Shepherd." By implication he says to the "sinners," "See what you are missing? If you are smart, and if you would like to have all of this security, wealth, peace of mind, comfort in distress, sense of worth which comes from being related to a great Person, and live happily ever afterward, then accept Christ and they will be yours."

After developing his dual purposes fully, McMillan shows wisdom in his conclusion by letting each person decide whether he is a sheep or a goat. He had made it clear that
one could be a baptized professor and still not be a sheep.

In closing the first "Shepherd" sermon, he said:

But again Christ's sheep hear his voice. Now how is it with you? Has this powerful voice ever reached your heart bringing light, life and quickening power with it? . . . Do you yield a cheerful obedience to all his commands, and follow him whither forever he leads you? . . . Let conscience give an honest answer to these questions. And may the Lord enable each of us to examine ourselves, and deal impartially with our own souls, for his name's sake. Amen.

In view of McMillan's aforementioned dual goals, his emotional appeal in these three sermons is a kind of eulogy on the estate of Christ's people. For example, he says in the first "Shepherd" sermon: "In the words of our text he [Christ] describes both the gracious disposition and the happy state of those that are his sheep, which would likewise serve for the support and comfort of his poor despised followers. . . ."

The sermons in the last two groups come close to Aristotle's epideictic speaking. They may be dichotomized into sermons of praise and blame—praise for "the elect," "Christ's sheep," and blame for "the professors of religion" who are not really living in fellowship with Christ and do not delight in doing his will, "the goats."

The five sacramental sermons make up the fourth group of McMillan's sermon types when classified according to their emotional appeal. The sacramental season was an especially important period in the work of a New Side minister. Whereas
the Old Side ministers used this season to rebuke every minute sin among the members and "fence the tables" with such barriers and warnings against partaking of the communion meal unworthily that their sermons were filled with appeals to fear the disfavor of God and the horrors of hell, the evangelistic New Side ministers, in addition to warning against eating the Supper in an unworthy manner and fencing out the unworthy members, also took advantage of the occasion to plead for sinners to accept Christ and thus qualify to eat at His table.\(^\text{34}\)

Accordingly, McMillan used emotional appeal in his sacramental sermons to suit the purpose he had in view on each occasion. For example, in "Seeking Christ's Love" McMillan utilized almost two-thirds of the message in describing Christ's love for mankind and explaining what is involved in man's love for Christ. That part of the sermon is filled with emotionally loaded words based upon the love-story book, Songs of Solomon (1:2). Then as McMillan began his "improvement," he asked the professing Christians nineteen leading questions to motivate their self-examination.\(^\text{35}\)

\(^\text{34}\)The members of the local congregation and Presbyterians from neighboring congregations often communed together. They were "examined" and given lead tokens on Saturday or Sunday morning, if they had not disqualified themselves by breaking any of the ten commandments. The elders took up the tokens after the communicants were seated at the tables. A large collection of these tokens has been preserved at the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia.

\(^\text{35}\)The Presbyterians' great concern about who ate the Lord's Supper was born out of a fear that they would "eat and drink damnation to themselves," as taught in 1 Corinthians 11:29.
Those questions were carefully phrased so as to move the listeners to repentance and rededication.

Subsequently, the last half of the "improvement" was directed to "Christless sinners." Note how he built it on the body of the sermon:

Suffer me, 0 Christless sinner, in consequence of what you have heard, to set the misery of your state before you, and entreat you to come and accept of this Christ as your Beloved, and to put in for a share of his love. Consider then, 0 poor Christless sinner, that while you remain destitute of love to Christ, God's wrath is still burning against you: the flaming sword of justice is always drawn, ready for your execution. . . .

0 sinners, awake, examine into the state of your souls, be convinced of your misery, and fly to Jesus, while there is yet time and space for repentence. . . . 0 put in for a share of his love: it is free love . . . why should your neighbor, your husband or wife, your father or mother, your son or daughter, your brother or sister share in it, and you not? It is as free to you, as it is to them; and it will be your own fault if you partake not of it.

Of the five sacramental sermons, "Seeking Christ's Love" and "Sin Abounding and Grace Superabounding" have such entreaties to the lost. The other three: "In Memoriam," "Behold your King," and "Fear Not, Little Flock" do not beseech the unconverted. This indicates that, even though McMillan repeated his sermons in toto more than once, he probably exercised care in the one he chose for a given occasion. Having built up a backlog of manuscripts, he had some range of choice.

McMillan was a man of fixed beliefs, deep feelings
about those beliefs and deep feelings for people. He noted in his Journal each visit with a relative or friend, the illnesses in his family, the distressing news of a relative's death, and the fact that he gave a nephew a home when the boy's father died.

Being a man of intense emotions, and strong love for the Bible, Christ, and the Church, the full scope of his emotional appeal, particularly on sacramental occasions, cannot be determined from his manuscripts alone. This is made more significant by the fact that many of his manuscripts do not contain the conclusions which he delivered extemporaneously. Previous illustrations have shown how McMillan spoke warnings of impending doom, but he is reported to have been able to move his auditors by deep emotions of love and tenderness.

A listener in one of McMillan's sacramental services in 1830 has given this impression: "So tenderly did the Doctor portray the scenes of Calvary, that every eye ran over, every heart was full ... his voice would mellow to the tenderest tones ... He was all benevolence. Even when allowance is made for bias, it remains significant that a voice that was noted for its bluntness and near harshness

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36This could possibly have been the "Sin Abounding" sermon. He preached it at Chartiers the 2nd Sunday of Feb., 1830, and again in Pittsburgh the 4th Sunday of October, 1830.

could mellow to the point of giving an impression of tenderness and benevolence.

Typically Calvinistic, except for his toning down of the "Total depravity tenet" which is discussed in the next division of this study, McMillan principally appeals to fear, shame, contempt for sin, security, sympathy for Christ, and desire for happiness. He gave less emphasis to the emotions of gratitude, justice, equity, and high ethical standards. In appealing to fear, his primary appeal, McMillan often refers to hell, the abyss, or pit. Hell is very real to him as a place of eternal flames of literal fire. One illustration from the second installment of "He That Loveth Not Is Lost" points this up:

And 0 what tongue can tell, or heart conceive, the awful misery of being found under this heavy curse at the coming of the Lord? Better, ten-thousand times better would it be eternally to wander in the flames of Nebuchadnezer's furnace; yea, better to endure all the tortures that man could inflict, than to be found in this condition: for then the dreadful sentence of "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels," will go forth against them never to be recalled.

McMillan occasionally makes brief references to heaven but mostly only allusions. He often makes a passing reference to the joys, beauty, peace, or glories of heaven, but he does not paint any vivid pictures of it.

Numerous examples could be given for each of the motive appeals McMillan used, but they would have a great deal of sameness. A typical example of each is given instead.
Shame. "He [God] is to be remembered by you with the deepest sorrow of heart and loathing of yourselves for treating your Creator & bountiful Benefactor in the manner you have done. You must take shame. . . ."38

Contempt for sin. "True love to Jesus manifests itself by an hatred to all his implacable enemies. . . . It is an hatred of sin as sin. The gracious soul hates sin for its own sake. . . . even abstracted from the consideration of its dreadful consequences."39

Security. "Nor shall you ever escape [from the Devil's possession] unless Christ Jesus, who is stronger than he, bind him & cast him out and set you free from his awful tyranny & drudgery."40

Sympathy for Christ. "Thus the loving Jesus hung upon the cross, enduring the most exquisite pain, until at last he bowed his head, and yielded up the ghost. O what wonders are here! O, believers, if you now saw the glorious Jesus hanging on the cross, bleeding, groaning, & dying for your sins; and calling you to come and see; if there ever was any sorrow like unto that sorrow which he endured to open a way

38"Remember God Early."
39"He That Loveth Not Is Lost" #1.
40"The Spirit's Possession" #2. The whole message in "Fear Not, Little Flock" is to assure Christians of their security, and so also are the two sections of "The Shepherd and His Sheep."
for your salvation; if you saw the blood streaming from his torn & mangled body, . . . and heard his doleful moans and agonizing cries, would it not deeply affect your hearts, and put you into an adoring, loving, wondering frame?\(^\text{41}\)

**Desire for happiness.** "To add no more, it is a boundless love: we cannot comprehend the height, the depth, the length, the breadth of it, for it passeth knowledge. All his people may swim therein . . . and it will be your own fault if you partake not of it . . . then here is matter of unspeakable joy and comfort indeed to you. . . ."\(^\text{42}\)

**Gratitude.** "Shall this glorious Being, I say, in order to save poor miserable sinners from sinking eternally down into the awful abyss of burning tophet, . . . divest himself of all his glory, take upon him the form of a servant, spend thirty-three tedious years in poverty, contempt & distress, and at last submit to the painful, shameful & cursed death of the cross! and shall those for whose sake he did all of this, scarce think it worth their whiles to spend a serious thought about him? 0, amazing stupidity!\(^\text{43}\)

**High ethical standards.** "Upon the sinner's acceptance of Christ, he receives a disposition to give him the glory that is due unto his worthy name . . . and this excites in

\(^\text{41}\)"In Memoriam."

\(^\text{42}\)"Seeking Christ's Love."

\(^\text{43}\)"He That Loveth Not Is Lost" #2.
him a sincere hatred to everything that is opposed to his glory; therefore, he cheerfully chooses his law, without exception, as the delightful rule of his obedience. . . .

McMillan used emotional appeals often and with a high sense of responsibility. His heavy reliance upon an appeal to the emotion of fear and a corresponding neglect of love and other altruistic motives was typical of Calvinistic preaching, the theology in which McMillan was reared and trained. To a people who had been oriented in a disciplinary religious life, the fear appeal was calculated to get response, and it apparently did. The people were used to being regimented and, therefore, expected firm control by their religious leader.

III. LOGICAL APPEAL

Preachers should avoid the mistake of answering questions which no one is asking or arguing propositions which no one doubts. McMillan strove to avoid those errors. He refused to assume what he thought were unnecessary burdens of proof. "We often belabor men with arguments and appeals," John Broadus warns, "when they are much more in need of practical and simple explanations, as regards what to do and how to do it." 45

44 "Behold Your King."
McMillan surely recognized the need for logical appeal for in one of his sermons he spoke of using "the strongest arguments" and the "most powerful and persuasive motives" to get his listeners to obey God. A man who described himself as "gay, reckless, addicted to youthful follies and wholly destitute of that wisdom which is from above," says of McMillan:

Dr. McMillan was noted for his faithful and pungent preaching, aimed directly at the heart and conscience. Under his thundering voice, clear expositions of truth, and solemn warnings, I was often roused, terrified, and melted to tears. Under his ministry I was made to feel that I was a sinner and that it was a fearful thing to be in a state of condemnation, with the wrath of God abiding on me.

As Neill spoke of McMillan aiming his preaching "directly at the heart and conscience," he may have intended to say that McMillan relied heavily on emotional appeal, but the larger body of testimony suggests that McMillan did use multiple appeals.

Among McMillan's extant manuscripts there are no apologetic sermons. That is, he left no sermons of defense or

46 "Knowledge Increases Responsibility."

47 This self-description is by William Neill, a man who was later won to Presbyterianism and to the ministry by McMillan. See the next footnote for the source of this information.

justification of his faith in God, the Bible, or eternal punishment and rewards. He certainly was qualified to prepare and preach such analytical sermons because he had access to a catechism on the evidences of Christianity,\(^4\) and his own theology lecture notes contain clear evidence that McMillan knew the rules of logic and argumentation. In 1820, McMillan had been devoting his full ministerial work to the Chartiers congregation for twenty-seven years,\(^5\) and throughout those years he had instructed the members in the fundamentals of the faith during the regular periods of catechizing and Bible study. Therefore, McMillan probably felt that there was no need for full-length apologetic sermons, nor even a need for heavy emphasis on strong argumentative discourses.

McMillan did not confront a situation like the one James M'Gready, his former pupil, faced in Kentucky. M'Gready was largely a touring revivalist and camp-meeting preacher, who spoke to people of all religious beliefs, and some with no religious beliefs.\(^6\) Because of that

\(^4\)This catechism was authored by John King, the minister who gave the charge at McMillan's ordination at Chambersburg, Pa., June 19, 1776." See Erskine's article in The Centennial Memorial of the Presbytery of Carlisle, p. 50.

\(^5\)He had resigned his ministry at Pigeon Creek in 1793, in order to devote his full efforts to Chartiers.

heterogenous audience, and because his popular preaching stirred up opposition, M'Gready had to spend a great deal of time defending his faith and presenting Christian evidences. The Deists, for example, sensing a threat to their philosophies, used their influence and resources to discredit M'Gready. In contrast, McMillan did not concern himself with the Deists or with atheists because his congregation was settled and stable in their religious loyalties.

McMillan probably adopted a course similar to the preaching made popular by Beecher some fifty years later. Beecher advised:

Do not prove things too much. A man who goes into his pulpit every Sunday to prove things gives occasion for people to say, "Well that is not half so certain as I thought it was." . . . Do not employ arguments any more than is necessary, and then only for the sake of answering objections and killing the enemies of truth. . . . Take things for granted, and men will not think to dispute them, but will admit them, and go on with you and become better men than if they had been treated to a logical process of argument, which aroused in them an argumentative spirit of doubt and opposition.\textsuperscript{52}

Perhaps McMillan gave his congregation a strong reason for believing the Bible to be God's inspired message by his own acceptance of it and his determination to spend his life proclaiming it. His ethos may have lessened the demand for strong logical appeal. The fact that McMillan was popularly

\textsuperscript{52}Beecher, \textit{op. cit.}, First Series, pp. 124-25.
called "the Father of Presbyterianism in the West" reflects the confidence which men placed in him. During the last decade of his life McMillan was "looked upon as an oracle of wisdom and piety." Another witness said, "It falls to the lot of but few men to exert such a personal influence on the men of their time."

**Theme**

The central theme in all of McMillan's preaching was: "All men at all times and in every way are wholly dependent upon the sovereign grace of God." It is explicit in his theology notes, implicit in most of his sermons, and was often heard thundering from his pulpit. In the "Sin Abounding" sermon, McMillan expressed his theme as follows:

> It [God's grace] restores them [men dead in trespasses and sins] to life, sanctifies all the powers and faculties of both soul and body; and will bring them all, in due time, to a greater abundance of bliss and glory than Adam lost, and confirm them in the full enjoyment of both throughout the boundless ages of a vast eternity.

**Basic premises.** The eight basic premises underlying

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McMillan's central theme were almost identical to the premises of Jonathan Edwards. In a study of Edwards' preaching, Orville Hitchcock extracted the basic tenets of Edwards' theology and presented quotations from Edwards' sermons to illustrate each tenet. Edwards' premises, according to Hitchcock, were:

(1) That the entire truth of religion is contained in the Holy Scriptures; (2) that man is a lowly, mean creature, tainted with the guilt of Adam's sin; (3) that man is completely and universally dependent upon God; (4) that the invisible church is composed of a small number of elect, who will continue to be saints throughout eternity; (5) that these elect become aware that they are saints through divine revelation in conversion; (6) that for the elect the practice of true religion is "sweet" and "pleasant"; (7) that the remainder of mankind are doomed to eternal suffering, which they can escape in part through prayer and repentance, partaking in a sort of "common grace"; and, finally, that God is sovereign and supreme.

Jonathan Edwards was a Calvinist and many of his contemporaries considered him to be the foremost leader in theology. The eight principles listed above, except for the idea of common grace, were, according to Hitchcock, fundamental to


the strictest Calvinism. Hitchcock's quotations from Edwards' sermons clearly show that Edwards did accept the eight tenets as the basic premises for his preaching. That McMillan believed and taught the same basic premises is clearly shown in the references to his theology notes which follow. With quotations from the theology notes numbered to correspond to Edwards' tenets, McMillan declares his beliefs as follows:

1. They [the Scriptures] must be a revelation from God, given to his rational creatures as a rule whereby to direct their practice. p. 10.
2. That there is some inherent evil or vice called original sin which was conveyed from Adam to all his posterity . . . is evident from many passages of scripture. p. 99.
3. Hence we may conclude . . . that means [helps or aids] without the Spirit are of no avail to the salvation of the soul. p. 187.
4. Those whom God, out of his own good pleasure, has chosen and certainly elected to glory . . . shall never totally fall away: . . . every true believer shall persevere unto the end, and shall be saved. p. 204.
5. Assurance, is when a person, from plain scriptural ground and evidence; and from the witnessing of the Holy Spirit with his spirit, is enabled to draw this comfortable conclusion: I believe, and am certain that Christ died for me, and that I shall be saved thro [sic] him. p. 199.

60 Hitchcock, op. cit., p. 221.
61 Thomas Branagan, A Concise View of the Principal Religious Denominations of the United States (Philadelphia: John Cline, 1911), pp. 9-10.
62 The page numbers within the body of quotes are from a typed copy of McMillan's manuscript notes dated May 5, 1806.
(6) They [the redeemed] become more spiritual, serious, and fervent in the performance of duty, and serve God in all things with more love and cheerfulness. p. 203.

(7) Thus it often happens with poor sinners, with whom the Spirit of the Lord is not effectually at work; they are . . . under a sense of the wrath of God due to them for their sin. Their consciences are awakened, accusing them, and bringing their iniquities to remembrance, so that they can find no rest, but are made to quake, and tremble under the awful apprehensions of eternal misery to which they see themselves justly exposed. p. 186.

(8) It is evident from scripture that there is but one God . . . and since all the powers of creatures are derived from him and must therefore be subordinate to him; it is manifest that nothing can make any resistance to his will. pp. 37-38.

Within the fifteen select sermons, McMillan explicitly states seven of the eight basic tenets and implies the eighth. He does not argue the validity or truthfulness of those premises, but presupposes their soundness and reiterates them as accepted propositions. After years of catechizing the congregation and reiterating those principles from the pulpit, McMillan had probably led his hearers to accept those propositions without hesitation or reservations. From those premises and other scripture principles relating to them McMillan fashioned his enthymemes. Before discussing his enthymemes, it will be helpful to examine his use of the basic premises.

McMillan often refers, more or less extensively, to several of his basic premises within the scope of a single sermon. In the first "Shepherd and His Sheep" message, McMillan says:
Another characteristic of Christ's sheep is that they hear his voice. . . . By nature they are unwilling to harken to his voice, even as others [depraved, but Christ's voice is a powerful voice, even the dead hear it [3]; and when it comes thus with power, it brings with its (1) Light. . . . (2) It not only brings light, but also quickening and life [5]; they are thereby made spiritually alive, and quickened to run in the ways of his commandments with cheerfulness and delight [6]. p. 10 of the manuscript.

None can move one step in following Christ until they be made spiritually alive by the infusion of a principle of grace by regeneration [5]. It is an impossibility for a soul whilst dead in trespasses and sins, as all by nature are [2], to tend Godward, Christward, and heaven-ward. . . . But those who have heard the powerful voice of Christ, which brings life, light, and quickening with it [a flashback to premise #3 already noted within this sermon] discern such transcendent glory, beauty and excellency in Christ, as attracts their warmest affections, and causes them to esteem his presence as their chiefest joy, and enjoyment of him as their greatest happiness [#6 as repeated within this sermon]. p. 11.

And however some such as are destitute of true grace, may have some flights, some care, [some] emotions in the outer court of their affections, yet they are entire strangers to . . . Christ. . . . Alas poor souls! instead of following Christ towards the heavenly Canaan, you are steering the quite contrary course . . . therefore, to hell you must go, there to bewail your unaccountable folly, and roar and grit your teeth in intolerable torments [7]. p. 17.

McMillan made distinct reference to five of his basic premises within the foregoing excerpt and referred to three of them twice. By such frequent references to his premises he thoroughly acquainted his listeners with the propositions

63The numbers in brackets refer to the eight basic premises numbered and listed previously in this chapter.
that gave support to his assertions and arguments.

"An enthymeme can be characterized as a syllogism with one or more suppressed parts," according to Walter Fisher, "but its essential nature is as a rhetorical form of argument whose function it is to convince or persuade." However, the enthymeme can perform the function of convincing or persuading only upon certain conditions. "Its successful construction," Lloyd Bitzer affirms, "is accomplished through the joint efforts of speaker and audience, and this is its essential character." Those joint efforts are accomplished in this manner: the speaker's reasoning usually rests on unstated assumptions—the suppressed parts of his enthymemes—"which if an audience grants, the reasoning is persuasive; and if it does not grant this missing part of the reasoning, the audience is not persuaded."

By 1820, McMillan had thoroughly implanted his basic premises and numerous other propositions into the minds of the majority of his congregation. Therefore, he drew "the premises for his proofs from propositions which members of his audience would supply if he were to proceed by question


66Fisher, op. cit., p. 201.
and answer, and the syllogisms produced in this way by speaker and audience are enthymemes."67 When McMillan's listeners accepted his conclusions as required by the premises to which they subscribed, they helped construct the proofs by which they were persuaded.68

Whereas most speakers are urged to "study their audiences in order to discover those probabilities, signs, and examples to which their audiences will assent--those opinions, facts, inferences, attitudes, or values with which their audiences will agree--so that they might construct propositions from them for their arguments,"69 McMillan had utilized a long ministry to construct and imbed in his congregation the necessary principles from which to build his persuasive enthymemes. That probably explains why McMillan did not employ involved arguments or use the scriptures in a more authoritative manner. Unlike the evangelists or roving preachers, McMillan had prepared his congregation to approve his assumptions, facts, inferences, and attitudes, and thereby contribute to their own persuasion.

However, even in the frequent restatement of his basic premises, McMillan was often involved in conflict and inconsistency. As earlier illustrated from his theology lectures,

67 Bitzer, op. cit., p. 408.
68 Ibid., pp. 405, 408.
McMillan believed that all men are born sinners and that they are totally depraved in sin. In one of his sermons (The Spirit's Possession #1) he expresses it in the following manner:

From this passage [Ephesians 2:1-3] it is evident that every one of the fallen Race that cometh into the world cometh into it spiritually dead, destitute of any principle exciting to spiritual & holy actions, empty of grace, & therefore destitute of any principle to oppose the entrance & government of Satan.

As Posey remarked, "Such a doctrine was too stern and unbending for the Western mind." McMillan, at times, attempted to soften that sternness in two ways: one, by stressing the more "pleasant" premises, and, two, by toning down the idea of "total depravity." An example of the latter is obvious in the following passage from "Seeking Christ's Love." Here McMillan begs "Christless sinners" to take the initiative, and continues his plea by saying:

O sinners, Awake, examine into the state of your souls, be convinced of your misery, and fly to Jesus, while there is yet time and space for repentence, lest you be forced ere long to lie down in everlasting sorrow, when there will be no place for repentance, nor probability for escape. O put in for a share of his love: it is free love. O why then should you remain destitute of it? Why should your neighbor, your husband or wife, your father or mother, your son or daughter, your brother or sister share in it, and you not? . . . it will be your own fault if you partake not of it. O be not so cruel to yourselves as to slight this love, and damn your soul: . . . . [researcher's italics].

In one sermon, McMillan speaks of sinners being without "any principle exciting to spiritual & holy actions," and unable "to oppose the entrance & government of Satan." In the other sermon, he asks sinners to "awake," "fly to Jesus," and be assured that "it will be your own fault" if you "slight this love [of Christ] and damn your own souls."

Though McMillan did not adapt his theology lectures, but rather taught his theology students the "total depravity" doctrine, he did adjust his preaching to achieve a greater effectiveness than could have been expected from strict Calvinistic preaching. In so doing, he was reasonably effective as a revivalist, but he was constantly confronted by the inconsistencies and contradictions brought on by his frontier position. Hitchcock says that Jonathan Edwards was confronted by the same problem and that his emphasis of the sinner's choice to be converted set the stage for Edwards' great revivals. 71

Inference

Inference means taking "an intellectual leap in the dark," Baird asserts, "a voyage from the known to the unknown." 72 Through testimony and examples, McMillan relied heavily upon the Bible for proof. Using the Biblical material

71Hitchcock, op. cit., p. 220.

as a basis, he reasoned out lines of thought and courses of action which he recommended to his congregation.

In the second installment of "He That Loveth Not Is Lost," McMillan used several scripture passages (without identifying them) as bases for a series of inferences. In it he said:

... better, ten-thousand times better would it be eternally to welter in the flames of Nebuchadnezer's furnace [Daniel 3:19-23]; yea, better to endure all the tortures that man could inflict, than to be found in this condition [inference]: for then the dreadful sentence of "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels" [Matthew 25:41], will go forth against them never to be recalled [inference]. And while the saints ascend, with their beloved Lord, into the blest realms of everlasting glory [I Thessalonians 4:17], devils will drag them down to Hell, where they must forever be beneath the heavy wrath of the eternal God enraged against their sins [inference].

Oriented as they were in Presbyterian doctrine, McMillan's congregation probably accepted his inferences without hesitation. Moreover, his frequent use of inference and failure to identify the Biblical material from which his "intellectual leap" was made, may have left his listeners unable to detect which was Bible and which was inference.

Deduction

McMillan left no sermons of a highly controversial nature, nor any tightly-reasoned messages which set forth a comprehensive view of Presbyterian faith or doctrine.

McMillan established the practice of making an
assertion—often an assertion drawn directly from the Bible, proving the assertion from the scriptures, and then drawing implications from the established assertion. In his "Sin Abounding" sermon, McMillan asserted "that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."73 After his explanation and amplification of the scripture assertion, McMillan began to draw inferences from it. As to grace superabounding, he said:

1. . . . grace does superabound sin, inasmuch as it does . . . . entirely conquer it, and removes all its dismal effects from elect sinners, as entirely and perfectly as if sin had never been.

2. . . . grace did much more abound in regard of its expense in carrying on its gracious designs in man's recovery.

3. If we consider the [finite] righteousness which sin destroyed, and that [infinite] righteousness which grace restores, it will appear by the comparison that grace did much more abound.

4. It will appear that grace does much more abound than sin, if we compare the covenant head [Adam] which sin ruined, with the covenant head [Christ] which grace has provided.

5. The same will appear if we consider that grace has restored believers to a much nearer relation to God, than that which sin deprived man of.

6. The glory of God is much more illustriously displayed, and the happiness and glory of the blessed in heaven more heightened by grace, than if sin had never entered into the world.

73 This assertion is drawn from Romans 5:20, the scripture text for the sermon. He read the text, affirmed that the apostle Paul had proved it, and then proceeded to use three scripture references to substantiate the assertion for his congregation.
McMillan argued from analogy and contrast to support his first line of argument, but made no appeal to scripture. He argued that sin was like a murderer's hand that kills, but grace, like God who makes alive. Sin, like a bungler's hand, dashes a work of art to pieces, but grace has the power to restore it to its original beauty. Sin, like a mighty warrior, can take captive many victims, but grace has the superior power to conquer the conqueror. His arguments served to amplify and intensify his line of argument more than to prove it. In addition, McMillan used two scriptures to support his second argument, no scripture for the third, four scriptures for the fourth, nine for the fifth, and three for the sixth.

It must be remembered that McMillan's congregation shared his theological and doctrinal views. To them, therefore, the type of arguments and reasoning used by McMillan was probably persuasive. The course which McMillan followed was sanctioned by Aristotle, who said:

We must not . . . start from any and every accepted opinion, but only from those we have defined—those accepted by our judges [audiences] or by those whose authority they recognize: and there must . . . be no doubt in the minds of most, if not all, of our judges that the opinions put forward really are of this sort. We should also base our arguments upon probabilities as well as upon certainties.74

The six major contentions in the "Sin Abounding" address dealt with matters in a realm where certainty is impossible. According to Aristotle's view, "We believe good men more fully and more readily than others: that is . . . absolutely true where exact certainty is impossible and opinions are divided. Because of their attitude toward McMillan, the Chartiers congregation probably felt certain that his deductions were absolutely true.

In those six lines of argument, McMillan followed the reasoning pattern of a hypothetical syllogism. His assumed major premise was this: If God's grace through Christ destroys, overcomes, or supercedes the damning effects of sin, then grace superabounds. His six inferences were his affirmations that God's grace does accomplish those desired ends. Therefore, he would conclude, God's grace superabounds.

In the first "Shepherd" sermon, McMillan used a categorical syllogism. His major premise was this: All souls by nature are dead in sins and can not move toward God until they are made alive by the all-powerful voice of Christ. His minor premise: Christ's all-powerful voice only calls to elect sinners. Therefore, he concluded, only elect sinners can move toward God and heaven.

By arguing the same point negatively, McMillan was able to advance his argument, intensify it, and get the emphatic

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75 Ibid., p. 25.
value of restatement. He implied his major premise: No person dead in the grave can arise and go on a journey. He stated his minor premise: It is as impossible for a soul whilst dead in trespasses and sins . . . to tend Godward . . . and heaven-ward as it is for a dead body, by its own power, to start out of the grave, and perform a long and difficult journey. The conclusion, though unstated, is obvious.

For persons holding to Calvin's doctrine of election, McMillan pursued a valid and persuasive course. The validity and effectiveness of his argumentation must always be measured in terms of his listeners. Since McMillan did not intend for his sermons to be printed or published in any form, he cannot be measured in terms of any audience except his immediate listeners.

Other examples of syllogistic reasoning are clearly visible in "He That Loveth Not Is Lost" #1. McMillan again used two syllogisms—one affirmatively and one negatively, to enforce the same idea. He stated his major premise, implied the minor premise, and then stated his conclusion. His syllogism is as follows:

Major Premise: "Love to Christ implies a loving of everything that bears his image."

Minor Premise: Christians are Christ's people and they bear his image.

Conclusion: "He who truly loves Christ, has also a love to the people of Christ . . . because they are his and bear his image."
His enthymemetic conclusion embraces the whole syllogism as stated. McMillan then confirmed and reinforced his deductive reasoning by reading I John 5:1 as Biblical proof. That scripture says, "Every one that loveth him that begat [Christ], loveth him also that is begotten of him" [Christian]. In using such relevant Biblical proof, McMillan confirmed the soundness of his argument and enhanced his ethical suasion.

In reasoning negatively on the same subject, McMillan made his syllogism complete. It is as follows:

Major Premise: "True love to Jesus manifests itself by an hatred to all his implacable enemies."

Minor Premise: "Now every sin, secret or open, is an irreconcilable enemy to Christ."

Conclusion: "The true Christian's hatred is not exercised against some particular gross acts of sin, but against all sin in general."

When McMillan employed deductive reasoning, he seems to have done so with skill and force. However, he did not often employ it, choosing rather to follow a course which has been recommended by a later homiletic critic. John Hall gives the following counsel to preachers:

Gentlemen, we are heralds, rather than logicians. We announce the Lord's will; many truths of the Word we may fearlessly declare without waiting to argue. They will do their work. Some of them instantly connect themselves with convictions or demands in the human soul, and fit them as the key fits the lock. Some of them get their proof as other Scriptures are explained, as the stones hold one another in the arch.76

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Generalization. If the fifteen select sermons fairly represent McMillan's lines of argument, it may be concluded that he did not employ simple enumeration of cases nor describe a series of specific cases from which to establish a general conclusion. He uses a rather unusual approach to inductive reasoning.

In "Seeking Christ's Love," a sacramental sermon, McMillan asks his hearers to examine themselves by an inductive analysis, hoping they will express their answer in overt actions. He begins his conclusion to the sermon in this manner: "From what has been said, let me beseech you all to examine and try yourselves whether you be among the number of Christ's sincere lovers. . . ." Then McMillan raised twenty questions for his listeners to answer, each within his own heart, with a view to getting them to search their souls and openly respond to his sermon. The questions were so constructed as to get each listener to move from particular to particular until he had reached the generalization that he was or was not living in harmony with the will of God, as Presbyterians interpreted God's will. McMillan began his questioning in the following manner:

Has your breathing after Christ the properties I formally [sic] mentioned? Is it such as proceeds from love to Christ? Is it such as nothing will satisfy but the full enjoyment of himself? Is it produced by the influences of his Spirit upon your souls and does it draw out your souls in earnest longings after the full enjoyment of him in glory? [etc.]
On occasions, McMillan argued from one particular case or implied that many specific instances should cause his auditors to act on a generalization. An example of the former type of argument is found in "Knowledge Increases Responsibility." In it McMillan said, "And if God threatened to punish his ancient church, have we not reason to fear that he will punish us?" He assumed God's unchanging nature as the basis for an argument drawn from one specific instance. In "Remember God Early," McMillan said to his listeners, "we are frequently hearing of someone's acquaintances, perhaps a brother, or a sister, a father or a mother, an intimate companion, or a dear friend . . . hurried away into eternity. . . ." The numerous cases of death which the listeners could recall became specific instances which should lead each person to say, "I too may suddenly die and, therefore, I must get ready to die." Such generalizations were expected to produce personal concern, and McMillan used them to motivate his listeners to respond to his messages.

Analogy. McMillan used many abbreviated analogies, but seldom used lengthy ones. For example, in "Sin Abounding," he said:

For, as the first Adam was the head and representative of all his ordinary posterity, and by his first offence imputed or brought guilt and death upon them all: so the second Adam, Christ Jesus, the head and representative of all his spiritual seed, has wrought out a perfect righteousness of infinite worth. . . .

Later in the same sermon, McMillan used another of his longer
analogies as a stylistic device and as a persuasive form.

In it he says:

So it may be said that sin abounds by the entering of the law, because the law discovers [reveals] the abounding of sin, as light let into a dark room discovers the abounding of dust, which before lay undiscovered.

In "Will ye also go Away?" McMillan used a double analogy to stress a single point in the following manner:

As iron sharpeneth iron, and as a little fire often spreads all around and kindles into a great flame, so the zeal and holy life of one Christian is frequently blest for the quickening of others of the people of God to a greater vigor in their Christian course, and for striking conviction into the conscience of those who are strangers to the life & power of godliness. . . .

Such analogies occur throughout the sermons. McMillan skillfully used them to add interest, clarity, impressiveness and force to his ideas. He used an equal number of contrasts with similar results. In a sense, McMillan made the two "Shepherd and His Sheep" sermons into full-sermon analogies. The parallel language and relationships prevailing between a shepherd and his sheep on the one hand, and Christ and his "Sheep" on the other are kept in full view throughout both discourses. The resulting clarity vindicates the course which McMillan followed.

**Explanation and exposition.** One of McMillan's favorite types of supporting material was explanation or exposition. In nine of the fifteen sermons, McMillan began by explaining the setting of a Bible text, or by analyzing the text itself.
As stated earlier, McMillan assumed that his congregation agreed with his propositions and basic premises. Therefore, he relied heavily upon his exposition of scripture passages to motivate his listeners by a clear, fresh understanding and appreciation of a Biblical passage to stand firm in faith or act upon the truth of the scripture.

McMillan often referred to what the Biblical writers had proved. For instance, he began the "Sin Abounding" message in this manner:

In this epistle [Romans], Paul, that inspired messenger of heaven, by invincible arguments, proves that all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles, have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; and that consequently, by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Having referred to the apostle's "proof" that all men are sinners, and that the law could not justify or save them, McMillan proceeded to explain why the law was given and how that grace was the sinner's hope. The explanation of the Bible text, Romans 5:20, occupied the remainder of a lengthy introduction.

McMillan used explanation in "Fear Not, Little Flock" in this way:

In the passage of which our text is a part, Christ encourages his disciples to cast all their care upon God, and to live in easy dependence on his providence, and to make religion their main business. He here shows that an inordinate, solicitous pursuit of the things of this world, even necessary things, doth very ill become the disciples of Christ. ... And he gives four reasons why the children of God should not make themselves uneasy about these matters.
McMillan's explanation and elaboration of those "four reasons" just mentioned above occupied the remainder of his sermon introduction, which consumed one-third of the manuscript. The six sermons which did not begin with the explanation of a Biblical text did, however, contain much exposition or explanation in the body of the messages. For example, in "Remember God Early" in the second of the three main heads, McMillan said, "What I design is to show you how he [God] should be remembered." In his explanatory introductions, McMillan sought to answer such questions as "Who says what to whom, and for what purpose?"

Narration and description. Though McMillan used few illustrations of his own creation or observation, he utilized exposition of scripture incidents in such a way as to achieve a kind of narration. Observe the manner in which he demonstrated this technique in "Will Ye Also Go Away?" He said:

Our blessed Lord, having fed the multitude with five loaves and two small fishes, they were convinced that he was that Prophet that should come into the world; and were going to take him by force and make him a King; and when he went over to the other side of the sea, they followed him, and manifested a great attachment to him. But when he began to preach spiritual, soul-searching doctrines to them . . . they went back and walked no more with him. Upon this occasion, Christ addresses this solemn question to the twelve, "Will You also go away?"

By phrasing the scripture record in his own words, McMillan hoped to lead his listeners to visualize the events and thus he enhanced their perception by getting them to participate
in the event being discussed.

In "The Spirit's Possession" #1, McMillan used his scripture text as a basis for describing a house that had been swept and made tidy, in order to get his listeners to imagine their hearts had been cleansed from "filthy occupation by unclean spirits" and made ready for the Lord's indwelling. In the first "Shepherd" sermon, McMillan explains the judgment scene of Matthew 25:31-46 by describing how Christ is to sit on his judgment seat and divide the "righteous sheep" on his right hand from the "wicked goats" on his left hand. McMillan also achieved a descriptive vividness by his use of language. To warn his auditors against disinterest and impertinence, he said, "Tho' Sinai's thunders roar, and its lightnings flash Jehovah's vengeance against the sinners' face--tho' a glorious, tho' once bleeding, weeping Jesus earnestly invites, yet our assemblies meet and depart almost as little moved, as when they came together."77

Allusions. McMillan gained understanding and acceptance of his ideas through allusions to Bible events, persons, and situations. As he discussed awakened sinners in the first "Shepherd" sermon, he spoke of their having "some flights, cares, and emotions in the outer court of their affections." That was an allusion to the outer court of the temple in

77"Knowledge Increases Responsibility."
Jerusalem. During the period of Jewish worship under the law of Moses, a Gentile could go no closer to the sanctuary than the outer court or court of the Gentiles. If McMillan's listeners were sufficiently informed in the Bible, his allusion to the "outer court" as applied to one's affections for Christ would be a meaningful way to describe a "sinner" who was trying to follow Christ at a distance or from afar.

In the sacramental sermon, "In Memoriam," McMillan discussed the gravity of an attitude of complacency on the part of professing Christians who were unrepentant about their sins. He warned them in this manner:

0, how treacherous have your hearts been to Christ; how blood-thirsty have your sins been against him, in pressing him down in the garden, and nailing him to the cursed tree. How are you able to look to Gethsemane or Golgotha with unconcerned hearts or dry eyes? Were not your sins the principal actors in the horrid tragedy! . . . Blame none so much as them [your sins]; they were the Judas who betrayed him, the Herod that mocked him, the Pilat that condemned him, the soldiers that pierced him. . . . Could they have been guilty of a more horrid crime than murdering the Lord of glory? 0, when will your hearts melt, & your eyes weep, if not now? Never was there such a moving sight put before your eyes as the Lord of glory pierced & slain by your sins. Now it is the deep calleth upon deep; deep sufferings in Christ, for deep sorrow in you.

By utilizing allusions, McMillan sought to set before his listeners' minds the "horrid crimes" of well-known Bible personalities and, by implying that his listeners were associated with those crimes by their own sins, called for conviction and repentance.
Use of Evidence

Like John Witherspoon, whose lectures on eloquence and composition he had heard, copied, and studied, McMillan relied chiefly upon a logical presentation of ideas and Biblical proof for his logical appeal. 78 "The religion of mankind ought to be delivered in the plainest manner, obvious to the capacities of all;" McMillan had said concerning the scriptures: "their plainness is such as we would expect from a divine teacher really concerned to instruct the world." In his own teaching, McMillan sought to imitate that quality in scripture which he thought was so necessary to good teaching. In addition to his straight-forward manner of logical orderliness, Joseph Smith said, "He had a plainness of style and language." 79

Biblical proof. It is difficult to formulate a definite and final conclusion about McMillan's use of Biblical proof, because he preached from full manuscripts while others are only extensive notes for extemporaneous preaching. In the three longest manuscripts among the select fifteen, 80


79 Joseph Smith, *Old Redstone*, p. 207.

80 "The Shepherd and His Sheep" #1 and #2, and "Sin Abounding and Grace Superabounding," considered in that order.
McMillan used twenty-eight, thirty-six, and fifty-seven scripture references respectively. In the shortest manuscripts, he used as few as five direct quotations from scripture, but he alluded to several others or used scripture phrases to express his own sermon ideas. On the average, McMillan used twenty-one scripture passages per sermon. One of the short manuscripts, "Knowledge Increases Responsibility," shows how McMillan used explanation, amplification, and argumentation centered on the text, Amos 3:2. The manuscript has twenty-one "etceteras" to indicate the places where McMillan extemporized. Five of those "etceteras" were used to discuss scripture passages which are only listed in the manuscript.

Another abbreviated manuscript, "In Memoriam," shows how McMillan, in a sacramental sermon, intensified emotions already felt by his listeners. In it, he makes no attempt to prove new truths. In addition to quotations, allusions, and Biblical phrases borrowed to express his own ideas, McMillan used Biblical personalities to illustrate his ideas. For example, in the second "Shepherd and His Sheep" address, he used the following incident to declare the Christian's good fortune under God's government. He said:

If the queen of Sheba had cause to say of Solomon's glory, "Happy are thy men, happy are thy servants that stand continually before thee, and that hear thy wisdom" [I Kings 10:8]; then sure they that stand continually before God, and see his glory, and the glory of the Lamb, are somewhat more than happy: to them will Christ give to eat of the
tree of life which is in the midst of the paradise of God [Revelation 2:7]: and to eat of the hidden manna [Rev. 2:17]. Yea, he will make them pillars in the temple of God, and they shall go out no more: and he will write upon them the name of his God, and the name of the city of God, new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from God, and his own new name [Rev. 3:12-13].

In the foregoing reference, McMillan referred to an Old Testament event, quoted a scripture to point up the idea he wished to draw from the event, used the event in an analogy to stress his own message for his congregation, and then quoted four New Testament passages to clarify, amplify, and prove his idea. A large portion of nearly every sermon is occupied by this type of Biblical material. However, McMillan failed to draw from his scriptural references all of their available means of persuasion for his listeners. He often did not tell them the location of the passage nor even give a clue to indicate that he was alluding to scripture. Such a practice does not seem wise, in view of the fact that McMillan's congregation had great respect for the authority of the scriptures. The Biblical proof in his sermons would have been much stronger if he had identified his passages, told something of their context and intent, and elaborated upon their relation to his sermon ideas.

Though McMillan quotes parts of several scripture

81 All of the italicized words are from the passages listed in brackets. Instead of quoting them in the first person as Christ first expressed them, McMillan reported them in the third person.
passages. In his "Sin Abounding" message and gives the place where each passage may be found, he makes no explanation or application of them, and he fails to draw together the strength of the several passages to support or prove his ideas. In the said sermon, he says, for example:

God the Father, by a judicial act of the court of heaven, acknowledges them for his children [a paraphrase], I John 3:1. And if children then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, Rom. 8:17. . . . They are heirs of a kingdom, Luke 22:29. Of an inheritance which is incorruptable, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them, I Peter 1:4. Yea, they shall sit down with Christ upon his throne of glory, Rev. 3:21. And shall inherit all things, for all things are theirs, saith the apostle, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are theirs, I Corinthians 3:21-23. And all things shall work together for their good, Romans 8:28.

None of the scripture passages is quoted in full. Some are paraphrased, some abbreviated, some alluded to, and all are reported in the third person, though the Bible gives them in the first person.

Unless McMillan's congregation knew their Bible extremely well, many of them did not know it when McMillan used Biblical phrases to express a series of ideas strung together by himself. Doubtless, many of his listeners did not know that he was using scripture at times. For a man who leaned so heavily upon Biblical evidence for proof, he should have drawn from it greater support.
IV. CONCLUSIONS

Preaching in Washington County, Pennsylvania, in the 1820's called for sermon materials adapted to a people of modest educational training. McMillan knew his listeners unusually well, and he sought to establish them in what he conceived to be the will of God. He saw to it that each sermon contained information, stimulation or inspiration, and a call for action.

After many years of preaching in the same local setting, McMillan enjoyed a high degree of respect for his character, good judgment, and good will. His sincerity, devotion to God and the people, and readiness to serve his community in every hour of need, gave him a strong ethical appeal in the minds of his congregation. Though he was not without undesirable qualities and attitudes, they were far outweighed by favorable ones.

McMillan made large and strong use of emotional appeal. He stressed his appeals to fear and supplemented them with appeals to shame, hatred for sin, security under God's providence and protection, desire for happiness, and sympathy for Christ's suffering. He used those appeals intelligently and responsibly, even though to a present-day critic they seem excessive. His strong emotional appeals were characteristically Calvinistic and effectively adapted to his listener's needs and expectations.
McMillan united his emotional and logical appeals. He relied almost exclusively upon the Bible for his supporting materials. His authority, illustrations, analogies, and specific instances were drawn from the scriptures alone. His strength and effectiveness in preaching lay in his listeners' acceptance of the Bible as God's inspired, infallible word. Because of that prevailing attitude toward the Bible, McMillan did not feel the need to use other source materials nor to strive for large bodies of logically consistent argument. Certainly, to any other type of audience McMillan would have had a very limited appeal. His sermons lack breadth, novelty, variety, or evident concern about events in the daily life of his congregation.

In building his sermons, McMillan made an extensive explanation of his sermon text, outlined his proposed plan of development, and proceeded with a series of tedious sub-points in support of well-chosen main headings. In developing his arguments, his favorite method was to make an assertion from a Biblical text, use other scripture passages for amplification, intensification, and proof, and then ask for a favorable response from his listeners. He also appealed to his listeners through narration and vivid description.

McMillan experienced inner conflict and homiletic difficulty because of the West's unfavorable attitude toward one of the basic tenets of strict Calvinism. In his theological
lectures, catechizing periods, and in some of his sermons, McMillan stressed the total depravity of the sinner. In other sermons, he urged his listeners whom he called "Christless sinners" to take the initiative in their salvation, and assured them that if they were lost it would be their own fault alone. These inconsistencies caused weaknesses in McMillan's logical appeal.

In summary, McMillan should be judged effective in his use of proofs, except for three areas of weakness. First, he relied too heavily on his appeal to the emotion of fear. However, in a situation where both speaker and listeners share a common belief in a fear-stressing doctrine, this weakness is ameliorated. Secondly, McMillan relied so completely on the Bible for proof and for every other kind of supporting material that his preaching lacked brilliance, freshness, and breadth. Here again, however, the fact that his congregation shared his feelings for the scriptures probably justified his emphasis. Thirdly, the conflicting emphasis which McMillan gave to the premise of total depravity created problems in his logical proofs.
CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS AND EVALUATIONS

I. CONCLUSIONS

A revivalism in American religious life sprang up and flourished during the first half of the eighteenth century. William Tennent and his Log College played a major role in that movement which culminated in the First Great Awakening. Upon the death of Tennent in 1745, a moral and religious decline set in. After more than a generation of decline, the Second Great Awakening began to develop.

That second religious reawakening had two distinct phases. The first, or eastern, phase centered largely in the Congregational and Presbyterian colleges along the eastern seaboard. Yale College and the College of New Jersey were revival centers. Graduates from those schools moved westward to kindle revivalism and establish schools out of which the second, or western, phase of the Second Great Awakening sprang. John McMillan was one of the most

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outstanding of those revivalists.\(^3\)

The background study prerequisite to a rhetorical study of John McMillan's preaching from 1820 to 1830 has brought to light many facts about an era of religious public speaking not hitherto collected into one body. Probably this assimilation, correlation, and interpretation will furnish direction and encouragement for further study of American religious public address.

John McMillan was a link between "immigrant" and "home grown" Presbyterianism; between the cultured, comfortable way of life on the eastern seaboard and the raw, rugged life on the western frontier; between the austere, unbending Calvinism of the Old Side and the heart-melting revivalism of the New Side; and between the educational polish of the east and the home-spun educational offerings in the west. McMillan's chronological and geographical placement in the stream of American religious history probably gives him a prominence out of proportion with his personal endowments or contributions.

A recent summary evaluation of McMillan by a leading Presbyterian historian lends confirmation to the judgments stated above. Edward Burgett Welsh, in a personal letter, dated February 28, 1964, wrote the following appraisal of McMillan:

\[^3\text{Ibid.}, \text{p. 135.}\]
He was not strong as an original or creative thinker. His theological lectures are rather commonplace, stereotyped Calvinism. . . . In the pulpit he was not so winsome an evangelist as his neighbor, Joseph Smith. He had a tremendous voice. The legend is that once when preaching in the open air and with a favorable wind he was distinctly heard a mile away. His great strength as a frontier leader was in his common sense, his ability to deal with men, and his uncanny insight into the locating of churches where future church population would make them strong. He was preeminently a church statesman. A man of independence and courage to stand by his convictions, he was a power for righteousness in a rough frontier society. In the Whiskey Insurrection of 1794, it was he, more than any other, who saved Western Pennsylvania from a bloody conflict. He far outlived all his contemporaries among the ministry of that area, and, in his later years, became almost a legend.4

Prior to his birth, John McMillan's parents vowed that if they should be granted a son, they would devote him to the ministry. Because of their loyalty to that vow and the sacrifices which it motivated them to make, McMillan was given educational and religious training far superior to many young men of his generation and status. He was also the ward and student of some of the most intelligent, pious, dedicated teachers in that era of American religious and educational history.

McMillan was a serious minded person throughout his developmental years and took proper advantage of his opportunities. In addition to his unusual religious and educational

4Welsh has been for many years a leading Presbyterian historian. He served on the Historical Committee of the Synod of Ohio. He presently lives at 603 E. University Street, Wooster, Ohio.
opportunities, he was natively endowed with a good mind and a wonderfully developed, healthy body. It seemed to many that nature and nature's God had wrought a specially qualified minister-teacher for the untamed wilderness, at the dawn of the new nation's history in 1776.

From the outset of his career on the frontier of Western Pennsylvania, McMillan gave good evidence of his sincerity, unselfishness, intelligence, love for humanity, willingness to work and sacrifice, and of his moral, mental, physical, and spiritual fiber. Long before the turn of the century, McMillan was held in high esteem by the great majority of his neighbors, and by the members of his presbytery and synod. He was a leader in every major sphere of his community's life.

By the time McMillan entered the 1820 to 1830 decade, his character, sagacity, and goodwill were sufficiently well established and known for his ethical suasion to be at its zenith. Even though there were probably several persons living in the vicinity of Canonsburg who did not believe the Bible nor profess religion, McMillan felt that he had been adequately diligent and thorough in his teaching of the Bible and theology so that he needed not to preach whole sermons in defense of his faith.

In addition to his ethos stemming from antecedent impressions and current position and status, McMillan further enhanced his ethical appeal by the manner and content of his
preaching. He urged his hearers to give God's word their earnest attention and then obey it. He regularly proclaimed the benefits which accrue to those who, out of true wisdom and character, accept the government of God for their lives. In contrast, he pictured the "Christless sinner" as one who, with base motives and character, is a fit subject for misery and doom.

McMillan's daily life among his congregation gave them an opportunity to see his good sense in the conduct of all phases of his life as a leader of men—in education, politics, business, and in religion. His sagacity and good will were so well demonstrated in that manner that he was in rapport with his listeners even as he rose to speak to them from time to time.

In logical appeal, McMillan relied almost wholly on Biblical authority, orderly arrangement, and sound reasoning. Throughout the early pages of his theology lectures, McMillan made an extensive argument for the divine origin of the Holy Scriptures and boldly stated that the Bible revelation meets all of the needs of mankind from the lowest capacity to the greatest. Out of that confidence in the divine inspiration of the Bible McMillan made all of his arguments and sought all of his authority. His limited reading in secular literature necessarily limited his use of authority almost exclusively to the Scriptures.

In addition to quoting, reading, and alluding to the
Bible for authority, McMillan derived logical appeal from his explanation of Scripture and from the cumulative force of many passages linked together to expand instruction. His Biblical illustrations, allusions, analogies, and paraphrases gave him added logical proof.

McMillan used a strong, well-balanced emotional appeal when viewed in the light of his generation and religious affiliation. He trained himself to be highly evangelistic. He urged sinners to flee to Christ in order to have the rich benefits of his boundless love and providence. He insisted that the acceptance of Christ is easy, pleasant, and rewarding. His motive appeals on the happy side were to peace, happiness, security, love, loyalty, unselfishness, service, freedom, purity, fellowship, companionship, feasting, quietness, and eternal life.

Hell with all of its horror, torments, agony, and endless suffering were set vividly before the sinner by McMillan. The Christless sinner, according to him, was base, defiled, filthy, sick, deserving punishment for a multitude of sins—verily a crawling worm. To sinners, he appealed to the motive of fear, pain, loss, bitterness, anger, hate, bondage, vileness, hunger, deceit, enmity, and eternal darkness. He declared that for one to continue in sin was senseless, hopeless, and made him deserving of eternal misery. The reason that is the case, he said, is because sinners will not accept the free grace of God to enrich and deliver them.
For greater emotional appeal, McMillan was skilled in his use of emotionally loaded words, in vivid description, in allusions, in employing figures of speech, in explaining the emotive language and incidents of the Bible, and in identifying himself with the blessed people who have accepted the redemption of Christ.

McMillan believed a person should hate sin for sin's sake and not only because it will damn his soul. Likewise, the Christian should love righteousness and should love righteous people because they are righteous; not because they are naturally lovable and affable.

McMillan prepared his sermons well, learned them to the point of memorization, and delivered them with vigor, as though he were speaking extemporaneously. He employed an involved style and did not use a consistent set of symbols to keep his ideas and transitions clearly before his listeners' minds. He was so vivid in description and explanation that his hearers had no difficulty in "seeing" heaven or hell. His use of simile, metaphor, symbolism, personification, allusion, exposition, analogy, illustration, specific instance, and suggestion enabled him to make abstract things seem concrete. He made wide and effective use of rhetorical questions to give point and power to his sermons. This was especially true in his conclusions.
II. EVALUATIONS

McMillan’s Virtues, Assets, and Techniques of Strength

One, his native strength of mind, body, and spirit gave McMillan a wide area of service for a long span of time. His stamina, intelligence, and nature were such that he belonged to the community and to the human race; not just to his own family and personal interests. Those same qualities gave him an effectiveness in his labors which excelled his talents, skills, and learning.

Two, his educational and religious training, though not remarkable by modern-day standards, were superior in his time, and were suited to the particular place where he lived out his long life of service. There were men with better university training for professions among the more cultured people of the eastern seaboard, but there were no better trained ministers or educators to serve on the isolated frontier with its danger, its illiteracy, its iniquity, and its misery.

Three, his convictions were deep-seated and healthy. His motives were singular and noble. His character was consistently above reproach. At times his judgment was questioned; his integrity never was doubted. These all combined to give him an inner peace, strength, and confidence which could weather the onslaughts that an undisciplined frontier presented. Such character also gave him the urge to
communicate the truth as he saw and believed it. Though the years mellowed him some, they never modified his stand for his views.

Four, McMillan was conditioned to be an evangelistic, revivalistic preacher. In addition to his local area of preaching, he was effective in helping mission points, destitute areas, and in giving new life to older churches where he conducted revivals.

Five, his greatest techniques of strength were his versatility in adapting the scriptures to his message; his effective use of imagery, allusion, rhetorical questions, emotional word choice and phrasing, Biblical language to express his own ideas; and skill in the effective delivery of memorized material as though it had been extemporaneous.

Six, he found a place where his training and temperament fitted him to serve and he chose it and stayed with it for sixty years. He had established in the community a feeling that he belonged to them. That made them trust him, respect him, and honor him as a stable leader of integrity.

Seven, his service was wider than his own pulpit and classroom. He taught others who became teachers and preachers and thus greatly extended his influence and fruit. He taught others who became renowned public servants and business men. He was a public speaker who had shown himself to be public spirited and a tireless public servant. That, in turn, made a public speaker of modest qualifications to be
far more important in his immediate and long-range influence than a study of his manuscripts alone could possibly reveal. Truly, to evaluate a preacher, one must evaluate the whole man in his whole milieu.

**McMillan's Weaknesses and Defects Which Hindered Him**

One, his voice, though strong and able to withstand extended service, was not pleasant. It must have caused some first impressions to prevent him from having a second opportunity to teach the dissatisfied.

Two, his surly, brusk manner and appearance was a liability for a preacher, even in frontier days. That would not be true of everyone, even of a majority, but it would be true of some.

Three, his convictions not only made him uncompromising, at times he was unsympathetic and unkind. Being a well educated man for his day, some people must have felt that he exhibited a superior attitude. For a public speaker who remains in the same locality for half a century, that would be a liability with some persons.

Four, his reading habits being confined to the Bible, theology materials, and closely related subjects left McMillan ill-equipped to enliven, ornament, and illustrate many of his sermon ideas, and he therefore lost impressiveness, emotive power, and the influence of being truly sagacious.
Summary Appraisal

Judged on the basis of his total influence: his breadth and longevity of service; his humanitarian, moral, educational type of service; his wholesome motives and manner of life in service; his effectiveness in producing other public servants, both civil and religious; his earned place in the religious and social histories; and his extant sermons and lecture notes; one can safely conclude that John McMillan deserved this study of his work as a public speaker; deserves to be remembered as a link in the chain of American public address; and deserves consideration as a worthy contributor to the early history of our nation.
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D. THESES AND DISSERTATIONS


Harold S. Baker was born in Franklin, Tennessee, July 30, 1918. He received his elementary and high school education in Williamson and Davidson County, Tennessee. For twelve years he worked in various clerical positions, worked in an aircraft factory during the years of World War II, and entered David Lipscomb College to prepare for the ministry. Upon the granting of his B.A. degree, he was employed as a faculty member of his alma mater. Two years later, 1954, he took a leave of absence to preach for the Convention Street Church of Christ in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and earn his Master's degree in Speech at Louisiana State University. Having earned that degree in August, 1956, he returned to his teaching post at Lipscomb and preached for two churches in the Nashville area; one year at Grace Avenue, and four years for Lawrence Avenue.

In 1961, he returned to the same church in Baton Rouge as minister and entered upon his doctoral studies. Along with his other duties, he has served in two six-week evangelistic campaigns in London and Aylesbury, England.

In 1964, he resumed his duties on the faculty at David Lipscomb College and began preaching for the Donelson Church of Christ.
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Major Field: Speech

Title of Thesis: A Rhetorical Study of the Preaching of John McMillan from 1820 to 1830

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