

AMERICAN JESUS

Prothero, Stephen Farrar. Straus and Giroux, New York. 2003

INTRODUCTION

What kind of Jesus Americans wanted can tell where they are even today and why aren't they involved much with social justice. Because they wanted to be comfortable or comforted ????????

There are about two thousand [mosques](#) in the United States, and more than six hundred Hindu congregations. In Los Angeles area alone, there are at least two hundred Buddhist centers (Prothero p. 6).

Today the [top ten denominations](#) in the United States are all Christians, as is roughly 85 percent of the population. While there are more Muslims than Episcopalians in the United States, there are infinitely more Episcopalians than Muslims (44 to 0, to be exact) in the 108th United States Congress. As a nation, Americans celebrate Christmas, not the Buddha's birthday (Prothero p. 6).

American culture has long been both Christian and plural, both secular and religious, and much of the dynamism of U.S. religious history derives from that paradox.

A QUEST FOR THE CULTURAL JESUS (P. 7)

[A majority of American citizens](#) claim membership in one Christian church or another. Yet many of the most interesting [appraisals of Jesus](#) have emerged outside the churches; film, and literature, and among Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and people of no religion at all. [To explore the American Jesus](#), therefore, is not to confine oneself to Christianity. It is to examine how American Christianity has been formed by Christians and non-Christians alike, and how the varieties of American religious experience have been shaped by the public power of the Christian message, Finally, to see how Americans if all stripes have cast the man from Nazareth in their own images is to examine, through the looking glass, the kaleidoscopic character of American culture (Prothero p. 7).

This book is not a history of American theology. It is a cultural history –a quest for [the cultural Jesus](#) (Prothero p. 10).

AMERICA'S RELIGIOUS REVOLUTION (P. 10)

Today church membership is the norm – roughly [three out of five Americans](#) are affiliated with a church. More than [two out of every three citizens](#) say they have made a “personal commitment to Jesus Christ” and approximately [three out of four](#) report they have sensed his presence (Prothero p. 11).

Yet polls reveal that [Americans of all faiths](#) view Jesus “overwhelmingly in a favorable light” and that he has “a strong hold even on those with no religious training.” Amazingly, nearly half of the country’s non-Christians believe that Jesus was born from a virgin and raised from the dead. Here atheists and Buddhists are active producers and consumers of images of Jesus, who in many respects functions as common cultural coin. The Library of Congress holds more books about Jesus (seventeen thousand or so) than any other historical figure, roughly twice as many as the runner-up (Shakespeare), and Jesus books there are piling up fast (Prothero p. 11).

How did the United States become a [Jesus nation](#)? We see the development of the American Jesus from an abstract principle into a concrete person, and then into a personality, a celebrity, and finally an icon (Prothero p. 12).

[John Calvin’s theology](#) depended entirely on maximizing the tension between a sovereign God and fallen humanity. In the house that Calvin built, there was little room for a guest who was both divine and human. However, beginning with the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century, assault on such tradition [freed up Jesus](#) to be a hero to those who could not embrace the beliefs and practices of traditional Christianity (Prothero p. 12). As Thomas Jefferson sat down in the White House, *razor* in his hand, and began to cut and paste his own Bible, the American Jesus was born (Prothero p. 13).

Soon Christians too were emphasizing [Jesus’ humanity](#) over his divinity. Evangelical Protestants popularized [Jefferson’s revolt](#) against Calvinism by Christianizing it. Whereas Jefferson had embraced Jesus without Christianity, they embraced Christianity without Calvinism, rejecting the doctrine of [predestination](#) as an offense against [human liberty and divine mercy](#). [Jesus had come to earth not for some but for all, they insisted, and each was free to accept or reject the salvation he so graciously offered.](#) Through the revivals of the Second Great Awakening of the first third of the nineteenth century, these evangelical enthusiasts democratized Christianity and Christianized America. So began America’s religious revolution, which liberated Jesus from Calvin as surely as the Revolutionary War had liberated the colonists from George III. The early political uprising had given birth to a new nation, and this spiritual revolution gave birth to a new form of American religion, centered no longer on a wrathful Father but on a loving Son (Prothero p. 13).

Three overlapping stages of the American revolution:

- 1). In the early nineteenth century, evangelicals liberated Jesus first from Calvinism and then from creeds. Though few rejected his divinity, Americans emphasized his humanity, transforming him from a distant god in a complex theological system into a near-and-dear person, fully embodied, with virtues they could imitate, a mind they could understand, and qualities they could love. In the process, they emboldened their Jesus rise up and overthrow his Father as the dominant person in the Trinity (Prothero p. 13).

2). The second stage, immediately following the Civil War, liberal Protestants were in the vanguard. They disentangled Jesus from the Bible, replacing the *sola scriptura* (“Bible alone”) with *sola jesus*: Jesus alone. Instead of basing their faith on scripture and tradition, like Roman Catholics, or as earlier Protestants had done, they took Jesus as their one and only authority (Prothero p. 14).

3). The third stage began with Jefferson, liberated Jesus from Christianity itself; forcefully advanced by Jewish writers and rabbis between the 1860s and the 1930s. It came to fruition in the midst of the post-1965 immigration boom, as Hindus and Buddhists boldly adopted Jesus as one of their own, unbinding him from Christian tradition (Prothero p. 14).

America reversed the earlier process that transformed Jesus into the Christ of the creeds. The creedal Christ, and the biblical Christ, **Jesus became accessible** to Americans who could not believe in predestination, the Trinity, or the inerrancy of the Bible and Jesus piety became possible even for non-Christians (Prothero p. 14).

RESURRECTIONS AND REINCARNATIONS

This book is divided in to two parts. The first, “Resurrection,” reawakening of Jesus among Christian insiders. The second “Reincarnation” focusing on rebirths of Jesus in outsider communities (Prothero p. 15).

The doctrine of **resurrection** originated in Jewish tradition, but it is most commonly associated with Christians, who made Jesus triumph over death. They interpreted his miraculous rising from the dead as evidence of his unique status as the Risen Lord (Prothero p. 15).

Reincarnation presents a very different picture of life after death. Common in Asian religions, this doctrine describes the human situation as a cycle of life, death and rebirth in which individual soul, after each successive death, seeks out a new body in a new place and time, typically in accordance with the moral theory of karma (Prothero p. 15). The chapters in this part of the book deal with communities that operate outside the confines of White Protestantism. These communities make a new home for Jesus inside of other religions. They typically set him alongside (rather than above) other religious virtuosi, rejecting his putative standing as the one-and-only savior of the world (Prothero p. 16).

The author of the books asserts that such an approach to America’s Jesus attempts to do justice to both the country’s Christian majority and its religious minorities, and to the sacred and secular commitments of its people. Jesus became a major personality in the United States because of the ability of religious insiders to make him culturally inescapable. He became a national icon because outsiders have always felt free to interpret him in their own fashion (Prothero p. 16).

In the United States, thinkers from Frederick Douglass and Rabbi Stephen Wise to Swami Yogananda and Malcolm X have boldly distinguished between the religion of Christianity and the religion of Jesus. While they have rejected the former, they have embraced the latter as their own. Not all Americans went this far. The vast majority of U.S. citizens today are committed Christians. Yet no one group has an interpretive monopoly. Everyone is free to understand Jesus in his or her own way. And Americans exercised that freedom (Prothero p. 16).

ONE: ENLIGHTENED SAGE

President Jefferson attacked religious establishment and defended religious freedom, arguing in a now-famous passage that “it does me no injury for my neighbor to say there are twenty gods or no gods. It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg (Prothero p.20).

“THE FIRST HUMAN SAGE” P. 21

Jefferson followed Priestley (Unitarian)closely praising Jesus as “meek, benevolent, patient, firm, disinterested, and of he sublimest eloquence” and his system of morals as “the most perfect and sublime that has ever been taught by man.” He viewed the following as “corruptions.” Jefferson’s list of these corruptions included dogmas such as original sin, the virgin birth, the atonement, predestination, salvation by faith, transubstantiation, bodily resurrection, and Trinity (Prothero p. 22). He also accused the Christians who believed in these to be “tyrants who had perverted the pure morals of Jesus into “an engine for enslaving mankind” (Prothero p. 23).

Jefferson was more radical than his Unitarian friend (Priesley) but his anti-supernaturalism did not detract a whit from his appraisal of Jesus. Jefferson heaped more praise upon the man than did his British colleague. Jesus was, in Jefferson’s words, “the [first human Sages](#)” (Prothero p. 23).

JEFFERSON’S RAZOR(P. 23)

In 1804, as the sitting president, Jefferson, razor in hand, excised the corruption of Paul and his successors from the New Testament to leave behind a complete record of the simple gospel of Jesus the enlightened sage; so he cut the authentic passages out of the Bible, pasting them into two columns on 46 octavo sheet (Prothero p. 24). In fact, a nearly identical effort some two centuries later by the Jesus Seminar would take hundreds of researchers nearly a decade. But for Jefferson the project took only two or three evenings (Prothero p.24).

Jefferson called his micro-Testament “The Philosophy of Jesus of Nazareth.” What Jefferson did was stripping off the “rags of Imposter” that “Pseudo-Christians” had dressed Jesus up and garbing Jesus once again in the simple robes of a Galilean sage (Prothero p.24).

CHRISTIANITY, TRUE AND FALSE (P. 26)

Over the past two hundred years, Jefferson has been called an atheist and an infidel, a theist and a Deist, a Unitarian and an Anglican, and Epicurean and a secular humanist.

What is most clear about Jefferson is that he was not a traditional Christian. Jefferson rejected Nicene Creed's formula of Jesus as "truly God and truly man." He sneered at Calvinist verities such as predestination, which throughout his political career dominated American religious thought. In Jefferson's view, real Christianity of Jesus was substituted for the false "Platonic Christianity" of the so-called Christian churches (Prothero p.26).

Later in U.S. history, thinkers as different as the abolitionist Frederick Douglass and the fundamentalist J. Gresham Machen would draw sharp distinction between the false Christianity of the churches and the true Christianity of Jesus. Douglass professed his love of "the pure, peaceable, and impartial Christianity of Christ" and his hatred of "the corrupt, slaveholding, women-whipping, cradle-plundering, partial, and hypocritical Christianity of this land" (Prothero p.26). He observed a vast gulf dividing the "slaveholding religion of" of America from "the Christianity of Christ." In fact, this gulf was "so wide, that to receive the one as good, pure and holy, is of necessity to reject the other as bad, corrupt, and wicked." Machen, who raged against modernism rather than slavery, drew his line between the supernaturalistic Christianity of fundamentalism and the naturalistic faith of Protestant modernists (whom he called liberals). He claimed that they are not two different types of Christianity but two entirely different forms of religion. Liberalism, he insisted, was "anti-Christian to the core" (Prothero p.27).

A GREAT MORAL TEACHER (P. 28)

The Unitarian James Smith called Jesus "the most perfect model of Republicanism in the Universe." A great moral teacher who spread the gospel of liberty, fraternity, and equality across ancient Palestine and, via apostles such as Jefferson, through the United States as well" (Prothero p. 28).

To Jefferson, Jesus was a man rather than a god. "Fear God and love thy neighbor," Jefferson wrote in an 1816 letter, is the "sum of all religion." And so his Jesus was the first and foremost an ethical guide. He was not sent by God to die on the cross and atone for humanity's sins. He came not to save, but to teach. Or, he came to save by teaching. Jefferson's Jesus was an enlightened sage (Prothero p. 28).

Jesus was a reformer of Judaism as well as a teacher of moral philosophy. While Moses worshiped "a bring of terrific character, cruel, vindictive, capricious and unjust," Jesus worshiped a God of "wisdom, justice, goodness." While Moses "had bound the Jews to many idle ceremonies, mummeries and observances," Jesus "exposed their futility and insignificance," shifting the locus of true religion from rites to ethnics, acts of intentions. This "great Reformer of the Hebrew code" also proved himself the superior of Moses in his preaching of "universal philanthropy." Rejecting the parochialism of the chosen people ideal, he demanded that we offer our love "not only to kindred and friends, to neighbors and countrymen, but to all mankind," insisting that all human beings were part of "one family, under the bonds of love, charity, peace, common wants, and common aids" (Prothero p.29).

Liberation theologians prefer the prophetic books over the Psalms, and Luke over John; fundamentalists focus on the Passion and Revelation more than Exodus and Leviticus. Jefferson's "canon within the canon" consisted of the Gospels, principally the synoptic accounts of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Inside those books, Jefferson emphasized the sayings of Jesus. His favorites came from the Sermon on the Mount (Prothero p. 29).

While traditionalists affirmed Calvin's dogma of the total depravity of human beings, Unitarians defended the more optimistic view that human beings were essentially good. Jefferson was solidly in the anti-Calvinist camp (Prothero p.30).

Jefferson was closer to Deism than he was to atheism, but he was closer to Unitarianism. Jefferson was not exactly a standard-issue Unitarian, since he rejected the miracles, which those "supernatural rationalist" affirmed. Jefferson said " I am of a sect of myself, as far as I know." Jefferson was first and foremost a partisan of Jesus. And in that party he had many fellow travelers. Jefferson was unfaithful to traditional Christianity, and he was to that extent an infidel. But his infidelity to traditional Christianity was motivated by his admiration of Jesus, whose moral teachings were to Jefferson as self-evidently true as the proposition that all men are created equal (Prothero p.32).

THE JESUS SEMINAR (P. 32)

By the end of the nineteenth century, many Americans, both Christians and otherwise, had begun to disentangle Jesus from rites and creeds, affirming that his exemplary life was more important than his atoning death. Many believe that the essence of true religion lies in right living rather than right thinking, and that service to others is the highest form of prayer (Prothero p.33).

Jefferson's influence is apparent in the case of Jesus Seminar, which conveyed Jefferson's Jesus into the twenty-first century. Robert Funk is the representing figure of the Jesus Seminar, whose quest for Jesus was a "quest for freedom;" **the first** was to free the real Jesus of history from the fetters of traditional Christian creeds –to enable Jesus to be himself rather than playing the roles forced upon him by Peter or Paul or the writers of the Nicene Creed. **A second aim** was to liberate the real Jesus from the chains of born-again mythology. "There are millions of Americans who re the victims of a mythical Jesus –as abusive as slavery. **Finally**, to free Jesus from the cloistered confines of the academy, by bringing cutting-edge research about him to the attention of the mass media (Prothero p. 34).

Quest for historical Jesus in 1835 by German theologian David Friedrich Straus and in 1940 a New Quest for the Historical Jesus by James M. Robinson. What Funk and the Jesus Seminar helped to get going in the 1980s was, therefore, a third quest.

THE JESUS WARS (36)

Jesus' Seminar was designed to provoke. It presented Jesus as "subversive sage" who defied not only the religious authorities of his day but also the expectations of contemporary Christians. Its Jesus did not claim to be either God or the Messiah. He did not recite the Lord's Prayer or deliver the Sermon on the Mount. He was essentially an oracle of moral wisdom, a sage (Prothero p.36).

Many objected to the Seminar's findings. The sharpest attacks came from New Testament scholars, whose railing against the Seminar's methods and assumptions helped touch off the Jesus Wars of the 1990s. Boston University's Howard Clark Kee called the Seminar "an academic disgrace" hell-bent on finding a Jesus "free of such features, embarrassing to modern intellectuals, as demons, miracles and predictions about the future (Prothero p.36).

Most serious critique was that Jesus Seminar was plumping for a non-Jewish Jesus. Birger A. Pearson, a New Testament professor at University of California at Santa Barbara, argued that the Seminar was "driven by an ideology of secularization" that caused it to overlook a whole generation of scholarship on the Jewishness of Jesus. The result was an ahistorical and anachronistic Jesus, divorced from Jewish practice. Seminary has performed a forcible epispasm on the historical Jesus, a surgical procedure removing the marks of his circumstance (Prothero p. 37).

The "creedal Christ" must die, Funk argues, so that the real Jesus can rise again. Funk has posted on his Web site "Twenty-One Theses: "The God of the metaphysical age is dead." Funk's manifesto dismisses original sin, miracles, the virgin birth, the atonement, the resurrection, and the Second Coming of Jesus" (Prothero p. 40).

Prothero suggest that Funk's new gospel is radically Jesus-centric, focusing on the historical Jesus and the spiritual liberation he promised. And in fact, he is hoping to shake it back to life, by redirecting Christians to the pure, primitive teachings of Jesus himself (Prothero p. 40).

JESUS NATION (41)

The cycle of religious reform repeats itself over and over again. But this dynamic does not operate merely inside the Church. It operates inside American culture as well. Non-Christians too can isolate Christian beliefs and practices for criticism, and enlists the authority of Jesus against them. The true religion of Jesus, they argue, was not Christianity at all. It was Judaism. They try to disentangle Jesus not just from certain Christian beliefs and practices but from Christianity itself (Prothero p.41).

Jefferson hated what Christianity had become. But he was able to admire, respect, and love " the first of all Sages" only because he was able to separate the religion of Jesus from the religion of Christianity. Jefferson was not of a sect by himself. Millions of Americans today, Christian and otherwise, harbor similar sentiments. In this sense, Jefferson was a Founding Father not only of the United States of America but also today's Jesus nation.

TWO: SWEET SAVIOR

INTRODUCTION (P. 43)

Puritanism emerged out of the Calvinist wing of the Protestant Reformation, and its distinctive beliefs and practices were at least as Hebraic as they were Christian. Their covenant theology took its cues from Israel more than Galilee, focusing not on the individual's relationship with God the Son but on the community's covenant with God the Father (the age of the first person singular) (Prothero p. 44).

Puritans were a God-fearing rather than a Jesus-loving people, obsessed not with God's mercy but with High glory, not with the Son but with the Father. The logic of Puritan theology turned on what the theologian Karl Barth, in *The Epistle to the Romans*, describing "qualitative distinction" between a righteous God and sinful humanity. He (Jesus) was he incarnate God who came to earth to suffer and die on the cross in order to reconcile the sinful elect to his angry Father (Prothero p. 45).

Debate about "The time showed religious diversity in the U.S."

1. Some see it as a recent development – a consequence of the opening immigration from Asia in 1965. 2. Others track it to colonial time where Dutch Mennonites and German Baptist mixed with French Huguenots and black Anglicans. 3. Prothero suggest that American religion really confronted diversity –took its current shape – during the first decades of the nineteenth century, a period of the "Great Diversification." According to Hutchison, 95 percent of Europeans in the colonies were at least nominally Protestant and 90 percent traced their heritage to the Calvinist wing of the Reformation. 85 percent were "*English speaking* Calvinist Protestants." After the turn of the nineteenth century, the demographics changed dramatically (Prothero p. 46).

This period also witnessed the first great influx of non-Protestant immigrants; Jewish community, Roman Catholics, Unitarians, Disciples of Christ were formed (Prothero p. 46). And later, Spiritualists and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons), and yet later Peace churches such as the Quakers, Mennonites, and Moravians appeared on the scene ((Prothero p. 47).

Americans rejected the authority of ministers, the veracity of creeds, and the importance of theology. The Bible remained authoritative, but now Americans insisted on interpreting the bible for themselves (democratization of American Christianity); declaration of religious independence from elitist ministers, established churches, and outmoded creeds. First Amendment guaranteed of religious freedom (Prothero p.47).

THE EVANGELICAL CENTURY (P. 48).

Churches grew: The number of Baptist congregations ballooned nearly twentyfold from 497 in 1776 to 9,375 in 1850. Methodist growth was from 65 congregations to 13,280 over the same period. American with religious diversity was Christianizing its people (Prothero p. 48).

Evangelicalism: During the first third of the nineteenth century, a new breed of Protestants – a new style of Jesus-friendly Christianity emerged as the country’s unofficial religious establishment – new style – evangelicalism (Prothero p. 48).

Evangelicalism became dominant religious impulse as well as a major cultural force – “the largest, and most formidable, subculture in American society.” The hundred years from Jefferson (1800) to Theodore Roosevelt (1899) had been “the evangelical century” (Prothero p. 49).

Evangelicals followed their Puritan forebears in affirming the divine inspiration of the Bible; no creed but the Bible; emphasized conversion – the “new birth” (Prothero p. 49).

Evangelicals cast Calvin’s God (fatalism) declaring their independence from another distant king, and placing Jesus at the center of the Christian life. They claimed that Jesus died for all, not just the high and mighty. And each individual was at liberty to accept or reject his gracious offer of salvation (Prothero p. 50).

SOLUS JESUS (P. 52)

The nineteenth century evangelicals focused on the Second Person in the Trinity more than the First. While Calvinists were ever straining to maximize the distance between God and humanity, evangelicals worked to narrow the gap – by making human more divine and God more human. Human remained sinners, but evangelicals saw their own sin as a matter of choice, not inheritance. (This sounds like they denied the original sin). They also saw God in human terms. They focused more on the New Testament than the Old, refusing to see God as wrathful and distant. They claimed any God worth worshiping had to be loving and near (Prothero p. 52):

The God the Father receded and God the Son stood out. Emerson believed that all human beings were essentially divine. What distinguished Jesus from the rest of humanity was his ability to realize that potential; growing emphasis among American Christians on Jesus; from doctrinalism to devotionalism (Prothero p. 53).

Why this was happening (Jesus focus)? The emergency of a consumer-driven economy and a new middle class, shifting conceptions of the American self, transformation of the family, development of science, biblical criticism, and comparative religion. Jesus’ piety also emerged out of the dynamics of the new free market in religion. Instead of marketing predestination or free will, the Bible or the Baptists, they began to offer religious shoppers **a new relationship with Jesus. This relationship was personal**, so preachers had to make Jesus into a person disentangling him not only from the complex theologies of Calvin but also from the complicated politics of the denominations. As evangelicals placed more of their faith in him, **Jesus became more human and less divine and they approached him as a person who could “be known and loved and imitated.” Jesus emerged in the mid-nineteenth century as a living, breathing human being (Prothero p. 55).** Once Americans began to see Christianity as a Jesus faith, they were transforming their **country into a Jesus nation (Prothero p. 56).**

FEMINIZING AMERICAN RELIGION (P. 56).

Majority of those who wanted to know and loved and imitated in the early-nineteenth century Jesus were women. Every religious groups in every era in the U.S. history, women have outnumbered men. As early as 1691, Cotton Mather was complaining that “there are far more godly women in the world than there are godly men.” While in 1700s congregations were feminized, in the 1800s Jesus was (Prothero p. 56).

How this was happening? In the Industrial Revolution of the early nineteenth century, men began to work in factories rather than family farms. Gradually women took charge in their homes. A new context for devotion of Jesus: Beginning around the 1830s, Protestants and Catholics alike transformed the home into the center of Christian life, and the mothers into a high priestess of the domestic piety. As mothers taught their children about Jesus, they emphasized the Sermon on the Mount, which offered God’s blessing to the meek rather than the strong, and the crucifixion, which demonstrated to them the virtues of submission and sacrifice (Prothero p. 57).

Women began to gather in women’s clubs, women’s colleges, and women’s political and labor organizations. [As the influence of women rose in homes, churches, and society, evangelicals began to associate God with feminine rather than masculine virtues.](#) Preachers delivered sermons based on New Testament mercy rather than Old Testament militance, and harsh Calvinist doctrines such as original sin and infant damnation beat a hasty retreat. [Some even began to imagine God as a warm and caring Mother.](#) The Shakers said the divine was both male and female, and cast their founder, Mother Ann Lee, as a female coming of Jesus Christ (Prothero p. 58).

FEMINIZING JESUS (P. 59).

One important effect of the feminization of American religion was the eclipse of the Trinity’s First Person by the Second. For the Puritans of the colonies, the person was the Father; for many contemporary Pentecostalists it is the Holy Spirit; for the nineteenth-century evangelicals it was the Son (Prothero p. 59).

Feminization of American religion did not kick in until after the Second Great Awakening (Prothero p. 59). The emergence of Christmas as “ a major religious event in American culture,” in the mid-nineteenth century, reinforced this identification; Christmas hymn “ It Came upon a Midnight Clear” (1849) and “ O Little Town of Bethlehem” (1868) . But Jesus was widely represented a maternal pose; In the painting of Madonna and Child the cherubic babe is sitting on the lap of an adoring Jesus. This maternal Jesus was marketed particularly effectively by the venerable lithography firm of Currier & Ives. One of many images Currier & Ives created was Jesus’ walking on the water and rescuing Peter from the sea. His hair, framed by a bright halo, is elegantly coiffured. His face is beautiful and his neck and fingers long and delicate. Beneath a long robe, his wide hips jut out toward the center of the image, as if to accentuate his roundness. This is an unmistakably [feminine Savior](#) (Prothero p. 61).

CHRISTIAN NURTURE (P. 61)

Bushnell, most influential theologian claimed that **good character was not developed** on its own, or by crazy evangelists, or by well-meaning librarians. It was cultivated by **nurturing mothers**. Getting to know Jesus was a process rather than an event, and it was **performed most effectively by mothers at home** (Prothero p. 62).

To Bushnell, Christianity was Jesus and Jesus was Christianity. The greatest truth of the gospel is Christ himself. For him, to be a Christian was to ponder the character of Jesus and then to conform to it. What mattered was developing a bond of friendship with Jesus. We want a friend, whom we can feel as a man, and whom it will be sufficiently accurate for us to accept and love. **He emphasized Jesus' feminine virtue** far more than his masculine attributes. To understand cultivation of Christian character, he compared the development of Jesus to the unfurling of a flower. His childhood (Jesus;) was “ a kind of celestial flower.” In his youth, he was a “sacred flower. At death, he was a “bruised flower, drooping on his cross” (Prothero p. 63).

The compliant character nurtured by Mary and realized by Jesus was gentle, humble, and patient. It endured suffering without complaint or resistance, submitting always to God's will. **Bushnell's Jesus sympathized with the poor, who “knew him as their friend.”** He did not crave worldly success, and he utterly lacked guile. As his character unfolded, he became wholly innocent, not only to sin but also of selfishness. He was, according to Bushnell, “ a perfectly harmless being. At death, he was “holy, harmless, and undefiled” (Prothero p. 63). Bushnell called for mothers to imitate their Savior and for children to imitate their mothers. Children's book that translated Bushnell's views into popular culture (Prothero p. 64).

“MAD FOR STORIES” (P. 64)

Rather than homing in on the ethical sayings of Jesus, evangelical preachers **emphasized stories** about him – especially stories about his interaction with women (Prothero p. 64).

Accompanying this new homiletic style were new tracts and new Bible, many of them illustrated with images of Jesus surrounded by children. as a child himself. Drama trumped dogma in the handouts of the American Tract Society, which aimed to entertain as well as edify (Prothero p. 65).

The new story sermon, the narrative tract, and the illustrated Bible – the new marriage of the sacred and the secular was a match in heaven: Religious themes made novels respectable, and fiction made religion entertaining (Prothero p. 65). The result was a new form of American popular culture, and a flurry of bestselling novels with religious themes, written by clergymen or by women (Prothero p. 66). Most popular novels were Elizabeth Stuart Phelps's *The Gate Ajar*, Little Elva and Tom of Harriet Beecher Stowe's “*Uncle Tom's Cabin*” (1852) (Prothero p. 66) later add more from page 67-68.

LIVES OF JESUS (P. 69)

Many American authors produced more straightforward lives of Jesus. Over the course of nineteenth century, American writers produced an endless stream of pious and popular lives of Jesus. Many were copiously illustrated to assist mothers in telling the Jesus story to their children, and to entertain adult readers. The most influential of these Victorian lives of Jesus was Henry Ward Beecher's *The Life of Jesus, the Christ* (1871) (Prothero p. 69).

Wentworth (a Harvard Man) told a local Calvinist pastor “ you worship an *abstract thought* – a mere projection of an idea –not a whole Mind, a *Living Being!* He said “My Savior is everywhere – in the book and out of the book. I see Him in Nature, in human, in my own experience. I live in a Bible. But is an unbound book! (Prothero p. 70).

Beecher's *Life of Jesus* followed by Jefferson in setting the true religion of Jesus against the false religion of the institutional church (Prothero p. 71). Beecher uplifted Jesus' conversation with Samaritan woman which he considered a clear rebuke to the religious establishment of his time – its tribalism, its legalism, and above all its lack of love. By accepting the foreigner into his family of love, Jesus demonstrates that true religion “requires neither altar, nor priest, nor uttered prayer, but only the grateful heart. “ The story also demonstrates Jesus' sympathy for all human beings, especially the poor, women, and social outcasts. Beecher's Jesus comes into the world not to die on the cross but to establish a new way to relate to God and other human beings. For him to be born again is to be initiated into a family of sympathy in which each loves the others as brothers and sisters and treats Jesus as a friend. *When Jesus embraces the Samaritan woman as a fellow human being rather than sneering at her as a sinner, he invites her into that family, that “kingdom of love.” He also makes himself her “companion”* (Prothero p. 72).

Beecher portrayed Jesus as an American Everyman: Jesus was a citizen. He knew the fatigues of labor, the trials which beset poverty, the temptations arising from the practical conduct of business. He lived among men in all the innocent experiences of society life, a cheerful, companionable, and most winning nature. He was familiar, natural, unpretentious, loving that which was homely and natural in men, rather than that which was artificial and pretentious (Prothero p. 72).

His Jesus was also a domestic Jesus. For Beecher love was more about self-fulfillment than self-denial, more about feeling than ethical obligations. To love was to find your true self through union with others. To follow Jesus was to live abundantly, not to lay down your life for a friend (Prothero p. 73).

For Beecher, Jesus was “invisible household of the heart,” no one was berated as a sinner, and God was worshiped “no long ...as a monarch, but as a Father.” As for Jesus, he exhibited all the characteristics of the mother Beecher never knew. He describes Jesus as a wellspring of sympathy exhibiting a “tender sympathy for others” through heartfelt acts of love. He touched the blind, the deaf, and the sick He pulled children close, blessing them not just with “bosom words” but also with “love-pressure” (73).

WHAT A FRIEND (P. 74)

Jesus the friend came alive for nineteenth-century Americans first and foremost in song. With new technologies with printing, hymnbooks became huge sellers. Most protestant denominations produced their own hymnbooks, but each borrowed from the others. “Evangelicalism found its collective voice” through the hymns it sang day and night, in season and out, everywhere and always (Prothero p. 74).

Jesus was the subject of more evangelical hymns than the Father and the Holy Spirit combined. In a massive database based on two hundred evangelical hymnbooks compiled by Marini, Jesus hymns are among the most popular. “All Hail the Power of Jesus’ Name” is the most –printed hymn overall (Prothero p. 75).

Fanny Crosby, a blind woman who wrote roughly 8,000 hymns under 200 pseudonyms. Hymn writers presented a form of Christianity that was relational rather than judicial, focusing on the intimate love of Jesus rather than the awesome power of the Father: Sankey’s songs and African American spirituals seemed to erase the time/space continuum, extracting Jesus out of first-century Palestine and inserting him into nineteenth-century Boston or Chicago. Sankey cast Jesus as a sweet and gentle shepherd calling his lost sheep by name. Human beings were no longer hateful sinners bound for hell but innocent sheep searching for home. “The Ninety and Nine,” Sankey’s signature hymn, describes Jesus as a compassionate shepherd who will not rest until he has brought a lost lamb into his fold. “The Wandering Sheep,” “Weary Wanderer,” “Come, Wander, Come” and “Tenderly Guide Us,” focus on the stray lamb rather than the shepherd, but the too cast Jesus as a “Shepherd of love.” Even “Amazing Grace” fits into this lost sheep genre, moving from exodus to wandering to home, all thanks to the loving ministries of Jesus the shepherd (Prothero p. 76).

First Jesus was calling tenderly waiting for people to come to him and then move to Jesus himself knocking waiting people to open the door to each person’s heart. “If modern evangelical hymns can be reduced to a single term,” Marini has argued, “it would be nearness to Christ rather than the otherness of the sacred” (Prothero p. 77).

More than a lover, the Jesus of popular evangelical hymnody is a friend. In fact, reference to Jesus as friend seem to outnumber reference s to Jesus as lover by at least ten-to-one in Sankey’s hymnals; “Christ the Friend,” “The Best Friend to Have Is Jesus,” “Friendship with Jesus,” “I have Found a Friend,” and especially “What a Friend We Have In Jesus” gained public attention when it appeared in 1875. Today it remains one of the most beloved hymns in American evangelicalism (Prothero p. 78).

LIBERAL PROTESTANTISM (P. 79)

Jesus-focused Christianity took root in evangelicalism but flowered in liberal Protestantism that adapted to the challenge of modernity by stressing the goodness of humanity, the inevitability of progress, the necessity of good works, and the immanence of God in nature, culture and the human heart. While evangelicals continued to affirm the twin authority of Jesus and the scriptures, liberals viewed the Bible as a good book rather than God’s Book. Ultimately, their faith came to rest on the authority of Jesus alone (Prothero p. 79).

The puritan's commitment to **Bible** (in the early seventeenth century) lived on and finally they began to print Bibles in 1777 (American Bible Society). The Bible had become an "icon in mind, home, church and culture." The Bible's iconic status owed much the Reformation slogan *sola scriptura*. Protestant said "What is not biblical is not the logical." In matters of faith and practice, the Bible alone was authoritative (Prothero p. 80).

The real religious revolution of the century was the emergency of **Jesus as the all-important religious symbol in American culture**: During the first half of the century, he grew up. In the aftermath of the Second Great Awakening, he overthrew God the Father as the dominant person in the Trinity. **Evangelicals**, instead of defining Jesus in terms of God, increasingly came to define God in terms of Jesus. God was loving and merciful, they argued, and His character was most clearly manifest in Jesus. During the second half the century, **liberal Protestants** declared Jesus' spiritual independence and they overthrew the Bible as the key source of religious authority claiming God's real revelation was Jesus, not the scripture (Prothero p. 81).

By the 1880s, **liberal Protestants** had left the evangelical fold, and **evangelicalism** had come to refer not to the broad center of American Protestantism but to the **conservative right**. At the turn of the century, **liberals** began to take over the mainline Protestant denominations (Prothero p. 81).

As liberal Protestantism ascended, Jesus did too. In fact, the more these liberal Protestants disentangled Jesus from controversial Calvinist dogma and restrictive creeds, the more prominent and popular he became (Prothero p. 81). Liberal Protestants were far more interested in recovering the historical Jesus than in tweaking the Christic formula of the creeds. Their thinking was Jesus-centric rather than christocentric; they focused far more on the person of Jesus than on the Christ on the cross. While **Calvinists** had maximized the distance between God and humanity and **evangelicals** had narrowed it, **liberal Protestants** all but obliterated it. 말살하다. They argued that **humans were created good**, in the image of God, not sinful, in the image of a fallen Adam. **As for God, He dwelled in the world**, rather than standing aloof from it (Prothero p. 82).

Liberals refused to recognize the sharp dualisms-between the sacred and the secular, divinity and humanity, the supernatural and natural, the world and the church- that had given Calvinism its dynamism. **Their Jesus was not restricted** to the church or even to the heart. He could be found in novels and nations, science and society. "The spirit of benevolence, and even of evangelization, is no longer confined to the Church of God," the Black Episcopalian Alexander Crummel wrote. He said "it is the spirit of age." The blurring of the boundaries between the kingdom of God and the kingdom of the world opened American culture up to the influence of Jesus. But it also opened Jesus up to the influence of American culture. Therefore, the liberal Protestants shaped Jesus in their own image. And as they disenchanting the cosmos, they disenchanting Jesus too (마법에서 깨어나게하다) (Prothero p. 83).

JESUS WEPT (P. 83)

All but the most radical **Protestant liberals** affirmed the **divinity** of Jesus, but they emphasized his **humanness**. Most spoke of Jesus in experiential terms, placing him not in first-century Palestine but **in their own hearts**. They emphasized his **birth** instead of his resurrection, the **incarnation** rather than the atonement, his **immanence** rather than his transcendence. More **moralist** than a miracle worker, their Jesus came to earth not to satisfy a legal judgment or to pay a debt owed to any angry Father but to **reveal** to human beings **the loving character of God**, and to prompt them to develop that same character in themselves. **His death saved sinners** not from hell but **from selfish solitude**. The new birth offered was essentially moral, an awakening to a life of sympathy of all God's children (Prothero p. 84).

What evangelicals and liberals did was nuance his undeniable maleness with a heavy **dose of femininity**. In sermons and novels, prayers and hymns, lithographs and half-tones, **evangelical and liberal Protestants alike** depicted Jesus as a **feminine male** – androgyne. Phelps called Jesus “sweet because strong.” His “exquisite compassion, she wrote, was “**tenderer** than woman’s, stronger than man’s” a combination “undreamed of before in the world.” In hymn like “Jesus, Savior, Pilot Me” compared Jesus’ stilling of the storm with a **mother** shushing her child. “My Rock” spoke of learning on Jesus like a “**child on mother’s breast**.” Both hymns supplement these maternal metaphors with images of manly strength (Prothero p. 85).

This same mix of unyielding yang and yielding yin appeared regularly in nineteenth-century lives of Jesus. Beecher told his congregation in a sermon in 1863, “My Christ is a lamb,” “but he was also a lion of the tribe of Judah.” One of the great mysteries of Jesus has been his ability to bring divinity and humanity together in one person. To Victorian American his ability to display feminine virtues in a male body must have been almost as mysterious. Eventually it would become disquieting too (Prothero p. 86).

THREE: MANLY REDEEMER

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