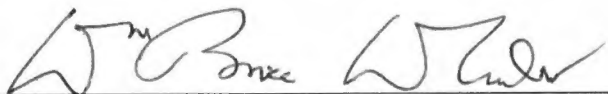


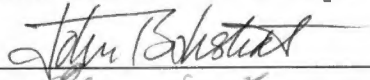
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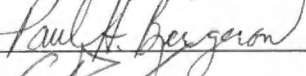


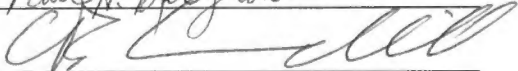
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Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of
The Graduate School

"'ANGLICAN FRONTIERSMEN':
THE LIVES AND MINISTRIES OF
MISSIONARIES SERVING
THE SOCIETY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF THE GOSPEL
IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY NEW ENGLAND"

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Benton Earl Gates
May 1997

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the lives and ministries of seven men who served as missionaries for the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in eighteenth century New England. These men, and their colleagues, were seeking to strengthen the position of the Anglican Church in a region of British North America dominated by non-conforming Congregationalism. Unlike other studies of the SPG, this dissertation develops six chapter-length narratives of the experiences of seven separate missionaries. The focus on this voluntary British society is therefore less institutional than other studies. The methods by which these men propagated Anglicanism and the adversity they faced in the attempt forms the core of this work. The missionaries examined include Matthew Graves of New London, Connecticut, John Beach of Newtown, Connecticut, Henry Caner of Boston, Massachusetts, Jacob Bailey of Pownalboro, Massachusetts, Jeremiah Leaming of Norwalk, Connecticut, Roger Viets of Simsbury, Connecticut, and Edward Bass of Newburyport, Massachusetts.

The chief resources used to explore the lives and ministries of these men were their correspondence with London and each other as well as their sermons, published and unpublished. Materials available at the Diocesan Archives of the Episcopal Church in Hartford, Connecticut and Boston,

Massachusetts were also extremely helpful in fashioning the conclusions of this study.

The thesis of this study is that the SPG missionaries stationed in New England during the eighteenth century were significantly "Americanizing" this most British of institutions, the Anglican Church. The fact that the number of missionaries who were actually born in North America increased throughout the eighteenth century helps to explain this phenomenon. Many of these men were ex-Congregational pastors who converted due to doubts about the validity of their non-episcopal ordination. These men, either intentionally, or subconsciously, transferred elements of their American Congregationalism to the American Episcopal Church they were planting in New England. While other studies have developed this argument to some degree, none have examined the process in the form of a "case study" using the lives of certain missionaries. This dissertation also provides a much needed social history of the experience of Anglican missionaries in colonial America.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

There is a mighty cry and desire, almost in all places where we have traveled, to have ministers of the Church of England sent to them in these northern parts of America . . . some well affected to the Church have desired me to write to my Lord of London and to you that if a Minister be not sent with the first conveniency, Presbyterian Ministers from New England would swarm into those countries and prevent the increase of the Church.¹

These words represent the assessment of George Keith, ex-Quaker and one of the first Anglican missionaries sent to British North America by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Keith penned these thoughts during a religious survey of the American colonies conducted by him at the behest and funding of the SPG between 1702 and 1704. Keith communicated this urgent need for Anglican clergy to the Bishop of London's Commissary for Maryland, Thomas Bray.

At the time of Keith's arrival in America, he found only eleven Anglican clergy north of Maryland; of these, only two resided in Massachusetts and none in Connecticut.² The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, created at

¹ George Keith, Philadelphia, to Thomas Bray, London, 24 February 1703, in William W. Sweet, Religion in Colonial America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942), 61.

² Edgar L. Pennington, ed., "The Journal of the Reverend George Keith 1702-1704," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 20 (December 1951): 353.

the initiative of Bray, became the instrument to supply this need for American missionaries during the eighteenth century.

North of Maryland, at the dawn of the eighteenth century, the Established Church of the mother country had been virtually shut out. Puritan reformers, seeking a safe asylum from harassment and persecution, braved the Atlantic crossing from the 1630's and filled the New England colonies by 1700. No longer the target of intolerance, the Puritans quickly adopted just such a stance in order to secure a "visible" church which reflected the "invisible" church of true saints as nearly as possible. Quakers, Baptists, even Separatists, commonly known as "Pilgrims," suffered Puritan reproach to various degrees. Prior to 1700, Anglican presence in New England was negligible, largely due to the neglect of both the British government and the mother church.

In 1634, the Bishop of London was granted nominal control of the colonial Church; both the Bishop and the Crown lacked the desire to exert much influence over religious affairs in America at that time.³ Domestic turmoil preoccupied both the British Church and State. Political and commercial interest in the colonies quickened after the restoration of Charles II. The state of the Anglican church in America also received renewed scrutiny. The succession of Henry Compton to the bishopric of London in 1675 marked the beginning of a trend toward greater

³ H.P. Thompson, Into All Lands: The History of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1701-1950 (London: S.P.C.K., 1951), 9.

efforts to build the colonial American Church. Stirred by reports of the scarcity of ministers in America and irregularity and immorality among some who were there, Compton reapplied to Charles II for a fresh mandate giving him ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the colonies. The King also provided funds for passage money for any minister or schoolmaster willing to travel to America, as well as L1200 to buy books for parish churches there.⁴

Compton's vigor to revive the Anglican church in America was certainly merited, and nowhere was the need more critical than in New England. Until 1686, no Anglican church had been established in Massachusetts; the rest of New England would wait until the eighteenth century for any signs of an Episcopal presence. In 1686, the Reverend Robert Ratcliffe landed in Boston with orders from the Crown to settle Anglican worship in the heart of New England Congregationalism. Shortly after Ratcliffe's arrival, Edmund Andros assumed control of the newly-created Dominion of New England in a rather strict manner that soon became unpopular. In the spring of 1687, Andros inspected the three Puritan Meeting Houses in Boston in order to select one to house Anglican services. He settled upon the Old South Meeting House and forced the regular congregation to mill about the street on Easter Sunday until the Anglicans had finished their service at two o'clock in the afternoon. A compromise was reached in the use of the building until the Anglicans finished

⁴ Ibid., 9-10.

building King's Chapel, the oldest Episcopal Church in New England. Before the structure was completed, however, the Glorious Revolution had swept James II out of power; Andros met the same fate on the American side of the Atlantic.⁵

Bishop Compton's selection of Thomas Bray as Commissary of Maryland strangely became the key to stimulating the growth of the Anglican church in eighteenth century New England. The rector of Sheldon, a village near Birmingham, during the 1690's Bray believed that the best way to improve the effectiveness of ministerial performance came by way of education. Thomas Bray had cultivated a life-long passion for books. He believed that clergymen must have kind hearts and full heads. In his opinion, the unlearned pastor was most often the unsuccessful pastor, and all too frequently indolent as well.⁶ Bray advocated a well-rounded education for the prospective minister, including the study of nature, mathematics, history, law and government. "Such an inestimable Benefit to Mankind, are a Clergy that do thoroughly understand, and industriously preach the Genuine Doctrines of Christianity."⁷ By the end of his life, Bray had founded fifty libraries in America and sixty-one in England and Wales.⁸

⁵ Sweet, 46-49.

⁶ Samuel C. McCulloch, "The Importance of Dr. Thomas Bray's *Bibliotheca Parochialis*," The Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 15 (March 1946): 50-51; Thompson, 10.

⁷ Ibid., 52.

⁸ Ibid., 50.

Bray's reputation and emphasis on education came to the attention of Compton; the Bishop of London believed that Bray's dedication and desire to improve the quality of Anglican clergy made him an excellent candidate to reinvigorate the Church in Maryland. The British government already had attempted to divide the colony into parishes and provide stipends for the Anglican clergy there. Political controversy over this plan, and the opposition to it aroused among Catholics and Quakers, stalled Bray's journey to America. Thomas Bray, however, was not idle while he waited to leave for Maryland. He made proposals by letter to the colonial gentry that they establish lending libraries in Maryland and Virginia.⁹ As he recruited to fill Maryland parishes, he found that the only men interested were too poor to buy books. This revelation led Bray to organize the formation of a corporation known as The Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge.¹⁰ The aims of this Society were to provide books for missionary libraries in British North America and to recruit personnel to fill the missionary posts there. Before sailing to Maryland in December 1699, Bray and the SPCK had sent over £2,400 worth of books into the plantations.¹¹

Thomas Bray stayed in Maryland only six months. True to his passion, he left libraries in every port he visited on the

⁹ McCulloch, "The Importance of Dr. Thomas Bray's Bibliotheca Parochialis," 51.

¹⁰ Thompson, 12-13.

¹¹ Sweet, 57-58.

way to the colony for the use of missionaries, naval chaplains, or clergy who might have time on their hands while waiting for transportation.¹² While in Maryland, Bray learned first-hand of the deplorable state of the American Anglican Church. He never returned to colonial America, but Bray's work on behalf of colonial Anglicanism in London in the years that followed was pathbreaking. Back in England, Bray realized that the SPCK could only adequately handle one-half of its initial mission, providing Christian literature at home and overseas. He advocated the creation of another society to recruit and supervise missionary personnel to serve in British North America. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop Compton and other influential leaders of the mother Church in London agreed with Bray's assessment. Consequently, on June 16, 1701, King William chartered the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.¹³ Far from simply providing missionaries for Bray's Maryland, the SPG would send 309 missionaries to all thirteen of the colonies between 1701 and 1785.¹⁴ Indeed, during those years, the energies of the Society would be expended almost exclusively to assist the Church in British North America.¹⁵

¹² Thompson, 13.

¹³ Samuel C. McCulloch, "The Foundation and Early Work of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," The Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 20 (June 1951): 124; Thompson, 15-18.

¹⁴ Sweet, 61.

¹⁵ Thompson, 35.

The Preamble of the Society's charter characterized the state of the Church in America which needed to be redressed:

Whereas We are credibly Informed, That in many of Our Plantations, Colonies and Factories beyond the Seas, belonging to Our Kingdom of England, the Provision of Ministers is very mean, and many others of Our said Plantations, Colonies and Factories are wholly Destitute and Unprovided of a Maintenance for Ministers, and the Publick Worship of God, and for lack of Support and Maintenance for such, many of Our Loving Subjects do want the Administration of God's Word and Sacraments, and seem to be Abandoned to Atheism and Infidelity; And also for want of Learned and Orthodox Ministers to Instruct Our Said Loving Subjects in the Principles of True Religion, divers Romish Priests and Jesuits are the more Encouraged to pervert and draw over our said Loving Subjects to Popish Superstition and Idolatry . . . it will be highly Conducive . . . that a sufficient Maintenance be provided for an Orthodox Clergy to live amongst them.¹⁶

In this manner, the principal task of the SPG was defined. Just as Bray had solicited subscribers for the SPCK from among the political and commercial elite of London, he did the same for the SPG. In fact, the SPG was essentially brought into being by the SPCK; its members largely constituted the original foundation list of the Society.¹⁷ Monthly meetings of the SPG

¹⁶ A Collection of Papers, Printed by Order of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (London: Joseph Downing, 1706), 3-4.

¹⁷ Thompson, 16; William A. and Phyllis W. Bultmann have written an article describing the membership rolls of both Societies. See William A. Bultmann and Phyllis W. Bultmann, "The Roots of Anglican Humanitarianism: A Study of the Membership of the S.P.C.K. and the

were set for the third Friday of each month, a practice continued to the present. The annual meeting, during which a distinguished British cleric was selected to preach a sermon to the Society, was held on the third Friday of every February.¹⁸ The earliest need of the SPG resulted from geographical uncertainties; the Society searched for all of the available "mapps" of the Colonies it could obtain, but found it difficult to locate good ones.¹⁹

Of course, the SPG also needed an insightful, candid appraisal of the state of religion in British North America. Bray's trip to Maryland offered a resource of information; other individuals were questioned about colonial ecclesiastical affairs. The Bishop of London, English merchants, colonial Governors, and important colonial laymen communicated their opinions and advice to the Society.²⁰ Among those who answered the solicitation of the SPG for information, the report of George Keith drew the most positive attention. Once one of the leading lights of American Quakerism, Keith had broken with Quaker authorities in America and Europe over doctrinal issues.²¹

S.P.G., 1699-1720," The Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 33 (March 1964): 3-48.

¹⁸ Thompson, 18; Edgar L. Pennington has written a fine history of the SPG Anniversary Sermons between 1702-1783. See his "The S.P.G. Anniversary Sermons, 1702-1783," The Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 20 (March 1951): 10-43.

¹⁹ Thompson, 25.

²⁰ C.F. Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G.: An Historical Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1701-1900, vol. I (London: S.P.G., 1901), 7.

²¹ Keith at one time was a colleague and friend of such Quaker leaders as George Fox and William Penn. He had spent a number of years in jail for his Quaker faith, as had most of its other leaders. See Pennington, "The Journal of the Reverend George Keith, 1702-1704," 347.

Keith feared that the Quakers had forsaken the authority of the Bible and were trusting their "Inner Light" alone for revelation. He also preferred a religion which was more sacramental and credal. Therefore, he had become an ordained Anglican priest in England and an aggressive foe of the Quaker faith.²² Thomas Bray's SPCK already had published some of Keith's anti-Quaker pamphlets; he had been hired by the Society to travel about England, seeking to convert Quakers to Anglicanism. The SPG concluded Keith would be the perfect candidate to send as a missionary to America to collect further data on the religious situation there. Keith could do the general survey, and he could combat the growing threat of Quakerism at the same time.²³

At age sixty-two, therefore, George Keith began his greatest contribution to colonial American Anglicanism. The SPG believed that Keith's mission was so important that it approved L200 per year for the ex-Quaker's tour of America and L200 for his wife and two daughters "if he dye." The Society also provided funds to send an ample amount of anti-Quaker literature in Keith's baggage.²⁴ Most of the sermons Keith preached and most of the tracts he wrote while in America were directed against Quakers. He loved to visit Quaker meetings and then confront the leadership after they had finished talking.

²² For an excellent biography of George Keith, see Pennington, "The Journal of the Reverend George Keith, 1702-1704," 346-362.

²³ Ibid., 351.

²⁴ Thompson, 27.

Nevertheless, Keith's defense of Anglicanism managed to irritate non-Quakers as well. While in Boston, Keith preached at King's Chapel a message so popular that local Anglicans had it published. Increase Mather quickly answered this publication with a fierce counter-attack. Keith perceived that Mather had "infused into the scholars and youths" of Harvard College "poysonous doctrines" and "deep prejudices against the Church of England."²⁵ By the end of his tour, George Keith had developed strong convictions about the sort of person who ought to be recruited for missionary service in America:

Such as go over into those Parts for the Propagation of the Gospel should be men of Solidity and good Experience as well as otherwise qualified with good learning and good natural parts and especially exemplary in Piety, and of a discreet Zeal, humble and meek, able to endure the Toil and Fatigue they must expect to go through both in mind and body, not raw young men, nor yet very old, whose Godly Zeal to propagate true Christianity in life and Practice should be their great Motive, for People generally of those parts are very sharp and observant to notice both what is good and bad in those who converse among them.²⁶

George Keith's admonition did not go unheeded. From the outset, the Society sought the "right" candidates for its missionary stations in British North America. Originally, the pool for potential personnel was strictly British. As early as January of 1702, the Society alerted all Bishops "of the Realm"

²⁵ Pascoe, vol. I, 41-42.

²⁶ Thompson, 25.

that it was looking for "such Clergymen as have a mind to be employed in this Apostolical Work, and can bring sufficient Testimonials."²⁷ Two colonial governors at home in London at the time argued that men should be sent over who held the same credentials as those advocated by George Keith. Given the difficult circumstances in the New World, Colonel Joseph Dudley of New England beseeched the SPG for men of good learning, sound morals, and not too young. They must have adequate support, so that they would not fall into contempt among their parishioners. Colonel Lewis Morris of New Jersey recommended that no promising young man be admitted to any great Benefice in England unless he first obliged himself to preach three years gratis in America.²⁸

However, the Society soon decided to expand its search for missionary personnel to the mission field itself. The Secretary of the SPG sent a letter to the Massachusetts Governor and clergy in 1706 encouraging them to send candidates to England for ordination. The Society had heard from Keith of the inclination for the Church of England among some of the young students at Harvard.²⁹ This appeal set in motion a trend which would significantly affect the nature of colonial Anglicanism in New England. Between 1702 and the end of Society support to America in 1785, 84 missionaries settled in 80 central stations throughout Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, and Naragansett. It is deceptive to

²⁷ A Collection of Papers, 19.

²⁸ Thompson, 22-23.

²⁹ Pascoe, vol. I, 44.

view these individuals as traditional missionaries "sent" to convert heathen hordes. Most were not "sent" at all; rather, many SPG missionaries in New England were American-born, ex-Congregationalist pastors. If not ex-dissenting pastors, most of these young men who traveled to London for ordination and Society appointment had at least been raised in Congregational homes. Therefore, the representatives of the English Church in New England were neither purely Anglican nor purely British. In order to understand the way Episcopalianism was uniquely planted and shaped in eighteenth century New England, these two realities must be appreciated.

The Society set strict criteria for the approval of missionary personnel. Testimonials verifying the age, marital status, temper, prudence, learning, sober and pious conversation, zeal for the Christian Religion, Diligence in a Holy Calling, affection to the present Government, and Conformity to the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church of England were sought for each candidate.³⁰ Once a candidate was admitted to the Society's service, he was required to lodge at some Bookseller's establishment or among a reputable family, rather than at some Publick-House. While waiting to travel to (or return to) America, the missionaries were asked to employ their time usefully, either through preaching or reading prayers. They would be advanced half a year's salary for encouragement and given ten pounds to buy books for their

³⁰ A Collection of Papers, 20-21.

personal libraries while in London. While on board ship, these men were to "demean themselves not only inoffensively and prudently; but so as to become remarkable Examples of Piety and Virtue to the Ships Company."³¹ They were also to conduct church services on board as they were given leave by the ship's Captain, always looking for opportunities to "Instruct, Exhort, Admonish, and Reprove" those on board.³²

Once they had arrived in America, the SPG missionaries were asked to correspond only with the Secretary of the Society, rather than other members. They were to keep a careful catalogue of the books entrusted to their care by the Society and were not allowed to leave the colonies without permission from London. They were sent first to places which could support them with a minimum of Society assistance. Married missionaries were required to take their wives to America "unless they can offer such Reason as shall induce the Society to dispense therewith."³³ Missionaries were instructed "very frequently in their Retirements (to) offer up fervent Prayers to Almighty God for his Direction and Assistance."³⁴ In addition, the Society counseled these men to "converse much with the Holy Scriptures; seriously reflect upon their Ordination Vows; and consider the

³¹ Ibid., 22-23.

³² Ibid., 23.

³³ McCulloch, "The Foundation and Early Work of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," 131.

³⁴ A Collection of Papers, 24.

Account which they are to render to the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, at the last Day."³⁵

SPG missionaries acquainted themselves fully with the doctrine of the Anglican Church, preparing themselves to be masters in controversy should they be forced to defend their "flock" from "such Gainsayers as are mixt among them."³⁶ The conversation and costume of the missionary was to be ordered by decency, and they were never to board with "Families of Evil Fame." They were to abstain from Gaming and to be "Frugal in Opposition to Luxury." With respect to their Parochial Cure, the missionary performed all services soberly, preaching the "great Fundamental Principles of Christianity." They preached particularly against those vices prevalent in their specific parishes. They constantly instructed all of their laity in the importance of the sacraments and took care to thoroughly catechize the young. They instructed the "Heathens and Infidels" with the principles of natural religion first, appealing to their consciences. Then, these individuals were introduced to the more substantive truth of the Holy Scriptures. SPG missionaries visited their respective parishioners as often as possible, and as convenience and opportunity permitted, they visited those Anglicans at a distance from their mission stations. The SPG missionaries were instructed "to convince and

³⁵ Ibid., 24-25.

³⁶ Ibid., 25.

reclaim" the dissenters in their parish "with a Spirit of Meekness and Gentleness."³⁷

Most New England dissenters, however, did not want to be "convinced" or "reclaimed." Moreover, most of the inhabitants of New England resented any insinuation by word or action that, somehow, their church life was inadequate or their faith was inferior. The presence of SPG missionaries in their midst persuaded most Congregationalists that London authorities were determined to interfere with a religious freedom they had sought for themselves and cultivated for over seventy years. Anglican missionaries in New England came to symbolize the same reality inhabitants resented in the form of the new royal charter of Massachusetts, increasing British control of colonial life.³⁸ Politically, commercially, and now religiously, the Crown seemed to be extending its authoritative tentacles.

Obviously, then, new ingredients for religious conflict emerged in New England with the advent of SPG personnel during the eighteenth century. However, the pot was already boiling. Often characterized as a people who valued harmony and order, the Puritans engaged each other within churches, and between churches, in incessant squabbling over issues relating to church

³⁷ Ibid., 25-29.

³⁸ Congregational polemicists such as Noah Hobart, Charles Chauncey, and Jonathan Mayhew all claimed in their tracts that the presence of SPG missionaries in New England represented nothing less than the overt attempt to reclaim the area for the Mother Church. Later, as some of these missionaries campaigned for an American bishop, Congregational spokesmen would argue that the designs of the mission agency were even clearer--to control the ecclesiastical life of New England.

polity, sacramental theology, the proof of visible sainthood, and the nurture of those outside of church membership. Paul Lucas called seventeenth century Connecticut a "valley of discord."³⁹ Robert Pope's fine study of the Half-Way Covenant and Edmund Morgan's analysis of the notion of visible sainthood describe real turmoil in New England churches.⁴⁰ The Great Awakening and the struggle over "enthusiasm" during the second quarter of the eighteenth century further divided the Puritan camp between "Old Lights" and "New Lights." Perhaps the Congregationalists would have been either more tolerant or more dominant in their dealings with Anglican missions had they been more united among themselves. Were the Anglican missionaries a greater irritant simply because the Puritan establishment already felt besieged by internal adversity? No doubt the answer to this question is yes, especially since many of these missionaries left the Congregational ranks over the issue of ordination, an issue which had already become a source of heated in-fighting among the dissenters.

Congregationalists consistently complained, both publicly in newspapers and broadsides, as well as privately in correspondence to the Society itself, that Anglican missionaries were not simply tending their own flocks; they were also

³⁹ Paul R. Lucas, Valley of Discord: Church and Society along the Connecticut River, 1636-1725 (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1976).

⁴⁰ Robert G. Pope, The Half-Way Covenant: Church Membership in Puritan New England (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969); Edmund S. Morgan, Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea (New York: New York University Press, 1963).

stealing sheep. While some historians have focused upon the work of the SPG missionaries to "civilize" and Christianize the Native American and the African slave, it is true that neither effort represented the chief outlet for the Society's energies.⁴¹ Clearly, from the outset, the presence of Anglican missionaries in each colony was meant to secure and stimulate the hold of the Church among the white English settlers. Anne P. Diffendal, in an unpublished dissertation, has also demonstrated the significant ministry directed toward foreign Protestants in the colonies by SPG missionaries. Nonetheless, as she argues, the Society aided only those groups of foreign settlers who shared its concept of episcopacy and condemned the enthusiasm of dissenters.⁴² Thus, even in its benevolence, the Society sought allies who, upon inevitable assimilation, would conform and thereby strengthen the colonial Anglican church.

New England's Anglican clerics, almost all of whom were Society missionaries, entered the lists of ideological controversy without fear. Throughout the eighteenth century, the British government proved reluctant to officially sponsor Anglican evangelism in New England. Likewise, they continually

⁴¹ For example, see Jean F. Hankins, "Bringing the Good News: Protestant Missionaries to the Indians of New England and New York, 1700-1775" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Connecticut, 1993); John H. Hewitt, "New York's Black Episcopalians: In the Beginning, 1704-1722," Afro-Americans in New York Life and History 3 (1979): 9-22; and S.C. Bolton, "South Carolina and the Reverend Doctor Francis Le Jau: Southern Society and the Conscience of an Anglican Missionary," The Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 40 (March 1971): 63-79.

⁴² Anne P. Diffendal, "The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts and the Assimilation of Foreign Protestants in British North America" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 1974).

stalled any efforts to send residential bishops to America. They simply did not want to stir up discontent, especially in New England.⁴³ SPG missionaries in America were not as passive; Arthur Cross and Carl Bridenbaugh place them at the heart of the debate over colonial episcopacy.⁴⁴ These missionaries defended their activities from attack through a constant stream of tracts and pamphlets; they criticized Congregationalists for adopting unbiblical forms of ecclesiastical polity and clerical ordination. The role certain Anglican missionaries played in the polemical wars of eighteenth century religious culture will be examined in this study. Of course, no greater issues of religious concern confronted missionaries than those posed by the revival traditionally known as the "Great Awakening."

The response of the Society and its missionaries to the Great Awakening itself was decidedly negative. Historians agree that in its nearly unanimous opposition to the revival, the colonial Anglican church offered a quiet sanctuary for those distressed by schism and emotionalism. In his seminal study of the New England phase of the Awakening, Edwin Gaustad claims that Anglicans, all clergy and most of the laity, held themselves aloof from the turbulence.⁴⁵ Gerald Goodwin called the Church "the most potent and unified anti-revivalist

⁴³ Carl Bridenbaugh argues this thesis cogently in his Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics, 1689-1775 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962).

⁴⁴ Ibid.; Arthur L. Cross, The Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies (Hamden, Ct.: Archon Books, 1964).

⁴⁵ Edwin S. Gaustad, The Great Awakening in New England (New York: Harper, 1957).

organization," the rank and file uniformly opposed to the Awakening.⁴⁶ By taking such an alienated posture, Anglicans isolated themselves from the most dynamic religious force to sweep the colonial era. In an unpublished dissertation, William Hogue explains that the success of SPG missionaries even prior to the revival set them at odds with dissenters. He also argues that Anglican clergy opposed the major personality of the revival, George Whitefield, from the start.⁴⁷ Hogue and others blame this animosity on the perception that Whitefield had betrayed his Anglican orders by partnering with dissenters in preaching the "new birth." Many historians conclude that colonial Anglicanism actually grew not only in spite of but due to the revival, drawing adherents disenchanted with "enthusiasm."⁴⁸

Two older studies have chronicled the general history of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel from its inception to the present day. The work of H.P. Thompson and C.F. Pascoe includes an abbreviated, cursory discussion of the Society during the eighteenth century.⁴⁹ Carson Ritchie has written a

⁴⁶ Gerald J. Goodwin, "The Anglican Reaction to the Great Awakening," The Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 35 (December 1966): 343.

⁴⁷ William M. Hogue, "The Church of England in the Northern Colonies and the Great Awakening" (Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1954).

⁴⁸ Besides Hogue, Goodwin, and Gaustad, see Nelson R. Burr, The Anglican Church in New Jersey (Philadelphia: Church Historical Society, 1954).

⁴⁹ H.P. Thompson, Into All Lands: The History of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1701-1950 (London: SPCK, 1951); C.F. Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G.: An Historical Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1701-1900, Two Volumes (London: S.P.G., 1901).

poor study of the SPG missionaries assigned to the colonies, confusing missionaries with non-missionary personnel while depending upon limited resources.⁵⁰ In an unpublished dissertation, John Nelson surveyed the origins of the Society and the work of its missionaries throughout all thirteen colonies until 1725.⁵¹ A doctoral dissertation completed by Hector Kinloch in 1959 profiled each of the Anglican missionaries who served in Connecticut during the eighteenth century.⁵² Kinloch's study is quite superficial; he generally offered biographical glimpses of each man normally shorter than a page in length. His work provides a partial foundation for a more thorough examination of the lives of SPG missionaries active throughout New England during that time. Similarly, E. Edwards Beardsley completed a study of the Episcopal Church in colonial Connecticut.⁵³ His research, while dated, offers a beginning framework to study the growth of the Anglican church in the other New England colonies. Irving King produced an institutional study of the activities of the SPG during the eighteenth century, but his dissertation describes the organization itself in action more than it does the lives and

⁵⁰ Carson I. A. Ritchie, Frontier Parish: An Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1976).

⁵¹ John K. Nelson, "Anglican Missions in America, 1701-1725: A Study of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1962).

⁵² Hector G. Kinloch, "Anglican Clergy in Connecticut, 1701-1785" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1959).

⁵³ E. Edwards Beardsley, The History of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut, from the Settlement of the Colony to the Death of Bishop Seabury (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1866).

the ministries of any particular missionaries.⁵⁴ Paul Woolverton provides broader background in his study of colonial Anglicanism throughout North America.⁵⁵

But who were these "Anglican frontiersmen"? Most of the research analyzing the work of the Society missionaries appears either generic or superficial, often part of a larger study embracing a broader theme. No one has produced a picture of who these men really were, what encompassed their daily activities and concerns, or how they fit into the religious *sitz im leben* of a particular region like New England. This study will help to complete that aspect of the picture. Some of these men served established parishes while others itinerated through vast regions. Both types of missionary service will be examined in this study, utilizing the life and work of particular men as a lens to focus on the issues and the unique challenges they faced.

General assumptions regarding the type of men who served the Society as missionaries have been formulated over time, often without evidential support. For example, the moral behavior of these men has frequently been questioned. As early as the 1740's, George Whitefield wrote the Society himself, arguing that the missionaries ought to be withdrawn from America, since they were "corrupt in their Principles, and

⁵⁴ Irving H. King, "The S.P.G. in New England, 1701-1784" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Maine, 1968).

⁵⁵ John F. Woolverton, Colonial Anglicanism in North America (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984).

immoral in their practices." He complained that many of these men were former dissenting ministers who had been discarded due to "profaneness and Irregularities;" he enjoined the Society to forsake such "unhallowed hands" lest their ministrations call forth a divine curse rather than God's favor.⁵⁶ Whitefield's epithets have persisted. But was he right? This study will demonstrate that the great evangelist's accusations, at least as they indicted the missionaries stationed in New England, were erroneous. Others have concluded that SPG missionaries came to America because they were unable to garner a satisfactory living in Great Britain, either due to mediocrity or lack of connections. Again, this study argues that, in the first place, most SPG personnel serving in New England were natives to the region. Additionally, the salaries offered missionaries in New England could hardly be termed extravagant inducements to cross the Atlantic.

Beyond offering a needed description of the SPG missionary as a "flesh and blood" individual facing the complexities and responsibilities of ministry in a hostile environment, this study argues that a predominant phenomenon joined the lives of the seven men depicted in these pages. Obviously, the London leadership of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts envisioned the transplantation of an orthodox, thoroughly British Anglican church in New England soil. The

⁵⁶ Philip Bearcroft, Secretary, SPG, London, to the Bishop of Oxford, London, 28 July 1741, Lambeth Palace Manuscripts, Lambeth Palace, London, 1123, I, no. 27.

Society and the Crown both hoped that the missionaries might serve to tie the region more tightly to the mother country religiously as well as culturally.

However, this study argues that New England's SPG missionaries shaped an Anglican Church in New England that did not fulfill the original vision. Indeed, the missionaries built an Episcopal order there which can best be described as an "American hybrid" of the mother Church. For example, Anglican missionaries throughout New England met in informal clergy conventions without episcopal authorization; this type of meeting would never have occurred in England. This study describes many more examples of this phenomenon. The fact that many of these missionaries were native to the region and Congregational in terms of religious heritage explains in part the "Americanization" of New England's Anglicanism. The "frontier" setting of New England for these missionaries and the minority position occupied by the adherents of the Church of England in the region also offer clues to the reasons for this transformation. Whatever the explanation, the Anglican Church in New England was clearly and significantly shaped by its missionaries in a direction contrary to the Society's intentions. This study, in investigating that strategic alteration, contributes significantly to the picture of religious culture in New England. More broadly, it explores the

adaptation of Anglican institutions to the American context, be they political, commercial, or religious.⁵⁷

This study analyzes the lives and ministries of four missionaries to colonial Connecticut and three missionaries to colonial Massachusetts. John Beach arrived in Newtown, Connecticut, in 1732. Discipline exercised over Beach's ministry by ecclesiastical leaders in America and in England showed the limits of British control over an American church growing in and protecting its own autonomy. Matthew Graves, the lone missionary native to Great Britain studied in this work, ministered in New London, Connecticut, between 1747-1779. Graves' experience demonstrates the increasing independence of his American colleagues. Graves recognized that the native-born SPG missionaries in New England were creating a "hybrid version" of the mother Church, and he vigorously, but vainly, fought the development. Roger Viets, missionary to Simsbury, Connecticut, and Jeremiah Leaming, sent to Norwalk, Connecticut, preached sermons that often sounded very "Congregational" in tone, substance, and method. Whether a product of their Congregational upbringing or as an intentional evangelistic tool

⁵⁷ Ronald L. Cooksey also explores the theme of "Americanization" in his unpublished doctoral dissertation, "The Americanization of the Anglican Church in the Northern Colonies During the Eighteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Toronto, 1977). Cooksey approaches this theme, however, in an entirely different manner than is taken in this study. Cooksey does not limit his study to the SPG nor to New England. He includes the middle colonies as well. Like King, Cooksey takes an institutional view of the phenomenon. The actual lives and ministries of the clerics in Cooksey's study remain shadowy. Cooksey's main focus is the colonial debate over the appointment of an American bishop, and how that controversy was settled following the American Revolution.

to convert local dissenters, these sermons clearly emanated from an "Americanized" Anglican pulpit.

In Massachusetts, Henry Caner presided over the prestigious King's Chapel in Boston from 1747 until the Revolutionary crisis drove him from his pulpit. Since no bishop resided in New England, Caner accumulated *de facto* power over ecclesiastical affairs in Anglican Massachusetts. He began to exercise many of the functions, without official recognition, that a colonial Bishop would have performed had one been sent to the region. Indeed, Caner's influence, along with that exerted by Samuel Johnson in Connecticut, could rightly be reckoned as a form of "pseudo-episcopacy." Jacob Bailey itinerated the eastern Massachusetts frontier, an area today incorporating much of the state of Maine. His life and ministry illustrated how Anglican ministry had to be adjusted and tailored to the frontier conditions of the New England wilds. Finally, Edward Bass, SPG missionary assigned to Newbury, Massachusetts, in 1753, compromised his ordination vows to keep his church open during the turmoil and terror of the American Revolution. This compromise represented another significant contribution to the evolution of the American version of the Episcopal Church.

All seven of these men lived through the American Revolution. Moreover, all seven suffered during those years in some manner, often violently, for their association with an Anglican institution persecuted for much of its existence in

eighteenth century New England. The SPG missionaries were seen as Tory icons symbolizing the tyranny of the Crown and the threat of ecclesiastical bondage at the hands of American bishops. This reality represents another very human theme of this study. Little did the patriot mob understand, however, that these men, along with the rest of their colleagues, had been fashioning an Anglican church in New England that was more American than British, more independent than subordinate to English supervision. Had they recognized this subtle, but profound, alteration in the New England Episcopal order, they might have been more charitable in their treatment of the local SPG missionary. One wonders how much the SPG missionaries realized what they were doing. In essence, SPG missionaries in New England had been laying foundations for the American independence of the Episcopal church for quite some time.

Books, libraries, and education remained the real passions of Thomas Bray's life even after he retired from active involvement in the two societies he helped to organize. Late in life, Bray was still lecturing to prospective missionaries to America, providing a special library for them, and sending them, for practice, to preach in British prisons. Prison visitation led Bray to associate with James Oglethorpe. Before his death in 1730, Bray helped Oglethorpe create a fund to finance the establishment of the colony of Georgia.⁵⁸ On his sick bed, Bray could relish the prospect that the Society for the Propagation

⁵⁸ Thompson, 41-43.

of the Gospel in Foreign Parts would steadily and fruitfully nurture the one true Church of the British Isles on American soil. However, in New England at least, a "wild vine" would flourish rather than a "potted plant."

CHAPTER II

"NOVANGLIAN CANT": THE MISSIONARY ORDEAL OF MATTHEW GRAVES

"I'm very sensible European Clergy are unwelcome guests in New England, and had not I, though alone, opposed some of their Designs, a Foreigner would have had no Business here. This cost me much trouble."¹ With these despairing words, Anglican missionary Matthew Graves informed his home office of the painful ordeal he had endured bringing the Book of Common Prayer to colonial Connecticut. Was his assessment of the situation realistic, or were these simply the ruminations of a paranoid priest? No stretch of the imagination is required to understand that the eighteenth century Puritan establishment of New England resented the incursions of a British-born, Anglican minister into their own back yard. But Graves was not complaining of his treatment by dissenters. The other Anglican missionaries in Connecticut, American-born to a man, were the targets of his disparagement. This rift within the Anglican camp signaled a more significant phenomenon characterizing the evolution of the Mother Church in colonial New England. Anglicanism was being "Americanized." Graves called the unorthodox plans and practices of the American Anglicans and their native-born

¹ Matthew Graves, New London, Ct., to the Secretary, SPG, London, 9 October 1765, in Kenneth Cameron, ed., The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut: New Documents and Letters Concerning the Loyalist Clergy and the Plight of Their Surviving Church (Hartford, Ct.: Transcendental Books, 1976), 137.

missionaries "Novanglian Cant." This British missionary spent years in Connecticut exposing and challenging such "cant."

The site of Matthew Graves' missionary service was New London, Connecticut, located on the southern coast of the state, near the border with Rhode Island. During the colonial era, New London was a thriving maritime commercial center. Its dependence on the sea influenced both the politics and culture of this New England town. Prominent in the coasting and West Indian trade, New London would figure significantly in the American seafaring tradition well into the 1900's.

Its origins were more humble. Passed over early in Connecticut history for more attractive sites along the Connecticut River to the west, no permanent settlement was established at what would be New London until 1646. A year prior, John Winthrop, Jr. led a contingent from Massachusetts to "Nameaug," the Indian name given to the area. Winthrop determined to plant a colony in "Pequot Country," although the area seemed to lack agricultural potential. Winthrop obtained the necessary grant from Massachusetts and settlers began to move to the region.²

The village decided to alter its name to New London in 1649, but some felt that such a selection reflected the pride all Puritans abhorred. Fair Harbor was recommended as an alternative, but the original choice was accepted by the

² Robert Decker, The Whaling City: A History of New London (Chester, Ct.: New London County Historical Society, 1976), 1-6, 10, 12.

colonial assembly in 1658, no doubt in part owing to the persuasion of then-governor John Winthrop, Jr. In 1702, that same assembly designated New London as one of the eight legal ports for the colony. New London never came close to achieving the commercial importance of its namesake; indeed, direct trade across the Atlantic never figured prominently in New London's maritime activities. Nevertheless, the sea represented the major industry of the colonial Connecticut town.³

Boston and New York proved to be overpowering competitors for the transatlantic trade with England. New London specialized in a coasting trade with these cities, providing the link between Connecticut farmers in the hinterland and British importers. Trade with the West Indies became vital to New London as a source of specie and bills of credit to pay for imported goods. Busy shipyards in New London limited their production to the smaller vessels designed for North American commerce. The flow of life in New London swelled and receded according to the dynamics of maritime trade.⁴

New London's only industry also brought the first Anglicans to this Connecticut port. None of the earliest settlers of this town showed any allegiance to the Church of England. It became clear over time that a contingent of Anglicans had arrived who desired the right to worship in that manner. It was also clear that commercial opportunity and

³ Ibid., 10, 23-25.

⁴ Ibid., 23-26.

governmental assignments had brought them there. These Anglicans initially met for worship in the home of John Shackmaple, commissioned "Collector, Surveyor, and Searcher for Connecticut" by the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations. Two of the earliest Society for the Propagation of the Gospel missionaries in New England, Samuel Johnson in Stratford, Connecticut, to the west, and James MacSparran of the Narragansett Bay country of Rhode Island to the east, served these individuals in the absence of a settled minister. MacSparran organized St. James Church, New London, in 1725, receiving some compensation from his parishioners until a permanent missionary was settled there in 1732. In that same year, the people of St. James constructed their first church building.⁵

The Society sent Samuel Seabury, Sr., the father of Connecticut's future Episcopal bishop, to New London in 1732. Son of a deacon in the Congregational church of nearby Groton, young Seabury attended Yale College at just about the same time that the defection of its president and one of its tutors to Episcopacy created shock waves which threw Puritan New England into a tumult. Apparently Seabury himself was also shaken by the event; he transferred to Harvard where he finished his studies in 1724. Following commencement, Seabury accepted the

⁵ Robert Hallam, Annals of St. James's Church, New London, for One Hundred and Fifty Years (Hartford, Ct.: publisher unknown, 1873), 8-10, 12-21; Frances Caulkins, History of New London, Connecticut, from the First Survey of the Coast in 1612, to 1852 (New London: publisher unknown, 1852), 440-442.

post of preacher to the North Groton Congregationalists. In 1726, he married the daughter of one of the founders of the St. James parish in New London. This event brought him to the attention of James MacSparran, the venerable SPG missionary from Rhode Island. After much study and, no doubt, conversation with MacSparran, Seabury declared for the episcopacy in 1731. After traveling to London for ordination and admittance to SPG service, Seabury served St. James parish in New London until the Society reassigned him to Long Island in 1743. Significantly, then, the first encounter the people of St. James parish would have with an SPG missionary came in the form of a native New Englander, a man who had once served as a Puritan divine.⁶

In February 1743, the New London church implored the Society to send a replacement for Seabury quickly. The "enthusiasm" of the Great Awakening had erupted in the town and the parishioners feared that some of their number might be swept away if a new minister was not settled there soon. "The very great convulsions occasioned here, and in divers other places in this colony, by the breaking out of what is called the New Light, makes this a melancholy juncture to have our Church empty and unsupplied."⁷ At the same time, some dissenters, disturbed by the excesses of this fervor, were considering the relative

⁶ Hallam, 31-35; Caulkins, 443-445; Hector Kinloch, "Anglican Clergy in Connecticut, 1701-1785" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1959), 102-103.

⁷ Churchwardens, St. James Church, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 26 February 1743, in Francis L. Hawks and William S. Perry, eds., Documentary History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Connecticut, 1704-1789, vol. I (New York: James Pott, 1863), 185.

safety and sanity of the Church of England. The time was ripe for the appointment of a missionary. Seabury himself concurred in a letter to the Society. He wrote that the "spirit of Methodism prevails mightily at New-London," making his absence "of dangerous consequence." "Those people have meetings in New-London almost every night or day, and 'tis not uncommon . . . to see ten or more seized at once with violent agitations, many incapable of any decency, crying out for their damned estate, some past speaking at all, or so much, indeed, as being unable to stand, fall down, as they pretend, with the weight of their guilt."⁸

William Stewart, the New London customs officer in 1743, and a member of the parish vestry, persisted in seeking the Society's favor on behalf of St. James. Owing to the esteem associated with his position, Stewart identified New London as "the seat of his Majesty's custom-house and so the port of greatest note in the colony," thus deserving of a missionary of equal stature. No missionary of "mean and ordinary abilities," who might serve adequately in the backwoods, would suit New London, "a city set on a hill which cannot be hid." Both the use of this metaphor and the fact that Stewart was complaining on behalf of the congregation that they had not been consulted about Seabury's replacement offer traces of incipient Puritanism in this Anglican parish. The rhetoric of the letter, however,

⁸ Samuel Seabury, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 5 June 1743, in Hawks and Perry, vol. I, 195-196.

appears to conform to the strict party line. They wanted a man bred up in the Church of England who conformed to the "canon and rubric" of Anglican orthodoxy, someone who could stand toe to toe with the Independent minister in town, "the most superior person of his order in this colony."⁹

They were given Matthew Graves. The Society agreed to send a missionary to New London in 1745 if the parish agreed to provide a house for him. Traditionally, the Society required a house and glebe land for the support of its personnel. In the case of New London, the glebe was located over 30 miles away in Hebron, making it of little use to the resident minister in New London. Moreover, the house was not finished by the time of Graves' arrival in 1748, a situation that would prove to be a thorn in his side for years to come and a symbol of the half-hearted welcome he received in New London. Despite all of their deferential vows to receive the missionary the Society chose for them, after they had exhausted their own attempts to lure missionary Timothy Cutler from Boston's Christ Church, St. James Church took offense that the Society had sent them someone before they were "ready" for him. These Anglicans resented the control of a foreign authority in a clearly "Puritan-like" manner.¹⁰

⁹ William Stewart, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 14 January 1743, in Hawks and Perry, vol. I, 188-189.

¹⁰ Hallam, 39-40; Maud O'Neil, "Matthew Graves: Anglican Missionary to the Puritans," in Samuel McCulloch, ed., British Humanitarianism: Essays Honoring Frank J. Klingberg (Philadelphia: Church Historical Society, 1950), 127-128.

Who was this man to whom the churchmen of New London offered such a cold shoulder? He was a native of the Isle of Man and, as they had requested, had been brought up in the Church of England. He had served faithfully as a minister and schoolmaster for fourteen years in Chester, where he was apparently caught up in the Wesleyan revival. His exposure to Methodism might have supplied his motivation for overseas service. Recommended to the Society by the Bishop of Chester, Samuel Cestriens, Graves was accepted for service in May 1747. Philip Bearcroft, Secretary of the SPG, assured Graves at that time that the perquisites of serving New London would match the £100 sterling he was earning at Chester. The Society would pay him £60 a year, which would be supplemented by the subscriptions paid by the people of his parish, along with the promised house and glebe lands. It was only upon his arrival that Graves found that the glebe was too distant to be of use. No doubt the Society failed to fully comprehend such matters peculiar to America, a misunderstanding Graves soon found to be only too common in his experience. Senior SPG missionary in Stratford, Samuel Johnson, wrote Graves expressing his empathy at this impractical situation. Johnson was obviously trying to establish a congenial relationship with the new foreign-born missionary.¹¹

¹¹ O'Neil, 126-127; Hallam, 41-42; Philip Bearcroft, Secretary, SPG, London, to Matthew Graves, New London, 20 May 1747, in Cameron, The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut, 71-72; Samuel Johnson, Stratford, to Matthew Graves, New London, 27 June 1748, in Herbert Schneider and Carol Schneider, eds., Samuel Johnson, President

Graves landed in America in March 1748 after enduring a dangerous journey, no novelty for a missionary candidate. "By a signal and miraculous Preservation of Providence I landed here on the 9th Instant. We were thirteen weeks and three days in our Passage from the *Lizard*, during which time we were exercised with inexpressible Perils and Terrors of Mind: even Famine approached and threatened our Ruin."¹² The "we" in this description included his sister Joanna who lived with Graves much of his life. A single man, Graves' only other relation was a brother John who later joined him in missionary service in America, stationed at Providence, Rhode Island. A freemason like so many other SPG missionaries in America, Graves' appearance was quite distinctive. "In person he was ungainly; of low stature, rather corpulent, with particularly short legs." Local legend insists that a wandering pig scooted under these legs one day and, lacking room to maneuver, gave the missionary a ride. An epileptic all of his life, Graves grew to fear "apoplexy" as he aged and gained weight. "Oh! 'tis dreadful to be hurled in a moment into eternity, to be tolerably well, and anon, perhaps in unquenchable flames, from which good Lord

of King's College: His Career and Writings, vol. I (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929), 132-133. Johnson was the spiritual "father" of the American-born Connecticut missionaries; in many ways, his presence and energy held the episcopalianism of Connecticut together. For other studies of this important Anglican missionary, see E.E. Beardsley, Life and Correspondence of Samuel Johnson (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1874) and Joseph Ellis, "The Puritan Mind in Transition: The American Samuel Johnson," (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1969).

¹² Matthew Graves, New York, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 17 March 1748, SPG Manuscripts (Library of Congress Transcriptions), Series B, vol. 15, no. 71.

deliver us." Graves' terror was well-founded; he died of an apparent heart attack while ministering as a Loyalist refugee in New York in 1780.¹³

Graves served in and around New London until 1778. He traveled throughout eastern Connecticut, southern Rhode Island, eastern Long Island, and other islands off the coast. He did not slow down nor curtail his itinerancy even towards the end of his life. In November of 1773, Graves wrote the Society that he had logged above 614 miles on his journeys, preaching over thirty times outside of his regular parish assignment. A year later, the Society recorded in its *Abstracts* of missionary activity that Graves had traveled 400 miles from the spring through September, preaching eighteen times beyond the bounds of his parish. He was always quick to indicate that all of this perambulation was at his own expense.¹⁴

Without doubt, the most frequently discussed topic in letters to the Society from New England missionaries throughout the eighteenth century was the need for more money. Graves never did realize the £100 Sterling he had been promised. To compensate for the shortfall, Graves taught West Indian boys who

¹³ O'Neil, 127; Lorenzo Sabine, Biographical Sketches of Loyalists of the American Revolution, vol. I (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1864), 487-488; Hallam, 45; Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 14 July 1761, in Francis L. Hawks and William S. Perry, Documentary History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Connecticut, 1704-1789, vol. II (New York: James Pott, 1864), 25.

¹⁴ Burr, 57; Abstract of the Proceedings of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 17 February 1775- 16 February 1776, in Kenneth Cameron, ed., Ethos of Anglicanism in Colonial New England and New York (Hartford, Ct.: Transcendental Books, 1981), 170.

resided in New London due to the port's specialty trade with those islands. In despair, Graves wrote the Society that these students owed him over 500 dollars, a sum delinquent for ten years. Joanna Graves worried even more than her brother about their impoverished condition. Local legend relates the story of one exchange during which an anxious sister was silenced by the missionaries' "The Lord will provide." Soon after a hawk lost its grip on a fish directly above the parsonage door. Matthew Graves received the fish as the "divine provision" he had promised his sister, a heaven-sent supplement to their meager household supplies. Brother John also noticed his sister's propensity to worry; he carved Jesus' biblical admonition to Martha that only "one thing is needful" in the window pane of the guest-chamber, hoping to quiet his sister's fears.¹⁵

Clearly, Matthew Graves' years in New London exacted a physical and financial toll. More significantly, his service degenerated into a spiritual "ordeal" as he discovered that American Anglicans, often with the assistance of his fellow missionaries, were altering his beloved Church well beyond its traditional rites and customs. Transplanted to New England by the SPG, nurtured by ex-Puritan ministers, Connecticut's Church of England appeared to Graves to be an unacceptable hybrid. The most British of institutions, the Church was being

¹⁵ Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 15 November 1773, in Cameron, The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut, 188; Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 9 October 1764, in Cameron, The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut, 131; Hallam, 41-42.

"Americanized" by the very people who swore the greatest allegiance to it. Graves feared that the practices and preferences of the Independents were seeping into the life of the Church. His recognition of this tendency, and his decision to challenge the trend, made him a lone, frequently ostracized, Anglican voice in eastern Connecticut.

In what could be called a classic understatement, Graves sought the patience of the Society with his frequent letters of complaint owing to his "Fondness of Decency and Order." New London's missionary insisted on a strict adherence to what he repeatedly called the "canons and rubricks" of the Church. Just months after his arrival, Graves wrote that he doubted the people would ever be "reconciled to a regular minister."¹⁶ His manner of conducting services seemed peculiar to his parishioners and he found their behavior equally dumbfounding. "I cannot, from their behaviour in Church, conclude that ever they had an orthodox minister among them, as my manner of performing seems strange to them; so does their religious deportment to me."¹⁷ Were these new converts behaving awkwardly in church due to an unfamiliarity with the Prayer Book service; had Seabury's ministry prior to Graves' arrival deviated significantly from the standard Anglican ritual? To some degree, Graves was indirectly questioning his predecessor's

¹⁶ Matthew Graves, New London, to Thomas Sherlock, Bishop of London, London, 29 April 1751, in Cameron, The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut, 86.

¹⁷ Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 7 September 1748, in Hawks and Perry, vol. I, 242.

conventionality. In contrast, Graves mourned the passing of British-born James Honyman, the first resident missionary to serve the colony of Rhode Island. Graves testified that Honyman had "persevered in his Office without wavering in the least from the Rules and Orders of our Church." No doubt Graves craved more of Honyman's ilk from across the ocean to reassert episcopal orthodoxy.¹⁸

Graves found deviation from standard Church practice almost everywhere. He could not determine how many of his people in New London had been baptized because no register had been kept. In Norwich, Graves insisted that a godparent "stand surety" for a baptized child despite the protests of the ex-Puritan parent. As always, Graves told the befuddled father that "the canons and rubricks . . . was my rule." Graves discouraged communicants from receiving "that most Solemn Ordinance, without previously acquainting me, and due Preparation." He surmised that the number of those taking the Lord's Supper might have been larger had he followed a less rigorous standard for admission.¹⁹

Matthew Graves charged that these exceptions to Anglican practice and tradition represented nothing less than "wild

¹⁸ Burr, 73; Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, July 1750, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, vol. 18, no. 38. There were more foreign-born missionaries in Massachusetts and Rhode Island than in Connecticut, but they were still outnumbered by native-born missionaries.

¹⁹ Burr, 63; Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 7 September 1748, in Hawks and Perry, vol. I, 242; Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 20 July 1763, in Cameron, The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut, 123.

Independent principles" in action, "invincible rules" for his American parishioners. He told the Society that his congregation did not recognize either its authority or that of the Bishop of London, the designated colonial prelate. The New London Church claimed that they were a special church, not on the same footing with other Anglican churches. They believed that they could conduct parish affairs without London's assistance. Graves might have found that argument utilized in most of the contemporary Connecticut parishes. Independent churches in Connecticut were resisting hierarchical authority at this time as well. This anti-authoritarianism, while startling to Graves, was really more the rule than the exception for eighteenth century religious culture in America. Dissenting clergy fought the impulse with the Saybrook Platform in New England; Anglican priests continually battled vestries in Virginia over salary rates.²⁰

The Connecticut Assembly, at its own expense, had just reprinted the Saybrook Platform for general distribution in 1767.²¹ This book, touting the authority of Connecticut's

²⁰ Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 2 September 1752, in Hawks and Perry, vol. I, 296.

²¹ The Saybrook Platform, enjoying the unique historical significance of being the first book published in the colony of Connecticut, was produced by a group of Puritan divines in 1708. In an effort to revitalize what they believed was an apathetic religious climate, as well as to centralize church discipline and authority in the hands of the clergy, Connecticut ministers adopted this platform. Consequently, Connecticut Congregationalism, like that of Massachusetts, was showing signs of moving from a fiercely independent congregational polity to that of a more consociational nature. This trend, however, was resisted by some dissenting churches in Connecticut. See H. Shelton Smith, et al., American Christianity: An Historical Interpretation with

ministerial leaders, had caused much aggravation among dissenting congregations according to Graves. "The Power therein to the Teachers is highly offensive to their Hearers." Graves must have recognized the parallel to his own predicament. Exasperated with the independence of his parishioners, New London's missionary beseeched the Society to reassign him to South Carolina. The plea fell on deaf ears.²²

Immediately upon his arrival in Connecticut, Matthew Graves had experienced intense conflict with his flock in Hebron, a satellite of New London. Like many other churches lacking resident ministers, Hebron had resorted to the use of a lay reader to conduct services. Puritan congregations frequently tested recent college graduates who aspired to the ministry by allowing them to preach in various churches. Based on their performance, these men might receive a call from one of the churches. While a Puritan himself, Samuel Johnson, now SPG missionary at Stratford, had obtained the pulpit at West Haven in this manner. So it was only natural that Johnson would resort to this practice to supply the many young episcopal congregations in Connecticut lacking a minister; it also proved to be an indispensable way to gauge and prepare men to be sent to England for ordination. After approval by the Society and

Representative Documents, vol. I, 1607-1820 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), 224-229.

²² Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 18 April 1767, in Cameron, The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut, 146.

ordination, the new missionary frequently returned to the church where he had served as a lay reader.²³

Puritan pragmatism applied to the exigencies of frontier Anglicanism was not without its dangers. Lay readers were not allowed to "conduct" episcopal services, just to preach sermons and to read prayers. The Secretary of the SPG assured Graves in October of 1749 that any young reader caught varying from the public Liturgy "will be dismissed from the Service of the Society upon the proof of such an heinous misdemeanor." Nevertheless, many of the British missionaries suspected that zealous lay readers were breaching the limits of their prerogative. James MacSparran, the missionary from Rhode Island who played such a strategic role in the early history of St. James' parish, New London, "opposed lay preaching of any sort. He thought it his 'Duty to bear Testimony against Lay-reading,' both because it was unscriptural and because it 'may prove perilous to Country Parishes and ignorant people.'" Matthew Graves quickly discovered just how dangerous a lay reader could actually be.²⁴

Before Graves' arrival in the area, the people of Hebron had already determined who their next minister would be and were grooming him for ordination. Jonathan Colton graduated from Yale College in 1745, a fellow classmate of future SPG

²³ Joseph Ellis, "Anglicans in Connecticut, 1725-1750: The Conversion of the Missionaries," New England Quarterly 44 (March 1971): 75-76.

²⁴ Ellis, 77-78; Philip Bearcroft, Secretary, SPG, London, to Matthew Graves, New London, 5 October 1749, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.) Series B, vol. 17, no. 207.

missionaries Jeremiah Leaming and Thomas Bradbury Chandler. Apparently Colton and a Mr. Thompson of the Hebron congregation made these desires known to Graves in June following his landfall in March. Since Hebron was part of his assignment, not to mention a source of L10 of his piecemeal salary, he found their requests, probably for a good deal of autonomy for Colton, "unreasonable." But as he was a stranger to New England ways, he offered to discuss the matter with Johnson and MacSparran. Johnson wrote Graves after speaking with the two men from Hebron, making the case of necessity for lay reading and acknowledging the Society's approval of the practice. He told Graves he had counseled Colton, "a sensible modest young man," to wait on the missionary and submit himself to Graves' direction and assistance.²⁵

If Graves is to be believed, his directions to Colton were never heeded. He wrote the Society in April of 1750 that he hoped Hebron would return to obedience "tho I despair of reducing their Lay Reader to reason."²⁶ A year later, as it became apparent that Colton would soon be sailing for London to seek ordination, Graves set out his charges against the young man in a letter to the Bishop of London, Thomas Sherlock. The lay reader preached his own sermons and "crudities" despite the fact that Graves forbade him to do so according to the 49th

²⁵ Matthew Graves, New London, to Samuel Johnson, Stratford, 18 June 1748 and Samuel Johnson, Stratford, to Matthew Graves, New London, 27 June 1748, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. I, 131-134.

²⁶ Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 3 April 1750, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, vol. 18, no. 37.

Canon. Graves prepared homilies to be read to the congregation in Hebron by Colton, but apparently the young man had been substituting his own creations instead. Obviously, Graves did not understand that Anglican lay reading had come to imitate Puritan candidating as a proving ground for effective preaching.²⁷

Graves also believed that Colton pursued commercial opportunities unbecoming of a ministerial candidate. Instead of preparing for orders, Colton acted as "a Merchant, an Apothecary, and a Farmer." To the British missionary, this was sacrilege; to the enterprising Yankee, this was making a living. Graves charged Colton with extortion by claiming that he was seeking to dupe London with an illegal bond he had gained from parishioners promising L30 sterling per year in salary. Graves claimed Colton never actually intended to draw upon this bond for his salary, but rather to use it as a ploy to gain ordination. Once ordained, he would cancel the bond, collect his salary from the rates promised to Anglican clergy by the local government, and the Society would be none the wiser. Graves thus accused Colton of practicing simony, the buying of a church office. Finally, he charged Colton with holding unauthorized parish meetings to stir up animosity against the missionary himself.²⁸

²⁷ Matthew Graves, New London, to Thomas Sherlock, Bishop of London, London, 29 April 1751, in "The Wolcott Papers," Connecticut Historical Society Collections, vol. XVI (Hartford, Ct.: Connecticut Historical Society, 1916), 55-57.

²⁸ Ibid.

This last charge appeared to be true. Following the alleged meeting, five men testified before the Hartford County justice of the peace on January 3, 1751. All five attacked Graves' conduct in Hebron, charging him with treason, bribery, and exerting domineering authority over the church. One man testified that Graves had said King George seldom went to chapel and that the nobility of England "did not trouble themselves much with religion." Another claimed Graves offered to sanction Colton's ordination if the parish promised to pay his £10 salary anyway. The third told the court he heard Graves say that his ear could be cut off if he did not get authority over Hebron in six months. Colton himself was challenging Graves' authority in Hebron. Reuben Huchisson told the justice of the peace that he had heard Colton say that Graves had no more business in Hebron than an Indian and that he "deserved to have his head broke for going into Hebron church and if he saw Mr. Graves their again he would brake His head outdoors."²⁹

Hebron was a headache for Graves and he sought to pass it off to another. Calling the church there a "knotty" people, Graves wrote the Society in January of 1751 that Mr. Thompson of Hebron had agreed to provide a glebe and house if they would agree to send a missionary there. Graves sanctioned the proposal, noting "inasmuch as they are wicked, they have greater

²⁹ Affidavits of Jacob Ford, John Peters, Nathan Rowlee, Joseph Man, and William Pennock before the Hartford County Justice of the Peace, 3 January 1751, in "The Wolcott Papers," 58-59; Affidavit of Reuben Huchisson before the Hartford County Justice of the Peace, 4 April 1754, in Cameron, The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut, 95.

necessity for a good resident minister."³⁰ Still contending Colton was unfit for the post, being of a "very wicked, litigious, and perverse nature," nine months later Graves recommended William Gibbs of Simsbury, a "moral, peaceable man."³¹ However, the frequency of Graves' letters to the authorities in London on this matter toward the end of 1751 indicates he knew his protests were in vain. There was simply too much support for Colton among the other clergy of Connecticut. Writing two days before Christmas, Graves called the young man a "false Prophet" and someone who trusted in the merits of his own works like any Papist would. He then left the matter with London.³²

London did indeed ordain Colton, but tragically, as was true for one-fifth of those candidates who crossed the Atlantic for orders, he died on the return voyage. He had been assigned to Hebron but was never able to serve there as a missionary. Writing to the Bishop of London two years later, Graves reflected on this controversy. Aware of the fact that Sherlock was cool to Graves for his opposition to the ordination, New London's missionary sought to defend himself. He enclosed affidavits from three parishioners in Hebron which testified to the truth of his allegations against Colton. He protested that

³⁰ Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 20 January 1751, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, vol. 19, no. 52.

³¹ Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 10 October 1751, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, vol. 19, no. 53.

³² Matthew Graves, New London, to Thomas Sherlock, Bishop of London, London, 23 December 1751, in Cameron, The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut, 90.

he had written nothing but the truth and then appealed to the "Searcher of Hearts" who would justify his actions on the Last Day. Graves told the Bishop he would rather endure his censure than labor under a guilty conscience for hiding the truth. He had already written the Secretary of the SPG, indicating he would never write against a candidate again, no matter how "undeserving." He closed his letter to the Bishop by explaining that he had prayed before Colton's ordination that he would either fail to gain it or that his heart would be changed. Graves cited church history as a precedent when another had fasted and prayed all night before the ordination of another impostor, Arius. He believed that Colton's death was an answer to his prayers and hoped that the young man had died "in the love of God."³³

The Bishop of London sent both Graves and Samuel Johnson a letter censuring New London's missionary for his obstinacy in the Colton affair. Johnson then chose to further humiliate Graves by reading Sherlock's letter publicly at Yale's Commencement in 1755. Johnson's decision to humble Graves so openly symbolizes a deeper problem plaguing the British-born missionary throughout his ministry in New England. The American-born, ex-Puritan missionaries recognized that Graves took exception to some of their practices, and they ostracized

³³ Matthew Graves, New London, to Thomas Sherlock, Bishop of London, London, 29 May 1754, in Cameron, The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut, 96; Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 2 September 1752, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, vol. 20, no. 35.

him as a result. Johnson wrote to the Bishop of London as early as October 1751 justifying Colton's behavior, explaining that he enjoyed the universal esteem of the missionaries of Connecticut, save Graves, and all of his people in Hebron but one or two troublemakers approved of the young man's ministry. He acknowledged that perhaps Hebron had been too zealous in its desire to keep Colton, resisting Graves upon his arrival and "treating him indecently," but Graves had carried his resentments too far as well.³⁴ Hence the signatures of Johnson and all of the clergy of Connecticut, except that of Graves, could be found on the letter of recommendation Jonathan Colton carried to London.³⁵ Sherlock thanked Johnson for the explanation, accepting the word of the dean of New England missionaries without question. He confided to Johnson that Graves had not concealed his passion and resentment in the letters he had sent to the Bishop. "His letter gave me great offense, as he will find when he receives my answer."³⁶

Ebenezer Punderson, the Society's nearest missionary in North Groton, also attacked Graves in a letter to the Bishop of London. He told Sherlock that he went with Colton to see Graves

³⁴ Samuel Johnson, Stratford, to Thomas Sherlock, Bishop of London, London, 20 October 1751, in Cameron, The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut, 89.

³⁵ The Clergy of Connecticut, New Haven, to Thomas Sherlock, Bishop of London, London, 13 September 1750 and 11 September 1751, in Kenneth Cameron, ed., Colonial Anglicanism in New England: A Guide (Hartford, Ct.: Transcendental Books, 1984), 29, 31.

³⁶ Thomas Sherlock, Bishop of London, London, to Samuel Johnson, Stratford, 21 April 1752, in Herbert Schneider and Carol Schneider, eds., Samuel Johnson, President of Kings College: His Career and Writings, vol. III (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929), 246.

in the hopes that some sort of reconciliation might be achieved. Punderson found Graves to be bitter, refusing to tell Colton the objections he had against the young man's plans to be ordained. "I was really sorry to find him averse to Mr. Colton and to the clergy of this country, whenas [sic] we have taken all imaginable pains and care to keep in good terms with him." [italics mine]³⁷ Graves told the Secretary of the Society that Colton had accused him of lacking no ingredient of vice in his nature, a charge Graves argued had originated with Mr. Punderson.³⁸

Why was Punderson so involved with the Hebron affair? John Thompson testified before the justice of the peace that Punderson's orders had been obtained by the same deception Colton had employed with the use of a fraudulent bond.³⁹ Punderson had also been christening children and marrying couples in Hebron without Graves' approval. Graves called this a "great obstruction" to his spiritual labors and blamed such interference for the stubbornness and lack of deference in the parish as a whole.⁴⁰ Graves' personal friend back in London, Secretary Philip Bearcroft of the Society, wrote to Punderson in what amounted to return mail for the time and told him that the

³⁷ Ebenezer Punderson, North Groton, Ct., to Thomas Sherlock, Bishop of London, London, 10 December 1751, in Cameron, Colonial Anglicanism in New England, 33.

³⁸ Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 10 October 1751, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.) Series B, vol. 19, no. 53.

³⁹ "The Fitch Papers," Connecticut Historical Society Collections, vol. XVII (Hartford, Ct.: Connecticut Historical Society, 1918), 9.

⁴⁰ Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, July 1750, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, vol. 18, no. 38.

people of Hebron must be contented with the care of Graves as they were comprehended within *his* assignment.⁴¹

Apparently, Graves' initial reception by the Connecticut clergy was cordial and his relationship with Samuel Johnson in particular was deferential. In a postscript to a letter which Graves wrote to Johnson just months after his arrival in Connecticut, the new missionary expressed genuine warmth. "I write to a friend, hereafter I desire to be added to the number of yours."⁴² However, it did not take long for this relationship to sour over a matter that related precisely to the "Americanization" of the colonial Anglican church. In the ever-continuing effort to secure adequate salaries for American missionaries, Johnson had proposed submitting a bill to the Connecticut assembly authorizing each parish to determine what rate they would pay to support its minister. Graves called investing such power in the local church "a perfectly Presbyterian Dependence" which would sacrifice the clergy to the "capricious will of the people." However, to the sensibilities of an ex-Puritan pastor, it simply represented pragmatic parochial politics. Johnson was adapting the Anglican church to its American milieu.⁴³

⁴¹ Philip Bearcroft, Secretary, SPG, London, to Ebenezer Punderson, North Groton, 24 October 1750, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.) Series B, vol. 18, no. 208.

⁴² Matthew Graves, New London, to Samuel Johnson, Stratford, 18 June 1748, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. I, 132.

⁴³ Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, July 1750, SPG MSS. (L.C. trans.), Series B, vol. 18, no. 38.

What infuriated Graves more than the creeping Congregationalism was that Johnson had, according to his testimony, duplicitously exchanged this plan for an alternative solution to their financial woes originally worked out by the entire group of Connecticut clergy at the preceding Yale commencement. Not trusting Johnson, a fact in itself that indicates the nature of the relationship, Graves had intercepted the fraudulent bill before it was considered by the assembly and found, to his horror, that Johnson and his son had forged all of the names of the other clergy on the impostor. Of course, he did not keep such information to himself. He immediately informed Bearcroft in London and Richard Mansfield, one of the American-born missionaries serving in Derby.⁴⁴ Bearcroft, obviously believing his friend's story, wrote Graves that such behavior by Johnson very much surprised him: "I am at a loss to think what excuse he can make for it."⁴⁵ Johnson, Mansfield, and the other missionaries decided to drop the whole matter rather than appear severely disunited. No matter what the truth of the affair might be, Graves had set himself against all of the other missionaries on the grounds of Anglican orthodoxy.⁴⁶

What other factors could possibly explain the harsh treatment reserved for Graves by his fellow Connecticut

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Philip Bearcroft, Secretary, SPG, London, to Matthew Graves, New London, 24 October 1750, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, vol. 18, no. 206.

⁴⁶ Samuel Johnson, Stratford, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 5 October 1750, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. III, 238-239.

missionaries? No doubt the fact that he was a "foreigner" to the other American-born missionaries served to isolate Graves. As Graves explained to the Secretary of the Society in the opening quotation of this chapter, he believed that European clergy were "unwelcome guests in New England."⁴⁷ A year before, Graves had described to the Secretary some of his past encounters with the other Connecticut missionaries: "As I did not, could not agree with some of my Brethren's Proceedings, I opposed them in what I thought wrong, and was also a stranger, I incurred their Displeasure, and through their writing gained very little Ground with my Superiors." Graves was very aware of the fact that he was a "stranger" to the Connecticut Church. No doubt the displeasure Graves referenced was the strained relationship he suffered with the Bishop of London, Thomas Sherlock. He blamed his negative reputation with the prelate on his American colleagues.⁴⁸

It is no wonder, then, given the cool treatment he endured at the hands of the American-born missionaries, that Graves encouraged the Bishop of London to appoint a British-born minister to the post of Commissary in New England. Graves had learned that Sherlock was considering such an appointment and that Johnson was the number one candidate. He counseled against

⁴⁷ Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 9 October 1765, in Cameron, The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut, 137.

⁴⁸ Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 9 October 1764, in Cameron, The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut, 131.

selecting a "Native of the place." Humbly acknowledging that he was not fit for the post, Graves suggested that "Doctor MacSparran is every way qualified for it." Graves was well aware of the growing gap between the interests of the American Anglicans and those of the Church at home. "All Europeans, especially Ministers, meet with very ungrateful reception here: and certain I am that there is a Plan already formed to extirpate us entirely."⁴⁹ To the contrary, the American missionaries were not formulating any specific strategy to eliminate foreign ministers. Rather, Graves was merely observing the steady "Americanization" of colonial Anglicanism over time.

Another reason for the deterioration of Graves' relationship with the other Connecticut missionaries was the fact that he shunned their voluntary gatherings. Puritan divines in Connecticut began to meet in informal conventions toward the end of the seventeenth century in order to generate some sort of competing power base over against that established by the local congregations. Johnson and the other Connecticut clergy mimicked this practice throughout the eighteenth century. Graves challenged clergy conventions as a "violation of Anglican ecclesiastical procedure and an infringement on the authority of the Bishop of London." He rarely attended these meetings. Consequently, the petitions and letters to the Society

⁴⁹ Matthew Graves, New London, to Thomas Sherlock, Bishop of London, London, 20 July 1750, "The Wolcott Papers," vol. XVI, 518-519.

frequently produced at these informal conventions lacked his signature.⁵⁰

The resistance Matthew Graves faced surpassed that offered by his missionary colleagues. In his early years of service in New London, he also had to battle his own lay leadership. The power of the New England vestry reflected its Puritan counterpart, again a product of the hybrid religious culture flourishing in American Anglicanism. In the England Matthew Graves knew, the vestry was a weak institution with little real power. The American vestry, whether of dissent or conformity, whether in the northern or the southern colonies, normally called the ecclesiastical "shots." Samuel Johnson understood this and tried to alert Graves to the reality of the situation as quickly as he could:

It must seem a strange shape to any gent that came hither from a condition wherein the Church is established and uppermost and flourishing, to such a militant depressed state as it is in here, scattered about into little parcels and among enemies, and without ministers which they long for, and are eager after. Nor is it easy for you to make allowance for their want of good manners and importunity, especially as the spirit of liberty beats high in their veins, beyond what Europe ever knew, whence they are apt to think they merit high of every clergyman of the Church; that they take the liberty to leave their old nonsense and conform to the Church, and as they have been used to be caressed and made much of in

⁵⁰ Ellis, 74-75; for examples of petitions bereft of Graves signature, see Cameron, The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut, 85, 141-142, 199, 205; Cameron, Colonial Anglicanism in New England, 35, 44-45, 46; and Hawks and Perry, vol. II, 22, 81.

their former popular state they are too apt to expect more than becomes them when they conform.⁵¹

By 1750, the SPG had conceded a great deal of power to the New England vestries by allowing them to select the missionaries they desired in exchange for the guarantee of financial support. This is the sort of power that would never be granted to an English vestry, since part of the episcopal prerogative was the assignment of clergy. Before 1750, on the three occasions in which a New England vestry refused to accept the SPG's choice of a missionary for them, the vestry carried the day. Even the sending agency realized that procedures were different in America.⁵²

Despite Johnson's warning, Graves was unprepared for the degree of interference he would arouse from his New London vestry. They claimed that they were Graves' directors, "and could place and displace him at their pleasure." They told Graves he could not have another minister officiate in the parish without their approval.⁵³ This disagreeable predicament was exacerbated for Graves by the selection of some church officers who lived immorally and openly flaunted church discipline. One man had married his late wife's brother's

⁵¹ Samuel Johnson, Stratford, to Matthew Graves, New London, 27 June 1748, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. I, 132-133.

⁵² Ellis, 78-80. For a good discussion of the New England vestry, see Bordon W. Painter, "The Vestry in Colonial New England," The Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 44 (December 1975): 381-408, especially 396-405.

⁵³ Matthew Graves, New London, to Thomas Sherlock, Bishop of London, London, 29 April 1751, in Cameron, The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut, 86-87.

daughter, despite the fact that Graves had counseled against such cohabitations privately and preached against them publicly. Another man, a Captain Durfey, was "an old Sea-Captain, who was never baptized, a swearing, bullying Wretch, and in the Heathen's phrase, *nulla Virtute redemptum*." Amazingly, the congregation had selected these men to sit on the vestry, and they were intent on opposing the minister. On one occasion, Durfey opened a letter from the Society intended for Graves without his permission.⁵⁴ Graves wrote the Society that, normally, such men would have nothing to do with one another. "(B)ut in persecuting the Ministers of Christ, like Pontius Pilate and Herod, they become Friends." They had united in "malicious principles and infidel practices."⁵⁵

Graves relationship with the laity of St. James Church in New London was further strained by his compassion for and active ministry to the local Native American population. New London's historic relationship with area tribes was not one of harmony. St. James parish completed and opened its church building in 1732. Tradition has it that a delegation of Indians wandering through town noticed the gilt ball on top of the new steeple. The war-chief of the party took an arrow from his quiver and aimed at the ball, driving the projectile through the wooden ornament. "'That,' said the chief, turning with a triumphant

⁵⁴ Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 2 September 1752, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, vol. 20, no. 35.

⁵⁵ Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 17 December 1751, in Cameron, The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut, 89.

smile to one of the local Anglicans, 'make you remember Indian came here, and how he shoot.'" New London's experience with Native Americans was well symbolized by the hanging arrow. Winthrop's policy toward the Indians of southeastern Connecticut had been unsympathetic. The settlers did not pay the original inhabitants for any of the land they appropriated, and they forced any Indians out of town who failed to yield to their rule. The Pequot War and King Philip's War both colored the early history of this Connecticut port town.⁵⁶

Is it any wonder, then, that the sympathetic relationship Matthew Graves nurtured with the local Indians shocked the sensibilities of his neighbors, parishioners, and fellow missionaries? He became a steady advocate of the Narragansett Indians, who, he wrote the SPG, "are truly pitiable, being daily despoiled and plundered of their land." Graves blamed the Connecticut assembly for this cruel treatment.⁵⁷ In one instance, in a letter to William Johnson, Samuel Johnson's son and an official of the British government assigned to Indian affairs, he called General Phineas Lyman "a great Favorite to this Colony, therefore no Friend to the plundered Indians."⁵⁸ Graves frequently visited both the Mohegan and Narragansett

⁵⁶ Caulkins, 442-443; Decker, 8-9.

⁵⁷ Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 25 August 1766, in Hawks and Perry, vol. II, 96-97; Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 20 November 1767, in Hawks and Perry, vol. II, 118-119.

⁵⁸ Matthew Graves, New London, to William Samuel Johnson, location unknown, 14 January 1768, in Cameron, The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut, 150.

tribes, befriending them and ministering to them. He wrote his superiors that no other missionary was as acceptable to the Indians in the area as he was, since he was the only one who had served them for several years.⁵⁹

Besides preaching to the Indians, Graves encouraged them in other practical ways. He secured a schoolmaster for the Narragansetts at their request. He took several of them under his roof in the interim and taught them himself. Out of gratitude, the tribe gave forty acres of land to the Church of England as a glebe. He also preached to other tribes in the area. He visited the Mohegans and assisted their preacher, Samson Occum. Graves recommended both Occum and a young Narragansett man named Tobias Shattock to the Bishop of London for ordination.⁶⁰

The missionary's relationship with the laity of his church did improve over time. By 1760, the number of Graves' auditors had increased so much that the pews on the floor had been enlarged and "handsome Gallary" (sic) had been added above. Still, there was not enough room for all of the families frequenting the church.⁶¹ Graves' burgeoning congregation was a testimony to the missionary's growing popularity. Graves

⁵⁹ Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 1 January 1772, in Hawks and Perry, vol. II, 174.

⁶⁰ Burr, 109; Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 15 January 1769, in Hawks and Perry, vol. II, 120-121; Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 20 November 1767, in Hawks and Perry, vol. II, 118-119.

⁶¹ Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 13 December 1760, in Cameron, The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut, 107.

reported to the Society that not only did the number of his parishioners continually increase, they had also become "doers as well as hearers" of the Word of God. The same parishioners who had resisted finishing his house in 1748 had now dug Graves and his sister a well nine years later. Graves rejoiced that "(s)urely no man was ever better regarded by his hearers, or beloved by all Denominations, than I am."⁶² By 1766, Graves concluded that the church in New London behaved well and had become an "ornament to their profession."⁶³

What accounts for the change both in Graves and in his people? Undoubtedly, the parishioners of St. James, New London, finally got used to their missionary's orthodox opinions and practices. Additionally, some of Graves' early antagonists had no doubt died and had been replaced by others who were the fruit of the missionary's own outreach in town. For Graves' part, "the traditions of the parish represent him as an honest and earnest man, kind, friendly, and social, of genial ways, familiar and simple-hearted." And yet, the missionary from Chester never felt completely at home in America. Early in his ministry in New London, Graves evangelized and converted a local dissenting teacher of Latin, Greek, and mathematics named Jonathan Copp. In the recommendation letter Graves sent with Copp to London, Graves confided in the Society that "he will

⁶² Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 14 July 1761, in Hawks and Perry, vol. II, 25.

⁶³ Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 25 August 1766, in Hawks and Perry, vol. II, 97.

appear with a larger fund of solid learning than is usually on such occasions exported from America."⁶⁴ His prejudices against the provinciality of colonial New England never waned.

Nevertheless, the outbreak of the Revolutionary crisis ruined whatever good will Graves was enjoying in New London. The political turmoil of the late 1760's and 1770's in New England, as well as in the rest of colonial America, endangered the ministry of Church of England personnel. Two factors served to worsen the situation in New London. Matthew Graves remained a staunch Tory; his parishioners adopted a vehement zeal for the Patriot cause. During the Stamp Act crisis, Graves was the only Connecticut missionary to fail to exhort his congregation publicly to obey the will of Parliament. Undoubtedly this omission was due to the fact that so many of his parishioners had taken part in local "mobbings" against the measure. Connecticut's stamp agent, Duncan Stewart, a member of St. James and a man Graves called an ornament to religion and a blessing to his church, quickly surrendered the notorious paper "with the utmost Politeness" to local "Sons of Liberty" upon demand. Stewart was later elected to the vestry, no doubt by many who had confiscated his stamps. New London merchants kept the

⁶⁴ Hallam, 42-43; Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 3 April 1750, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, vol. 18, no. 37.

agreement to embargo British goods in response to the Townshend duties longer than most other New England towns.⁶⁵

To protect their churches from attack, most SPG missionaries closed them in 1775-1776. Their ordination vows required them to adhere exactly to the Prayer Book service, a part of which included public prayers for the King. Rather than break their vows, the clergy locked their doors. Graves did the same, and then watched his flock slowly dwindle as many Tories left New London. He ministered to a remnant in the woods, "as poor as Job," but who furnished him with a "House-room and Fire." At least he was "free from the daily Din of War, Slaughter, etc." He predicted that the Spring of 1776 would "behold America deluged with Blood."⁶⁶

By the spring, given the rumor that New London was about to be destroyed by a British man-of-war, Graves had removed his family to Chatham. In February, he wrote a poignant letter to George Washington, pleading for his understanding and assistance. He wrote the general that he suspected that he would soon be arrested and returned to New London. Yet he protested his innocence:

I have never wrote one line either to the
Society, or anyone in Europe, or any
Person upon this Land about the Affairs of
America. Neither have I ever preached

⁶⁵ Bruce E. Steiner, Connecticut Anglicans in the Revolutionary Era: A Study in Communal Tensions (Hartford, Ct.: The American Revolution Bicentennial Commission of Connecticut, 1978), 17, 20; Decker, 41.

⁶⁶ Matthew Graves, New London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 2 November 1775, in Cameron, The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut, 197.

about them. I have strictly observed every Proclamation, both from the Continental Congress and our Governor. As I am no politician, I cautiously avoid talking about Politics, especially in the House of Prayer, esteeming it my bounden Duty to preach Jesus Christ and Him only.⁶⁷

Graves argued that his kingdom was not of this world. He begged that the general intercede to prevent the removal of his family and goods during the winter season, a step that "would be almost Murder."

Behold an aged Clergyman of the Church of England, almost worn out in the divine Master's Service, lying at the Excellency's Feet, imploring the Assistance, begging that he may not be treated as a Vagabond, and exposed to cruelties, Miseries and Hardship which his decayed strength cannot endure. For God's sake, consider my truly pitiable case and relieve me and that soon, or else 'twill be too late.⁶⁸

As if to drop a name to secure Washington's aid, Graves mentioned at the end of the letter that he had General Harry Lee as a pupil in England, a man who would surely plead his cause if at camp.⁶⁹ There is no record of Washington's reply to this letter from New London's missionary.

Connecticut Episcopal churches began to reopen in 1778, as ministers decided in convention to omit the offensive prayer

⁶⁷ Matthew Graves, Chatham, to General George Washington, location unknown, 5 February 1776, Matthew Graves Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

before they lost their flocks altogether. Graves was not party to that convention, of course. To further exacerbate his dilemma, the New London parish insisted that Graves not only leave out the prayer for the King but insert one for Congress. This requirement was unique to New London among Connecticut parishes and further demonstrates their radical commitment to the Patriot cause. Graves refused to honor the request but reopened the church and prepared to officiate on Sunday morning, November 15, 1778.⁷⁰

Thomas Mumford and Nathaniel Shaw, leading merchants in New London and members of the vestry of St. James, were two of three men who sent out the majority of Connecticut privateers during the Revolution and took the major share of prizes. Consequently, it is no surprise that Mumford and his brother David forcibly removed Graves from his pulpit on that fateful November morning. Had not two elderly church women forced the men to release the missionary, a tar and feathering might have awaited him out of doors. As it was, he fled the church building in a surplice and sought refuge in the house of a friend, who, ironically, was a Whig.⁷¹

Graves fled to New York under a flag of truce. He wrote the SPG from there in 1779 that he had been forced to leave after "undergoing a continued scene of persecutions, afflictions

⁷⁰ Hallam, 56.

⁷¹ Hallam, 57; E.E. Beardsley, History of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1866), 321-322; Steiner, 68; O'Neil, 143.

and trials, almost even unto death" for his religious principles and unshaken loyalty to the King. He rehearsed the facts that he had lost most of his earthly possessions. With currency devalued by the circumstances of war, he was destitute.⁷² Graves was officiating at St. George's in New York when he died of a stroke in 1780. His sister returned to New London that same year, or perhaps she had not accompanied him to New York, because she was given the privilege of a room in the parsonage until a new minister could be secured. St. James' church was burned to the ground during a raid on New London by Benedict Arnold in 1781.⁷³

Historian Lawrence Brown argues that the American-born SPG missionaries did not realize "the degree to which an American consciousness was developing among them." To Matthew Graves, this development was only too apparent. His missionary service in the port town of New London, Connecticut proved to be a tremendous ordeal due chiefly to the "Americanization" of the Church of England there. His resistance to this transformation over the years becomes a measure of just how much of a change was transpiring in the Anglicanism of New England.⁷⁴

⁷² Matthew Graves, New York, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 29 September 1779, in Hawks and Perry, vol. II, 204.

⁷³ Burr, 124.

⁷⁴ Lawrence Brown, "The Americanization of the Episcopal Church," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 44 (December 1975): 38.

CHAPTER III

"FRONTIER DISCIPLINE": THE HERESY TRIAL OF JOHN BEACH

"I can assure the venerable Society it is the great pleasure of my life to promote true religion, and to serve the eternal interest of souls, agreeable to their pious intentions."¹ These words were written in 1767 by one of the veteran missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Connecticut, John Beach. Serving Newtown and Reading, in the western Connecticut county of Fairfield, Beach became one of the most respected missionaries in the colony, second only to the venerated Samuel Johnson. In many ways, Beach, a disciple of Johnson in his early years, could be described as Johnson's faithful lieutenant in the religious wars of eighteenth century Connecticut.

However, Beach's reputation was not always this secure. Indeed, during the decade of the 1750's, the Society came to question whether it truly was Beach's "great pleasure to promote true religion . . . agreeable to their pious intentions." A stormy decade for Beach personally, the 1750's also produced one of the most fascinating episodes in the history of SPG mission activity in colonial Connecticut. The stubborn, argumentative, and opinionated missionary of Newtown surprised his colleagues and the home office with a sermon which challenged traditional

¹ John Beach, Newtown, Ct., to the Secretary, SPG, London, 13 April 1767, John Beach Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

Christian theology. The publication of this sermon provoked Beach's censure by these parties, and resulted in the only Anglican heresy trial in the colonial history of New England. More significantly, the method in which the affair was handled, and Beach's reluctant recantation, demonstrated the degree to which eighteenth century Anglicanism in New England had been thoroughly "Americanized." John Beach truly suffered "frontier discipline;" an examination of Beach's ministry and the attempts to correct this errant missionary expose the degree to which the colonial Episcopal church was modified by its provincial setting.

Hannah Beach gave birth to her third son, John, on October 6, 1700. John's father, Isaac, was a tailor and a member of the Congregational church of Stratford, Connecticut. Indeed, the young minister of that church, Timothy Cutler, later an Anglican convert and rector of Christ Church, Boston, was a family friend of the Beachs. He soon recognized the scholastic promise of young John and encouraged his parents to allow him to pursue advanced studies.²

John Beach attended Yale College, where his old friend Cutler became President of the institution during his sophomore

² Rebecca D. Beach and Rebecca D. Gibbons, The Reverend John Beach and His Descendants (New Haven: The Tuttle, Morehouse, and Taylor Press, 1898), 86-87. Two other sources of essential biographical detail on Beach are William B. Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, Volume V: Episcopalian (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), 82-85, and Franklin B. Dexter, Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College with Annals of the College History, vol. I: October 1701-May, 1745 (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1885), 239-243.

year. Beach graduated in 1721, one year before Rector Cutler and six other prominent Congregational clergymen rocked New England with their conversion to the Church of England.³ After graduation, Beach returned to Stratford and studied theology, intent on a ministerial career.⁴ Beach joined the Stratford Congregational church on August 22, 1722, the first member confirmed by the new minister in town, Hezekiah Gold.⁵ The young theology student became a great opponent of the embryonic Episcopal church in Stratford, demonstrating a pugnacity and a taste for the controversial which would dominate his life.⁶ Apparently he came by this aggressiveness genetically; Beach's uncle Joseph, a pillar in Stratford, was an arch-enemy of Anglicanism who opposed the building of an Episcopal church there.⁷

Stratford was the cradle of Episcopalianism in the colony of Connecticut. George Muirson, SPG missionary to Rye, New York, visited the village in 1706, arousing interest in the

³ This event is known in the literature as the "Yale Apostasy of 1722," which dramatically occurred during Commencement when Cutler concluded the ceremonies with an Anglican benediction. Samuel Johnson, Congregational minister at West Haven, was also a member of the group who parted with their congregational ordination for reasons of conscience. For a good description of this event, see Donald F.M. Gerardi, "Samuel Johnson and the Yale 'Apostasy' of 1722: The Challenge of Anglican Sacramentalism to the New England Way," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 47 (June 1978): 153-175, and Edgar L. Pennington, Church of England Beginnings in Connecticut and Black Monday at Yale (Hartford, Ct.: Church Missions Publishing Company, 1938).

⁴ Rebecca Beach, 90; Dexter, 239.

⁵ Rebecca Beach, 94.

⁶ Marc A. Mappen, "Anatomy of a Schism: Anglican Dissent in the New England Community of Newtown, Connecticut, 1708-1765" (Ph.D. diss., Rutgers University, 1976), 19.

⁷ Ibid., 18, note 34.

Mother Church. Missionary Francis Phillips stayed in town for just five months in 1712; otherwise, Stratford was bereft of the Anglican rite until 1722 when George Pigot passed through the community on his way to serve in Providence, Rhode Island. In 1723, the dean of the Society's personnel in Connecticut, Samuel Johnson, assumed the rectorship in Stratford, a post he would hold, with the exception of a stint as President of King's College (later Columbia University) in New York, until 1772. Stratford became the nerve center for the spread of Anglicanism throughout the colony.

In 1722, George Pigot warned Cutler, Johnson, and the other Yale "apostates" that their congregational ordination was invalid. This admonition, along with a recent acquisition of books from England by the College library, persuaded the men that Pigot was correct. In addition to stirring up the waters in New Haven, Pigot visited Newtown, Connecticut, a town 22 miles from Stratford. The missionary managed to convert a sympathetic group of townspeople to the Anglican way, and they, at his urging, appealed to the Society to send them a missionary since they were at such a distance from Stratford.⁸ Eleven men and one widow of Newtown offered their heart-felt thanks to the Society for what Pigot had "introduced" among them, but they acknowledged that they were "placed in the midst of an insidious people" who might disrupt their quiet adherence to the Church

⁸ Ibid., 15-16.

unless a missionary were sent to them.⁹ Unfortunately, the Society did not send a missionary to Newtown at this juncture.

The occasion for locating a missionary from the Society in Newtown seemed to be especially propitious in 1724. The local Congregational pastor, Thomas Towsey, known as the "fighting preacher," had memorialized the General Assembly protesting that his parishioners had not paid him.¹⁰ He demanded that they be coerced into doing so.¹¹ Newtown was so divided over its allegiance to Towsey that Samuel Johnson wrote gleefully that the time was right to send a missionary. He told the Society that "Newtown is distressed for a minister, their teacher being quite beat out; and the whole town would, I believe, embrace the Church if they had a good minister at Fairfield."¹² However, by the following January, in response to an August inquiry from London as to the possibilities of sending a missionary to Newtown, Johnson replied that the opportunity had passed.¹³ In September of 1726, Johnson wrote the Secretary of the Society, providing an update on prospects in the area. Fairfield was growing daily in adherents and had constructed a small church

⁹ Rebecca Beach, 19-20.

¹⁰ Ibid., 15-16.

¹¹ Mappen, 17.

¹² Samuel Johnson, Stratford, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 11 June 1724, in Francis L. Hawks and William S. Perry, eds., Documentary History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Connecticut, 1704-1789, vol. I (New York: James Pott, 1863), 101.

¹³ Samuel Johnson, Stratford, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 10 January 1724, in Hawks and Perry, vol. I, 99.

building, but "nothing can be expected of Newtown or Ripton to encourage the Society to send them a missionary."¹⁴

Why had the opportunity in Newtown been lost? The answer was a simple one--John Beach had arrived.¹⁵ At only 23 years of age, Beach had been offered the Newtown congregational pastorate, and he had accepted it. Much more popular and dynamic than Towsey, Beach soon quieted the ecclesiastical controversy in Newtown, if only for a few brief years.¹⁶ Beach's abilities and popularity were recognized by the Anglicans in town, as well as in Stratford. Johnson told the Society that Beach was a "popular, insinuating young man" who "pleaseth them so well" in Newtown that hopes of settling a missionary there were dashed. Johnson also used this episode to ride his favorite "hobby horse," protesting that if a Bishop had been in residence in New England, an Anglican priest could have been stationed in Newtown before support for the Church had eroded.¹⁷ Years later, in petitioning the Society for Beach's services as a missionary in Newtown and Reading, local Anglicans acknowledged the "good opinion that persons of all persuasions" had of Beach in town on account of his "remarkable sober and

¹⁴ Samuel Johnson, Stratford, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 16 September 1726, in Rebecca Beach, 20.

¹⁵ The articles of agreement settling John Beach as the Newtown Congregational minister may be found in Rebecca Beach, 94-95.

¹⁶ Mappen, 18.

¹⁷ Samuel Johnson, Stratford, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 10 January 1724, in Hawks and Perry, vol. I, 99.

regular conduct."¹⁸ Johnson acknowledged the fact that the dissenters in Newtown "have of late got the advantage of us" because of the "craft and assiduity" of Independent teachers, as well as the removal of a leading Churchman of Newtown into "New York Government."¹⁹

Newtown Congregationalism seemed to be basking in the warmth of unity and vitality. Beach was rewarded for his success in 1728 with a raise of four pence on the pound.²⁰ But it was only a mirage. Under the surface, trouble was brewing. Pastor Beach was beginning to question his abilities as a minister in general and his worthiness to administer the sacraments in particular, no doubt in part due to doubts he harbored over the legitimacy of his ordination.²¹ While opposing the Episcopal church publicly, it was clear Beach was quite familiar with the theology and the practice of the enemy. His knowledge came in part from his reading and in part from his association with Timothy Cutler and Samuel Johnson, the Anglican rector of Stratford who occasionally visited Churchmen in Newtown.²² Beach even used Anglican rite to serve his

¹⁸ Petition of Several Members of the Church of England in Reading and Newtown in Connecticut, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 20 March 1732, in Rebecca Beach, 28.

¹⁹ Samuel Johnson, Stratford, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 20 November 1729, in Hawks and Perry, vol. I, 138.

²⁰ Rebecca Beach, 97.

²¹ Mappen, 19.

²² Besides developing a relationship of collegiality and faithfulness for most of their lives, Beach and Johnson were, in fact, related by family connection. Beach's niece, Anne Beach, would later marry Johnson's oldest son, William Samuel. This connection explains much of the correspondence between John Beach and William Samuel Johnson in later years.

Independent purposes. Recognizing that a portion of his congregation leaned in an episcopal direction (the same folks who would later form the bulwark of his Anglican church in town once he converted), Beach often used the Lord's Prayer and other "set" prayers to placate the latent Anglicans in his midst. This practice was quite controversial; many believed that the introduction of these prayers led "at once to Rome" and would "imperil souls forever."²³

In the case of the pastor, they did. Suddenly, the unimaginable and horrific occurred: John Beach announced to his stunned parishioners sometime during January of 1732 that he was converting to the Church of England. An examination of Beach's conversion experience is a telling model of the difficult path of conscience trod by many of these Congregational pastors turned Anglican missionaries. Years later, in a pamphlet written to defend converts, clergy and laity to the Church of England, Beach described the manner in which his transformation occurred. Two clergymen of the Episcopal church, probably Cutler and Johnson, had offered Beach the opportunity to seek ordination in London and to return to the SPG mission in Brookhaven. The salary of sixty pounds there was quite appealing, but Beach refused, eventually seeking ordination among the Independents and taking the post in Newtown.²⁴

²³ Rebecca Beach, 97.

²⁴ John Beach, A Friendly Expostulation With all Persons concerned in publishing a late Pamphlet, entitled, *The real Advantages which Ministers and People may enjoy, especially in the Colonies, by conforming to the Church of England* (New York: John Holt, 1763), 10.

For having studied the controversy with the best helps I could get, though I had some doubts about the lawfulness of *Presbyterian* ordination (so called) yet, my doubts about the lawfulness of clerical conformity in the church of *England*, were stronger. And I thought it my duty to embrace that side, on which there appeared to me the least reason to doubt. This I solemnly declare was the state of my mind when I was ordained among the dissenters.²⁵

Beach noted in this pamphlet that the people of Newtown showed him as "much love and respect" as he could hope for, along with much land which was given or sold to him. However, later Beach read some books, perhaps provided by Cutler and Johnson, which he had never perused before. These tomes eliminated all of his "scruples about the lawfulness of conformity" and the "chief argument on which (he) had relied for the lawfulness of dissenting ordination." (Unfortunately, Beach does not specify what that argument was.) In the end, Beach declared that his congregation and he "parted in peace and love." He also resigned to them between 100-200 acres of land which had been assigned to him.²⁶

Perhaps there was some peace and love evident between the concerned parties in this separation, but the squabbles over the land Beach said he "resigned" indicated that his recollections of the immediate repercussions were too rosy. The selectmen at a town meeting in Newtown on February 28, 1732, formed a

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

committee to inquire of Beach "ye terms if any" that would induce him to give up his land after his resignation.²⁷ The "if any" language betrayed a recognition on the part of the selectmen of the stubbornness and combativeness they were facing in Pastor Beach. His firm resolve to pursue the Episcopal ministry was equally evident in his words to the congregation as recorded in the town records. Beach avowed that "there is a possibility yet not ye least Probability that he shall Return to us againe upon his former principles."²⁸ Many dissenters in town declared they anticipated Beach's conversion. One woman told her son that she "knew Mr. Beach would turn churchman, for she never heard of any one that kept reading Church-books, but what always did."²⁹

The Newtown Independent meeting split again. Part of the congregation called for a day of fasting and prayer in February of 1732 to seek divine assistance in dealing with this catastrophe. In case God needed some help in conveying His counsel, a committee was formed to gain the advice of the Fairfield County Ecclesiastical Council. In what must have seemed sweet revenge to him, Thomas Towsey, Beach's predecessor, was made a member of this committee.³⁰ Meanwhile, fifteen families in the congregation petitioned to follow Beach into the

²⁷ Rebecca Beach, 98-99.

²⁸ Newtown Town Records, I-II, 26, in Mappen, 19.

²⁹ E. Edwards Beardsley, The History of the Episcopal Church in Connecticut, From the Settlement of the Colony to the Death of Bishop Seabury (New York: Hurd and Houghton, 1866), 89.

³⁰ Rebecca Beach, 24-25.

Anglican church. They claimed that they would wait until Beach acquired proper Episcopal ordination, and, defiantly, protested the settlement of any other minister, Independent or Anglican, in Newtown.³¹ These new Churchmen argued that they would simply pay the ministerial rates they had been assessed for Beach the Independent to Beach the Anglican. These were the same families who petitioned the Society one month later, in March of 1732, to station John Beach in Newtown and Reading as their missionary. They bemoaned their "calamitous state" whereby they and their "poor children" would likely be "trained up in the very great ignorance of the knowledge of the Gospel" unless Beach was returned to them. Generously, the Episcopalians of Newtown and Reading offered to share Beach with the nearby communities of Danbury, Ridgefield, Woodbury, and New Milford, if the Society would be so kind as to assign him to their parish.³²

John Beach's first act as an Anglican was to be baptized according to the Church's ritual, along with his five-year old son, by Samuel Johnson in the Church of England in Stratford in February of 1732. He took his first Communion in the Episcopal way at the hands of Johnson on Easter of that year, April 9.³³ Soon after, Beach was on his way to London for ordination and assignment by the Society to Newtown. He took with him recommendations from the other SPG missionaries who knew him.

³¹ Ibid., 25-26.

³² Several members of the Church of England in Reading and Newtown, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 20 March 1732, in Hawks and Perry, vol. I, 149-150.

³³ Rebecca Beach, 97; Beardsley, 89.

Samuel Johnson called his former pupil and neighbor a "very ingenuous and studious person, and a truly serious and conscientious Christian."³⁴ James Honyman, distinguished missionary to Newport, Rhode Island, noted that Beach was "universally esteemed by all that know him in this country, for the sake of his good morals and his learning."³⁵ These testimonials insured a smooth ordination for Beach once he arrived in London; he was quickly ordained and appointed to serve the Society in Newtown and Reading. Beach did not linger in England; he later confessed that he traveled there "in a broken state of health" while also fearing contraction of the small pox, a disease which proved fatal to several American ministerial candidates in London.³⁶

John Beach returned from England in September of 1732, and began what would be a fifty-year term of service as the Society's missionary in Newtown and Reading, Connecticut. His arrival was greeted with mixed emotions. Samuel Johnson expected Beach to win his entire former congregation due to his popularity in Newtown.³⁷ Beach's popularity suffered a setback, however, following his conversion. Congregational pastor Moses

³⁴ Samuel Johnson, Stratford, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 5 April 1732, in Hawks and Perry, vol. I, 152.

³⁵ Sprague, 83.

³⁶ Beach, *A Friendly Expostulation*, 11. As will be argued later in this chapter, Beach constantly complained of poor health throughout his life, and no doubt, this concern caused him to contemplate his own mortality frequently. Such contemplation must have led him to preach the sermon which invited his prosecution on heresy charges, a sermon debating the state of the dead prior to the second coming of Jesus Christ.

³⁷ Samuel Johnson, Stratford, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 25 March 1732, SPG Records, Series A, vol. 24, no. 121, in Mappen, 21.

Dickinson, in the ordination sermon he preached for Beach's replacement, Elisha Kent, attacked those who would betray their own baptism in converting to the Church of England.³⁸

"Presbyterians, Beach complained, were quick to call him 'Apostate, Bastard Papist, and anything that an overflowing gall and licentious Tongue can disgorge.'" ³⁹ Others accused the new Anglican missionary of alcoholism and the theft of pew cushions from the Independent meeting house at the time of his conversion.⁴⁰

Even the local Indians opposed John Beach. In commending Beach to the Society's service, Samuel Johnson, James Wetmore, and Henry Caner wrote that there was a village of Indians three miles from Newtown to whom Beach would be sent to evangelize:

These Indians are above twenty miles from the Sea (and) are more temperate, and consequently fitter to be wrought upon, if a missionary were settled near as that He might with any tolerable convenience attend upon them and we are ready to believe that they might by a Diligent and proper Instructor be brought to the knowledge of Christianity, if it were

³⁸ Moses Dickinson, A Sermon Preached at the Ordination of Mr. Elisha Kent in New-Town (Boston: publisher unknown, 1733), 7.

³⁹ John Beach, An Appeal to the Unprejudiced in a Supplement to the Vindication of the Worship of God according to the Church of England from the Injurious and Uncharitable Reflection of Mr. Jonathan Dickinson (Boston: publisher unknown, 1737), 103.

⁴⁰ John Beach, A Familiar Conference upon some Antinomian Tenets, Sometimes miscalled, the Doctrines of sovereign Free Grace: with Some remarks upon a Pamphlet, Entitled Animadversions, critical and candid (New York: John Holt, 1764), 29-30; John Beach, A Continuation of the Calm and Dispassionate Vindication of the Professors of the Church of England, against the abusive Misrepresentations and Salacious Argumentations of Mr. Noah Hobart, in his second address to them (Boston: D. Fowle, 1751), 77.

recommended to the Governor to oblige them to attend upon his ministrations.⁴¹

But it was not to be. Beach found these Indians hostile to his advances. He claimed that they had been stirred against him by local dissenters who convinced the Indians that Beach was about "to rob them of their lands and draw from them money for his support."⁴² Beach visited the Indians on one occasion, but found "them resolved not to hear him, so he despair(ed) of doing any good among them." Beach postponed any further attempts to contact these native Americans until "their Jealousies" were spent.⁴³

Nevertheless, John Beach persevered in his ministry to the increasing number of adherents to Anglicanism in Newtown and Reading. When he first arrived, there was no church building in either town in which to hold services. The first Episcopal service in Newtown history was held in the open under a large button-ball or sycamore tree at the foot of a hill south of the village.⁴⁴ Subsequent meetings were held in Beach's own home until a small rough church was built toward the end of 1732.⁴⁵ The church in Newtown was framed on a Saturday, the roof-boards

⁴¹ Samuel Johnson, James Wetmore, and Henry Caner, Stratford, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 25 March 1732, John Beach Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁴² Beardsley, 90.

⁴³ Abstract of the Proceedings of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 16 February 1732-15 February 1733, in Kenneth W. Cameron, Ethos of Anglicanism in Colonial New England and New York (Hartford, Ct.: Transcendental Books, 1981), 49.

⁴⁴ Ezra L. Johnson, Newtown's History and Historian (Newtown, Ct.: publisher unknown, 1917), 80.

⁴⁵ Beardsley, 90.

set in place that evening, and Beach's parishioners met in the structure the next day, "sitting upon the timbers and kneeling upon the ground."⁴⁶ A "strong, neat building" replaced the more primitive 1732 structure in Newtown in 1746.⁴⁷ Beach even gained converts from within his own family. Brother William of Stratford was charged with the "heinous sin" of covenant-breaking by local Independents when he abandoned Congregationalism for the communion of the Church.⁴⁸ Apparently even the missionary's mother, Hannah Beach, adopted her son's faith. She was eventually buried in the churchyard of the Anglican church in Stratford while her husband Isaac took his final rest in the old Congregational burying grounds in the same town.⁴⁹ Ecclesiastical controversy frequently divided families in colonial New England.

The first two decades of John Beach's ministry in Newtown and Reading represented an era of steady growth for the Anglican flocks there and a budding reputation for the resident missionary. Indeed, from 1732 until 1752, certain features of Beach's life and ministry surfaced which would characterize the career of this important SPG missionary. One facet of Beach's ministry quickly materialized within the context of controversy. It soon became obvious that John Beach loved a good theological

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ This building is described in John Beach, Newtown, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 2 April 1746, John Beach Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁴⁸ Beardsley, 95.

⁴⁹ Rebecca Beach, 98.

fight. He "was certainly fond of argumentative and debatable subjects."⁵⁰ Beach also demonstrated his excellence in ecclesiastical debate through a series of pamphlet wars in which he took a leading role.⁵¹ He published 16 pamphlets and preached as far away as Boston and Newark, New Jersey, championing the Anglican cause.⁵² Beach's opponents included Jonathan Mayhew, Independent minister in Boston, Noah Hobart, the Congregational minister at nearby Fairfield, Connecticut, and Jonathan Dickinson, the President of the College of New Jersey.

During the 1730's through the late 1740's, Beach took up his pen to defend the Book of Common Prayer and the validity of Episcopal ordination against that of the dissenters. After 1750, partly due to the influence of the Great Awakening, Beach's concerns became more theological, defending an Arminian view of man's ability to cooperate with God's saving grace against the Calvinistic doctrine of a sovereign God who denigrated any of man's efforts to obtain salvation. In these later dogmatic conflicts, Beach's frequent foe was his counterpart in Newtown, Independent minister David Judson who had replaced Elisha Kent in 1742.⁵³ In one of his publications against Judson, Beach summarized the justification for his preoccupation with theological combat. "Surely you and we have

⁵⁰ Ibid., 24.

⁵¹ For a good summary of the pamphlet wars in which Beach took part, see Hector G. Kinloch, "Anglican Clergy in Connecticut, 1701-1785" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1959), 218-224c, and Mappen, 130-171. For a list of the pamphlets published by John Beach, see Dexter, 241-243.

⁵² Mappen, 132.

⁵³ See Mappen, 140f.

vastly different religions, as we have vastly different conceptions of God, and his way of dealing with mankind."⁵⁴

Beach also railed against the theology and the behavior associated with the revivals of the 1740's and after. In this tirade, again, he found his mark in David Judson, who had been influenced by New Light theology and had led the Newtown Independents through a rather belated revival during the 1760's.⁵⁵ In 1743, Beach happily reported to the Society that his people were "not at all shaken, but rather confirmed in their principles by the spirit of enthusiasm that rages among the Independents round about us." Indeed, Beach declared that many dissenters, disturbed by the turmoil and factions in their own meetings, creating the "utmost confusion and disorder," had conceived a "better opinion of our Church," some even seeking sanctuary in the tranquillity of Anglicanism.⁵⁶ That same year, Beach begged the Society to send a missionary to New Milford or to grant him official instructions to care for these Anglicans so that they would not be fined by the Independent town meeting. If no remedy was achieved for these Churchmen, Beach feared that they would be forced to attend the Independent meeting during which "they must endure the mortification of hearing the

⁵⁴ John Beach, A Second Familiar Conference upon some Antinomian Tenets; Occasioned by Mr. David Judson's Remarks upon the first: In which his Objections are laid down in his own Words (New York: John Holt, 1765), 17.

⁵⁵ Mappen, 24.

⁵⁶ John Beach, Reading, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 20 April 1743, John Beach Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

doctrine and worship of the Church vilified, and the important truths of Christianity obscured and enervated by enthusiastic and antinomian dreams."⁵⁷

The situation had worsened in New Milford by 1750. He visited the small Anglican flock there, some 18-25 miles distant from Newtown, and found that several of their neighbors had become "extravagant enthusiasts" who had not, as yet, taken a name for themselves. Their leader was an "ignorant mechanick" who, Beach argued, did not know the first principles about either natural or revealed religion, and screamed his sermons so loudly that he could be heard a mile away. This enthusiastic preacher administered communion to the unbaptized and small children, many of whom screamed and howled while they partook of the Lord's Supper. Beach sarcastically suggested that one "would be tempted to suspect that the devil was come visibly among them." According to the Episcopal missionary of Newtown, this revivalistic sect renounced all reason as carnal and pretended to inspiration. Beach had tried to talk to the leader of the group, but with little effect.⁵⁸

Another feature of John Beach's ministry which rose to prominence during the first two decades of his mission to Newtown and Reading was the importance and power which he ascribed to books, particularly books of theology and Church

⁵⁷ John Beach, Reading, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 20 October 1743, in Hawks and Perry, vol. I, 200.

⁵⁸ John Beach, Reading, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 9 April 1750, in Hawks and Perry, vol. I, 261.

rite. As has been demonstrated, reading such books helped to produce his conformity to the Church of England, as it did for many of the native-born SPG missionaries. Furthermore, his propensity to publish his writings illustrated the significance of the written word to Beach. In the tradition of SPG founder Thomas Bray, Beach recognized the value of books in the hands of Anglicans in America. Therefore, he frequently requested that the Society send him books to distribute to his parishioners and to inquiring Independents. His mission at Reading did not possess even one large Folio Bible and Common Prayer Book for church use at the time of his arrival. Beach asked the Society to supply these needed tomes, along with a dozen or two smaller Books of Common Prayer for individual parishioners.⁵⁹ The Society happily complied with Beach's request. Ten years later, Beach urged the Society to send him four dozen smaller Common Prayer Books, a sign of the growth of his congregation, along with Tate and Brady's version of the Psalms, plus two dozen of Richard Allestree's Whole Duty of Man.⁶⁰

Books such as these could serve the purpose of evangelism in some extraordinary ways, as well as that of instruction. One Sunday following the Episcopal service in Newtown, a female member of Beach's flock dropped her Book of Common Prayer on the way home. An opponent of the Anglican church found the book,

⁵⁹ John Beach, Reading, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 23 November 1737, SPG Abstracts, 17 February 1737-10 February 1738, in Cameron, Ethos, 59.

⁶⁰ John Beach, Reading, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 2 April 1746, John Beach Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

and announced to those near him that it was a "*Mass Manual*, containing very wicked things." A crowd gathered to inspect this heretical piece of writing. However, many of these people discovered, much to their amazement, that the book was full of Scriptures and many of the "excellent prayers" Beach had used while serving as the Congregational pastor in Newtown. Far from agreeing with the antagonistic individual who discovered the book, some in the crowd conformed to the Church once their misinformation about the contents of the Book of Common Prayer had been corrected.⁶¹ John Beach's belief in the power of the written word remained strong to the end. In his will, Beach left ten pounds to each of his congregations to be used to buy Bibles for the poor in their midst.⁶²

Incredible growth accompanied the ministry of John Beach between the years 1732-1752, in spite of the initial persecution he faced in Newtown and Reading. Indeed, Beach's congregation would flourish throughout the tenure of his service in a manner not equaled in any other parish in Connecticut. It was clear that Beach had his eye on numerical growth from the outset of his pastorate. Facing heavy opposition early on, Beach suggested that if he would be allowed to relocate to Newark, New Jersey, he "could do much more good there than I can in this parish." He had visited the area twice the previous summer, at the urgent invitations of the people there, and had ministered

⁶¹ Beardsley, 96.

⁶² Rebecca Beach, 120. Beach's entire will is helpfully provided on this page.

to between 300-400 souls. The Newark Anglicans were preparing a petition to be sent to the Society requesting the reassignment of Beach among them. While acknowledging that he was "perfectly contented in (his) present condition," Beach believed that, with a little cultivation, the congregation at Newark could grow to be the largest of any in a radius of 200 miles.⁶³ The Society chose to leave Beach in Newtown and Reading.

Their decision proved to be an astute one. After six months of ministry in the two towns, Beach counted 44 communicants. A half year later, 29 more had been added; Beach claimed that the number increased every time he offered the Sacrament.⁶⁴ By 1739, Beach had baptized 151 children and 13 adults. He now claimed 123 communicants, most of whom lived too far away to receive the Sacrament weekly, so he had to administer it more often. His people were growing not just numerically, but in holiness as well. Beach confessed that, while meeting with many discouragements, these communicants, save one or two, adorned "their profession by a sober, righteous and godly life."⁶⁵ Ten years later, Beach reported to the Society that he enjoyed 400 "constant hearers" in Newtown and Reading, or about one-third of the entire population. He baptized on average 60-70 children per year, and a few adults.

⁶³ John Beach, Newtown, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 8 September 1736, John Beach Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁶⁴ John Beach, Newtown, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 10 March 1733, SPG Abstracts, 16 February 1732-15 February 1733, in Cameron, *Ethos*, 49.

⁶⁵ John Beach, Newtown, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 24 August 1739, in Hawks and Perry, vol. I, 170.

He claimed converts both from the Independent and Quaker persuasions. Confidently, Beach rejoiced that "our church here, like the house of David, waxes stronger and stronger."⁶⁶ The Secretary of the Society replied that London had received "with great pleasure the Accounts of the flourishing Condition" of Beach's churches.⁶⁷

John Beach quickly developed a method for encouraging the growth of his congregations. He constantly reminded the Society in his correspondence that he preached on alternate Sunday mornings at Reading and Newtown, with the evening service each Sunday held in the community which had not hosted the morning service that day.⁶⁸ He also preached in many surrounding communities, Ridgefield, Woodbury, Waterbury, New Milford, and Litchfield among them--a practice common to the life of an SPG missionary in America.⁶⁹ Beach's hard work definitely bore fruit. In 1732, the population of Newtown was 550, 15% of whom belonged to the Church of England. By the 1750's the percentage of Anglicans had doubled along with the population. Their presence was so strong at this stage that they earned parish privileges in 1752, allowing them to divert their ecclesiastical

⁶⁶ John Beach, Reading, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 1 April 1749, in Hawks and Perry, vol. I, 253; and John Beach, Newtown, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 22 July 1740, SPG Abstracts, 15 February 1739-20 February 1740, in Cameron, *Ethos*, 67.

⁶⁷ Philip Bearcroft, Secretary, SPG, London, to John Beach, Newtown, 4 October 1749, John Beach Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁶⁸ For an example of this reference, see John Beach, Newtown, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 7 August 1735, in Hawks and Perry, vol. I, 159-160.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*; Rebecca Beach, 103.

taxes away from the Independent minister in town toward Beach.⁷⁰

By 1764, and again in 1769, Beach claimed that the Anglicans outnumbered the Independents in Newtown, a condition untrue of most every other community in New England. In 1771, the outspoken rector declared that his congregation was twice as large as the dissenting body of Christians in town, a fact which the dissenters denounced as a fabrication.⁷¹ Rather, the Presbyterians in Newtown contended that the Anglicans "constituted exactly half of the town's population" in the years 1770 and 1774.⁷² Regardless of whose estimate was accurate, the growth of the Anglican congregations in Newtown and Reading under John Beach's care was nothing less than phenomenal.

Beach's success evoked requests from other congregations soliciting his removal to their mission. The Anglicans at Staten Island in New York asked the Society for Beach's services.⁷³ A letter from Samuel Johnson indicated that the loss of Beach to Connecticut "would be an unspeakable damage to us

⁷⁰ Mappen, 23; Rebecca Beach, 41-42. The actual petition to the Connecticut General Assembly requesting parish privileges for Newtown Anglicans may be found in Kenneth W. Cameron, ed., The Church of England in Pre-Revolutionary Connecticut: New Documents and Letters Concerning the Loyalist Clergy and the Plight of Their Surviving Church (Hartford, Ct.: Transcendental Books, 1976), 91-92. A statement from Beach himself concurring with the petition follows after the petition itself.

⁷¹ Mappen, 27-28; John Beach, Newtown, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 2 April and 3 October 1764, SPG Abstracts, 17 February 1764-17 February 1765, in Cameron, Ethos, 133; John Beach, Newtown, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 17 October 1769, in Francis L. Hawks and William S. Perry, eds., Documentary History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Connecticut, vol. II (New York: James Pott, 1864), 133-134; John Beach, Newtown, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 2 October 1771, in Hawks and Perry, vol. II, 168-169.

⁷² Mappen, 28.

⁷³ Dexter, 240.

here."⁷⁴ This testimony, along with a petition from his people in Newtown and Reading, squelched the opportunity for Beach's removal. In 1751, following the decease of their venerated pastor, James Honyman, the Anglicans in Newport, Rhode Island, urged Beach to come to serve with them. He declined out of respect to his feeble health, a constant personal concern throughout his life.⁷⁵

In the summer of 1753, the new Anglican college in New York, King's College, sought Samuel Johnson, the respected missionary in Stratford, and Beach's mentor in many ways, to become the first president of the institution. Johnson left for New York in April of 1754 to explore the opportunity without resigning his post or taking his family. By September of that year, he had returned to Stratford due to the illness of his eldest son, but he had virtually decided to accept the position at King's College. This decision led to an episode which became a benchmark in the life and ministry of John Beach. In many ways, the mid-1750's through 1760 represented an era of crisis, controversy, and uncertainty for John Beach.

From the moment Johnson began to consider the opportunity at King's College, he hoped that Beach would take his place in Stratford should he move to New York--another possible removal

⁷⁴ Herbert Schneider and Carol Schneider, eds., Samuel Johnson, President of King's College: His Career and Writings, [Four Volumes] vol. III (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929), 227.

⁷⁵ Sprague, 83; Dexter, 240. For a reference to Beach's refusal to take the Newport mission on account of health in his own hand, see SPG Abstracts, 16 February 1753-15 February 1754, in Cameron, Ethos, 94.

for Beach offered due to his effectiveness in Newtown and Reading. In November of 1753, Beach wrote Johnson, sorrowful for Connecticut's sake should Johnson accept the post, but also certain that Johnson was best fitted to be a college president. Beach believed that Johnson could best serve "the interests of mankind" in this academic position. As to the matter of a successor in Stratford, Beach encouraged Johnson not to worry over the selection. Rather, based on his "experience and observation," Beach suggested that Johnson "leave ye people to act entirely for themselves, for they are wonderfully jealous of being imposed upon by ye ministers." Beach recognized the independence of the laity so true of both Anglican and Independent congregations in colonial America. Beach indicated that, at any rate, he must make a "trial among them" before he agreed to serve the Stratford congregation. Apparently Johnson had warned Beach that his church was in "a dying State." Beach doubted his ability to revive them. Besides, given his health, the only promotion Beach anticipated, and welcomed, would be to "ye Congregation of ye Righteous, when (he would) rest from (his) Labours." Obviously, Beach was preoccupied with his poor health and the prospect of an imminent death.⁷⁶

Despite Beach's ambivalence over the invitation, Johnson hoped throughout the spring of 1754 that Beach could be prevailed upon to take the post in Stratford. Johnson told the

⁷⁶ John Beach, Reading, to Samuel Johnson, Stratford, 9 November 1753, John Beach Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

Society that Beach was the logical choice since the mission in Newtown and Reading was so burdensome, given Beach's "infirm health."⁷⁷ The sticking point, in Johnson's mind, preventing Beach's ready acceptance of his offer was the worthiness of a successor in Newtown and Reading. Johnson was busy attempting to orchestrate Beach's replacement as well. Meanwhile, John Beach began to exhibit a measure of erratic behavior. In May, William Samuel Johnson wrote to his father that Beach had been twice in Stratford during Johnson's absence and had not let anyone know of his presence, let alone offer to fill the empty pulpit. "His peculiarities are unaccountable." Nevertheless, in July, Samuel Johnson placed so much confidence in Beach's abilities that he recommended to the Bishop of London that Beach be considered for the post of the Bishop's Commissary in Connecticut once his Lordship decided to make such an appointment.⁷⁸

By August, Johnson knew that Beach's removal to Stratford had become more and more doubtful. He wrote his son that "it is a sad thing if Mr. Beach will not succeed;" a fellow missionary had written Johnson that Beach seemed "very cold and backward"

⁷⁷ Samuel Johnson, Stratford, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 25 March 1754, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. III, 254-255; William Samuel Johnson, Stratford, to Samuel Johnson, New York, 3 May 1754, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. IV, 10; Samuel Johnson, New York, to William Samuel Johnson, Stratford, 27 May 1754, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. IV, 11-12.

⁷⁸ Samuel Johnson, New York, to the Bishop of London, London, 6 July 1754, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. IV, 21.

about the move.⁷⁹ William Johnson answered his father's letter, claiming that Beach was "a very strange man" not to reply to any communication and not preach in Stratford. Still, the younger Johnson hoped that the Church people in Stratford would give Beach another try.⁸⁰

Late that same month, the mystery had been solved. William Johnson wrote his father that he could relinquish any hopes that Beach might replace him. In what the young man called a "fit of spleen," Beach had denounced Samuel Johnson publicly, censuring his conduct and claiming that Johnson had kept some of the salary from the Ripton church which had rightfully been owed to Beach. Beach had apparently argued that if Johnson were so concerned about the Stratford church, he should have never left it. Consoling his father, William Johnson wrote

He has forgot, good man, that he is in a great measure indebted to you for the very bread he eats. O! heaven-born gratitude, celestial maid, whither art thou fled! Thou leftest thy sweet abode to dwell in human breasts; but they indignant spurn thee away! I wish you may find more grateful hearts in the place of your present residence; for I am sure there is but very little of it remaining in this land of our nativity. I indeed begin to be suspicious that Mr. Beach is the foundation of all the murmuring that has been amongst us; for thus your friends say, if a minister, a brother will venture to censure and find fault, where he ought

⁷⁹ Samuel Johnson, New York, to William Johnson, Stratford, 5 August 1754, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. I, 195.

⁸⁰ William Johnson, Stratford, to Samuel Johnson, New York, 16 August 1754, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. I, 197.

to respect, we must not wonder that the little ones, the people will talk.⁸¹

Obviously, Beach was behaving in a very unusual and uncharacteristic fashion toward his long-time friend, colleague and mentor.

In the fall of 1754, Samuel Johnson confronted John Beach over the matter of charges Beach had made against him. Apparently, Beach had accused Johnson of letting his church die without pastoral care, while not resigning his post and relinquishing the salary. He further charged Johnson with avarice, over the Ripton funds, and nepotism, the latter "heinous crime" stemming from the assignment of Johnson's son as a catechist, an assignment Beach accused the father of engineering. Johnson told Beach that his display of disloyalty made him appear to be one of "Mr. Hobart's converts" (the Independent pastor of Fairfield and frequent antagonist of both Beach and Johnson). To Johnson, Beach had acted in a "very strange, unneighborly, unkind, and inconsistent part."⁸² Despite this heated exchange, Johnson unbelievably continued to hope that Beach would take his mission in Stratford.⁸³ The matter was not fully resolved until Johnson learned the following summer

⁸¹ William Johnson, Stratford, to Samuel Johnson, New York, August 23, 1754, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. I, 199.

⁸² Samuel Johnson, Stratford, to John Beach, Newtown, 18 October 1754, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. I, 200-206. This letter is quite lengthy and equally fascinating.

⁸³ Samuel Johnson, New York, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 3 December 1754, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. IV, 29; Samuel Johnson, New York, to William Samuel Johnson, Stratford, 20 January 1755, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. I, 209-210.

that Edward Winslow rather than John Beach would succeed him at Stratford.⁸⁴

Along with this strange conflict with Samuel Johnson, the mid-1750's found John Beach suffering a good deal of poor health, not only personally but among family members. William Samuel Johnson excused a degree of Beach's peculiarity during the summer of 1754 because his daughter had been very ill. She died in June.⁸⁵ Beach's brother William, a long-time pillar of the Anglican church in Stratford, had died in the fall of 1751.⁸⁶ Tragically, his wife of over thirty years, Sarah, died during the summer of 1756.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ Samuel Johnson, New York, to William Samuel Johnson, Stratford, 11 June 1755, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. I, 218. Historians disagree over the reason the Society chose Winslow over Beach for the Stratford mission. The charity of the explanation seems to depend upon the fondness of the historian for Beach. His descendant, Rebecca Beach, claimed that Beach could not conscientiously leave his people behind, see Rebecca Beach, 109. The Church historian of Connecticut, E.E. Beardsley, argued that the mutual attachment which Beach and his churches enjoyed dissuaded the Society, see Beardsley, 188. The Yale historian, Franklin B. Dexter, blamed Beach's health and his attachment to his current mission for the selection, see Dexter, 240. Johnson's son told his father that Beach's "unsteadiness" kept the Society from making the appointment even after Beach had finally petitioned for it. See William Johnson, London, to Samuel Johnson, New York, 3 April 1756, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. I, 251. William Johnson wrote this letter while awaiting ordination and assignment by the Society to an American mission. However, he died of disease while in London, yet another fatality owed in part to the lack of a resident bishop in America. No wonder Samuel Johnson felt the need of an American bishop so personally. For an account of young Johnson's death, see Samuel Fayerweather, London, to Samuel Johnson, New York, 24 June 1756, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. I, 259-263. This poignant letter painted the cost paid in dear terms by many SPG missionaries and their families during the eighteenth century.

⁸⁵ William Samuel Johnson, Stratford, to Samuel Johnson, New York, 21 June 1754, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. I, 189.

⁸⁶ Samuel Johnson, Stratford, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 14 October 1751, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. III, 243.

⁸⁷ Dexter, 241.

John Beach complained incessantly of poor health himself. A close reading of his correspondence lends itself to the notion that this SPG missionary might have suffered from hypochondria. In 1761, 21 years before his death, Beach wrote the Society that the "painful and weak state" of his body made him suppose that this would be his last letter to them.⁸⁸ In a letter summarizing forty years of service to the SPG, Beach noted that he had "lost only two Sundays, through sickness; although, in all that time, I have been afflicted with a constant cholic, which has not allowed me one day's ease, or freedom from pain."⁸⁹ Beach's physical misery seemed to increase during the early years of the 1750's. In a letter to the Society during the spring of 1752, Beach lamented the fact that he never expected to enjoy the blessing of health again. Indeed, he dreaded another laborious winter at his mission due to his health, a physical state which prevented his travel to distant settlements who wanted him to preach.⁹⁰

Considering John Beach's preoccupation with infirmity and death, along with his somewhat eccentric confrontation with Samuel Johnson, his publication of A Modest Enquiry into the State of the Dead should have surprised none of his

⁸⁸ John Beach, Newtown, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 6 April 1761, in Hawks and Perry, vol. II, 18.

⁸⁹ John Beach, Newtown, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 5 May 1772, in Hawks and Perry, vol. II, 182.

⁹⁰ John Beach, Reading, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 20 April 1752, John Beach Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

contemporaries.⁹¹ Published in 1755, this sermon to his congregations in Newtown and Reading took the position that there was no general resurrection of the dead at the second coming of Jesus Christ. Rather, judgment and rewards awaited Christians at the time of their own deaths, after which they would immediately be ushered into the presence of the Lord. Once having attained heaven, it was nonsensical to Beach that the believer would then be resurrected and judged again at the advent of the Lord on the Day of Judgment. Beach sought assurance that he and his loved ones, all either near death or already dead, would find themselves in the company of the Lord at the moment of their expiration.

John Beach was no stranger to controversy, even with long-time friends like Samuel Johnson. He knew his position in this sermon was untraditional. "I freely own, that in this opinion I am singular: and I never read or heard of any man since the first Ages of Christianity, that was of it."⁹² Nevertheless, he argued that he would be a bad minister if he kept back, through "fear of obliquy," this point so profitable to the soul. Beach took personal solace in the truth he was preaching; he knew he would soon experience the "Truth of this Doctrine." At the same time, he was not "very anxious about the Reproach of Novelty, or Heresy; especially from those who are fonder of Vulgar Errors,

⁹¹ John Beach, A Modest Enquiry into the State of the Dead, By which it appears to the Enquirer, that there is no intermediate State; but the Resurrection immediately Succeeds Death (New London: T. & J. Green, 1755).

⁹² Ibid., 35.

than they are diligent in search of the Holy Scriptures."⁹³ The strength of Beach's conviction regarding the ideas of this sermon can be readily detected by the fact that he went to the length of publishing the text.

A Modest Enquiry, the text of which was *Matthew 22:31-32*, was a thorough investigation of the pertinent biblical passages relating to the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead. Jesus declared that God was the God of the living and he listed Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob among those alive in the *Matthew* passage. If these three men were alive, they must have already risen from the dead, leaving the dust of their bodies in the earth.⁹⁴ Beach argued that the truth of his teaching was apparent in Paul's words to the Corinthian church, to be "absent from the body" is to be "present with the Lord." (*II Corinthians 5:1-4*, King James Version)⁹⁵ Those with Jesus from the time of their deaths will descend with him from heaven at the second coming of Christ.⁹⁶

Beach summarized the teaching of this sermon in the following fashion:

In this immortal body we immediately appear among the innumerable Company of Angels and Saints. The Judgement continues to be executed upon all Men, as fast as they go out of this world, till the Time comes which God has appointed for the putting an End to the Race of Sinners

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 2-3.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 9.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 11-12.

on Earth; then Christ will appear to all, that shall be found alive on this Globe, who in a Moment shall all be changed, from earthly to spiritual Bodies; then all good Men both Quick and Dead, shall jointly in a Body, take Possession of that Kingdom prepared for them from the Foundation of the World.⁹⁷

The last twenty pages of Beach's sermon answered possible objections to his arguments and ended with a flaming description of Hell to warn the lukewarm listener to put off careless sin through repentance and saving faith. If the resurrection and judgment were thousands of years away at the end of the world, there would be no influence of this biblical truth on the conduct of individuals now. The knowledge that death brought immediate judgment invigorated men to awake from their carnal sleep. Beach admonished his congregations that not an ocean of tears nor an eternity of prayer will prevail with the Judge after death to revoke their doom.⁹⁸

John Beach experienced the objections he had anticipated to this sermon, but perhaps he did not expect the furor nor the scope of the controversy he stirred.⁹⁹ Independent ministers in Beach's neighborhood acquired copies of the objectionable sermon, and the Association of the Western (Congregational) District in Fairfield County sent a copy of the sermon along

⁹⁷ Ibid., 21-22.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 37-39.

⁹⁹ References to the Beach heresy trial may be located among the SPG Records, Manuscript Journals, vol. XIII, 201-202, 219-223; vol. XIV, 30, 69, 94, 258-260. Also see Marc Mappen, "Anglican Heresy in Eighteenth Century Connecticut: The Disciplining of John Beach," The Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 48 (December 1979): 465-472.

with a letter to the Society on December 24, 1755. These ministers expressed an "innocent" concern that such a sermon, preached in their own backyards, endangered key doctrines of the Christian faith, especially the general physical resurrection of the dead and the general judgment of the dead. They claimed that Beach was taking "unwearied pains" to "propagate these Errors" and that the other SPG missionaries had ignored their duty to publicly "convince people of the fatal tendency of such Errors." They were writing the Society to see what could be done, knowing that London would want to be made aware of such heresy.¹⁰⁰

The SPG missionaries in America were not as lackadaisical in handling this affair as the Dissenting ministers believed. Timothy Cutler, the man who encouraged Beach so warmly in his youth to pursue the ministry and the Church, had been alarmed by the sermon when it first was published and had sent a copy to the Society. At least this was the report given to the Connecticut missionaries by Samuel Johnson. When no word of reproof came from London, however, the silence seemed to encourage Beach to withstand "the Endeavours of his Bretheren to Set him Right." Missionary James Wetmore had sent him a more orthodox sermon on the Resurrection by a Dr. Felton, and during the summer of 1756, the Connecticut missionaries, along with Samuel Johnson, "took a great Deal of pains to convince him of

¹⁰⁰ SPG Records, Manuscript Journals, vol. XIII, 201-202.

his Errors and Misconduct." Neither effort chastened Beach.¹⁰¹ Samuel Johnson wrote to his son that Beach would need to submit to the Society "or be discarded, or at least severely reprimanded."¹⁰²

Meanwhile, the Society had yet to take action; Secretary Bearcroft seemed "to be quite stumbled what to think" of Beach. Believing that Beach deserved to be "turned out immediately," Bearcroft also recognized that Beach's age, health, and long years of faithful service earned him some measure of grace and consideration.¹⁰³ The Secretary finally laid the matter before the Society one year after he had received the letter from the Dissenting ministers of Fairfield County. Passing the buck, they asked the Bishops of Oxford, Peterborough, and Norwich to judge the orthodoxy of Beach's sermon. The Bishops found the sermon to be contrary to "ye plain tenor" of the Scriptures and the belief of the "Catholick Church in all ages." No doubt these three men also recognized that the rule of apostolic succession, upon which their authority rested, depended upon the doctrine of the bodily resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The first bishops were consecrated by apostles; seeing Jesus following His resurrection became the main criterion for

¹⁰¹ James Wetmore, Rye, N.Y., to the Secretary, SPG, London, 28 October 1757, in Kenneth W. Cameron, Colonial Anglicanism in New England: A Guide (Hartford, Ct.: Transcendental Books, 1984), 44.

¹⁰² Rebecca Beach, 110-111.

¹⁰³ William Johnson, London, to Samuel Johnson, New York, 3 April 1756, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. I, 251.

designating apostleship.¹⁰⁴ The Bishops feared that the propagation of Beach's notions would "unsettle and mislead Men's Judgements in religious matters and produce disquiet and contention." They were embarrassed that the affair came through sources other than Society personnel; they feared that the publication of such a sermon by one of their own number would bring "reproach on the Society." They recommended that letters outlining the necessary steps of correction be sent to Beach, to the other missionaries in the area, and to the Independent ministers who first notified the SPG of the heresy.¹⁰⁵

The letters were sent and the Connecticut missionaries, along with Wetmore and Samuel Seabury, Jr., of New York, took action, this time with the authority of the Society. Apparently, Beach had already come to realize the difficulties he had created for himself and had begun to recall all of the copies of his sermon he could acquire. Beach's colleagues met with the errant missionary on October 18-19, 1757 in Stamford, Connecticut. They reasoned with him until nine o'clock in the evening on the first day and then for the entire morning of the following day. At that point they were satisfied with Beach's repentance. In the afternoon, all of the men proceeded to the

¹⁰⁴ See Acts 1:21-22 (King James Version) for the connection between apostolic ministry and the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ.

¹⁰⁵ SPG Records, Manuscript Journals, vol. XIII, 219-222. A copy of the letter sent to the Association of the Western (Congregational) District in Fairfield County may be found in William J. Seabury, Memoir of Bishop Seabury (New York: Edwin S. Gorham, 1908), 21-22. The letter expresses appreciation that this matter was brought to the Society's attention and offered the sincerest wishes that both parties might do all they could to propagate the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Anglican church in Stamford and heard, along with a crowded congregation, a "long and excellent Sermon upon the subject of the Resurrection" answering "all the objections as taken from Mr. Beach's sermon."

Ironically, the sermon of rebuke was delivered by Samuel Seabury, Jr., the man who would later become America's first resident Episcopal bishop, residing in the diocese of Connecticut. Seabury, therefore, performed a function unofficially that his episcopal role would require him to exercise more formally in later years.¹⁰⁶ Seabury, at age twenty-seven, had protested the responsibility, but his fellow missionary Wetmore declared that the young man was better able to deliver the sermon than anyone else. Wetmore insisted that Seabury do the honors.¹⁰⁷ An elderly man, present on the occasion, told Seabury years later that, when he saw the young man ascend into the pulpit, he thought the other ministers to be "very careless about their business" in sending a boy to preach at such a time. "But I found out that if you had a boy's face, you had a man's head."¹⁰⁸

John Beach displayed the requisite humility during his trial. Fellow missionary James Wetmore informed the Society of Beach's response to the proceedings:

¹⁰⁶ SPG Records, Manuscript Journals, vol. XIV, 258-260.

¹⁰⁷ Bruce E. Steiner, Samuel Seabury, 1729-1796: A Study in the High Church Tradition (Oberlin, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1971), 97.

¹⁰⁸ Herbert Thoms, Samuel Seabury, Priest and Physician, Bishop of Connecticut (Hamden, Ct.: The Shoe String Press, 1963), 26-27.

He makes no difficulty to acknowledge that he is far from disbelieving the future resurrection even of the Flesh, and the general judgement at the last day; That his sentiments are changed touching several things objected to in his Sermon, tho' he thinks his notions therein advanced have been generally misunderstood; That he was not aware, that such consequences as have been drawn from his principles, could be at all charged upon them; But is fully sensible of his imprudence in Preaching and Publishing that Sermon, is heartily sorry for that rashness, wishes it had never been wrote, and says he shall for the future be careful to avoid singularities, and not Preach or propagate any notions contrary to the received sense of the Articles and Liturgy of our Church.¹⁰⁹

Beach's colleagues "heartily recommend(ed) Mr. Beach to the favour of the venerable Society, not doubting but that he is sincerely disposed to propagate true Religion, and to serve the pious ends of his employment in their Service to the utmost of his power."¹¹⁰ Apparently, the unfortunate episode was finally resolved to the satisfaction of all involved.

In the fall of 1760, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Secker, wrote Samuel Johnson that the Society was "now well satisfied about Mr. Beach."¹¹¹ Johnson replied that he had given Beach the assignment of preaching and publishing against assorted contemporary Independent heresies, hoping that might offer "some atonement for his last offense" which was now

¹⁰⁹ SPG Records, Manuscript Journals, vol. XIV, 258-260.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Palace, London, to Samuel Johnson, New York, 4 November 1760, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. IV, 70.

"scarce thought of."¹¹² The Archbishop did caution Johnson that, from now on, he wanted a copy of everything published by any SPG missionary in America, along with any responses to such publications. This would allow London to know if "any missionary is guilty of gross vices, or teaches false doctrines; which last I am sorry to say we learnt, in the case of Mr. Beach, from the Dissenters, not from any of our own church."¹¹³ At Johnson's request, John Beach had prepared a sermon entitled An Attempt to Vindicate Scripture Mysteries for the press, "hoping it may make some amends for my former error." Johnson wrote a preface to this publication, commending its author and content.¹¹⁴

An Attempt to Vindicate Scripture Mysteries was meant to be some sort of peace offering to the Society and the other Connecticut missionaries to make amends for the disgrace Beach had brought upon them with A Modest Enquiry into the State of the Dead.¹¹⁵ Hence, a high profile presentation of the sermon was necessary. Beach was asked to preach this message at the

¹¹² Samuel Johnson, New York, to Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Palace, London, 20 November 1760, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. IV, 74.

¹¹³ Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Palace, London, to Samuel Johnson, New York, 27 September 1758, in Schneider and Schneider, vol. III, 256-257, 258-259.

¹¹⁴ John Beach, Reading, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 22 April 1760, in Hawks and Perry, vol. I, 306.

¹¹⁵ John Beach, An Attempt to Vindicate Scripture Mysteries, Particularly the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the Atonement of Christ, and the Renovation of the Holy Ghost: Also, of the Eternity of the Future Punishments with some Strictures upon what Mr. F. Taylor hath advanced upon those points. In a sermon preached before the Clergy of the Church of England, in Connecticut, at their Annual Convention, at New-Haven, June 4, 1760 (New Haven: James Parker and Company, 1760).

annual convention of the Connecticut missionaries in 1760. Beach also suggested that certain Arian and Socinian errors were gaining ground in Connecticut among the Independents, and some Church of England adherents were in "danger of infection." Therefore, the other missionaries had entreated him to preach some sort of antidote to these fallacious teachings.¹¹⁶ Edward Winslow, the man who replaced Samuel Johnson at Stratford, wrote to the Society that Newtown's missionary had, "much to his own reputation" and to the "credit of religion and advantage of the Church" in Connecticut, zealously and faithfully vindicated important fundamental truths of the Sacred Trinity. Winslow hoped that

Mr. Beach has, by this service, atoned in some measure for the ill effects of his former unhappy mistake, and that it may prove a seasonable means to preserve our people in their steadfastness, and to guide our dissenting brethren to that refuge from their various distractions among themselves, both about doctrines and discipline, which they must needs wish to find.¹¹⁷

By the following year, the cloud over Beach's head seems to have blown over. He thanked the Society for its support over the past 29 years, "in which time I have faithfully, though weakly and very imperfectly, endeavoured to propagate true

¹¹⁶ John Beach, Reading, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 22 April 1760, in Hawks and Perry, vol. I, 306.

¹¹⁷ Edward Winslow, Stratford, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 14 July 1760, in Hawks and Perry, vol. I, 317.

religion."¹¹⁸ The memories were still very fresh; undoubtedly the Society would have identified more with the words "weakly" and "imperfectly" than with "faithfully."

What lessons did the heresy trial of John Beach teach about the nature and condition of the American version of the Church of England in eighteenth century Connecticut? First, it was clear that the American missionaries had developed their own strategies for dealing with irregularities or controversies. Despite the fact that the SPG personnel on site expended some energy to correct John Beach, it is remarkable and significant that they did not pursue the obvious course--immediately appealing to the colonial diocesan, the Bishop of London, for counsel and assistance. Indeed, none of the missionaries ever appealed to the Episcopate in England; Timothy Cutler made some effort to alert the Society itself, otherwise the American missionaries, especially in Connecticut, tried to deal with the situation "in house." Their attempt, moreover, did not seem to be overly serious or determined. Consequently, Beach paid no mind to their rebuke. The Beach affair displayed an independence among the American priests in New England which became a recurring pattern in their dealings with London. Thomas Sherlock's letter to Samuel Johnson requesting the submission of all future missionary publications for his scrutiny demonstrates that Sherlock recognized this self-

¹¹⁸ John Beach, Reading, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 6 April 1761, in Hawks and Perry, vol. II, 18.

reliance among the eighteenth century New England clerics. London did not want to learn of any more colonial ecclesiastical novelties from their opponents.

This independence among the American missionaries was personified by the response of John Beach himself to the affair. Therefore the second lesson of this episode relates to the relative ineffectiveness of "frontier discipline." In his official statement following correction, Beach indicated that he believed that the notions he set forth in the controversial sermon were "generally misunderstood." This assertion hardly represented wholehearted repentance. The Beach family historian sang the same tune years later when she wrote that the offending sermon had been "misunderstood" by the other missionaries.¹¹⁹

Most historians argue that Beach's 1760 Convention sermon, An Attempt to Vindicate Scripture Mysteries, represented a rehabilitation through recanting his previous errors. If so, it was a strange act of rehabilitation. The fact of the matter is that this sermon dealt with none of the theological issues raised by A Modest Enquiry into the State of the Dead. Moreover, in An Attempt to Vindicate Scripture Mysteries, Beach argued that certain doctrines of the Christian faith were indeed mysteries, too hard to comprehend. Beach could have been thinking that his teaching about the resurrection of the dead

¹¹⁹ Rebecca Beach, 110.

was one such "hard" doctrine. In Beach's mind, A Modest Enquiry might have been too mysterious for others to grasp its truth.¹²⁰

When therefore we apply ourselves to the Study and Contemplation of these heavenly Doctrines, we presently find our Intellects *nonplussed* as to the Manner of them; many Mysteries start up which we cannot fathom, many Knots appear, which we cannot untie, and Difficulties which we cannot surmount. Now what shall we do in this Perplexity? Shall we conclude that there is no Truth in such Doctrines as are clearly and repeatedly taught in the holy Bible, because there is a Difficulty attending them? . . . Is it not the most unreasonable Thing in the World, and next to Madness, when an Article of Religion of the highest Importance is proved by a great Number of concurring Texts of holy Scripture, for us to slight and ridicule it, merely because we are not capable of distinctly explaining it, and of clearing up all the Difficulties which belong to it? For when God is pleased to reveal to us his Nature, and the wonderful Things of the Spiritual World, common Reason and a very small Portion of Modesty must teach us in that Case, to expect and to prepare ourselves to meet with many unaccountable and incomprehensible Things in such a Revelation.¹²¹

Beach had taught a difficult view of the resurrection with many Bible references, and his sermon had been ridiculed. Newtown's missionary may have intended his 1760 convention sermon to serve as a vindication of the mysterious, yet orthodox, teaching of A Modest Enquiry. Whatever Beach had in mind, if the later sermon

¹²⁰ John Beach, An Attempt to Vindicate Scripture Mysteries, 8.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 9, 12.

was intended to correct the crimes of the former sermon, it failed.

Ironically, the incompleteness of Beach's recantation became apparent years later in a funeral sermon he wrote to eulogize his colleague, mentor, and friend of many decades, Samuel Johnson. If Johnson had read what Beach published in the wake of his death, he himself might have questioned the transformation of Beach's ideas regarding the resurrection of the dead. Beach warned the "careless vicious Christian" to "think much of the certainty, greatness and nearness of unseen things." He urged such a creature to "say to his own soul, I must soon die and leave all visible things, *and after death is the judgment.*" (emphasis mine) Eternity was "near at hand;" "the Judge standeth before the door." Following death, Beach argued that the soul commenced an "everlasting now." There would be no intermediate state for the dead to endure. "Do but consider one moment, what great and amazing things we expect after death, when we shall go into the world of spirits, and there be happy or miserable beyond our present conception!" Beach had nothing but kind words for the memory of Johnson; there had never been a time that a conversation with the deceased had not left the missionary from Newtown "the better for it." According to Beach, Johnson walked "humbly with God;" he was "righteous and benevolent . . . good-natured, kind, amiable and obliging . . . in all his dealings with mankind." Beach also believed that

Johnson was, at that moment, enjoying the presence of the Lord following resurrection and judgment. Johnson might have turned over in his grave at Beach's words, but if Beach was right, Johnson was no longer there.¹²²

In the years following the heresy trial of John Beach, the Anglican congregations under his care in Newtown and Reading continued to experience phenomenal growth. By 1772, Beach reported to the Society that the Church of England people in these towns had increased 20 to 1, "many remarkable in piety and virtue."¹²³ An average of 500 people listened to his sermons in Newtown; he had 300 auditors in Reading.¹²⁴ Beach rejoiced that, due to the growth of his churches, for the first time in Connecticut and perhaps in New England, the Church of England people had registered a majority vote in the town elections of Newtown.¹²⁵ People moving to the back country took a zeal for religion with them which their rector believed they had learned in Newtown and Reading, setting up churches in such places as

¹²² John Beach, A Funeral Sermon, upon the Decease, of the Reverend Doctor Samuel Johnson, Late President of King's-College, in New York; Rector of Christ's Church, at Stratford; Missionary from the Venerable Society, for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and Member of the same, Who exchanged Life, for Immortality, January VIth, 1772, in the 76th Year of his Age at Stratford, in Connecticut, New-England (New Haven: T. and S. Green, 1772), 7, 12-14, 16. Ironically, Beach failed to preach this sermon in person; he could not come to the actual funeral due to health problems. It was a common eighteenth century practice to publish sermons eulogizing the dead even if they were not delivered on the actual day of the funeral.

¹²³ John Beach, Newtown, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 5 May 1772, in Hawks and Perry, vol. II, 182-183.

¹²⁴ John Beach, Newtown, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 20 October 1773, in Hawks and Perry, vol. II, 192-193.

¹²⁵ John Beach, Newtown, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 13 April 1767, John Beach Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

Lanesboro, Nobletown, and Arlington.¹²⁶ Beach noted that even the Independents living in Newtown and Reading had learned more of the true religion simply by their exposure to the Church of England folk in the two towns. Indeed, the two religious persuasions were now living in a peace and harmony unknown in earlier years. "The rising generation of the Independents seem to be entirely free from every pique and prejudice against the Church."¹²⁷

Despite this growing religious tranquillity, Newtown's aged Episcopal veteran of conflict and controversy would close his life with one more fight. John Beach told the Society in 1765 that his parishioners thought that "the Church of England is one of the most invaluable blessings on this side of Heaven." Therefore, he guaranteed that their loyalty to the Crown in the midst of the current "seditious tumults" surrounding the Stamp Act controversy would be steady.¹²⁸ Beach did not exaggerate. The sheer numerical strength of the Anglicans in Newtown, Reading, and Ridgefield made these three towns Tory strongholds during the American War for Independence. Each of these three towns affirmed their loyalty to the King and Parliament after

¹²⁶ John Beach, Newtown, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 20 October 1773, in Hawks and Perry, vol. II, 192-193.

¹²⁷ John Beach, Newtown, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 5 May 1772, in Hawks and Perry, vol. II, 182-183.

¹²⁸ John Beach, Newtown, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 2 October 1765, in Hawks and Perry, vol. II, 83.

hostilities had begun in contrast to all of the rest of the towns in Connecticut.¹²⁹

As early as 1770, the Newtown town meeting voted not to cooperate with the Committees of Correspondence. In 1775, representatives from Newtown were refused lodging in New Haven because of their Loyalist reputation, and thus could not attend the session of the Connecticut legislature. A few weeks before shots were fired at Lexington and Concord, the Newtown selectmen issued a vigorous protest against the disloyal actions of the Continental Congress.¹³⁰ By February of 1778, 49 members of John Beach's church in Reading had joined the British army.¹³¹ Newtown Loyalists did not even begin to take the oath of loyalty to the state of Connecticut until after the Treaty of Paris was signed in 1783.¹³²

Significantly, John Beach had died the year before the Newtown Tories finally renounced their allegiance to Great Britain. Beach himself had exercised an enormous political, as well as religious, influence in these inland towns of Connecticut lacking the leadership of patriotic merchants or lawyers.¹³³ And John Beach was the consummate Tory. Unlike the

¹²⁹ Stephen P. McGrath has written a fine article exploring the anomaly of the allegiance of these three towns and the explanations for their behavior. See Stephen P. McGrath, "Connecticut's Tory Towns: The Loyalty Struggle in Newtown, Redding, and Ridgefield, 1774-1783," The Connecticut Historical Society Bulletin 44 (July 1979): 88-96.

¹³⁰ Mappen, 178-179.

¹³¹ Bruce E. Steiner, Connecticut Anglicans in the Revolutionary Era: A Study of Communal Tensions (Hartford, Ct.: The American Revolution Bicentennial Commission of Connecticut, 1978), 62.

¹³² McGrath, 96.

¹³³ See McGrath, 92.

other SPG missionaries in Connecticut who closed their churches in 1776 rather than be forced to omit prayers for the King, Beach alone kept his churches open and prayed for George III until the rector finally died in 1782. Beach "declared that he would do his duty, preach, and pray for the King till the rebels cut out his tongue."¹³⁴ Of course, Beach's age, popularity in Newtown and Reading, and the sheer number of Church of England adherents in these two towns enabled Beach to maintain his unique opposition relatively unscathed.¹³⁵

There were attempts made to silence Beach. Patriot vigilantes fired a musket at Beach during one service in Reading. Obviously aiming high to scare the rector, the bullet lodged in the sounding board above Beach's head. Pausing only momentarily, Beach encouraged the alarmed congregation with the Scripture admonition: "Fear not them which kill the body but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in Hell."¹³⁶ Other soldiers invaded the church at Newtown, threatening to shoot Beach if he read the obnoxious prayers for the King. Without a tremor or wavering, Beach read the prayers. So moved by the rector's courage, the men stacked their muskets and stayed for the service.¹³⁷ On another occasion, Beach was escorted from his house to be shot

¹³⁴ Beardsley, 318-319.

¹³⁵ Steiner, Connecticut Anglicans in the Revolutionary Era, 57-58.

¹³⁶ Ezra L. Johnson, 82.

¹³⁷ Charles B. Todd, The History of Redding, Connecticut (New York: The Grafton Press, 1906), 79-80; Steiner, Connecticut Anglicans in the Revolutionary Era, 58.

by a patriot mob. Ordered to kneel and pray for himself, Beach instead prayed for his persecutors. Conscience-smitten, the mob dispersed without firing a shot.¹³⁸ Not even the town authorities in Reading, more sympathetic with the Continental Congress than the selectmen of Newtown, could tame John Beach. They petitioned Beach in February of 1778 to cease praying that the King "would vanquish" his enemies in America as such a prayer was a "great insult" to the people of Connecticut. They "asked" Beach to stop in order that peace and quiet might be enjoyed in Reading.¹³⁹ Obviously, Beach was unwilling to succumb to such an insipid plea.

Only the grave stilled the tongue of Newtown's Anglican controversialist. Age 82, John Beach died in Newtown on March 19, 1782. Richard Mansfield, the SPG missionary to Derby, Waterbury, and Westbury, Connecticut, delivered Beach's funeral sermon, which was later published. With Beach no longer able to respond, Mansfield offered the more traditional and orthodox view of the resurrection of the dead in this sermon.

This is the crown of righteousness mentioned in the text; all the immunities of which indeed, *are not to be expected at death*; but they are laid up, they are reserved to the *second coming of Christ*. 'Till then, the souls of them that were slain, for the word of God, are represented as under the altar. It is at the end of the world, that the righteous shall shine forth in the kingdom of their

¹³⁸ Todd, 80; Rebecca Beach, 102.

¹³⁹ Justice-of-peace and Selectmen of Reading, Connecticut, to John Beach, Reading, 12 February 1778, Main Vault, 974.62 R24, Connecticut State Library, Hartford.

Father, and when the Son of Man cometh in the glory of his Father, with his holy angels, then he is to render to every man according to his works. (emphasis mine)¹⁴⁰

Mansfield did describe Beach as "truly one of the first ornaments and best defenders of religion in general" which the Church of England, if not all of America, could boast.¹⁴¹ He compared Beach to the patriarchs and prophets of old who fought the good fight of faith in times of "calamity and mischief."¹⁴² On the final page of the sermon, Mansfield appeared to revert to Beach's view of the resurrection. He acknowledged that pious Christians, who had fought this good fight of faith, had "gone before us to heaven" and had already been rewarded with a crown of righteousness.¹⁴³ Perhaps John Beach was smiling over the doctrinal inconsistency Mansfield presented in Beach's funeral sermon regarding the resurrection of the dead. Certainly, only Beach, not Mansfield, was now in the position to know which view of the resurrection was accurate. The Society remembered John Beach as a man who "never made his religion bend to the prevailing humor of the times."¹⁴⁴ They had certainly learned of this trait first hand.

Indeed, the life and ministry of John Beach illustrated the growing independence of the Anglican clergy in America.

¹⁴⁰ Richard Mansfield, A Funeral Sermon upon the Decease of the Reverend John Beach, A.M. (New Haven: T. and S. Green, 1782), 12.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 18.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁴⁴ SPG Abstracts, 15 February 1782-21 February 1783, in Cameron, Ethos, 196.

Beach's stubbornness in the face of correction, as well as the complacency shown in reprimanding him by his colleagues in New England, demonstrated that the colonial church valued the freedom it enjoyed from oversight by London authorities. The Beach trial represents a historical "benchmark" through which the growing "Americanization" of New England's Anglican church can be measured. The paths taken by the mother church and the daughter church were increasingly divergent with each passing year. John Beach was a true "son" of colonial New England Anglicanism: controversial, combative, and dedicated. Ironically, Beach's spirited independence was actually enlarging the breach between his colonial Church and the traditional Church of England he loved so much.

CHAPTER IV

"PSEUDO-EPISCOPACY": THE MINISTRY OF HENRY CANER

"This is a melancholy subject which I take no pleasure to dwell upon."¹ By 1762 when SPG missionary Henry Caner wrote these words, he may have been speaking for most of his colleagues in New England. The subject he disdained to discuss was an Anglican Episcopate in America. The fact that New England did not enjoy the presence of a resident bishop discouraged Caner. The lack of a colonial bishop inconvenienced American Anglicanism at best and, at worst, prevented the Church from growing at a rate that might have been otherwise possible.

The earliest attempt to establish the episcopacy in British North America began in 1638.² Archbishop Laud hoped to send a bishop to New England but failed, due to competing problems occurring in Scotland. A few more lukewarm efforts were made during the seventeenth century. With the dawning of the eighteenth century, and the creation of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the call for an

¹ Edward Midwinter, "The S.P.G. and the Church in the American Colonies: III. Massachusetts," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 4 (June 1935): 110.

² Arthur L. Cross, The Anglican Episcopate and the American Colonies (Hamden, Ct.: Archon Books, 1964), 89-90. Cross offers the best overview of this extensive and complicated subject. He emphasizes the institutional activity of the British Government during the eighteenth century as an impediment to the placement of a colonial bishop. The other definitive study on the subject, more from the colonial perspective, is Carl Bridenbaugh's Mitre and Sceptre: Transatlantic Faiths, Ideas, Personalities, and Politics, 1689-1775 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1962). Frederick V. Mills, Sr. has reviewed the historiography regarding the topic in his "The Colonial Anglican Episcopate: A Historiographical Review," Anglican And Episcopal History 61 (September 1992): 325-345.

American episcopacy became more persistent.³ The founder of the Society, Thomas Bray, made the first appeal, even raising funds for the endeavor. One of the first two Society missionaries, John Talbot, also recognized the need for a bishop. In a letter to the Society written in September 1703, Talbot described the handicap imposed upon the American church bereft of episcopal leadership:

'The poor Church has nobody upon the spot to comfort or confirm her children; nobody to ordain several that are willing to serve, were they authorized, for the work of the Ministry. Therefore they fall back again into the herd of the Dissenters, rather than they will be at the Hazard and Charge to goe as far as England for orders: so that we have several Counties, Islands, and Provinces, which have hardly an orthodox minister, am'st them, which might have been supply'd, had we been so happy as to see a Bishop or Suffragan Apud [sic] Americanos.'⁴

In 1706, Talbot traveled to England to press his case in person. Queen Anne favored the proposal, and Talbot returned to America to select a house for the appointed bishop to occupy. With the assistance of Governor Robert Hunter, Talbot located a suitable abode for America's first bishop in Burlington, New Jersey.⁵ In 1712, the Society "closed the bargain, and directed that the

³ Cross, 93.

⁴ Cross, 93-94, quoting the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, *Digest of the Records*, 11.

⁵ The 1713 Abstract of the Proceedings of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, p. 44, indicated that the house had belonged to a John Tatham and that the Society had agreed to pay him L600 sterling for the residence. See Cross, p. 94, n. 5.

residence be prepared for habitation."⁶ But Queen Anne's death in 1715 derailed what was probably the best chance for the placement of an American bishop during the entire century.

With the accession of George I, and the ministry of Robert Walpole, pleas for a colonial Anglican episcopate were ignored in the name of political expediency. Walpole and his successors did not want to stir up unrest among Dissenters in the colonies over the issue of a resident bishop. Despite this royal silence, SPG missionaries and key ecclesiastical leaders in England continued to campaign for colonial episcopacy. One indefatigable advocate was Samuel Johnson, the elder statesman among the Connecticut missionaries. He was assisted in his efforts by the Bishop of London from 1723-1748, Edmund Gibson. Gibson's see included the colonies, and he rightly concluded that he was incapable of serving such a large diocese effectively. Gibson's successor, Thomas Sherlock, renounced his supervision of the colonial church in an effort to force the Crown to send a resident bishop to America. Thomas Secker, first bishop of Oxford (1737-1758) and then archbishop of Canterbury (1758-1768), collaborated with Johnson as well to accomplish his episcopal objective.⁷

⁶ Cross, 94-95.

⁷ For an excellent article on the efforts of Johnson and Secker to settle an American bishop, see Don R. Gerlach, "Champions of an American Episcopate: Thomas Secker of Canterbury and Samuel Johnson of Connecticut," The Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 41 (December 1972): 381-414.

Archbishop Secker wrote to Samuel Johnson at the end of March 1763, that the time might finally be right to expect the placement of a bishop in the colonies. With the end of the Seven Years War, Secker hoped that the way might be clear to reconsider this proposal, as the Crown reviewed its plans for the colonies in the wake of the Treaty of Paris.⁸ Dissenters on both sides of the Atlantic suspected as much: Jonathan Mayhew, an Independent pastor in Boston, battled the SPG missionary at Cambridge, East Apthorp, in a venomous pamphlet war between 1763-1765 over the "hidden agenda" of the Society, including the settlement of a bishop. Society missionaries Henry Caner of Boston and Arthur Browne of Portsmouth joined Apthorp in his defense of the Society's innocence. However, Mayhew's attack served his purpose and that of the other American dissenters. The clamor scared the Crown away from pursuing any concept of a colonial episcopacy. The Stamp Act crisis only increased royal reservations about forcing a bishop on unwilling colonists. With the tumult of the late 1760's into the early 1770's, it was too late even to entertain any further consideration of the project.⁹

Therefore, the Anglican church in British North America remained an oxymoron: an episcopal church without episcopacy. Only a bishop could ordain ministers. Any young man seeking orders had to cross the Atlantic to be ordained in London.

⁸ Gerlach, 401.

⁹ Ibid., 403-404.

Throughout the eighteenth century, one in five of these candidates died during the journey, either by epidemic or shipwreck. Independents in New England claimed that the death in 1714 of one such aspirant to episcopal orders, Dudley Bradstreet, "was a Judgement on him for his Apostacy."¹⁰ A resident bishop would have spared candidates the danger, time, and expense of this trans-Atlantic odyssey. No doubt others who were less stouthearted might have applied for orders had they not been obliged to travel to England. Anglicanism was spreading in America during the eighteenth century and could have used a larger pool of ministerial candidates from which to draw. Additionally, only a bishop could confirm church members and consecrate church buildings. Hence, American Episcopalians were denied these benefits. Moreover, administration of ecclesiastical business and discipline of clergy often lacked the consistency a colonial episcopate could have offered.

No one was more aware of the ecclesiastical vacuum created by the absence of a colonial bishop than Henry Caner. At one time one of the senior SPG missionaries in Connecticut, Caner served the flagship Anglican church in Boston, King's Chapel, beginning in 1747. Along with the other New England missionaries, Caner made periodic, dutiful pleas for the provision of an American episcopate. At the same time, it is apparent in the career of this instrumental American missionary that he himself was filling the void created by the lack of a

¹⁰ Midwinter, 109.

bishop. Caner's influence and position among the New England Episcopal clergy, especially those of Massachusetts, served to establish him as a *de facto* American bishop. He seemed to relish this role of "pseudo-episcopacy" as well, raising the question of how much Caner really wanted to see a true bishop reside on American soil. This "pseudo-episcopacy" is another example of the "Americanization" of the Anglican church during the eighteenth century. The American missionaries adapted their ecclesiastical context to colonial realities.

Henry Caner was not a native American missionary. Born in the southwest of England near Bristol around 1700, he moved to Boston with his family around 1713. His father, Henry, Sr., was a master carpenter who was, ironically, employed in the enlargement of the church his son would later pastor, King's Chapel. In 1717, the family moved to New Haven, Connecticut, where the elder Caner supervised the building of the first College Hall at Yale.¹¹ Young Henry was raised in the Anglican church, setting him apart from many of his future colleagues in the employment of the SPG.

Henry Caner attended the college his father helped to build, graduating from Yale in 1724. After graduation, he worked as a schoolteacher in Fairfield, Connecticut, and studied theology under the tutelage of Samuel Johnson, SPG missionary in nearby Stratford. Johnson and Caner became the senior

¹¹ Franklin B. Dexter, Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College with Annals of the College History, October 1701-May 1745, vol. I (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1885), 296.

missionaries in Connecticut and maintained a warm friendship for the rest of their lives. Later they would publish a joint attack against Jonathan Mayhew's broadside opposing the Episcopal church in New England.¹² As early as 1725, Caner was acting as a lay reader for a small Episcopal flock in Fairfield; they sent him to England in May 1727 for ordination in the hopes that he would be appointed to serve them as a Society missionary. Back in Connecticut the following autumn, Caner served the people of Fairfield for nearly twenty years. Near the end of his tenure in Connecticut, Caner wrote the Society, reckoning the gains accomplished under his ministry. Communicants there had increased from twelve when he arrived to sixty-eight. He had also been active in Norwalk, Connecticut. He had organized that parish in 1737 and, upon his departure in 1747, Caner claimed one hundred and fifteen communicants.¹³

Increasing age and infirm health made the necessary itinerancy in Connecticut difficult for Henry Caner. An opportunity to hold a more settled ministry came in 1747. The Commissary appointed by the Bishop of London to serve New England, Roger Price, resigned his position and vacated the pulpit of King's Chapel, Boston, in the winter of 1746.¹⁴

¹² Hector C. Kinloch, "Anglican Clergy in Connecticut, 1701-1785" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1959), 63.

¹³ Dexter, 296. See Henry Caner, Fairfield, Ct., to the Secretary, SPG, London, 25 March 1747, Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

¹⁴ Price was a British-born priest who was not popular among the native-born SPG missionaries. Respect for Price among his parishioners at King's Chapel had also become spotty due to his frequent absences from Boston. The apparent reason for Price's resignation related to his

Demonstrating the autonomy displayed by most eighteenth century congregations irrespective of denominational allegiance, King's Chapel sought Price's successor without the aid or approval of the Bishop of London.¹⁵ Caner was probably selected due to the eloquent and popular style of his preaching.¹⁶ Caner wrote to the Society of his intention to accept the invitation to move to Boston. He asked for London's approval of the move and for a quick replacement for Fairfield, even going so far as to suggest his successor.¹⁷ Price and the Churchwardens delivered the key to King's Chapel to Henry Caner in an elaborate ceremony on April 11, 1747.¹⁸

For almost forty years of ministry in Boston, Henry Caner acted as an energetic builder of the Anglican church, both physically and spiritually. A savvy businessman as well as a dynamic spiritual leader, Caner reinstigated the efforts to replace the wooden church building his father had helped enlarge with a stone structure. The cornerstone was laid for this

desire to serve an Anglican mission in Hopkinton, Massachusetts where Price had invested in some land. See William Shirley, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 1 December 1746, in William S. Perry, ed., Historical Collections Relating to the American Colonial Church, vol. III: Massachusetts (Hartford, Ct.: [privately printed], 1873), 403.

¹⁵ William B. Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, vol. V: Episcopalian (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), 61.

¹⁶ Dexter, 296-297. No other reasons for Caner's selection are suggested by his biographers. No doubt his friendship with Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts helped Caner to secure the prestigious pulpit in Boston. Distinguished service in Connecticut, and a valuable recommendation from the patriarch of missionaries there, Samuel Johnson, may have contributed to the choice of Caner.

¹⁷ Henry Caner, Fairfield, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 10 February 1747, Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

¹⁸ Sprague, 61.

edifice in August of 1749 during a ceremony in which Caner preached the sermon "The Piety of Founding Churches for the Worship of God: A Discourse on *Nehemiah* 2:20."¹⁹ The new building, still standing today on the corner of Tremont and School streets just off Boston Common, was completed five years later. Again, this event was accompanied by prayers and a special sermon by the rector which was later published.²⁰ King's Chapel drew many influential leaders as communicants; both William Shirley and Francis Bernard, serving as governors of the colony, befriended and worshipped with Caner. In the late 1760's and early 1770's, with the increased presence of royal troops in Boston, a significant number of army and navy officers attended services at King's Chapel. In fact, the last three burials which Caner recorded in the parish register were those of soldiers from the sixty-fifth regiment.²¹

Thoroughly Loyalist in his political position, Caner fled Boston when the British troops evacuated the city in March of 1776. He left so quickly that he was forced to leave behind most of his personal effects, including his treasured personal

¹⁹ Dexter, 297-298.

²⁰ Ibid., 297.

²¹ Sprague, 62. For the close relationship between Caner and Governor Shirley, see William Shirley, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 6 June 1747, in Perry, 410, and Henry Caner, Boston, to William Shirley, Boston, 23 October 1752, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford. In 1758, Caner visited Governor Thomas Pownall with a letter and books from the Society. See Henry Caner, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 26 October 1758, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

library. He did manage to take with him the church registers, part of the Vestry records, vestments, and plate of King's Chapel.²² Caner, his daughter, and servant first sailed to Halifax, and then soon after to London.²³ In London, the Society honored Caner with his choice of vacant missions; he chose Bristol, Rhode Island. There seems to be some dispute as to whether Caner ever actually returned to America to serve that parish.²⁴ Henry Caner died at the age of 92, in 1792, near where he was born, in Long Ashton, England.²⁵

Studies of eighteenth century Anglican prelacy argue that the influence of the episcopacy flowed from both the bishop's person and his prerogatives.²⁶ Who he was as a pastoral model promoted his position; likewise, the fact only he could ordain, confirm, and consecrate secured his status. In the ministry of Henry Caner, a colonial approximation, or improvisation, of this pattern may be discerned. Whether Caner would have understood

²² Sprague, 62, and Dexter, 297. Church historian Robert Carroon has argued that Caner also took the original manuscript of William Bradford's Of Plymouth Plantation into exile with him. Carroon contends that this may solve the mystery as to how this document found its way from the New England Library, located in the steeple room of Old South Church in Boston, to the library of Fulham Palace, the residence of the Bishop of London. See Robert G. Carroon, "The Mystery of the Bradford Manuscript," The Mayflower Quarterly 48 (November 1982): 161-165.

²³ Caner described his exodus from Boston to the Society in Henry Caner, Halifax, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 10 May 1776, in Perry, 585-586.

²⁴ Compare Sprague, 62-63, with Dexter, 298.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Helpful studies on the eighteenth century Anglican episcopate include Kenneth Fincham, Prelate as Pastor: The Episcopate of James I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); John Walsh, et al., eds., The Church of England c.1689-c.1833: From Toleration to Tractarianism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); E. Garth Moore, An Introduction to English Canon Law (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967); and William Gibson, Church, State and Society, 1760-1850 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

his influence and activities in just these terms is debatable. Without question, however, the rector of King's Chapel, Boston, was filling an ecclesiastical void created by the absence of a colonial bishop.

The most prominent image characterizing the Anglican prelate from the time of the Stuarts on was that of the "pastoral" episcopacy.²⁷ The biblical model for this viewpoint was the life and the ministry of St. Paul. Paul set forth a "pastoral" pattern in his leadership of the early Christian church. In the pastoral society of the first century, the metaphor of a "good shepherd" who nurtured and directed his flock became a powerful metaphor for the earliest bishops. The bishop as a "good shepherd" whose life modeled his teaching became a prominent theme in the "(c)onsecration sermons, episcopal biographies, and epistolary dedications . . . in early Stuart England."²⁸ The theme maintained its popular resonance into the next century as well. In short, the conduct of the life of the bishop was to be synonymous with the content of his preaching and teaching.

Henry Caner cultivated a "pastoral" image during his forty years of ministry in Boston. Caner wrote many letters like the one he sent to the future SPG missionary to Cambridge, Massachusetts, East Apthorp, at the end of 1751. In this pastoral epistle, Caner encouraged Apthorp to "establish himself

²⁷ Fincham, 9-12.

²⁸ Ibid., 10.

in principles of virtue."²⁹ The Society recognized Caner's pastoral oversight in their Abstract of missionary activity for the year 1774. "The Society take this opportunity of returning their thanks to the Rev. Dr. Caner for several letters received from him in the course of the year, and for his readiness on every occasion to assist the Society and their Missionaries with his kind offices."³⁰ During the politically tumultuous spring of 1775, Caner demonstrated by his conduct that he was the shepherd of Massachusetts' missionary flock.

Yesterday I was favor'd with yours of December 28th [from the Society], with one inclosed for the Clergy of this province, which I shall take care to communicate as opportunity offers. The advice which that Letter contains I have the pleasure to find is nearly the same with what I had before given to sundry of the country Clergy who had consulted me. I have promised to notify them if the King's troops should find it necessary to move forward in a hostile manner, that they may retire to this town for a time, lest possibly they should be seized on as Hostages, if no worse. In the mean time I have some small hopes that the troops now daily arriving will discourage our factious Leaders from attempting an open resistance.³¹

²⁹ Henry Caner, Boston, to East Apthorp, London, 3 December 1751, in Kenneth W. Cameron, Letter-Book of Henry Caner (Hartford, Ct.: Transcendental Books, 1972), 101.

³⁰ A Short Abstract of the Most Material Proceedings and Occurrences in the Society, for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts; Between February 19, 1773-February 18, 1774 in Kenneth W. Cameron, Ethos of Anglicanism in Colonial New England and New York (Hartford, Ct.: Transcendental Books, 1981), 159.

³¹ Henry Caner, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 18 April 1775, in Perry, 578-579.

By his own testimony, Caner was acting as the "mentoring" pastor of missionaries under duress. He was performing the same function a colonial bishop would have exercised in these turbulent circumstances.

It is not surprising that Caner moved into this role of *de facto* bishop. Preaching served as the bedrock of the "pastoral" image of prelacy during the eighteenth century.³² Caner was selected by the Churchwardens of King's Chapel partly on the basis of his sermonic skill.³³ Moreover, Caner was the immediate successor in this particular church to the Commissary in New England of the Bishop of London, a position of authority as the Bishop's agent. No Commissary was sent to replace Roger Price after his return to England; Caner inherited Price's mantle of authority along with his pulpit.³⁴ King's Chapel itself represented the closest thing to a cathedral church colonial New England would ever see.³⁵ Rector of the oldest Anglican church in New England, Caner himself boasted of the significance of the structure during its renovation in 1753. Construction was progressing happily; the roof was to go on in the fall and its

³² Fincham, 11-12.

³³ Dexter, 296-297.

³⁴ Caner was quite happy to be rid of Price. In a letter to P.H. Frankland dated 13 February 1749, Caner asked Frankland, "if he ha(d) any influence with the present Bishop of London, 'for God's sake use it to prevent our being plagued with the old Commissary [Roger Price],' under whom the Church can never flourish.'" Henry Caner, Boston, to P.H. Frankland, London, 13 February 1749, in Cameron, Letter-Book of Henry Caner, 100.

³⁵ King's Chapel was the oldest Anglican church in New England and its edifice occupied a prominent location adjacent to the Boston Common. The history of this church and the informal power exercised by Caner contributed to its status as a *de facto* cathedral.

first tier of windows was already in place. "It is certainly the most noble Building ever attempted in English America."³⁶

Contemporaries and later historians both have recognized the primacy of Caner's ministry in coordinating the ecclesiastical activities of Massachusetts. Samuel Johnson occupied a similar role to that of Caner for the Connecticut clergy; Caner expanded his influence throughout New England after Johnson's activities declined due to age in the late 1760's until his death in 1772. It is no surprise, then, that the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel addressed Henry Caner as the "Father of the American Clergy."³⁷ As they had done for Samuel Johnson, and at his behest, the University of Oxford conferred upon Caner the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity in January of 1766, a singular honor reserved for only the most respected clergy in the colonies.³⁸ The Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Secker, wrote Henry Caner in 1763, acknowledging that, as of that date, Caner and Johnson were the only two men "with whom at present I statedly correspond."³⁹

³⁶ Henry Caner, Boston, to Barlow Trecothick, London, 4 July 1753, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

³⁷ SPG Abstract, 16 February 1776-21 February 1777, in Cameron, Ethos, 173.

³⁸ Dexter, 297. Caner was informed of this honor by the Secretary of the Society, Daniel Burton. In a letter to Burton, Caner indicated that his award came at the request of significant ecclesiastical "power brokers," the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, and the Bishops of London, Durham, and Winchester. See Henry Caner, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 15 May 1766, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

³⁹ Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Palace, London, to Henry Caner, Boston, 30 March 1763, in Perry, 496.

Historian Herbert Kinloch summarized the central role of Henry Caner in the ecclesiastical life of New England in this way: "The S.P.G. correspondence shows that Caner was an able and influential arbitrator, negotiator and propitiator in such matters as church appointments, internal parish difficulties and the relations between the S.P.G. and the colonial clergy."⁴⁰ Caner fulfilled the many roles of bishop without the necessary authority or stated power to do so. The power to ordain and to excommunicate, what one Jacobean divine called "giving orders and keeping order," constituted the central authority of the Anglican bishop. The bishop evaluated candidates for ordination carefully and exercised discipline diligently to elevate the moral purity of the Church. "You are the north winde to kill all vermin, and the south to ripen all good fruit," a London lecturer reminded one English bishop in 1616. "I meane your authoritie to punish the wicked and cherish the good."⁴¹ Henry Caner had no official power to ordain Episcopal clergy for New England, nor did he wield any authority to exercise discipline on erring missionaries.⁴² However, he demonstrated a significant degree of involvement in both of these episcopal prerogatives.

⁴⁰ Kinloch, 62.

⁴¹ Fincham, 12. The London lecturer referenced in this citation was William Jackson in his The Celestial Husbandrie (1616).

⁴² "The bishop alone (or by another bishop deputed by him) ordains priests (though other priests present take part in the laying on of hands); the bishop alone (or by another bishop deputed by him) makes deacons, confirms the baptized, and consecrates land and buildings." E. Garth Moore, 19.

Henry Caner could and did influence appointments to the American missions. He wrote Richard Terrick, the new bishop of London, a letter of congratulations for his accession in 1764. In that letter, Caner acquainted the new colonial prelate of his role in the ordination of New England clergy:

The Plantations have been esteem'd by Custom, at least sometimes by Patent, to appertain to the Diocese of London. Agreeably for Bishops of that See have honored me with their Correspondence relative to the Affairs of the Church in these parts, and have kindly received the Recommendations I have given of young Gentlemen who have gone from hence for holy Orders.⁴³

In this letter, Caner clearly signaled the new bishop that he was the key leader through whom the Anglican church in Massachusetts should be instructed and supervised. Furthermore, he made reference to a practice that he had pursued for almost two decades by this time. Recommendations of young men for ordination in London became commonplace in the correspondence of Henry Caner. In 1759, Caner wrote the Archbishop of Canterbury of the need for a missionary to be stationed near Harvard in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The need for the right individual was great. Harvard was the only "Seminary of Learning" for the colony and Caner confessed that "Socianism, Deism, and other bad

⁴³ Henry Caner, Boston, to Richard Terrick, Bishop of London, London, 1 September 1764, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

principles find too much countenance among us."⁴⁴ Caner called for a "Gentleman, who by his doctrine & good example, may give a right turn to the Youth who are educated there."⁴⁵ Then came the standard Caner recommendation repeated in so many other letters, in this case on behalf of East Apthorp:⁴⁶

Mr. Apthorp, a gentleman now in orders, and who had his Education at the University of Cambridge, in England, at the same College with my Lord Bishop of Bristol, and particularly favoured by his Lordship, and who is also a Member of the Society, offers himself to this service. This Gentleman appears to be every way qualified to undertake such a Mission with success, & at the request of the People has promised to accept it, if the Society shall think fit to establish one in that place.⁴⁷

Apthorp was already ordained; Samuel Frink was not. Caner sent a letter with Frink who was in pursuit of holy orders and recommended an assignment to a mission at Rutland, located about sixty miles from Boston. Caner told his lordship, the Archbishop of Canterbury, that the people of Rutland were deserving of a missionary and appeared capable of supporting Mr.

⁴⁴ Henry Caner, Boston, to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Palace, London, 7 April 1759, in Perry, 452.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 453.

⁴⁶ For other examples of Caner's recommendation of candidates for ordination, see Henry Caner, Boston, to Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, London, 28 April 1748, recommending Jeremiah Leaming; Henry Caner, Boston, to Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, London, 17 May 1748, recommending Ebenezer Dibblee and Richard Mansfield; Henry Caner, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 23 October 1752, recommending Peter Bours, Jr.; and Henry Caner, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 12 December 1754, recommending Edward Winslow. All of these letters are found in the Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Frink. "Many families of that Profession (Anglican) from England and Ireland are settled in Rutland and the neighbouring places, and are earnestly desirous of having the advantage of a Church among them."⁴⁸ After addressing the need of the people in Rutland, Caner turned to the matter of Frink's character:

As to Mr. Frink, he was born among them (his father being a dissenting Minister in that neighbourhood), and they are therefore much attached to him. I have personally known Mr. Frink for some time. About two years ago he applied to me for some direction in his studies, having in the course of his reading found himself under a necessity of conforming to the Church. Since that time he has conducted [himself] as a worthy member of the Church of England, and has been preparing himself for holy orders. He has always borne an unexceptionable character for prudence and piety, and I trust will prove a very worthy Missionary, if your Grace and the Society shall see fit to employ him.⁴⁹

In this letter, Caner also acknowledged his strategic role in grooming potential ordinands for their ministry. As Samuel Johnson had tutored Caner in Fairfield, Connecticut, as well as many others since that time, Caner was now teaching candidates the fundamentals of Anglican orthodoxy. It may be that Caner was instrumental in the conversion of Frink to Anglicanism, but the plausibility of this possibility is not clear in the context above.

⁴⁸ Henry Caner, Boston, to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Palace, London, 22 June 1763, in Perry, 499.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Henry Caner occasionally offered his insight as to the proper location of a new missionary. In the case of Roger Viets, he suggested that the Society send the young man to some other parish than the one for which he was destined, Lymesbury. While he had heard nothing to detract from the character of this prospective missionary, Caner had been contacted by some of the Connecticut clergy as to the danger of sending Viets to that parish. "[T]here is a party in the Parish who are not fond of his settling among them; from which circumstance they are apprehensive of bad consequences if he should be sent to that place, and do therefore wish the society might employ him in some other mission."⁵⁰ And they did. Viets was sent to the town of Simsbury to assist the missionary already stationed in that parish, William Gibbs, who was suffering from age and infirmity.

Regrets about the recommendation of missionaries who proved to be disappointing also found their way into Caner's correspondence. In November of 1751, Caner recommended John Fowle for ordination and a vacancy in Norwalk, Connecticut. He was certain Fowle would "do much good."⁵¹ By 1760, Fowle had left Norwalk and Caner bemoaned his role in ever sending the man there:

I wish that I could forget that such a
Creature ever existed, but like my Sins he
will ever & anon stare me in the Face, &

⁵⁰ Henry Caner, Boston, to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Palace, London, 7 January 1763, in Perry, 489.

⁵¹ Henry Caner, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 12 November 1751, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

what is worse I cannot atone for him even by Repentance. He call'd upon me a few days ago to ask my advice whether he could not commence an Action against the Society, for refusing to pay his salary, or against the Bishop of London for ordaining him. And I suppose the next will be against me for recommending him (which indeed would be the most proper suit). In short he is I think a Fool & a Madman.⁵²

In a letter the year before to this same correspondent, Caner confided his disgust with a group of missionaries who had been converted from dissenting congregations. He had learned that Samuel Fayerweather, one of this number, had been approved for the mission at Narragansett. He disapproved of Fayerweather's "levity, vanity, roving disposition, and neglect of study or improvement."⁵³ Then the senior cleric of Massachusetts registered his general disdain:

I have been so much imposed upon by Converts from the Dissenters that I don't know whether I shall ever consent to recommend another that comes from among them. [William] MacClenahan, [] Cotton, [Samuel] Fayerweather--I wish they were all in the Fleet--I know not one Quality in either of them that should recommend them to any sober People.⁵⁴

⁵² Henry Caner, Boston, to Barlow Trecothick, London, 1 May 1760, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁵³ Henry Caner, Boston, to Barlow Trecothick, London, 3 July 1759, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

Caner's disapproval, while not producing the immediate dismissal of these three men, proved to be prophetic. MacClenachan deserted the Society's service and Fayerweather was dismissed in 1780 for taking an oath to the rebel States.⁵⁵

Henry Caner acted as a *de facto* colonial bishop by "keeping order" as well as recommending candidates for orders. In general, he believed that the character of the New England missionaries was good and that their labor was useful. Caner wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury that he personally knew all but two or three of the missionaries in New England, and that they had no equal among the dissenting preachers in the region. Caner admitted that there were "some things in a few which I cannot approve, and wish were amended," but that, in general, their "ability, soundness of doctrine, [and] good and exemplary Life and Conversation" deserved the Society's approbation. Caner even dared to "challenge the Dissenters" in matching cleric for cleric, although he recognized that Independents had a "most extraordinary talent at praising themselves." An observer of New England religion for over thirty years, Caner thanked the Society for its part in providing such high caliber missionaries and assured London of

⁵⁵ No record of the third missionary criticized by Caner in the preceding quotation can be found. C.F. Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G.: An Historical Account of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1701-1900, vol. II (London: S.P.G., 1901), 853.

the "many great and good effects which, under God, have been the consequence of their Endeavours."⁵⁶

The Archbishop of Canterbury welcomed this insight, as the reputation of the Society personnel had been stained by the conduct of some of the southern missionaries.⁵⁷ However, Caner did warn the Archbishop that some of the younger missionaries seemed to be sending the Society reports of their activities which exaggerated their successes. Knowing the true state of these missions, Caner had been grieved by the liberties taken in these reports. Caner offered his Lordship a corrective for this problem:

This has induced some good men here to wish that either such letters as are designed to be sent home were submitted to the inspection of some cooler head, to soften the terms in which they are express'd, or else that their accounts were laid before such person, to be formed into one common draught, comprehending their several representations, and in that form transmitted to the Society. This need not prevent the Missionaries from corresponding separately with the Society; but it would enable the Secretary to judge how far it might be proper to suppress some sanguine expression in private letters, by comparing them with the more public account.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Henry Caner, Boston, to Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Palace, London, 23 December 1762, in Perry, 486.

⁵⁷ Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Palace, London, to Henry Caner, Boston, 30 March 1763, in Perry, 495.

⁵⁸ Henry Caner, Boston, to Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Palace, London, 23 December 1762, in Perry, 488.

Caner undoubtedly would have acted as this "cooler head" to tame the reports of the younger missionaries had the authorities in London asked him to do so.

From time to time, London asked Henry Caner to mediate specific disputes involving Society missionaries. One such occasion occurred in the fall of 1760. A conflict had arisen between the senior warden of the church in Providence, Rhode Island, John Merret, and the rector of the church, missionary John Graves. Merret accused Graves of mispending parish funds without his approval and claimed that the rector displayed religious tendencies best described as "enthusiastic" or "Methodist."⁵⁹ In response to a letter from Merret asking "that a worthy clergyman might be appointed to inquire into the matter and bring about a 'civil & genteel Understanding between them,'" the Society had chosen Caner.⁶⁰ Caner reluctantly accepted the assignment and worked throughout the fall to gather the facts of the case and to resolve the matter if at all possible.⁶¹ He implored a prominent layman in Providence, John Aplin, to do what he could to settle the conflict so "that it may not be suffer'd to cross the Atlantic, but die in the Land in which it

⁵⁹ Henry Caner, Boston, to Samuell Currie and Joseph Sweeting, Providence, R.I., 23 November 1760, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford. Both Graves and his brother, Matthew, stationed in New London, Connecticut, had been influenced by the Wesleyan revival in England.

⁶⁰ Henry Caner, Boston, to John Graves, Providence, R.I., 24 October 1760, in Cameron, Letter-Book of Henry Caner, 113.

⁶¹ For Caner's lengthy correspondence surrounding this affair, see Letters #228-241 in the Henry Caner File, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

had its Birth."⁶² Happily, Caner was finally able to report to the Society that the matter had been laid to rest and all parties had been reconciled. He wrote the Secretary that he believed the Society would be more pleased "to hear that the difference was adjusted than to be troubled with a detail of this Contest."⁶³ Caner admitted in this letter that his role in mediating this conflict reminded him of the need of a bishop in America. Caner, then, must have been cognizant that he was functioning in an unofficially episcopal manner in this affair.

Even clergy outside of New England sought Caner's help in keeping order and exposing charlatans among missionary personnel. In one letter, Caner reported that "the clergy and laity at Philadelphia ha[d] asked him to report the Rev. [William] MacClenachan's further imprudence, indicating that he will submit to no rules or authority. He is ruled only by his own fancy."⁶⁴ Closer to home, Caner regretted the necessity to acquaint the Society with the sad affair of one Richard Mieux, alias Samuel Griffith. Mieux had forged certificates of ordination, possibly utilizing the legitimate credentials of his father, now deceased. However, he failed to substitute the contemporary names of the Bishops performing the ordination to match the forged date. To perpetrate the hoax, Caner related

⁶² Henry Caner, Boston, to John Aplin, Providence, R.I., 10 November 1760, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁶³ Henry Caner, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 8 December 1760, in Perry, 462.

⁶⁴ Henry Caner, Boston, to Samuel Nicolls, London, 6 October 1760, in Cameron, Letter-Book of Henry Caner, 112.

that "this very bad man" had used a collection of manuscript sermons his father had preached during the 1720's.⁶⁵

How had the impostor finally been exposed? Mieux had been caught stealing "from every House in the Parish where he is intimate." Caner listed some of the items stolen: "silver spoons, shirts, a piece of linen, books, rings, a Tweezer, case of silver, silk, a Girdle Buckle, umbrellas, Napkins, and Table cloths." Mieux had tried to escape once he found himself discovered, but was captured. This man, "infamous to a Proverb" for his lying and stealing, now waited in prison for his trial.⁶⁶

Caner himself had regarded the veracity of this man's credentials with suspicion from the outset of his appearance in the area. On the same day in which he wrote the letter above to the Society, Caner told the Bishop of London that he had doubted Mieux, alias Griffith, almost at once. Caner had asked the counterfeit missionary to produce his License and Letters of Orders, but Mieux confessed that he had no License and "declined producing" the Orders. Caner immediately wrote to England for some information about the man, but failed to learn anything about him "for want of his proper Name." Caner concluded that the lesson to be learned by the incident was to be more careful:

⁶⁵ Henry Caner, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 24 June 1765, in Perry, 518.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 519. It is a fascinating sidelight to learn what items held sufficient value to be stolen during the eighteenth century. Clearly Mieux was after silver and linen in whatever form he could find them.

"We have not often been imposed on in this manner & I hope this Instance will make us still more cautious."⁶⁷

Another task incumbent on the eighteenth century Anglican episcopate was visitation of his diocese. Initially meant to serve a judicial function, to extend "disciplinary action" against those "subject to ecclesiastical law," the visitation became, through the course of the century, a less formal means of acquainting the bishop with the condition of his flock.⁶⁸ Bishops performed this duty faithfully during the 1700's in England, even separating visitation tours from confirmation tours of the diocese, effectively doubling their work load.⁶⁹ Henry Caner imitated this episcopal pattern in his ministerial activities. In the summer of 1752, Caner visited Episcopalians attempting to revive the Society's mission in Marblehead. He had preached there several times and begged the Society's favor on behalf of these families.⁷⁰ Similarly, twenty-four "heads of families" had written Caner from Rutland asking him to visit them and to preach among them. Caner wrote the Archbishop of Canterbury that he had made the visit "and was highly pleased with the excursion, a very large body of People attending in the fields, for they had no house sufficient to contain them. They are generally Husbandmen--an open, honest, uncorrupt people, and

⁶⁷ Henry Caner, Boston, to Richard Terrick, Bishop of London, London, 24 June 1765, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁶⁸ Moore, 20.

⁶⁹ Gibson, 18.

⁷⁰ Henry Caner, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 23 October 1752, in Perry, 446.

I think truly deserving the compassion and assistance of the Society."⁷¹

An Anglican bishop was also responsible for the general oversight of his diocese.⁷² Henry Caner clearly undertook key administrative tasks essential to the ecclesiastical life of New England and beyond. His opinion and endorsement were frequently sought for the establishment of clergy in various missions. In a letter to the Secretary of the Society, Caner asked for missionaries to be sent to the towns of Braintree, Dedham, and Stoughton. In each case, the churchmen in those towns had specifically asked Caner to represent their need to the Society.⁷³ Likewise, the laymen of Newport, Rhode Island, asked Caner to give an opinion on the settling of Marmaduke Brown there due to a vacancy created by the move of their rector to Jamaica. Browne had been an itinerant in New Hampshire, and Caner believed he was more needed in Newport than on the frontier during "this time of war. (French and Indian War)" Moreover, the size of Browne's family required a larger income than he had been receiving in New Hampshire.⁷⁴

Even clergy outside of New England sought Caner's administrative insights in recruiting personnel. Thomas

⁷¹ Henry Caner, Boston, to Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Palace, London, 22 June 1763, in Perry, 499.

⁷² Moore, 20. For a discussion of the bishop's administrative duties, see also Walsh, 5 and Fincham, 14.

⁷³ Henry Caner, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 19 February 1763, in Perry, 492.

⁷⁴ Henry Caner, Boston, to Samuel Nicolls, London, 6 October 1760, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

Standard of New York solicited Caner's input regarding possible candidates for holy orders. Caner knew of no one to suggest other than William Gibbs of Simsbury, who was reportedly dissatisfied "in his situation among a undercultivated People."⁷⁵

It is apparent from reading Caner's correspondence that he always kept the "big picture" of ecclesiastical life in New England clearly in mind. As a matter of course, he frequently described the spiritual health of the various Massachusetts' missions in his letters to the Society.⁷⁶ His concerns for the administration of the ministry of the gospel transcended the boundaries of his own parish. Caner could be found managing affairs in Connecticut, despite the fact that he no longer served in that colony. In 1748, he wrote the Society that Norwalk and Stamford were at odds over the appointment of a missionary.⁷⁷ In 1751, Caner asked that missionaries be sent to Hebron and Taunton, as well as legal protection be provided for the Connecticut clergy against the abuse of unfair taxes levied against them by dissenting government.⁷⁸ Caner's assistance as a mediator was even offered to competing Episcopal churches in

⁷⁵ Henry Caner, Boston, to Thomas Standard, West Chester and East Chester, N.Y., 12 December 1752, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁷⁶ For an example of this type of letter, see Henry Caner, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 5 January 1757, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁷⁷ Henry Caner, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 17 May 1748, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut.

⁷⁸ Henry Caner, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 6 May 1751, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

Boston. In 1758, the people of Christ Church, Boston, (the famous "Old North Church" of Paul Revere fame), asked Caner to represent their difficult circumstances to the Society. Their rector, Timothy Cutler, was ill and unable to carry out his duties. Caner and his assistant, John Troutbeck, had tried to compensate for Cutler's inactivity for two years, but their own health and their obligations at King's Chapel prevented this scheme from continuing much longer. Without the assistance of the Society in sending another missionary to Christ Church, the parish would suffer irreparable harm.⁷⁹

Henry Caner's administrative oversight for the Anglican church of New England included the distribution of literature to the clergy in those colonies. In 1756, Caner received 380 copies of the first volume of Thomas Sherlock's sermons. Caner expected these sermons by the Bishop of London to serve as an effective antidote to the growth of infidelity and the fashionable "Religion of Nature" popular in New England. He promised to distribute these sermons among the clergy of Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts.⁸⁰ Caner also supplied the missionaries in the area with the Anniversary Sermons given by a member of the Society annually. For example, the sermons for 1762, 1763, and 1764 were sent to Caner on behalf of the

⁷⁹ Henry Caner, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 20 May 1758, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁸⁰ Henry Caner, Boston, to Thomas Sherlock, Bishop of London, London, 9 November 1756, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

other missionaries in 1765. Caner then passed them on to each of the clergy.⁸¹

Only an Anglican bishop held the proper authority to convene the clergy of the diocese in an official meeting to offer oversight and to exercise discipline. Henry Caner was painfully aware of this fact and characterized the consequent disarray of the missionaries as a "rope of sand. There is no Authority, no union among us; we cannot even summon a Convocation, for united Counsills, while the Dissenters have their Monthly, Quarterly & annual Associations, Convocations &c to advise, assist & support each other."⁸² Twice, Caner greeted the new bishop of London on behalf of the missionaries of Massachusetts, noting that the proper salutation would have come from a convention of the clergy if one could have been authorized.⁸³ It is significant, and a sign of Caner's "pseudo-episcopacy," that he took it upon himself to offer the greeting to the new bishop.

Henry Caner occasionally bemoaned the absence of an American bishop in his correspondence, as did most of the SPG missionaries from time to time. In the fall of 1760, the

⁸¹ Henry Caner, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 31 July 1765, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁸² Henry Caner, Boston, to Thomas Secker, Bishop of London, London, 7 January 1763, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁸³ See Henry Caner, Boston, to Thomas Sherlock, Bishop of London, London, 27 December 1748, and Henry Caner, Boston, to Thomas Hayter (who died before this letter was written. the letter was delivered to his replacement, Richard Osbaldeston.), Bishop of London, London, 12 February 1762, both in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

success of British forces against the French afforded an occasion to reconsider the establishment of a colonial episcopacy, according to Caner. Writing to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Caner suggested that the estates of the Roman Catholic bishop of Quebec, as well as other Papal properties, might provide the necessary support for an Anglican bishop, once Canada became a British dominion.⁸⁴ But, due to hesitancy on the part of the Royal government, the opportunity was missed, as others had been squandered in the past.

Just two months after his suggestion to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Caner was singing a different tune to the Secretary of the SPG. Admitting that most of the problems associated with the Society's missions in America related to the "want of a proper Authority," Caner recognized the obvious. "A Bishop for this part of the world is (I doubt) an expedient too remote to be thought of. Neither have we a Commissary, or the least shadow of authority among us."⁸⁵ Therefore, Caner sought the help of the Society in providing some sort of authority which might work in substitution.

That some Clergyman of proper age & experience, residing in New England, and who bears a character of wisdom, piety, and prudence, be empowered by the Society as their visitor, to inspect the manners and conduct of their Missionaries, to look

⁸⁴ Henry Caner, Boston, to Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Palace, London, 6 October 1760, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁸⁵ Henry Caner, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 8 December 1760, in Perry, 459.

into the state of their several Missions,
 & keep up a constant knowledge &
 acquaintance with the progress of each,
 whether it be under a state of increase or
 decay, and if the latter, to what that
 decay is owing, whether to the negligence
 or improper conduct of the Missionary, or
 to the perverseness of the People.⁸⁶

This "visitor" would also have the power to convene the missionaries annually, to collect reports from each missionary about the state of their parishes, and would be required to visit all of the missions assigned to him once every three years. Caner was too circumspect to offer himself as a candidate for the post, but could it be that the well-respected Boston rector was simply looking for official approval of what he had already been doing? Rather than giving up some of his status and power with the assignment of an American bishop or Commissary, Caner might simply have wanted recognition from the Society for the oversight he was already offering.

Five years later, Caner offered a similar scheme which might promote some sort of authority in Massachusetts other than that of the episcopacy. Writing to Thomas Secker, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Caner suggested that the political tumult surrounding the Stamp Act controversy made the assignment of a bishop to America inconvenient until "'Tempers are a little subsided. Meanwhile, as transition, the Authority of an Archdeacon, Rural Dean, or some such office might be bestowed upon some of the more Grave & reputable Clergy already here, who

⁸⁶ Ibid.

are so unexceptionable in their characters that' whatever powers they might be furnished with, it would raise no disturbance, but would gradually lead on to further Authority."⁸⁷ Whether called a "visitor," "Archdeacon," or "Rural Dean," Caner was arguing for an alternative to episcopal leadership which he himself was capable of supplying.

In 1765, Henry Caner finally initiated an informal means to coordinate Anglican ministry from within Massachusetts itself. Following the funeral of Timothy Cutler, rector of Christ Church, Boston, the clergy present convened at Henry Caner's house to discuss their "broken and disjointed state." At that meeting, they decided to ask the bishop of London for permission to hold a voluntary convention annually for the sake of "cultivating brotherly affection and supporting each other with united Counsels under any difficulty or embarrassment that may happen to take place in any particular parish."⁸⁸ Richard Terrick, the current bishop of London, agreed to the scheme and the first convention was held in June of the following year.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Henry Caner, Boston, to Thomas Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Palace, London, 23 December 1765, in Cameron, Letter-Book of Henry Caner, 125. In this same letter, Caner also suggests that a visiting bishop might be received with so much favor, as Dean Berkeley had been during his visit to America, that he might be asked to remain in the colonies. At the least, such an episcopal visit would provide opportunities for the exercise of the rites of confirmation, consecration, and ordination.

⁸⁸ Henry Caner, Boston, to Richard Terrick, Bishop of London, London, 10 September 1765, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁸⁹ Caner thanked Terrick for permission to hold this convention in Henry Caner, Boston, to Richard Terrick, Bishop of London, London, 3 February 1766, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

Apparently, the spectacle of fourteen Anglican clergy walking together in gowns and cassocks to hear Caner preach at King's Chapel caused quite a stir in Boston. Held on June 4, the King's birthday, the missionaries present were honored by the presence of the Governor of the colony at dinner. Despite the unusual display of High Church "pomp and circumstance," Caner wrote the bishop of London that "we have heard of no jealous or unfriendly Remarks, upon the Occasion."⁹⁰ Missionary William McGilchrist of Salem reported to the Society that the meeting was "meant to promote mutual love & harmony amongst ourselves, and to assist each other with advice in difficult cases." Significantly, McGilchrist added, Caner was chosen Moderator and Secretary of this first clergy convention in Massachusetts.⁹¹ No colonial bishop was present to preside at this meeting. So the clergy deferred to their *de facto* episcopate, Henry Caner.

Caner's leadership role among the convened clergy continued in the years following. Caner, along with Mather Byles, Jr., the rector of Christ Church in Boston, communicated with the Society on behalf of the convention in 1772. Caner and Byles reported that the Colony's clergy were extremely disappointed over the failure to settle a bishop in America as well as the decision of the Society to suspend any further

⁹⁰ William McGilchrist, Salem, Ma., to the Secretary, SPG, London, 27 June 1766, in Perry, 524, and Henry Caner, Boston, to Richard Terrick, Bishop of London, London, 30 June 1766, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁹¹ William McGilchrist, Salem, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 27 June 1766, in Perry, 524.

assignment of missionaries to Massachusetts until after the political turmoil had subsided.⁹² The day before shots were fired at Lexington Green to begin the American Revolution, Henry Caner received a letter from the SPG with counsel intended for all of the clergy in Massachusetts, "which I shall take care to communicate as opportunity offers." Recognizing Caner's informal position of authority in colonial ecclesiastical affairs, many of these men had already sought Caner's advice on the eve of the fighting. Happily, the Society offered the same suggestions which Caner had given to his colleagues.⁹³

Historian Frederick V. Mills, Sr., argues that an internal Anglican controversy existed over an American episcopate between the years 1763-1775. According to Mills, the laymen and clergy of New England, outside of the activity of Samuel Johnson, were not enthusiastic about the establishment of an American bishop in the colonies. Rather, they offered "potential resistance" to the scheme. No petitions, calling for a bishop, originated among laymen in the parishes. Leading Connecticut laymen, like Godfrey Malbone and Samuel Johnson's own son, William Samuel, not only failed to demand the episcopacy, in the case of Malbone, but even opposed such an idea, in the case of Johnson. The attitude of the Massachusetts laity reflected that of their

⁹² Henry Caner and Mather Byles, Jr., Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 23 September 1772, in Perry, 565.

⁹³ Henry Caner, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 18 April 1775, in Perry, 578-579. Caner wrote Richard Hind, the Secretary of the SPG, describing the action around Lexington and Concord, as well as the subsequent siege of Boston by the Rebels, in Henry Caner, Boston, to Richard Hind, Secretary, SPG, London, 2 June 1775, in Perry, 580-581.

Connecticut brethren. The Massachusetts clergy, led by Caner, did petition for a bishop, but always through the auspices of the Society or the bishop of London. They had no desire to supersede proper channels.⁹⁴ Could it be that the Anglican clergy of New England, and chief among them Henry Caner, were enjoying their autonomy too much to sincerely desire the interference a resident bishop might offer? Truly, there were disadvantages implicit to the lack of a colonial episcopate, but, in balance, the freedom the arrangement provided might have seemed to outweigh its hardships in the minds of Caner and the others.⁹⁵

Historian Kenneth Fincham argues that "considerable barriers, political, social and institutional, obstruct(ed) the faithful reproduction" of a truly pastoral episcopacy in seventeenth century England.⁹⁶ No doubt the constraints inhibiting the bishop from functioning as a "pastoral leader" or "good shepherd" to his flock only worsened with time. The diocese was growing larger, and travel became increasingly difficult. The office itself became more and more enmeshed in Parliamentary politics. Diocesan administration devolved into

⁹⁴ Frederick V. Mills, Sr., "The Internal Anglican Controversy Over an American Episcopate, 1763-1775," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 44 (September, 1975): 261-263.

⁹⁵ Significantly, most of the clamor for an American bishop by the middle of the eighteenth century came from missionaries stationed in the Middle Colonies. The leading proponents by mid-century were Thomas Bradbury Chandler and Samuel Seabury, Jr., stationed in New Jersey and New York respectively. New England missionaries collectively offered the standard request for a bishop from time to time, but their pleas lacked the passion of the middle colony missionaries.

⁹⁶ Fincham, 17.

the hands of civil lawyers and ecclesiastical underlings. Given these exigencies, it could be that Henry Caner, in his "pseudo-episcopacy" in colonial Massachusetts, provided a more effective pastoral care for his flock than could have been offered back in England. While not officially recognized, Caner's informal episcopal leadership was certainly shaped by the needs of the Anglican church in New England. Inasmuch as those needs were effectively met, Henry Caner's "pseudo-episcopacy" represented a fruitful "Americanization" of the colonial Anglican church, and further evidence of the innovative nature of colonial American institutions given the unique circumstances of a "frontier" setting.

CHAPTER V

JACOB BAILEY, "ITINERANT MISSIONARY ON THE EASTERN FRONTIER OF MASSACHUSETTS BAY"

The entrance of Kennebeck River from the ocean exhibits a wild and disagreeable appearance, and for a league or two the prospect is bounded by rugged and lofty shores, craggy cliffs, and naked rocks, which either hang over the water or form frightful caverns, create disgust and horror in the mind of a stranger; but as he advances the view improves, and the eye is delighted with a surprising variety of objects.¹

This scene greeted the eyes of Jacob Bailey, the new missionary of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel to a frontier mission in eastern Massachusetts, what would later become the state of Maine. The year was 1760. Clearly, from these recorded observations, the "Frontier Missionary," as Bailey would come to be known, embarked upon his service with a degree of ambivalence, if not trepidation. Just like his perspective on the unfolding panorama around him, however, Bailey found that as he advanced into the years of his missionary service, the "view improved." It might even be said that Bailey came to "delight" in many aspects of his years on the frontier. Nevertheless, his service would be hard compared to other missionaries, requiring him to adapt his ministry to the rugged American environment which constituted his parish.

¹ John L. Sibley and Clifford K. Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates: Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College in the Classes 1751-1755, vol. XIII (Cambridge and Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1873-1975), 526.

Bailey's itinerancy, conduct of services, relationship with parishioners, even his attire, were shaped by the "backwoods" setting of his mission. Certainly, it can be argued that Jacob Bailey encountered a "surprising variety of objects" and circumstances as the Society's man in the backwoods of eastern Massachusetts.

Jacob Bailey was born to David and Mary (Hodgkins) Bailey of Rowley, Massachusetts, in 1731.² David Bailey was a poor farmer in Rowley, a Deacon of the local Congregational church. Despite being a hard worker, Bailey struggled to provide for his large family.³ Young Jacob began keeping a journal during these years, a practice he pursued throughout his life. In his journal, Jacob complained that Rowley was "remarkable for ignorance, narrowness of mind and bigotry." He believed that everyone thought and acted uniformly; anyone aspiring to a higher level of learning, piety, or gentility was ostracized by the town's other inhabitants. Such an individual would be considered "an odd, unaccountable fellow shunned by every company, and left to drink his mug of flip alone on lecture-day night."⁴

Two characteristics of the youthful Jacob Bailey made such surroundings particularly arduous. Young Bailey hungered for

² "Rev. Jacob Bailey," The Essex Antiquarian (Salem, Massachusetts) 1 (May 1897): 69.

³ William S. Bartlet, The Frontier Missionary: A Memoir of the Life of the Rev. Jacob Bailey, A.M. (Boston: Ide and Dutton, 1853), 44; "Rev. Jacob Bailey," 69.

⁴ Bartlet, 3.

knowledge; curiosity about all sorts of subjects drove him to challenge the prevailing ignorance in his hometown. At the same time, he struggled with bashfulness which threatened to impede any efforts to educate the nascent scholar. Bailey had no books due to the poverty of his family. Consequently, he spent an hour each evening writing on whatever paper he could find about diverse subjects.⁵ Indeed, years later, Bailey would write manuscripts on a host of topics, including a contribution to the Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society regarding prehistoric American earthworks, a History of New England, a description of the province of New Brunswick, and much poetry.⁶ No doubt his early practice of scribbling established a foundation for his later proficiency. One evening Bailey dropped a sample of his writing on the floor. It was retrieved and shown to the local Congregational pastor, Jedidiah Jewett. Parson Jewett took an interest in the boy and sought to provide for his education.⁷

The shyness of Jacob Bailey nearly preempted his scholarly career. While Jewett proposed schooling Jacob during a visit to the Bailey homestead, the diffident young man escaped to a nearby grove until he believed that the minister had left. He confided to a correspondent years later that "thousands would not have tempted me to come into" this great man's presence. The arrangements were made and Jacob was sent to Jewett's

⁵ Bartlet, 6; "Rev. Jacob Bailey," 69.

⁶ Sibley and Shipton, 544-545.

⁷ Bartlet, 6.

parsonage for his lessons. He had not slept a minute the night before, and the boy paced back and forth in front of the minister's home "no less than ten times." He finally managed enough nerve to reach the door handle, when his courage failed again. At this point, only one sort of person, of whom Bailey was more frightened than the parson, forced him into the house. "I presently perceived my spirits beginning to sink, till finding that the eyes of a young female in the neighborhood were turned towards me, I concluded, of the two evils, prudentially to choose the lesser, and so instantly entered. I got over the difficulties of my first address, and was put to learning that very afternoon, and, as I had the good fortune to perceive, greatly to the acceptance and admiration of my master."⁸

At the encouragement of Jewett, Bailey entered Harvard College in 1751 at the rather late age of twenty. Due to the poverty of his family, and the contemporary practice of ranking students according to their social station, Bailey was seated at the foot of his class.⁹ Bailey held a Hollis scholarship at Harvard and waited on tables.¹⁰ Famous classmates graduated with Bailey in 1755, including John Adams, later President of the United States; John Wentworth, afterward governor of New Hampshire; Tristram Dalton, later a United States Senator; and Samuel Locke, afterward a President of his *alma mater*. The Reverend William Wheeler, in after years, like Bailey, a

⁸ Ibid., 6-7.

⁹ "The Rev. Jacob Bailey," 69; Bartlet, 44.

¹⁰ Sibley and Shipton, 522.

missionary for the SPG, also graduated in 1755.¹¹ Discouragement brought on by penury nearly cut short Bailey's years at Harvard. During his junior year, Bailey resolved to go off to sea rather than face the prospect of continued indigence and difficulty. Only the last minute gift of two dollars, a pair of gloves, and the loan of a Hebrew Bible, all provided by Congregational pastor James Chandler, prevented Bailey's exit.¹² Jedidiah Jewett remained Bailey's chief benefactor throughout his Harvard years, a fact the young man acknowledged in a letter to his parents: "He not only instructed me for this society [i.e. Harvard College], but has since been almost the procuring cause of all my benefactions; and now, whilst in Boston, he spared no pains to advance my interests. I have everything of clothing for commencement, but only a pair of stockings and a gown."¹³

Like many other eventual SPG missionaries, Bailey kept school during his years at Harvard and afterward, in order to cover expenses and bide time for a more lucrative employment.¹⁴ He taught school while a collegian in Rowley in 1753. Following graduation, he kept school in Kingston, New Hampshire, Hampton, New Hampshire, and Gloucester, Massachusetts, along with attempts to establish private schools in Kingston and his native

¹¹ Calvin R. Batchelder, A History of the Eastern Diocese, vol. I (Claremont, New Hampshire: The Claremont Manufacturing Company, 1876), 41; "Rev. Jacob Bailey," 69.

¹² Bartlet, 11; Sibley and Shipton, 522-523.

¹³ Bartlet, 31. Bailey describes in his journal a trip through Massachusetts during which many wealthy patrons contributed financially to the advancement of his education at Harvard. For extracts from this journal account, see Bartlet, 11-14.

¹⁴ Bartlet, 32.

town, between the years 1755 and 1759.¹⁵ His experience in the different locales was mixed. Bailey did not enjoy his time in Kingston. Working eleven hours a day with 150 young people, he found little time for useful leisure and scholarly pursuits.¹⁶ Writing a fellow alumnus of Harvard in September of 1755, Bailey offered the following lament.

I feel, however, the same temper
towards Mother Harvard, which the
Israelitish Songster had towards his
beloved Jerusalem, when seated beside the
waters of Babylon.

But instead of rivers or purling
streams, I find nothing except stagnating
pools and dismal swamps; instead of willow
groves, the usual repose and retreat of
disconsolate lovers, I have only ranges of
shaggy hemlock, and the gloomy shades of
lofty pines. As to a harp, never having
used one, there remains none, either to
hang up, or to fling away. The people in
these parts have no very musical ears, so
that an un-Harvardinium story will serve
instead of a song.¹⁷

Bailey recorded the same sentiment in verse during the fall of 1755:

Alas! for I languish, I moan and complain
For the absence of Harvard and all her
 bright train;
Forever my thoughts that kind mother pur-
 sue
And all her past fondness present to my
 view.
Delightful companions no more I enjoy,
Nor do I with [David] or Stephen employ
My moments of leisure. No, those are all
 spent

¹⁵ "Rev. Jacob Bailey," 70.

¹⁶ Bartlet, 33-34.

¹⁷ Bartlet, 34.

In lonely doggerel and fallen content.
 No thickets of locust, no far-spreading
 grove,
 When evening approaches, invite me to
 rove.¹⁸

Bailey was not alone in his homesickness for Harvard in the "wilds" of New England. Classmate, and future U.S. President, John Adams wrote the future missionary from Worcester, Massachusetts, on "I know not What Day" of January of 1756:

I heartily sympathize with you in your affliction, which I am the better qualified to do as I am confined myself to a like place of Torment. When I compare the gay, the delightful scenes of Harvard, with the harsh, and barbarous nature of sounds that now constantly grate my Ears, I can hardly imagine myself the same being, that once listened to Mr. Mayhew's Instructions, and revelled in all the other pleasures of an academical Life.¹⁹

Adams wrote Bailey that the only pleasure left to him was to correspond with friends, "and the more Streams (which) flow from this Source the greater is my Pleasure."²⁰ He asked the future missionary to correspond with him and to greet other old friends with the same request. He promised to be faithful in responding to any letters sent.

¹⁸ Ray P. Baker, "The Poetry of Jacob Bailey, Loyalist," The New England Quarterly 2 (January 1929): 67.

¹⁹ Bartlet, facsimile letter facing page 34.

²⁰ Ibid.

Jacob Bailey found the situation in Hampton, New Hampshire much more to his liking. He found the students to be of superior quality there, and his lodgings both accessible and satisfactory. In his journal, dated June 22, 1757, Bailey wrote that he enjoyed in Hampton the conversation of "men of sense and learning." Moreover, as the "gentle shadows of evening" approached, the young scholar found pleasure in the opposite sex, "a company of easy, ingenuous young ladies," who would stroll with him and his comrades "into the streets or neighboring fields to view the beauties of nature."²¹

Apparently the bashful Bailey had overcome his shyness around women. In fact, his future wife, Sarah [or Sally] Weeks, whom he married in the summer of 1761, was one of his students in Hampton. Miss Weeks' father, John, was a physician and colonel in the local militia. Her mother bore the maiden name Wingate, one of the hallowed names in the history of New Hampshire.²² So, Bailey's wife came from much different stock socially than he did. Sarah's brother Joshua would later serve as a contemporary colleague of Jacob Bailey in the employment of the SPG in the coastal town of Marblehead, Massachusetts.

Bailey's tenure of teaching in Hampton inspired much enthusiasm among the local populace. When offered another job in a nearby town, the loyal citizens increased Bailey's wages by L80.²³ Bailey was just as popular among his pupils. When it

²¹ Bartlet, 36.

²² Baker, 60.

²³ Bartlet, 36,

finally came time for Bailey to leave Hampton, he invited his students to come pay a farewell visit to his study. Bailey noted in his journal later that his study was full of the "little creatures" from nine o'clock until sunset. The children "were exceedingly moved" at their teacher's parting, expressing many "tokens of sorrow." Bailey confessed a mutual sentiment at the prospect of leaving the youth and found himself "inspired with many tender sensations" as he offered them his benediction.²⁴ Bailey displayed the kind of affection toward his students which would later endear him to frontier parishioners.

The teacher not only strengthened his pupils academically, he enhanced their spiritual demeanor as well. Bailey described one young woman who had opposed and scoffed at God until his intervention introduced in her "a love and reverence of her Maker." Bailey saw the same transfiguration occur in the lives of many students. "I had an opportunity, of late, to take notice of the Divine power in influencing the hearts of several, in a truly wonderful and surprising manner, which plainly shows, that no human consideration can avail against the efficacious operations of Heaven."²⁵

It was only natural, then, that Jacob Bailey should proceed toward a career in the Christian ministry. Given his background, it would of course be assumed that he would follow the Congregational way. Therefore, on April 4, 1758, Bailey,

²⁴ Ibid., 37.

²⁵ Ibid.

overcoming a bout with bashfulness, preached a sermon before an Association of dissenting pastors in Exeter, New Hampshire. They offered him their "approbation" to preach the gospel, and in his journal, Bailey prayed, "O, that I may be improved as a blessing to mankind, and be an instrument of advancing the Redeemer's kingdom!"²⁶ Much to the dismay of his family, however, Bailey soon decided to serve his "Redeemer's kingdom" within the bounds of the Church of England. Bailey found it nearly impossible to console his parents and Aunt Bailey "who all cried out upon me when I discovered my resolutions of visiting London for orders."

The factors contributing to Jacob Bailey's conformity to the Church of England are not difficult to determine. Indeed, Bailey's experience reflected a pattern of events repeated in the conversions of other SPG missionaries raised in Congregational homes. First, the young man would meet and enter into dialogue with an Anglican pastor who was often a missionary for the Society as well. The SPG missionary would raise doubts about the validity of any ordination conducted without proper episcopal supervision.²⁷ The missionary would then supply the prospective convert with reading materials on the subject while

²⁶ Batchelder, 41; Bartlet, 39.

²⁷ Anglicans and Congregationalists debated the meaning of biblical passages such as I Timothy 3:1-7 and 4:14 [King James Version]. Depending upon how the Greek words "episcopos" and "presbuteros" are translated, a case could be made that a bishop must be present for the proper ordination of a minister.

continuing to discuss the finer theological points of the controversy.

In Bailey's case, Henry Caner, Anglican rector of King's Chapel in Boston, was instrumental in turning the young man toward the Church of England. Bailey wrote Caner in September of 1759 thanking him for some books the Boston cleric had loaned him. Bailey acknowledged that all of his objections to episcopal ordination and conformity to the Church of England had been "answered entirely to [his] satisfaction" through these materials. Bailey asked for further advice and directions from the venerated veteran missionary.²⁸ No doubt Caner discussed with Bailey the crucial Scriptural texts supporting episcopal authority. He would have also related the importance of the concept of "Apostolic Succession" to the young man.²⁹ Objections to conformity to the Church of England, as raised by Independents, would have included an Anglican emphasis on ritual that approached Catholicism and a theology more Arminian than Calvinistic.³⁰

²⁸ Bartlet, 43.

²⁹ "Apostolic Succession" is the theory that all bishops can trace the heritage of their authority back to one of the original apostles of the early church. This succession provided the power necessary for Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Anglican prelates to rule their particular communions. Congregationalists dismissed this notion as "Romish" and false.

³⁰ The Puritans had been influenced by John Calvin's teaching during the years they fled to Geneva to escape the persecution of Mary Tudor, 1553-1558. Calvin emphasized God's sovereignty and maintained that the total depravity of man prevented the efficacy of any human effort to obtain salvation. Jacob Arminius, a Dutch theologian, argued that God had made man's will free and that the individual could contribute to his salvation.

Other individuals played a prominent role in Jacob Bailey's Anglican conversion. The Reverend Arthur Brown, rector and missionary to Queen's Chapel, Portsmouth, New Hampshire, assisted Caner in persuading Bailey to take up episcopal orders.³¹ Apparently, the influence of Daniel Gibbs, a Gloucester merchant whom Bailey met while keeping school there, was crucial in drawing him into the Anglican fold. Bailey found Gibbs' "aversion to rusticity and profaneness" especially attractive.³² Bailey harbored disdain for the provincial, unsophisticated town in which he was raised. It could very well be that the manner and cultural refinement of Anglican gentlemen like Gibbs offered an escape for Bailey from his experience of Rowley and its rustic Congregationalism. It seems to be one of the ironies of Jacob Bailey's life that this man of letters who relished the "virtues" of civilization so enthusiastically should continually find himself serving the Church in the "backwaters" of America and Canada.

Dr. Silvester Gardiner, a prominent physician in Boston and Senior Warden of Caner's church, King's Chapel, also played a role in Bailey's conversion. Gardiner, as a key figure in the

³¹ Arthur Browne, a veteran missionary serving the SPG from 1729 until his death on June 20, 1773, became the model for Longfellow's "Rector" in "Tales of a Wayside Inn." Browne served in Providence, Rhode Island from 1729-1735, and then in Portsmouth and Kittery, New Hampshire, for the duration of his lifetime. Browne's son, Marmaduke, followed his father's footsteps as an itinerant SPG missionary in New Hampshire from 1754-1759, and then served as rector in Newport, Rhode Island, from 1760 until his death in 1771. Arthur Browne was not native to America; he was born in Drogheda, Ireland and earned his Master's Degree from Trinity College, Dublin. See Charles F. Pascoe, Two Hundred Years of the S.P.G. (London: S.P.G., 1901).

³² Bartlet, 47.

Plymouth Company, a group of men speculating in land in the Kennebec region of Massachusetts, would become a patron of Bailey's efforts to establish the Church there.³³ Gardiner understood that worship opportunities and religious instruction were mandatory ingredients for any settlement established on his lands. He even forestalled Congregational attempts to settle a minister there due to his preference for the Church of England.³⁴

Bailey left Gloucester on December 13, 1759, walking the entire distance to Boston on foot in order to obtain the necessary documents to assist his ordination in London. The President of Harvard refused to give Bailey any testimonials, "although it was well known that I was never punished for the breach of any college laws."³⁵ The President of this bastion of Congregationalism did condescend, however, to sign Bailey's diploma. Caner feared that the lack of testimonials from Harvard "entirely confounded" Bailey's plans, and would make it "next to impossible" for the young man to "act with success."³⁶ Bailey recorded in his journal that Caner's pessimism caused him "a great deal of uneasiness."³⁷ Caner, however, adopted an alternative plan. He told Bailey that he had drawn up recommendation letters to the Society and the Bishop of London

³³ Bartlet, 46-47; Sibley and Shipton, 525.

³⁴ Ronald L. Cooksey, "The Americanization of the Anglican Church in the Northern Colonies During the Eighteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1977), 164. Cooksey argues that any opposition Bailey faced in his mission can be blamed on Gardiner's refusal to satisfy Dissenter demands for Congregational clergy.

³⁵ Bartlet, 49.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

on Bailey's behalf. If the prospective missionary could obtain the signatures of the other Boston clergy on these letters, Caner hoped that Bailey might be ordained after all. Timothy Cutler and John Troutbeck of Christ Church agreed to sign, but William Hooper of Trinity Church refused to do so, arguing that Caner "had drawn them [the letters] up without sufficient caution."³⁸ Nevertheless, Hooper told Bailey that Caner's letters should suffice without his signature, an opinion which fortunately proved to be accurate.³⁹

On January 19, 1760, Bailey sailed from Boston for London on the *Hind*. The similarity of his experience to the trans-Atlantic voyage of other missionary candidates and the fact that he kept a detailed journal of the trip, even to the point of registering the distance traveled by the ship on certain days, makes Bailey's crossing worth describing.⁴⁰ A small boat took Bailey out to the *Hind* in Boston harbor, but the conditions he found there made his first impression of the ship quite

³⁸ Ibid., 49-50. It could be that Hooper's refusal to sign Bailey's letters was an act of envy indirectly aimed at Caner. Caner, as was argued in the previous chapter of this dissertation, functioned as a "pseudo-bishop" in New England ecclesiastical affairs. Hooper, who was not a missionary funded by the SPG, may have resented Caner's power and viewed Bailey's recommendation as a forum to challenge that power. Caner's recommendation of Bailey may be seen in a series of letters written to Thomas Sherlock, bishop of London, Philip Bearcroft, Secretary of the Society, and Samuel Nicolls, master of the Temple, London, in letters no. 202-204, 15 December 1759, Henry Caner Files, Colonial And Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

³⁹ Bartlett, 50.

⁴⁰ Charles E. Allen, "Rev. Jacob Bailey, Missionary of Church of England on Kennebec River, 1760-1779; His character and work," *Maine Historical Society Collections*, vol. 7 (series 2) (Portland: Maine Historical Society, 1896), 230.

negative. A strong wind made the climb up the ship's side difficult. Once aboard, the "most horrid confusion" confronted the missionary candidate. Bailey was surrounded by a sea of humanity, a "dismal hubbub" from which he could find no retreat for more than an hour. Desperately looking for some compassionate soul to direct him to his berth, Bailey wrote that his ears had been "stunned" by the combination of the boatswain's whistle and the "swearing and hallooing of the petty officers."⁴¹

The profanity of the crew constantly discouraged Bailey. Among his cabin mates, Bailey found "the most shocking oaths and curses resounded from every corner, some loading their neighbors with bitter execrations, while others uttered imprecations too awful to be recorded."⁴² One of Bailey's messmates, a minister's son from Worcester, England, "appeared to be a man of fine sense" and "considerable breeding," but "his language, upon all occasions, was extremely profane and immodest, yet nobody seemed a greater admirer of delicacy in women than himself."⁴³ Another man, the ship's carpenter, "drank excessively, swore roundly, and talked extravagantly," while an Irish midshipman Bailey met was "the greatest champion of profaneness that ever fell under my notice" who uttered the "sacred name" with every word and

⁴¹ Bartlet, 51.

⁴² Ibid., 52.

⁴³ Ibid., 53.

roared out a "tumultuous volley of stormy oaths and imprecations."⁴⁴

Bailey's living conditions on board ship matched the language he so deplored there. A guide escorted him to a "dark and dismal region" below deck where the "fumes of pitch, bilge water and other kinds of nastiness" nearly suffocated the young man. He entered a small cabin "hung round with damp and greasy canvas." This room appeared "most gloomy and frightful," barely superior in Bailey's imagination "to the infernal abodes, where darkness and horror remain unmolested."

In the middle stood a table of pine, varnished over with nasty slime, furnished with a bottle of rum and an old tin mug, with an hundred and fifty bruises and several holes, through which the liquor poured in as many streams. This was quickly filled with toddy, and as speedily emptied by two or three companions, who presently joined us in this doleful retreat. Not all the scenes of horror about us could afford me much dismay, till I received the news that this detestable apartment was allotted by the captain to be the place of my habitation during the voyage! I endeavored to soothe the melancholy ideas that began to intrude upon my mind, by considering that I should, through the permission of a favorable Providence, shortly be in brighter regions.⁴⁵

When supper arrived, a concoction of beef, onions, bread, and potatoes served up in a broth, Bailey shared the limited eating utensils with his messmates. "The table was furnished

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 52.

with two pewter plates, the half of one was melted away, and the other, full of holes, was more weather-beaten than the sides of the ship; one knife with a bone handle, one fork with a broken tine, half a metal spoon, and another, taken at Quebec, with part of the bowl cut off."⁴⁶ Bailey battled seasickness throughout the voyage, as well as a "greasy canvas bag" hung over some beams in which he was supposed to sleep. With the utmost difficulty, he prevented himself from "falling over on the other side."⁴⁷ Unlike many other missionaries, as well as George Whitefield on his trips across the Atlantic, Bailey did not even attempt to conduct services on board on the Sabbath. Rather, Bailey observed that his shipmates spent Sundays in a "very disagreeable and scandalous manner, without any kind of divine worship," and that they passed their time on this holy day in "diversions and quarrels."⁴⁸ Perhaps the bashfulness of Bailey mixed with the irreligious behavior of his fellow passengers combined to discourage the missionary from venturing an offer of church services.⁴⁹

Jacob Bailey landed in England in just under one month, on February 16, 1760. The *Hind* dropped anchor in the harbor of Portsmouth and the lieutenant of marines on board haughtily remarked, "'Now, Mr. Bailey, you have a view of a Christian country, which you had never an opportunity of seeing before,'"

⁴⁶ Ibid., 54.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 55.

⁴⁹ Bailey's journal extracts describing his entire trans-Atlantic crossing are fascinating, and may be read in Bartlett, 50-58.

intimating that the "people of New England" were a "barbarous and inhospitable generation."⁵⁰ Indeed, one shopkeeper in Guilford, when asked by the young missionary about English walnuts, exclaimed in amazement, "'Is it possible for a person educated in New England to speak such good English! Why, sir; you speak as plain English as we do.'" A crowd subsequently gathered around Bailey to examine this curiosity.⁵¹

Bailey took a "stage machine" from Portsmouth to London, where he availed himself of the sights and sounds of this famous city. When not involved in the activities pursuant to his ordination and acceptance into Society service, Bailey tramped about the city with James Greateon, another candidate for orders who would eventually serve as rector of Christ Church (the old "North Church"), Boston, Massachusetts. The young men visited Westminster Abbey; Bailey, as could be expected, wrote a detailed description of the church.⁵² He dined on more than one occasion with Benjamin Franklin in London. At one of these dinners, Bailey noted that "(n)othing could possibly be more agreeable than the conversation, behavior and entertainment of this afternoon."⁵³ Later, during the stormy days of the American Revolution, Bailey, the Tory, would ridicule Franklin, particularly as a figure of Whig folly and anti-Church, free-

⁵⁰ Allen, 232.

⁵¹ Ibid., 233.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Bartlet, 66.

thinking Deism.⁵⁴ Jacob Bailey also enjoyed a performance by the famed British actor David Garrick at Drury Lane Theater.⁵⁵ A man frequently compared to Garrick, George Whitefield, whose revivalistic sermons were often dramatic and emotional, drew Bailey's attention. He and his companions visited Whitefield's famous Tabernacle at Moorfields on March 14, 1760, where Bailey "saw multitudes of people crowding along from every quarter, to hear the entertaining impertinence of that gentleman."⁵⁶ Bailey could not tolerate the theology of this fellow Church of England minister, but he could not deny the man's celebrity status. He calculated that nearly ten thousand persons were in and about Whitefield's Tabernacle the day he visited. Among the group were "many serious people of the lower sort, several of fashion, and a great number of villains, who take the advantage to pick the pockets of the innocent rabble."⁵⁷

The main business facing Jacob Bailey in London was ecclesiastical. Bailey presented his testimonials from Caner to Philip Bearcroft, Secretary of the SPG, and to Samuel Nicolls, representative of the Bishop of London, on February 27th. He met with the Archbishop of Canterbury the next day, conversing with him in a "most easy and polite manner" for more than half

⁵⁴ Bailey's mocking verse of Franklin is sampled and examined in Baker, 81-89. In his poetry, Bailey satirizes Franklin's scientific accomplishments and political achievements. "In Nature's work could point out blunders,/And do himself ten thousand wonders./He by a kite contrived to rise,/And range at large about the skies . . . 'Tis said by electricity/He once was known to kill a flea."

⁵⁵ Sibley and Shipton, 525.

⁵⁶ Bartlet, 63-64.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

an hour about the war (French and Indian) in America and other subjects. Thereupon, his Lordship wrote to Dr. Nicolls that he need have no scruple in admitting Bailey to ordination.⁵⁸

The following day, Nicolls administered the examination all missionary candidates endured before their orders were approved. Bailey was so nervous that morning he could eat no breakfast. Hiking two miles to the site of the ordeal, Bailey was ushered into the presence of his examiner. First, he gave the young man a Greek New Testament and asked him to translate a portion of it into either English or Latin depending upon Bailey's preference. Nicolls gave Bailey the freedom to select the passage and the prospective missionary rendered the first chapter of *Matthew* with ease. Next, the examiner asked Bailey to translate into English a specific section of Grotius de Veritate. Bailey completed this exercise without any errors. Finally, Nicolls requested that Bailey translate into Latin the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England and then explain the meaning of each article. Bailey confessed that he completed this task, "not only to his [examiner's acceptance], but even far beyond what I could wish."⁵⁹ Nicolls found Bailey to be well-qualified, and recommended him for ordination the next Sunday.

Jacob Bailey was admitted to deacon's orders on March 2 and priest's orders on March 16. It was a common practice to

⁵⁸ Ibid., 61.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 61-62.

administer both oaths of ordination in close proximity for American missionaries. The Bishop of Rochester, Zachary Pearce, ordained Bailey on the first occasion; the Bishop of Peterboro, Richard Terrick, later Bishop of London, did the honors on the second occasion.⁶⁰ Following the first ordination, Bailey and his fellow ordinands dined with the Bishop of Rochester in true splendor. Seated at a long table covered with silver dishes in a vast hall composed of the finest marble, Bailey was overwhelmed by the magnificence of the repast. "We had ten servants to attend us, and were served with twenty-four different dishes, dressed in such an elegant manner, that many of us could scarce eat a mouthful. The drinking vessels were either of glass or of solid gold."⁶¹ Bailey paid half a guinea for his second set of orders, plus half a crown to the man who attended at the altar.⁶² Clearly, the new missionary understood the significance of the service upon which he had entered.

The whole affair was conducted with the utmost solemnity. O, that our minds may ever be sensible of the weight and importance of this sacred office to which we are now appointed, and may the Divine influence animate and direct our actions to the glory of Heaven and the happiness of those beings which surround us!⁶³

On March 22, Bailey received L25 sterling, a half year's salary, from the Society. He immediately walked to the place

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid., 62.

⁶² Ibid., 64.

⁶³ Ibid.

most candidates in London frequented after being paid, a book store on New Bond Street, to buy some volumes to assist him in his ministry.⁶⁴ King George II signed Bailey's ordination, and the new priest received nineteen pounds, seven shillings and sixpence which constituted the royal bounty for all American clergymen. The Prince of Wales gave Bailey a copy of Leland's View of the Deistical Writers and some other books.⁶⁵ Bailey paid ten guineas for his return trip to America near the end of March, arriving back in Boston on June 4, 1760.

Jacob Bailey's missionary service on the frontier of eastern Massachusetts is a case study of the adaptation of a religious institution, the Church of England, to primitive and rustic conditions. The Society recognized the uniqueness of this assignment when they sent their first missionary, William MacClenachan, into the region. Calling MacClenachan a man of "uncommon fortitude" with a mind "cheerfully disposed to undergo the Dangers and Difficulties to be expected in that Mission," the SPG sent this candidate to the backwoods of Massachusetts with its blessing.⁶⁶ MacClenachan proved to be a charlatan who remained on the Kennebec for only three years. Dawdling in Boston rather than removing to the frontier, MacClenachan had tried to set himself up as a physician there using "quack

⁶⁴ Ibid., 66.

⁶⁵ "Rev. Jacob Bailey," 71.

⁶⁶ Abstract of the Proceedings of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 21 February 1755-20 February 1756, in Kenneth W. Cameron, Ethos of Anglicanism in Colonial New England and New York (Hartford, Ct.: Transcendental Books, 1981), 99.

medicines" he had bought in London. Incurring huge debts, this errant missionary took Henry Caner's advice and headed south to Virginia and Maryland to find a more lucrative vacancy.⁶⁷

The inhabitants of Pownalboro petitioned the Society late in 1759 to replace MacClenachan with Jacob Bailey. In describing his parish to one correspondent, Bailey called it "a remote corner of America."⁶⁸ The families in his parish numbered nearly 1500 in an area Bailey described as "100 miles in length and 60 in breadth."⁶⁹ Essentially, Bailey's pastoral responsibility, including neighboring areas demanding his occasional attention, encompassed what was then most of the current state of Maine.⁷⁰ Obviously, Jacob Bailey's experience as an episcopal priest was bound to vary from his English or American counterparts simply based on the size of his parish.

Travel was extremely difficult throughout the Kennebec region. "Rapid rivers" and "impenetrable forests" interfered with Bailey's itinerancy. During the winter, the temperatures dropped so drastically and the snow was so deep that "moving from place to place" was "still more impracticable" for the

⁶⁷ For a description of McClenachan's character and behavior by King's Chapel, Boston, rector, Henry Caner, see Henry Caner, Boston, to William Smith, Provost of the College of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, 21 November 1759, in Henry Caner Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford. On his way to Virginia or Maryland, MacClenachan stopped off in Philadelphia and repeated his charade there.

⁶⁸ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro on the Kennebec River, to Samuel Parker, Boston, 14 March 1777, Jacob Bailey Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁶⁹ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 26 March 1761, SPG Manuscripts (Library of Congress Transcriptions), Series B, vol. 22, no. 59.

⁷⁰ Bartlet, 78.

frontier missionary. Nonetheless, Bailey proudly reported that he had journeyed several hundred miles in the face of these obstacles to preach to adults and to baptize their children.⁷¹

No doubt the duress of travel impeded the movements of the parishioners to services as well as those of the priest. The number of rivers throughout the region required, along with the lack of any roads, that the canoe be the principal form of transportation in the summer. During the winter, the sleigh was used by Bailey to travel along the frozen rivers.⁷² The sheer depth of the snow, five or six feet deep in places, left some settlements, like Georgetown and Harpwell, unreachable for Bailey's ministry.⁷³ Even without snow, it took Bailey eight hours on the water [18 miles] to reach Georgetown. During one such trip, Bailey got lost in the woods and spent the night in the open air exposed to a severe thunder storm. In the summer, "armies of flies and musketoes," along with extreme heat and hunger, assaulted Bailey on his trek to the remote parish of Georgetown.⁷⁴

Not only did the size of Bailey's parish and the prevailing weather make his travel difficult, it also affected his appearance. Calling himself "tragic-comic" in attire, Bailey wrote one correspondent of the impact of "violent storms

⁷¹ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 26 March 1761, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 59.

⁷² Bartlet, 78.

⁷³ SPG Abstracts, 19 February 1762-18 February 1763, in Cameron, Ethos, 123.

⁷⁴ Bartlet, 91.

of rain, mire to the horse's belly, wet to my skin, and my clothes rent in climbing over windfalls." He arrived for services "in this pickle" and then returned in the same "shattered condition."⁷⁵ Toting ecclesiastical accouterments for miles and miles on solitary sojourns shaped Bailey's practice of Anglican ministry. The Society instructed its missionaries to dress decently as is fitting to a clergyman so as to give no offense either in word or deed.⁷⁶ Bailey carried the necessary liturgical apparel on these trips, but the arduous travel conditions he endured often hampered his desire to conduct services appropriately attired.

The lack of collegiality made Bailey's ministry along the Kennebec unique. Indeed, unlike any other town in the province of Massachusetts Bay, the establishment of the Church of England in Pownalboro predated the organization of a Congregational parish, or any other denomination for that matter.⁷⁷ No other Anglican missionaries were particularly close to Bailey with whom he could regularly fellowship. Henry Caner reminded Bailey of this fact in inviting him to the annual clergy convention held in Boston in June of 1766. "As you have few opportunities of meeting and conversing with your Brethren, I doubt not you will cheerfully lay hold of this, and take the benefit of the

⁷⁵ "Rev. Jacob Bailey," 73-74.

⁷⁶ A Collection of Papers, Printed by Order of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts (London: Joseph Downing, 1706), 25.

⁷⁷ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 27 October 1771, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 66.

brotherly correspondence and advice which such an occasion affords."⁷⁸

For the first eight years of Bailey's missionary service, Joshua Wingate Weeks was the only other missionary or priest to visit this solitary clerical figure in his "remote and uncomfortable situation." Given that Weeks was Bailey's brother-in-law, even this visit can be viewed as almost compulsory.⁷⁹ The only other religious leaders Bailey found upon arrival in his frontier parish were "a number of illiterate exhorters who ramble about the country and endeavour all in their power to seduce the people from order and decency."⁸⁰ Bailey had little use for this type of religious "fanatic" who

endeavors to fix upon them [the regular clergy] the charge of gross immorality, which he whispers to his female adherents, with the appearance, of great delicacy, with forced sighs, affected groans, doleful looks, and artificial tears. The progress of this enthusiasm . . . is attended with many pernicious effects. It encourages idleness, excites dissension, begets poverty, brings Christianity into contempt, and promotes a criminal intercourse between the sexes. People of this character delight, if possible, to assemble in the evening, and find a

⁷⁸ Henry Caner, Boston, to Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, 17 May 1766, in Kenneth W. Cameron, Letter-Book of the Rev. Henry Caner (Hartford, Ct.: Transcendental Books, 1972), 64.

⁷⁹ Jacob Bailey, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 27 June 1768, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 63.

⁸⁰ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 26 March 1761, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 59. No doubt these "illiterate exhorters" were lay preachers associated with Methodism or some other manifestation of revivalism on the frontier.

pretence to continue their lectures beyond the usual hour of repose.⁸¹

Bailey believed that these lay exhorters encouraged sexual immorality among their auditors by their theatrics.

The scarcity of books at his frontier outpost deprived Jacob Bailey of the key tool utilized by other colonial Anglican priests. This dearth was particularly aggravating for a man who had loved to read and to write since childhood. The cultured Bailey fell victim again to the "rusticity" he so abhorred during his youth in Rowley. William MacClenachan absconded with the books belonging to the mission when he left. Furthermore, when Bailey arrived, he discovered that the lack of Common Prayer Books in Pownalboro hindered his ministry there. "I humbly consider that common prayer Books from the Society would be of great service among the people, as they are desirous of joining in divine worship, and cannot obtain them."⁸² These books were sent, along with some Catechisms and a collection of "pious small Tracts." Bailey thanked the Society and acknowledged that they would be of great help to the "younger Sort, and promote the Decency of Worship."⁸³

Nevertheless, the missionary in Pownalboro was asking for more small prayer books from the Society nine years later for

⁸¹ Baker, 78. Bailey wrote some very entertaining verse about the theatrics of these lay exhorters and the sexual immorality he believed they bred by their very ministry. This poetry may be sampled in Baker, 78-79.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Batchelder, 21-22.

the younger part of his congregation who were "wholly destitute" of them and had no way "to procure them."⁸⁴ Bailey's church was growing, but the difficulty of acquiring reading materials remained intractable. A portion of Bailey's own personal library was lost in a fire the following fall, including "Stackhouse's History of the Bible and Broughton's dictionary of all religions."⁸⁵ The missionary hoped that the Society might help him recoup the loss, as well as to send more prayer books and catechisms. "Since the building of the church [no church was built in Pownalboro until 1770] I have catechized and instructed the children in publick and learnt several young persons to read English."⁸⁶ By 1779, due to war-time conditions and the general poverty endemic to the Massachusetts frontier at any time, Bailey was even running out of paper upon which to write.⁸⁷ In concluding a letter to the Society in 1768, Jacob Bailey alluded to the pressing nature of this continual hardship. "(W)hat has always rendered my situation peculiarly unhappy is my want of conveniences of prosecuting my studies."⁸⁸

The parishioners of the town of Frankfort, renamed Pownalboro when the Lincoln County Court was moved there in

⁸⁴ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 5 November 1770, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 65.

⁸⁵ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 27 October 1771, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 66.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to Samuel Parker, Boston, 25 March 1779, Jacob Bailey Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁸⁸ Jacob Bailey, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 27 June 1768, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 63.

1760, had promised Bailey a Glebe of 200 acres of land, which, with their subscriptions, would yield 20 pounds sterling per year towards Bailey's support. In addition, they pledged to build him a parsonage and a church building for the parish once the French and Indian War ended.⁸⁹ Until these construction projects were completed, Bailey was to live in the barracks of Fort Richmond and conduct divine service in the chapel there. He was to live from the yield of a farm that was leased to Silvester Gardiner which surrounded the Fort. Bailey first lived in Fort Shirley in 1760 and then moved himself and his new bride into Fort Richmond in the spring of 1761.⁹⁰ Soon it became apparent, due to the poverty of his parishioners, as well as perhaps a bit too much unfounded optimism behind their initial overtures, that the people of Pownalboro could not provide housing for their missionary.

Bailey's complaints about the town's unfulfilled promises began as early as March 1761. No building large enough to contain the number of folks who attended worship was available, and he estimated that it would take two years to fund such a building and the parsonage.⁹¹ No remedy to this problem, however, had emerged by 1767. "Seven years hard service in this rough and disagreeable country" left Bailey without church, without glebe, and without parsonage. He struggled to adapt to

⁸⁹ SPG Abstracts, 23 February 1759-15 February 1760, in Cameron, Ethos, 110.

⁹⁰ Sibley and Shipton, 526-527.

⁹¹ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 26 March 1761, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 59.

the exigencies of his frontier context. Dr. Gardiner's lease on the farm at Richmond had expired and Bailey could no longer make use of that land. The missionary had just rented a small house for himself and his family, but might be forced to "quit it without being able to produce myself another." Still, "not a foot of land (was) granted for a parsonage," and Bailey was obliged to "officiate in the court house for want of a church."⁹²

Things had not changed the following year for Bailey; in fact, circumstances had worsened. As he had predicted, Bailey could no longer pay the rent [three pounds per annum] on his small house as his parishioners had provided subscriptions and fees of only four pounds during the year. He had been forced to move to the other side of the river where he had "only one wretched apartment for (him)self and (his) family." He had spent five pounds "fitting up" the several houses he had lived in over the years, none of which had been reimbursed. However, he recognized the impoverished condition of his people and did not attack them for their inability to provide for him and his family.

Jacob Bailey described the poverty of his parishioners in his journal when he first arrived among them. The country itself was "rugged and disagreeable" while the people, in general, were "so poor, not to say idle," that they struggled to provide the most basic necessities of food and clothing for

⁹² Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 30 October 1767, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 62.

their families. They lived in "miserable huts" which hardly sheltered them from the "inclemency of the weather in a rigorous climate. Half of the houses lacked chimneys to provide heat during the winter and many of the people "had no other beds than a heap of straw." Multitudes of the children ran barefoot through the winter snows and whole families subsisted for months at a time on little more than potatoes roasted in the ashes.⁹³

Despite these primitive living conditions, Bailey continually asserted that these people, at heart, were "serious, honest and industrious."⁹⁴ Bailey contended that his parishioners suffered from a combination of factors which served to impede any prospect of prosperity. The French and Indian War ravaged the eastern frontier of Massachusetts, a region where "possessions have always borne an excessive price" anyway.⁹⁵ Many of these settlers still lived in the shadow of a debt incurred by their trans-Atlantic passage from Germany. Cognizant of the financial straits of his people, Bailey was always reluctant to insist that they fulfill the subscriptions they promised the Society upon his assignment to the region. Consequently, Bailey suffered along with his parish, barely able to make ends meet on a frontier outpost where the cost of living was excessive.⁹⁶ The proprietors of the Plymouth Company, Bailey's initial financial backers, did not make the Parson's

⁹³ Bartlet, 88.

⁹⁴ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 23 September 1766, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 60.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

plight any more palatable. They frequently told the settlers that any ministerial taxes collected for Bailey in town would be immediately refunded by him to the Company.⁹⁷

The characteristics and conditions of Reverend Bailey's parishioners necessitated a flexible ministry adapted to Anglican ritual. "I found the people in these parts a mixture of several nations," many of whom had been forced out of their homelands through persecution or penury. "These speak diverse languages and have been educated in so many different religions that it is extremely difficult to understand them, notwithstanding which they are pretty constant in their attendance on public worship."⁹⁸ French Huguenots and German refugees had settled in the area; Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Calvinists, Lutherans, Independents, Quakers, Anglicans, and people without specific religious inclinations constituted Bailey's pool of potential communicants.⁹⁹ The earnestness with which many of these people looked at Bailey while they tried to understand what he was saying frequently amused the missionary.¹⁰⁰

Obviously, the order of the Anglican rite was foreign to many of these groups. Pownalboro had no communion vessels at first; once they were secured, Bailey began the task of

⁹⁶ Jacob Bailey, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 27 June 1768, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 63.

⁹⁷ Sibley and Shipton, 529.

⁹⁸ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 26 March 1761, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 59.

⁹⁹ Allen, 228.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

acquainting his frontier parish with Church doctrine and practice. He told the Society in 1762 that the "People are now mostly satisfied with the form of Baptism prescribed by the Church of England, and none object to the Order of Holy Communion."¹⁰¹ Bailey reported happily that men initially "abandoned to disorder, vice and profaneness" now pursued "industry, morality and religion." He credited this transformation to the performance of Anglican worship services on the frontier.¹⁰² Bailey recorded in his journal that anyone surveying his ecclesiastical efforts on the Kennebec would have to agree that his ministry "required no small degree of resolution, prudence and patience, as well as strength of constitution" to conduct services properly among such an "ignorant and unsteady" people.¹⁰³ Aware of the sacrifices he made to minister to his parishioners, Bailey's success offered him no small measure of satisfaction and self-congratulation.

Indeed, Bailey confronted a spiritual "hodge podge" in Pownalboro. Not only were most illiterate, but few heads of families were even baptized.

some had a very weak and imperfect notion of a future state, and fancied that they should enjoy their wives and children in another world; many, I may add, most houses were destitute of Bibles, or any other books; they had no settled

¹⁰¹ SPG Abstracts, 19 February 1762-18 February 1763, in Cameron, Ethos, 122.

¹⁰² Ibid., 123.

¹⁰³ Bartlet, 91.

principles; and, in short, their morals were extremely deficient.¹⁰⁴

Bailey, the ex-schoolteacher, immediately began to teach English and catechize adults, and most especially the young. Despite finding his audience "deficient" in religious principles, he reported success among the various Christian persuasions. As early as 1761, Bailey wrote the Society that a "few families among us of the Romish church . . . begin to be constant in their attendance at divine service."¹⁰⁵ In October of 1771, Bailey indicated that "several dissenters who have since come among us are very friendly and constant in their attendance at church."¹⁰⁶ The next year, Bailey baptized 49 persons in his parish, of whom "21 had belonged to rigid dissenting families."¹⁰⁷

Clearly, Jacob Bailey came to care deeply for his frontier parish, but the difficulties of providing for his family drove him to request a removal from the Society. In 1767, Bailey's friends entreated him to seek a vacancy in Massachusetts or New Hampshire should the Society have such a post available. The inquiry did not come without some hesitation. "At the same time I offer this request, I am so sensible of the importance of this mission, and the necessities of the poor people that I had

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 89.

¹⁰⁵ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 26 March 1761, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 59.

¹⁰⁶ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 27 October 1771, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 66.

¹⁰⁷ Batchelder, 28.

rather continue under the greatest difficulties than be instrumental in depriving them of the Gospel."¹⁰⁸ One year later, an opening for Bailey to move did appear. The people of Amesbury, Massachusetts, to whom Bailey had preached in the past on his journeys to and from Boston, were petitioning the Society for a mission and requested that Bailey supply that mission. The chances of providing for his family were better in Amesbury, a likelihood Bailey described as a "greater prospect of my doing good" there. Bailey asked the Society to expedite his move to the new parish "as soon as a proper person appears to supply" the mission in Pownalboro.¹⁰⁹ Such a candidate never materialized; however, the overall circumstances along the Kennebec improved, and Jacob Bailey never left his original mission.

Part of the "improvement" realized along the Kennebec included the buildings the parishioners had originally promised Bailey, a church and a residence. Bailey and a group of his wardens traveled to Boston in 1768 to solicit subscriptions for a church building. Dr. Gardiner assisted them in their efforts and they managed to accumulate pledges of £120.¹¹⁰ Jacob Bailey excitedly informed the Society that the first service was held in a new church building on November 4, 1770. "The outside and

¹⁰⁸ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 30 October 1767, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 62.

¹⁰⁹ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 4 October 1768, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 64.

¹¹⁰ Jacob Bailey, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 27 June 1768, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 63.

windows are finished, and the floors laid so that it is in some measure decent and convenient. Its dimensions are 60 feet in length including the chancel and 32 feet in breadth."¹¹¹ Bailey smugly added that the dissenters in town were "mortified and incensed at the success we have had in procuring benefactions and so far accomplishing the pious design" of building the church. No wonder the Congregationalists were ashamed; no meeting house had yet been erected in town.¹¹² Bailey's congregation grew once they began to meet in their church building.¹¹³ Apparently the building inspired a good deal of pride among these pioneer Anglicans; they had "built at their own expense an elegant pulpit and reading desk and their wives and daughters have furnished them with cushions and hangings of crimson Damask" by the fall of 1773.¹¹⁴ Once the Lord's house had been constructed, a domicile for the rector was quickly erected. By October 1771, the frame of the parsonage had been enclosed and one or two rooms of the structure had been finished. He and his family had moved in, but Bailey told the Society that a huge debt had been contracted to cover the expenses of the church and the parson's home. The total bill so

¹¹¹ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 5 November 1770, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 65.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 27 October 1771, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 66.

¹¹⁴ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 4 October 1773, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 67.

far was L200 sterling, fifty of which Dr. Gardiner had supplied.¹¹⁵

Bailey's efforts to evangelize neighborhood Indians did not parallel his increasing success among the Anglo-Americans in his parish. Remnants of the Norridgewalk Tribe who subsisted by means of hunting, these Native Americans were characterized by Bailey as leading a "rambling life . . . very savage in their Dress and Manners," and, while having a language of their own, "universally speak French."¹¹⁶ He offered to educate their children, but found that the tribe in general suffered an aversion to English Protestants.¹¹⁷ In part, this hostility originated in the murder of two of their leaders, supposedly by a "couple of English hunters," but there was insufficient evidence to convict the accused of the crime. Hence, the Indians, "greatly enraged," were laboring to unite distant tribes to take revenge. Bailey wrote the Society with remorse that this unfortunate situation had already resulted in over L1000 sterling of damage upon the Kennebec River, "a great sum considering the poverty of the people."¹¹⁸

The other factor contributing to the poor relations between the English Protestants and the Norridgewalk tribe,

¹¹⁵ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 27 October 1771, in William S. Perry, ed., Historical Collections Relating to the American Colonial Church, Volume III: Massachusetts (Hartford, Ct.: [privately printed], 1873), 562.

¹¹⁶ Bartlet, 83-84.

¹¹⁷ Sibley and Shipton, 528.

¹¹⁸ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 23 September 1766, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 60.

according to Bailey, was their adherence to Roman Catholicism and the propaganda fed them by French missionaries. The devotion of these Native American Catholics was so great that they visited Canada "once or twice a year for Absolution." Bailey complained that most Jesuits, "instead of endeavouring to reform their [the Indians'] morals, comply with them in their most extravagant vices, and teach them that nothing is necessary to eternal Salvation, but to believe in the Name of Christ, to acknowledge the Pope (as) holy Vicar, and to extirpate the English, because they cruelly murdered the Saviour of Mankind."¹¹⁹

Bailey's disdain for the Jesuits was not indiscriminate, however. In his manuscript history of the Eastern Country, written after his exile from America, Bailey praised the "self-sacrificing zeal, the education and culture" of one of the French missionaries who had worked among the Indians:

[T]hough mistaken in his religious and political principles, he honestly endeavored to support the welfare of his disciples, and to pursue the dictates of his conscience; but like other upright men, he perished in the cause he labored to maintain, and by the power he most heartily despised. To blacken the moral character of a person for no other reason than because his country, education, and interest are opposed to our own, is narrow, base and ungenerous.¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ SPG Abstracts, 21 February 1766-20 February 1767, in Cameron, Ethos, 141.

¹²⁰ Allen, 243.

This SPG missionary maintained respect for other missionaries in the backwoods and the challenges which faced them, no matter what denomination they represented.

Another feature of Bailey's ministry to the colonial American frontier was the mobility of his parishioners who kept pushing up river to cultivate more land and to establish new settlements. The Reverend Henry Caner, leading clergyman in Boston, recognized this demographic dynamic soon after Bailey arrived in Pownalboro and recommended the addition of two more missionaries to the area. Caner told the Society that with one missionary to the west of Bailey and one to the east, he was certain the entire country would unite around an Anglican profession.¹²¹ Bailey quickly concurred with Caner's suggestion. He asked the Society in 1762 to send a missionary to Georgetown, Harpwell and places adjacent, where 7000 inhabitants resided bereft of any minister of any denomination. These frontier settlements were located twenty miles from Bailey and were nearly unreachable during the winter.¹²²

Furthermore, if a missionary could be settled in Georgetown, Bailey argued that he could press further into the frontier and "do more service in the New Settlements, and upon the neighbouring Rivers of Sheepscott and Dumorascotta." Georgetown formally petitioned the Society for a missionary in

¹²¹ Henry Caner, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 6 October 1760, in Perry, 458.

¹²² SPG Abstracts, 19 February 1762-18 February 1763, in Cameron, Ethos, 123.

1762, promising to provide a parsonage, twenty pounds sterling per year, and a new church building which was already under construction.¹²³ The Society responded favorably to this petition and sent Willard Wheeler to Georgetown in May of 1768. He labored there for four years, leaving for Newport, Rhode Island in 1772. Once again, the ministry at Georgetown fell into Jacob Bailey's already full lap.¹²⁴

Still people continued to move up river, seeking better land and greater fortune. Jacob Bailey extended his ministry to the breaking point to accommodate his burgeoning parish. Simultaneously, he besieged the Society with pleas for help. In 1771, Bailey told the Society of a new settlement known as Gardinerstown, funded almost entirely by Silvester Gardiner of Boston. Located almost 9 miles from Pownalboro, the town already enjoyed the existence of a new church building just waiting for a missionary to serve in it.¹²⁵ Bailey renewed his call for assistance in 1773. Infant settlements extended 45 miles along the river from Pownalboro and contained no less than 400 people bereft of any religious instruction. Bailey knew that many of these people would be "well disposed towards the church" because "many were formerly under my care at Pownalboro" and several were communicants of "good character." In just two visits to Gardinerstown the preceding summer, Bailey had

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Batchelder, 26, 28.

¹²⁵ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 27 October 1771, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 66.

baptized twenty-two persons, three of them adults. It appeared "probable" to Bailey "that if a missionary was fixed at Gardinerstown with proper encouragement the people in general would adhere to the church."¹²⁶ The boundaries of the Massachusetts frontier were expanding; Bailey admonished the Society that the Anglican Church would reap significant converts if it sent more workers into the harvest field.

Obviously, Jacob Bailey faced a host of trials and much adversity ministering on the eastern frontier of Massachusetts. He was forced to adapt his ministry continually to primitive, difficult, and dangerous conditions. Nevertheless, his endurance clearly bore fruit. A survey of his reports to the Society over time chronicles his success. By 1762, he concluded that the morality of his parishioners was beginning to improve.¹²⁷ The following year, Bailey optimistically reported that his people were "generally constant in their Attendance upon public Worship, and pay a much greater Regard to the Lord's Day than formerly."¹²⁸ In 1772, Bailey was finally seeing the real fruit of his hard work. "Many, after having long absented from public worship, are returned to it" and "the people are more united."¹²⁹ Examination of Bailey's baptismal figures over

¹²⁶ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 4 October 1773, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 67.

¹²⁷ SPG Abstracts, 19 February 1762-18 February 1763, in Cameron, Ethos, 123.

¹²⁸ SPG Abstracts, 18 February 1763-17 February 1764, in Cameron, Ethos, 126.

¹²⁹ SPG Abstracts, 21 February 1772-19 February 1773, in Cameron, Ethos, 157.

time offers the same perspective of his increasing fruitfulness. Beginning with the fall of each year, from 1764-1765 Bailey baptized 43 infants and 3 adults; from 1765-1766, he baptized 38 infants and 1 adult; and from 1766-1767, he baptized 31 infants and 1 adult. He added 2 new communicants each year.¹³⁰ With the completion of his church building in 1770, Bailey's baptismal figures significantly improved. In 1772 he baptized 49 persons; in 1774, he baptized 51 infants and 4 adults.¹³¹ Finally Bailey seemed to be establishing order in his frontier parish.

But it was not to be. Even the frontier could not escape the turmoil of the American Revolution. In a remarkable letter written from Falmouth in July of 1775, Jacob Bailey informed the Society of the situation unhappy for him and anyone still friendly to the Crown. "The predominant infatuation of the present times has at length reached my parish and spreads with unceasing and frightful rapidity through all the eastern settlements." Bailey theorized that the rough manners and lack of sophistication which characterized inhabitants of frontier Massachusetts exacerbated the violence stirred by rebellion. The resolutions of the American Congress were being implemented with "inhuman severity." Mobs of rebels were physically coercing Loyalists to swear allegiance to the dictates of Congress. Thousands of Tories, according to Bailey, were flying

¹³⁰ SPG Abstracts, 21 February 1766-20 February 1767, and 20 February 1767-19 February 1768, in Cameron, Ethos, 141 and 144.

¹³¹ SPG Abstracts, 21 February 1772-19 February 1773, and 18 February 1774-17 February 1775, in Cameron, Ethos, 157 and 165.

from their homes. "In a word the inhabitants of New England are deeply involved in the horrors of confusion, Anarchy, war and bloodshed." Bailey found his heart broken and bleeding for his country without offering any excuse for this "folly, extravagance, and fury of the people which has no example in history."¹³²

Moreover, Bailey advised the Society that, despite public declarations of allegiance, the King was viewed in Massachusetts as a "merciless tyrant" whose name was seldom mentioned "without the fiercest and most bitter execrations." Bailey complained that dissenting ministers throughout New England were attacking his colleagues with a "Rhombic spirit of bitterness" as they employed their eloquence to kindle the "flames of sedition." The Congregational clergy, according to Bailey, accused the Church of England ministers of being inimical to liberty and determined to join the British government in establishing popery in America. Services were continuing in Pownalboro and Falmouth, but parishioners were being threatened merely on account of their Anglican church membership. Bailey's parishioners were unable to support him financially under these dire circumstances; Bailey had to depend upon friends traveling to Great Britain to collect his stipend from the Society. He had great hopes in the success of the British army, especially since a "levelling spirit rages" through America which Bailey

¹³² Jacob Bailey, Falmouth, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 6 July 1775, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 68.

hoped would wreck any sort of discipline and respect for authority among American troops.¹³³

Jacob Bailey was no stranger to local opposition; over the years, he had faced the usual amount offered Anglican missionaries in New England. The absence of a Congregational minister prior to Bailey's tenure in Pownalboro seemed to inflame a few of the leading townspeople. In 1766, some leading men sought to discourage the attendance of some of Bailey's parishioners.¹³⁴ The following year, some of Bailey's papers and part of the church's collection were stolen out of the missionary's desk.¹³⁵ In 1768, two or three individuals insinuated at a congregational meeting that Bailey was about to prosecute his parishioners for failure to pay the support they owed him in arrears.¹³⁶ That same year, apparently the same gentlemen sought to establish a rival meeting house in Pownalboro. They failed, and the fact that conscience had nothing to do with their aims was evident, according to Bailey, by the fact that these men never attended "service among the dissenters in the neighbouring parishes."¹³⁷

Still, the adversity Bailey faced as the Revolution began reached unprecedented levels. He was assaulted twice by a

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 23 September 1766, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 60.

¹³⁵ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 30 October 1767, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 62.

¹³⁶ Jacob Bailey, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 27 June 1768, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 63.

¹³⁷ Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 27 October 1771, SPG MSS. (L. C. trans.), Series B, Vol. 22, no. 66.

"furious mob." On four occasions, the local Committee of Safety sentenced him to "heavy bonds" as he was "hurried from one tribunal to another. Bailey was driven from his home and family three times, "roving about the country" and concealing himself either by disguise or "under the cover of darkness." Twice, patriots tried to shoot the missionary. His servant, upon whom the family depended for support during those times Bailey was absent, was thrown into prison. During his "wandering excursions," Bailey's family suffered "beyond measure for necessities of life. The missionary himself sometimes endured an entire day on the run without food."¹³⁸ Most of the SPG missionaries in Massachusetts were forced to flee their homes; many were assaulted and imprisoned. Nevertheless, the degree of harassment Jacob Bailey experienced was extreme compared to his colleagues. Again, the frontier context of his mission, and the rougher, less sophisticated nature of his neighbors, may have accounted for his excessively violent treatment.

On New Year's Day, 1776, a group of Whigs voted to force Bailey to consecrate a Liberty Pole, and to whip him on it if he should refuse. The Parson managed to avoid this confrontation. In the spring of 1777, Whigs shot Bailey's sheep and cattle, and began to collect taxes from the Episcopalians for a neighboring Congregational church.¹³⁹ During the summer of 1778, at a

¹³⁸ SPG Abstracts, 19 February 1779-18 February 1780, in Cameron, Ethos, 188.

¹³⁹ Sibley and Shipton, 531. Also see Jacob Bailey, Pownalboro, to Samuel Parker, Boston, 14 March 1777, Jacob Bailey Files, Colonial and

settlement about fifty miles from Pownalboro, Bailey "was assaulted by a violent mob armed with clubs, axes, and other weapons, who stripped me naked in search of papers, pretending that I had conceived a design of escaping to Quebec."¹⁴⁰ Bailey wanted to escape with his family to Canada in 1778, but the season was too far advanced for travel by the time he received approval for his emigration. Local officials attempted to disrupt Bailey's Christmas services that year, describing the congregation as a "nest of damned Tories."¹⁴¹ Bailey planned to hold the service in defiance claiming that the "United States could (not) possibly be in danger if he ministered to his people."¹⁴² The entire confrontation was averted, however, when heavy snows canceled the service.

Jacob Bailey removed his family to Nova Scotia in the summer of 1779. At first, he ministered as the Society's representative at Cornwallis, a post he found disagreeable since the local inhabitants were transplanted dissenters from Connecticut. Only twenty Anglican families lived in this settlement of "King Killers" who had founded a little empire here and were constantly "praying for the success of the faithful in New England." Drunkenness and blasphemy were scarcely noticed here, but "a word spoken against rebellion is a

Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

¹⁴⁰ Batchelder, 36.

¹⁴¹ Allen, 241.

¹⁴² Ibid.

crime of enormous magnitude."¹⁴³ Bailey was happy to move to Annapolis in July of 1782 to fill a post previously and delinquently held by his brother-in-law, Joshua Wingate Weeks.

In Annapolis, Jacob Bailey's ministry had come full circle and, once again, he found himself a missionary amidst frontier conditions. This time, the ravages of the American Revolution increased the hardships faced by the Parson and his parishioners. Little Charles Percy Bailey, Jacob's son, had failed to recognize white bread when it was set before him in Canada because he had never seen any before.¹⁴⁴ Nearly 5000 refugees reached Annapolis between the time of Bailey's arrival there and the fall of 1783. His own house was continually crowded with exiles. His pastoral concern was evident, as he described the lot of these poor Loyalists to Samuel Parker, rector of Trinity Church, Boston:

It is really distressing to view the situation of these unhappy exiles, landed upon a strange coast, at this cold and stormy season of the year, destitute of every comfortable accommodation, not even a cottage to shelter them from the weather. Several hundreds are stowed in our church, and larger numbers are still unprovided for. Besides proper refugees, multitudes are crowding into this province from York and Long Island. I am informed that ninety six thousand have embarked for Canada and Nova Scotia.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴³ Sibley and Shipton, 539-540.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 539.

¹⁴⁵ Jacob Bailey, Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia, to Samuel Parker, Boston, 28 October 1783, Jacob Bailey Files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

Even Governor Wentworth of New Hampshire had been unable to find accommodations in this crowded town.¹⁴⁶

Jacob Bailey's initial impression of the eastern frontier of Massachusetts had inspired in him horror and disagreeable sensations; he noted in his journal that, after a few days in the area, he detected an "uneasy melancholy" increasing upon him.¹⁴⁷ By the time of his flight to Canada, however, Bailey confessed to the Society that his heart remained in Pownalboro with his former parishioners, many of whom were "sadly distressed for their sufferings on account of their loyalty."¹⁴⁸ What accounted for the change of Jacob Bailey's sentiments? No doubt the fact that Bailey's ministry had produced numerical growth among the Anglican community of eastern Massachusetts increased his fondness for his old parish. At the same time, Bailey was clearly a sensitive and compassionate man. His descriptions of the suffering of his flocks in both New England and Nova Scotia reveal a pastor's heart troubled by the struggles of his sheep. It is clear that Bailey had become attached to the parishioners he served in Massachusetts. Even his love of nature, as manifest in his verse, might have aroused his nostalgia for his mission along the Kennebec.

Jacob Bailey's life and ministry represented a real paradox. He was a man of letters never completely at home in

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Sibley and Shipton, 526.

¹⁴⁸ SPG Abstracts, 18 February 1780-16 February 1781, in Cameron, Ethos, 192.

his frontier parish. Bailey used his poetry on the Kennebec to grapple with the general ignorance of those around him.¹⁴⁹ As an Anglican priest in the wilds of eastern Massachusetts, he attempted to follow the rubric of Church practice under primitive conditions amidst a group of people unfamiliar, if not ambivalent, to Episcopal doctrine and liturgy. In spite of the fact that he never really belonged there, Jacob Bailey left a part of his heart in the backwoods of Massachusetts. In June of 1779, Bailey wrote "A Farewell to Kennebeck" to memorialize his life and service there.

Adieu, ye fair domestick scenes
 Of balmy sweets and flowery greens
 And 'yond aspiring grove;
 Farewell, ye smiling, chearful seats,
 Ye solitary, calm retreats
 Of innocence and love.

.

Once more with heavy parting sighs
 We roll around our misty eyes;
 My partner calls to mind
 Her babes beneath the heaving ground,
 And mourns and weeps with grief profound
 To leave their dust behind.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Baker, 66-67.

¹⁵⁰ Bartlet, 267, 273. The entire poem may be read in Bartlet, 267-273. By far, the majority of verse written by Bailey in later years is political satire written against Whigs and "Free Thinkers" whom Bailey blamed for the excesses and tragedy of the American Revolution. One representative stanza of this verse is the following: "Let all the honest and sincere/Who Heaven's authority revere/Resist with steadfast resolution/The sons of change and revolution." (Baker, 88) Bailey attacked John Hancock, the theme of democracy, the non-importation agreements protesting the Townshend duties, and the figure of the "Trimmer" (one who "walks the fence" between Whig and Tory) with his biting poetic wit. Religion and politics were seldom divorced in Bailey's thinking. See Baker's article on Bailey's poetry for samples of Bailey's satirical verse regarding politics.

CHAPTER VI

THE "UNCONVERTED SERMONS" OF JEREMIAH LEAMING AND ROGER VIETS

Mean time the Church is every where in peace, and the Clergy orthodox; only I find there are some of the leading laity in good Mr. Palmer's district, that is infected with what here is called *Taylorism, i.e., Socinianism and Pelagianism*, and they are somewhat disaffected, I believe, without reason, against their minister, for preaching against those errors; charging him with Calvinism, and, perhaps, he may be a little too warm on these accounts.¹

In the course of a 1760 letter intended to acquaint the Archbishop of Canterbury with the state of the American Episcopal Church, Samuel Johnson offered this explanation for the discord in the parish of Solomon Palmer. Palmer, an itinerant SPG missionary to Litchfield County, Connecticut, had provoked the displeasure of some of his laity over doctrinal issues. This fact is plain enough in Johnson's remarks. What is not so obvious was the significance of the polemical weapon wielded by the embittered parishioners, the charge of Calvinism.

The Anglicans of Litchfield County may have been grasping at whatever repugnant epithet lay close at hand, and certainly, in Puritan Connecticut, the contagion of Calvinism infecting Episcopal clergy was not beyond the realm of possibility. Was

¹ Samuel Johnson, King's College, New York, to the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lambeth Palace, London, 13 July 1760, in Francis L. Hawks and William S. Perry, eds., Documentary History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Connecticut, vol. I (New York: James Pott, 1863), 311.

this simply an empty charge leveled by an angered Litchfield laity, or was the theology of Palmer, and other missionaries, tainted in some way by the thinking of neighborhood dissenters? Indeed, could it be that, when many of the SPG missionaries converted from Congregationalism to the Church, they did not entirely forsake their native doctrinal heritage? Might the sermons of these missionaries actually betray a hybrid dogma formulated in the unique setting of the Anglican church emerging on the American frontier? Perhaps the sermons of these missionaries appealed to an American Anglican who still felt vaguely comfortable with the Calvinism of his forbears.

Consciously or subconsciously, the "unconverted sermons" of SPG missionaries may have been an effective evangelistic tool to win over curious dissenters. The Anglicans in Litchfield County protested the Calvinism they thought they were hearing. The question is, how much of it were they, and others of their ilk in New England, actually hearing in the sermons of SPG missionaries? Beyond that question, the issue raised is how assimilated, even comfortable, had the Anglican laity in New England become with an "Americanized" Anglican sermon fortified with heavy doses of Congregational thinking and method? Despite the occasional protest like the one registered in Litchfield County, a complaint which actually lacked exact theological definition, the argument of this chapter is that certain American-born SPG missionaries exposed their congregations to a unique blend of Anglicanism and Congregationalism in their

preaching. In fact, the infrequency of protests, like the one offered in Litchfield County, is a measure of how familiar Anglican parishioners had become with some latent Calvinism embedded in the sermons they audited.

Evidence for the thesis of this chapter is found in the unpublished sermons of two SPG missionaries born and raised in American Congregational homes. Jeremiah Leaming, a native of Connecticut, served the mission at Newport, Rhode Island, between the years of 1748-1757 and the mission at Norwalk, Connecticut, between 1758-1778. Roger Viets, born in a section of Simsbury, Connecticut, known as "Turkey Hills," returned to his hometown as SPG missionary during the years 1763-1783. Over forty of Leaming's sermons and nearly thirty of Viets' sermons constituted the resources used to formulate the arguments of this chapter.

Local historians dispute the birthplace of Jeremiah Leaming, placing the event in either Durham or nearby Middletown, Connecticut.² Regardless, the young boy was baptized by the Congregational minister Nathaniel Chauncey of First Church, Durham, on May 12, 1717.³ The oldest of nine children, Jeremiah was obviously raised in a dissenting home. At the age of 24, Leaming entered Yale College, graduating in 1745. During his undergraduate studies, Leaming declared for

² E. Edwards Beardsley, The Rev. Jeremiah Leaming, D.D.: His Life and Services (New York: James Pott and Company, 1885), 3.

³ Ibid.

the Episcopacy, being encouraged in that path by Samuel Johnson, the SPG missionary at Stratford.⁴

Following his graduation from Yale, Leaming acted as a lay reader for the Anglican church in Norwalk, Connecticut. The Anglicans in Norwalk hoped that Leaming might be ordained and returned to them as a missionary from the Society, but Johnson had other plans for his young prodigy. The rector and vestry of Trinity Church, Newport, Rhode Island, had written the authorities in London, asking for assistance in locating a young man to act as schoolmaster, catechist, and assistant to the rector, James Honyman. The Society referred the request to Samuel Johnson, and he recommended Jeremiah Leaming, believing no doubt that the young man had proven skills as a teacher.⁵ Trinity parish, Newport, paid for Leaming's journey to London, where he was ordained Deacon by the Bishop of Llandaff and Priest by the Bishop of Winchester during a two-week period of June, 1748.⁶

Leaming assumed Honyman's duties, as well, in 1750 when Newport's long-time missionary died. Leaming served in his various capacities at Trinity until the Society could send a replacement for Honyman. Shortly before that replacement

⁴ Franklin B. Dexter, Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College with Annals of the College History, May, 1745-May, 1763, vol. II (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1896), 39.

⁵ "Letters of the Reverend Doctor Jeremiah Leaming to the Reverend Doctor Samuel Peters, Loyalist Refugee in London, and One Time Bishop Elect of Vermont," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 1 (September 1932): 116-117.

⁶ Ibid., 117.

arrived, St. Paul's Church in Naragansett campaigned to have Leaming assigned as their missionary following the death of their distinguished missionary, James MacSparran. Their attempt to obtain Leaming failed, and the Society sent the Connecticut missionary back "home" to Norwalk, Connecticut.⁷ Jeremiah Leaming then spent the next twenty-one years of his ministry serving Norwalk, and, at first, Ridgefield, a parish sixteen miles away.⁸

Jeremiah Leaming was one of the few Connecticut missionaries to engage in the publication of theological defenses of the Anglican Church.⁹ Located between two of the greatest champions of Congregationalism, Noah Hobart at Fairfield and Noah Welles at Stamford, Leaming believed that he was provoked by local antagonists to defend episcopal government.¹⁰ Published in 1766 and 1770, Leaming's pamphlets argued specifically for the validity of episcopal ordination over that of the presbyterian alternative.¹¹ Leaming's reputation as a scholar earned him the honorary Master of Arts degree from King's College (now Columbia University), New York, in 1765.¹² His popularity among his colleagues earned Leaming the right to preach the funeral sermon of Samuel Johnson in 1772

⁷ Beardsley, 4.

⁸ Dexter, 40.

⁹ Hector G. Kinloch, "Anglican Clergy in Connecticut, 1701-1785" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1959), 78.

¹⁰ Beardsley, 4-5.

¹¹ Dexter, 78.

¹² George D. Seymour, The Reverend Jeremiah Leaming of Connecticut: A Biographical Sketch in the Form of a Letter to Henry Watson Kent, Esq. (Woodbury, Connecticut: publisher unknown, 1928), 13.

when John Beach failed to appear due to illness.¹³ At the commencement of the War for American Independence, Leaming had about 170 communicants in Norwalk, many of whom were scattered by the hostilities.¹⁴

Like most of his fellow missionaries in Connecticut, Jeremiah Leaming was a noted Loyalist during the American Revolution. Consequently, he suffered the wrath of local mobs of patriots. On one occasion, his portrait was taken from his home, mutilated, and nailed on a sign-post upside down.¹⁵ Apparently, local authorities were not satisfied with abusing a mere facsimile of the Tory rector. A group of Norwalk Sons of Liberty broke into Leaming's house during the winter of 1776 and carried him off to the Fairfield County Jail. Deprived of a bed and any hospitality that could have been provided by friends or family, a cold settled into Leaming's hip which made him a cripple for the rest of his life.¹⁶

In July 1779, an expedition of British troops torched and pillaged a number of Connecticut coastal towns. In their acts of destruction, these forces did not discriminate between friend or foe. Hence, Leaming and many of his parishioners lost all that they had. A body of Hessian mercenaries forced Leaming, against his will, to accompany the British troops as they left Norwalk. Fearing that his removal might thus be misunderstood

¹³ Beardsley, 6; Kinloch, 77.

¹⁴ "A Sketch of the History of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Norwalk, Connecticut," Churchman's Magazine 3 (November 1806): 466-470.

¹⁵ Beardsley, 7.

¹⁶ Seymour, 13; Beardsley, 7.

by local patriots, Leaming persuaded the British to take his family on board as well and allow them to return with the troops to New York.¹⁷ Safely in New York, Leaming described the events to the Society:

On the 11th instant, by the unavoidable event of the operation of His Majesty's troops, under the command of General [William] Tryon, my church and great part of my parish was laid in ashes, by which I have lost every thing I had there--my furniture, books, and all my papers, even my apparel, except what was on my back. My loss on that fatal day was not less than twelve or thirteen hundred pounds sterling. Although in great danger, my life has been preserved; and I hope I shall never forget the kind providence of God in that trying hour.¹⁸

Besides losing the possessions listed in his letter, three of Jeremiah Leaming's farms, 70 acres at Middletown, 40 acres at Norwalk, and 44 acres at Farmington, were confiscated. A house Leaming owned in Boston was razed "to make room for fortifications."¹⁹

Leaming's Loyalism was a family affair. His brother, Mathias, a resident of Farmington, Connecticut, was constantly exposed to the harassment of patriot mobs. Only the grave offered sanctuary to a reviled Tory. Mathias Leaming's crude headstone in the old burying-ground in Farmington reads, "In

¹⁷ Beardsley, 7-8.

¹⁸ Jeremiah Leaming, New York, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 29 July 1779, in William B. Sprague, Annals of the American Pulpit, vol. V: Episcopalian (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969), 129.

¹⁹ "Letters of the Reverend Doctor Jeremiah Leaming," 118.

memory of Mr. Mathias Leaming who hars gott beyound the reach of parcecushion--The life of Man is Vanity."(sic) Mathias Leaming asked that he be buried, opposed to custom, with his feet to the west, "so that when the last trumpet sounded, he should be found to be *facing in the opposite direction* from his persecutors."²⁰

Jeremiah Leaming remained in New York until after the Treaty of Paris was signed. He became rector of the Episcopal Church in Stratford, Connecticut, on Easter, 1784.²¹ Leaming served exactly six years in this post, retiring on Easter of 1790.²² During the post-war years, Leaming was instrumental in raising and uniting the American Episcopal Church out of the ashes of war. Leaming repeatedly made kind overtures to the Southern clergy, projecting measures for the union of the Church.²³ In writing to Bishop White of Pennsylvania, who was reticent to approve the consecration of Samuel Seabury, Jr. at the hands of Scottish bishops, Leaming begged for harmony. Apologizing for his vigor in the matter, Leaming explained that "I have been forty years in the service of the Church, and I believe I am the oldest clergyman in America, and I am very desirous to see it complete before I die."²⁴ In particular, Leaming fought the encroachment of Unitarianism on traditional Church doctrine.²⁵

²⁰ Seymour, 26.

²¹ Dexter, 41.

²² Ibid.

²³ Beardsley, 13.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Kinloch, 78.

Jeremiah Leaming specifically acted to make the transition to post-Revolution Episcopalianism a smooth one in Connecticut. In 1784, he performed the delicate task of gaining State Assembly approval of a bishop in Connecticut. That same year, he preached the sermon at the first ordination service of the American church.²⁶ Leaming also preached the sermon before the Connecticut clergy gathered in convention in Middletown, August 3, 1785, to welcome their new Bishop, Samuel Seabury, Jr. In 1790, Jeremiah Leaming drafted the canons of the diocese of Connecticut.²⁷ The preceding year, Columbia College once again bestowed upon him an honorary degree, this time the Doctor of Divinity.²⁸ Leaming spent the last years of his life living in the home of family friends in New Haven, Connecticut. During these years, he was troubled not just by the lameness which had afflicted him since the Revolution, but also by a total loss of sight. Believed to be the oldest clergyman of the new Episcopal Church in America, Leaming died in New Haven on September 15, 1804.²⁹

Before Samuel Seabury, Jr., had been offered the episcopate of the new diocese of Connecticut, the state clergy had asked Jeremiah Leaming to take the post. Most historians believe Leaming turned the post down due to failing health. Correspondence between Leaming and Samuel Peters, notorious Tory

²⁶ "Letters of the Reverend Doctor Jeremiah Leaming," 121.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Sprague, 130.

²⁹ Dexter, 41.

rector of Hebron, Connecticut, and refugee in London, tells a different story. Leaming told Peters that the real reason for his refusal was diffidence about his personal abilities. He confided that, had he known that the office was not as difficult as he had assumed, and that Seabury had many personal enemies, he would have given a more favorable response to the offer of the Episcopal post in Connecticut. Leaming declined a later request to serve as coadjutor with Seabury in the Episcopal office, this time truly due to ill health. In 1792, he was elected Bishop of New Jersey. Again, poor health and a lack of unity among the Jersey clergy discouraged Leaming's consent.³⁰

Like Jeremiah Leaming, Roger Viets came from a large family. The second of ten children, Viets was born in Simsbury, Connecticut, now East Granby, on March 9, 1738. His father, Captain John Viets, was a devout Congregationalist. His grandfather, also named John, a Dutch physician living in New York City, moved to Simsbury after buying copper mines there as a speculative venture in 1710.³¹ "Turkey Hills," the site of the Viets' family homestead, did not have a grammar school. Consequently, Roger Viets boarded at the home of Samuel Tudor, the Congregational minister in Poquonock, in order to be prepared for his collegiate studies at Yale. Tudor, the tutor,

³⁰ "Letters of the Reverend Doctor Jeremiah Leaming," 120-121.

³¹ Dexter, 557.

was paid 8 pounds, a deer skin, and a pig, to teach young Viets.³²

Roger Viets graduated from Yale College in 1758. An excellent student, Viets won one of the coveted Bishop Berkeley prizes for classical language study, entitling him to spend an additional year at Yale refining his Latin grammatical prowess.³³ Intending to prepare for the Congregational ministry there, Viets left Yale converted to Anglicanism instead. Either attendance at the Anglican church in New Haven, or reading the notorious books given by Bishop Berkeley to the Yale College library, led to the young man's conversion. Perhaps he spent his long hours of study in the library preoccupied with theology as well as Latin.³⁴ Between the summer of 1759 and the summer of 1761, Viets served as the lay reader for the Anglican parish in Simsbury, St. Andrews. While in New York City to be inoculated for small-pox, Viets met the venerated Dr. Samuel Johnson, president of King's College. He took charge of a parish school for Trinity Church in that city, but shortly returned to Simsbury. St. Andrews proposed to the SPG that Viets be returned to them as an assistant to William Gibbs, the current rector and resident missionary. In March of 1763, Viets was

³² Mary J. Springman and Betty F. Guinan, East Granby: The Evolution of a Connecticut Town (Canaan, New Hampshire: Phoenix Publishing, 1983), 44.

³³ Dexter, 557.

³⁴ Springman and Guinan, 82.

ordained in London by the Bishop of Coventry and was safely back in Simsbury, at his duties, by June.³⁵

Roger Viets' appointment to assist Gibbs was not universally popular among the parishioners of St. Andrews. The reasons for the opposition of some of the Anglican laity in Simsbury to Viets' assignment are not clear; perhaps some in the parish believed Gibbs was being set aside by the Society because of personal problems. William Gibbs' sister, Elizabeth, reported in 1763 "that about fifty families had picked Viets for her brother's successor, but forty-two other families 'of the most substantial among us are determined he never shall be over them for reasons which they at present keep something private.'"³⁶ Lay division in churches boasting multiple staffs was not uncommon in any denomination during the eighteenth-century, nor is it any less common today. For refusal to pay ecclesiastical taxes to the Congregational establishment, Gibbs had been arrested, "bound hand and foot, and thrown over a horse for conveyance to jail in Hartford."³⁷ This mistreatment, which had occurred during the 1740's soon after Gibbs' appointment to Simsbury, had contributed to a deteriorating mental condition which had become severely debilitating by the time of Viets' appointment. Either due to sympathy for their elder rector or

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Kinloch, 109.

³⁷ William M. Vibert, Three Centuries of Simsbury (Simsbury, Ct.: Simsbury Tercentenary Commission, 1970), 62.

due to sheer partisanship, the younger missionary represented unwelcome competition to some of the members of St. Andrews.

Roger Viets ministered in Simsbury for the next twenty-four years. In that St. Andrews was supporting two SPG missionaries when most parishes could not afford even one, Roger Viets was forced to supplement his income as a farmer in the summer and as a teacher in the winter. He accumulated the largest library of any of the Anglican clergy in Connecticut.³⁸ Increasingly, Viets did all of the work of the ministry in Simsbury; William Gibbs finally died in March of 1777. By 1774, Viets' congregation had increased to nearly 200 families. Only Newtown and New Haven boasted larger Anglican congregations than that of Simsbury.³⁹ The growth of St. Andrews was even more remarkable considering the local antipathy to episcopalianism in and around eighteenth century Hartford.

During the thirteen years between his ordination and the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, Viets traveled nearly 4436 miles throughout Connecticut and Western Massachusetts.⁴⁰ His most frequent destinations outside of his parish were Westfield, Massachusetts (18 miles away, 11 visits), Canton, Connecticut (11 miles away, 27 visits), Hartford, Connecticut (10 miles away, 19 visits), Farmington, Connecticut (6 miles away, 11 visits), and Great Barrington, Massachusetts (55 miles away, 6

³⁸ Dexter, 557-558.

³⁹ Springman and Guinan, 83; Dexter, 558.

⁴⁰ "The Pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary War Years at St. Andrews," Old Saint Andrews Church Parish Crier (June 1995): 6.

visits). On at least one occasion, Viets ministered in Stockbridge, Massachusetts (62 miles distant), Spencertown, New York, (75 miles distant), Lanesborough, Massachusetts (82 miles distant), and Pittsfield, Massachusetts (76 miles distant).⁴¹ This sort of vigorous itinerancy was conducted by most of New England's SPG missionaries during the eighteenth century. Viets helped to establish churches at Salmon Brook and Great Barrington, Massachusetts.⁴² Besides building churches, the young missionary, age 34, finally began building a family when he married Hester Botsford of New Milford in 1772.⁴³ New Milford was one of the towns on Viets' missionary circuit over 50 miles away. Two years later, the couple gave birth to the first of their eight children.

The War for American Independence brought the predictable personal turmoil and distress into the life of Roger Viets as it did for most of his fellow SPG missionaries. In November of 1776, Viets was arrested for helping two British officers escape from their imprisonment in the Hartford jail. Careful to avoid taking them into his home, Simsbury's missionary did secret Christopher French and Joseph Mayland, providing them with "Victuals and Blankets."⁴⁴ The following January, Viets was convicted of these charges, along with treasonous communication

⁴¹ Figures derived from St. Andrews parish records, 1763-1775.

⁴² Springman and Guinan, 83.

⁴³ Dexter, 559.

⁴⁴ Court Records, Secretary of State's Office, January, 1777, found among the letters and petitions of Roger Viets and William Gibbs, Box XII, Hoadley Collection, The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford.

with the enemy, and sentenced to a fine of twenty pounds and one year's confinement in the Hartford jail.⁴⁵ Ironically, Captain John Viets served, simultaneous to his son's imprisonment, as the jailer at nearby Old Newgate, the copper mines his father had purchased. This underground prison facility, at the behest of the Continental Congress, held British POW's and local Tories.⁴⁶

The elder Viets died of small pox in April of 1777, prompting his son to petition the Connecticut General Assembly for an early release from jail. Viets indicated that the condition of his father's estate and accounts required his immediate attention. In addition, the death of William Gibbs in March had left his parishioners "suffering in their Spiritual Circumstances" and certain to be "ruined by the full execution" of Viets' sentence. Viets humbly admitted that he had indeed "entertained" the two British officers, and that now he was "fully convinced of the folly as well as the evil of his fault." Viets "solemnly" pledged "to do nothing in future, by word or deed, detrimental to the welfare or privileges" of Connecticut or the United States of America, promising to be a "true and faithful subject" of the same.⁴⁷ Some of Viets' parishioners forwarded their own petition to the General Assembly,

⁴⁵ Dexter, 559; Vibert, 63; Springman and Guinan, 83.

⁴⁶ Vibert, 63.

⁴⁷ Petition of Roger Viets to the General Assembly of the State of Connecticut, 1777, Letters and Petitions of Roger Viets and William Gibbs, Box XII, Hoadley Collection, The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford.

complaining of their "want of Christian Consolation" in the absence of their missionary's ministry.⁴⁸ The Assembly allowed Viets to serve the remaining six months of his sentence restricted to the town boundaries of Simsbury after posting a bond of L1000 to prevent further disloyalty.⁴⁹

Following the War, the SPG withdrew its financial support of the American missionaries, an action which greatly upset and inconvenienced Roger Viets. In a letter to fellow missionary Bela Hubbard of New Haven, Viets complained that the Society had "forsaken us in our old age when We are gray headed."⁵⁰ Viets and Hubbard discussed the possibility of forming a Society in America much like the SPG to finance the ministries of New England missionaries, but in the end, Viets was forced to move to Canada to stay on the Society's payroll. The "uncongenial climate for Anglicanism in Hartford County" no doubt contributed to this decision.⁵¹

In 1786, Roger Viets accepted the SPG call to Trinity Parish in Digby, Nova Scotia. He moved his family to Digby the following year.⁵² He maintained some "business interests and property holdings in Connecticut," but he only visited the state a few times, the last coming in 1800, prior to his death in

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Springman and Guinan, 83. It is a matter of great curiosity where Viets was able to secure the funds to post such a large bond. None of the sources of Viets' life offers an explanation.

⁵⁰ Roger Viets, Simsbury, to Bela Hubbard, New Haven, 9 December 1785, Roger Viets files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

⁵¹ Kinloch, 109.

⁵² Dexter, 558.

1811.⁵³ He entertained a nostalgia for Simsbury, confiding in his brother Abner that he wished some day to return. However, his church in Digby was healthy, he was being paid 125 pounds per year, and he feared future U.S.-British conflict.⁵⁴ It is difficult to believe, therefore, that Viets ever really wanted to come home. Upon his death, Viets' son, Roger Moor Viets, succeeded to the pulpit at Trinity Church, Digby, in his father's stead.⁵⁵ Roger Viets' nephew, Alexander Viets Griswold, became one of the first Episcopal bishops in America.⁵⁶

Colonial historians have not written many books on the preaching of any particular sect or denomination. Colonial American sermons have been used ubiquitously to analyze the New England "mind," but quality studies devoted strictly to the form and content of these sermons are few.⁵⁷ Of the books that have been written about Congregational sermons in New England, most focus on the seventeenth century rather than on the eighteenth

⁵³ Kinloch, 109.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 110.

⁵⁵ Dexter, 559.

⁵⁶ Springman and Guinan, 83.

⁵⁷ Perry Miller and most colonial historians since have used sermons as part of their arsenal of source material to chronicle the thinking and the culture of colonial New England. When the colonial sermon form has attracted particular attention, it has usually been a study of a specific variety of sermonic literature. For example, execution sermons, election sermons, and fast sermons seem to be particularly popular genres to analyze. See Ronald A. Bosco, "Lectures at the Pillory: the Early American Execution Sermon," American Quarterly 30 (Summer 1978), 156-176; Martha L. Counts, "The Political Views of the Eighteenth Century New England Clergy as Expressed in their Election Sermons" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1956); Billy L. Harris, "The New England Fast Sermon, 1639-1763" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1968); and Harold D. Mixon, "The Artillery Sermon in New England, 1672-1774" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1964). Comprehensive studies of the colonial New England sermon are rare, perhaps because of the sheer magnitude of the material to be studied.

century.⁵⁸ The one sterling foray into eighteenth century sermonizing has been conducted by Harry S. Stout in his The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England.⁵⁹ Stout's study established several basic characteristics found in most Congregational sermons preached in New England during the eighteenth century. For the sake of comparison, Stout's characteristics can be used to measure the similarity of sermons preached by Jeremiah Leaming and Roger Viets to those preached in neighboring dissenting pulpits.⁶⁰ A few studies of sermons preached in Great Britain during this same time period were also utilized to set the context for this comparative study of Anglican and Congregational sermons.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Probably the best of these books is David D. Hall's The Faithful Shepherd: A History of the New England Ministry in the Seventeenth Century (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1972). Also see Louis R. Johnson, "American preaching in the seventeenth century" (Th.D. diss., Northern Baptist Theological Seminary, 1958) and Babette M. Levy, Preaching in the First Half Century of New England History (Hartford, Ct.: American Society of Church History, 1945). Part of the reason for this historical fascination with the sermons of the seventeenth century is the preoccupation with the controversial notion of "declension" which some argue beset late seventeenth century Puritanism. The sermon form known as the "jeremiad," which ministers used to bemoan the loss of zeal and devotion among their congregations, has become one of the sources utilized to debate this argument of declension. See Sacvan Bercovitch, The American Jeremiad (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978).

⁵⁹ Harry S. Stout, The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

⁶⁰ Another study used to formulate the generic traits of the Congregational sermon was Teresa Toulouse, The Art of Prophesying: New England Sermons and the Shaping of Belief (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1987).

⁶¹ Most helpful of these books was James Downey, The Eighteenth Century Pulpit: A Study of the Sermons of Butler, Berkeley, Secker, Sterne, Whitefield, and Wesley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969). Also see John Brown, Puritan Preaching in England: A Study of Past and Present (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), and Alan F. Herr, The Elizabethan Sermon: A Survey and a Bibliography (New York: Octagon Books, 1969).

Methodologically, the common format for the Congregational sermon in eighteenth century New England was text-doctrine-application. This was known as the "plain style" sermon. The preacher would normally read the Scriptural passage he intended to exposit, proceeded to explore the doctrinal truths taught in those Biblical verses, and concluded by offering practical insights as to the manner in which the doctrine might be personally implemented. Moreover, Dissenting ministers read their sermons almost verbatim by the beginning of the eighteenth century. Extemporaneous preaching was considered a vile practice indicative of a lack of scholarly credentials; George Whitefield's practice of speaking extemporaneously on his tours of America during the Great Awakening produced strong censure from many Congregational and Anglican ministers.⁶²

The same methods were employed in the Anglican pulpits of New England as well. Both Jeremiah Leaming and Roger Viets wrote their sermons word-for-word and read them to their congregations. Both men also kept their sermons in special books so that the sermon could be used repeatedly over the years of their ministry.⁶³ Their Congregational colleagues also

⁶² Stout, 34, 189-194.

⁶³ For example, the Easter sermon first preached by Roger Viets in Salmonbrook on 7 April 1765 was used again on Easter Sunday in 1766, 1770, 1771, 1776, 1779, 1780, 1781, 1784, and 1807, and by his son, after Viets' death, in 1812, 1823, 1828, and 1834. Of course, Viets would preach this sermon in different locations on his circuit during these years, but his people must have become very familiar with his traditional Easter sermon nonetheless. Roger Viets, "Easter," 7 April 1765, Roger Viets files, Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut. Henceforth in this chapter, the date given for each sermon cited will be the first occasion upon which it was preached. Most of the sermons were preached on subsequent dates

maintained such books. Moreover, Leaming and Viets adhered to the format of the "plain style" sermon. In a sermon he preached on the duty of beginning religion during youth, Jeremiah Leaming developed the doctrinal truth of his text, Ecclesiastes 12:1. Once that dogma had been explored, he said, "And now, lest any one should fail to make a proper use of what has been said, I shall undertake to make it for him."⁶⁴ This statement represented the verbal cue for the congregation that the application segment of the sermon was about to begin.

On October 21, 1759, Roger Viets preached a sermon entitled "Sing Praises to God" at St. Andrews in Simsbury. Citing Psalms 47.6, which enjoins the faithful to "sing praises to God," Viets explored the doctrinal importance of singing. Following this segment of the sermon, he concluded with practical application: what is the proper manner of singing such praises.⁶⁵ A few months later, Viets took the text, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matthew 11:28) In this sermon, he systematically described the doctrinal implications of the command, to whom the command was given, and the experiential consequences of obeying the command.⁶⁶ Like Leaming, Roger Viets employed a verbal

as well. Additionally, all subsequent sermons quoted or cited in this chapter have been drawn from either the Files of Jeremiah Leaming or Roger Viets among the Colonial and Early American Files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford, unless otherwise noted.

⁶⁴ Jeremiah Leaming, "The Duty of Beginning Religion in Youth," 26 January 1755, 9.

⁶⁵ Roger Viets, "Sing Praises to God," no. 34, 21 October 1759.

⁶⁶ Roger Viets, "Labor and Heavy Laden" (Part One), 13 January 1760.

transition to signal that the application of doctrine was coming. In a sermon calling his congregation to "rend your hearts and not your garments," Viets directed his hearers toward practical application with the words, "We may now proceed to make a suitable use of this Doctrine."⁶⁷ In general, preaching technique did not vary between colonial Anglicans and Congregationalists during the eighteenth century. Laity in either sect would have been at home in the pews of the other each Sunday morning from the standpoint of methodology.

Under the influence of what was known as the "New Learning" during the eighteenth century, Congregational sermons frequently described God in a mechanistic, extra-biblical fashion. The thinking of Isaac Newton seemed to be shaping the exaltation of God as it sounded forth from New England pulpits. Dissenters hailed "the Almighty Being," "the Father of Lights," "the Great Governor of the Universe," "the Almighty Hand," or "the Supreme Architect." Divinity ruled the operation of nature according to the flawless designs He had instilled in it. Furthermore, Congregational ministers extolled a God who was more approachable and man-like. The Lord could be imagined to be "smiling" or "frowning." Sermons praised a more anthropomorphic Deity who managed the universal machine He had created with precision, predictability, harmony, and order.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Roger Viets, "Rend Your Hearts and Not Your Garments," 1 March 1761, 21.

⁶⁸ Stout, 132-134.

Jeremiah Leaming also framed his devotion to God in terms compatible with the "New Learning." He frequently referred to the Creator as the "pure and holy Father of the Universe."⁶⁹ Roger Viets called God "Creator and Governor."⁷⁰ In another sermon, Viets described God as "Almighty in Creation," "Governor of the Whole World," and "original Fountain of all Blessings, Author of Good."⁷¹ For both men, and for most Congregational preachers of the eighteenth century, God's glory emanated chiefly from His role as Creator of the universe Newton had now explained. The influence of the "New Learning" on sermons was not restricted to New England. Anglican sermons given in the middle and southern colonies were also shaped by enlightenment thinking. The striking fact is not that Anglican sermons outside of New England were also shaped by the "New Learning." The significant aspect of the phenomenon for this study is that the use of mechanistic or natural metaphors by preachers of various denominations created more of a common "American" pulpit in New England which eased movement across denominational barriers.

Leaming and Viets also portrayed an approachable, anthropomorphic God in their sermons. According to Leaming, God

⁶⁹ Jeremiah Leaming, The Evidence for the Truth of Christianity made plain--from Matters of Fact. In a Sermon preached at Norwalk, January 28th, 1770, and at Trinity-Church, in the City of New York, July 5th, 1772, and at St. George's-Chapel the same Day (New York: John Holt, 1772), 11, and Jeremiah Leaming, "Christian Faith Described," 16 August 1772, 4.

⁷⁰ Roger Viets, "Sing Praises to God," 15.

⁷¹ Roger Viets, "Deliverance," No. 26, September 2, 1759, 4, 11, 16, 21.

"smiles" on the souls of those for whom He bestows mercy. In that same sermon, Jeremiah Leaming encouraged his church that the "eyes" of the Lord are upon the righteous and His "ears" are open to their cry.⁷² On another occasion, Leaming acknowledged that "(t)here is no such thing as envy lodged in the 'Bosom' of that ever Blessed Being, whose Name, and Nature, is Love."⁷³ Roger Viets also emphasized the "all piercing eyes" of God, omniscient "eyes" that "are in all places" and from which "nothing can be concealed."⁷⁴ Likewise, he credited the "finger of the Almighty in Creation" with the plain inscription of the proofs of God and Providence on the hearts of all mankind.⁷⁵ Congregationalists and Anglicans seemed to be worshipping the same God given the similar characterizations of the Creator offered by their pastors.

John Calvin and the other reformers bequeathed several enduring legacies to the Protestants who would follow them in the faith, but none was as significant as the rule of *Sola Scriptura*. Christians nurtured in the Calvinistic tradition came to revere the Holy Scriptures as the only rule for faith and practice in the spiritual life. In the days of Luther and Calvin, this position represented an attack on the Roman Catholic church, which added church tradition and papal pronouncements to the Bible as sources of authority. Two

⁷² Jeremiah Leaming, "The Duty of Beginning Religion in Youth," 4-5.

⁷³ Jeremiah Leaming, "A Religious Life Possible to be Attained, and the Means to be used for that End," 24 July 1763, 4.

⁷⁴ Roger Viets, "One Thing Needful," April 1771, 5.

⁷⁵ Roger Viets, "Deliverance," 4.

hundred years later, in New England, Congregational pastors loyal to Calvinist doctrines still clung to the Scriptures as the only repository of truth available to God's people. *Sola Scriptura*, the "Scriptures alone," guaranteed the preeminence of Biblical teaching from the colonial Congregational pulpit.⁷⁶

Anglican sermons in England were moving in the opposite direction. Influenced by the "New Learning" so popular throughout the colonial world, British preachers were relying increasingly on the power of human reason, in addition to the Holy Scriptures, to discover truth. Christianity was reasonable, not mysterious.⁷⁷ Anglican sermons in New England, however, displayed an allegiance to the Bible more akin to the American Congregational pattern. *Sola Scriptura* clearly set the boundaries for the preaching of Jeremiah Leaming and Roger Viets. Every sermon which each man preached was loaded with Biblical allusions and references to specific passages.⁷⁸ The Scriptures so thoroughly saturated the thinking of both men that they constantly utilized Biblical phrases without even offering citations.⁷⁹ Jeremiah Leaming developed the habit of underlining Biblical passages he incorporated into his sermons,

⁷⁶ Stout, 8, 14, 91, 140, 149-150, 166.

⁷⁷ Downey, 14, 81.

⁷⁸ See, for example, Roger Viets, "Deliverance," 20-21; Roger Viets, "One Thing Needful," 9, 15; Roger Viets, "Rend Your Hearts and Not Your Garments," 6; and Roger Viets, "Christmas," 25 December 1763, 12-13. For Leaming, see, for example, Jeremiah Leaming, "A Religious Life Possible to be Attained, and the Means to be Used for that End," 3-6.

⁷⁹ For example, see Roger Viets, "Divine Retribution," 8 April 1761, 14.

demonstrating a special veneration for the Scriptures.⁸⁰ Another sign of reverence was the confession of Roger Viets in one of his sermons that he preferred Scripture translations to paraphrases.⁸¹ Both men were trained in Greek and Hebrew at Yale College, so they were ably prepared to explore the Bible through its original manuscripts.⁸²

Along with their use of the Bible, the words of both of these SPG missionaries honored the Scriptures. In a sermon he had published, Jeremiah Leaming implored his hearers to

set an high Value on the holy Scriptures,
and make them the *sole Rule* of our *Faith*
and *Practice*. They contain the whole
Evidence of our Religion, and all that
Christ *has done, is doing, and will do for*
his Church, . . . if we forsake the
Scriptures for a mere Whim of Men's
distempered Brains, we must expect to
embrace Absurdity. But if we take the
Evidence for Christianity from the
Scripture, we are always safe.⁸³

Leaming clearly distinguished between the efficacy of Scripture to grasp truth, and the inefficacy of man's reason. "We ought always to make a Distinction between what is founded on the infallible word of God, and what is only the Conclusion of our own minds."⁸⁴ Indeed, the smartest men, bereft the counsel of

⁸⁰ For example, see Jeremiah Leaming, "The Duty of Beginning Religion in Youth;" and Jeremiah Leaming, "Upon the Lord's Prayer," 7 February 1768.

⁸¹ Roger Viets, "Sing Praises to God," 7.

⁸² For a reference to the original Hebrew translation of the passage Viets was expositing, see Roger Viets, "Between Two Opinions," no. 30, 30 September 1759, 5.

⁸³ Jeremiah Leaming, The Evidence for the Truth of Christianity Made Plain, 10.

⁸⁴ Jeremiah Leaming, "Christian Faith Described," 21-22.

the Scriptures, merely "grope in the Dark," unable to find "the way to Happiness."⁸⁵

On June 17, 1781, Leaming dedicated an entire sermon to the subject of the study of the Scripture. In this message, he exhorted his congregation to study the Word of God strictly, sincerely, diligently, and impartially.⁸⁶ The missionary from Norwalk argued that the Bible offered a double blessing; it was a fountain of living waters provided by a dying Redeemer and a rule by which every man ought to regulate his life. Leaming called his fellow Anglicans to forsake the writings of profane authors and turn to the sacred authors instead.⁸⁷

Roger Viets agreed that "there is nothing in the Canon of Sacred Writ which has not some important and essential Signification."⁸⁸ In a sermon he preached two years later, Viets testified to the divine source of the Bible. He called it "the sacred Scriptures, those lively oracles of the living God."⁸⁹ Since the Lord had provided the Scriptures Himself, Viets concluded that they alone could "best explain his Will and Designs."⁹⁰

Another principal doctrine central to eighteenth century Calvinism was the notion of the total depravity of mankind.

⁸⁵ Jeremiah Leaming, "The Way to Attain Heavenly Wisdom," 17 October 1773, 2.

⁸⁶ Jeremiah Leaming, "An Exhortation to Study the Scripture," 17 June 1781, 15.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 17; Jeremiah Leaming, "The Way to Attain Heavenly Wisdom," 16.

⁸⁸ Roger Viets, "Sing Praises to God," 6.

⁸⁹ Roger Viets, "Rend Your Hearts and Not Your Garments," 3.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 5.

Congregational preachers in colonial New England regularly explored the depth and the breadth of the sin engrained in the hearts of their flocks. These Congregational ministers taught that man was so sinful that human perfectibility was an impossibility. Human beings could do nothing to improve their capacities to behave morally; they were ruined beyond hope apart from the grace of God. The Latitudinarianism sweeping British religious circles took exception to this dismal pronouncement. Anglicans in Great Britain generally believed that the power of man's reason could be harnessed to refine and to rationalize society. Talk of sin, salvation, and eternal punishment seemed to belong to a past, less enlightened age. The goal of the preacher was to tell his people their duty and convince them to do it.⁹¹

Jeremiah Leaming and Roger Viets sided with the New England Congregationalists in bemoaning the sin of the human condition. Perhaps they brought this thinking "unconverted" into their pulpits as a result of being nurtured on this doctrine during the years of their youth. Leaming simply stated that all were sinners and thus had "lost all Intercourse with the pure and holy Father of the Universe."⁹² Apart from Christ, the missionary from Norwalk declared that one could only be an "obstinate, incorrigible sinner."⁹³ Sin was nothing to be

⁹¹ Downey, 10-11.

⁹² Jeremiah Leaming, The Evidence for the Truth of Christianity Made Plain, 11.

⁹³ Jeremiah Leaming, "The Importance and Dignity of the Ministerial Office," 9 September 1764, 11.

tolerated or excused. "The smallest (sin) is infinitely heinous in the sight of God, and very pernicious to the souls of men."⁹⁴ Leaming encouraged his parishioners to always "consider" their "depraved State," a practice useful to their Christian lives, and to thereby appreciate "the necessity of the Assistance of God's Holy Spirit to quicken, and set home his word upon" their hearts.⁹⁵

Leaving no room for misunderstanding in the minds of his hearers regarding their sinful condition, Roger Viets called his flock "poor, wretched, miserable Worms of Dust."⁹⁶ The whole of this discourse was dedicated to the objective of identifying the pernicious tendency of the evil, wicked heart to judge and accuse others falsely and rashly due to the reality of indwelling sin. Sin was a universal problem, according to Viets. "There are many, if not the far greater Part of Men giving themselves over to Wickedness, drinking in Iniquity like Water, and rolling Sin as a Sweet Morsel under their Tongues."⁹⁷ The Simsbury missionary told his people that sin would beset them from the "cradle to the grave" in every circumstance of life. Indeed, sin seemed to compound in a human being as he or she grew older. Whether experiencing godly happiness or sorrow, instances of wickedness rushed too freely into the human heart,

⁹⁴ Jeremiah Leaming, "A Religious Life Possible to be Attained, and the Means to be Used for that End," 17.

⁹⁵ Jeremiah Leaming, "The Way to Attain Heavenly Wisdom," 11.

⁹⁶ Roger Viets, "Judge Not" (Part One), 29 July 1759, 1.

⁹⁷ Roger Viets, "Man's Sinfulness, Confession, and Forgiveness," no. 31, 24 August 1760, 2.

a heart desperately evil and deceitful. Viets complained that the sins committed by Christians were often so awful and rampant that even the "Heathen" of old would have blushed "to have been suspected of such sins we are really guilty of."⁹⁸

Specific teachings relating to sin caused the sermons of Leaming and Viets to sound even more Congregational in tone. Following the example of late seventeenth century New England Puritan preachers, Roger Viets attacked the sins of New England in almost jeremiad-like fashion.⁹⁹ He compared the sin of the region to the disobedience of the Israelites in the wilderness and recognized military defeat at the hands of French troops as divine punishment for wickedness.¹⁰⁰ Like the Israelites, the inhabitants of New England were too frequently "intolerably wicked, vicious, stiff-necked, hard-hearted, irreclaimable, and incorrigible."¹⁰¹ While sin was a problem at all times historically for all nations, Viets feared that New Englanders had especially offended God by their conduct.¹⁰²

Both Leaming and Viets agreed with Calvinistic Congregationalists that man had been cursed with sin from the Fall of Adam. The teaching that sin is inherent to human nature and passed on from one generation to the next is called the

⁹⁸ Ibid., 6, 12, 13, 18.

⁹⁹ Harry Stout discusses this "sacred" rendering of New England's history among Congregational ministers in his The New England Soul, 62-63, 75-76, 136.

¹⁰⁰ Roger Viets, "Divine Retribution," 16-18.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 16.

¹⁰² Ibid., 17; Roger Viets, "Man's Sinfulness, Confession, and Forgiveness," 9.

doctrine of "original sin." Jeremiah Leaming taught that "human nature in Adam has transgressed the original law given to man, and thereby lost communion with God."¹⁰³ In another sermon, he claimed that all individuals had fallen from a state of innocence and had become "Condemned Malefactors."¹⁰⁴ Roger Viets agreed with this evaluation of the human plight. "Death reigned over all the human Race" because of the first man's, Adam's, transgression.¹⁰⁵ "Great corruption" had come upon "all mankind" due to the "Degeneracy of Adam our first Parent."¹⁰⁶

According to Calvinist doctrine, human depravity demands eternal damnation at the hands of a wrathful God who hates sin. No feature of colonial preaching in New England is more famous than the lurid characterizations of Hell painted by Puritan pastors. Almost every American student has read the most famous example of this genre in junior high school literature class, Jonathan Edwards' "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." The human heart was wicked beyond description; its punishment had to at least equal its viciousness and despicability.¹⁰⁷ Again, British Anglican preachers scoffed at such descriptions of Hell as infantile and intolerant; their Latitudinarianism moved away from such harsh dogma. Archbishop John Tillotson led the attack against such traditional renderings of eternal punishment.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰³ Jeremiah Leaming, "Christian Faith Described," 2.

¹⁰⁴ Jeremiah Leaming, "Justification Stated" (Part Two), 3 October 1762, 8.

¹⁰⁵ Roger Viets, "Easter," 11.

¹⁰⁶ Roger Viets, "Man's Sinfulness, Confession, and Forgiveness," 1.

¹⁰⁷ Stout, 226-227.

¹⁰⁸ Downey, 10.

Nevertheless, Hell was alive and well in Norwalk and Simsbury, Connecticut, in both Congregational and Anglican sermon literature. Jeremiah Leaming and Roger Viets brought the Calvinistic doctrine of eternal damnation replete with colorful illustrations of the same directly into their Anglican theology. Jonathan Edwards has nothing on Jeremiah Leaming in a sermon the latter preached on October 14, 1781, entitled "The Wrath of God is Revealed Against Sin." The whole sermon was intended to stir up the fear of Hell in his hearers and consequently drive them to a holy life. "The wrath of an offended God must be infinitely terrible beyond the Suspicion of the most guilty conscience."¹⁰⁹ Leaming warned his parishioners that the grave was no sanctuary from the wrath of God which would pursue the sinner into the next life.¹¹⁰ Sounding much like Edwards, Leaming cautioned his flock that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."¹¹¹ Eternal damnation was a "state of complete misery, fixed forever."¹¹² The divine determination to assign a soul to Hell would be a horrible moment, and yet "all the Angels in Heaven, and all the Saints that ever lived upon the Earth" will "approve the Sentence."¹¹³ "How dreadful, how amazing it will be, to hear such a Sentence

¹⁰⁹ Jeremiah Leaming, "The Wrath of God is Revealed Against Sin," 4 October 1781, 4.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 5.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 7.

¹¹² Jeremiah Leaming, "Justification Stated" (Part One), 3 October 1762, 1.

¹¹³ Jeremiah Leaming, "A Religious Life Possible to be Attained, and the Means to be Used for that End," 22.

passed by that loving Saviour, that most kind merciful Redeemer."¹¹⁴

Roger Viets frequently described one aspect of Hell above all others--its fires.¹¹⁵ He warned his hearers to "flee from the wrath to come, the hottest flames of Hell."¹¹⁶ There remained for sinners "only an awful and terrible Expectation of the Wrath of Almighty God; and a full Measure of his flaming Indignation."¹¹⁷ In fact, God was angry with a sinner every time a sin was committed.¹¹⁸ Apparently the flames of Hell did not consume the poor sinner consigned to the eternal flames, nor were they his only source of torment. Viets warned his hearers that "roaring lions" inhabited Hell as well.¹¹⁹ Hell was indeed a place of horrid torment where the sinner's body and soul suffered eternally in the "Lake of Fire and Brimstone."¹²⁰

Both Leaming and Viets subscribed to the Calvinistic teaching that Satan was an actual being who would also be punished in Hell once God finally defeated him on the last day of history. Jeremiah Leaming taught that it was the business of the Christian pastor to "convert sinners, . . . and to save all such unhappy souls from eternal death and to turn them from the

¹¹⁴ Jeremiah Leaming, The Evidence for the Truth of Christianity Made Plain, 13.

¹¹⁵ For example, see Roger Viets, "Between Two Opinions," 8.

¹¹⁶ Roger Viets, "Judge Not" (Part One), 23; Roger Viets, "Divine Retribution," 15.

¹¹⁷ Roger Viets, "Divine Retribution," 20.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 15.

¹¹⁹ Roger Viets, "Deliverance," 15.

¹²⁰ Roger Viets, "Easter," 3, 16.

Power of Satan unto God."¹²¹ Roger Viets called Satan by one of his biblical appellations, "Beelzebub, Prince of Devils."¹²² Satan increased the ability of the sinner to slip into wickedness. Wicked individuals, according to the SPG missionary from Simsbury, "sold themselves into the hands of Satan to work all Manner of Abominations."¹²³ Most American colonial preachers personified evil in the being of Satan; both Congregational and Anglican laity understood the dangerous significance of his existence to the welfare of their souls. Embodying evil in a specific person was less popular among European clerics.

Congregational Calvinists in New England solved the problem of total human depravity and the eternal punishment it merited through the orthodox Christian doctrines of salvation, atonement, propitiation, and redemption. Salvation for the sinner came by means of grace through faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross, apart from any human efforts to earn salvation. Indeed, man was so depraved that he could not possibly contribute any good works toward the accomplishment of his salvation. Reformers called this doctrine *Sola Fidei*, that is, faith alone reconciled the sinner to God.¹²⁴ The doctrines of atonement and propitiation taught that Christ on the cross stood in the place of every sinner and suffered the just penalty for sin, thus satisfying, or propitiating, the wrath of God.

¹²¹ Jeremiah Leaming, "The Importance and Dignity of the Ministerial Office," 42.

¹²² Roger Viets, "Deliverance," 9.

¹²³ Roger Viets, "Man's Sinfulness, Confession, and Forgiveness," 10.

¹²⁴ Stout, 150-158.

Christ redeemed, or bought back, an individual enslaved to sin through the payment of His death. Christ could offer the perfect sacrifice for sin because He was fully man (thus accomplishing full identification with human sinners) and fully God (thus offering a life of sinless perfection to satisfy the requirements of God's law demanding unblemished righteousness). A theological alternative to this strict Calvinism was a school of thought known as Arminianism. Thinkers of this ilk argued that good works produced through human effort could contribute to a person's salvation. Anglican theology leaned in the Arminian direction, particularly back home in the Mother Country.

Arminian theology was conspicuously missing from the sermons of Jeremiah Leaming and Roger Viets. Just a few sentences into his funeral oration for Samuel Johnson, Jeremiah Leaming called sinners to repent of their sins and to receive Christ as Lord and Savior.¹²⁵ In another sermon, Leaming offered a classic definition of redemption: "We are out of covenant with God, and stand in need of a mediator, who should pay down a Redemption for us, and intercede in Right of his own merits that we may be accepted by the Father of mercies."¹²⁶ A little later in the same message to his congregation, Leaming identified Christ as the One who had "made a propitiation for the Human

¹²⁵ Jeremiah Leaming, The True Christian's Support Under Affliction. A Sermon Preached at Christ's Church, in Stratford, in Connecticut, January the 9th, 1772. At the Funeral of the Reverend Samuel Johnson, D.D. (New Haven: Thomas and Samuel Green, 1772), 5.

¹²⁶ Jeremiah Leaming, "Christian Faith Described," 3.

Race."¹²⁷ Leaming described Christ as the perfect mediator in that He "is as careful of God's Honor, as of man's salvation."¹²⁸ The mercies of Christ were fully manifest when the Anglican in Norwalk meditated on the fact that the Son of God "left the joys of Heaven, and his Father's Bosoms, to come and die for you."¹²⁹ God had truly blessed mankind, according to Leaming, by setting aside the Covenant based on the Law for one founded on grace and secured through the merits of Christ alone.¹³⁰

Roger Viets told his congregation that God was "calling, inviting, urging, and persuading the Sinner to repent of his Wickedness, to turn unto him, and to have Life."¹³¹ The salvation offered to the sinner was clearly founded on the merits of Christ's death alone.¹³² In declaring the supremacy of Christianity to all other religions, Viets asked his hearers the rhetorical question, "Has any of their heathen Gods offered up himself a Propitiatory Sacrifice for the Sins of its Worshippers?"¹³³ Along with this clear reference to the doctrine of propitiation, Viets also taught lucidly the doctrines of atonement and redemption.¹³⁴

¹²⁷ Ibid., 15.

¹²⁸ Jeremiah Leaming, "Christ Came to Fulfill the Law," 2 February 1772, 14.

¹²⁹ Jeremiah Leaming, "The Duty of Beginning Religion in Youth," 3.

¹³⁰ Jeremiah Leaming, "Justification Stated" (Part One), 9.

¹³¹ Roger Viets, "Divine Retribution," 2.

¹³² Roger Viets, "Rend Your Hearts and Not Your Garments," 6.

¹³³ Roger Viets, "Deliverance," 18.

¹³⁴ For the doctrine of the atonement, see Roger Viets, "Easter," 11; for the doctrine of redemption, see Roger Viets, "One Thing Needful," 3.

Roger Viets seemed to embrace the Calvinism of New England Congregationalists along the lines of even more specific doctrinal truth. John Calvin and Martin Luther both argued that God predestined or elected certain individuals to be saved and others to be damned. Arminians abhorred the arbitrary nature of this doctrine and what it seemed to teach about the selective mercy of God. But Roger Viets, in a sermon he preached on October 28, 1759, argued that "tis predestinated that all those who shall be heretics and deny the Lord who bought them, shall be punished in Hell forever."¹³⁵ Not only did Viets seem to ascribe to the doctrine of predestination, he also apparently subscribed to the notion of God's overruling providence, a favorite doctrine among Calvinists touting the sovereignty of God. "The Providence of the infinitely wise God as in all Things else so in this, put Man in such a Condition as to be moved by Things temporal, present, and visible."¹³⁶

Both Leaming and Viets offered scriptural, historical, and orthodox defenses of such traditional Christian doctrines as the Incarnation of God as a man, Christ's resurrection, and the historicity and reality of miracles.¹³⁷ Contending for these

¹³⁵ Roger Viets, "Contend for the Faith Once Delivered," no. 37, 28 October 1759, 3.

¹³⁶ Roger Viets, "Easter," 17. For other references to the Providence of God in a Viets sermon, see Roger Viets, "Deliverance," 4, 14, 16, 20.

¹³⁷ For a defense of the Incarnation, see Roger Viets, "Christmas." For excellent apologetical expositions of the historicity of Christ's resurrection, see Jeremiah Leaming, The Evidence for the Truth of Christianity Made Plain and Roger Viets, "Easter." For a reference to the historicity and reality of miracles, see Roger Viets, "Between Two Opinions," 7-8.

trans-rational doctrines in the face of the "New Learning" so prominent among "enlightened" theological circles was not an *avant garde* position. But such a stand was fully compatible with the teaching of most New England Congregational pastors. And Leaming and Viets could take no other posture. Jeremiah Leaming concluded, "We must renounce the very Faculty of Credibility, and all Faith in History, before we can set aside the Evidence which God hath given for the Truth of the Christian Religion."¹³⁸

Historian Harry Stout, in his study of Congregational sermons in colonial New England, identified a new trend unique to the eighteenth century. Increasingly, Congregational ministers were emphasizing morality in their messages. The words "piety" and "virtue" were being used by these preachers much more frequently.¹³⁹ Some of this emphasis on virtue might have its origin in the fact that many of these men were reading the political writings of a group of British thinkers known as the "Country Party." These Whig ideologists hammered the notion that virtue must be protected from the power of tyrants.

Regardless of the source, Jeremiah Leaming and Roger Viets joined their Congregational colleagues in calling their flocks to virtue and piety. Jeremiah Leaming constantly used the word "virtue" in his sermons, frequently equating it with the whole

¹³⁸ Jeremiah Leaming, The Evidence for the Truth of Christianity Made Plain, 8.

¹³⁹ Stout, 128-131.

concept of religion in general.¹⁴⁰ Emphasizing moral standards in religious conduct, Leaming attacked pride, vanity, weakness, and folly in conversation and behavior.¹⁴¹ A survey of the titles of some of Roger Viets' sermons displays his stress of morality in religion. He preached sermons on "The Pleasure and Peace of Wisdom," "The Greatest of These is Charity," "Falsehood and Hypocrisy," "Honesty," "Lying," and "Walking Worthy of Vocation."¹⁴² In 1765, Viets preached an entire sermon on the subject of morality, significantly entitled "Vices and Virtues." Some of the virtues discussed in this teaching included kindness, tenderheartedness, and forgiveness.¹⁴³ The goal of a sacramental sermon Roger Viets delivered to young communicants in 1763 was to "stir up Youth to virtue."¹⁴⁴ In an earlier sermon, Simsbury's missionary had attacked pride, lusts, infidelity, intemperance, profaneness, and hypocrisy as false gods like Baal who could not deliver.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ Jeremiah Leaming, "Religion the Only Method for Happiness," 19 November 1780, 6, 8. See Jeremiah Leaming, "The Importance and Dignity of the Ministerial Office," 9, for heavy use of the word "virtue," underlined twice in one sentence.

¹⁴¹ Jeremiah Leaming, "A Religious Life Possible to be Attained, and the Means to be Used for that End," 15.

¹⁴² All of these sermons may be found in the Roger Viets Files, Colonial and Early American files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford.

¹⁴³ Roger Viets, "Vices and Virtues," 1765, 11-17.

¹⁴⁴ Roger Viets, "To the Young," 24 July 1763, 3.

¹⁴⁵ Roger Viets, "Deliverance," 3. In his sermon entitled "One Thing Needful," Viets extolled the virtues of a good life practiced constantly and conscientiously. See Roger Viets, "One Thing Needful," 7-8. Again, Anglican ministers in other regions of colonial America were preaching sermons reflecting this emphasis on "virtue" and morality. The universality of this phenomenon indicated the pervasive influence of Whig ideology in eighteenth century America, a fact that has been well documented by a generation of historians following in the footsteps of Bernard Bailyn. See Bernard Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the

Societal dynamics in eighteenth century New England presented Congregational ministers, and ministers of every denomination really, with tensions and challenges. The introduction of English manners and dress worried the pastors that their flocks would succumb to pride and avarice in searching for material prosperity. The understandable desire to become more wealthy drove inhabitants toward the frontier, leaving the older towns from which the power of many Congregational ministers emanated.¹⁴⁶ This mobility of the New England population tested the authority of the local minister; clerical authority was being increasingly questioned in general by a laity that had always contended for their power according to Congregational polity. The Great Awakening threw fuel on this simmering fire; lay itinerants claimed that some of New England's finest Congregational ministers were actually unsaved. In the midst of the chaos, Congregational ministers sought to restore order and reassert their authority. They attempted this end by attacking the pursuit of wealth in their sermons and issuing frequent enjoinders to be faithful in worship attendance.¹⁴⁷

American Revolution (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967). Moreover, sermons focusing on morality became a staple of the common "American" pulpit of the eighteenth century which transcended denominational boundaries.

¹⁴⁶ For an excellent study of this phenomenon and its historical, societal, and religious repercussions, see Richard Bushman, From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967).

¹⁴⁷ Stout, 143, 159-165, 197-202.

Jeremiah Leaming and Roger Viets faced the same challenges as their Congregational counterparts, and they utilized the same sermonic weapons to strengthen their influence and authority. In a sermon he preached during the summer of 1781, Leaming attacked those "who consider Riches as their chief happiness." He argued that no soul can be satisfied with the abundance of earthly treasures.¹⁴⁸ During a funeral sermon given in 1772, the missionary from Norwalk complained that too many people conducted an "extravagant pursuit of the profits and pleasures of this present world" as if their "Eternal Salvation depended upon" it.¹⁴⁹ At another funeral a year later, Leaming reminded his audience that they were "pilgrims and strangers" for whom this world was not a home.¹⁵⁰ In fact, the "Pomps and Vanities of this wicked world" could easily choke out the effects of the Word of God in a believer's life.¹⁵¹ Too many allowed "their eyes to be dazzled with superficial Tinsel instead of pure gold."¹⁵² Apparently, funerals offered Jeremiah Leaming the best opportunity to demonstrate the fleeting nature of worldly riches as opposed to the eternal value of treasures laid up in heaven.

Roger Viets also condemned those who valued temporal treasures more than the "Beatitudes of heaven."¹⁵³ In a sermon based on the words of Jesus that it was easier for a camel to go

¹⁴⁸ Jeremiah Leaming, "The Reason for Setting our Affections on Things Above," 12 August 1781, 2.

¹⁴⁹ Jeremiah Leaming, "Funeral Sermon," 1772, 3.

¹⁵⁰ Jeremiah Leaming, "A Funeral Sermon," 11 July 1773, 3.

¹⁵¹ Jeremiah Leaming, "A Funeral Sermon," 17 April 1785, 3.

¹⁵² Jeremiah Leaming, "A Funeral Sermon," 1772, 3.

¹⁵³ Roger Viets, "Divine Retribution," 11.

through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter Heaven, Viets counseled love of God above love for goods, lands, or possessions. God was the more "proper and suitable Object of Love" for the true Christian, not worldly gain.¹⁵⁴ The position of the SPG missionary in Simsbury on the accumulation of wealth was clear.

These have given up both their Souls and Bodies to the Service of the ungodly Mammon of this World, and are resolved to make their Religion subservient to the Promotion of their worldly Interest and instead of seeking first the Kingdom of God and Righteousness of Christ they make it their primary and principle Concern to seek the fading Glory and transitory Honour of this vain Life, and seem to expect that all Things in Heaven will fall to them of Course.¹⁵⁵

Acquisitiveness was a threat to ministerial authority both in terms of driving parishioners onto the frontier away from their churches and driving God from greedy hearts. Anglican and Congregational pastors formed a united front against this enemy of their congregation's souls.

Jeremiah Leaming also abhorred the growing tendency among his flock to treat the Sabbath day with contempt. He feared that his congregation would "spend this Day . . . in such a manner as not to be much Edified by it."¹⁵⁶ Indeed, the

¹⁵⁴ Roger Viets, "Easier for a Camel to Go Through the Eye of a Needle," no. 32, 18 July 1762, 4. This sermon actually was given once before the 1762 date, but Viets inscribed in his sermon book that he knew "not when nor where the first Time" he preached it.

¹⁵⁵ Roger Viets, "Contend for the Faith Once Delivered," 6.

¹⁵⁶ Jeremiah Leaming, "The Duty of Beginning Religion in Youth," 7.

lackadaisical attitudes toward worship attendance threatened the vitality of Christianity in New England. "Where there is a neglect of the Public Worship, or a Disregard of the Christian Sabbath, Religion is in great Danger of being lost."¹⁵⁷ Leaming reflected on the faithfulness of the early Christians, even during persecution, to worship God earnestly. In contrast, he lamented, "where is the zeal and earnestness now to press together into the house of God, to approach the Gates of his Sanctuary,--and to worship in his holy Temple?"¹⁵⁸ Leaming preached an entire sermon defending the authority and dignity of the ministerial office.¹⁵⁹ The shaky enthusiasm of his people to attend upon his ministries caused him some concern.

Roger Viets exercised strong emotion against the profanation of the Lord's Day. He told his flock that it was the sin of "robbing God" not to attend worship services. This crime "cries loudly against" those who absent themselves. If persisted in, the failure to participate in sacred meetings would lead to "other Vices and Wickednesses which will end in our eternal Destruction." And yet, Viets contended, this sin reigned in New England. "Oh that my Head were Waters and mine Eyes a Fountain of Tears that I might weep, Day and Night, for this abominable Iniquity, this so heinous a Transgression of God's holy Law which so spreads, prevails, and increases upon

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Jeremiah Leaming, "Love to our Brother a Sure Mark of a True Christian," 4 October 1772, 11.

¹⁵⁹ Jeremiah Leaming, "The Importance and Dignity of the Ministerial Office," 9 September 1764.

us."¹⁶⁰ Viets commanded his parishioners to look around the sanctuary to see "how many turn their backs wantonly on the House of God."¹⁶¹ Even among those who attended services, Viets criticized the devotion displayed. Some Anglicans in Simsbury were composing themselves in a "Sleepy Posture," sitting "loosely," and behaving in a careless manner.¹⁶² Since these people had to listen to Viets read his sermons *verbatim*, their failure to stay alert throughout the message evokes both sympathy and understanding. But to their minister, such conduct was unacceptable, and indicated a serious breach of deference for his ministerial authority.

John Calvin's followers became known for an intense introspection pursued to determine the inner "signs" of election to salvation. Roger Viets could easily have spoken the following words in any of the Calvinistic Congregational pulpits of colonial New England: "A Suitable, Religious and proper care of our Souls consists in frequently examining our Selves, how we have lived, and what our Behaviour has been."¹⁶³ Likewise, he joined the Congregationalists in attacking the old nemesis of the British Reformation, the Roman Catholic Church. According to Viets, Catholics had locked up the Scripture from people "in an unknown Tongue" in order to exert their control through an improper interpretation of it.¹⁶⁴ One of the most famous

¹⁶⁰ Roger Viets, "Divine Retribution," 4, 9.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 13.

¹⁶² Roger Viets, "Reasonable Service," 16 June 1765, 10-11.

¹⁶³ Roger Viets, "One Thing Needful," 4.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

Catholic monarchs of Great Britain had been Mary, the daughter of Henry VIII. In one of his sermons, Viets referred to her as a "bloody Monster" and labeled her Church with the traditional Protestant epithet, "the Whore of Babylon."¹⁶⁵ Unlike Viets and his Congregational colleagues in New England, more moderate British Anglicans were trying to build Latitudinarian bridges toward increasing communion with their Roman brethren.

Historian Harry Stout argues that the venerated SPG missionary from Stratford, Connecticut, Samuel Johnson, was one of the few Anglican ministers in eighteenth century New England who preached the traditional doctrines of sin and regeneration.¹⁶⁶ Stout's opinion of the orthodoxy of New England Anglicanism is too exclusive. It is a sign of the "Americanization" of the Anglican church in eighteenth century New England that the sermons of SPG missionaries sounded more like those preached by their Congregational neighbors than those of their brethren back in England.

If this theological phenomenon was so widespread among Anglican ministers in New England, why were they not detected and disciplined by the Church leadership in London? Perhaps the doctrinal pluralism, the "Americanization" of the Anglican sermon, was so common that it had become acceptable in the northern colonies. The Society was too distant and too busy to monitor the sermons of its missionaries. Normally, the SPG

¹⁶⁵ Roger Viets, "Between Two Opinions," 13.

¹⁶⁶ Stout, 227-228.

relied on key missionaries to report problems or inconsistencies which needed its attention. In Connecticut, that missionary would have been Samuel Johnson. Johnson himself, however, was courting a theology as Calvinistic as that of Leaming and Viets. The examination conducted by the Society in London before a missionary was ordained and assigned his post was rather perfunctory.¹⁶⁷ This testing would not have detected the niceties of theological preference. Candidates had to present the Society with testimonials guaranteeing their morals, scholarship, and loyalty to the Anglican Church. But colonial Anglican ministers, who had already made the theological adjustments to their American context, provided these testimonials for native-born aspirants. In essence, then, the fox was guarding the theological "hen house" of the Anglican Church in New England. Moreover, it could very well be that the Society was more interested in a growing church membership in America than they were strict doctrinal purity.

The reasons for this hybrid Anglican sermon are somewhat unclear; several explanations deserve consideration. It could be that the theology of many of these native-born SPG missionaries did not undergo as radical a transformation as has often been assumed. Perhaps they carried some Congregational thinking which they had learned in their early years unscathed into their Anglican pulpits. After all, the issue for many of

¹⁶⁷ For a good description of this examination, see chapter V of this dissertation, pages 171-173.

these men in forsaking the Congregational ministry was not theological. Rather, they had doubted a matter of church polity, the viability of their Presbyterian ordinations, in deciding to forsake the religion of their youth. Or perhaps a sermon incorporating some elements of Calvinistic theology became a potent tool to evangelize local Congregationalists. Jeremiah Leaming, Roger Viets, and others may have wanted to make the return "to the fold" as easy as possible for the dissenters they pursued. Given a lack of evidence and testimony by these men, historians can only speculate why these missionaries sounded so Congregational. Whatever the reasons, the method, style, and content of Anglican sermons in eighteenth century New England, delivered by native-born SPG missionaries, demonstrated again the novel path upon which American Episcopalianism was already traveling.

CHAPTER VII

EDWARD BASS AND THE CRISIS OF CONSCIENCE

I need not tell you of the sad situation of this Country, and that America is such a scene of war and tumult as never was known before. I fear things will grow worse and worse. God bring them to a speedy and a happy issue! I stand greatly in need of the Society's Counsel and advice.¹

Indeed he did! Writing just two months before the Declaration of Independence was signed in Philadelphia, SPG missionary Edward Bass was facing a crisis of conscience. And he was not alone. Society missionaries throughout British North America were at a loss as to how to proceed in performing their clerical duties. Their association with a British institution based in London stigmatized these priests. Living under a cloud of suspicion, most of the missionaries suffered various forms of abuse from rebel mobs and Committees of Safety. However, the greatest crisis confronting most of these men had to do with an inner struggle. Could they conduct worship services according to the changing circumstances of the American scene? Would they be willing to adjust their liturgy, to "Americanize" the objectionable British components?

Anglican priests found themselves in a unique situation on the eve of the American Revolution. They alone of all colonial

¹ Edward Bass, Newburyport, Massachusetts, to the Secretary, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, London, 3 May 1776, in Daniel Addison, The Life and Times of Edward Bass (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1897), 130.

clergy took a special oath of allegiance to the King of Great Britain, not once, but twice: first at their ordination as deacons and then again when they were ordained as priests.² According to the English Prayer Book of 1775, which had not changed since 1662, the ordinand was to swear an oath of the King's Supremacy before the presiding bishop.³ Of course, this confession occurred across the Atlantic far from any rebel ears. More public and problematic were the prayers required for the King in the liturgical service designed for Sunday morning and evening worship. These prayers were mandatory. Additionally, in the Litany, the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th sentences referred to the King and the Royal Family. "In the order for the Holy Communion, there were two collects for the King immediately following the Decalogue and preceding the collect for the day, one of which (had to) be used."⁴ Rebel committees, rebel mobs,

² Walter H. Stowe, "A Study in Conscience: Some Aspects of the Relations of the Clergy to the State," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 19 (December 1950): 303.

³ Ibid. The oath read as follows: "I, A.B. do swear, that I do from my heart abhor, detest, and abjure, as impious and heretical, that damnable doctrine and position, That Princes excommunicated or deprived by the Pope, or any Authority of the See of Rome, may be deposed or murdered by their Subjects, or any other whatsoever. And I do declare, that no foreign Prince, Person, Prelate, State, or Potentate hath, or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, Ecclesiastical or Spiritual, within this Realm. So help me God.

⁴ Ibid., 304. The "Prayer for the King's Majesty," to be recited during Morning and Evening Prayer, was worded in the following manner: "O Lord our heavenly Father, high and mighty, King of kings, Lord of lords, the only Ruler of princes, who dost from thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth; Most heartily we beseech thee with thy favour to behold our most gracious Sovereign Lord, King GEORGE; and so replenish him with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that he may always incline to thy will, and walk in thy way: Endue him plenteously with heavenly gifts; grant him in health and wealth long to live; strengthen him that he may vanquish and overcome all his enemies; and finally, after this life, he may attain everlasting joy and felicity, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." It

even rebel parishioners demanded that these prayers be omitted from the liturgy of the Anglican services. Could a conscientious missionary make the necessary deletions and keep his church open? Or must the missionary close his church rather than tamper with the time-honored order of worship he had pledged to keep? Edward Bass of Newburyport, and the other New England SPG missionaries, struggled over this dilemma in 1776.

Edward Bass was born to Joseph and Elizabeth Bass of Dorchester, Massachusetts, on November 23, 1726. Displaying a humor characteristic of his personality, Bass, later in life, mused that he had left Dorchester because the streams there "were not deep enough for bass to swim in."⁵ A descendant of Mayflower settlers, Bass entered Harvard College in 1740 at the age of thirteen and was graduated in 1744. He returned for a master's degree in 1747 with a thesis entitled, "Will the Blessed in the Future World after the Last Judgement, Make Use of Articulate Speech and Will that be Hebrew?"⁶ Undoubtedly the young student hoped this would be the heavenly tongue as he was especially skilled in its manipulation. While at Harvard, Bass roomed with Mather Byles, Jr., the son of a famous

is clear why the recitation of this prayer became odious to rebel sensibilities after the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

⁵ Daniel Addison, The Life and Times of Edward Bass, 119.

⁶ Reader's Guide 1, Episcopal Records, Papers of the Bishops, Biographical Sketch of Edward Bass, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, Boston.

Congregational pastor in Boston. Byles' conversion to Episcopalianism would cause a great stir in the years to come.⁷

During his years at Harvard, Bass taught school and supplied Congregational pulpits at Boxford, Malden, Norton, and other towns. Intending to enter the Congregational ministry, Bass never received the call he hoped for due, according to close friends, to the fact that he lacked "popular talents."⁸ He was soon converted to the Church of England perhaps because of this disappointment or perhaps through reading the books given to Harvard Library by Bishop George Berkeley.⁹ No doubt the validity of Congregational ordination lay at the root of Bass' move away from the church of his youth.¹⁰ The wardens of St. Paul's Church in Newburyport evidently saw something in the young Bass that escaped the scrutiny of Congregational parishes. They extended an invitation to Bass to come and assist Matthias Plant, the aging SPG missionary serving there. Legend has it that one warden liked Bass because he "pares an apple and lights a pipe more like a gentleman than any other candidates you have brought to me."¹¹ Perhaps Bass had indeed been "too worldly" to satisfy the more narrow social tastes of Congregational leaders.

⁷ John L. Sibley and Clifford K. Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates: Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard College in the Classes 1741-1745, vol. 11 (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1960), 340.

⁸ Ibid., 341.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ While no direct evidence exists detailing the reasons for Bass' conversion, most conformists struggled with the lack of episcopal authority in Congregational ordinations.

¹¹ Addison, 14.

St. Paul's wrote the Society in December of 1751, asking that Bass be ordained and returned quickly to them to assist Plant, whose health was a matter of concern.¹² Bass carried the traditional testimonials from established missionaries with him to give to the Society upon his arrival in London. Charles Brockwell, assigned to King's Chapel, Boston, to assist Henry Caner, noted that Bass was of "general good character" and carried a full complement of recommendations, including some from the "Seminary of Schism," the epithet Episcopal clergy attached to Harvard. His one reservation was that Bass had already preached a sermon in Newbury, a transgression Plant had been too infirm to prevent.¹³ Ebenezer Miller, SPG missionary in nearby Braintree, acknowledged that Bass had preached "for some time among the dissenters to good acceptance, but now upon mature consideration, thinks it his duty to conform to the Church of England...." He told the Society that both Plant and the people in Newbury were "highly pleased" with the missionary candidate, "universally well spoken of as a man of Piety and sense, a good Preacher and of an agreeable temper." Miller encouraged the Society to dispatch Bass quickly back to New England because the young man had never had smallpox, a disease

¹² Wardens of St. Paul's Church, Newbury, Ma., to the Secretary, SPG, London, 23 December 1751, in Sibley and Shipton, 341.

¹³ Charles Brockwell, Boston, to the Bishop of London, London, 21 January 1752, in William S. Perry, ed., Historical Collections Relating to the American Colonial Church, vol. III: Massachusetts (Hartford, Ct.: [privately printed], 1870-1878), 441.

that had robbed other towns of clerical candidates seeking ordination in London.¹⁴

Testimonials in hand, the twenty-six-year-old Bass crossed the Atlantic without incident and made the journey from Portsmouth to London in a "large, old-fashioned English stage-coach, drawn by six horses."¹⁵ Bass waited on Thomas Sherlock, Bishop of London, in his palace at Fulham. There the Greek New Testament "was placed in his hands, and he was desired to render a part of a chapter into English, and afterwards into Latin, which he did to the satisfaction of those present."¹⁶ In addition, Bass was asked to translate the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Anglican Church into Latin. Having successfully completed this examination, Bass was ordained by Sherlock in his private chapel at Fulham on May 24, 1752.¹⁷ Following the sacrament of ordination, Bass and the other new clerics were treated to a sumptuous feast by the bishop. A short time after his admission to deacon's orders, Bass was ordained priest. By the autumn of 1752, Massachusetts' newest missionary had returned safely to Newbury.¹⁸

Matthias Plant died the following spring, so the Society adopted Edward Bass as their designated missionary to Newbury

¹⁴ Ebenezer Miller, Braintree, Ma., to the Secretary, SPG, London, 1 February 1752, in *Ibid.*, 442-443.

¹⁵ John N. Norton, Life of Bishop Bass of Massachusetts (New York: General Protestant Episcopal Sunday School Union and Church Book Society, 1859), 29.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 34-35.

and paid him the usual £50 per year allotted to SPG personnel in the American colonies. The life of the parish shifted to the area of the city nearest the water, Newburyport, home of St. Paul's, and away from the original location of the earlier Anglican church, Queen Anne's Chapel. Queen Anne's had initially come into existence through a Congregational church split due to earlier demographic shifts in Newbury. Now, the Chapel suffered the absence of its new priest three out of the four Sundays in a month because more Episcopalians lived near the port. Frustrated over this course of events, the parishioners of Queen Anne's decided to revert to the faith of their fathers and take the building with them, converting it to a Congregational church. Bass fought this move as long as he could, but he was eventually persuaded by the governor of Massachusetts and the Society to allow the transition to occur.¹⁹

Outside of this dispute, steadiness and stability marked the tenure of Edward Bass in Newburyport until the outbreak of the Revolution. In the fall of 1754, shortly after taking full responsibilities for the work in Newbury, Bass married Sarah Beck, a young woman raised a dissenter, like the parson, but who became a zealous advocate of the English Church.²⁰ Bass had no

¹⁹ For a discussion of Bass' controversy with the incorporation of the Fifth Parish of Newbury, what had been Queen Anne's Chapel, see Sibley and Shipton, 344. For a full discussion of the original Congregational rupture which led to the creation of Queen Anne's Chapel, and then its reversion back to Congregationalism, see Calvin R. Batchelder, A History of the Eastern Diocese, vol. I (Claremont, N.H.: The Claremont Manufacturing Company, Church Printers, 1876), 426-435, 447-448.

²⁰ Introduction to the Sermon Collection in The Gospel Advocate, November 1826, perhaps written by James Morss, Bass' successor at St.

children either by this wife or by a Miss Philips whom he married in 1793 as an elderly widower. Bass served the parish in Newburyport for fifty-one years, until his death in 1803. While in the Society's service, he faithfully corresponded with the Secretary biennially, as required by the organization's charter.²¹ While not physically becoming, Bass' temperament and charm mixed with sincere self-deprecation won him the appreciation of his contemporaries, even those from the dissenting community.²²

Bass did not serve during the years of the Great Awakening and the initial visits to America of George Whitefield. Nevertheless, one disturbance which interrupted his quiet pre-Revolutionary years in Newburyport was the outbreak of Methodism. He wrote the Society in 1764 that this "enthusiastick spirit" prevailed more in Newbury "than in any other town in the Country." The Methodists held nightly meetings, during which adults and children of both sexes would "cry out, utter very strange, some that have been present say blasphemous expressions, and fall into raptures and trances." He was thankful that none in his church were "at all infected with these things."²³ Despite his abhorrence for the

Paul's, Edward Bass Papers, Box 2, File 1, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, Boston.

²¹ For samples of Bass' correspondence, see Perry, 469, 505.

²² Sibley and Shipton, 343. Apparently, Bass' nose protruded significantly, as did his upper body, a corpulence out of proportion to his five foot eight inch stature. His striking blondness was also noted frequently.

²³ Edward Bass, Newbury, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 25 March 1764, in Perry, 512-513.

emotionalism of the revival, he still maintained a professional and mature relationship with the clergy of other denominations in Newbury. When George Whitefield died in Newburyport in 1770, Bass was one of the six pallbearers for the famous evangelist.²⁴

Edward Bass developed strong relationships with the other Massachusetts missionaries and joined them in cooperative pursuits. He signed petitions beseeching the Society to seek the assignment of a bishop to North America, especially as political troubles increased during the 1760's.²⁵ Like so many of the other SPG missionaries in America, he was a member in good standing of the Masons, organizing the Lodge in Newburyport and preaching the installation sermon for John Rowe as Grand Master throughout North America at Trinity Church, Boston.²⁶ In a sermon before his home lodge in 1779, he encouraged his brothers to "love one another, making love the very badge by which they should be known to belong to him [God]."²⁷ Given Bass' friendly disposition and respect for others, there appeared to be no evidence that certain missionaries would betray him during and after the Revolution. As a sign of Bass' gregariousness and the general esteem extended to him by others, Jonathan Parsons, Bass' Presbyterian colleague in town, wrote him a letter of rebuke, in Latin, censoring his fondness for card playing and similar social activities. Parsons' regard for

²⁴ Addison, 120.

²⁵ Perry, 530-532 and 541-542.

²⁶ Sibley and Shipton, 343.

²⁷ Addison, 171-172.

Bass was demonstrated by the use of Latin, lest the letter fall into the hands of a layman and harm the Episcopal Rector.²⁸

The tranquillity of St. Paul's parish was shaken violently and unalterably by the outbreak of hostilities at Lexington and Concord in April of 1775. All over New England, SPG clergy became leading loyalist suspects for local Committees of Safety.²⁹ As early as the fall of 1768, the missionaries, in convention in Boston, recognized that a storm was brewing:

The general state of the Churches in this part of America are indeed in as good a condition as can reasonably be expected under the present troublesome state of these Colonies. All that we are able to do in these times is only to cultivate among the people committed to our care a spirit of peace and patience under the various insults to which they are exposed for refusing to join in the popular clamors which now prevail. We are neither allowed to speak nor scarcely to be silent unless we join with those who we believe to be laboring the destruction of our constitution, civil & religious. The civil Government is too weak to afford us protection; & ecclesiastical superior we have none on this side of the Atlantic, from whom we may receive timely advice or direction under our present trials. We can only look up to God and cast ourselves upon the divine providence for protection and for a happy issue to our distress.³⁰

²⁸ Sibley and Shipton, 343.

²⁹ For an excellent study of the role of the Episcopal clergy and laity in the American Revolution, see David L. Holmes, "The Episcopal Church and the American Revolution," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 47 (September 1978): 261-291. Charles Mampoteng focused on the plight of Anglican clerics in New England alone in his "The New England Anglican Clergy in the American Revolution," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Church 9 (1940): 267-303.

³⁰ Clergy of Massachusetts, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 22 September 1768, in Addison, 101-102.

Of course, the colony of Massachusetts became the focal point of revolutionary fervor. Following the Intolerable Acts and the closing of the port of Boston, Bass himself wrote the Secretary of the Society, voicing his worst fears: "You express a Compassionate sense of the Distresses of your American Brethren: indeed their present situation is enough to excite the compassion of every humane man. The Country in general is in great Distress, which, I doubt is rather likely to increase than otherwise; and the Missionaries will not fail to have their full share."³¹

The SPG missionaries did indeed have their "full share" of distress. William Clark of Dedham was arrested in 1777 for helping two Tories flee the country. His house was ransacked, he was denied counsel at his trial, and he was sentenced to banishment and the confiscation of his estates. Prior to his transportation to the ship which would take him away from his homeland, he spent ten weeks in a jail cell, on the wall of which hung a picture of Oliver Cromwell for his reluctant perusal. He experienced such hard usage on the ship, along with a bout of asthma, that he lost his power of speech. Already nearly deaf, Clark became a pitiable figure and, like many refugees in England, he found little sympathy there.³²

³¹ Edward Bass, Newburyport, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 15 August 1775, Edward Bass Papers, Box 1, File 1, Item 3, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, Boston.

³² Addison, 139; Mampoteng, 280-281; Abstract of the Proceedings of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 20 February 1778-19 February 1779, in Kenneth W. Cameron, Ethos of Anglicanism in

John Wiswall, missionary to Falmouth between 1765 and 1775, was taken prisoner, abused, and shot at by a mob. He made his escape on board one of His Majesty's ships, leaving behind "all his property, his library, which was a good one, his household furniture, and his real estate." Forced to follow her husband with only two days' provision and the clothes on her back, Wiswall's wife sickened and died, along with one of her daughters, shortly after reuniting with him in Boston.³³ Winwood Searjeant of Cambridge and Joshua Wingate Weeks of Marblehead were both driven from their parishes for refusing to take an oath of loyalty to the rebel Government.³⁴ Ranna Cossit was threatened by a mob of 300 men late in 1774 while serving his flock in Haverhill and Claremont.³⁵ "The only clergyman who died was Rev. Mr. (Ebenezer) Thompson, of Scituate, his death being due, it was freely said, to some 'uncivil treatment from the Rebels in his neighborhood'."³⁶

Edward Bass also experienced his share of derision during the early days of the American Revolution. Jacob Bailey, missionary to the Pownalboro frontier, wrote the SPG about one such encounter Bass endured. "I was one evening just upon my arrival at his house, witness to a scene equally ludicrous and

Colonial New England and New York (Hartford, Ct.: Transcendental Books, 1981), 184. Missionary Edward Winslow writes of Clark's treatment in his letter to the Society, written from New York City on 4 January 1779, in Perry, 606.

³³ SPG Abstracts, 17 February 1775-16 February 1776, in Cameron, Ethos of Anglicanism, 169.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Addison, 140.

indecent, for as he was returning from an entertainment with his wife he was pursued along the street by near two hundred persons who pelted him with dirt and stones and treated him with the most indelicate language."³⁷ Bass suffered the financial hardship common to most of the missionaries during the war years as well. Indeed, his parishioners were well-aware of the fact that Bass could not obtain his salary from the Society because of the "present unhappy Times." They took it upon themselves to subscribe to a special fund to provide some sort of relief for Bass and his wife in November of 1776.³⁸

Samuel Peters, SPG missionary to Hebron, Connecticut, was a notorious Tory who became famous for his biased chronicles of American history written during his exile in London. While describing Major General Benedict Arnold, the recent traitor to the rebel cause, for a British publication called the Political Magazine in 1780, Peters made reference to another example of persecution suffered by Edward Bass. While leading American troops out of Cambridge toward Quebec in the early fall of 1775, Arnold paused in Newburyport. The troops occupied Bass' parsonage "and made very free with his cellar." Arnold got word of this behavior on the part of his men, reprimanded them, and offered Bass a guard. He declined the offer, fearing that such preferential treatment might arouse the ire of local inhabitants. At the same time, Arnold's offer of assistance did

³⁷ Jacob Bailey, Cornwallis, Nova Scotia, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 15 November 1782, in Addison, 156, 211-212.

³⁸ Addison, 157-158.

give Bass some manner of authority with the soldiers using his home. "On their insisting upon being entertained with wine, [Bass] informed them, 'there was small beer at their service, but his wine he kept for Col. Arnold.' After this, they troubled him no more."³⁹

The main source of consternation for the SPG missionaries in New England was the question of conscience. What were they to do about the oaths of loyalty they had taken to the King at the time of their ordination? How were they to continue to pray for the royal family, given the adverse political climate and the threat of severe persecution? There was no single pattern of response in all the New England colonies. The missionaries in Connecticut acted in unison in response to this dilemma. In convention on July 23, 1776, all of the SPG missionaries in Connecticut agreed to close their churches rather than risk reprisal by rebel mobs against their persons and their property for continuing to pray for the King.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, they decided to continue to serve their parishioners as long as they could safely do so in any manner possible outside of the liturgical gatherings which mandated any sort of royal prayers. Surviving convention minutes disclose the reasoning used to reach this decision to close the churches. The missionaries argued that they were bound by their ordination oaths, that no resident

³⁹ Samuel Peters, The Political Magazine of London, 1 (November-December 1780): 746-748, in Kenneth Cameron, ed., The Works of Samuel Peters of Hebron, Connecticut (Hartford, Ct.: Transcendental Books, 1967), 164.

⁴⁰ Mampoteng, 284.

bishop was present to approve any alteration in the liturgy, and that any such changes without permission might incur the penalties of "Suspension, Excommunication and Deposition."⁴¹

The united front of Connecticut clergy was breached on November 27, 1778 when John Tyler of Norwich opened his church to services devoid of the prayers for the King. As justification for his action, Tyler argued that "the cause of religion ought not to be annihilated on a civil account" and that "public worship was of too much consequence to be totally omitted on account of a few words in a liturgy." Claiming Christ's Kingdom was not of this world, Tyler acknowledged that prayers for King George had become an obligation now impossible to fulfill.⁴²

The initial reaction of Tyler's colleagues was cool. Meeting in convention in May of 1780, the other missionaries wrote Tyler a letter expressing concern for his deviation from the doctrines of the Church. However, within three years, all of Tyler's critics had followed suit, "opening their churches, conducting public worship, and omitting prayers for the King, the Royal Family, and Parliament."⁴³ Recognizing the realities of the situation, the Society finally offered unofficial approval for this course of action. In a 1782 letter from New Jersey missionary Thomas Bradbury Chandler, exiled in London, to John Beach, missionary in Newtown and Reading, Chandler told

⁴¹ Stowe, 305-306.

⁴² Ibid., 312-313.

⁴³ Ibid., 313-314.

Beach of the Society's belated decision. No formal decree was issued, but the Society agreed to look the other way as long as prayers for Congress were not substituted for those for the King.⁴⁴

The Massachusetts clergy did not manifest the same degree of harmony as those in Connecticut.⁴⁵ A few of the Massachusetts missionaries followed the lead of their Connecticut brethren. William Clark in Dedham, along with McGilchrist in Salem, Weeks in Marblehead, and Winslow in Braintree, all closed their churches in the spring of 1777. In a letter to his congregation, Clark explained that the General Court had just passed a law fining anyone L50 for preaching or praying against the independency of the colonies. Clark told his parishioners that his conscience required him to close the church until such time as the King relinquished his jurisdiction over North America. Any sort of public service devoid of parts of the time-honored liturgy would, in Clark's words, be, at best, "lame and imperfect." Acknowledging that the American Episcopal

⁴⁴ Thomas Bradbury Chandler, London, to John Beach, Newtown, Ct., 4 January 1782, in Stowe, 317-318.

⁴⁵ Correspondence from the Massachusetts missionaries requesting counsel from the Society regarding the conduct of their ministry under such dire straits is scarce. Generally, they claimed with loyalty that they would hold out as long as they could, faithful to the Prayer Book and their ordination vows. An explanation as to why the Society took so long to address the conduct of American ministry during the Revolution, or to approve the closing of churches, is not readily apparent. Edward Winslow, missionary to Braintree, Massachusetts, unhappily informed the Society that some of his colleagues were "wavering and unsteady" in the face "of the violence of the present storm." Most, however, remained "firm in their adherence to their principles" and Winslow considered it "inexcusable to desert them" while he could abide in some degree of safety. Edward Winslow, Braintree, Ma., to the Secretary, SPG, London, 8 August 1775, in Perry, 582-583.

clergy had generally agreed to shut their churches when they could not proceed in their usual services, he had decided to follow this course of action. He used the decision of the Connecticut clergy to bolster his position.⁴⁶

Nevertheless, not all of the SPG personnel in Massachusetts agreed to follow the party line. Edward Bass deviated from the accepted pattern. Bass, like the clergy of Connecticut, found it expedient to accommodate his ministry to the unique circumstances of revolutionary America. Even before the Declaration of Independence was signed in Philadelphia, Edward Bass was considering his options. On the one hand, he was obligated to honor the Church and his ordination vows. On the other hand, the spiritual welfare of his Newburyport parishioners pressed upon Bass' heart.

In a letter of indictment from William Clark to the Society, written in early 1781, Bass' thinking can be discerned. After discussing the difficulties facing the Episcopal clergy in the wake of the Rebellion, Clark was startled to find that Bass was contemplating conduct different in "opinion from the united sentiments of the clergy in that province." Bass told Clark that he preferred "compliance with the People in all omissions that they should require in order to keep up publick worship." Clark bristled at the "vulgar proverb" Bass used to illustrate his line of thought, "that Half a Loaf was better than no

⁴⁶ Thomas Jessett, "Planting the Prayer Book in Puritan Massachusetts," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church, 21 (September 1952): 378-379.

bread." Bass argued that the Episcopal clergy had followed the same pattern of behavior during the English Civil War when Cromwell dispensed with both King Charles I and prayers for the Royals. When Clark stubbornly told Bass that he intended to go to Scituate the next Sunday to read prayers for the King in "as distinct and audible a voice" as he could speak, despite the fact that another missionary had been persecuted there for doing so, Bass told Clark he was being rather foolhardy.⁴⁷

The vestry of St. Paul's in Newburyport asked Bass for "Half of the Loaf" on July 16, 1776. They requested that he "omit in [his] use of the Service all Prayers, Collects, or Suffrages which relate to the King, Royal Family, or Government of Great Britain." Without such action, they feared for the welfare, indeed for the very existence, of the church.⁴⁸ It is significant that two of the ten men who signed this letter to Bass were members of the Committee of Safety and Correspondence in Newburyport.⁴⁹ Bass responded to this request on the same day it was made, signifying in writing that he would honor the desires of the lay leadership of St. Paul's.⁵⁰

⁴⁷ William Clark, London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 23 February 1781, in Perry, 612. Edward Winslow, missionary to Braintree, Massachusetts, also offered the Society the same justification Bass used with Clark for omitting the Royal prayers. He felt that precedent had been set during "Cromwell's usurpation" when the Royal collect had been ignored for the safety of the churches. See Edward Winslow, Braintree, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 15 August 1776, in Perry, 694-695.

⁴⁸ Wardens and Vestrymen of St. Paul's Church, Newburyport, to Edward Bass, Newburyport, 16 July 1776, in John Currier, 'Ould Newbury': Historical and Biographical Sketches (Boston: Damrell and Upham, 1896), 407.

⁴⁹ Addison, 135.

⁵⁰ Edward Bass, Newburyport, to the Wardens and Vestry of St. Paul's Church, Newburyport, 16 July 1776, in Addison, 155.

Edward Bass was not alone in Massachusetts in omitting prayers for the Royal Family. Samuel Parker, assistant minister to William Walter at Boston's third Anglican church, Trinity, also chose to delete the offensive language from the liturgy in order to keep the church open. Walter had already fled Boston to seek safety in exile; Parker stayed behind to care for the needs of Boston's Episcopal population. All of the SPG missionaries in Massachusetts' capital city had left town. Parker was not on the Society's payroll, so he did not suffer the condemnation of the SPG later visited upon Bass.⁵¹ Parker used the Prayer Book as written until after Independence was declared. At that point, noisy demonstrations interrupted the church services to the degree that Parker could no longer continue unless changes were made in the prayers. Parker communicated this to his vestry on July 18th. Unlike Bass, Parker initiated the change in liturgical practice, an act with even greater boldness and less hesitancy. At their meeting with Parker, the wardens and vestry of Trinity Church concurred with the judgment of their pastor.⁵²

The minutes of the vestry meeting at Trinity on July 18, 1776, disclosed the state of political affairs in Boston during these turbulent times. Parker warned of impending damage which

⁵¹ Parker was employed by Trinity Church, Boston, and fully paid by them. Hence, he was not employed by the SPG, nor under their jurisdiction. This freedom enabled Parker to remain in Boston and act as an intermediary between the Episcopal Church and the new American government. He also corresponded freely with the Society, informing them of developments he felt they should know.

⁵² Addison, 141.

would accrue to the proprietors of the Church should the liturgy be performed unaltered. The lay leaders agreed that "the Temper and Spirit of the People in this Town was such that they would not suffer any Prayers for the King to be publicly read in divine Service." Acknowledging that some people still resided in Boston who could not "conscientiously attend the Worship of Dissenters, & to whom it would be a great Detriment & Grief of Mind to have no place where they can attend the Worship of God according to their Consciences," the vestry of Trinity Church reluctantly concluded that it would be "the least Evil of the two" to omit the prayers rather than to shut up the church. They hoped that this action would not be "imputed to them as a Fault or construed as a Want of Affection for the Liturgy of the Church."⁵³

The steps taken by Bass and Parker could easily be seen as another form of "Americanizing" the Anglican church in New England.⁵⁴ Recognizing that circumstances required such action, these two clerics adapted the liturgy of the English church to the American context. Since Parker was not in the employ of the SPG, he faced no sanctions for this revolutionary step, an alteration usually requiring the permission of a prelate. However, no bishop had ever resided in New England. Bass, on

⁵³ Ibid., 142.

⁵⁴ Lest the small number of Massachusetts clergy taking this step seem to minimize the argument that Anglicanism was being "Americanized" by this development, it must not be forgotten that the entire group of Connecticut clergy took the same action by 1781. Bass and Parker were simply "ahead of their time" in altering the colonial Anglican church to fit the American context.

the other hand, depended upon the largesse of the Society to support his ministry in Newburyport. He was not able to get any letter to the Society, due to the war, between May 3, 1776, and November 15, 1779. In the interim, the Society took severe measures to discipline Edward Bass for what it considered to be traitorous adaptation to the American milieu just to keep his church open. In January 1779, the SPG removed Edward Bass from its roll of New England missionaries, simultaneously ending all of his financial compensation.⁵⁵

Bass was dismissed on the testimony of Henry Caner, missionary to King's Chapel, Boston; Joshua Wingate Weeks, missionary to Marblehead; and William Clark, missionary to Dedham and Stoughton.⁵⁶ All three of these men had closed their churches rather than omit the offensive prayers for the King from their services. All three had also fled to England for safety. Caner had long suspected Bass of disloyalty. In a letter to the Secretary of the Society in mid-1775, Caner wrote that "Mr. Bass has comply'd perhaps too far with the Orders of the Rebels."⁵⁷ Caner was the *de facto* bishop in Massachusetts and well respected by the London authorities. The Society compared Caner's comment to a letter it had received from Bass in March 1775 in which he had stated "that his church had

⁵⁵ SPG Minutes, London, "State of the Evidence against Mr. Bass," January 1779, in Perry, 602-603.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 602.

⁵⁷ Henry Caner, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 18 July 1775, in Kenneth Cameron, Letter-Book of the Rev. Henry Caner: S.P.G. Missionary in Colonial Connecticut and Massachusetts until the Revolution (Hartford, Ct.: Transcendental Books, 1972), 164.

suffered less than might have been expected."⁵⁸ In the words of the Society report of 1779, "How could Mr. Bass have remained quietly in so rebellious a place (the other Missionaries in Massachusetts being driven away) if he had made no other compliances? & why did all the clergy differ from him on that account?"⁵⁹

Joshua Wingate Weeks excoriated Newburyport's missionary in a letter written from London in January 1779. Not only had Bass indeed forsaken a prayer for the King, but had preached "a sermon exhorting his hearers to give their money liberally for cloathing the rebel Soldiers &c." Weeks claimed that his brother-in-law, Jacob Bailey, missionary to Pownalboro, had been present on the occasion and had heard the sermon. Weeks also believed that Bass began to pray for the Congress rather than the British Government in 1776, but he could not assert this from personal knowledge in that he had never conversed with Bass on the subject.⁶⁰ Weeks was certain that Bass had expected to make great acquisitions to his church by following the prevailing political wind in Newburyport ("There is scarcely one loyal person in that rebellious town") but had been disappointed in these hopes. Suggesting that Bass had been bribed by his people to alter the liturgy, Weeks claimed that Bass had

⁵⁸ Addison, 192.

⁵⁹ SPG Minutes, London, "State of the Evidence Against Mr. Bass," January 1779, in Perry, 604.

⁶⁰ Joshua Wingate Weeks, London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 21 January 1779, in Addison, 199-200.

lost esteem even in the eyes of the rebels for these base motives.⁶¹

William Clark acknowledged that a fifty-mile distance from Newburyport cast doubt on the accuracy of the information he had obtained about Bass' behavior. He also qualified his accusations with the caveat that he maintained "a very friendly feeling for Mr. Bass . . . [a man who had] always conducted himself laudably in his station and has been always well respected by his Parishioners and his brethren in general." Nevertheless, Clark accused Bass of omitting prayers obnoxious to the Rebels, reading their proclamations, and keeping their fasts. Clark believed that the motivation for this course of action was not any "fixed principle of disaffection to the British Government" but rather a desire to please people and to weather the turbulent political storm in the easiest manner possible.⁶² Weeks and Clark testified that they both had conducted "personal conversations with Bass, and that if their principles were right and loyal, his were otherwise." Missionary John Troutbeck of Hopkington claimed the same personal knowledge of Bass' disloyalty.⁶³

No doubt Caner, Weeks, and Clark resented Bass' refusal to flee his parish. His steadfastness in the face of political

⁶¹ Joshua Wingate Weeks, London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, "The State of the Church in 1778," in Perry, 599.

⁶² William Clark, London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 23 February 1781, in Perry, 611, 613.

⁶³ SPG minutes, London, "Observations" regarding action taken against Bass, in Addison, 193.

chaos, on the surface, might have offered the Society the opportunity to question the courage of the other three. Perhaps, therefore, there was some element of self-preservation behind the accusations directed against Bass. Weeks and Clark assumed that Bass had acted treacherously in order to increase his wealth and popularity. It was beyond their understanding that he might have taken the steps he had to maintain the continuity of spiritual nurture for his flock. It could be that a measure of altruism and the priority of pastoral care determined whether a missionary would ultimately stay in or flee from revolutionary Massachusetts.

It is clear from Bass' correspondence with the Society as late as November 1778 that he had no idea he had been charged with disloyalty.⁶⁴ Even after learning of his dismissal, Bass was still writing William Morice, Secretary of the SPG, in the fall of 1781, requesting a true accounting of the charges and the witnesses arrayed against him.⁶⁵ He wrote a letter to a lawyer in London as late as June 1784 soliciting his help in discovering the reasons for the Society's displeasure.⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Edward Bass, Newburyport, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 23 November 1778, Edward Bass Papers, Box 1, File 2, Item 4a, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, Boston. In this letter, Bass readily confesses to the Society leadership that he has omitted prayers for the King and explains that he did so to prevent "the dispersion, if not even the annihilation of my Church."

⁶⁵ Edward Bass, Newburyport, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 30 October 1781, in Addison, 161-162.

⁶⁶ Edward Bass, Newburyport, to Henry Belew, Esq., London, 25 June 1784, Edward Bass Papers, Box 1, File 5, Item 17, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, Boston.

Bass learned of the accusations laid at his feet secondhand and in piece-meal fashion from two of his colleagues at Trinity Church--William Walter, the senior cleric, who had fled into exile, and his assistant, Samuel Parker, who remained in Boston. Walter assured Bass that his character had not been questioned; rather, it had been affirmed to the Society that "you had gone with the Tide & was the avowed Supporter of the public Measures in America." Walter believed that the critical indictment offered was that Bass had recommended to his parishioners a collection for the procurement of necessities for the American Army. Walter had protested the charge to the Society the moment he had heard it.⁶⁷ Parker wrote Bass just four days later confirming the charge of a collection for the Rebel forces, as well as being "obedient to the Orders of Congress . . . and observ[ing] a certain fast Day of their Appointment." He also told the beleaguered missionary that he was doing all in his power to clear up the misunderstanding.⁶⁸

The principal charges leveled against Bass before the Society were serious. As a chaplain in one of her Majesty's regiments, he had supposedly sought to dissuade soldiers from their loyalty. He was accused of being part owner of a privateer preying upon British shipping. It was said that he

⁶⁷ William Walter, New York, to Edward Bass, Newburyport, 18 June 1781, Edward Bass Papers, Box 1, File 3, Item 7, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, Boston.

⁶⁸ Samuel Parker, Boston, to Edward Bass, Newburyport, 22 June 1781, Edward Bass Papers, Box 1, File 3, Item 5, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, Boston.

had read the Declaration of Independence in his church and it was believed that he had preached a charity sermon to clothe rebel soldiers. Again, he had kept all the fasts and Thanksgiving Days called by the Continental Congress.⁶⁹

The first three accusations were later demonstrated to be false. The collection for the soldiers was a charge arising out of misunderstanding. Bass did indeed keep his church open for fast days for the same reason he deleted prayers for the King--to carry on his ministry and to prevent the destruction of the church building. Apparently these charges arose from vague reports offered to Caner, Weeks, and Clark by ship captains who had spent some time in Newburyport during the Revolution. Bass' initial divergence from the "party line," omitting part of the liturgy, produced an atmosphere of suspicion which fed these other rumors.⁷⁰

However, these three missionaries were not the only critics of Edward Bass and his conduct during the stormy days of the Revolution. Peter Frye, registrar of the Court of Probates at Salem, also wrote the Society of Bass' disloyalty. A member of William McGilchrist's mission there, Frye testified that Newburyport was a more rebellious town than even Salem. McGilchrist fled Salem; Frye believed that Bass had to be a Rebel to remain in Newburyport. Loyalists who knew Bass called him "a perjured man . . . Rebel to the Church and King." Frye

⁶⁹ Addison, 158-160.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

claimed that it was common knowledge that Bass had complied with all of the measures of Congress and its various committees.

"(I)t was also said by the People of Newbury port, after the Death of a Colonel Framham, the Town was purified; and had not one Tory left in it; that it had not a Loyalist in the Town-- said, Mr. Bass however was at that time living in that Town without any Insults, or molestation, that I ever heard of, in those times; and till I arrived in England."⁷¹

The most notorious Loyalist among the SPG missionaries was Samuel Peters, who had served the parish of Hebron, Connecticut. Peters had been forced to flee to England early during the stormy 1770's. Quite contrary by nature, Peters also quarreled with William Pitt while in London and was later struck off the pension roll of the British government in 1804.⁷² Having a strong anti-Patriot ax to grind, Peters offered a sharp rebuke of Edward Bass. Peters sought news of Bass in 1778 from two ship captains who were members of the Newburyport parish. The captains told Peters that Bass "read their [Congress's] Proclamations for fasts & thanksgivings, their Declaration of Independence & their prohibition to pray longer for the King, & I heard him pray for the Congress & he omitted the prayers for the King, besides he & his wife hold shares in 2 or 3 privateers & have had good luck." Peters reprimanded the captains for

⁷¹ Peter Frye, London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 24 May 1783, in Addison, 183-185.

⁷² Hector G. Kinloch, "Anglican Clergy in Connecticut, 1701-1785" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1959), 92-94.

loose tongues if they were indeed friends of Bass, since such testimony could cost Bass his living from the Society. One of the captains, a man named Salter, responded that Peters was free to tell anyone his news, since Bass had doubled his Church since 1774 and didn't need the Society's financial help any longer. The salty old captain added that if Peters, Thomas Bradbury Chandler and other clergy had "behaved with that moderation and love for America as did Mr. Bass & Mr. Parker," they might "all have retained (their) reputations & property."⁷³

Peters shared this story with the Society, and in subsequent letters carried on his tirade against Edward Bass. Peters charged that there had been only four Loyalists in all of Newburyport, and Edward Bass was not one of them.⁷⁴ Crying that he had been censured by the friends of Bass "as a private accuser of an absent and injured Brother," Peters swore he bore no ill-will against the man at the center of the controversy. He simply repeated what he had learned from two of Bass' parishioners, having no personal knowledge of misconduct on Bass' part. Peters argued that some of Bass' advocates, by the offices they once held, had betrayed the oath they had once taken to the King in order to swear allegiance to the new American government. Such men, "proved to be guilty of perjury,

⁷³ Samuel Peters, London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 18 November 1782, in Perry, 622-624.

⁷⁴ Samuel Peters, London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 19 June 1783, in Perry, 630-631.

may tell a simple lie without a blush." Their testimony would be devoid of any value in any court.⁷⁵

Two of the men Peters charged with perjury would have been William Miller and Henry Atkins. The former had been the Deputy Collector of His Majesty's Customs in Newburyport; the latter had served as the Weigher and Gauger of His Majesty's Customs at the same port. Miller had lived in Bass' house for a year before he left Massachusetts in May 1776; he offered a sworn affidavit to the Society of Bass' loyalty to the Crown. After frequent conversations with Bass, Miller found him to be a "steady friend of his Majesty's Government." In fact, Miller told the Society that such attachment to the King had cost Bass the support of some wealthy parishioners who favored the Rebel cause.⁷⁶ Acknowledging the loss of these parishioners in his affidavit, Atkins also told the Society that he had personally seen Bass insulted by the people of Newburyport due to his esteem for the British government. Atkins vouched for Bass' loyalty through the day of his departure from America.⁷⁷ Both of these testimonials were given to the Society by a lawyer named Samuel Hale, in London, on behalf of Edward Bass in 1783.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Samuel Peters, London, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 20 May 1783, in Perry, 625-626.

⁷⁶ Affidavit of William Miller, Glasgow, 5 May 1783, in Perry, 624-625.

⁷⁷ Declaration of Henry Atkins, undated, but probably offered to the Society along with Miller's affidavit in 1784, in Perry, 635.

⁷⁸ Hale was contacted by Bass to forward these testimonials to the Society. See his letter to Hale, London, written from Newburyport, dated 6 November 1782, in Perry, 621-622. Hale forwarded the testimonials to the Society with a letter to the Secretary, undated, found in Perry, 633-634. Samuel Hale was an interesting fellow whose behavior might persuade the casual observer of political opportunism. A native of Massachusetts, he headed Rebel mobs and made an unsuccessful

Along with these testimonials, Governor John Wentworth, at the request of Bass again, also supplied evidence to the Society of Bass' loyalty to the Crown.⁷⁹

The wardens of St. Paul's Church, Newburyport, came to the aid of their pastor on two separate occasions. Writing the Society in 1782 and again in 1784, they contended vehemently that Bass had conducted himself in an honorable manner. The earlier communiqué is terse and to the point. "We can assure the Society that there is not the least Ground for any such reports (of disloyalty), and that his political Character is the reverse of what it hath been represented to them."⁸⁰ Realizing that the earlier note had failed of its intended effect, the wardens wrote again in May 1784. After carefully listing the charges against Bass and registering their surprise that he was still under suspicion, Joseph Cutler and Lewis Jenkins dismissed all of the charges except for the fact that Bass had kept the church open on fast days. And he had only done this to keep the building from being vandalized by Rebel mobs. "Temperate and uniform in the discharge of the duties of his Mission, his [Bass'] conduct has been such as could give just cause of

bid for membership in the Continental Congress. He was a Commissary in New York for the Congress; later he traveled to France, seeking some sort of position from Ambassador Benjamin Franklin. Failing in this effort, he finally came to England where he professed himself a Loyalist, obtaining a pension from the British government. See "Account of Mr. Hale," in Perry, 634.

⁷⁹ John Wentworth, Hammersmith, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 11 June 1783, in Addison, 180. Bass' letter to the Governor asking for the favor of his help may be found on the same page of Addison's work.

⁸⁰ Wardens of St. Paul's, Newburyport, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 14 October 1782, Edward Bass Papers, Box 1, File 4, Item 11, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, Boston.

offence to no party." Rumors of financial incentives to encourage Bass to act as a trimmer were absolutely false; he was deeply in need of the living the Society had provided for him in the past. The wardens of St. Paul's hoped that Bass' stipend would be restored soon.⁸¹

Some of the other SPG missionaries in Massachusetts and New Hampshire also wrote London on behalf of their colleague. Ranna Cossit, missionary to Haverhill and Claremont in New Hampshire, encouraged the Society that it must be mistaken about Bass' position. He was certain that Bass had "maintained his loyalty uncorrupted by the prevailing spirit" and that he had suffered persecution for such a stance.⁸² Samuel Parker, the other cleric in Massachusetts who omitted the Royal prayers from the outset of the Revolution, besieged the Society with correspondence on behalf of Bass. Parker assumed that some people had misrepresented Bass to the Society, perhaps even maliciously. Parker acknowledged that Bass had altered the liturgy, but he could not believe this was the reason for dismissal from the Society's service. "Scarce a Person in New England has supported a more uniform loyal character and Conduct since the Commencement of the unhappy Revolt than he. His Attachment to the Laws and Constitution of England both in

⁸¹ Wardens of St. Paul's, Newburyport, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 3 May 1784, in Perry, 637-638.

⁸² SPG Abstracts, 15 June 1781, in Addison, 204-205.

church and State has drawn upon him the Resentment of the Disaffected and he has suffered much for his Loyalty."⁸³

Jacob Bailey, brother-in-law to Joshua Wingate Weeks (and one of the sources for Weeks' indictment of Bass), knew two gentlemen who affirmed without doubt that Bass was a friend to the British government. Bailey believed Bass to be a "worthy, honest man" who had never read the Declaration nor had prayed for any of the Revolters.⁸⁴ Charles Inglis, missionary in New York, acknowledged that Bass' most intimate acquaintances were Loyalists. In omitting the collects for the King, Inglis averred, Bass had done nothing "more than many other valuable Clergymen, who suppose themselves justified by the principle of necessity."⁸⁵

William Walter, ex-Rector of Trinity Church, Boston, fled to New York to avoid persecution soon after Independence was declared. He took a sincere interest in the case of Bass, but through the course of his correspondence he offered a confusing portrayal of his friend's sentiments. In one letter written in 1779, Walter protested that Bass could not be a Rebel. "[H]is mind is too strong and his heart too good to be perverted even by these villainous and contagious times." At the same time,

⁸³ Samuel Parker, Boston, to Edward Bass, Newburyport, 22 June 1781, Edward Bass Papers, Box 1, File 3, Item 5, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, Boston. Parker is quoting a portion of a letter he wrote to the Society for Bass' benefit in this excerpt.

⁸⁴ SPG Abstracts, 25 January 1782, in Addison, 207-208.

⁸⁵ SPG Abstracts, 21 September 1781, in Addison, 205. Also see John W. Lydekker, Life and Letters of Charles Inglis (London: publisher unknown, 1936), 206.

Walter acknowledged that appearances might be against Bass. He attempted an explanation for his friend's actions. Bass had opposed the Revolution "with all the Steadiness that could be expected from a man of his mild and pacific disposition," but this conscientious pastor was troubled that some of his parishioners might attend the discourses of Dissenters should his church be closed. So, he made the best of a bad situation; he left out the prayers for the King. Still, he substituted no prayers for Congress and took no oath of loyalty to the new regime.⁸⁶

Late in 1781, Walter was writing the Society again regarding Bass. This time, however, he had to explain why he had acted inconsistently regarding Bass' case. Apparently Walter had spoken with Joshua Wingate Weeks after his return from England, and Weeks had seemed "so well informed that I thought his testimony authentic on the head and for a time wished that I had never interferred in Mr. B.'s vindication." Under this impression, Walter had written the Society attacking Bass. Now Walter realized that Weeks had been misinformed respecting Mr. Bass and lamented that Weeks had fallen in his way at the time he did.⁸⁷ Walter wrote the Society twice more over the next year defending Bass, citing corroborating testimony from Samuel Parker as well as laymen acquainted with

⁸⁶ William Walter, New York, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 20 September 1779, in Perry, 607-608.

⁸⁷ William Walter, New York, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 8 December 1781, in Perry, 613-615.

Bass' life and ministry in Newburyport. One of these witnesses told Walter that Bass had been asked to read the Declaration of Independence in church, but had positively refused it, "saying He was no Herald to publish the Proclamations of War." In Walter's view, Bass had done nothing any more criminal than any other priest behind rebel lines.⁸⁸

Edward Bass mounted a defense of his actions in his own right with a series of letters written to the Society as well as to other missionaries implicated in the Society's decision. Bass argued that he had done nothing more in omitting prayers for the King and in keeping his church open on fast days than other clergy remaining in the country had done. He was ready to present witnesses on his behalf at the Society's request.⁸⁹ Earlier, he had explained that he had honored the request of his parishioners to keep the church open by deleting parts of the liturgy in "hopes of doing some good in bad times, and of preventing the dispersion, if not even the annihilation of my Church."⁹⁰ As to the charge that his conduct had been reckless because he was confident that his parishioners would make up the loss of the Society stipend, Bass "was always sensible it could

⁸⁸ Ibid. For the other two letters written by Walter, see William Walter, New York, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 2 January 1782, and undated, 1782, in Perry, 615-616, 618-619.

⁸⁹ Edward Bass, Newburyport, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 15 March 1782, in Perry, 617-618.

⁹⁰ Edward Bass, Newburyport, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 23 November 1778, Edward Bass Papers, Box 1, File 2, Item 4a, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, Boston.

not. Some of them indeed have shewn me much kindness, but the times are very hard upon them, Taxes exceeding high, Trade well-nigh ruined, &c., so that in short I plainly find I cannot subsist here much longer with any tolerable decency without the Society's usual allowance."⁹¹

In a letter written to William Walter in New York during the summer of 1781, Bass attempted to refute what he considered to be the principal charge against his conduct. He had come to believe that this matter of a reputed charity sermon on behalf of American soldiers had stigmatized his reputation with the Society. Bass explained to Walter that he had mentioned to his auditors, in the course of an unrelated sermon, that a collection for the poor of Newburyport was to be taken the following week. All of the ministers of the town had been asked to make such announcement and he had complied. However, he argued, he had never made any reference to the Rebel army in the sermon, despite the fact that he supposed some of their families might benefit from the offering. Bass was certain that this event had created some manner of confusion leading to the false charge against him.⁹² Indeed, Bass believed that the victory of the Rebel army would be "injurious to our Church in America,"

⁹¹ Edward Bass, Newburyport, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 27 February 1782, in Perry, 616-617.

⁹² Edward Bass, Newburyport, to William Walter, New York, 2 July 1781, Edward Bass Papers, Box 1, File 3, Item 6, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, Boston. Bass wrote a similar letter to his lawyer in London, Samuel Hale, making the same defense about the charity sermon in the Fall of 1782. See Edward Bass, Newburyport, to Samuel Hale, London, 6 November 1782, Edward Bass Papers, Box 1, File 4, Item 12, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, Boston.

and that separation from the episcopal oversight of the Mother Church would prove fatal.⁹³

Bass was convinced that false witnesses were tarnishing his credibility in the eyes of the Society due to jealousy. He was certain that he had become the target of some refugees who had fled America due to an inability to keep their churches open.⁹⁴ "I find I have secret Enemies (God knows how they came to be so) who are set upon ruining my character & reputation with those upon whose good opinion I set the highest value."⁹⁵ Bass came to believe that Joshua Wingate Weeks had been the primary agent in tarnishing his service. In a terse exchange of letters with Weeks, Bass made this opinion known. He told Weeks that he had learned that he was Bass' accuser to the Society and requested the charges that had been made. Weeks responded in the following manner. "If you think so meanly of me as that I should turn accuser, or so highly of me as that I should have more credit with the Society than yourself you greatly wrong me. I assure you I am not admitted to any of their secrets."⁹⁶ Bass remained unsatisfied by Weeks' denial.

⁹³ Edward Bass, Newburyport, to Henry Belew, Esq., London, 25 June 1784, Edward Bass Papers, Box 1, File 5, Item 17, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, Boston.

⁹⁴ Ibid. Bass wrote to Samuel Hale as well, another lawyer, claiming that his reputation and interest were both suffering at the hands of false accusers. See Edward Bass, Newburyport, to Samuel Hale, London, Edward Bass Papers, Box 1, File 5, Item 14, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, Boston.

⁹⁵ Edward Bass, Newburyport, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 27 February 1782, in Perry, 616-617.

⁹⁶ Undated reference is made to these letters in Addison, 166-167.

In a final flurry of letters to William Morice, Secretary of the SPG, an exasperated Bass made his final pleas for reconsideration. Bass complained that he was suffering on both sides of the Atlantic; in Massachusetts for being a Loyalist, in London for being a "Trimmer." He denied reading the Declaration of Independence or ever praying for Congress. He reminded Morice of the numerous testimonials that had been presented to the Society on his behalf. He accused Weeks and others of misrepresenting his conduct before the SPG. Bass was particularly offended that the Society was freely communicating with other clergy in the area, particularly Samuel Parker in Boston, but had failed to send him one line listing his crimes or his accusers.⁹⁷ Bass plead with Morice, if not as the Society's agent, then at least as a "private gentleman" to answer his queries.⁹⁸

Finally, in 1786, Bass went public with his defense. He published a tract entitled A Brief Account of the Treatment which Mr. Bass . . . Hath Received from The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. Offering a general defense against all charges he had heard rumored against him,

⁹⁷ Edward Bass, Newburyport, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 9 January 1784, in Perry, 631-633.

⁹⁸ Edward Bass, Newburyport, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 21 June 1784, in Addison, 179. William Morice, the current Secretary of the Society, wrote Bass a very perfunctory response of just a few lines the following year, noting that his affair had been "agitated before the Society" three times and that no reason to change the previous decision of the Society had been demonstrated. See William Morice, Secretary of the SPG, London, to Edward Bass, Newburyport, 17 February 1785, in Perry, 639-640.

Bass reached the consummate level of frustration with the Society for whom he labored. He accused the SPG of acting in a clandestine manner much like "certain odious courts in some parts of Europe, to which the Society would I suppose, think it a disgrace to be compared."⁹⁹

The SPG reconsidered the case of Edward Bass on four separate occasions following his dismissal in January 1779. The final review of the matter occurred in June 1783. From reading the evidence against Bass and the minutes of these hearings, it appears that all the Society had in the way of proof were questions generated by other missionaries. They seem to have taken no notice of Bass' plea for advice in his letter of May 3, 1776. Indeed, they considered his lack of correspondence between 1776 and 1779 as a sign of guilt, taking "no notice of his dismissal which he probably knew of."¹⁰⁰ Reasons given justifying Bass' dismissal included the following: Bass had cooperated with rebel privateers who had supported him financially, he had acted contrary to ordination, he had not observed the precedent of other missionaries, and failure to punish Bass would reflect negatively on other missionaries who had closed their churches.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ For a summary of the substance of this tract, see Addison, 167-170. Bass selected as a text for this tract Ecclesiasticus 19:13-15-- "Admonish a Friend, it may be he hath not done it. Admonish thy Friend it may be he hath not said it. Admonish a Friend for many Times it is a Slander and believe not every tale."

¹⁰⁰ SPG Minutes, London, "State of the Evidence against Mr. Bass," January 1779, in Perry, 602-604.

¹⁰¹ Anonymous document in Perry, 635-637.

Edward Bass was never reinstated as a missionary for the Society of the Propagation of the Gospel. He did, however, continue serving the Episcopal church in America, until his death in 1803. Ironically, this shamed missionary became the first Bishop of the Episcopal Church in Massachusetts. He was consecrated to that position by the Bishops of Pennsylvania, New York, and Maryland on May 7, 1797.¹⁰² "Bishop Bass in convention was interesting and instructive. He had a great fund of anecdote by which he made himself alike entertaining to the aged and the young." Known for his affability and hospitality, it is no wonder that Bass' funeral was "attended by a large concourse of people of different denominations desirous to testify to their respect for a man who possessed in an uncommon degree the esteem and confidence of the community."¹⁰³

The Bass affair illuminates the issue of conscience faced by the Anglican missionaries at the outset of the American Revolution. How could they honor their ordination vows and still keep their churches open? Most missionaries defined their vows strictly along the lines of their pledge to pray for the King. In doing so, however, it could be argued that they had missed the forest for the trees. Hadn't they also taken a vow, at the time of ordination, to promote the glory of God and edify His people? Could this be done if churches were shut in

¹⁰² Sibley and Shipton, 355.

¹⁰³ Introduction to Sermon Collection, The Gospel Advocate, November 1826, perhaps written by James Morss, Bass' successor in Newburyport, Edward Bass Papers, Box 2, File 1, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, Boston.

deference to the wording of a particular prayer? Which vow deserved the greater attention?¹⁰⁴ Samuel Parker defended the solution he and Bass had chosen in a letter to William Morice in 1781: "(C)onsidering the disagreeable Dilemma we were reduced to, we cannot but hope our Conduct will be viewed with Candour, and the Error (if such it is) imputed to the Head and not to the Heart."¹⁰⁵

More significantly, the actions of Edward Bass demonstrate again the tendency of SPG missionaries to "Americanize" the Anglican church during the eighteenth century. Bass maintained that he had been loyal to the Crown and the Church throughout the American Revolution. At the same time, he had altered the liturgy of the Anglican communion in order to protect the church during peculiarly adverse circumstances generated by the American milieu. In taking this step, Bass acted in a fashion that would be imitated by the missionaries of Connecticut five years later. Anglicanism had to be acculturated to survive in the New England of the late 1770's. "While his attitude can hardly be described as sympathetic to the revolutionary cause, Bass was keen to the exigencies and implications that the revolution would have for the future of traditional Episcopal

¹⁰⁴ Walter H. Stowe makes this same argument in "A Study in Conscience: Some Aspects of the Relations of the Clergy to the State," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 19 (December 1950): 311.

¹⁰⁵ Samuel Parker, Boston, to the Secretary, SPG, London, 9 January 1781, in Addison, 144-151.

worship in America."¹⁰⁶ Narrowly construed, the Society decided that Edward Bass had failed to serve the interests of the Anglican Church in 1779. Understood more broadly, Bass' contextualization of Episcopal worship set it on a firmer foundation to flourish during the post-Revolutionary era.

¹⁰⁶ Reader's Guide 1, Episcopal Records, Papers of the Bishops, Biographical Sketch of Edward Bass, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Massachusetts, Boston.

CHAPTER VIII

EPILOGUE

It must appear, from a perusal of their charter, that the Society cannot imploy any Missionaries, except in the PLANTATIONS, COLONIES and FACTORIES belonging to the KINGDOM of GREAT BRITAIN; . . . they regret the unhappy events which confine their labors to the Colonies remaining under His Majesty's sovereignty. It is so far from their thoughts to alienate their affections from their brethren of the Church of England, now under another Government, that they look back with comfort at the good they have done for many years past, in propagating our holy religion, as it is their earnest wish and prayer, that their zeal may continue to bring forth the fruit they aimed at, of pure religion and virtue; and that the true members of our Church, under whatever civil government they live, may not cease to be kindly affectionated towards us.¹

So the inevitable had happened. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, suffering from an indebtedness during the Revolutionary War which had forced them to ask King George III for the privilege of taking up a collection throughout the realm, decided to end their financial support of the missionaries stationed in the new United States of America.²

¹ Abstract of the Proceedings of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 20 February 1784-18 February 1785, in Kenneth W. Cameron, Ethos of Anglicanism in Colonial New England and New York: Gleanings from the S.P.G. Abstracts [1704-1785] Concerning the Church of England in the Northern Plantations and Nearby Areas (Hartford, Ct.: Transcendental Books, 1981), 202.

² Irving H. King, "The S.P.G. in New England, 1701-1784" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Maine, 1968), 299. Not only did the King give the Society a Royal Letter permitting the collection, but he added £500 of his funds out of the Crown's treasury. The collection netted £19,369

While the missionaries still ministering in the United States must have anticipated the Society's move, they were nevertheless stunned and disconcerted by the act. No doubt Society personnel relished fond memories of valiant efforts and successes in planting Anglicanism on American soil. No doubt the Society's kind wishes that similar fruitfulness continue were respectfully appreciated by the American missionaries. But they still felt stranded. What was to become of their church now? What was to become of them? The Society's hopes that their ex-employees be "kindly affectionated" toward the organization aside, the Anglican clergy of this new nation had to be preoccupied with the issue of survival.

Two of the missionaries examined in this study did not live to see the Society's cessation of support. John Beach weathered the American Revolution better than most of his colleagues, given the special strength of Anglicanism and Loyalism in Newtown, Connecticut, and surrounding environs. The age of the stubborn old protagonist of the Episcopal Church had also commanded begrudging respect. He did not live to witness the signing of the Treaty of Paris, a capitulation the consummate fighter might have found difficult to comprehend. He remained in his pulpits in Newtown and Reading, Connecticut, obstinately praying for the King every Sunday, until he died on March 19, 1782, in his 82nd year.

between 1779-1783, L12,435 in 1779 alone. Nevertheless, the Society still made the decision to end their financial assistance to American missionaries.

Matthew Graves, arguably somewhat paranoid and certainly ostracized by the other missionaries in Connecticut, died a refugee in New York in 1780 from a cerebral hemorrhage he suffered while officiating in one of the few loyalist pulpits left in America.³ Graves had been stripped of his New London, Connecticut, pulpit in 1778 by a patriot mob; long before this humiliating event occurred, he had discerned the growing independence of the Anglican church in America, among both laity and his fellow native-born missionaries. Before his retreat to New York, Graves and his sister Joanna had been forced to sell their furniture and most of their possessions just to live.⁴ He ended his life ministering to a refugee-filled city, the only Americans Graves could even begin to understand.

Three of the missionaries analyzed in this work left America to continue their ministry as agents of the Society in Canada. Roger Viets did not leave his post in Simsbury, Connecticut, until the Society made its decision not to assist the American missionaries any longer.⁵ Viets seemed stunned and apparently felt betrayed by the Society's action. He and Bela Hubbard, a fellow missionary to New Haven, Connecticut, discussed various schemes, including an American "Society," to

³ Maud O'Neil, "Matthew Graves: Anglican Missionary to the Puritans," in Samuel C. McCulloch, British Humanitarianism: Essays Honoring Frank J. Klingberg (Philadelphia: The Church Historical Society, 1950), 143.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Viets, along with Samuel Andrews of Wallingford, Ct., James Scovil of Watertown, Ct., and Richard Clarke of New Milford and Woodbury, Ct., left only after the Society could no longer supply their yearly salaries in the United States. See King, 300.

fund the continued ministry of missionaries in America.⁶ The discussion was all in vain. In May of 1786, Viets accepted the position of rector for the parish of Digby, Nova Scotia, on the eastern bank of the Bay of Fundy. No church was yet erected, so he returned to Connecticut to winter with his family in Simsbury. The following summer, he took his family to Canada. Viets only revisited his American home twice more in his life, once in 1789 and once in 1800. To the end, the sermons this preacher wrote sounded strangely like a Congregational pastor's. He died the summer of 1811 in Digby, age 74.⁷

Ten miles down the road from Viets in Annapolis Royal, missionary Jacob Bailey continued his "frontier" ministry to loyalist refugees. Having fought the wilds along the Kennebec River in what is now eastern Maine during the American segment of his service for the Society, Bailey was well-suited to continue to brave the harsh privations experienced in this Canadian post. When Bailey left Massachusetts with his family during the summer of 1779, he fled a ministry that had become extremely difficult due to steady persecution from local patriot leaders. He first accepted a call to Cornwallis in Nova Scotia,

⁶ See Roger Viets, Simsbury, Ct., to Bela Hubbard, New Haven, Ct., 1 September 1785, and Roger Viets, Simsbury, to Bela Hubbard, New Haven, 9 December 1785, Roger Viets files, Colonial and Early American files, Archives of the Episcopal Diocese of Connecticut, Hartford, Ct.

⁷ Franklin B. Dexter, Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College with Annals of the College History, May, 1745-May, 1763 vol. II (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1896), 558-559. Fellow SPG missionary, refugee, and alumnus of Yale College [1757], James Scovil, assisted at the ceremony installing Viets into the ministry at Digby. The church building (of wood) was finally erected by January of 1791.

but the scarcity of Episcopalians there and the numerical strength of Independents in the settlement reminded him too much of home. Still, out of a sense of duty, Bailey endured the adverse circumstances, long a trait of his missionary career. When his brother-in-law and fellow SPG missionary Joshua Wingate Weeks, formerly of Marblehead, Massachusetts, failed to satisfy the Society's expectations in Annapolis, London replaced Weeks with Bailey. Jacob Bailey continued to minister in Annapolis faithfully until his death on July 26, 1808.

The "Father of the American Clergy," a title given him by the Society, Henry Caner also sought refuge in Canada. Serving at the prestigious King's Chapel in Boston, Massachusetts, cast Caner in a double-edged situation. Long recognized unofficially as the leader of the Anglican clergy in Massachusetts and firmly entrenched in the oldest Episcopal church in New England, Caner was also located right at the center of revolutionary turmoil. The eminence of Boston in colonial ecclesiastical affairs enabled Caner to exercise a "pseudo-episcopacy;" the radical politics of the same city forced him into exile. So when the British troops evacuated Boston in March of 1776, Caner went with them. He only had a few hours notice of the departure. Nonetheless, he managed to escape with the registers, vestments, and plate of King's Chapel. Significantly, he left his library behind.⁸ Caner never actually ministered in Halifax; he soon

⁸ Franklin B. Dexter, Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College with Annals of the College History, October, 1701-May, 1745, vol. I (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1885), 297.

left Canada for England. The Society, out of respect for his distinguished service, gave him the missionary post in Bristol, Rhode Island. He visited Cardiff, Wales, during the summer of 1780. He died at Long Ashton, England, in December, 1792, at the age of 92.

Two of the missionaries profiled in this study remained in the United States to assist in the birth of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Edward Bass had already been relieved of his Society stipend due to the controversy he stirred by omitting liturgical prayers for the King during the American Revolution. This act kept his church in Newburyport, Massachusetts, open and vital; it also helped to alleviate most of the animosity that would have been directed toward Bass as an Anglican minister. One further repercussion of the Society's decision to suspend Bass, treatment he considered unfair, was that the missionary himself adjusted fairly well to the new government. Apparently the action of ecclesiastical London made Bass' break with political London easier.⁹ Bass continued to faithfully nurture his flock at St. Paul's in Newburyport, now depending fully on their voluntary contributions, a practice all Episcopal clergy in the United States would soon experience as well.

Bishop Seabury of Connecticut, the first residential bishop in the United States who was consecrated by non-juring Scottish bishops, and six of the Massachusetts clergy gathered

⁹ John L. Sibley and Clifford K. Shipton, Sibley's Harvard Graduates: Biographical Sketches of Those Who Attended Harvard in the Classes 1741-1745, vol. XI (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1960), 351.

in Salem during the summer of 1789 to nominate Edward Bass to be the first bishop of Massachusetts. Bishops White and Provoost, consecrated by English prelates, put off the nomination until a third Bishop of the English line could lay hands on Bass. It was just as well; leading Episcopal laymen in Massachusetts, expressing the American independence so common among Anglican laity during the colonial era, were outraged that the six Massachusetts clergy would attempt such a step unilaterally. On May 24, 1796, the Annual Convention of the Episcopal Churches of Massachusetts elected Dr. Bass their first bishop. The following May he was consecrated by the bishops of Pennsylvania, New York, and Maryland, all of English descent. During the summer of 1798, Bass was elected Bishop of Rhode Island, and in August, 1803, the churches of New Hampshire formally accepted his jurisdiction as well. Bass' last years were very busy. He helped to build a new church for St. Paul's in Newburyport, along with his episcopal duties. He died on September 10, 1803, from a long-standing case of gout which finally "rose to the stomach."¹⁰

Jeremiah Leaming remained in Norwalk, Connecticut, preaching an "Americanized" sermon, until Hessian troops took him against his will to New York City during the summer of 1779. Having lost all of his personal effects, books, and papers in a fire set by the British troops under General William Tryon, he was forced to remain in New York for the duration of the War.

¹⁰ Ibid., 352-357.

Following the Revolution, Leaming acted as the elder statesman in the effort to revive the Episcopal Church in Connecticut. Asked to be the first bishop of the Church to reside in Connecticut, he declined, either due to age or a lack of confidence in his capacity to serve effectively. Samuel Seabury, Jr. was the second choice of the Connecticut clergy gathered at Woodbury in 1783. Leaming believed so strongly in the relationship of royalty to episcopacy that he held serious reservations about the validity of Samuel Seabury's consecration at the hands of Scottish bishops who would not recognize the Hanoverian succession.¹¹ Leaming served as rector in the oldest parish in Connecticut, at Stratford, from 1784 until 1790. He refused a second offer to go abroad for consecration in 1787. Leaming retired to New Haven, Connecticut, following his resignation from Stratford. Blind and lame, Leaming died in the home of a friend as a near recluse at the age of 88 in September 1804.¹²

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, founded in 1701 by Thomas Bray and his colleagues, refocused its energies after 1785. Their vision had been almost entirely centered on the thirteen colonies prior to that year, but the American Revolution had transformed political realities. Immediately following the American War for Independence, the SPG

¹¹ Ronald L. Cooksey, "The Americanization of the Anglican Church in the Northern Colonies During the Eighteenth Century" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Toronto, 1977), 174.

¹² Dexter, vol. II, 40-41.

sent many missionaries northward into the remaining British colonial possession in North America, Canada. During the 1800's, Society missionaries ministered throughout the West Indies, Central and South America, Asia, and Africa. Naturally, where the British military and political presence was strongest, Society personnel would be stationed in strength. Australia, India, and South Africa all invited the special attention of the SPG. The Society continues to send missionary personnel throughout the world even to this day; it is now known as the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.

The Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States was created by the General Convention of clergy and lay delegates meeting in Philadelphia in 1789.¹³ What may be said of this church at the dawning of the nineteenth century? First, it was clearly regionally diverse, even within an area traditionally touted for its homogeneity like New England. The Connecticut Church exhibited a much more closely-knit ecclesiastical community than the rest of the northern states, especially Massachusetts.¹⁴ There could be several reasons for this phenomenon. The clergy in Massachusetts reacted to the

¹³ Interestingly, Jeremiah Leaming did not like the name chosen for the new Episcopal denomination in the United States. In a letter to the Reverend Abraham Beach of New Jersey in 1786, Leaming complained that the Church of England was not called a Protestant Church; it was a reformed Church. The Anglican Church had never "protested" against the civil powers in Great Britain; it simply reformed the nation. So Leaming rejected the use of the term "Protestant" for the American branch of the Anglican communion. See E. Edwards Beardsley, The Rev. Jeremiah Leaming, D.D.: His Life and Services (New York: James Pott and Company, 1885), 13.

¹⁴ Cooksey, 11.

Revolution in a less uniform manner than the missionaries of Connecticut. In part, this was due to the fact that the Massachusetts clergy enjoyed more amicable relations with dissenters than did the clerical coterie of Connecticut.¹⁵ The Connecticut missionaries united more thoroughly against the common enemy of Independency than did the SPG personnel in Massachusetts. Jeremiah Leaming claimed that the harmony and flourishing state of the Connecticut church at the end of the War, relatively speaking, resulted from the unanimous decision of all clergy to voluntarily close their churches rather than omit prayers for the King.¹⁶ They then acted in unison in reopening their churches in November of 1778.

It was obvious that the Connecticut clergy moved more cohesively in their service than their neighbors to the east. Samuel Johnson's patriarchal influence until his death just prior to the Revolution also contributed to the unity the Connecticut church enjoyed. Henry Caner, his counterpart in Massachusetts, could not coordinate the activities of the SPG missionaries in his colony with the same masterful ease as Johnson. It is no surprise, then, that the Connecticut clergy obtained the first residential bishop in the United States for their diocese. The difficulties created by the manner in which they accomplished this feat also displayed the regional diversity of the new Church. It took all of the skills Bishops

¹⁵ Ibid., 128.

¹⁶ Ibid., 137.

White and Seabury could muster to reconcile the High Church Tories of Connecticut with the Low Church Whigs of Pennsylvania to a reorganized Church structure and a new Book of Common Prayer.¹⁷ The regional diversity of the new Church clearly did not arise in the wake of the Revolution. This study demonstrates that the roots for such heterogeneity could be traced to the colonial experience of New England Anglicanism.

Secondly, growing strength, quantitatively and qualitatively, marked the early years of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States. Historian Frederick Mills, Sr. argues that the years 1775-1800 are traditionally interpreted as a period of decline for American religion.¹⁸ No church seemed to suffer more during the Revolution than the Anglican church. With membership ranks full of loyalists and the target of patriotic mobs bent on property destruction, the American Episcopal Church declined significantly during the War for Independence. Nevertheless, the recovery of the Church was

¹⁷ Ronald Cooksey characterizes this compromise as energized by "the democratic spirit of the new republic while maintaining enough of the tradition of the parent Church to satisfy both High and Low Church Americans." See Cooksey, 2. The labels "High Church" and "Low Church" refer to the amount of ritual and ceremony each group desired during Episcopal worship services. The "High Church" group wanted a lot of ceremony, the "Low Church" group not as much.

¹⁸ The fact that the Revolution dislocated large number of loyalists who were active in their churches and bred the "traditional" immorality associated with war are two factors often blamed for this decline. In addition, the growing pervasiveness of liberal religions like Deism, Universalism, and Unitarianism is cited as a cause for the beleaguered state of American Christianity in the post-Revolutionary era. See Frederick V. Mills, Sr., "The Protestant Episcopal Churches in the United States 1783-1789: Suspended Animation or Remarkable Recovery?," The Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 46 (June 1977): 151.

nothing less than "remarkable," as Mills himself argued.¹⁹ The phenomenal growth in Episcopal clergy between 1783 and 1789 was unequaled by any other six-year period of the colonial era. The Church resupplied 91 of 131 vacancies created by the War.²⁰ By 1789, four-fifths of the 1774 parishes were revitalized to the point that they were able to send delegations to one or more of seven state conventions held that year.²¹

The Episcopal Church had been especially devastated in New England. More than two-thirds of the resident SPG missionaries left the region, most for Canada, but some for England or the Middle Atlantic states. In 1785, only 10 out of 21 missionaries were still living in Connecticut. Only one missionary remained in Massachusetts, Edward Bass, and he had been dropped from the Society's rolls.²² By 1782, however, signs of recovery were already apparent. Churches were re-opening and the lack of personal abuse directed toward the clergy represented a significant trend toward accepting the presence of Episcopalianism in the new republic. In 1774, the population of New England approximated 740,000 persons of whom approximately 27,500 were Anglicans. By 1790, inhabitants of New England numbered 923,564 and the Anglicans had grown to around 46,000.²³

The health of the Church in Connecticut seemed to be especially good. By 1791, the number of clergy had increased

¹⁹ Ibid., 170.

²⁰ Ibid., 156.

²¹ Ibid., 157.

²² King, 294-295.

²³ Ibid., 301-302.

from ten to twenty. By 1810, sixty-one Episcopal churches held services in the state each Sunday.²⁴ As early as 1785, Bishop Seabury claimed that the Connecticut church alone boasted a membership of over 30,000 Episcopalians.²⁵ Roger Viets wrote the Society in 1784 that the losses to his congregation in Simsbury by death and emigration were "pretty nearly balanced by the accession of new Conformists."²⁶

Historian William Hogue argues that a significant number of the clergy joining the Episcopal Church after the Revolution were former Methodist pastors. These men had remained in the Church of England until the Revolution, displaying the non-schismatic attitudes of their British mentor, John Wesley. Following the War for Independence, some of these men remained in the Episcopal Church rather than joining the newly-created Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States. Ironically, these pastors brought an evangelical emphasis into an Episcopal Church which had successfully withstood the onslaught of "enthusiasm" during the Great Awakening. The Church of England had grown dramatically in the colonies during the revival of the 1740's and 1750's because it had served as a refuge from and an antithesis to the principles of enthusiastic Calvinism. But the Revolution had decimated the ranks of the anti-revival Anglican clergy and allowed for the increased influence of a new

²⁴ Richard J. Purcell, Connecticut in Transition: 1775-1818 (Middletown, Ct.: Wesleyan University Press, 1963), 39.

²⁵ King, 301.

²⁶ Ibid., 298.

evangelical party constituted of many of these Arminian Methodist pastors. In a very real sense, then, the American Revolution had more to do with the introduction of revivalism into American Episcopalianism than did the Great Awakening.²⁷

Thirdly, American Episcopalianism finally became truly "episcopal" in the first years of the new republic. As has been noted earlier in this chapter, the Connecticut Episcopal clergy moved first to establish the episcopacy in their state. After Jeremiah Leaming turned down the offer to cross the Atlantic for consecration, the High Tories of Connecticut settled on Samuel Seabury, Jr. The selection of Seabury amounted to a thinly-veiled ecclesiastical protest against republican politics. A High Tory himself, Seabury's loyalist credentials were impeccable. At one time he had served as a chaplain to the loyalist regiment under Colonel Edward Fanning. He had been driven from his SPG mission station in Westchester, New York, by Connecticut patriots and imprisoned for a time in New Haven.²⁸ Seabury had been a champion of an American episcopate and had not been a part of the group of Connecticut missionaries who had decided to re-open their churches in 1778 by means of the necessary liturgical omissions. The latter fact would increase his popularity among London authorities from whom he needed the requisite consecration.²⁹

²⁷ William M. Hogue argues this thesis very effectively in his "The Church of England in the Northern Colonies and the Great Awakening" (Ph.D. diss., The Catholic University of America, 1954), 239-242.

²⁸ Purcell, 38.

²⁹ Cooksey, 172.

News from Philadelphia that the Pennsylvania clergy planned to adopt presbyterian ordination until bishops could be consecrated in England, what the Connecticut clergy saw as Whig thinking, made Seabury's consecration more urgent in the minds of his colleagues. The Connecticut ministers sent him to England without gaining prior approval for his mission from the London leadership of the Church. Unfortunately, Seabury arrived in the middle of the peace negotiations, so the Parliament was not particularly predisposed to pass special legislation allowing Archbishops to consecrate bishops for a foreign state.³⁰ Seabury was desperate for consecration, so he turned to the non-juring Scottish Episcopalian bishops for assistance. In this quest he was successful; Scottish bishops consecrated him in November of 1784 in Edinburgh. Ironically, Seabury, who had defended the Hanovers from patriot attack, was consecrated by a group of bishops who would not recognize the succession of this royal family. Naturally, the English prelates frowned on Seabury's consecration.³¹

Seabury's Scottish consecration may have been a blessing in disguise. It graphically illustrated for all of New England the severance of institutional ties between the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States and the ecclesiastical establishment in London.³² Nevertheless, the irregularity of the consecration disturbed some of the Connecticut clergy who

³⁰ Ibid., 172-173.

³¹ Ibid.

³² King, 293.

remained loyal to King George III.³³ Parliament finally approved the consecration of American bishops in 1786. The first two men consecrated in the English line, William White of Pennsylvania and Samuel Provoost of New York, also questioned the validity of Seabury's episcopal authority. Provoost in particular refused to recognize Seabury's consecration. A staunch Whig during the Revolution and very bitter toward Tory clergy, Provoost resisted reconciliation with Connecticut's bishop.³⁴ It took all of the diplomatic savvy White could muster as an intermediary to bring the two men together. He was ably assisted in this task by Samuel Parker, rector of Trinity Church in Boston, a friend of Seabury and a Whig who remained at his post throughout the Revolution. Seabury and Provoost settled their differences at the 1789 General Convention which created the Protestant Episcopal Church of the United States. The fact that the Scottish wing of the Episcopal Church was finally reunited with the British wing in 1788 helped Provoost to accept Seabury's episcopacy.³⁵

The Low Church Episcopalians of Pennsylvania, led by White, called for as much power in the hands of the local parish as possible. In this demand, they were perpetuating a colonial precedent. They also argued that lay and clergy representatives should both be gathered in a General Convention, with

³³ In addition to Jeremiah Leaming, Ebenezer Dibblee of Norwalk and Stamford, and Christopher Newton of Ripton, North Stratford, and Stratfield objected to the Scottish consecration. See Cooksey, 174.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.; Mills, 169.

concurrence of both delegations a prerequisite for the passage of any legislation. The bishops of the new church would be selected by both laity and clergy, a method which had not been practiced in the English Church since the Norman Conquest in 1066. The involvement of the laity in episcopal selection, and the fact that American Episcopal bishops would be purely spiritual leaders for the first time since the Edict of Milan in 313 A.D., demonstrated that the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States was returning to its vital Christian roots.³⁶ In essence, the Low Church wing of this new Church wanted to organize itself "from the bottom up."

For the High Church faction from Connecticut, the Pennsylvania plan seemed a bit too democratic. They wanted bishops selected before any conventions were organized. They insisted that the clergy maintain control in church affairs. They claimed that there was no room for the laity to exercise authority beyond the local parish. The High Church group sought to structure the new Church "from the top down." Jeremiah Leaming said it best on behalf of his colleagues: "The ministerial authority is either from Heaven, or from men . . . If man give the authority to the minister, they must constitute all the Laws, by which that Church is to be governed. In that case, the Church would be nothing more than a meer human

³⁶ Mills, 165-167.

Invention."³⁷ But the people had triumphed in the Revolution, and they would carry the day, with some compromise, in the organization of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States.

Finally, the new Church was fully "Americanized." William White's plan for Episcopal government reflected an allegiance to the concept of natural rights and the contract theory of government which American political leaders had utilized to pattern the new federal government.³⁸ As noted above, a purely spiritual episcopate and lay participation in the General Convention of the Church were peculiarly "American" decisions.³⁹ Foes of the Episcopal Church in America were still charging it with vile "Englishness" during the War of 1812. No doubt the Church did retain some of its English heritage, but so did many aspects of American society and government in general.⁴⁰ However, the sermon preached by Bishop John Henry Hobart during the General Convention of 1814 represented a spirited defense of the loyalty of the Church to the young United States government.⁴¹ The "Americanization" of the Episcopal Church championed so eloquently by Hobart was, as this study proves,

³⁷ Ebenezer Dibblee, Norwalk, Ct., to Samuel Peters, London, 6 November 1789, Samuel Peters Papers, IV, 47, Episcopal Church Historical Society, Austin, Tx., in Cooksey, 174.

³⁸ Mills, 168.

³⁹ Lawrence L. Brown, "The Americanization of the Episcopal Church," The Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 44 (December 1975): 44-47.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 33, 51.

⁴¹ Ibid., 33.

anything but new. The Anglican Church in America was being continually "Americanized" throughout the eighteenth century.

This "Americanization" could even be seen in the way Anglicans had been building their churches during the colonial era. Donald R. Friary has argued that no standard architectural model was imposed on the American Episcopalians either by canon or by custom. Neither the SPG, the Bishop of London, nor the Archbishop of Canterbury dictated a specific set of plans for the building of colonial American churches. In the absence of such requirements, American Anglicans combined some elements of Anglican practice with a wide variety of local building traditions and influences to create a hodgepodge of colonial Anglican church structures.⁴² Hence, the vast diversity of the American environment and building experience shaped Anglican church buildings in much the same way that the American frontier modified the practice and the doctrinal expression of the British Anglican model. There were distinctive features of Anglican church buildings in New England: pulpits, altars, and fonts separated as distinct liturgical centers, altars in the east end, large glass windows in the east wall, an east-west orientation, and steeples. But none of the colonial Anglican churches constructed in the region could be identified as a standard church type for the denomination.⁴³

⁴² Donald R. Friary, "The Architecture of the Anglican Church in the Northern American Colonies: A Study of Religious, Social, and Cultural Expression" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Pennsylvania, 1971), 325.

⁴³ Ibid., 391.

In short, church building types of all denominations, including those of the Anglican communion, were indigenous to the regions of America where they were constructed. In fact, there is evidence that some of the New England meeting houses in the eighteenth century copied some prominent Anglican features, further confusing the architectural diversity of the region.⁴⁴ In England, the mother Church was a highly organized, hierarchically structured institution. Friary argues that "in the new, free, unstructured, tradition-less American environment it drifted away from the parent institution toward autonomy and experiment." Friary believes that this tendency was more true of Anglicanism in the southern colonies, rather than in those northern colonies where more orthodox SPG missionaries were stationed.⁴⁵

This study demonstrates that Friary misunderstood the activities and the role of New England's eighteenth century SPG missionaries. Yes, they were paid by authorities in London. Yes, they corresponded regularly with the Society and the Bishop of London. Yes, they loved the English Church which had ordained them and assigned them to the "Anglican frontier" of New England. But they were also clearly modifying the Church

⁴⁴ The meeting house in Farmington, Connecticut, built in 1771, imitated the steeple of Christ Church, Boston, while locating the principal entrance into the sanctuary on the side of the building. The Farmington Congregationalists did not want to seem too "Anglican" by placing the principal entrance to the front of the structure. See Wayne Andrews, Architecture, Ambition, and Americans: A Social History of American Architecture (New York: The Free Press, 1978), 47.

⁴⁵ Friary, 401-402.

they loved to fit the American context in which they desired to see it flourish. Besides "Americanizing" their church buildings, American Anglican clergy and laity fashioned a distinctly American Anglican Church in eighteenth century New England. Irishman James Lyons, SPG itinerant in New Haven County, Connecticut, between the years 1743-1745, had it right. He called American Episcopalians "Church Men in words, but Congregationalists in Discipline."⁴⁶ Did his indictment signify that the American SPG missionaries and their congregations were disloyal to the London Church authorities? Disloyalty was not the issue. Rather, the clergy and the laity Lyons described were simply Episcopalians experiencing their faith and church life in colonial America. That reality simply and significantly determined how they expressed the colonial religious alternative they had chosen.

⁴⁶ James Lyons, New Haven County, Ct., to the Secretary, SPG, London, 8 October 1763, Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts Manuscripts, Library of Congress transcripts, Series B, III, 202, in Cooksey, 35.

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