

Front was not as united as Presbyterians claimed. For instance, Sen. Richard Johnson, a devout Kentucky Baptist, was bitterly opposed to Presbyterian efforts to stop mail delivery on Sundays. Peter Cartwright, the Methodist evangelist, “scorned A.H.M.S. interlopers from ‘the eastern states where they manufacture young preachers like they do cabbages in hot houses’” (77–78). Even though the Benevolent Empire produced massive amounts of religious literature, Methodists and Baptists generally preferred to use their own denominational publishing houses. Exploring how these relations evolved and eventually dissolved would have added another dimension to an already fine work.

All told, Matthew Smith’s study of nineteenth-century Cincinnati is a valuable contribution to our understanding of nineteenth-century urban America and the rise of religious pluralism in the United States. By the end of Cincinnati’s Bible War, most residents in the Queen City could agree that, even with their religious differences, they had a thriving community where “the spires still point to heaven.”

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***Catholics Without Rome: Old Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Anglicans, and the Reunion Negotiations of the 1870s.* By Bryn Geffert and LeRoy Boerneke. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2022. xxiv + 536 pp. \$150.00 hardcover.**

Using LeRoy Boerneke’s 1977 dissertation as a jumping off point, Bryn Geffert tackles the subject of “Catholics without Rome” and their relationship to the modern ecumenical movement. Geffert revised the dissertation’s arguments and incorporated new sources such as Mark Chapman’s *The Fantasy of Reunion: Anglicans, Catholics, and Ecumenism, 1833–1882* (Oxford University Press, 2014) and Thomas Albert Howard’s *The Pope and the Professor: Pius IX, Ignaz von Döllinger, and the Quandary of the Modern Age* (Oxford University Press, 2017). The dogmatization of papal infallibility 1870 catalyzed ecumenical activity around the Old Catholic Church and the Bonn Conferences. A minority of Roman Catholic theologians, led by Ignaz von Döllinger, could not accept papal infallibility. Those opposed to what they saw as the novelty of Vatican I designated themselves as “Old Catholics,” faithful to the apostolic faith. Despite never officially joining, Döllinger helped form the Old Catholic Church, which immediately began seeking ecumenical partners. Old Catholics, Anglo-Catholic Anglicans, and the Orthodox saw Roman Catholics, with their claim to papal infallibility, as schismatics and sought possible fellowship with each other on the basis of claimed apostolic succession.

Döllinger helped organize ecumenical conferences in Bonn with the lofty goal of reuniting the Catholic Church on the basis of the supposedly unified faith of the Church Fathers. These attempts, Geffert argues, inaugurated the “modern ecumenical age” (xi). The Anglo-Continental Society and the Russian Orthodox Society of Friends of Spiritual Enlightenment sent representatives to Bonn and worked with the Old Catholics to reunify the Church. Geffert traces the ecumenical efforts surrounding

Old Catholicism and the Bonn Conferences through the work of Döllinger and other major figures including E. B. Pusey, Aleksandr Kireev, and many others. The Bonn conferences began with great promise; with the help of St. John of Damascus, participants even managed to settle the thorny *filioque* debate to the satisfaction of both sides.

Despite promising dialogue, the reunification efforts fizzled out relatively quickly after 1875. Döllinger never organized a third Bonn Conference. Geffert argues that the reunion efforts failed for several reasons. First, Anglicanism and Orthodoxy were riven by internal divisions. As a result, there was no individual or body capable of representing all of Anglicanism or Russian Orthodoxy, let alone Orthodoxy as a whole. Neither did any person or group have the authority to make doctrinal decisions or reunion agreements.

Geffert categorizes Anglicans into Broad Church, Anglo-Catholic or High Church, Protestant or Low Church, and Evangelical or radical Protestant parties. Anglo-Catholics were often the most interested in reunion efforts. Döllinger, the Old Catholics, and the Russian Orthodox tended to see the Anglo-Catholics as the only possibly legitimate Catholic branch of the Church of England. Even among Catholics and Orthodox favorably included toward Anglicans, however, the issue of apostolic succession and therefore the validity of Anglican orders continued to dog reunion negotiations. Broad Church and Protestant Anglicans often openly opposed reunion efforts that would potentially Catholicize the Church of England. Pusey, despite his ecumenical efforts, bitterly opposed reunion with Old Catholics, and especially the Orthodox, largely because it would set another barrier between Anglicans and Rome.


The section on divisions within Anglicanism could be improved with greater attention to differences among factions. Geffert treats “High Church” as nearly synonymous with “Anglo-Catholic,” when in fact the two parties could differ greatly in origin, belief, and practice. Related to this, Geffert would be better served by explaining the sociopolitical and religious logic surrounding the growth of late nineteenth-century English anti-Catholicism, as opposed to providing a series of “exhibits” (300–301). Leaving the Anglicans, the Russian Orthodox also fought bitterly among themselves over how much doctrinal, ritual, and cultural agreement was necessary for reunion. Kireev, who argued for minimal agreement, was in the minority. Additionally, Anglicans, the Orthodox, and the Old Catholics disagreed among themselves on how to define the church and who had the authority to do so.

Meanwhile, Balkan rebellions against the Ottoman Empire beginning in 1875 and the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 disrupted ecclesiastical concerns. This was especially true given that Britain and France opposed Russian interests in the Balkans. The appointment of Konstantin Pobedonostsev to over-procurator of Russia’s Most Holy Synod in 1880 further chilled ecumenism. For Pobedonostsev, church union could only be based on ethnic unity, not dogmatic agreements.

While nationalists such as Pobedonostsev undermined ecumenism, nationalism also animated the Bonn reunion efforts. Growing nationalism of the nineteenth century fed anti-Roman Catholicism. This translated into support for the Old Catholic Church and a desire to unite in the face of the trans-national Roman threat. For Döllinger and others, only national churches could negotiate and reunite free from Roman control. However, most ordinary people simply did not care about church reunion. Ecumenical enthusiasm remained largely confined to the ivory tower. In an age of growing secularism, national identities increasingly outranked cosmopolitan Christian citizenship.

Chapter 13 shows how Old Catholic ecumenical efforts trickled into our present day. Anglicans declared intercommunion with Old Catholics in 1931. Following Vatican II, Roman Catholicism is more open to ecumenism. Old Catholics, Anglicans, and Orthodox churches are now internally divided on questions related to women's ordination and sexuality. Nevertheless, Geffert concludes that "the fundamental impediment to any union" is the discovery of "just how diverse was Christian belief from the very outset" (375). Therefore, a Church, not history, must interpret revelation. "Until Orthodox, Anglicans, and Old Catholics share a common ecclesiology, reunion will remain impossible" (376).

Geffert might have expanded on Boerneke by assessing the role of Scandinavian Lutherans in the ecumenical movement. Many associated with Bonn wrote off Lutherans because they did not claim apostolic succession. But others, especially Anglicans, argued that since Lutherans possessed *de facto* succession they too constituted a legitimate branch of the Catholic Church. This possible oversight is interesting given that Boerneke was a Lutheran pastor and professor. In any case, Geffert admirably sheds light on an understudied period of Christian history and successfully demonstrates its ecumenical significance.

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***Richard McNemar: Frontier Heretic and Shaker Apostle.* By Christian Goodwillie. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2023. xv + 518 pp. \$85.00 cloth; \$40.00 paper.**

The latest book by Christian Goodwillie, a leading scholar of Shaker history, shines welcome light on the life of Richard McNemar, a prominent New Light clergyman in the Kentucky Revivals who converted to Shakerism in 1805. A gifted, charismatic, and classically trained theologian, Richard McNemar was already a trailblazer in the region's ongoing religious change. When the first Shaker missionaries arrived there in early 1805, they found a young minister with a proven track record of taking himself and others into uncharted spiritual territory.

Richard McNemar spent slightly under half of his sixty-eight years as a Shaker. His conversion at age thirty-five utterly shocked his contemporaries and left a gaping void in the trans-Appalachian New Light circles. Ironically, McNemar's pivot into Shakerism—formally the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing—probably shielded him from the mainstream scholarly scrutiny that he has so long deserved, by placing his prodigious output of writings within collections too often side-stepped by scholars less interested in Shakerism *per se*. This gripping biography carefully examines McNemar's full life experience, from childhood in central Pennsylvania to his early spiritual experiences, education, and Presbyterian ordination in Kentucky, his rapid rise and growing influence as a theologian and denominational leader, before his Shaker conversion. Thereafter, McNemar's life purpose revolved around the build-up of the Shaker project—theologically, organizationally, legally, musically, and more.