

Evangelicals and 'Domestic Felicity' in the Non-Elite South

By: [Christopher A. Graham](#)

Christopher A. Graham, "Evangelicals and 'Domestic Felicity' in the Non-Elite South," *Journal of Southern Religion* 15 (2013): <http://jsr.fsu.edu/issues/vol15/graham.html>.

***© Association for the Study of Southern Religion. Published under a Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY); <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>

Abstract:

The present examination suggests that the forces that shaped non-elite southern families did so independently of planter hegemony, and that adherence to faith led to middle-class family styles before industrial forces began to work in the rural South. Through the use of tract societies, Bible societies, newspapers, Sunday Schools, and other tools of the publishing market, evangelical sources served as a channel for middle-class ideas about families and social relations; sources not implicated in the maintenance of patriarchal power. Non-elite southern whites who consumed these sources enacted evangelical lessons in the creation of new familial forms.

Keywords: Southern United States | Antebellum South | North Carolina | Religion | Evangelical Christianity | Middle-class | Domestic Life

Article:

On her sixth wedding anniversary in 1845, Caroline Lilly observed her "four lovely children smil[ing] all round me contributing much to my domestic felicity." Caroline, the wife of a Montgomery County, North Carolina, slaveholder conformed to a modern, evangelical parenting style at odds with the patriarchal child-rearing instructions of the South's great planters. For example, Caroline struggled to correct her feisty toddlers without physical punishment. When her son James, Jr., mistreated his little brother, Caroline "represented to him the wickedness of his conduct and told him that God was angry with him and would punish him if he did not repent and do better." Soon after, however, James again misbehaved, and Caroline confessed, "I felt it my duty to punish him with the rod. he promised amendment but was he convinced of his error?" She regretted her steps: "Have been too harsh and too frequently resorted to rough means. Must endeavor to improve."¹ She strove to implement the precepts of modern evangelical parenting.

Caroline drew her parenting lessons from John Abbott's *The Mother At Home*, published in 1833 by the American Tract Society.² Caroline read the book in 1840, after the birth of her first children (twins), "for the sake of properly gaining instruction on the important subject of training my sweet babes," and immediately recognized the central premise; "He [Abbott] says parents should have deep devotional feelings themselves, should present religion in a cheerful aspect."³ Abbott advocated patience and tolerance³ in teaching morals, describing a fine line between forbearance and indulgence. The well-meaning but misguided child would come around

to the lessons of a *patient* mother, but a spoiled child risked becoming “self-willed, turbulent, and revengeful,” and might spend a lifetime disappointing his parents. Abbott’s choice of adjectives marking undesirable behavior is telling. Considered in a more favorable light, they might describe an impulsive man of honor: willful, violent, and primed for vengeance. To prevent this undesirable outcome, Abbott insisted that mothers must exert total authority to achieve the obedience of their children. But Abbott’s authority was not that of an impatient patriarch. Punishment must be delivered with a moderate tone. “*Guard against too much severity*,” he advised. “Let a mother ever be affectionate and mild with her children... And let her feel, when they have done wrong, not irritated, but sad, and punish them in sorrow, but not in anger.”⁴ Thus, Caroline despaired about correcting James, Jr.—with the rod. She had not just presented herself as angry, she was angry. But she strove to enact the behavior Abbott prescribed. Caroline did not fear that a beating was the wrong approach. She feared because the correction was inflicted in a moment of passion, not solemnity and sadness, that it would be ineffective, and worse, lead to uncontrollable children.

Just over one hundred miles to the northwest from the Lilly farm, the Thomasson family owned land but no slaves in Iredell County, North Carolina. Strong Thomasson, 24 years old in 1854 when he married Mollie Bell, was a devoted farmer, but taught in common schools and avidly consumed the latest religious and secular magazines of the day. A Methodist, Strong habitually attended services and meetings of Baptists, Quakers, and Presbyterians in his neighborhood. Strong Thomasson’s domestic felicity exerted itself subtly in the way he utilized his Sundays.⁵ After Thomasson’s marriage to Mollie Bell, and particularly after the birth of their son in 1856, the couple more and more frequently stayed home from church. Though due in part to the difficulty of coordinating a family of three’s attendance with frequent sickness and poor weather, Strong’s decision to stay home Sundays grew into a conscientious effort to construct a sacred domestic sphere. Strong had expressed Sabbatarian sentiments before his marriage, but his acquisition of a home and family facilitated enactment of domesticity: “This is a pleasant day, indeed, and while I write Mary is sitting near with the *Bible & Sunday Book*, and at my right elbow is a white pitcher of red and white Winter Roses—emblems of love and purity, and just before me lies that great ‘Store house of the English language’—*Webster’s American Dictionary*.” It is a perfect scene of domestic happiness, including a content wife in devotion and a symbolic flower arrangement. *Webster’s* suggests a conflation of secular and sacred. Mollie’s reading choice, however, reflected Strong’s preference for sacred pursuits on Sundays. Strong did not quit church; his family continued to attend services regularly, but his gradual replacement of congregation with family is apparent in his diary in the 1850s. The July after son Jodie’s birth, Strong wrote, “I & Mollie are sitting in the south end of our cabin; the window is up to admit the pleasant south wind which comes in gently through the green leaves of the peach-tree that stands just in front of the window. Our boy is sleeping on a pillow in a chair just at my left hand, and the dogie [sic] is also quite [quiet] just now.”⁶ In these non-elite southern households, traditional expressions of patriarchy and power had given way to modern evangelical prescription for domestic life.

In the cases of Lilly and Thomasson, we see a profound change in southern families and evidence of how that change happened. Caroline learned the art of parenting from a book published by the American Tract Society and an author who advocated the moral equality of husband and wife and the nurturing of Christian sensibilities in children. Though in a slave-owning household, Caroline exhibited the parenting style common to middle-class homes outside the South.⁷ Strong, too, absorbed and enacted the lessons of evangelical books, and he conscientiously constructed the perfect scene of private, domestic piety based in a material setting.⁸ Lilly and Thomasson developed their conception of family life from the most current evangelical literature, a trend that scholars usually associate with northern domesticity. By middle-class family forms, I mean those that feature nuclear families, companionate marriage, and gentle nurturing of children. That they did so is reminiscent of historian Jonathan Daniels Wells's urban-based southern middle class that absorbed the offerings of the national print market.⁹ But unlike Wells's middle class, Caroline, Strong and others like them remained thoroughly embedded in rural, agricultural patterns. Their move toward the middle class did not derive from professional occupations or material possessions.¹⁰ Evangelicalism drove their domestic ethos.

Current scholarship on southern families acknowledges the emergence of middle-class elements of domestic life in the South, but remains focused on the dominance of racial and patriarchal hierarchies among the wealthy.¹¹ Craig Thompson Friend, for instance, recently described the cultural power of "aristocratic conceptions of manhood"—in particular, the advice of Lord Chesterfield—to model familial behavior. Chesterfield "encouraged the individual to use institutions and people for his own ends," those ends invariably being self-interested. Planters *performed* gendered behavior as "affairs 'of theater and ideology,'" acting parts to prove to others the authority their wealth and status demanded.¹² However, focusing on the South's non-planters and deprioritizing the racial imperative illuminates alternate avenues for the development of family models. A discourse of family rooted in evangelism proved central to how some southerners imagined and enacted family life. In some homes, like those of Caroline Lilly and Strong Thomasson, families did not emulate planter familial models, but rather, elevated moral equity in marriage and humility in childrearing.

The present examination suggests that the forces that shaped non-elite southern families did so independently of planter hegemony, and that adherence to faith led to middle-class family styles before industrial forces began to work in the rural South.¹³ Through the use of tract societies, Bible societies, newspapers, Sunday Schools, and other tools of the publishing market, evangelical sources served as a channel for middle-class ideas about families and social relations; sources not implicated in the maintenance of patriarchal power. Non-elite southern whites who consumed these sources enacted evangelical lessons in the creation of new familial forms.

In the 1840s and 1850s, the countryside crawled with agents distributing books and tracts. Scores of ministers and seminary students scoured the roads and cabins of the United States seeking to sell or give away religious publications. Both secular and denominational publishing houses hoped to distribute the Word as widely as possible. Since the 1780s Methodist circuit riders had carried and sold books published by their Book Concern, as had the Baptists. After 1820 and advances in printing technology, American Protestants harnessed the power of the publishing industry to aid in the spread of religious doctrine. The American Bible Society and the American Tract Society took the lead. Founded respectively in 1816 and 1825, these organizations based in New York City aspired to place religious publications into the hands of every American.¹⁴ From North Carolina, Presbyterians and the State Baptist Convention participated most heavily in the national ecumenical endeavor, even while continuing their own publishing houses.¹⁵ The Presbyterians in 1844 found themselves “impressed with the belief, that the press is an important engine to operate upon the minds of men,” and resolved to “bring these works, or, at least, one or more of them, within the reach of every member of our respective congregations.”¹⁶

A mark of how entrenched book agents became in the national evangelical consciousness by the 1850s is that the term “colporter”—one who distributes or sells tracts—had replaced the term “itinerant” in Baptist language to indicate almost any travelling or unsettled minister. The American Tract Society, the American Bible Society, and the American Sunday School Union managed national networks of traveling agents much like Francis Asbury had governed the early Methodist itinerancy. Local preachers sometimes served as agents selling books, while the national organizations deployed other, usually new, ministers on the circuits.¹⁷ Peter Doub, a stalwart old reverend in Guilford, Forsyth, and Iredell Counties, served as an agent.¹⁸ The American Bible Society, in 1841, dispatched 20 year old Charles Force Deems, a native of Baltimore and recent graduate of Pennsylvania’s Dickinson College, as General Agent of the North Carolina Bible Society. Deems opened his agency by “visiting and preaching, and becoming acquainted with prominent clergymen and laymen of all denominations.”¹⁹ Deems, as general agent, had an imperative to visit only the prominent men, but individual agents talked to everyone. They stopped at every likely place on their route. As one agent put it, “I try to visit all—from the governor to the poorest negro.”²⁰

The chief goal of American Tract Society and American Bible Society ministers was the conversion of sinners—through textual revelation preferably—and they pursued this goal, not just with book sales, but also with preaching and family prayer. This method signaled a subtle but important change in American piety. Some agents did report miraculous conversions, but most agents’ reports convey success in more plodding, everyday, fashions.²¹ “One poor widow,” agent J. R. B. wrote, “thanked God that I had been sent that way, for her children were evidently improving much from their new books.” Another Tract Society agent “succeeded in forming a Sabbath-school at a place called H—, in this county. Formerly it was noted for the dissipation of its people, but now there is apparently a disposition to reform.” Yet another “visited a very intemperate neighborhood and left a Manual with a man opposed to temperance; since that time I

learned that the whole community has abandoned the use of ardent spirits, using coffee in place of whiskey to refresh them while at work.”²² No doubt some people had conversion experiences, but it is unrealistic to expect that entire communities did. While agents delighted in conversions, they realized that moral improvement, or the disposition to reform, stood as their chief success.

It is, of course, impossible to gauge how genuinely people regarded their transformations due to the reading of a tract or Bible. And it is even more difficult to judge the persistence of a conversion. But what is readily apparent is that piedmont North Carolina in the 1840s and 1850s was awash in the language and tools of the latest national evangelical styles. One agent, the Reverend E. K. B., “sold books to the value of \$168.57, and granted,” or, gave away, “\$22.13.” He spoke at 63 meetings, and visited with 683 families, of which he prayed with 101. This was one agent in North Carolina. For the entire state in 1855, the American Tract Society reported 18,555 families visited (10,375 prayed with by ministers). Of that many 1,542 families “habitually neglected the house of God,” and 1,001 were “destitute of the bible,” a small number that belies the agents’ claims of region-wide destitution. The same agents—31 in total—held 740 “religious meetings,” sold 22,978 volumes, and gave away 7,951 more.²³ This report is just for the American Tract Society, and does not reflect the numbers of volumes sold or granted by the American Bible Society, the American Sunday School Union, or the denominational societies.

These sales and gifts of Bibles and tracts did not depend on the conversion of the recipient. Religious publication societies intended their literature to become integrated into a family’s daily life and routines. Some evidence is available to suggest that a few families, at least, treasured religious society Bibles and literature in their families. Bibles survive carrying the American Bible Society, American Tract Society, and American Sunday School Union imprints that served as valuable records of family history for several generations. In fact, some imprints came equipped with pages reserved for recording births, marriages, and deaths of family members. For instance, Harper and Achsas Blackburn, a farm family with four children lived near Salem in Forsyth County on \$250 of land. Their 1845 American Bible Society Holy Bible remained in use by their family to at least 1871.²⁴ Tobias and Catharine Sigmon Moser, farmers in Catawba County on \$235 worth of property, obtained an 1830 American Bible Society New Testament and maintained their family records in it for a generation.²⁵ Joseph G. Taylor inherited his 1845 American Bible Society New Testament from his uncle William, and carried it with him to Indiana.²⁶ B. Alexander Holt of Stanly County, 32 years old in 1860 and married to B. Caroline Honeycutt, was a mechanic with no property, but his 1850 American Bible Society New Testament remained in use by his family until 1913.²⁷ Small farmers John and Susanah Morton, also of Stanly County, recorded family milestones until the 1880s in their American Bible Society Holy Bible.²⁸ Ketton Gilleland of Iredell County noted in the flyleaf of his Bible, “R.K. Gilleland his Book to Read And Study Bought of hew cimble [Hugh Kimball] Prise \$6.00 [sic].” The price was steep, but the Gillelands used the American Tract Society Bible well into the twentieth century.²⁹

Agents of the American Tract Society, the American Bible Society, and the American Sunday School Union did distribute the perennial favorites of Protestant literature—that literature containing “pulpit themes” of conviction, redemption, and salvation. *Baxter’s Call*, *the Dairyman’s Daughter*, and *The Anxious Inquirer* rated as highly as *The Pilgrim’s Progress*. Yet, the textual community created by the world of evangelical publishing carried new cultural assumptions about morality and behavior. No longer did literature dwell on the conversion struggle or the pilgrimage tale. The home, the family, child-rearing, and a variety of other everyday experiences became the sites of sacred influence. This trend in literature matched the decline in emphasis on personal salvation and the rise in the imperative for moral actors to shape the secular world.³⁰

Thus, when Caroline Lilly relied on John Abbott’s *The Mother at Home* to guide the punishment of her son, James, Jr., she prioritized the new morals of motherhood. That instance was not her first utilization of American Tract Society material. As a schoolteacher in Concord, North Carolina, Caroline closely read Jacob Abbott’s *The Young Christian* to define her pedagogical and disciplinary approach to the classroom. Though as much a parenting manual as a teaching guide, its lessons of patience, restraint, and understanding could be applied in both classroom and domestic settings. In the introduction, Abbott directed an instruction to mothers that teaching “must be done, not in the suspicious manner of hearing a lesson which you fear has not been learned, but with the winning tone of kindness and confidence.” Abbott believed a child’s instruction lay in the ignition of his or her own native imagination. Thus, whipping with switches countered the intended effect of education. Caroline, subject to an “austere pedagogue [sic]” and its rod in her youth, paid particular attention to Abbott’s instructions about discipline. She copied two of his paragraphs into her diary. The excerpts charged teachers to sympathize with childlike impulses that might disrupt a classroom or break its rules. Illustrating with an example of a boy unable to contain his talking, Abbot instructed, “Now if any severe punishment should follow such a transgression, how disproportionate would it be to the guilt!”³¹ Though Caroline copied Abbott’s paragraphs into her diary, she altered their wording. She read this passage to say: “Should any teacher inflict severe punishment for such a fault he would certainly be guilty of an act of cruelty which no person who distinctly recollected the feelings of childhood would commit.”³² She clearly understood Abbott’s intent.³³

Discussions of morality in religious literature had an analog in the conversation about family forms in ecclesiastical newspapers. Religious newspapers proliferated in North Carolina by the 1850s. Among the denominations, the Presbyterians published *The North Carolina Presbyterian* in Fayetteville, the Baptists established the *Biblical Recorder* out of Raleigh, and the Methodist Protestants founded *The Methodist Protestant & Family Visitor* in Baltimore. The Methodist Episcopalians did not host a state based newspaper, but subscribed to two papers, the *Southern Christian Advocate* from Charleston and the *Christian Advocate* from Richmond. Even the Antimission Baptists had access to *The Primitive Baptist*. Editors, in original columns and in excerpts from papers across the nation articulated forward-thinking advice on gender

relations, advice strikingly compatible with evangelical expectations. Farmwomen, editors claimed, should not succumb to a life devoted to ease and materialism, and they looked to wealthy planters as examples of how *notto* behave. Historian Victoria Bynum notes regarding the yeoman-centered piedmont how “the practical needs of a farming economy and the infectious spirit of progress encouraged the view that white women should be active helpmates to their husbands rather than ornaments.”³⁴ To the “practical needs” and the “spirit of progress” must be added the evangelical expectation of marital fulfillment through moral gender equality.

According to evangelical literature, women were a counterpoint to the iconic man. Not as an inferior being, but in equilibrium. An advice for men began, “HOW TO TREAT A WIFE.” Answering puckishly, “*First*. Get a wife,” the column continued, describing a vision of gender apartheid, with man in the “open air” and woman “shut in from these healthful influences.” Yet that very inequity engendered the conscientious characteristics of patience, attentiveness, and solicitousness. The husband must realize that “[y]our wife may have had trials, which, though of less magnitude, may have been as hard to bear. Do not increase her difficulties.... [S]he has trials and sorrows to which you are a stranger, but which your tenderness can deprive of all their keenness.” Abandon impulsive self-interest, the author urged; restrain the impulse to heap your problems onto her. “Do not treat her with indifference.” How? “*Sometimes* yield your wishes to *her*.” For men who found the thought distasteful, the writer appealed to empathy, “Think you it is not difficult for her to give up *always*?” Submission of masculine impulse and imperative was key to reciprocal love and respect—the ideal relationship between husband and wife, the writer summarized. Nods to gendered differences lingered, as in the instruction, “Show yourself *manly*, so that your wife can *look up* to you, and feel that you will act nobly, and that she can confide in your judgment,” but a wife looking up to a husband had been surpassed by the admonition for the man to yield his wishes.³⁵ Southern evangelical publications thus objected to impulsive masculine behavior advocated by sexually and racially anxious planters, and offered an alternative code of conduct based on evangelical standards. Newspapers’ advice to men encouraged a companionate relationship in marriage. A Christian household, then, should be a place of respect across gendered divides, but more so, a place where the will and honor of a man should be subjugated in favor of harmony. Evangelical newspapers urged the domestication of masculine behavior, and promoted the moral authority of wives and mothers in relation to husbands and fathers, thereby reinforcing the middle-class view of family forms and functions.

Romantic love guided partners in companionate marriages and domestic life and prioritized strong emotional bonds between husbands and wives, and parents and children. Moral equality between men and women also marked such matches.³⁶ While enacting Tract Society literature in her teaching and child rearing, Caroline Lilly also articulated and practiced a companionate marriage of her own. Caroline prioritized an affectionate marriage over an economically or socially advantageous one. Historians have noted this characteristic—the advent of affection—among wealthy planters.³⁷ Caroline—not a planter—still expected romantic love. James Lilly practiced it, as his choice of a poor, dependent, school teacher—as she recognized—would not

raise his status in any way. When Caroline finally accepted an offer, she did so because the suitor had captured her heart. Fortunately for her, James also offered a final step into the world of the middle-class South.

Caroline Lilly's move toward domestic felicity gained momentum with her unexpected marriage, unexpected because after an early infatuation with the minister who shepherded her conversion, she had resigned herself to singlehood, and did not once, at least to her diary, divulge any interest in marriage. As a single woman with experience teaching children in a community largely untouched by the population turnover of urban areas (though not the outmigration to the Southwest), Caroline likely represented a fine catch to the older bachelors—fathers among them—of Cabarrus and Montgomery. Five men proposed marriage, or indicated an intention to do so, to her. Caroline rejected four of them before accepting one. In the deliberations in her journal, Caroline revealed a firm vision of the conjugal relationship. She rejected all appeals to economic dependency, comfort, and status, and determined that should she marry, she would do so for love alone. Her first (known) suitor in 1836, a "C. H. L.," did convince her "that he is devotedly attached to me and beside this question of mind & heart was such as entitle him to universal respect," which she considered a fair foundation for marriage. "[B]ut for several reasons I feel my duty to discard him."³⁸ She did not state the reasons. Caroline expressed distaste with the idea of stepping into another woman's place when she noted of another perceived suitor; "I do hope he ['Mr. C'] is not looking out for another wife."³⁹ Her contempt for desperate bachelors and unfamiliar mates is apparent with her snub of a new suitor, "Rumor says that L.S. a widower with five children is resolved on addressing me on the subject of matrimony. I am not acquainted with the gentleman and am very much astonished that he should speak so freely on the subject. He must either feel very certain of success or dread a disappointment but little."⁴⁰ This man's subsequent proposal absolutely stunned her:

To my utter astonishment Mr. L. Simmons came here on last evening and actually proposed marriage. Nothing could be further from my thoughts than the idea of acceding to the proposition even if he were possessed of the wealth of the Indies. He takes a great deal of pains to have known that he is rich and goes so far as to say he is independent. Be it so. he is welcome to enjoy it. I want it not. I would rather work for [illegible] a cottage than to possess princely honors with him.

Lockey Simmons, indeed, had reason to boast. A landowner, cotton planter, and Baptist patron in the eastern portion of Montgomery, the widower Simmons claimed a farm the value of \$4,000 in 1850, with thirty-three slaves.⁴¹ A match with Simmons would have provided as much economic stability as could have been hoped for in Montgomery County, and perhaps an unprecedented attainment for a woman born illegitimate and poor. Apparent in Caroline's rejections are a number of assumptions. She could not countenance the idea of marrying a man solely for the economic security he offered, nor a man for whom she did not feel an affectionate attachment. What economic independence Caroline had achieved as a teacher in Concord appeared tenuous at best, and having grown up in poverty, she did not romanticize or desire its dispossessions.

Poverty haunted her. In April 1837, upon seeing an “old maid,” she faltered then righted herself, “I am almost tempted to accept M.D.’s proffer, but no, that will not do. The marriage state must be truly miserable without reciprocity of affection, similarity of tastes & congeniality of Soul.”⁴²

At forty years of age in 1838, James Marshall Lilly found himself still unmarried. When James’ sister Mary married Atlas Cochran in May 1838, Caroline was in attendance as part of the wedding party. Though more interested in the dress and fashion of the bride, Caroline did note that she “[h]ad a tete a tete with James M. Lilly. Somewhat agreeable.”⁴³ It was an inconspicuous beginning, but paired with Caroline in the wedding party and seated next to her in a carriage on a two-day jaunt with the bride and groom, James built up a modest rapport with her. “[T]he agreeable conversation of Mr. L. rendered the trip quite pleasant.”⁴⁴ James escorted Caroline home from church that Sunday, but nothing about him made her think of him as more than a friend of a friend.⁴⁵ James, however, had designs he developed over the summer. His widowed mother hosted Caroline for supper at her house, and sent Caroline a basket of peaches from James’s home, Scuffleton, on the banks of the Pee Dee River.⁴⁶ While she may have suspected James’s interest, Caroline became fully aware when James visited the Martin household, where she lived, in August.⁴⁷ “The world will say he has some particular motive in visiting Mrs. M.’s,” she said before noting in a cool tone, “I care not.”⁴⁸ But her practiced indifference could not suppress her growing feelings, for the next day she wrote, “I see myself exposed to dangers which of my own strength I cannot avert.”⁴⁹

Much to Caroline’s surprise, she had grown accustomed to her own autonomy and resented the unexpected feelings growing in her heart. In her alarm, Caroline processed through a common courtship practice—an almost ritual defense of her independence expressed through fear of marriage and a studied indifference to her suitor.⁵⁰ “Felt that my heart was in danger,” Caroline wrote in September, “but prayed for aid to guard it carefully.”⁵¹ Caroline did not specify the reasons she feared for her heart. Interestingly, she also made no mention of the fact that James was not a professed Christian. She based her assessment of him entirely on his affections. On November 12, James proposed marriage to Caroline. “Nothing in the history of my past life had appeared half so much like romance and so little like reality as the events of this day...” Feelings overcame her, “But I do not dream. I cannot doubt the evidence of my senses...” James had confirmed what she had already learned from their brief courtship, that the pair truly loved one another, and James possessed no other motive. “No mercenary motives could prompt him to make such a choice. I am destitute of wealth of beauty of honorable connections and yet he declares he only wishes fortune for my sake.”⁵² She deliberated for the customary length of time, and notified him by letter three weeks later that “I have consented to become his companion for life fully believing that mutual affection is the only solid basis of conjugal felicity, and being persuaded that no other motive has induced ____ to so important engagement.”⁵³ She reassured herself; “No prince or potentate on earth could rival him in my affection.”⁵⁴ Caroline married James at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Martin on January 1, 1839.

Caroline's aspiration for an affectionate marriage proved out. She repeatedly noted tender moments, indulgences, and protective solicitations James provided. The two occasionally went fishing for pleasure, strolled in the waters of Little Richland Creek, and toured the farm fields. Caroline treasured these moments. The couple comforted one another in times of trial. In fact, Caroline frequently revealed episodes of irritation and anger, for which James provided relief. For example, one "morning found me quite ill in body and mind. My indisposition so excited my nervous system that I lost all command of myself and scolded not a little. Felt ashamed and made some apology to my dear husband who witnessed my perturbed state of mind. He replied mildly that he attributed it all to my bad health and did not blame me."⁵⁵ She did not fear his judgment, but rather was anxious about upholding her end of tender reciprocity. "The kind attentions of my husband are not all diminished but rather increase as my bodily afflictions accumulate."⁵⁶ His attentions soothed her anxieties, and her physical perturbances. James not only fretted over her when she succumbed to illness, but frequently substituted at her school when she could not attend.⁵⁷ She returned the favors when he was ill, or just ill-tempered. "My husband is perplexed with many cares and requires the soothing attentions of a prudent and affectionate wife. Let me not forget the vows of 1839."⁵⁸ During her first pregnancy, Caroline wrote an extraordinary and revealing statement: "A sweet calm resignation to the will of Heaven and the assiduous attention of my beloved James have greatly tended to alleviate my bodily affliction."⁵⁹ She had placed James on an equal footing with God in relation to her own well-being, but her positioning is critical. She reserved submission as an act for God, not her husband. She had not learned to subsume her own happiness to her husband. That still remained for God. No, from James she had learned to expect "assiduous attention."

James never behaved as the domineering patriarch, anxious about status and honor, so often described by historians. On only one occasion did Caroline suggest that James even possessed such qualities. "Mr. L indisposed, aggrieved from an incident that occurred at the Gaines on yesterday. He possesses high sense of honor that will not readily book an insult." [nb: struck out in the original.] The insult had apparently regarded James's compromised financial situation. It should be repeated that this is the only time Caroline referred to James's sense of honor, and this prickly honor did not have a domestic face. James did not parade his honor within the household, and he did not exhibit the dominance of his family as a performance of his honor in public. He thought nothing of being a substitute teacher in his wife's school, a nurse at her sickbed, or to allay her anxieties by returning directly from Lawrenceville court instead of carousing with male friends.⁶⁰ Nor did James act the patriarch in matters of religion. The Lilly family was Baptist, but James and Caroline attended a Methodist church because she adhered to that faith. He facilitated her ability to attend Sunday worship, quarterly meetings, and camp meetings. James never wielded spiritual authority in the household; Caroline was the undisputed head of family devotion at Scuffleton.

In the experiences of Caroline and James Lilly, we see a fledgling middle-class order in the Piedmont of farms and slaves. She drew in ideas from a full spectrum of evangelical and

contemporary literature. Caroline insisted on a companionate marriage, and thereby rejected traditional considerations of status and comfort. James was not a Christian, but his married life conformed to the expected behaviors of a Christian man and husband.⁶¹ The lessons of colporters and their tracts found expression in the Lilly home.

Those colporters, the agents of the publication societies, did more than distribute printed material. They modeled the very behavior they prescribed. The Presbyterian Synod of North Carolina described the general approach the agent must take, “the sending round suitable individuals, into the very bosom of our families ... aided by all the tender associations connected with *home* and the domestic fire-side, they may urge these publications upon the acceptance of all.”⁶² Thus, not as harbingers of revelation and revival, but as tutors in new forms of pious worship did tract and Bible society agents prove an innovative force. They did, indeed, continue to preach at camp meetings but they entered the family home in a way that no camp meeting sermon could. One agent reported:

Recently I came to a house; the children ran off, and the old man started as I drew near him. Do not be alarmed, said I; I have come to talk with you and your family about your souls. Now let us all go into the house and spend a short time profitably, as it is our first and may be our last meeting. The cabin was about sixteen by eighteen feet, serving as a dwelling for twelve persons, kitchen, smoke-house, dog-kennel, and pigsty. After greeting each one kindly and explaining my work, I again addressed the children. I said to a boy of fourteen, ‘Well, my boy, do you know who made you?’ ‘I reckon daddy did,’ he replied. Asked his grown sister if there was a Bible there. ‘Don’t know, sir.’ ‘Did you ever see one?’ ‘I don’t remember whether I ever saw him or not.’ I talked of the goodness and mercy of God in sending Jesus Christ to die for sinners. The father looked amazed: ‘Why, you don’t say that Jesus Christ is dead, sir?’ Long ago, said I. ‘Well, I never heard of it.’ The Bible says, ‘He had power to take up his life, and to lay it down.’ Get your Bible, and I will read you about it. ‘I have no Bible, and none of my family can read.’ I read from my own; he said he had never heard the Bible read before. I prayed with these poor people—the first prayer the children ever heard. There is a church within three miles of this family.⁶³

An amusing anecdote, indeed, but the modern impulses of the colporter—the imperative to literacy and family prayer—are present in the decidedly ordinary southern home. Another agent reported his method for assembling families for impromptu prayer meetings:

about dark we will have from five to fifteen come in—no extra preparations—the *neighbors just come in to see*. Then we set out a box of books—put in a big piece of light-wood, (pitch pine)—then give each one a book or tract, and the children an Almanac to look at or read, and be ready to change them about to gratify their curiosity; and when they have done looking, give them some tracts, and then propose to the head of the family, as so many of his neighbors are present, to have prayers before we part. *Thus we can have a prayer-meeting every night.*⁶⁴

Family prayer served as the basis of domestic piety. In some places, as Colleen McDannell notes, evangelicals attached great significance to art, furniture, and architecture as expressions of a pious domestic ideology.⁶⁵ Even Charles Deems wrote a book, *The Family Altar*, to propagate the form.⁶⁶ But these two anonymous American Tract Society agents adapted to the realities of southern rural life, finding a piece of pitch pine and a box of tracts sufficient to devotion. The prayer mattered more than the altar.

Strong Thomasson deeply mined contemporary literature for guidance on how to construct his middle-class family. Most of the magazines and newspapers he subscribed to contained articles and columns devoted to describing ideal gender relationships. Strong's courtship of Mary (Mollie) Bell was already underway when his diary opens in 1853, and there never seems to have been any question that the two would not be married. Therefore, when Strong read *Arthur's Home Magazine* or the *Young Bride's Book*, he had specific applications in mind. Of the former, he remarked that he must subscribe, "if not now, as soon as I get possession of, 'a pretty little wife, and a big plantation.' Since 'There's no place like home' I intend to have a home if I live."⁶⁷ In fact, when he received the *Young Bride's Book*, eighteen months before his marriage, Strong noted that he would present the compilation to Mollie on their wedding day.⁶⁸ Strong did not have a commanding tone; rather, he conducted himself in genial ways. Giving Mollie the *Young Bride's Book*, subtitled *An epitome of the domestic duties and social enjoyments of woman*, as wife and mother, was not a command, but an express wish and encouragement that Mollie be a certain kind of Christian wife. It, too, was an implicit statement that Strong, the husband, would behave as a Christian man. The preface to the 1839 edition of *The Young Bride's Book* established its vision of a Christian marriage: "That conjugal felicity may be at once reciprocal and lasting, there must not only be equal virtue on each part, but virtue of the same kind; not only the same end must be proposed, but the same means must be approved by both." The critical distinction here is the prescription for the balance of power in a marriage. It does not allow separate standards of behavior for husbands and wives, but "equal virtue...virtue of the same kind." Public displays of political dominance and private acts of sexual control were not sanctioned. The "same end," and "the same means must be approved by both." Again, the standard of behavior for husbands and wives—for men and women—depended in part not on independent sexual variables, but on the unity of virtues practiced by one another.

Strong and his extended family exemplify the unique nature of middle-class ideas applied in a rural agricultural region. Historian Paul Escott noted that Strong and Mollie remained fully in the economic orbit of—even submission to—Strong's father Andrew. Strong looked to Andrew for advice on the purchase of land. Strong and his brothers Clark and Caleb worked each other's land as much as their own. Important family meetings and events took place at Andrew's house; Clark went there for his deathbed. Yet *inside* Strong and Mollie's own home, the picture vastly changes. "Staid [sic] at home and read, among other things, two of Wesley's sermons. One on family religion... and the other on redeeming time." On another occasion, "We stay at home on

Sunday and read our good books—the Bible—*Chain of Sacred Wonders*—*Prince of the House of David*—etc., etc.”⁶⁹

Strong consciously constructed the setting for middle-class domesticity not only in the physical settings of the household, but in the relationship he cultivated with Mollie. Strong, like James Lilly, cared for his wife when she was sick, and assumed her duties in the house. “Found Mary in bed with the sick head ache,” he noted a week after their marriage. “Bathed her feet in warm water, and gave her some Ditney tea, and a warm rock for her feet, covering her up nicely in bed.”⁷⁰ When Mollie fell ill in 1859, Strong undertook a task few southern men admitted to—he cooked and washed dishes. “It is well enough for a man to know how to cook, wash dishes, etc.,” he concluded. “Had I been ignorant of these things, I would have been likely to have gone to bed to-night minus my supper.”⁷¹ No doubt, Mollie would have too. He confessed, “I’d make a great cook if I had enough of two things:—viz. practice and something to cook.”⁷² Strong stepped in to aid in other tasks such as quilt making and washing.⁷³ He not only aided Mollie with physical labor, Strong also taught her to read. “Gave Mollie her first lesson in Grammar,” he noted six months after their wedding. “She learned and recited three lesson[s]! They were of course not very long, but I am well pleased with her start. Think she’ll be a grammarian some day.”⁷⁴ With such acts, Strong enthusiastically performed the role of a graceful Christian husband. In these cases, he occupied the patriarchal seat, being the possessor of power. But he did not perform these tasks because to wield power was his duty, or because he meant to exhibit his power. He did so because he aimed, as he had read in the *Young Bride’s Book*, to have “reciprocal” relationship with “equal virtue” achieved through the “same means.”

Strong’s domestic life did not supplant his church life entirely, but home life was no less sacred than church. This is a slight distinction, and a major one. It is slight because Strong still prioritized salvation and moral behavior above all other things, but a tectonic shift had occurred. Scholars of religion have long noted the theological and material changes to the American household as a result of market expansion and industrialization.⁷⁵ Few however have described this process in southern households, let alone non-slaveowning ones. Yet Strong Thomasson exemplifies—in theology more than materialism—that shift. He stayed at home on Sundays in reveries of quietude, made possible by a home, a wife, and a child. Strong turned his domestic setting into a sacred scene: “The man that loves not, and so neglects his home, if he has one, must be looking out for happiness in the wrong direction.” The perfect happiness of a confident Christian could only be found in the context of marriage and parental relations, in a household setting. Strong, like many others, turned his eyes from a heaven in a supernatural world, to a very real heaven on earth. “Home,” he wrote, “There is music in the word. O that we may always have a good home; –a home on earth.”⁷⁶ The shift to domestic felicity is emblematic of a theological shift from salvation-focused religion to a focus on secular morality. Salvation remained the goal of household happiness.

How much more pleasant it is to spend the Sabbath at home reading good books and papers, than it is to spend it gad[d]ing about over the neighborhood. And to say nothing of the agreeableness,

how much more profitable it is. Since the Lord is so good as to let us live, we should not spend our time in idleness, nor in frivolous conversation, but we should be all the time laying up for ourselves ‘treasures in heaven.’⁷⁷

The act of “laying up for ourselves ‘treasures in heaven’” thus included staying at home—not at a revival, not in communal singing, and not in listening to a sermon—but in staying at home.

Strong worked toward the nuclear family as a sacred ideal. Scholars tend to suggest that economic change broke down habits of mutuality.⁷⁸ But Strong lived fully in a world of habits of mutuality. Historians also suggest that communities threatened with economic and political change clung more forcefully to religion.⁷⁹ But here it is religion itself that facilitated the change. Strong certainly lost something of traditional social relationships. He did not worship with friends, neighbors, and family as much. He did not visit, or receive visitors in such a way as to reinforce social bonds. All the while he maintained communal economic relationships with his family and neighbors. Habits of mutuality remained while religious practice directed him toward habits of domesticity. Strong never expressed regret over the transition. He embraced it.

In the rural, non-planter homes of Caroline Lilly and Strong Thomasson we see clear expressions of middle-class behavior. Both anticipated and practiced companionate marriages, both nurtured their spouses and children with affection, and both sacralized their domestic spaces. The demands of racial and gender hierarchy were not the primary experience in Caroline and Strong’s familial endeavors. Their conceptions of family relationships arose from the cultural world of their evangelical Christianity; not the Christianity of the great revivals, but mid-nineteenth-century American Christianity that promoted an expanded view of moral behavior and instruction. Evangelism defined domestic piety and in the process, defined the larger shape of households and homes as religious centers in the antebellum Piedmont. Caroline attended protracted meetings, and deeply struggled with her own salvation, but she learned how to be a wife, a mother, and member of society from Christian-infused literature on female education and the advice literature circulated by national evangelical publication societies. Strong imbibed in the fictional and moralistic forms of Christian literature present in magazines and newspapers. Of interest here is the observation that these cultural changes are apparent long before economic and political challenges manifested themselves in the South. Both diarists, in the midst of traditional southern farmsteads of slave labor (Caroline) and extended families (Strong), turned their families and their homes into the means of salvation. Their eyes did turn earthward, but they were no less Christians for their new methods. Indeed, instead of a decrease in the social influence of Christian behavior, the prescriptions for salvation became more deeply embedded in everyday life. This domestic piety has been most visible to historians in planter families. Here, it is apparent in the homes of more modest people.

Part of the cultural change not necessarily specific to evangelicals is that of male gender roles. Strong Thomasson and James Lilly enacted and represented a model of masculine behavior at odds with elite planter standards based on honor, command, or political independence. Though

we do not have the interior thoughts of James, we can read in Caroline's observations a man fully in concert with his wife's marital expectations. James and Strong's behavior was not feminized, and nothing suggests that their peers considered them less than men. When James acceded to Caroline's religious prerogatives and when Strong fed Mollie's reading habits with bridal magazines, both fulfilled standards of manly behavior promulgated by middle-class Christianity. Specifically, they regarded their wives as moral equals in the domestic sphere. Thereby, Strong and James became the men that the American Tract Society and the *Southern Christian Advocate* encouraged them to be, morally fulfilled by their wives. These two husbands acted the parts that historian Amy Greenberg recently described as "restrained manhood," which she explains, "was practiced by men in the North and South who grounded their identities in their families [and] in the evangelical practice of their Protestant faith." They were "strong proponents of domesticity or 'true womanhood.'" Furthermore, "they believed that the domestic household was the moral center of the world, and the wife and mother its moral compass." Greenberg's restrained men could be found in cities and in the country and among Democrats and Whigs, even if their cultural preferences tended them toward business and progress-oriented Whiggery.⁸⁰ The notably Whiggish orientation of the North Carolina Piedmont—and other places outside the coastal plains—thus may be partially explained by the embrace, within households, of the new evangelical conception of family life.⁸¹ This manifestation of restrained manhood was possible because its practitioners—in this example—prioritized an evangelical ethic over the needs of racial power and public approval of manly and feminine performance. In Lorri Glover's recent exploration of planter parenting, fathers nurtured a desire to personal restraint necessary to independence in their sons. Yet, because slavery defined the independent character, those same sons cultivated a fiery defiance of authority with ultimate consequences for the national unity.⁸² The Lillys owned slaves, but Caroline, in the undisputed position of parental authority, taught her children—boys and girls—to temper their desires not for self-satisfaction, but in deference to the authority of God.

These findings also point to another critical relationship in southern life—that of elite planters and non-elite white people who composed the majority of the free population. Historians from Eugene Genovese to Stephanie McCurry have described elite cultural power as the basis of social expectations for all others. Planters expected command relationships with subordinates and secured that behavior in non-planters through political, religious, and social pressures. According to Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, slaveholders bridged potential tensions with yeomen with appeals to gender solidarity. "The conventions of masculinity," Fox-Genovese explains, "did much to mediate those tensions, especially since the yeomen did not rush to develop an alternative."⁸³ But planter persuasion or even coercion is not so apparent in this story. In fact, what is notable is the *unmediated* nature of non-planter evangelical literature and practice. Caroline and Strong learned their behaviors not by listening to elites, or aspiring to be like them, but by engaging with national evangelical publishing networks and other cultural conversations.⁸⁴ They did, indeed, develop an alternative ethos. In the Lilly and Thomasson homes we see a power dynamic described by Beth Schweiger and others that prioritized moral

equilibrium between men and women, and not one of utter gendered dominance.⁸⁵ If, as Colleen McDannell and Stephanie McCurry might agree, that homes are the “starting point for shaping the public world,” these internal dynamics had political consequences.⁸⁶ In the Piedmont homes of North Carolina, families nurtured relationships not based on honor, power, and performance, but on harmony, moral equity, and peace. This is not to say that non-elite southerners replicated homes and families of their northern cousins. Indeed, southern yeomen continued to hew to conservative theology, and contemporary gender and racial norms. Caroline Lilly, even if she did not prioritize her husband’s place, still insisted on deference to God’s authority. Yet, the evangelical domestic ethos posed problems for the gathering Confederate nation, as its practitioners could not fully support the secessionist’s brash defense of honor and patriarchal privilege.

1. All references to the Caroline Lilly diary [“Lilly Diary”] are from Caroline Brooks Lilly Diary and Account Book #4530, Southern Historical Collection, The Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. James Lilly sat firmly in the ranks of Montgomery County’s “squirearchy.” The Lilly family was among the oldest and largest landholders in southwest Montgomery, and James worked and socialized within the “courthouse ring” at the county seat in Lawrenceville. Caroline, however, was born illegitimate and grew up in poverty in Moore County before she became a schoolteacher—a decision that ultimately led to her introduction to cultural upper class in Cabarrus and Montgomery Counties. A year after their marriage, James and Caroline owned nine slaves, just two more than the average slaveholder in Montgomery, but not exceptional. Lilly Family File, Government and Heritage Library at the State Library of North Carolina, Raleigh, Lilly Diary, volume 1, pages 3-5, 1840 Federal Census for Montgomery County (East Pee Dee District), Schedule I. Quotes from Lilly Diary, January 1, 1845, January 10, 1840, January 4, 1846, and January 9, 1846.
2. John S. C. Abbott, *The Mother At Home* (New York: The American Tract Society, 1833).
3. Lilly Diary, 29 November 1840.
4. Abbott, *The Mother At Home*, 24, 30, 60–61.
5. Thomasson is commonly known as Basil Armstrong Thomasson, but internal evidence from his diary indicates his friends and family called him Strong. All biographical information from Paul Escott, ed., *North Carolina Yeoman: The Diary of Basil Armstrong Thomasson, 1853–1862* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996). Strong never aspired to slaveholding status and he did not harbor political goals, though he did advocate for the causes of temperance and public education.
6. Escott, *North Carolina Yeoman*, 215–216, 103, 203, 222, and 142.

7. I look particularly to Jane Turner Censer for examples of planters with a middle-class tendency. Jane Turner Censer, *North Carolina Planters and Their Children, 1800–1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984). Lorri Glover argues that early national southerners raised sons in a more patriarchal manner. At the heart of this debate is the relative imperative to instill values necessary to maintain absolute racial authority. Lorri Glover, *Southern Sons: Becoming Men in the New Nation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).
8. For the material setting of domestic piety, I follow Colleen McDannell, *The Christian Home in Victorian America, 1840–1900* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).
9. Jonathan Daniel Wells, *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class, 1800–1861* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).
10. Jennifer L. Goloboy, “The Early American Middle Class,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 25.4 (2005): 537–545; and Christopher Clark, “Comment on the Symposium on Class in the Early Republic,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 25.4 : 557-564.
11. In addition to Jane Censer, Jan Lewis, Stephen Stowe, and Anya Jabour have all traced middle-class family forms in elite, southern families. See Jan Lewis, *The Pursuit of Happiness: Family Values in Jefferson’s Virginia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Anya Jabour, *Marriage in the Early Republic: Elizabeth and William Wirt and the Companionate Ideal* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998); and Steven M. Stowe, *Intimacy and Power in the Old South: Ritual in the Lives of the Planters* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990).
12. Craig Thompson Friend, “Sex, Self, and the Performance of Patriarchal Manhood in the Old South,” in *The Old South’s Modern Worlds: Slavery, Region, and Nation in the Age of Progress*, eds. L. Diane Barnes, Brian Schoen, and Frank Towers (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 250–251. In the “affairs” passage, Friend quoted Steven Stowe.
13. A commercial market in material goods and ideas had penetrated North Carolina early in the century, but the structure of households is usually associated with *economic* change. Paul Escott places economic change in Piedmont North Carolina at the arrival of the North Carolina Railroad in the early 1850s. Escott, “Yeoman Independence and the Market: Social Status and Economic Development in Antebellum North Carolina,” *North Carolina Historical Review* 66 (July 1989): 275–300.
14. On religious reading and the origins of national publication networks in the early nineteenth century, see David Paul Nord, *Faith in Reading; Religious Publishing and the Birth of Mass Media in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), particularly 61–88.

15. *Minutes of the Presbyterian Synod of North Carolina, 1837* (Fayetteville, N.C.: Edward J. Hale, 1838).
16. *Minutes of the Presbyterian Synod of North Carolina, 1844* (Fayetteville, N.C.: Edward J. Hale, 1845). The Methodists, for all their desire to preach with other sects, did not affiliate with the national organizations and maintained their own publishing and distribution networks. Their ministers, however, formed the backbone of national tract distribution in North Carolina. *Journal of the Seventeenth Annual Session of the North Carolina Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, Held in Pittsborough, N.C., Nov. 1-14, 1854* (Raleigh: Wm. C. Doub, Printer, Star Office, 1855)
17. David Paul Nord, "Religious Reading and Readers in Antebellum America," *Journal of the Early Republic* 15 (1995): 241–272.
18. Rev. M. T. Plyler, "Peter Doub, Itinerant of Heroic Days," in *Historical Papers*, Series IX (n.p.: Trinity College Historical Society and The North Carolina Conference Historical Society, 1912), 33–50; and Samuel Bryant Turrentine, *A Romance of Education: A Narrative Including Recollections and Other Facts Connected With Greensboro College* (Greensboro, N.C.: The Piedmont Press, 1946), 62.
19. Edward M. Deems and Francis M. Deems, eds., *Autobiography of Charles Force Deems* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1897), 71–72, 79. See Deems to Joseph Hyde, Esq., 13 December 1841, American Bible Society Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.
20. *Summary of Colportage, by the American Tract Society in the year ending April 1, 1853* (New York: American Tract Society, 1853), 31–32.
21. On the changing messages of tract and Bible societies, see Mark Y. Hanley, *Beyond a Christian Commonwealth: the Protestant Quarrel with the American Republic, 1830–1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 150, 152; and Candy Gunther Brown, *The Word in the World: Evangelical Writing, Publishing, and Reading in America, 1789–1880* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).
22. *Summary of Colportage, by the American Tract Society in the year ending March 1, 1855* (New York: American Tract Society, 1855), 21.
23. *Summary of Colportage* (1855), 4, 22.
24. Blackburn Family Bible Records, North Carolina Division of Archives and Records, and 1860 Federal Census for Forsyth County, Schedule I.
25. Tobias and Catharine Sigmon Moser Family Bible Records, North Carolina Division of Archives and Records, and 1860 Federal Census for Catawba County, Schedule I

26. Taylor Family Bible Records, North Carolina Division of Archives and Records.
27. B.A. Holt Family Bible Records, North Carolina Division of Archives and Records, and 1860 Federal Census, Stanly County.
28. John Wright Morton Family Bible Records, North Carolina Division of Archives and Records, and 1860 Federal Census, Stanly County.
29. Robert K. Gilleland Family Bible Records, North Carolina Division of Archives and Records, and 1860 Federal Census, Iredell County.
30. Hanley, *Beyond a Christian Commonwealth*, 150, 152; Brown, *The Word in the World*; Stephen Rachman, "Shaping the Values of Youth: Sunday School Books in 19th Century America," accessed December 9, 2011, <http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/ssb/?action=introessay>; and Daniel T. Rodgers, "Socializing Middle-Class Children: Institutions, Fables, and Work Values in Nineteenth Century America," *Journal of Social History* 13.3 (1980): 354–367.
31. Jacob Abbott, *The Young Christian: or, A Familiar Illustration of the Principles of Christian Duty* (New York: American Tract Society, 1832), 5, 45-46.
32. Lilly Diary, April 1838.
33. "Rev. Jacob Abbott" on *Shaping the Values of Youth: Sunday School Books in 19th Century America*, accessed December 15, 2011, <http://digital.lib.msu.edu/projects/ssb/search.cfm?AuthorID=182>.
34. Victoria Bynum identified a discourse in piedmont newspapers that eschewed "the code of modern gentility." Newspaper editors condemned the allegedly frivolous life of planter women. Victoria E. Bynum, *Unruly Women: The Politics of Social & Sexual Control in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 48–50.
35. *Southern Christian Advocate*, 12 April 1844.
36. Karen Lystra, *Searching the Heart: Women, Men, and Romantic Love in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 127, 229; and Jabour, *Marriage in the Early Republic*, 1–7.
37. Lewis, *The Pursuit of Happiness*, 169–208; Censer, *North Carolina Planters and Their Children*, 72, and Stowe, *Intimacy and Power in the Old South*, 50–51, 88–89.
38. Lilly Diary, 13 November 1836.
39. Lilly Diary, 22 April 1838.
40. Lilly Diary, 29 May 1838.

41. Lilly Diary, 21 November 1838. On Simmons, see William Cathcart, ed., *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1833), Federal Manuscript Census, North Carolina, Schedules of Population and Slaves, 1840, 1850, and 1860.
42. Lilly Diary, n.d., April 1837
43. Lilly Diary, 10 May 1838.
44. Lilly Diary, 11 May 1838.
45. Lilly Diary, 13 May 1838.
46. Lilly Diary, 3 July 1838; 16 August 1838.
47. Lilly Diary, 30 July 1838; 4 August 1838.
48. Lilly Diary, 19 August 1938.
49. Lilly Diary, 20 August 1838.
50. Scott Stephan detailed the reasons for women's hesitation in the face of courtship as fear of both sexually impulsive (and deceptive) men, and of the potential for a mismatch that threatened piety. Scott Stephan, *Redeeming the Southern Family: Evangelical Women and Domestic Devotion in the Antebellum South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 62–67. See also Anya Jabour, *Scarlett's Sisters: Young Women in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 151–180.
51. Lilly Diary, 24 September 1838.
52. Lilly Diary, 12 November 1838.
53. Lilly Diary, 8 December 1838. In some ways Caroline and James's courtship contained elements of epistolary ritual that Steven M. Stowe described, particularly in James' actual proposal and in Caroline's affirmative reply. Unfortunately, the letters they exchanged do not survive. Their courtship also included quite a number of face-to-face visits that apparently included unguarded emotional expression—not elemental to Stowe's description of planter ritual. Stowe, *Intimacy and Power in the Old South*, 50–121.
54. Lilly Diary, 17 December 1838.
55. Lilly Diary, 7 September 1839.
56. Lilly Diary, 9 September 1839.
57. Lilly Diary, 25 July 1839.
58. Lilly Diary, 28 October 1840.

59. Lilly Diary, 1 August 1839.
60. Lilly Diary, 5 February 1839.
61. By this I mean that James did not experience religious conversion, and was thus ineligible to join a church, even if he did pray and attend regularly.
62. *Minutes of the Presbyterian Synod of North Carolina, 1844*, 13.
63. *Summary of Colportage* (1853), 30-32.
64. *Summary of Colportage* (1853), 29-30.
65. McDannell, *The Christian Home in Victorian America*, 38–51
66. Charles F. Deems, *The Home Altar: An Appeal in Behalf of Family Worship; with Prayers and Hymns, and Calendar of Lessons from Scripture for Family Use* (New York: M. W. Dodd, 1850). Though published in New York, Deems composed the book while president of the Methodist's Greensboro Female Institute.
67. Escott, *North Carolina Yeoman*, 12.
68. *Ibid.*, 27–28.
69. *Ibid.*, 190, 222.
70. *Ibid.*, 90-91.
71. *Ibid.*, 225.
72. *Ibid.*, 231.
73. *Ibid.*, 229.
74. *Ibid.*, 124.
75. Mary P. Ryan, *Cradle of the Middle Class: The Family in Oneida County, New York, 1790-1865* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); and McDannell, *The Christian Home in Victorian America*.
76. Escott, *North Carolina Yeoman*, 256. Brown noted this downward glance in *The Word in the World*, 13, 19.
77. Escott, *North Carolina Yeoman*, 183.
78. Steven Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850–1890* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

79. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *The Shaping of Southern Culture: Honor, Grace, and War, 1760s–1880s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 106–135.
80. Amy Greenberg, *Manifest Manhood and the Antebellum American Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 11–12, 238–258.
81. John Quist found this tendency in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. See Quist, *Restless Visionaries: The Social Roots of Antebellum Reform in Alabama and Michigan* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998).
82. Glover, *Southern Sons*.
83. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Household: Black and White Women of the Old South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 202.
84. Friend found this aspirational behavior in one South Carolina Piedmonter in “Belles, Benefactors, and the Blacksmith’s Son: Cyrus Stuart and the Enigma of Southern Gentlemanliness,” in *Southern Manhood: Perspectives on Masculinity in the Old South*, eds. Craig Thompson Friend and Lorri Glover (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2004), 92–122.
85. Beth Barton Schweiger, “Max Weber in Mount Airy Or, Revivals and Social Theory in the Early South,” in *Religion in the American South*, eds. Donald Mathews and Beth Barton Schweiger (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 33. See also Frederick A. Bode, “A Common Sphere: White Evangelicals and Gender in Antebellum Georgia,” *The Georgia Historical Quarterly* 74.4 (1995): 775-809; and Stephan, *Redeeming the Southern Family*.
86. McDannell, *The Christian Home in Victorian America*, xiv; and Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).