

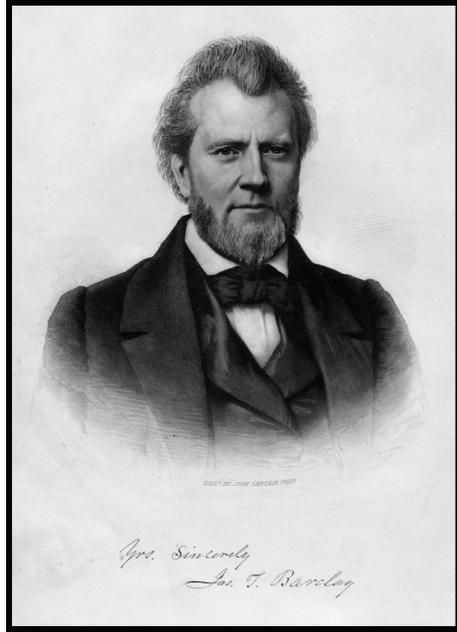
## James Turner Barclay: Resident of Scottsville, Citizen of the World

By Evelyn Edson  
Edited by Angela Nemecek

Doctor, agricultural experimenter, pharmacist, archaeologist, preacher, scholar, missionary in Jerusalem, family man: James Turner Barclay was a person of many facets. Born in King and Queen County in 1807, Barclay first became associated with the Scottsville area because his father owned an estate between Batesville and North Garden.

The Barclay family enjoyed a storied history in American politics. Barclay's grandfather, Thomas Barclay, played a significant role in the American Revolution; he served as the first U.S. consul in France in 1781, and later Commissioner to Morocco. He died in 1793 in a duel with a Spanish nobleman, who had cast aspersions on the character of American women. Thomas's son, Robert, James's father, was a merchant in Washington, D. C., as well as a Virginia landowner. He married Sarah Coleman Turner, and they had four children: Mary Elizabeth, Thomas Jefferson, James Turner, and Anna Maria (Orianna).

After Robert tragically drowned in the Rappahannock River in 1809, Sarah Coleman Turner married Captain John Harris of Viewmont and the family settled there in 1814. John Harris was a wealthy cotton merchant who owned eight large estates in and around Albemarle County. He



*James Turner Barclay, MD, circa 1858*

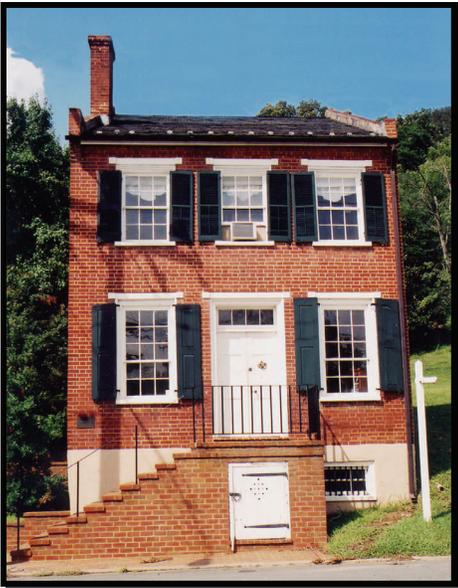
was also a kind and generous stepfather. He became the legal guardian of his four stepchildren in 1818, and provided for their education.

James' brother Thomas studied at the University of Virginia and had just opened a law practice in Scottsville in 1828, when he was found drowned in the James River. James' two sisters married into the Moon family and settled at Viewmont and Mt. Ayr, respectively. Among the children of Anna Maria Barclay Moon were Charlotte (Lottie) Moon, the famous Baptist missionary to China, and Orianna Moon Andrews, who followed her uncle to the University of Pennsylvania, becoming one of the first female doctors in Virginia.

Although family lore holds that James Turner Barclay attended the University of Virginia, the University has no record of him. He entered the Medical College of the University of Pennsylvania in 1826, graduating with an M.D. in 1828. The three-year course included chemistry, surgery, obstetrics, anatomy, pharmacy and medicinal plants, as well as clinical instruction. After returning home, Barclay married Julia Ann Sowers of Staunton in 1830 and settled in a house on the northeast corner of Market and Seventh Streets in Charlottesville, where he opened a drug store.

In 1831 the Barclays exchanged their house in Charlottesville, along with \$3000, for a much grander address—Monticello. The family who had inherited the estate, the Randolphs, had fallen on hard times and were forced to sell it. The Barclays did not remain there long, selling it again in 1836 to Uriah Levy, whose family continued to own it for many years. Later the Randolphs blamed Barclay for not properly maintaining the estate, but Barclay's daughter-in-law denied these charges. After leaving Monticello, the Barclays moved to Viewmont and eventually to Scottsville, perhaps to the Barclay House, purchased in 1838 by James's mother. Here the young doctor opened another drugstore.

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*Barclay House,  
Home of James Turner Barclay*

Around this time, James and Julia also underwent a religious conversion, which would change the face of Scottsville, since it led to the founding of the Disciples of Christ Church. Although his mother and sisters were Baptists, James Turner Barclay was a member of the Presbyterian Church, the church of his wife, until 1840. At this time a missionary of the “Campbellites” came to Scottsville.

Alexander Campbell had founded the Campbellites, who came to be known as the Disciples of Christ. In an effort to return to the “pure” Christianity of early days, the Campbellites relied on Scriptural literalism. From the Baptists the Disciples took the practice of adult baptism and total immersion. More radically, they denied the Trinity and eschewed church hierarchy. All adult members were brothers and sisters; the senior members were elders, with no distinction of rank. Any member could administer the Lord’s Sup-

per, which was re-enacted at every gathering. Meetings, called “cooperations,” drew Disciples from the southeast, where the movement was most successful.

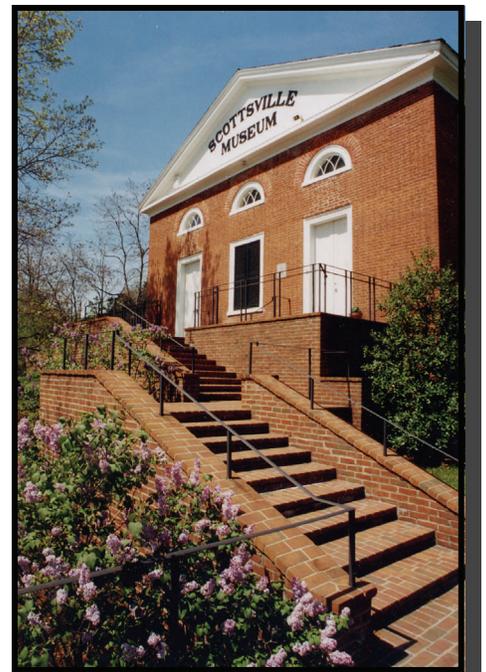
One result of the literalist approach to the Bible was a murky position on slavery. After all, Abraham had owned slaves, and Paul had counseled slaves to submit to their masters. At a time when many churches were torn asunder over this issue, the Disciples’ position attracted some hostility. According to the 1840 census, Barclay himself did own slaves—eleven, to be exact—though in later letters he would refer to them as “our beloved servants.”

Despite these controversies over slavery, the tenets of the Campbellites were inspiring to many. Reuben Coleman, Barclay’s step uncle, described the Scottsville meeting which resulted in the Barclays’ conversion: “I have attended many Christian reunions during the fifty years of my spiritual life, but none more delightful in its progress, or more cheering in its results, than that meeting...” At the close of the revival meeting, Julia Barclay rose as a convert. The next day, after lengthy conversations with the evangelists, her husband also converted, and the couple was baptized in the James River.

The Barclays were wholehearted members of the church, and their faith dominated all of their subsequent lives. In 1846 the Scottsville congregation built its church. Dr. Barclay was not only its preacher, but also built the pews

and the altar.

James Barclay’s religious fervor paved the way toward missionary work. While a Presbyterian, he considered going to China, but after his older brother’s death, his mother was unwilling to let her only surviving son go. Both of James’s sons were given the names of famous missionaries: Robert Gutzloff Barclay, born 1832, was named for Karl Gutzloff, a German missionary who served in Java, Thailand and China; John Judson Barclay, born in 1834, was named for Adoniram Judson, who spent his career in Burma.



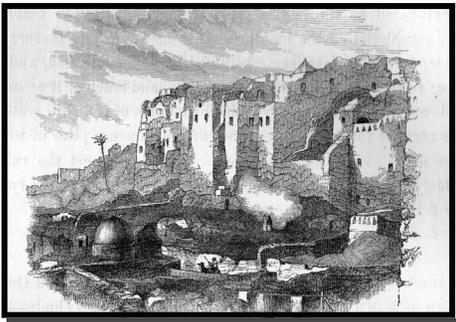
*Scottsville Museum, formerly Disciples of Christ Church*

By 1849, James and Julia were urging their church to support their whole family on a mission to the Jews of Jerusalem. Dr. Turner’s mission in Jerusalem, as he saw it, was to facilitate the End

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of Time by converting Jews to Christianity and encouraging their resettlement in the Holy Land. Barclay, who said that he read the Bible from cover to cover every six weeks, was struck by the idea that the Jews, now dispersed throughout the world, would have to return to Jerusalem before the Second Coming of Christ—also known as the Millennium—could take place. In 1850, with the blessings of the Disciples of Christ and a small amount of funds, the Barclay family departed, with high hopes, for Jerusalem. After an extended voyage, marked by violent storms at sea, they arrived at Beirut in January 1851. Barclay rejoiced to find himself in “Emmanuel’s Land” which “I had so long wished to make the land of my adoption, and the final resting-place of my bones.”

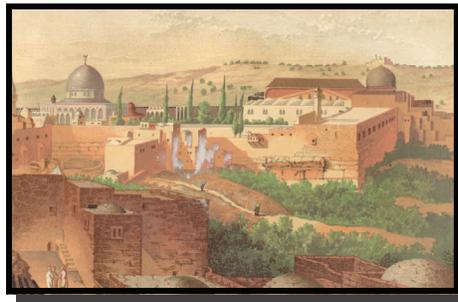


American Christian Mission Premises on Mt. Zion, Jerusalem

But Jerusalem at mid-century was not an encouraging sight. Ruled as a minor province by the Ottoman Turks, the city had fallen into ruin, and its polyglot population of Jews, Muslims and Christians was impoverished. The Barclays were shocked at the sectarian hostility, particularly among the Christian community. Barclay himself was ejected from the Church of the Nativity during the Christmas Eve service because he was not Catholic. His cause of converting Jews to Christianity was hampered by the fact that those who converted were liable to be persecuted by their former co-religionists. In their letters, the Barclays expressed horror at religious practices they judged to be idolatrous. Julia and daughter, Sarah, were particularly shocked at the treatment of Muslim women.

In his letters, Barclay reported numerous long and probing conversations on the subject of religion, but he held firm in his position of not paying people to convert, nor would he baptize them until he felt they were properly prepared. Not surprisingly, the number of converts was disappointing. However, once word got out that Barclay was a physician, sufferers turned up to their home in droves. In the first year alone, he reported that he treated more than two thousand people for malaria.

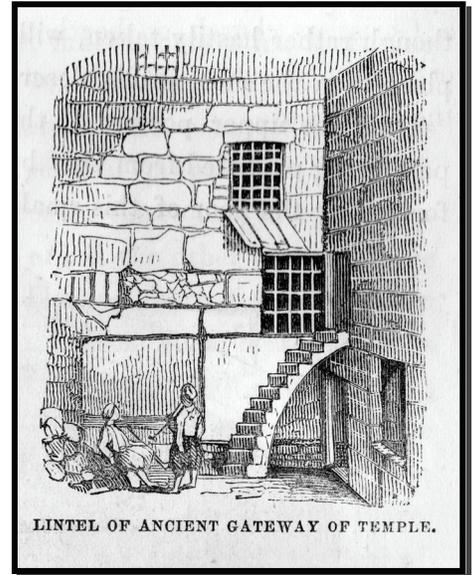
Despite these harsh living conditions, Barclay’s restless curiosity led him on a course of exploration. By chance he was able to treat successfully a Turkish official, who was impressed by “the wonderful effect of my electric machine upon his palsied arm.” This official was in charge of repairs in the Haram al-Sharif, or Temple enclosure, where the Dome of the Rock still stands today. Non-Muslims had not been allowed inside for centuries, but Barclay accompanied his guide, making measurements and drawings. The results of his discoveries were published in his book, *City of the Great King*, published in 1858.



Temple Mount and Olivet from Zion, drawing from *City of Kings* book by J.T. Barclay, 1858

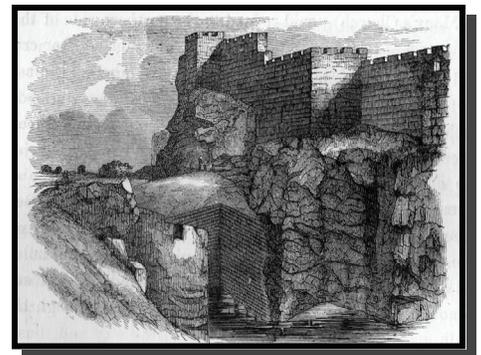
Jerusalem’s underground structures were almost more numerous than those above ground, as the city was permeated with subterranean passages, some of which dated back to the second millennium B.C.E. Barclay explored a large reservoir he determined to be the “Sea,” mentioned in the apocryphal biblical book of Sirach. He also entered one of the underground passages that led from a well outside the Temple wall to the Fount of the Virgin, and followed it for 105 feet until the passageway was blocked. Bar-

clay named a feature there, which is to this day known as Barclay’s Gate. This massive structure, of which only part of the lintel remains, was nearly buried under centuries of rebuilding and debris. Consulting the first-century Jewish historian, Josephus, Barclay identified it as one of the original gates in the Temple wall.



LINTEL OF ANCIENT GATEWAY OF TEMPLE.

Outside the greater city wall he and his sons found the entrance to a cave, which Barclay believed to have been the quarry for the stones of the Temple. This discovery aroused the interests of the Masonic order, which received special permission to conduct their ceremonies in it. All these findings were fully described in *City of the Great King*, illustrated with drawings—many by his daughter Sarah—and maps. He also made a large map, published separately,



City Wall on Bezetha Hill over the Great Cavern Quarry

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entitled "Map of Jerusalem and Environs, from Actual and Minute Survey."

Sarah Barclay wrote a book of her own, *Hadji in Syria, or Three Years in Jerusalem*, published in 1858. Her work included a dramatic account of her entering the Tomb of David in disguise with some Muslim woman friends. She also recounted the delights of camping out on the Mount of Olives in the summer time, where the family, battled by malaria, went to escape the stifling and infectious air of the city.

In 1854, The Crimean War broke out between Russia and the Turkish Empire, and this had an immediate impact on Jerusalem and the Barclays. The Turks withdrew their troops, which had been maintaining order among the assorted Bedouin tribes in the region. Letters from the Barclays describe intermittent gunfire and battles around the city. They started for home, and in July 1854 Julia Barclay wrote from Malta to her friends in Scottsville, "Now I am at last between you and the warring nations, and may occasionally hope that a letter will reach you."

Later that year the Barclays arrived in the United States to see to the publication of their books. James Barclay also undertook a commission from the U. S. Mint to devise a method that would prevent coin counterfeiting. Political machinations prevented him from ever being adequately compensated, and in letters as late as the 1870s he was still complaining about being cheated of his proper reward.

In 1857, the Barclays returned to Jerusalem, and were joined in 1858 by the intrepid Orianna, who assisted with the medical mission. Their lack of success in making converts, coupled with the Disciples' own doubts about Barclay's ideas of the Millennium, caused support for the mission to waver. In the Disciples' journal, *The Millennial Harbinger*, Barclay published a series of articles in 1861 called, "The Welfare of the World Bound Up with the Destiny of Israel." He began to encourage the immigration of Jews to the Holy Land, as a prerequisite for the last days. Financial difficulties, compounded by the outbreak of the Civil War in America, finally brought the mission to a close.

The Barclays stayed a little longer in the east, as Sarah was now married to Augustus Johnson,

the U.S. consul in Beirut, but by 1865 they were home. Barclay accepted the chair of Natural Science at Bethany College in West Virginia and taught there until 1867. At that time he retired to Alabama, where his son Robert lived. He pursued his studies and preached at the church in Wheeler, Alabama, until his death in 1874. In 1906 his remains were moved back to Bethany and buried in the cemetery where Alexander Campbell lay, known as the Campbell cemetery. Julia joined him two years later, at the age of 94.

James Turner Barclay's name is indelibly imprinted on Scottsville, from the "Barclay House" on Main Street to the Disciples of Christ Church he helped to found, which now houses the Scottsville Museum. "With his learning and talents, he might have accomplished greater good, perhaps, had he preached in our great cities," noted Reuben Coleman at his memorial address in 1875, but "let no man imagine that his was not a useful life. Quietly and unobtrusively he did a great work."

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Special thanks to Connie Jo Geary for contributing talented technical support, extensive research and photographic expertise and to Angela Nemecek, Anne Shirley Dorrier and Robert Spencer for detailed editing.